

So What Does a Lutheran Christian Higher Education Do, Anyway?

Some would have us minimize our Lutheranism, but that is a mistake. Where else today can young people encounter a coherent, socially embodied, and historically extended set of views and arguments about the world and the Gospel which they can access, discuss, and agree and disagree with?

We articulate and apply an ethos grounded in both faith and engagement with God's world through an examined tradition hammered out across many generations that makes sense and works.

Serves our students well, no matter what their background--Lutherans, non-Lutheran Christians, and all other who are interested.

Serves the entire church by constantly refreshing it with the Reformation's powerful set of insights about the Gospel.

Serves the world by affirming and promoting the world's created goodness--while always keeping it penultimate.

Serves all by exposing, examining, explaining, and exploiting intersections where the Gospel intrudes on the world God so loves.

WHY CLARIFY AND MAGNIFY OUR LUTHERAN TRADITION?

Enhance our interactions with a set of powerful insights about the Gospel

- Instruction
- Policy
- Practice

Respond to current claims and events such as

- Marriage and family
- Civil religion
- Media and culture
- Advances in science and medicine

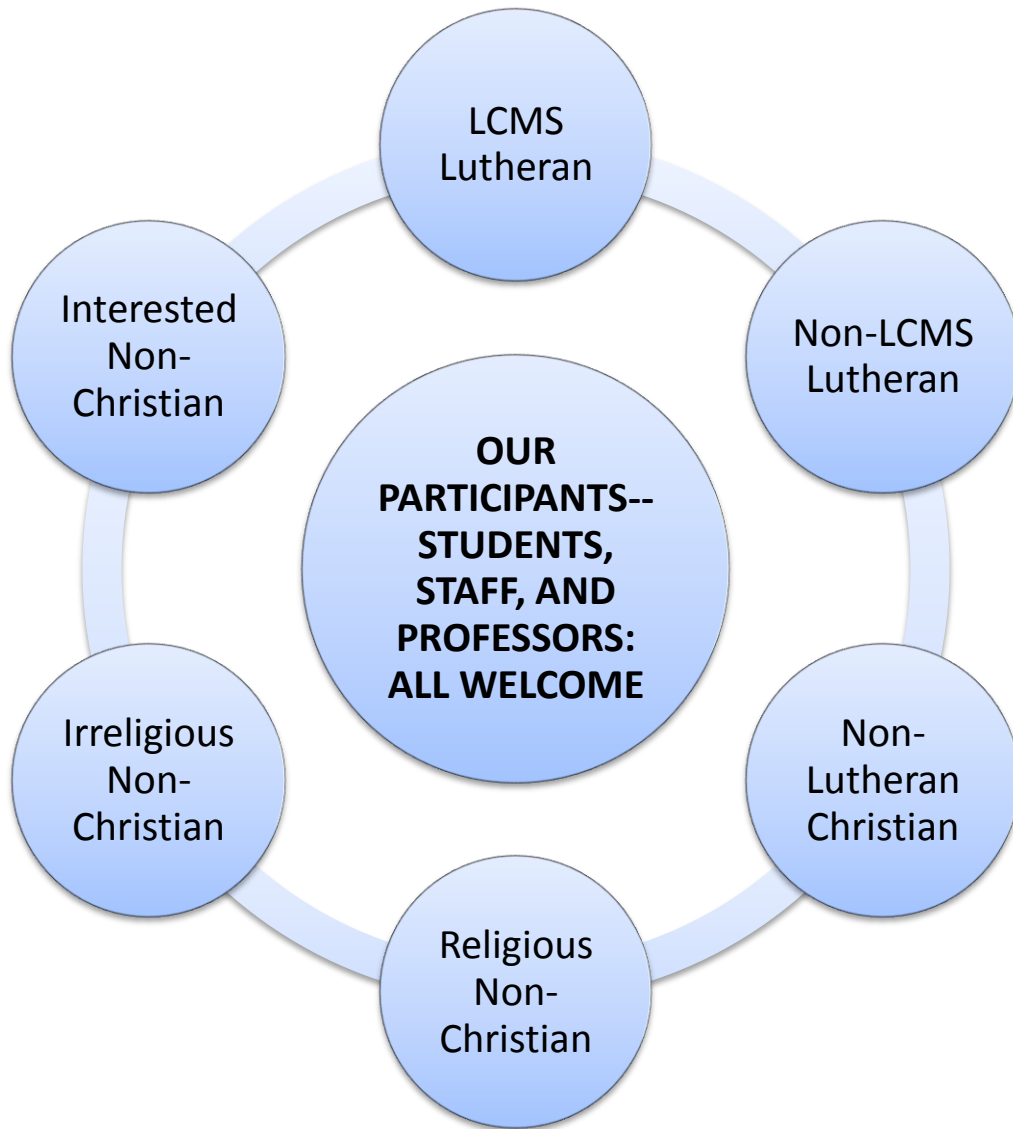
Compare and contrast the competing grand narratives

- Postmodernism
- Reductionistic materialism
- Paranormal spirituality
- Mere pragmatism

Constructively assist entire Church w/ "Christocentricity" and the Gospel

- Clarify the 5 to 6 spiritual traditions
- Provide a coherent and tested tradition and theology as a baseline
- Use this to assist all participants to locate and appreciate their own tradition

BUT WHAT ABOUT OUR NON-LUTHERANS AMONG US?



Some interesting applicants and variations:

1. non-LCMS pre-sem
2. non-Lutheran pre-sem
3. female pre-sem
4. child of a gay couple
5. gay couple
6. gay married
7. Muslim or Mormon
8. non-Lutherans celebrating communion in the dorm
9. minority Lutheran enrollment
10. _____

(How about staff and faculty?)

SHOULD WE CAST OUR IDENTITY IN TERMS OF...

- Reacting to seismic cultural shifts and affronts to historical Christianity? (We need to stand for something and stand our ground—sometimes as a voice crying in the wilderness.)
- Assimilating to social change, adapting to demographics, and remaining accessible and relevant? (We need to be a community that is Christian and hospitable to all whom may come.)
- Engaging, clarifying, responding, and “pro”- “claiming” a distinct, credible, and well-worked-out understanding of the life, the world, and the life to come that God entrusts to us? (If we know who we are, we can leverage this identity to help others know whose they are.)



Three biblical themes that characterize the Christian’s role in the world:

- ✓ Conquerors: “we are more than conquerors” (Rom8:37); Israel entering Canaan (Joshua); Luther’s hymn, “A Mighty Fortress;” *Christus Victor*
- ✓ Exiles: Israel in Egypt; Judah in Babylon; we are strangers here, heaven is our home (Hebr 11:13); our citizenship is not on earth (Phil 3:20)
- ✓ Sojourners: Israel among the nations; salt and light (Mt 5:13-14); subject to the authorities (Rom 13, 1 Pet 2); in the world (Jn 17:15)

Which might suit us best?