
BHO Resource Coordinator Newsletter

Inform, Inspire, Equip

Hello there! This is your Resource Coordinator from your Board for Home Outreach. Before we kick this thing off I'd like to explain some things.

First, the definition of the word outreach. The word outreach can mean different things to people. Here is what I will **always** mean by outreach. OUTREACH = ACTIVITY FOR THE PURPOSE OF CREATING RELATIONSHIPS TO LEAD PEOPLE TO THE TRUTH OF CHRIST. (FYI, Your entire life is outreach)

Secondly, the purpose of this newsletter will always be three fold; to inform, inspire, and equip. In attempting to achieve this purpose I must forewarn you. Some of the content may be strange, unsettling, even non-confessional Lutheran. In your reception of this content I will have the same expectation that the Rev. Ed Schuppe has of his e-letter *Gleanings*. "You must read this with a spirit of discernment since not all the content will be from a Confessional Lutheran perspective. Absorb what is useful; discard what is not; and add what is uniquely your own."



I, Gregory Harstad Schmidt, being of sound mind and body (at least for the moment) take full responsibility for the content of this newsletter. Please contact me with any comments. Whew! I'm glad that's over. Let's have some fun!

For far too long I was in the rut of limiting the definition of an outreach resource to books, programs, money, websites, etc. But there are other outreach resources out there that we clergy often forget about and underutilize.

Synonyms for resource are *capability, ingenuity, initiative, source of wealth, supply of aid or support*. You may not have the physical resources of an established congregation. You may not have the financial resources of some congregations. But, YOU



are capable. YOU are ingenious. YOU are initiating. YOU are a source of great wealth, aid, and support. **II Timothy 1:7, For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.** And don't you forget it!!!! The theme of this inaugural edition of *The Newsletter* is,

“The Pastor, His Family, and His Circumstances as Resource.”

The Pastor as Resource

What do you like to do? Fish? Hunt? Quilt? Philately? What do you want to do? Volunteer? Start a Bible study? Study a language? Spelunker? You are an outreach resource in all that you do especially in your interests and avocations. It has been my experience that when I embrace my interests and avocations, powerful and amazing things happen in the wacky world of outreach.

I joined a gym- Your health and appearance are an important part of the outreach puzzle. When you look and feel healthy you have even more confidence to engage others. Confidence that you can channel into outreach. Also there is something about sweating next to someone for an hour that breaks down inhibitions and allows for frank discussion. I have given counsel and shared Law and Gospel with so many people in and outside of the gym.

Involved in my children's physical activities- I have coached and assist with practices and games in my children's soccer league. At practices and games I am often wearing a church shirt advertising the church or one of its activities (VBS, Germanfest, Ping Pong). I actively attend my daughter's dance recitals. Actively means engaging others. Conversation that leads to what I do, where I do it, and why I do it, etc.

Ping Pong- I love ping pong! I started what I call Ping Pong Fellowship at the church. We have six tables and we could use more. By word of mouth alone so many people are coming to the church, a church that many of them never even knew existed. They are seeing Bible verses on the walls. They are reading the tracts available in the building. They are meeting a pastor and church members who are excited they are there!

Shooting (guns)- The Second Amendment is an awesome thing. There are many people who think the same way. Shooting has been a great way to reach out to people, especially men (that too often forgotten and vital aspect of the congregation), with the Gospel.

I joined a bowling league- This could be the topic of its own newsletter. A guy from church asked me if I wanted to be on his team. I am not a bowler, but I went for it. It was fun!!!! Do you know how many other pastors were at the bowling alley on league

night? None. I was able to shatter so many stupid pastoral stereotypes and blow people's minds with simple biblical truth.

Teaching- I conduct five different Bible studies. One of them is at a local restaurant. One is at an assisted living facility. We've gotten to know the restaurant staff. All the customers see us with our Bibles, studying, learning, having a good time. At the ALF I've developed countless relationships with residents, their families, and the staff.

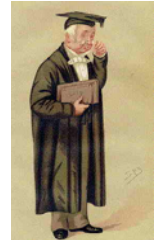
Drinking coffee- I have my Bible out at Starbucks every time I'm there. I'm there to "study". I'm am primarily there to connect with people for the purpose of outreach (and the dark roast).

Visiting members and prospects at their place of business- Impact people where they are they will come to where you are. I love seeing where people work. You can relate with them better. They think you're supper cool because you took the time to do it. And, they introduce you to their coworkers who also think its cool that a pastor would visit someone at their work.

Life is nonstop outreach. You never stop letting your light shine. What do you enjoy doing? And how can you naturally use it to reach out to the people you encounter? As long as it is not contrary to Scripture, if you want to do it, DO IT!!! Be a good steward of your your interests and avocations! Blessings will flow!! And don't feel guilty!!!



Excursus: (Excursus is a fancy word academics use to justify digression. Anyway, I digress.) Is it just me or is there a culture of guilt in the ELS? By this I mean if the pastor is doing anything other than sitting in his office working on his sermon, reading the Confessions, doing exegesis, and drinking coffee with little old ladies, he should really feel guilty. I've gotten that impression from some clergy and I often wonder what outreach is like in their churches. Actually I don't have to wonder, I read the Convention Report.



The Family as Resource

If the Lord has blessed you with a family your potential for outreach has multiplied big time. Your family's activities will put you in touch with way more people than you could reach alone. Here are some of the things the Schmidts have done and do.

Home School Association- An awesome opportunity to meet people, especially other Christians. There are not many Lutherans homeschoolers in my area. It has been a great opportunity for informing people about the Lutheran church and my particular congregation. Several curious people have come to church as a result.

Assisted Living Ministry- I am not known for many things, my beautiful voice being one of them. My wife and children add to the service in every way but especially vocally. And the old folks love seeing and hearing the children. You connect with the residents, staff, and residents' families. It's awesome! We serve two local ALF's with Word and praise.

Kids' activities- Our kids are in soccer and dance, along with 578 billion other kids. This puts you in touch with tons of people to reach out to. For years our church also has sponsored a youth soccer team. I always make sure one of my children is on our sponsored team. I always interact with the families so they know I am the pastor of the church on the shirt.

Street clean up- Years ago my wife and I got sick of walking past the trash on our neighborhood streets. We decided to adopt a stretch of road in our neighborhood. Several times a week the Schmidt family (all seven of us) is seen by the community picking up trash. It is not uncommon for someone to ask us if we're the walking/trash family. I will do my best to turn it into a conversation about God's creation and how we want to keep it pretty, and then to me being the pastor of Our Savior Lutheran Church, etc., etc., etc.



Socialize- because of all these activities we have developed relationships with lots of people. This has led to inviting people over to the house for barbecues, play dates, etc. It has led to being invited to people's homes as well.

Coed soccer team- My wife and I played on a coed soccer team. We connected with a ton of people especially from other countries. It was radical.

Simply showing up to, and engaging in activities is simply lame. As a Christian you have been called to a greater purpose, to reach out to a dying world with Christ. Viewing all my families activities as outreach opportunities has changed my life (and made some of the things I don't totally dig a lot more enjoyable and exciting).

Circumstances as Resource

By circumstances I mean physical plant. Do you have a church building? Do you have a fellowship hall? Do you have a preschool? If you do praise the Lord! If you don't, praise the Lord!!

Pastors without a church building

Use other people's stuff- Conduct Bible studies at local restaurants. Use parks or rec centers for VBS's and special programs.

Sponsor a team- Get your name out there!! For a small fee you can have the name of your church on twenty kids' jerseys for hundreds of people to see for months. Attend the games and engage the spectators.

Assisted Living Centers- Start a Bible study or worship service at an Assisted Living Facility. There is a growing segment of people who need to hear the Word and they are being forgotten. You can help them, it won't cost you a dime in overhead, and you meet a ton of people!

Pastors with building(s)

First of all do the same things as a pastor without a building. Secondly when your buildings are not being used for church related activities, what is going on at your church? If it is going unused you are blowing a great opportunity to reach out to your community. What organizations or groups could you allow to use your facility for the purpose of outreach?

At my church the following groups have used or use our facility during the week,
Daughters of the American Revolution
Business Networking International
Classical Conversations
Paradise Coastmen
Numerous property management groups hold meetings
Farmer's Market

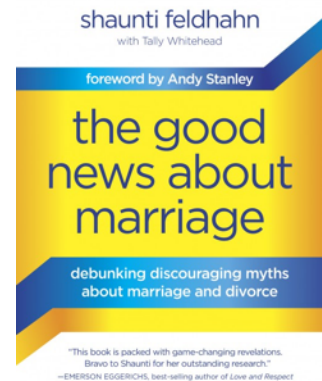
All of these people know who I am and what the church stands for because I regularly connect with all of these groups. By opening up your facility you get to develop relationships with many groups of people who wouldn't think of coming to a conservative Lutheran church.

Recommended Read

The bad news is that one of the biggest factors in the decline of the church is the state of marriages within our churches. The good news is that a lot of what we've been told and believe to be true about marriage is a myth. The Good News About Marriage is a book that will give you great ammunition for counseling, conversation, sermonizing, and outreach!

Did you know,

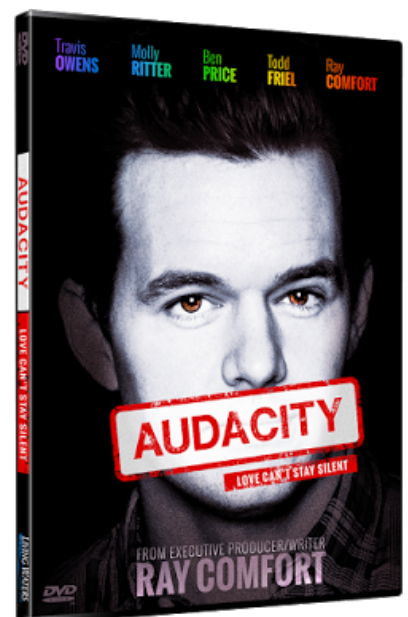
1. The actual divorce rate has never been close to 50%. It is significantly lower and has been declining over the last thirty years.
2. Most marriages aren't just so-so. The vast majority are happy.
3. The rate of divorce in the church is not the same as among the non-churchgoing population. It too is significantly lower.
4. Remarriages aren't doomed. A significant majority survive and thrive.



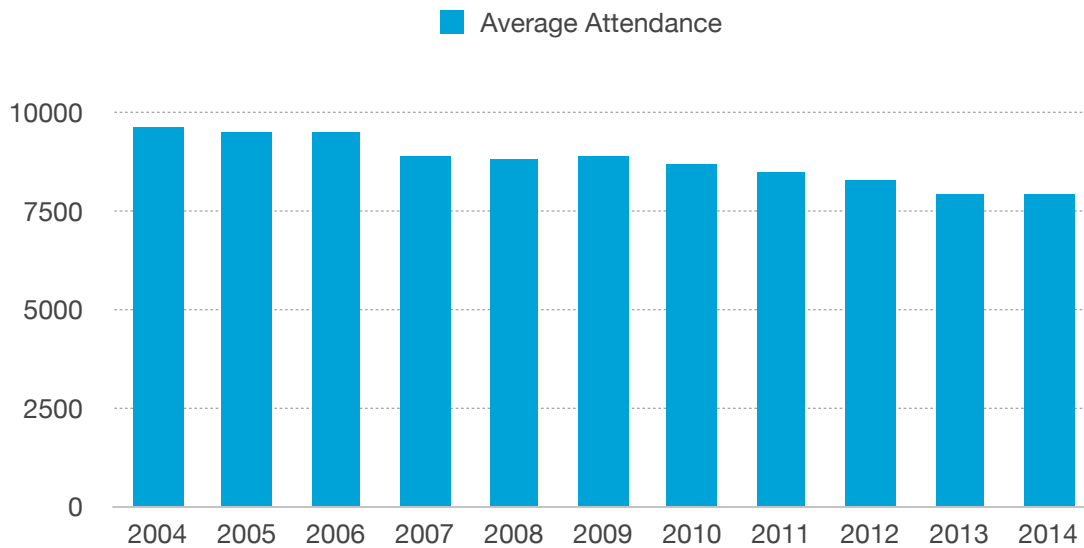
Recommended Watch

Audacity is produced by Ray Comfort and Living Waters Ministries. It's hard to call it a movie because it's kind of a documentary. It's hard to call it a documentary because it's kind of a movie. But what I can certainly call it is excellent. Appropriate for youth groups and adults, it is a great Law and Gospel presentation directed toward homosexuals and advocates of homosexuality.

I used it for Sunday Bible study and had a great time. We even purchased one hundred copies for the membership to watch and distribute.



Synodical Snapshot



“The decline of the ELS is so severe in human terms, as to make the continuing existence of the synod doubtful in its current form beyond twenty years.”

This is a quote taken from the Planning and Coordinating Committee’s report from the 2010 Synod Report p.141. The chart above is of the Synod’s average attendance. As you can see in ten years it has fallen by nearly 2,000. Why?

Don’t let the answer be because of a lack of outreach!!!!!!!!!!!!!! In I Timothy chapter 3 the qualities of overseer are described. The Holy Spirit says that, “He must have a good reputation with outsiders..”. What is your reputation with the outsiders in your community?

When you can manage your own personal talents, interests, family, and situation for THE PURPOSE OF CREATING RELATIONSHIPS TO LEAD PEOPLE TO THE TRUTH OF CHRIST, you will be able to manage your congregation’s talent’s and situation for THE PURPOSE OF CREATING RELATIONSHIPS TO LEAD PEOPLE TO THE TRUTH OF CHRIST.

Whew! I did it. My very first newsletter. NOW. I want to hear from you! I want to hear what you guys are doing for outreach. I want to know what you would like to see in future newsletters. Contact me at pastorschmidt@embarqmail.com, or 239-597-4091.