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PRESIDENT'S LETTER - SEPTEMBER 07

“Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.” (Hebrews 12:1)

Fellow Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord:

The Bible has many references to athletic contests. One of the most eye-catching is the reference to the Christian life as race. It is not a quick 100 yard sprint. It is more than a marathon that we are involved in our ministries. The key is perseverance or endurance. When our grade-school students ran a 5K race, we had to caution them against starting out full bore and then slowing to a walk after the first half mile.

The writer to the Hebrews encourages us **“to run with perseverance the marathon marked and laid out for us.”**

THE MINISTRY IS MORE THAN A MARATHON

It would be nice, while running a marathon, if you could choose your own race course. It probably would be downhill all the way. However, you have to follow the course as it is laid out and marked otherwise you will be disqualified. In the same way, we do not choose our path in life. This is a good thing because we would also choose the easy way. God lays out, not only the race, but also our training course. Our ministry is laid out for us by God Who directs when and where and how we serve. We do not choose our ministry on the basis of what we would like to do and where we would to serve.

We are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses. The Greek word “witness” is the English word “martyr.” It means “those who testify” and refers to those Christians in chapter eleven some who resisted to the point of shedding blood. Like runners, we are encouraged by those who run with us and encourage us by their example. Even though in the United States, we have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood, we are encouraged by the witness of many faithful Christians here and overseas.

We need to throw off everything that hinders us and the sin that so easily entangles us. The Greek word “oncon” is the English word for tumor. It is translated burden or weight or impediment. The cares and pleasures of this world can be a burden or weight which prevent us from running our Christian race and can interfere with our service in the public ministry. Our text specifically refers to “sin” which so easily entangles us. Our personal sins seem small and insignificant, but these sins take us down and prevent us from finishing our race. We need to shake off all sloth and run our race with perseverance. If you are going to run a marathon, you have to give up eating certain foods. You don't have time for the usual activities. Your entire life is dedicated to running your race. Does our ministry demand any less of us?

The positive thing is that we need to fix our eyes on Jesus. When you run a race, you should not think about each step, each mile. You need to keep your eye on the goal. In our ministries, we need to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus. Jesus is the Author and the Finisher of our faith. He is the one that enables us to run our race with joy. Jesus endured the cross for us. When you think of what Jesus suffered from sinful men, you will not grow weary and lose heart. Some runners drop out of the race because they become discouraged. Jesus ran the race for us. We have a Savior who bears our burdens and gives us the strength and perseverance to run the race God has marked out for us.

Rejoice that God disciplines you. An undisciplined son is a potential criminal. Children need and actually crave discipline. Children know that their parents love them because they take the time and interest to discipline them. So God trains you for the race of your life by disciplining you. All the things that happen to us prepare us to stand firm in the faith until the end. I have a plaque that simply says, "No pain, no gain." Training for a race is no fun. It is tedious. And yet training is essential in order to run the race. Prepare yourself for service in the Lord's fields which are white for harvest.

Hebrews reminds us, (Hebrews 12:11) "Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it." God is training us for righteousness and everlasting life.

May God strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees in the race of your life. God will strengthen you through Jesus to run this race. There is no load so heavy that it will prevent you from finishing your race. God has a purpose for whatever happens in your lives. Rejoice in the service to which the Lord has called you.

A fellow runner,



John Schierenbeck

The CLC has its race laid out for it. As CC approaches and we deal with the continuing financial challenges of this year and prepare for the Convention next June, we are encouraged to pray for endurance and perseverance.

The ILC enrollment is 131. This is one less than we anticipated. However, this is down by 37 students from two years ago. The annual student revenue has decline almost \$150,000 from two years ago.

Also the revenue for this year is going to be about \$32,000 less than we anticipated in this year's budget because of fewer dorm students and more part-time students. Even with \$840,000 in General Fund offerings, we are facing a potential deficit of \$85,000. Right now offerings are running behind the CBP estimates.

	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
Total Enrollment	168	149	131
Dorm Census	108	87	78
Student Revenue	\$820,000	\$735,000	\$670,000

The CC will meet October 3-4 in Eau Claire. The Boards will meet October 1-2.