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Cammons at Gettyburg



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Quiet Moments

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Man in the Street

TROY TYSDAL

The temperature dropped overnight. We were now looking at a high of 5° Fahrenheit, and I was scheduled to help a friend do *man in the street* interviews for a Christmas series his church was planning—he would ask the questions and I would run the camera. The phone rang. I was hoping he was calling to cancel, but no such luck. An hour later we were flagging down people on street corners and in the store fronts of our community.

It was uncomfortable approaching strangers, and the frigid temperature outside probably didn’t help the foot traffic that day. *But*, after two hours, we had interviewed close to a dozen people, both believers and unbelievers alike. To my surprise, only one person declined to be interviewed, and the rest were not only willing to talk, but seemed to enjoy it.

One of the questions we asked was, “If there is a God, and you could ask him one question, and you were guaranteed



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an answer, what would you ask?” One man replied, “I would ask him about my deceased parents. Where are they, and are they ok?” I thought to myself, “That’s a great question, and one the Church might be able to answer.”

As we wrapped for the day, I loaded my camera gear into my car, and thought to myself, “*This* is where the Church belongs!” Not that we forsake gathering together, resting in Word and Sacrament, but that we take our message to *those in the street*. We have been given answers to important questions, and many who have lost their way are ready to talk... and more importantly, willing to listen.

It is easy to stay inside, where it is comfortable and warm, but it is outside where we will find the lost. *Let us go to them*—for it is to the lost that we have been sent.

Rev. Troy Tysdal is Director of Communications and Prayer for the CLB, and serves as editor in chief of Faith & Fellowship magazine.

How Does Biblical Mission Happen?

Centripetal and Centrifugal Force in Gospel Mission

BRAD PRIBBENOW

I was in college when I first learned the difference between *centripetal* force and *centrifugal* force. No, it wasn't in an engineering course. Believe it or not, it was in my campus ministry!

Centripetal force is defined as something that moves an object *toward* a center; while centrifugal force is something that moves an object *away* from a center. As a campus ministry we often tried to exercise centrifugal force as we reached out to and evangelized our campus with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Yet we also found that, for some non-believers, the most effective gospel witness came through an experience of Christian community within the campus ministry (centripetal force). They learned about the love of God and came to saving faith in Jesus Christ by means of their experience of real Christian community within the confines of the campus ministry. In our campus mission, we needed *both* centripetal gospel force and centrifugal gospel force!

OLD TESTAMENT WITNESS

We observe this same reality in the Scriptures. We see centripetal (attracting) gospel force in passages such as Isaiah 2:2-5 and Isaiah 56:7, where God's house is described as a gathering place of worship for all nations. And, we see centrifugal (dispersing) gospel force emphasized in God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3. In this text, we notice that God did not intend his blessing to reside only with Abraham and his immediate family. God was blessing



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Abraham so that through him “all the peoples of the earth will be blessed.”

NEW TESTAMENT WITNESS

The same occurs in the New Testament. In the days following Pentecost, the fellowship of believers had an attracting (centripetal) force upon their surroundings as they experienced rich community, sacrificial giving, and deep love for one another (see Acts 2:42-47). As an effect of this community, the Lord added “to their number daily those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47). We also see an emphasis on centrifugal (outward) gospel force in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) and in Jesus' statement in Acts 1:8, “...and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

THE CHURCH TODAY

These biblical patterns are true for the Church today, too. Some forms of attractional (centripetal) evangelism will

be very fruitful, as non-believers come into contact with believers who take their Christian faith seriously and who practice generosity and grace in their relationships with one another. Other times we will need to cross boundaries that will take us to people who are unreached and need someone to come to them.

May our missionary God guide us as a Church to be both centripetal and centrifugal in our witness—that all the families of the earth might be blessed through him!

Rev. Brad Pribbenow Ph.D. serves the Church of the Lutheran Brethren as Dean and Professor of Old Testament at Lutheran Brethren Seminary in Fergus Falls, Minnesota.



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A Civil War cannon on display at Gettysburg National Military Park.

Fight the Good Fight

ANDREW FOSS

On paper President Abraham Lincoln couldn't have hoped for a better military strategist—a man who had earned the nickname, “The Young Napoleon,” because he possessed an incredibly strategic mind. At the time, he was the youngest cadet ever accepted into the US Military Academy (15) and eventually graduated second in his class. His name was George McClellan. Ever hear of him? Most likely not, and here's why.

Under McClellan's command the troops started to believe they could actually win the Civil War. So no one was surprised when President Lincoln promoted him to the rank of Major General and eventually General-in-Chief of the entire Union Army. He had everything going for him, but there was just one problem—he was

reluctant to mount a mass offensive. For weeks General McClellan readied his position, organized his men and laid out his battle plan, while Robert E. Lee's Confederate Army lay dangerously exposed just a few miles away. President Lincoln repeatedly urged McClellan to put his numerical and tactical advantage to use and crush the rebellion with one swift attack, but he just wouldn't fight.

So, after an excruciating year of inactivity, President Lincoln finally removed one of the greatest military minds of all time and eventually replaced him with a man with half his tactical talent—but a man who loved to fight. And you no doubt have heard of this man—Ulysses S. Grant.

Let me be clear. The renown of your name is not the point here. It's been said

that the greatest asset of a soldier is his/her ability to fight when called upon. Without that, all other assets are ultimately useless. Church, we have been called to do something, and everything else we do is a waste of time if it doesn't lead us to do this one thing—*make disciples*. No matter how good we are at everything else, if we don't do this one thing well, we come up short in fulfilling the mission God has given us. We can raise money and build great buildings. We can write books and compose great hymns of praise. We can have the biggest and best ministries in our towns and cities. But if we don't make disciples, what good is it?

In Matthew 28, Jesus calls us to invest in the lives of others the way that he invested in his disciples. But here's the rub. I remember hearing these words,

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Matthew 28:18-20

“Go and make disciples,” from a very early age, and all these years later I’ve finally come to understand why we initially gravitate towards the mandate. It’s because we are a “*get ‘er done*” kind of people.

But as with anything related to the Christian life, the commands to do something are always rooted in the announcement of what God has already *done* for us. And so we’re not called to go and fight with our own strategy, and in our own power, to put a dent in the unbelief within our families, our workplaces, our schools, or our spheres of influence. No, we’re simply invited to engage the world around us with the battle plan God has already given us as outlined in the Great Commission.

Jesus tells his original disciples, and he’s telling us, “[Teach] them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:20a). It’s here, as it were, that Jesus takes a backward glance at his own teachings and says, “As you engage others, what I want you to be about is what I have said, not what you think you should say. You don’t even have to come up with the strategy because, truth be told, neither did I (John 12:49-50). Don’t give your opinion, or your best educated guess; declare only my words.”

But of course, his commands are not all Jesus emphasizes. In Matthew 28:19 we read that we’re also to engage this world with the gift of baptism. Not only does God give us his commands, he expresses a need and a provision for cleansing as well. Because, after all, baptism is the washing away of our inability to live up to all he commands (1 Peter 3:21). Wow! God the Father has not only given holy requirements, but he also supplies the

required holiness through this means of grace. And so this message is to be central in our disciple-making as well, but still the commissioning isn’t over.

Jesus also teaches in verse 19 that we are to baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But why? It’s because baptism is not just declaring the cleansing of our sin, but it’s also announcing God’s unconditional claim upon us. Think about adoption for a moment. It’s common for individuals who are adopted to take a family’s name as their own in response to that initiating love. In the same way, baptism done in the name of the Holy Trinity is where we can be assured that we are undoubtedly part of God’s family (1 John 3:1).

It’s important to note that the New Testament writers always motivated the “soldiers of Christ” (2 Timothy 2:3) in light of this gospel. They gave imperatives (what you and I should do), but they did so based only on indicatives (what God has done). In other words, the motivation to live out any and all biblical obligations is always first rooted in gospel declarations. So the reason we’re to go and make disciples is not solely because Jesus commanded it; it’s because Jesus did precisely this for us.

Do you know how many disciples Jesus was actually talking to when he gave this Great Commission? Eleven. That’s it! We’re told earlier in Matthew 28 that some worshiped this resurrected Jesus, but some also doubted. This tells me that our doubts are not new to God. They don’t shock or repulse him. Remember, these were the very same individuals who saw Jesus die and rise again, yet a number of them were still not convinced that he was the promised Messiah. Oh, so

small in number and faith! But the size of the denomination or local church you belong to, or the size of the faith you have, *does not matter!* Why? Because it’s not about *you!* Remember, Jesus said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:18-20).

Church, may we never forget that the same Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead now leads us into battle. It’s the Holy Spirit who strengthens us in our weakness, guides us into truth, and gives us courage to tell others about the gospel. And so in light of all that God has done and is doing in you, he now invites you to go and make more disciples with the assurance that the *One* we proclaim makes effective the work he calls us to. Our God is a sending God and calls his people to be a going people. So go and fight! Go and make his name known! Go and make disciples by engaging this world with the Father’s commands, cleansing, and claiming, with the authority of Jesus, and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Rev. Andrew Foss is Pastor at Hope Community Church in Nanuet, New York.



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Lutheran Brethren DNA

A Burden for the Lost; Evangelism a Priority



J-TERM SPEAKER

EUGENE BOE

Rev. K.O. Lundeberg was instrumental in bringing together the family of churches that came to be the Church of the Lutheran Brethren. In 1899 he established the *Broderbaandet* (*Bond of Brotherhood*). This magazine was to be an instrument of the Lord through which he could put his “heavenly brotherly bond” around the hearts of brothers and sisters and bind them together as one.

One of the important purposes of this paper was to help the Lord’s people understand that they have the great task “to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth.” Lundeberg understood that the extensive mission work being carried out in his time was a witness of this.

A personal owning of this conviction and task by every believer came by

hearing and believing the saving gospel of Jesus Christ. It was a fruit of the believer having the sure and glad assurance of the forgiveness of their sins and the living hope of eternal life. This was too good to be kept to oneself and therefore, from people gripped by its reality, it burst forth to others near and far.

The section of *Broderbaandet* devoted to mission was titled “From the Harvest Field.” It was anchored in Matthew 9:38. “Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.” In the very first edition Lundeberg stated, “It is the burden of our witness that souls are saved through Christ’s gospel, which gladdens the hearts of God’s children. This is what we will put forward. We will make it possible because our brothers and sisters must hear this from the paper.”

Broderbaandet’s writers saw their world as a world in need of salvation which can only happen through Christ. The world was lost without Christ. The reality of these truths gripped their hearts and shaped their lives and callings.

The call of the Lord to go forth with the gospel into all the world was also encouraged by reports from missionaries who were already serving throughout the world. Reports came from such places as India, China, and Africa. In the first year of *Broderbaandet’s* publication several columns of “From the Harvest Field” were devoted to lectures by David Baron on *The Jewish Problem, Its Solution, or Israel’s Present and Future*—lectures originally delivered in 1890 at Northfield, Minnesota. This indicates that the burden for souls extended to the Jewish people as

“Then Jesus said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.’”

Matthew 9:37-38

well. Lundeberg wanted the brothers and the sisters to hear the call of the Lord to evangelize all by going into all the world to preach the gospel to everyone—a message emphasized by Baron.

Another voice that sounded forth the gospel as an evangelist until silenced by his going home to his Lord in 1938 was that of E.M. Broen. He not only traveled widely as an evangelist, but was also a parish pastor who did evangelism. He was a contributor to *Broderbaandet* from the first year of its publication. His passion for evangelism and mission was expressed in many ways. Beginning with Number 16 of 1899 and on into 1900 he translated from English into Norwegian Arthur Pierson’s *Evangelistic Work in Principle and Practice* (1887). This labor of love by Broen indicated his passion for reaching the lost and for the message of Pierson’s book to be heard by the readers. Pierson is recognized as the greatest popularizer of missions in his time.

Pierson’s book sought to stir every believer to “unresting action, that every soul may hear the gospel of God.” He emphasized that this great trust is given to every believer so that no child of God ought to be or can be indifferent. Perhaps the influence of Broen and Pierson impacted the early days of CLB church life and its continuing history, for it was very common for pastors and lay persons alike to ask individuals, “How do you have it with God?” or “How do you have it with the Lord?” Evangelism

and personal witness was the concern of every believer.

Broen was appointed to the CLB mission committee in 1902 and was instrumental in the calling of the first missionaries, the Kilens, who left for China August 27, 1902. He became a member of the CLB in 1903 and served as the first president of the Lutheran Bible School and as a member of the faculty. His God-given passion for mission was contagious, as many of those he taught heard God’s call to go into all the world with the gospel.

In reviewing Broen’s published sermons on spiritual awakening in the book *Fra Guds Bekk (From the River of God)*, we recognize a number of emphases. He, along with Lundeberg, did not make assumptions about people being right with God. There isn’t the presupposition that because they were baptized, confirmed, a member of the church, or attending church that they were right with God.

In his sermon “You shall meet God”—based on Amos 4:12—Broen describes what it is like to come face-to-face with God. To meet God as we really are in ourselves on our own basis is not something that we desire. In fact, it is the last thing that we want. For he is holy (Isaiah 6:2). Our sins will find us out (Numbers 32:23). He is a God who avenges (Psalm 94:1). You cannot flee from his presence (Psalm 139:7).

However, you can meet God on his

own terms—through the cross of his Son, on the basis of the blood of Jesus. As Isaiah wrote, “‘Come now, let us settle the matter,’ says the Lord. ‘Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool’” (Isaiah 1:18). Again, he notes the now-ness of salvation, saying, “Now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2).

From the very beginning our family of churches was marked as people with a burden, born out of the gospel, for people to be saved. This was expressed in evangelistic preaching, personal witness and going as missionaries to China and later to Africa, Japan, and Taiwan.

Rev. Eugene Boe Ph.D. serves the Church of the Lutheran Brethren as Research Professor of Systematic and Historical Theology at Lutheran Brethren Seminary in Fergus Falls, Minnesota.

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Global Migration:

It Will Change Your Life, Community, Church and Family



ROLAND J. WELLS, JR.

Nobody saw it coming 40 years ago. Today, the entire world is being changed by it. By what? *Global migration.* Global migration means that about two *billion* people have been or are migrating inside or outside their national borders. Today people from everywhere are moving everywhere else. Chinese, Latinos, Africans, South-Asians, Mid-easterners and Americans are flowing all over the globe. Forty years ago, nobody dreamt that soon anyone, anywhere, could travel anywhere else, if they really wanted to.

Why is this happening? There are many reasons:

- The human population has grown from three billion in the early 1960s, to seven-and-a-half billion now. This

has put pressure on resources, and transportation availability allows people to move away from war, famine, persecution and instability. These are forces that push people outward.

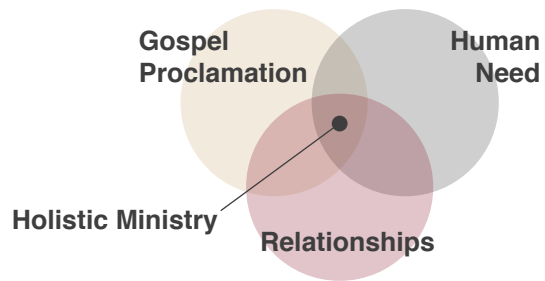
- Due to war and dire poverty, even the lowest wages in Western Europe and the US look attractive to people who have nothing, in Africa, Asia and Latin America. This also is a force that pushes people outward.
- In the United States and Western Europe, we have an intense labor shortage. Since WWI, the western birth rate has oscillated. There were baby booms after WWI, WWII and the echo generation of Millennials. After the Crash of 1929, the birth rate dropped until 1945. This smaller “Elvis” generation gave birth to

Gen-X, who gave birth to Gen-Z. The huge wave of immigration that started in the late 1980s happened when the small Gen-X generation entered the labor force at the peak of the WWII generation’s retirement. We had a labor shortage. Now, thirty years later, the small Gen Z is joining the labor force, right at the peak of Baby Boomer retirement. Once again, we’ve got a gap and a labor shortage. That vacuum is a pulling force.

- Human migrations are nothing new. Every few hundred years, Western Europe saw successive waves of Celts, Germanic tribes, Huns and Slavs—these are the ones known since recorded history. Archeology and DNA tell us that there were many waves earlier. Parallel waves can be

MissionShift

Tripartite Model



recognized in South Asia, China, Africa and Latin America. People have always been on the move. But, today, in much greater numbers, people are moving from everywhere to everywhere else.

MissionShift, our educational program, is neither pro- nor anti-immigration. That would be like being pro- or anti-air. Air is all around us, and it's a fact of our existence. Immigration is a global phenomenon, as people move into or out of every country on earth.

What Does This Mean for Us?

So what does this mean for us as North American Christians? Since the change of the immigration law in 1965, we have seen a growing number of legal immigrants and refugees come to be our neighbors. Added to this are the millions of illegal immigrants who come across our borders without permission, plus students and tourists who simply overstay their visas, hoping to fit in. Some estimate we now have about 75 million immigrants and their families living among us. This number will continue to grow.

This isn't just an urban phenomenon. Wherever there is a job, even a lousy job, an immigrant will come to fill it. Any place there is an egg, turkey, pork or beef processing plant, there will be immigrants. Labor is needed to run beef, hog and crop operations. Many inexpensive small town motels are now operated by members of one tribe/caste from Southwest India. Dairy farms in western Wisconsin couldn't function without hard-working rural Latinos, who understand cows and are willing to work the long, back-breaking hours. On the other end of the spectrum, our high-tech and medical fields could not operate without hundreds of thousands of brilliant immigrants.

Today, rural towns are seeing children of many colors in their local schools.

Small grocery stores with signs in Spanish or Somali dot towns where a generation ago Norwegian was spoken on Main Street. Enterprising farmers are finding a ready market for goat and lamb. These changes are not going to go away. In fact, as transportation gets cheaper and global crises mount, more people will be on the move. This will affect your town, your county and your state. Values will be shifted; organizations will change, as will the food at the local grocery store and café.

These folks are our employees, neighbors, co-workers and someday... maybe the other grandparents of your own grandchildren!

Most immigrants are not actively connected to any church. Most have never heard the gospel. Some come from religious traditions that are actively hostile to or greatly misunderstand Christianity. As these folks come to be our neighbors, now is the time to reach out—not tomorrow.

A Tripartite, Holistic Model

As we look at these tremendous needs, we can also see them as tremendous opportunities for reaching people in the Name of Jesus. We see that this task has three components:

1. *Proclamation of the Gospel* is the central task of the Christian Church. The gospel is the message that Jesus Christ took on himself the sins of the world so that humanity can be reunited with God. Only by trusting in Christ are we forgiven our sins and made to be one with God. That is the central purpose of the Church, and faith in Christ is the greatest gift we can give to all people, yet that proclamation does not exist in a vacuum.
2. *Vast Human Needs* are a part of every immigrant situation. Jesus told us to share the glass of cold water.

The disciples elected deacons so the needs of the widows could be met. Every place there are immigrants, there are needs; each of these needs can be a channel for building relationships and sharing the gospel.

3. *Relationships* are the key to each of these, as both the gospel and care are most effectively transmitted when we take the time to build healthy, real, culturally-savvy relationships.

If we make sure to combine all three, we have the holistic model of Jesus, of Paul, of Wesley, Spener, Francke, Hauge and Hudson Taylor, to name a few. The model has been rediscovered repeatedly throughout the history of the Church; it's then that it grows and is healthy. The immigrants give us a great opportunity for outreach at the same time as we empower our church members to bold witness! It's an amazing shift.

Today the world has come to us. Can we together try to grasp a vision for outreach as big as our God?

Pastor Roland J. Wells, Jr. serves as the Senior Pastor of St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church in downtown Minneapolis. He is the creator of MissionShift, the Executive Director of the Urban Cross-Cultural College Consortium and the Executive Producer of the MissionShift DVD Series for congregations, non-profits and educational institutions.

Follow Pastor Wells at: www.rolandwells.com

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CLB Shared Ministry: Contribution Report

63% *Four Months to Go!*

\$1,779,765

Received Through 12/31/18

\$2,825,000

2018-19 Contribution Goal

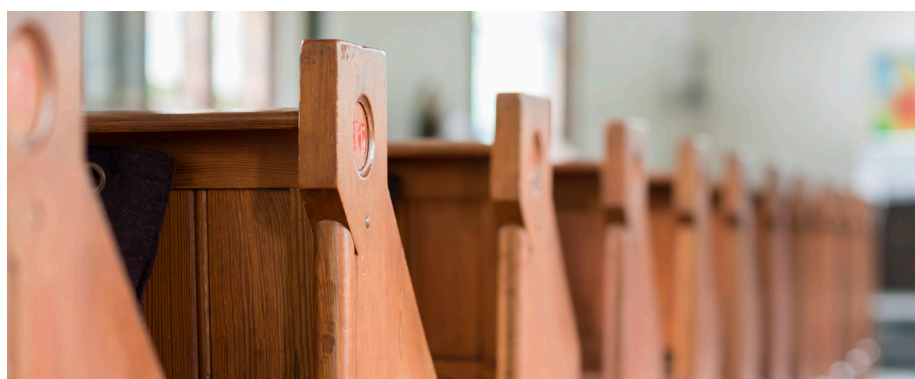
Expected Through 12/31/18: \$1,745,927▲

The CLB Fiscal Year Ends April 30, 2019

My Church

ROY HEGGLAND

Some of you have grown up in the Church of the Lutheran Brethren as I have. The CLB is where we are comfortable and where many of our friends are found. We enjoy the style of worship service and revel in our understanding of law and gospel. We believe God has called us to the “least reached” people rather than to places where many others have already brought the gospel. There is so much good about the CLB that we could start believing that other denominations “just have it wrong” and unintentionally think less of them than God does.



Tofotografie /iStock

But it can get even worse than that. Many of us have become so attached to our local congregation and its local mission that we don’t even give the *shared ministries* of the CLB much thought or attention. Perhaps those ministries are not something we regularly pray about and support financially. We can think and act as though the Great Commission as recorded in the Gospel of Matthew goes something like this: “Stay where you are and enjoy the love and fellowship of like-minded believers in your hometown.”

As in many areas of life where we can get sidetracked, what we gravitate toward is not “bad” in a moral sense, but rather something that, while good, is not all that God has intended and commissioned us to do. The word *commission* is an interesting word, but it has lost its meaning for most of us. Just looking at the word, we can see that it starts with *co*, which means “together, mutually.” The second part of the word is *mission*. That word could be defined as “purpose”

or “calling” or “assignment.” We have denigrated the word to mean something that other people do in other countries to bring the gospel. What it really means is the calling or assignment that we all share in together. In the Great Commission, Jesus speaks to Christians everywhere and throughout history.

So listen with new ears to what Jesus actually said to his disciples (including us):

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:18-20).

Are we going to our neighbors to disciple them in the communities where we live? Are we faithfully giving to the joint ministries of the CLB so that those whom we have sent can go to other

nations to make disciples? If we are only enjoying our local congregation as a place to fellowship and be spiritually fed, rather than a place where we are equipped to make disciples, we are missing our calling. If we are actively involved in making disciples where we live but not supporting those who are taking the gospel to all the nations, then we are not fully hearing what Jesus said.

Jesus said he would build his Church upon the testimony of who he is, the Christ, the Son of the living God (Matthew 16:16-19). It is good to remember that we are part of his Church and have been brought into fellowship through those who took his commission seriously. With God’s help, we can all take the Great Commission seriously.

I urge each of us to make disciples where we live, and support those who are doing the same around the world on our behalf.

Roy Hegglund is Associate for Biblical Stewardship for the Church of the Lutheran Brethren.

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Small Town Encouragement

CHERYL OLSEN

I recently visited with Heather Shaw, whose husband, Pastor Darren Shaw, serves Faith Lutheran Brethren Church, Hendricks, Minnesota, and also Blom Prairie, just across the state line in Toronto, South Dakota. Blom Prairie and Faith have shared a pastor for many years, with the Shaws ministering there the past five years. Both communities are small; Toronto with around 200 residents, and Hendricks 700. Both have been similar sizes for decades, surrounded by farms and businesses that come and go. The churches are smaller than some in larger communities, but are growing and thriving! Heather says that she is so impressed with the outreach mentality that many of the women have. What can we learn from them?

Each church has its own worship and more traditional activities, but they also join together for common purposes. Hendricks women meet weekly to quilt, and monthly for Bible Study. Quilting provides fellowship and support, and serves the community through warm quilts donated to nursing homes, local moms in need, a nearby homeless shelter, and to an auction for wells in Chad, Africa. Recently, youth have also expressed interest in learning from these older women.

Toronto women meet for Bible Study and a devotional monthly. They do a few intentional outreaches as well, such as boxes for shut-ins, buying items such as coffee, cocoa, towels, etc.—assembling them together and then delivering them.

The annual Christmas Tea is their largest event. Ruth Iverson envisioned this event as a “Gift to the Women of the Community” in 1989. She passed away weeks later, but the annual event continued to grow and give that gift to more than



ChristmasTea at Blom Prairie Lutheran Brethren Church in Toronto, South Dakota (attendance over 100).

Toronto women. Women now come from many surrounding communities, and it has grown to over a hundred women! It has become the “can’t miss” tradition of multi-generational families with grandmas, moms and teenage daughters. Wassail or hot cider and warm greetings start the evening. Food has varied from traditional Christmas food, international food and décor, to chicken salad sandwiches, but it’s always a quality menu. A good speaker, plus a program with Christmas songs and the Christmas story always encourages believers as well as seekers to focus on Jesus, the true meaning of Christmas.

Another gift to the community is “Echoes of Encouragement,” begun in 2016. Heather gathered a multi-generational core of women ages 25-70 to brainstorm common interests that would draw women together. The resulting free events have bridged gaps, and brought different women who don’t always come to church events. They have met at a fire hall, local restaurants, and once at church. Topics have included Flower Potting Frenzy; Clear the Clutter;

Make-Ahead Freezer Meals; Straw Bale Gardening; Pickling for your Pantry; and Heritage Night. The buzz of conversation is heard as they do hands-on things together. Practical spiritual applications abound as devotional thoughts are shared in a non-threatening atmosphere. Their theme verse is 1 Thessalonians 5:11, “...encourage each other and build each other up...”—and this is happening!

With a combination of tradition, innovation, and personal involvement, women are being reached. Praise God for what he is doing in churches large and small, in urban, rural, and small town settings!

Cheryl Olsen is the Faith & Fellowship Correspondent for Women's Ministries of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren.



Visit WMCLB online: www.WMCLB.org



President Brad Hoganson in conversation with students at Hillcrest Lutheran Academy.

Making Disciples of Jesus Christ



BRAD HOGANSON

I'll just go ahead and say it: "I love the Church of the Lutheran Brethren!" As a young child, it was Hillside Lutheran Brethren Church of Succasunna, New Jersey that welcomed our family into the church. It was there that I first heard the gospel. In my teen years, I began working at Tuscarora Inn—the Lutheran Brethren Conference Center in Mount Bethel, Pennsylvania—and it was there that I came to faith and began to learn what it was to serve others in Jesus' name. While working at Tuscarora, I built some friendships with co-workers who were attending Hillcrest Lutheran Academy and they suggested that I would benefit from attending the school. In the

fall of 1983, I began my senior year at Hillcrest. At Hillcrest I was challenged and disciplined in my faith; it was there that I first sensed a call to vocational ministry.

Early in my presidency of Hillcrest, some friends asked how Hillcrest is connected to the Church of the Lutheran Brethren. I thought they might be joking because it had been my experience that the CLB was the common thread of my faith journey and for so many others I knew! Hillcrest would not exist and would be difficult to sustain without the Lord's hand guiding the Lutheran Brethren to continue Hillcrest as a ministry arm.

There are a number of official channels that organizationally and theologically

keep Hillcrest closely and securely connected to the Lutheran Brethren. We like it that way. We love that Hillcrest continues to be a part of the mission and vision of the Lutheran Brethren. We are an active agent in the Church of the Lutheran Brethren, carrying out God's given plan and purpose for the CLB. Hillcrest passionately engages our grand mission as a denomination in making disciples of Jesus Christ.

I want to share three simple stories as small glimpses of how Hillcrest's ministry fulfills the vision and mission of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren.

On August 4, 2018, Pastor Evan Langlois texted a Hillcrest staff member

The mission of Hillcrest Academy is to equip students in a Christ-centered, Bible-based environment for a life of eternal significance.

HLA Mission Statement

in astonishment. He wondered if Logan had applied to Hillcrest. Logan was one of the kids who attended youth group at Bethany Lutheran Brethren Church in East Hartland, Connecticut. Logan had heard of Hillcrest through a friend who decided to attend Hillcrest after hearing a presentation at Tuscarora. Logan didn't have a strong connection to the church, but was part of a family the church was reaching out to. After Principal Isaac connected with his mother and conducted the family interview, Pastor Langlois was notified that the student would likely attend. There was clear rejoicing (in emojis) for a student who was just beginning to plug in at the church and would now find more opportunities for faith formation at Hillcrest.

Every time I see Logan on campus there is a huge smile on his face. His name was announced frequently over the loud speakers at football games, and I can see that he is very well liked in the student body. Three weeks into his senior year experience at Hillcrest, he met with our guidance counselor. He had a significant request. His favorite class was Bible. He'd never studied God's Word in depth before. He was asking the guidance counselor to change his schedule, giving up his study hall period for an additional Bible class. His hungry soul was enjoying a spiritual feast in our classrooms. Along with active Bible study, Logan is purposefully being discipled by staff and faculty. I know this because we survey our students to understand which adults, if any, they feel they're connecting with. Logan easily listed five people he feels are mentoring him in his first three months at "the Castle." Hillcrest is an honored partner in the disciple-making movement of the Lutheran Brethren.

This movement extends far beyond the reach of our CLB churches. I returned from a trip to Norway the second week of

December. Almost 30 years ago the Lord formed a divinely-inspired relationship with the Danielsen School in Bergen, Norway. If you visit Norway and stop in one of the missional or home churches, it is likely that one of the teachers, leaders, or pastors is a Hillcrest alumnus. Jens Doskeland is an alumnus who is active in church planting in the Bergen area. He told a Hillcrest staff member that the community his church is replicating is what he experienced in Hillcrest's dormitory. Jens says that he learned how to live in Christian community in the dorms at Hillcrest, where conflict arose periodically and the young men were discipled to handle the conflicts in a God-honoring way. He proudly talks to his church members about his Hillcrest experience. The disciple-making at Hillcrest extends beyond our country and the roster of our churches.

The missional movement of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren is alive in the Castle at Hillcrest.

This was poignantly communicated during a gathering of donors in Minneapolis last year. We sat in the home of a Hillcrest board member. We enjoyed coffee and finger foods on plates placed on end tables as a graduate from 2018 shared her Hillcrest experience.

This student explained that she came to Hillcrest on a whim. A Google search led her family to visit during the first week of school. After the tour, the girl ventured home to northern Minneapolis to pack her belongings so she could attend Hillcrest—two weeks after school started in the Castle.

The girl had a bumpy experience in her first two years. Purposeful mentorship by a member of Good Shepherd Lutheran Brethren Church in Fergus Falls led the student to a deeper relationship with the Lord. God used the mentor conversations to slowly change the student's heart.

She went home after her junior year a different person. Her parents noticed. Slowly the student's faith took hold in the lives of her parents. The couple sought Bible training. They started volunteering in Christian ministry. The student shared that her faith-formation at Hillcrest is blossoming in her parents' lives.

The student continued her story, outlining how her training called her to be active in Good Shepherd Church. She invited friends from the dormitory to attend church with her. God used the gospel-centered preaching of Good Shepherd to call these two friends to baptism in the student's senior year.

Not only are students being discipled to follow Christ at Hillcrest, they are being used to immediately communicate the gospel, building "spiritual muscles" that reflect the disciple-making mission of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren.

To God be the glory.

Rev. Brad Hoganson is President of Hillcrest Lutheran Academy in Fergus Falls, Minnesota.

Visit HLA online at: www.ffhillcrest.org



The Mattern Family: Kris, Seth, Logan (15), and Emma (9).

Saving Faith

KRIS MATTERN

My name is Kris. I did not grow up in a church. As an adult, I believed that I was a strong woman and I could take care of everyone and everything. Who needed a church? I had me. I was a good person. That surely was my key to heaven.

Then came the year 2010. I rang in the New Year unemployed, having been part of a corporate layoff while I was on maternity leave following the birth of our daughter, Emma, the previous March. In January my husband, Seth, and I learned that the spinal cord lipoma

she had been born with would require a significant surgery. Just after Emma's first birthday in March she had surgery to untether her spinal cord to prevent nerve damage, allowing her to grow normally. I became consumed with her recovery and concerns of her future health.

“God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

Romans 5:8

In June, things were beginning to look up. Emma was healing beautifully and I was working as a temp at the company where I previously worked. Then I received the call. On June 25, just after lunch, I was overhead paged to pick up a call. My sister was on the other end of the line letting me know that our father had a heart attack while attending a car show with our six-year-old son, Logan. She urged me to get to the hospital as quickly as possible. Over the course of the two-hour trip from work to the hospital, the calls with my mom and sister progressed from, “It’s pretty bad,” to ultimately learning that he had passed away before I could get there.

I didn’t get to say goodbye. The last time I saw him alive was that morning when I hugged him after dropping our children off so I could go to work. I should have hugged a little longer that morning and told him I loved him again. I was crushed. I was worried about Logan and what he had experienced. I was terrified of being strong enough to continue on without Dad.

Our family held each other up, supporting each other while we set out, limping together into our new life without one of the people we loved so dearly. I started back to work on Tuesday, July 6, just one week after Dad’s funeral. At 10:00 that morning, for the second time in a week-and-a-half, I was overhead paged to pick up a call that would deliver devastating news.

A representative of the lumber company where my husband worked called to inform me that Seth had been impaled by a large piece of wood when the saw he was operating jammed and then kicked the piece backwards into him. I vaguely remember hearing the phrases “a lot of blood loss,” “Life Flight,” and “get to the hospital quickly.” I asked if Seth was still alive and was told that they weren’t sure. A co-worker drove me to the hospital and

as I stood at the emergency room desk, I heard the helicopter carrying Seth land over us. I was quickly whisked to a small private family room where I was met by a volunteer chaplain and then escorted to the trauma bay. I was able to kiss Seth and tell him I loved him as they kept him stable while an operating room was opened for surgery. They would remove some of his damaged organs and repair torn muscles.

Over the next three weeks, he was moved through three levels of intensive care, then to a regular room, and ultimately home to continue his recovery. In the coming months I would exhaust myself taking care of Seth, our children, and supporting my mom, while I tried to work enough hours to be kept on as a temporary employee. I was a shell of the strong woman that had started the year. I no longer had me.

I began to feel that something was missing in our life—something more than Dad and the safety and security that we enjoyed pre-2010—but I wasn’t sure what. Seth, who had grown up in a church, asked me about attending church. For most of our nine-year marriage I had resisted, but now I agreed. In early March 2011 we attended a service at Good News Lutheran Brethren Church. My brother and his wife had attended there for years and my mom had recently started to attend. It was a very welcoming church and the services were easy to follow. I learned a lot, moving in my thinking from salvation for “good people” to “Jesus plus me.” I just couldn’t figure out what I was supposed to be adding.

We sought membership, so on April 5, 2012 Seth and I sat down with Pastor Mike and two of the elders to be interviewed. At the very end of the meeting Pastor Mike asked me if I believed in God. Yes, I did. He asked if I were to die that night would I go to heaven. I cried. Surely there was more to being saved than Jesus dying for

me. They encouraged me to continue to immerse myself in the Word, attend Bible studies, and regularly attend Sunday services. At some point shortly after that, Pastor Mike mentioned Romans 5:8, “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

I remember reading that verse and things began to click. God loved me as the unworthy sinner that I was. Loved ME. So much, in fact, that he provided for my salvation in a way that I couldn’t interfere. Salvation isn’t “Jesus plus me.” It is Jesus. Looking back, I know that I needed to be at a point where I could no longer rely on myself in order to be receptive to hear, know, and believe the Good News. God used the absolute worst year in my life to prepare me.

Knowing that God loved me even before I believed, I can now look through the pain to the many blessings of 2010 as God cared for us. Both Emma and Seth recovered with none of the setbacks or complications that were anticipated by their medical teams. My unemployment and Dad’s early retirement meant that after dropping Logan off for school, Emma and I were able to have breakfast with him every weekday morning for the six months before his passing. Most of all, God brought our little family to Good News Lutheran Brethren Church, a church that would not only care for me as I took my first steps as a Christian, but provided teachers for my children so that they, too, could learn about a true saving faith.

Kris and Seth Mattern are members of Good News Lutheran Brethren Church in McAlisterville, Pennsylvania. Kris serves as chairperson of the Worship and Music team, and works in human resources for a local hospital. Seth serves on the Trustee Board and works for the Pennsylvania state parks system.



Trisch J., RN assists Dr. O. in a cleft lip repair at the mission hospital.

Hope and Health to Chadians

NOEL JOHNSON

Jesus declared, “I will build my Church,” to his small band of disciples after Peter confessed him as the Christ. In one pithy pronouncement, Jesus defined both his role in and his ownership of this enormous and supernatural construction project. In the early twentieth century, Lutheran Brethren missionaries J.I. and Sophie Kaardahl must have wondered what this Church would look like as they labored in the heat, obscurity, and isolation of southwestern Chad to bring Jesus’ gospel to the Mundang people. Ralph and Esther Fuglestad, arriving to relieve them, must have had similar thoughts. Had the newlyweds wondered that just one Chadian boy had come to faith in the first eleven years of the Kaardahl ministry?

I can only imagine Ralph’s joy during his first dry season in Chad when he

and Berge Revne (coming from Yagoua, Cameroon) ventured out together to preach to a neighboring Masana tribe. Who could have predicted it would be two witch doctors responding to the gospel message that day? This joy must have been a comfort when, barely a year after his arrival, Ralph lay sick in bed, eventually succumbing to a severe complication of malaria.

The death of this patient, godly man saw an outpouring of sympathy from the villagers toward Esther through the shared experience of suffering and death. She prayed that Ralph’s death would “lead many souls... to Jesus.”¹ Years later, the Mundang still referred to her as the “lady of the courageous heart.” Could Esther have imagined at the time that this people group would one day grow into the strongest element of this new Church

in Africa, sending their own missionaries to other tribes?

Years and countless similar stories later, the seminary in Gouna Gaya was in need of a missionary couple to help train Chadian leaders. Paul and Teresa S. answered God’s call to Chad. While in Gouna Gaya, Paul and Teresa would occasionally slip across the border to a mission hospital in Mesquine, Cameroon, seeking help for an occasional medical problem or attendance at childbirth. There they met Bert and Debbie O., a medical missionary couple involved in the beginnings of the hospital.

I first met Paul and Teresa in Fergus Falls, Minnesota when my wife Trisch and I were delegates to the CLB national convention and Paul and Teresa were featured speakers. Hearing of the short-term mission trips we had been leading

“... and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.”

Matthew 16:18

in partnership with the Lutheran Brethren of Cameroon, and aware of our medical backgrounds, Paul advised us to connect with Dr. O., as he had become aware that a new medical project was underway in Chad.

We first met Dr. O. in Chad at the new hospital compound a year before its opening. They had been gifted 19 acres of dusty and barren land fifteen minutes travel by car northeast of Ndjamena and bordered by five unreached Muslim people groups. Marcos H., of Lutheran Brethren International Mission, was present at that first meeting, and LBIM has been represented at yearly meetings ever since. The vision was to reach these people groups through the ministry of medicine. Curiously, the mission paradigm was similar for the early missionaries. Esther Fuglestad (Stalsbrotten) wrote: “Each morning after they held early devotions with the houseboys, they handed out medicine at the dispensary, for ailments of every description.”²

Since the opening of the mission hospital seven years ago, we have journeyed there once or twice a year with small groups from Maple Park LBC (Lynnwood, WA) helping to guide, fund, and encourage the work there. Growing quickly as it met desperate needs for medical, surgical, and obstetric care, the hospital became known in the surrounding areas as the place “where you can have a baby and the mother does not die.” In addition to bringing hope and health to the Chadians, the hospital serves the medical and surgical needs of mission workers of various denominations and associations.

Bible verses are written on the hospital walls and a Chadian chaplain visits and prays with the patients daily. The staff

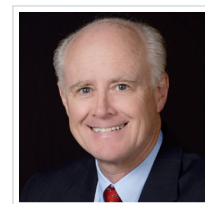
are encouraged to share the gospel with patients as the spirit leads.

Along the way, ZamZam and Jonathan R., who had been living in a neighboring village, founded a thriving school on the hospital grounds. Jonathan, the son of LBIM missionaries to Chad, had married ZamZam, a Chadian Muslim background believer, who had come to faith after reading a Gideon Bible. The school also grew quickly despite the inclusion of Bible teaching in the curriculum. It has become known for its excellence, serving over 600 students through the sixth grade.

Last year, the hospital leadership was approached by two Chadian men who proposed to meet for Christian worship on Sundays using the school building. Before long, a congregation of believers had assembled and attendance grew. God is being praised in open worship now and his Word is being openly taught weekly in the midst of these people groups. God is expanding his kingdom through his Church in a highly visible way over three hundred kilometers north of the original CLB mission in Lere, Chad. We later discovered that these two men had been trained by the Paul and Teresa in Gouna Gaya.

More recently, after hearing Dr O.’s numerous gospel presentations, a prominent and influential village chief has professed his faith in Jesus. Could this chief be a “person of peace” described by Jesus in Luke 10:6? I can only imagine the opposition this man will face from his fellow village chiefs and Imams in the area when news of his confession spreads. Please pray for him and his family that God will hold them fast to the promise of the gospel in the face of unimaginable opposition.

Connecting the dots in this abridged and convoluted tale, the stories testify to the genesis, nature, and composition of this supernatural Church of which Jesus spoke: It is Jesus who builds it and who is the owner. We who—past, present, and future—are called to join him in his Church’s mission to make disciples are the “living stones... being built into a spiritual house.”³ We rest in the assurance that we have become part of God’s master plan to bless all nations.



Dr. Johnson practices Pulmonary Medicine in the Seattle area where he lives with his wife Trisch. Dr. Johnson currently serves on the board of directors for the mission hospital in Chad and as medical advisor to the LBIM to Chad. The Johnsons attend Maple Park LB Church in Lynnwood, WA.

Sources

1. Stalsbrotten, Esther. *The African Trail. Faith and Fellowship Press, 1989, p 26.*
2. *Ibid.* p 19.
3. 1 Peter 2:5.



The Hosch Family (L to R): Emery, Ben, Winnifred, Sara, and Adelaide (Henrietta not pictured).

A Familiar Foreigner

BEN HOSCH

On our first trip to RT Mart, my daughter asked me, “Why is everyone staring at us?” The only good answer I had was this: “Because we look strange.” With blonde hair and blue eyes, my children stick out like sore thumbs in the hustle and bustle of Hsinchu, Taiwan. We are foreigners fumbling through a new language—at the mercy of Google translate when we don’t quite know what we want to say.

And on the opposite end, Taiwan is strange to us. The sights, smells, and sounds are all very different. There are new fruits that look like they come from another planet. Common sense traffic laws seem not to apply to the speeding *mótuōchē* (motorbikes). And there is almost no utility bill or parking fine that cannot be paid at the nearest 7/11 convenience store. When the Apostle Peter writes to the Christians of Asia Minor referring to them as “foreigners and exiles” (1 Peter 2:11), I suddenly feel like I have a better grasp on what that means.

Many Chinese and Taiwanese consider Christianity to be *yang jiao*—foreign religion. David Marshall was told by a Taiwanese man that God “wears a foreign face.”¹ But is the Triune God foreign to the Taiwanese people? In one sense, not

at all. George Mackay was such a beloved missionary that even the hospital in Hsinchu bears his name. And yet maybe God is foreign, because despite years of missionary work, the founding of several Bible colleges and seminaries, and even some very large churches, the number of Christians in Taiwan still hovers at only 6% of the population.

Jesus certainly seems like a foreigner to Taiwan. Are missionaries, like myself, an invasion on Taiwanese culture? Is it worth it to learn a new language and a new culture? Is it worth it to be a foreigner in a land where so many see Jesus as foreign?

Missionaries might be foreigners, but I assure you that Jesus is not. He is the image of the invisible God. By him, and for him, all things were created (Colossians 1:15-16). Our Lord is not foreign to Taiwan, because he created Taiwanese people, he loves them and he died for them. He is not sending his missionaries to any place he is not going and has not gone before them (Luke 10:1; Micah 2:13). Jesus calls his missionary people to go to the very ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). It’s not because Jesus has foreign territory yet to be explored. It’s because many residents of his world have yet to be citizens of his Kingdom.

It’s a funny thought that there is more

“give and take” in being a missionary than I would have expected. To give Christ to Taiwan, I must first receive the gift of its language and culture. I am a foreigner to Taiwan seeking out those who are foreigners to the Kingdom of God. Yet what is foreign eventually becomes familiar. My prayer is that the same may be said of Jesus in Taiwan.

Rev. Ben Hosch is a 2016 graduate of Lutheran Brethren Seminary. He has served congregations in Minnesota and North Dakota. He and his wife Sara are your newest missionaries to the unreached people of Taiwan.



*Is the Lord calling you to International Mission?
Contact: LBIM@CLBA.org*

Source

1. True Son of Heaven: How Jesus Fulfills the Chinese Culture. Kuai Mu Press, 2002.

Pangman Installed



L to R: Rev. Brandon Pangman, Elder James Coomer, Rev. Andrew Foss, and Elder Joel Hanson.

On September 23, 2018, Rev. Brandon Pangman was installed as pastor at Emmaus Road Church in DeWitt, Iowa. Rev. Andrew Foss officiated.

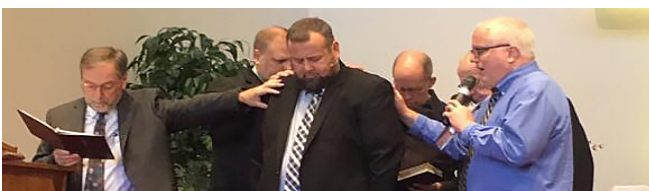
Poore Ordained



L to R: Elders Larry Vigesaa, Jim Skramsted, Rev. Danny Bronson, Rev. Bill Poore, Rev. Luther Larson and Regional Pastor Gary Witkop.

On November 18, 2018, Pastor Bill Poore was ordained at Yellowstone Lutheran Brethren Church in Billings, Montana. Regional Pastor Gary Witkop officiated.

Johannesen Installed



L to R: Dr. Gaylan Mathiesen, Rev. Mark Nienow, Rev. Mark Johannesen, Elders Brian Carlson, Allen Johannesen, and Armin Christofferson.

On October 21, 2018, Mark Johannesen was installed as pastor at True Life Church in Rochester, Minnesota. Dr. Gaylan Mathiesen led the service.

Skones Installed



L to R: Rev. Dan Chell, Elder Mark Billings, Elder Steve Tonneson, Pastor Scott Skones, Regional Pastor Gary Witkop, Elders Jonas Nelson, and Adam Cranfield.

On October 21, 2018, Scott Skones was installed as pastor at Living Word Fellowship in Dickinson, North Dakota. Regional Pastor Gary Witkop officiated.

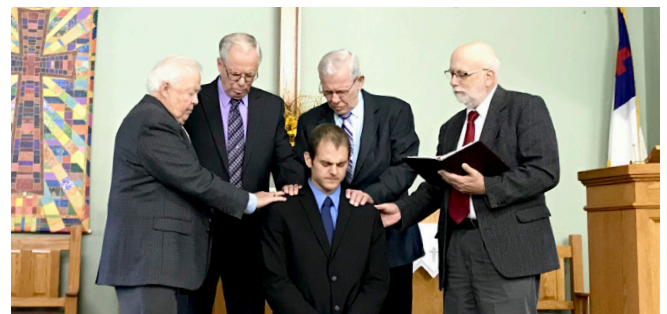
Stenberg Ordained



L to R: Regional Pastor Warren Geraghty, Rev. Andrew Foss, Rev. Aage Larsen, Rev. Daniel Stenberg, Rev. Luther Stenberg, Elders Erling Stedjan and Michael Renn.

On September 16, 2018, Pastor Daniel Stenberg was ordained as pastor at Calvary Lutheran Church in Bergenfield, New Jersey. Regional Pastor Warren Geraghty led the service.

Rostvedt Installed



L to R: Elders Harold Thompson, Everett Watson, Pastor Ty Rostvedt, Elder Marvin Ott, and Regional Pastor Stan Olson.

On October 7, 2018, Ty Rostvedt was installed as pastor at Salem Lutheran Brethren Church in Grand Rapids, Minnesota. Regional Pastor Stan Olsen officiated.

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An Unexpected Visitor

God has a divine sense of humor, as well as perfect timing. He sent us an unexpected visitor that we should have been expecting.

It was October 14, and I was reaching the culmination of a pointed sermon. It was my third Sunday of unpacking our church's proposed new vision statement: "Connect with God, Connect with Others, Connect Others with God."

In my chosen text from Luke 5, Jesus has just called Matthew the tax collector to be his disciple. Why Matthew? "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (5:31-32). In his excitement at being accepted by Jesus, Matthew then puts on a banquet, so that all his friends can meet and mingle with Jesus and the other disciples.

I had just spoken these words: *Consider what this experience was like for the rest of the disciples! Maybe they're thinking, "Jesus calls Matthew, one of these 'sinners,' to follow him, to be one of us. What's with that? And then, Matthew invites us to this banquet, drags us into his world, and we're face-to-face making small talk with a bunch of people we'd never hang out with in public. This is so uncomfortable!"*

At that moment, I looked from the pulpit to the main doors of the sanctuary, which were wide open. Through them, I spotted a man crossing the parking lot on foot, then entering the narthex and moving directly toward the sanctuary. I suspected he needed something.

The man was a stranger. He was 45 minutes late for church. He behaved timidly, moved awkwardly to a chair near the back. And he was very different than most of us. You must understand that our church building is situated between two distinct neighborhoods. The neighborhood to the west is demographically very much like us. The neighborhood to the east... is not. This man clearly came from the east.

As I shared the CLB Vision Statement—"We see God stirring in our church a fresh passion to reach beyond our own comfort to all people among whom God places us..."—I wondered if this man realized what it meant for him.

I concluded by applying the biblical text to our proposed vision: "Connecting with Others who are not like us, in order to Connect those Others with God, requires us stepping outside our comfort zone." And I was feeling anxious. This man heard me publicly commit to connect with him! We were on the hook! What if he just wanted money?

As I waited after the service to greet the man, he never showed up. I found him sitting off in a corner with one of our people. Yes, "Jeff" was looking for monetary assistance. Our man was offering him help finding a job, and more significantly, our man was offering relationship. And, now several months later, the relationship continues...

Rev. Brent Juliot serves as pastor of Oak Ridge Lutheran Brethren Church in Menomonie, Wisconsin.

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