

In Mission

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Romans 12:2

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Alternative Education for Mission

by Mike Lange

Alternative educational paths have opened the door for potential candidates who are not able to attend residential seminary allowing them to stay, learn, and serve in their context. This model of raising up leaders locally and bringing education to them not only strengthens our ability to supply qualified workers in a post-Christendom reality, but also empowers those workers to continue to be engaged in God's Mission in the mission field in which they already live and work.

The students featured in this issue of *In Mission* attend Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and are enrolled in the distance learning Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) certificate program offered through Concordia Seminary. Another option is the Cross-Cultural Ministry Center program at Concordia University,

Irvine, and certified by Concordia, St. Louis, where they will receive an MA degree.

The Ethnic Immigrant Ministry Institute and the Center for Hispanic Studies (also both offered through Concordia Seminary, St. Louis), are two other certificate distance learning programs meant for men whose first language is not English. (Dawit Bokre, Juan Vallejo, and Berhanu Kumalo are qualified and mission-minded leaders who have gained their theological education in this way in the past.)

Meet Three Candidates

Sean Jones, a deacon at First, Yuba City, completed the licensed lay deacon certification program in 2016, and is starting the SMP track this coming fall.



Sean Jones and Sons

(cont'd...)

“Even before completing the (deacon) program, I was trying to figure out how I could grow and be trained theologically, and continue to serve. I’ve definitely felt the call of God on my life and feel as though I should continue my education and look for ways to serve the local church,” Jones said. “I had heard about the Specific Ministry Pastor program offered through Concordia, St. Louis, and felt that it would be a great fit for me and for my family.”

Travis Wright, a vicar at Redeemer, Fresno, is currently in the Cross-Cultural Ministry Center program. This intensive program allows him to stay connected with his community while fulfilling necessary coursework.

“I felt called to be a pastor in the LCMS (Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod) and wanted to gain the education needed to be an ordained minister,” Wright said. “The Cross-Cultural Ministry Center offered the chance to attain theological education and remain in a community which my wife and I are firmly embedded and remain employed. I am able to serve congregations in my area which would not otherwise have an ordained pastor due to financial constraints.”



Travis Wright



Jim Pevy, currently serving as a vicar at Faith, Fair Oaks, was accepted into the SMP program last fall and enjoys being able to stay where he has roots while gaining appropriate training and serving locally.

“The reason I chose the SMP program is that the program reflects how the early Christian Church raised up leaders within the congregations,” Pevy said. “This program allows me to stay in my context and help in the environment I am familiar with instead of placing me in a new environment where I may struggle.”

Jim Pevy

In addition to the ones mentioned above, those listed below are also enrolled from the CNH District:

CMC’s MA Degree Program:

- Clarence DeLude (Waianae, Oahu)
- Barron Fong (San Francisco)
- Muluneh Taye (San Francisco)

SMP Program:

- William Pierce at St. Matthew on the island of Hawaii

More to pray for...

1. Ask that God would grant wisdom to these individuals as they balance the challenges of theological education with work, family, and ministry. Pray for strength in family relationships.
2. Pray for God’s mission to the world to remain a powerful and central motivation and purpose so that by all means some might be saved and come unto a knowledge of the truth.

If you would like to be a mission prayer partner for your congregation or are interested in Direct Missionary Support for one of our eligible missionaries, please contact Pastor Mike Lange, mike@cnh-lcms.org or his assistant, Glenna Sanlis, glenna@cnh-lcms.org.