

No other way: Does it matter whether people believe in Jesus?

By Pastor Steve Shipman

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

—John 14:6 NRSV

There is salvation in no one else [than Jesus], for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved.

—Acts 4:12

While we may not like this sort of claim (and there are many similar ones throughout Scripture), if the Bible is our authority, this is what we will teach and believe.

Recently, a post on Facebook called my attention to a Bible study distributed by the Women of the ELCA entitled, "Transformation and Conversion." The student version (downloadable from WELCA) is largely unobjectionable, although I found it a bit jarring when the claim was made that the disciples "gradually came to see the tradition they grew up with through a new lens as they listened to Jesus' words and saw his ministry to those in need." Jesus sounds more like a social worker than one who announced that God's Kingdom was breaking into the world and people needed to repent. But maybe I am just being cranky.

In the leader guide, conversion is studied as a generic psychological phenomenon more than an act of the Holy Spirit through the Word. One of the examples is of "a young woman born to non-observant Jewish parents [who] attends church with evangelical Christian friends during high school, explores Zen meditation during college, and later as a wife and mother studies the Jewish tradition and with her family joins and commits herself to a nearby Reform synagogue." One can easily imagine why the example did not have her connecting with an Orthodox synagogue.

For Lutherans, our faith is not a "path to God" but an invasion from God into our world.

More dubious is another story of transformation (which the author distinguishes from conversion), which reports: "A person who grew up Lutheran and was taught that only Christians are 'saved' [quotes by author] joins a Jewish-Christian weekly Bible study and comes to appreciate the worth of other paths to God, while remaining a loyal Lutheran."

After some good material on Augustine, Paul, and Ananias, the writer (Carol Schersten LaHurd, identified as, among other things, an expert on Islam and inter-faith dialogue) recommends "the story of one of the foremost theologians in the history of Islam, Al-Ghazali." She also suggests reading "more about the importance of *enlightenment* in Islam in the children's book, *House of Wisdom*."

The *Dig Deeper* section announces that throughout the course "we will meet people from other religious traditions in order to gain broader insights into spiritual transformation," adding that "it can be helpful for Christians to see our commonality with people of faith from other traditions." Al-Ghazali is cited again: "Christian writers Paul and Augustine have influenced the course of Christian history, and Al-Ghazali has influenced Islam. He wrote 70 books that have helped Muslims relate to God both intellectually and emotionally."

What the writer seems to presume is that Christianity is one "path to God," and that other people have paths to God that we should appreciate as equal to ours. The problem is that, for Lutherans, our faith is not a "path to God" but an invasion from God into

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No other way

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our world. While the author of the study never questions the Resurrection, one has to ask what it means that God raised Jesus if he is only one among many “paths to God.”

This brings to mind the long note in the first edition of the Augsburg Fortress *Lutheran Study Bible* that says that in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20) Jesus didn’t really mean what Christians have understood through the centuries. The commentator, Duane A. Priebe, wrote regarding the command of Jesus, “That does not mean make everyone disciples. Most people who are helped by Jesus and believe in him never become disciples.” After a hue and cry, the note was removed from later editions.

Wiser Christians than I have debated what the Almighty will do with people who have never heard the Gospel, and I accept that the answer is beyond my pay grade. But we have been commanded by our Lord to “make disciples of all nations,” and too often our so-called appreciation of other religious traditions is a convenient way to justify ignoring His command. When we become more excited about the color of the carpet or a fundraising program than about proclaiming Jesus to those who have never heard the Gospel, we are disobeying our Lord.

We who believe faith is a free act of the Holy Spirit through the Word never have an excuse for violence,

Until we decide exactly what we believe about Jesus, we are unlikely to engage in the sort of evangelism that turns the world right-side-up.

manipulation, or coercion to bring people to faith. And yes, we should expect to find elements of truth in other religious traditions, since as Paul wrote, “Ever since the creation of the world His eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made” (Romans 1:20).

But our marching orders are clear, whether our “tolerant” culture likes it or not. We are called to proclaim Jesus as God’s solution to the problem of sin, and only through his Incarnation, Crucifixion, and Resurrection is salvation offered. This is not a “path to God” but an invasion from God that makes Christian conversion and transformation possible.

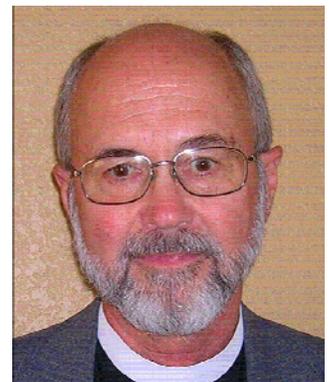
To put the question most directly: Does it matter whether people believe in Jesus or not? Are we to “meet people’s needs” and appreciate all “paths to God,” or is our call to uplift Jesus so that through repentance and faith in him people will be “saved” (to use the study writer’s quotation marks)?

The ELCA and our predecessors do not have a great track record in the matter of evangelism. Until we decide exactly what we believe about Jesus, we are unlikely to engage in the sort of evangelism that turns the world right-side-up.

One might also ask why Women of the ELCA would publish a study such as this. What do they hope to accomplish? In our conflicted and confused time, people need Jesus, not an intellectual study of conversion as a generic religious phenomenon. How does this study bring the participants to Jesus, and how does it build up the Body of Christ?

Lutheran CORE for good reason uplifts the value of “Mission-Driven.” What we mean by that is above all to proclaim the Gospel and call people everywhere to faith and discipleship.

We urge the ELCA to place the Great Commission at the top of its agenda, whether our “open and inclusive” society appreciates us or not. And that would include a more careful editing of its official publications and study materials, and clarification of its study materials’ purpose.



Pr. Steve Shipman, director of Lutheran CORE, can be reached at sshipman@lutherancore.org or 570-916-7780.

In our conflicted and confused time, people need Jesus, not an intellectual study of conversion as a generic religious phenomenon.

New leaders bring strengths in parish and bilingual ministries

Lutheran CORE welcomes three new members of the Steering Committee representing three different states and with strong experience in bilingual ministry.

“I am heartened by the passion and range of gifts and experience our new members (that is, Steve, Keith and Patricia) bring to the Steering Committee and look forward to their contributions to the ministry of Lutheran CORE in the coming year,” said Steering Committee Chair Lynn Kickingbird in regard to the new leaders.

“We are delighted to have Pastors Keith, Steve and Patricia to serve on Lutheran CORE's steering committee,” stated Director Pr. Steve Shipman. “Each of them brings not just extensive experience in the parish, but also important contributions through bi-lingual ministry. We look forward to their insights and assistance in the years ahead.”



Pr. Keith Forni, a native of Berea, OH, serves First Lutheran Church and Santa Cruz Lutheran Church (ELCA) in Joliet, Illinois, in a ministry known as the Joliet City

Center Lutheran Parish. A graduate of Valparaiso University, he earned his M.Div. from Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago. Called as the mission developer of Santa Cruz in 1991, the congregations were linked at First's facilities in 2005, embracing a shared pastorate. There has been continuous Lutheran ministry at this site since 1870. German was the original language of *die Erste Kirche*. The parish now worships and serves in English and Spanish. Its Blessing Bench Food Pantry assists 75 households weekly with supplemental food, health, devotional & literacy

resources. The Common Confession was adopted by the parish in 2009.

Pr. Forni served his vicarage in Brooklyn, NY at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, and was pastor at Incarnation Lutheran Church in Chicago before serving as a bi-lingual mission developer for Mission Luterana San Miguel in DeKalb, IL (1999-2004). Pr. Forni has served as a coordinator of Latino ministries for the Northern Illinois Synod ELCA, and directs the Bilingual Ministry Resources Center of Chicago and Joliet, Illinois. He is a supervisor of seminary and diaconal field work students and the author of several articles in *Let's Talk*, the theological journal of the Metro Chicago Synod ELCA. He also serves as dean of the Northern Illinois Chapter of the Society of the Holy Trinity. Pr. Forni and his wife, Ruth (Strege) Forni, are the parents of three children.

“I have grown to cherish the interdependence, vision, mission-mindedness and encouragement of Lutheran CORE, and I give thanks to God for the opportunity to serve on the Lutheran CORE steering committee,” said Forni.



Pr. Steven Gjerde grew up in Kendall County, IL, and graduated from Valparaiso University, majoring in theology, classical Greek and Spanish. He attended Luther Seminary, graduating

summa cum laude, and served as vicar at First Lutheran in Cresco, IA. At seminary, he tutored Greek and served as a teaching assistant for Dr. James Burtness and Dr. Mons Teige. He served as a member of the *Word and World* editorial board.

Pr. Gjerde served his first call at two congregations in western Marathon

County, WI, and now is senior pastor at Zion Lutheran Church in Wausau, WI. He has written articles in *Touchstone* and *Lutheran Forum*, and was a presenter at the 2013 Lutheran CORE Convocation. He is currently a Doctor of Ministry student at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, studying pastoral care and home devotion. He and his wife, Jane, have four children.

“Lutheran CORE has provided hope, guidance, and a public forum for confessing Lutherans across denominations, and I'm glad to work with others in carrying that work forward,” said Gjerde.



Pr. Patricia Muran was born and raised in Corpus Christi, TX, of Hispanic heritage. A graduate of Texas Women's University with a degree in social work and a

Spanish minor, Pr. Muran worked as a social worker, vocational counselor, banker and realtor prior to receiving her call to the ministry. A graduate of Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, she served as an ELCA mission developer—and now pastor—of Iglesia Luterana Santa Cruz in Santa Maria, CA. She and her husband are the parents of two sons and five granddaughters. She enjoys gardens, keeping up with politics, and travel.

“I hope that Lutheran CORE can be more engaged with Lutherans in their commitment to the ministry of God's Word,” said Pr. Muran.

“God has always provided great leadership for CORE,” remarked Lutheran CORE's moderator, Pr. Paul Ulring concerning the new leadership. “These new Steering Committee members are just a continuation of His faithfulness.”

ELCA Witness: Thinking out loud

By Pastor Steven Gjerde

Imagine a congregation that has enjoyed the ministry of its faithful pastor for more than twenty years. This pastor has opened for them the Holy Scriptures, taught them to esteem the Lutheran confessions, and cared for them not only as comforter but also as sentinel, warning them against sin and false doctrine. All this the Holy Spirit has accomplished through this pastor, who is now retiring.

They form a call committee. They receive the names of candidates. They are diligent, interviewing and listening to the candidates' sermons. Yet what they hear and read does not match the sound pattern of doctrine they've received. "They sound too liberal," says one blunt member, voicing what others had tried to say more gently. "They accept what we've been taught is wrong."

Such a congregation is not imaginary. Versions of it exist across America in the ELCA and are facing this kind of situation or something similar. They have stayed in the ELCA for any number of reasons that withstand armchair critique. What will Lutheran CORE, as the only national organization in a position to speak for them, do about it? How will it help connect faithful pastors with faithful congregations?

Wrapped up in that question is the Scriptural expectation that the church will do all it can to preserve and pass on the teaching it has received. "O Timothy, guard the deposit entrusted

to you" (1 Timothy 6:20). ELCA synodical officials are bound by the decisions of 2009 to assist traditional congregations (or, more broadly speaking, "ministry sites") in locating traditional pastors, should the congregation request it; yet even a synod's ability to identify them can be limited. Lutheran CORE could help both the congregation and the synod, even more than it has.

Lutheran CORE should develop its visibility as the speaker for ELCA traditional believers.

An earlier article in this newsletter reminded readers of ClergyConnect, hosted by Lutheran CORE and accessible through its website. It also explored how traditional pastors and congregations of the ELCA might connect through the "call process" page on the ELCA website. These avenues may well help synods, leaders, and ministry sites to identify each other, but their success would hinge on their ability to self-promote and interpret key words. Lutheran CORE could improve the process.

First, Lutheran CORE should develop its visibility as the speaker for ELCA traditional believers. Not only in matters of sexuality, with which it is closely aligned in many minds, but also in respect to other social statements, ecumenical arrangements, and such ministerial practices as admittance to Holy Communion, Lutheran CORE should endeavor to

speak clearly and widely on behalf of the deposit of faith we hold in common. In so doing, CORE would provide an identifiable rallying point for orthodox members of the ELCA.

Second, as the developing speaker for traditional ELCA believers, Lutheran CORE should consider the creation of a chapter system for traditional ministers and ministry sites within the ELCA. While CORE has served, and should continue to serve, as a broad network that crosses denominations, it would serve traditional ELCA members best by more aggressive attempts to gather them within local fellowships. Interfacing is one thing; seeing each other face-to-face is another.

Periodic meetings, similar to conference meetings, would allow us to form our identity within the ELCA, steward the confession we share with other Lutherans in America, and support and commend one another. Moreover, this chapter system, developing as it would a list of like-minded persons and organizations within the ELCA, would allow traditional leaders and ministry sites to know, track and commend one another within the ELCA call process. Synods, like pastors and congregations, could benefit from this resource.

Just recently, a friend of mine was contacted by a congregation similar to the one I described earlier. Its call committee chairperson spoke with a Missouri Synod friend, who gave him the name of a pastor, who gave him the

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Thinking out loud

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name of my friend. This friend would never have been contacted via other avenues; person-to-person networking accomplished the task and assisted that congregation's synod in identifying a suitable candidate. Lutheran CORE can strengthen that networking.

Finally, the connection between Lutheran CORE and the ELCA seminaries cannot be underestimated. Already, traditional-minded students or prospective students may think they have reason to question entrance into the ELCA's ministry; how much more so if they have no sense of a fellowship waiting to share and confess their doctrinal and moral convictions. The more that Lutheran CORE can share its message with the ELCA seminary communities, the better for the ministry we support, and there should be no question that ELCA seminaries, supportive of the

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2009 decisions, would allow for our traditional perspective to be shared and advocated on their campuses.

The list of ideas I've provided would require much work, perhaps more work than reasonably expected of a committee or set of committees spread across the nation and populated by ministers and lay persons already carrying full vocations. That observation brings the question back to resources and finances: will Lutheran CORE have the increased financial support of those who read this newsletter, so that it can retain its staff and charge them with such tasks as these? The answer to that question, and possibly to the future of traditional

confessors of the faith in the ELCA, lies in the hands of those who read this article now.



Pr. Steven Gjerde is Senior Pastor of Zion Lutheran Church, Wausau, WI, and a member of ELCA Witness. He can be reached at s.gjerde@dwave.net.

Lutheran CORE Connection moving to all-digital delivery

We live in a new day with exciting, novel ways to communicate our message, often for a fraction of the cost once required. Beginning with our November issue, *Lutheran CORE Connection* will be published in an all-electronic format and will no longer be mailed via US Postal Service. Responsible stewardship requires, and modern technology now makes possible, this change that will allow us to devote our resources to mission in other ways.

If you currently receive a print copy of our newsletter but have an email address that you check regularly, send an email to kj.lcore@popp.net with the subject "Send CORE Connection by email." We will gladly add you to our e-news mailing list. Be sure to include your full name so that we can match you to our mailing list. If you prefer not to receive an email copy but have access to a computer connected to the Internet, you may download the newsletter by clicking the blue

"Newsletter" button on our website, www.lutherancore.org.

We know that some of you may not have email or may prefer to receive a paper copy. For a minimal donation of \$25 to defray printing and mailing costs, we can provide paper copies to those who request them. Please call our Minnesota office at 651-633-6004 (888-551-7254 toll free) for more information on how you can receive a print copy of the newsletter.

MissionConnect: Girl's vision for Water Missions inspires congregation

The Lutheran CORE Steering Committee seeks to remind congregations of the challenge that Lutheran CORE makes to member congregations to support one local and one international mission partner.

By Pastor Dennis Nelson

For the last several years it has been the practice of St. John's Lutheran Church in Grove City, Ohio, to have a special Lenten appeal, usually led by someone from the youth program.

Past Lenten appeals have raised funds to buy livestock through World Vision and to provide beds for people in need through Bed Brigade, a local organization in Columbus, Ohio.

Sarah Wittenberg, a confirmation student, asked the youth ministers and pastors of St. John's if this year's Lenten appeal could be for Water Missions International, a non-profit Christian group that provides sustainable safe water and sanitation solutions for people in developing countries and disaster areas.

Sarah's grandmother had been a delegate to the 2013 NALC Convocation in Pittsburgh, Pa., and had heard a presentation from the organization. She gathered some information and gave it to her granddaughter.

When her granddaughter came to the pastoral leadership of the church, their immediate response was, "Yes! Great! Go for it!"

At the time Pastors Don Allman and Scott Ness were figuring out their mid-week Lenten services. They decided to frame their entire Lenten series around water. Each week one of them preached on one of the water passages in the Bible, such as Jesus' calming of the storm, meeting the woman at the well, and turning water into wine. They talked about what Jesus had to say about water, what Jesus did with water, and what water means to our faith.



Sarah Wittenberg's vision for mission inspired members of St. John's Lutheran Church in Grove City, OH, to raise \$10,000 to support Water Missions International.

Water bottles were distributed to everyone who came to worship on Ash Wednesday and the first Sunday in Lent. Special labels were put on these bottles, urging people to remember their baptisms as they drank the water, and then, when the bottle was empty, to put coins, dollar bills, or a check into the bottle, and return it the next time they came to worship.

According to Pastor Scott Ness, "People responded in incredible ways." Gifts to the appeal totaled \$10,000, which Pastor Ness described as "an actual shock." He further commented, "Sarah never publicly stated her goal. Later she told us that her dream was \$5,000. The amount that came in was double that."

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MissionConnect: Girl's vision inspires congregation

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Pastor Ness said that part of the uniqueness of the appeal is that it really empowered a young person. "We supported her from the pulpit and during announcements, but it was her show. It is a fun thing for us when we can empower our youth to do ministry and when the youth are an example of what it means to follow Jesus."

St. John's has weekly worship services in two separate spaces—the sanctuary and a gymnasium—with a combined weekend worship attendance of around 400. Five-gallon water jugs were set up in each worship space as a constant reminder. Several times during the ensuing weeks these jugs were emptied after being filled with

donations, and then were set out again for refilling.

The appeal was promoted through Holy Week, and gifts came in through June. As the donation period came to a close, someone heard that the response was \$900 short of an even \$10,000. So he wrote a check for \$900, bringing the total to \$10,000.

According to Pastor Ness, some of the youth, seeing what Sarah and youth before her had done, are thinking about what they can do next year during Lent. "Sarah's example and the response are generating a



Youth from St. John's Lutheran Church label bottles of water for their Lenten fund-raising emphasis.

spirit of generosity. It is so exciting to watch."

St. John's delegates to the 2014 NALC Convocation in Charleston, SC, presented a check for \$10,000 to representatives from Water Missions International, which is headquartered in Charleston. Sarah and her grandmother went to Charleston on vacation and were there for the presentation.

A local newspaper ran an article in their Faith and Family section about Sarah and what she had done, giving further exposure to her good work.

St. John's is located in Grove City, Ohio, a suburb of Columbus. It was one of the first congregations to join the North American Lutheran Church. If you would like to know more about this appeal, contact Pastor Scott Ness at sness@stjohnsgc.org.

To learn more about Water Missions International go to www.watermissions.org.



Sarah and members of St. John's Lutheran Church present a \$10,000 check to Water Missions International.

Norway (and Western Europe): A glimpse of our future?

By Pastor Don Brandt

Ministry magazine, a Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) publication written primarily for pastors, published in its September, 2014, issue an article by the Rev. Dr. Jan Paulsen, the retired SDA president. He described how contemporary Norwegian society might give us a glimpse of what we will eventually be facing in our own, increasingly secular culture. Paulsen wrote about a Norwegian relative who he believes is representative of the majority view in Norway on the subject of religious faith.

“My wife, Kari, has an uncle in east Norway whom we sometimes visit, and he likes to talk to me about faith. Our conversations are amicable and wide ranging. He is unapologetic about his atheism, yet is not hostile to my views. Rather, his attitude is one of indulgent amusement, which is touched perhaps with pity that I should live my life beholden to a belief system that, to his mind, is little removed from the realm of fairy tales.

In Pursuit of the Great Commission

“This type of response confronts so many of us who pastor within postmodern and secular communities. It is not usually outright hostility that creates barriers to our witness, nor is it that interest in Christianity has been completely extinguished. It is simply that the notion of a faith that actively shapes life seems alien to the postmodern mind. The idea that there is an ultimate truth—a truth that makes demands on our thinking and behavior—seems absurd to someone steeped in a culture of relativism, which regards absolutes of morality or spirituality with deep suspicion.

“Much Seventh-day Adventist evangelism has specialized in

persuasive and effective presentations of biblically-based, propositional truth. But what are we to do when the people we want to reach are ambivalent about the very concept of truth? When they do not accept the Bible as authoritative in any sense?”

What a profound and succinct summary of the challenge we face as witnesses to the Gospel. Paulsen suggests the kinds of questions congregations should be asking themselves if they hope to connect—in a meaningful and effective way—with their surrounding communities. Consider these questions and whether they should be discussed among leaders and members of *your* congregation.

First: Does your congregation have an “extroverted” or “introverted” mind-set? Paulsen quotes Bonhoeffer: “The Church is the Church only when it exists for others.” He then quotes Jesus’ prayer to the Father regarding his disciples: “As you have sent me

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A glimpse of our future?

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into the world, I have sent them into the world.” (John 17:18)

Second: Is your congregation doing the hard work of discerning the real needs of the unchurched in your local community? “Too often, we give people what we know they need and wonder why their response is less than enthusiastic,” wrote Paulsen.

Third: Is your congregation “authentic” in the way it engages your surrounding community? “A secular, postmodern man or woman can smell a sales pitch coming from miles away. Thus, when it comes to outreach in the secular world, it is absolutely essential that we first seek to build genuine relationships with people. Trust is difficult to create, and easy to destroy,” says Paulsen.

And one final quote from Paulsen: “We do not cheapen our core values or beliefs when we freely enfold people into the warmth of our fellowship, regardless of where they are in their spiritual journey. Rather, we are reflecting Christ’s overwhelming concern and compassion for people over everything else.”

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The more challenging our local mission field becomes, the less likely we are to discover a one-size-fits-all, guaranteed-to-succeed program strategy. Our best hope is an ongoing, often trial-and-error, effort to initiate ministries that help our members *develop relationships* with people who are not connected with any faith community.

What about *your* local mission field? What kind of ministry would address the very real needs of people in an authentic way *and* facilitate the building of relationships between your volunteers and those they serve?

Would it be some kind of health ministry? Or offering and hosting a weekly (free) community supper? Perhaps a ministry to the homeless or working poor. Might it be a ministry focusing on the children of your neighborhood; possibly a sports ministry, or a music and drama program?

The answer will be unique to your local ministry context and depend, to a degree, on the ministry gifts and financial resources of your congregational members.

Maybe it’s time to have this discussion with your congregational leaders. And don’t just address this issue by adding the topic to your monthly church council agenda. Schedule a time and place to wrestle with these questions in depth, perhaps a half-day (or full-day) event with plenty of time for reflection, discussion and prayer. And don’t limit participation to only those members who currently hold office.

Need specific ideas for this gathering? Email me.



Pr. Brandt welcomes comments and questions. Contact him at donb@oursaviorsalem.org

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Social media and the Gospel

Pastor Eric Swensson, our social media consultant, offers some insights on leveraging social media for the Gospel.

How can I get more page views for my ministry's website?

This is, of course, a very important question, and let me say upfront that there is no easy path here. The tips I am going to give you will help. Once you have determined what works for you and do it consistently, you will experience increase.

One can pay for a company to do SEO work (search engine optimization), but it is very expensive. Ever since Google and other search engines altered the way they search to avoid those tricks—and also began to give some priority to social media—SEO has become much less popular. So the good news is, if you are already using social media, all you need to do is tweak how you use it.

I have a website for my business (Sound Shore Media), but I do not devote much time to it. I have the clients I want, and I spend my time promoting them, not me. However, I do want it to do respectably well. I turned to a friend of mine, Rev. Mark Ryman, a pastor in the North American Lutheran Church. Mark has been a blogger of daily devotions for a while, and he had put his experience to work for the Carolinas Mission District. I was actually asking him for some advice about something else, and the conversation turned to getting more

“Internet has gone from text to image to sound to video. Each step you take increases interest. Using a graphic makes a difference, and the graphic that is used makes a difference.”

page views (ignore the term “hits”; it is page views you want to use as metrics). Mark has seen consistent growth in the mission district's daily devotions site. He has discovered that the photo-graphics are a huge factor in driving people to the site... particularly if the go-between is social media. Take away the photo-graphic—as he had to do a couple of times because Facebook was acting up that day—and the number of people reached via Facebook is cut in half.

Pastor Ryman said, “Internet has gone from text to image to sound to video. Each step you take increases interest. Using a graphic makes a difference, and the graphic that is used makes a difference.”

His advice to gain more page views is to see that:

- you make daily updates to your site;
- the updates are what people are looking for;
- the updates are graphical (use images); and
- multiple promotions are made each day via social media.

Therefore:

1. Determine what you are trying to achieve and who is your audience.
2. To what are they responding? (What do they seem to like most that you post?) To determine how people are responding on your site you will need to install an app such

as Google Analytics. (Contact me at ejsvensson@gmail.com for further information on installation.)

3. Continue to tweak what you are doing to improve it, and then post it on each social media you are using.

Your ministry may or may not find value in using Google Ads for a website or Facebook ads for FB (I do not recommend it), but you definitely will be discerning what you want to do, what you are able to do, and then posting it and promoting it via social media on a daily basis.

Consistency, patience, and striving to learn to write better, along with the judicious use of images, are all one needs in order to be successful.



Pr. Eric Jonas Swensson works with the Institute of Lutheran Theology in marketing, development and international theological education. The owner of Sound Shore Media, a social media marketing business, he has been using the web to connect evangelistically with people for fifteen years. A historian and a writer, Pr. Swensson can be reached at ejsvensson@gmail.com or 914-235-0361.

Upcoming events

October 25	New Life Lutheran Church Duluth, Minnesota	<p>The Lake Superior Ministerial Association of the LCMC/NALC annual Fall Theological Conference under the theme <i>“Christians and the Afterlife”</i> from 10:00AM – 4:00 PM. Keynote presenter is Rev. Steve King of Sola Publishing. This event is designed for both clergy and laity. Suggested cost is \$10 per individual and \$50 per congregation. Lunch will be available to order.</p> <p>For more information, contact Pr. Stew Carlson (sycharlutheranpastor@gmail.com; 651-207-3939) or Pr. Carl Fiskness (carlfiskness@hotmail.com; 320-260-4255).</p>
October 30	Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary Charlotte, North Carolina	<p><i>“Ecclesia Plantanda,”</i> a Reformation Conference sponsored by the Department of Lutheran Studies at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. Speakers include the Rev. Dr. Joel Lehenbauer and the Rev. Dr. James Nestingen. Download the conference brochure for further information, or contact Dr. Mary Havens at mhavens@gordonconwell.edu.</p>
November 6-8	Upper Arlington Lutheran Church Hilliard, Ohio	<p>2014 NALC Mission Festival themed <i>“Abida – Hearts on Fire”</i> will feature inspiring speakers, panel discussions with people who are currently leading house church ministry, practical resources, and time to connect with other mission-driven leaders. Theme speakers are Bishop John Bradosky and Dr. Gemechis Buba.</p> <p>Contact Jenny Brockman (jbrockman@thenalc.org; 614-777-5709) for further information or go to the NALC website (www.thenalc.org).</p>
November 17-18	San Pedro Center (near) Orlando, FL	<p>Florida Chapter, Society of the Holy Trinity Retreat. Speaker: The Rev. Dr. Walter C. Sundberg Jr, Professor of Church History, Luther Seminary.</p> <p>For further information contact Rev. Larry Recla, Dean of the Florida Chapter, STS, at larryrecla@comcast.net.</p>
April 14-17, 2015	The Coast Hotel and Conference Center (formerly Radisson Canmore Hotel) Canmore, Alberta	<p>Canadian Rockies Theological Conference, <i>“The Worship Wars Peace Talks,”</i> hopes to explore some of the issues surrounding different worship and musical styles and how they might be used in a theological and liturgically faithful way. Scheduled speakers are Dr. Frank Senn and Dr. Amy Schifrin. In addition, recording artist Steve Bell will both speak and present a concert.</p> <p>Conference cost is \$330 CDN. Early bird registration (before March 14) is \$300 CDN. Hotel cost will be approximately \$110.00 CDN PER NIGHT.</p> <p>For ongoing updates (including registration information when all the details are worked out) please join the “Canadian Rockies Theological Conference” Facebook page, or send an email to karl@calvarylutheran.ca to be included on our mailing list.</p>
August 10-14, 2015	Hyatt Regency DFW International Airport Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas	<p>Three Lutheran events: Lutheran CORE Convocation [August 10-11]; Braaten-Benne Lectures on Theology (formerly Theological Conference) [August 11-12]; NALC Convocation [August 13-14].</p> <p>Information will be posted on our website as details are finalized.</p>



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CORE Connection

News from Lutheran CORE

Published monthly by

Lutheran CORE

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New Brighton, MN 55112-2202

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