

...FOR THOSE SEEKING THE EMPOWERING PRESENCE OF THE *Holy Spirit*

LutheranRenewal

Regret

A KILLER OF PASSION

by Paul Anderson

The word "regret" comes from an old English word "greet," which means "to weep." The "re," meaning "again," suggests ongoing weeping. Webster defines regret as "sorrow or remorse over something that has happened, especially over something that one has done or left undone" (*Webster's New World Dictionary*).

At first glance, regret seems hardly dangerous and certainly not deadly. But on closer examination, we can see the folly of regret and the potential to feel its crippling impact. Regret sentences us to live in the past. It buries us in remorse. It keeps us from investing in the future. The "re" of regret tells us that it often hangs around much longer than it should. Regret often includes the words "if only..."

*"If only we had experienced revival."
"If only I had not compromised."
"If only I had passed my test."
"If only we had not broken up."
"If only they had not forgotten to pay the bill."
"If only I had taken that position instead of moving."
"If only I had come to Christ twenty years ago."
"If only my parents had let me go to college."
"If only I had obeyed when the Lord prompted me to move."
"If only our business had not gone bankrupt."
"If only our pastor had been a godly man."
"If only my wife had not chosen to divorce me."
"If only Jeremy would have lived."
"If only our children hadn't rebelled against the Lord."*

Leaders are not immune from regret. In fact, it can come on us with greater intensity, perhaps because we know that the stakes are high. I was recently in Finland. While preparing for a pastors' seminar the night before, I felt like the Lord gave me a picture of the ministers who would be coming. The first of four pictures was of pastors throwing in the towel. I thought it might apply to three of the ninety participants. Ten stood when I invited a response, and quite a few of them in tears.

UPCOMING EVENTS

(Location: St. Paul, Mn)

February 10-11, 2006

Equipping Conference

**"This Day We Fight -
Breaking the Bondage
of a Passive Spirit"**

With Greg Boyd & Francis Frangipane

On-site registration: \$40/person

March 11, 2006

Organic Church Seminar

With Paul Kaak

(See this newsletter for details.)

May 6-7, 2006

A weekend with Wolf Simson

Details to come!

August 2-5, 2006

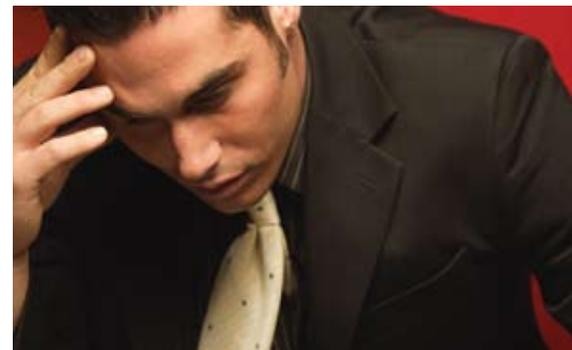
Reformation...Reloaded!

Featuring: Bill Easum, Guy Chevreau,

Francis and Judith MacNutt,

Wolfgang Simson, and more!

Brochures will be available in May



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(Independent of North Heights Lutheran Church)

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Alliance of Renewal Churches

www.arcusa.org • 651-486-4808

The Master's Institute

www.themastersinstitute.org • 651-765-9756

Why is regret dangerous?

1. Unlike repentance, regret usually doesn't have a terminal point. Repentance leads to forgiveness, and forgiveness is the best way to deal with the past. Forgiveness brings release and a lifting of the sorrow. Regret tends to hang on like a cloud, darkening the atmosphere with gloom. It doesn't go anywhere. Regret can lead to repentance, but often it doesn't. It is the poor substitute for repentance because it doesn't bring the same relief. It is like shame. One can confess something done wrong (usually accompanied by guilt), but shame attacks who we are, not just what we have done. It is, therefore, more elusive to deal with than guilt. We cannot confess, "I am sorry that I exist," or "I am sorry for who I am." Regret brings the same ambiguity.
2. Regret leads to passivity and levels off passion. It keeps us from being productive and pro-active. We slip into a fatalism that renders us harmless to the enemy and inefficient in the kingdom. Regret and faith have nothing in common.

FAITH focuses on the future;
regret focuses on the past.

FAITH projects to what isn't and can be.
Regret looks at what is and shouldn't have been.

FAITH gives us hope in where we are going.
Regret gives us pain for where we have been.

FAITH says that God holds my life.
Regret says that circumstances hold my life.

It is possible to regret something appropriately. When we are unable to attend a friend's graduation, we can say politely, "I regret that I cannot attend." It is not something we need to repent over, so in this case regret fits the situation. And that kind of regret doesn't camp out in our soul. But it can stick around when it is

more serious than just coming ten minutes late for a meeting or missing a party, and when it does it puts a haze over the present, shielding us from the future, making it easier to live with yesterdays than tomorrows. Regret is like manna; it is only good for a day. Moses told the children of Israel, "No one is to keep any of it until morning" (Exodus 16:19). But some did, and it was "full of maggots and began to smell" (v.20). Regret, likewise, makes our souls putrid.

Some regret is related to our own failure; other regret is related to the failure of others. Like I read once, "The only way to deal with the past is through forgiveness." If we failed, we need to ask for God's forgiveness—and go on. We can be confident that where sin abounded, grace can be much more abundant. God is so powerful that He even uses our failures for His purpose. But if we continue to stop with regret and don't move past it to repentance, we won't get the benefit of God's grace touching our failure.

If the failure is someone else's, we must forgive them and move past it. If we do, God will capitalize on the incident to further release us into our dream. I once made a proposal regarding a position I thought that God wanted me to assume. The Board of Directors of the organization, however, thought differently. I was disappointed for a day, thinking that the board had made a wrong decision and missed the will of the Lord. Then this thought came to me: no one's decision, even a wrong decision, has the power to keep me from doing the will of God as long as I am being obedient and walking in the Spirit. That released me to thank God for the decision—and go on. Two years later the Lord spoke into my heart about starting a seminary, a far greater dream than the one I had considered, and one that is continuing to grow larger each year. The Master's Institute, now under Mike Bradley's capable direction, is thriving as a leadership training school and is releasing people into their God-appointed destinies.

But if we continue to stop with regret and don't move past it to repentance, we won't get the benefit of God's grace touching our failure.

People living with regret may choose to blame rather than forgive. If a young adult is blaming his parents for not paying for his education, making it difficult for him to get a job, he may hold onto that blame the rest of his life. Then he feels that he always has an excuse for not fulfilling his destiny. He says that he could have been successful if his parents had only done their part. The young man Joseph in the Bible could have had the same outlook: “If only my brothers had not sent me down the river...” He chose instead to make the best of what was handed to him, and God used his right attitude to bring him into a place of great influence. God is not hindered by the failures of other people in our lives, but He is hindered by our bad attitude and unbelief.

Unbelief causes disappointments to linger in our souls as regret. Faith turns disappointments into divine appointments. But where pastors blame people in the pew for their lack of success or for blocking revival or for making life miserable for them, they are choosing to cling to regret, which puts their car in reverse.

Paul, by contrast, wrote, “Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it—I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while—yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no



regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation,

what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done” (2 Corinthians 7:8-11).

Paul examined the fruit of two kinds of sorrow: regret and repentance. Regret leads to death, while repentance has a wealth of potential

fruit. He calls the two sorrows worldly or godly. Worldly regret includes such emotions as anger, self-condemnation, discouragement, depression, and blame, and those emotions do not naturally convert to positive change. When a Japanese boy living at our home ran in a relay race at his high school, he passed the baton too late. Though I was one hundred yards away, I could see the outburst of anger. When I talked with him later in the morning, he was deeply disappointed in his performance, as is understandable, and I shared his pain. But that emotion didn't translate to working harder. Instead, he got more lazy and even cynical regarding track.

A sermon by Francis Paget called “The Sorrow of the World,” speaks of a sin that medieval Christians called *accidia*, “a compound of depression, sloth, and irritability which plunges a man into a lazy languor and works in him constant bitterness.”

Paget said that monks seemed particularly prone to it. It was regarded as one of the seven deadly sins.

Our emotions easily play tricks on us and deceive us, especially emotions of sorrow or anger. Regret can lodge in our soul and remain months or even years after a painful event, bearing deadly fruit.

By sharp contrast, godly sorrow (literally “sorrow toward God”) produces abundant fruit. Let's look closer at what that fruit is as Paul listed it:

Earnestness. The word comes from the Greek word which means “to hurry, make haste, be zealous.” It is just the opposite of laziness. It is the picture of intensity and quick response. Paul uses it of Christians who must exert themselves to maintain unity (Ephesians 4:3). The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament says that in all its uses, it “is an actualizing of salvation, a fulfilling of what has been opened up by grace” (Bromiley, p. 1070). Rather than leading to passivity, closer to fatalism than faith, godly sorrow brings an exertion of energy, appropriate to the gracious offer of God. The word is used in Hebrews (6:11) to call Christians to show earnestness in realizing the full assurance of hope, lest they slip back and lose what belongs to them. It is an action word, just the opposite of what regret inspires.

“Fear the Lord and shun evil...”

Proverbs 3:7

Eagerness. The NIV says “what eagerness to clear yourselves” (2 Corinthians 7:11). That translates one Greek word “apologia,” which means “defense, answer, reply.” Godly sorrow produced in them communication with Paul rather than withdrawal, a typical response to regret. They moved toward Paul, not away from him. They had been distant, and it had broken Paul’s heart, but now the letter he risked writing produced words and actions, not bitterness and distancing.

Indignation, anger resulting from injustice. It is possible to be so passive that we are incapable of anger. Some things are worth getting angry about, and the immorality and disunity in the Corinthian church were two of them, and repentance stirred up appropriate anger.

Fear. The NIV says “alarm.” The word is phobos, from which we get phobia. Fear in meeting a bear in a forest leads to necessary action, a change in direction. The Christian community in Corinth needed a jolt, and Paul’s letter gave it to them. Leaders must be careful not to comfort when it is time to challenge, and Paul was willing to bear his heart and do just that. Fear, especially a fear of God, needs to be present lest we take a complacent outlook regarding iniquity and fall into the trap ourselves. “Fear the Lord and shun evil,” wrote Solomon (Proverbs 3:7).

Longing. Desire planted in good soil produces a longing that can lead to action. Longing is a cousin of passion, a necessary ingredient to pursue one’s destiny. Regret puts us to sleep, while godly sorrow lights a fire and intensifies emotion.

Zeal. The NIV uses the word “concern” to translate zalos. That seems too weak for the context. The Greek lexicon says it means “zeal, ardor.” The Corinthians were shaken out of

Earnestness

Eagerness

Indignation

Fear

Longing

Zeal

Punishment

lethargy and became zealous to connect again with Paul and to deal with the problems in their church. Tolerance can be a good quality when we are blanketing the faults of others with love. It is an inappropriate response to sin that needs to be uncovered and dealt with.

Punishment. The KJV uses the word “revenge.” The NIV says “readiness to see justice done.” It is used of the widow who receives justice after many requests (Luke 18:7). Justice goes two ways: the release of the innocent and the punishment of the guilty. Solomon said that “when the sentence for a crime is not quickly carried out, the hearts of the people are filled with schemes to do wrong” (Ecclesiastes 8:11). Parents and leaders need to know the difference between mercy and indulgence. Misplaced tolerance leads to a dangerous permissiveness and weakens the power of grace.

The inaction of the leaders in Corinth to gross immorality was creating an unhealthy climate that excused evil. But now godly sorrow was producing good fruit, taking them from regret to repentance, from inactivity to Spirit-led response. One look at this list can tell us how desperately godly sorrow is needed in the body of Christ, especially where grace has lulled people into sleep rather than into action, where mercy means permission rather than forgiveness, especially in mainline churches.

I had hoped for more to happen in the church I had been at for twenty-five years, and now I was leaving. I prayed on my final Sunday for the pastor who was taking my place, a long-time associate. Then he prayed for me, and he spoke just two words: “No regrets.” God seemed to reach into my heart and take the pocket of regret out. By God’s grace, I didn’t have even a moment of regret since that time.

God is able to take regret from you if you will give it to Him. He doesn't want you to live with regret, because He doesn't call you to live in the past. Regret serves no good purpose, and it leads to no constructive action. It needs to be surrendered to a God who knows your past and is bringing you into your destiny. The past—is past. God is giving you “a future and a hope.” Let God cleanse you of the regret of your past—and lay hold of your future with courage.



“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

Jeremiah 29:11



*Paul Anderson
Director of Lutheran Renewal*

What a Deal!

by Denise Siemens

I love to clip coupons, shop the sales, collect reward points—anything to get a good deal. When we were first married I saved enough stamps (remember those coupon books?) to buy an electric hedge trimmer. I was so happy and proud, and our bushes never looked better!

You have a similar opportunity if you are a member of Thrivent Financial for Lutherans. Lutheran Renewal is enrolled in Thrivent's “GivingPlus Program.” Thrivent will contribute \$1 for every \$2 you donate to Lutheran Renewal, for a maximum of \$300 from Thrivent. So, if you give LR \$600, Thrivent will contribute an extra \$300 to LR. Your \$600 has increased to a \$900 gift. Talk about extra bang for your buck! But, instead of trimming hedges, you'll be sowing seeds in the Kingdom by giving to our ministry. The example given is the maximum qualifying gift. All donations are gratefully accepted.

The process is easy. Contact our office and we will mail the appropriate form to you. You fill in the six blanks, send it back with your donation to LR, and then we do the rest. You may also request forms from Thrivent Financial. Thrivent's phone: 1-800-847-4836; e-mail: mail@thrivent.com.

RIM TO CLOSE . . .

By Rev. Del Rossin

(This article was first printed in the September 2005 issue of the RIM newsletter.)

Eighteen years ago this Fall several dozen Lutheran Church/Missouri Synod (LCMS) pastors and laymen gathered to pray about how to impact the LCMS with the good news of the Holy Spirit's work in our age. We decided to begin a new ministry that would work within the LCMS in a positive manner. I was chosen to be Director of what became Renewal in Missouri (RIM).

God has richly blessed RIM's ministry these 18 years! Hundreds of pastors and wives have been strengthened for ministry at our retreats. Our dialogues with Synodical leaders resulted in agreement in all theological areas where there had been disagreement. RIM sponsored many conferences and seminars across the country, and the fruit from those continues in the lives of individuals and congregations. During these years we have published over 710,000 Newsletter copies. Also, many thanks to Ted Jungkuntz our chief proof reader all these years.

We will never see (this side of heaven) all that God accomplished through RIM. The Charismatic Renewal was a sovereign world-wide movement of the Holy Spirit in the Church. The movement has waned somewhat in this country, but many positive blessings continue. The Holy Spirit is still moving in Christ's Church! There is now more worship and praise in the churches. Millions have been "baptized with the Holy Spirit" to receive power to share the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ through word and wonder in a world in desperate need of Jesus. There also is a greater openness to spiritual gifts like healing, etc.

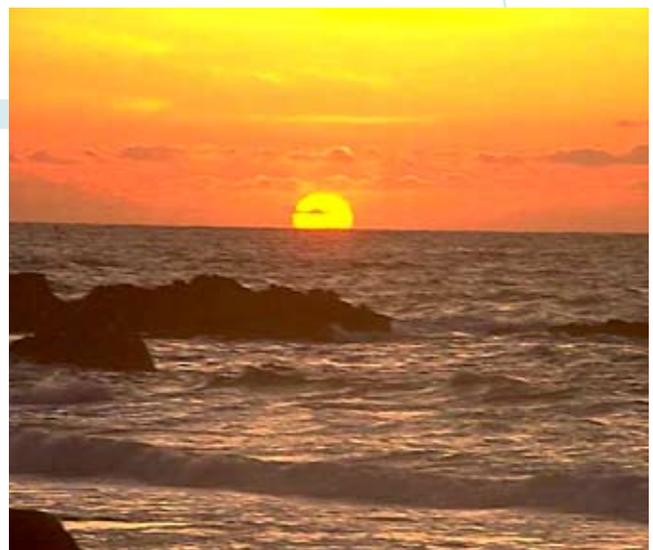
RIM's "season" appears to be over and we close RIM down not with a sigh of failure, but with rejoicing for all that God has done and for the privilege of being used by him these many years. Most of those who began RIM are now in their senior years. It

seems time for new leaders to develop new ministries under the direction of the Holy Spirit. This decision is the consensus of the leadership team after months of prayer.

RIM has been a vital part of my life of serving the Lord, and I will truly miss the ministry and the fellowship with so many wonderful people of God. I want to thank all who have prayed for RIM and supported us with financial contributions. I also praise God for the "Leadership Team" (Don Miles, Ferd Bahr, Paul Koehn, Jim Bredeson, John Sproul and Gene Goldsby) who have been a tremendous help since 2002.

Our plan is to close RIM at the end of 2005. During 2006 I'll continue to coordinate the "Congregational Prayer Network" and the "Prayer Letter" in addition to personal ministry to pastors and congregations, etc. I will also be serving on the Lutheran Renewal board of directors as well as pastoring a mission church in Rome, Wisconsin.

It has been a "good run" as they say. To God be all the glory! This is not a time to look back and yearn for the "good old days," but to "press on" into God's future.



(Editor's Note: We bless Del, and all of those who have been in leadership over the years at RIM. A special "Welcome back!" to Del from Lutheran Renewal. We're glad to have you back on the LR Board.



Organic Church Seminar

Growing Faith Where Life Happens

featuring Paul Kaak

March 11, 2006

“God’s kingdom is like a seed thrown on a field by a man who then goes to bed and forgets about it. The seed sprouts and grows- he has no idea how. For the earth bears fruit without his help—spontaneously. First a green stem of grass, then a bud, then the ripened grain. When the grain is fully formed, he reaps—harvest time!” Mark 2: 26-29

Imagine planting seeds of the Kingdom in the places where God can naturally, organically, bring forth life: in restaurants, living rooms, parks, work places and neighborhoods.

While it may seem revolutionary, bringing God’s message to where people are is in keeping with the ministry of Jesus, who lived among the people of his time.

But in order to do this we would need a “hands on” guide for demystifying how the Kingdom grows so it could be carried out potentially by anyone the King calls his own—yes, even you!

The **Organic Church Seminar** will teach us how we can return to those ancient roots by letting the church be alive, organic, growing, spreading in the most likely and unlikely of places.

This four-session seminar is based on the book, *Organic Church: Growing Faith Where Life Happens* by Neil Cole. Our speaker, Paul Kaak, works closely with Neil at CMA, Signal Hill, CA. (cmresources.org). Their ministry has helped start over seven hundred organic churches in thirty-two states and twenty-three nations in six years.

Recommendations for the book *Organic Church:*

“This book is profound, practical, and a pleasure to read. It stretches our thinking and brings us to a place where we can see the Kingdom of God spread across the world in our generation. This book has come at the right time.”

JOHN C. MAXWELL, founder, INJOY, INJOY

“Most of us instinctively feel that church as we know it prevents church, as God wants it. But where, exactly, is the catch? Where do we go from here? This book expertly places a thrilling invitation before us to join probably the most exciting spiritual pilgrimage going on today; the global migration of a church on the way back home again. Come and dial in!”

WOLFGANG SIMSON, author, *Houses That Change the World*

Organic Church Seminar Registration

March 11, 2006 • 9:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Please note: The Conference will be held at North Heights Lutheran Church
Roseville Campus • 2701 Rice Street

You may make copies of this form to share with others. **One family per form, please.**

Register early—space is limited.

No food will be sold on-site. We will supply a list of area restaurants upon your arrival.

Cost: \$15 per person if postmarked before March 1
\$20 per person if postmarked after March 1

The cost remains the same whether you attend one or all of the sessions.

Please print.

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Zip _____ Phone () _____

Church _____

E-mail _____

We regret that no children under the age of 12 years will be admitted to this Seminar. Exception: nursing infants. Sorry, childcare is not available.

Seminar Payments

Postmarked before March 1

Number of Registrants: _____ X \$15 = \$ _____
(US Funds)

Postmarked after March 1,
or on-site registration

Number of Registrants: _____ X \$20 = \$ _____
(US Funds)

On-site registrations will be dependent on seat availability.

Registration fees are non-refundable.

Please make checks payable to:

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2701 Rice Street; St. Paul, MN 55113-2200

We’re sorry, but we cannot accept phone, fax, or e-mail registrations.

RESOURCES

Dare to Dream

Do you want to discover your dream? Learn how to pursue it? Need to recover broken dreams? In *Dare to Dream*, Paul Anderson will help you to discover what God has placed inside of you! (\$10)

Dare to Dream Workbook

This journaling book by Paul Anderson will assist you in creating the kind of climate in which God-sized dreams can grow. Each page has a Dream Reflection and accompanying questions. (\$6)

Dare to Dream and Workbook Set (\$14)

The Father's Gift

Paul Anderson has written a book that answers many of your questions about the Holy Spirit. Are you wondering about the gifts? Would you like to be filled with the Spirit? Can the Spirit really lead us? Questions at the end of each chapter make it great for a Bible study group, Sunday School class, or for personal reflection. (\$10)

Answering Your Questions About Speaking in Tongues Larry Christenson has re-released this helpful book, now with a new preface, that has already sold over 250,000 copies. He addresses questions like: "Is the gift of tongues for today?" "What does speaking in tongues mean?" "Is speaking in tongues for me?" and many more. (\$8)

Gospel Stories

Pastor Orval Moren has written a powerful resource for anyone who would like a "3-minute lesson" for children. You'll also find suggestions, visual aids and Scriptural references in this indispensable tool. (\$12)

Breaking Strongholds in My Life

A booklet by Paul Anderson that identifies key strongholds of bondage in our lives and how we can break free through the power of the Spirit and not merely by our own effort. (\$2)

Building Christian Character

An inspiring and challenging study by Paul Anderson of 34 Christian character traits. The study gives a biblical meaning and example of each trait and shows how the trait can be applied in practical ways. (Workbook or Teacher's Guide: \$6 each, 8 or more \$5 each)

Charismatic Renewal Among Lutherans

Larry Christenson gives practical guidance for understanding and experiencing spiritual renewal, charismatic gifts, and renewed faith. (\$3.95 Closeout \$2)

Especially for Pastors

Edited by Paul Anderson, a monthly newsletter to encourage and assist pastors as they shepherd the Lord's flock. (\$20 annually for hard copy or \$10 annually for e-mail. Include e-mail address on order form.)

The Gift of Tongues (Booklet)

A biblical study of this spiritual gift by Larry Christenson. He also traces its connection with receiving the Holy Spirit, answers questions, covers theological concerns, and discusses practical aspects. (\$2.25)

Healing From a Father Wound (Booklet)

A message by Paul Anderson that brings emotional and spiritual healing to those who carry wounds from the past. (\$2)

He Knows my Name (CD)

A collection of original and familiar worship songs from Living Water Lutheran featuring four songs performed by the Kenyan orphans living at Agape Children's House. All proceeds go directly to Agape. (\$15)

Prayer Ministry (Expanded)

A booklet by Paul Anderson with practical help in training prayer ministers. Twice the size of the original. (\$3)

Pray For the Power of the Spirit (Tract)

By Rev. Del Rossin, a biblical study on releasing the power of the Holy Spirit. (6/\$1 or 100/\$15)

The Renewed Mind

This book by Larry Christenson touches on five major areas of spiritual experience: Dependence on God; Facing challenges with the authority of Christ; Patience; Discipline; Prayer. (\$9)

Ride the River

Using a parable of Lewis and Clark's exploration of the American West, Larry Christenson helps you discover how God the Father puts your life journey under the co-leadership of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. (\$11)

A Rose for Nana

Carol Greenwood is the author of this delightful, inspiring collection of stories and reflections about the God who speaks to us every day. (\$10 Closeout \$5)

A Soldier Looks at Spiritual Warfare

Author Dick Denny uses military analogies to confront readers with the reality of spiritual warfare. "Superb" said one longtime adult educator. (\$15)

Welcome, Holy Spirit

Edited by Larry Christenson, this 432-page book is important reading for all Christians, but especially Lutherans who want a definitive study on renewal. (\$15 Closeout \$5)

What About Baptism? (Booklet)

A practical 17-page booklet by Larry Christenson. Topics include: Infant Baptism, Immersion, Re-baptism and Baptism with the Holy Spirit. (\$2.25)

You Shall Be Baptized in the Holy Spirit

This book, written by Elsie Fuhrman, teaches believers how to receive empowerment of the Spirit and how to minister it to others. (\$7)

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NEW!