

LUTHERAN BRETHREN SEMINARY

DR. DAVID VEUM

A few weeks ago, in preaching class, Isaiah—an LBS distance student from Shanghai living in Eugene, OR—told us about the current level of persecution of Christians in China. The sale of Bibles has been restricted. One can be arrested for attending a church that is not registered with the government. We all felt some of the burden that Isaiah feels for the church in China.

After class, Chris, a distance student from Buda, TX, posted this on our course website: *“Isaiah, just remember we are praying with you. God is good, and powerful, and he loves China so dearly that it breaks his heart to see them left in darkness, but who will go and tell of his great love? So, Isaiah, if you ever get the urge to go back to China, let me know. Maybe we can tandem preach and evangelize, encouraging the Church to be bold, full of love and to let it shine!”*

This was Isaiah’s response: *“Thank you, Chris! We Christians are not afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.”*

At LBS we get to prepare for ministry students like these who have a deep passion for following Christ.

How do we prepare them? Formally, we teach the 90 credits of our M. Div. program. Informally we do this through conversations in faculty offices, e-mail and discussion post exchanges, and

mentoring opportunities as students engage in ministry and mission. We want students to graduate with a deep conviction of the authority and performative power of God’s Word, a passion for sharing the message of God’s holiness and his mercy to sinners through the cross, and an awareness of and a plan for addressing their personal challenges so that they will thrive in ministry.

CURRICULUM

- We have completed a full implementation of the newly designed Supervised Ministry Education, a curriculum change adopted in June, 2016. This program includes testing with LeaderWise, the design of a Personal Development Plan, and personal learning goals for ministry experience. We have added assessment of couples for married students.
- In August we will offer a new course titled, “Church Planting and Revitalization.” It will teach the biblical and missiological motivations for church planting and will help students assess various models for doing so.

FACULTY

- Dr. Eugene Boe has completed 20 years as Dean of LBS and will leave that role on July 1. He will continue

his almost full-time teaching responsibilities, and he will be summarizing in writing the theology which he teaches.

- Dr. Brad Pribbenow has been appointed as Dean beginning July 1. He will have a full-time teaching load along with the added responsibilities of administration.
- Dr. Gaylan Mathiesen led a team of six students to Taiwan in April. The purpose of the Taiwan 2018 Mission Vision trip was “for LBS students to internalize our Lord’s mission to unreached people in Taiwan so that the students will better discern God’s call on their lives and will more effectively lead congregations in our Lord’s mission.” The high cost and challenges of conversion in Taiwan left a strong impression on the students.
- In August we welcomed Dr. Daniel Berge to the faculty as Professor of New Testament. He is very enthusiastic about his work. He has refined our format for teaching students how to study a text so that they can follow the same format in all of their exegetical and homiletical courses.
- Dr. Margareth Alexanderson, our Director of Institutional Assessment, has represented LBS by serving on TRACS on-site teams as they

Year	Students	Distance	Resident	Distance credits	Resident credits	Total credits
2017-18	36	23	13	288	306	594
2016-17	31	16	15	217	354	571
2015-16	41	24	17	258	493	751
2014-15	37	17	20	207	432	639
2013-14	31	12	19	145	478	623
2012-13	26	6	20	64	372	436

visit schools to make peer reviews. This is an important expectation of and contribution to our accrediting agency.

- In addition to his work as Director of Distance Education, Dr. Allan Bjerkaas has volunteered significant time in the development of the LB Discipleship Institute.

ACCREDITATION

- In April 2017, we received our 10-year reaffirmation of accreditation from TRACS.
- This year we submitted an exemption letter to the Department of Education Office of Civil Rights requesting its acknowledgment of the Seminary's exemption from Title IX Education Amendments of 1972 and their regulations. Those regulations conflict with our Statement of Faith and with certain CLB Position Papers. That exemption was approved, which makes it possible for eligible students to use VA benefits.

GRADUATION

At the 2017 LBS Commencement these students received their degrees:

- Kristian Anderson, Brooklyn, NY
- Ben Bigaouette, Le Sueur, MN
- Chris Hartley, DeWitt, IA
- Alan Johnson, Lynnwood, WA
- Daniel Stenberg, Olympia, WA

- Kevin Clinton, Fontana, CA
- Jordan Herrick, Colfax, WI

At the 2018 LBS Commencement these students received their degrees:

- Moriah Juhl, Fergus Falls, MN
- Robert Schultz, Estevan, SK
- Zachary Smith, Menomonie, WI
- Greg Rokos, Camrose, AB
- Jon Ronnevik, Fort Collins, CO

LBDI

In service of CLB congregations, the objectives of the LB Discipleship Institute are to provide resources, opportunities, and learning environments that will allow the participants to:

- Apply scriptural precepts in their daily lives based on a working knowledge of the Bible.
- Develop the skills to do ministry in the body of Christ and in the world they interact with on a daily basis.
- Develop biblically-based convictions of the truths that Scripture provides about God and the relationship the believer has with him through the person and work of Jesus Christ.
- Exhibit the character traits of a follower of Christ as they are portrayed in Jesus' life and in the writings of Scripture as the Holy Spirit produces growth in their lives.

Dr. Allan Bjerkaas, the director, has

developed and updated a Moodle site for delivering courses. Rev. Joel Egge has been developing modules for a first course in elder training. Faculty will be writing LBDI courses this year.

THE FUTURE

As with other seminaries, we are facing enrollment challenges. The chart above shows the trend toward distance education and some decline in student numbers.

The Church needs to be concerned about calling the next generation of leaders. We need new pastors, evangelists, and missionaries. At the current pace, we will graduate four M.Div. students in 2019 and three in 2020. To meet this need, at LBS we have analyzed our database and sent 83 names of potential students to our Regional Pastors for follow-up. We continue to connect with and mentor those whom the Lord may be calling. We strongly encourage our congregations to be praying to the Lord of the Harvest for workers and to send students to prepare.

Dr. David Veum serves the Church of the Lutheran Brethren as President of Lutheran Brethren Seminary.