

# Ablaze! Challenge

Are you up for a challenge? People thrive when challenged!

Martin Luther challenged people. The *95 Theses* together with the *Small and Large Catechisms* challenged both the establishment of the Church and the congregations of the countryside. These formative documents pushed people! And by God's grace, the Church and her people thrived.

Ready to be challenged? That's what *Ablaze!* is all about. It is not a program, a binder or a DVD. It is a challenge: What would it take to have people in our church body share the Gospel with 100,000,000 people between now and 2017, the 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Reformation?

What would it take? A people on fire. Commitment. Perseverance. Discipline.

The Reformation's heart was grace through faith: Christ's work on our behalf. But make no mistake, Martin Luther worked hard to grow in that truth and to share that truth. He was disciplined, dauntless, and untiring.

And he called on others to be the same. Luther minced no words about Christians undisciplined in the faith. He even suggested that children not be given food or drink until memory work was properly recited!

While I am not suggesting that, I am suggesting this: Let's challenge one another to grow in the truth in order to share the truth. To share the Gospel with 100,000,000 people, humanly speaking, will take commitment, perseverance and discipline. Specifically, I invite you to accept an "*Ablaze! Challenge*," a challenge that could set the church on fire!

***Read through the Bible Every Year*** - The Reformation was a literary revolution. It opened the Bible to the laity, not just the leadership. The Word of God is the power of God that changes everything! Let's dive into the word instead of dabble with it!

***Pray for a Half Hour a Day*** - Extended prayer is not the vain babbling rejected by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. It is heartfelt prayer to the Father modeled by Jesus on numerous occasions. Luther taught in the Large Catechism that the Reformation would not have been sustained without the prayers of God's people! Let's move ahead on our knees!

***Give Jesus Ten Percent of Your Income*** - Pagans trust money; Christians trust God! Tithing breaks trust in money and builds confidence in God. To reach 100,000,000 people will take more confidence in God than money!

***Intentionally Develop Relationships with Four Unbelievers*** - The longer we are in the church, the less likely we are to really know people outside of the church. How can we reach people when we are not even connected with them?

***Secure Seven Others to Take Up this Challenge*** - What would happen if we each would secure seven other fellow believers to make the same commitment?



Does this capture your imagination? Are you ready for such a challenge? Is this dying world ready? For more information about this *Ablaze! Challenge* and how you might commit to it, contact Rev. David Davis at [ablaze@michigandistrict.org](mailto:ablaze@michigandistrict.org).

