

A 1st Century Mission Model for the 21st Century

by Pr. Don Brandt, Director of the Congregations in Transition Initiative

At least three distinct trends in congregational ministry are converging to challenge how we “do church” in 2019.

The *first* trend is the increasing numbers of pastors who are retiring. The Boomers, who *were*, for most of their lives, part of the largest generation in American history, are now entering their retirement years.

Millennials are less likely to become pastors.

Which brings me to a *second* trend: Millennials, the offspring of Boomers, who are *now* the largest generation, are not as likely to become pastors as their parents were. In fact, we learn from Pew Research that Millennials are only half as likely to attend church as their parents did back in the 80’s and 90’s. And one consequence of this is that seminary enrollment has been rapidly declining.

A *third* trend is the continued economic and demographic decline of rural and small-town America. This means that congregations in these settings, in particular, will have fewer options when it comes to finding the “right” pastor to call. And even if they do think they have found this pastor they are less likely to be able to afford an adequate salary and benefits package. (Remember: many seminary graduates are paying off significant undergraduate college and seminary debt.)



Precedent

There *is* a historical precedent for a lack of pastors available to serve congregations in rural or small-town settings. I am referring to 18th and 19th century America, when circuit-riding pastors were quite common. These pastors would serve — with occasional preaching visits — numerous small churches over a large geographic area. And this would be their full-time ministry. Can we return to that model as a way to address the current declining number of pastors? Probably not. However, in regards to this comparison to the era of circuit-riding ministers, there is good news and bad news.



Bad News

First the *bad* news: Most pastors in 2019 are unlikely to embrace something resembling a full-time circuit-riding call. (And that includes retired pastors, like me.) Call us— in comparison to the circuit-riding ministers of yore — pampered and spoiled — but there you have it.

Good News

However, there *is* good news. In the 18th and 19th century many parishioners were uneducated and sometimes illiterate. Visiting ministers of that era would often be the most educated person present during the worship gathering. Needless to say, this is not the case in 2019. Lay leaders today are not only well-educated, many of them bring skills, a breadth of life experiences, and a depth of faith that can sometimes be found wanting in a particular ordained minister. As we all know, the New Testament model for engaging in faithful and effective

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ministry is compared, by the Apostle Paul, to the parts of the human body. The different parts of the body, in Paul's analogy, represent the different gifts and abilities of individual "members" in the Body of Christ. We find this analogy used in Ephesians 4, 1st Corinthians 12 and 14, and Romans 12. For example, from Romans chapter 12...

Just as each of us has one body of many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophecy according to your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.
(Romans 12:4-8) (TNIV)

Traditional Leadership Model

In my view most Lutheran leadership models in American (and European) culture have traditionally erred on the side of an unhealthy dependence on ordained clergy. Whether or not you agree with that assessment, a great many congregations in the coming years will not have the option of building their congregation's ministry on that traditional model. This will be true of many congregations that cannot secure the services of a full-time, resident pastor. It will also be true for most congregations served by a part-time pastor. And it will almost always be the case for congregations being served by multiple supply preachers.

New Testament Model

It is time to return to the New Testament model for Christian ministry. We should not only do this out of necessity, but because it is biblical. And because it is the biblical model, it fosters the kind of congregational dynamic most likely to be inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit. An LCMC pastor friend of mine,

Many future congregations will not have the option of building their congregation's ministry on the traditional model.

Congregational ministries should not rise or fall based solely on the presence (or competence) of a full-time, resident pastor

David Sorensen, is currently preaching a series entitled "Back to the Future: A 1st Century Church in the 21st Century". I think that about captures it.



Lutheran CORE's *Congregations in Transition* (CiT) is a ministry initiative that was inspired, in part, by the awareness of a developing shortage of ordained, active Lutheran pastors. But it is also inspired by the conviction that congregational ministries should not rise or fall based solely on the presence (or competence) of a full-time, resident pastor. Instead, we need to take to heart Martin Luther's view of the Christian priesthood as something we *all* share in Christ Jesus. Too often we have only paid lip service to this Lutheran — and biblical — understanding of ministry. *It's time we embrace and encourage the gifts of the laity.*

Gifts of the Laity

The purpose of *Congregations in Transition* is to walk alongside church lay leaders as they navigate the many challenges and opportunities that are inherent in times of transition. Details regarding what a CiT coach/consultant can offer *your* congregation can be found on the [Lutheran CORE website](#). Our trained coaches are volunteers, so a congregation's costs are minimal. And *please note*: Our advice and guidance will be customized to your congregation's needs. So whether you are already in the search process, or haven't yet organized a call committee, or your pastor has only just announced his or her upcoming retirement, we can be of assistance.

CiT's purpose is to walk alongside church lay leaders as they navigate the many challenges and opportunities that are inherent in times of transition.

For more information, read over the [CiT materials](#) already on the CORE website, or contact either me at pastordonbrandt@gmail.com, or CORE Director Dennis Nelson at dennisdnelsonaz@yahoo.com.

By the way, Dennis and I would appreciate prayers for our upcoming coach training event and for safe travel for all those attending. Our event is this April 1st through 4th in Arizona.

Grace and peace,
Don Brandt

Is ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton Losing Touch with Reality?

by [Dennis D. Nelson](#), Executive Director of Lutheran CORE

Deluded?

I was absolutely astounded when I read ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton's response to the recent action taken by the United Methodist Church to affirm the historic Christian view of marriage and human sexuality. Speaking of the very different vote that the ELCA took nearly ten years ago, she said, *"Yet, though a controversial decision at the time, our 2009 action has brought strength and blessings for our life and mission beyond what we could have imagined a decade ago."* [emphasis added] How in the world could she make a statement like that when she wrote the following in the February 2019 issue of "Living Lutheran"?

ELCA membership decreases by 70,000 a year.

"Our congregations are growing older and smaller.

At least 40 percent of our congregations have an average weekly worship attendance of 50 or less.

ELCA membership decreases by 70,000 people a year, or roughly the loss of a synod per year.

Clergy retirements outnumber new candidates for ministry.

Financial pressures and building maintenance create stress.

There is a dearth of people in their 20s and 30s in our pews."

Bad News > Imagined Good

Having recently said all of that, how could she now say that because of the 2009 decisions the ELCA is experiencing "strength and blessings for our life and mission beyond what we could have imagined a decade ago"?

Revelations

Instead the ELCA is revealing what it really believes and the direction in which it is determined to go by its doing nothing to address the "We Are Naked and Unashamed" movement and nothing to counter the growing influence and message of its most famous public spokesperson, the author of the book, *Shameless: A Sexual Reformation*. Also, while the Presiding Bishop is quick to respond to so many other issues, she refuses to respond to recent state legislation regarding abortion. How could she expect God to give "strength and blessings" to a church body that is refusing to deal with such blatant rejection of His Word?

Rejected

Bishop Eaton also says in the same communication, "We have not fully grown into the commitment we have made." I am certain she means something far different, but I would say *not* that the ELCA still needs to fully grow into its commitments, but instead that the ELCA has *rejected* the commitments that it made. Even though the 2009 Churchwide Assembly said that the traditional view of human sexuality would also be honored, [one of the keynote speakers at last summer's youth gathering led 31,000 young people in renouncing the traditional view of human sexuality as a lie](#) and ELCA leaders groveled in front of ELCA seminary students who were able to force the [firing of an ELCA seminary president](#) because twenty years ago she held and advocated for traditional views.

How could she expect God to give "strength and blessings" to a church body that is refusing to deal with such blatant rejection of His Word?

Surprise

How could one look at all of this and say that the 2009 decisions have brought "strength and blessings . . . beyond what we could have imagined a decade ago"? The only surprise, if any, should be how blatantly the ELCA is revealing its own dishonesty and hypocrisy by:

- placing perimeters on what it approved in 2009
- first promoting the whole issue of "bound conscience," but then not honoring those perimeters
- breaking its promise to honor the "bound conscience" of and give a place of equal honor and respect to those who hold to traditional views.



Oncoming Collapse

If anything is "beyond what we could have imagined a decade ago," it is not the "strength and blessings" that the ELCA has been experiencing, but the speed with which any restraint against an "anything goes" view of human sexuality is collapsing.

On another note, we need to pray for and support our brothers and sisters in the United Methodist Church, including those from the southern hemisphere, who held firm to the clear teaching of the Scriptures in their recent vote.

What is “Confessing”?

by [Pr. Steven K. Gjerde](#), Vice-President of Lutheran CORE

Lutheran CORE strives to be a voice and network for “confessing Lutherans.” But just what is a *confessing* Lutheran? People sometimes ask that question, and it deserves a good answer.

Lutheran Confessions

Historically, the terms “confessing” or “confessional” harken back to the Lutheran *confessions*, or statements of doctrine, published in the *Book of Concord* in 1580. These documents, which include writings by Martin Luther, his friend and colleague, Phillip Melancthon, and their successors, have served as touchstones of Lutheran orthodoxy across place and time.



Ordination Vows

Most if not every Lutheran pastor has vowed some kind of allegiance to this set of documents at ordination, and Lutheran laity will (hopefully) recognize one of its most beloved portions, Luther’s *Small Catechism*. At the book’s very start stands perhaps its second most famous document, the *Augsburg Confession*. This document was written by Melancthon in 1530 to set forth the doctrine of the churches in Germany (the “evangelicals”) that had embraced Luther’s teachings. For this reason it carries the label of *confession*: it publicly states, or *confesses*, what the evangelical Germans believed.

Doctrinal Assaults

This history brings us to a simple definition: *confessing* or *confessional* Lutherans are Lutherans who adhere to the teaching of the *Book of Concord* over against all doubts and doctrinal assaults. They stand in line with those earliest confessors of the Lutheran church and say, “Our churches teach thus and so.” Lutherans do disagree over the status of some of the writings in the *Book of Concord* (notably, the *Formula of Concord*), but all would agree that *confessing* or *confessional* describes a Lutheran’s fidelity to the contents of this book.

Homologeō

Digging a bit deeper, we may look at the term *confess* in light of Scripture. There we find that the term most frequently connected with “confess” is the

Greek term *homologeō*: “If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved” (Romans 10:9). The term used here and in similar passages is a simple combination of two words, *logeō* (to say or speak) and *homo* (same). To *confess* is to “say the same thing.”



A beloved Lutheran theologian named Norman Nagel expressed this aspect of confession in his description of Lutheran worship from 1982:

Our Lord speaks and we listen. His Word bestows what it says. Faith that is born from what is heard acknowledges the gifts received with eager thankfulness and praise . . . Saying back to him what he has said to us, we repeat what is most true and sure. (Lutheran Worship [St. Louis: CPH, 1982] page 6).

Lutheran CORE exists to support Lutherans engaged in this act of confession.

The *Book of Concord* and the churches that cherish it seek to *confess* or *say the same thing* that the Lord has said through His prophets and apostles, trusting that word to be “what is most true and sure.” We could therefore say that confessing Lutherans say the same thing as the Lutheran confessors before them because those confessors said the same thing as God says in His word.

Barmen Declaration

One famous use of the term *confessing* comes from May 1934, when German Protestants, under the leadership of such men as Karl Barth and Martin Niemöller, adopted the *Barmen Declaration*, resisting the racist, Nazi-inspired “German Christian” movement. The Declaration condemned the attempt of National Socialism to change church doctrine and dictate church polity in support of Hitler’s “Aryan” ideology. Indeed, whenever the church resists changes to the doctrines of its Lord, it becomes a *confessing* church, saying what God has said over against all falsehood.

Whenever the church resists changes to the doctrines of its Lord, it becomes a confessing church.

With churches across America struggling to know and believe what God has spoken, and with attempts

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What's a Christian to Do? Responding to Inconsistent, Illogical Ill-will

by [Pr. Cathy Ammlung](#), Lutheran CORE Secretary

Over the past several months, I've reflected on the challenges Christians face as we share our faith with others. On the one hand, never has there been a greater field for mission. On the other hand, not only are more people unchurched and non-religious; many are also proud of their unbelief. Some are outspoken in their scorn and contempt for believers, especially traditional Christians.

Rules of Engagement

I've mentioned two components of engagement with hostile skeptics (and, increasingly, "progressive" Christians). First: Always lead with the love of Jesus. He longs to forgive, heal, redeem, and make them his own. His love, shining through us, can be immensely attractive, even to skeptics!

Second, we need to immerse ourselves in Scripture and the basics of Christian doctrine, and to learn what's known as *apologetics*. Apologetics is the art of addressing objections, clarifying misunderstandings, correcting distortions or misrepresentations, and providing a well-reasoned defense of the Christian faith to its despisers. It "troubleshoots" wrongheaded beliefs that separate people from Jesus Christ.



Guided by the Spirit

Before we continue, here's a word of encouragement. We don't have to be "perfect" in our responses. It's not necessary to rebut every argument of a skeptic. Let the Holy Spirit guide and inform us along the way. The Word of God can uncover the sins, hurts, and distorted beliefs of that person, and begin to heal, forgive, enlighten, and transform that life at last.

Skeptics "Know"

Sadly, some skeptics are so convinced that Christianity is wrong and awful that they have no desire to understand it better. We don't believe what many atheists accuse Christians of believing, yet they aren't interested in hearing what we *do* believe because they already "know" it's just as horrid and false. Additionally, some atheists are muddled and confused in their own beliefs. They may tout atheism as a beacon of rational thought, but hold irrational and contradictory beliefs in its service.

- They insist there's no such thing as universal truth. And *that* "truth" applies universally!

- They tell Christians not to impose their beliefs or morality on them, but insist that their beliefs and morality should be imposed, often by force of law, on us.
- They say that Christians are too judgmental and intolerant - while condemning everyone who doesn't agree with them!

But the major insight I've come to about atheists is this. They dismiss the notion of sin, but they're often keenly aware of injustice, malice, and hatefulness in the world. They've often been hurt by others. They may acknowledge their own complicity in certain evils. They may feel regret, even guilt, at things they've done or failed to do. Rather than sneer at atheists, we need to see some of their zeal as maybe misguided - but also as a possible point of commonality, conversation, and even conversion.

Without a conceptual and moral framework that acknowledges, articulates, addresses, and ameliorates *sin*, though, they flounder. They veer frantically between insisting that certain beliefs and actions aren't wrong, *ever, at all*, and consigning into the outer darkness those who have committed at *any* time in their life *any* infraction of *their* "tablet of commandments." The examples are too numerous to get into.

We all do that to some extent, because we are all sinful, selfish human beings. But atheists, who generally deny not only the existence of sin, but also *anything* supernatural, seem to respond to the *reality* of goodness, sin and evil, or right and wrong, as if our world was populated solely by angels and demons rather than fallible, broken human beings! Believe as they do, and one is "on the side of angels." Transgress their beliefs, and one is a demon to be exorcised and booted into the outer darkness, eternally expunged from history books, monuments, and positions of responsibility or authority.

Advantage: Christians

And believe it or not, that is where we Christians have the greatest advantage. We believe in a transcendent, omnipotent God, and acknowledge eternal, universal truths, especially in the moral realm. We traffic in the supernatural! Yet in great love, this transcendent Deity comes among real, flesh-and-blood, dirty, stumbling, selfish, stupid, hurting and hurtful human beings - *as a human being, save without sin*. He debunks the whole "angels and demons" playbook, and instead of de-sinners sin or exorcising sinners, he exorcises sin and forgives, heals, transforms, restores, redeems, and glorifies sinners! We have "God in the flesh," who knows us inside and

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Rekindle Gathering Canceled

by [Pr. Dennis D. Nelson](#), Executive Director of Lutheran CORE

We are very grateful to all who encouraged us to hold a gathering designed to help pastors rekindle their first love for Christ, for the church as the body of Christ, and for mission and ministry as the work of Christ in the world. We are very grateful to the four pastors who had agreed to be presenters – Tim Hubert, Wendy Berthelsen, Brian Hughes, and Craig Moorman. And we are very grateful to Pastor Dennis DiMauro and Trinity Lutheran Church in Warrenton, Virginia for being willing to host the event.

Ministries

Unfortunately, as of March 11, no one had registered for the May event so the board took action to cancel it. While we are sorry that we will not have the opportunity to hear from these gifted and excellent presenters, we do want to lift up their ministries. [Tim Hubert](#) would be happy to send to you the Power-Point that he had been preparing. This file looks at how to love God through Scripture, hymns, writing, and reflection. Tim writes, “This could be done alone or in a small group, always praying for the guidance of the Holy Spirit.” We also want to lift up for you Craig Moorman’s book, [The Awe-full Privilege: This Thing Called Parenting](#). Craig writes, “My greatest concern for the Church is what happens (or doesn’t happen) in the homes of our parishioners, especially in terms of discipleship. Faithful and effective mission will flow out of a deep commitment to discipleship AND the discipling must begin on the home front.”

Next Generation

While we are sorry that there was not the response to the Rekindle gathering that we had thought and hoped there would be, we are very pleased with the high level of interest in our [Congregations in Transition](#) ministry initiative – both from potential

client congregations as well as from the pastors who have offered to serve as coaches for these congregations. Please join with us in prayer for the training event, which will be held April 1-4 in the Phoenix area. Please pray with us for congregations that are or soon will be without a pastor. Please pray with us that God will raise up faithful, confessional, orthodox, and evangelistic/outreach-oriented pastors for the next

Please pray that God will raise up faithful, confessional, orthodox, and evangelistic/outreach-oriented pastors for the next generation.

generation.

Please also pray for us as Lutheran CORE as we continue to do our work of challenging the ELCA to keep its promises, alerting people to ways in which orthodoxy is being threatened, supporting those who are seeking to be faithful within the ELCA, and being there for those who are in the process of determining how God is calling them to be affiliated.



What is “Confessing”?

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at changing church doctrine multiplying daily, Lutheran CORE exists to support Lutherans engaged in this act of confession. As the Danish pastor and hymnwriter, Nicholas S. Grundtvig, teaches us to sing,

God’s Word is our great heritage and shall be ours forever;

to spread its light from age to age shall be our chief endeavor.

Through life it guides our way, in death it is our stay.

Lord, grant while worlds endure, we keep its teachings pure throughout all generations.

May God grant us the strength to will and to do this good and loving work.

What’s a Christian to Do?

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out, and who sees more keenly than any zealot the horrors of *every* sin. And he’s an absolute expert at dealing with it. He nailed it to his Cross and dragged it down to Hell, where he left it to burn.

They Need What We Have

We Christians can courageously condemn sin, because we are confident that in Christ, every sin can be forgiven, every sinner can be saved, and every soul - warped, ruined, and destroyed by sin and evil – can be raised to new, glorious, Christ-centered life and beauty. We have exactly what the world, including our atheist friends and neighbors – need. Pray for the power of the Holy Spirit to fill each of us - individuals, congregations, pastors, seminaries, the whole Church on earth – with the grace, courage, and passion we need to proclaim the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord!!

CORE's Support to ELCA Orthodox Pastors

by [Pr. Dennis D. Nelson](#), Executive Director of Lutheran CORE

Someone recently asked how Lutheran CORE supports faithful, confessional, orthodox ELCA pastors who are serving in orthodox ELCA congregations. It is a good question. In this article I will seek to answer it.

First of all, I would want to say that when I speak of confessional, orthodox ELCA pastors who are serving (or did serve) in orthodox ELCA congregations, I am also speaking of myself. I am ELCA rostered. I served the same congregation (first ALC, then ELCA) for forty years before my retirement in June 2014. So I will also be speaking of ways in which Lutheran CORE was of support to me during my years of ministry.

CORE's Calling

Let me also say at the beginning that we feel that part of our calling as Lutheran CORE is to alert people to ways in which orthodoxy is being threatened in the ELCA. We inform people of ways in which the ELCA is not keeping its promise to honor also the traditional view of marriage and human sexuality. But we do not believe that faithfulness in the ELCA is impossible, though we are extremely concerned about the diminishing number of faithful, confessional, orthodox ELCA pastors as so many of them have retired, are retiring, or soon will retire. *Our role is to support those who are working to be faithful in the ELCA, those who have decided that being faithful requires them to leave the ELCA, and those who are in the process of determining how God is calling them to be affiliated.*

**Faithfulness
in the ELCA is
not impossible.**

Support

Having said that, I will now list a number of ways in which CORE seeks to support confessional, orthodox ELCA pastors who are faithfully serving in ELCA congregations.

- Assurance that you are not alone. Connection with many others who share your concerns and are engaged in the same struggles.
- Providing a [closed Facebook group](#) in which you can engage in conversation with like-minded people. Both page and group are named Lutheran CORE.
- Resources for [worship](#), including prayers and hymn suggestions.
- [Daily devotionals](#).

- Our annual [Encuentro](#) – a day of support, connection, fellowship, inspiration, and resources for those who already are involved and for those who are considering becoming involved in bi-lingual (English-Spanish) or Spanish language ministries.
- Some day you will retire or resign to take another call. Through our [Congregations in Transition](#) ministry initiative we are training a group of (mostly retired) Lutheran pastors to serve as coaches for congregations who are between pastors who either do not have an interim pastor available to them or do not have the resources for an interim pastor.
- [Clergy Connect](#) – a resource on our website through which congregations that are looking for an orthodox pastor and pastors who are looking for another call can find each other.
- Through our pastoral formation project, addressing the critical issue of the looming clergy shortage, especially the looming extreme shortage of orthodox clergy and seminary graduates for ELCA congregations.
- Guidance in evaluating ELCA communications, such as the social statement on [Women and Justice](#).
- Articles in our bi-monthly [newsletter](#), CORE Voice, on such topics as how to share the faith with people who are hostile to the Christian faith and how to communicate in a way that is relevant to technically sophisticated, younger generations.
- Representation to ELCA leaders. We have advocated for traditional views in our communications to the presiding bishop and the synodical bishops concerning such things as the [Supreme Court decision regarding same sex marriage](#), the choice of [keynote speakers](#) for last summer's youth gathering, and recent state legislation regarding [abortion](#).
- An idea that has not yet come together - setting up a way in which orthodox students at ELCA seminaries and recent orthodox seminary graduates can make connections and support each other.

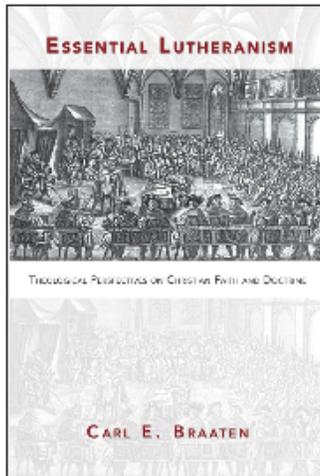
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CORE's Support to ELCA Orthodox Pastors

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The author of the letter to the Hebrews wrote, "Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us . . . run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith." (12:1-2) *Our goal as Lutheran CORE is to help you look to Jesus and to run with perseverance the race that is set before you.*

What do Carl E. Braaten's Friends Have to Say about His ALPB Books?



Essential Lutheranism: Theological Perspectives on Christian Faith and Doctrine

From Robert W. Jenson, *Cofounder of the Center for Catholic and Evangelical Theology and Professor of Systematic Theology Emeritus at Lutheran School of Theology at Gettysburg:*

"How to classify this book? After weighing possibilities, I decided what it did was to settle up. My friend (full disclosure) settles up with the history of theology, with the role of Lutheranism in that history, with the imprint on his own thinking of childhood in a missionary compound, with the problems of certain theological loci, with the state of ecumenism, with those who have influenced him, and with much else along the way. I would call it a final general reckoning, except that Carl is very much alive and at work—who knows what he will do next?"

"If you already know what Carl Braaten thinks about things, you will have some fun with this book. If you don't know about him, reading this book will repair the lack."

From Paul R. Hinlicky, *Tise Professor of Lutheran Studies, Roanoke College:*

"Essential Lutheranism is vintage Braaten: a spicy stew of autobiographical reminiscence and reflection, theological erudition, passionate argumentation and incisive judgment from the 'eschatological' perspective out of which Braaten unfolds the essence of Lutheran theology. What is special about this offering is Braaten's application to flashpoints in contemporary theology:

ecclesiology, mission, ethics, and ecumenism. Braaten does not just receive Lutheranism like a fossil from the past, but renews and reinvigorates it in taking on the challenges of today."

Paper, 206 pp., \$17.00 + postage

My Ecumenical Journey: Ecumenical Experiences and Perspectives of an Evangelical Catholic Theologian

As described by his friend and colleague Dr. Robert Benne
(jointly honored by the annual Braaten-Benne Lectures):

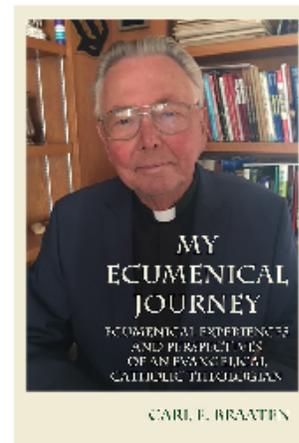
"In another 'last book,' Carl Braaten traces his ecumenical journey from the 'Braaten brouhaha' of the early 60s — in which he was mistakenly interpreted as commending an immediate return to Rome — through his (and others') founding of the Center for Catholic and Evangelical Theology to the current agreements on justification forged in 1999. Lest you think he is naively optimistic about the current ecumenical situation in which churches are splitting right and left, his first chapter coolly depicts the stark reality we face. Nevertheless, he finds plenty of evidence that possibilities for reconciliation and unity for the sake of the mission of the Gospel are still alive. God grant that we might have yet another 'last book' by this revered evangelical catholic theologian."

Paper, 139 pp., \$15.00 + postage



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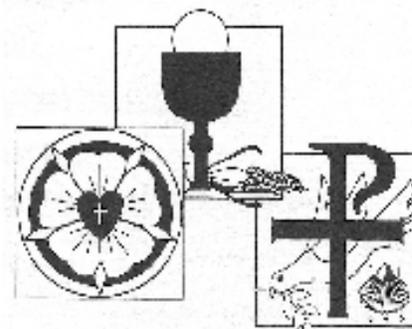
Lutheran?

What's in a Name?

Identifies the people, where they came from, present demographics, commitment to beliefs and practices, in service to others. LI01

Lutherans and Other Christians

Emphasizes the conversations with other Christians, places Lutheranism within the spectrum of American churches—Catholic and Protestant, shows commitment to learning about the faith. LI02



An Invitation to Lutheran Worship

How Lutherans worship. Describes what joining in the church's worship is all about, what takes place during the service of worship when we gather with God's people. LI03

Lutheran Faith, Lutheran Worship —Two Sides of One Coin

Why Lutherans worship as they do. Emphasizes that Lutheran worship is trinitarian, ordered by Word and Sacrament, and marked by a catholic sense of the Church. LI04

Martin Luther and the Reformation

Discusses what led to Luther's historic attempt to reform the church and the events that prompted the writing of the Augsburg Confession. Describes distinctive teachings of Lutheranism. LI05



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If you are planning an event that you believe Lutheran CORE members would want to know about and that is consistent with the [Common Confession](#), please let us know. Brief articles and pictures are always welcome. We also can share them on our website and our Facebook and Twitter feeds. Contact CORE's editor, Kim Smith at kss01ohio@gmail.com.

Coming Events

2019 Lutherans for Life Regional Conferences	Events held in Texas, Michigan, Colorado, Minnesota, Maryland and California.	Mar. 23 is the first conference; final is Nov. 16th	“Did God Really Say ...?”	Click here
Lutheran CORE: Coach Training for Congregations in Transition	Carefree, AZ	Apr. 2-3, 2019	Training Lutheran pastors to be coaches who will help churches thrive in the transition period.	Click here
Canadian Rockies Theological Conference 2019	Canmore, Alberta	Apr. 30—May 3, 2019	“In the World Following Christ”	Click here
Pro Ecclesia Conference 2019	Loyola University, Baltimore	June 3-5, 2019	“What’s the Good of Humanity?”	Click here Register
NEXUS—for high school students	Grand View University, Des Moines, IA	June 23—28 & July 7-12, 2019	“Where God’s call meets your life”	Click here
ELCA Churchwide Assembly	Milwaukee, WI	August 5-10, 2019	“We are Church”	Click here
NALC Lutheran Week	Indianapolis, IN	August 5-9, 2019	“Walking by the Spirit with the Fruit of the Spirit”	Click here
Encuentro 2019	Chicago, IL	September 14, 2019	Save the date!	Click here
LCMC Annual Gathering	Omaha, NE	Sept. 29 - Oct. 2, 2019	TBD	Click here.

Website Features

- * *** New *** CORE posts a short list of blog friends under [Friends of Lutheran CORE](#).
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- * CORE connects confessing congregations and pastors on its [Clergy Connect](#) page.
- * CORE posts a [daily devotion](#).
- * Check out our [Worship](#) page to see all the worship resources Pastor Cathy Ammlung has posted including [Prayers of the Church](#).
- * CORE’s [Communications](#) page includes newsletters, Letters from the Director and many Other letters of interest.

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