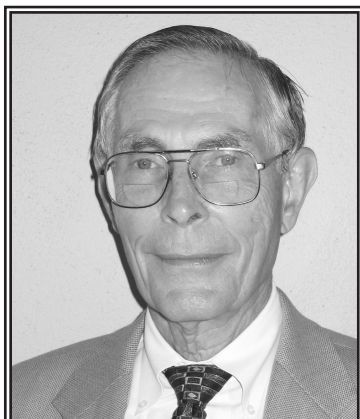


## DISTRICT NEWS

## Just A Few



## BURNING BUSH

Bruce Lieske  
Founder Lutherans in  
Jewish Evangelism

"A few men became followers of Paul and believed..." (Acts 17:34)

Have you ever heard of Paul's Letter to the Athenians? Probably not. What do we know about the church that Paul founded in Athens? Nothing. To our knowledge Paul failed in his efforts to plant a church

there. Ancient Athens was a world-famous center of learning and philosophy. Home to the philosophers Aristotle, Plato and Socrates, the statesman Pericles and the historian Herodotus. The Areopagus was an important judicial body comprised of elite Athenians. Athens was also a center of pagan worship, the most important temple being the Temple of the goddess Athena, the remains of which can be seen today in the Parthenon.

Acts 17 records Paul's preaching efforts in the synagogues, in the marketplace and at the Athenian Areopagus. Results? "A few men became followers of Paul and believed. Among them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, also a woman named Damaris, and a number of others."



Recently I had the privilege of preaching at one of our smaller LCMS churches in the

San Francisco Bay area. Founded in 1935, Grace Lutheran Church next year will celebrate its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Located in an affluent, liberal, educated community I took note of the bumper stickers on the cars in the neighborhood: Free Tibet, Impeach Bush, Stop the War, Vote No on Prop 8, Stop Global Warming.

As I walked around the neighborhood I noticed one small three-bedroom house that was for sale. Reduced from \$689,000 to \$649,000. It was a joy for me to share the good news of Jesus with the 30 people who attended the worship service. Beautiful, multi-ethnic folks who love the Lord and who have been placed in a Gospel-resistant community, just like Athens of old.

I have utmost respect for Pastor Olson and his congregation who minister to this community, their Gospel witness blocked by the idols of intellectual arrogance, affluence and other "unknown gods." C all

of which eventually will disappoint and fail. Does it seem discouraging and even useless to minister in such a community? Certainly!

The same is true of Jewish missions as most of you readers must realize. Does that mean we should give up and move on? No. God calls each one of us to different fields, some more responsive than others.

My former secretary now works with Wycliffe Bible Translators, deployed to a Muslim culture on an island in SE Asia, which must remain anonymous for security reasons. Among those who pray daily for Sarahjoy, for her safety, for her health and for wisdom to share the Gospel in a Gospel-resistant culture.

Think of the many brave Christians who speak of Jesus at risk to their lives in Iran, Sudan and other Muslim-dominated cultures. And pray for them.



Recently at my home church, Prince of Peace-Orlando, the Missions and Evangelism Committee wore T-shirts on Sunday morning with a large red cross, Romans 1:16, and the words "This shirt is illegal in 52 countries." C obtained from the Voice of the Martyrs organization. This organization was founded many years ago by a Jew, Richard Wurmbbrand. He became not only a Christian, but a Lutheran pastor because an uneducated Lutheran carpenter dared to speak the Gospel to a Gospel-resistant person.

So we, too, are compelled by the love of Christ to share God's love with all people, including those who are Gospel-resistant.

If any of our readers would like to be involved in our ministry, we do have volunteer "openings." We need people willing to organize Bible study groups, or to have people with existing groups utilize our Bible study materials. Email us at or call us at 877-457-5556 x220. □

## Biographical Data on District President, VP Candidates

Editor's note: Presented here is background information available at press time on those Pastors who were nominated and accepted that nomination to serve as District President or Vice President.

### On the Slate for Florida-Georgia President

**Rev. Dr. Victor J. Belton**, Atlanta, GA — Dr. Belton, 55, is pastor of Peace-Decatur, GA. During his 19 years in the Florida-Georgia District, he has served on the District Board of Directors, Georgia Vice President and as a Circuit Counselor. He is now on the LCMS Board of Directors. *Statement on vision and gifts for the Florida-Georgia District:* Empowered by the Holy Spirit, through the faithful stewardship of God's gifts, the Florida-Georgia District of the LCMS, in line with our ABLAZE goals, will seek and save the lost and lead in vitalization and revitalization of mission and ministry among confessional, orthodox Lutheran.



**Rev. Marc Kappel**, Eustis FL — Pastor Kappel, 39, serves Faith-Eustis, FL, as pastor, and has been in the Florida-Georgia District for nine years.



**Rev. Dr. David P. Mulder**, Winter Park FL — Dr. Mulder, 63, has been in the Florida-Georgia District for six years and serves as pastor of Ascension-Casselberry FL. He was previously the President of the LCMS' New England District. *Statement on vision and gifts for the Florida-Georgia District:* The District Convention

theme — "The Love Of Christ Urges Us On" — would work well as vision for the next three-six years. My gifts are primarily in preaching and peace-making. I also have ministry experience at the congregation (16 years), district (6 years) and synod level (8 years). If elected I would have four objectives: 1. Carry on the ministry required by the Synod handbook. 2. Strive to maintain a balance between ministry "in support of" and "on behalf of" the district workers (ordained, commissioned, contracted), congregations and schools. 3. Find ways to compliment the current district staff so that team ministry will flourish. 4. Be an encourager to all in the spirit of Barnabas.



**Rev. Gregory Walton**, Marietta GA — Pastor Walton, 47, has served in the District for 22 years and is now at Faith-Marietta, GA. He has served on the District Board of Directors, is now the Georgia VP, chaired the Task Force on Recruitment and as Circuit Counselor. *Statement on Vision and Gifts for the District:* I want to see people fall deeper in love with Jesus, grow in discipleship, be inspired to tell others of Jesus, and fulfill God's purpose for their life. We can continue to serve our people by encouraging and equipping them with Word and Sacrament ministry. However, we need to build on this and use the technology and resources available to us. We need to become all things to all men so that by all possible means we might save some and enlarge God's Kingdom. I honestly don't know how my gifts would serve the vision or

the District beyond a desire to serve Jesus, teach others about Him, with a willingness to serve Him however and wherever He deems it best.



**Rev. Stephen K. Wiperman**, Lake Worth FL — Pastor Wiperman, 56, has been in the District for three years, serving at Our Savior-Lake Worth, FL. He is currently on the Florida-Georgia Board of Directors and served in various capacities in other LCMS Districts, including 2<sup>nd</sup> VP in North Wisconsin. *Vision and gifts for the Florida-Georgia District:* I see the Florida-Georgia District as a fertile mission field blessed with: dynamic congregations faithfully celebrating God's grace in Word and deed; dedicated people boldly sharing the love of Christ with friends and neighbors near and far; devoted leaders yoked to Christ and His mission. I believe God has blessed me with His love in Christ and gifted me with the ability to lead others to love Him and live lives of committed, contagious faith. *Former pastorates:* Mission of Christ Lutheran Church,

### On the Slate for District Vice President (Florida)

**Rev. Dr. Kent Fuqua**, pastor of Hope Evangelical-Hudson FL



**Rev. C. Scott Gress**, Boynton Beach FL — Pastor Gress, 48, has been in the District for 20 years, including a year of vicarage. Now senior pastor of Trinity-Delray Beach, FL, he has served as Circuit Counselor, Circuit Outreach Counselor and on the

Stewardship Task Force. *Vision and gifts for the Florida-Georgia District:* I wholeheartedly agree with the current vision statement of the Florida-Georgia District. Practically speaking, I see a preferred future where all our churches are externally focused and where disciples intentionally make disciples who make disciples. It is where people sacrifice their own preferences for the sake of those who are not yet saved (1 Cor. 9:22). Others have shared that I have: strategic, analytical, future thinking, leadership and coaching gifts. Along with the gifts of many others, these gifts and my formal education and training can assist in keeping us focused on the vision, strategies and tactics that are necessary to accomplish what God desires, which is at its core of the fulfillment of the Great Commission.



**Rev. Dean Pfeffer**, Plant City FL — Pastor Pfeffer, 50, has been serving in the District of 15 years and is pastor of Hope-Plant City, FL. He is a member of the Board of Directors and has served as an LWML Zone Counselor. *Vision and gifts for the Florida-Georgia District:* Our mission statement at Hope is simple — Connecting People to Jesus. Our task as a District is not only to do that but to assist congregations in making those connections. Too many of our congregations are struggling to the point of barely existing. Through TCN and other programs we must revitalize our churches for the simple task of connecting people to Jesus. At the same time we must 'restore the joy of salvation' in

our churches. Our worship and faith life should reflect that joy to all who visit and worship. We must strive as a District in every way, shape, form to make our churches a place of joy where all are welcomed and made to feel a part of the mission — both locally and globally.

### On the Slate for District Vice President (Georgia)

**Rev. Dr. Victor J. Belton**, Atlanta GA (please see information above under President nominees)



**Rev. David C. Brighton**, Warner Robins GA — Pastor Brighton, 53, has served in the District for a decade and is pastor of Mt. Calvary-Warner Robins, GA. He has served as Circuit Counselor. *Vision and gifts for the Florida-Georgia District:* I fully support our District's vision to encourage our congregations to see themselves as mission outposts, with every member a missionary. We have been sent on the Lord's mission to seek and save the lost and we must continue to encourage our congregations to send workers out into the harvest field. I would work to keep this vision before our congregations, pastors and lay people at all times and help support any/all efforts to encourage, equip, motivate and send our people out to do the work they have been called to do.



**Rev. Gregory Walton**, Marietta GA (please see information above under President nominees) □