

REPORT 42: LUTHERAN COUNCIL IN CANADA

The Lutheran Council in Canada (LCIC) is a cooperative agency relating to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) and Lutheran Church-Canada (LCC).

Many decades ago, the LCIC was a fairly extensive agency with offices on Hargrave Street in downtown Winnipeg. The Council maintained its own Division of Theological Studies, and LCC (at that time not an autonomous church, but a federation of Missouri Synod congregations in Canada) was strongly involved, as one of our own leading theologians, Dr. Norman Threinen, served as full-time director of that division. There were strong hopes that a three-way merger of nearly all Lutherans in Canada could be accomplished. That goal began to fade in the mid-1970's over theological disagreements on the inspiration and authority of Holy Scripture, as well as the ordination of women to the pastoral office.

In the 1980's, the current configuration of major Lutheran bodies in Canada began taking shape: The former Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada (ELCC) and the Lutheran Church in America Canada Section (LCA-CS) merged to form the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) in 1986. A brief time later, most Missouri Synod congregations in the country moved Lutheran Church-Canada (LCC) beyond its former status as a federation of districts into becoming a self-governing church body in 1988.

The two current member churches of the LCIC appoint representatives to the Council on the basis of their own criteria. The Council now meets very infrequently – generally once a year – and is focused on a limited number of issues:

- Lutheran chaplaincy to the Canadian Forces;
- Lutheran chaplaincy under the Correctional Service of Canada; and
- Scouts Canada.

Pastor Hans J. W. Borch (ELCIC, Elmira, ON) has been the Council's Lutheran representative to the Interfaith Committee on Canadian Military Chaplaincy since late 2008. His current appointment extends to the end of 2015. The Rev. Dr. Garry Dombrosky (LCC, Edmonton, AB) has long served on the Interfaith Committee for Chaplaincy to the Correctional Service of Canada, also with a current appointment until the end of 2015. Pastor Michael Diegel (ELCIC, Rosthern, SK) represents us with Scouts Canada.

The Council is comprised of six members, most of whom live in Winnipeg, to reduce travel and meeting costs. The ELCIC is represented by National Bishop Rev. Dr. Susan C. Johnson, Dr. Leon C. Gilbertson, and The Rev. Andre Lavergne. LCC representatives include President Robert Bugbee, Dwayne Cleave, and The Rev. Cameron Schnarr.

By common consent, I have served as Council President since 2009. Although we recognize that the scope of inter-Lutheran activity in Canada is far more limited than it was many years ago, I am grateful for the goodwill of the participating churches in helping to facilitate the projects where such cooperation is still very much needed.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Dr. Robert Bugbee, President
Lutheran Council in Canada

REPORT 43: TASK FORCE ON DISCIPLESHIP MATERIALS

Mandate

Responding to Synodical Resolution 08.2.05: **To Provide Biblically-Based Materials and Resources on Christian Discipleship**, a task force was struck with the assignment, "To provide materials to pastors and congregations of Lutheran Church-Canada that will address key needs in the area of Christian discipleship under supervision of the Synod President." (Approved Terms of Reference)

Task Force Membership (appointed by the President)

The first meeting of the Task Force was held in Winnipeg on February 17, 2012. The members of the Task Force are (alphabetically):

Daryl Becker (Alberta-British Columbia District)
Rev. Lawrence Flohr (East District)
Carol Haberstock (Alberta-British Columbia District)
Elton Harper (Central District) – Chairman
Kathy Kuhl (East District) Secretary
Rev. Jacob Quast (Central District)

Process

In order to carry out its assignment the Task Force sought to:

1. Study and identify key areas of Christian discipleship, particularly those which may reveal weakness and require strengthening in LCC congregations
2. (a) Generate materials and resources in these key areas, both through the personal efforts of task force members or by enlisting the assistance of other gifted people in the body of Christ
2. (b) Monitor initial publication feedback and adjust material as required.
3. Analyze any financial requirements of these efforts and consult on such questions with the treasurer of Synod
4. Suggest means and methods for placing the materials into the hands of LCC pastors and congregations and encouraging their ongoing use.

Since its February 17, 2012 meeting, the Task Force has met 15 times via Skype and twice in person, in Winnipeg.

As members of the Task Force researched different areas of Christian discipleship, it became evident that there are numerous Bible-based resources already available to the workers and members of our congregations. In fact, the question that arose most often among the members of the Task Force was one of Bible literacy. Are the congregational members of Lutheran Church – Canada taking time to study the Word?

As this question became central to the area of discipleship, it was the decision of the Task Force, in consultation with President Bugbee, to ask the people of LCC as directly as possible, what they are doing in the area of Bible study. What is working? What is not? And why?

In the Fall of 2012 a survey was designed and distributed in such a way as to get it into the hands of as many members as possible. Electronic survey format and hard copy surveys were available to collect data. Communication of the survey was done through LCC/District publications and Church Worker conferences in all three districts.

Results

In all, 505 surveys were received, 244 mailed in and 261 completed online.

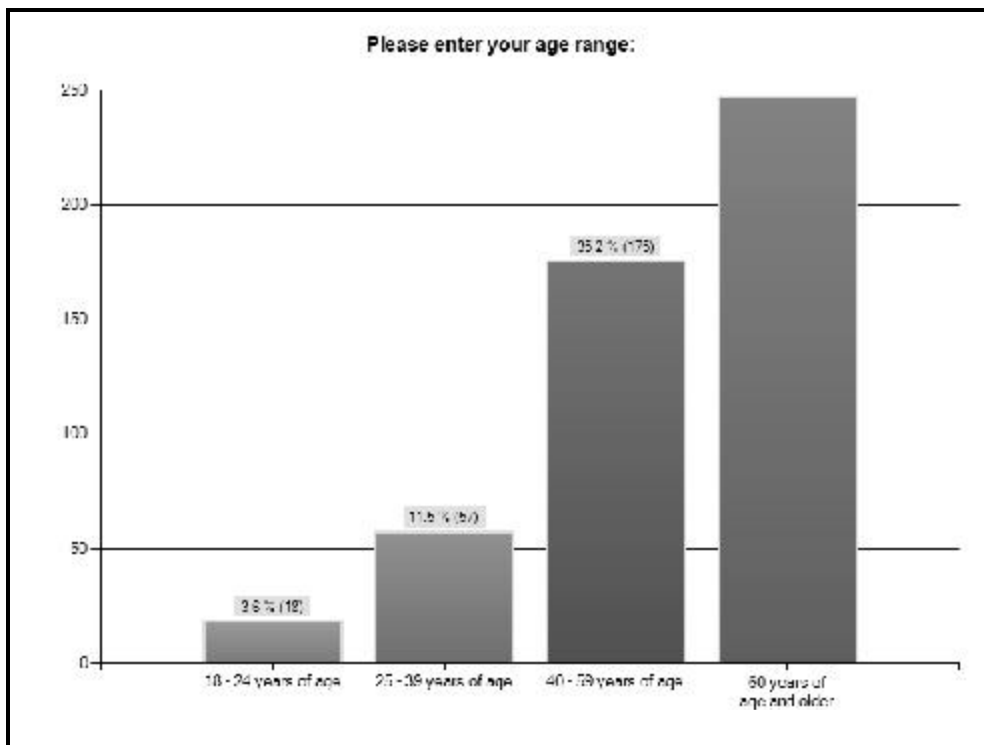
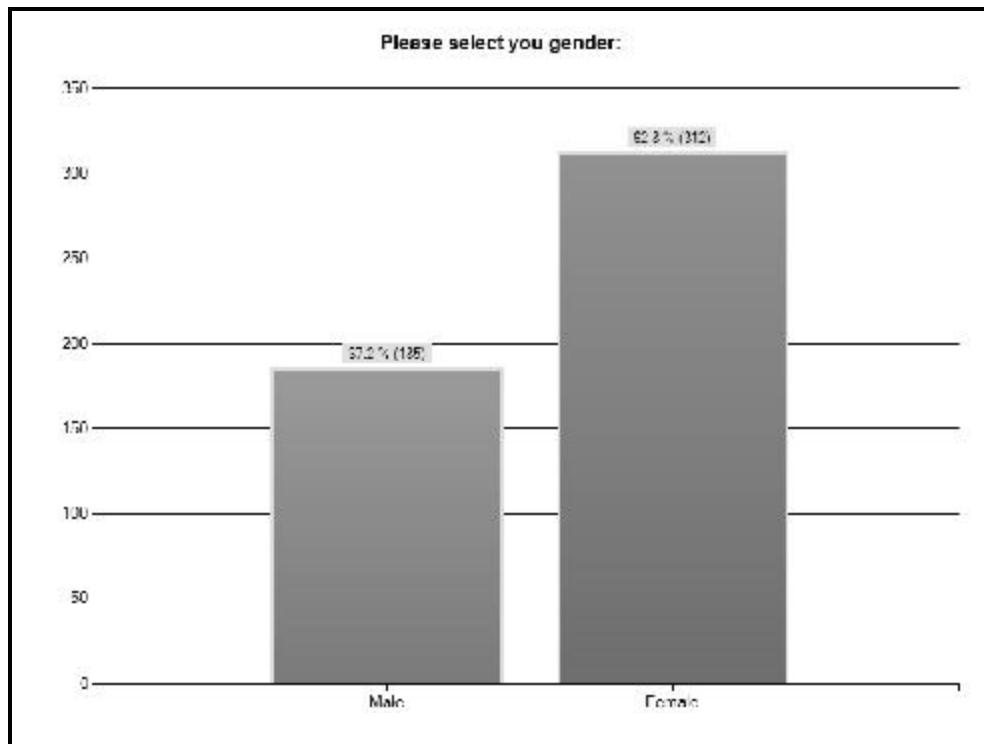
The survey identified many of the obstacles and **roadblocks that are facing God's children to keep us** from our Father. It also provided a great wealth of information to help us overcome and break through these obstacles.

- LCC congregational members are not in **God's Word on a daily basis**.
- In-depth Bible study is not common place in the home and regular church Bible studies are a struggle in many congregations.
- LCC congregational members use a vast array of materials from various Lutheran and non-Lutheran sources.
- Many confused daily devotional material as their daily in-depth Bible reading. Both are important but are different!
- There is interest in technological applications for in-depth Bible study material.
- Majority of respondents utilize the hard copy Bible as their tool for in-depth Bible study.

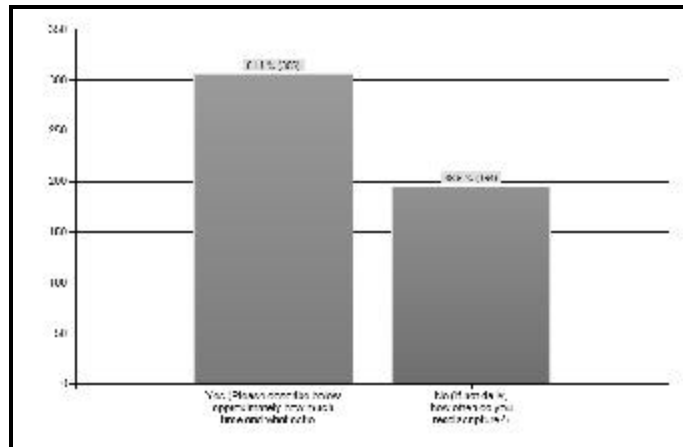
While the survey would not be considered statistical representation of LCC demographics, those who responded gave honest responses, often with explanations, that can give encouragement and direction to those desiring to be in the Word regularly, as well as leaders within our congregations in positions to encourage those entrusted to their care (1 Thess. 5:9-11).

Below are the graphical representations that account for the vast majority of responses to the survey questions along with applicable written comments.

Question 1 & 2: Gender and Age Group



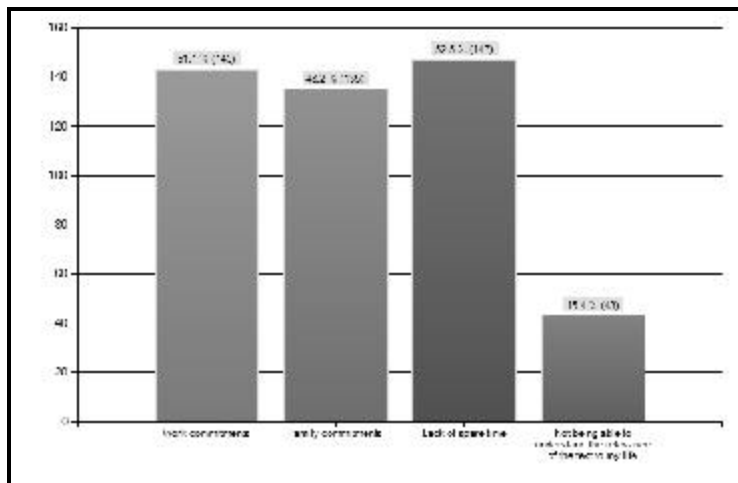
Question 3: Do you try to set a time aside each day to read Scripture?



If yes, what actions/routine did you implement to help develop and maintain your daily reading?

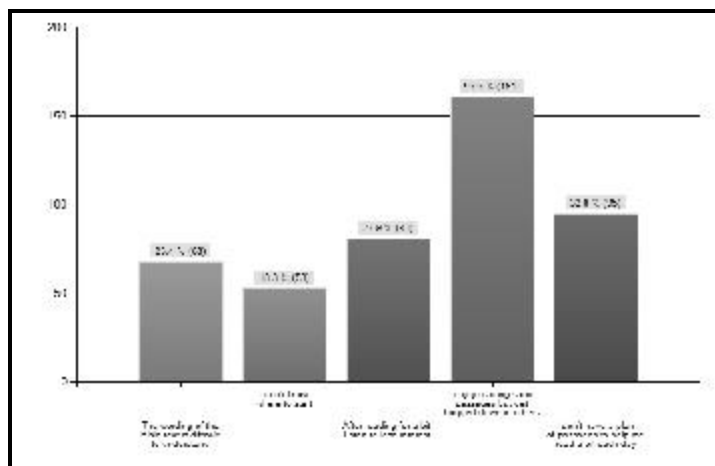
- Consistent use of specific material
- Develop consistent habit, i.e. same time of day set aside, same place to sit/area of quiet
- Multi-tasking approach read on transit ride, read Bible on cell phone while nursing baby
- Importance of Bible literacy leadership in the home; demonstrate by action. Observe habits of parents taught by their parents that daily Bible reading was important.
- Keep reading, even if you don't understand, and write questions in a journal to take to church on Sunday or email Pastor.
- Read the Bible on line or means of audio (iPod, CD, etc.)
- Lay out a plan and glue it in our Bibles

Question 4: What factors make it difficult for you to devote more time to Bible reading?



- Sinfulness
- Laziness
- No excuse
- Poor time management
- Level of material too difficult for beginner
- Distractions
- Require audio for visually challenged

Question 5: What factors make daily Bible reading challenging?

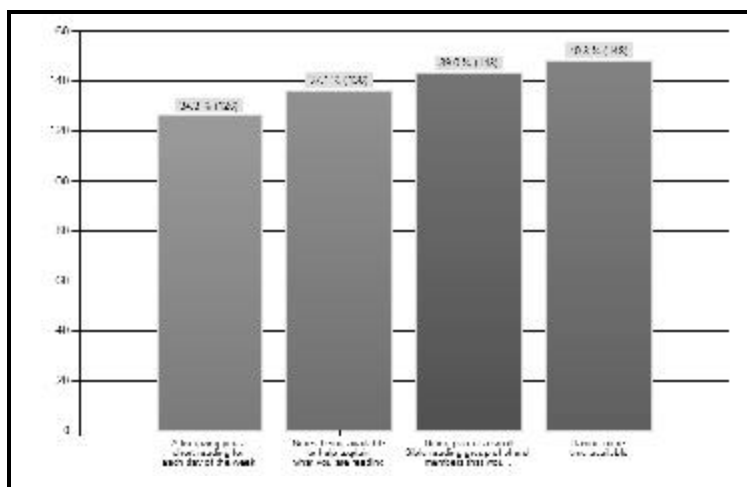


- Time challenge (constant fatigue of life, “Satan is very effective in keeping me busy”)
- “I get behind and then I quit”
- Complexity challenges
 - language I do not understand, not

knowing the history and culture of the day

- Need something portable
- Spouse doesn't share faith
- Lack of encouragement and direction from Pastors and Parish Leaders

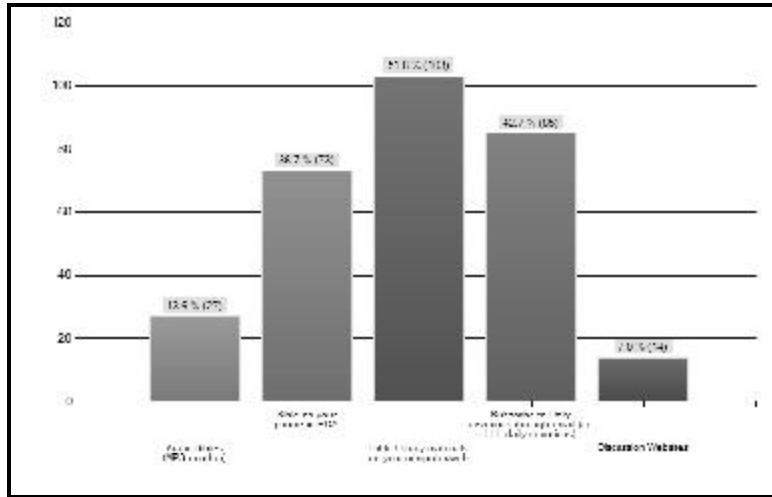
Question 6: What would help you to read more of the Bible each day?



- Resources
 - Study Bible
 - Electronic formats
 - A Genealogy chart
 - Geographic map
 - Opportunity/channel to ask questions
 - Steadfast Lutherans
 - Worldview Everlasting
 - IssuesEtc

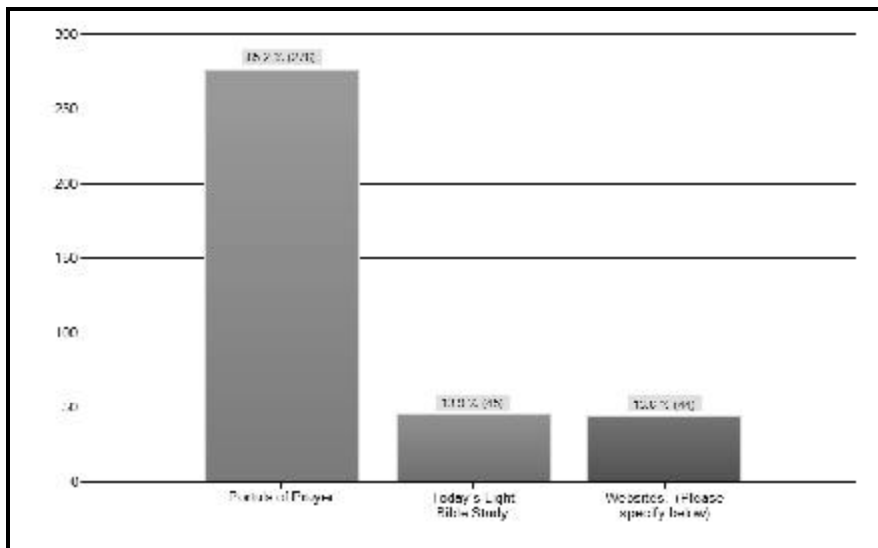
- Encouragement from others
- Read Bible readings for the upcoming Sunday
- Group study plan: Reading Bible passage before coming together for study
- Being part of a group would help individuals be accountable for reading.
 - Within your church
 - With another group check with your Pastor before joining

Question 7: Do you use any modern forms of personal Bible study/reading?



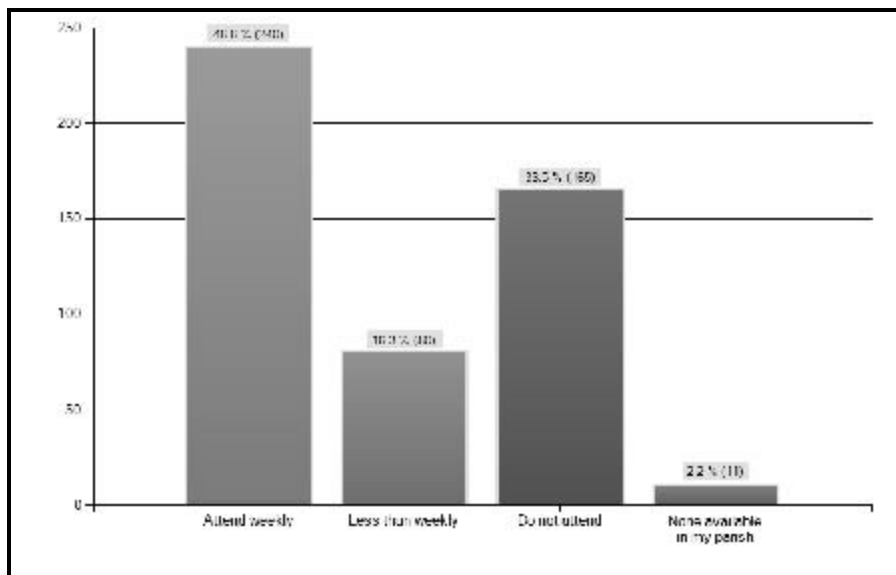
- Email church members about passages that we will be reading
- Biblegateway.com
- Worldview Everlasting
- Bible study through Facebook
- Libronex/Logos – advanced resource
- Glo software
- IssuesEtc
- Bible on cassette/CD/DVD/iTunes Bible/mobile app
- E-Readers (electronic Bible)

Question 8: If you are using personal Bible study material to aid daily reading and understanding of scriptures what study material do you utilize?

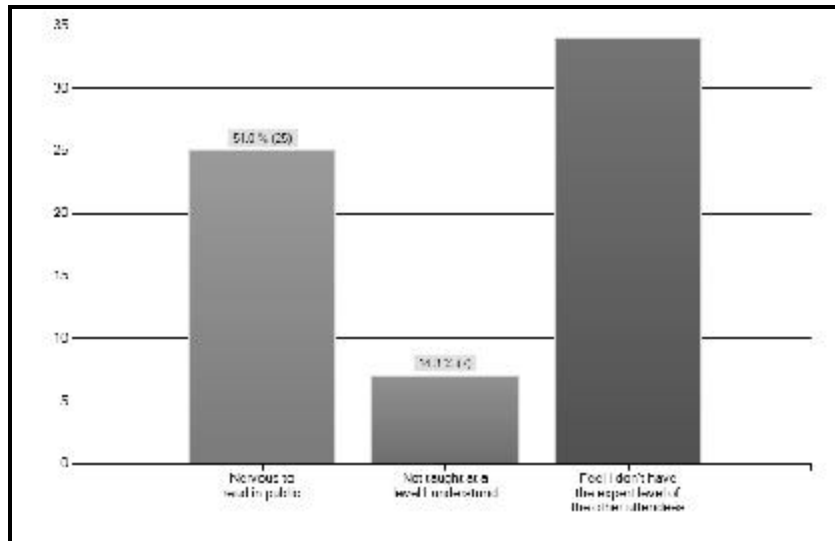


Lutheran Bible Study Book	Losing Yet Gaining Bible Study.	Bible Dictionary
Forward / Day by Day	Bible studies in Tapestry - LWMLC	iPhone - You Version bible
Women's Study Bible	Video blogs from worldviewetlasting.org	Life Light Bible studies
Concordia Self-Study Bible (NIV)	Daily Bible reading guide	Podcasts from issuesetc.org
LSB Journal	Good News Magazine	Reading schedule in the hymnal
Lutheran Witness, Canadian Lutheran	Daily Audio Bible reading	Personal Bible Study Journal
The Bible & Bible helps	Attend Bible Study when available	Glo Bible Software
Canadian Bible Society guide	LLL and LWMLC material	Bible Gateway
The Book of Concord (Kolb and Wengert)	Luther's Small Catechism with explanation	Walther's 'Law and Gospel'
NIV Concordance	CPH Commentaries	Lutheranism 101
Nelson's illustrated bible dictionary	The Psalms with Luther	Books from Bible Study at Church

Question 9: Bible Study attendance – how often do you attend a group Bible study?



Question 10: If you are not in a group Bible study why do you not attend?



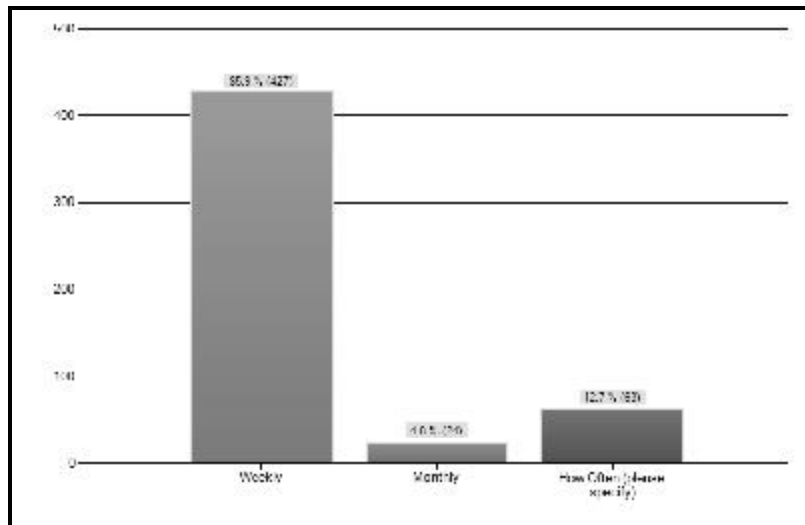
Other responses included:

- Time related conflicts
- Conflicts family, church conflicts, 'clique' Bible studies
- Transportation issues
- Leadership or material not applicable or

effective

- Lack of spousal support or interest
- No Bible study offered

Question 11: Worship attendance how often do you attend worship service?



Recommendations

The Task Force, after thoughtful consideration and prayer, recommend the following.

1. That the Synod web page includes a section specifically set up for discipleship resources.

2. That resources in the areas of Bible literacy, Christian Stewardship, Outreach, Reconciliation, and responses to societal trends be included, either by way of links to existing resources, or through documents developed specifically for each section.

3. That Lutheran Church – Canada congregational members with gifts, abilities, and experience in writing are identified and sought for the writing of specific Bible study materials, keeping a Lutheran Church – Canada context in mind.
4. That resources be identified as congregational leadership resources, or for personal growth.
5. That this area of the web page be under the direction of a committee responsible to Synod staff. It is recommended that the responsibilities of this committee include:
 - Keep resources of the website current
 - Review new materials and uploaded appropriate material to the LCC website.
 - Communicate updates in an effort to keep
 - resources current and in the hands of the people of the Church.

6. That the work of the Task Force continue into the next triennium allowing time to set up an appropriate structure (including budget), before passing the work on to the committee.

Conclusion

What the results of the survey demonstrated, although not a surprise, were that the underlying theme or reason for all of us not to be God's word daily was sin. Now keep in mind that the sin came in many different forms and obstacles. Some of these obstacles came from external sources such as rural communities without a shepherd to lead the flock, lack of support from family/spouse/church, having to work or attend class in order to financially support themselves and their families. There were many challenges given, however these were some of the most common and influential external pressures.

As challenging and daunting as these outside pressures are, even more so were the internal roadblocks that the devil has been able to put between us and God. The biggest factor by far, hands down, **not even a competition for us not being in the God's word** was time or lack thereof.

The devil is very crafty and is able to run interference between God and us constantly, usually without us even recognizing that it is happening. It comes in all forms, **such as our children's sporting events/practices**, our jobs, lack of energy and motivation. He is also able to fuel the fire by creating doubt in our minds. This doubt creates insecurities in our lives and stands in the way of immersing ourselves in the Word of God regularly.

This was often indicated in the area of the survey when asked about Bible Study attendance. There were external factors such as not being able to attend a Bible Study because there was not one offered or there was no one to lead it. But the internal doubt and insecurities are causing many of us not to attend because we feel that we may not be as knowledgeable as other members of the congregation that may be attending the same Bible Study.

As the Task Force continues its work, appreciation must be given to the support received thus far from President Bugbee and those who serve us at the **Synod's office**. It is hoped that the work of the Task Force will begin initial committee work, allowing the opportunity to design and implement structure before turning things over to the committee.

May our gracious God continue to give us guidance as we assist our Church by providing materials for His people, encouraging them to be in the Word as **they grow in knowledge and faith as Jesus' disciples**.

REPORT 44: COMMITTEE FOR THE CARE OF CHURCH WORKERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

The LCC President's Committee for the Care of Church Workers and Their Families is comprised of:

Prof Jonathan Kraemer of Edmonton, AB, Pastor James Paulgaard of Walnut Grove, BC, Lori Schultz of Kitchener, ON, with Harry Haberstock, Pastor Emeritus, as Chairman, along with Pastors Dave Hilderman, Abbotsford, BC, and John Haycock, Lloydminster, AB as advisers, with The Rev. Dr. Michael Nel, leader of retreats.

At the 2011 LCC Convention in Winnipeg, this Committee was given both mandate and funding

to proceed in serving Church Workers and spouses with preventative care using Family Systems thinking.

The Committee organized and facilitated 3 **'Ministry as Curiosity' Retreats during the past triennium**: the 1st retreat was held for the Fraser Valley and Vancouver Circuits in ABC District on March 5-7, 2012 at Edenvale Retreat Centre, Abbotsford, BC with 24 persons attending; the 2nd on Nov 5-7, 2012 at Star of the North Retreat Centre with 18 participants, plus 9 students and 1 professor from Concordia Lutheran Seminary in Edmonton for two half days; and the 3rd was held