



The Voice of Renewal

NEWSLETTER OF LUTHERAN LAY RENEWAL OF AMERICA

*Renewing faith and promoting spiritual growth in individuals and congregations
with renewal weekends, retreats, workshops, and conferences*

Celebrating 51 years!

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July, A.D. 2023

LUTHERAN LAY RENEWAL WEEKEND IN IGANGA, UGANDA

“Greetings dear friends in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I am happy to share with you about the Lutheran Lay Renewal Weekend that was held at Trinity Lutheran Church in Iganga Municipal Council. It started in the afternoon of Saturday 17th June, and it ended the following day on Sunday 18th with a Divine Service. This Lutheran Lay Renewal Weekend was mostly attended by students at Triangle secondary school.



Students leading worship at the Renewal Weekend

On Saturday, the students were able to share their testimonies of how the Lord was using them to share their faith with others and how their prayers were being answered, especially those who were struggling to pay school fees. The main question posed was how they felt like to be Christian students living together with many others of a different faith. This was a great discussion in that they explored how the Lord was using every person and many committed themselves to continue manifesting the love of Jesus to fellow students in and out of school.



On Sunday we had a Divine Service which included an installation of Vicar Leonard Opeede. Leonard attended the first Lutheran Lay Renewal Conference at Magamaga in 2019. After the service, the vicar said it was because of Lutheran Lay Renewal that he developed interest of training to become a pastor, though it did not happen immediately. Leonard will be going back to the seminary in Kenya in the month of August, and he said his target is to spread Lutheranism in his region called Teso Subregion of Uganda, particularly Kumi, Serere and Bukedea districts.” - Rev. Peter Maganda, Dean, Eastern Deanery, Lutheran Church of Uganda



Dean Peter Maganda and Vicar Leonard Opeede with many of the participants of the Renewal Weekend

Board Election

Our board of directors will be meeting on August 27 and on the agenda will be the election of board members. Do you have a heart for spiritual renewal, evangelism and church growth? Perhaps you or someone you know might be interested in serving on our board. This is an exciting time at Lutheran Lay Renewal as the Lord continues to open new doors to our ministry in the U.S. and Africa. Contact our national office for details if you’re interested in being a part of this exciting ministry.

THINKING IN HEBREW VS THINKING IN GREEK

By Rev. Dave Luecke, Ph.D.

The Old Testament is written in Hebrew. The New Testament is in Greek. We are reading both in English or in one of the many languages of worldwide Christianity. Good translations are basic to understanding and spreading the Word of God.

But the issue is greater than finding comparable words. Hebrew and Greek are two different ways of thinking about truth, God, man, salvation, human nature. I once visited a Sunday worship service at a church where the regular preacher was on vacation. Substituting was an actor who recited the whole of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. Hearing instead of reading brought some new insights. But by the end, I realized there was no Gospel, as I understood it from Paul's letters. Grace is not at all obvious in Jesus' sermon. Why?

The explanation comes by recognizing the Hebrew mindset. When Pilate asked his famous question, "What is truth?" he was responding to Jesus' version of the truth. "I came into the world to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me." For Jesus, truth is the relationship with God. Pilate with his Greek mindset was not impressed.

For the Hebrew, truth is the relationship with God as understood in the community of his people. For the Greek, truth is an abstract description of reality. The Hebrews recognize that God rules everything, so a relationship with God determines how things turn out. For the Greeks, man rules nature through understanding the application of rational insights. Right conduct is the ultimate concern of the Hebrew mindset, right thinking that of the Greek. Hebrew thinking extols the moral virtues as the substance and meaning of life. The Greek subordinates them to intellectual virtues.

A seminary friend of mine spent his career as a missionary among Muslims in India. He was criticized for proposing that we feature the One Hebrew God more than the three Persons highlighted in our Greek-influenced Christian creeds. It makes sense to first find common ground before advancing to God becoming a man in Jesus Christ.

What do these contrasts mean for interpreting the New Testament today? Recognize that the European mindset is definitely shaped by Greek thinking. For communicating biblical truth today, Paul is a better source than Jesus, who was speaking to a different kind of audience with a mindset poorly understood today.

Go to Jesus and the four Gospels to better grasp truth as the right relationship with God and wrong relationships as whatever departs from his will. Sins can be listed, as in the Ten Commandments. Go to Paul today to recognize the underlying condition of sinful nature more so than sins. This is important for ministry, especially with people who do not understand a covenant relationship with God but do recognize that their natural human condition does not bring a fulfilling life.

Go to Jesus to understand mercy as forgiving transgressions and restoring relationships. Go to Paul to understand grace as more than the gift of mercy but also the gifts of the Spirit in empowering better living of love, joy, and peace now.

Go to Jesus for a strong sense of living in community as the separated, covenant people of God. Go to Paul to offer fellowships of the Spirit open to all who are followers of Christ. Do you want to minister more effectively today? Go with Paul and his Spirit-shaped, grace-focused perspective on life with God.

Jesus taught by telling specific stories. Paul solved problems by constructing abstract generalizations. Both were proclaiming biblical truths. Today there is a growing awareness that stories communicate better than doctrine. That is why both Jesus and Paul are necessary for bringing Bible truths to those who don't already know them.

OUR PARTNERS IN AFRICA NEED OUR FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The financial needs of our partners in Africa are great, as Uganda and Rwanda are two of the 25 poorest countries in the world. Below is a wish list of current financial needs. Would you or your congregation be willing to help?

Lutheran Church of Uganda

\$100 will pay the salary of a nurse at Niagobya Medical Clinic for one month.

\$276 will pay the salaries of 6 teachers at a Lutheran primary school for one month

\$1,500 will buy a motorcycle for a pastor or vicar. At least three motorcycles are needed. Many pastors and vicars serving rural congregations must walk long distances every week to minister to their congregations.

Anglican Diocese of Northwest Ankole, Uganda

\$90 per year will pay for school fees, scholastic materials, a uniform and school bag for a child in a rural school.

\$211 per year will pay for school fees, scholastic materials, a uniform and a school bag for a student in a rural secondary school. Funds also are needed to support the growing youth ministry of the diocese.

Reformed Lutheran Church of Rwanda

Funds are needed for the Lay Leaders Training Program, which is training men, women and youth in Biblical studies, and to be leaders in their congregations. The RLCR also is training Lutheran adults to be deacons and deaconesses.

The Marianne Foundation – Ibanda, Uganda

Funds are needed to support all of the programs to train young women in job and life skills.

Triangular Communities – Iganga, Uganda

Vision: To see all children and girls enter adulthood with holistic skills and abilities necessary to contribute effectively to the development of Uganda.

One hundred percent of any donations to Lutheran Lay Renewal will go to the need designated by the donor or, if you prefer to work directly with a church or ministry in Africa, please contact our office and we will put you in touch with church leaders there.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- Healing for Elaine Schomaker, Julie, Dan and Kathie Klueg
- For the Lord's blessings on our ministry in the U.S., Uganda and Rwanda, and for the financial resources that are needed for this ministry

Lutheran Lay Renewal of America is eligible to receive Choice Dollars Grant Funds from the Thrivent Financial Choice Dollars program. We are grateful to Thrivent Financial, and those individuals who designate their Choice Dollars to us, for their support of LLRA and its ministry!

LLRA is a 501 (c) (3) tax exempt organization and depends on contributions from churches and individuals who have benefited from our ministry to help us continue to bring this ministry to more and more congregations all across America - and now also in Uganda and Rwanda!

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