

Concordia College Alabama Resolution

March 2015

LCMS Mission Statement: In grateful response to God's grace and empowered by the Holy Spirit through Word and Sacraments, the mission of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) is vigorously to make known the love of Christ by word and deed within our churches, communities, and the world.

Concordia College Alabama (CCA) Mission Statement: Concordia College prepares students through Christ-centered education for lives of responsible service in the church, community, and world.

CCA Vision statement: Concordia College will be a diverse, global institution of excellence, and a leader in developing intellectual, spiritual, and moral leaders of Christ-centered justice.

Our mission and vision statements need to move from words to actions, from platitudes to practice, from ideas to impact, from mere survival to transformation in Christ. Rural communities are fighting for survival from population and economic loss, from lives stolen by drugs and violence, by the destruction of family and hope.

The understanding of mission is the foundation of the relationship between CCA and the LCMS. When Rosa Young wrote the LCMS for assistance with the proclamation of the Gospel through the education of young people in the Black Belt of Alabama, it was with the understanding that the will and desire were present, but there were not sufficient funds to perform the task. The LCMS then came with resources to assist in this goal. That defines our understanding of mission.

The Alabama Lutheran Academy was birthed in 1922 by the Mission Board of the LCMS to bring the Gospel message through Christian education to those impoverished in body and Spirit in Alabama. A majority of Black pastors and teachers, in an earlier era, benefited by attending the Academy as children. Over the years Alabama Lutheran Academy became CCA that today finds itself in a unique position to provide a transformational model for rural America and continue the mission of Rosa Young and Rev. Nils Bakke. In fact today 85% to 90% of all graduates from CCA become the first within their families to graduate with any kind of degree – AA or Bachelors.

When there is a desire to proclaim the Gospel, but the resources to perform the task are insufficient that establishes the mission relationship and is even foundational for a mission mindset. It is, of course, always the hope that the mission will ultimately mature, become self-sufficient and no longer require the same level and magnitude of support as when young and fledgling.

We are now at a place in the life of our LCMS in which funds are no longer as available and abundant as in prior years. Consequently, the desire is for mission entities to be self-

supporting. This is possible for CCA, but it will take many changes over time in attitude, understanding of funding, and revision of policy.

Until 2005, CCA was essentially debt free. In order to accomplish that she had hundreds of thousands of dollars in deferred maintenance, was in serious trouble with Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), had declining enrollment, poor graduation rates, extensive loan default rates, and a poor system of financial controls and balances. Within the brief span of ten years this entire situation has been reversed and CCA is poised to become an anchor of stability in economically challenged Dallas and Wilcox County and in Alabama overall. According to a former Mayor of Selma, the Honorable James Perkins, CCA is an essential element in the spiritual, social, economic, and cultural stability of the region today.

In this same time frame, with the generous support of the LCMS, magnanimity of donors, and under the excellent leadership of executives and board chairs, notably Rev. Dr. Tilahun Menedo as president, the board, faculty and staff of CCA has been able to turn the situation around. The institution is fully approved by SACS, dorms have been renovated, a new campus has been acquired, there are more returning students, GPA's are higher and finances are fully tracked and projections for enrollment and income are being established. Thanks be to God!

The Board of Regents (BOR) and the executive staff of CCA believe the college can grow and mature to function within her means and eliminate dependence on the Synod for operational support. The college will continue to rely on the line of credit, as do the other CUS schools, between semesters and the summer, and for at least five years will need between 2 - 3 million dollars a year depending on the funds raised. Clearly CCA has proved its ability to raise such funds even in an economically difficult period.

The BOR is taking full advantage of the college's location in historic Selma to continue the strong heritage of advocating for social justice. The board has directed the administration and staff to:

1. Develop a Christ Centered International Institute for Social Justice ,
2. To develop short-term Certificate programs designed to serve small businesses in central Alabama counties that will augment the CCA enrollment, and
3. Work closely with Rev. Roosevelt Gray and Black Ministry as they work to establish Lutheran schools throughout synod and reestablish a viable feeder system for CCA and all CUS Institutions.

The BOR believes that the 'mission' of CCA is alive and viable in providing educational opportunities for the underserved in the region. The regents with generous assistance from the LCMS, CUS, generous donors and friends have been able to pull CCA out of the ashes, expand the campus, and reestablish credibility with SACS to the point that our executive staff has been requested to attend accreditation visits and advise other institutions regarding best practices.

The BOR of CCA intends to continue to plan for the bright future that we believe has been ordained for our institution. We pray that our mother, the LCMS will not abandon us at this time in our development and we are certain that we will mature to the point of self-sufficiency.

SOLI DEO GLORIA – TO GOD ALONE BE THE GLORY!