

# The Lutheran Connector

An Official Publication of the Canadian Association of Lutheran Congregations



The Canadian Association of Lutheran Congregations (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.

As believers we are servants of one another;

As believers we share one another's burdens as Jesus did for us on the cross;

With one voice we proclaim Jesus Christ to the world.

**CALC's 2019 Annual General Convention**  
**October 18-19**  
**CALC's 2019 Annual Pastors' Study Retreat**  
**October 16-17**  
**Both at the Best Western Port O' Call**  
**1935 McKnight Blvd NE, Calgary, AB, T2E6V4**



**Room Rate**  
**\$119.99 per night**  
 (plus applicable taxes)  
 Single or double occupancy  
 Hot breakfast included  
**Book by October 2<sup>nd</sup>**  
 You must call the hotel  
**1-403-291-4600**  
 Mention Promotional Code:  
**CALC Convention**

**Room Rate good for:**  
**October 15-19**  
 Hot Breakfast: October 16-19  
**Catered Meals**  
**Pastors' Retreat**  
 October 16: Lunch & Supper  
 October 17: Lunch  
**Convention**  
 October 18: Lunch & Supper  
 October 19: Lunch  
 October 19: Optional Banquet

**Hotel Amenities**

- Free 24 hour airport shuttle.
- A club-style fitness center and squash courts.
- 8,000-square foot Waves Water Park (including two hot tubs),
- Free high speed WIFI.

Free parking for guests.

## Inside This Edition

Our President and National Council have been busy preparing for our 2019 National Convention and Pastors' Study Retreat. You can read about these events in two articles which describe these events. We recognize that sending pastors and delegates to the retreat and convention is a significant investment of congregational funds. We can provide grants to congregations. Information on that process is also included in this edition.

This edition includes two articles relating to World Mission written by two missionaries with connections to CALC.

News from our seminary is also included. Read about ILT's Winter Meeting of its Board of Directors.

Did you know that the Pope and an influential Muslim cleric signed a "fraternal" agreement? Did you know that there are groups lobbying Parliament to remove "Advancing Religion" as a legitimate charitable purpose? You can read about these developments in two articles published in this edition.

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## From the President's Desk

### *When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?*

On March 10<sup>th</sup> of this year, journalist Bonnie Allen posted an article on the CBC's website entitled "*From sacred to secular: Canada set to lose 9,000 churches, warns national heritage group.*"

Ms. Allen's article was based on information released by the National Trust for Canada (NTFC), a national charity that works to save heritage buildings. The NTFC estimates that 9,000 religious spaces in Canada will be lost in the next decade.

In 2009 Natural Resources Canada conducted a national energy audit. The audit revealed that religious organizations owned some 27,601 buildings in Canada. These buildings were used for worship, training or promotion. Upon review of the information on these buildings, NTFC estimated that about a third of these buildings would be demolished or repurposed in the 2020's.

The article led with a picture and terse description of the demolition of a church building.



The Village of Meath Park, SK, 170 kilometers northeast of Saskatoon, demolished this church in 2018 over safety concerns related to its crumbling foundation. Residents who tried to stop the demolition had to be removed by RCMP.

The article continued with several examples of how some church buildings have been repurposed.

- In 2016 Hazlet Lutheran Church, northwest of Swift Current, SK was converted into a space for live concerts.
- St. Luke's Anglican in downtown Ottawa demolished their church hall which made room for supportive housing and a parking garage. Even with this additional income, their budget is very tight.
- In Hamilton, ON, the Hughson Street Baptist Church's congregation decided to raze its old building, rather than pour millions into renovations. It partnered with a developer to build a new building with 45 affordable apartment units.
- The deconsecrated St. John's Anglican Church of Indian Head, SK. was renovated into a 5,000 square foot, four-bedroom home with a loft master bedroom.

- 150-year-old St. Jax Anglican church in downtown Montreal partnered with Le Monastère — a circus cabaret show — to generate revenue. The circus-cabaret performs high-wire and trapeze acts in the sanctuary. They rent the church building to other groups to survive.



Acrobats hang from the rafters of 150-year-old St. Jax Anglican church in downtown Montreal.

While secular recycling enthusiasts may be thrilled with the repurposing of Christian churches, NTFC's project leader Robert Pajot pointed to the consequences of this trend. *"Neighbourhoods are going to have multiple churches closing. Some people qualify this as a crisis, and I kind of agree. It is going to hit everybody."*

Pajot went on to say: *"It's not just about the buildings. It really is beyond the impact of the loss of a heritage building in the community. The places of faith really have been, for generations, centres of so much of community life. They play a de facto community hub role, community service role."* Even this secular group understands that the loss of the vibrant congregations which occupied these church buildings will impact communities. It will impact them in the present and for eternity.

Why? Why are all these churches slated for closure? Bonnie Allen succinctly stated what she believed were the causes of this predicament. *"In rural areas, congregations are shrinking as members age or move away. In cities, the increasing secularization of society coupled with new spiritual practices has cut into traditional Christian church attendance. Even rising immigration hasn't been enough to offset the trend. With fewer people in the pews, and less money in the coffers, rising maintenance costs on old buildings have overwhelmed many congregations."* Her words ring true. To the foregoing burdens add the cost of heating and cooling the building and costs of a pastor and/or pulpit supply. These words reflect the experience of the vast majority of CALC's congregations. We are overwhelmed.

As I began to ponder the implications of this article, Luke 17:20-18:8 came to mind. From the very beginning of his ministry, Jesus called the faithful to *repent, for the kingdom of God is near*. In Luke 17, some Pharisees seized on Jesus'

words and asked him to show them this kingdom. Jesus' response to them was that the kingdom he preached and brought was not an earthly kingdom. It was a kingdom of faith that resided in the heart, soul and mind of those who believed in him. However, Jesus promised that the kingdom of faith would turn into a tangible eternal kingdom in an instant when Jesus returned in his eternal glory. He declared that all of this would occur after his death on the cross and glorious resurrection.

Jesus promised that his sudden return would take an oblivious world with great surprise. It would be like the time of Noah and the time of Lot. At the time of Noah, people lived lives oblivious to God. They ignored Noah's preaching: the building of a large ship with no water in sight. Noah preached that the end was coming and would be produced by a catastrophic flood. The people of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah lived lives focused on gaining wealth and satisfying *all* their appetites. They were unmoved by Lot's example of righteousness. God came suddenly in the flood and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire and brimstone. Jesus' words produced anger and derision on the part of the Pharisees and fear and consternation on the part of his disciples. Jesus did not want to leave his disciples with troubled hearts.

Jesus completed this discourse with a parable. It was about a human judge who neither feared nor respected God or human beings. A widow from his town approached the judge. She had been wronged by a wealthy resident. She pleaded with him to intervene in her case. Initially the judge did not care about her. However, he was finally moved to intervene when he realized that this woman would not give up on her case and could even attack him.

This little parable was a call to his disciples to repent. They would be like the widow: vulnerable and powerless. Like the widow they would be wronged, persecuted and cheated by the people of every generation. It would be easy for the widow to lose heart in the face of wrong. It would be easy for her to believe that the system was rigged and justice was bought and sold like any commodity. She could convince herself that the golden rule is: "The one with the gold makes the rules." She could scare herself into inaction. She could convince herself that if she were to speak out and become the proverbial "squeaky wheel," she might not get what she wants. She may be punished for her complaining. It would be easy for a widow to give to give up and lose faith. In the same way, it would be easy for the church to lose faith when confronted with persecution, bullying and violence.

Jesus ends his sermon on the little parable with these words. *"However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"* (Luke 18:8b). Jesus wants us to understand the seriousness of our situation. Faith can be driven out by fear, bullying and inaction.

The disappearance and repurposing of church buildings in our countryside, villages, towns and cities is evidence of the disappearance of faith in our land.

The lure of wealth, sports and recreational activities compete for the hearts, souls, minds and strength of our people and in too many cases they have won out. Their strategy is simple and effective: just keep people away from church for the sake of career and/or a good and healthy activity and they won't go back to the church. It works.

The death or disability of each of our aging saints negatively impacts the faith and life our congregations. Our budgets shrink, while costs just keep going up.

Canada's public schools, colleges and universities attack the Christian faith. Many of our children, youth and young adults come to seriously question their faith as a direct result of the teaching of our public schools. The fruit of creating doubt in the truth and relevance of the Christian faith is this: our young people stay away from church in droves.

We read articles like Bonnie Allen's and lament. We begin to believe what she says. We believe the system is rigged against us. We begin to believe the church is dying. We want to die with dignity. We go into a palliative care mode. We hope the church stays open long enough for us to receive a good Lutheran funeral and burial.

The parable continues to be a call from Jesus not to lament, but to repent and pray. If passionate and persistent calls for justice could move a corrupt and uncaring jurist to act fairly; then the heartfelt petitions of beloved children would certainly move a loving and merciful God and Father. He called them to pray to God with annoying and passionate persistence; all the while believing that God would answer their prayers. They were called not to give up because God would not give up on them.

Jesus calls us to cry out: "Father God you know your church is under attack. You know many Canadians call Christians judgmental, petty, hateful, racist, and hypocritical. They say we are afraid of, even hate, and want to discriminate against all those who struggle with their sexual identity. Many of our own children, youth and young adults have come to doubt in the truth and relevance of your Word. The world rejoices as your houses are demolished or desecrated. Houses of prayer and worship are turned into businesses, clubs and houses."

"Holy Father we beg you not to let this to happen in our congregation and the other congregations of CALC. We believe that you are really present in your Word preached and proclaimed and the Sacraments administered. Open our eyes, and those whom you will draw to our congregations, to your presence. Father God, give us the grace, faith and trust to survive. Use us! Make us conduits and pipelines of your love, grace and truth as expressed in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ! Teach us ways to defend our faith in you in the face of the doubts and fears of the world. May your light shine through us individually and as congregations."

In Christ,

*Pastor Ed Skutshek*

A red rectangular box with white and yellow text. The text reads: "2019 Annual General Convention October 18-19". Below this, it says "Convention Theme:" followed by the quote "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. (1 Peter 3:15)".

**CALC's Annual General Convention (AGC)** will be held October 18-19, 2019. This year's AGC will be unique. It will be held over two rather than three days. Our annual Learning Event (LE) will still take place on Friday October 18th. The theme for the LE will be Christian apologetics. Our annual business meeting will take place on Saturday morning. Saturday afternoon is reserved for a keynote address and closing worship. Delegates and visitors could return to their homes following worship. Those that are able can stay for a celebratory meal.

The venue for the convention takes us back to CALC's constituting convention held on Reformation weekend 1992. We will truly be going back to our roots. Twenty-seven years ago our founders took a bold step. Full of hope, joy and energy they took the first steps necessary to establish our Association. They laid the foundation upon which God has built our Association. Twenty-seven years later we return to the Port O' Call Hotel and ask God to kindle within us that same hope, joy and energy.

**Venue:** Best Western Port O' Call Hotel, 1935 McKnight Blvd NE, Calgary, AB T2E 6V4. The hotel is located 15 minutes by car from both the Calgary International Airport and the downtown city centre.

**Accommodations:** Best Western has given us a block room rate (rooms with one or two queen beds) at a rate of \$119.99 per night, plus applicable taxes (single or double occupancy). The hotel maintains a 24 hour complimentary shuttle to and from the Calgary Airport. Simply include your arrival and departure information and CALC will arrange for the hotel shuttle to pick you up at the airport when you arrive and get you there for your departing flight. See page 4 above for details on the hotel and accommodations.

**Full Registration Fee: \$180.00 per delegate/visitor.** Registration fees include convention materials and lunch and supper on Friday the 18<sup>th</sup>. Breakfast for Friday and Saturday morning are included in the room rental rate.

**Registration Friday Learning Event only: \$90.00 per delegate or visitor.** Includes lunch and supper on Friday.

**Registration Saturday convention only: \$90.00 per delegate or visitor.** Includes convention materials and lunch on Saturday.

**Saturday Banquet:** A banquet will be held after worship on Saturday the 19<sup>th</sup>; a separate ticket in the amount of **\$55.00** per person may be purchased for the banquet.

You will be able to register online at [www.cala.ca](http://www.cala.ca).

**Convention Schedule:**

**Friday October 18 – Learning Event**

<b>8:00-9:00 AM</b>	<b>Breakfast</b>
9:00-9:30 AM	Opening Worship
9:30-11:00 AM	Apologetics Session #1
<b>11:00-11:30 AM</b>	<b>Break</b>
11:30 AM -12:30 PM	Apologetics Session #2
<b>12:30 -1:30 PM</b>	<b>Lunch</b>
1:30-2:30 PM	Apologetics Session #3
2:30-3:00 PM	<b>Break</b>
3:00-4:00 PM	Apologetics exercise
4:00-5:00 PM	Break
5:00-6:00 PM	Supper
6:00-7:00 PM	Presentations - Ministry Partners
<b>7:00 PM</b>	<b>Free time</b>

**Saturday October 19 – Convention**

<b>7:30-8:30 AM</b>	<b>Breakfast</b>
8:30-9:00 AM	Devotion – Convention Opening
9:00-10:30 AM	CALC Business Session #1
<b>10:30-11:00 AM</b>	<b>Break</b>
11:00 AM -12:30 PM	CALC Business Session #2
<b>12:30 to 1:30 PM</b>	<b>Lunch</b>
1:30-2:00 PM	Introduction of Guests
2:00-3:30 PM	Apologetics Session #4
3:30-4:00 PM	Unfinished business/break
4:00-5:00 PM	Closing Worship & God speed
5:00-6:30 PM	Closing Meal



Three days before Christmas, four children sat a pastor’s kitchen table frosting Christmas cookies. They were surrounded by images of the Christian faith and Christmas hymns and carols were played in the background. Two of the children were “pastor’s kids”. The other two were sisters who grew up in a secular home. Their maternal grandparents were nominally Roman Catholic. The younger of the two sisters suddenly asked this question: “Show me that God is real!” How would you answer this young woman?

An office administrator at a major business was widely known as a church attending Christian. From time to time she was ribbed by her peers for her faith. They dubbed her the office’s “Church Lady.” One afternoon she received a call from a co-worker. Hours before the phone call, he had come home to a scene that would be permanently etched in his mind. He found his teenage son hung from a rafter in the basement of the family home. He asked her to tell him why she believed in God in a world where teenagers hang themselves. How would you answer this grieving father?

The inquisitive child and the grieving father were real. The questions they asked were real. The Apostle Peter encouraged Christians of every generation to: *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.* (1 Peter 3:15). Are you ready to respond?

Most Christians would admit that they are not ready to respond to these challenges. Yet, God calls us to be ready for these questions and to speak with gentleness and respect. We need help in sharing and defending our faith. God has provided pastors, teachers and other leaders to equip us so that we can give a reason for our hope. Christian apologetics is a branch of Christian theology that defends Christianity against objections. Christian apologetics is a required course for the M-Div. degree and Pastoral Ministry Certificate offered by the Institute of Lutheran Theology (ILT) of Brookings, SD, USA. ILT is CALC’s seminary. It should be required for all of us!



**Speaker:** We have invited Rev. Dr. John Eidsmoe to speak to us for our Friday learning event. He has taught legal history and church history at law schools and seminaries. A constitutional attorney and retired Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Air Force Reserve, Colonel Eidsmoe has also taught church history and

other subjects in various seminaries. He currently teaches Christian apologetics at ILT.

He is a frequent lecturer and debater at colleges, universities, churches, and civics groups. As a constitutional attorney, he has successfully litigated court cases involving First Amendment religious freedom and has defended home education and Christian schools, championed the right of students and teachers to study the Bible in public schools, debated ACLU attorneys on radio and television, and served on the Ten Commandments Legal Defense Team. He is an ordained pastor in the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations.

He holds five degrees in law, theology, and political science. These include two doctorates, one in law from the University of Iowa, and one in ministry from the Oral Roberts

University. He earned his Masters of Divinity degree from Lutheran Brethren Seminary and his Master of Arts degree in biblical studies at Dallas Theological Seminary. His Bachelor of Arts degree in political science is from St. Olaf College. He is also a graduate of the Air Command & Staff College and the Air War College.

He and his wife have been married over 30 years, have three children: David, Kirsten and Justin. He lives in rural Pike Road, Alabama.



**Agenda:**

The agenda for the Saturday morning business sessions includes the certain reports:

- Secretary’s Report: includes establishment of the quorum for the convention and meeting and approval of the minutes of the 2018 Annual General Convention;
- President’s Report;
- Elders’ Report;
- Trustees’ Report;
- Treasurer’s Report (including approval of financial statements for 2018 and the 2020 budget for our Association).
- Report of the results of the congregational referendum on the Constitutional amendment reducing the minimum size of the National Council from ten (10) to eight (8).

The terms of three members of the National Council become vacant at our 2019 Annual General Convention. Members of the National Council are elected for 4 year terms. The vacancies and incumbent members are as follows:

Office	Incumbent
Vice President	Helen Zacharias
Treasurer	Brenda Evjen
Trustee*	Dennis McGuire

\*This office will not be filled if the congregations approve the reduction of the minimum size of the National Council.

Nomination forms will be mailed to each congregation in June. The nomination forms will describe the duties of the Vice President, Treasurer and Trustee. Nomination forms will also be available for submission online.



Jointly Sponsored Study Retreat: CALC’s National Council and the Board of Directors of the Institute of Lutheran Theology Canada Society (ILTCS) are pleased to announce the first jointly sponsored CALC-ILTCS Pastors’ Study Retreat. As in the past, our study retreat will be held immediately before our annual general convention.

The joint pastors’ study Retreat reflects the strong ties between CALC, ILT and ILTCS. CALC’s current President and Vice President are on the Board of Directors of ILTCS. Fred Schickedanz, St. Peter’s Cochrane (CALC), AB, former Vice President of CALC is also a director on ILTCS’s board, together with the Rev. Dr. Dennis Beifeld, President of ILT.

ILTCS is a registered Canadian charity established for the purpose of providing graduate and certificate level theological education for pastors; practical religious training and pastoral ministry programs for lay leaders; and continuing religious education programs for pastors, congregations and individuals. ILTCS provides these services through agreements with the Institute of Lutheran Theology (ILT) of Brookings, SD, USA. ILT is CALC’s seminary.

ILT is a Lutheran seminary providing graduate, certificate, and lay level theological education through a fully integrated online campus. Faithful, fully-credentialed teachers lead students deeply into the Scriptures and the Christian tradition through a continual dialogue via live online video conferencing that replicates a traditional classroom.

We have a vision for our joint annual pastors’ study retreat. Our vision is stated as follows:

*CALC and ILTCS will strive together to establish and maintain an annual pastors’ study retreat which will provide high quality continuing education and opportunities for professional development for the pastors, deacons, pastors-in-training and seminarians of CALC, other Lutheran bodies which share our scriptural and confessional roots (LCMC, LCC, AFLC, NALC and CLB) and other church bodies.*

*The continuing education and opportunities for professional development offered during each pastors’ study retreat will primarily be provided by ILT through its faculty, adjunct faculty and sessional lecturers, together with other professionals engaged by CALC and ILTCS from time to time.*

Consistent with our vision statement, our inaugural joint study retreat will provide continuing education and

professional development for those who minister to our congregations. It will address a serious issue facing the church, namely, the impact of self-directed and even self-administered euthanasia in Canada.

**Venue:** Best Western Port O' Call Hotel, 1935 McKnight Blvd NE, Calgary, AB T2E 6V4. The hotel is located 15 minutes by car from both the Calgary International Airport and the downtown city centre.

**Accommodations:** Best Western has given us a block room rate (rooms with one or two queen beds) at a rate of \$119.99 per night, plus applicable taxes (single or double occupancy). The hotel maintains a 24 hour complimentary shuttle to and from the Calgary Airport. Simply include your arrival and departure information and CALC will arrange for the hotel shuttle to pick you up at the airport when you arrive and get you there for your departing flight. See page 2 above for details on the hotel and accommodations.

**Registration Fee:** The registration fee for our convention is **\$120.00 per participant**. Registration fees include lunch and supper on Wednesday the 16<sup>th</sup> and lunch on Thursday the 18<sup>th</sup>. Breakfast for Wednesday and Thursday morning are included in the room rental rate. A separate ticket in the amount of \$35.00 per person may be purchased for supper on Thursday. You will be able to register online at [www.cala.ca](http://www.cala.ca).

**Study Retreat Schedule:**

**Wednesday October 16**

7:30-8:30 AM	<b>Breakfast</b>
8:30-9:00 AM	Welcome – Opening Worship
9:00-10:30 AM	MAiD - Sanctity of Life - Session #1
10:30-11:00 AM	<b>Break</b>
11:00 AM -12:30 PM	MAiD - Sanctity of Life – Session #2
12:30 to 5:00 PM	<b>Lunch &amp; Free Time</b>
5:00 -6:00 PM	<b>Supper</b>
6:00-7:30 PM	MAiD – Legal Presentation 1#
7:30-7:45 PM	<b>Break</b>
7:45-8:45	MAiD – Legal Presentation #2
8:30 PM Free	<b>Free Time</b>

**Thursday October 17**

8:00-9:00 AM	<b>Breakfast</b>
9:00-10:00 AM	MAiD - Sanctity of Life – Session #3
10:00-10:30 AM	<b>Break</b>
10:30 AM to 12:30 PM	MAiD - Sanctity of Life – Session #4 R Berg Presentation
12:30 -1:30 PM	<b>Lunch</b>
1:30-2:30 PM	Closing worship & Godspeed
2:30 PM	<b>Free Time</b>

**Theme – Sanctity of Life & MAiD**

The Sanctity of Life is being seriously challenged in Canada and abroad. The Supreme Court of Canada’s ruling in *Carter v. Canada* (2015) required the repeal of sections of Canada’s Criminal Code that prohibited medical assistance in dying in order to satisfy the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Supreme Court gave the government until June 6, 2016, to create a new law. In June 2016 the Parliament of Canada passed federal legislation that allows eligible Canadian adults to request medical assistance in dying. Bill C-14 is known as the Medical Assistance in Dying Act or (MAiD). From that time on, Canadians within and outside the church have wrestled with this newfound liberty. Canadians are increasingly bringing pastors into their deliberations and asking pastors for specific pastoral help, guidance and action. Sadly, leaders within Christ’s Church are beginning to view MAiD as an acceptable form of medical treatment. CALC does not!

CALC is called to respond to MAiD and its implications. We are called to: *“Study the problems of contemporary life and society in the light provided by the sacred Scriptures in order to bring to bear our Christian understanding of human nature, Law and Gospel, and Dr. Martin Luther’s insight concerning the two kingdoms, in order to enter effectively into society and government to help in dealing justly and mercifully with such problems.”* Consistent with CALC’s call to study and respond to challenges in contemporary life, we have invited speakers who will discuss MAiD from the context of the left-handed kingdom, our secular Canadian society and legal system and the right-handed kingdom, the Body of Christ, the Church.

**Presenters:**



**Reverend Timothy Rynearson.**

Pastor Rynearson is an ordained pastor rostered with the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LC-MS) and is on the faculty of the Institute of Lutheran Theology (ILT) of Brookings, South Dakota: permanent faculty – Graduate Program - Biblical Theology. He has served as the Pastor of Peace Lutheran Church of Brookings, South Dakota, since 1996. He also serves as the Principal of Peace Lutheran’s Early Childhood Center. He also teaches ethics at South Dakota State University. He earned a BA at Concordia College, Ann Arbor, MI (1981), a Master of Divinity degree from Concordia Seminary (1985) and an STM from Concordia Seminary (1995).

Topics addressed and discussed in Pastor Rynearson’s Bio-ethics courses include beginning of life issues such as abortion, surrogacy, invitro-fertilization, artificial insemination donation, cloning, DNA testing banks, personhood, parenthood, and emotional issues surrounding the drive to have, or not have, children. End of life issues include physician assisted death (now legal in Canada and



for about 1/3 of Americans), choosing to keep or remove various life support measures, palliative care, how to have important conversations with loved ones - ideally long before there is a need to be involved with end of life care, and how to help people grieving the loss of children and other loved-ones. All of the above are presented in light of God's Word.



**Pastor Rick Bergh.** Rev. Rick Bergh (M.Div., CT, NT), is an ordained minister and serves a parish in Victoria, BC. His presentation will focus on pastoral care to those who are contemplating legal voluntary euthanasia and their families. He is a best-selling author, speaker, narrative therapist and workshop leader. He is a Thanatologist (specialist in death, dying and bereavement). You can learn more about his work at: [www.rickbergh.com](http://www.rickbergh.com).



**Shawn Leclerc.** Shawn Leclerc works in association with RMcD LAW OFFICES and has a growing practice in Lethbridge, Alberta. Shawn was called to the Ontario Bar and the Alberta Bar in 2017 and works in association with RMcD Law Offices in areas of Civil

Litigation with an emphasis on Corporate Law.

A boutique firm located in North Lethbridge, Alberta, RMcD LAW OFFICES is the registered trade name representing the independently associated general practices of (as of 01 Oct 2018): R. (Ron) McDONALD, Q.C., WILLIAM F. MALCOLM, DAVID C. CAVILLA and SHAWN LECLERC.

## Need help attending Convention and/or Pastors' Retreat?

National Council recognizes that for many of our congregations, sending your pastor to the pastors' study retreat and convention and a delegate to the convention represents a significant investment of congregational funds. We have established the "Gathering Fund" for the purpose of providing grants for congregations who need financial assistance in sending their pastor to the study retreat and convention and/or a delegate to the convention.

In order to apply for the grant please send a letter addressed to the National Council requesting a grant. Please email the letter as an attachment to an email to our Secretary. The letter should include an itemized estimate of the costs of sending the congregation's pastor to the study retreat and convention, and/or the costs associated with a delegate to

the convention. The application should ask for a percentage of these total costs.

### Sample Application for a Congregational Grant to Help Pastor Attend the Pastors Retreat and Convention.

#### Application Received From:

Lutheran Church  
15 Sparks Street  
Toronto, ON, V1W 4G3  
Telephone: (416) 779-5685  
Email: [info@lutherantoronto.com](mailto:info@lutherantoronto.com)

Pastor Arrives & Checks-in Tues. Oct. 15  
Pastor Leaves & Checks-out Sun. Oct. 20

We hereby request a grant in the amount of \$800.00 to send our pastor to CALC's 2019 Study Pastor's Study Retreat & Convention. Our request is based on the following estimated costs:

Airfare (-Calgary return).....	575.00
Hotel (Check in Oct 16 Check-out Oct 20 @119.99).....	599.95
Registration Fee Pastors' Study Retreat.....	120.00
Thursday Oct 17 supper.....	35.00
Registration Fee Convention.....	180.00
Closing Banquet.....	55.00
Total.....	1,564.95

### Sample Application for a Congregational Grant for a Delegate to Attend the Convention.

#### Application Received From:

Lutheran Church  
15 Sparks Street  
Toronto, ON, V1W 4G3  
Telephone: (416) 779-5685  
Email: [info@lutherantoronto.com](mailto:info@lutherantoronto.com)

Delegate Arrives & Checks-in Thur. Oct. 17  
Pastor Leaves & Checks-out Sun. Oct. 20

We hereby request a grant in the amount of \$700.00 to send our delegate to CALC's 2019 Convention. Our request is based on the following estimated costs:

Airfare (Toronto-Calgary return).....	575.00
Hotel (Check in Oct 17 Check-out Oct 20 @119.99).....	359.97
Registration Fee Convention.....	180.00
Closing banquet.....	55.00
Total.....	1,169.97

**Grant applications are due August 15, 2019.** The amount of the grant received will be subject to the availability of funds on hand at the time the grants are processed and awarded.

Please submit grant application letters to the Secretary of CALC as follows:

**By Mail:** c/o Grace Lutheran Church, 1162 Hudson Road, West Kelowna, BC, V1Z1J3.

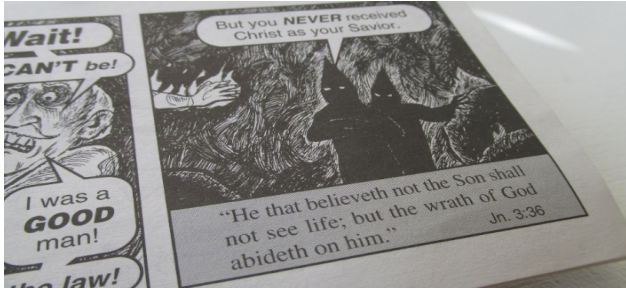
**By Fax:** (250) 769-5691.

**By Email:** [secretary@cala.ca](mailto:secretary@cala.ca)

# Computing Bible Translation

The Scriptures changed my life.

By Dan Bidulock



Long before I knew Jesus, his word was delivered through Jack Chick comic book Bible tracts I found at the bus stop. What first seemed silly and offensive eventually rewrote my story in a way that will be told in eternity. I am a witness-to and proof-of the power of God's Word.

There are many people who know a different Danny. Most people call me Dan now. I'm the same person I've always been, but still different somehow. There is no greater wisdom to be attained apart from fearing God and measuring your own heart and mind against the stories told by witnesses in the Bible. This is what sets Dan apart from Danny... though I am badly tainted, my life reflects God's truth.

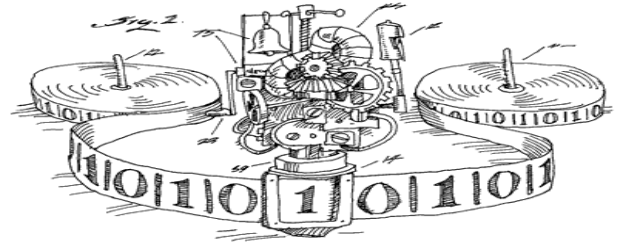
It's been fifteen years since I submitted my life to Jesus Christ. Now I am called to extend Christ's offer of eternal life to some who believe Jesus to be silly and offensive, and to others who have never even heard His name.



**My name is Daniel Bidulock. I am computer programmer and Wycliffe Bible Translator.**

When God's Word takes root in your heart, you see the world clearly. You see God at work everywhere. For me, having read those first few verses, God was immediately revealed in music, movies, and television... none of which were Christian. To this day I point to the truths revealed to me by The Matrix, Fight Club, and a wonderful Canadian film called Cube 2: Hypercube.

God's truth was further reinforced through my academic studies in Computer Science... nothing is random, and infinity belongs to God. Like God, we create with our words. This is true of all people, though perhaps in a less literal sense than when executed by someone who speaks the languages of machines. My graduate research in Artificial Intelligence was motivated largely by the romantic notion of creating a sentient computer being in my own tarnished image. Day by day, this notion is less romantic and more likely.



**Artificial Intelligence and Computer Science provide fertile ground for new points of theological discussion.**

Though excited to speak at length on fantastic ideas about computing and reality itself, my first Wycliffe assignment is purely pragmatic. Wycliffe has an immediate need for Web Developers. By God's provision, I've been teaching Web Development for the last three years and am a master of my trade. Programmers write software for computers. Web Developers are specialized programmers in that we write software for delivery over the World Wide Web. Wycliffe has an urgent need for Web Developers. My first assignment will be a Web application called Scripture Forge. You can learn more about it at <https://scriptureforge.org>.

**It used to take about 25 years to translate the Bible into a new language**

With the advent of computing machines, it now takes about ten. In practical terms, my job at Wycliffe is to make Bible translation faster and easier. The need for Web Developers is motivated by the urgent need of people who don't know this simple truth: Jesus loves you. No Scripture, no salvation... no Bible comics at the bus stop. This is deeply unsettling, because memories of the old Danny are still fresh. My life apart from Christ is a bad story.

**My work as a Bible translator is supported entirely by generous individuals and families.**

I cannot do my work without your generosity. Take this opportunity to contribute to Kingdom-building work. I need committed monthly financial partners and cannot begin work until my budget is proven 100% sustainable. Click [whatdandoes.info/partner](http://whatdandoes.info/partner) for details and to see where your help is needed.



# Mission to Ethiopia

## Teaching the Confessions to the South Sudanese Nuer People in Ethiopia

By Wendel Ritz

Seminarian Wendel Ritz (ILT) shared his upcoming trip to Ethiopia at our CALC's 2019 Convention. Delegates and visitors supported Wendel through prayer and monetary donations. He prepared the following summary of his trip.

My call to serve with Wycliffe brings with it an opportunity for others to contribute to the Great Commission. The good stories people tell about how they came to know Christ are enabled by generosity. Money contributed to my mission is money invested in God's work. It has impact on real lives in ways money alone cannot facilitate.

### Give as God leads

Invite my family to visit you on a Sunday.

Allow me to testify to the power of the Scriptures. We hope to visit the congregations in Calgary and Southern Alberta to call up supporters.



It is a great privilege to be called to apply my God-given skills with Wycliffe. Greater still that I get to hear good stories first-hand of individual lives changed and entire communities transformed. There is no better use of my time on earth. Let me share this joyous duty with you. We are all called to testify to God's work in our own lives. We are all called to bring news of His sacrifice to people around the world.

God's peace,  
Daniel Bidulock M.Div., M.Sc. Wycliffe Bible Translator  
Contact: [dan.bidulock@wycliffe.ca](mailto:dan.bidulock@wycliffe.ca).  
Info: <https://whatdandoes.info>.



Ending Bible poverty by facilitating the translation of God's Word among minority language communities worldwide



Dear friends,

I have returned safely to Canada, and I would like to share a bit with you about the trip to Ethiopia to work with the South Sudanese Nuer people. I spent 10 days in Ethiopia and taught the Lutheran confessions. It was a blessing to see the students interact with the

material, and to see them grow in their understanding of the confessions. God worked in this time, and kept us all safe from serious harm.

It was interesting to see that some discussion points (like the existence of God and the truth of Scripture) are concepts that simply are believed, while in the West these ideas take much time to be shown to be true. At the same time some topics that here we would take for granted (such as wine in communion and forgiveness of enemies) were topics that required more discussion there than they would have here. We had a lively discussion on indulgences, and I was able to learn many things from these wonderful people.

I had the opportunity to travel to the West of Gambella and visit a small town there. The Church there is new but the growth is fantastic. On the Sunday we visited I was able to witness 40 (forty!) baptisms. Praise be to God. Today the South Sudanese Church has 300 congregations and about 60,000 members, but it is on track to grow to 700 congregations in the next 5 years.

We had the chance to experience worship Lutheran style in Africa. It is livelier there than it is here, however the services are a little bit longer as well. I timed the service. From procession to closing was 6 hours and 58 minutes! I spoke an evangelistic message during the time at that service, but kept it to a mere 15 minutes.

The church buildings are a little bit different: armed police outside, wooden slat constitution with no covering, tin roofs and very limited technology. In one service a bird swooped in and sat on the arm of the preacher. In another session a donkey wandered through. Lizards are ubiquitous, and they happily scamper across everything and everyone present. Dogs come to visit, and kids literally climb the walls to see better.

Something I saw from the church attendees as well as the kids, students and pastors: Joy in life. A passion to share the gospel and a commitment to Christ that makes me look at my life in a new way. The people in the Church are focused on Christ in a very direct way. And it shows. In the classes we taught and the services we visited I was able to see the love of Christ in their lives, but also the passion to share this love of Christ with others. I hope in some small way all of us can take this to heart, hear the Gospel and out of love respond by sharing this Gospel with others, so many here to may come to faith in Jesus Christ.

I plan to in the future to renew my involvement with the Nuer people and the South Sudanese Lutheran Church and would like to keep you updated to anything that is happening with the South Sudanese Lutheran Church. I would like to send you occasional updates. If you would prefer not to receive any future updates please let me know and I can take your name off the mailing.

In Christ,

Wendel Ritz

Pictures: These pictures give a snapshot of Wendel's time in Ethiopia serving the South Sudanese Church there.



1. The country has many modern things: a stadium and cellphones, but also very traditional elements everywhere in the country, such as goat herders in the middle of the capital city.



2. Construction of modern buildings also has a very distinct ancient style to it!



2.5 Speaking of traditional: These types of houses are common everywhere in the rural areas of Ethiopia.



3. This is the main church of the Lutheran Church of South Sudan. The Church has grown to 300 congregations and 60,000 members.



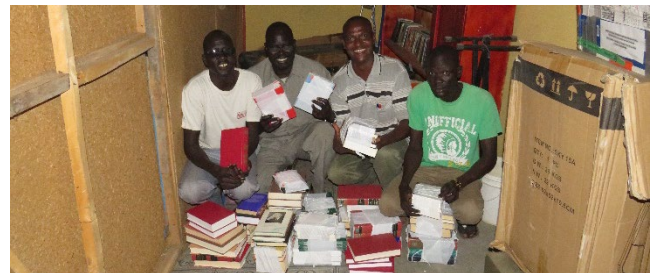
4. Classrooms under construction



5. 7 hour worship service (well, 6 hours 58 minutes)



6. The Sunday I was there the congregation we visited had 40 (forty!) Baptisms.



7. This is the library of Trinity Lutheran Seminary. On the floor are the books we brought for them from Canada. Thank you to all who gave books to take!



8. Grace Lutheran in Drumheller gave the church a new Altar cloth set to be used for communion. It was joyfully received.



9. The first communion service with the new Altar cloth sets. Note: the chalice was carried out of the original seminary in South Sudan as it came under attack. Pastor William had time to grab it (as soldiers were coming through the campus shooting), and only it and carry it to Ethiopia. Nothing else was able to be saved from the Seminary there. It has a special place in Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Gambella Ethiopia.

## News from ILT



### WINTER BOARD MEETING

03.01.2019

The Institute of Lutheran Theology Board of Directors conducted their winter meeting on Tuesday February 26th and Wednesday February 27th. The winter board meeting is a time for the board to receive a report from the president about the progress of the institution for the current academic year, to conditionally approve graduations from May, and to review and update the strategic plan.

The board gladly received the report from the president. The president reported that ILT is on target for its budget. Tuition revenue came in well over the budgeted projections and expenses are within the budget amounts. The institution is in a very strong position it makes the transition in the second

half of its academic year. There is much to be thankful for from donors, faculty/staff, and students for the blessing we have this year.

Six students (1 Master Arts in Religion, 1 Master of Divinity, and 4 Pastoral Ministry Certificate) were approved to graduate in May under the condition they successfully complete their last semester. These were reviewed and commended to the board by the ILT faculty. These students are all currently working in congregations or Christian ministries and will continue this work after graduation. This gives ILT almost 70 graduates from its various certificates and degrees.

One important task of the board for this meeting was to review and adopt the new strategic plan which included a revamped institutional vision, values, and priorities. These will help give direction to the planning and decision making that goes into the next year's institutional plans and budget. There is much work yet to be done at ILT, and the strategic plan will help accomplish those tasks.

We would like to share with you the vision, values, and priorities of ILT:

#### Vision Statement:

The Institute of Lutheran Theology will be a leading center for classical theological study in the Lutheran tradition that, consistent with the Great Commission, holds the scandal of the cross before the church and the world through (1) its students and graduates, (2) its participation in the ecumenical theological enterprise, and (3) its pioneering efforts in lay, undergraduate, seminary, and graduate education.

#### Institutional Values:

We are **bold** in asserting the truth of the gospel.

ILT confesses with ultimate urgency the gospel of Jesus Christ once delivered to the saints, as it is proclaimed in the Holy Scripture and confessed in the Lutheran Symbolic Books, without compromise or abridgement.

*"For I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith. . ." (Romans 1:16)*

We are **bound** in our submission to the cross of Jesus.

ILT does not glory in possessing truths about Jesus Christ, but is captured by the truth of Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

*"I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified." (1 Corinthians 2:2)*

We are **open** in listening to all who may contribute to the theological task.

ILT is committed to freedom of inquiry and expression in service to understanding and proclaiming the truth of the gospel.

*"We take every thought captive to obey Christ." (2 Corinthians 10:5)*

We are **critical** in our examination of all truth claims.

ILT fosters the right use of reason and demands intellectual honesty from all members of its community.

*“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.”*  
(Romans 12:2)

We are **independent** in carrying out our mission.

ILT is not captive to any external restrictions but is free to serve the whole church and the world at large with integrity and faithfulness.

*“I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some.”* (1 Corinthians 9:22b)

We are **hospitable** in serving our students.

ILT seeks to make the excellent theological education available to students, regardless of their location or circumstances.

*“We are putting no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry.”* (2 Corinthians 6:3)

#### **Institutional Priorities:**

1. **Enrollment Growth**--Implement a comprehensive plan for enrollment management
2. **Financial Health**--Develop a sustainable business model
3. **Academic Advancement**--Optimize growth in academic programs
4. **External Relations**--Cultivate additional external support and partnerships
5. **Leadership Development**--Build a leadership/teaching team for the future

## ROMAN CATHOLIC-MUSLIM DOCUMENT SIGNED BY POPE AND GRAND IMAM



Pope Francis and Sheik Ahmad el-Tayeb, grand imam of Egypt's al-Azhar mosque and university, sign documents during an interreligious meeting at the Founder's Memorial in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, Feb. 4, 2019. The joint agreement can be accessed by following this link:

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2019-02/pope-francis-uae-declaration-with-al-azhar-grand-imam.html>

The Grand Imam of al-Azhar is a prestigious title among the Sunni Muslims and a prominent official title in Egypt. He is considered by some Muslims to be the highest authority in Sunni Islamic thought and jurisprudence and holds a great influence on followers of the theological Ash'ari and Maturidi traditions worldwide. The Grand Imam Heads the al-Azhar Mosque, and by extension al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt, and is responsible for official religious matters along with the Grand Mufti of Egypt. Pope Francis is considered the highest authority in the Roman Catholic Church.

The document the two men signed is described as a “fraternal agreement.” A fraternal agreement is based on the fundamental belief that the parties to the agreement are brothers and sisters and all of the parties to the agreement have common purposes and interests.

With this agreement the Pope and Sheik el-Tayeb began a theological debate on the will of God toward religions and improving Christian-Muslim relations.

The fraternal agreement describes the commonality between and among the people signing it. The agreement declares: *“Faith leads a believer to see in the other a brother or sister to be supported and loved. Through faith in God, who has created the universe, creatures and all human beings (equal on account of his mercy), believers are called to express this human fraternity by safeguarding creation and the entire universe and supporting all persons, especially the poorest and those most in need.”*

The agreement was entered in the name of:

- God who has created all human beings equal in rights, duties and dignity, and who has called them to live together as brothers and sisters, to fill the earth and make known the values of goodness, love and peace;
- Innocent human life that God has forbidden to kill
- The poor, destitute and marginalized;
- Widows, orphans, refugees and the exiled;
- Victims of war and calamity;
- Human fraternity that embraces all human beings, unites them and renders them equal;
- Fraternity torn apart by policies of extremism and division;
- Freedom, that God has given to all human beings creating them free; and
- All persons of good will present in every part of the world.

The purpose or aim of the agreement was stated as follows: *We, who believe in God and in the final meeting with Him and His judgment, on the basis of our religious and moral responsibility, and through this Document, call upon ourselves, upon the leaders of the world as well as the architects of international policy and world economy, to work strenuously to spread the culture of tolerance and of living together in peace; to intervene at the earliest opportunity to stop the shedding of innocent blood and bring an end to wars, conflicts, environmental decay and the moral and cultural decline that the world is presently experiencing.*

The agreement states the most important causes of the crises of the modern world are:

- *a desensitized human conscience, a distancing from religious values and a prevailing individualism accompanied by materialistic philosophies that deify the human person and introduce worldly and material values in place of supreme and transcendental principles.*
- Great and valued advances in the fields of science, technology, medicine, industry and welfare, have at the same time contributed to a *moral deterioration that influences international action and a weakening of spiritual values and responsibility. All this contributes to a general feeling of frustration, isolation and desperation leading many to fall either into a vortex of atheistic, agnostic or religious extremism, or into blind and fanatic extremism, which ultimately encourage forms of dependency and individual or collective self-destruction.*
- Religious extremism, national extremism and intolerance have produced armed conflicts in the world, what might be referred to as signs of a “third world war” being fought piecemeal.
- Lack of equitable distribution of natural resources... has generated, and continues to generate, vast numbers of poor, infirm and deceased persons. This leads to catastrophic crises around the globe.
- Attacks on the institution of the family, to regard it with contempt or to doubt its important role, is one of the most threatening evils of our era.
- Political manipulation of religions and from interpretations made by religious groups who, in the course of history, have taken advantage of the power of religious sentiment in the hearts of men and women in order to make them act in a way that has nothing to do with the truth of religion

The solution to this crisis is the awakening of religious awareness in this generation and in the hearts of new generations through sound education and an adherence to moral values and upright religious teachings.

The foundation for this agreement is described as follows: the first and most important aim of religions is to believe in God, to honour Him and to invite all men and women to believe that this universe depends on a God who governs it. Life is a gift from God, from its beginning to its natural end, cannot be taken away, threatened or manipulated to suit oneself. The agreement condemns all those practices that are a threat to life such as genocide, acts of terrorism, forced displacement, human trafficking, abortion and euthanasia. They likewise condemn the policies that promote these practices.

Pope Francis and Sheik Ahmad el-Tayeb called upon all concerned to stop using religions to incite hatred, violence, extremism and blind fanaticism, and to refrain from using the name of God to justify acts of murder, exile, terrorism and oppression. They asked this on the basis of their common belief in God who did not create men and women

to be killed or to fight one another, nor to be tortured or humiliated in their lives and circumstances. They declare that God, the Almighty, has no need to be defended by anyone and does not want His name to be used to terrorize people.

The agreement asks that people of faith to affirm that:

- The teachings of religions invite us to remain rooted in the values of peace; to defend the values of mutual understanding, human fraternity and harmonious coexistence; to re-establish wisdom, justice and love.
- Freedom is a right of every person: everyone enjoys the freedom of belief, thought, expression and action.
- People cannot be forced to adhere to a certain religion or culture, as is the imposition of a cultural way of life that others do not accept.
- The protection of places of worship – synagogues, churches and mosques – is a duty guaranteed by religions, human values, laws and international agreements.
- We must stop supporting terrorist movements fuelled by financing, the provision of weapons and strategy, and by attempts to justify these movements even using the media. All these must be regarded as international crimes.
- It is an essential requirement to recognize the right of women to education and employment, and to recognize their freedom to exercise their own political rights.
- The protection of the fundamental rights of children to grow up in a family environment, to receive nutrition, education and support, are duties of the family and society.
- The protection of the rights of the elderly, the weak, the disabled, and the oppressed is a religious and social obligation that must be guaranteed and defended through strict legislation and the implementation of the relevant international agreements.

The Catholic Church and Al-Azhar announced and pledged to make their agreement available to authorities, influential leaders, persons of religion all over the world, appropriate regional and international organizations, organizations within civil society, religious institutions and leading thinkers. They ask that their agreement become the object of research and reflection in all schools, universities and institutes of formation, thus helping to educate new generations to bring goodness and peace to others, and to be defenders everywhere of the rights of the oppressed and of the least of our brothers and sisters.

Our Board of Elders and Our National Council will look carefully at the fraternal agreement, its meaning and its implications. Watch for upcoming articles in the Connector.

There are many statements within the fraternal agreement that CALC supports. We profess and proclaim that life is a gift from God and must be nurtured and supported from conception through natural death. We also condemn all those practices that are a threat to life such as genocide, acts of terrorism, forced displacement, human trafficking,

abortion and euthanasia. We likewise condemn the policies that promote these practices.

We also believe that marriage and the family, as defined in Scripture, are God-given gifts to humanity and the building block of all societies. We believe the sanctity of marriage and the family are under attack and we condemn all laws and policies that undermine the family as Scripture defines it. We are against terrorism and war. We are called to feed and clothe the poor, heal the sick, provide access to clean water to the thirsty, protect the elderly, the widow, the orphan, the refugee, the exiled and the marginalized. We believe that the freedom of religious belief and practice is a fundamental human right and must be protected.

Christian people are called by Jesus to obey those in authority over us, unless those in authority force us to engage in activities or hold beliefs that conflict with God's will as expressed in Holy Scripture. We are also called to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. We are called to intervene and defend those that are treated unjustly and unmercifully by those in authority.

We agree that violence by extremists against Muslims and/or Christians in their houses of worship, public places and their homes is inexcusable and must be condemned and requires action on the part of all people. The recent shooting of 49 Muslims worshipping in two Mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand is yet another example of the crisis which prompted the fraternal agreement. Extremism seems to keep winning the day. In the middle of all of the news stories cataloging the horrors surrounding this tragic event, a CBC article under this byline was published on the Internet: "***New Zealanders reach out to Muslims in wake of mass shooting, as accused appears in court.***" The article declared:

*New Zealand's stricken residents reached out to Muslims in their neighbourhoods and around the country on Saturday, with a fierce determination to show kindness to a community in pain as a 28-year-old white supremacist stood silently before a judge, accused in mass shootings at two mosques that left 49 people dead. ....The massacre during Friday prayers prompted a heartfelt response from Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, who pronounced it "one of New Zealand's darkest days" and said the shooter, an Australian native, had chosen to strike in New Zealand "because we represent diversity, kindness, compassion."*

*Her fellow countrymen seemed to want to prove her right by volunteering acts of kindness. Some offered rides to the grocery store or volunteered to walk with their Muslim neighbours if they felt unsafe.*

There is hope! There is much to learn from New Zealanders!



Residents pay their respects at Hagley College for the victims of the mosque attacks in Christchurch. (AFP/Getty Images)



CANADIAN COUNCIL of CHRISTIAN CHARITIES  
ADVANCING MINISTRY TOGETHER

## CCCC to Testify before a Select Committee of Canada's Senate to Defend Retaining "Advancing Religion" as a Legitimate Charitable Purpose.

The Senate of Canada has struck a special committee with a mandate of examining the charitable sector. The committee will make recommendations for modernizing charity law and regulation in Canada.

Over the past several years activists have called on government to remove the category "***for Advancing Religion***" as a charitable purpose and activity. Virtually all churches use this category on their applications for charitable status by Revenue Canada.

The Canadian Council of Christian Charities (CCCC) wrote a brief for the Committee summarizing the hundreds of academic level studies which document the many public benefits provided are provided by religion. CALC and many of our congregations are members of CCCC.

CCCC wants the Special Senate Committee to affirm "Advancing Religion" as a charitable purpose with significant public benefit to Canadian society.



In response, the Senate Committee invited CCCC CEO Rev. John Pellowe to appear as a witness at 11:00 AM on Monday, March 18.

CCCC's brief is summarized below.

The CCCC's brief draws on rigorous research produced by Canadian organizations and academics including: Statistics Canada, Imagine Canada, and Angus Reid Polling and sociologists such as Reginald Bibby and Kurt Bowen. Sources from the US include organizations such as the Harvard, T.H. Chan School of Public Health and sociologists Robert Wuthnow (Princeton University) and Nancy Ammerman (Boston University). CCCC's submission also draws upon European and Asian research.

The research usually compares: (1) ***religiously Very Committed*** (people who attend a place of worship at least once per week); with the (2) ***religiously Less Committed***



(people who attend a place of worship, but less than weekly) and the *Non-Religious* (people who never attend a place of worship). Most of the research shows the remarkable positive effect religion has on people who take their faith seriously. The religiously Less Committed are much more like the Non-Religious in behaviour than they are like the Very Committed.

Rev. Pellowe was very forthright about his presentation. He began by stating that, in order to demonstrate that religion has public benefit, it is necessary to compare religious people with non-religious people. He recognized that the comparisons that are made could give the impression of arrogance or condescension. He could be accused of making the case that “Christians are better than other people and we know it.” He did not wish to create a feeling of antagonism between two groups of people or an “Us vs. Them” mentality. He stated that all humanity must work together for the good of all, with each contributing what they have from their various perspectives and each appreciating the contributions of others.

His report made four major points concerning the positive benefits of religion.

1. **Religion develops and activates prosocial attitudes and behaviours, resulting in high levels of generosity and volunteerism that benefit both religious and secular charities, and improves public civility.** Examples of these principles include the following.

Religiously Very Committed people report that they highly value a sense of belonging, friendliness and kindness. The Very Committed stress the importance of forgiveness, generosity and concern for others. They are more inclined to disapprove of vengeance, to believe they should forgive those who hurt them, and to believe that we ought to put our trust in others, even when that trust is not returned.

Sociologist Kurt Bowen wrote: *“There is a gentleness among the religiously Very Committed that sets them apart from other Canadians.” For example, the Very Committed care about justice, but are careful to advocate in lawful ways. When it comes to protest, the Very Committed are twice as likely to support a boycott or attend a legal demonstration as the Non-Religious. But as to illegal forms of protest, only 20% of the Very Committed would join an unofficial strike or occupy a building, compared to 50% of the Non-Religious.*

The religiously Very Committed are more likely than the Non-Religious to strongly agree that cheating, buying stolen goods, lying, and accepting a bribe are never justified.

Rev. Pellowe reported that eighteen Canadian social surveys reveal that the religiously Very Committed gave more to secular charities than do the Non-Religious or anyone else. The median donation by the Very Committed to secular charities was found to be double that of the Non-Religious. The one-third of Canadians

who were religious (the Very Committed and the Less Committed) together provided more than 40% of all the funds raised by secular charities. The 40% of the population who were Non-Religious gave only 30% of the donations received by secular charities. Religious Canadians give sacrificially to ensure that secular goals for the common good are achieved.

2. **Religion results in better personal outcomes that reduce demand on the state’s resources for rehabilitation and health care and improves quality of life and individual contribution to society.**

Rev. Pellowe reported that research at the Harvard School of Public Health shows that children and youth who attended weekly religious services reported greater life satisfaction and positivity in their twenties and were less likely than others to smoke, use drugs, or make poor sexual activity choices.

Other studies reported that like their youthful counterparts, *religiously involved adults are also less likely to commit crimes or misuse prescription drugs, and more likely to make wise choices for positive long-term outcomes.*

Research which followed children for 10 to 20 years linked weekly church attendance as a child to long-lasting benefits for mental health and other health issues. Research also suggests that adults who are religiously active have better health and well-being.

The U.S. National Health Interview Survey studied case files on 21,000 Americans. The data showed that people who never attend religious services exhibited almost twice the risk of death in the study’s eight-year follow-up period when compared to the Very Committed.

3. **Religion has tangible community benefits in terms of social capital, infrastructure, and neighbourhood viability and a 12-times return on investment related to tax concessions.**

Rev. Pellowe contended that research demonstrated that places of worship often engage in mutually beneficial relationships with outside groups and support their programs. In her study on congregational life, Nancy Ammerman, a sociologist at Boston University, wrote:

*Everywhere you look among the congregations we interviewed, there are scout troops and nursery schools, senior centers and sports leagues – all existing independently of any single congregation, but often housed and supported by religious groups in cooperation with others in the community. In addition, there are arts organizations that use religious buildings for rehearsals, performances and lessons.*

*Congregations support formal and informal programs of tutoring, after-school care, and literacy classes. They contribute to programs of education and service provision that surround issues as diverse as AIDS,*

unwanted pregnancies, handicapped persons, adoption, and more. They support and refer parishioners to counseling centers of all sorts. And they cooperate with others in delivering spiritual care to people in hospitals, nursing homes, on college campuses, and even in police and fire departments.

4. **Religion creates tangible benefits for the public at large based on a core of people who are other-centered, civically engaged, and willing to work together sacrificially for the common good.**

Rev. Pellowe quoted the work of two Canadian academics who linked declining civic engagement since 1945 to declining church attendance. They believed that civic engagement and church attendance are linked because, in addition to instilling good behavior and obedience to authorities, the local church used to be where people learned to become civically engaged. Church was the place that people learned to speak in public, run meetings, engage those with different viewpoints, and understand the needs of their local community. *A local church helped people to not only bond within their community, but also to bridge into the other communities around them.*

Rev. Pellowe reported that a series of studies in mainland China revealed that businesses that were close to places of worship (e.g., Buddhist monasteries, Taoist temples) were more environmentally responsible, philanthropic in their giving, were less likely to be accused of illegal business practices, and were run more efficiently. Chinese researchers looked at economic data at the provincial-level from 2001 to 2011 and found that Christianity, in particular, had significant positive effects on economic growth in China.

The CCCC has called us to action. They have asked that we: ***Please pray for John as he presents and that both the written and oral presentations will result in an affirmation of Advancing Religion as a charitable head.***

## CONGREGATIONS IN TRANSITION

Please contact Pastor Ed Skutshek, President of CALC for details: [ed.skutshek@gracelutheranelowna.com](mailto:ed.skutshek@gracelutheranelowna.com) or (250) 801-3860

Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd  
1630 Lawrence Avenue West  
Toronto, Ontario M6L 1C5  
Receiving Pulpit Supply  
(416) 249-8851  
[www.goodshepherdlutheran.ca](http://www.goodshepherdlutheran.ca)

### Peace Lutheran Church

526 5 Ave.  
Wainwright, AB  
T9W 1B1  
(780) 842-4070  
Receiving Pulpit Supply

### Immanuel Lutheran Church of Rosenthal

P.O. Box 2965  
Stony Plain, AB  
T7Z 1Y4  
(780) 963-4048  
Vacant - Pulpit Supply  
<https://www.ilcr.ca/>

### Asker – Calvary Parish

#### Asker Lutheran Church

RR#1, Site 20, Box 13, Ponoka, AB T4J 1R1  
<http://www.askerlutheran.com/>

#### Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church

Rural Route #2, Wetaskiwin, AB, T9A 1W9  
Receiving Pulpit Supply

## UP-COMING EVENTS

### Ontario Cluster Meeting

**When:** Saturday June 8<sup>th</sup>

**Time:** 10:30 AM to 4:00 PM

**Where:** Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd  
1630 Lawrence Ave. W., Toronto, ON, M6L 1C5

**Cost:** \$20.00 per person. Lunch included.

**Contact:** Rev. Peeter Vanker, [pcvanker@sympatico.ca](mailto:pcvanker@sympatico.ca).

### Ordination.

**Ordinand:** John Herbert Lofstedt

**Date:** Sunday June 9<sup>th</sup>

**Time:** TBA

**Calling Congregation:** Resurrection Lutheran Church

**Where:** Resurrection Lutheran Church  
250 Quarry Road, Pembroke, ON, K8B 1A6  
(613) 735-6921

If you have an upcoming congregational event that you would like to publicize, contact CALC's Secretary at: [secretary@calc.ca](mailto:secretary@calc.ca) .