

## Bishop Bradosky's Christmas Message

My dear friends in Christ,

The Christmas Gospel begins this way:

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and without Him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in Him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.*

*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

— John 1:1-5, 14

Christmas can be a time filled with sentimental moments of remembering the birth of our own children and grandchildren. For some it is a time of remembering those who are not with us to share in the celebration. There is nothing wrong with contemplating the Nativity in all of its details recorded in other Gospel accounts. In fact, Martin Luther encourages us to meditate on



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*Adoration of the Shepherds by Guido Reni (1575-1642)*

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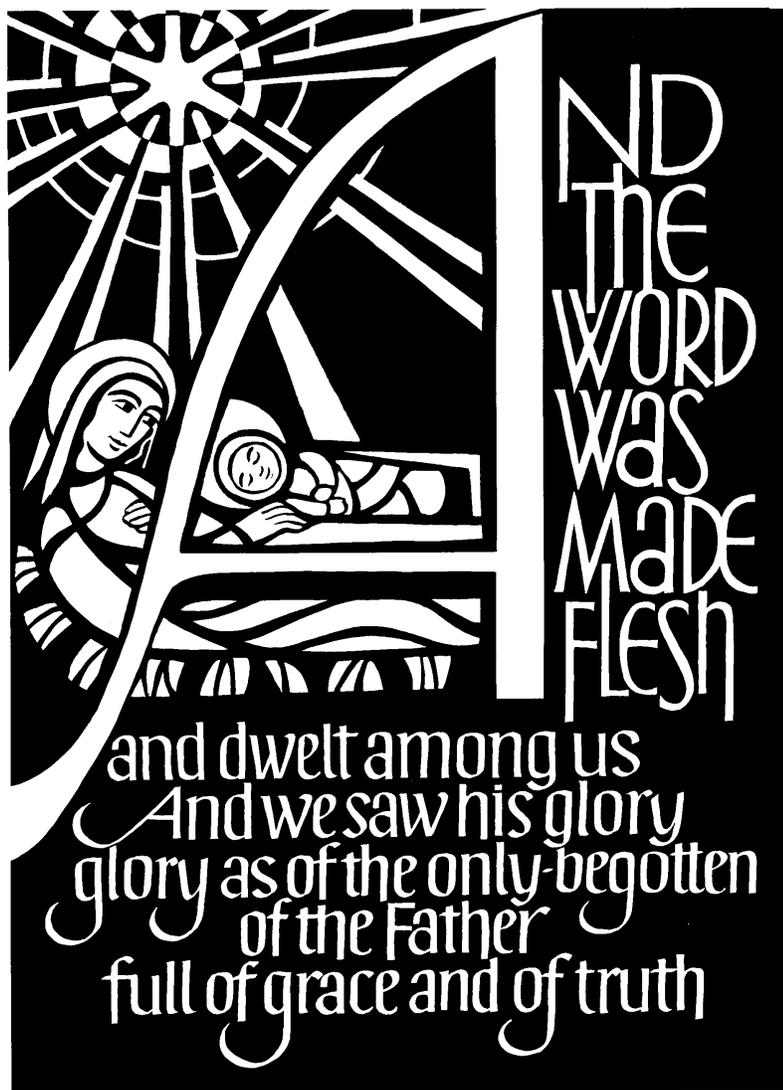
the birth of Jesus just as we see it happening in our own families. It brings us great consolation to know that Jesus came as a baby.

John's Gospel jumps right into the most important part of the Christmas story, the nature and identity of the infant Jesus. John begins with the profound proclamation of the eternal divinity of Jesus. He is the Word that creates. With a Word He calls things into being. John begins not with human experience but with divine intervention. These are words so wonderful and unprecedented that human reason cannot comprehend them. Nothing but faith through the work of the Holy Spirit can accept this. John invites us to believe it before we understand it. This little baby is nothing less than God's only Son, the Incarnate Word, the Light of the World. Without this Light there is only darkness.

This is the dividing line separating Christianity from other faiths and a measure of true faith within Christianity. True Christian faith rests on the nature and identity of this Baby born of Mary. John's Gospel gives no room for any other identity or titles except the eternal divinity of the Savior of the world. His nature is one with the Father, even in creation. Instead of mere sentimentality, John invites us to come to the manger and see the Trinity. He invites us to reflect on the words of the Nicene Creed.

It is Jesus' true identity that gives us courage and strength to believe. He is the only one who can offer true righteousness and salvation to those who believe in Him. He alone is the only one who can redeem us and cleanse us from sin by His own death and resurrection. Luther describes the birth of Jesus as the devil's doom:

*For the hook, which is the divinity of Christ, was concealed under the earthworm (the infant Jesus). The devil swallowed it with his jaws when Christ died and was buried. But it ripped his belly so that he could not retain it but had to disgorge it. He ate death for himself. This affords us the greatest solace; for just as the devil could not hold Christ in death, so he cannot hold us who believe in Christ.*



Yet Jesus' birth proclaims that we have a Savior who is also our Brother. He has taken on our nature in every way except for sin. John proclaims to our delight that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. Our Savior is one who was born of Mary, suffered, was crucified, died, rose from the dead on the third day, ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father. Luther writes, "With a cheerful heart I may declare: 'I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, who sits on His right hand as my Advocate. He is of my flesh and blood; yes, He is my Brother. For us men and for our salvation He came down from heaven, became incarnate, and died for our sins.'" Our eternal welfare and salvation are established on this article of faith. Into this faith we were baptized and on this faith we live and die.

I was more than a little surprised to discover that a Christmas song with the following words was popular

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in our culture. The song is “Mary Did You Know?” and the writer, Mark Lowry, is pondering Mary’s insight into the eternal divinity of Christ as the Gospel of John declares.

*Mary, did you know that your baby boy  
will one day walk on water?*

*Mary, did you know that your baby boy  
will save our sons and daughters?*

*Did you know that your baby boy  
has come to make you new?*

*This child that you’ve delivered  
will soon deliver you.*

*Mary, did you know that your baby boy  
will give sight to a blind man?*

*Mary, did you know that your baby boy  
will calm a storm with His hand?*

*Did you know that your baby boy  
has walked where angels trod?*

*And when you kiss your little baby,  
you’ve kissed the face of God.*

*Mary, did you know?*

*The blind will see, the deaf will hear,  
and the dead will live again.*

*The lame will leap,  
the dumb will speak the praises of the Lamb.*

*Mary, did you know that your baby boy  
is Lord of all creation?*

*Mary, did you know that your baby boy  
will one day rule the nations?*

*Did you know that your baby boy  
is heaven’s perfect Lamb?*

*This sleeping child you’re holding  
is the great I Am.*

*Oh Mary did you know?*

Let us approach this Christmas with the same pondering of Christ’s true nature and identity. Let our proclamation be focused on Christ exclusively, the only Savior and Consolation of the world. Let us do nothing to attract people to ourselves but instead lead them to Christ who is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

The entire nature and divinity of Christ is summed up in these words from the Christmas Gospel, “And

the Word became flesh.” Luther reminds us that those words are the equivalent of saying “I am a Christian.” Both sets of words should be used to overcome the oppression of the devil. The Word who became flesh will send him fleeing.

Finally, as you prepare to celebrate Christmas let me encourage you to make one more connection with those powerful words from the Gospel, “And the Word became flesh.” When these words are combined with the bread and wine on the altar it becomes the Body and Blood of the Word.

St. Augustine said, “That Lord, you see, who ‘in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God’ was so compassionate that He did not despise what He had created in His own image; and therefore ‘the Word became flesh and dwelt among us,’ as you know. Because, yes, the very Word took to Himself a man, that is, the soul and flesh of a man, and became man while remaining God. For that reason, because He also suffered for us, He also presented us in this Sacrament with His Body and Blood, and this is what He made even us ourselves into as well.”

In the Eucharist, the Word Made Flesh enters into our lives with all the power and majesty of His eternal divinity and we are forever changed.

Christ is born! Oh, come, let us adore Him.

Celebrating with you the joy of the Christmas Gospel — Emmanuel, God with us.

**Bishop John F. Bradosky**

## **Bishop to host tour**

NALC Bishop John Bradosky will host a trip to the Biblical and classical sites of Greece and Turkey Oct. 20-30, 2015.

The 11-day tour will follow the journeys of St. Paul and includes a three-day cruise. There is an optional three-day extension to Italy.

Contact Pam Charas at [mcharas@earthlink.net](mailto:mcharas@earthlink.net) or 937-434-0993 for a flyer and registration form.

# 2015 NALC Pastors Conference

## 'Jesus and the Bible: Authority in the Church'

"Jesus and the Bible: Authority in the Church" is the theme of the 2015 NALC Pastors Conference being held Tuesday through Thursday, Feb. 10-12, at the Crowne Plaza Orlando Universal in Orlando, Fla.

Dr. David Yeago will offer two keynote presentations on the conference theme.

Dr. Yeago is professor of Systematic Theology and Ethics for the North American Lutheran Seminary and Trinity School for Ministry in Ambridge, Pa.



*David Yeago*

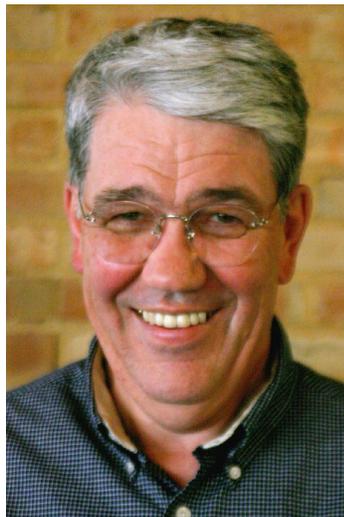
The Rev. Dr. James Nestingen will lead two presentations on preaching lectionary Scripture texts for Lent, Holy Week, and Easter. These will be followed by preaching workshops where pastors are invited to deliver sermons on Scripture texts from Lent, Holy Week, and Easter and to receive feedback from presenters and colleagues.

Dr. Nestingen is professor emeritus in Church History at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minn. He also teaches for the North American Lutheran Seminary.

Workshop opportunities will be offered on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings. Workshops include:

+ "The NALC Discipleship Emphasis and You" - Bishop John Bradosky and Pastor Mark Chavez, General Secretary.

+ "Worship in the NALC" - the Rev. Dr. Amy Schiffrin, president of the North American Lutheran Seminary, and Associate Professor of Liturgy and Homiletics at Trinity School for Ministry.



*James Nestingen*

+ "Reigniting Passion for Mission in the NALC" - Pastor Gemechis Buba, Assistant to the Bishop for Missions.

Days will begin with Morning Prayer (Matins) and end with Compline (Prayer at the Close of the Day).

Thursday will feature a meeting of the NALC Ministerium, chaired by Bishop Bradosky, followed by a service of Holy Communion including the renewal of ordination vows and a blessing of oil for use in local congregations.

There will be free time each afternoon with the opportunity to schedule individual time with the bishop or other NALC executive staff.

Although the conference is offered for NALC pastors and seminary students, other NALC leaders and pastors and seminarians from other church bodies are also welcome. Spouses are welcome to attend, but must register to be included in meals.

Registration fee is \$50 for those who register by Nov. 30 and \$75 for those who register after that date. Registration includes breakfast and dinner on Wednesday; breakfast on Thursday. You may register online at [www.thenalc.org](http://www.thenalc.org).



*Amy Schiffrin*

# Missionary ministers to children in South Sudan refugee camp

**By Pastor Gemechis Buba**

*NALC Assistant to the Bishop for Missions*

I recently visited Nairobi, Kenya, on a mission review and strategic-planning trip to East Africa. This was truly a trip orchestrated by the Holy Spirit. The timing was perfect to look at the past, present and future of Pastor Matthew Riak's mission work in South Sudan and Uganda.

Matthew is doing wonders in the Adjumani Refugee Camp. What he has accomplished in the camp is nothing less than a miracle. His mission work is a tremendous blessing to the refugees and their children, giving a relatively quality primary education to 1,700 children. His strategic relationship with the regional government, community leaders, church leaders, United Nations officers and various NGOs is remarkable. I was impressed and very proud of our missionary and his family.

We also discussed various personal, spiritual and family matters. The burden of this ministry's work on Matthew's family is not easy. We have discussed some ways of easing that burden for them.

Once again I thank the World Mission Prayer League's international and regional leadership for making this work a great success. I thank Pastor



*Children from South Sudan at the Adjumani Refugee Camp in Uganda are a part of a school organized by NALC Missionary Pastor Matthew Riak.*

Frank Rothfuss for his continued help. I also thank Bishop Bradosky and our NALC congregations who are supporting our missionary, Pastor Matthew and his family, Achol and Immanuel, for their sacrificial work in this volatile, unstable, underdeveloped and dangerous area. They are truly bringing hope and the life of Christ Jesus to thousands.

We discussed next steps to work on the strategic follow up of the mission work that is already started in the area. The Rev. Dr. William Obaga, the immediate regional director for the World Mission Prayer League, will send us the strategic follow up document on the direction of the mission, relocation of St. Luke's Theological College and on Matthew's continued involvement with St. Luke's primary school in Adjumani.



# Theologians Without Borders

**By Pastor Gemechis Buba**

*NALC Assistant to the Bishop for Missions*

One of the greatest resources that is needed today is not what you would expect. While it's true that financial help is needed by many of our mission partners throughout the world, one of the greatest needs is you.

The theology of mission is an important topic to be discussed, but what we hear from our partners across the world is that there are millions of Christians — thousands of young men and women, grandparents, children, bankers, teachers, accountants, lawyers, CEOs, maintenance workers, musicians, professional plumbers and more — that long for training in Scripture and theology. There are many, many people who would like to receive education or seminary training to be pastors, but there are not enough teachers to teach them.

Theologians Without Borders recognizes that in North America we are rich with education, training, and degrees. As we continue to build relationships with our brothers and sisters in Christ all over the world, we recognize this is a resource that we can easily share. As we strive to live out the Great Commission, are you willing to be sent out? To share your education and gifts? To begin a relationship with another part of the Body of Christ in a different place where you will also have the ability to learn and grow in your faith?

Most of our Theologians Without Borders will travel for a week to 10 days and will teach on a specific topic, as well as spend time building relationships with local congregations and leaders. It is important for home congregations and Mission Districts to understand that participating in the larger body of Christ is a gift to the whole. The pastors and leaders who give of their time are not on “vacation.” As the leader gives of his or her time, we ask that the congregation would consider giving the gift of additional paid leave.

Upon request, a conference call can be arranged for congregational leadership with the NALC's

Executive Staff or experienced representative to empower congregational leadership to make this informed decision and gift.

There is a possibility of travel individually or on one of the group trips that is planned for 2015.

The NALC Missions Office will help Theologians Without Borders by connecting the individual with:

- + An overseas contact person
- + Initial contact and planning assistance
- + Connection to a travel agent
- + Cultural training and information
- + Fundraising options
- + Providing information and assistance to home congregation to understand this mission
- + Resources to debrief the experience upon return
- + Outlets to share experiences to help encourage others in this ministry (blog, newsletter, etc.)

Theologians Without Borders currently has group trips planned for:

- + India - February 2015 with India Transformed
- + Slovakia - May 2015 with East European Missions Network
- + China – May 2015 with China Service Ventures

Other places where individuals are needed include (but are not limited to): Denmark, Ethiopia, Germany, Ukraine, and Tanzania.

For more information on Theologians Without Borders or any of the trips please contact Jenny Brockman in the Missions Office at 614-777-5709 or [jbrockman@thenalc.org](mailto:jbrockman@thenalc.org).

# Let it be to me according to your will

Although my topics for the *Ministry Matters* articles most often deal with practical issues related to ministry within the NALC, Advent seems to beg for something more.

As you read this *NALC News*, we will be but days from our celebration of the Nativity of our Lord.

The last Sunday in Advent, we traditionally hear about Mary, the mother of our Lord, and this year is the same. The appointed Gospel reading is from Luke 1:26-38. It records the visit of the angel Gabriel, who brings the good news of Jesus' birth to Mary, though she asks Gabriel, "How can this be, since I have no husband?" Finally, Mary's response is one of faith: "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word" (RSV).

"Let it be to me according to your word." These words of Mary embody the nature of faith — of trust in God's word and will. Martin Luther, in his 1521 exposition on the song of Mary, sung upon Gabriel's visit, wrote:

*But Mary's heart remains at all times the same; she lets God have His will with her, and draws from it all only a good comfort, joy and trust in God.*

Oh, that we might all have such faith in God — that our only desire is that His will be done and that we draw from it only a good comfort, joy and trust! It comes down to obedience, doesn't it? It comes down to a simple yielding of our will to God's.

I talk about this often with our call committees as they are seeking a new pastor. The call process is not about our will or agenda or desire, but about opening ourselves to the revealing of God's will so that we align our will with His.

The notion is somewhat foreign to most of us who pray, offering God our will, hoping that He will align His will with ours! This is also the ground of much tension and conflict within congregations, as lay members, leaders and pastors are all too ready to seek and push their own personal agendas, rather than together seeking God's will as revealed in His Word. The lack of Biblical knowledge rampant in



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## *Ministry Matters*

### **Pastor David Wendel**

Assistant to the Bishop  
for Ministry and Ecumenism

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Lutheranism feeds this "me" focus, as ignorance of God's Word leaves one with his or her own desires and preferences.

The first step in healthy congregational life (and all of life!) is a continual and intentional focus on God's Word — in Scripture, in worship, in our own devotional study and meditation.

The second step is to always be praying, "Lord, let it be to be according to your word" rather than, "my will above all else." The problem with seeking our will is that it doesn't provide "a good comfort, joy and trust" in God.

The usual human strategy of "my will be done" furthers selfishness, self-centeredness and self-absorption, which creates distance from God and others. This is why our Lord taught us to pray, "Thy will be done." This is why our Lord modeled this for us as He struggled with the Father's will in the Garden of Gethsemane before His death, yet finally praying, "Not my will, but thine be done."

And isn't that of the same intention as Mary's "let it be to me according to your will?" The point is that we seek, rely upon and place our trust not in our own will, actions or ability, but in God's! As Mary prepared her heart and her life for the birth of the Son of God and Savior of the world, her one aim was, "Thy will be done!"

May this be our prayer, as well, as we prepare our hearts and homes for Christmas. May we be praying every day of our lives, "Lord, let it be to me according to your will!" And may our hearts remain at all times the same, drawing from God's will for us a good comfort, joy and trust in Him!

# NALC to join 2015 March for Life

By Pastor Dennis Di Mauro

*“In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and she exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.”*

— Luke 1:39-45

What a wonderful Scripture scene to meditate on this Advent. I have always considered this pericope to be the most pro-life passage in the entire Bible. Consider what was happening at that moment. At first, we see that Luke recounts a joyful reunion between two blessed women, Mary and Elizabeth, who lovingly share the news of their pregnancies. But if we take a deeper look, we also see that Luke narrates a joyful meeting between two unborn children. Indeed, John the Baptist, an *unborn child*, leaps in the womb of his mother Elizabeth because he is in the presence of his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, *another unborn child* in the womb of Mary. Is there any doubt that Scripture recognizes unborn children as full and distinct persons in the eyes of God? And is there any doubt that one of those unborn children was, at that very moment, the Savior of the World?

But sadly, the way we treat people here on earth is often at odds with how God would have us behave. And while the personhood of Jesus and John is



*Members of the North American Lutheran Church were among tens of thousands of people who took part in the 2014 annual March for Life in Washington, D.C. Pictured here are, from left, Pastor James Lehmann, Pastor David Wendel, Pastor Mark Chavez, Pastor Rebeca Heber, Bishop John Bradosky, and James Hansen.*

clearly recognized in the Word of God, the lives of so many unborn children in our country today are in severe jeopardy. Due to the pressures of our sinful world, including teen pregnancy, poverty, substance abuse, and ignorance about child development in the womb, we as a nation often choose abortion as the remedy for God’s gift of life. Since the 1973 decision, more than 55 million children have been aborted in the United States, with 1.2 million abortions performed in just the last year. Statistics tell us that over 95 percent of those abortions were performed on children with no suspected fetal abnormalities.

The North American Lutheran Church seeks to stand up to the national tragedy of abortion by supporting women in crisis pregnancies with Christian love and support. This outreach to women in difficult circumstances needs to take place in our communities, our congregations, and through our local pregnancy centers.

We also seek to stand up in Christian witness to our elected representatives who allow the national policy of abortion-on-demand to continue unabated:

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members of Congress who refuse to restrict abortion even in the third trimester and who give Planned Parenthood of America, the nation's largest abortion provider, over \$500 million in taxpayer subsidies every year.

Last year, Bishop John Bradosky and Pastor David Wendel attended the National Memorial for the Preborn and their Mothers and Fathers at D.A.R. Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C., an ecumenical service which prays for the end of abortion and celebrates those who work for alternatives to abortion.

In January, the NALC Executive Council will be holding its meeting in Washington, D.C., so that they and our executive staff can participate in the pro-life events there.

Members of NALC congregations are also invited to participate in the 2015 March for Life, which will be held on Thursday, Jan. 22, in Washington, D.C. The march will take place on the 42nd anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision which made abortion legal in all 50 states.

The day's activities include:

8:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. — National Memorial for the Preborn and their Mothers and Fathers at D.A.R. Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C.

12 noon - 4 p.m. — After the service, the NALC marchers will be joining up with other pro-life Lutherans, represented by Lutherans for Life and the LCMS Life Ministry, at Seventh Street and Independence Avenue to participate in the March for Life on the National Mall.

The Lutheran Church Missouri—Synod will also be holding a life conference Jan. 22-24 at the Crystal City Hilton Hotel in Arlington, Va.

NALC members who plan to participate in the March for Life are asked to notify Pastor Dennis Di Mauro of Trinity Lutheran Church in Warrenton, Va., and president of Northern Virginia Lutherans for Life, at [dennisdimauro@yahoo.com](mailto:dennisdimauro@yahoo.com) or 703-568-3346.

For more information about the three events, visit [marchforlife.org](http://marchforlife.org), [nationalprayerservice.org](http://nationalprayerservice.org), and [lcms.org/events/lifeconference](http://lcms.org/events/lifeconference).

# **DVDs on Lutheran teaching featuring Jim Nestingen are available from the NALC**

A DVD study led by popular Lutheran theologian the Rev. Dr. James Nestingen is now available from the NALC offices.

This 12-part DVD on Lutheran theology as explained in the Lutheran Confessions and Martin Luther's Small Catechism is an excellent resource for adult studies.

The DVD series, with individual sessions of 35-60 minutes each, was produced by St. Paul Lutheran Seminary and funded, in part, by a grant from the North American Lutheran Church.

Dr. Nestingen, an NALC pastor, taught church history and the Lutheran Confessions at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minn., for many years.

The session titles are:

1. The Lutheran Confessions
2. Justification
3. Law and Gospel
4. Ten Words
5. God the Father
6. Who is Jesus?
7. Redeemed
8. Holy Spirit
9. Lord's Prayer
10. Baptism
11. Confession and Absolution
12. Communion



*James Nestingen*

You may order the DVDs by contacting the NALC Administrative office at [nalc.mnoffice@thenalc.org](mailto:nalc.mnoffice@thenalc.org) or 888-551-7254. Cost is \$100 plus shipping.

# Generational Challenges in Congregational Outreach

The signs are unmistakable: The percentage of North Americans who are active members of a local faith community continues to drop. And the median age of those who are a part of a congregation continues to climb. What's going on?

A significant part of the challenges before us relates to specific generational issues.

A personal confession: When I was engaged in a church-growth-consultation ministry back in the late 1980s and early 1990s, I had little understanding of how good we had it back then. Granted, one of my presentation topics focused on reaching nesting-stage Baby Boomer parents through ministries for their children. The demographic opportunities during those years were pretty obvious. The largest generation in American history had entered the nesting stage, and this meant incredible outreach opportunities for local churches. In addition, many Boomers — back in the 1970s — had been positively impacted by the Jesus Movement. As a result, they felt a moral and spiritual responsibility to raise their offspring in the Christian faith once they entered the nesting stage.

I realized those opportunities 20 to 30 years ago did not guarantee anything when it came to succeeding generations. Nevertheless, I have been unpleasantly surprised at the degree to which the children of Boomers — the Millennials — have abandoned “organized religion.” I’ve written before of how the Pew Foundation has discovered that the percentage of Millennials currently attending church is half (that’s right — 50 percent!) of the percentage of Boomers attending church when they were younger adults.

So what is going on?

Factors contributing to this dramatic decline in church participation can be divided into trends that are largely out of our control as congregational leaders, and those factors which can be impacted by how we do ministry.



## *In Pursuit of the Great Commission*

**Pastor Don Brandt**

Factors that we can only wring our hands about include:

1. Our North American culture continues to become less religious and increasingly secular. This ongoing trend, which arguably began back in the 1960s, will probably continue barring a national crisis and/or a nationwide spiritual awakening.
2. North Americans continue to grow in their mistrust of institutions of all kinds — whether political, corporate or religious.
3. The science-faith debate has resulted in a secular stereotype of Christians, in general, as non-intellectual, uneducated “fundamentalists.”
4. The digital age means an increasing percentage of younger adults who have no formal connection to any face-to-face, physical community. Their “relationships” are, increasingly, online.
5. And related to our more individualized, digital age, Millennials are much less homogenous than their parents’ generation. Just two examples of this are a lack of consensus regarding a specific, preferred music style and a far greater variety of tastes when it comes to television programs. In other words, there are few (if any) “one-size-fits-all” ministry options for this generation.

And now for the factors that are more specific to how we do ministry, and where some churches might be able to effectively respond:

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1. A higher percentage of Millennials are choosing to live in metropolitan/urban settings rather than in the suburbs. Many of our more traditional models for outreach have assumed a suburban context.

Unfortunately, there are a limited number of established urban congregations that are vital and financially stable enough to effectively reach out to these urban younger adults.

2. More Millennials are choosing to remain single or, if married, to not have children. Too few congregations are equipped or motivated to effectively minister to either young couples without children or single young adults.

3. Fewer Millennials are pursuing home ownership compared to their Boomer parents. Part of this is driven by financial realities when it comes to qualifying for a home loan. However, part of this trend is also driven by personal preference. And again, many of our traditional models for congregational ministries assume a local community where there is the long-term stability of homeowners who will not be as likely to relocate as renters.

Enough of the challenges. What, if anything, can the local congregation do to reach this generation? And let's acknowledge, up front, that many of you belong to congregations where you are simply not large enough to have a reasonable hope of organizing a peer group for this generation. However, if a new peer group is a possibility, go for it! This could be either a group for young couples, for young couples raising children, a young Moms (or Dads) group, a peer group for singles, or a group for single Moms.

But now for possible strategies regardless of your congregation's size:

1. Focus on your younger adults as individuals, making a concerted effort to welcome them into the life of your congregation.

2. Give them ministry leadership responsibilities where their gifts and talents are recognized and affirmed. For example consider up-front roles in your worship life, or positions on your council.

3. Younger adults of this generation are often open to mentoring relationships. This can be something pastors and lay leaders organize and encourage, whether mentoring individuals (same gender, of course) or mentoring young couples.

4. Millennials are especially interested in community service ministries. This is at least one programmatic ministry even small congregations can offer that might attract younger adults as volunteers.

5. Community ministries that serve children are an excellent outreach opportunity for reaching the parents of those kids. This is true of every generation, and is true whether those children are being raised by married parents or a single parent.

6. Check out other Christian churches in your community. What kind of ministries have they found to be effective in reaching this generation?

What about your congregation? Are you doing all you can to connect with younger generations? There's nothing easy about this, but we have always been called to reach future/younger generations, regardless of the difficulties and challenges involved.

## **Ratification process**

The 2014 NALC Convocation approved an amendment to the NALC constitution which would allow more flexibility in scheduling the annual NALC Convocation.

For it to go into effect, the amendment must be ratified by a two-thirds majority of NALC congregations voting in the ratification process.

Congregations are encouraged to consider the decision at their next congregational meeting or to schedule a special meeting for this purpose. The deadline for congregations to vote on ratification is Jan. 25, 2015.

Congregations were sent information about the ratification process. The information is also available online at [www.thenalc.org](http://www.thenalc.org) (under the 2014 Convocation tab).



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### **Missions**

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### **Ministry & Ecumenism**

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