

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS
 from the Chapel Organ Committee
 to the
BOARD OF CONTROL
 of
Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary
January 29, 1987

Since our last report to the Seminary Board (October 2, 1986), the Chapel Organ Committee has made a great deal of progress, so much progress, in fact, that the Committee is ready today to recommend to the Board the signing of a contract with an organ builder. However, before that recommendation comes before you, we wish to present a report of our activities and a rationale for our recommendation.

A. Meetings

The committee contacted Dr. Edward F. Meyer of New Ulm, MN, to advise him that he had been retained by the Board as organ consultant. Dr. Meyer has met with the full committee twice, on 15 November and 17 December 1986. He has spoken via telephone with the committee chairman on numerous occasions. One meeting with the chairman, scheduled for 17 January 1987, was cancelled because of bad weather.

Two meetings without Dr. Meyer have been held. Business Manager Martin was invited to both meetings to assist the committee in the formulation of a financing rationale. The meetings were held on 30 December 1986 and 26 January 1987. The recommendations herein were composed at the latter meeting.

B. Matters under discussion

1. Organ Specifications

This, of course, is the basic question an organ committee and its consultant need to ask and answer. What sounds must the organ have? On the basis of the initially stated purposes of the chapel instrument (cf. report to the Board of February 6, 1986) and with the concept of **basic** in mind, Dr. Meyer suggested and the committee approved the following specifications:

Hauptwerk (Great)	Schwellwerk (Swell)	Pedalwerk
8' Prinzipal	8' Gedackt	16' Subbass
8' Rohrfloete	8' Salicional	8' Floetenprinzipal
4' Octav	4' Spitzfloete	4' Choralbass
4' Spillfloete	2' Prinzipal	16' Fagotto
2' Waldfloete	Sesquialtera II (dd) **	
Mixtur IV (dd) *	Tremulant	
8' Trompete		

* double draw: first draw brings on 2' Prinzipal; full draw brings on the remaining three ranks of the Mixtur

** double draw: first draw brings on the 2 2/3 Nazard; full draw brings on 1 1/3 Terz

56 note manual compass; 32 note pedal compass
16 voices; 20 ranks; 1000 pipes

2. Mechanical action

We had felt it might be unwise for us to consider mechanical (tracker) action for the chapel organ for two reasons: a mechanical action organ would be more expensive and it would take up more room (thus eliminating seating space in the chapel).

We have come to the conclusion that our fears were unfounded. Dr. Meyer maintains that an organ built by a reputable company will cost no more if it has mechanical action than if it has electric or electro-pneumatic action. Purchasing a mechanical action organ costs more only if the builder does not ordinarily build such instruments. We stand to lose no more seating by having a mechanical action organ than we would lose with an electric action organ unless we would place the pipes in the chambers at the front of the chapel. This the committee does not recommend.

On the basis of the above, considering the observation that mechanical action tends to be more maintenance-free, and with the thought in mind that tracker action is "where it's at" in Lutheran organ building, the committee recommends that the chapel organ employ mechanical action.

3. The loss of chapel seating

Whoever builds the chapel organ will place the organ case (pipes) about three feet from the back wall of the room. The case will be about 42" deep. At the very least one bench and half of another will have to be removed from each side of the chapel. It would be best if two complete benches were removed.

Since the grand piano is now in the auditorium and has been replaced by a console piano, two of the benches could be replaced in the front of the room. Therefore, 20 spaces would be lost at a maximum, six spaces at a minimum.

It might be added here that, should the chapel ever be "turned" and a new chancel added at the south end, the organ could be dismantled and moved to the other end of the room.

4. Opening the chapel ceiling

A number of people raised a question concerning the possibility of opening the chapel ceiling. It was felt this would benefit the new instrument--and the chapel--both acoustically and aesthetically. The committee felt the subject needed to be broached, even though it doubted the move would be financially wise. The committee retained the services of a reputable acoustician, Mr. Scott Riedel. At a meeting with Professors Tiefel, Valleskey, and Panning Mr. Riedel expressed the opinion that opening the chapel ceiling likely would not enhance the organ's sound appreciably. He is presently studying measurements of the room and the area above its ceiling to determine if mathematical calculations support his opinion. The committee does not anticipate

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this study to be a factor. However, as we said, the question needed to be asked.

5. Organ builders

No matter how fine are a room's acoustics or how well designed its specifications, the quality of an organ depends primarily on the organ builder. The committee found it necessary, therefore, not only to discuss specific builders, but also to determine what variety of builder it wished to employ to build the organ.

Organ builders fall into two basic categories: assembly line builders (building upwards of 25 instruments a year) and shop builders (building as few as five a year). Shop builders tend to be more concerned with tonal quality and historic purity, assembly line builders more with price competitiveness. Obviously, shop builders charge more than do assembly line builders. There do exist, however, builders in each category who are committed to both competitiveness and quality. It was to these builders the committee determined to let bids. The committee could have approached builders who would have produced a finer instrument--at higher prices. We could have gone to builders who would have built a less expensive instrument--with the resulting compromise in tonal quality.

C. The letting of bids

The committee determined to let bids to four builders, two "assembly line" and two "shop" builders, who had fine reputations for quality and seemed to be able to build at a cost near our goals. The firms and their bids were:

Casavant Freres Ltd., St. Hyacinthe, Quebec:	\$149,000
Schlicker Organ Company, Buffalo, New York:	\$154,098
Dobson Organ Company, Lake City, Iowa:	\$146,000
Taylor and Boody, Staunton, Virginia:	\$175,000

Taylor and Boody did not bid on our specifications, but on a twelve rank instrument of their own design. This fact, together with their high cost and deliver date (1992), led the committee to eliminate them from consideration.

The Board has a right to ask why the bids are appreciably higher than the \$125,000 estimate it considered as it approved the initial faculty recommendation to build an organ.

Two factors must be considered: First, the \$125,000 figure was an estimate made after casual conversations with several consultants. There was little discussion of specification, builders, or escalating costs until after the February, 1986 Board meeting. Secondly, the estimates originally mentioned may have been based on cost assumptions which were "old." As we shall report later, pipe organ costs are increasing dramatically each year.

It is the committee's hope that the Board will agree that, while it would be possible to go back to work in order to stay under the \$125,000 initial

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estimate, the additional cost is justified.

D. The decision-making process

Dr. Meyer expressed the conviction that any of the three builders under consideration would provide the Seminary with an outstanding instrument for its chapel. He mentioned that he has had experience in dealing with two of the builders and anticipated no problems working with the third. He declined to offer a firm choice, but gave that responsibility to the committee.

Professors Valleskey and Tiefel were asked to inspect instruments of each builder. Both men were familiar with Casavant, but neither with Dobson or recent Schlicker installations. Both visited a Dobson organ at our Trinity Church in Brillion and a recent Schlicker at Immanuel Church (LCMS) in Hillside, IL.

E. The Recommendation

Having done what it considers to be adequate study, the Chapel Organ Committee respectfully recommends to the Seminary Board of Control:

That Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary enter into a contract with the Dobson Organ Company of Lake City, Iowa, to build a 20 rank mechanical action organ for \$146,000 to be delivered during the late spring of 1988.

The organ's specifications are those of the specification list supplied earlier in this report. Included are a free standing solid oak case (having more than one color of wood stain so that there would be some light and some darker areas and probably a portion of the trim would be gold leafed), an adjustable bench, music light, rack and pedal light, an on/off switch at the console. The warranty is for five years from the date of the acceptance of the organ and does not extend to electrical motors or blowers required for the operation of the organ. This builder also adds 12 pipes to the 8' Salicional which our specifications had not called for.

F. Additional costs

Besides the cost of the organ, these

1. the consultant's fee: 3% of the organ cost (\$4,380) plus (or minus) his expenses
2. some remodeling in the chapel, e.g., removal of rear radiator and replacement, moving of benches, etc.) estimated to be less than \$6,000

G. Total Organ Project Costs

The total cost of the organ project is estimated to be \$156,000. Presently there is \$35,000 in the Organ Fund.

H. Publicity of the Anniversary Thankoffering

Should the Board determine to approve the Committee's recommendation today, an announcement will be sent immediately for inclusion in The Northwestern Lutheran. The project has already been announced at the Seminary's Christ-

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mas services. Articles for the Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly have been assigned to Professor Tiefel and Dr. Meyer dealing with the place of music and worship in pastoral training and the organ in Lutheran worship.

A faculty committee must soon be appointed to oversee the celebration of the 125th anniversary of the Seminary and the publicity of the anniversary thankoffering.

I. Cost Considerations

An understanding of the offering's publicity campaign gives no clues, however, to the success of the offering, nor does the perception that the offering will be popular among the members of the Synod. Add to that the consideration that the major portion of the offering likely will not be gathered until the 1988-89 school year even though the offering is announced prior to that time. It is obvious, therefore, that we are asking you to approve a recommendation on the basis of an unknown income offered at an unknown time.

The faculty anticipated this set of unknowns when it brought to you the set of recommendations concerning the building of the organ. That set included a recommendation which suggested that "the Board stand ready to release Seminary funds in the event that gifts fail to cover initial and/or final expenses." Our committee is ready to advise you of the implications of that recommendation.

Signing a contract with the Dobson Organ Company obligates the Seminary to payments before the organ even arrives on campus in the spring of 1988. Add to these costs the additional costs of consultant and remodeling which will need to be expended during 1988. Since, as we have said, it is not likely that the greater portion of the offering will arrive before the installation of the organ, some of the Seminary's institutional funds (up to \$38,000 in 1987 and up to \$83,000 in 1988) will have to be used for the organ. This means that projects presently under consideration (e.g., road resurfacing, tennis courts, fuller reimbursement for the Israel tour) may have to be delayed or removed from consideration.

It must be anticipated that some borrowing of principal from designated funds will become necessary. Even if the anniversary thankoffering surpasses the \$125,000 goal, institutional funds will have to pay the interest which the borrowed money would have earned, guaranteeing that no projects which rely on the interest which accrues to designated funds go wanting. In this event the same projects mentioned in the preceding paragraph might have to be delayed until designated funds could be repaid.

The Board must also face the reality that the offering may not reach the \$125,000 goal; the bleaker side of reality is that it may fall far short of the goal. Should this scenario occur, total monies borrowed from designated funds will have to be amortized over a certain period of time and repaid by institutional funds. The possibility most grim is that up to 20% of general non-budgetary income could be tied up for up to ten years!

J. Final considerations

Despite these realities, the Organ Committee still brings before you the recommendation to build the chapel organ. Our committee has some confi-

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dence that the thankoffering will be successful. The present organ does need to be replaced, if not now, then later. Builder costs are increasing every year, in some cases by as much as 10% per year. The chapel organ project has been "in the works" for over 25 years. Many of the factors which stood in the way of the completion of the project have been eliminated. For all of these reasons, the committee is ready, after serious thought, to bring this recommendation before you.

The Board will have to determine whether or not it shares the conclusions the Organ Committee has reached.

Respectfully submitted,

the Chapel Organ Committee

James Tiefel, chairman
Paul Manthey
David Valleskey