

WELS NATIONAL
CONFERENCE ON



**LUTHERAN
LEADERSHIP**



PLENARY: A COURAGEOUS CONVERSATION ON MODELING GOSPEL-CENTERED UNITY

Dr. Joan Prince
Rev. Dr. Kenneth Fisher

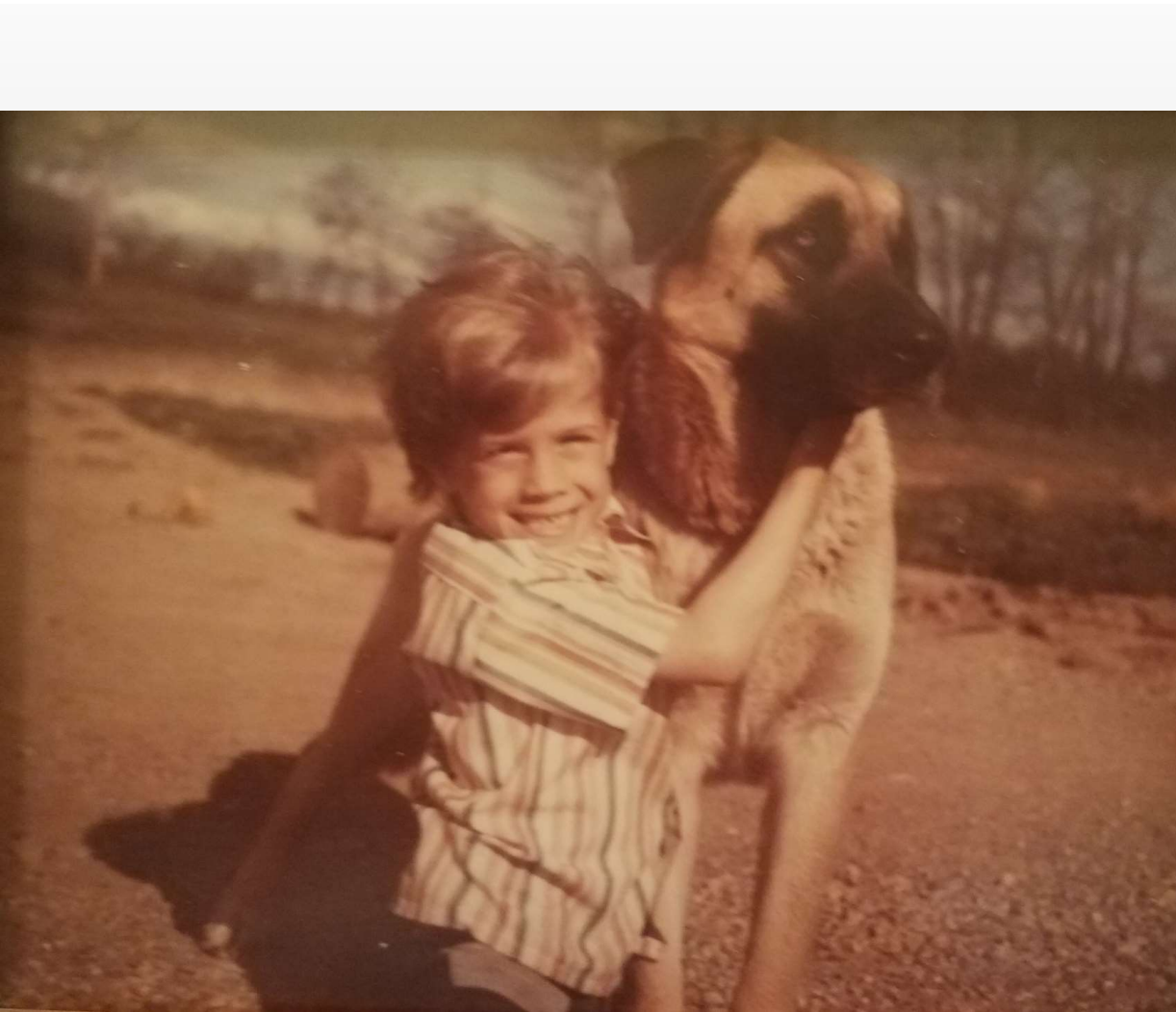


WELS NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
LUTHERAN LEADERSHIP











<i>Ethnic Grouping</i>	<i>Members (nearest hundred)</i>	<i>% of Total WELS Membership</i>
White	323,200	93.8%
Hispanic or Latino	4,800	1.4%
Black or African American	4,500	1.3%
American Indian or Alaska Native	3,800	1.1%
Two or more (Mixed Ethnic Background)	3,100	0.9%

Source: WELS Statistical Summary 2020

<i>Ethnic Grouping</i>	<i>WELS congregations reporting having at least one member from this ethnic grouping</i>	<i>WELS congregations with 50 or more members who belong to this ethnic grouping</i>	<i>That represents _____ % of total WELS members in that ethnic grouping</i>
White	1222	1028	98.7%
Hispanic or Latino	407	15	52.6%
Black or African American	437	16	41.0%
American Indian or Alaska Native	162	11	84.6%
Two or more (Mixed Ethnic Background)	270	8	27.4%
Asian	338	7	34.3%
Other	161	10	59.5%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	101	0	N/A

“WELS low diversity rate, combined with the fact that any diversity is concentrated in a small number of congregations, merits **honest discussion** and **prayer**. Let us consider how we might better reach out with the gospel to all people groups.”

--Rev. Jon Hein in the WELS Statistical Summary 2020

*“Therefore go and **make disciples of all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19-20)*

PART 1:
THE GREAT COMMISSION
CHALLENGES US TO BREAK
DOWN MAN-MADE BARRIERS

“...you will be my
witnesses **in Jerusalem,
and in all Judea and
Samaria**, and to the ends
of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)



*“A new command I give you:
Love one another. As I have loved
you, so you must **love one
another**. By this everyone will know
that you are my disciples, if you
love one another.” (John 13:34-35)*

“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us **so that the world may believe** that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—**so that** they may be brought to complete unity. Then the **world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.**

(John 17:21-23)

“There is a unique power and pleasure of God that in the midst of a diverse group of men and women by their own will walk, worship and work together”

--Dr. Mark DeYmaz

Author of “*Building a Healthy Multi-Ethnic Church*”

“Now those who had been scattered by the persecution that broke out when Stephen was killed traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, spreading the word **only among Jews**. Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and **began to speak to Greeks also**, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus.... So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. **The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.**”
(Acts 11:26)

MODERN DAY
MAN-MADE BARRIERS:
RACE



“From one man **he made all the nations**, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. **God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him**, though he is not far from any one of us.” (Act 17:26-27)

**“But what’s the
Synod’s position
on me?”**



MODERN DAY
MAN-MADE BARRIERS:
GEOGRAPHY



MODERN DAY
MAN-MADE BARRIERS:
CULTURE



ASSIMILATION VS. ACCOMMODATION

(become like us)

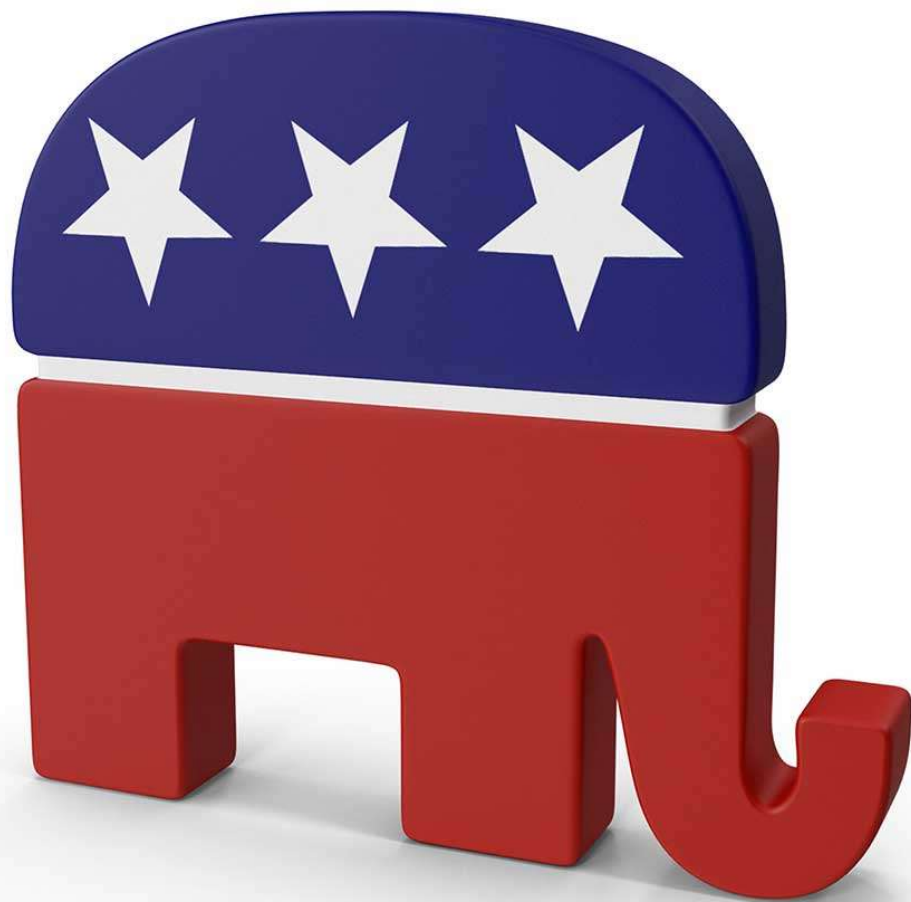
(what I can change to
become like you or make
you more comfortable)

MODERN DAY
MAN-MADE BARRIERS:
WORSHIP STYLE

*“Let them praise his name with dancing and
make music to him with timbrel and harp.”
(Psalm 149:3)*

*“Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet,
praise him with the harp and lyre,
praise him with timbrel and dancing,
praise him with the strings and pipe,
praise him with the clash of cymbals,
praise him with resounding cymbals.”
(Psalm 150:3-5)*

MODERN DAY
MAN-MADE BARRIERS:
POLITICS



PART 2:
CREATING A WELCOMING
GOSPEL-CENTERED
ENVIRONMENT IS A TEAM
EFFORT

Less than half of Christians (47%) think their church is inviting to visitors.

According to Barna Research 2022





WHAT WOULD YOU DO TO
MAKE PEOPLE WELCOME
AT YOUR HOME?



PART 3:
**DON'T LET WHERE YOU'RE
PLANTED KEEP YOU FROM
UNDERSTANDING AND LIVING
OUT GOSPEL-CENTERED UNITY**

*“There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for **all have sinned** and fall short of the glory of God, and **all are justified freely** by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus”*

(Romans 3:22-24)





*“After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from **every nation, tribe, people and language**, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb” (Revelation 7:9)*



WELS NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
LUTHERAN LEADERSHIP