

NETWORK NEWS



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3rd, 4th pastors ordained under exceptions rule

This winter, two more pastors have been ordained outside of the historic episcopate after they sought and received permission to be excepted from the full communion agreement with The Episcopal Church USA that requires pastors to be ordained by bishops.

Bob Schaefer, originally from Hutchinson, Minn., was ordained March 16 at Faith Lutheran Church in his hometown by his internship supervisor, Pastor Martin Taylor from Mt. Vernon, Wash.

Pastor Judy Reitz of Grace Lutheran in Nerstrand, Minn., was ordained Jan. 26 at St. John's Lutheran, Northfield, Minn., by her father-in-law, Pastor Otto Reitz and Pastor Susan Debner, Decorah, Iowa. Pas-

tor Joseph Crippen of St. John's preached.

Schaefer has been called to pastor the two-point congregation of First and Spring Creek Lutheran Churches near Litchville and Hastings, N.D. They are in the Eastern North Dakota Synod.

Bishop Rick Foss of that synod preached at Schaefer's ordination.

"Generally, my feeling is that the involvement of the laity is very important," commented Schaefer, "and I have concerns about the implications that the CCM agreement has obliged us to." (CCM is Called to Common Mission, the full communion agreement with The Episcopal Church U.S.A.)



With the Flow or Against the Current?

**WordAlone Network's
Annual Convention
April 25 & 26, 2003**

See page 3

WordAlone corrects pamphlet error

WordAlone has learned that some of the figures used in our initial printing of "An Introduction to the WordAlone Network" were incorrectly comparing "apples and oranges" in the ELCA statistics chart. The correct figures will appear in the brochure when more copies are printed.

The figures for the number of Global Missions staff in the pamphlet were not comparing the same categories.

Our volunteers used two different Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) documents to obtain those figures, not realizing that there were differences in what was being reported. The "International Personnel Directory 2001," published by the Division for Global Mission (DGM) was the source of the number of DGM staff we reported for 2000: 48 persons. We now know that was the total staff.

Our volunteers used an annual ELCA Yearbook for the 1989 figure. However, we

have now been told that the yearbook only listed executive staff. So the percentage of growth in the number of staff from 1989 to 2000 was incorrect in the pamphlet.

Further research by WordAlone showed that in 1988 there were 21 executive staff according to the ELCA Yearbook. The number of executive staff in 2002 was 27. The correct and updated figure for growth in executive staff positions from 1988 until 2002 is a 28.6% increase. The pamphlet correctly reports that in those years the number of missionaries in the field declined by more than 50%.

If our readers want to know more about the Division for Global Missions, they can go to the DGM website, www.elca.org/dgm/mission.

Of special interest may be the service opportunities available. The site lists 118 positions all over the world, from Europe to Bangladesh. There are short-term and long-term, volunteer and paid, lay and clergy openings.

Jobs range from teaching to accounting to evangelism. The largest category listed is education with 80 positions in four categories: 21 for "English as a second language" instructors, nine in "other," 31 for post-secondary posts and 19 for K-12 jobs. Some 15 administrative-professional and 17 evangelism-ministry-pastoral posts were noted. Some jobs appear in more than one category.

Global mission history is under the resources tab on the DGM page. Listed in the archives are the names of U.S. Lutheran missionaries from 1842 until 2000, including when and where they served.

Index

- p. 2 WordAlone corrects pamphlet error
- p. 3 Register now for annual convention
- p. 4 DVD offered on homosexuality
- p. 5-8 A Commentary on Admonition
- p. 9 Lutherans reserving the host?
- p. 10 Bishops have discussed lay presidency
- p. 11 Lutheran Clergy Connect

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- Please photocopy & distribute -

Register now for annual convention

"Christ's Church: With the flow or against the current?" is the theme of the April 25-26, annual WordAlone Network convention at Roseville Lutheran Church, Roseville, Minn.

A registration flyer was sent out in early March. Convention planners encourage early registration, especially to help with the planning for meals at the convention. Registration flyers were mailed to everyone who receives WordAlone's Network News.

If you are not on WordAlone's mailing list, call the WordAlone office at 888-551-7254 to request a registration flyer.

The flyer has information about the agenda, workshops, seminars and hotels. The registration fee is \$90 but is free for seminarians. It includes four meals-dinner on Friday and Saturday, and continental breakfast and lunch on Saturday. Friday night's session, 7-9 p.m., which includes worship and a presentation by futurist Leonard Sweet, is open to the public.

Sweet will speak three times on the convention theme-before and after dinner on Friday and on Saturday morning. As all churches are caught in the currents and winds of American culture and society, Sweet wrestles with questions like: Is it a time for churches to seek safe harbor and drop anchor, or is it a time to sail boldly out on the open seas?

Pastor Johan Hinderlie, Mt. Carmel Ministries, will preach at the 7 p.m. worship ser-

vice Friday night. Workshops will be offered multiple times Saturday. They are being designed to help people and congregations become more effective in working for renewal, reform and reflection within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Registration is free for seminarians

There will also be a designated time for people to meet and connect with other WordAlone members from their synods and regions.

WordAlone's Theological Advisory Board will present in-depth seminars discussing the theological issues brought to the fore by the advisory board's "Admonition for the Sake of the True Peace and Unity of the Church." Continuing education units will be offered for the seminars as well as for Leonard Sweet's presentations.



Dr. Leonard Sweet

Other convention activities include reports from the president and treasurer and elections for four positions on the WordAlone Network Board of Directors.

Child care is available

The schedule starts with registration at 1 p.m. Friday, April 25, in Luther Commons. The convention begins at 3 p.m., dinner is at 5:30 p.m. and the convention will recess at 9 p.m. On Saturday, continental breakfast begins at 7:30 a.m. The convention resumes at 8:30 a.m., lunch is at noon, dinner is at 5 p.m. and the convention concludes at 9 p.m. (Please contact the WordAlone office if you will need child care.)

DVD offered to balance 'one-sided info on homosexuality'

A group known as Concerned ELCA Members (CELCAM) is making available a DVD with interviews with leading experts on traditional and Biblically based positions on homosexuality, according to psychologist Merton Strommen, author of "The Church and Homosexuality: Searching for a Middle Ground."

This DVD will be sent free to the approximately 11,000 congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). The DVD also will be sent to some 1,000 delegates to this summer's Churchwide Assembly to be held in Milwaukee, Wis.

The information is also available on a set of four videotapes. Sets of the videotapes are being sold for \$30, Strommen, of Minneapolis, Minn., said in March. To order, write to Kirk House Publishers, P.O. Box 390759, Minneapolis, Minn., 55439.

"Six influential groups have been presenting only one point of view on the issue of homosexuality: national mental health organizations, academic institutions, the media, courts of law, public schools and the Division of Outreach Ministry (ELCA)," said Strommen.

"As a result, members of congregations lack the information they need to contest arguments that favor the ordination of non-celibate gays and the blessing of same-sex marriages."

CELCAM wishes to balance the information available, he stated. The production was done by Seraphim Communications of St. Paul, Minn.

The DVD includes an interview with Rev. Amy Schifrin, pastor at Bethlehem Lutheran in St. Cloud, Minn., who acquaints viewers with what she, as a counselor of students, has heard and seen over the years regarding "homo-erotic" behavior. Strom-

men identifies what science has established and the threat posed by the dark side of homosexuality.

Theologian James Nestingen, of Luther Seminary, St. Paul, addresses the questions now facing the church and ends by asking: How can we discuss these questions without splitting the church? Dottie Ludwig, a former lesbian who has been serving as a therapist for homosexuals tells her story and discusses her understanding of homosexuality, according to Strommen.

Strommen is slated to speak on "Balancing One-Sided Information," May 3 at Lutheran Church of the Ascension, Citrus Heights, Calif., and May 4 at St. Timothy's Lutheran Church, San Jose, Calif.

He will address the Upper Susquehanna Synod Assembly June 13 and 14, in Harrisburg, Pa. At a two-day conference June 16 and 17, he and Dr. Robert Gagnon will speak. The first day will be at the Elks Lodge in Devil's Lake, N.D., and June 17 it will be at Atonement Lutheran Church, Fargo, N.D. For specifics, contact the synod and congregations.

Schifrin and the Rev. Jim Emer, a Roman Catholic priest from the Fargo diocese, will join in a panel discussion on June 17. Gagnon is associate professor of New Testament at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary and author of the book "The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics."

Gagnon, Strommen, and Schifrin will be featured speakers at a conference on Christian Sexuality: The Biblical and Theological Foundations and Implications for Ministry, Oct. 17-18 at Trinity Lutheran Church, Runnemede, N.J. Registration is \$25. For more information contact Pastor Rudy Schneider at 609-597-2696.

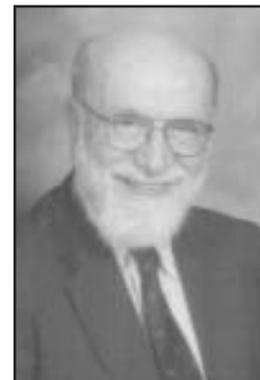
A Commentary on 'Admonition for the Sake of the True Peace and Unity of the Church'

Last fall, The WordAlone Theological Advisory Board issued "Admonition for the Sake of the True Peace and Unity of the Church," a written statement suggesting that the ELCA may have contradicted its own Lutheran Confessions in adopting new ordination requirements in recent years. The admonition primarily addressed the ELCA's practice of requiring that new ministers and bishops be ordained into an "episcopal succession" as defined by The Episcopal Church USA (ECUSA). (See the full text at www.wordalone.org)



by
Dr. George
Wolfgang Forell
Carver
Distinguished
Professor
Emeritus,
University of Iowa

The center of the Christian Faith is the Lord Jesus Christ who was crucified for our sins and raised for our salvation. Without Christ there is no Christianity. This might seem obvious to most of us but we live in a time in which there are some, claiming to be Christians, who believe that the overwhelming centrality of Christ for Christians is an embarrassment in a pluralistic world. They say, "We should consider all founders of religion and important religious leaders of equal significance." Our answer must be our Lord Jesus Christ is not the founder of a religion or a great religious leader. He is the second person of God,



Dr. George Wolfgang Forell

the Holy Trinity. To downgrade Jesus to a religious leader or prophet is for Christians blasphemy. Christ is our only savior. We are saved by faith alone through Christ alone. How do we know this? Luther summarizes:

"... the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, and sanctified and preserved me in true faith, just as he calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth and preserves it in union with Jesus Christ in the one true faith. In this Christian church he daily and abundantly forgives all my sins, and the sins of all

believers, and on the last day he will raise me and all the dead and will grant eternal life to me and to all who believe in Christ. This is most certainly true." (*Small Catechism*, Tappert, 345/6)

Salvation is a divine gift, not a human achievement. The primary gift is the forgiveness of sins on which we all depend (Continued on page 6)

A Commentary on 'Admonition for the Sake of the True Peace and Unity of the Church'

(Continued from page 5)

all our lives. We are in need of this forgiveness because we are sinners as long as we live and God's eternal law, which all human beings encounter every day, makes us aware of our sin and our dependence on God's forgiveness. And this forgiveness enables us to live as sinners saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. This new life is not an effort to earn God's forgiveness, a task we could never accomplish, but an expression of our gratitude for the forgiveness we have been granted by grace alone.

We live this life in the one holy catholic and apostolic church created by the Holy Spirit through the proclamation of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments. Only the Gospel and sac-

raments of holy baptism and holy communion are the means of grace, which create and sustain the church. They are God's gifts and human beings cannot add to or subtract from these gifts. But the fruits of these gifts are a life of love to God and all the people who need our help. We must live this life not because we rely on such works to merit peace with God and in our families and with our neighbors and the world in which we are called to live, but in gratitude for the love of God bestowed upon us through Christ our savior. One major fruit of

God's love is the ministry of the Gospel, our task to share the Gospel with all men and women throughout our entire life. The true apostolic succession is the sharing of the apostolic witness as found in the Scriptures with all people. "To preach and administer the sacraments publicly in the name of the church is the specific calling of the ordained ministry."

But belonging to the church is not limited to the reception of the word and the sacraments though they are the realities

The true apostolic succession is the sharing of the apostolic witness as found in the Scriptures with all people. "To preach and administer the sacraments publicly in the name of the church is the specific calling of the ordained ministry."

that constitute the church. Worship is a vital part of Christian discipleship but for Lutherans the form of worship has changed over the centuries and is still changing. Such changes contribute to the vitality and

relevance of our worship. They are influenced by our history and culture. The essential element of worship is that it is always an instrument, a tool of word and sacrament; if it obscures God's Word it is inadequate or even false worship, even if it makes us feel good, is entertaining and brings in good crowds.

And the church must find ways to serve the world. The Christian Faith must be active in love. But if we are only concerned about such activities and lose sight of the faith, created by word and

sacrament, which should motivate the service, we will soon notice that the works of love become ever more shallow and superficial. Works of love not rooted in faith fade away. They are like cut flowers whose beauty is bound to dry up and vanish. We do not have the power to serve without being always restored through God's grace and forgiveness. Human sin can and does distort and destroy the most impressive human achievements and institutions.

The church also needs discipline to shape all its activities in the service of word and sacrament. But such discipline must always be developed in the light of word and sacrament and not in order to create a hierarchical institution which substitutes human power for God's power. We believe that order is necessary but it is not dependent on uniformity.

Lutherans have been able to serve God with the help of a variety of orders and organizations. They must always be evaluated in relationship to word and sacrament. They must constantly be examined as to their effectiveness in supporting the proclamation of the Gospel. If an organization seems to exist only to preserve itself, it may have to be abandoned. That something is old does not necessarily make it true; at the same time that

something is new does not assure us that it is better.

We must measure all rules and organizations by the standard of service to the Gospel. A system that may have been useful at one time may interfere with the proclamation of the Gospel in a different historical or cultural setting. Hierarchies may have actually served the proclamation of the Gospel when monarchies ruled but may have become counter-productive in an age of democracy. Monarchies or democracies are not Christian. They are

Hierarchies may have actually served the proclamation of the Gospel when monarchies ruled but may have become counter-productive in an age of democracy.

human devices to rule human beings. They do not save. To make salvation dependent on one kind of sociological organization falsifies the Christian message and denies the sufficiency of

word and sacrament. By exalting human organizations as essential we deny Christian freedom. The Lutheran Confessions explicitly state, ". . . the community of God [the Latin reads "churches of God"] in every locality and every age has authority to change such ceremonies according to circumstances, as it may be most profitable and edifying to the community of God." (Formula of Concord X, Tappert, 493/4)

To demand of Lutherans to accept any non-biblical human order as essential for the unity of the church denies the Christian freedom St. Paul (Continued on page 8)

A Commentary on 'Admonition for the Sake of the True Peace and Unity of the Church'

(Continued from page 7)

exalts in Galatians 5:1. We can practice ordination by bishops as long as presbyterial ordination is equally acceptable and it is obvious that an adiphoron (a human device) has not been made a theological necessity. Likewise the two practices of installing bishops with or without the participation of three bishops in Episcopal succession must be options of equal standing.

For almost 500 years most Lutheran pastors have been presbyterially ordained and were valid servants of word and sacrament and most leaders of synods were installed without the assistance of bishops in Episcopal succession like, for example, Hanns Lilje of Hannover

and Eivind Berggrav of Norway. Their service to the Gospel was not diminished by the absence of historical succession but guaranteed by the presence of word and sacrament. The presence or absence of the so-called "historical episcopate" does not guarantee the validity of the

We are assured of the apostolic witness when we study the scriptures and receive the sacraments, this is the obligation of all people.

ministry but the presence of the word and sacrament does. We do not need apostolic succession of bishops but must have succession of an apostolic witness. For that both laypeople and clergy are, and must remain,

responsible. We are assured of the apostolic witness when we study the scriptures and receive the sacraments, this is the obligation of all people.

Study guide on Admonition available from WordAlone

Pastors Carl Shankweiler and Mark Chavez have written a study guide on the *Admonition for the Sake of the True Peace and Unity of the Church* with discussion questions for persons to use in settings such as Sunday morning adult forums in their congregations. The study guide is meant to be used in conjunction with Dr. George Forell's commentary on the *Admonition*, published here.

The study guide is available on-line under the Resources button on the WordAlone website or by contacting the WordAlone Network office at 888-551-7254.

The *Admonition* was written by the WordAlone Theological Advisory Board last November and then presented at a theological conference. Individuals are encouraged to sign it. Instructions for signing it are on the WordAlone website.



*lex orandi, lex credendi
'praying shapes believing'*

Lutherans reserving the host?

by Gracia Grindal

In the past few months, there have been reports that certain ELCA bishops have refused to authorize lay people to serve communion to shut-ins or people in remote areas.

I hope these reports are not true, but I fear they are. ELCA bishops may be refusing to authorize lay presidency because the Episcopal hierarchy has expressed grave concern about the process. Bishop Phil Hougen of the Southeast Iowa Synod said as much in his report to the Conference of Bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) meeting Oct. 3-8, 2002:

"The Episcopal Church is looking for us to be an ally in limiting lay presidency," Hougen said. "It is problematic for the Episcopal Church. We had better do this recognizing the ecumenical implications. It is fair to report that it's the hope of the Episcopal Church that we would move away from lay presidency," he added." [Quoted from an Oct. 15 news release from the ELCA on a Conference of Bishops meeting.]

To make it possible for people to receive communion where there is no pastor, some bishops are reported to have required that a pastor consecrate the elements before a layperson could take the bread and wine to give communion. This practice makes very clear that only ordained people have the power to consecrate the elements.

When this happens, Lutherans are in danger of returning to the medieval practice known as "reserving the host."

Over the years, the consecrated bread, or host, became an object of adoration. The

Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 directed that the reserved sacrament be kept locked up so that people did not steal it and use it for magical purposes. Throughout the Middle Ages, the practice of adoring the host became more and more complicated. The festival of Corpus Christi, the Thursday after Trinity Sunday, became a major feast of the western church, when the tabernacle (a case or box) holding the host was paraded around the community to be adored. After the Council of Trent, tabernacles of the most ornate design housed the host.

Martin Luther rejected the practice without question. In a letter to the Regents and Councilors, on Aug. 1, 1532, he wrote, "Concerning the reserving of the sacrament in the ciborium [Generally considered to be a covered container for the communion hosts-Editor], we think that even though it might still be the custom to reserve the sacrament and lock it up, this custom ought to be abolished, for sacrament and Word ought to be together" (LW 50, p. 66).

From the time of Luther until now, Lutherans have believed that the words of institution with the elements are sufficient to make the sacrament valid. The power to make the sacrament valid does not come from the one saying the words; it comes from the words themselves. This is at the heart of the argument we are having about Called to Common Mission (CCM), the full communion agreement between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and The Episcopal Church USA. Episcopalians believe that the person (Continued on page 10)

Bishops have discussed lay presidency

The Conference of Bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) was expected to continue its discussion on lay presidency at its March meeting, according to a church news release.

At their October meeting, the bishops talked about the role of lay people in presiding at Holy Communion and preaching, about standards for persons doing "authorized lay ministry" and about "common understandings" of lay presidency and lay ministry, according to the Oct. 15 news release. Practices reportedly vary from synod to synod.

The ELCA constitution allows lay people to perform official church functions with the consent of their congregation or ministry, provided a local synodical bishop, in consultation with the synod council, auth-

orizes them to.

The news release points out that the issue is especially important to congregations with small memberships and limited finances for ordained ministers. The number of congregations in the ELCA with 50 or fewer persons in worship each week rose to 2,339 in 2001, up from 1,935 in 1988, the first year of the ELCA.

Similarly, the news release continues, 2,456 congregations were without a called pastor in 2001 compared to 1988 when there were 1,153. There are 575 synodically authorized lay ministers.

For some bishops, lay ministry is important in ethnic communities and immigrant populations, the news release said.

'praying shapes believing' (Continued from page 9)

Lutherans reserving the host?

who is celebrating the Eucharist has to be a priest ordained by a bishop in historic succession. Lutherans do not.

If our bishops, contrary to Lutheran doctrine, require the practice that pastors consecrate the elements before lay people can take them to shut-ins or people in remote areas, they are beginning a slide down the slippery slope toward the abuses of the reservation of the host.

This is not a minor issue.

It is at the heart of the Reformation. Even Anglicans have had a mixed history on this issue. The British parliament rejected two versions of the Book of Common Prayer in 1927 and 1928 because they

permitted the reservation of the host.

Even though ELCA bishops might argue they are simply trying to enforce the requirements of the CCM agreement, they should recall their statement agreed upon at a Conference of Bishops meeting in Tucson, Ariz., in 1999 stating that CCM would not proscribe lay presidency: "...lay persons may continue to be licensed by the synodical bishop in unusual circumstances to administer the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion as is the present practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America."

It will be a great disappointment if our leaders take their promises so lightly.

Lutheran Clergy Connect

Lutheran Clergy Connect is one way for congregations seeking a pastor to connect with potential candidates who believe that Christ alone is sufficient for the unity of the Church and that the Word of God is the authority for the Church. Below are the most recent listings. A full list, which includes 21 additional listings, is posted on the WordAlone website. ([www. wordalone.org](http://www.wordalone.org)).

If you would like your congregation listed on Clergy Connect, please mail or fax your request on church letterhead, signed by an officer or call committee chair, to WordAlone Network, 2299 Palmer Dr. Suite 220, New Brighton, MN 55112 Fax: 651-633-5994. (Please notify us when the position's been filled.)

Give the following information:
 Pastoral position
 Congregation's name, city, & state (& website address if applicable)
 Contact person
 Phone number
 E-mail address
 Calls are listed starting with the most recently received.

tjohnson@zionanoka.org
 763-421-4656
Position: Zion seeks either a Youth Pastor or Youth Director to lead an intensive high school ministry with a potential for 400 plus young people. Would join a large staff of pastors and lay people committed to a strong youth ministry.

Lutheran Church of the Master
Omaha, NE
 Contact: Rev. Kip Tyler
 2617 South 114th Street
 Omaha, NE 68144-3098
 402-333-4444 (w) 402-334-7152 (h)
www.churchofthemaster.com
tyler@churchofthemaster.com
tyler9@cox.net
Position: a full-time pastor with the major responsibility of supervising outreach & servant-leadership ministries.

Our Savior's Lutheran Church
Lake Oswego, OR
 Contact: Lisa Martin
 13017 Sierra Vista Drive
 Lake Oswego, OR 97035
 503-670-8024
lisamartin3@cs.com
Position: Senior Lead Pastor

Our Saviour's Lutheran Church
Victoria, TX
 Contact: Rev. John Waak
 4102 N. Ben Jordan
 Victoria, TX 77901
 361-575-4305
oslc4xr@cox-internet.com
Position: a children's & youth pastor responsible for all ministries from birth through college age people.

Emmanuel Lutheran Church
Knippa, TX
 Contact: Dan Bielfeldt
 Box 251
 Knippa, TX 78870
 830-934-2124
danb@knippa.k12.tx.us
Position: Pastor for small rural congregation. Parsonage & amenities provided, excellent school district.

Clarkfield Lutheran Church
Clarkfield, MN
 Contact: Kathy Bellicot
 1000 15th Avenue
 Clarkfield, MN 56223
 320-669-7614
www.clarkfieldlutheran.homepage.com
Position: Full-time Pastor

St. Matthew's Lutheran Church
Princeton, IL
 Contact: Gene Vincent
 814 Bruce Lane
 Princeton, IL 61356
 309-236-5699
gvin922@earthlink.net
Position: pastor for a 140 year old church in community of 7,600 in North Central, IL

First Lutheran Church
Hector, MN
 Terry A. Pederson
 1303 W. Bayberry Ave. Apt. 6
 Olivia, MN 56277
 320-523-5292 home
 320-523-2040 work
taphtb@tds.net
Position: Pastor

Zion Lutheran Church
Anoka, MN
 Contact: Rev. Tim Johnson
 1601 4th Ave. S.
 Anoka, MN 55303