



**The Most Reverend Dr.
Mark Steven Shirilau**

December 14, 2010

I am very sorry to announce that we will no longer be holding worship services at Central City Lutheran Mission. La Obra de San Martin, our once-enthusiastic ministry there has been virtually destroyed by CCLM's self-appointed board of directors and the ELCA's failure to depose or at least rein in that renegade group.

Exactly a year ago today, December 14, 2009, Pastor David Kalke prematurely resigned from his ministry at CCLM because of many of these same people. We took over the worshipping community, which Pastor Kalke had wisely established as an entity independent of CCLM and its board. Early this year all was exciting and vibrant at La Obra.

Without Pastor Kalke to keep them in check, the venomous attitude of the few remaining board members – who had reappointed themselves in violation of their own bylaws – began to infect the entire community. We did our best to challenge these malcontents, first by pointing out their wanton disregard of their own governing documents, and then challenging them in court to force them to follow the system of democratic elections designed to represent the community. After asking several times, they finally agreed to mediation, presumably to circumvent the court unseating their illegitimate power.

We thought we had come to an agreement in mediation – an arrangement that would lead to the eventual unification of CCLM as a sacramental and social ministry within the ELCA. But they simply lied to us. They did not follow one single aspect of the agreement and they continued their same old arrogant stronghold as if signing an agreement meant nothing.

I had been working with the Lutheran bishop, Murray Finck, and thought that he would step in and resolve this problem, presumably by dismissing David Adlington and the problematic board of directors. However, in spite of repeated sincere requests that this be done, lest CCLM continue to fall further into disarray, he has been unwilling or unable to do so, and this troublesome board is still acting out its campaign of destruction.

The final straw came last Friday when they fired Socorro Quiñones, the director of the Plaza Comunitaria. Not only was she fired, but she was “bought off” and ordered not to step foot on the property. This prevented her from appropriately saying goodbye to the students and volunteers who love and respect her. Furthermore, she is La Obra's chief lay minister, and this inhibited her ability to help with the many activities that should be taking place this time of year.

We seriously considered reopening the lawsuit. However, we realize that the court can rid CCLM of its ethical bankruptcy, but it cannot eliminate its financial bankruptcy. What good would it do us to have the court award us control of a corporation facing imminent foreclosure?

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Working with those in control at CCLM has been like trying to maintain a relationship with an alcoholic. At some point one must realize that years of trying to help do not solve the problem, which will not go away just because it would be in everyone's best interest. The horrors of trying to deal with this gang of thugs have worn all of us down physically, emotionally, and spiritually. It is not a healthy place, and it will never become one until these people resign. Since they have refused to see that fact and hold on steadfastly to the wheel of their sinking ship, we must move on.

Sunday, December 18, will be the last Sunday of worship services at CCLM. Everyone is encouraged to attend the Spanish Mass held at St. John's Episcopal Church at 12:30 every Sunday afternoon. It is just a few blocks from CCLM, on the corner of 14th Street and Arrowhead. Nori, Connie, Socorro, and I have all attended Mass there in the recent past. The pastor is aware of the problems at CCLM and the people there will welcome you. They are also celebrating a Spanish Mass at 12:30 p.m. on Christmas Day.

Some had suggested we gather money and pay Socorro so she could reject CCLM's corrupt buy-out. However, we realized that this would be like giving money to CCLM itself, and money can do so much more good elsewhere. In fact, I personally give a significant portion of my tithe to the Community of St. Martin in Guadalajara, and I suggest all of you send money there rather than to CCLM. (Donations to "Community of St. Martin" may be mailed to 29021 Willow Creek Lane, Highland, CA 92346.) Resurrection remains the key theme of our faith, and it is remarkable to see the great and wonderful ministry in Mexico springing forth from the ashes of CCLM. In the year that Pastor Kalke has been down there, he has developed teams of partner organizations, both religious and secular, making great strides in education and health prevention, particularly with HIV and AIDS.

Please be absolutely clear that neither the Ecumenical Catholic Church nor the Community of St. Martin have any further affiliation with any activities at Central City Lutheran Mission. We publicly and completely distance ourselves from the destructive and dishonest self-appointed leaders there: David Adlington, Marlin Brandt, Gail Egenes, Murray Finck, Fred Fruehan, John Futch, Stephanie Gasca, Marie Hinz, Lara Janssen, Bill Olinger, Victor Pereda, Rueben Rivera, and their puppet Maria Medina. They have proven over and over again that they cannot be trusted.

I do wish I had more positive news for Christmas and the new year, but do hope you will join me in giving a deep and sincere thank you to all who have worked so diligently at La Obra, especially Pastor Nori Kieran-Meredith, Connie Showler, Socorro Quiñones, Robert Ballantyne, Enrique and Omar Rodriguez, Alex Avila, and all the other faithful people. I hope to see you all some time at St. John's.

Grace and Peace,

+ Mark Shirilau

Most Rev. Mark Shirilau, Ph.D.
Archbishop and Primate
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The Most Reverend Dr. Mark Steben Shirilau

14 Diciembre, 2010

Siento mucho en anunciar que nosotros ya no tendremos misas en Central City Lutheran Mission. La Obra de San Martín, nuestro ministerio allí que una vez estaba apasionado, ha sido destruido virtualmente por la junta directiva auto-designada de CCLM y el fracaso del ELCA para deponer o contener ese grupo renegado.

Exactamente hace un año hoy, el 14 de diciembre de 2009, el Pastor David Kalke dimitió prematuramente de su ministerio en CCLM a causa de muchas de estas mismas personas. Tomamos responsabilidad para las Misas y la congregación, que Pastor Kalke había establecido sabiamente como una entidad independiente de CCLM y su junta. Temprano este año todo emocionaba y vibrante en La Obra.

Sin Pastor Kalke para tenerlos controlados, la actitud venenosa de los pocos que quedan miembros de la junta – que había nombrado de nuevo a sí mismo en la infracción de sus propios reglamentos – comenzó a infectar la comunidad entera. Hicimos cuanto pudimos para desafiar a estos descontentos, primero por indicar su indiferencia lasciva de sus propios documentos directivos, y entonces los desafiando en tribunal a forzarlos seguir el sistema de elecciones democráticas que son diseñadas para representar la comunidad. Después de preguntar varias veces, ellos por último aceptaron mediación, para rodear presumiblemente el tribunal que desarzona su poder ilegítimo.

Pensamos que nos habíamos concordado en la mediación – un arreglo que llevaría a la unificación eventual de CCLM como un ministerio sacramental y social dentro del ELCA. Pero estuvieron simplemente a nosotros. Ellos no siguieron un aspecto único del acuerdo y ellos continuaron su misma fortaleza arrogante vieja como si firmando un acuerdo no significó nada.

Había estado trabajando con el obispo luterano, Murray Finck, y pensé que intervendría y se resolvería este problema, despidiendo presumiblemente David Adlington y la junta directiva problemática. Sin embargo, a pesar de peticiones sinceras repetidas que esto es hecho, por temor a que CCLM continúe caerse más adentro del desorden, él no ha estado dispuesto o incapaz de hacer así, y esta junta molesta todavía representa su campaña de destrucción.

La paja final vino el viernes pasado cuando despidieron Socorro Quiñones, la directora de la Plaza Comunitaria. No sólo fue despedido, pero fue “comprada” y ordenada no dar un paso pie en la propiedad. Esto la previno de despedirse apropiadamente a los estudiantes y voluntarios que la adoran y respetan. Además, ella es ministra principal de La Obra, y este inhibió su capacidad de ayudar con las muchas actividades que deben estar sucediendo esta época del año.

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Consideramos gravemente volviendo a abrir el pleito. Sin embargo, nosotros nos damos cuenta de que el tribunal puede deshacerse CCLM de su insolvencia ética, pero no puede eliminar su insolvencia financiera. ¿Lo que bueno lo hace para tener el tribunal darnos control de una corporación mirando inminente a ejecución de su hipoteca?

Trabajar con éstos en el control en CCLM ha sido como tratar de mantener una relación con un borracho. En algún punto uno debe darse cuenta de que años de tratar de ayudar no resuelven el problema, que no se irá simplemente porque estaría en todos mejor interesa. Los horrores de tratar de trabajar con esta pandilla de maleantes ha llevado todos nosotros abajo físicamente, emocionalmente, y espiritualmente. No es un lugar sano, y nunca llegará a ser uno hasta que estas personas dimitan. Desde que ellos se han negado a ver ese hecho y aguantan fijamente a la rueda de su buque en declive, nosotros debemos mudarse.

El domingo, 18 de diciembre, será el domingo final de misas en CCLM. Todos son favorecidos a asistir la Misa española en la iglesia episcopal de San Juan a las 12:30 de la tarde todos los domingos. Es sólo unos pocos bloques de CCLM, en el rincón de Calle 14 y Arrowhead. Nori, Connie, Socorro, y yo he asistido la Misa allí en los últimos tiempos. El pastor está consciente de los problemas en CCLM y las personas allí le darán la bienvenida. Ellos también celebrarán una Misa española a las 12:30 de la tarde en el Día de Navidad.

Algunos habían sugerido que reunimos dinero y pagamos Socorro así que podría rechazar la corrompe compra de CCLM. Sin embargo, nosotros nos dimos cuenta de que esto estaría como dar dinero a CCLM mismo, y el dinero puede hacer así mucho más bueno en otra parte. De hecho, yo doy personalmente una porción significativa de mi diezmo a la Comunidad de San Martín en Guadalajara, y yo sugieren que todos ustedes envían dinero allí antes que a CCLM. (Donativos a “Community of St. Martin” pueden ser enviados a 29021 Willow Creek Lane, Highland, CA 92346.) La resurrección se queda el tema clave de nuestra fe, y es notable ver el gran ministerio maravilloso en México que salta adelante de las cenizas de CCLM. En el año que Pastor Kalke ha estado allá, ha desarrollado los equipos de organizaciones de socio, ambos religioso y secular, haciendo grandes progresos en la educación y la salud, especialmente con VIH y SIDA.

Sea por favor absolutamente claro que ni la Iglesia Católica Ecuménica ni la Comunidad de San Martín tiene más afiliación con cualquier actividades en Central City Lutheran Mission. Nos desvinculamos completamente y públicamente de los líderes destructivos y deshonestos auto-designados allí: David Adlington, Marlin Brandt, Gail Egenes, Murray Finck, Fred Fruehan, John Futch, Stephanie Gasca, Marie Hinz, Lara Janssen, Bill Olinger, Victor Pereda, Rueben Rivera, y su títere Maria Medina. Han demostrado una y otra vez que nosotros no podemos fiarnos de ellos.

Deseo que tuviera noticias más positivas para la Navidad y el año nuevo, pero espere que uniré mí a dar un profundo y sincero gracias a todos los que ha trabajado tan diligentemente en La Obra, especialmente Pastor Nori Kieran-Meredith, Connie Showler, Socorro Quiñones, Robert Ballantyne, Enrique y Omar Rodriguez, Alex Avila, y todas las otras personas fieles. Espero verlos algún tiempo en la iglesia de San Juan.

Gracia y Paz,

+ Mark Shirilau

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Open Letter to:

Friends of Central City Lutheran Mission

Two ways to develop a neighborhood ministry.

- 1) Hold a “posada” – traditional pre-Christmas Mexican spiritual gathering – for immigrants and their families with ecumenical leadership involved. Growing out of the work of neighborhood projects, people would gather, sing, be fed and be strengthened for their journeys in education, health care, family development, spiritual development and preparation for a Christmas that was not based in “things” but in community building. The journey of Mary and Joseph becomes their journey in a foreign land.
- 2) Have white people from white Lutheran church located in one of America’s wealthiest white cities drive into a poor neighborhood with clean white underwear, socks and t-shirts to give to the homeless men living in the sanctuary as the white people serve cookies, sing their Christmas carols and leave feeling fulfilled because “they” have “done something” this “Christmas season.”

When I resigned from Central City Lutheran Mission as its Executive Director on December 14, 2009, I predicted that concepts for neighborhood ministry clearly outlined in the above two options were at play. It was made clear this is not a personality struggle, but a battle of theological and ecclesial ideas for the development of cultural competency and spiritual insertion in a poor neighborhood of Mexican immigrants.

At the time of my resignation I predicted that the insidious racism of the Pacifica Synod and liberal thinking of the ELCA, of which it is a member, would stand in direct opposition to the hard work that so many of us put in for 13 years to develop a neighborhood ministry rich in ecumenical relationships and spiritual diversity. I predicted that a vindictive and narrow-minded bishop’s office, a Board of Directors not representative of the people and a newly emerging set of volunteers seeking to see themselves look good would divert the direction of CCLM and virtually destroy its integrity.

Since then much pain and suffering have been inflicted on the Mexican residents, volunteers and staff located around Central City Lutheran Mission by an insensitive and racist leadership. Neighborhood leaders have been evicted. Experienced staff who designed and created projects have been fired. A core of “yes men/women” have become tokens for racist diversity behind which the efforts of the ELCA and Pacifica Synod now operate.

Enlightened Lutheran clergy – including two assistants to the Bishop - and Lutheran lay leaders distanced themselves from the negativity and lack of transparency in the bishop’s plan. One Lutheran pastor left a CCLM Board meeting with the bishop present in disgust when it was clear what the bishop’s intentions were.

In bad faith the leadership of the Pacifica Synod – Bishop Murray Finck – entered into a mediation process when it was clear he would lose the legal process. The mediation process could have brought



peace and ecumenical ownership to a flailing project in a theological and financial bankrupt Synod. He single-handedly refused to promote the agreements of the mediation process and continues to blindly support the rich looking for their project to exercise false charity. The staff of CCLM were never once told of the agreements as a result of the mediation process which would have required a behavior change!

Spiritual traditions have been disrespected and destroyed in the name of “Lutheran piety.” Vibrant worship moments have been denied as worship leaders have not had access to the building. The unique relationship between Word and Sacrament and Human Services has been destroyed under the guise of creating something “more Lutheran.” A blatant lack of respect for Mexican traditions, images and cultural manifestations brings the low Reformation traditions into a modern context that wrecks of racism and discrimination in an anti-Mexican context.

The low Reformation can’t go much lower! Its bastion of lifeless piety gasping for breath in Orange County does what it has done for the last 12 years. Straw figures are created as the “enemy” – personality conflicts are lifted up as the analysis for problems and different visions for community ministry. Theoretical and theological discussion does not happen. People’s projects are undermined while a bishop in a dying Pacifica Synod carries on like a bull in a china shop. Unfortunately the broken china are human beings.

Options 1 and 2 for ways to develop a neighborhood ministry were real options. The leadership of CCLM – Pacifica Synod, Board of Directors and Acting Interim Director – had both options. Option one, which was to have happened on December 18th, was denied. The ecumenical community and the immigrant community for the first time since CCLM’s existence were denied access to the building and kitchen.

Option two will happen on December 19th and was affirmed and approved by the leadership of what is now a sinking ship. White people from First Lutheran Church will come and offer their trinkets so they can feel good about themselves.

It is no surprise to me, given my experience of the Pacifica Synod for 13 years, that this is the sad outcome one year later. It is no surprise to me that when faced with such paternalism and traditional approaches for neighborhood development that the ecumenical community and the neighborhood itself will turn its back on CCLM, the Pacifica Synod and walk.

And walk they are. The worshipping community has decided to move. Faced with the firing of the last true neighborhood organizer on staff – a loyal and creative staff person for six years – the neighborhood understands the nature of the current leadership.

People don’t want underwear. They want a place where they can be recognized as human beings struggling to form a community where human rights can be respected, human dignity can be encouraged and where diverse traditions for the celebration of Christmas traditions can be respected. They have made it clear since 2004 when stripped of its congregational status by the bishop’s office that they wanted a place to worship, to celebrate that Eucharist. Once again that right is being denied. That



God, as Luther taught us, the validity of the Eucharist does not depend on the celebrant. The Eucharist will continue to be celebrated with or without with Pacifica Synod Bishop! While it is indeed sad that the worshipping community will be leaving its historical home at CCLM, it is even more sad to know that the Pacifica Synod once again sits with an empty building in a now-hostile neighborhood.

The poor will be with you always, so Scripture tells us. The struggle of the poor continues. The days of the Pacifica Synod and its surrogate leadership in an empty and bankrupt project appear to be numbered.

In good conscience, I need to let you know as a supporter of CCLM that the integrity of the project has been destroyed, in my opinion. In good faith I can no longer support it or the neighborhood's intentions to mediate with a closed ELCA leadership. There are many other projects which need your good support and prayers. There are many other options for being in solidarity with the poor and their efforts to find justice in the USA and work to overcome racism and discrimination. There are many other options for supporting rich spiritual diversity and theological exploration during these difficult times.

Thank you for your personal support throughout these years. Thank you for having courage to try something different within the Lutheran structures. Our efforts were not in vain as many lives were touched and many lives changed. The City of San Bernardino was changed. That which remains unchanged is the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and its Pacifica Synod. Its piety to be in solidarity with the poor and multi-cultural is without substance.

Seeds have been planted and nurtured. The harvest will come! Bread and wine will continue to be made. The Eucharist will continue!

As we gather around the manger in Bethlehem together may we once again see the face of Jesus in the face of poor child, a child of color, an immigrant, a man sought after by the King and powers that be!

The Rev. David J. Kalke
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