

The Lutheran Connector

An Official Publication of the Canadian Association of Lutheran Congregations (CALC)

Summer Edition

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Pastors' Retreat 2015

October 14-15

Camp Nakamun, near Edmonton, AB



Convention 2015

October 16-18

Emmaus Lutheran

Edmonton, AB

*10-Year Plan

*Defending the

Faith



CALC is a Community of Independent Congregations Living Together
 The Word of God Created Us
 The Word of God Sustains Us
 The Word of God Redeems Us
 We are servants of one another
 We share one another's burdens
 As Jesus served us and bore our burdens
 As one we proclaim Jesus to the world

Elections:

Delegates to our 2015 National Convention will elect a Vice President, Treasurer and a Member of the Board of Trustees.

In this edition of the Connector you will find a description of the vacant positions on our National Council (NC), and the procedure to be followed in nominating a candidate for one of the vacant positions.

A Nomination form is attached to this edition of the Connector.

Nomination should be received by NC by September 18, 2015.

Website www.calc.ca

Email: info@calc.ca

President's Message

*Alain Simoneau vs The City of Saguenay, QB
The Beginning of the End of Christian Prayer at
City Council Meetings and More?*



April 15th of this year, the Supreme Court of Canada (SCC) in the case entitled ***Simoneau et al vs City of Saguenay et al*** Docket: 35496 ruled that a Christian prayer recited by the mayor of the City of Saguenay, QB, at a public council meeting violated the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and ordered the recitation of that prayer cease.

In the aftermath of the April 15th decision, several cities across Canada immediately suspended their tradition of offering opening prayers for council meetings, including Ottawa, Regina and Kelowna (my hometown). City councils in Calgary and Edmonton voted to eliminate opening prayers and replaced them with moments of silence. Winnipeg's city council bucked this trend and a city councilor offered a Christian prayer. There may be pockets of resistance to the SCC ruling now, however, soon and very soon, God will not be acknowledged, worshiped and petitioned in Canadian city halls. Similar lawsuits will most certainly follow and this silence may well eventually spread to our provincial legislatures and finally Parliament.

Christians cannot remain silent on this issue. We must be in dialogue with our neighbors and in the town square. We have to be ready when those who are offended by Christian prayer attack other Canadian institutions. In order to engage in this dialogue it is important that Christians understand the facts of this lawsuit, the issues addressed by the court, the decisions handed down and the implications of these decisions.

From 2002 through November 2008, the City Council of the City of Saguenay, QB, began their regularly scheduled City Council meeting with this prayer:

*"In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit."
"O God, eternal and almighty, from Whom all power and wisdom flow, we are assembled here in Your presence to ensure the good of our city and its prosperity. We beseech You to grant us the enlightenment and energy necessary for our deliberations to promote the honor*

and glory of Your holy name and the spiritual and material well-being of our city. Amen."

"In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit."

The mayor began and ended the prayer by making the sign of the cross. The other members of the council, together with any municipal officials present, would cross themselves at the beginning and end of the prayer.

Mr. Alain Simoneau, a professed atheist, regularly attended Saguenay's city council meetings. He alleged that the prayer and the making of the sign of the cross were a religious display which made him very uncomfortable. Prior to the December 4, 2006, Saguenay City Council meeting, Simoneau approached the mayor and asked him to stop reciting prayers before the meeting. The mayor refused Simoneau's request.

In response to the mayor's refusal, on March 28, 2007, Simoneau, and Mouvement laïque québécois ("MLQ") filed a formal complaint with Quebec's *Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse* (the "Commission") demanding that they enjoin the recitation of the subject prayer and order the removal of all religious symbols, including religious statues and a crucifix, from council chambers. MLQ is a non-profit organization that advocates the complete secularization of the provincial government at every level in Quebec. Simoneau was a member of MLQ. The Commission limited their review to the prayer and not the crucifix and statuary. The Commission believed that there was enough evidence to submit the case to Quebec's Human Rights Tribunal (the "Tribunal").

July 22, 2008, MLQ and Simoneau filed a complaint with the Tribunal. The complaint alleged that the public recitation of the prayer amounted to discriminatory interference with Mr. Simoneau's freedom of conscience and religion, contrary to ss. 3 and 10 of the Quebec Charter and interfered in a discriminatory manner with his right to dignity and his right to information, contrary to ss. 4, 10, 11, 15, 44 and 82 of the Quebec Charter. The remedy they sought was for the Tribunal to order the City and its mayor to cease the recitation of the prayer and removal of all religious symbols from the council chambers. They also asked for \$50,000 in compensatory and punitive damages.

November 3, 2008, the Saguenay City Council unanimously passed a bylaw which changed the procedures around the prayer before their Council meeting. The Bylaw acknowledged that prayer before city council meetings was **a tradition** of the city of Saguenay. It went on to say that the council unanimously wanted this **tradition** to continue and enacted their

bylaw: "On the basis of their individual rights and freedoms, in particular their rights to freedom of expression, conscience and religion." The bylaw provided for the recitation of this prayer:

Almighty God, we thank You for the great blessings that You have given to Saguenay and its citizens, including freedom, opportunities for development and peace. Guide us in our deliberations as City Council members and help us to be aware of our duties and responsibilities. Grant us the wisdom, knowledge and understanding to allow us to preserve the benefits enjoyed by our City for all to enjoy and so that we may make wise decisions. Amen.

The prayer began and ended in the name of the Trinity and the sign of the cross was made. The bylaw allowed anyone who wanted to participate in the prayer to gather in the Council Chambers a few minutes before the meeting was scheduled to begin. The prayer specified in the Bylaw was then prayed. The chair was required to delay calling the meeting to order for at least two minutes after the prayer finished. This gap in time allowed all those who were offended by the prayer to enter the council chambers and take their places. The meeting would then be called to order.

Simoneau and MLQ amended the complaint and alleged the new bylaw and the new prayer continued to violate his freedom of conscience and religion and his right to dignity and information.

The Tribunal heard the case and found that ***the prayer was religious in nature*** and that the recitation of the same showed a preference for one religion to the exclusion of others. Therefore, this practice constituted a breach of the ***state's duty of neutrality***. The Tribunal ruled that Simoneau sincerely held his atheistic views and his allegation that the whole process of prayer before the council meeting made him feel isolated, uncomfortable and excluded. They concluded that the subject prayer and the public display of religious symbols resulted in a substantial interference with his freedom of conscience and religion and was therefore discriminatory. They ordered that the prayer before the meeting cease and awarded \$30,000.00 in compensatory and punitive damages to Mr. Simoneau and MLQ. The Tribunal awarded punitive damages because they believed the mayor and council had acted with intentional disregard of Simoneau's rights.

The City of Saguenay appealed the Tribunal's decision to the Quebec Court of Appeal. The major issue on appeal was the proper definition and limits of the ***"state's religious neutrality"***. The majority of the court

held the state must exercise a ***"benevolent neutrality"***. To meet this standard the state must neither encourage nor discourage any belief or non-belief. The appellate court held that "neutrality" does not require the state to avoid involvement in religious matters. The exercise of the duty of neutrality permits the state to take into consideration the society's heritage and traditions, and the state's duty to preserve its history.

The Court of Appeal held that it was their duty reconcile and balance the protection of the diversity of beliefs with the cultural reality of society, which includes the society's religious heritage. The Appellate Court found that the prayer in Saguenay's bylaw expressed universal values and could not be identified with any particular religion. The court further concluded that the state's duty of religious neutrality is intended to promote tolerance and openness, not to exclude from a society's reality all references to its religious history. The court held that the interference with Mr. Simoneau's freedoms posed by the prayer and religious symbols was trivial and insubstantial; therefore, there was no discrimination with respect to freedom of conscience and religion. The appeal was allowed and the action was dismissed. Simoneau and MLQ took the matter to the Supreme Court of Canada.

The Supreme Court of Canada (SCC) sided with Simoneau and the MLQ. They affirmed that the ***"state has a duty of religious neutrality,"*** and the City of Saguenay violated its duty of neutrality whenever the prayer was recited before a city council meeting. The unanimous decision was based on the implications of an evolution in Canadian Society. The Court acknowledged that Canada has become a truly a multi-cultural society. Our citizens embrace and practice many faith and belief systems. In addition, a growing number of Canadians have declared they are atheists or unbelievers. The SCC ruled that public meetings, like a city council meeting, must be a safe place for all Canadians. They held: *"A neutral public space free from coercion, pressure and judgment on the part of public authorities in matters of spirituality is intended to protect every person's freedom and dignity, and it helps preserve and promote the multicultural nature of Canadian society."* The court went on to say: *"The recitation of the prayer at the council's meetings was above all else a use by the council of public powers to manifest and profess one religion to the exclusion of all others. On the evidence in the record, it was reasonable for the Tribunal to conclude that the City's prayer is in fact a practice of a religious nature."*

The Court went on to rule that the recitation of the prayer by those in authority turned the meeting into preferential space for those of theistic beliefs. Theists could freely participate in the meeting. The court held that non-believers could participate in the meeting, at a price: "isolation, exclusion and stigmatization." The court made the following ruling on the two minute period which permitted non-believers to join the meeting after the prayer: "*The attempt at accommodation provided for in the by-law, namely giving those who preferred not to attend the recitation of the prayer the time they needed to re-enter the council chamber, had the effect of exacerbating [or making worse] the discrimination.*"

The City argued that, by excluding the prayer, the court gave atheism and agnosticism prevalence over religious beliefs. The prayer ban would by definition be discrimination. The court ruled that, by excluding religious prayer, the state is not promoting unbelief, the state is abstaining from making any statement on faith or unbelief whatsoever.

The City pointed out to the Court that their prayer is very similar to the prayer that is recited in the House of Commons, the body with highest legislative authority in Canada. The City reasoned that their prayer should be accorded the same respect as the prayer said in the House of Commons. The SCC ruled that it would be inappropriate to use the House of Commons' prayer to support a finding that the City's prayer is valid. The SCC ruled: *In the specific context of this appeal, this argument must fail for three reasons. First, there is no evidence before us on the purpose of the prayer of the House of Commons. Second, the circumstances of the recitation of the two prayers are different. Third, it is possible that the House's prayer is subject to parliamentary privilege, as certain courts have suggested.*

The City urged the Court to consider the following arguments. (a) The preamble to the Canadian Charter reads: "*Whereas Canada is founded upon principles that recognize the supremacy of God and the rule of law.*" (b) The preamble thus establishes the supremacy of God and the rule of law as the sources of the values that the charter protects. (c) Therefore, a prayer that refers to that same God cannot interfere with anyone's freedom of conscience and religion. The SCC ruled that the Charter's reference to the supremacy of God cannot legitimize the City's prayer before council. The SCC has held: "*The preamble, including its reference to God, articulates the 'political theory' on which the Charter's protections are based.*" The Court reasoned that the phrase "supremacy of God" never meant to give one

religion supremacy over another religion or the rights of unbelievers. The prayer said by City of Saguenay with its reference to Father, Son and Holy Spirit was clearly a religious act which gave preference to Christianity and this was a clear and unambiguous violation of the City's duty of religious neutrality.

So what should Canadian Christians do in the aftermath of this decision? We must engage our government and our culture in dialogue. We must challenge the reasoning underlying this decision.

Freedom from Religion? No one argues that our Charter grants Canadians the "freedom of religion and conscience." This Charter freedom protects the right of each Canadian to freely and unreservedly practice whatever religion one chooses or refrain from such belief and practice. This freedom is personal. It protects each Canadian's ability to believe and act upon that belief or refrain therefrom. In *Simoneau vs Saguenay*, the court interpreted the Charter's grant of freedom of religion and conscience to include granting Canadians a "freedom from religion." The *freedom from religion* requires that government affirmatively act to limit the rights of fellow citizens from legitimately practicing their faith in an effort to not offend, isolate or alienate non-believers. The state's enforcement of both *freedom of religion* and the *freedom from religion* can create tension and lead to incongruous and mutually exclusive results. If this *freedom from religion* is taken to the extreme, it would have the effect of driving the practice of religious faith underground in an effort to protect the sensibilities of non-believers. The court removed this tension by interpreting the grant of each person's freedom of religion and conscience to impose a duty on the "state" to take a position on the practice of faith in certain aspects of civic life.

Religious Neutrality? The Quebec human rights Commission and Tribunal, the Quebec Court of Appeal and the SCC all based their decisions in this case on the assertion that the "state has a duty of religious neutrality" and that this duty flows from the freedom of religion and conscience guaranteed by the Charter. This duty requires that government do nothing to favor religious groups. No one seems to challenge this assertion. The history of our nation reveals that the Canadian government at all levels has not been neutral about religion. Examples of a Canadian bias in favor of faith and belief, include, without limitation, the following:

- In many provinces (Newfoundland, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan), religious schools have a constitutionally protected right to exist, teach

their students religious tenets and to receive public funding.

- The preamble to our Charter declares that "Canada is founded upon principles that recognize the supremacy of God and the rule of law." The authors of the Charter intentionally made both the rule of law and supremacy of God foundational principals of Canadian society. Logic, reason and rules of grammar dictate that by so doing they placed the supremacy of God on the same footing as the rule of law. The supremacy of God cannot therefore be a "political theory," but a reality which must be accorded the same status and respect as the rule of law. The word supremacy is defined as: "the state or condition of being superior to all others in authority, power, or status." If the supremacy of God is an organizing or foundational principle of Canadian society, God is superior to all others in authority in Canadian society, including, all those in our governmental institutions whether federal, provincial and local. God's recognition in the public life of our nation is thus perfectly legal and above reproach.
- Canada is a constitutional monarchy. Our sovereign, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, is given the title: the Defender of the Faith. She is the head of the Church of England and the Church of Scotland, both being Christian denominations. The Queen's Canadian title includes "Defender of the Faith." While our Queen is not the head of any church in Canada, this title affirms our Monarch's conviction in the existence of God. If our Queen believes in God, and is the head of two Christian church bodies, does this not define the identity of the God who is sovereign and the one called upon in Canadian civic life?
- The justices declared that the authors of the Charter never meant to give one religion supremacy over another religion or the rights of unbelievers. For centuries the God acknowledged, worshiped and petitioned in Canadian civic life has been the Christian God revealed to us as God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. This practice continued after Canadian Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms was enacted.

What's Next? The implications of this case are mindboggling. If the state has a duty to be neutral with respect to religion and this duty is interpreted to prohibit the recitation of a prayer at a public meeting what will be next? Will the duty to be neutral pave the way for lawsuits that will dismantle the separate school systems in many provinces and forbid provincial funding

of faith based schools? Will chaplains in prisons and publically funded seniors housing be fired and chapels closed on grounds that these positions and places of worship advance religious beliefs in a public institution? Do we remove the "Defender of the Faith" from our Queen's title? Will faith communities lose their charitable status on the theory that government is supporting religious groups by giving their members tax advantages? Where will it end?

Parliamentary Prayer. The following prayer has been part of the daily proceedings in the House of Commons since 1877 and was codified in standing orders in 1927:

Almighty God, we give thanks for the great blessings which have been bestowed on Canada and its citizens, including the gifts of freedom, opportunity and peace that we enjoy. We pray for our sovereign, Queen Elizabeth, and the Governor General. Guide us in our deliberations as members of Parliament, and strengthen us in our awareness of our duties and responsibilities as members. Grant us wisdom, knowledge, and understanding to preserve the blessings of this country for the benefit of all and to make good laws and wise decisions. Amen.

The SCC seemed summarily to refuse to allow Parliament's prayer to be used to scrutinize Saguenay's prayer.

The court argued the circumstances of the recitation of the prayers were different. I am not sure if that is entirely accurate. Parliament's prayer is read by the Speaker of the House before the doors are open to the public and thus could not offend public sentiments. In Saguenay the prayer was read by the mayor in a closed door time before the city council meeting officially started. The major difference between the circumstances is the invocation of the holy Trinity and the making of the sign of the cross before and after Saguenay's prayer.

The court argued that no evidence was given as to the purpose of Parliament's prayer. I respectfully submit that Parliament's prayer speaks for itself. Parliament asks God to bless and protect our Queen and Governor General. Parliament asks God to bless and guide them in their deliberations for the common good. Saguenay's prayer had the same purpose.

The court refused to use Parliament's prayer as a yardstick by which to measure Saguenay's prayer on grounds that members of Parliament have certain privileges that exempt them from the reach of the Supreme Court of Canada, which could include saying prayers. The SCC is most assuredly technically correct in their assertion. The recitation of prayers behind closed

doors may be a standing order in Parliament and the House may use parliamentary privilege as a protection. However, the heart of the decision in *Simoneau vs Saguenay* is the new doctrine of the neutrality of the state. Parliament is not neutral with respect to religion. They pray to God. A privileged prayer recited behind closed doors changes nothing. The rule of law requires that all Canadians be treated equally under the law. If the state has a duty of neutrality in religion it applies to all, including Parliament, or to none.

Talk to your neighbors and pray for our Supreme Court. The Apostle Paul wrote: *"I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people— for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness."* (1 Timothy 2:1-2). Pray that the name of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit may once again be invoked in heartfelt prayer in the civic life of our great nation.

In Christ

Pastor Ed Skutshek, President.

New Pastor Installed at Martin Luther – Vancouver, BC



Sunday May 3, 2015, Reverend Manfred Schmidt was installed as the fulltime pastor of Martin Luther Evangelical Lutheran Church (MLELC), of Vancouver, BC. Our President preached and presided at the installation. MLELC is a bilingual

congregation. Congregants worship in German and English services on Sunday mornings. Each month the members of Martin Luther meet for one or more combined service. The combined services are conducted primarily in English, however, hymns are sung in English and German (verses alternate between English and German), and Scripture is read in both English and German.

Pastor Manfred was born in Liebenwalde, Germany. He grew up in a Christian home. His father was Lutheran and his mother Baptist. He was exposed to both faith backgrounds. He regularly attended church while living in Germany. He was trained as an engineer. However, Pastor Manfred also experienced the stirring of the Holy Spirit. In response he attended Bible School in Germany. He also received training as a music and choir director.

Pastor Schmidt participated in mission trips to Haiti through Worldteam of Florida; in Kenya, Africa, through Word of Life Ministries; and in Israel.

He emigrated to Canada as an adult. He worked for Finning Tractor and Equipment in Vancouver from 1985 to 1989. Pastor Manfred to begin serving in the church and continued his Christian Studies in 1989. He earned a Diploma of Christian Studies from Regent in 1991. He was ordained as a Pastor in 1993. He continued his studies at Regent College and earned a Master of Divinity degree in 1996. During 1998 Pastor Manfred accepted a call to serve Immanuel Church of Vancouver, BC.

During 2004 Pastor Manfred accepted a call to serve Zion Lutheran Church (ZLC) of Cloverdale/Surrey, BC. ZLC is a congregation of the Lutheran-Church Canada (L-CC). Pastor Manfred's ministry continued to focus on ZLC's German speaking parishioners. The Holy Spirit used Pastor Manfred to revitalize ZLC's German service. The service grew under his leadership.

Pastor Schmidt used his musical skills in worship. He sang solos, often accompanying himself on guitar, and as part of a duet, trios and quartet. He directed ZLC's German choir. He organized excursions and outings to local attractions in BC lower mainland, Mexico and Alaska.

In 2014 he returned to Immanuel Church in Vancouver. Pastor Manfred was called by Martin Luther in 2015. He is called to a bilingual ministry in German and English.

Pastor Manfred is a single father of four grown sons, all in their twenties. He is also a grandfather.

The congregation celebrating Pastor Schmidt's installation included: members of Martin Luther congregation; members of Zion Lutheran Church, Cloverdale; Pastor Schmidt's sons and grandson; many of his dear friends and relatives; Pastor Ian Buntain of Immanuel Church; CALC Pastors: Alan Boerner (Bonnie), Eddie Kwock, Richard Hung; Pastor Carol Gerber; Pastor Karl Keller; Pastor Norm Miller; Pastor Dorothy Chu; Pastor Adolf Mantz; and Pastor Fred Rink. Special music was provided by Pastor Schmidt; a choir from Zion Lutheran's; Martin Luther's Choir; and a piece sung by both choirs. Worship was followed by a luncheon.

Pray that the Lord will continue to bless Pastor Manfred's ministry at Martin Luther Church.

10-Year Strategic Plan

Cluster Meeting Update

Cluster meetings in April/May

Apr 18	Immanuel Lutheran, Stony Plain, AB
Apr 25	St. John's Lutheran, Viscount, SK
May 2	Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church, Mission, BC
May 16	Christ Lutheran, Morden, MB

16 attended our 4th Cluster meeting at Immanuel Lutheran of Rosenthal, Stony Plain, Alberta. Thank you to the people of Immanuel for making the space available for the meeting and for catering our lunch and coffee breaks. Representatives from Bardo Lutheran, Christ Lutheran, and Journey's Lutheran, Calvary Lutheran and Asker Lutheran attended the meeting.

12 participants braved the threat of freezing rain in order to attend the 5th Cluster Meeting at St. John's Lutheran Church in Viscount, Saskatchewan. The church in Viscount, 50 minutes east of Saskatoon was chosen for its central location. Representatives from Immanuel Lutheran in Parkside and St. John's Lutheran in Preeceville attended. The bad weather kept representatives from Trinity Lutheran in Leader, the furthest away, from attending the cluster.

24 participants gathered at Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church in Mission BC for our sixth cluster meeting. Congregations represented: host Mt. Calvary Lutheran; Vancouver Chinese Lutheran of Burnaby; St. Andrews of Kamloops, and Grace Lutheran of Kelowna. Thanks to the people of Mt. Calvary for hosting the cluster meeting.

About a dozen gathered at Christ Lutheran Church in Morden, Manitoba for our seventh cluster meeting. The cluster meeting may have been small but our discussion was lively, spirited and touched many areas. Thanks to all who participated in and hosted the event.

The following represents a summary of the priorities for our Association which emerged from the discussions at our cluster meetings:

- ❖ National Council continue to work toward making our Annual General Convention (AGC): vibrant; with many opportunities for prayer, praise and worship; and full of opportunities for Christian Education that equips, empowers and encourages us to fulfill Christ's Great Commission through the effective sharing and defending of our faith.
- ❖ National Council continue to explore the benefits and challenges of holding our Pastors' Study Retreat

as a part of our AGC. The evaluative process has begun as we hold our Pastor's Study Conference as a part of this year's convention.

- ❖ National Council continue to refine our Shepherd's Pathway, including:
 - Discerning and accurately stating congregational expectations as to the role of pastor in congregational life.
 - Discerning and accurately stating pastor's expectations as to the role of pastor in congregational life.
 - The process by which the call of a candidate for pastoral ministry is discerned; including the intentional 40 day period of discernment and CCPF program.
 - Developing standards, policies, procedures and expectations for embedded ministries under ILT's Pastoral Ministry Certificate Program (PCM).
 - Developing standards, policies, procedures and expectations for embedded ministries under ILT's Master of Divinity Program (M-Div).
- ❖ National Council continue to provide guidance to congregations in the call process, including:
 - materials to be used in developing a congregational vision in expectation of the call;
 - materials to be used in assessing a congregation's pastoral needs in expectation of the call;
 - options for advertising pastoral vacancies;
 - materials to be used in and assistance in interviewing candidates;
 - model letters of call (with the letters of call reflecting the expectations of the pastor and the congregation); and,
 - voluntary salary, holiday and Sabbatical guidelines for pastors.
- ❖ National Council continue to study social issues confronting us, including: the sanctity of life; the erosion of the rights of Christians in the public life; marriage, family and the Godly expression of our human sexuality; the onslaught of secular humanism and atheism; and Creations vs Evolution.
- ❖ National Council look at our model constitution under the heading of Membership. It was affirmed

that we tend to look at church membership legalistically. Individual congregants tend to look at membership in terms of their name being on a roster as a member. Membership has privileges, such as the right to voice and vote at congregational meetings, the right to call special congregational meetings and other privileges extended to members (i.e.: burial in a cemetery maintained by the congregation). Church councils tend to look at membership lists for quorum and voting purposes. We have to look at membership in new ways.

2015 Convention Update

Emmaus Lutheran Church of Edmonton, Alberta, will host CALC's 2015 Annual General Convention. The convention will be held October 16th, 17th and 18th.



Theme: 1 Peter 3:15-16. *"But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander."*

Convention Highlights:

Approval of 10 Year Strategic Plan: The delegates to CALC's 2013 convention authorized our National Council to present a Ten-Year Strategic Plan for CALC for adoption by our Association. National Council was to report back to last year's convention as to the specific process to be followed in the development and implementation of our plan. National Council introduced a working document entitled "Working toward a Ten-Year Strategic Plan – IMPV (Identity, Mission, Progress & Vision). Seven Cluster meetings were held in the early part of this year. National Council will introduce our 10-Year Strategic Plan for our delegates' approval during our business session.

Keynote Speaker - Christian Apologetics:



Sharing and defending our faith can be daunting. Where do you start? What do you say? How do you handle the thorny questions that arise? Our convention's keynote speaker the Reverend Doctor Joseph Boot, of Toronto, Ontario, will address us at our

Friday morning learning event and Saturday afternoon as our convention Keynote Speaker. Reverend Boot is one of Canada's leading Christian Apologists, defined as a defender of the faith.

Rev. Boot (M.A., Ph.D.) is a cultural theologian, leading Christian apologist, founding pastor of Westminster Chapel in Toronto, Chancellor of Westminster Classical Christian Academy, a newly established classical Christian school, and founder of the Ezra Institute for Contemporary Christianity (EICC). Originally from Great Britain, he served with Ravi Zacharias International Ministries for seven years as an apologist based in Oxford England and Toronto Canada. Joe has spoken all over the world in 25 countries at numerous universities, seminaries, churches, colleges, and conferences from Eton College and Oxford University, to Forman University in Lahore, Pakistan.

Pastor Boot regularly addresses pastors and Christian leaders as well as medical, legal, and business professionals in North America, Britain, and the Middle East and has publicly debated leading atheistic thinkers and philosophers in Canada and the United States.

Registration Fees:

Full Registration.....\$90.00

This registration fee covers all events on Friday and Saturday, including lunches, refreshment breaks and the Saturday night banquet.

Friday Only Registration.....\$25.00

This registration fee covers all events on Friday, including lunch and refreshment breaks.

Saturday Only Registration.....\$25.00

This registration fee covers all events on Saturday, including lunch and refreshment breaks. The Saturday night banquet is not included.

Banquet Only Registration.....\$40.00

This registration fee covers the Saturday night banquet only.

Accommodations:

Delegates and visitors must arrange for their accommodations. These hotels are located near Emmaus Lutheran Church.

Holiday Inn Express – Edmonton North

13742-50th Street,
Edmonton, AB, T5A 5J6
Phone: 780-476-9898
Email: hiexedmontonnorth@gmail.com



They have reserved 25 rooms (deluxe with twin or king beds) for 149+tax per night. Contact hotel directly CALC Convention. This hotel is 1.4 kilometers or a three minute car ride from the convention site.

Sands Inn & Suites

12340 Fort Road Northwest,
Edmonton, AB T5B 2B9
(780) 474-5476



They have reserved 14 rooms with two queen beds and 4 rooms with 1 queen bed all offered for 109.00+tax per night. Confirmation number is 59317. Call hotel directly. This hotel is 4.3 kilometers or an eight minute car ride from the convention site.

2015 General Convention Agenda

Friday, October 16

8:30-9:30 AM	Registration
9:30-10:30 AM	Keynote Speaker Session #1 ¹
10:30-11:00 AM	Refreshment Break
11:00-12:00 PM	Keynote Speaker Session #2 ¹
12:00-1:00 PM	Lunch
1:00-2:00 PM	Breakout Session #1 ²
2:00-2:30 PM	Refreshment Break
2:30-3:30 PM	Breakout Session #2 ²
6:30-7:00 PM	Registration
7:00-8:30 PM	Opening Worship
8:30-9:30 PM	Hospitality

1. Rev. Dr. Joseph Boot will speak on Christian Apologetics.
2. Hour long sessions on topics of interest, governance, missions, evangelism.

Saturday October 17

8:30-9:00 AM	Registration
9:00-9:30 AM	Devotions-Convention Opening
9:30-10:30 AM	Business Session #1
10:30-11:00 AM	Refreshment Break
11:00-12:00 PM	Business Session #2
12:00-1:00 PM	Lunch
1:00-1:30 PM	Introduction of Guests
1:30-2:30 PM	Keynote Speaker Session #3 ¹
2:30-3:00 PM	Refreshment Break
3:00-4:00 PM	Keynote Speaker Session #4 ¹
4:00 PM	Convention Closing
6:30-9:30 PM	Banquet

1. Rev. Dr. Joseph Boot will speak on Christian Apologetics

Sunday October 18

11:00 AM	Closing Worship (Holy Communion)
12:30 PM	Refreshment Break

Business Meeting:

General Business: New members will be formally admitted. Delegates will receive and approve reports from our: President, Board of Elders, Board of Trustees

and Treasurer. A budget for 2016 will be adopted. Our 10-Year Strategic plan will be approved. Elections will be held to fill vacancies on our National Council. The vacant positions on National Council are described below together with a call for nominations.

ELECTIONS – National Council Call for Nominations.

The delegates to our 2015 National Convention will fill the following vacant positions on National Council:

- Vice President (4 year term)
- Treasurer (4 Year term)
- One Member on Board of Trustees (4 year term)

Below please find:

1. A brief description of the makeup and terms of reference of the National Council.
2. A brief description of the terms of reference of the Board of Trustees.
3. A brief description of the terms of reference of the office of the Vice President.
4. A brief description of the terms of reference of the office of the Treasurer.

1. National Council:

The **National Council** is comprised of: the Executive, the Board of Elders (BOE) and the Board of Trustees (BOT).

The Executive: is made up of our President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. A lay person **must** serve as: (a) either the President or Vice President; and either the Secretary or Treasurer.

The Board of Elders: The BOE is comprised of the President, the Secretary and at least three (3), or five (5) or seven (7) members. The General Convention decides the size of the BOE. There are currently three Elders. The **majority of the members** of the BOE **must be lay people**.

The Board of Trustees: The BOT is comprised of the Vice President, the Treasurer and at least three (3), or five (5) or seven (7) members. The General Convention decides the size of the BOT. There are currently three Trustees. The **majority of the members** of the BOT **must be lay people**.

Qualifications: Each member of the National Council shall be elected from CALC's Roster of Pastors, a believing member of a member congregation or an associate member chosen for their:

- (a) Commitment to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and to the divine inspiration, revelation, and inerrancy of the Scriptures;

- (b) Evidencing the fruit of the Spirit in life suitable to the function of the office;
- (c) Spirit-bestowed gifts of wisdom, knowledge, and administrative ability; and
- (d) Full intention to uphold this Association's Confession (Article Three), Purpose (Article Five), and Constitution.

Election: The members of the Executive, the BOE and the BOT are elected by a majority vote of the voting delegates to CALC's Annual General Convention for staggered four year terms, with about one third of the terms expiring each year.

Meetings: The National Council is required to meet at least once a year as called and publicized by the President. Additional meetings may be called by the President and must be called when requested by at least one-third of the Board Elders or by at least one-third of the Board of Trustees. Meetings may be held by telephone conference or internet conference. The National council typically meets three times a year at the Delta Airport Hotel in Calgary, Alberta: a winter meeting in January or February; a spring meeting in May or June; and a fall meeting in September. The National Council gathers for the annual General Convention in October.

Incumbent Members of the National Council: Below please find a roster of the incumbent members of our National Council and when their terms expire. The positions which will be vacant at the 2015 Annual General Convention are in bold print below.

National Council Member	Term Expires
Edward Skutshek, President	2017
Manfred Schickedanz, Vice President	2015
Helen Zacharias, Treasurer	2015
Vivien Georgeson, Secretary	2017
Randall McLeod, Elder	2018
Peeter Vanker, Elder	2016
Tim Bauer, Elder	2016
Ron Voss, Trustee	2016
Sherland Chhangur, Trustee	2015
Everley Lutz, Trustee	2017

Vacant Positions Described: A description of each of the vacant positions follows.

2. BOARD OF TRUSTEES: The delegates will elect a member of the Board of Trustees for a four year term ending at our Annual General Convention in 2019. A description of the Board of Trustees and their rights and duties as set forth in our constitution are set forth below.

A. Membership.

The Board of Trustees is composed of the Vice President as Chairperson and tie breaker and Treasurer, and not less than three nor more than nine other members.

B. Meetings.

The Board of Trustees shall meet at least once each year as called and publicized by the Vice President. Meetings may be held by telephone conference or internet conference. Additional meetings shall be called by the Vice President as often as the business of this Association may require, or at the request of the President of this Association or of one-third of the members of this Board.

C. Duties and Responsibilities.

The Board of Trustees shall have charge of the general management and business affairs of the Canadian Association of Lutheran Congregations.

(a) Property Transactions.

(1) In the performance of these duties this Board is authorized and empowered to purchase or otherwise acquire title to real estate for and on behalf of the Canadian Association of Lutheran Congregations; to act on behalf of the various jurisdictional units, committees, etc., after receiving their recommendations, in the buying and selling of property; to borrow money on behalf of this Association or any of its jurisdictional units, boards, committees, etc.

(2) This Board shall be responsible for the investment of the endowment and other investment funds of this Association; to buy and sell bonds, stocks and other securities; to receive gifts, legacies, and devises on behalf of this Association or manage, or dispose of them; to have full power to manage, in accordance with this Association's Statement of Purpose (Article Five) all properties entrusted to it; and to secure and defend the property rights of this Association by the process of law.

(3) It shall be the policy of this Association not to borrow money, unless approved in the same manner as a constitutional amendment.

(b) Procedures and Relationships.

Procedures in performing these duties, delegation of responsibilities, and relationship of the Board of Trustees to separately owned institutions, irrespective of type of ownership, shall be as defined in the Constitution and Bylaws.

(c) Periodic Review.

The Board of Trustees shall periodically review the financial condition, policies, practices, and operations of all components of this Association. If in the judgment of the Board of Trustees any such policy, practice, or

operation is detrimental to the Purpose of this Association (Article Five), it shall, in writing, point out such matters to those concerned. In the event agreement cannot be reached, those involved may submit the matter to the National Council.

(d) Financial Control.

The Board of Trustees shall require jurisdictional units, boards, standing committees, etc. which receive budgetary support to make such adjustments in their programs as may be necessary to insure that expenditures for current operations shall not exceed receipts for the current fiscal month.

(e) Auditors et al.

The Board of Trustees shall make arrangements for auditors and other necessary employment and, as needed, prepare job descriptions.

(f) Salaries.

The Board of Trustees shall recommend to the National Council the remuneration of the officers and other employees of this Association, provided such remuneration is deemed necessary, subject to approval by the General Convention.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: The delegates will elect a Vice President for a four year term ending at our Annual General Convention in 2019. Because our sitting President is a member of the Clergy, the Vice President elected must be a lay person. (CALC Constitution – Article 10, Section 2.3 (2.3.1)) A description of the rights and duties of the Vice President as set forth in our constitution is set forth below.

1. The Vice President shall preside at all meetings of the Board of Trustees.
2. The Vice President's particular responsibility shall be to assist the President to facilitate resolutions and motions passed by the General Convention, National Council, Board of Elders and Board of Trustees. If the President dies, resigns, or is unable to serve, the Vice President shall serve until the next General Convention.

THE TREASURER: The delegates will elect a Treasurer for a four year term ending at our Annual General Convention in 2019. The Treasurer may be from our Clergy Roster as the sitting Secretary is a lay person. A description of the rights and duties of the Treasurer as set forth in our constitution is set forth below.

1. The Treasurer shall serve as a member of National Council and act as secretary to the Board of Trustees.
2. The Treasurer shall:

- (a) Keep such financial records, including books of account, as are necessary to comply with Revenue Canada;
- (b) Render financial statements to National Council and General Convention;
- (c) Perform any additional duties prescribed in this Constitution, Bylaws and resolutions of this Association.

Nominating Procedure:

A CALC "Nomination Form" is attached to this issue of the Connector as pages 20-21. Please follow the following procedure in nominating a candidate for a vacant position:

1. Each candidate for the position of Vice President, Treasurer or Trustee must be nominated in writing by a member of a CALC congregation or an Individual Associate Member. The person nominating a candidate must fill out section of the form attached hereto entitled: **1. The Nomination.**
2. The person nominated must indicate his/her acceptance of the nomination by signing and dating the section entitled: **2. The Acceptance.**
3. The Nominee should complete Sections 3 through 6 and answer questions 7 through 11 and sign and date the form as indicated.
4. The completed Nominations Form should be forwarded to CALC as follows:

(a) By Mail to:

CALC
Att: Pastor Edward P. Skutshek, President
C/O: Grace Lutheran Church
1162 Hudson Road
West Kelowna, BC, V1Z 1J3

(b) Scan the form as a jpeg or PDF and email to: president@calc.ca.

(c) Fax the form to (250) 769-5691

5. Each nomination form will be considered by the CALC Nominating Committee before recommendation to the National Convention. The Nominating Committee will meet on Saturday September 19th. Nomination forms received by Friday September 18th and approved by the Nominating Committee on September 19th will be included in the Bulletin of Reports. Nomination forms received after September 19th may or may not be included in the Bulletin of Reports, which is sent out to delegates as an attachment to an email about 2 weeks prior to the convention. Nominations may also be made from the floor.

Pastor's Study Retreat 2015



Dates: This year we will hold our Pastor's Study Retreat on **October 14th and 15th**, the **two days before our convention** in Edmonton.

Venue: The retreat will be held at Camp Nakamun, a Christian camp located on the shores of Lake Nakamun. The camp is near Busby, Alberta, about an hour drive west and north of Edmonton.

Itinerary: The retreat will begin about noon on Wednesday the 14th. (Morning flights from the Eastern Canada, get into Edmonton, before noon). It will conclude Thursday evening. Pastors will stay at the camp Wednesday and Thursday night. Friday morning we will travel to Emmaus Lutheran, in Edmonton, our convention site. There will be time for study, reflection and recreation.

Costs: If attendance is round 30 our budget for the retreat for 2015 should cover the costs of the retreat. As in the past, the costs of travel to and from the retreat are covered by each congregation sending a pastor(s).

At the 2012 General Convention in Toronto, CALC's President, Pastor Ed Skutshek emphasized the importance of attendance at CALC's two annual gatherings, the Pastors' Retreat and the General Convention, for the purpose of Gathering, Equipping, Encouraging and Educating under the acronym GEEE.

Therefore, please advise if there are any financial constraints that would prohibit a pastor's attendance as assistance can be provided through CALC's Gathering Fund, a designated fund which has been set up for the purpose of maximizing attendance at CALC's two annual gatherings.

Keynote Speaker: This year's keynote speaker is Pastor Rick Bergh, M-Div. CT. Pastor Rick has served in the pastoral ministry for many years, most recently for about ten years at St. Peter's Lutheran Church, CALC, in Cochrane, AB.

Pastor Rick is designated as Certified in Thanatology (CT) by the Association for Death Education and Counseling (ADEC). After 30 years of experience as a palliative care-giver, pastor and grief counselor, Pastor

Rick authored several books so that others could benefit from all this experience.

Pastor Rick's sessions will focus on the terminally ill; grieving; dying; and suggestions for pastoral intervention and counsel during these difficult times.

Retreat Schedule Wednesday October 14th

12:30 PM-1:30 PM	Lunch
1:30 PM-3:00 PM	Speaker Session #1
3:00 PM – 3:30 PM	Refreshments
3:30 PM – 5:00 PM	Speaker Session #2
5:00 PM -6:00 PM	Supper
6:00 PM-6:30 PM	Free time
6:30 PM – 7:00 PM	Evening Prayer/Worship
7:00 PM	Free time

Retreat Schedule Thursday October 15th

8:30 AM to 9:30 AM	Breakfast
9:30 AM to 10:30 AM	Speaker Session #3
10:30 AM to 11:00 AM	Refreshments
11:00 AM to 12:30 PM	Speaker Session #4
12:30 PM-1:30 PM	Lunch
1:30 PM-5:00 PM	Free time
5:00 PM -6:00 PM	Supper
6:00 PM-7:00 PM	Sharing
7:00 PM – 7:30 PM	Evening Prayer/Worship
7:30 PM	Free time

Retreat Schedule Friday October 16th

7:00 AM – 8:00 AM	Breakfast
8:00 AM	Drive to Edmonton

To Register for the Retreat. Send an email to Vivien Georgeson, our Secretary, to the following address secretary@calc.ca which includes the following information:

1. Your name and your congregation .
2. Indicate how you are getting to the retreat, by car or airplane. If you are flying in please indicate whether you need a ride from the airport to the retreat site.
3. If you need a ride from the airport please provide the following information: Airline, flight number and arrival time.
4. Please indicate any dietary restrictions you may have.
5. Please indicate any other special needs you may have.

Bedding and towels will be provided by the camp for guests flying into the retreat. We ask that those driving to the retreat bring bedding and towels.

Canadian Rockies Theological Conference



Our President attended the 2015 Canadian Rockies Theological Conference (CRTC) April 14th to 17th. The theme of the conference was "**Worship Wars – Peace Talks.**" Highlights of the conference are provided below.

Purpose: CRTC's website described the purpose of the conference as follows: "For years we have been hearing the phrase "Worship Wars" used to describe the divide between "traditional" and "contemporary" worship practices. But as is usually the case, such labels do not capture the complexity of the issue at hand. The debate about worship is encumbered with various inaccurate assumptions, false dichotomies, and downright uncharitable behavior. Perhaps the time has come to bury the hatchet and talk peace."

The Presenters:



Rev. Dr. Frank Senn author of Christian Liturgy: Catholic and Evangelical, and a number of other books on the subject. President of the Society of the Holy Trinity.

Rev. Dr. Amy Schifrin Director of the North American Lutheran Seminary, and Associate Professor of Liturgy and Homiletics.



Steve Bell. Juno Award winning Christian singer and songwriter. He was the recipient of the 2012 Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal, and the 2013 Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra's Golden Baton Award.

The Basics unpacked by Drs. Senn & Schifrin:

Liturgical Worship Defined: Liturgy is defined as the "work of the people." Liturgy is really any ritual order of worship that is followed by a religious body. Most all Christians use a liturgy or order of worship. We use hymns with an agreed upon tune and words on a screen, or written in a bulletin or hymn book. Worship is led by one or more individuals and follows a certain order. Any order of worship is a liturgy. In the Christian Church when we talk about the difference between *liturgical vs*

non-liturgical worship we are referring to whether your congregation follows an ancient Christian rite or an order of worship which does not follow the ancient Christian rites of worship. Worship has a **vertical dimension** – the congregation gathers together before God for repentance, contrition, confession, absolution, praise, thanksgiving, prayer, and inspiration. We worship one God in Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We pray to the Father, through the Son in the power of the Spirit. Worship has a **horizontal dimension** we sing hymns, psalms and spiritual songs to one another, we address one another (Leader: the Lord be with you. People: And also with you.), we hear God's word and respond to God and one another (we exchange the peace with one another).

Rev. Drs. Senn and Schifrin described the elements of the ancient rites of worship and contemporary evangelical worship and their use in worship in our Lutheran churches.

Elements of the Ancient Rite or Liturgy

Ancient Rites: The Settings for Holy Communion, the Service of the Word, Rite for Baptism, Vespers, Matins and other services found in the LBW go back to Reformation times. These services were originally written in Latin. Luther translated the Roman Catholic Mass (Holy Communion) and other services into German. They were later translated into English and then updated to reflect the language of our times. The elements of the service of Holy Communion are as follows:

Gathering: The congregation is gathered together and called to worship our God with one voice through: Confession and Absolution, Entrance Hymn, Kyrie, Hymn of Praise and the Prayer of the Day.

Word: The congregation is enlightened through the reading of Scripture: a Psalm, an Old Testament, Epistle and Gospel lesson followed by preaching on the same.

Response: The congregation responds to the word proclaimed through confession of one of the ecumenical creeds, prayers of the people, offering and presentation of gifts, the peace shared and Holy Communion.

Sending: The congregation joins together in song, receives a blessing is sent into the world to serve God.

Lectionary-Church Year: The ancient church followed set readings or a lectionary. The ancient church followed a church year that began with Advent, through Christ the King Sunday, which celebrates the return of Christ as King at his second coming.

Hymnody: The Church year is celebrated through hymnody. There are hymns written for every part of the Church year. Hymns passed down through the

generations speak and articulate the theology of the Church and reflect/embody Trinitarian worship. Hymns praise, adore and thank God. Some hymns are call to repentance others are hymns of lament.

Contemporary Evangelical Rite or Liturgy:

Contemporary Evangelical Rites: Contemporary liturgies trace themselves to the summer camps held by Presbyterian congregations in Scotland. The camp liturgies were placed into the urban church setting around the turn of the 20th Century. The ancient rites and liturgies were abandoned in favor of a new rite:

Preliminaries: The congregation was worked up and readied for the message by songs and choruses and personal testimonials.

Preaching: The word of God was proclaimed.

Response to the Word: An altar call was issued – people were encouraged to make a commitment to Christ – an invitation to personal prayer is extended. The service ended and people left.

Billy Graham's Crusades followed this order of worship: (1) **Preparation:** first a mass choir sang; followed by solos from George Beverly Shae as a kind of personal testimony as preparation for the word, (2) **Preaching:** Billy Graham preached the word with power; and (3) **Response:** then the altar call was issued – prayer partners and repentant members of the audience streamed forward to the altar.

No Lectionary/No Church Year: Contemporary evangelical worship services do not follow a lectionary or church year (other than celebrating Easter and Christmas).

Rev. Drs. Senn and Schifrin described most contemporary evangelical worship they had encountered as Jesus centered, and not particularly Trinitarian. They described most evangelical hymns and choruses as more about the mood of the artist than theology. However, they did acknowledge that Steve Bell's contemporary hymns were Trinitarian and theologically sound.

Ancient and Contemporary Rites in Lutheran Worship.

Rev. Drs. Senn and Schifrin noted that each congregation is called to discern the shape their worship takes, the order of worship that is followed and the hymns sung. They noted that Lutheran congregations have adapted contemporary liturgy into congregational life as follows:

- Some Lutheran congregations have opted to use the ancient rites and traditional hymns as expressed in our Lutheran Hymnals for all worship services and

have ***opted not to use contemporary hymns in worship.***

- Many Lutheran congregations ***diversify weekly worship.*** Some have a traditional service and contemporary service each Sunday. Other congregations designate specific worship services as "Youth" or "Contemporary" services. Their traditional service of worship use the ancient rites and traditional hymns as found in our Lutheran Hymnals. The contemporary service features a very simple order of worship and contemporary hymns and music.
- Many congregations engage in ***blended worship.*** They use the ancient rite as expressed in our Lutheran hymnals, however, they eliminate parts of the liturgy and use a blend of traditional hymns and praise songs.
- Some engage in ***convergent worship.*** They follow the ancient rites as expressed in our Lutheran Hymnals and modify tunes used in the liturgy and a blend of traditional hymns and contemporary hymns and songs that are appropriate to the season.

The presenters invited participants to reflect on how their home congregations adapted contemporary Christian music and hymnody into their weekly worship. CALC congregations should reflect on their worship practices, specifically on how closely the ancient rites are followed in weekly worship and how contemporary Christian music is adapted into their worship.

Highlights of Steve Bell's Presentation.

Steve Bell is a contemporary Christian artist. He is a prolific songwriter, accomplished musician and excellent singer.

Steve is the son of a Baptist preacher. He was used to worshipping using contemporary liturgies. The service began with hymns and choruses, then offering, preaching, prayer and an altar call.

Steve grew up in what he called a classic Baptist household. Sobriety, modesty, humility and joy were the most important accomplishments in life. He was taught to go to church, memorize Bible verses, praise and worship God with ardor and faith and all will go well. Worship was Christ-centered. The Trinity was mentioned in worship, but always a mystery. One's relationship with Jesus had to be personal. Jesus had to be a friend. Steve admitted that he could not see Jesus as a friend. Jesus was a mystery.

Steve's father left the parish ministry and became a prison chaplain, first in Drumheller, AB and then Stony

Mountain, MB. His family worshiped with the prisoners and the Roman Catholic priests stationed at the prison along with Pastor Bell. Steve learned the liturgy for the Roman Catholic Mass. He even accompanied the liturgy in Mass said in the prison chapel and Roman Catholic Churches around the prison. It is here that Steve learned to love liturgy.

As a young man he left home and became a professional musician. He played guitar and sang in rock bands that played the pub circuit in Winnipeg. After 10 years in the pub scene, Steve was recruited by the Youth for Christ movement to lead worship for street kids in Winnipeg.

With the help of an Anglican Priest friend, he developed a liturgy or order of service for the Sunday night service. Representatives of Youth for Christ were skeptical of Steve's use of a liturgy at first. His liturgy consisted of gathering songs, scripture reading, a message and a minute of silence. The time of silence was meant to be a time of confession. He invited the street kids to open themselves to the presence of God. As it turned out this moment of silence was very powerful.

Steve spoke of a particular street kid named James, a rowdy lad, from the worst circumstances. It turned out that the moment of silent confession figured prominently in James' conversion. He lived with a constant knot in his stomach because of the drugs, anger and violence in his home. He professed the only time the knot disappeared was when he was in God's presence during the time of silence. He wanted to commit his life to that God and he became a Christian when he prayed a sinner's prayer in the solitude of his room.

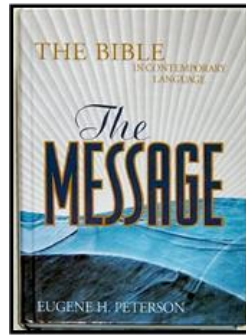
When he is not touring as a contemporary Christian artist, Steve worships in a conservative Anglican congregation in Winnipeg. He is involved in planning worship and accompanying congregational singing. He used his musical talents to innovate the congregation's liturgies. He often sets the ancient lyrics found in the congregation's liturgies to new tunes.

Steve's final words to our group: Liturgy is a gift. We are to continue to use it. This is a time of greening, setting old words to new tunes, and in this way breathe new life into our liturgies. He encouraged congregations to continue to use liturgies and to love our liturgy. Our love for liturgy will show and we will draw others in.

What Kind of Message is "The Message"?

By Ron Voss

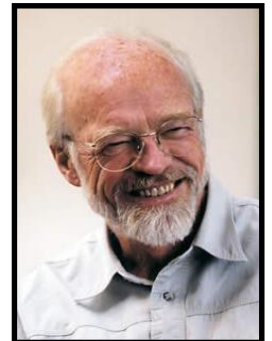
You may be familiar with Eugene Peterson's The Message 'Bible'. Listening to a recent Stand Up For The Truth radio broadcast, *The Message of the Message "Bible"*,¹ prompted me to write this article.



I first became aware of The Message about eight years ago and since then have researched and followed it with some interest. The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language was created by Eugene H. Peterson and published in segments from 1993 to 2002 by Navpress. According to Wikipedia, The

Message "was written to make the original meaning more understandable and accessible to the modern reader." Peterson has even written a version for children, ages 4-8, My First Message, A Devotional Bible for Kids.

From 1993 to 1998, Eugene Peterson was Professor of Spiritual Theology at Regent College in Vancouver, B.C. and remains as a professor emeritus of spiritual theology at Regent. The Message has been marketed by Navpress as "The Bible in Contemporary Language" – a user friendly, easy



to comprehend version of the Bible, and, according to some definitions, is considered a "paraphrase". It is important to understand that The Message is not a translation of biblical Scripture, but more like Eugene Peterson's personal imaginative commentary, incorporating his philosophy. Nor, would it be accurate to describe it as "The Bible in Contemporary Language". True translation is taking the original Greek and Hebrew texts, being very careful to preserve their true meaning as much as possible, word by word and phrase by phrase, while translating them into another language so that the exact meaning is kept intact. Nothing is removed or added, and there is no discrepancy about what God is actually saying in the text. Anything outside of this, changes the true meaning of the Bible, and is re-wording God's Word. While The Message is generally

¹ <http://standupforthetruth.com/2015/06/the-message-of-the-message-bible/>

understood to be a “paraphrase” of the Bible, it is highly questionable to call it a paraphrase, since it goes far beyond the rephrasing or rewording of a text or passage. If you want to hear Eugene Peterson explaining what motivated him to write the message, please see this short video on YouTube.²

Eugene Peterson, the author of *The Message*, even says it is not really a Bible, the authoritative Word of God. Here is a quote from Peterson: “One of the Devil’s finest pieces of work is getting people to spend three nights a week in Bible studies. Well, why do people spend so much time studying the Bible? How much do you need to know? We invest all this time in understanding the text which has a separate life of its own and we think we’re being more pious and spiritual when we’re doing it. But it’s all to be lived. It was given to us so we could live it. But most Christians know far more of the Bible than they’re living. **They should be studying it less, not more** (emphasis added). You just need enough to pay attention to God”.³

This raises some important questions, such as, “Is it right for this admitted human “paraphrase” (even though it is beyond a paraphrase) to be read from the pulpits as if it were the Word of God, and “Is *The Message* a wholesome Christian alternative or complement to traditional Bible translations?”

Marsha West with Berean Research, a ministry which exists to help Christians discern and equip themselves to keep themselves and others from falling into deception, in a recent article, *Does U2’s Bono, A Professing Christian, Believe The Bible?*, that examined the beliefs of the rock star Bono, whose “spiritual journey has been greatly influenced by” Eugene Peterson, described *The Message* as one man’s “parody of the Bible”.⁴

Speaking of Bereans, I have been intrigued by the account about the Bereans recorded in Acts 17:11: “Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true”. Imagine that, the Bereans “examined the Scriptures every day” to see if what the great Apostle Paul was saying was true, that is, did it line up with Scripture! That provides a good guide for how we are to discern messages, whether they be from the Pope, Bishops, Emergent/Emerging Church gurus such as Brian McLaren, Rick Warren, Jim Wallis, Rob Bell and Tony Campolo, or even from your beloved local pastor.

You should not be interested in somebody’s opinion, but, rather, “What does the Bible say?”

In 2011, during a Bible study at St. Peter’s Lutheran Church, Cochrane, one of the participants wondered how one goes about choosing a Bible translation? His concern was understandable, as one only needs to take a trip to a bookstore to discover that there are hundreds of options in Bibles, which can make the choice of a Bible an overwhelming exercise. There are as many as 50 different English versions of the Bible. This prompted me to put together a Power Point presentation entitled, “Choosing a Bible”. I explained how the various Bibles fit onto a ‘translation scale’.



At one end of the scale is a “word for word” (‘literal’) translation which follows the Hebrew or Greek as closely as possible. At the other end, after one moves through a “thought for thought” (‘dynamic equivalence’) region that attempts to present the original language in a more ‘reader friendly’ format, one has a paraphrase. The further away one gets from the more literal “word for word” translation, the text becomes easier to read, relying more on the theological, linguistic or cultural understanding of the translator, which, however, also carries a greater risk of incorporating the translator’s doctrinal views and bias into the text. Although *The Message* in the figure above is shown as occupying the paraphrase realm, as discussed previously, *The Message* should not be viewed as a “paraphrase”. Within my presentation, I explored how *The Message* aligned with well known “word for word” and “thought for thought” Bible translations, that is how does *The Message* align with “What does the Bible say?”. For example, I put up a slide with the following text:

With a God like this loving you, you can pray very simply. Like this: Our Father in heaven, Reveal who you are. Set the world right; Do what's best - as above, so below. Keep us alive with three square meals. Keep us forgiven with you and forgiving others. Keep us safe from ourselves and the Devil. You're in charge! You can do anything you want! You're ablaze in beauty! Yes. Yes. Yes.

² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NIGEnn1JnSk&channel=LaityLodge>

³ <http://www.leaderu.com/marshall/mhr03/peter1.html>

⁴ <http://bereanresearch.org/does-u2s-bono-a-professing-christian-believe-the-bible/>

I asked: "Do you recognize this"? No one recognized it. Then, I revealed that it was The Message's version of The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13). *"This, then, is how you should pray: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."*

Then I put up a slide with a side-by-side comparison, the Word of God versus The Message, for a key text from the Bible:

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. – John 3:16-17 (NIV)

This is how much God loved the world: He gave his Son, his one and only Son. And this is why: so that no one need be destroyed; by believing in him, anyone can have a whole and lasting life. God didn't go to all the trouble of sending his Son merely to point an accusing finger, telling the world how bad it was. He came to help, to put the world right again. – John 3:16-17 (The Message)

While The Message "was written to make the original meaning more understandable and accessible to the modern reader", note in this particular case that while the NIV uses 47 words, Peterson used double the number of words, and, in my mind, clouds and even corrupts the meaning of this important passage.

According to Romans 10:17: "faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the Word of Christ". As declared in the Formula of Concord – Epitome in the Book of Concord – The Lutheran Confessions, which reference this passage in Romans, "God the Holy Ghost does not effect conversion without means, but He uses the preaching and the hearing of God's Word to accomplish it...faith comes from hearing God's Word". With that in mind, consider that Christ is not the author of The Message, Peterson takes upon himself the role of the Holy Spirit. Does faith come from hearing the words of Eugene Peterson?

As part of my discernment, I also like to learn about the author of a so-called Christian message. Consider, for example, that Eugene Peterson has endorsed two books, The Shack by William P. Young and Love Wins by Rob Bell (emergent former pastor, who, by the way, has

transitioned to a full-fledged New Age traveler along with Oprah Winfrey), both of which say that a loving God would never let anyone go to hell. Also, Peterson is the author of a book called Contemplative Pastor: Returning to the Art of Spiritual Direction and is very much into "spiritual formation", done through spiritual disciplines, primarily through the discipline of the silence. Thus, Eugene Peterson has endorsed the back cover of New Age writer Sue Monk Kidd's new edition of When the Heart Waits. Sue Monk Kidd, a once conservative Baptist found the "secret" in contemplative prayer and has now become a strong proponent of contemplative spirituality.

It was interesting that the Stand Up For The Truth radio broadcast happened to fall on the day (June 26th) that the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that gay marriage must be allowed across all the U.S. states. In the broadcast there was discussion about how Eugene Peterson's The Message is being used by those who want to avoid or deny the truth that homosexuality is a sin. For example, Peterson in The Message not only removes the sin of homosexuality from 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, but also adds earth reverence to this passage by including "those who use and abuse the earth" as a sin. We are commanded in Deuteronomy 4:2: "You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God that I command you". An example was given during the radio broadcast of the author of a post "On Being Gay" relying upon The Message versions of 1 Corinthians 6 and Romans 1:25-27 to make his case. He writes: "Reading these renditions and then re-reading the traditional texts without the lens of prejudice, the point is as plain as day. Lust and abuse is wrong and destructive, but love—now that is a different matter".⁵

Also discussed in the broadcast was the unfortunate situation that for so many young people The Message is pretty much their primary text; they have literally grown up reading The Message. In their world there is all this stuff on TV, in movies, this media barrage, so the 'bible' they have is not a counterbalance to the world. And this, as well, could, in part, explain the trend in our culture.

One of the participants in the radio broadcast, John Lanagan, is the author of a recent booklet tract entitled, "The Message 'Bible' – A Breach of Truth: How Eugene Peterson's The Message Omits Homosexual Sin – and Other Strange Deletions, Additions, and Alterations."⁶

⁵ <http://www.courage.org.uk/articles/article.asp?id=219>

⁶ <http://www.lighthouse trailsresearch.com/blog/?p=16449>

Over time, I have come across various critiques of The Message. I could write and share much more on this topic. However, any who are interested can send me an email and I would be happy to forward links for additional critiques.

Peace – His kind,

Ron Voss, June 27, 2015

Highlights National Council Meeting May 30, 2015

President's Report:

New Members: The President noted that the Board of Elders will be receiving an application from an ordained pastor for rostering as a Pastor in Extended Ministry and National Council will be asked to issue a call to said pastor for ministry as a chaplain/counselor with a parachurch organization.

Installations: Pastor Manfred Schmidt was installed as fulltime pastor of Martin Luther Evangelical Lutheran Church of Vancouver, BC on May 3rd 2015.

Congregations in Call Process: The President reported that the following congregations are in the call process:

- ❖ Immanuel Lutheran Church of Rosenthal, Stony Plain, AB;
- ❖ Basel Hakka Lutheran Church, Vancouver, BC;
- ❖ St. John's Lutheran Church, Preeceville, SK; and
- ❖ All Saints Lutheran Church, Ottawa, ON.

Progress in the call process for each congregation was shared.

10-Year Plan: The President shared feedback from the seven cluster meetings. The feedback received by the President is summarized in the article found on page 7 above.

Board of Elders (Elders) breakout session.

- The Elders (*Elders*) continued the review of the files of CALC students enrolled at the Institute of Lutheran Theology (*ILT*), Brookings, South Dakota.
- The Elders once took up discussion on the question of additional educational requirements for Pastors who are called to CALC congregations who do not have a Lutheran background and/or received

training in a non-Lutheran seminary in response to specific questions from two of our congregations.

- Elders welcomed Pastor Rick Bergh to their breakout session. Pastor Rick was asked to make a presentation at our 2015 Pastors' Study Retreat October 14th and 15th. He briefed the Elders on his presentation.
- Pastor Bergh and the Elders discussed a vision for two key points on our Shepherd's Pathway to Pastoral Ministry. Before a candidate for the ministry begins a course of study for M-Div degree or a Pastoral Ministry Certificate, he/she should go through a forty day period of discernment in his/her home parish, and then enroll in and complete the Christ Centered Pastoral Formation (CCPF) program.
- CCPF: An intensive program, somewhat similar to the established Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) program. Unlike CPE, which is a multi-faith program, CCPF is Christ-centered. During the CCPF program a candidate has time and an opportunity for internal self-examination with respect to Heart, Soul, Body and Mind aspects of the Shepherd's Pathway. This course envisions a 6 to 8 week commitment on the part of the student. A minimum of 6 to a maximum of 12 students are required for a CCPF class.
- Pastor Bergh and the Elders discussed how a standardized curriculum for the 40 day discernment period and CCPF could be developed, how the programs could be delivered and how a candidate's progress could be assessed.

Board of Trustees (Trustees) breakout session.

- Institute of Lutheran Theology (ILT) –Trustees to work on a marketing plan aimed at informing our members of ILT's identity, structure, mission and vision and raising their interest in ILT.
- Trustees need to work to make membership more aware of CALC's Designated Funds
- Trustees to work toward recruiting a CALC congregational representative in each congregation in order to tell the congregation what is new in CALC and solicit support of our programing.
- Trustees to look at how do we encourage people to enter the pastoral ministry.

Board of Trustees (Trustees) breakout session.

Institute of Lutheran Theology (ILT) update:

- ILT is going through an accreditation process.
- Benefits of accreditation: ILT students with a Master of Divinity will have access to more graduate schools for advanced degrees including STM and PHD degrees.
- The American accreditors require that ILT be approved by the Department of Education in every state the school has students. They are afforded an exemption in the US. Religious schools are not bound by this rule.
- ILT's US accrediting body requires ILT to be recognized by the Department of Education in every province ILT has students or provide evidence of an exemption. CALC rep get in touch with online seminaries in Canada to determine if an exemption exists.
- ILT's Accreditation in the US will allow Canadian students to take advantage of tuition and book deductions on their income tax returns.
- Canadian students are at a distinct disadvantage when dealing with ILT. They must pay tuition in US funds. It costs over \$1.20 Canadian to buy \$1.00 US. Trustees are striving to find ways to help Canadian students with this disparity.

Next Meeting: Saturday September 19, 2015, 9:00 AM, Delta Calgary Airport Hotel.

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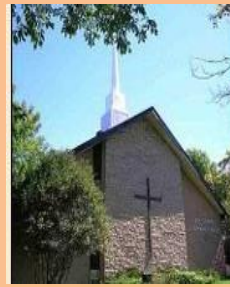
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Church Staffing Vacancies

ONTARIO:



All Saints Lutheran Church
Ottawa, ON

Is seeking a full-time Pastor & part-time Youth Worker
For more information call us at (613) 828-9284 or email us at:
secretary@allsaintslutheran.ca

All Saint's is currently served by Pastor Doug Kranz as interim pastor.

SASKATCHEWAN



St. Johns Lutheran Church
Preeceville, SK
Seeking
Pastor

Contact: Rev. Ed Skutshek
(250) 801-3860
President@calc.ca

BRITISH COLUMBIA:



Basel-Hakka Lutheran Church
Vancouver, BC
Seeking
English Pastor

Fulltime Position
Knowledge of Chinese dialects an asset but not a requirement.
Apply by October 15th to:
pastorsearch@bhlc.ca

ALBERTA:



Immanuel Lutheran Church of Rosenthal
Stony Plain, AB

Is seeking a full-time Pastor
For more information call us at (780) 963-4048 or email us at:
doug7nichols@hotmail.com



Canadian Association of
Lutheran Congregations
(CALC)

Nominating Committee
C/O: Pastor Edward P. Skutshek, President
Grace Lutheran Church
1162 Hudson Road
West Kelowna, BC, V1Z 1J3

Nomination Form

1. The Nomination

Dated: (Please Print)
Name of the Person Nominated: (Please Print)
Name and Address of Nominee's Congregation: (Please Print)
Position Nominee is nominated for: (Please Print)
Name and telephone number of the person making the nomination: (Please Print)

2. The Acceptance

Having prayed about this nomination for the CALC National Council, I am willing to let my name stand. I am in full support of CALC's principles, in full agreement with CALC's doctrinal standards and am confident that in some measure God has gifted me for this office. With God as my help, I will do my utmost to fulfill the stated duties and responsibilities of this office should I be elected.

Dated _____

Signature of Nominee

3. Biographical Information

Candidate's Full Name (Please Print)
Candidate's Address: (Please Print) Street, City, Prov. PCode
Candidate's Telephone Number:
Candidate's Email Address:

4. Prior Experience

Describe past experience or positions held that would assist you in the above position. (Attach additional sheets if needed). Please print.

5. Spiritual Gifts and Skills

Outline strengths, abilities and Spiritual gifts that you would bring to this position. Examples: (a) Spiritual Gifts of Administration, Leadership, Discernment, Wisdom, Encouragement, Teaching (Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28) and (b) education or experience with strategic planning, corporate governance, communications, fund raising or financial management). (Attach additional sheets if needed). Please print.

6. Vision

Please indicate your concerns and hopes for the future of CALC. (Attach additional sheets if needed).

7. Are you over the age of 18 years?

Yes

No

8. Are you a baptized member of a congregation of CALC?

Yes

No

9. Are you currently involved in a bankruptcy proceeding?

Yes

No

10. Are you currently the subject of a proceeding relating to guardianship or conservatorship?

Yes

No

11. Will you be at CALC's 2015 National Gathering?

Yes

No

Signature _____

Date: _____