

Remembering the Reformation

NALC pastor in Florida has amazing collection of Reformation memorabilia

Many people are observing the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017, but Pastor Paul Arnold may be outdoing them all.

The pastor of First Evangelical Lutheran Church of West Palm Beach, Florida, has been collecting Reformation memorabilia for many years. He is now sharing his extensive collection with visitors to the Martin Luther Center created by his congregation.

“It’s an informational place letting people know who Martin Luther was and what he did within the Church,” he said. “The center is arranged chronologically. It’s a visual experience.”

Pastor Arnold described the center as “kind of a show and tell for adults,” on a YouTube video about the center.

Pastor Arnold’s collection started with a Luther medal from the 1933 World’s Fair in Chicago that he was given 40 years ago. It expanded to more medals, then to postcards, German money, and stamps. His collection now includes eight stained glass windows, 1,500 framed pictures, 2,700 books, 30 movies, and 200 compact discs on Luther, the Reformation, and related matters.

“It’s got to be one of the biggest collections in the United States,” Pastor Arnold said.

The collection includes authentic pieces dating to 1521, including an early edition of Luther’s translation of the first five books of the Bible into German and a 1540 edition of Luther’s Bible.

“There’s also some really fun stuff,” he said. “I like that the Germans don’t always take Luther so



Pastor Paul Arnold (center) poses in the Martin Luther Center of First Evangelical Lutheran Church of West Palm Beach, Florida, with NALC leaders, from left, Pastor David Wendel, Pastor Gemechis Buba, Bishop John Bradosky, and Pastor Mark Chavez.

seriously.” Some of the “fun stuff” includes snuff boxes and rubber ducks.

“Martin Luther is the second most commemorated person with coins and the second most written about,” Pastor Arnold said. Jesus tops both categories.

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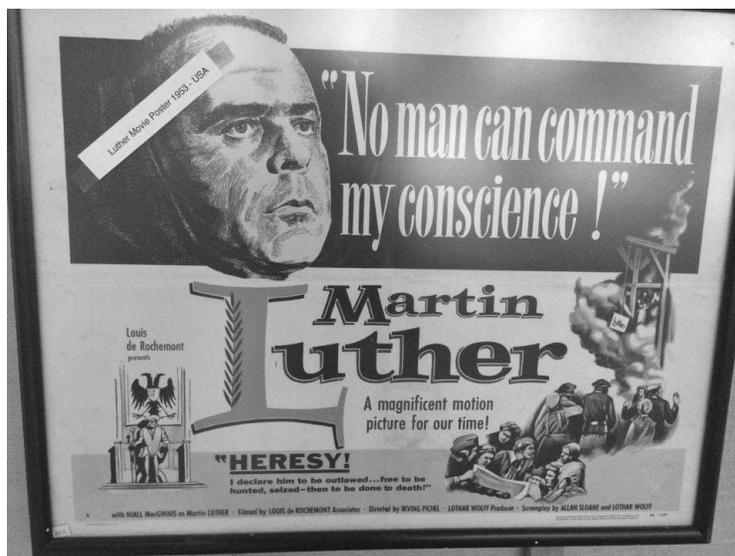
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The Martin Luther Center is housed in a 3,700-square-foot building previously used by three different banks and given to the congregation in 2015 when the last bank closed. Pastor Arnold's collection was previously stored in four garages.

Pastor Arnold said that Martin Luther needs to be remembered "because of his stand on Scripture, because he changed the Christian Church ... and his role in providing a foundation for the German language. There also wouldn't be much congregational singing without Luther."



Northwestern Publishing House created this logo for the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. It is available as a poster and on a variety of other items at nph.net.



Poster from the 1953 Martin Luther movie starring Niall MacGinnis displayed in the Luther Center.

Oct. 31, 1517 — when Martin Luther posted his 95 Theses on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany — is usually considered the start of the Reformation.

The Reformation anniversary has brought a lot of extra attention to the Martin Luther Center and Pastor Arnold's collection. "People who aren't Lutheran don't know very much about Martin Luther," he said.

The center hosts special events and speakers and offers a worship service on Wednesdays at noon. They will be offering a Reformation service and featuring a different Martin Luther movie each day during Reformation week Oct. 29-Nov. 4.

To schedule an appointment to visit the Martin Luther Center, contact Pastor Arnold at 561-833-9653 or parnold911@aol.com.

"I encourage you to visit and enjoy one of the many tours of the facility by Pastor Paul Arnold. It is the largest collection of Luther related museum pieces and memorabilia I have seen in the United States," said NALC Bishop John Bradosky. "Pastor Arnold will help you to gain a more thorough understanding of Luther's life, his faith, and his legacy of leading the Reformation. During this year of commemorating the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, this should be your destination if you can't make it to Germany. Come and spend a day at the Luther Center."

LCMS and NALC dialogue produces new book on Law and Gospel

When representatives of the North American Lutheran Church and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod started meeting together over five years ago, it was decided that the group would sponsor a book of essays on the proper distinction of God’s Law from his Gospel.

That book is now available from Concordia Publishing House (cph.org).

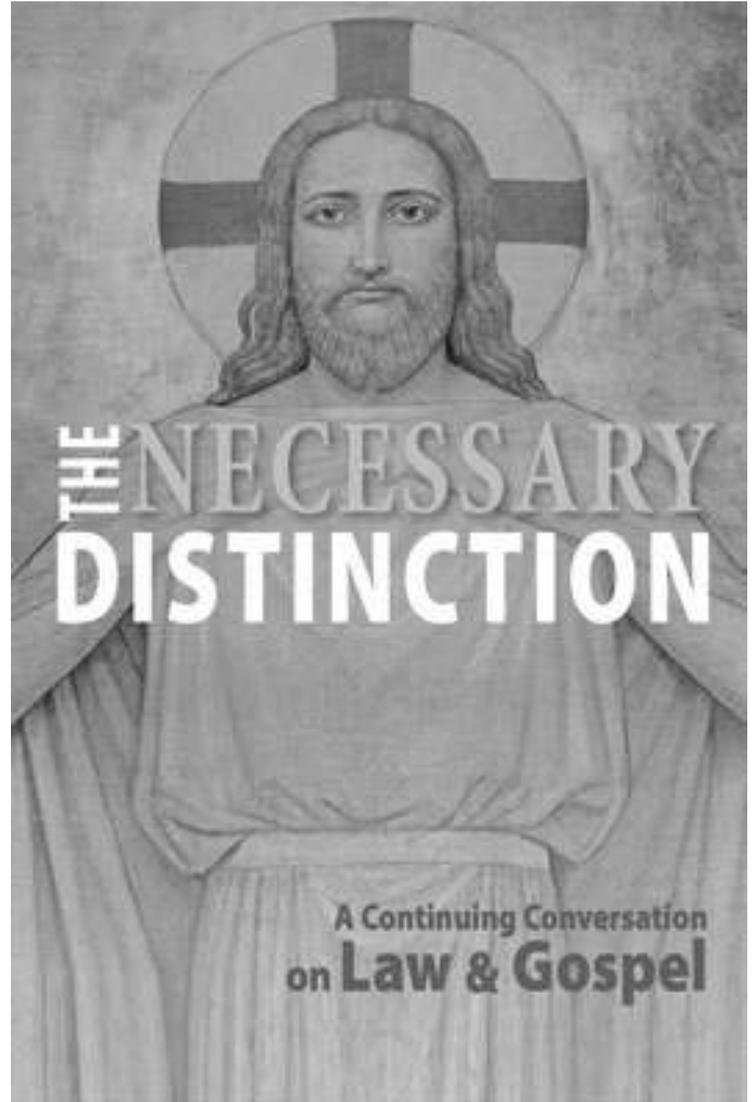
The Necessary Distinction: A Continuing Conversation on Law and Gospel contains 13 essays on the relationship of the Law-Gospel distinction to preaching, pastoral care, missions, ethics, and the Christian life.

The essays are written by Pastor Peter J. Brock, Dr. Albert B. Collver III, Pastor William M. Cwirla, Dr. Stephen Hultgren, Dr. Naomichi Masaki, Dr. Mark C. Mattes, Dr. James Arne Nestingen, Dr. Steven D. Paulson, Prof. John T. Pless, Dr. Mark A. Seifrid, Pastor Larry M. Vogel, and Dr. Roland F. Ziegler.

The book was edited by Dr. Albert Collver III (LCMS), Dr. James Arne Nestingen (NALC), and Prof. John T. Pless (LCMS).

“I’m pleased that we have brought together a variety of confessional Lutheran scholars from North America and Australia to provide our churches with vigorous and fresh discussion of a theme at the heart of Lutheran theology. It is our hope that this book will be used in pastoral gatherings throughout the NALC, LCC, and LCMS to challenge and better equip pastors to engage the fine art of distinguishing Law and Gospel in all that they do,” said Prof. John T. Pless, author of two of the essays and one of the three editors of the book.

“In our day, when many Lutherans seem to have lost their way biblically, this book is much needed. It is for those who preach the Word and those who hear the Word, for the theologically trained and those who aren’t. It is a gift to our churches and to



all who are committed to the ‘necessary distinction,’” said Pastor David Wendel, NALC Assistant to the Bishop for Ministry and Ecumenism.

In his endorsement of the book, NALC theologian Dr. Robert Benne described the book as “a tremendous resource.” “All you want to know about the distinctive Lutheran witness to the proper relation of Law and Gospel is in this volume. It attends to the classic debates within Lutheranism about that relation, with special focus on the third use of the Law. The definitive essay by Stephen Hultgren alone is worth the price of the book,” he wrote.

The need for reform in the church today

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we approach the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, I am sharing with you portions of an article I was asked to write about the need for reform in the Church today.

While our context is different, the issues that necessitated the Reformation are evident as the Church continues in a state of decline, especially in the West. I believe our pathway forward will necessitate a return to the heart of the Reformation and a sacrificial embracing of the nature and authority of Scripture.

Martin Luther understood the Scriptures as the ultimate authority for faith and for life. It is from the Scriptures that the Church obtains its authority, as the Scriptures bring the Church into existence and sustain it. Luther's sense of the holiness and transcendent nature of Scripture is as profound as his love for it.

In his lectures on the Psalms, Luther writes, "What pasture is to the beast, the nest for the birds, the stream for fish, the Scriptures are for believing souls. To the arrogant, of course, they are a stumbling block; he will have nothing to do with them, since they offer him nothing. But to him who approaches the Scriptures with humility they open themselves and themselves produce humility, change man from a desperate sinner into a child of God. They give everything which the soul needs, and it is to tempt God, if anyone will not be satisfied with the Scriptures. They are the fountain from which one must dip. Each word of the same is a source which affords an inexhaustible abundance of water to everyone who thirsts after the saving doctrine. God's will is completely contained therein, so that we must constantly go back to them. Nothing should be presented which is not confirmed by the authority of both Testaments and agrees with them. It cannot be otherwise, for the Scriptures are divine; in them God speaks and they are his Word."



From the Bishop

Bishop John Bradosky

In his lectures on the Psalms, Luther regards the expressions, "God speaks," and "the Scriptures speak," as convertible. To hear or to read the Scriptures is nothing else than to hear God. They are his sanctuary in which he is present. Therefore we dare not despise one single word of the Scripture for "all its words are weighed, counted and measured." (*J. Michael Reu, Luther and the Scriptures, pp. 5-6*)

This understanding of the authoritative and transcendent nature of the Scripture as the norm for all matters of life and faith must again be asserted as the foundation for reform and renewal in the Church today. This authority must be understood to transcend all other competing authoritative sources in our culture.

In reflecting on the first Reformation, many applauded Luther's efforts in moving the Bible from the cathedral to the kitchen table of every believer's home. Today it must be reassembled in its totality from the trash heaps of those who have engaged in minimalism, deconstruction, and revisionist techniques for minimizing its normative influence. It must be pulled away from those who deny its truth and power while asserting contemporary human wisdom as more authoritative and relevant to our needs.

This transcendent truth must find its way back into the daily devotional life of every Christian — a guide to every relationship, the foundation of the faith we

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believe, and the inspiration to engage in Christ's mission that provides direction and purpose for living.

While clergy play an important role in providing the clear proclamation of the Scripture as they engage in Word and Sacrament ministry and in catechesis — faithfully teaching the truth contained in the Scripture — the power of this new or continuing reformation will be the role of the laity, what I believe was Luther's original intention. This focus is the nature of discipleship, which is just beginning to impact our life together.

Our understanding of Word and Sacrament propels us into discipleship, a life of following Jesus. What we receive in worship we carry with us into the world. In Baptism, we receive Christ and his kingdom. We take on a new identity as a child of God, a citizen of the Kingdom Jesus came to proclaim. To our own name is added the name "Christian." We become a child of God, an inheritor of his Kingdom.

Parents, along with the Christian community, take on the responsibility of discipling the child to become a follower of Jesus, maturing in the faith until they, too, are able to share their faith in Jesus with others and disciple them. Unfortunately, we have often abandoned those children and families after the sacramental act is concluded.

We have failed to ask the far deeper Lutheran question, "What does this mean?" What are the implications for parents and sponsors? How have we trained mentors to disciple the parents or to walk with both the parents and their children in an intentional process toward becoming a mature follower of Jesus Christ?

Asking those questions would insure that we understand the implications of Baptism, leading us to a mature understanding of the Priesthood of all Believers, as well as a more complete understanding of Christian vocation. Such an understanding of Baptism would include time for daily confession, forgiveness and repentance, making good use of the promises received in Baptism. Private confession with another brother or sister in Christ would not seem foreign to our life but a treasure that unbinds and frees us.

This understanding of discipleship moves us from the Word read and proclaimed at worship into a life of daily reading, reflection, study and meditation on the Word, providing time for Christ to speak through his Word as he is present in it.

This discipline is more than a personal and privatized endeavor. Disciples must come together to reflect on Scripture, share insight and meaning, offer encouragement and care through the mutual consolation in the Word.

The primacy of prayer in our worship compels us to lead a life of daily prayer. Luther encourages us to pray prior to our reading and reflection on the Scripture so that Christ will be our teacher through the Holy Spirit, who comes to us in our prayers. Failure to begin with prayer means that we will be our own teachers and miss what Christ would have us learn.

This life of prayer draws us ever closer to Christ and is a powerful resource in guiding and directing our decisions. Intercession for others is equally important as an expression of our love and care for them. Even the offering should not only remind us of Christ's sacrificial love during worship but inspire us to invest our lives in the lives of others.

That is the commitment of discipleship, to invest our lives in the lives of others. While we gather as a community, the love of Christ we receive is to be invested in the lives of all those with whom we share a relationship.

The creed should remind us to grow in our understanding of the faith we possess. Teaching the faith is a primary component in equipping the laity as disciples of Jesus. Christian education must begin at the earliest possible moment and never end. We must teach and be open in our learning to fully embrace Jesus, not according to our own preconceived understandings but according to his revealed identity in the Word. He is who he claims to be: the Lord of Life; the Savior of the world; the Messiah; the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Teaching the faith transforms our worldview from our secular culture to a biblical worldview of the Kingdom of Heaven Jesus came to proclaim. Only

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in this worldview do we glimpse how the world looks from God's perspective.

Confessing the creed together reminds us that our learning equips disciples to confess their faith in Christ Jesus, to bear witness to Christ not only during worship but also in the world. Christian education not only helps us mature in our faith but also equips us to pass on what we have learned in every relationship.

The challenge in Christian education is not the mere accumulation of information as though we are designed to be a reservoir of information. Rather, we are to intentionally pass on what we are learning immediately, as we learn it, as though we are a pipeline through whom God's Word enters the lives of others. Learning to share the content is as important as the content itself.

The Eucharist does not end in consuming the bread and the wine. The presence of Christ we have received in the Sacrament creates a longing to share Christ's presence through caring for and demonstrating Christian community to others, both within and beyond the Body of Christ.

We see the nature of that Christian community described in Acts 2:42-47. "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."

These verses create a powerful glimpse into Christian community. Discipleship invites us to ask the question, "What does this mean?" Disciples are challenged to mature not only in their understanding but also in their application of the faith to daily living. The nature of this community is one that bears witness to the profound love of Jesus Christ. This community is incarnational, highly relational,

and reflective of Christ's love that demands mutual responsibility and accountability. This is the nature of life-to-life discipleship that is our greatest resource for reform and renewal today.

This is only a partial list of the connections that one can easily make between our Lutheran identity in the centrality of worship and discipleship. I began with worship not only because of its centrality in our life together but also because its foundation is the Scripture from beginning to end.

The Word of God alone is powerful enough to bring the reform and renewal the Church needs. Probing the depth of the Word of God when we regard it as transcendent and authoritative truth opens us to its life-giving and transforming power. It transforms our values, understandings and behaviors, equipping us to invest our life in Christ in the lives of others through catechesis, or teaching the faith, and vocation, or modeling and living the faith, in the context of a Christian community committed to love expressed in mutual responsibility and accountability.

It is the Word of God in Holy Scripture that defines and describes this process as Jesus disciplined his first followers. While the world debates absolute truth and relative truth, objective truth and subjective truth, ultimate truth and situational truth, universal truth and cultural truth, for the sake of its own renewal and for the sake of the world, the Church must boldly proclaim the transcendent truth of Sacred Scripture. We do so not simply to argue for its acceptance as one among many understandings of the truth, but in word and deed we regard it as the norm above all other norms for all matters of life and faith, believing it, confessing it and living it. It is our only hope for the reform and renewal that is so desperately needed now.

With you being reformed and renewed in Christ Jesus,

Bishop John Bradosky



Introducing Pastor Valery Hryhoryk NALC Global Worker in Belarus

*By Pastor David Briedebach
Eastern European Missions Network*

Christian evangelism remains illegal within the borders of Belarus. Yet, the hearts of the faithful within Belarus Lutheran Missionary Fellowship (BLMF) — our East European Mission Network (EEMN) partner in ministry — and Pastor Valery Hryhoryk continue to strive forward in building the Body of Christ.

Only state-registered congregations are allowed to gather in their officially registered building for worship and Bible study. Furthermore, only registered members of the congregation may participate, otherwise fines and imprisonment may result due to their “illegal” activity.

The congregation that meets in Pastor Hryhoryk’s garage remains illegal because their applications for official registration have been refused four times in a row. Despite these significant challenges, Pastor Hryhoryk and his co-workers in ministry are making a real impact in Belarus.

They have been able to successfully share the Gospel message of Jesus Christ through music evangelism that shares biblical truths on life and relationships. They are also regularly invited to participate in official state celebrations to share their brand of popular music with a “positive message.”

BLMF also regularly hosts “jam sessions” for youth, where they can gather for fellowship and also engage in conversations about “spiritual things” that eventually lead to an opportunity to encounter Jesus Christ.

Because of the anti-evangelism laws, EEMN has been unable to host English Bible camps in



Pastor Valery Hryhoryk with his wife, Tanya, and 11-year-old son, Anton.

Belarus. This is why EEMN is especially excited to announce that we hosted students from Belarus at our 2017 English Bible Camp in Latvia. This opportunity is a direct result of our expanding network of ministry partners working together to strengthen each other’s ministries.

The EEMN-brokered relationship that has recently formed between Pastor Hryhoryk and Pastor Raimonds Mezins, St. Gregors Christian Missions Center Director in Saldus, Latvia, led to this cooperative language camp effort, along with our seeking invitations from Daina Zandberga, Striki School Director, and Indra Rassa, Saldus Region Mayor.

For more information on Pastor Valery’s work, or to partner with him in ministry, please visit the NALC’s website to download adoption paperwork: www.thenalc.org/international-mission.

Chuck Lindquist to retire as director of World Mission Prayer League U.S.

Paul Gossman named new WMPL General Director

Transition is a time of looking back to the past and looking forward to the future. The World Mission Prayer League (WMPL) is in that position now.

WMPL is a Lutheran mission sending organization which sends more than 100 missionaries to 20 different countries, fueled by the prayers of 6,000 individuals. WMPL is a ministry partner of the NALC.

Pastor Chuck Lindquist has served as the General Director for the Prayer League for 20 years and is now ready to retire.

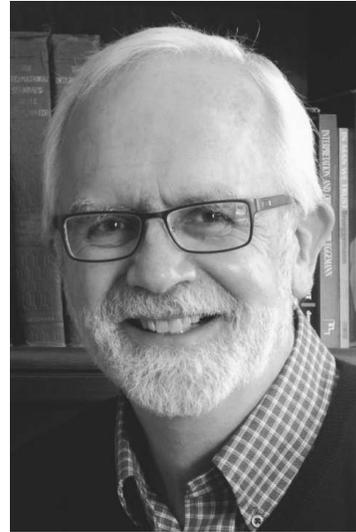
Pastor Lindquist holds degrees from Augsburg College, Luther Theological Seminary and Fuller Theological Seminary. He served as a missionary in Ecuador prior to becoming WMPL's Personnel Secretary in 1986 and its General Director in 1997.

"For more than a century, in one form or another, we have sent missionaries. And from the very beginning we have found God faithful. I have no doubt whatsoever that our faithful God is as dependable today as ever before. We may fittingly thank him for all that is past. We may properly trust him for all that's to come," Pastor Lindquist said.

Pastor Paul Gossman will be stepping into the role of General Director at the Prayer League Office in Minneapolis starting in November.

Pastor Gossman and his wife, Pris, are veteran WMPL missionaries who have served in the Philippines, Peru, and in bilingual congregations in the United States.

After Paul's graduation from Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Mo., the Gossmans served as missionaries in the tribal highlands of the Philippines, training leaders and planting churches. Along with their daughter, Sarah, they later served with WMPL in Peru, doing similar work among the poor in the city of Chiclayo.



Chuck Lindquist



Paul Gossman

Since their return to the United States in 2000, the Gossmans have served in bilingual and multiethnic parish and parachurch ministries in Illinois, Washington and Oregon.

Paul, who holds a Ph.D., in Intercultural Studies from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, taught at Trinity Lutheran College in Washington and has been an independent instructor and consultant in a wide variety of countries and settings.

In celebration of God's faithfulness throughout Chuck Lindquist's service as General Director, a gathering of thanksgiving will be held at Calvary Lutheran Church in Golden Valley, Minn., at 2:30 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 26.

With joy and anticipation for what God will do in the future, a service of installation for Pastor Gossman will be held at 2:30 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 3, at Trinity Lutheran Church of Minnehaha Falls in Minneapolis.

For more information about WMPL or either event, visit wmpl.org or contact the Prayer League by email at wmpl@wmpl.org or 612-871-6843.

Charles Jackson named executive director of World Mission Prayer League Canada

Pastor Charles Jackson has accepted a call to serve as Executive Director of World Mission Prayer League (WMPL) Canada.

Charles and Anita Jackson, NALC global workers in Mongolia with WMPL, are planning to transition from their work in Mongolia to WMPL's office in Camrose, Alberta, in November.

"With support of many supporters' prayers affirming this call, as well as having a personal sense of confirmation from God, now is a time for us to transition to a new role in ministry," Charles said.

"We are leaving a field where we have made many good friends and where there is still much work to be done, but we have also felt the call to build up prospective churches and individuals to consider their own calling to pray for, support and engage in missions through World Mission Prayer League," he said.

Charles and Anita Jackson first met at a WMPL Briefing Course in 1988. Their hearts' desire and calling has been in missions: "to know Christ and to make him known."

Charles and Anita are both graduates of the Lutheran Bible Institute in Seattle. Charles also has an M.Div. from the Lutheran Theological Seminary Saskatoon. Anita has an MTS from Concordia Seminary in Edmonton.

They served with the Lutheran Parish in Donalda, Alberta, while occasionally teaching at the Canadian Lutheran Bible Institute.

In 2001, WMPL Canada commissioned them for service in Samburu, Kenya, where they served for eight years.

In 2010, the Jacksons took on their current NALC-WMPL assignment with JCS International in Mongolia. Charles serves as Joint Christian



Charles and Anita Jackson

Service's Project and Placements Director. Both Charles and Anita mentor and help with leadership development in their local fellowship and with others in the Ulaanbaatar community where they live.

The Jacksons are very thankful to be following Rob and Pat Lewis who have been amazing encouragers through word and prayer for the Jacksons and other Kingdom workers. Rob Lewis is the current WMPL Canada Executive Director.

Charles and Anita also look forward to working with Pastor Paul Gossman who will be the new World Mission Prayer League USA General Director after Chuck and Cindy Lindquist's many years of faithful service.

"Thank you for your ongoing prayers during this time of transition," they said.

World Mission Prayer League is a ministry partner of the NALC. You can learn more about WMPL at www.wmpl.org or www.wmplcanada.org.

Pearl Harbor victim welcomed home with funeral 75 years in the making

By Pastor Christopher Martin

Memorial Day weekend took on a new significance for the people of Emmons Lutheran Church in Emmons, Minn., and the surrounding community as they gathered on Saturday, May 27, for a funeral service for a veteran of the U.S. Navy. However, this wasn't an ordinary funeral service, it was one 75 years in the making.

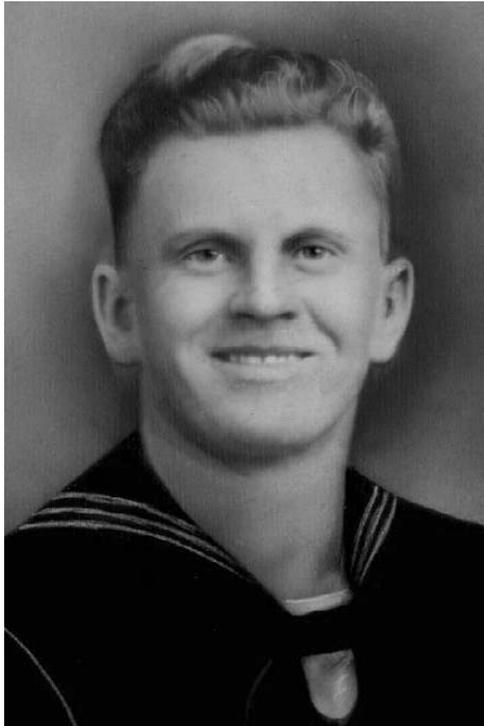
Glendon Iverson was 24 years old when he left Emmons to join the U.S. Navy in 1941. Glendon was born and raised in Emmons, and was both baptized and confirmed at Emmons Lutheran Church, where he was an active member until leaving for the Navy.

After completing his Naval training in Michigan, Glendon spent the end of the summer months on furlough with family and friends in Emmons, before leaving in early September for San Francisco, Calif., for his first assignment. When Glendon left Emmons, little did anyone know that it would be over 75 years before he would return.

On Sept. 11, 1941, Glendon reported for duty aboard the battleship U.S.S. Oklahoma in San Francisco. Shortly afterward, the battleship and its crew were sent to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, where it was docked near Ford Island.

Glendon, like many other members of the crew, worked hard during the day and enjoyed the weather and scenery of the Hawaiian islands in the evenings. It seemed like paradise on earth. That was, until Japanese forces attacked Pearl Harbor on the morning of Sunday, Dec. 7, 1941.

The U.S.S. Oklahoma was among the first ships hit during the raid, taking multiple torpedo hits, causing



Glendon Iverson

the ship to capsize rapidly. Glendon was among the 429 members of the crew of the Oklahoma who lost their lives in the attack.

In the aftermath of Pearl Harbor, his family back in Minnesota was first notified by telegram that Glendon was missing in action. When his remains were not recovered, he was declared to have lost his life in the attack.

During salvage efforts, Glendon's remains, and those of the other lost crew members of the Oklahoma, were recovered and sent to labs in an effort to identify the remains and return them to family members. Most of the remains could not be identified.

After the war, the unidentified remains of the Oklahoma's crew were placed in mass graves at the National Cemetery of the Pacific at Punchbowl Crater in Honolulu. Glendon was officially classified as "unrecoverable."

The tragic circumstances surrounding Glendon's death became a sensitive topic of conversation with the Iverson family — and in the community — and were seldom, if at all, discussed. Because his remains could not be identified and returned to his family, a funeral or memorial service was never held in Emmons. As the years passed, a plot reserved for him next to his parents at Oaklawn Cemetery in Emmons went unused and without a marker. His nephew, Gary Iverson, frequently considered whether to give the unused plot away, but he always decided to hold on to it in the end.

Shortly after the 75th anniversary of the Pearl Harbor attack in December of 2016, the Iverson

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family, which now consisted of Glaydon's nieces and nephews, received news that as a result of DNA analysis and a renewed effort by the Department of Defense, Glaydon's remains had been identified and were being returned to the family. This was confirmed by the Navy in March of 2017. At that point, arrangements were made to hold a funeral service at Glaydon's home church, Emmons Lutheran Church, with burial in the plot reserved for him over Memorial Day weekend.

On Thursday, May 25, Glaydon's remains returned to Minnesota. They were flown from Hawaii with a Navy escort. Upon arrival at the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, Glaydon's family and a military ceremonial unit met the casket on the tarmac, and a brief military ceremony was held.

Several veterans' organizations and law enforcement agencies organized an escort for Glaydon from the airport to the Mittlestadt Funeral Home in Lake Mills, Iowa. Along the route, several fire companies showed their support on overpasses of Interstate 35. A brief stop was held at the American Legion post in Albert Lea, Minn., and the procession then made its way through Emmons, where community members lined the street to pay respects for their fallen hero.

Another motorcycle escort took place the day of the funeral service, as veterans' groups escorted Glaydon's remains from the funeral home to Emmons Lutheran Church, and finally, from the church to the cemetery. Several news outlets and television stations sent reporters to document the day. U.S. Representative Tim Walz and other public officials were present.

Pastor Christopher Martin of Emmons Lutheran Church officiated, and preached on Jesus' words from John 15:13: "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends."

Pastor Martin noted that while it may have taken 75 years to have an identity returned to the remains in the casket, Glaydon's identity as a child of God in Jesus Christ had never changed, and that he has rested during this time with his Savior, who had given his life for Glaydon's at the cross.



Funeral procession for Pearl Harbor victim Glaydon Iverson at Emmons Lutheran Church in Emmons, Minn.

A Navy ceremonial unit was present to provide full military honors by serving as pall bearers at the church service, laying a Hawaiian lei on his photograph, and providing military honors at the cemetery.

In reflecting on this unique service, Pastor Martin said, "I grew up learning about Pearl Harbor like most American school children. But I didn't know how many of the people who died at Pearl Harbor that day were still missing until I was asked to conduct the funeral service for Glaydon this year. Words can't adequately express the emotions I and many of us had at being part of this last chapter of one of the most historic events of American history in finally laying to rest one of our heroes from Pearl Harbor who lost their life that day, and how God used that as an opportunity to proclaim the Gospel of life and salvation through Christ so many years later with so many people from so many different walks of life present in our little community here in Emmons. I'm also delighted at the sense of closure that the Iverson family, and our entire community in Emmons, now have that they've waited for so long to have, and perhaps at times, felt would never come."

While Glaydon's story of his long return home was a heart-warming story to hear on a Memorial Day weekend, it's also a story that serves as a wonderful reminder for Christians today. While it may seem as if the world sometimes forgets about us, God never forgets about us. Because he has placed his name upon us, and because of the sacrifice of his Son, Jesus, on the cross, we know that we can look forward to the day when we are raised up from death to everlasting life with Christ.

Victory Ministries update

By Pastor Samar Ghandour

As I prepare to travel back to the mission field of Liberia with Victory Ministries, I am pleased to present this report of the work the Lord called me to. Though challenging, I am trusting God to lead, bless and strengthen me for the work. The work is very spiritual and requires God's presence to be with me for anything to be done.

Funding for some of the things we anticipate doing in Liberia, and possibly Guinea, Sierra Leone and Ivory Coast is not available, but I continue to trust our God to provide and guide the use of the resources.

Please continue to pray for me and for the people working with me in Liberia that the Spirit of Christ will eliminate discouragement. Please pray for clearer vision, strategy, fruitfulness and discipleship development among the people.

We are praying to God to bless the foundational work going on in Sierra Leone and Guinea now and hopefully in Ivory Coast. We are praying for the Spirit of God to go ahead of us into these regions and prepare the way. The opportunities are great in these countries, as is the need for preaching the Gospel.

As the church in Liberia grows, the need for more qualified pastors also increases. The Lord continues to raise up people to do his work in the Church. Three men have responded to God's call for ministry. Victory Ministries is sending them to ministry training school in their respective localities. We trust in the Lord that, at the end of their training, they will be ready to pastor a church, start a new church or go into missions in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea or Ivory Coast. Tuition fees were paid by Victory Ministries to facilitate their training. While they are attending ministry school, they will



Pastor Samar Ghandour

continue to receive training through their national church and regular regional training for pastors and church leaders.

Other ongoing work of Victory Ministries includes emergency assistance, construction, property maintenance, container shipments to Liberia, and acquiring electronics and ministry equipment. For a more detailed report of this ongoing work, please visit: missions.nalcnetwork.com/victory-ministries.

As our preparation continues, one of the largest prayer requests concerns the first convocation of the Lutheran churches of Liberia. I will be

continuing to provide guidance for the preparation of the national convocation. Since this is the first national gathering, help is needed with the planning, designing, forecasting, coordinating, and organizing. They are expecting approximately 500 people, but I anticipate attendance to be about 300. Because the Liberian churches have not had an experience in hosting three hundred people away from their respective homes and local congregations, I am giving them the needed guidance so that there will not be failure and discouragement.

I am planning to depart the United States in early December, and I hope to return in early June 2018, but will continue to provide updates on the progress of our ministry and work.

Pastor Samar Ghandour is called Associate Pastor for Missions for Advent Lutheran Church in North Charleston, S.C., serving West Africa: Liberia, Guinea, Ivory Coast, and Sierra Leone with Victory International Ministry. For more information or to partner with us in this ministry, please visit www.thenalc.org/GCS.

Temples and Priests

Before and after Christ's resurrection

This is the third in a series of articles on temples, priests and church buildings by Pastor Mark Chavez, NALC General Secretary.

We concluded part two with the observation that the new temple is Jesus — his resurrected body and the bodies of his disciples. His body is the primary structure, not church buildings.

The new temple is radically different than the old. It is animate, so animate that it gives all life. Christ the cornerstone is a living stone and all of his disciples are living stones built upon the cornerstone (see 1 Peter 2:4-9). The new temple is the most mobile structure in all of creation. Unlike the old temple, to which sinners had to travel, the new temple is always on the move seeking sinners.

Another difference is that the priests and the structure in the new temple are one and the same. In the old temple priests were distinct from the temple — so distinct they could only approach the temple altar to offer sacrifices if they were ritually clean. The high priest could only enter the holy of holies and approach the Ark of the Covenant once a year, and again only if he was ritually clean.

Now Jesus, the great high priest, is the temple, and so is his royal priesthood, his disciples, who are built into the temple. Jesus removed all that separated the priests and the people from the living God in the old temple. He is the Lamb of God who took away the sin of the world.

High priests at the Jerusalem temple repeatedly offered the bodies of animals and birds as sacrifices. Jesus offered his own body — “He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself.” (Hebrews 7:27)

Since Jesus did away with all the other daily sacrifices, there's only one sacrifice left for priests in the new temple. We daily offer our bodies “as a living sacrifice” (Romans 12:1).

At the old temple priests could only be adult men from the tribe of Levi. Priests in the new temple are from every tribe and race. They are young and old, men and women (see Peter's quotation of Joel 2:28-29 on Pentecost in Acts 2:16-18). The Triune God, Father, the Son and Holy Spirit, makes us priests in the new temple by joining us completely with Christ in his death and resurrection in our baptisms (see Romans 6:3-4).

The radical difference of the new temple and new priesthood ties directly with discipleship. We tend to think of our Lord's commandment “to go and make disciples of all nations” as some lofty, challenging mission attainable by only a select group of people who go to some far away place. However, every baptized believer is a mobile delivery vehicle for the living God's presence on earth. Obeying the Great Commission is not only within reach of all baptized believers, it is expected of all. Jesus simply commands and calls us to be who we are as a new creation in him.

The Holy Spirit, beginning with our baptisms and each day thereafter, gives us the capacity to make disciples of all nations. We are all priests, living in God and God living in us, and therefore able to speak God's forgiveness to all sinners. We bear in our bodies the very gospel of Christ, and the Holy Spirit will use us to call sinners to faith in Christ through his gospel.

When Jesus commands us to go and make disciples he is not necessarily commanding us to travel to another continent. He commands most of us to go where we are already going in our daily lives. We have opportunities to bear witness to Christ beginning in our homes, and then out in our neighborhoods, schools and workplaces, including our churches.

We could say a lot more about the primary structure — Jesus' body and our bodies living in Him. But what of the secondary structures, our church buildings? What is their place and function in the Church? More on that next month.

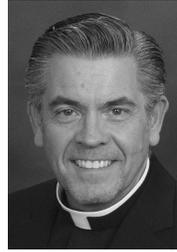
Christ Centered and 'Altogether Born Again'

At last, by the mercy of God, meditating day and night, I gave heed to the context of the words, namely, "In it the righteousness of God is revealed, as it is written, 'He who through faith is righteous shall live.'" There I began to understand that the righteousness of God is that by which the righteous lives by a gift of God, namely by faith. And this is the meaning: the righteousness of God is revealed by the gospel, namely, the passive righteousness with which merciful God justifies us by faith, as it is written, "He who through faith is righteous shall live." Here I felt that I was altogether born again and had entered paradise itself through open gates. There a totally other face of the entire Scripture showed itself to me. Thereupon I ran through the Scripture from memory. I also found in other terms an analogy, as, the work of God, that is what God does in us, the power of God, with which he makes us wise, the strength of God, the salvation of God, the glory of God. (From Luther's Works, Volume 34)

The Executive Council and staff of the NALC recently had their quarterly meeting at First Lutheran Church in West Palm Beach, Fla.

We had the opportunity to hear a lecture by renowned church historian and theologian, the Rev. Dr. Timothy George, founder and president of Beeson Divinity School of Samford University in Birmingham, Ala. His speech was titled, "Reading Scripture with the Reformers," but it should have been titled, "Reading Scripture with Luther." He seemed surprised and pleased to have a Lutheran bishop, staff and council sitting in the front row for his lecture!

It was a blessing to hear this respected and knowledgeable teacher reminding us, again, how the Word of God, Jesus Christ, was the center and focus of all that Martin Luther preached, taught and lived. He also reminded us how Holy Scripture was at the heart of Luther's spiritual turn and was the foundation of the Reformation.



Ministry Matters

Pastor David Wendel

Assistant to the Bishop
for Ministry and Ecumenism

Dr. George read the above passage, in which Luther describes his "conversion" as being "born again," as the Scriptures revealed to him, finally, the good news that "the righteous lives by a gift of God, namely, by faith."

Thus, God spoke to Luther as he read and meditated upon Romans 1:16-17 (RSV): "For I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, 'He who through faith is righteous shall live.'"

As I am focusing these 2017 Ministry Matters articles on questions related to ministry in the NALC, I think it is appropriate to spend a bit of time considering what Dr. George presented as Luther's question.

The beloved Dr. Luther was not so concerned with "Who am I?" but "Whose am I?" This is at the heart of who we are as the NALC and how we function as congregations, pastors and laity. And it is the reason that we are, as stated in our first core value, "Christ Centered." Whose are we? We are Christ's! We belong to Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, and for that reason, we affirm that we are Christ Centered. But are we living that out?

I worked with a pastor and congregation not too long ago and asked about the focus of their council

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meetings. How much time was spent in Bible study and prayer, compared to discussing budget, building and maintenance. They shared that they usually had a one minute devotion someone found on the internet. After further discussion, they came to the conclusion they had lost their focus on Jesus.

This was something of a revelation, and these wonderful, honest congregational leaders made a commitment to spending intentional, intensive time in Bible study and prayer, to keep their focus on Jesus, the Word of God, and the Holy Scriptures.

My experience is that this is all too common. Lutheran council members think that council meetings are about doing the required business of the church, managing income and expenses, paying the bills, keeping the doors open. There is no time for in-depth Scripture and prayer, so interesting spiritual, devotional “things” are ripped and read from the internet.

This is not to criticize our congregational leaders. It is simply to point out the reality of our misdirected institutional mindsets, calling pastors and church leaders to once again be Christ Centered — focused on the Word of God in our midst, immersed in Scripture, to again and anew hear the Gospel, which is truly the power of God unto salvation for everyone who has faith.

And this is critically important for us in the NALC if we are to experience renewal, re-formation and growth in faith and numbers.

All around us in Lutheranism and the Christian Church in North America, we are seeing stagnation, decline and frustration. Many thought this would turn around immediately and magically when we became the NALC. The letters at the end of our name will not reform and transform us any more than will the letters M.Div. or Ph.D.

The Gospel of the saving death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the only power of God unto salvation. Jesus alone is the way, the truth and the life. Only Jesus gives life, and abundant life. He alone brings joy, peace and hope! As he is the resurrection and the life, he will restore and resurrect our stagnant, declining congregations just

as he causes us as individuals to be born anew, again and again, as daily we die to sin and are raised to new life, renewed through the promise of our baptism into Christ.

There is no hope for the NALC other than our hope in Christ. Let us live our Christ-centeredness by being people of the Word of God, reading the Word, studying and meditating on the Word, discussing it as we walk alongside each other in life. Let us learn Scripture so well that it is on our hearts, minds and lips as we rise up and lie down each day. Let our council meetings be consumed with the Word of God and prayer, so that we spend less and less time on building and budget. Let us embrace discipleship and disciple-making as a life-to-life commitment, as we share the Scriptures together so that others will come to know and place their faith and trust in Jesus Christ and the power of the Gospel.

We are only beginning to grasp what it means for us to be Christ Centered in our lives and in the NALC. Let's pray that God will continue to reveal that to us, as he revealed it to blessed Martin Luther.

If you have a question regarding “ministry matters” in the NALC, email me at dwendel@thenalc.org, and I will try to provide an answer!



Youth and Family Ministry Update

Registration for two events just opened:

The Nexus Institute for your deeper thinking high school students. Visit www.thenexusinstitute.org.

Quake Events. Visit <http://quakeevent.com>.

You really should check out and share the Sola Publishing Holy Families website link with parents in your congregation: www.holyfamilytime.com.

Monthly webinars are offered on the second Tuesday of each month at 2 p.m. ET. The webinars will also be archived at faithwebbing.com.



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