

Making the mission of God an unavoidable issue
for the Christian community



the ohsco

Spring 2009

news

THE OSWALD HOFFMANN SCHOOL OF CHRISTIAN OUTREACH

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ad • vo • cate n. a person who speaks or writes in support or defense of a person, cause, etc.
a person who pleads for or in behalf of another; intercessor.

Having an advocate can run the range from helpful to critical. Finding an advocate when attempting to mend a broken relationship can be important, finding an advocate when standing in a court of law can be crucial. As Christians we know that we have an advocate that never fails us – Jesus. He is able to stand before God and speak on our behalf, asking for forgiveness and mercy because of what he has accomplished for us through His death and resurrection.

One very important role of a Director of Christian Outreach is to be an advocate within a congregation for those who are not yet connected to the Body of Christ. Often without realizing it congregations make decisions that profoundly impact their ability to proclaim the Gospel. Who are we inviting? How are we inviting them? What are we inviting them to participate in? How will they be welcomed when they accept our invitation? Questions of Why we do What we do and the Way we choose to do it most often are answered in ways that reflect the values of those inside the congregation, but inadvertently communicate to the pre-churched person that they are not welcome.

A Director of Christian Outreach is trained to advocate on behalf of those who have no voice in the congregation and train others to do the same all the while equipping the members of the church to see their gifts as the tools God uses to proclaim His Good News to lost people. Teaching, training, equipping, leading,

and, yes, advocating on behalf of lost people. These are all ways in which a DCO serves a congregation as the congregation seeks to carry out its unique place in the Mission of God. If you have questions about DCO training, or want to learn more about opportunities to have a DCO or DCO student-intern serve your congregation contact Prof Phillip Johnson at pjohnson@csp.edu or call him at (651)641-8246.

You are invited

**Please join us for the OHSCO Annual
Partners Appreciation Dinner**

Saturday, April 18, 2009

Social 6:00 p.m.

Dinner 6:30 p.m.

Buenger Education Center at Concordia University

\$25 per person or \$100 per eight person table

Tickets must be purchased in advance

by the *RSVP* deadline of April 6.

Online at ave.csp.edu or Call 651-641-8701.

MACO Cohort Notice:

Due to low enrollment (financial pressures are everywhere!), no MACO cohort will begin this summer. However, we anticipate being able to begin a new cohort as soon as we reach a “critical mass” of enrollments. If you are interested (or if you know someone who is), have them contact Norm Piatti, piatti@csp.edu.



Singing Our Mother into Eternity

By Rev. Mark G. Press, PhD

My mother sang around the house just for fun. She had grown up on music. For every birthday, she (and Dad, while he was alive) would join in a rousing chorus of “Happy Birthday” over the phone lines to whichever child or grandchild was marking the day. I remember that our childhood trips to her parents’ home in Detroit were always marked by some music, especially the old Victrola in Grandpa’s basement ringing out with strains of Glenn Miller tunes.

In her earlier years, Mom sang in school. She loved to recall how in grade school she was asked to sing in front of the class, and the teacher was a little shocked when she belted out the lyrics to “My Name is Heinie Limburger.” By the time she was in high school, she was part of the “Bethany Trio,” a group of three friends who participated actively in Walther League and who sang at many a church gathering around the Detroit metro area during the late ‘30s and early ‘40s. Choir rehearsal was a given for her, even while her four boys were growing up. Sundays usually found her on the organ bench, as long as she could find some kind soul to sit with the boys in the pew.

So it was fitting that Mom’s death bed became a place for music. Pancreatic cancer was the doctor’s diagnosis for her illness. She looked at it more as a “distant early warning” from God to be prepared for His final call. With the powerful and loving hand of God, the caring support of neighbors, and the magnificent assistance of Hospice, her earnest desire to remain at home was fulfilled.

When I arrived at the house on a Sunday one week prior to her death, I found that my only living brother had not been able to fulfill one of Mom’s requests, to read to her the words of “My Course Is Run.” Somehow I found strength to read those words to her. (TLH #599)

Several times during the following days we came together around Mom’s bed with words of some of her favorite hymns: “Beautiful Savior,” “A Mighty Fortress,” “For All the Saints”, and “Now the Light Has Gone Away.”

Early Sunday morning, I went into Mom’s room and grabbed up her old TLH (The Lutheran Hymnal). “My Course Is Run” was the first hymn I sang to her that morning. Then I turned the hymnal one page earlier to “Who Knows When Death May Overtake Me” and sang all eleven verses of that powerful hymn:

Then may death come today, tomorrow,
I know in Christ I perish not;

He grants the peace that stills all sorrow,
Gives me a robe without a spot.
My God, for Jesus’ sake I pray
Thy peace may bless my dying day.

As she struggled for each breath, I turned one page earlier to “For Me to Live Is Jesus.” Then I noticed that Mom had written on the inside back cover page of her hymnal her “Favorite Funeral Hymns.” I had already sung two of the three, and the only one remaining was #521, “What God Ordains Is Always Good.” I almost choked on some of the words: “To Him, then, I will yield me,” “His hand that sends me sadness will turn my tears to gladness,” “No poison can be in the cup that my Physician sends me.”

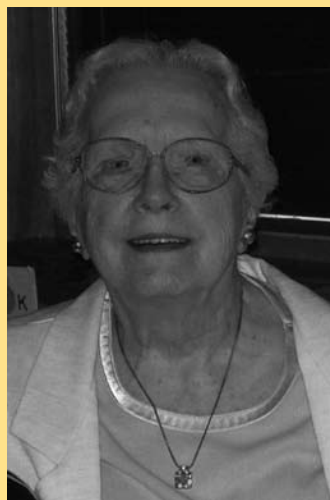
My voice trembled as I reached the second-last verse:

What God ordains is always good.
Though I the cup am drinking
Which savors now of bitterness,
I take it without shrinking. . .

At that precise moment, the rattling of her breath stopped. I called the rest of the family into her room in time to see the last two heavings of her chest, and she went calmly and peacefully into the presence of the Savior. My brother and his wife joined Connie and me in singing the last stanza:

What God ordains is always good.
This truth remains unshaken.
Though sorrow, need, or death be mine,
I shall not be forsaken.
I fear no harm, For with His arm
He shall embrace and shield me;
So to my God I yield me.

And to our God we yielded our mother, singing her into the eternal chorus, where the singing goes on forever: “Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise” (Rev. 5:12, NIV)!





Thanks for Faithful Supporters

What joy we have to see and to know the faithful support of our OHSCO group! Despite the difficult financial times, we have seen some amazingly dedicated gifts come our way. What this tells us is that people believe in our mission, namely “Making the mission of God an unavoidable issue for the Christian community.”

If you have been wanting to join the OHSCO Circle, we invite you to consider that right now. What participation in the OHSCO Circle means is an annual intention of \$500 or more to OHSCO’s General Fund needs. The following levels are encouraged:

Helping Hands	\$500 annual intention
Supporting Hands	\$1000 annual intention
Giving Hands	\$2500 annual intention
Open Hands	\$5000 annual intention

The OHSCO Circle gifts enable us to do a better job of budget planning from year to year around what people’s intentions are to help. We realize that these difficult financial times make such support even more of a sacrifice. For this we are extremely grateful. May the Lord continue to make the mission of God a central matter for your life and service in His kingdom!

Werning Chair of Discipleship

OHSCO is attempting to establish an endowed Chair of Discipleship. The Dr. Waldo J. Werning Chair, a Discipling Ministry is to be a much needed compliment to the Fechtner Chair of Christian Outreach.

The purpose of the new endowed Chair is to begin the training process for equipping church leaders for total discipleship ministry, who will then go on to train disciples, “af flame” for the modern-day task of sharing the Gospel in a diverse world, separated from a loving Father.

“We need blessed and dedicated Christians to partner with us in finding the joy of serving Christ and then offering the Gospel to the world,” says Dr. Mark Press, OHSCO Director.

For more information and a brochure describing the Chair of Discipleship, and an invitation to partner with OHSCO for this ‘over and above’ effort, contact Rev. Robert Cordes, 651-738-6075 or email revinbob@earthlink.net. And please pray for this Chair, and that God’s people will respond in endowing the Chair.

Website Update

For some time now, OHSCO has been working on a re-creation of our website.

The OHSCO Team has identified as our primary partners for this stage of website creation the following group of people: Those people with “outreach DNA” who also have a willingness (even eagerness) to utilize online resources in becoming better equipped to become outreach leaders. If you fit that profile and would like to be involved in this process of designing a useful site, please contact us (651-641-8701 or press@csp.edu).

Our ultimate goal is to create a website that would be in itself a useful outreach tool, providing resources that will be helpful in equipping outreach leaders for effective service. To that end we are conducting several “listening posts” during February and March in the Twin Cities area to listen to some of our potential partners.

Do you remember Luz M. Guerrero?

Some of you may remember her. She is the Colombian deaconess who successfully finished her internship from Concordia Seminary last June at OHSCO. Her consecration as a deaconess was in September 2008 at Woodbury Lutheran, her home church.

Luz received a call to continue working in the Twin Cities as a Missionary at Large. Since her graduation from Seminary last summer, Luz has been waiting to receive a Religious Visa which will allow her to work in this country for the next two years. Meanwhile, she is only allowed to do volunteer work, which she has been doing in St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Woodbury.



One of her greatest joys this season was the ending of the translation into Spanish of the book “Devoted to God and to Each Other,” by Pastor Deane Schuessler.

Please pray that the will of God be done in her **3** life and ministry.



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Christian Outreach for Pastors

With a focus on “Re-anchoring on the Rock and gearing up for the times in which we live today” pastors from four states, in two different cohorts came together for renewal and interactive leadership training. These men were on campus at Concordia from January 26-February 6 and February 9-11. Their emphasis was on Scriptural and Christ-centered Christian Outreach.

These pastors are part of the Christian Outreach Doctor of Ministry program hosted by Concordia St. Paul for Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne.

The second cohort focused on what it means to have one foot in the Word and one foot in the world and what it means to live and minister in a world made up of many different cultural ways of life. The first week’s course, *Communicating Christ: Culture and Context*, was led by Dr. Douglas Rutt. The second week they built capacity for ministry in the local congregation by wrestling with *Organizing the Congregation for Christian Outreach* with Dr. Phil Bickel.

This program of renewal and leadership training will engage again with *Systematic Theology Today* and *Creativity in Evangelistic Preaching* in May. For further information contact with Dr. Eugene W. Bunkowske, (651) 603-6252 or Bunkowske@csp.edu.

The New Face of MACO

Beginning in June 2009, the Master of Arts in Christian Outreach (MACO) program will be offered in a new format. From its inception the program required the student to spend two weeks in three consecutive summers on campus for classroom study, plus take additional web-based classes and write a major thesis paper (a hybrid type of delivery). The new approach is totally internet-based, requiring only one week of orientation on campus and one week on campus at the conclusion of the program two years later.

The key component is the ‘eFolio’, an electronic portfolio on a personalized web site in which all written assignments and papers are uploaded.

All classes are web-based. Also, instead on a one-time thesis, there is a series of papers and essays on a variety of topics spread out over two the years.

The key component is the ‘eFolio’, an electronic portfolio on a personalized web site in which all written assignments and papers are uploaded. Both the student and the assigned coach have access to the documents for evaluation and guidance. They also communicate regularly by e-mail and telephone.

For further information regarding the MACO program, please call 651-641-8224.