

ELCA Does Not Honor Its Own Commitments

by Dennis D. Nelson

First, things are allowed. Then they are promoted. Then they are celebrated. Then they become the norm. Then other views are marginalized. The final step is that other views are silenced.

Anyone who does not believe that that is exactly what is happening in the ELCA need look no further than recent events at United Theological Seminary, the ELCA seminary that was formed by the merger of the former Gettysburg and Philadelphia Seminaries. Anyone who still believes that the ELCA will honor its commitments implicit in the decisions that were made at the August 2009 Churchwide Assembly to provide a place for those who hold to traditional, Biblical views of human sexuality and marriage needs to become aware of recent events at that same seminary.

The final step is that other views are silenced.

Recently it became known that Dr. Theresa Latini, president of the seminary, in the 1990's was director of an organization within the Presbyterian Church (USA) called OneByOne. This organization on its website describes its mission as "to equip and educate the church to minister the transforming grace and power of the Lord Jesus Christ to those who are in conflict with their sexuality." Because the LGBTQ+ (Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual-Transgender-Queer +) community, when it hears those kinds of words, immediately thinks shame, abuse, and torture, the revelation of that fact has caused such an uproar that members of the LGBTQ+ community are calling for her resignation, along with the resignation of Dr. J. Elise Brown, chairperson of the board of trustees of the seminary, as well as the resignation of all the members of the board. Dr. Latini has made it clear that she no longer agrees with the mission and purpose of OneByOne, but still the fact that at one time she was in agreement with and was director of that organization is enough to make many in the LGBTQ+ community lobby for her resignation.

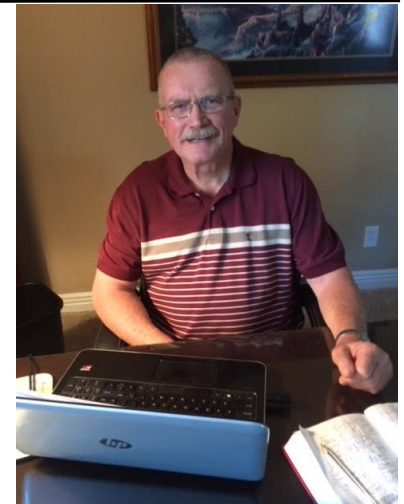
Traditional View

What does all that mean? It means that anyone who has ever held – at any point in their life – the traditional view is not acceptable to the relentless LGBTQ+ agenda, and that there is no room for any view but their view. The traditional view on

human sexuality has become marginalized. The relentless LGBTQ+ agenda will not stop until the traditional view and everyone who holds to the traditional view have been silenced.

Actual Vote

But how does this silencing of the traditional view compare with what was actually voted on and approved at the August 2009 Churchwide Assembly? That assembly approved a social statement entitled "Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust." The social statement says on page 21, "At this time this church lacks consensus on this matter." Therefore it "encourages all people to live out their faith . . . with profound respect for the conscience-



continued on [page 7](#)

Farewell

by Steve Shipman

As I indicated in January, this is the last issue of *CORE Voice* that I expect to be working on as editor (really consulting editor at this point). If the good folks in charge so desire, of course, it may not be the last you hear from me.

The ministry of Lutheran CORE is needed more than ever, and it is up to each of you to share in the work. The ELCA continues to sink into its own narcissistic silliness, still deluding itself that it is a player in the larger culture (when it probably counts around 1% of the population as active members, half of whom likely disagree with its positions on social issues). Meanwhile it looks with scorn on the Great Commission task of making disciples for Jesus, which is what would really make a difference in our world.

The ELCA continues to sink into its own narcissistic silliness ...

As evidence one only needs to look at the New England Synod, which seeks to remove the Great Commission from the ELCA Constitution; the first edition of the ELCA's study Bible a few years ago that had a long-winded comment that when Jesus said to make disciples of all nations he didn't really mean that we should make disciples of all nations; and the craziness in the seminaries (which Pastor Nelson addresses elsewhere and which I plan to address in a future issue of *Forum Letter*).

Pure Bullying

What we see at the Pennsylvania seminary (ironically called "United Lutheran Seminary") is pure bullying by a group

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What Kind of Pastor Does the Church Need Today?

by board member [Pr. Brett Jenkins](#)

Part 3 of 3

I have suggested that to meet the actual needs of the Christian church for the foreseeable future here in the West, a pastor will need to be missional, a healing presence, traditional in the deepest ways, sharing ministry by equipping others to do it, responsive to the changing conditions, personally and profoundly spiritual, and unhurried enough in their conduct that they have time to deeply engage and assess the people and world around them. Though I am proposing nothing new, what I am suggesting here is in practice no modest thing, and I now address myself to the great majority of people in the church, the *laity*.

Throughout these articles I have made pointed suggestions about what I believe pastors will need to be and do to meet the missional needs of the Church of Jesus Christ. I stress that in my estimation these are *needs*, not simply desirable goals. Let me be blunt: I believe that without this kind of clergy, the Church here in the West will need to wither and die so that more faithful Christians from other parts of the world will see the need to replant the Church here. Indeed, I have met missionaries from other countries who, convinced of the spiritual morbidity of the Western Church, have come here *already* for just such a purpose.

Yet I hope that in addressing the question, “What kind of pastor does the Church need today?” I have not given the impression that the burden of transforming the pastorate lies solely with the clergy themselves. Pastors are formed by the Church in order to then shepherd the Church. *We all* share responsibility for changing the role of the pastor into one that is more Biblical and less conditioned by our history and cultural expectations.

Several years ago, Frederica Matthewes-Green shared the fact that a recent survey had disclosed that *most* (+80%) of the women who had obtained abortions did so because they felt they had no other choice, because they had too few resources, too little support from those around them. “It was your mistake; you deal with it,” seemed to be the tacit message they received from even their pro-life friends.

Serve One Another

Our culture likes to enshrine the individual chooser as the sole (or at least primary) agent of change, but that mentality is part of the very postmodernism the Church is called to witness against. While the Bible upholds the fact that we are all responsible for our own choices, it also upholds the reality that the whole community contributes to or challenges the faithfulness of the chooser. St. Paul in particular was aware of this dynamic, exhorting the Church with words like “bear one another’s burdens in love,” “do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another,” and “it is good not to... do anything that causes your brother to stumble.”

Ms. Matthewes-Green concluded her article by stating “there is more to being pro-life than being anti-abortion.” She

was right. In the same way there is more to being for such changes in the pastorate than saying, “You go for it, pastor; we’re behind you.” The people of God can support such changes in the pastorate by being both demanding and less demanding.

Share the Load

They can demand such changes in the pastorate by making their congregational profiles reflect their desire for a shepherd, not a CEO, a spiritual healer rather than a social helper. They can ask the pastor for ways they can share the ministry load so that the pastor will have more time for reflection upon the congregation’s condition and Scripture-based prayer for guidance in leading it. They can demand that the pastor remain healthy physically, mentally, and spiritually, holding the Mutual Ministry or Pastoral Support Committee (your church does have one, doesn’t it?) accountable for this vital work.

Conversely, congregation members can be less demanding upon the pastor’s time and emotions by not expecting them to remember every small detail of their personal lives shared between services on a busy Sunday morning. They can excise from their vocabulary phrases like, “I thought that was what we paid the pastor to do,” and replace them with, “Didn’t we call our pastor to lead us in doing the ministry rather than doing it all themselves?” They can demand that the pastor spend less time and attention on them so they have more time and attention to give to those outside the family of faith.

Tell Him about the Love of Jesus

Yes, pastors make our own choices, but the people of God profoundly influence the choices we make. I will share with you the story of one man whose personal witness is instructive. He was dying as quite a young man of a rare form of cancer. As he lay dying, he drew me close to his bed one day and said, “Pastor, my sixteen year old son... you’ve got to help him. I have faith, and I praise God for the life I have had the chance to lead, but Jonathan... All he keeps asking is, ‘Why would God do this? Why would God do this?’ You’ve got to help him; you’ve got to tell him, like you’ve told me over and over. Tell him about the love of Jesus, and tell him *I* believed it with all my heart. I want to see him again; please tell him... as many times as he needs to hear it.”

Do we have that kind of heart for the world outside the Church? Are we mostly afraid they will ruin our morals and comfortably predictable lives, or are we horrified that they—like those we love who are currently (but maybe not forever) inside the Church—*could* be lost forever? If the former, we will not have the fortitude to make the changes I have outlined. If the latter, nothing will stop us from making those changes.

What is it going to be... for you? ... for me?

...without this kind of clergy, the Church in the West will need to wither and die so that more faithful Christians from other parts of the world will ... replant the Church here.

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“I want to see him again; please tell him ... as many times as he needs to hear it.”

The Institute of Lutheran Theology: Ten Years and Counting

by President [Dennis Bielfeldt](#), Ph.D

Part 2 of 2

Editor's Note: Last time we were pleased to present the [first part of this article](#) on the Institute of Lutheran Theology (ILT). Since then, ILT has received the news that they have been fully accredited by the Association for Biblical Higher Education. We congratulate them on achieving this milestone, which speaks well of the quality of their program and the hard work so many folks have put into the Institute. Students now have access to more sources for loans and funding, and their degrees are formally recognized by other academic institutions.

History

The leadership of ILT was actually *called out* by a church body (the WordAlone Network) to form a new institution. In 2006 and 2007 I was employed by WordAlone to build the House of Studies within WordAlone. ILT received its IRS 501 (c)(3) designation a few months after its legal incorporation in late 2007.

After offering lay programming to congregations from 2007-09, ILT perfected its video-conferencing technology beginning in the fall of 2009 to offer courses to future pastors. By 2010 it had defined its core degrees: *Masters of Divinity*, *Masters of Arts*, and *Masters of Sacred Theology*. Concurrently, ILT established its popular *Pastoral Ministry Certificate*, the bare-boned 12 course - (24 semester hours) program preparing students to teach and preach if they could not do the full 30 course - (90 semester hour) M. Div. The *Doctor of Ministry* degree was added in 2015. In the last five years, ILT has worked assiduously to achieve institutional accreditation.

ILT has spent much of the last decade preparing for accreditation, creating a finance and business office, an institutional advancement office, an office of academic affairs, an office of student affairs, an office of financial aid, an office of chaplain and educational ministry, an office of library and informational services, an office of assessment and measurement, an office of technology and technological support, and an office of public relations, publications, and donor development. It has produced countless handbooks for students, faculty, staff, departmental offices, and its Board of Directors. It has collected, collated and interpreted information from constituents, students, alumni, faculty, staff and its Board. It has written detailed business and strategic plans, written and implemented assessment plans, built and implemented budgets, and received unqualified financial audits. While accreditation is neither necessary nor sufficient for quality education in the classroom, it is essential if one is to create an institution that can survive the tempests of the coming years.

The ILT spent the last decade preparing for accreditation; it gained that status in February 2018.

Current Operations

In all it does, ILT seeks to glorify Jesus Christ by implementing its Mission Statement:

The Institute of Lutheran Theology is a Christian faith community, seminary and graduate school that rigorously equips faithful pastors, teachers and lay people to effectively proclaim the gospel and serve Christ's church throughout the world.

ILT rigorously trains students because it believes that preaching in today's post-modern, post-Christian context de-

mands a very deep theological education. Because a profound awareness of the contemporary horizon is requisite for effective preaching, ILT trains its students more deeply in philosophy than is common within Protestant seminaries today.

ILT has a full-time staff of seven, a graduate faculty of seven, and is blessed by the presence of another 15 part-time staff and faculty. The school boasts an exceptional faculty, with many having long and extensive publishing records. ILT has more than 100 active students and has already graduated 19 from its graduate courses and 34 from its excellent certificate programs.

The Institute has hundreds of friends and supporters praying for and contributing to its success. We have been blessed by gifts of more than \$5,000,000 in the last 10 years, with almost 40% coming from ILT staff and the board.

Vision

ILT yearns to be a safe place for Lutheran theological discussion. We are a big tent. The board, faculty and staff are comprised of men and women from the ELCA, LCMS, LCMC, NALC, AFLC, ELS, Canadian Association of Lutheran Congregations (CALC) and the Augsburg Lutheran Churches.

Our students come from across the Lutheran spectrum and beyond. At their request, we are currently studying a number of new programs including a Ph.D. and select undergraduate programming. We actively seek to partner with like-minded institutions willing to aggressively pursue new student constituencies without sacrificing academic and theological scruples.

Early on, we understood that the challenges to the Lutheran confessional tradition were so great that only an institution with financial stability, academic rigor, and institutional longevity could address them. ILT is that institution. We pray that its institutional girth will allow it to be a faithful, humble witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ to future generations.

Being Human in a Posthuman Age: *The Promise of Christian Anthropology*
Ancient Evangelical Future Conference | June 7-8, 2018

for more information, visit <http://webbercenter.tsm.edu/AEFC2018>

What Does It Mean To Be Human?

Many observe that Western society is increasingly "posthuman"— dismissive of the intrinsic value of human beings. This conference will consider how a Christian theology of human nature can engage this trend, and address related issues, such as sexuality, race, and the dignity of human life.

[Click here](#) for information on the Ancient Evangelical Future Conference (AEFC) Conference.

Attention, Please!

by [Rev. Randy Ouimette, ret.](#)

Retired NALC Pastor from Arroyo Grande, CA

I have greatly enjoyed reading and listening on CORE's website to the [presentations of Pastoral Formation Summit One](#) last June 21, 2017 in Des Moines, IA. The professors, theologians, and church leaders cover both practical and spiritual challenges and necessities for raising up our new generation of servant-leader pastors in the 21st century Christian Lutheran Church. I highly recommend using this stimulating offering on the CORE website.

As a recently retired pastor after 41 years of pastoral ministry, all in California (often calling ourselves the "Lutheran diaspora"), I can see many challenges to identifying and raising our next generations of pastors.

Can I Have Your Attention, Please?

One of the biggest challenges to our next generation of pastors and church leadership is the attention span — or lack of it — in our current culture.

According to an Associated Press (AP) report, Americans' attention spans have shrunk by 50% over the decade from 1998-2008. In 1998 a normal person's attention span was 12 minutes, and by 2008 it was down to 5 minutes. What were the causes? — stress and decision overload. As we know, commercials have been shortened 15-30 seconds these past years, and if a commercial is 10 seconds or less, 90% watch it. But how many pay attention through a 30-second commercial? — 67%; and a 60-second commercial keeps the attentions of only 46%. We get jaded and antsy, "bored" and distrustful.

No wonder commercials get more bizarre and creative and off the wall trying to keep our attention! I have actually really enjoyed some of these, but after the 30 second commercials, I ask myself — what was the point again?

If the "medium is the message" (per Marshall McLuhan), then these are desperate times! And these AP statistics are ten years old, so today we can add personal hand held devices, social media, digital everything, and instant communication as additional reasons for attention loss. Ask teachers in classrooms what it takes to keep the kids' attention.

What is the Challenge?

Our new pastors in formation, like all of us, are first of all not immune to this shortened attention span in their own lives and studies. Can they 'be still and know that I am God' in order to sense the Call of the Lord, that tap on the shoulder of their heart and head by the Holy Spirit? The discernment time of God's call to public ministry takes more time than a Geico commercial. These precious new pastors in formation need us to be patient and persistent in keeping the 'holy calling' conversations going. We can help by going deeper in conversations about the gospel's true healing power in our sophisticated but wandering society. We can inspire them to walk alongside hurting and suffering people as 'little Christs' (per Luther).

Secondly, our new generation of pastors will want (and need) to present the fulness of the Good News of God in Jesus Christ in all of its truths, applications and implications without watering it down or doing a simplistic reductionism that keeps

the listeners' fickle attention span. This will take all the new pastor's focused command of the distinction between Law and Gospel, costly grace and "cheap" grace, true confession, repentance, forgiveness, assurance of salvation, the Lordship of Christ, serving all with agape love, preaching that is focused, not rambling; deep, not trite; true, not trendy — all of this to a people who will give less attention and demand more. With God all things are possible! We all are lifted by the empowering words of the imprisoned Apostle Paul to young Timothy (2 Tim.1:6-7) ... "I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you... for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline."

Where Lambs Wade and Elephants Swim

This is a phrase by Dr. Maurice Lee in his [Pastoral Formation](#) paper presented at the Summit last June. In today's hyped up and digitalized secular culture, we pray that next generation pastors will (if I read Dr. Lee correctly, whom I personally know and respect out here in California) so define and organize their ministries that the least and the greatest will be shown the Servant Savior Christ.

Dr. Lee states, "...the ability of a Lutheran pastor to interpret the two-testament Christian Bible in accordance with its wholeness and unity expressed in sprawling diversity...not to stand down from the conviction that Christian faith is nothing less...than an account of the truth of God and the world, the way things really are and will be by God's promise.

... As we think about the formation and training of the next generation of Lutheran ministers of Word and sacrament, we can and should place emphasis on straightforward doctrine, on the 'fides quae', on the content of the creeds and the catechisms, as that — insofar as these faithfully expound scripture — in which lambs may wade and elephants swim."

Many of us are indeed as lambs who wade with limited attention spans who need God's Truth in all its clarity. Many others of us are like elephants who can backstroke deeply into the theological, philosophical, and societal issues that finds all fulfillment ultimately in God's Truth in all its clarity.

My Prayer

So I pray that our next generation of pastors be:

- excited to stretch our attention spans with Biblical truths
- willing to chip away at our inattentiveness with Christ's touch of grace
- really glad to meet us just as we are and inspire us to listen, watch, and reach out with eternal attentiveness!

...the least and the greatest will be shown the Servant Savior Christ.

If the 'medium is the message' (per Marshall McLuhan), then these are desperate times!

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Pastoral Formation Project Needed Now More Than Ever

by [Dennis D. Nelson](#)

In the February letter from the director we gave the names and professional positions of the six people who will be participating in the second phase of our pastoral formation project. This second phase will be held at a hotel near Chicago's O'Hare Airport on Wednesday, April 11. In addition to the seven members of the board, four presenters will be there in person, and two will be participating by Skype, as we hear from people who are doing something unique and/or particularly effective to raise up future leaders, including pastors, for the church. A link to that article can be found [here](#).

One retired ELCA pastor, upon reading that article, wrote in an email, "Wow. . . this looks awesome! Your report gives me some fresh air . . . and hope!"

Another ELCA pastor, who is now serving as a chaplain in a Lutheran home, told me about visiting a new resident (a retired college professor, whose father was Roman Catholic and whose mother was Lutheran). This person asked, "What's going on with these new pastors coming out of seminary? They are not what we used to get – in terms of spiritual and Biblical focus."

Looking at what is happening in ELCA seminaries, we understand these people's concern.

New ELCA Video

The ELCA has released a new video encouraging and challenging people to consider public ministry. The video is entitled, "Do You Want to Change the World?" and is promoting all seven ELCA seminaries. You have got to

admire and appreciate the energy, commitment, passion, and enthusiasm of the young man in the video. But there is something disturbing about what is missing. *Jesus is never mentioned even once in a video that is challenging people to consider public ministry.* Basically what we are told is this. "Just show up." "Do you want to change the world? Just show up." Jesus is not needed. Jesus is not a part of it — except perhaps to provide inspiration. We can change the world (implication – we can save the world) just by our showing up. A link to that video can be found [here](#).

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Intolerance Towards Traditional Views

The total intolerance of the LGBTQ+ community (which the ELCA allows and even enables) at United Theological Seminary in Philadelphia and Gettysburg towards the traditional view on human sexuality and marriage has been revealed by their reaction to the fact that at one time the president of the seminary served as director of an organization with a traditional view. Click [here](#) for more on this topic.

At Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, a fairly minor incident resulted in a large group of students demanding that the seminary become involved in a major, campus-wide campaign against systemic racism. Would that the student body have as deep a concern for the lost and as great a desire that people come to know, believe in, and put their trust in Jesus!

Naked and Unashamed

A movement has risen out of the student body at Lutheran

School of Theology in Chicago. Called "Naked and Unashamed," this movement rejects marriage by any definition as being normative for sexual activity. Lutheran CORE's response to this movement can be found on our website. A link to that response can be found [here](#).

Would that the student body have as deep a concern for the lost ...

And we are in conversation with several ELCA congregations who are telling us that they are not able to find an orthodox and outreach-oriented pastor to be their next pastor, and their synod is not able to help.

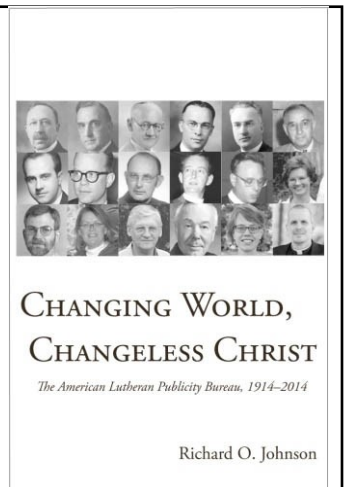
Next Generation of Pastors

With these kinds of dynamics happening in the church and at the ELCA seminaries, it is only appropriate that we be concerned about what kind of pastors will be available in the future. Therefore, Lutheran CORE is working with leaders from four different Lutheran church bodies – ELCA, Missouri Synod, LCMC (Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ), and NALC (North American Lutheran Church) – to address the issue of what can we do to raise up a whole new generation of Lutheran pastors who will believe that the Bible is the Word of God, and who will be committed to reach people for Jesus Christ.

Changing World, Changeless Christ

Established over a century ago, the American Lutheran Publicity Bureau (ALPB) continues to critique various Lutheran church bodies to this day. It is a historical look back at the ALPB and some of the consequences of the decisions made by those church bodies.

\$16 per copy plus shipping
Click [here](#) to order or call
(607) 746-7511

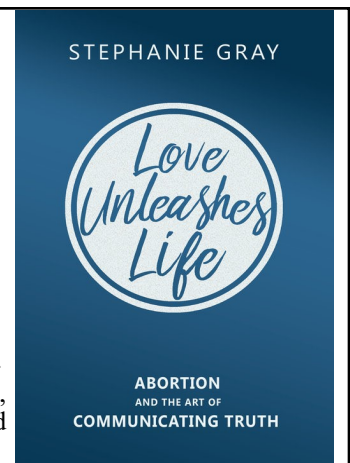


Love Unleashes Life

Have you ever shut down in frustration when you wanted to be able to hold a *civilized* conversation about abortion with someone who completely disagrees with your pro-life beliefs? Then this is the book for you.

Stephanie Gray has spoken on this topic all over the world. She has done the hard work of thinking through the tough questions and tackles them with faith, intelligence, clarity, courtesy and humor. For more information, click [here](#).

If interested in discussing the book, contact [Kim Smith](#).



Many Thanks and God's Blessings to Steve Shipman

by [Dennis D. Nelson](#)

On behalf of the board of Lutheran CORE, I would like to express my deepest appreciation to Pastor Steve Shipman. This March issue of our newsletter, *CORE Voice*, is the final issue which he will be working on as editor. We also want to express our appreciation to Kim Smith, a member of the board, who worked with Steve on the January and March issues and now will be serving as editor. Kim is also the person who developed our new website, which we feel is a better reflection of what we are doing and what we are focusing on now.

Pastor Steve has been a part of the renewal movement within the Lutheran Church for many years. In addition to serving as a Lutheran pastor, he was secretary of the Lutheran CORE Steering Committee for several years before becoming director. Since retiring as director in early 2015, he has been editor of our newsletter, and now will continue to play a major role in the ministry of Lutheran CORE by overseeing our Facebook page and group.

There are many things that I deeply appreciate about Steve. First, he seems to know everyone who has been involved with Lutheran renewal. He knows the history, because he has played a major role in that history. He has been so willing to share his knowledge, insight, and wisdom with me as the new director. I remember when he said, "One of the best parts of the job is all the great people you get to meet and work with." I have found what he said to be very, very true.

He speaks and writes with clarity and conviction. He knows the major issues and can address those issues with great insight, precision, and passion. His commitment to the authority of the Bible is unwavering. His love for Jesus is real. His dedication to the ministry of the church is strong.

I am very grateful to Steve for all that he has done for Lutheran CORE. I am glad to count him as a good friend, and I am very thankful that I can call on him at any time for information, wisdom, guidance, and insight.

God's richest blessings to you, Steve.

Every Eight Seconds...

by [Pastor Brad Hales](#)

What can we do in eight seconds? Tie our shoes? Turn on the television? Use the microwave? Make a cup of coffee with a Keurig? Eight seconds is very quick, isn't it? But there is one thing that is happening every eight seconds in our country, and it's going to continue for the next thirty plus years. So, what is it? Every eight seconds an individual is turning 65 years of age in the United States. Our country is aging at a rapid rate, and the church is no exception.

The average age of a Lutheran is sixty or better. In most of our congregations we are now accustomed to a sea of gray hair rather than the laughter of children. Some may come to the conclusion that an aging church signals stagnation, decline, and eventual death. But instead of thinking negatively about this condition, have we ever thought that this is a blessing instead of a curse? God has provided us with the asset of older adults to renew his church, to grow disciples, and to evangelize for the Lord's Kingdom. Are we equipped and prepared for this challenge?

In Isaiah 46:3-4 it is written, "Listen to me, O house of Jacob, all the remnant of the house of Israel, who have been borne by me from before your birth, carried from the womb; even to your old age I am he, and to gray hairs I will carry you. I have made, and I will bear; I will carry and will save." Throughout Scripture, there are several examples of older adults being used by the Lord. Genesis 18:9-15 tells us that even at an advanced age, Abraham and Sarah would bear a child to fulfill God's covenantal promises. In Samuel 17:27-29; 19:31-38 we are told of an older man named Barzillai who intentionally served King David. Both the aged Simeon and Anna are discussed in Luke 2:22-38, as they witnessed and worshiped the new born Savior. And in Titus 2:1-5, both older men and women are instructed on how to conduct themselves and mentor those who are younger.

A Witness to Future Generations

Some in the church might think that when they age, ministry has to "cease and desist" (Rocking Chair Theology). But this is not God's plan! The Lord still intends to use older adults to

grow in their witness of Jesus Christ to future generations. As it is written in Psalm 71:17-18, "O God, from my youth you have taught me, and I still proclaim your wondrous deeds. So even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do not forsake me, until I proclaim your might to another generation, your power to all those to come."

So, how do you begin to build a Mature Adult Ministry and literally "reach out" to the aging, since the "fields are white unto harvest?" I would like us to consider the 5 S's of Senior Adult Ministry - Spiritual, Support, Social, Service and Self.

In the **spiritual**, we intentionally need to help older adults grow in their discipleship of Jesus through worship, Bible study, prayer, retreats, adult VBS and study. **Support** may mean starting support groups, grandparenting, visitation, aging in place, and specific evangelism to older adults. In **social**, this might include sponsoring meals, programs, and educational trips. **Service** may encourage using talents and abilities in the church or community. And **self** may introduce exercise, nutrition, counseling, family relationships and health care. Anything we do to help the aging grow in the faith, share the faith, and live the faith will be beneficial for the congregation.

Engaging the Aging

Yes, the Church is aging at a rapid rate. Will we see this as a threat or an opportunity? God has blessed us with the asset of aging to literally renew and revive Christ's Church. Let us focus on "engaging the aging," helping mature adults to strengthen their discipleship and grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ.

Brad Hales is the pastor of Reformation Lutheran Church, Culpeper, Virginia. He presently leads the North American Lutheran Church's Senior Adult Ministry Team.

The Lord still intends to use older adults to grow in their witness of Jesus Christ to future generations.

... the 5 S's of Senior Adult Ministry - Spiritual, Support, Social, Service and Self.

ELCA Does Not (continued from [p. 1](#))

bound belief of the neighbor.” It then continued, “Regarding our life together as we live with disagreement, the people in this church will continue to accompany one another in study, prayer, discernment, pastoral care, and mutual respect.” There is no way that the ELCA is living according to that spirit in the way in which it is allowing the attitude of the relentless LGBTQ+ community to become overwhelmingly predominant.

Four Views

That same social statement on pages 20 and 21 outlines four different views that members of the ELCA hold “with conviction and integrity” regarding same-gender relationships –

- (1) that they are sinful and contrary to Biblical teaching;
- (2) that they are a reflection of a broken world;
- (3) that the Bible when speaking of same-gender relationships is not addressing the issue of sexual orientation and lifelong loving and committed relationships as we know them today;
- (4) that same-gender relationships should be lived out with lifelong and monogamous commitments that should be held to the same rigorous standards, sexual ethics, and status as heterosexual marriage.

As I read it, the ELCA in August 2009 did not endorse same-gender marriage.

The social statement says on page 19, “This church . . . will include these different understandings and practices within its life as it seeks to live out its mission and ministry in the world.” There is no way that the ELCA is living according to that spirit in the way in which it is allowing the attitude of the relentless LGBTQ+ community to become overwhelmingly predominant.

That same assembly also approved several changes to

[ELCA] is allowing the attitude of the relentless LGBTQ+ community to become overwhelmingly predominant.

Farewell (continued from [p. 1](#))

of faculty and students (and if you think the students instigated it please contact me for a good deal on shares of the Brooklyn Bridge) who falsify what the Churchwide Assembly, supposedly the “highest legislative authority” in the ELCA, actually adopted, in order to gain power and control.

But then those of us who saw the abortion statement “interpreted” to mean the opposite of what it says should not be surprised. Nor should anybody be shocked to watch congregations continue their hemorrhage of members as the older generation dies off or walks away and the newer generation the ELCA so eagerly covets sees nothing to attract them. Jesus is the attraction that has drawn people to faith for 2,000 years now, and the Holy Spirit works through the Word and Sacraments, not political advocacy or pandering to certain groups.

Not Immune

Those who have left the ELCA for other church bodies should not fool themselves into thinking they are immune from the forces that have led the ELCA into its effective apostasy and

Jesus is the attraction that has drawn people to faith for 2,000 years.

ELCA ministry policies, including the following—

Resolution 3 – that in the implementation of any resolutions on ministry policies the ELCA would commit itself to respect the bound consciences of all.

Resolution 1 – that the ELCA would commit itself to find ways to allow congregations that choose to do so to recognize, support, and hold publicly accountable lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships. (Note that the ELCA is not saying that recognizing same-gender relationships would become the only acceptable position, but that recognizing same-gender relationships would be allowed for those congregations that choose to do so.)

Resolution 2 – that the ELCA would commit itself to find a way for people in such same-gender relationships to serve as rostered leaders of this church.

Resolution 4 – that the ELCA would call upon its members to respect the bound conscience of those with whom they disagree, and would be committed to respect the conviction of members who believe that the ELCA should not call or roster people in committed same-gender relationships.

Inflicted upon the Church

That is what was actually approved back in August 2009. Were we so naïve then as to actually believe that that is the way it would be lived out? Are we so naïve now as to actually believe that there still is a place for the traditional view within the ELCA? Are we so naïve now as to not see that what is happening at an ELCA seminary is a warning of things to come as we realize that seminarians who are being trained in that kind of a setting and with that kind of a mindset will soon be inflicted upon the church? Lord, help us and watch over us!

Are we so naïve now as to actually believe that there still is a place for the traditional view within the ELCA?

implosion. The emphasis of Lutheran CORE on pastoral preparation is exactly where all Lutheran churches need to focus their efforts, because without faithful teaching and effective discipline they will soon find themselves in the same position. Sexual ethics are far from the most egregious of the ELCA’s errors.

Like it or not, when an unchurched person sees the word “Lutheran,” they aren’t interested in whether it is ELCA, NALC, LCMC, LCMS or WELS. As long as we claim the Lutheran mantle, we are in this together if we are serious about Christ’s world mission.

Lutheran CORE was reorganized in 2010 to recognize the necessary linkage of those who would leave or had left the ELCA and those who remain. We don’t have the luxury of washing our hands of one another in a culture increasingly hostile to the values proclaimed in the [Common Confession](#).

Benjamin Franklin supposedly told the Continental Congress that, “If we don’t hang together, most assuredly we shall all hang separately.” That is also true of Lutherans in twenty-first century North America. And that is why Lutheran CORE needs and deserves your continuing prayers and support.

We are in this together ...

Coming Events

Pastoral Formation Summit, Phase Two, April 11, 2018. Please hold this event in your prayers. [Click here.](#)

Ancient Evangelical Future Conference (AEFC) will be held again in June at Trinity School of Ministry. [Click here.](#)

Pro Ecclesia Conference, “Hope Today,” June 4-6, 2018, sponsored by Center for Catholic and Evangelical Theology, at Loyola University in Baltimore. For more information see the [Epiphany Newsletter](#). [Click here](#) to register for the conference.

LCMC Youth Event, July 17-20, 2018. Grand View University, Des Moines, Iowa, “Called 2 Follow.” [Click here.](#)

Lutheran Week, August 13-17, 2018. Crown Plaza Denver Convention Center, Colorado. Includes **Women of the NALC gathering**, **Braaten-Benne Theological Lectures**, and the annual **NALC Convocation**. [Click here.](#)

LCMC Annual Gathering, October 7-10, Des Moines, Iowa. [Watch this link for more information.](#)

Are You Sponsoring an Event? We Would Love to Help You Get the Word Out

If you are planning an event that you believe Lutheran CORE members would want to know about and that is consistent with the *Common Confession*, please let us know. Brief articles and pictures are always welcome. We also can share them on our website and our Facebook and Twitter feeds.

Contact CORE’s new editor, Kim Smith, by clicking [here](#).

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Weekly Devotions and Sermon Starters

[Weekly devotions](#) continue to be available on our new website. Pastor Dennis Nelson, president of the board and director of Lutheran CORE, posts a devotional based upon one of the following Sunday’s readings every Tuesday. Pastor Steven Gjerde, vice-president of the board, writes a devotional based upon one of the previous Sunday’s readings in the Missouri Synod lectionary series, which is posted every Wednesday. A link to these devotionals is then posted on a number of different Facebook and Twitter accounts. Spread the good word about these resources!

CORE Voice

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