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Intersections

Faith, Learning, and the Vocation of Lutheran Higher Education



IN THIS ISSUE

Lutheran Social Teaching and Economic Life

Intersections is a publication by and largely for the academic communities of the twenty-seven institutions that comprise the Network of ELCA Colleges and Universities (NECU). Each issue reflects on the **intersection** of faith, learning, and teaching within Lutheran higher education. It is published by the NECU, and has its home in the Presidential Center for Faith and Learning at Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois, the institutional sponsor of the publication. ***Intersections*** extends and enhances discussions fostered by the annual Vocation of Lutheran Higher Education Conference, together lifting up the vocation of Lutheran colleges and universities. It aims to raise the level of awareness among faculty, staff, and administration about the Lutheran heritage and church-relatedness of their institutions, especially as these **intersect** with contemporary challenges, opportunities, and initiatives.

About the Cover and Artist

Sheila Mesick
Untitled
Mixed media: paint, fiber, found objects

Sheila Mesick is a working artist who recently retired from teaching art within the Davenport community schools. She resides in Davenport, Iowa and is a member there of St. Paul Lutheran Church.

The untitled triptych pictured on the cover was originally created for a 2017 EMPOWER TANZANIA fundraiser. It now hangs on the office wall of Ann McGlynn, Director of Communications at St. Paul Lutheran Church, Davenport, Iowa, who photographed the art.

Sheila Mesick says this about her vocation as artist and educator: "During those years when working with students, my goal was to facilitate learning so that students would develop the skills needed for visual expression. My intention was to engage students in the creative process so that they might discover their own creative voice. My ability to create art sustains me."

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From the Publisher

The Lutheran Reformation of Christianity in the sixteenth century also included the reform of education. Prior to the Reformation, education in Europe had been a private matter, reserved for those who could afford tutors or who could enter a medieval monastery. Lutheran reformers insisted that education should be a function of the community and available to all because education was necessary to fulfill God's desire that human communities flourish and that society function wisely.

Although it is no longer widely known, this Lutheran educational ideal is one of the primary sources of contemporary higher education. The ideal first informed higher education's attention to character development, which remains with us today, particularly in undergraduate education. The Lutheran tradition of educational reform also shaped the university model by helping to establish the University of Berlin, the first modern research university. Concomitantly, the Lutheran movement played a significant role in creating the academy. Drawing on the commitment to embrace God's call to freedom, the value of all people, and care for creation, Lutheranism helped develop key practices of the academy: academic freedom, humble acknowledgment of one's limits, contributions to the common good, and the importance of questioning received knowledge, values, and practices.

The truth that a living Lutheran intellectual movement centrally helped develop Western and then global higher education has been masked in the United States. Immigrant Lutherans founded colleges in America to serve their communities without reference to broader Lutheran ideals. They focused instead on creating schools for educating their own leaders, a necessary task in America, with its disestablishment of religion. The decision of twentieth-century American Lutheran leaders not to establish a Lutheran research university reflected their focus on residential colleges as vehicles for internal Lutheran leadership development.

This focus on internal leadership development and this forgetting of Lutheran educational ideals left an intellectual void that was filled by a widely accepted secular understanding of academic mission. The Lutheran tradition as a resource for higher education was relegated to campus ministry and, in most cases, to certain religion department courses. At some colleges, the Lutheran tradition continued to provide a pious gloss to the college's academic mission, but it had no substantive place in informing academic work.

The Network of ELCA Colleges and Universities (NECU) was organized in part to awaken Lutheran higher education from our collective amnesia about the ideals of Lutheran higher education and their implications for the mission of our institutions. The statement *Rooted and Open* summarizes the work done to articulate a vision for higher education shaped by Lutheran ideals. We have also made great strides toward drawing on Lutheran educational ideals for co-curricular learning, particularly by emphasizing education-for-vocation. However, we have only begun to reclaim the Lutheran intellectual tradition as an ongoing resource for the full missions of our institutions, including their academic missions.

This issue of *Intersections* includes writings from an initiative by NECU to change this situation. NECU convened a consultation in July 2019 to explore possible uses of the Lutheran intellectual tradition as a resource for the academic mission of our institutions. The case study was whether and how to use Lutheran social teaching as a resource for teaching business ethics. The consultation involved professors from business, leadership, and management departments at Augsburg University, Concordia College, and Augustana College.

Much detritus to discard and much work remains toward reclaiming a vibrant Lutheran identity at NECU institutions. All the articles in this issue on Lutheran social teaching and economic life reflect an important step along the way.

Mark Wilhelm is the Executive Director of the Network of ELCA Colleges and Universities.

ERNEST L. SIMMONS

GUEST EDITORIAL

Moral Deliberation in NECU Classrooms

Early on in its existence, the ELCA determined that it was necessary to continue the practice of its predecessor bodies in producing documents of careful reflection on social issues to benefit congregations, which were understood as "communities of moral deliberation," according to the 1991 ELCA statement, *The Church in Society*. Known as social statements, these expressions of Lutheran social teaching are intended to assist both individuals and communities of faith in addressing significant current social issues with integrity, coherence, and responsible and informed faith. (See Roger Willer's essay in the present issue of *Intersections*.) This effort has produced twelve social statements and thirteen social messages on a variety of topics ranging from the environment and economics to immigration and genetics. While these statements were initially formulated for congregational use, the question of a current study undertaken by the Network of ELCA Colleges and Universities (NECU) is whether these statements may also be of use in classrooms on our campuses. Could their utilization increase the level of campus ethical reflection such that our campuses become *academic* communities of moral deliberation?

Martin Luther was a relational thinker who placed Christian life in a simultaneous relationship before both God and neighbor. The faith which inwardly embraces the justifying grace of God is then expressed outwardly in loving service to neighbor, made explicit through one's vocation in the world. Our colleges and universities over the last 25 years have intentionally raised awareness of vocation for our students, who thereby see their work as a calling, above and beyond a mere career. At a time when "conversation" on challenging topics is absent or divisive, our campuses are one of the few places where reasoned and respectful dialogue can occur without rancor or retribution. These social statements may provide a resource for such college-wide discussions. They may raise the communal level of ethical reflection while acquainting our students with the rich history of Lutheran ethical reflection.

It is the intention of this NECU project to determine if these outcomes are achievable. We began with a pilot workshop on the ELCA social statement on economic life, *Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All*, among business and finance faculty in July, 2019, at Augsburg University. The working group will be exploring other statements and disciplines over the next two years to determine if they can help faculty attend to ethical issues within their disciplines. Lutheran social teaching may help our campuses address the classic Lutheran question, "What does this mean?" Thoughtful and informed faith for responsible action in the world can do no less.

Ernest L. Simmons is Theologian in Residence and Professor Emeritus of Religion at Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota. He is co-chair of the NECU working group on Lutheran Social Teaching, which led a pilot consultation in July, 2019 at Augsburg College in Minneapolis. Participants centrally reflected on potential uses of the 1999 ELCA social statement, *Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All* within their business, finance, and leadership classrooms.]

MARTHA E. STORTZ and TOM MORGAN

The Responsible Professional: Vocation and Economic Life

What do professionals "profess?" Does attending a faith-based institution add anything distinctive to their "profession"? We argue that the "value-added" for students at Lutheran institutions of higher education is vocation, a sense of calling that reaches beyond professional commitments and ethics codes. Whether they are in graduate or undergraduate programs, whether their degree is in the liberal arts or in professional/pre-professional studies, whether they pursue grad school or career, whether they are Lutheran or not—whether they are religious or not!—we hope that these students profess a distinctive responsibility ethic that is derived from understanding themselves to be "called and empowered to serve the neighbor so that all may flourish" (NECU).

In this article we propose to show the ways in which profession and vocation intersect, before then outlining the distinctive marks of a responsibility ethic. Finally, we will unpack the marks of the responsibility ethic that informs the ELCA Social Statement on economic life, *Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All*.

Throughout, we draw on work done by NECU-sponsored consultation from July, 2019 involving professors from business, leadership, and management departments at Augsburg University, Concordia College, and Augustana College (Rock Island).[1] The purpose of the consultation was to discuss the ELCA social statement on economic life as a possible resource for teaching business ethics.

Profession and Vocation: Intersections and Differences

How does a sense of calling or vocation make one's professional commitments more than "just a career"?

First, profession grounds vocation, whereas vocation invites professionals to think beyond themselves and their professional guild.

Professions root vocation, giving it a distinctive soil: a history and tradition of service, a set of practices constitutive of that profession, a community of practitioners who

Martha E. Stortz is the Bernhard M. Christensen Professor of Religion and Vocation and **Tom Morgan** is Professor of Leadership Studies, both at Augsburg University in Minneapolis, Minnesota. They have taught often together in graduate and undergraduate settings over the past ten years, working to help students better understand and articulate their callings. They were both involved in the planning team for the consultation on Lutheran Social Teaching that engaged the ELCA social statement, *Sufficient Sustainable Livelihood for All*. They are pictured here beside *Madonna* by Mikelis Geistauts, and *Filling a Bucket* by Tara Sweeney.

embody the goals and values of the profession, and a set of standards that enable the professional to know what it means to do her job well.

Vocation offers professionals a kind of *telos* beyond the profession, an end which orients the profession's history, place, and practice. The called professional has a sense that work well done contributes to a greater good that exists beyond the professional guild. Vocation infuses professional commitments with a meaning and purpose that exceeds simply "being a good doctor" or "being a compassionate teacher." A finance professor at Concordia College observed that, before introducing business ethics, "you have to talk first about the purpose of a human being, the purpose of your whole life." Talking about calling or vocation helps leverage the prerequisite conversation.

> "The called professional has a sense that work well done contributes to a greater good that exists beyond the professional guild."

Moreover, through their vocations, called professionals have a connection to other people of good will who work toward that greater good. They participate in a larger community, one that includes other professionals, other workers, others who value the same goal and serve the greater good.

Second, profession locates work within a particular history and community, whereas vocation locates profession within a larger history and a broader community.

Every professional works in a particular time and place. What it means to be a judge in twenty-first century North America is very different from what it means to be a judge in Guatemala or Pakistan. What it means to be a good judge in all locations demands a close reading of context, the particular contingencies that impact one's service.

Vocation reminds the professional of a broader context that encompasses and even judges the present context. That context can be variously defined—"the kingdom of God," "*shalom*," "*tikkun olam*" (the Jewish mandate to "heal the world")—but each articulation places the present in perspective. The director of the MBA program at Augsburg observed that he wanted to honor his students' desire to "make a bunch of money," but he added pointedly, "*and* we want you to give back." To that end, he has students craft a personal mission statement, as well as identify their core values and set a series of short-term and long-term goals that include service.

Third, profession is composed of consciously institutionalized patterns of trust between client and professional, practices specific to the profession, institutions that support these patterns and practices, and communities responsible for their nurture and governance. Vocation interrogates these patterns of trust, practices, institutions, and communities, posing critical questions about justice, fairness, equity, and access.

Vocation breaks the profession's potential parochialism, offering cross-professional perspective, even a cross-professional language. At the same time, vocations supply a court of appeal for questions of justice. For example, one could be an exemplary priest according to the professional standards of the Roman Church—and never question why there are no women in the guild. Vocation presses the question: are some "children of God" more equal than others?

A business administration professor at Augustana College observed that so much of business ethics had been tainted by scandals like Enron (2001), the banking crisis of 2007, or the subprime mortgage crisis (2008). She wanted to move away from "scandal-based ethics," which told students what *not* to do into a more positive ethics that helped them discern *what to do*. A sense of calling could help anchor them in the midst of stormy markets.

Finally, professions regard the "other" as client, whereas vocation regards the "other" as neighbor or fellow-traveler.

Professions focus on a specific, often temporary task: e.g., getting a will written, finding a diagnosis, implementing a plan of treatment, getting a high school diploma. The other is "client," and the professional doesn't have to like her client, agree with her politically, or share her taste. Similarly, the client doesn't have to like her lawyer, agree with her politically, or share her taste. One serves; the other is served. Professional boundaries ensure appropriate distance and acknowledge a beginning and end to that service.

Professions frame service in terms of a question: "What do you want me to do for you?" The question acknowledges expertise on one part, need on another. There's difference between professional and client in terms of power and agency. The relationship is often dyadic; justice may be its operative norm.

Vocation regards the other as "neighbor." Moreover, vocation presents the professional as a "neighbor" as well. Neighbors share a common space—the neighborhood; they walk a common path. This relationship is less dyadic. There are lots of others in the neighborhood, lots of others along the way. In the relationship between two neighbors or two fellow-travelers, there's more symmetry in terms of agency and power. Vocation tempers justice with love.

"In the relationship between two neighbors or two fellow-travelers, there's more symmetry in terms of agency and power."

Vocation thus frames service differently: "What will we do together?" "Where does the path lead?" Or more simply, "What needs to happen?" Service is *with* another, not *for* another.

Kinds of Codes of Ethics

How does a sense of calling or vocation move a professional's behavior beyond a professional code of ethics or code of conduct?

Every profession has a code of ethics or code of conduct that is intended to guide the practice of that profession and regulate professional behavior. These codes align with three major approaches to human behavior dominant in Western philosophical ethics: deontological ethics, which attends to rules; teleological ethics, which attends to goals or values; and aretaic ethics, which attends to excellence in character and the virtues that describe it. These three approaches reflect basic dimensions of human behavior. Humans create rules to govern social life; guided by values, they seek after goals; finally, they practice virtues that compose a life of integrity.

Accordingly, professional codes of conduct or codes of ethics often list the rules governing conduct in the profession, the goals or values professionals hold, and the virtues that make for "a good lawyer" or "a good manager." In what follows, we unpack these three dimensions of professional codes of conduct using the Code of Conduct of the American Management Association (hereafter, AMA). Then, we demonstrate how an understanding of vocation pushes beyond these codes of conduct to offer called professionals a way of responding to what's going on around them.

Deontological ethics

Deontological or duty ethics honors that part of human nature that needs to know the rules—whether to follow or to disobey them. Rules set basic parameters for human interactions, enabling traffic to run smoothly, social trust to build, and governments to function according to a rule of law. Currently, politics in the United States is consumed with whether some individuals are "above the law," like the President and his associates, or whether they are temporarily exempt from constitutional constraints which apply to other citizens.

Deontological ethics presents humans as *citizens*, obedient to rules, particularly rules that forbid actions that destroy and dismantle social bonds. It focuses on "what should we do?"

Rules may be broad or quite specific; they stipulate what one must do (prescriptions or "thou shalt" imperatives), what one should not do (proscriptions or "thou shalt not" imperatives), as well as what one may do with impunity (permissions). It's worth noting that rules outlining what one should do (prescriptions) have greater range or impact than rules outlining what not to do (proscriptions). For example, the Ten Commandments told the Hebrew peoples to "Honor your father and your mother"—but did not say specifically how that was to happen. There's room for filial discretion, meaning a daughter or son can decide whether a parent would be happier with a Thanksgiving visit or an off-season adventure. The commandment is a broad, prescriptive rule. Another commandment clearly forbids killing: "Thou shalt not kill," but would have greater range if it read "Thou shalt love and speak charitably of your neighbor." Charity is a lot harder to manage than simply refraining from murder.

The AMA Code of Conduct leads with the rules that govern professional conduct, and those are three-fold: (1) do no harm, (2) foster trust in the marketing system, and (3) embrace ethical values.

The first and presumably most important rule to "do no harm" is broad and negatively stated. It does not specify the many and various ways in which marketers may inflict harm, which broadens its application beyond a rehearsal of specific situations. The message is clear: *in every situation*, the professional is to do no harm.

> "The first and presumably most important rule to "do no harm" is broad and negatively stated. It does not specify the many and various ways in which marketers may inflict harm, which broadens its application beyond a rehearsal of specific situations."

But the rule does not have the range of the positive counterpart, a rule to "do good." The second rule—"foster trust in the marketing system"—presumes the marketing system is always right. The third rule points to the teleological thrust of the code, professional values or goals.

Teleological ethics

Teleological ethics honors that part of human nature that seeks outcomes or goals. The saying, "the ends justifies the means," hints that all kinds of rules might fall before a desirable outcome. More benignly, this kind of ethic satisfies the desire of people who like to aim for something, whether through an architect's design, a recipe, or a long-term goal. *Teleological* ethics presents humans as *makers*, crafters of their own professions and careers. It focuses on "what do I want?" or "what do I seek?"

Clayton Christensen, Harvard Business School professor and consultant, writes about the blueprint he drew up in college for a "well-planned life." Not surprisingly, it took a lot of planning to craft it. Christensen describes how everything was oriented toward goals: the sports he played, the relationships he cultivated, the time he devoted to projects, the sleep he got, even his family. He knew what he wanted and put all of his energies into achieving it. Observing Christensen and others like him, New York Times op-ed columnist David Brooks sums up the lure of a distant goal: "Life comes to appear as a well-designed project, carefully conceived in the beginning, reviewed and adjusted along the way and brought toward a well-rounded fruition" (Brooks).

The AMA Code of Conduct lists an impressive roster of values that follow from its governing norms: honesty, responsibility, fairness, respect, transparency, and citizenship. Each value is defined, then elaborated in a series of pledges, which are stated in thoroughly teleological language: "To this end, we will…." For example, honesty is defined as being "forthright in dealings with customers and stakeholders," and supported by promises to "strive to be truthful in all situations and at all times" and to "offer products of value that do what we claim in our communications."

Clearly, each of these values could also be a virtue or character trait, but to have them listed as "values" rather than "virtues" signals they are aspirational rather than descriptive. The difference is important: it's probably better to have an honest marketer than a marketer who aspires to be honest. Still, a professional becomes honest by striving for honesty in all of his/her interactions. Though not identical, values and virtues are related. Perhaps the tired story of the famous pianist is still apt. When asked, "how did you get to be a Carnegie Hall musician," he simply said, "Practice. Practice. Practice." We become truthful people by telling the truth over and over and over again.

Character ethics

Aretaic or character ethics offers yet a third alternative, describing the qualities or characteristics that make a person good in general or simply good at whatever it is that she does. These qualities dispose a person to act in a particular way no matter what the situation. He doesn't have to consult a social or legal code; he doesn't have to calculate whether or not this action would forward his goals or projects or plans. He simply acts instinctively, leaning into patterns that have been etched into his behavior over time and in various circumstances. A truthful person never has to think about telling the truth; it's simply part of who she is. A truthful person will simply always tell the truth, without having to consult the rulebook and without having to calculate cost.

Character ethics presents humans as *creatures of habit*, specifically the habits that make for excellence in a particular professional role. It focuses on the question of identity, "who is the good professional?"

Much of professional ethics describes the specific qualities that make for a good lawyer or doctor, and these are delineated in the professional code for that profession. Daniel W. Porcupile, contract officer at U.S. Security Associates, Inc., compiled a list of desirable qualities for any profession: expertise or specialized knowledge, competency, honesty and integrity, accountability, self-regulation, and image (Porcupile). Again, these virtues or qualities of the good professional start as values, characteristics toward which one aspires. Over time, these values become habitual, etched on character. The truthful professional never has to wonder about telling the truth; she simply is a truthful person.

> "Virtues or qualities of the good professional start as values, characteristics toward which one aspires. Over time, these values become habitual, etched on character."

The AMA Code of Conduct speaks less of character, but what it does say is powerful: "As marketers, we recognize that we not only serve our organizations but also act as stewards of society in creating, facilitating, and executing transactions that are part of the greater economy." The statement confers on marketers a two-fold identity, and the state-of-being language is crucial. Marketers are servants of the organizations that employ them; they are also stewards of the larger economy. These are powerful markers of identity, but here's the rub. These two identities could be mutually exclusive, e.g., when serving the company conflicts with stewarding society. And they could often compete with one another. Moreover, what happens when the "greater economy" systematically dis-privileges or dis-enfranchises a group of people, as the economies of the American South (revolutionary, pre-Civil War, reconstruction, Jim Crow eras) have historically discriminated against black people?

Responsibility Ethics and Lutheran Higher Education

Responsibility ethics presents humans not so much as citizens or makers or creatures of habits, but rather as people who are summoned or called to be the *first responders* to what's going on around them.[2] In their responses, they attend to various dimensions of their context: themselves, their own professions, the world around them, and God. The language of vocation inhabits the world of responsibility ethics.

Responsibility ethics focuses on questions of accountability, "What's going on? How am I being called/summoned to respond? Where is God in all of this?" As first responders, responsible professionals are "called and empowered to serve the neighbor so that all may flourish." Readers familiar with *Rooted and Open*, the founding document of the Network of ELCA Colleges and Universities, will recognize this language. What follows is something of a rewriting of that document's main moves, but in the register of responsibility ethics. We believe that these commitments outline three elements of a responsibility ethics that both deepens and interrogates traditional codes of professional ethics.

Called and empowered

Being a "first responder" does not mean acting on impulse. Response is different from reaction. Reactions are instinctual, unconsidered, and often hasty. If I touch a hot burner, my instinct is to jerk my hand away from a source of immediate pain. That instinctive reaction is appropriate to the situation. But most professional situations call for a response, and responses are more considered, deliberative, and discerning. Responders are reflective professionals and reflective practitioners.

Responsible professionals are freed from the constraints of custom and status quo, even any unjust parameters of their professional code, to ask broadly: "what is going on?" They are freed for a kind of critical inquiry into a situation or issue to ask tough questions and to turn down easy answers. Aware of their own limitations as well as the limitations of human understanding in general, responsible professionals have a healthy sense of humility. Rather than paralyzing them from any action at all, this intellectual humility prods them to be probative and open to the counsel of others.

To serve the neighbor

As first responders, responsible professionals act out of a sense of calling or vocation, which includes but exceeds their professional work. They possess a critical appreciation for their own strengths and skills, which they regard as God-given gifts, not innate possessions. Because these capacities are "gifts," they are not the property of the one who has them. Rather they come with an obligation to be shared with others. Here, "can" implies "ought," not the other way around as philosophical ethics would have it.[3] The professional has a responsibility to share with others the strengths and skill with which she has been gifted.

Moreover, responders share their gifts with clients whom they also regard as *neighbors*. Regarding the client as a neighbor breaks the hierarchical nature of a relationship between a superordinate (the professional) and subordinate (the client) and adds a dimension of equity to the relationship. Both client and professional are neighbors, one to another. Responsible professionals are released from the prison of their own individuality or career goals to work for the good of another. Advocacy (*ad-* + *-vocare*) becomes part of their vocation or calling (*vocare*), as they work for justice in the world.

So that all may flourish

Finally, regarding the client as neighbor points toward a *neighborhood* or *commons* in which "all may flourish." As first responders, responsible professionals look toward a common good that lies outside the boundaries of the professional guild, their immediate place of employment, even the concerns of global market. From the perspective of the common good, responders have a critical perspective on the penultimate goods of career, professional guild, nation, and the global economy. All of these goods come together in the divine economy, quite literally, the "house of God" or *oikos theou*.

> "From the perspective of the common good, responders have a critical perspective on the penultimate goods of career, professional guild, nation, and the global economy."

Because they do not have a God's eye view and so can only catch glimpses of the divine economy, responsible professionals regard themselves as stewards, tending a house that they do not own. They exercise a radical hospitality toward both neighbors and neighborhoods in which they work, extending God's welcome to the whole of creation. Finally, they exhibit a commitment to the well-being of the world, particularly those places and people that suffer from inhospitality.

Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All

Graduates from Lutheran institutions of higher education know that they are "called and empowered to serve the neighbor so that all may flourish." How does that calling play out concretely for graduates working in various sectors of business and the economy?

The 1999 ELCA Social Statement, *Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All*, reframes these questions in the horizon of a broader economy, the household of God. Further, it offers four criteria for making economic judgments. Finally, it invites business professionals to respond rather than react to global market forces.

Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All, (hereafter, SSLA) provides an alternative framework for economic deliberation that both complements and critiques codes of conduct like the one referred to above. For example, the AMA Code rightly challenges managers to see that their duties do not end with the organization that employs them. Managers function as "stewards of society" and serve "the larger economy." SSLA insists on an even broader horizon, nothing less than a divine economy, the household of God: "In Jesus Christ, God's reign intersects earthly life, transforming us and allowing us to see the ways in which the world falls short of God's intentions and enabling us to speak out." Seen from this point of view, accepting any economy system without question gives it "god-like power" (ELCA, "Brief Summary," see also Reierson).

The document spells out "God's intentions" in language that translates to people who do not believe in the Christian God and to people who do not profess faith at all. Four criteria inform economic judgments, which ought to aim for "a sufficient, sustainable livelihood for all."

Sufficient

Sufficiency means the ability to meet basic needs, which is both a divine intention and a human right. In order to meet basic needs, the world's resources must be shared and distributed justly so that everyone has enough. Huge disparities between rich and poor disrupt the just distribution of resources. Some people have more than they need; some have nothing.

The document names two threats to the just distribution of natural resources: consumerism and greed. Consumerism confuses wants and needs, confusing desire with necessity. Greed, which has both personal and corporate dimensions, is that obsessive desire for more. People become possessed by their possessions; corporations acquire smaller, more vulnerable enterprises creating monopolies that cut jobs and raise prices. The search for cost-cutting and saving leads to higher prices and fewer jobs. SSLA calls on all government to promote the common good; it calls on all citizens to hold governments accountable.

Attention to sufficiency demands that responsible professionals ask the question: how much is enough?

Sustainable

Sustainability refers to the capacity to survive and thrive together over the long term. Respecting the integrity of creation is both a divine intention and a human responsibility. Humans are bound to respect the integrity of creation, not just for their own survival and enjoyment, but in order to pass this on to future generations.

The past year has seen teen-agers and young people such as Sweden's Greta Thunberg on the front lines protesting climate change. They boldly display disgust with the irresponsibility of their elders: "We're skipping our lessons to teach you one." "If you don't act like adults, we will." Sustainability highlights the responsibility of one generation to those that succeed it.

Attention to sustainability demands that responsible professionals ask the question: what is the long- and short-term impact of our actions?

Livelihood

A livelihood refers to an economic support system, nothing more and nothing less. Although there are multiple dimensions of one's livelihood, including the various communities to which one belongs (family, neighborhood, faith community, and nation, etc.), the workplace is probably the primary economic support system for many people. Workplace practices of hiring, retiring, and termination, in compensation and benefits, in policies for illness and childcare should reflect a basic respect for the dignity and worth of each employee.

> "Workplace practices of hiring, retiring, and termination, in compensation and benefits, in policies for illness and childcare should reflect a basic respect for the dignity and worth of each employee."

At the same time, people are more than what they do. As children of a living God, they have an inherent worth, whether they are working are not. In the divine economy, all people have dignity, even when their "livelihood" depends on others, i.e., when they are not working, no longer working, or unable to work at all. A Down's syndrome adult in a group home may not receive a paycheck but has a life of meaning and purpose nonetheless. A retiring engineer has a calling, even though she no longer goes to work every day. Responsible professionals contribute to the livelihoods of others, not just themselves.

Attention to livelihood demands that they ask the question: how do we support ourselves and those who depend upon us?

For All

The final phrase of SSLA—"for all"—reiterates the scope of the divine economy, but focuses particular attention on those people who suffer from poverty and economic injustice. Because Christians follow a God who embraced suffering on the cross, they show particular compassion to those who suffer. Similar to the "preferential option for the poor" in Roman Catholic social teaching, SSLA calls for "particular scrutiny of policies that affect the poorest people with the aim of investing to improve their lives."

After working for the State Department, Augsburg graduate in communications and political science Jacquie Berglund worked in the Baltic countries for the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development before turning toward making beer. She turned out to be as successful at the alchemy of the palate as she'd been with the alchemy of international relations, and Finnegans

Brew Co. was born. But Berglund wanted to encourage "barstool philanthropy," as she called it, and she conceived of the idea of a reverse food truck: "Some food trucks serve food. This one serves the greater good." Instead of making food, people donate money to stock local food pantries and shelters. A menu listed prices for how much it would cost to feed a family of four for a day, for a week, for a month. The food truck became a regular presence at weddings, graduation parties, birthday celebrations. Aiming to "put hunger in the rear view," Finnegans truly serves the common good (Finnegans).

Attention to flourishing "for all" demands that responsible professionals ask the question: how does our behavior affect others, particularly those living in poverty? How does our behavior impact the whole of creation.

Conclusion

The goal of posing all of these questions is not to prescribe answers but to help responsible professionals in various fields of business think through the impact of their behavior, actions, and decision. These tools for deliberation outline a way to respond rather than merely react to the forces and situations surrounding them.

We believe a distinctive professional formation, one that goes way beyond acquiring skills, happens at Lutheran institutions of higher education. Although we focused here on business, this framework could be applied throughout the professions, using other ELCA social statements and social messages in the process. (See complete list on page 15.)

> "A distinctive professional formation, one that goes way beyond acquiring skills, happens at Lutheran institutions of higher education."

What marks professional education at an ELCA college or university? Graduates are poised to become responsible professionals who are "called and empowered to serve the neighbor so that all may flourish." These young professionals know how to make a living—but even more importantly, they know how to make a life.

Endnotes

1. Participants included Augsburg University's George Dierberger, Director of the MBA Program and Associate Professor of Management; Marc McIntosh, Associate Professor of Finance; and Fran Lyon Dugin, Adjunct Professor in Business; Concordia College's Ahmed Kamel, Professor of Computer Science and Management Information Systems; Angel Carrete Rodriguez, Assistant Professor of Finance; and Faith Ngunjiri, Associate Professor of Ethics and Director of the Lorentzen Center for Faith and Work; and Augustana College's Amanda Baugous, Associate Professor of Business Administration; and Lina Zhou, Associate Professor of Business Administration. The consultation was facilitated by Kathi Tunheim, Vice President for Mission, Strategy, and Innovation at Gustavus Adolphus College. Presenters included Dr. Roger Willer, Director for Theological Ethics at the ELCA; Dr. Mark Wilhelm, Executive Director of NECU; and Rev. Dr. Ernest Simmons, Emeritus Professor of Religion at Concordia College. Observers included Augsburg University's Marty Stortz and Tom Morgan, Concordia College's Larry Papenfuss, and Augustana College's Jason Mahn.

2. This section draws on distinctions found in H.R. Niebuhr's classic book on Christian ethics, *The Responsible Self* (HarperSan Francisco, 1963). Niebuhr presents three different approaches to the question of ethics: man [sic] the maker (teleological), man [sic] the citizen (deontological), and man [sic] the answerer, responsibility ethics. While following elements of Niebuhr's typology, we distinguish character/aretaic ethics (creature of habit) from responsibility ethics (first responders), arguing the distinctiveness of these two approaches. In his op-ed article, "The Summoned Self," David Brooks contrasts the "well-planned" life (a teleological approach) from the "summoned" life (a responsibility approach), and we are indebted to his insights and distinctions as well.

3. The principle that "ought implies can," attributed to Immanuel Kant, stipulates that an agent, if morally obliged to perform a certain action, must then be able to do it. Markus Kohl (see works cited) debates whether this is what Kant intended, despite the subsequent history of attribution.

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A List of ELCA Social Teaching and Policy Documents

As of September 2019

More information available at www.elca.org/socialstatements

Social Statements **(address social institutions, provide frameworks)**

The Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective (1991)	
Abortion (1991)	Aborto
The Death Penalty (1991)	Pena de Muerta
Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice (1993)	Medio ambiente
Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture (1993)	Raza, Etnicidad y Cultura
For Peace in God's World (1995)	Por la paz
Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All (1999)	Vida Economica
Caring for Health: Our Shared Endeavor (2003)	Salud y asistencia sanitaria
Our Calling in Education (2007)	Educación
Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust (2009)	La sexualidad humana
Genetics, Faith and Responsibility (2011)	
The Church and Criminal Justice: Hearing the Cries (2013)	La Iglesia y la justicia penal
Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action (2019)	(Translation in process)

Social Messages **(briefer, topically focus, dependent on statements)**

"AIDS/HIV" (1988)	El SIDA
"Israeli/Palestinian Conflict" (1989)	
"Homelessness: A Renewal of Commitment" (1990)	Gente sin Vivienda
"End of Life Decisions" (1992)	Final de la Vida
"Community Violence" (1994)	Violencia Comunidad
"Sexuality: Some Common Convictions" (1996)	La Sexualidad
"Immigration" (1998)	Inmigración
"Suicide Prevention" (1999)	Suicido
"Commercial Sexual Exploitation" (2001)	Explotaćion Sexual
"Terrorism" (2004)	Terrorismo
"People Living with Disabilities" (2010)	Personas Discapacidades
"The Body of Christ and Mental Illness" (2012)	Las enfermedades mentales
"Gender-based Violence" (2015)	(Translation in process)
"Human Rights" (2017)	(Translation in process)

150+ Social Policy Resolutions **(policy specific)**

Examples of two different kinds:

a) Adopted by Church Council (include theological and analytical background)

"The Sponsorship of Legal Gaming by American Indian Tribes" (2007)

"Toward Compassionate, Just, and Wise Immigration Reform" (2008)

b) Adopted by Churchwide Assembly (little background, very brief)

"Rural Economic Crisis" (1999)

"Opposition to the War in Iraq" (2005)

ROGER WILLER

ELCA Social Teaching for the Classroom?

"Institutions in the Network of ELCA Colleges and Universities (NECU) share a common calling that is deeply rooted in the Lutheran intellectual tradition and boldly open to insights from other religious and secular traditions."

NECU, *Rooted and Open*

The Question

These opening lines from Rooted and Open posits a common calling rooted in the Lutheran intellectual tradition for the 27 signatory NECU institutions. The statement explicitly unpacks several Lutheran theological values to ground and support educational priorities such as excellence, freedom of inquiry, vocation, and others. But it is fair to wonder whether other aspects of the Lutheran intellectual tradition besides those unpacked could also benefit institutions of the Network of ELCA Colleges and Universities (NECU). To focus on one specific question, could Lutheran social teaching add value to NECU classrooms as a resource in academic inquiry?

Such a question probably has not occurred to most NECU faculty or, likewise, to Lutherans who teach in non-Lutheran institutions. For some it may even bring immediate apprehensions about academic freedom. Yet, the constructive use of Lutheran social reflection would not impinge on academic freedom *if* that body of thought could demonstrate a legitimate claim as an academic resource itself, one "deeply rooted in the Lutheran intellectual tradition and boldly open to insights from other religious and secular traditions." It is a legitimate question, then, to ask what role Lutheran ethical material—as part of the intellectual tradition claimed in the NECU statement—might play in the classroom.

This essay is initially descriptive; it seeks to share something about the character and content of recent Lutheran social reflection in order to invite faculty and others to consider whether ELCA social teaching could be

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"Could Lutheran social teaching add value to NECU classrooms as a resource in academic inquiry?"

used as academic resources. Integral to the descriptive task, however, I also argue that the body of ELCA social teaching provides an actual social ethic. That is, one finds there a relatively comprehensive, remarkably cogent, and responsibly consistent ethic from the viewpoint of ethical theory.[1] Through description and attention to this claim, this essay probes how the content of ELCA social teaching is a legitimate resource for classrooms. It concludes by pointing to the results of a pilot project testing these ideas in summer of 2019 run by a NECU steering committee.

Academic Inquiry and a Lutheran Social Ethic

The existence of a *Lutheran* tradition is widely recognized as an unintended outcome of a religious, political, economic, and social dispute of sixteenth-century Europe. The reform movement originating first in, but not confined to, Wittenberg, Germany, sought reform in the church catholic. It never intend to form an independent, even if temporary, church of its own or to intellectually fund a distinctive tradition. Regardless, human beings inherently live and think out of traditions (Macintyre) and after 500 years *Lutheran* has become the adjective to designate a sociological and intellectual tradition within the church catholic.

Lutheran moral and social reflection, consistent with claims in the NECU statement, sees itself as both rooted in an intellectual heritage while yet necessarily open to other sources, religious and non-religious. While the tradition's moral content is not wholly unique among Christian stances, it is possible to distinguish a collection of perennial themes, emphases, and characteristics of Lutheran social reflection that constitute an identifiable tradition. Moreover, this tradition, at its best, sees its efforts as a contribution to the interpretation of human life, including moral life, in all its height, depth, and complexity.

The term *social teaching* in one sense may be applied to the entire body of historical reflection. This body draws from the perennial themes on social and ethical life forged in the source writings of the sixteenth century, e.g. the Book of Concord, as they sought to interpret the meaning of the Holy Scriptures for their day. However, it is more appropriate to distinguish that body as *historical Lutheran social reflection* over against contemporary Lutheran social teaching. *Social teaching* seems to suggest a church's body of official documents that has been consciously developed for that purpose. Social teaching in this essay, then, designates a collection of documents developed within the ELCA that officially addresses social questions. (See page 15 for a complete list.)

"While the tradition's moral content is not wholly unique among Christian stances, it is possible to distinguish a collection of perennial themes, emphases, and characteristics of Lutheran social reflection that constitute an identifiable tradition."

This teaching certainly is rooted in, nourished by, and accountable to the history of Lutheran social reflection. However, it is composed of a particular body of statements, messages, and policy resolutions adopted legislatively on behalf of the ELCA. In most United States denominations, official addresses to social questions, when it actually exists, is a collection of policy and moral directives adopted *ad hoc* by governing bodies. However, the ELCA's teaching joins just a couple of other denominations which work out their social teaching as sustained arguments drawing upon extensive theological and social analysis. Certainly the best-known social teaching is from the Roman Catholic tradition, illustrated most recently by Pope Francis' *Laudato Si*. While clearly less extensive than the Roman Catholic social ethic developed over some 150 years, the ELCA has produced a body of moral articulation that also can be claimed as a social ethic in itself.

Two questions immediately seem obvious. The first asks: what justifies a claim to be a social ethic? A *social ethic*, over against a collection of ethical materials, is recognized when it can be shown to be comprehensive, cogent, and consistent as a body across the five dimensions of ethics. Taken together, ELCA social teaching is not propositional in the sense that an overarching set of principles deductively determine its content. Yet, this essay sketches how the ELCA's social teaching satisfies the three criteria with a coherence comparable to that of a tapestry. To speak analogically, this essay argues that as a tapestry this evangelical Lutheran social ethic could legitimately be a source of academic inquiry in classrooms across any number of disciplines when moral questions are, or ought to be, addressed.

> "What commends ELCA social teaching for a classroom in which many students are not religious, let alone Lutheran?"

The second question asks: even if it meets the criteria, what commends ELCA social teaching for a classroom in which many students are not religious, let alone Lutheran? Why should anyone besides a Lutheran pay attention? The content and character of ELCA social teaching as a coherent tapestry is part of the answer. However, I want to lift up its character as a responsibility ethic, an ethical mode that lends itself to use in settings like classrooms. Responsibility ethics conceives of human beings first and foremost as essentially dialogical; that is, the human self comes into being through interaction. Rather than attention to right rules, consequentialist goals, or good virtues, this mode emphasizes a fitting response to moral quandaries. Classrooms are a natural setting to exercise this qualitatively rich moral wrestling, what has been called elsewhere "transformative responsible dialog" (Anderson). The description and the warrant for these claims are sketched in the remainder of this essay.

Relatively Comprehensive

ELCA social teaching represents some 30 years of moral deliberation addressing the great social institutions and issues of contemporary life. While the address has occurred in a series of documents, they provide extensive material on a surprisingly comprehensive series of ethical questions relevant to most academic disciplines. (This comprehensive address is a claim that not every social ethic can make!) The scope of attention to both large-scale social systems and to applied topics is evident in the titles of ELCA social teaching (see page 15 for a complete list). There are 13 social statements (heftier documents that address the overarching social institutions of contemporary life such as sexuality, health care, economics) and 14 social messages (topical considerations on narrower social questions).

The claim to comprehensiveness depends not just on the titles but on the fact that each statement or message speaks to related questions. The statement about genetics, for instance, attends to the fundamental question of unprecedented human power in science and technology as well as to the calling of scientists. This is necessary in order to provide rationale for how the statement speaks to the use of genetic science and technology. The statement on sexuality speaks to the nature of marriage and family, same-sex relations, internet sex, pornography, etc. The statement on peace ranges on topics from the military-industrial complex to international development to just war and pacifism. While a couple broad social systems have not yet been treated,[2] the body of documents taken together suggests the overall warp and woof of the ethic in much the way that a tapestry suggests the contour of yet to be woven sections.

The purpose for ELCA teaching documents also matches the comprehensive goals of any genuine social ethic (ELCA, "Policies" 10). Several of these commend themselves directly to the world of higher education. ELCA social teaching:

- presents an overall moral vision of the good through repeated moral articulation on specific questions of contemporary life;
- funds moral formation as part of the church's teaching function exercised within congregations, colleges, seminaries, and other venues;
- provides frameworks for dialog, discernment, judgment, and action;
- offers vocational reflection on many everyday callings; and

- provides the basis for advocacy on social, economic, and political questions, both for the corporate witness and for the exercise of citizenship.

Responsibly Consistent

The title of this section, "responsibly consistent," is a wordplay to underscore the conceptual and operational consistency of this social ethic in the mode of responsibility ethics. This mode of doing ethics stands over against the other fundamental ethical modes: duty-oriented (*deontological*), goal-oriented (*teleological*), or virtue-oriented (*areteological*) ethics.[3] The mode of rule-oriented ethics (associated with Kant, for instance) views human beings primarily as "citizens" under obligation with an emphasis upon determining what is right as derived deductively from absolute norms. The mode of goal-oriented, consequentialist ethics (associated with Mills and Bentham, for instance) perceives human beings primarily as "makers" with a focus on their actions that bring about certain ends. The mode of virtue ethics (associated with Aristotle or Thomas Aquinas, for instance) also perceives human beings primarily as "makers," but with a primary focus on concern for character-formation through the excellences of the virtues.

> "The human being most fundamentally must determine what is fitting in the face of a plurality of demands, forces, and goods."

In contrast, the mode of responsibility ethics (technically called *cathekontic* ethics) considers human beings fundamentally as dialogical creatures. This mode of ethics only appeared in the last hundred years and includes both religious thinkers (H. Richard Niebuhr and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, for instance) and philosophers (Emmanuel Levinas, for instance). It takes its descriptive title from the idea and metaphor of humans as interactive answerers. The Latin root of responsibility, *respondere*, means one who answers or gives account to another. In other words, there is a fundamentally different conception of what is at the heart of being moral. While rules and duties, consequences and virtues, are significant to the moral life, it argues that the human being most fundamentally must determine what is fitting in the face of a plurality of demands, forces, and goods. The decisive metaphor in this mode is about what or who makes a rightful claim on human lives. The first moral question asks: what is going on? There are obvious distinctions among those who write in this mode. However, it is generally agreed that this approach provides a mode that "is not reducible to an ethics of virtue or duty" (Schweiker, "Disputes" 18).

The first indication that responsibility operates as the dominant mode in the body of ELCA teaching appears in the fifth paragraph of the foundational ELCA social statement. The 1991 statement *Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective* reads: "The witness of this church in society flows from its identity as a community that lives from and for the Gospel...It is in grateful response to God's grace in Jesus Christ that this church carries out its responsibility for the well-being of society and the environment" (ELCA, Church 1). The primary theme here is responsiveness, albeit directed at differing "whoms." The Christian and the Christian church *respond* to God's grace in Jesus Christ but simultaneously carry out responsibility *to* the created world. The moral origin is response to God but significantly there also is an operational responsibility that is oriented to neighbors. The content of moral action is discerned by what serves the flourishing of the neighbor who needs care and justice.

ELCA social statements demonstrate this consistency repeatedly. The 2009 statement, *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust*, observes: "Our vocation of service leads us to live out our responsibilities primarily in light of and in response to the neighbor's needs, often in complex and sometimes tragic situations" (ELCA, Human 4). The text then turns to fundamental themes and to normative sources such as the Ten Commandments in responding to the neighbor's needs. One finds parallel moves in virtually every social statement.

Certainly, no group of thinkers or leaders sat down in 1987 (the "birth year" of the ELCA) and decided that the ELCA will be doing responsibility ethics. That point is, however, crucial to the claim! Responsibility ethics is widely regarded as emerging in the twentieth century because of the drastically altered global context of unprecedented human powers, pluralism, social complexities, and the pervasive questioning of authority. These factors do not dictate a responsibility mode, but they are conditions that favor its emergence. This mode, then, was not pre-established; yet concepts and commitments of responsibility found natural expression, a synergy if you will, with both historic Lutheran themes and contemporary practices.

"Responsibility ethics is widely regarded as emerging in the twentieth century because of the drastically altered global context of unprecedented human powers, pluralism, social complexities, and the pervasive questioning of authority."

The distinctiveness of this responsibility ethic becomes clearer through comparison with Roman Catholic social teaching. Catholic social teaching has a historical pedigree and richness, but it is the work of an educated and illustrious magisterium, a relatively small group of individuals. Further, it carries a hierarchical authority as absolutely binding on the conscience of members when delivered *ex Cathedra*. ELCA pronouncements, by contrast, are developed by a taskforce of clergy and lay specialists through a broad participatory process including three major feedback loops. Ultimately, ELCA teaching documents must be adopted by a democratically elected body (called the Churchwide Assembly) composed of two-thirds of lay members and one-third of rostered leaders.

This democratic component matches the emphasis in responsibility ethics upon dialog and interaction within a community of moral deliberation. It does not seem like a stretch then to suggest that such an approach lines up with what many faculty hope to accomplish in the classroom when the material begins to border on moral questions. Whether that be economics, social science, artistic meaning, the inherent moral character of technology, the use of scientific knowledge, or others, the subject matter at some point crosses into the moral. When that is the case, the object for inquiry depends a great deal upon the understanding of what it means to make moral judgments. Classroom dialogue could move toward determining the right rules or duties, best consequences, or virtues. Yet, it seems a smoother fit to invite dialog toward what is fitting. The classroom so conceived would be an exercise in responsibility ethics.

Remarkably Cogent

Besides being comprehensive and consistent, a genuine social ethic must address all the dimensions of ethics *and* provide an identifiable and cogent core. In common usage the term "ethics" is often confined erroneously to matters of moral norms and practical reasoning. However, moral theory demonstrates that ethical reflection entails five dimensions and a thoroughgoing ethic must address each (Schweiker, *Responsibility* 35). In greatly simplified terms, these dimensions are:

- *The fundamental dimension*, which asks: what is the basic character of reality and, in specific, what is the basic character and meaning of being a human agent or a society? When asked in religious terms, these same questions are addressed in light of claims about the divine.
- *The hermeneutical or interpretive dimension*, which asks: what and how do we interpret the context of any moral situation? In short, how does the ethic interpret what is going on in a given context?
- *The normative dimension*, which asks: what is good, right, or fitting? That is, it asks about the correct norms for human being and doing.
- *The practical dimension*, which asks: how does this get implemented? What is *good applied reasoning*?
- *The meta-ethical dimension*, which asks: how is it we know something is true and, specifically, how does one justify moral claims?

I have demonstrated elsewhere how ELCA social teaching operates in all five dimensions (Willer, "Emerging."). For two reasons it is relevant to illustrate the normative dimension in the current essay: (1) it will suggest several moral questions that could be addressed in the classroom; and (2) it segues into the essential characteristics of the social ethic—its axiology and principle of choice.

Normatively speaking, ELCA social teaching documents mediate between grand ethical affirmations and detailed application in particular situations (ELCA, "Policies" 11). That is, while they may name highly abstract principles and occasionally commend specific decisions, they devote major attention to "middle principles" as frameworks for mediating between the abstract and decisions about particular situations. Several of these principles are identifiable across the body of teaching statements and would serve well as starting points in the classroom for moral dialogue. ELCA statements represent a communitarian ethic focused on question of the common good, for instance. However, they do not argue in terms of seeking the greatest good for the greatest number, and consistently hold that special priority be given to the voices and needs of those who are most vulnerable. (The most vulnerable often are left out of calculations solely dependent on the greatest good for the greatest number.)

Likewise, the meaning of justice is specified as identifying four principles—participation, solidarity, sufficiency, and sustainability. These four appear first in the statement on ecology (1993) but also are addressed in the statement on economics (1999) and again on genetics (2011); they also shape several social messages. This continuity is not sketched out systematically from one document to the other, but the overlapping and complementary attention to the meaning of justice creates a remarkably cogent demarcation. Likewise, across the documents there is attention to wise practical reasoning, a congruence that develops cumulatively into a useful conceptual apparatus.

"There is an identifiable moral imperative across ELCA teaching documents."

This coherence in the demarcation of justice and practical wisdom segues into the most substantive claim about the ethic's cogency: there is an identifiable moral imperative across ELCA teaching documents. The clearest articulation of such an operational imperative is found in the statement on genetics: "Accordingly, responsible people are called to practice the imperative to respect and promote the community of life with justice and wisdom" (ELCA, Genetics 15). In this formulation, the statement provides the *sine qua non* of an ethic. That is, it provides both the core value and the directive for choice. This imperative provides the conceptual means to evaluate policy and direct action on questions regarding the use of genetic knowledge. As the statement says: "With this imperative, the ELCA articulates an ethic of universal human obligation to serve the flourishing of the created order" (16).

This imperative can be identified as operative across the body of ELCA social teaching. In one sense, of course, the overarching moral imperative of most Christian ethics is the golden rule—to do unto others as you would have them do unto you (Matt. 7:12, Luke 6:31). In one sense, then, that could be said to underlie every social statement, but such a broad imperative does not provide an identifiable core value or directive for choices. While still overarching there is sufficient specificity in a moral imperative regarding the health care system that states: "respect and promote the flourishing of the common good of health with justice and wisdom in all social relations and actions." While the particular content of any given social statement is ecology, education, criminal justice, or others, each operates with this mixed moral imperative, theoretically speaking. That is, each spell out the meaning of right choice (respect *and* promote) and the core value (flourishing of the common good).

Significantly, such a moral imperative bears deep resemblance to that which is found in early Lutheran social reflection. Those who know Martin Luther's Small Catechism will recognize, for instance, the resemblance between such an imperative and his pithy instruction regarding the Fifth Commandment. He writes: "We are to fear and love God, so that we neither endanger nor harm the lives of our neighbors, but instead help and support them in all of life's needs" (352). Note how Luther's reasoning founds Christian moral concern in response to God. It also gives first priority to the "do not" of the commandments. That is, he gives priority first to *respect*, to the "do no harm" principle for the neighbor's good. But then Luther turns, in every commandment, to the "do" meaning of the commandment, i.e., to *promoting* the good of neighbor. Framed by such Lutheran Christian commitments, then, one can say that ELCA social teaching coheres around the central imperative: In response to God's love, respect and promote the flourishing of the common good with justice and wisdom in all social relations and actions.

> "ELCA social teaching coheres around the central imperative: In response to God's love, respect and promote the flourishing of the common good with justice and wisdom in all social relations and actions."

But can such an imperative be useful in a classroom for individuals whose conception of God is not Christian or who doubt or deny the existence of God? It is here that the mode used by the ELCA social teaching reaches beyond explicit Christian reflection. It is here that using the mode of responsibility ethics contributes to the analysis and understanding of moral existence per se, regardless of religious commitments. One may not call upon God, but the point of responsibility ethics is that the human being wrestling with moral quandaries *is* set upon by demands and forces and must give account. The French philosopher Emmanuel Levinas, in fact, develops a responsibility ethic not based in a religious tradition but argues that it is in response to the face of the other that an imperative of responsibility appears (Levinas, *Totality* and *Otherwise*). Thus, while certainly located in an ELCA teaching document, the moral approach and content can assist anyone who believes that moral questions require a fitting response, whether that response is understood as to God's action, to a spiritual force, or to a naturalistic field. The ELCA social ethic enables and prompts moral grappling with or without the stamp of religious tradition.

Conclusion

Assessing the criteria of comprehensiveness, consistency, and cogency, this article has argued that the body of ELCA social teaching provides an actual social ethic, one usable as a resource for classrooms. But, is there any evidence that this teaching resource actually can work? Yes. The Network of ELCA Colleges and Universities (NECU) brought together a pilot project in July of 2019 for a small group of business, finance, and economic faculty from four ELCA-related institutions. The two-day project at Augsburg University included discussion such as that above regarding ELCA social teaching, but the heart of the pilot was quite practical. The focus, an obvious choice, was on *Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All* (1999) as the test for the classroom.

Participants were invited to imagine using the statement in class in three ways: (1) to prompt discussion by using segments, (2) to develop a case study to hold up to the statement as mirror, and (3) to think about how their syllabuses might integrate the statement as a resource. The discussion was candid and rich, noting the urgent need for tools in the classroom to enable civil and engaged dialog at this time of growing cultural polarization. There are no magic solutions, but participants evaluated the statement's content and approach as significantly worthwhile, even while critiquing its age and expressing the wish it had covered some topics more thoroughly. Most significantly for this article, there was a general affirmation about its value in the classroom, summarized by one participant as, "[this] document gives me language and tools to articulate, dig deeper, ask better questions, and enable students to think a little better for and about themselves" (Willer, "NECU").

Endnotes

1. Elements of this essay were first published as "Emerging Tapestry" (see works cited), and are used here with permission.

2. For example, ELCA social teaching to date does not address the digital revolution or a thorough theological address to government. The latter is now underway, due in 2025.

3. There are disagreements whether consequentialist and virtue ethics should be folded together under teleology since both are oriented to ends. It seems easier for non-theorists to distinguish the fundamental categories as threefold. See Robin Lovin in works cited below, as well as the essay by Martha Stortz and Tom Morgan in the present issue if *Intersections*.

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FAITH NGUNJIRI

The Challenge of Inclusion in the Ethics Classroom

Concordia College observed MLK Day 2020 on the theme of "Not Racist: A White Moderate Myth." My ethics students were required to attend the events and reflect on three questions: What was the primary message? How did that message resonate with you? And: What questions did the speeches and workshops raise for you? Inevitably, as a predominantly white institution (PWI) working on equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) ideals, Concordia met the topic with some resistance. I am the only Black woman tenured faculty member, so the resistance came as no surprise. How are we ever going to get to sufficient, sustainable livelihoods for all (as the ELCA social statement has it), if we cannot discuss one of the reasons for economic inequality—racism and racist structural arrangements in the United States? As an intersectional scholar, I introduce my students to issues of race, gender, sexual identity, religion, and other sources of diversity and marginalization in organizations. MLK Day offered the perfect entry point for talking about race in class this semester.

As I read through my students' reflections, it was clear that, on the one hand, they were profoundly moved and informed by the messages from the speakers. One of the speaker's talk focused on the question of "who has a right to belong here"—an issue we obviously struggle with as a PWI. We are not yet an inclusive campus; in fact, most minority students would describe the climate as hostile. As such, our retention rates for minority students are insufferable. My ethics students' comments such as "everyone belongs here and everyone should be accepted here" suggests that some students are open to expanding their worldview. As an example, through student activism, a meal bank fund was begun last semester to help food insecure students.

On the other hand, statements such as "white people do not have to interact with colored people," or "the power behind [white privilege] is considerably smaller and less impacting to colored people"—and, indeed the fact that they use the term "colored people" to refer to minorities—suggests that we have a lot of work to do to educate our students to become more culturally competent. We have far to go to become a welcoming institution *for all*.

During our next class period, I led the class through a discussion on race and racism, beginning with a five-minute *New York Times* documentary, "Conversations with White People about Race." My goal was to help the students collectively process what their experiences in a safe space, and to help to destigmatize these taboo topics. We can only truly learn how to be ethical leaders in the issues of race and diversity by openly engaging with these topics. Students resonated with the views expressed about the discomfort that white people have towards talking about race. They also talked about how they first came to realize that they were of a certain race. My goal in bringing such difficult conversations to the ethics classroom is to equip my students with the ethical tools to engage in dialogue. We must do better, as an institution committed to helping our students "BREW": Becoming Responsibly Engaged in the World.

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EMILY BETH HILL

Business as Usual? Marketing, God, and the Limits of Christian Callings

Among the reforms Martin Luther desired for the church, he sought to break down the walls between the holy vocations and everyone else. He argued that all people could serve God and love their neighbors, no matter their job, and that those who worked in the church as priests or monks, for example, were not more holy or perfect than others.

In one example, writing on whether Christians can bear the sword on behalf of "temporal authority" (secular government), he argues first that temporal authority exists not for Christians who ought naturally to follow the will of God, but "for the sake of others, that they may be protected and that the wicked may not become worse" (Luther, "Temporal Authority" 94). Thus, Christians can freely participate in this secular government and bear the sword—not for their own advantage, but out of love for their neighbor and to restrain evil and protect the vulnerable. "Therefore," he writes, "if you see that there is a lack of hangmen, constables, judges, lords, or princes, and you find that you are qualified, you should offer your services and seek the position" (95).

Many might respond with a cry of disbelief: "*Hangmen*? Is it really appropriate for Christians to be in the business of killing people?"

The hangmen example is a famous and hotly debated one—perhaps by Luther's design. He is most concerned to probe the limits of what can count as a legitimate Christian calling. He thus sets up various criteria that need to be in place for the inclusion of hangmen. First and foremost, the temporal authority (political leader) must recognizes his or her work to be the rightful promotion of the common good or restraint of evil in service of the neighbor. Luther recognizes that many princes claiming to be acting "Christianly" were simply amassing their own power ("Temporal Authority" 84). In our decidedly post-Christian era, such an argument is further complicated. And given all the injustices present within our contemporary judicial system, the question is pressed further: Can Christians, constrained by love of neighbor, be executioners?

Not all questions of Christian vocation are quite so controversial. The contemporary faith and work movement exists today in the wake of Luther's claim that no vocation is more holy than another. Yet it too must wrestle with what exactly a "Christian business," for example, means and how to live it out. Some see the workplace as a place to evangelize, but emerging organizations are trying to more closely align "Christian" work with work for justice and the flourishing of all (Worthen).

As the movement develops a more critical edge and is willing to question business as usual, I would suggest we need to return to the question of whether there are certain professions Christians shouldn't do. While I don't

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wish to reconstruct a wall between secular and sacred vocations, my contention is that the command to love our neighbor requires us to look deeply at how our work affects our neighbors.

Depending on our religious traditions and social locations, the answer to the question of whether certain professions may be off limits may appear self-evident; some jobs may seem obviously wrong to one person, while completely fine to another. But we are formed by many things that teach us those perspectives. For example, James K.A. Smith has identified secular liturgies in spaces such as the shopping mall, sports arenas—and yes, universities—that can idolatrously shape our ideas of "the good life" (121). As our participation in these and other practices in culture shape our social imaginations, they provide ethical frameworks by which we make decisions. This formation is often implicit and occurs without our knowledge, hence our decisions according to this "common sense" appear self-evident and not necessarily in conflict with our faith.

The Business of the Neighbor

I write as a theologian and ethicist who sees the question of vocation as an important ethical question. But I also write as someone who spent ten years working in corporate marketing consulting before going back to university and studying theology. In the process I realized just how much I had been shaped by capitalism, the American Dream, and my own business education.

I also write with several caveats. My goal in asking the question is not to come up with a concrete list of professions Christians must avoid. The answers are rarely so black and white, and if we did come up with such a list we would inevitably domesticate it in order to be able to live according to it. In making such a list we would simply have to avoid that list of professions in order to justify ourselves and then judge ourselves more righteous than those who were in those jobs. I also want to acknowledge that our options are always limited and imperfect; there is no "innocent" job untainted by structural injustices. We cannot entirely extract ourselves from consumer capitalism, just as we cannot extract ourselves from the fallen world in which we live.

Luther famously advocated that Christians cannot be justified by any works—by obeying any set of laws—but that salvation was given as a gift through faith in Christ's work on our behalf. The law, he argued, causes humans to constantly look inward to ask whether they are good enough. In doing so, they can never really love their neighbor because they are preoccupied with their own works and salvation. However, in Christ, one can be assured and secure in their salvation and are thus able to look outward to Christ and their neighbor.

Dead to sin and alive in Christ, one is able to focus on loving the concrete neighbor that God places before one. This is our broadest vocation as a Christian. In that sense, the first theological question we may ask about professions is *how does this help or hinder my love for my neighbor?* Because our social imagination is so powerfully shaped by the systems and institutions in which we live, we must critically examine what is happening in the places where we work, what might be getting in the way of loving our neighbor, or problematically redefining what loving our neighbor means. I hope that the questions examined here open us up to how Christ transforms the way we understand what it means to love our neighbor in our work contexts.

"The first theological question we may ask about professions is *how does this help or hinder my love for my neighbor?*"

With this goal in mind, I here scrutinize one particular profession: marketing. Marketing serves as a useful example for several reasons. First, it is mundane and ubiquitous. Virtually every type of organization from churches to non-profits and corporations have marketing positions. Second, it is either praised as empowering consumers and meeting their needs, or demonized as manipulating desires. So which is it? Or can we evaluate its compatibility with Christian neighbor love without either praising or demonizing?

How we narrate the practices of marketing dictates the ethical questions raised and frames the set of reasonable answers about whether Christians should participate. Marketing is useful, then, as a case study to theologically narrate what is going on and to do so in a way that gets underneath textbook definitions and polarizing options, while allowing for critical questions and discernment.

Who is Marketing For?

Marketing positions itself as a neutral set of tools, as a process that facilitates the mutually beneficial exchange of products and services of value. This formal positioning takes on a positive tone via one of marketing's prominent framing ideas: *the marketing concept*. According to the marketing concept, the firm exists for customers to know their needs and satisfy their needs.

> "According to the marketing concept, the firm exists for customers to know their needs and satisfy their needs."

This positive positioning is emphasized as texts rhetorically portray the marketing concept as a progression from other possible business orientations—namely a focus on production or selling. In the production concept, a firm focuses on selling mass-produced goods at a low cost, while under the selling concept, firms undertake aggressive selling campaign so that consumers will buy enough of their products, that perhaps they otherwise would not. With these other concepts as a foil, the portrayal of an enlightened turn from a selling orientation to the customer orientation makes the marketing concept appear as a win-win strategy, one that focuses on the interests of the consumer to meet business objectives and therefore facilitating valuable and mutual economic exchange. Firms oriented in this way create our treasured social goods: wealth and economic growth, ever improving lifestyles, and the ability to freely express ourselves personally by what we consume.

"The consumer is now in total control," Kevin Roberts, former CEO of advertising agency Saatchi & Saatchi, proudly exclaims. "She's going to decide when she buys, what she buys, where she buys, how she buys…All the fear's gone and all the control is passed over to the consumer" (qtd. in Goodman and Dretzin).

However, the pure customer orientation of marketing can be questioned by digging further into the discipline's stated objectives. Philip Kotler, an influential popularizer of the marketing concept writes that "Marketing management is essentially *demand management*" (*Marketing Management* 15). This aspect of marketing has been present from its earliest roots in economic theory. No matter how a firm frames its purpose one must keep in view the desire to manage customers in order to manage product demand. Further, one can see the fundamental force and purpose of the customer orientation of a business in light of a further conversation in Kotler's marketing textbook. He argues that the main purpose of orienting a firm to satisfy the needs of the target customer is because it is cheaper to retain an existing customer than to attract a new customer (22).

Therefore, we can see that the primary goal of the marketing concept is to increase customer loyalty (customer retention) for the sake of company profit. My point so far is simply that marketing cannot be both empowering to the consumer, striving to "sensitively [serve] and [satisfy] human needs" as Kotler advocates (Kotler and Levy 13), *and* be a system of tools that desires to manage demand and create customer loyalty for the sake of customer profit. We must acknowledge that it is not a neutral set of techniques.

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The marketing concept masks the vast network of activities and systems that exist in order to know consumers, and then to generate a situation in which they are satisfied by a given product or service. Management guru Peter Drucker writes: "The aim of marketing is to know and understand the customer so well that the product or service fits him and sells itself. Ideally, marketing should result in a customer who is ready to buy. All that should be needed then is to make the product or service available" (64-65).

This description reveals the sweeping aspirations of marketing to know customers in order to influence them—to make it appear that they are satisfying their needs and desires without needing to be convinced. A detailed analysis of the practices and systems in place from marketing research to advertising to big data reveal this desire and the increasing capacity to carry this out in personalized ways. A study of each practice in its context reveals its own set of theological and ethical questions. Here I will focus on branding as a significant tactic used to generate consumer loyalty for the sake of profit and then reflect theologically on that practice.

Branding: A Quest for Loyalty

Modern branding originated in the early twentieth century as the output of industrialized goods increased and markings became prevalent to help consumers distinguish between mass-produced items. The world of branding has changed significantly since then to the point where Naomi Klein now argues that industrial economies are no longer about making and selling things, but buying products and then branding them (5).

This shift has been driven by the continuing need to create customer loyalty. Multiple things can create customer retention; one, of course, is that the product actually satisfies the needs of consumers. A company cannot generate loyalty if it offers something that no one is interested it, or promises something it does not deliver—however fleeting satisfaction may be. However, as the number of products available has proliferated, as quality and pricing have converged, and as most physical and functional needs have been met, more is needed to generate loyalty. This is the role of the modern brand.

Brand loyalty develops as firms successfully meet functional needs with the product itself, but it must progress from there. Strong brands must be able to associate their brand with more "expressive" and "central" values, thus endeavoring to meet more emotional and spiritual needs. In this way consumers are encouraged to link questions such as, "What kind of person do I want to be?," with the brand, so that the brand is seen to "say" something about the consumer and consumers and brands can "share" values. As brands create this linkage, customers will be increasingly loyal to them (Andrew 191).

Douglas Aitkin, a branding expert, describes the experience of hearing consumers in a focus group "expressing cult-like devotion" to gym shoes. He decided to study cults to apply that knowledge to brands. Aitkin concluded that people join brands for the same reason people join cults: "to belong and to make meaning." Thus, in addition to managing product quality, advertising and promotions, packaging design, and pricing decisions, brand managers now have to "create and maintain a whole meaning system for people, through which they get identity and understanding of the world. Their job now is to be a community leader" (qtd. in Goodman and Dretzin). Brands are providing communities for people to self-actualize and consumers are using brands to help navigate life experiences, to construct their identities, and to express their values.

"All these elements are designed to generate love and loyalty among the target audience by glorifying the brand and creating visceral associations."

In another take, Kevin Roberts argues that brands should aim to generate love for their brand. He insists that stand-out brands must "tap into dreams," utilize "myths and icons", and generate "passion" in order to create "loyalty beyond reason" (77, 66). Roberts's comments point to the range of activities that go on to animate brands in order to generate love and loyalty. Putting a Nike swoosh on a T-shirt means something now, but that meaning was created and is continually sustained. Brand personalities are created by a variety of elements from their name, logo, shapes, and colors, to slogans, spokespeople, stories, event sponsorships and product placements in the media. All these elements are designed to generate love and loyalty among the target audience by glorifying the brand and creating visceral associations.

So far I haven't mentioned theology, but other words for the loyalty brands seek might be *faithfulness* or *worship.*

Luther on What a God is

The theological contours of branding can be illuminated by looking at Luther's definition of God from *The Large Catechism*:

> What does it mean to have a god? or, what is God? Answer: A "god" is the term for that to which we are to look for all good and in which we are to find refuge in all need. Therefore, to have a god is nothing else than to trust and believe that one with your whole heart. As I have often said, it is the trust and faith of the heart alone that make both God and an idol. If your faith and trust are right, then your God is the true one. Conversely, where your trust is false and wrong, there you do not have the true God. For these two belong together, faith and God. Anything on which your heart relies and depends, I say, that is really your God. (386)

For Luther, our trust and faith define both God and idols—"anything on which your heart relies and depends." This does not mean that God is only a projection of ourselves, our fears and desires, but that human beings are wholly determined by their relationship with God. God is not just someone we acknowledge with our lips or our minds. Rather, our lives are oriented by hope and trust in God's goodness, promises, and provision.

All our faith and trust is in the true God or it's not. There is no in between—that's idolatry, according to Luther. God is the one eternal good, the giver of all good things and the one who provides by grace and gift alone. And so, "[God] wishes to turn us away from everything else apart from him, and to draw us to himself, because he is the one, eternal good" (Luther, *Large Catechism* 388). Luther acknowledges that many of the good things we receive come through other humans, yet "anything received according to his command and ordinance in fact comes from God...Creatures are only the hands, channels, and means through which God bestows all blessings" (389). So as brands attempt establish themselves as a source of life, identity, and meaning for the sake of their own profit, they are redirecting the hopes and trust that are meant to placed in God.

And brands do not just help increase firm profits by selling their products and services; they are also financial assets for the firm that appear on company balance sheets. This quantity represents the value of a brand that could potentially be transferred to another company in the event of a sale, separate from expected sales revenue (Batchelor 102). The brand is something over and above the product or service itself; it is created and sustained by the work of professionals who attempt to imbue the brand with spiritual values and meaning that ultimately only exist to the extent that customers believe they exist and are willing to value them—who look to them to help as a source of identity and meaning in the world.

Here we might ask about the actual difference, for example, between a functional car and a BMW. In some ways a BMW may actually be of higher quality—more comfortable or more efficient than a lower-priced car. But we would be hard pressed to equate the price difference and brand power entirely to quality or other real differences in the cars.

> "Brands have captured the love and worship of human beings and have turned them into capital."

In a very real way, then, brands have captured the love and worship of human beings and have turned them into capital. Neuroscience also reveals the successful effects of branding. When individuals are exposed to the logos and imagery of powerful brands their neural activity is identical to the patterns of brain activity produced when they view religious symbols (Lindström 124-25).

Questions Christians Should Consider

For Luther, an economic system, the market, or even a brand can be the means by which God provides genuinely good things to human beings. But that system or brand becomes idolatrous when it points human beings away from God as the provider and endeavors to secure worship and trust in itself instead.

Though what I have just described is a dominant theoretical approach to branding and true for most large brands, not all branding operates as I described. My friend does branding for small, local businesses and focuses on helping them clearly communicate their main message. But as a Christian, he understands the potential impacts of branding in our contemporary environment. He is willing to ask the tough questions about his own business practices in light of his faith, and pass on projects that don't fit his ethical considerations.

Christians working in marketing or branding, or those considering going into the profession, should consider the following:

- What does the brand or advertisement promise? Is it directly related to the product or service or is it something above and beyond what we can realistically promise?
- What is the genuinely good thing we are providing to customers? And how are we defining what is genuinely good? Does it increase or diminish service to the neighbor?
- Are our marketing efforts directing the hopes or trust of human beings away from God and toward our company or brand? Though Luther noted that its possible to recognize God's provision coming from the hands of human beings, it is clearly a problem if our marketing efforts intentionally obscure such provision and idolatrously redirect human identity and faith away from God.

As we consider broadly the question of whether there are some professions Christians shouldn't do, my intention is to press us to ask questions of our work that go beyond how we can be "good Christians" at work and to ask what is going on in our work itself, and how it affects others. Luther's definition of God, and the corollary, of an idol, is a useful lens to examine many practices and aspects of life because it reveals that faith is always enacted. All actions spring from some hope and are expressions of praise and expectation of what one can count on from some power. And so, we must question whether and how our own work creates idols or plays on fears instead of trust in God.

But Christians must also examine their own hope and faith, and be continually reminded of who they are in Christ. That God through Christ is *for them* reveals a God who provides everything human communities need to flourish. Only as human lives are confident and radically oriented by trust in God's promise will they be freed to follow God, including in their paid vocations. The business of Christianity—centrally focused on worship of God and love for the neighbor—will always run counter to idolatrous visions of "the good life."

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KRISTEN GLASS PEREZ

Responding to Student Hunger at NECU Institutions

In Fall of 2015, a student entered my office suite and offhandedly declared, "I am always so hungry at this school." With those words, something fundamentally changed in my life and work in ELCA higher education. As I began to build a relationship with that student, I embarked on a new and more nuanced understanding about students and economic hardship at our NECU institutions. I also entered into a new lived experience about my role as a college chaplain at Augustana College and then Muhlenberg College, as well as about the calling of our collective colleges to meet the needs of the students whom we serve.

The student did not intend to enter the chaplain's office to talk about food insecurity. She came into the integrated and holistic student advising, career, and vocation center to talk about the things we hope our students talk about—academic and co-curricular interests and how those might intersect and be lived out on campus and in the community. I quickly realized that we cannot have conversations about meaning and purpose, academic aptitude, and career ambition until students' basic needs are met.

In going deeper with the work, I found that the story of that initial student was replicated over and over in other students. It wasn't that students didn't have food all the time—it was that there weren't always transparent mechanisms in place to ensure student success and access to a wide array of things including food, personal hygiene items, clothing, and school supplies which includes textbooks and required online portals. Often, students and families were stretched to the very limit to provide the minimum amount of money needed to enroll and register for classes. When a disruptive event happened (for example, an unexpected family emergency or broken laptop or field trip fee), students were often unable to make up the cost, even if it was minimal.

Responding to Food Insecurity

Food insecurity is defined by "not having reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food." According to the United States Government Accountability Office (GAO), and a study by Durbin, "The Challenge of Food Insecurity for College Students":

- 30 percent of college students are food insecure;
- 22 percent of college students have the lowest level of food insecurity; and
- 13 percent of students at community colleges are homeless.

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A common question I have heard over and over in five years of working on these particular issues is: "Doesn't everyone have a meal plan?" The simple answer is "no," and the more complicated answer is that not all meal plans are created equally. So even if a majority of students *do* have a meal plan, there are varying levels of meal plans and meal plan availability. For example, few campuses maintain a dining service that is open during breaks or the summer. This has a great impact on students who may not be able to leave campus or have another primary residence outside of campus. At each of the two NECU institutions where I have served as a college chaplain, I have worked with cohorts of students who, outside of college-owned housing, identify as homeless. This does not include international students, many of whom remain on campus for the entirety of their time as a student. Additionally, across all college campuses, there are increasing numbers of transfer, commuter, and off-campus students who are less likely to have meal plans (Swipe Out Hunger).

> "These types of small loans can make a huge difference in the lives of college students."

At both Augustana and Muhlenberg, we began to address these complicated needs by instituting new programs, including on-campus pantries, food recovery efforts, and expanded emergency loans and grants. At Muhlenberg College, we also convened a comprehensive working group to look more strategically at student economic hardship on campus. As a result, we launched a set of new initiatives (Muhlenberg) including emergency grants in two categories: grants for basic needs (food, clothing, shelter), and experiential learning grants. The former fund basic needs, food, housing, or other unexpected hardship outside of cost of attendance. The latter enable students to engage in the fullness of curricular and co-curricular life at the college. Examples include a fee associated with a student club or organization or a field trip for a class. Students are eligible to apply two times or up to $500 per year through a centralized application process. They receive a response within 24 hours of the request.

Often, these types of small loans can make a huge difference in the lives of college students. In 2018, with support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) launched a new website "to support institutions that desire to or currently offer emergency financial resources to students in need." The website builds upon the 2016 report from NASPA (Kruger); according to their research:

- Emergency loans or grants can have a huge impact on student success.
- 41 percent of emergency loans or grants come from foundations and individual donors.
- 78 percent of private institutions say lack of financial resources is the greatest barrier to serving a greater number of students who need emergency loans or grants.
- 72 percent of the loan or grant need is less than $1,000 per student. (Kruger)

Testimonies by Students and Educators

At Muhlenberg, we also took a deeper dive into our own student data around these issues. In the 2019-2020 academic year, we participated in the HOPE Survey, the largest national survey addressing basic needs insecurity for college students.[1] In its third round of administration, the focus has been on enrolling more private, liberal arts colleges to provide more specified data to these campuses. In Spring of 2018, we also conducted a "Hidden Costs Survey" with students, faculty, and staff. Students were asked, "To what extent have these additional costs impacted your ability to engage in College life?"

One student responded, "I have two jobs to help with expenses. I want to pull my weight. But when the college provided that $50, it went a long way both in terms of food and helping me be able to concentrate to do well in class." Another wrote, "There were so many unexpected costs like food at break periods, having plates, utensils, dish soap, etc. Also, if you didn't have a fan right away it was sweltering. I could not afford one."

Faculty and staff were asked, "What have you or your department done to assist student with financial hardship?" One faculty member responded, "I've purchased/donated books and other school supplies for students, and I've used my account to print course materials for students that needed to be able to write on physical copies, but who couldn't afford to print. I've also brought in food for students who were hungry, and/or fed them at my home." Over and over again, the responses showed us the way to begin to address some of the need. Not all the need, but some of it.

In his book, *The Privileged Poor: How America's Elite Colleges are Failing Disadvantaged Students*, Anthony Jack, of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, refers to some students as "doubly disadvantaged." These are students who are strong academically, but come from low income backgrounds. They are less exposed to the norms and unspoken expectations of campus life, particularly at elite institutions. Jack describes his own experience at Amherst College. He wondered if he was the only student like himself. This experience, along with figuring out the process of navigating campus culture, became the focus of Jack's research and scholarship as a sociologist.

> "I am grateful for all of the students who are on our campuses and willing to share their experience and, in doing so, bring our institutions to the front lines of this work."

Muhlenberg College hosted Anthony Jack in Fall of 2019 for a series of on-campus engagements including a meal with students, a faculty and staff enrichment session, a public lecture, and a meeting with senior leadership including the president. Of all of these different opportunities for campus engagement, I was most struck by the student comments during his public lecture. It was the first time that I have been at an event where there were lines of students at the microphones waiting to respond and to ask questions. In many cases, students thanked him for sharing his own story, remarking that it was the first time they heard their own story reflected publicly.

My own reflection on the event was to recall my interaction five years ago with that first student who was bold enough to share her story in a public space, to declare that she was hungry. In many ways, the telling of these stories about food and economic insecurities parallels the #metoo movement. I am grateful for all of the students who are on our campuses and willing to share their experience and, in doing so, bring our institutions to the front lines of this work.

Lessons Being Learned

My experience as a chaplain working directly with these efforts at two colleges in different parts of the country has taught me many lessons. Here are five:

1. *This is daily work.* There needs to be more than a one-time effort. Like many aspects of life, the issues are intersectional. There are many different reasons a student might face an economic hardship. Often, the reasons overlap, and thus, our responses must also overlap.

2. *There are skeptics.* Both in the on-campus and broader college communities, I have found that many people have a disbelief that "our" students are mirroring the national trends around student hunger and economic insecurity. This is simply not the case. Another common misconception is that students might "abuse" the resources. In five years of this work, I can confidently say that I have never had a student receive support from the pantry or the emergency grant program who wasn't truly in need of extra support. I will also note that the students in need have been from a wide variety of backgrounds and identities.

3. *It does not always require a huge or new budget line.* At both colleges, we were able to reallocate existing funds in order to launch the majority of the programs. At Muhlenberg, the resources are now housed in a central place, giving us the ability to track and assess the need and demand.

4. *The chaplaincy has a unique but not solo role to play*. On both campuses, my work on these issues has been deeply collaborative with a wide array of partners including faculty, trustees, presidents, student affairs staff, alumni and alumni affairs staff, admissions and enrollment staff, and students themselves. As with other work on campuses, support staff including

administrative assistants has been at a forefront of the work. They literally open the pantries for students or alert other staff members that a student may have an emergency need. Without the coordinated work of all of these partners, we could not accomplish this work.

5. *Student learning is an outcome.* At each college, student workers, student organizations, and students working on academic research were involved with the initiatives. The pantries essentially require intern-level research, planning, and reflection in order to launch. I can cite several examples where student workers have been deeply impacted by their work in these initiatives; they ended up pursuing graduate school and professional opportunities to further work on issues related to food and housing insecurity.

> "It is within our common calling as NECU institutions to help ensure that many barriers to success are removed so that students can navigate the college experience with grace and dignity."

Final Thoughts

I do not want to idealize or glamorize the support we are able to provide. It is not realistic to expect that we can meet all student financial hardship needs. It is also not realistic to expect that for the students with the highest need, their need will disappear when they leave our campuses. I do believe, however, that it is within our common calling as NECU institutions to help ensure that many barriers to success are removed so that students can navigate the college experience with grace and dignity and that they complete their degrees. With these kinds of programs, we are not celebrating economic hardship. We are celebrating our community's ability to meet the very real needs of our students. I have come to believe that this might be the defining calling of a NECU college or university.

Endnotes

1. Results from the survey will be available later in the Spring of 2020.

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W. KENT BARNDS

Gen Z is Made for Lutheran Higher Education

I remember thinking to myself "we were made for this generation" the moment I saw the PowerPoint slide shared by the Education Advisory Board (EAB) highlighting Generation Z's Defining Traits (see next page). These traits—socially responsible, purpose-driven, cost-conscious, culturally open, and tech-expectant—seemed to fit perfectly with the mission of Lutheran higher education today and gave me great hope about the promise of Lutheran higher education in the years ahead.

But perhaps it is more accurate to say Gen Z is made for Lutheran education?

Beyond Messaging Mission

A review of the mission statements of the 27 NECU institutions reveals phrases and terms such as: thoughtful stewards, responsible citizens, rewarding lives of leadership and service, character and leadership development, purposeful people, acting in pursuit of human dignity and social justice, seeking truth, inspiring service, spiritual growth and service, lives of personal and professional fulfillment, socially responsible citizenship, the development of the whole person, the dignity of all people, personal faith, responsible leadership for service in the world, embracing diversity, discerning our callings, ethical and civil values, the Lutheran tradition, reflective practice, spirited expression, and compassion and integrity.

Many of the terms and phrases used by Lutheran colleges to describe their various missions characterize what Jason Mahn, professor of religion and director of the Presidential Center for Faith and Learning here at Augustana College, describes as "the roots and shoots"—both the deeply Lutheran foundation and the inclusive, creative educational priorities that grow from them. While these foundations and priorities are needed to serve this new generation, messaging about mission won't be sufficient in bringing Gen Z to Lutheran colleges in the first place.

> "Lutheran colleges and universities need to maximize the alignment of values between Generation Z and our Lutheran approach to higher education."

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Lutheran colleges and universities need to dive deep into what we are learning about Generation Z, recognize how they are different from the previous generation of Millennials, and make the necessary changes to maximize the alignment of values between Gen Z and our Lutheran approach to higher education. We also need to develop language for our institutional values that Gen Z students will recognize as their own.

Who is Gen Z?

It is generally accepted that the members of Generation Z were born between 1996 and 2010. They have also been referred to as digital natives, the Net Generation, and the iGeneration. They are the most racially diverse generation in history and will comprise nearly one-third of the population of the United States this year. Generation Z has been shaped significantly by the Great Recession. Their approach to life is more conservative and practical in some ways, having witnessed their Generation X parents' disappointments with jobs or finances.

Sharon Florentine cites Jason Nazar, founder and CEO of Comparably, who describes Gen Z as "the most confident, socially aware, and entrepreneurial generation of our time." In *Generation Z Goes to College*, Corey Seemiller finds that "Generation Z students are motivated by not wanting to let others down, advocating for something they believe in, making a difference for someone else, having the opportunity for advancement, and earning credit toward something" (15). As for their learning style, they "want to be interactive and hands-on; they are curious and love challenges; and, they want to succeed (win) using strategies, practice and do-overs" (Roseberry-McGibbin).

The bottom line is that Gen Z is different, which presents challenges and opportunities for Lutheran colleges and universities.

When it comes to religious affiliation and interests, Gen Z is a diverse and complex generation. By some reports, Gen Z appears to be more involved and interested in organized religion. Seemiller notes that 41 percent of Gen Z report attending a weekly religious service and 76 percent identify as religious (44). After a decade or more of downplaying participation in religion and building programming around the "nones," Lutheran higher education may be able to readjust to for Gen Z. What a tremendous opportunity for Lutheran colleges and universities across the country—but only if this is accurate.

Others, in fact, estimate that one third of those in Gen Z have no religion or are "nones." This is nearly the same proportion as Millennials—compared with 23 percent, 17 percent, and 11 percent among, respectively, Generation X, Baby Boomers, and the Silent Generation, according to Pew Research (Lipka). What is more, members of Gen Z are

Generation Z's Defining Traits

Socially Responsible	26%	Of 16- to 19-year-olds volunteer on a regular basis
Purpose-Driven	67%	Of Gen Z want their careers to have a positive impact on the world
Cost-Conscious	60%	Say their number one concern is to avoid drowning in college debt
Culturally Open	72%	Of Gen Z believe racial equality to be the most important issue today
Tech-Expectant	62%	Of Gen Z will not use apps or websites that are difficult to navigate

more likely than previous generations to identify as atheist or agnostic, and a majority see church attendance as unimportant, according to the Barna Group, a firm providing data to Christian organizations.

With competing findings, Lutheran colleges will need to continue on a path of emphasizing spiritual growth and interfaith dialog, while positioning resources for what may be a resurgence in traditional religious observance.

Alignments of Aims and Ambitions

Generation Z and Lutheran institutions are a perfect match not because of who we are (Lutheran colleges and universities), and they are (Gen Z), but because of what we, and they, strive to accomplish. The match is more about ambitions than identity. This is not to diminish the importance of identity, but where we align more elegantly is related to our collective ambitions as colleges and how Gen Z hopes to impact the world.

> "Generation Z and Lutheran institutions are a perfect match not because of who we are (Lutheran colleges and universities), and they are (Gen Z), but because of what we, and they, strive to accomplish."

The collective endeavor of Lutheran colleges and universities to "educate for vocation" may be too jargony and vague for Gen Z and their parents, given their very practical approach to the world. At the same time, *how* Lutheran institutions educate for vocation has all the essential ingredients to attract this new generation of students in a way that other sectors do not.

First of all, our institutions' commitment to social justice aligns well with Gen Z's interest in social responsibility. This generation may be more interested in social change and expects action over task forces, think tanks, and ideas (think Greta Tunberg). Lutheran higher education's historic emphasis on social justice in service to one's neighbor provides an attractive platform to fulfill the new generation's ambitions for change.

But Gen Z expects more than proclamations; they want visible signs of progress and will look for evidence that the college is doing what it promises. Seemiler, as cited by Eliana Loveland, describes this as a "thoughtful worldview" and suggests Gen Z wants to "engage in service that has a tangible and lasting impact on systematic and structural problems."

> "Lutheran higher education's historic emphasis on social justice in service to one's neighbor provides an attractive platform to fulfill the new generation's ambitions for change."

Second, Lutheran higher education's historic commitment to vocation relates directly to the defining quality of a purpose-driven approach to the world. There is a practicality that Gen Z will bring to our campus. Students will be more curious about how a reading, task, or activity relates to what they view as their purpose. They will not have a lot of patience for something that requires making meaning from abstraction. This will challenge some of us to step back and rethink how to articulate the purpose behind assignments and activities. While this may be challenging for some, it presents an opportunity for Lutheran colleges and universities to make connections between general education and the major, and between career exploration and post-graduation planning. This generation may force us to make permeable those silos that have historically existed between the curricular and co-curricular, and between content and skill development. Gen Z might just be the catalyst we need to put it all together.

Third, our institutions' leadership and ambitions in the areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion, through deep commitments to interfaith dialog, internationalization, and ensuring access to higher education for those historically left out, will resonate with this generation. Gen Z is culturally open. They are committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion. They can have no patience for structural racism and barriers. Gen Z will want visible proof of a commitment to diversity and equity. Plans, aspirations, and platitudes won't be enough. They will demand that privilege is addressed head-on and will make it uncomfortable for a campus that doesn't take and sustain concrete action.

Finally, Lutheran colleges and universities represent a tremendous value that, if stewarded and communicated effectively, can connect with Gen Z's cost-conscious approach to the world. While there is a wide range of prices and net-prices for the diverse network of Lutheran colleges and universities, there is an admirable record among NECU institutions in providing access to students from all socio-economic backgrounds. In fact, ELCA colleges and universities on average enroll a slightly higher percentage (32.5 percent) of Pell-eligible students than are enrolled nationwide (31 percent). Finlandia University, Augsburg University, Thiel College, and Lenoir-Rhyne University have new student enrollments of Pell-eligible students that exceed 50 percent, demonstrating an incredible commitment to access. Beyond the commitment to access, Lutheran institutions invest heavily in scholarship and financial aid, offsetting high published tuition and fees. As Jim Paterson observes, Gen Z students will "want to know that their specific choice will pay off, having witnessed a steady stream of very public discussion in the last decade about the high cost of college, student debt, and under- or unemployment."

But where the real value lies is in whole-person education, small classes, diverse majors, outstanding study-away options, competitive athletics, collaborative research opportunities, and a transformative education.

Embracing and Serving Gen Z

Corey Seemiller and Megan Grace, in their book *Generation Z Goes to College*, have identified several characteristics related to colleges that will require some changes on most campuses. Drawing from their work and others cited below, I want to make some concrete suggestions for Lutheran colleges and universities:

Skills, skills, skills

Generation Z may replace the dreaded question, "will this be on the exam?" with, "is this something that my future employer is looking for and will value?" Schwinger and Ladwig cite a survey in which 89 percent of Gen Z respondents would rather spend their free time devoted to doing something productive and creative rather than just "hanging out" (47). Gen Z values skill-development above all and actively seeks ways to develop and apply practical skills that align with the pursuit of their goals. Successful colleges will do a more effective job of identifying which skills each course and experience develops.

Customize the college experience

Gen Z has been customizing and curating their online and buying experience to make it more personal and they will expect the same from their college experience. Gen Z will expect much greater choice in curating their college experience. They will want more flexibility in general education and major requirements and will want to make connections that they see, rather than those identified by others. They will be less interested in following the exact pathway developed for them and will want to chart their own way. Seventy-two percent say they "want a more customized college experience in which colleges allow students to design their own course of study or major" (Loveland). And they have the confidence to do it on their own! Customized major and minors and lots of flexibility in the general education program will be expected.

Replace "vocation" with "purpose"

Students who are part of Gen Z expect to live and act with purpose and Lutheran colleges and universities have an opportunity to co-opt the term to connect with them more effectively. We have infrastructure, through our historic emphasis on vocation and education-for-vocation, to serve students especially well in this area. But, the term "vocation" may not be straightforward for this generation of students. While this might be a tough sell on campus, "purpose" has equity with this generation of students, and that is important.

Emphasize equity always and everywhere

Gen Z expects equity. They are not as inclined to buy into the old narrative of equal opportunity. They see inequities. They've been educated about privilege. They know that there are "haves" and "have-nots." They are not interested in whatever narrative explains systems of inequity. They don't want a lecture. They want equity for all.

Give them credit for what they do

I recall reading that Gen Z is less likely to be motivated to participate by a gift card and would prefer college credit or something that can go on their resume. Credit matters to this group and fits in with their focus on purpose and practicality. Gen Z is unlikely to jump at a new experience unless there is some kind of credit attached that has a very practical application. Important experiences, like advising appointments, lectures, cultural events, and participation in clubs and activities may need to have accompanying credit to capture the attention of Gen Z.

Embrace their parents as co-pilots

Gen Z's Gen X parents will be good co-pilots. They tend to be a tad more practical and will expect more from their children and perhaps less from the college. But, they will have more questions about value and promise fulfillment. They have high expectations of their student and of the college, but are also flexible and understanding of limits. Thinking of them as co-pilots for the journey rather than helicopter parents is a good start.

Illustrate value and strengthen value proposition

Because of the cost-consciousness of Gen Z, colleges and universities will need to do a much better job of illustrating the value of the experience offered. New efforts to be transparent about how resources are used, exercising restraint in increasing costs, and keeping student debt levels low will be more important than ever before.

Relate learning to the real work from day one

A career and career preparation are very important to Gen Z. They understand and appreciate that college is important preparation for a career, but they are also very practical. They will expect to know how a game theory activity, theoretical discussion, poem, or play relates to their career pathway. Gen Z will push us to connect what we do in the classroom, the residence hall, and throughout campus to their future career ambitions.

Be entrepreneurial and lead by example

Nearly half of Gen Z expects to be their own boss and many have already engaged in organizing an online fundraiser or launched their own business. They will look to colleges to teach them how to go it alone. They will want to see practical examples on campus and will seek classroom and co-curricular experiences that prepare them to become entrepreneurs, when the time comes.

Conclusion

Generation Z may be the next greatest generation in strengthening the missions of Lutheran colleges and universities. Working together, we might deepen our shared impact on the world. They are made for us. By strategically and consistently refining and living out our missions in appropriate ways, we can also make ourselves anew for them.

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