“Even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.”
Mark 10:45 NKJV

What do you want to be when you... rise up?
3  What do you want to be when you . . . rise up?
4  Compassion and catechesis - The Fifth Commandment
5  Walk with Walther
6  Future shepherd of God’s flock
8  The Lord’s ministry at the University of Iowa
10  Turning the corner
11  From the pulpit - “What Wondrous Love”
13  “Look Toward the Heavens: The Art of He Qi”
14  What else do I do?
15  From the Director of Ministerial Recruitment
It’s a question that we sometimes ask little kids: “What do you want to be when you grow up?” The answers naturally change over the years. I can remember wanting to be a professional basketball player; that didn’t turn out so well. Then I was going to be a math teacher—again, no dice. What about you? What does the future hold for you? Guess what—I actually know what the future holds for you because you are baptized and you belong to Jesus Christ.

What does God have planned for us in the future? The answer is actually a lot more exciting than many Christians sometimes think it is. For a lot of Christians with whom I have spoken about this subject, their answer stops WAY too soon. People say something like this: “Because I trust in Jesus and belong to him, when I die, I will go to heaven to be with Jesus. That’s my future.” Now, that is surely a true statement. If the answer stops there, however, it stops too soon—because it stops with death. And God has no intention of letting death have the last word.

Stop and think for a second, what did God have in mind when he made human creatures? We don’t have a lot of details, but the fact that Adam and Eve lived in a perfect place and lived in perfect love with each other and with God—that sounds pretty great. God made us to be physical people, with real bodies living in a real world where everything works the way it’s supposed to and everything is done to honor and love God and each other. It’s hard to imagine, but it would have been fantastic!

It’s not that way anymore, of course. The only life we’ve ever known has sin and sadness and death in it. Remember, though, that death is a tool in the hand of Satan. Death only entered into our existence as human creatures through the sin of the one man, Adam (Rom. 5:12). If God sent his Son, our Jesus, to take away the power of the devil and the power of sin, how could death have the last word in the lives of God’s children?

Death doesn’t have the last word. Yes, when a Christian dies his (or her) soul goes to be with Christ in Paradise, and that is a peaceful kind of resting (Rev. 14:13). The Bible, however, doesn’t actually say much about that existence. Instead, the Bible really focuses upon, well, upon Jesus—both his first coming to die and rise from the dead, and his second coming to raise everyone and be the judge of the living and the dead.

What do you want to be when you . . . rise up? If you die before Jesus returns, then when the Lord comes again he will raise up your body and join your body and soul together again, and you will be strong and holy and filled with incredible love for God and for other people. You won’t have to struggle with sin and guilt any more! In an amazing way that we don’t fully understand, Jesus will set this whole creation free from death (Rom. 8:21), and restore it as a perfect place that is once again “Very Good!”

The proof of all of this is Jesus himself. He came as a real man. He really died, to take our sins away. And then, he really rose from the dead—permanently!—to take away even death from our lives. We still get sick and die, of course, and the world is still a messed up place. But that’s why we say in the Nicene Creed, “And I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.” It is going to be a great new world!

Jeffrey Gibbs is professor of exegetical theology at Concordia Seminary.
You shall not murder.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not hurt or harm our neighbor in his body, but help and support him in every physical need (Luther’s Small Catechism, p. 10).

The Fifth Commandment falls into the category of commandments that describe the relationship that God intends to exist between His people. The Fifth Commandment states what, initially, would appear to be a very basic requirement of God’s people. The simple requirement of the commandment not to kill sounds both obvious and generally simple to obey. Our Lord desires that we not kill another person and for most of us, murdering another person is not something we would seriously consider doing. Thus, it seems, unlike some of the other commandments, we have this one easily in hand and need not worry about transgressing it; however, the explanation of the commandment quickly shows us our sin and reminds us that we have transgressed this commandment, perhaps more than others.

The Fifth Commandment is not only about our actions toward others that may take their lives. The commandment certainly covers the taking of a life through various means including random killings, abortion, euthanasia, and even taking of one’s own life in suicide. However, the commandment also covers the hurting or harming of another person in any way, including, Luther argues, our speech. Additionally, the commandment includes the requirement that we help our neighbor in need and the condemnation that not doing so is tantamount to killing them in an active manner. Suddenly, the mirror of the Law illuminates the darkness of our sin and we find that we are guilty of transgressing the Fifth Commandment time and again.

Indeed, most of us have probably not taken a life that was not given to us to take, but most of us have probably spoken ill of someone, not assisted someone in need, wished evil upon someone, or simply ignored the tremendous tragedies of lives taken around us. It is likely that we have transgressed this commandment in many and various ways on a daily basis. Thus it is incumbent upon us to repent of our transgression, receive the abundant and gracious forgiveness of our God, and then by God’s grace, in joy, serve and help our neighbor.

Serving and helping our neighbor in need is but one way that God blesses us through the Fifth Commandment. God’s provision for our protection is also a part of this commandment. Our Lord graciously provides us with this commandment to curb the desires of those who would sin against us and harm us in our body. His provision for our protection also serves to protect us from the evils of sin by providing restraint with regard to our actions toward others. Through the Fifth Commandment, our Lord both provides for us and protects us.

The Fifth Commandment does not remove the authority of God or those governments that He has provided for our protection to take a life. Luther argued in the Small Catechism that “this commandment doesn’t include God and the authorities, nor is their right to kill taken from them” (p. 10). For this reason, we must take care when challenging the actions of a government in the taking of life through just war or capital punishment that this commandment is not misapplied. For it is meet, right, and salutary that we actively work to ensure that all life is protected, but we must do so properly applying God’s Word of Truth. For to do otherwise would be to break another commandment.

Paul Philp is an admissions counselor at Concordia Seminary
A godly Lutheran theologian of a former age, among other things, gives the following description of students of theology: “When they arrive at the university, they know everything. In their second year of study they become aware of some things they do not know. At the close of their last year of study they are convinced that they know nothing at all.” We can easily see the lesson which the old theologian wished to convey, viz., that there is no worse delusion than this, to think that one has advanced very far in the acquisition of knowledge and that the knowledge of one is conceited because of what he knows surely is but superficial.

There is no doubt that what the theologian said is quite right. It perfectly agrees with the statement of the apostle in 1 Corinthians 8:2, “If any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.” Accordingly, all great pedagogs and teachers have warned their pupils, saying: Non multa, sed multum (do not study many different things, but much of one thing). Everything depends, not on how much we know, but how well we know it. The greater the progress a person makes in his science, the more rapidly does he become convinced that he is still lacking many things. He does not adopt the slogan of our times: Quantum est, quod scimus! (Oh, how gloriously much we know!), but repeats the confession of the great philosopher: Quantum est, quod nescimus! (Alas, how great is our ignorance!) The more truly learned a person is, the humbler he is; for he knows how much he is still lacking, within what narrow boundaries his knowledge is confined, and how much there still remains unexplored.

AC XII. Concerning Repentance

Concerning repentance it is taught that those who have sinned after baptism obtain forgiveness of sins whenever they come to repentance and that absolution should not be denied them by the church. Now properly speaking, true repentance is nothing else than to have contrition and sorrow, or terror about sin, and yet at the same time to believe in the gospel and absolution that sin is forgiven and grace is obtained through Christ. Such faith, in turn, comforts the heart and puts it at peace. The improvement should also follow, and a person should refrain from sins. For these should be the fruits of repentance, as John says in Matthew 3[:8]: “Bear fruit worthy of repentance.” Rejected here are those who teach that whoever has once become righteous cannot fall again.


Luther on Ministry

He calls Zion (that is, the whole church of believers) a preacher (evangelizatricem) of the Gospel, for all who are called to the Gospel are evangelists. For now not certain families are destined to teach the Gospel, as the priestly office under the Law was settled upon the one tribe Levi, but people of all stations may be called to teach the Gospel. But since all things must be done orderly in the church, all may not teach - promiscuously, that is - but only those who have been called to teach. So the difference between the clergymen and laymen is solely out of office, not of right.

What Luther Says: A Practical In-Home Anthology for the Active Christian, compiled by Ewald M. Plass, p. 947, © 1959 by Concordia Publishing House.
Where did you live before coming to the Seminary?
Kim and I were married in 2001. We lived in Chicago on the north side of the city in the Ravenswood/Lakeview neighborhood, between Lincoln Square and Uptown.

What was your career prior to coming to the Seminary?
I have a master’s degree in civil engineering from the University of Illinois. I worked in construction management for nine years for a large construction firm.

How were you active in the church prior to coming to the Seminary? How did this activity influence your decision to apply to the Seminary?
I was an elder at our home congregation in Chicago before coming to the Seminary. I was also active in music at the church and served as a trustee for the maintenance of the church campus. I spent a lot of my free time in various activities at the church. This helped me realize that the many things I love to do are centered on service and the church.

Who were some of the main influences in your decision to aspire to the Holy Ministry?
My father is a pastor who instilled in me a peace and quiet joy centered on the church. I have several friends who are pastors who kept me grounded in the realization that pastors are only humans who have a love for others and a love for Jesus. My pastor at my home church encouraged me to use my talents to serve God and to consider the ministry. He helped me realize that while I felt incredibly unprepared to become a pastor, the Seminary gives just such preparation.

Kim, how did you and your husband discuss the decision to come to the Seminary?
As Aaron’s previous career provided less fulfillment, we began to pray about a new direction. One day Aaron came to me and let me know that God was pulling him in the direction of the Seminary. We prayed about this considerably and the more we prayed, the more we both knew that this was absolutely the right decision for our family.

How many children do you have?
Our daughter will be three in April, and we just had our second child in October.

With all the transitions your family has gone through, how do you maintain family connectedness?
God has blessed us with classmates and friends here at the Seminary who we meet with regularly for Bible study. They are a great resource for family issues, such as how to make family devotions a habit.

Aaron, as a husband, how do you demonstrate your love and support of your wife amid the rigor of academics?
I try my best to be disciplined in my school work and to limit studying to between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. so I can spend the rest of the evening with my family. It’s helpful to keep in mind that academic perfection is not necessarily the reason we’re here. I actually do better academically when I maintain a balance between family and school. I must confess that I do sometimes study at night when the kids are asleep, as well.

As a father and seminarian, how do you demonstrate to your children that they are important?
I learn something new every day about being a father. Usually it’s a lesson that reminds me I need to spend more face time with my children. My daughter used to actually grab my face and turn it to look at her when she wanted my attention. Now she is vocal enough to get my attention verbally. Basically, I try my best to reserve every evening to be with my children and to be focused on them from dinner time to bedtime.

Kim, as a wife, how do you demonstrate your love and support of your husband amid your own busy schedule and your husband’s school schedule?
I try to regularly let him know how proud I am of him and how much I’m enjoying this adventure we have together! Also, Aaron is a drummer, so between playing drums and intramural sports, the kids and I try to attend as much as we can and roll it all into the family time we have together.

Do both of you feel that you have also received support from the Seminary community?
Yes, we both agree that the community here is very supportive and we have already made lifelong friends in the short time that we have been here.
What is it like to live in on-campus housing?

We moved to the Woods from a condo in Chicago. In a lot of ways the apartment we have now is similar to our previous home. I haven’t mowed a lawn in years, for example. And similar to our condo in Chicago, we sometimes feel we know our neighbors a little too well – or that they know us a bit too well! Having a Christian community at your doorstep is pretty amazing. It is great having so many other kids for our daughter to play with, having classmates so close, and having a community where so many of us have the common bond of willingly displacing our families in order to study at the Seminary.

What are some of the adjustments that you have had to make as a family that others should know about?

Kim supports our family by working part-time. That means I spend more time taking care of the kids, picking up around the apartment, doing laundry, etc. while she is working.

What are some of the financial considerations that families should be aware of as they enter the Seminary?

God has blessed Kim with a job that helps support our family and we are learning not to be too proud to ask others for help. Also, it’s important to have your finances in order before coming to the Seminary. Most likely, money management is something every pastor is going to need to understand.

How are you making ends meet? How have the Food Bank and Re-Sell It Shop helped?

Personally, we try hard to remember that we can’t have everything we want, but God provides us with everything we need. We are continually blessed by gifts from friends and family, and by the Food Bank and the Re-Sell It Shop, which are amazing and well-managed resources right here on campus.

What do you do to keep in good health?

Athletics on campus are easy to get involved with. Kim has found running and walking partners in the Woods. She also has attended a Pilates class that has regularly met on campus. I have tennis and cycling partners that live right in my building and I have been involved with the intramural football and basketball seasons and also played on the Seminary tennis team.

What is the one piece of advice you would give to those who are thinking about coming to the Seminary?

Pray about it. If you are married or engaged, pray about it with your spouse or fiancee. If you have children, pray about it with your family. Daily prayer and devotion are essential, and unfortunately, even at the Seminary, it can be challenging to maintain them.

How does a seminarian continue to grow in Christ amid the rigors of Seminary study? How does the study itself contribute toward this growth?

I’m amazed by the correlation between my classes. At first I thought it was just coincidence. Then I figured the professors must regularly meet to compare their course outlines. But now I’m realizing the Spirit is at work to teach and reinforce skills and knowledge throughout my classes that are shaping me to become a pastor.

What are some ways you keep accountable to a consistent devotional life?

Ironically, keeping a consistent devotional life at the Seminary is difficult. We have found strength and encouragement from our friends on campus with whom we meet regularly for Bible study. I am also encouraged by my friends and neighbors who lead by example and motivate me to be consistent in my own devotional life. Finally, my classmates and professors help keep me accountable through daily chapel.

How does the fact that Concordia Seminary is a Christ-centered campus affect what you see happening on campus?

The most obvious sign to me that this is a Christ-centered campus comes from my professors. I am encouraged by them daily. My professors are not only teachers, but also pastors, and they truly care about me not only as a student, but also as a child of God. It is a great way to learn.
Not long ago, Rev. Castens sent me an email asking, “Would you be willing to write an article detailing what you do in the Lord’s Ministry as a campus pastor?” I replied, “Sure.” Then I thought, “So what do I do?”

Truth is, I do the same work as any pastor. I serve God’s people through the teaching and preaching of God’s Word and the administration of the Sacraments. I prepare and preach sermons, teach Bible studies and confirmation classes, counsel people, provide opportunities for confession and absolution, perform baptisms, and conduct the Divine Service. What’s different is I do all of that as the LCMS campus pastor at the University of Iowa.

The church I serve is called St. Paul’s Lutheran Chapel. St. Paul’s is a dedicated campus ministry, which means we’re all about the students. Our chapel is the church home for medical and law students, graduated students, undergrads, and even some international families. As these students have contact with the means of grace they grow and mature in the Christian faith. Some of them even come to faith. It is exciting to watch God work in the lives of these students. It’s also exciting to watch them develop life-long friendships at the chapel. Some of them even meet their spouse at the chapel – I met mine at the LCMS campus ministry at the University of Michigan.

Another exciting aspect of campus ministry is working with international students and their families. The University of Iowa hosts about 2,000 international students, primarily from Asia, Europe, and Latin America. Volunteers from the chapel and sister LCMS congregations serve tirelessly to help these students. Through free English conversation classes and other programs, friendships are formed. The best part is that I get to speak the Gospel to them. If you’re thinking
Prospective Seminary Student Referral Form

I would like to share with you the name of a person who I feel would be a good candidate for ministerial formation or deaconess studies at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.

Name____________________________________________ Approximate Age __________________________________
        Phone Number ( ______ ) _________________________ Marital Status __________________________________
             Address__________________________________________ City __________________ State _____ ZIP ____________
             Church Membership _________________________________________________________________________________ (congregation) (city) (state)

_____ I have discussed with him the possibility of studying to be a pastor, and he is interested.
_____ I have discussed with her the possibility of studying to be a deaconess, and she is interested.
_____ I have not discussed this possibility with him/her, but I feel that he/she has been blessed with
       the necessary gifts to serve as a pastor/deaconess.

My relationship to this person is ________________________________________________________________

My name and address (optional) _________________________________________________________________

Please mail to Concordia Seminary, Office of Admission, 801 Seminary Place, St. Louis, MO 63105.

about becoming a deaconess, international student ministry is an area well worth investigating. Deaconess Angela Carriker (Concordia Seminary 2008 grad) serves as our Director of International Student Ministry and she does an outstanding job.

Of course, it would be incredibly difficult for us to serve the students if it were not for the “The Townies.” “The Townies” are the resident members of St. Paul’s congregation. They are small in number, fewer than 20 people, but they are committed to helping the students who attend our chapel. This includes hosting students for meals, letting students do a load of laundry at their homes, and providing them with love, friendship, and support.

Campus ministry is also filled with challenges. One challenge is that each year, I get a large contingent of new members, which completely changes the dynamic of the congregation. The seniors leave in May, and in August, freshmen appear on campus. No two academic years are the same, so programming must be flexible enough to reach each new generation.

Another challenge is scheduling. Each semester the students get new class schedules, which means I get a new schedule. For example, we have a student leadership team that meets once a week. Last fall the team met at 7:00 a.m. In the winter they met at 3:00 p.m. This fall we meet at 8:30 a.m. When will we meet this winter? I haven’t a clue. It all depends on the students’ class schedules.

The same holds true for confirmation classes and Bible studies. Adaptability is a way of life.

If you have ever spent time on a secular college campus, you understand that proclaiming Jesus as THE way, THE truth, and THE life can be a real challenge. On campus, relative truth and tolerance for all ideas, lifestyles, and religions is preached as being correct. Standing on the Word of God is a must in such a setting, for students desire a Biblical church that does not cave to the latest social norms.

Being a campus pastor is a tremendous privilege and the blessings far outweigh the challenges. If you’re interested in becoming a campus pastor, feel free to contact one. I’m confident he would love to talk to you.

Rev. W. Max Mons,
St. Paul’s Lutheran Chapel, Iowa City, Iowa
Passing entrance exams, surviving personal interviews, finding a place to live in a new city, and figuring out finances are all concerns that future LCMS pastors face when deciding to enroll in seminary.

Prospective seminary students can find comfort in the fact that many others have traveled this path before (and lived to talk about it), and many others will come after. Another comforting fact is that God meets all our worldly needs. Jesus said, “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?” (Matthew 6:25-34)

In the previous issue of The Servant, I listed five of the 10 most frequently asked questions from students who are pursuing their part of God’s plan. Below is the second half of the FAQs.

**Where do I work?**

If you are interested in off-campus employment, please visit the Concordia Seminary Web site and look through the Area Employment List. If you are interested in student work-study, lists of on-campus student positions are also posted there.

**How can my spouse get involved on campus?**

A great way to stay in touch with the Seminary community is to sign up for the Daily Announcements emails. Printed copies are also posted in the library and on the mailroom counter. The Seminary Women’s Association (SWA) offers small group Bible studies, prayer chains, Adopt-A-Single Student (for married couples), the Son-shine program (providing meals for new mothers or families experiencing illness or other hardships), summer meetings to help returning and new seminary women get acquainted, social gatherings, and other special seminars. There is a Yahoo Group online for the wives/fiancees of current or prospective Seminary students. The group is a way for women to connect with other women here at the Seminary, ask questions, find resources, and share thoughts, concerns, and prayer with and for each other.

**What do I do for health insurance for myself and for my family?**

Concordia Seminary students are required to carry medical insurance. The Seminary offers medical insurance through Concordia Plans to students and their families. Spouses can either be covered on the student’s insurance, or find other means of health insurance (through employment or independent companies). The same applies to the children of a student. Typically, children of students may qualify for Missouri State insurance, MO HealthNet for Kids.

**Are there moving companies that offer discounts to Seminary students?**

The LCMS Group Purchasing Agreement (GPA) is in place and has contracts with four moving companies. For more details on the GPA program, visit the LCMS Web site. ABF U-pack Moving also recognizes moving discounts for Seminary affiliates.

**Should I register my automobile in the state of Missouri?**

Since your family has a student status, you are not required to change your automobile license. However, since you will be here for a few years, you may want to obtain Missouri residence so you do not have to hassle with returning to your home state to renew your tags each year. Note: If you do become a Missouri resident and register your automobiles, every year you will have to pay personal property tax.

Tim Driskell helps his family move out to make room for the next group of seminarians.

Laura Moehlman is life transitions coordinator at Concordia Seminary.
The two parables that you just heard are about selling and buying, something that is on the minds of many people today. With the economic struggles we currently face as a nation, buying is less carefree than it was in the past. As job security diminishes along with retirement accounts, many buyers are learning to do without luxury items as they stretch their dollars. Sellers have become concerned as sales of big ticket items decline. Home sales have tumbled. Many sellers are in the difficult position of being unable to pay for their mortgages or sell their homes. Government bailouts continue to balloon as many businesses face bankruptcy. Bargains are plentiful for those who are willing to buy, but a lack of confidence stops many of them.

The two parables we just heard feature men who have a completely different outlook. Telling us about the kingdom of heaven, both parables feature a man who acts with complete confidence in his purchase. Economic concerns do not exist. After finding what they desire, the men in both parables promptly go and sell all that they have to buy it. There is no hint of second thoughts or buyer's remorse. They find an item of great value, and are willing to give everything to acquire it.

These parables go very well together. The second parable features a merchant who is diligent in searching for fine pearls. The man in the first parable buys the whole field along with the treasure. The merchant in the second parable is excited to buy only a single pearl of great value.

Selling everything to buy one special thing. That is the point of the parables, but is that how the kingdom of heaven is gained? While the kingdom of heaven would certainly be worth selling everything for, we know that it can’t be acquired in that way. Perhaps the lesson is that we should be willing to give up everything for the kingdom if necessary. If that is the case we can all breathe easy, because as Americans we don’t need to. Now, we like to think that we would gladly give up all of our possessions for God’s kingdom, just like the men in the parables do. But in reality, few of us are even willing to sacrifice our lifestyles a little when we decide how much to put in the offering plate.

The hard truth is that while we would probably all agree that it is worth it, none of us are willing to gladly get rid of all that we have for the kingdom of heaven. There are too many other things in our lives that we love and trust. Whether it is our car, truck, family, relationships, job, clothing, reputation, money, or our personal time, we are constantly drawn inward to self-interest and selfish desires. As we say in confession, we truly are poor, miserable sinners who deserve eternal damnation. In light of this situation, it is hard to see these parables as anything but an accusation. While the kingdom of heaven is of more value than anything else in our lives, how often do our sin-clouded eyes forget this? How reluctant would you be to let go of all your possessions?

It is important to consider where these parables were told and who the original audience was. Jesus tells these parables to his disciples in the privacy of a house. They are not spoken for the benefit of the crowds or for the ears of the scribes and Pharisees. The people that were following him have been left outside. Christ speaks these words about the kingdom to his close circle of followers only. These parables are given as words of assurance from the Lord directly to his chosen disciples.

Earlier in Matthew chapter 6, Jesus offers words of assurance in a similar setting. He tells his disciples, “Do not to be anxious. Your heavenly Father knows your needs. You are valued by your heavenly Father. He will care for you.” Again in chapter 10, our Lord comforts his disciples’ fears. “You are of more value to your Father than many sparrows. Even the hairs of your head are all numbered.”

The parables of the hidden treasure and the pearl of great price raise these truths of our worth to God our Father to an astonishing new level. Unlike the men in the parables, we are not willing to give up everything for the kingdom of heaven. Thankfully, God does not demand that we sell everything that
we have. He knows that no matter how hard we try, it can never be enough. No, the men in the parables do not seem to resemble us, but they do paint a beautiful picture of the love our heavenly Father has for us in Christ. The parables bring to mind the one person who was willing to gladly sell all that he had in order to purchase each of us. Jesus Christ willingly paid the highest possible price by giving up absolutely everything so that he could claim each of you as his very own treasured pearls.

The natural reaction is to reject this preposterous idea. After all, we are not valuable treasures or pearls of great price! We are poor miserable sinners! It seems pretentious to suggest that God could possibly look at us in any other way. Fortunately, what an item is worth to a buyer is not always its actual value. What something is worth is determined exclusively in the mind of the buyer. Buyers are the ones who ultimately determine how much they are willing to pay.

I read a recent news article about a baseball card collector that serves to illustrate this point. He was searching diligently for a very rare baseball card. While he waited eagerly for it to appear on the market, he had plenty of time to reflect on the price he was willing to pay. When the baseball card was finally offered for sale at auction, he bid to win. He was willing to pay whatever was necessary to get it. He won the auction and became the owner of the card at the cost of well over two million dollars. This one hundred year old piece of cardboard from a package of cigarettes was now his treasured possession. His comments in the interview afterward were filled with joy. He described the baseball card as “the crown jewel of his collection.” What could easily be considered a child’s toy or worthless trash was transformed into a priceless treasure in his eyes.

This is similar to how the mind of God in Christ looks at each of you. Jesus gave everything to purchase you for eternity. While he had the authority to call 12 legions of angels to help him in the garden of Gethsemane, he chose the way of the cross. He endured a brutal beating at the hands of both his fellow Jews and the Roman soldiers. He willingly submitted to humiliation and mockery. Nailed onto a cross between two criminals, he was reduced socially to the level of an outlaw. he was despised and ridiculed by the very people He was sent to save. It is hard enough to imagine going through all of this misery willingly for someone else, but the price that Christ had resolved to pay was much higher. The Son of God had more to give of himself before the staggering price of our rebellion and sin could be paid in full. Jesus Christ would empty himself of every last thing he had before the full price for you and me could be reached.

St. Matthew records the words that reveal the true sobering price that Christ was willing to pay in order to purchase us. As darkness covered the land Christ cried out in a loud voice, “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?” In a shocking turn of events the sinless Son of God became sin. Now drinking fully from the cup of God’s wrath, Christ became a curse for us. In the most terrible moments on the cross, God the Father turned his back on his Son, leaving him to suffer the full punishment for our sin. Damned on the cross in our place, Christ was left to experience the full force of Hell itself. After the cup of God’s wrath had been emptied down to the very last dregs, payment was given in full. St. Paul writes that you have been bought with a price. Consider for a moment the true cost that Jesus chose to pay for you. It is truly a staggering sum beyond our limited understanding.

In the sermon hymn we sang “What wondrous love is this?” The last stanza ends, “What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss to bear the dreadful curse for my soul, for my soul, to bear the dreadful curse for my soul!” The Lord of bliss has indeed borne our dreadful curse for us. What wondrous love God the Father has shown to you and me by sending his Son Jesus Christ. The man in the first parable sold everything to buy a treasure that he found. The merchant gave all that he had for a single precious pearl. Christ our Lord gave all that he had for you and for me. Jesus bought you from sin, death and the devil, from Hell itself, showing you the unspeakable love that your heavenly Father has for you. You do not need to reach and claw for the kingdom of heaven. In Christ Jesus, the kingdom of heaven comes to you!

Yes, the world’s troubles will continue to bear down on us. Economic problems may remain an ugly reality. Throughout all of this your heavenly Father gives you eternal comfort and assurance. He assures you that he loves you and will never abandon you. You are more precious to him than many sparrows. In his loving eyes you are a priceless treasure, a pearl of great price. He showed this by sending his Son to rescue us from sin.

The empty tomb shows us that the price for our sins was indeed accepted as paid in full. Every last bit of your condemnation has been taken away. Your sins have been buried. All that is left in their place is Jesus. His righteousness was placed over you at baptism and will remain forever. While we continue to look at the world through sin-clouded eyes, our heavenly Father looks at you and me, and sees only the perfect righteousness of Christ. Jesus willingly became a curse so that you could become a treasure.

What wondrous love! What a glorious exchange! Amen.

Eric Carlson
Seminary Student
“Look Toward the Heavens: The Art of He Qi” was recently on display in the Concordia Historical Institute at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. The exhibit is made up of 43 wildly colorful artist proof giclée prints, most of which are 30” by 30”. He Qi traveled to St. Louis in October 2009 to formerly open the exhibit and talk to students, faculty, and the public about his art. To view more of He Qi’s pieces, please visit www.heqigallery.com.
What else do I do?

What else do I do? Good question. Well, when I am not doing “the professor thing” and the activities associated therein, you are very likely to find me down at Pedersen Fieldhouse, playing and coaching basketball, working out, or talking up the St. Louis Cardinals. Truth is, I enjoy sports of all kinds. I think playing games like basketball, tennis, softball, and Ultimate is about as good as it gets. (I didn’t say I was good at any of these, only that I enjoy playing!) But I also ride my bike, hike, fish and water-ski—I am game for almost anything . . . except jogging. I’d rather “take a beating” than jog out to some nondescript place, turn around and slog home again. And treadmills. The name of the machine itself connotes grinding boredom. Not for me.

At home, Diane and I have this dog, Izzy, who demands attention almost constantly, and so I happily take her on walks and am magnanimous enough to let her plop down on my stomach when I am lying on the floor. She also does a pretty good job fetching her “bumpers.” And so I like to throw them to her and have her retrieve them. (Out and back she goes—the dog equivalent of jogging.)

I also love to read books of all kinds. Diane thinks I am an addict. She critiques my purchases when she peruses our monthly Master-Card bill, and like a guilty kid, I shrug my shoulders and promise to do better next month, knowing that I am certain to “fall off the wagon” at the slightest provocation.

I also like to watch movies. “Shawshank Redemption” is my all-time favorite. But “Die Hard 1,” “Rocky 1,” “Field of Dreams,” “The Natural,” “Pulp Fiction,” and “Kill Bill” are definitely in my top ten. Recently, I have been renting some foreign films and find them quite interesting. Diane and I also like watching good “period pieces” and series. A series on John Adams is a recent, very engaging, watch.

Well, that’s some of the highlights of what else I do in my life. My wife and my children, who are pretty well grown now, could add some colorful details, but they aren’t here right now. (This is probably a very good thing!) All in all, the Lord has blessed me richly and for those blessings I am very thankful.

Dr. Timothy Saleska
I do not want to take much of your time in this article with a long discourse on the value of our deadlines, or our new admissions cycle, or the latest information on the ELCEs. All of this information is valuable and can be found at www.csl.edu, or by calling 1-800-822-9545.

I do want to take this opportunity to refocus your attention on the words of the Lord in Matthew 9, “Therefore pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.”

When we speak of recruiter, and ministerial recruitment, who is it but the Lord who is recruiting men for the ministry of the Word? It is not a ministry which we have concocted, therefore any raising up is done by him.

Oh, but how he completes this task through us! We pray, and do not contrive our own plans, and he puts forth a desire for some to be pastors, to be sure, but he uses us in this task to encourage men we see around us who would serve quite well in this office. So, I want to show you pictures of how the Lord is fulfilling this prayer to raise up workers: pictures of men and their families who are here because the church is praying to the Lord of the harvest.

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Recruitment Territories

Rev. Kyle Castens  
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