

How DEIA, Anti-Racism and CRT Are Becoming the New Gospel in the ELCA

by [Pr. Larry Becker](#), ELCA pastor in southern California



Any meaningful discussion of these modern-day heresies absolutely must begin and end with scripture. **DEIA** (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and now Accessibility – other letters are soon to come, I’m sure, as other intersectional groups demand recognition and victimhood status), **Anti-Racism** (which seems to actually be sort of reverse racism), and **CRT** (Critical Race Theory), which defines everything and everyone through the lens of racism. They ultimately divide the world into victims and victimizers, and if you’re deemed a victimizer, you must be destroyed at any cost.

Although these ideologies are often dressed up in biblical/religious terms to sound Christian enough to mislead people, they actually are in direct opposition to scriptural admonitions, and in fact seek by their very nature to *undermine* the authority of Scripture and *replace* the Good News of the Gospel of God’s love poured out for us through Jesus’ sacrifice for us on the cross, with something truly vile and destructive. In order for these progressive idolatries (more on that term later) to be accomplished, people have to be convinced that the Bible is wrong and not to be trusted in matters of faith and life, that faith only matters if it is filtered through the DEIA, CRT and anti-racist ideologies – nothing else will be tolerated!

As background and foundation for this article, I ask that the following biblical references be kept in mind and heart. The biblical language

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How DEIA, Anti-Racism and ...

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is clear and must not be allowed to be subverted by the typical “theological word salad,” manipulative gaslighting tactics and fear mongering (“If you don’t agree with us, you’re a racist, homophobic, transphobic, or whatever *ad hominem* attack they can think of to cower people into silence) so often used by activists and race-baiters to stifle debate and confuse those who are not well-grounded in scripture and the Lutheran Confessions.

Scripture for Consideration

Galatians 3:23-29, especially verse 28: “There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.” (*NRSV*)

Colossians 3:5-11, especially vs. 11: “In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all!” (*NRSV*)

1 Corinthians 12:12-13: “¹²For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.” (*NRSV*)

Rom 8:1-8, especially 8:1 – There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. (*NRSV*)

The DEIA, Anti-Racism and CRT Replacement Gospel

One of the great gifts that Christianity has given to the world has been the cure for the destructive problem of “tribalism.” For the purposes of this article, I would define tribalism as the pitting of one tribe, nation, group or even gender and intersectional identity against another. When Christianity began to spread, something amazing happened: tribalism no longer defined the lives of people of faith, and that change affected their communities. A new possibility for communal living began to emerge because people believed in, as *THE* defining characteristic of their lives, salvation and forgiveness through faith in Jesus’ life, death and resurrection for them. As people came to faith, the tribalism that had separated them and pitted them against one another began to fade away. The rebirth that comes through baptism and faith was incompatible with the old warring cycles of death and destruction, and light began to shine in the darkness as the Kingdom of God began to emerge. Although we begin to see changes coming in cultures and even governments because of the pres-

ence of those changed by faith, darkness, however, will always be a part of this broken and sinful world.

Despite all the happy rhetoric surrounding them, DEIA, CRT, anti-racism, and the victim-victimizer way of categorizing people actually turn people against one another, bringing back the tribalism that fell to the power of forgiveness, becoming ultimately profoundly racist and demonic.

Why? Because it skips the whole life-changing-relationship with Jesus part that CAUSED the changes and tries to go right to the end result. But since scripture and true faith are bypassed, the end result actually becomes the activists’ Utopian fantasy of a perfect world. This is where my use of the term idolatry comes in. They worship this vision and will destroy anything in the way of accomplishing it. Their goal, sadly, is a reflection of their own brokenness (as all idols are), and therefore HAS to accommodate virtually every kind of behavior forbidden by scripture (just keep adding more letters to the abbreviations!). God and scripture are, other than the occasional out-of-context reference to give some illusion of legitimacy, taken out of the equation completely. The resulting idolatry is then inside-out and backwards (I think the technical term is “*bass-ackwards*”) from what scripture invites us to experience.

The Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church

Imagine the horror and embarrassment of ELCA leadership when it was discovered that after 35 years of mandated 10% quotas of people of color and people whose primary language is other than English, the ELCA actually became on average MORE Caucasian, with some figures being quoted as high as 97%!

Imagine the thought processes at work: “What can we do now? How can we FORCE the ELCA to become the church that we want it to be. The ‘racist’ ELCA must be destroyed and rebuilt in our image (but see Genesis 1:21 to see whose image is important!). We’ll call it ‘decolonization’ or ‘deconstruction,’ but we’ve got to completely destroy it. But how can we make the churches go along with all of this? I know! We’ll use *guilt* to do it! That worked before, right? We’ll throw enough Bible-sounding word salad at them to confuse them, but we’ve got to convince the 97% that THEY are the problem, condemned by God, that they are evil, racist, misogynistic, sexist, and that they are victimizers! THIS is the new gospel. ‘No condemnation in Christ Jesus’? Hah! We’ll HEAP condemnation on them! We’ll minimize Jesus’ death on the cross and salvation through faith in him. We’ll undermine people’s

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Christian Marxist Antisemitism

by [Pr. David Charlton](#), Lutheran CORE Board President and NALC pastor in Florida



Most people would call me a “conservative” Lutheran, although I would prefer to be called orthodox or traditional. Nevertheless, I will accept the label. Therefore, as a conservative Lutheran, it is incumbent upon me to differentiate myself from the conservative Christians who hold views that I reject. So let me say clearly that I reject Christian Zionism.

What is Christian Zionism? Normally, that term describes a fundamentalist dispensationalist theology that believes the founding of the State of Israel in 1948 was the fulfilment of prophecy. Furthermore it holds that all the land currently in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza belong to the State of Israel by divine right. As a result, it holds that Israel has the right to annex territory and establish settlements wherever it wishes. It does not recognize the Palestinians as a people, nor their right to have a state of their own. Finally, it sees conflict between Israelis and Palestinians as a necessary and unavoidable precursor to the End Times. Anyone who does not support Israel militarily is therefore considered an enemy of God. (Not everything called Christian Zionism falls under this definition. See [Israel Matters](#) and [The New Christian Zionism](#) by Gerald R. McDermott)

I reject Christian Zionism as described above because it is a form of Millennialism, which the Augsburg Confession rejects in Article XVII. I also reject Christian Zionism because I reject the notion that a person’s rights should be based on their religion or ethnicity. In other words, I am a “classical liberal”. I support a two-state solution for Israel and Palestine, in which Israelis and Palestinians, Jews, Muslims, Christians, Druze, and people of other religions have equal political and human rights.

Having said that, I would like to ask why some

Lutherans of the left refuse to distance themselves from groups that deny the right of Israel to exist, that teach violent Antisemitism, and that use Marxist dualism to justify violence and terrorism? A very concrete example of the refusal to renounce Christian Marxist Antisemitism occurred at the 2024 Synod Assembly of the Florida-Bahamas Synod, ELCA. In a resolution entitled [Resolution 24-02 Palestinian Advocacy and Dismantling Christian Zionism in Our Churches](#), the assembly lamented the destruction caused by Israeli attacks in Gaza, saying

Be it Resolved, The Florida Bahamas Synod in Assembly laments both the destruction of Gaza’s infrastructure, housing, schools and universities, hospitals, and places of worship--and the millions of people who are experiencing displacement, facing malnutrition, and starvation, as a result primarily of Israel’s continuing air strikes and blocking entry of humanitarian aid trucks...

Among other things, it also recommends that congregations learn about the [SUMUD initiative](#) and spend at least three hours of adult education time in the next three months in learning more about the conflict, occupation and Christian Zionism. Missing is any condemnation of HAMAS for the killing of 1200 people in Israel on October 7, 2023, or of any attribution of responsibility to HAMAS for starting the war that is now devastating Gaza.

Consider an earlier part of the resolution:

Whereas, The ELCA Presiding Bishop, Elizabeth Eaton, on October 13, 2023 denounced the attacks and hostage-taking on October 7, 2023, by HAMAS and has denounced the subsequent disproportionate death toll among Palestinian civilians; as reported by the United Nations, more than thirty-four thousand civilians have been killed in Gaza since October 7, 2023 ; <https://elca.org/News-and-Events/8207...>

Please notice two things. First, while the resolution mentions that Bishop Eaton denounced the attacks and hostage taking, it never joins her in that denunciation. Secondly, while it mentions the number of people killed by Israel in Gaza, it never mentions the number killed by HAMAS on October 7.

Is this an oversight? Did the resolution simply assume that everyone denounces HAMAS and its ideology? Sadly, the answer is no. An amendment was proposed that clarified things by adding the following words:

and emphatically denounce the following Palestinian groups that have been involved in

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The ELCA Shows Its Values Through Whom It Features

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

There is an old adage that says, “You show your values through what and whom you feature.” That certainly is true of the ELCA.

Again this past June, in observance of Pride Month, “Living Lutheran,” the ELCA’s digital magazine, featured interviews with a number of LGBTQ+ persons. According to “Living Lutheran,” they are “excited to affirm and embrace everyone in the church, and to amplify the voices of our ELCA siblings in the LGBTQIA+ community.” Typical of the ELCA, they do nothing to “affirm and embrace” those with traditional views.

“Living Lutheran” featured interviews with several people during the month. The typical interviewee told of being intimidated and deeply harmed growing up by the way they were treated by the traditional church because of their sexual preferences and gender identity. But they thank God that God watched over them and guided them until they finally found an open and welcoming ELCA congregation that affirmed them as they are and taught them that God loves them and made them exactly as they are. One person even shared the dubious Biblical interpretation that “Jesus washed feet; therefore, he must accept all sexual preferences and gender identities.”

Most of the interviews I would describe as typical and to-be-expected. But one of them I consider to be dangerous – the interview with Elle Dowd published on June 3. [Here](#) is a link to that interview. At the bottom of the interview you will find the words – “Read more about – Voices of Faith.” If you click on “Voices of Faith,” you will find pictures and links for more articles. The ones entitled “A conversation with” are part of the series for Pride Month.

The first thing I noticed about the interview with Elle Dowd is the totally posed and artificial picture of her arrest. She begins by saying that she grew up in the ELCA and is now an ordained pastor, but she is currently on academic leave from call to finish up her Ph. D. in queer theology, researching bisexual theology. In other places she describes herself as “bifurious.” Sounds like a wonderful person to be teaching your congregation’s future pastors. In 2021 the ELCA’s publishing ministry, Broadleaf Books, published her book entitled, “Baptized in Tear Gas: From White Moderate to Abolitionist.” ([Link](#)) She describes it as “my own conversion story through my experiences during the Ferguson Uprising.” In the



promotional material for the book Elle Dowd describes herself as an “Assata Shakur-reading, court-house-occupying abolitionist with an arrest record, hungry for the revolution.” That description naturally raises the question, Who is Assata Shakur? Be prepared for the worst. Assata Shakur is a convicted murderer and one of the FBI’s “Most Wanted Terrorists.” Assata was a member of the [Black Liberation Army](#). In 1977, she was convicted in the first-degree murder of a state trooper during a shootout on the New Jersey Turnpike in 1973. She escaped from prison in 1979 and is currently wanted by the FBI. There is a \$1 million FBI reward for information leading to her capture, and an additional \$1 million reward offered by the Attorney General of New Jersey. Such is the hero and role model of someone whom the ELCA lifts up and features.

At the end of the interview, in answer to the question, “What do you pray for?” Elle Dowd answers, “I pray for our collective liberation, for the dismantling of white supremacy, for an end to cis-hetero patriarchy, for the fall of capitalism and empire, for #landback, for abolition, for reparations. . . .”

A few years ago the interim bishop of the ELCA synod in which I was rostered before I retired, Southwest California, scheduled Elle Dowd to be the featured presenter for a spring, multi-conference assembly. I wrote to the bishop, expressing the same concerns I mentioned in this article. Typical of my experience when I try to communicate with ELCA leaders, I never received a response, not even the courtesy of a form letter acknowledging receipt of my letter.

What does the ELCA value? Look at whom it lifts up and features.

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Orthodox Reading is Pastoral Reading

by [Pr. Brett Jenkins](#), NALC pastor from Pennsylvania and former board member of Lutheran CORE



“What’s all this ‘Father’ stuff about in the Lord’s Prayer? Why *should* we call God ‘Father,’ anyway?” she intoned petulantly, fixing me with a stare that clearly thought no reasonable answer was possible. It was my first year in ministry. I had converted to Christ but a year before and now found myself teaching Luther’s *Small Catechism* as part of my youth minister duties at a largish program-style Lutheran church. From my undergraduate background in the arts and my wife’s current graduate school studies, I was utterly familiar with the post-structuralism that informed her question, but despite the self-consciously progressive, university-dominated atmosphere of the town I served, I was still shocked to hear the sentiment from the mouth of a seventh grader.

I would not be shocked today... not anywhere in the United States, let alone a college town. “How do we *know* God is ‘Father?’” challenged the former PASTOR of one of my parishioners in an adult Sunday School forum. Such pugnacious personalities litter the Christian landscape of the modern West, pseudo-intellectuals who, because they came across the concept of *apophatic theology* in seminary, now feel they can use it to undermine Scriptural authority and thence refashion the Christian faith in a manner more congenial to their modern WEIRD (Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, Democratic) presuppositions and biases.

In my [last article](#) I made the case that a specific, seemingly innocuous use of inclusive language for human beings had unexpected but potentially devastating side effects in the realm of pastoral care and Christian self-understanding. Tinkering with Christ’s chosen address of God may have similar side effects. Progressives like Rosemary Radford Reuther and

Sally McFague purport to give us reasons we need not address God as Father. Conservatives like Dennis Prager give us reasons we must. Still, it may well be that the question “Why *should* we call God ‘Father?’” may be like Job addressing God on the question of suffering, to which God responds in a way that lets Job know that he has no possible idea of full import of what he is asking—that Job lacks the *capacity* for God to respond in a meaningful way to such a question. “Stop clucking in such a self-important way. You cannot possibly understand what is at play here. Consider yourself blessed to know Me at all,” might be an apt summary of God’s speech in Job 38-41. To address God in any other way than that revealed by God may have ripples that redound to the harm or even damnation of others and should so be avoided.

Which is why I believe that the answer that I gave the young lady mentioned above in my theological naivete is still the correct one; we call God “Father” because we are disciples—followers—of Christ, not His instructors. If we think of Jesus as someone who merely cracked open a door on God that we can now wedge open a little wider by our own enlightened efforts, we misunderstand Him utterly as “the Word become flesh” who “dwelt” (in the Greek, *skenoō* or “tabernacled”) among us, who in my favorite modern translation “is in the bosom of the Father” and hence alone has the capacity to “make Him known.”

As time went on, I discovered that this young woman had good reason for negative associations with the word “father;” her own dad was an addict who had been emotionally and often physically absent until two years before when he had cleaned up and was endeavoring to “make good” in his role in her life, an effort she perceived as “pushy” and presumptuous. What a privilege it was to teach her—as I hope I have taught my own daughter—that she has a Father in heaven who we earthly fathers can only hope to palely imitate as providers, nurturers, and self-sacrificing protectors. (Ephesians 3:14)

Had I let her indubitably real pain colonize—exercise a controlling influence—over my theology, she could never have found what I would later hear theologian Marva Dawn refer to as “the *true liberation* of being a woman who can without reservation call God ‘Father.’”

Grappling with Scripture as the revealed Word of God and the Apostolic faith that has informed that encounter has preserved such liberation—true liberation—for us all.

Ghosting Faith

by Pr. Douglas Schoelles, NALC Pastor in Indiana and
Lutheran CORE Board Member



Ever been ghosted? Ever have someone with whom you were connected not call you back? Ever have someone stand you up? Most of us have been ghosted some time.

Cutting off contact with a friend without giving any warning or explanation is ghosting. Essentially, they vanish into thin air as if they were a ghost. Sherry Turkle, MIT sociology professor, says that “ghosting has serious consequences because when someone treats us as if we could be ignored, we begin to think this is okay and we treat ourselves as people without feelings. At the same time we treat others as people who have no feelings, so empathy begins to disappear.”

Are you okay with being ghosted? I presume not. While we certainly don’t want to be treated as though we can be ignored or dismissed, whom do we ghost? Ghosting or being inactive in a relationship negates the whole point of being in a friendship or relationship. If someone says they are your friend, but then ghosts you, then their words are worthless and empty.

If we say we are Christians we are claiming to be friends of Jesus. But if we are inactive in our relationship with Christ, if we ghost Jesus Sunday after Sunday, month after month, then we are inactive friends, right? And to be clear, Jesus has an opinion on friends who ghost him. The nicest word he uses is “lukewarm” which he says he will spit out (Rev 3:14–22).

Saying one believes in Jesus doesn’t carry much water because even the demons believe in the one true God. But demons do not have a faith relationship. They don’t claim Jesus as a friend. If you are ghosting Jesus, why? An inactive faith is really no faith at all.

A complacent or inactive faith weakens our ability to fight off the devil and allows Satan’s temptations to lead us into brokenness and sin. As a matter of fact, an inactive faith blocks Christ’s courage to overcome the devil’s cunning and deceptive plan (Ephesians 6:11). So letting faith die is unwise. True faith does something (2 Pet 1:5-9).

Jesus calls you a friend (Jn 15:13-15). He seeks having an active faith relationship with you where he connects with you and you connect with him (Jn 15:4). A true friendship with Jesus is living and vibrant. It is active.

While we may go through times when our faith is weak or small and inactive, faith can always be revived, grow stronger and be more active. A living relationship with God brings you a holy strength. This mighty power comes from your relationship with Christ and gives you resolution to life’s circumstances.

Does the LORD ghost us? Never. He is the LORD who neither slumbers nor sleeps. God keeps watch over his people. Christ never abandons his people, but rather comes for his lost sheep who ghost him. Christ takes on all our rejection, not just ghosting him, but our unfaithfulness through our entrusting our lives to false values and empty gods. All through Scripture, God demonstrates his heart for his people.

While an inactive faith is kind of worthless, Jesus does want you to have a ghosted faith. The LORD gives you the Holy Spirit – the Holy Ghost so you will never feel abandoned or ghosted. “But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.” (Jn 14:26) When the Spirit of Truth comes to you, he will guide you into all the truth and will make known to you Christ’s friendship (Jn 16:12-14). You can be certain that Christ is always ready to have an active faith relationship with you!

God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us. (Rom 5:5)

Your servant in the Gospel,
Pastor Douglas



Check Us Out Online!

City Mission: A Catalyst for Becoming a Missionary Disciple

by [Pr. K. Craig Moorman](#) Lutheran CORE Board Member



“... if you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday. And the Lord will guide you continually ... and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.” (Isaiah 58:10, 11)

Since 1992, my family and I have been deeply involved in disaster relief efforts around the country, from Florida (post-Hurricanes Andrew and Ian) to Mississippi (post-Hurricane Katrina) to West Virginia (post-flooding) to Indiana (post-tornadic destruction) to Tennessee (post-tornadic destruction) to Baltimore City (post-human generated difficulties), etc. My wife, Nancy, and I—and all five of our children (now adults)—were greatly impacted by these experiences, especially <in discovering> *how they ‘taught us’ what it means to be a missionary disciple of Jesus Christ*; and now, over three decades later, thousands of lives have been transformed because of these intentional acts of mission. Our first *City Mission* was launched in 2014. For this year’s event, *City Mission: Baltimore and Beyond ’24*, we decided to keep this one question before us, specifically in light of Isaiah 58:10,11: ***What does it mean to be a missionary disciple?***

We’ve offered two types of missional opportunities over the years: First, *Cross Country Mission (CCM)*, which involves disaster response-type work following a natural catastrophic event beyond our home base, somewhere *across the country*; or, *City Mission (CM)* which was born out of CCM to serve more locally and bridge between the City and Suburbia, addressing human-generated needs. (see: [CM Part 1](#) and [CM Part 2](#))

This past year’s experiences have helped us to see that these more intensive missional encounters have

been highly effective in serving as a catalyst for igniting the participants, the laos/λαός-People of God, into the more ordinary and daily work of mission in their homes, places of work, schools, etc. In other words, they have the capacity to shake us—the Church—out of our timidity, and even lethargy, and pursue both the Great Commission (Mt. 28:16-20) and the Great Shema (Mk. 12:28-30) with a fiercer determination—*To become missionary disciples!*

These ventures have pushed us from only *knowing* what it means to be a disciple into actually *living out* our discipleship through intentional, boots-on-the-ground missional activity. These experiences enabled us to live a more incarnational, Christ-centered discipleship as it took on real bones, sinew, flesh, and blood; specifically, as we were baptized into the mission field! Just a couple of years ago, one of our young adults described CM as “*a raw and unfiltered experience of what it means to be the Church!*” Truly, these ‘encounters’ have served as a catalyst for becoming a missionary disciple.

My daughter, Sarah, who experienced her first CCM at 14 y/o and is now 33 y/o, has also reflected on what it means to be a missionary disciple. After our most recent CCM this past February and CM in May she wrote: “*In disaster zones, where everything is stripped away, where chaos abounds, order is lost, and hope seems lost with it ... it is here that a new source of Life is found. A new perseverance, a ‘restored strength and ever-flowing spring’ begins to pour from within you (Isaiah 58:10-12). Suddenly your own petty complaints of the day don’t matter. The madness and the rush of a ‘controlled’ life is*



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A Different Approach to Pro-life Ministry

by [Pr. Patrick Darnell](#), newest member of the NALC's Life Ministries Team

A Different Approach to Pro-life Ministry

As a pastor, I sometimes have the opportunity to take on unexpected ministries outside of the church. Such was the case when I was invited to become the Executive Director of Operation Saving Life (OSL), a Christian pro-life organization focused on ending abortion by providing the spiritual, physical, and financial needs of women who have had an unplanned pregnancy. After many years, and hundreds of lives being saved, our ministry is drawing to a close at the end of this month as we merge with one of our national partners. As I reflect on my brief time with this organization, I'm struck at just how little I understood of this ministry from my days in the pulpit. Below are a few of the lessons that I have learned in ministering to abortion-minded women in crisis.

Start With Compassion

Churches often address the problem of abortion – and abortion minded women – in the wrong way. We view the issue of abortion as a moral crisis – which it is. After all, life begins at conception and to end that life is a terrible sin. Without realizing it, we frame the woman's decision to have an abortion through this same lens. We assume, as is often advertised as the “benefits” of an abortion, that the woman is making a choice for family planning reasons, because economic hardships, or perhaps so that she can reach a milestone in her career or education. As the church, our response is often to try and help this woman see the moral wrong of this decision. That she might choose life, because this is the right decision, even though it is the harder one to make.

In reality, 75% of all women who have had an abortion report that they were forced into the procedure. Nearly every woman in our program at Operation Saving Life was a victim of domestic violence, risked losing their jobs or homes by having another child, faced extreme poverty, or had family or partners who were demanding that they have the procedure. It is a reality that those in the abortion industry don't often share, because you can't be pro-choice if you don't have the freedom to choose in the first place.

The issue of abortion for many of these mothers, then, doesn't focus on morals, but rather survival. This is how the church must respond to the issue as well. While we should never shy away from calling abortion a sin, beginning our approach to saving a



life with a moral argument will only condemn and lead a mother further from Christ. More often than not, she knows that abortion is wrong – in fact, she doesn't want one – but does not see any other option out of her situation than to end the pregnancy. She is trying to survive and avoid hardship that she does not believe that she can bear. The response of the church must begin with compassion by responding to the barriers that she feels she has in bringing a child into this world. By showing her that there is a path to having this child and to thrive, we are giving her hope. In a very real way, our goal is to embody the words of Isaiah 40:3 *“In the wilderness prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.”* We cannot begin our ministry to the abortion-minded mother in condemnation, but instead in hope, in understanding, and in a very clear response to the challenges that she faces. We make a path, when no path can be seen.

Lead With Generosity

In our experience, the barriers that many of our mothers faced focused on just a few areas. At OSL, we found that if we could tailor our ministry to meet these needs, then the mother would most likely choose life. In fact, in our seven years, we have not had a single woman choose to abort her child after entering our program. Every one of them chose life. We didn't do anything radical. We simply listened and responded. Most importantly, we followed through.

While every situation is different, we found that the greatest and most common barriers that a mother had in choosing life included: Housing, Transportation, Childcare, and Community. If we could help a mother have safe and stable housing, provide the means to get to work or doctor's appointments, find adequate childcare, and surround her with people who would love and support her, we would also be providing hope and a clear path to choose life. Although paying rent or buying a car can be very big

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A Different Approach ...

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asks, especially for smaller churches, there are still ways that any congregation can help accomplish these goals.

One of the most successful ministries that we had was our mentor mom program. It cost nothing, required no space, and was easy for us to scale with our needs. Many of the mothers in our program were facing parenthood alone. Their families or the father were not supportive, and these mothers often were first-time and single parents. What they needed most were people who could surround them and let them know that they didn't have to face this alone. In partnership with local churches, we paired the women in our program with experienced mothers in congregations. These mentor moms would check in on our moms regularly, befriend them, pray with them, help them when a mom was overwhelmed, worried, or just needed someone there. Ministry happens when we experience life alongside others, and this was ministry in its purest form – simply loving one's neighbor in the name of Christ. No money was ever exchanged, simply fellowship and support.

Some churches could help in much greater ways. They donated cars or raised funds for auto repairs. Others held gift card drives for Uber funds or Walmart cards so that a mom could get diapers or make it to doctors' appointments. Some hosted weekly support groups and Bible studies for single moms. Women's groups across the city hosted baby showers, threw birthday parties, or provided Christmas presents. A few churches paid for childcare, offered work or job placement help, paid for temporary housing, one even offered an unused parsonage as safe housing for pregnant moms. Generosity can come in many forms. The key is to always look for and respond to the barriers that these women are facing. Hope is easy to find when a path is made clear. As a ministry, our job is to bring light into the darkest of places. Even the dimmest light completely changes our perspective of the situation we are in. If a church can accomplish this, then they can help save a life.

Continue The Relationship

Perhaps the most disheartening thing we find is that many ministry efforts are far too short. All of our churches will offer occasional help and prayer, but what these mothers need is a long term investment. Sadly, most pro-life ministries stop once a woman has chosen to keep her child. Many pregnancy care centers, too, can only offer support for up to a year, and this support is limited. Yet, consider all that

these women have been through. In just a few months, they have become parents! They are over tired, over worked, many have been abandoned by their boyfriends or husbands, some have lost their jobs, others are struggling to keep up with the costs of childcare, a few are rebuilding their lives after situations of abuse, while others are simply trying to pick up the pieces. It is not uncommon for us to find that God has used a child to save the life of a mother, but the mother still desperately needs support.

This is the greatest ministry opportunity that the church has. Offer ongoing support. In this ministry, we have to go big and go long. At OSL, a mother could remain part of our program for up to three years after a child was born. Our commitment to help wasn't limited to one-time support, because our goal was to develop a long-term relationship with the mother. Like the church, we are in the business of saving lives *and* changing lives. This takes time. So, rather than doing something once, we would do it for an entire quarter. Need help with an electric bill this month? We will pay it for the entire summer. Need help with rent, with food, with daycare... we've got this, but not just once. That's 90 days on us, so that you can be free to focus on what you need to be well.

The twist is that we did not do this simply out of generosity, but for the purpose of longevity. We reevaluated our commitments every 90 days, but during that time, we regularly met with the moms. We prayed with them, offered pastoral care, helped them to set goals, and worked with them to achieve them. So long as they were working to get on their feet and parent well, we would be with them the entire way. They should never have to face this challenge alone. It was this kind of commitment that saved lives.

There is no reason for a church not to do the same thing. Most congregations could very easily adopt a mother or two in need. Make the commitment to invest in that family and do so for the long term. Be open that you are doing this because this is the kind of thing that Christ calls us to do. There is no condemnation, but a clear truth of love, hope, and a future. While boundaries, goals, and expectations should be set, developing relationships with these families can make a generational impact in their lives. It is the best tool that we have to break the destructive cycles that so many in our community face.

Although the work of Operation Saving Life is ending, it is my prayer that our ministry will continue through the church. There is nothing more powerful in these women's lives than what Christ can accomplish in them. Often, as is true in the church itself, it was the unexpected child that changed everything for the better. Our job is to prepare the way.

How DEIA, Anti-Racism and ...

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confidence in scripture, the confessions and the creeds, and we'll guilt them into submission. Then *they* will actually help *us* destroy the church! Brilliant! And we'll promise them a million new members who look just like us! All they have to do is shut up and get out of the way."

In order to accomplish this on any level, ALL of the institutions of the church must be changed so that DEIA is the unquestioned operating procedure (done!), and they have to infuse DEIA into all of the constitutional documents of Churchwide, synods, and especially churches. Already on the ELCA website is the result of their DEIA audit and recommended changes to all of our constitutions. Being pushed by the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church, this represents the reworking of the framework of the ELCA, from top to bottom. Once the DEIA is fully unleashed, nothing can stop it, and I don't think most of the leadership in the ELCA fully understands what hell they're about to experience themselves. DEIA demands complete obedience with no tolerance for conservative or dissenting voices. Even bishops will be forced to conform.

The one thing still standing in the way of full domination for DEIA is **Bound Conscience**. These positions, put in place apparently to gaslight people who disagreed with changes made in 2009, are what gives legal cover to those who would disagree with DEIA, CRT and anti-racism. Oddly, from a conservative and biblical point of view, these clauses are deeply flawed. We would say with Luther, that our consciences are **bound to the Word of God**. Oddly, that part is never mentioned in the Bound Conscience clauses.

However, when Bound Conscience goes (and it is being actively "reconsidered" now), nothing is left to protect conservative pastors and churches who still dare to disagree, and we will be subject to legal action, discipline and punishment for being racist or any of the usual *phobics*, and whatever other attacks that would be launched. That, I believe, will happen as soon as DEIA is fully implemented in our constitutional documents. DEIA leaves no room for disagreement. The change will be breathtakingly swift. The United Methodists are now discovering, with the departure of huge numbers of conservative pastors and churches, what happens when the conservative brakes are released. Even progressives there are showing some concern at how quickly their founding documents and positions are being abandoned – with not much of substance being put in their place.

I expect these changes to begin to be implemented at the 2025 Churchwide Assembly. Once DEIA changes are implemented, Bound Conscience will fall. Conservative pastors and churches will no longer be welcome in the ELCA, nor will we be safe.

Pastor Lawrence Becker
Westchester Lutheran Church,
Los Angeles, CA

Christian Marxist ...

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politically motivated violence to include the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), Fatah, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine – General Command (PFLP-GC), the Democratic Front for the Liberation of organizations[sic], Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Abu Nidal Organization, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad and Hamas,

However, the Florida-Bahamas Synod declined. Why? The only answer that I can see is a convergence of historic Christian Antisemitism and Christian Marxism. The Antisemitism of the Christian left follows the Marxist practice of dividing all of humanity into oppressor and oppressed. This Marxist dualism sees the oppressor as always evil and the oppressed as always innocent. Furthermore, the oppressed are never really responsible for their actions. Whatever they might do, even if it involves the kind of atrocities perpetrated on October 7, it is never their fault. The oppressor drove them to it. As Bishop Eaton said in her letter on October 13, 2023, to which the resolution refers,

We must also call a thing a thing. The power exerted against all Palestinian people — through the occupation, the expansion of settlements and the escalating violence — must be called out as a root cause of what we are witnessing.

According to Bishop Eaton, the root cause of the violent Antisemitism of HAMAS, is Israel. The Florida-Bahamas Synod Assembly concurs. The refusal to denounce HAMAS and other militant groups is intentional. So, one would guess, is the refusal to address the Antisemitic rhetoric, intimidation, and violence at anti-Israel rallies in the U.S.

As a "conservative" Lutheran I am glad to renounce Christian Zionism. Are there any "liberal" or "progressive" Lutherans who are willing to renounce Christian Marxist Antisemitism?

City Mission: A Catalyst ...

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*gone. All that you see, all that you think about, is before you: an opportunity to love the people who have lost it all. The people who *really* have something to complain about, yet don't. They're full of thankfulness*



for life itself, not the things in it. The presence of the Holy Spirit is so tangible in these places where distraction is low and pain is high. Lives are changed, and hearts are broken for the things that break His. The Cross becomes what matters most; the thing we cling to, and the hope of His Resurrection and the new life to come."

Brothers and Sisters, CCM or a CM is merely a 'tool' or vehicle to help build out and facilitate the work of mission; but, it has also become an all-important and much needed catalyst to embolden us



to live out our calling as missionary disciples. *What has the Lord placed in front of you ... perhaps, to teach you ... how to become a missionary disciple? Dare to step into it. His grace will lead you, every step of the way.*

Becoming a *missionary disciple with you ...* In Christ, Craig



Video Ministries—July 2024

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

Be sure to check out the two new videos on our YouTube channel. A link to our YouTube channel can be found [here](#). Both of these videos are from members of the board of Lutheran CORE. Doug Schoelles, NALC pastor, has given us a CORE Convictions video critique of the “Created to Be” curriculum used by Lutheran Outdoor Ministries. A link to his video can be found [here](#). Chris Johnson, LCMC pastor, has given us a video book review of a biography of Charles Spurgeon, one of the greatest preachers of all time. A link to his video can be found [here](#).

LUTHERAN OUTDOOR MINISTRY CURRICULUM

A CORE Convictions Video by Doug Schoelles

What makes it even more important that people know about this curriculum is the fact that basically the same teaching material is being used in preparation for and at the ELCA Youth Gathering this summer. The material claims that the focus of each of the five sessions is to give youth “an opportunity to explore more deeply the authentic selves God has created us to be.” But in actuality it is rife with social justice works righteousness and saturated with DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) ideology as it tells young people that God created them to be exactly as they are, their identity is however they define themselves, and that they are to be brave and disruptive change makers.

Under the theme “Created to Be Free,” there is no mention of being free from sin, rebellion, and death. Under “Created to be Authentic,” there is no mention of who I am in Christ and how Christ defines me. Instead it is completely how do I define myself. The young people are told they are loved by God, but there is no reference to why or how. The cross of Christ is only referenced once.

“SPURGEON: A BIOGRAPHY”

A Video Book Review by Chris Johnson

Who is the “Prince of Preachers,” Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892)? Arnold Dallimore shares with us the story of a man whose reputation spans generations and continents, a man who has been read in many languages and still is respected to this day. This biography recounts the life of Spurgeon from a faithful young lad, to becoming a “Boy Preacher,” to being the leader of, at the time, one of the largest churches in the world, the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London. The Lord, through

this church, would educate generations of pastors, care for orphans, and serve as a clear witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Dallimore’s biography serves as an entry point to know the life of this British preacher. Without getting bogged down into too many details, Dallimore recounts for us Spurgeon as a riveting preacher, a teacher of pastors, a public theologian, a prayer warrior, a faithful husband who loved and was loved by his loving wife (Susannah), a capable administrator of a large urban church, a pastor who had the salvation of souls as his main mission, a pastor who had a heart for the many meek, mild, and poor in London, a man who dearly loved his Lord, his Scriptures, and his calling as an under-shepherd of the Good Shepherd.

Though Spurgeon (what we might consider a Reformed/Calvinistic Baptist) and Lutheran theology don’t always see eye to eye on key points of doctrine (the Lord’s Supper and Baptism, to name two), Lutherans can still learn from this man’s passion, dedication, and seemingly indefatigable nature to help build a bit of the kingdom of God here on earth. One works as hard as possible for the sake of the kingdom and God does the rest. We sow, God provides the growth. Pastors and laity can both enjoy this accessible biography of Spurgeon and have a fire rekindled in them for the difficult, yet eternally essential mission of the Church.

Some widely circulated works of Spurgeon, in addition to his many sermons, include the following: “Lectures to My Students,” “Morning and Evening,” “Smooth Stones Taken from Ancient Brooks,” “The Treasury of David,” and decades of his monthly publication, “The Sword and the Trowel.”



Coming Events

- **NEXUS 2024**—Des Moines, IA. July 21-27, 2024. Click [here](#).
- **NALC Online Convocation**. August 9, 2024. Click [here](#).
- **LCMC 24th Annual Gathering & Convention** — Marion, IA. September 29- October 2, 2024. Click [here](#).

More events: <http://lutherancore.website/events/future/>