

The new partnership agreement will strengthen ties between Yale Divinity School and the three seminaries of the Eastern Cluster.

Historic Agreement

BY PAUL F. STUEHRENBERG



ELCA students at Yale Divinity School. This historic agreement grows out of the Cluster's mandate to cooperate when appropriate with ecumenical divinity schools and other theological education providers in its region, and out of Yale Divinity School's commitment to provide inter-traditional theological education in an ecumenical setting. Under the terms of the agreement, students enrolled at Yale can take courses at one of the Eastern Cluster schools as a part of their Yale program; students at Eastern Cluster schools can take an "ecumenical year" at Yale. The agreement also invites Eastern Cluster schools to help identify visiting professors of Lutheran studies for Yale's Lutheran Studies Program.

William Rusch, noted ecumenical leader and visiting professor of Lutheran studies at Yale Divinity School, was the keynote speaker at the ceremony. His address focused on three themes that converge in this agreement: the current state of ecumenical discussions, Lutheran involvement in ecumenism, and Yale's strong history of fostering ecumenical theology.



LIBABETH HUCK FBS (ALL)

A worship service with members of YDS and the Lutheran Seminaries took place in Niehuhr Hall after the signing.

Reverend Philip Krey and Former Dean Rebecca Chopp formally sign the partnership agreement between YDS and the Eastern Cluster of Lutheran Seminaries.

On May 1, 2002, Yale Divinity School and the Eastern Cluster of Lutheran Seminaries (ECLS) celebrated the signing of an official partnership agreement that provides for the exchange of students and faculty and helps to support Lutheran theological education.

The eight seminaries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) are organized into three regional clusters. The Eastern Cluster is comprised of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, and the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary.

The partnership agreement between the Eastern Cluster of Lutheran Seminaries and Yale Divinity School allows for student and faculty exchanges, and will improve support for ordination-track

Philip Krey, Executive Director of the Eastern Cluster of Lutheran Seminaries and President of Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, and Rebecca Chopp, then Dean of Yale Divinity School, signed the partnership agreement on behalf of their institutions. Other participants in the service included George Lindbeck, Pitkin Professor Emeritus of Historical Theology, Gene Outka, Dwight Professor of Philosophy and Christian Ethics, Paul F. Stuehrenberg, Divinity Librarian and Director of the Lutheran Studies Program at Yale, and Margaret Payne, Bishop of the New England Synod, ELCA.



signed with ECLS

The new partnership agreement builds on several years of cooperation between the two institutions. The Eastern Cluster schools have already sent two faculty members to serve as visiting professors of Lutheran studies: Gerald Christianson came to Yale from the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, and Robert Robinson came from the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. In fall 2002 Günther Gassmann, who serves as Distinguished Visiting Professor at the Gettysburg seminary, will teach a course at Yale on the history of ecumenical theology in the twentieth century. Professor Gassmann formerly taught at Heidelberg and was the director of ecumenical affairs for the Lutheran World Federation before becoming the Executive Director of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches.

The Gettysburg seminary has also shared its annual Luther Institute program with Yale. In October 2000 Martin Lind, Lutheran Bishop of Linköping, Sweden, and Manus Buthelezi, retired Bishop of the Central Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of South Africa, visited New Haven on their way to Gettysburg. The focus of their visit was on the pastoral role of the bishop. In October 2002 we expect to host Simo Peura and Risto Saarinen, Luther scholars from Finland. These visits also provide an opportunity for faculty from Gettysburg to visit Yale.

In addition, for the past several years Lutheran students at Yale have made an annual pilgrimage to Philadelphia, where they have met with seminary staff to discuss issues relating to candidacy and placement. While there, they have also had the opportunity to interact with faculty and students, to participate in worship, and attend classes. The

Philadelphia seminary has offered, as a part of the partnership agreement, to be in contact with each Lutheran student at Yale, building on this already existing relationship. This support will help Lutheran students at Yale navigate the ELCA ordination process.

The Lutheran Studies Program at Yale, established in 1995, provides a program of study that overlays the Yale Divinity School curriculum, based on the distribution requirements of ELCA seminaries. Through the Lutheran Studies Program, Yale Divinity School has made a commitment to provide a core of courses on a regular basis, including the theology of Martin Luther, Lutheran Confessions, and Lutheran polity. The Program also provides a formation for ministry program that includes regular worship and a colloquium focused on the practice of ministry in the Lutheran tradition.

The new partnership agreement will strengthen ties between Yale Divinity School and the three seminaries of the Eastern Cluster. In so doing, it will help Yale Divinity School maintain its tradition of offering an excellent academic and ministerial program for Lutheran students to study. ✦

Sandy Stayner, Rector of the Berkeley Divinity School at Yale, joins Henry Morris '83 and Craig Settlage '69 (Associate Executive Director of the Division for Ministry, ELCA) during a luncheon celebrating the May 1st agreement. (*above*)

YDS Lutheran Studies Program Chair the Reverend Michael Merkel, the Reverend John Spangler '83 (Gettysburg Seminary Director of Communications), and the Reverend Leslie Swenson '71 chat at the Dean's Residence. (*below*)

