

Communicating the Truth

It is by now a truism that technological developments have led people in the contemporary world into an information revolution. Virtually anything one might want to learn about is 'only a few clicks away,' and it's not only information being dispersed. With the dawn of developer trends like Web 2.0, the revolution in internet technology is viewed increasingly in terms of the way it functions to connect people, interest groups, and businesses. The creative avenues opened up for connecting with people at a geographical distance from us are astounding, and this fact is not lost on the world of higher education.

While the quality of distance learning is a subject of much debate in the academic world, institutions of higher learning, including seminaries, continue to move in this direction. A majority of such learning, however, is self-directed, with students getting credit for things like reading a book and taking a test. Slightly more developed online classes will include some written discussion with other students. For some fields of study this may be sufficient, but one can see why critics of such learning like the philosopher Hubert Dreyfus say it is far from real education.

This is where the Institute is doing something entirely unique. With the top of the line program for online education, Adobe Connect Professional, we are able to deliver *real time* and *interactive* educational experiences. You can see and hear your professor's lectures live, ask questions and make comments, take quizzes, share documents, do collaborative small group work with others in the class, and utilize virtually any internet teaching tool. And if you miss a class, need a review, or want to reuse the material, courses are recorded and archived for viewing at your convenience. And new developments are continually being made to improve the quality of course delivery and management.

Earlier this summer we uploaded a class from Mt. Carmel Ministries in Alexandria, MN to churches in Alberta, Canada, Charleston, SC, and Omaha, NE, that were able to participate with the local group in a study of Paul's letter to the Philippians. The possibilities here are endless and combined with its development of congregational learning centers and masters level degree programs the Institute is poised to be a leader in Lutheran theological education. One of the most exciting things about this is that it is churches and pastors willing to get involved who will make it happen, helping to free us from the ecclesiological myths that have infected Lutheranism. Relating those called to building up the true body of Christ is what the Institute of Lutheran Theology aims to do, connecting people in such a way that we may hear and learn together to declare the gospel of our risen Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and so live and move and have our being in him (Acts 17:28).

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