

FORUM LETTER

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4 “The trinitarian paradigm is rooted and grounded in the gospel of our crucified and risen Lord Jesus Christ. The biblical narrative culminates in the gospel’s identification of God in the entire story of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection. God is never more divine than when he becomes human, never more true to his inner being than when he loves the world in the gift of his own beloved Son Jesus Christ. Henceforth, we will not look for nonanthropomorphic ways of speaking of God. We will follow the logic of God incarnate in the person of Jesus as the linchpin of our answer to the quest for authority. God has a proper name; God’s name is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and whoever calls upon some other name will have to be satisfied with the blessings that flow from some other deity than the God of the gospel of Jesus Christ.” – Carl E. Braaten, *Mother Church: Ecclesiology and Ecumenism* (Fortress Press, 1998)

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Non-cooperation in externals



To most in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America who pay attention to such things, the constant angst in the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod about “cooperation in externals” is a puzzling thing. ELCA Lutherans are genetically predisposed to ecumenical action. The ELCA, after all, has full communion agreements with several other denominations; it is an active member of the National and World Councils of Churches and the Lutheran World Federation. It cooperates right and left with all kinds of people, and not just in “externals” either.

The LCMS, on the other hand, cooperates only rather gingerly with other groups, even other Lutheran groups. The operating principle seems to be that if the cooperation has only to do with service and not with worship, education, or most anything else, then it may, under some carefully defined conditions, be acceptable. Thus the LCMS has remained a part of Lutheran Social Services and Lutheran World Relief, even though it meant working with the ELCA – with whom, need I say, they are not in doctrinal agreement.

Assessing cooperation

After the ELCA’s action last year to permit persons in homosexual relationships to serve in the ministry, there were folks in the LCMS who thought any cooperation with the ELCA, even in “externals,” ought to be axed. A motion to that effect was made at this year’s LCMS convention, and it garnered 43% of the votes. What finally did pass was a resolution initiating a study to propose

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“theological criteria for assessing cooperative endeavors, determining what would necessitate termination of such cooperative efforts.” The convention seemed to be saying that there is a point where they will no longer work with the ELCA in any capacity; that point hasn’t been reached yet, but they can see it from here.

The reaction in the ELCA was some collective head-shaking. If they can’t work with us on matters like this, the attitude ran, then the heck with it. It’s their problem. Let them go their own way.

Working together – not

All of that has been turned upside down by the ELCA’s decision to pull out of the Lutheran Malaria Initiative. LMI, ballyhooed with great enthusiasm at the ELCA’s 2009 Churchwide Assembly, was to be a joint effort by the two Lutheran churches and Lutheran World Relief, in cooperation with the United Nations Foundation (UNF), to fight malaria, the deadly disease that is still the scourge of many parts of Africa. This was an exciting moment – both because it was a cause that everyone could support (and thus a welcome contrast to more contentious issues being discussed), and because it was the first opportunity in a long time for the two large Lutheran church bodies in the U. S. to tackle something together in a high-profile way.

The proposal had developed when the United Nations Foundation, which had received a sizeable grant to fight malaria from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, approached LWR with the idea of mobilizing the “Lutheran constituency” in this cause. For several months representatives worked on a project that could be fully supported by both the ELCA and the LCMS. The ultimate plan anticipated the raising of \$75 million – with some \$30 million coming from LWR, \$25 million from ELCA, and \$20 million from LCMS. The UNF’s primary role would be a large grant to assist in the fundraising process.

All of this was presented to the churchwide assembly last summer. There were lots of fine words about how the LMI partners had agreed that we must do more than simplistic actions like handing out nets; how malaria is intertwined with poverty; how a malaria campaign would relate to existing programs to combat hunger and HIV/AIDS. The proposal before the assembly was to continue devel-

opment of LMI and to prepare resources, pilot projects, solicitation of donors, etc., all of it building toward a churchwide campaign to be approved by the 2011 assembly. Things were off and running, and with a good deal of excitement.

Financial free-fall

What was not anticipated was the financial crisis engendered by the churchwide assembly’s actions on sexuality. The ELCA has seen giving plummet in the last year, and while the official explanation about this generally mentions “the economy” as the first cause, nobody is really fooled by that. Mission support (funds congregations send to the ELCA through their synods) through August 31 of this year is down nearly 15%, ELCA treasurer Christina Jackson-Skelton told the bishops in October, and there is no end in sight to the crisis.

And so, in an announcement made September 30 by Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson, the ELCA has unilaterally “ended the partnership that was entitled ‘Lutheran Malaria Initiative.’” This decision shocked the ELCA’s partners in LMI; they tried mightily to find a way the ELCA might continue to participate, but to no avail.

There are many things puzzling about Bp. Hanson’s explanation, and about the decision itself. Start with the opening words: “The ELCA’s commitment to malaria work continues.” No one doubted this, of course, until the announcement that the ELCA was pulling out of LMI. He goes on to say that “the ELCA, encouraged by the vote of the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, has developed a strategy to join the global movement to contain deaths from malaria in Africa by 2015.” It is rather odd, first of all, that he seems to draw a distinction between the churchwide assembly and “the ELCA.” I thought that the churchwide assembly *was* the ELCA, or, more precisely, that the Assembly is the official voice of the ELCA. The way he phrases this, it sounds like the ELCA is actually the executive staff at Higgins Road, who are happy to take advice from the churchwide assembly, but in the end make their own decisions.

Who’s in charge here?

He then notes that “some changes are being made to the structure of this project.” Apparently the ELCA’s “project” was not LMI at all, but some

more amorphous dream about malaria. Whether anyone at the ELCA headquarters ever thought much about malaria until approached by the UNF, I cannot say. They certainly didn't express the thought very forcefully.

"ELCA leadership has determined that a \$30 million campaign around malaria, which was to be tested in the current biennium, is not feasible at this time," the bishop tells us. Puzzling on a number of fronts. First, the proposal submitted to the church-wide assembly was for a \$25 million campaign. But the higher figure does sound less feasible, I suppose.

Second, one would think a "test" normally implies some sort of standards by which to evaluate feasibility. Has the test yielded some results? If so, what are they? If not, why is the test being stopped before the testing period is even half over?

And then one wonders just who "ELCA leadership" might be. This announcement came right before the Conference of Bishops meeting in October, and the Church Council meeting follows in November, so apparently those groups aren't the "ELCA leadership." Of course we already knew this about the bishops, who are only "advisory"; nearly every statement out of ELCA headquarters referring to the bishops states that explicitly. But if Higgins Road is going to renege on a commitment made by the churchwide assembly (which seems to me to have a pretty good claim itself on the phrase "ELCA leadership"), then they might at least be upfront about just who is making these decisions.

Spinmeister

But oddest of all is the announcement that the ELCA will continue with what it calls "the ELCA Malaria Campaign," with a goal of \$15 million. This, the bishop says, is to "right-size" the campaign for the "current realities" ("right-size" instead of "down-size" – get it?). He then, in a remarkable bit of spin, explains how much better this campaign will be financially – the bottom line being that the ELCA will be able to direct these funds as it chooses, and not be bothered by the opinions or restrictions of our (former) partners. One is left wondering: if the LMI provisions were so inefficient or onerous, why was the ELCA involved in it in the first place?

And speaking of spin, you've got to love the news release issued by the ELCA. It quotes Bp. Hanson: "This new, focused effort will assist the ELCA

to keep our commitments strong and allow us to bring health and hope to those affected by malaria in Africa." From that it derives a headline, which, in case you missed the implication, proclaims that the "ELCA *Strengthens* Malaria Work Through New, Focused Effort" (emphasis mine). This new go-it-alone campaign, you see, isn't really bad news, but it actually makes for a stronger program. Apparently this new one doesn't even have to be tested; it can just be imposed by fiat.

ELCA officials quickly took down the LMI page on their website, and replaced it with information about the ELCA Malaria Campaign. (No word yet as to whether we will we call this ELCAMC or just EMC.) This was done so quickly that an opening greeting from former bishop and now program coordinator Andrea DeGroot-Nesdahl begins with the remarkable statement, "When I first heard about the ELCA Malaria Campaign, I thought: 'Malaria? How can I make a difference about malaria?'" – remarkable because actually she had been working on malaria for more than a year before the "ELCA Malaria Campaign" was announced.

Dueling campaigns

What will happen now to LMI? Despite Bp. Hanson's decree that the ELCA has "ended the partnership," nothing of the sort has happened. LMI will go on apace, but without the ELCA's participation. The ELCA, often so frustrated by and even scornful of the LCMS doubts about "cooperation in externals," is now the one not cooperating. I was told by two different persons involved in LMI that the initiative will probably keep its total goal at \$75 million, with LCMS and LWR picking up the slack left by the ELCA's withdrawal. That will certainly make the ELCA look good on the world stage.

So it appears we will have dueling malaria campaigns. My own recommendation to ELCA individuals and congregations is that they strike a blow for continuing cooperation in externals by directing their benevolence funds to fight malaria to LMI through Lutheran World Relief – an agency, of course, in which the ELCA participates, so one can hardly be accused of dissing the ELCA by so doing. Frankly, at this moment in time, LWR seems a more responsible and financially healthy avenue for our mission dollars.

– by Richard O. Johnson, editor

In search of the “Great Tradition”

by Thomas D. Pearson



Wandering through the various meetings and events held in Hilliard and Grove City, Ohio during the week of August 23-27 [see *Forum Letter*, October, 2010], a visitor might well have been struck by the repeated invocation of “the Great Tradition” from invited speakers and eager participants alike. Lutherans there clearly liked it, obviously wanted to be part of it, and evidently didn’t have a firm grasp of what it means.

Not that it’s easy to find out what it means. “The Great Tradition” is a concept with a long pedigree within the western Christian community. Its recent renaissance as an ecclesial slogan, however, appears to stem from Pope John Paul II’s use of the specific term in his 1998 encyclical, *Fides et ratio*. A year earlier, a series of essays published under the title *Reclaiming the Great Tradition* (edited by James S. Cutsinger, InterVarsity Press, 1997) considered the erosion of the common ground between evangelicals, Catholics and Orthodox, with that common ground vaguely identified as “The Great Tradition.” But defining precisely what constitutes this Great Tradition has proven elusive for groups that want to position themselves firmly within it.

What makes the Tradition Great

This might be particularly true of the newly-constituted Seven Marks Society. Allegiance to the concept of the Great Tradition was pledged on a regular basis during the Society’s brief convocation in Hilliard, as the members struggled to articulate how to be a “voice” and a “presence” within North American Lutheranism advocating for the precepts and practices embedded in that Tradition. Indeed, the Society calls itself “A Fellowship of the Great Tradition,” and its website (<http://sevenmarks.org>), even offers a short blurb on what, from a Lutheran perspective, the Great Tradition truly is.

And therein lies the problem. The Society’s website description of the Great Tradition identifies it with the Gospel preached in its purity and Sacraments rightly administered; in short, the Society’s statement reduces the Great Tradition to Article VII of the Augsburg Confession. But what makes the Great Tradition in fact “great” is its vast embrace of

widely diverse doctrinal claims, exegetical methods and ecclesiastical practices, some of which are distinctively theological in character, but many of which are not.

In fact, Lutherans historically have actually shunned some of these elements of the Great Tradition. Does the Seven Marks Society intend to celebrate a minimalist version of the Great Tradition, selecting only those expressions congruent with historic Lutheranism? Or does the Society wish to re-situate Lutheranism within the fullness of that Tradition, reacquainting us with long-neglected themes integral to western Christianity?

What’s going on here?

For example: the Great Tradition has an ecclesiology, one that seems to generate confusion among the members of the Society. They explicitly claim that they are not a “church body,” nor are they a ministerium. But they want to have a Bishop (or a Bishop-Protector). They plan to produce resources related to stewardship, evangelism, theological education, pastoral and bishop formation, and for the training of deacons. But the Great Tradition does not recognize entities that abjure being a church but want a bishop of their own anyway, nor intentional non-church bodies that seek to fulfill the needs of a church. So what exactly is going on here?

Another example: the Great Tradition of western Christianity has crafted a rich and distinctive moral theology, rooted in (but not limited to) differing accounts of natural law, that emphasize human flourishing and the need for good works as a theological requirement. Lutherans have always been profoundly uneasy about locating this moral emphasis within a specifically theological confession. For this reason, Lutherans have rarely done much notable work in moral theology. But the Great Tradition is rife with it. What to do? Lutherans have typically emphasized a methodology that starts with justification and derives all other theological desiderata from that starting point. It is notoriously difficult, however, to derive moral imperatives from the doctrine of justification. Do Lutherans now abandon their theological distinctives in order to reclaim a

position on moral theology within the Great Tradition?

Is compromise required?

These are but two instances of a broader problem, one not unique to the Seven Marks Society. Just how would we describe the relationship of orthodox confessional Lutheranism to the wider theological affirmations and practices of the Great Tradition? Should we even attempt to do so? Is it indeed possible to summarize adequately what the Great Tradition represents in all of its depth and reach? It will not do for Lutherans simply to point to the ecumenical creeds we share with the rest of western Christianity; there's nothing in the creeds that define

an ecclesiology or moral theology. A creed is not a breviary of the Great Tradition.

The question with which the Seven Marks Society should be wrestling – along with all Lutherans who wonder what we are about in the early years of the twenty-first century – is two-fold. What does the Great Tradition require of us, in the scope of doctrine and practice, in order to fully claim and participate in that Tradition? And what theological compromises are Lutherans willing to make in order to claim a part in that Great Tradition?

Thomas D. Pearson is Associate Professor of Philosophy at the University of Texas-Pan American in Edinburg, Texas. This is his first contribution to Forum Letter.

Orthodoxy is not schismatic

by Ken Kimball



Editor's note: Last month we published remarks made by Pr. Erma Wolf at the constituting convention of the North American Lutheran Church, explaining why she felt she could not participate in the formation of the new church body. We asked Pr. Ken Kimball, who is among those founding the NALC, to respond.

I respectfully disagree with my Lutheran CORE colleague, Pr. Erma Wolf. The formation of the North American Lutheran Church is not schismatic; the decisions and actions by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America over the last year are schismatic and sectarian. By contrast with the ELCA's deliberate break with the church catholic, the formation of the NALC is an orthodox effort to remain within the church catholic.

I serve a two point rural parish in the hills of northeast Iowa – Old East and Old West Paint Creek Lutheran congregations – both with a Church of Norway heritage, a high view of the normative authority of Scripture, the creeds, and the Lutheran Confessions, a deep respect for (and therefore high expectations of) the pastoral office, and an enduring commitment to the historic liturgy of the Church.

We have been in the forefront of resistance and reform with Call to Faithfulness (our reform group in NE Iowa), Solid Rock, and Lutheran CORE. Before the events of the past year, we had hoped

that a safe and supportive place for traditional congregations and pastors might still be found in the ELCA or at least in the Northeast Iowa Synod. Sadly, despite our best efforts, that was not to be.

Remaining with the church catholic

It is already difficult for traditional ELCA congregations to find and call faithful traditional pastors; the day is not far off when "difficult" may become "nearly impossible." Instead of remaining hostage to the ELCA's revisionist-dominated seminaries and synod bishops and candidacy committees, we will work with our NALC partners to support the training and preparation of orthodox pastors.

Instead of spending so much energy and time resisting and opposing our national church body, we are ready to be part of a church body that is aligned with and supports our heritage and commitments as Lutheran churches; in departing the ELCA and joining the NALC, Old East and Old West are choosing to remain within the church catholic.

Ken Kimball is pastor of Old West Paint Creek Lutheran Church in Waukon, IA, and Old East Paint Creek Lutheran Church in Waterville, IA. Both congregations are in the process of withdrawing from the ELCA and the Northeast Iowa Synod.

Ex libris forum



Christmas is coming, and *Forum Letter* would be happy to help you pad your Christmas list with a few good books:

■ Donald Heinz, *Christmas: Festival of Incarnation* (Fortress, 2010; ISBN 978-0800697334). If you are one of the many pastors always looking for something that might offer a new approach to Christmas, you might try this one. Heinz is a retired ELCA pastor who taught at a state college. He's written a "thick description" of Christmas as religious and cultural event, considering how music, art, literature, and much more have helped to define the holy day/holiday in contemporary America. Rather than grouching about the "secularization of Christmas," Heinz tackles it head on, helping the reader to view and understand it in a more sympathetic way.

■ Robert W. Jenson, *Canon and Creed* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2010; ISBN 978-0664230548). As modern commentary series go, WJK's *Interpretation* series is pretty good, offering a more theological approach that can be useful for pastors and teachers. Apparently having run out of individual books of the Bible to commentarize, they are branching out into some thematic offerings. This one by Jenson is a promising example. Anyone who teaches the Bible to laity eventually has to confront the question of the canon – and especially with the blossoming in recent years of books claiming to recover the "lost" Christianity of early non-canonical writings. Jenson offers a helpful reflection on the interplay between canon and creed (and, though it isn't in the title, teaching authority in the church).

■ David L. Stubbs, *Numbers* (Brazos, 2009, ISBN 978-1587431401). The *Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible* is an ongoing series that offers Biblical commentaries written by theologians (including several Lutherans) rather than Biblical scholars. This one, by Presbyterian David Stubbs, is an interesting example. Numbers is not very high on the list of favorite Lutheran books (or any other denominational list, probably), and yet Stubbs presents it as a text with considerable relevance "in the midst of contemporary discussions about the nature and mission of the church."

■ James R. Payton, Jr., *Getting the Reformation Wrong: Correcting Some Misunderstandings* (IVP Academic, 2010; ISBN 978-0830838806). Despite the importance of the Reformation to modern Christians, chances are pretty good that even most pastors don't keep up with current scholarship on the period. We know what we were taught in seminary, and that's good enough. It's not good enough, though, and Payton argues that many, even in the churches, misunderstand the Reformation in at least a dozen ways. He devotes a chapter to each, drawing on recent scholarship to help the reader re-evaluate "what we were taught" in college or seminary.

■ Paul R. Hinlicky, *Preaching God's Word according to Luther's Doctrine in America Today* (ALPB Books, 2010; ISBN 978-1892921147). Doctrinal preaching is a lost art in many churches today, and that is one reason that we are in such a doctrinal mess. Hinlicky is a professor at Roanoke College and a long-time friend of the American Lutheran Publicity Bureau. The book consists of actual sermons he has preached (most of them as part of a series on Lutheran doctrine), and they are good examples of how robust doctrinal preaching can both instruct and captivate.

■ William H. Willimon, *The Collected Sermons of William H. Willimon* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2010; ISBN 978-0664234461). Doctrinal sermons these are not, but Willimon, former Dean of the Chapel at Duke and now a United Methodist bishop, does know how to tell a good story, and how to make it work in the context of preaching. It would be a rare preacher who couldn't find something helpful here – helpful for preaching, perhaps, but if not, then simply for inspiration.

■ Carl E. Braaten, *Because of Christ: Memoirs of a Lutheran Pastor-Theologian* (Eerdmans, 2010; ISBN 978-0802864710). This little book is Braaten's reflection on his own life and work – not exactly an autobiography, though it is organized chronologically. But it is a fascinating opportunity to hear about the people, the experiences and the theological movements that have influenced him over the course of his lifetime. He is, as one would expect, usually forthright about all these things, though there are times one

may find oneself thinking, "Oh come on, tell the rest of the story." An easy read, and fascinating.

■ Lauralee Farrer and Clayton J. Schmit, *Praying the Hours in Ordinary Life* (Cascade Books, 2010; ISBN 978-1608992782). There is a resurgence of interest in the daily office in recent years. It is not a complicated way to pray, and yet some may find the struc-

ture unfamiliar or intimidating. This book is a lovely introduction to the ancient practice—simple enough for a beginner, and yet with profound insights even for those who already pray the office with some regularity. The book is part of a series entitled *Art for Faith's Sake*, edited by co-author Clay Schmit, an ELCA pastor who teaches preaching and liturgy at Fuller Theological Seminary. —roj

Omnium gatherum



The liturgy of the future • This is kind of like shooting fish in a barrel, but I just have to tell you about the Liturgy Project of the Center for Progressive Christianity. "Where can churches find liturgical resources with creative, engaging alternatives to patriarchal, supernatural language and symbolism?" their web site asks. My initial response was "The *ELW*," but I guess that's not edgy enough for the progressives. Their new project will be directed by Dr. Polly Moore, who, they tell us, "has remarkable credentials for the task. She has a PhD in mathematics, was the vice president of Genentech Inc, a major biotech firm, and is a recent MDiv graduate of Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley. She is a candidate for ordination in the United Church of Christ." Would it be just too vicious of me to opine that the math degree is probably the most helpful of the remarkable credentials listed? In case you're not familiar with this group—"movement," they call themselves—they "started by deconstructing the dominant paradigm of the faith in America, taking apart its patriarchy, literalism, and chauvinism." Now they have "begun to construct a new model of Christianity that is compatible with deep spirituality, religious pluralism, sound science, good common sense, compassion for the needs of humanity, inclusion of all people, and respect for the environment." They do have a web site, but I've run out of room to list it.

Welcome to church college • First it was the celebrated "condom tree" at Cal Lutheran, and now this: At the freshman orientation at Gustavus Adolphus College, there were some skits presented that were, in the eyes of some, more than a bit inappropriate for such an event at such a place. They seemed not

just to advise students to respect others and to be responsible in their sexual lives, but to encourage them to treat their college years as a time of free experimentation. One skit explained, for example, how to signal to your roommate that you're in the midst of a sexual encounter in your room, so he or she should stay out. A student who was present caught it all on video, and the video was posted on YouTube, which, one would imagine, probably led to some interesting conversations among administrators and trustees. The college president apparently got enough inquiries about it that he drafted a response letter which, among other things, described the affair as "light-hearted." I'm fairly tolerant about college kids and their antics, but I have to say that as a parent, I'm glad I don't have a 17-year-old being subjected to this light-hearted stuff as part of his or her college orientation. At a church-related college, one expects better.

Transfer, please • At the recent "Rite of Reception" in San Francisco, two of the seven folks "received onto the roster" of the ELCA were listed in the program as being "on leave from call." Normally someone "coming on the roster" (I just hate these terms) has to have a call first (whether they are recent seminary graduates, or coming from another denomination). So, good Lutheran that I am, I asked the question, "What does this mean?" The answer was that these people were being treated as if they were already on the ELCA roster but on leave from call, and they had moved into a new synod, available for call there, and thus were simply being "transferred" to that synod's roster. This process, I was told, is a "usual occurrence." Of course these folks were neither on leave from call nor moving

into a new synod. It all seems pretty strange to me, but then this is the ELCA, which seems to make things up as it goes along.

Editor's rant • No, not me. Daniel Lehman, editor of *The Lutheran*. Those were pretty defensive words in the October issue, explaining why the magazine will treat the new North American Lutheran Church like any other non-ELCA church body, which is to say rather casually. So the account of the founding of this group of exiles from the ELCA gets "a 203-word article . . . No more, no less." He also defends *The Lutheran's* decision not to accept CORE's advertisement for the theological conference prior to the constituting convention of the new church—a decision, of course, which readers of *The Lutheran* wouldn't even have known about if he hadn't brought it up (unless they are *Forum Letter* subscribers; *FL* covered it in the May 2010 issue, and even printed the rejected ad). He did graciously speak of "a noted ELCA pastor [who] blogged about his experience at the NALC gathering," and who "in every way . . . wrote as a churchman, looking for the best in what was said there." At first I thought he meant me, but then he gave examples of the "not so restrained" comments posted in response; it soon became apparent that he was actually talking about Russ Saltzman, my predecessor, whose thoughtful reflections were posted on firstthings.com. The responding comments there really were much less restrained than those on our Forum Online; or maybe the webmaster over at firstthings.com just has a higher tolerance for nasty remarks. Saltzman probably is more "noted" than I am, though I'm a little

surprised that someone at *The Lutheran* reads firstthings.com. But at least they might have mentioned that Saltzman and I roomed together in Columbus, so that must make me at least semi-noted.

Reformation medals • Our publisher, ALPB, is considering producing a series of "Martin Luther Medals" for church schools and congregations leading up to the 2017 Reformation quinquennial. They are trying to gauge if there is adequate interest to proceed with the project. To find out more and to express your interest, visit www.alpb.org.

Lost without a compass • I'm teaching an adult Bible study on Numbers this fall. An odd choice, perhaps, but I've been in one parish now for 26 years and my goal before I retire is to have taught every book of the Bible at least once. So I'm doing Numbers. I thought it might be interesting to look at the ELCA's "Book of Faith" leader's guide on Numbers. It has some interesting stuff in it (though four sessions on Numbers seems a tad stingy). I especially liked the little drawing it provided on the twelve tribes camping around the tabernacle. Then I compared it with the account in Numbers 2, and discovered that the drawing has the directions all messed up. The tribes on the east and west of the tabernacle are reversed. Or you could reverse the ones on the north and south and make it work, too. Better still, you could put the tribes on the east of the tabernacle in the usual "east" position to the right, instead of on top. I will resist the temptation to comment about Augsburg Fortress having lost their direction.

— roj

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