



Standing **FIRM** for LIBERTY

The Church of
Christian
Liberty
and its
Ministries

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Table of Contents

Special Acknowledgements	iii
Foreword.....	vii
Introduction	
For the Greater Glory of God.....	ix
Chapter One	
Redeem the Time.....	1
Chapter Two	
God Shapes a Leader.....	11
Chapter Three	
When the Foundations Are Being Destroyed	19
Chapter Four	
CLASS Returns Home	33
Chapter Five	
Back to the Future.....	41
Chapter Six	
Why a Little Learning Can Be a Dangerous Thing	53
Chapter Seven	
Storming the Gates of Hell	69
Chapter Eight	
The Sale of the Century.....	83
Chapter Nine	
The Power of the Pen.....	93
Chapter Ten	
A Glimpse Down the Hall of Faith	111
Chapter Eleven	
A Voice in the Wilderness	127
Chapter Twelve	
Reforming Higher Education	143
Chapter Thirteen	
For the Greater Glory of God.....	157
Appendix A	
World and Life View in the Classroom	165
Appendix B	
Education or Indoctrination?.....	169

Foreword

Some men's greatness may be seen in how largely they loom over the movements they launched. These are the Caesars and Charlemagnes, the Nebuchadnezzars and Napoleons whose accumulated personal glory seemed to outshine any of their actual achievements.

But as great as such men are in the annals of history, greater still are those men whose movements loom large over them—even to the point of obscuring them from view. These are the Bucers and Bezas, the Knoxes and Kuypers whose achievements have endured even when their names are barely remembered anymore.

Paul Lindstrom's greatness was of this second sort.

In his day, he did indeed loom large. His personality was expansive. His interests were wide ranging. His accomplishments were impressive. His influence was great. And his disciples were innumerable. In pioneering the modern homeschooling movement in the sphere of education, in standing for justice in the sphere of politics, in graciously extending mercy in the sphere of charity, in casting vision in the sphere of the church, and in founding a host of institutions in the spheres of publishing, academia, pro-life activism, journalism, curriculum development, and Christian liberty, he was an engine of productivity in an age marked by passivity and quiescence.

But it is not so much for what he was able to do in his day that he ought to be celebrated today—as impressive as that recollection may be. Rather, it is for all those he was able to influence, for the roles they are now taking in shaping their families, their churches, their schools, their communities, their businesses, and their world, that he is best remembered.

I first met Paul Lindstrom in the earliest days of his ministry when most of his later achievements were still little more than dreams. His vision for a church and a school were still in their infancy. His aspiration for a college was a barely formed idea. But already there was in him a determined and certain faith that could not and would not be denied. And already there was in him the work ethic, the unrestrained optimism, and the unbridled enthusiasm for what was right and good and true that would over time bring those dreams, visions, and ideas into fruition.

Over the years I watched with admiration as Rev. Lindstrom overcame every obstacle with unflinching courage and tenacity. He was undoubtedly one of the most evident trophies of God's grace in these modern times in which we live. And as a result, his is an incredibly instructive legacy—a legacy that reminds us of the good providence of our God in the past, of the sustaining work of our God in the present, and of the very great and precious promises of our God for the future.

These days wherever I go I meet men and women who were shaped by the work of Christian Liberty and Paul Lindstrom. They are the monuments to his faithful labors. They are his ever-living Ebenezers. They are the evidences of his greatness. Indeed, in this most welcome new survey of the ministries he birthed, that truth is proclaimed with utmost clarity and passion.

Perhaps by looking back at Paul Lindstrom's remarkable life and his reforming work, we will be able to see our way forward for our own. After all, his was a distinctly Biblical vision, a sound vision, and thus a rather unpopular vision. And it still is.

—George Grant,

PASTOR OF PARISH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, FRANKLIN, TN

Introduction

For the Greater Glory of God

To understand the story of the Church of Christian Liberty, you must start with the convictions and passions of its founding pastor—the Reverend Paul Lindstrom.

Pastor Lindstrom was no ordinary individual. He possessed a passion for the truth, a love for people, and a determination to act on his convictions that set him apart from many of his contemporaries. While the term “activist” is typically reserved for those on the theological and political left of the spectrum, Pastor Paul was in every sense an exception. “Redeem the time—buy up the opportunities!” was one of his frequent mottos.

Get going he did—in his relatively brief lifetime he would lead demonstrations at the State Department in Washington, D.C., on behalf of imprisoned American servicemen overseas; travel the world attempting to raise awareness of the plight of soldiers missing in action; help shut down abortion clinics through acts of peaceful civil disobedience; defend the rights of families to engage in home education in state courtrooms across the United States; and begin a church for those disenfranchised by the drift toward liberalism within large denominations.

In addition to all of these accomplishments, Paul Lindstrom also helped start a Christian academy that would ultimately draw students from seventy communities; start a homeschool ministry that would empower tens of thousands of families to teach their children at home; help start the first Christian day schools in the former Soviet Union; fund mission enterprises at home and throughout the world; help begin a college in the United States; and on and on the list goes...

In the midst of all these activist endeavors, Paul Lindstrom never sought to call attention to himself or his accomplishments. His concern was twofold: to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to preserve the biblical values upon which our nation and government were founded.

While some conservative Christians of his time believed they should limit their activities to only those causes that directly impacted the local church, Rev. Lindstrom believed that the Gospel required that Christians engage the larger culture, educational institutions, as well as governmental policies. As

a result, he rarely saw any contradiction between preaching a sermon on Sunday and leading a protest on Monday.

Once, for example, he braved the icy winds of February to lead a demonstration in Chicago against the presence of a prominent Hollywood actress who had come to a popular department store to endorse a line of clothing.



Rev. Lindstrom leading protest in Chicago in 1983

He believed (as did many veterans) that this person had given material aid and comfort to the enemy by her well-publicized propaganda visits to the enemy capital during the Vietnam War.

While many, if not most, Christians hold to their beliefs and convictions, Paul Lindstrom was unique in the degree to which he

attempted to do something tangible each day to help make his values a reality in our society. While his critics said some of his views or actions were too activist or extreme for a conservative minister of the Gospel, he never took such criticism to heart. Rather, he believed that the moral and spiritual principles of the Word of God are the source of any nation's liberties and freedom, and therefore are also applicable to society and its institutions.

As an avid student of the Bible and history, Paul Lindstrom believed in the biblical truth that states, "...blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD" (Psalm 33:12). He also understood how often our Founding Fathers had the wisdom and humility to draw deeply from the principles of Scripture to form the framework of our Constitution. It was on this basis that he believed that biblical principles should legitimately guide the decisions and policies of our legislative, judicial, and executive branches of government.

During his early days in ministry, he watched in deep dismay as the public education system continued its drift toward the secular and atheistic principles of John Dewey and the *Humanist Manifesto*. His soul was even more troubled as he watched many Christian parents effectively abdicate their God-given responsibilities to teach their children the moral and spiritual

principles of the Scriptures. He felt one such evidence of this abdication was turning them over for twelve years or more to the secular government schools.

He not only believed there was a moral and spiritual bankruptcy connected to secular curriculums and humanistic teaching philosophies, but worse, that such things were actively attempting to undo the Christian heritage that had guided families in America for over 200 years. Further proof of the failure of the system was the fact that test scores were plummeting. Millions of American students were finishing their public education careers functionally illiterate.

Pastor Paul was also distressed by the serious inroads leftist and socialist forces were making into the American government, society, and economy. As a young man he had been exposed to the teachings of a group dedicated to exposing communist influences in our midst. While he would later come to recognize the inadequate approach of the group known as the John Birch Society and clearly break ranks with them, he would remain an ardent opponent of socialism and Marxism during his entire adult life.

As we have said, to understand the history of the Church of Christian Liberty you must first understand the driving principles and passions of its founder—Rev. Dr. Paul Lindstrom.

Chief among his guiding principles were five core convictions:

1. The mandate to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world, both through the local church and by way of missions;
2. The legitimate right of the principles of Scripture to serve as the guiding directives in the policies and activities of our governmental, social, and educational institutions;
3. The right of parents to educate their children with God's Word as the foundation in whatever setting they desired without government interference, thereby instilling in their sons and daughters a truly practical and beneficial education based on a biblical worldview and the authority of Scripture;
4. The need to remain constantly vigilant to protect the liberties bequeathed to us by our Founding Fathers as outlined in the Constitution, Declaration of Independence, and Bill of Rights, and to guard our nation against all enemies of liberty both foreign and domestic;
5. The right to life for all human beings from conception to natural death.

These basic principles served as the roadmap for Pastor Paul's life and ministry. What follows in the pages to come is the story of how he lived out these convictions and the vibrant institutions and ministries that were birthed as a result, particularly the Church of Christian Liberty and its attending ministries.

When it came to choosing a motto for the Church of Christian Liberty, the church that he would help found, he chose, *Ad maiorem, Dei Gloriam*. Translated from Latin it means, "For the greater glory of God." Indeed, Paul Lindstrom would dedicate his life to pursuing the greater glory of God. He left behind a legacy of faithfulness, courage, and vision that continues to impact families, the church, and our world today.

A picture that now hangs in the hallway of Christian Liberty Academy in Arlington Heights, Illinois, perhaps best summarizes his conviction regarding the education of children. The words are attributed to Martin Luther, a man whom God greatly used during the Protestant Reformation:

I am much afraid that schools will be the great gates of hell unless they diligently labor in explaining the Holy Scriptures, engraving them in the hearts of youth. I advise no one to place his child where the Scriptures do not reign paramount.

Chapter Eight

The Sale of the Century

The Church of Christian Liberty Finds a New Home

The year 1922 was a memorable one.

That was the first year insulin was ever used to treat someone for diabetes. A geological survey that same year concluded that the oil supply in the United States would be depleted in just twenty years. The American Pro Football Association was given a new name—The National Football League. Josef Stalin was named General Secretary of the Communist Party in Russia.

It was also the year Annie Oakley set the new women's shooting record by breaking one hundred targets in a row. Drivers in Vancouver, British Columbia, began driving on the right side of the road. Babe Ruth was suspended for one day from baseball and fined \$200 dollars for throwing dirt on an umpire. Last, but certainly not least, Charlie Osborne suffered the world's longest recorded case of the hiccups—435 million times in a row before they stopped. He died eleven months later.

Taken from Historical Events for the Year 1922 ¹

Groundbreaking in Arlington Heights

But 1922 was a significant year for yet another reason. That was the year the Arlington Township Board laid the cornerstone for their new high school—Arlington Heights High School. The school would be ready for occupancy the next year—1923. At that time the village of Arlington Heights, some thirty miles from downtown Chicago, was considered by many to be a community out in the country—it was, after all, connected to the large metropolis by a single rail line.

Yet, for the next sixty-five years, thousands of high school age students would be educated in the new school standing at the corner of Euclid Avenue and Walnut Street. The Cardinal Red (mascot for the school) would be worn proudly by students and alumni until the school's closing in 1984.

Today, a cement cornerstone bearing the year “1922” is on display in the hallways of Christian Liberty Academy. How did a small, fledgling school with a meager budget manage to purchase a major suburban high school five times its size—all the while outbidding a major Chicago university and other potential buyers? It is a testimony to the sovereign hand of God once again blessing the life and mission of Paul Lindstrom and the Church of Christian Liberty.



Miss Popularity

A short article in the *Chicago Tribune*, dated April 25, 1985, paid tribute to the storied high school built over six decades earlier, “If there had ever been a vote, Arlington Heights High School probably would have been Miss Popularity among the eight schools in Northwest Suburban High School District 214.”

The article went on to explain why there was such affection for a sixty-five year old square brick building:

When it was selected to be closed because of declining enrollment in the district, the community bitterly objected. When it was shut down last summer, the community mourned...On Saturday, the school, at 502 Euclid St., goes on the auction block for a second time, with a minimum price of \$1.1 million.²

The selling price itself was nothing less than remarkable given the fact the school covers some 200,000 square feet. It boasts three gymnasiums, a full sized library, a large cafeteria, numerous science labs and art studios, and an outdoor football stadium. All this located in the center of one of the

most lucrative suburban housing markets amidst the nearly 300 suburbs of Chicago.

The three main competitors looking to purchase the building were Roosevelt University, Northwest Assembly of God in Mt. Prospect, and the Church of Christian Liberty and Academy. At the time, Christian Liberty Academy in Prospect Heights was a mere one fifth the size in square footage of the new building. Some observers were certain that even at the bargain basement price of \$1.1 million, the property was still way out of reach for both churches.

Oddly enough, the school had remained for sale for almost a year and still there were no takers.

Do I Hear a Million Five?

Mike McHugh remembers the almost miraculous series of events that led the Church of Christian Liberty to consider bidding on the property at auction.

The high school had closed in Arlington Heights and had remained closed for some time. The school board more or less began to panic with an empty facility on their hands that they had to maintain (they had recently completed the construction and opening of the new John Hersey High School some three miles away to replace the older building).

Roosevelt University wanted the campus very badly. To sweeten the deal for a future buyer, the school board had just spent nearly one million dollars in infrastructure upgrades before they closed the school. The board of trustees at Roosevelt had deep pockets and close connections to the city council, so everyone and their uncle felt Roosevelt University would get the building.

Yet, the Bible reminds us that, “The king’s heart is in the hand of the LORD, like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes” (Proverbs 21:1). When the day of the auction was to take place, it came down to three expected bidders—Roosevelt University, Northwest Assembly of God, and the Church of Christian Liberty. The drama began as Northwest Assembly opened the bidding at \$500,000, but soon the other two parties had bid up the price close to one million dollars. At that point the Assembly of God church dropped out, leaving only the Church of Christian Liberty and Roosevelt University.

McHugh remembers, “Phil Roos (the official representative of Christian Liberty) bid \$1.5 million for the entire property. The trustees for Roosevelt University on hand were befuddled that we were still in the bidding. They had never counted on us going as high as we did. Their board of trustees had authorized them to only go as high as \$1.5 million and not a penny more.”

The tension in the room grew as the Roosevelt University trustees huddled and tried to determine their next move. Yet, try as they might to finagle a way to stay in contention, the reality was clear—they had no legal authorization to bid more than the \$1.5 million.

Sensing an opportunity, Phil Roos entered the next bid—adding a mere \$10,000.

All eyes turned to Roosevelt University. The school could obviously afford to bid much more money, but they were hamstrung by the directive from their board of trustees. They tried to cleverly stay in the bidding, but as McHugh remembers, “the Church of Christian Liberty knew the rules of the auction. If they can’t put up a larger bid, we win. The officials on hand were ultimately required to side with us on the matter.”

“Sold!”

Now that the Church of Christian Liberty was the official owner of the facility, there was still a small matter to be considered—how to raise the necessary funds to pay off the purchase amount. Pastor Paul and the other leaders decided the first order of business was to sell the church in Prospect Heights. Amazingly, the church property sold in less than a year after going on the market. A fundraiser was eventually held that netted the remaining \$500,000.

“We paid off the whole amount in under seven years,” McHugh marvels. “Even though we were a church of no more than 200 people, we now owned the school and were completely debt free.”

Yet, not everyone was rejoicing with the congregation. While the church celebrated the work of the divine hand of God in securing a property five times their size, criticism soon appeared in the media over the outcome of the auction.

The *Chicago Tribune* ran a somewhat sarcastic and condescending story entitled, “Minister’s Student Army Finds a New Beachhead.” “After seventeen years of conservative activism at their Prospect Heights location, Rev.

Lindstrom and his soldiers have set their sights on occupying the vacant Arlington Heights School in nearby Arlington Heights.”³

Armed with a Bible, the Constitution, and Knowledge of the Legal System

The reporter hinted not everyone on the Arlington Heights School Board or Village Council had been thrilled with the outcome of the sale. The article goes on to explain how Pastor Paul had earned a reputation as something of a legal street fighter in a nearby suburb, “‘They’re welcome to him,’ a Prospect Heights city attorney said of the church’s plans to move to Arlington Heights. ...Armed with his Bible, the Constitution and knowledgeable of the legal system, the minister can be a formidable opponent.”⁴

Mike McHugh thinks the city attorney for Prospect Heights was probably speaking for more than just himself at city hall when he heard that Pastor Paul was leaving. “There was probably a huge, palpable sigh of relief on the part of many the day we moved from there to Arlington Heights,” he said with a smile.

Pastor Paul believed the move to the new high school building was a strategic step forward in the mission to which God had called him: “What we’ll be seeing in the next five years will equal the accomplishments of the last twenty.”

A Village Has Seller’s Remorse

Now that the Church of Christian Liberty was in possession of the former Arlington Heights High School, there were more challenges to be met. Pastor Paul’s wife, Florie, remembers the first time she toured the facility before it was purchased, “How are we going to buy this building,” I thought. “How are we going to pay for the heat?”

Yet, just as God provided for the purchase of the school He also provided for its maintenance.

“The Lord was so amazing to us in so many ways, even with our unspoken



Moving from Prospect Heights campus in 1985

prayers,” she remembers. One of the evidences of God’s involvement was an unexpected offer from the former head of maintenance at Arlington High School. He approached the new owners and offered to come out of retirement to help train the new custodial staff.

The church took him up on his offer, and his extensive knowledge and experience proved invaluable to moving in and maintaining the building properly.

A few years after the sale of the high school, the school board who sold it suffered a severe case of what might be called “seller’s remorse.” They realized that they had just sold a magnificent property at a bargain basement price in the middle of some very valuable real estate.

“They showed up in Paul’s office one day and said they’d like to buy the school back,” Florie Lindstrom recalls. “He listened respectfully to their offer to sell him other property in the village if only he would return the school to its original owners. He responded by saying, ‘If you can find something of a comparable size and price, we’ll listen.’”

“We did look around at some other buildings the district had closed,” remembers Mike McHugh. “None of them even came close in comparison to what we had here. We ultimately declined their offer.”

As for the neighbors near the school, they soon came to welcome the new Christian Liberty Academy. “They recognized there was less noise, graffiti, and beer bottles left on their yards,” said McHugh. “We have also enjoyed a much better relationship with the village than we did in Prospect Heights. They have treated us fairly for the most part.”

Mourning a Late, Great School

While the community in general came to appreciate the new owners, there remains to this day one group that mourns the loss of the high school. It has nothing to do with the new occupants or their upkeep on the building. Rather, it’s just a case of nostalgia for a great school that was home to sixty-one graduating classes.

A story appeared in the local *Daily Herald* newspaper on June 10, 1999, entitled, “15 Years Later, They Still Bleed Cardinal Red—And Pain Still Lingers for ‘Abandoned’ Students, Faculty, of Arlington High” that captured the sentiment of many. The story stated in part:

In the beginning, or so it seems, was Arlington High School. From its opening in 1923, Arlington was a pillar, and the community lavished its love and affection on it... All that tradition, all that history, came to an end June 8, 1984. Fifteen years ago this week, Arlington High School closed its doors for the last time.⁵



The story goes on to chronicle the desperate efforts to keep the school open once the impending closing was announced. Yet, the fate of the school was sealed when school board members voted five to two, on May 17, 1982, to close the building. The result was that nearly 1,000 current students were to be dispersed among three high schools in the area.

Despite a lawsuit filed to keep it open, and five candidates running for school board vowing to keep the school open, it was still not to be. All five candidates lost, and a ruling by the Illinois Appellate Court upheld the decision to close the school. As the article laments, “Once the school was sold to Christian Liberty Church and Academy in 1985, it was official: There would be no shrine to Arlington’s rich history.”⁶

A Movie Remembers an Elegant Lady

The lingering nostalgia for a time gone by led two graduates of the school to produce a documentary about its rise and fall entitled, “Lady in Red.” The title was chosen based on the scarlet color of the bricks on the historic building.

Another article in the *Chicago Tribune* explained why these two former graduates of the school put up \$10,000 of their own money to make a movie about their alma mater, “Even though it’s been 20 years since it closed, there’s still a lot of great feelings,” said [Jon] Cofield, age 37. ‘You couldn’t wait to go there when you were growing up.’”

The other student involved, Brian Sullivan, had the idea for making the film when he attended his twentieth class reunion. The article continues:

Interviews with attendees of that gathering were among the 50 hours of footage compiled over a three-year span... “There seems to be this bond among Arlington grads,” said Sharon Romack, a member of the school’s Class of 1972. “I don’t know if that was created because the high school closed. But that seems to have something to do with its mystique.”⁷

A Very Special Homecoming

For its part, the Church of Christian Liberty has tried to help ease the pain of the school closing by holding garage sales and selling memorabilia to former students. Today you can find a glass display case with red and white Cardinal letter jackets from the Arlington High School years. There is also a collection of newspaper articles and campaign posters for student government offices.

Sensing the struggle of graduates who have no school to revisit, the Church of Christian Liberty decided to try to be of help. They hosted the first homecoming for graduates in the eighteen years since the school closed its doors. A local newspaper wrote a story about the event and quoted a former student from Arlington High School:

And that was the point of Saturday’s homecoming, or any homecoming. High schools continue to play a role in so many people’s lives long after their education is completed—and most visibly during these special October rituals...We also give special praise to officials at Christian Liberty Academy for being gracious hosts...⁸

The first homecoming event for former Arlington High School students proved so successful that a second was organized in 2008, specifically for the class of 1985, the class that never got to graduate. It helped to close a gap in many student lives that had lingered for many years.

An Occupancy Permit for the Glory of God

Painful as the closing was to many alumni, it would be wrong to place the blame for the demise of Arlington High School on Christian Liberty Academy. All the events that led to its being shut down happened long before Christian Liberty Academy was interested in the facility. The day Phil Roos placed the winning bid for the facility, it had already stood empty and vacant for well over a year.



Dr. Paul Lindstrom standing in front of CLA in Arlington Heights



Main hallway at CLA



Friendships grow quickly at Christian Liberty

Indeed, had not the Church of Christian Liberty purchased the building in 1985, it is conceivable that the school building would have been demolished to make way for new housing units or a subdivision. Arlington High School fulfilled a great need to educate students for nearly sixty-one years at the corner of Euclid and Walnut. Yet one could argue that the building is now fulfilling a much higher calling—advancing the Kingdom of God on earth.

That's the way Pastor Paul put it to a reporter, "This is not a Sunday School picnic we're engaged in. We're onward Christian soldiers. We've been told to occupy until Jesus comes."

And so Christian Liberty Academy has an occupancy permit that, God willing, will allow them to utilize this spacious, attractive, and versatile facility for the sake of the Gospel for many years to come. Meanwhile, they continue to train future generations, "For the Greater Glory of God."

(Endnotes)

- 1 "Historical Events for Year 1922", *HistoryOrb.com*, n.d., <http://www.historyorb.com/events/date/1922> (October 15, 2014).
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