

APRIL 16, 1986

THE *Lutheran*

AN OUTSIDER'S
VIEW
OF LUTHERAN
UNION

IS 'OPEN'
ADOPTION
A GOOD IDEA?

RECEIVED

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'Padre' Johnson:

THE FAITH OF A WILD WEST PAINTER

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Form 1040 Department of the Treasury—Internal Revenue Service **1985**

For the year January 1, 1985, or other tax year beginning 1985, ending 1985

OMB No. 1545-0047

Use IRS label. Other-wise, please print or type.

Your first name and initial (if joint return, also give spouse's name and initial) **JEFF C. TERWILLIGER**

Your social security number **308 58 3840**

Present home address (number and street, including apartment number, or rural route) **123 MAIN STREET**

City, town or post office, state, and ZIP code **ANYTOWN USA 70562**

Your occupation **SALESMAN**

Special occupation

Do you want \$1 to go to this fund? ☒ Yes ☐ No

If joint return, does your spouse want \$1 to go to this fund? ☐ Yes ☒ No

For Privacy Act and Paperwork Reduction Act Notice, see Instructions.

Filing Status

1 ☒ Single

2 ☐ Married (filing joint return (even if only one had income))

3 ☐ Married (filing separate return. Enter spouse's social security no. above and full name here.)

4 ☐ Head of household (with qualifying person). (See page 5 of Instructions.) If the qualifying person is your unmarried child but not your dependent, write child's name here.

5 ☐ Qualifying widow(er) with dependent child (year spouse died \geq 19) (See page 6 of Instructions.)

Exemptions

6a ☒ Yourself ☐ 65 or over ☐ Blind

b ☐ Spouse ☐ 65 or over ☐ Blind

c First names of your dependent children who lived with you.

d First names of your dependent children who did not live with you (see page 6).

e Other dependents (1) Name (2) Relationship (3) Number of months lived in your home (4) Did dependent have income of \$1,500 or more? (5) Did you provide more than one-half of dependent's support?

f Total number of exemptions claimed (also complete line 3b).

Income

7 Wages, salaries, tips, etc. (Attach Form(s) W-2.) **21,435**

8 Interest income (also attach Schedule B if over \$400) **632**

9a Dividends (also attach Schedule B if over \$400) **180** % Exclusion **0**

9c Subtract line 9b from line 9a and enter the result **180**

10 Taxable refunds of state and local income taxes, if any, from the worksheet on page 9 of Instructions.

11 Alimony received

12 Business income or (loss) (attach Schedule C)

13 Capital gain or (loss) (attach Schedule D)

14 40% of capital gain distributions not reported on line 13 (see page 9 of Instructions)

15 Other gains or (losses) (attach Form 4797)

16 Fully taxable pensions, IRA distributions, and annuities not reported on line 17 (see page 9)

17a Other pensions and annuities, including rollovers. Total received **0**

17b Taxable amount, if any, from the worksheet on page 10 of Instructions

18 Rents, royalties, partnerships, estates, trusts, etc. (attach Schedule E)

19 Farm income or (loss) (attach Schedule F)

20a Unemployment compensation (insurance). Total received **0**

20b Taxable amount, if any, from the worksheet on page 10 of Instructions

21a Social security benefits (see page 10). Total received **0**

21b Taxable amount, if any, from worksheet on page 11 (see page 11 of Instructions)

22 Other income (list type and amount—see page 11 of Instructions)

23 Add lines 7 through 22. This is your total income **30,247**

Adjustments to Income

24 Moving expense (attach Form 3903 or 3903F) **0**

25 Employee business expenses (attach Form 2106) **0**

26 IRA deduction, from the worksheet on page 12 **0**

27 Keogh retirement plan deduction **0**

28 Penalty on early withdrawal of savings **0**

29 Alimony paid (recipient's last name and social security no.) **0**

30 Deduction for a married couple when both work (attach Schedule W)

31 Add lines 24 through 30. These are your total adjustments **0**

Adjusted Gross Income

32 Subtract line 31 from line 23. This is your adjusted gross income. If this line is less than \$11,000 and a child lived with you, see "Earned Income Credit" (line 59) on page 16 of Instructions. If you want 100 to figure your tax, see page 13 of Instructions **30,247**

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A LITTLE SALT

Message in graffiti

I serve on our congregation's evangelism committee. One afternoon I returned home to find my 8-year-old daughter had left me the following message: "Mr. Klotz called. There will be a vandalism committee meeting tomorrow at 9:45 A.M."

—Ruth Pritchard
Atlanta

Even the style of the Scriptures is more than human.

—Richard Steele

Lenten sacrifice

Ash Wednesday proved unforgettable this year at Christ Church in Philadelphia's Chestnut Hill section. Parishioners who were attending the service received the following bulletin instructions for the imposition of ashes: "Worshippers are invited to come forward with their confessional sheets and deposit them in the plate. After they have been burned and mixed with oil, worshippers are again invited to come to the altar rail..."

—William A. Shafer
Wyndmoor, Pa.



Knows the 95 theses too

One of our confirmation students responded this way to a quiz asking him to "List the 10 Commandments in any order." He said, "3,6,1,8,4,5,2,10,7."

—Robert A. Jackson Jr.
North Syracuse, N.Y.

Prayer is the spirit speaking truth to Truth.

—Philip James Bailey

Original contributions are welcome. We'll make a small payment for published items, but we can't return unused submissions or acknowledge their receipt.

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Our cover of Cody, Wyo., artist Ray "Padre" Johnson is by Mark A. Staples. (Story on page 4.)

THE LUTHERAN

The magazine of the Lutheran Church in America
2900 Queen Lane, Philadelphia, Pa. 19129
Phone (215) 438-6580 (Editorial),
438-6179 (Advertising), 438-6193 (Subscription)
(ISSN 0024 743X Publication No. 322080)

Editor Edgar R. Trexler; Features Editor Mark A. Staples; Senior News Editor Carolyn J. Lewis; News Editors Rosemary Dyson, Emily Marie Romlin; Editorial Associate Glenn C. Stone; Contributing Editor Floramæ Gelser; Art Director Bernhard Sperl; Production Manager Jack B. Burr; Copy Editor Joyce E. Nelson; Circulation Promotion and Advertising Manager James W. Morentz; Subscription Manager Helen McDermott; Business Manager Eleanor K. Eisenhower.

Published on the first and third Wednesdays of each month (except monthly in July, August and December) by the Lutheran Church in America at 2900 Queen Lane, Philadelphia, Pa. 19129.

Subscription rate \$6.50 a year in the United States and Canada, 2 years for \$11.50, 3 years for \$16. Add \$5 a year for foreign subscriptions. Single copies 50 cents.

Second class postage paid at Philadelphia, Pa., and additional offices. Copyright 1986 by The Lutheran, magazine of the Lutheran Church in America. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Lutheran, 2900 Queen Lane, Philadelphia, Pa. 19129. The Lutheran is a member of the Associated Church Press and Interchurch Features.

The Faith of a Wild

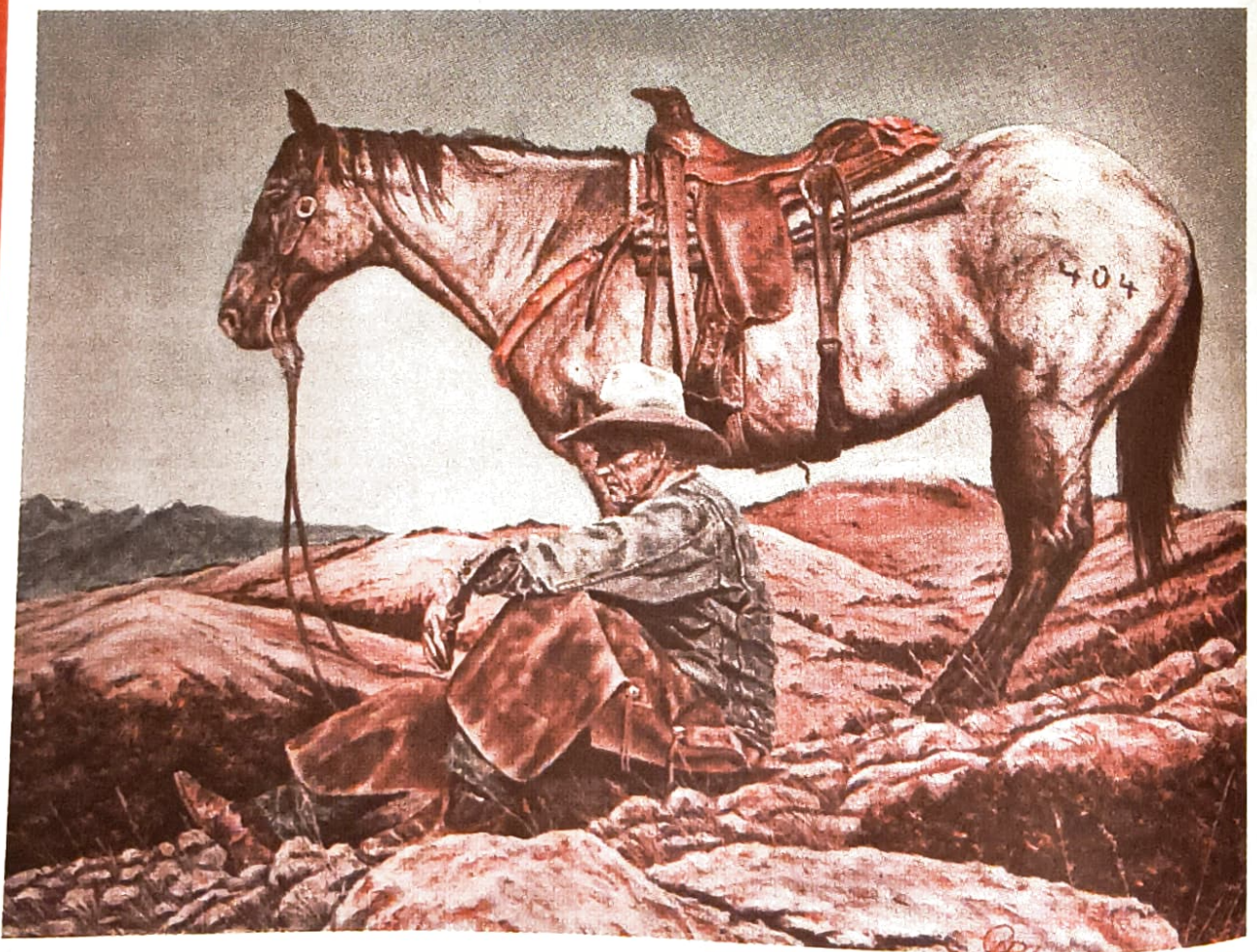
By Mark A. Staples

Painter-Pastor 'Padre' Johnson is called both genius and maverick. He's suddenly finding artistic fame.

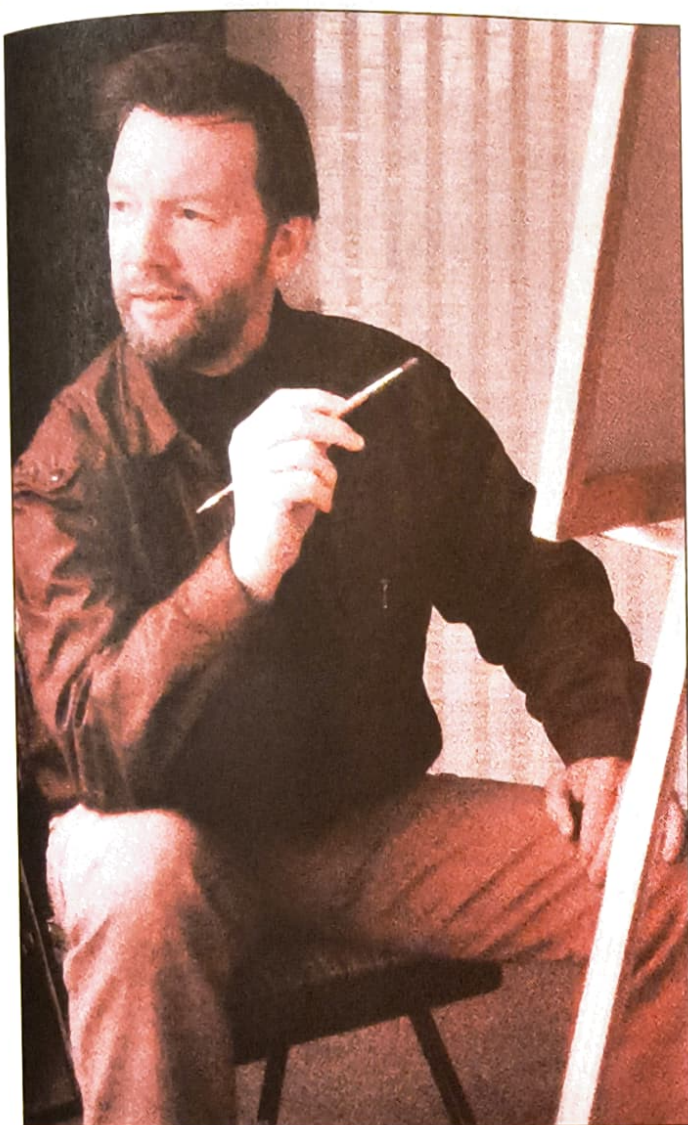
The day before, nature had teased the foothills of the Rockies with a taste of spring. But as Ray "Padre" Johnson loads his sagging hatchback car with paintings, sketches and easels, the now-raw air is filled with rain changing to snow.

Johnson's four-wheel-drive car is only a few years old, but it's a mess. It's traveled more than 100,000 miles. The windshield is cracked. The bottom edges and sides are caked with Wyoming mud, splattered during many splash-filled climbs off the paved road beneath Jim Mountain in Cody to Johnson's simple log-cabin-style studio atop a treeless rolling slope.

From Johnson's porch at night this visiting city-dweller writer can hear silence for the first time in his life. No traffic sounds, no birds, no rustling leaves. No neighbors in sight.



West Painter



Artist Johnson in his Cody studio. At left is his painting *Old Leather Denim and Dreams*.

In this frontier setting painter-pastor Johnson creates the oil paintings of the Wild West that have begun to bring him fame. His last painting sold for more than \$20,000. And he's in the midst of visiting 57 countries in a campaign to paint "the faces of the world," a project sponsored by Voyageur Art which is expected to lead to a Johnson world tour and art exhibition.

Johnson, clad in denim and wearing a cowboy hat, is squeezing the last packages into a car that still has to have room for him and me. In the cramped car now enveloped by the swirl of a snowstorm, layers of easels and brackets for a painting exhibition seal Johnson from my view. We make eye contact by glancing at the rear-view mirror.

By his own definition, Ray "Padre" Johnson isn't comfortable in the foothills. He defines faith as a "reach, a risk into the unknown out on the summit. Some people see faith as a security blanket. Faith then just becomes synonymous with going to church and Sunday school, something they may

do out of fear that they may incur their Maker's wrath if they are not giving off enough faith." Such activities can be artificial if misused, he says, especially if participants use the activities as a springboard to "judge others who are not the same."

Johnson, a compact man with a sandy beard and hair, speaks with a gravelly voice. In a day and evening of conversation he impresses an observer that his ideas about life are constantly expanding. He has a world view of theology rather than a parochial one. "I never fix my answers in concrete," he says. "My answer for now may go through a 10-degree adjustment in five years as I sort out human experience."

While Johnson's always been part of the institutional church as a chaplain or parish pastor, he is something of a maverick, unbound by traditional categories. He now has a part-time call to First English Church, Billings, Mont.

"His vision is different from that of most people," explains Bishop Thomas Blevins of the Pacific Northwest Synod. "He has an ability to let go of what makes most people secure. He has a unique sense of who he is and what ministry means that enables him to serve in a different and special way. In a church that's as structured and defined as ours is, we tend to be less inclined to find a place where people like Padre can have a go at what they do best. He just doesn't want to fit into a neat category, to be a 'legitimate pastor.'"

Johnson's reach-out philosophy keeps him constantly on the move. "Some people need a center," Johnson says, noting that the grandeur of the setting for his Cody studio would make an appropriate one. "But I feel I'm a world person. My center is out there. I'm not uncomfortable anywhere unless the people I'm with think they have all the answers for someone else."

That kind of attitude has pushed Johnson, now 51, to take on a dizzying array of activities. After graduating from the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago in 1960, he served as a campus pastor at Middlebury College in Vermont and as a parish pastor in Rutland, Vt., during which time he was chaplain to the police department there. In his New England days he took occasional jobs as a truck driver and emergency room medical technician "to meet people from all walks of life."

In 1967-68 he served as a field medical officer and chaplain with a mobile specialty force, "the River Raiders" on the Mekong Delta. He was wounded three times, twice within one hour. He speaks in measured tones about the experience.

"I became familiar with the emotional texture of people," he says in a typically dramatic, expressive style. "It allowed me to see the human drama of war eyeball to eyeball. I had to discover how Christianity fit in out there. When we captured someone in the opposition I wanted them to feel through my touch, voice and eyes the response of another member of the human family. I came to see each new face I met as a painting, a fingerprint painted by the Master Painter. I could

Johnson: "I think many depictions of Christ are just too heavenly"

sometimes see a piece of myself inside someone else's skin."

Johnson was decorated for three rescue missions involving the River Raiders. He says he treated an estimated 75 "opposition" soldiers. It was in Vietnam that Marines began calling Johnson "Padre." The name stuck.

Upon returning home, he served as chaplain to the famed naval air team, the Blue Angels. (He remains a chaplain in the naval reserve.) The Jaycees recognized him as one of its Ten Outstanding Young Men of America partly as a result of his Vietnam service. He then took on a series of positions in government service, mental health, crime prevention and community development. One of those positions involved him as director of the governor's crime commission under Minnesota Gov. Harold Levander (1969-72).

A community development position was in Sault Ste. Marie, Mich., where he helped plan the upgrading of roads, sewers and housing in a community of Native Americans. At that time he befriended the late Sen. Hubert Humphrey, who tried to convince him to run for public office. But Johnson decided instead to return to Minnesota to be pastor of an experimental ministry in the new town of Jonathan, Minn. The congregation was started in 1974 as a joint project of the Minnesota Council of Churches and the Lutheran Church in America, the latter purchasing land for the congregation.

Only about 20 percent of the members were Lutheran then, Johnson recalls. The community congregation also had a mix of Roman Catholics, Episcopalians, United Church of Christ members, United Presbyterians, American Baptists and a Jew.

"I felt my job was to allow true ecumenism to breathe," Johnson says. "I wanted to respect the diversity of each heritage plus acknowledge the threads that bring us together."

Johnson designed a constitution for the congregation which challenged the constitution of the LCA. "I wanted to treat each tradition equally, allow room for all the members," he says. But he claims the LCA thought of the experiment as too open-ended. "I like diversity. I don't want everything alike, especially when it comes to theology," Johnson says. "I'm not anti-Lutheran and not anti-institution," he continues. "I'm not out to alter the the constitution of the institution, but there are exceptions."

Minnesota Synod Bishop Herbert Chilstrom knew Johnson during the Jonathan community days and says Johnson's style and the Jonathan community project raise hard questions for Lutherans in American society.

"Ray Johnson has many talents and some would consider him to be a creative genius," Chilstrom says. "But I consider him to be more of a maverick. I think he tried to fulfill the mandate of setting up a community church in the Jonathan community. But it never caught fire. The question is whether it was because of his style or other factors. I suspect it was a little of both. For one thing the town of Jonathan never grew the way we hoped it would."

Chilstrom disagrees with Johnson's "world view" of theology. "I think you're more honest with people in dialogue if it is clear what tradition you are coming from. Our experience in the Jonathan community raises real questions about

whether Lutherans in America can be involved in community church projects. Fundamental groups have a much easier time blending into that kind of scene. A church like ours has such a strong confessional and liturgical tradition that we find it hard to work in that kind of community structure."

Johnson stayed on at Jonathan for four more years until 1979. "But I felt my time on that frontier was coming to a close." The pioneer members of the ecumenical community eventually moved on to different congregations and the Jonathan community church became Living Hope Church, Chaska, Minn., an LCA church now growing with its Lutheran identity, according to Chilstrom.

Johnson then went to First English Church, Billings, but he also "returned to the ridge," the Wild West setting he had known as a boy growing up in the Cody area where his father had once been assigned as an agent for the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Johnson had shown signs of being a talented artist even at the age of 10. He liked to draw human portraits.

To immerse himself in the idea of painting life in the Wild West, he took a job as a cowman, herding cattle. He paid for his first saddle by trading a painting for it.

Soon he began painting memorable scenes from his photos and his mind. *Old Leather Denim and Dreams* shows a cowman taking a break, sitting atop a rocky slope with his tired horse and reflecting. *Ghost Riders in the Sky* shows cowmen in search of stray cattle in high country as a passing hail storm produces a ghostly sky.

Johnson says his photographs are the vehicle through which he returns to his memory. He has pictures to fill dozens of scrapbooks. From them he is able to transfer a sense of realism onto the canvas. He's done most of his painting and sketches within the past five years. All but a few of his 70 or so originals have been sold.

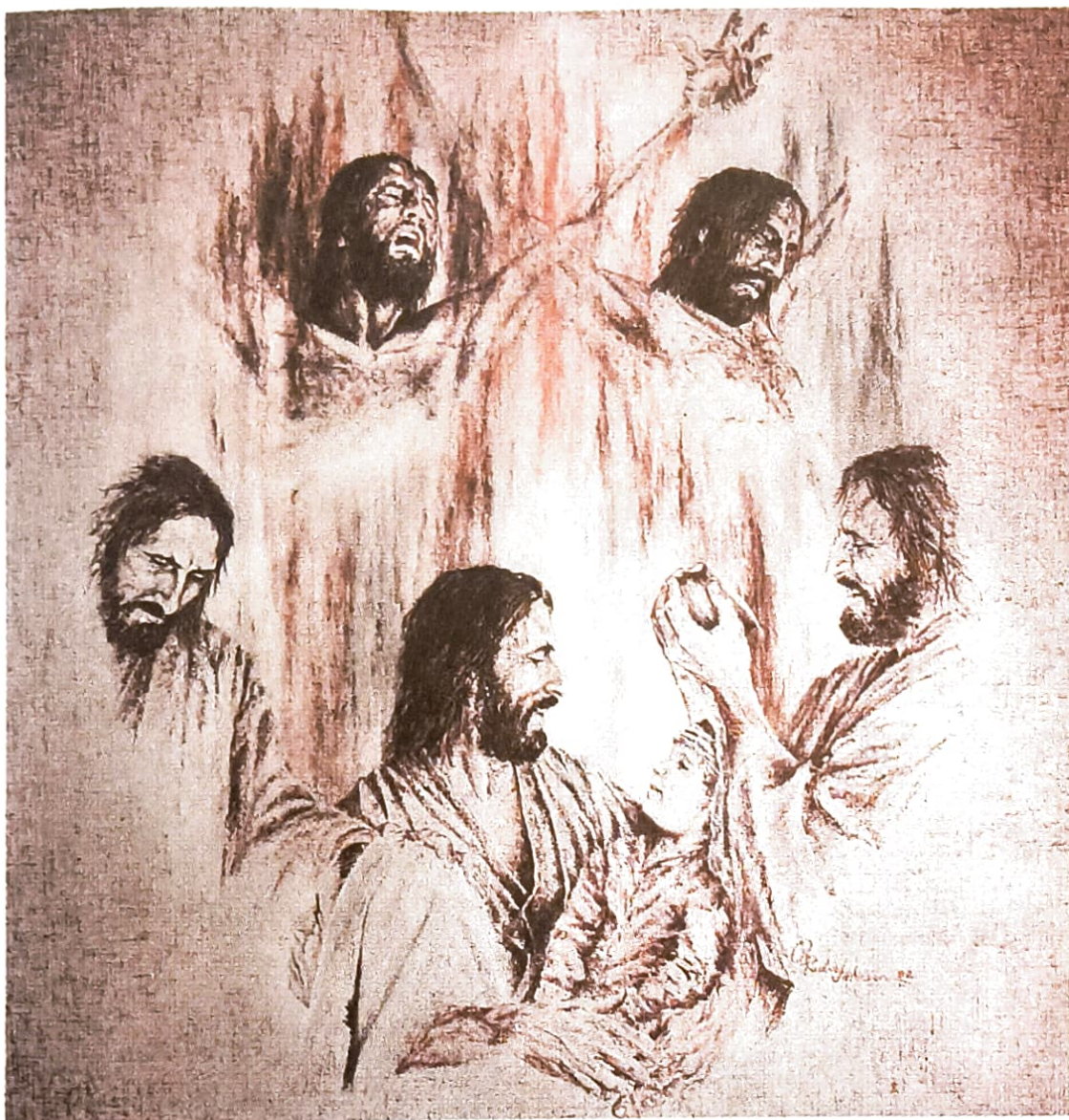
Johnson was one of several portrait painters invited to submit a painting of President Ronald Reagan to the second inaugural event. The invitation was extended by the Independent Republican Party of Minnesota. Johnson's depiction gave Reagan a western weathered face. "I think he looks weathered, like a man who's been in the open," Johnson says. The artist says Vice President George Bush told him he'd captured Reagan's face the best, though the president may not have agreed. "In a few years he (Reagan) might think it's nice," muses Johnson.

Johnson's now painted 15 of the 65 paintings he plans to take on his world tour in 1989. He's done a moving sketch of a Sudanese man whose expression, Johnson says, "sums up the suffering I've seen in the world. In each painting I do I see 1,000 faces." His paintings have been exhibited in 28 cities so far.

In attempting to catch people of the world on canvas he's had a special interest in capturing horsemen. He's focused on riders in Australia, Hawaii, China, Tibet, Afghanistan, Argentina, North Africa and South Africa. He speaks eight languages and recently spent several months in the Soviet Union photographing future faces to paint.

Johnson's had disappointments in his rapid-fire life. When he came home from Vietnam he realized his marriage was crumbling. A divorce resulted. But he keeps in touch with his grown children. A son, Richard, 27, is a sculptor. Another son, Ray III, manages a department store.

For painter-pastor Johnson, the most popular painting he exhibits is one depicting five faces of Jesus Christ. It outsells all his other prints even at Wild West shows and its buyers



Johnson's painting of Christ came from a "vision"

include non-believers. Among its great admirers has been King Karl Gustav XVI of Sweden.

The painting has a unique origin. Johnson had photographed a Jewish friend and his daughter as a possible model for a painting of Christ. Later, while hiking in the snow-wrapped Grand Tetons, he suffered a near-fatal fall and briefly lost consciousness. He claims to have seen a vision of the photographs arranged in a cluster of five during the fall. "It was fixed for all time in my imagination," he says. The resulting work shows Jesus laughing, accepting a child, comforting a woman and during the resurrection. He has sold more than 150 prints of the painting, along with the original. For some observers, the painting of Christ depicts Jesus as rough and almost too human. "That's the way I picture him," Johnson says. "He worked in the dirt and the dust under a hot sun. I think many depictions are just too heavenly."

Johnson's global exposure to humanity has given him a world view of theology that makes some people uncomfortable. "I believe in Jesus Christ, but I cannot be sure that someone who has not known Christ doesn't have insights to God which are equally as valuable. There may be many ways to believe," he says. "I can't imagine God saying to anyone, 'Since you haven't understood the saving grace of my Son, I can't accept you.'"

"I feel life is a prayer. At any moment you may find a person anywhere — in the Kalahari Desert or Johannesburg — with whom you may share a similar ingredient for life and you'll resonate with a person you may not see again. This person will share and understand my acceptance of him and will accept me. That's a kind of giving away of understanding that is like the Parable of the Prodigal Son. God is accepting all of us, the unacceptable, all the time." ■

An Outsider's

Assuming the 1988 wedding between Lutherans isn't called off by a lovers' quarrel, what is the real significance of the big event?

By Jean Caffey Lyles

Church unions are like weddings (never mind, for the moment, the obvious limitations of marriage as a metaphor for a three-way merger such as the impending Lutheran amalgamation).

For example, certain moments connected with both weddings and church unions cause everyone present, including total strangers, to go all misty-eyed and sentimental and to babble ecstatically about this splendid match and the glorious future ahead.

The last such moment I remember in the Lutheran progress toward union happened on a hot September day in 1982 in a big, bright, air-conditioned convention hall in Louisville, Ky. More than 1,000 Lutherans were trying to sing *The Church's One Foundation* (the standard hymn for such occasions) in perfect rhythm with two other bunches of Lutherans in far-flung parts of the country. While all these convention-goers in Louisville, Cleveland and San Diego were singing four-part harmony rather well, tenuously united by audio connection, there was not a dry eye in the house. We unbiased outsiders at the press table were, of course, keeping our usual cool, journalistic objectivity while dabbing our eyes with tissues. Prior to the hymn we had witnessed a kind of long-distanced betrothal via the audio hook-up, followed by semi-dignified Lutheran whooping and hollering.

Of course, the possibility exists that one of the several lovers' quarrels that have made this engagement toward a 1988 union so interesting to watch could assume major proportions. One of the partners might get steaming mad, send back the ring and call the whole thing off. (It would not be the first broken courtship in ecumenical history.)

Right now the Lutheran union is at the stage a wedding-in-the-making reaches when hostilities start breaking out over whether the bride's pastor or the groom's should perform the ceremony, who should and should not be invited to the rehearsal dinner and whether having *Lohengrin* would be tacky.

One thing must be said for Lutherans: They are having their fights in full public view. At one time church unions were negotiated behind closed doors by the "old boys" of the participating churches, and the details of the compromises and

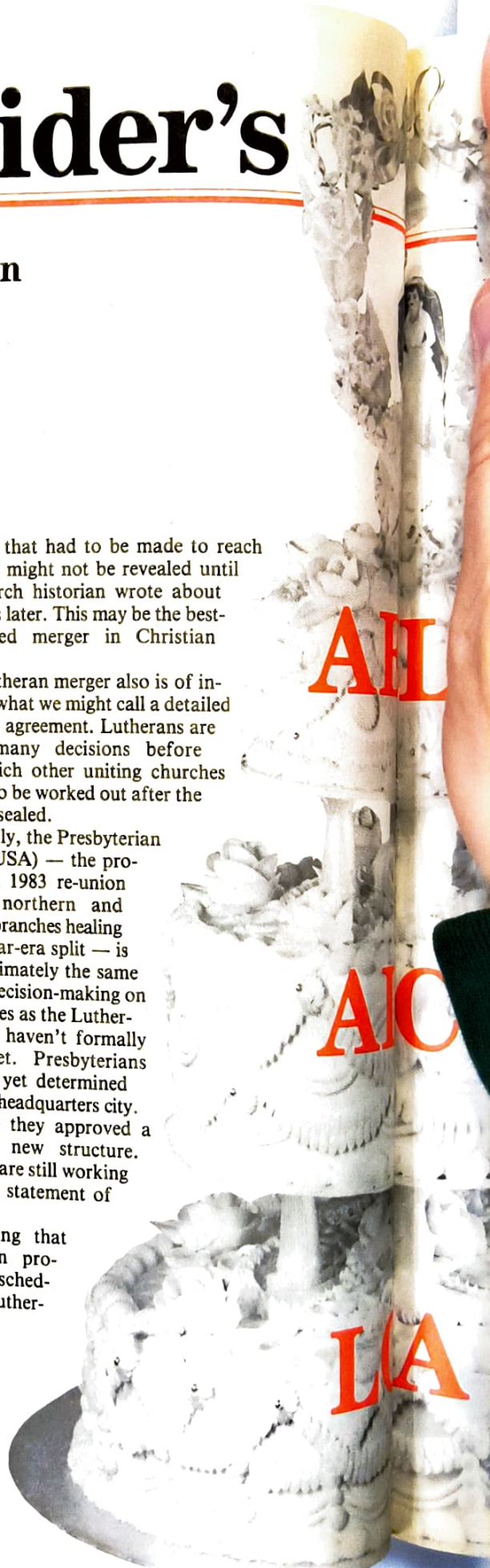
trade-offs that had to be made to reach agreement might not be revealed until some church historian wrote about them years later. This may be the best-documented merger in Christian history.

The Lutheran merger also is of interest for what we might call a detailed prenuptial agreement. Lutherans are making many decisions before union which other uniting churches have left to be worked out after the pact was sealed.

Ironically, the Presbyterian Church (USA) — the product of a 1983 re-union between northern and southern branches healing a Civil War-era split — is at approximately the same stage of decision-making on many issues as the Lutherans, who haven't formally united yet. Presbyterians have not yet determined their new headquarters city. Nor have they approved a proposed new structure. And they are still working on a new statement of faith.

Assuming that the union proceeds on schedule and Luther-

The author, an Episcopalian, is Protestant editor of the Religious News Service in New York City and an editor-at-large for *The Christian Century*. The article is the second in a series of occasional pieces on Lutheran union being jointly published in *The Lutheran* and *The Lutheran Standard*.



View of Union

LUTHERANS
GROWING
TOGETHER



ans wake up Jan. 1, 1988, to find themselves members of a new church — what then?

The consummation of a church union, like a wedding, is exciting; but in both cases, the “forever after” part turns out to be filled with less romance and more reality. Learning to live and work together is a far more costly and sobering experience than the superficial shows of unity one ecumenist calls “kissy-kissy” ecumenism.

If Lutheran union is like others I’ve observed, the partners will not immediately become indistinguishable. (Almost 30 years after the union of the Congregationalist Christian churches and the Evangelical & Reformed Church into the United Church of Christ, many members still identify themselves as “former E&Rs” or Congregationalists.)

But what difference will the new Evangelical Lutheran Church in America make for Lutherans in local churches, for other Christians, and for the nation?

For one thing it will change the “balance of power” in American Pro-

testantism. If the new church opts for membership in the National Council of Churches, the impact of a 5.3 million-member denomination, incorporating Lutheran branches not previously part of the council, could be considerable. In recent years, the Lutheran Church in America has been a moderate or even relatively conservative voice in the liberal council. The addition of the American Lutheran Church’s strength will probably increase this moderating or conservatizing influence. The embarrassing fact that Lutherans have only one executive-level staff member in the NCC, and that achieved only after long and pained Lutheran complaints, is sure to change.

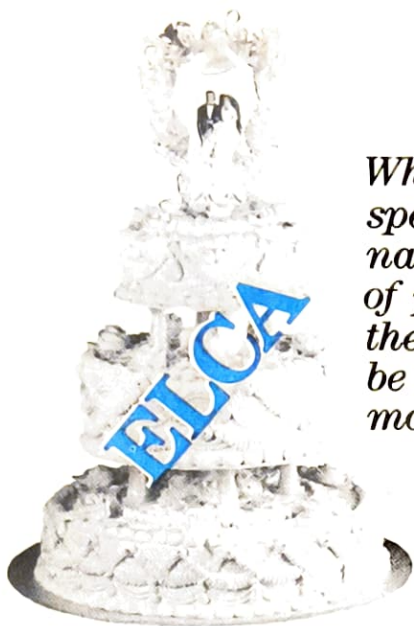
And if (in the union process) the Lutherans should for some reason decide to withdraw from membership in the 31-denomination council of Protestant and Orthodox bodies, their defection would probably be fatally crippling, and the occasion for a realignment of the U.S. ecumenical scene. It’s hard to imagine that the NCC could credibly represent mainline Protestantism without Lutheran participation.

Certainly, when Lutherans speak as a church body in the national forum of public affairs, their voice will be heard more clearly. Who can blame non-Lutherans for being confused about the identities and sizes of a multiplicity of Lutheran bodies? If three of those bodies can unite and make a common witness in public life, their words and deeds could well carry more weight.

The new Lutheran body, because of its size and polity, with a head of communion who is both full-time chief executive officer and chief spiritual leader with a tenure of several years, will have a certain leadership advantage. The head of the new church — depending on the character and personality of the person elected — could well become the most powerful and influential figure in U.S. Protestantism. (Note that the polities of the larger Baptist and Methodist bodies do not afford their top leaders the combination of such prominence, power and assured tenure.)

A Pan-Lutheran “balance of power” question will remain vis-a-vis the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The LCMS now becomes the “little guy” in relation to the new proposed ELCA body. The Lutheran merger, with its inclusion of former Missourian Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches members, isn’t likely to improve relations with the LCMS.

Some ecumenists contend that the one event that made



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Lutheran union possible was the LCMS decision in 1981 to break altar and pulpit fellowship with the ALC. It was only then that some ALC members had to acknowledge that there was no point in sitting around "waiting for Missouri" to come around before putting together a scheme for Lutheran unity. The other, earlier key event that made union possible was a schism — the AELC break-off from the LCMS. AELC's need to become part of a larger, more stable entity enabled it to play a catalytic role in getting union talks off dead center.

The union ends any illusion that altar and pulpit fellowship with the LCMS might be restored in the foreseeable future.

Sadly, Lutheran union leaves the LCMS by itself in a theological backwater. In time, perhaps, that church and the even more conservative Wisconsin Synod (based in Milwaukee!) will draw closer together.

The unexpected decision by the Commission for a New Lutheran Church to put the main church offices in Milwaukee could — if it sticks — shift the regional balance of Protestant power from East to Midwest. The action may, in fact, help influence the Presbyterian Church (USA), the Episcopal Church and agencies of the United Church of Christ — all of which are pondering relocation — to move closer to the geographical and demographic center of the country. While such a location as Milwaukee may have disadvantages for international mission concerns, ecumenical relations and major media attention, it does promote an image of a church that is in touch with the "heartland" and intends to listen to the pulsebeat of local churches in Middle America.

A new mainline church with the word "Evangelical" in its name could help restore to the American vocabulary the authentic meaning of that word, which secularists and the mass media have come to use almost interchangeably with such pejorative terms as "fundamentalist." The new prominence of the word "evangelical" could also make Lutherans themselves more mindful of the church's reason for being, its mission to spread the good news of the Gospel.

After being preoccupied with merger issues for six years or more, Lutheran leaders, once the church settles into its new identity, may find the energies they've spent internally on the necessary but tedious work of designing the new organization will now be freed up, and they'll be able to give more time to less parochial concerns — including mission, evangel-

ism, education, ecumenism and public witness.

Lutherans, having achieved some measure of unity among themselves, will be able to consider what it might mean to manifest Christian unity in their relations with Catholics or Orthodox or Episcopalians or Presbyterians or Methodists or Baptists. These three Lutheran bodies, each of which brings a different ecumenical experience to the merger, will have something unique to contribute as the new church works out its ecumenical future.

One result of Lutheran union may be that the members of the three uniting bodies will have to give up their stereotypes about one another. Or perhaps they will discover a grain of truth in some of those exaggerated images, and learn to live with one another's quirks, as well as one another's gifts and graces. One Lutheran, after attending a CNLC meeting, remarked: "In the new church, the AELC people should be in charge of worship and liturgy. The LCA people should be in charge of social action. And the ALC people should be in charge of the pastries for coffee hour." (Guess which church the speaker was affiliated with!)

The battles about quotas or goals for ethnic-minority representation on committees or convention delegations have not all been fought yet; but one who has paid even cursory attention to the work of the CNLC has to conclude that the new church will have a commitment to being "inclusive" and will want to promote such an image.

While Lutheran unity will radically alter the lives, career paths and residences of a good many Lutheran leaders and employees at national level offices (and some may lose their jobs as agencies consolidate and relocate), it is harder to see what impact the union will have for local churches. Their national church may have a new name, their magazine may have a new look, and they may send the national offerings to a different office, but many lay people in local churches will wonder what all the fuss is about.

The new design may bring some changes in terminology that local folk have to get used to, and they may see more reported about their national church in the newspapers, but other than that, Ascension or Zion or Trinity Church may go on living out its local parish life much as before.

Where Lutherans of all branches are present in a locality, the awareness of change could be more profound than just seeing new faces at a synod meeting. In some cases, the change could mean a decision to have one strong congregation in a neighborhood rather than three separate struggling ones.

One last prediction: Lutherans everywhere may solemnly vow never to refer to their new church by its alphabet-soup initials, but just watch. Long before the procession of banners and ecclesiastical dignitaries starts down the aisle at the inaugural service of the new church, the proposed acronym "ELCA" (pronounced, God help us, "ELK-uh") will have become irrevocably embedded in all our churchly vocabularies.

But those of us outsiders, viewing Lutheran union from the sidelines, expect Lutherans to contribute more to American ecclesiastical life than one more ugly acronym. We on-lookers couldn't care less how many synods you have and how you determine the boundary lines. What we'll be looking for is something more intangible; a new spirit, a new vision that gives the rest of us a fresh perspective of what it means to be the church and live out the Gospel among brothers and sisters from whom one has been separated too long. ■

ONE BLOOD, MANY COLORS

Asian Americans: Becoming Lutheran

By Edmond Yee

The Sunday after her grandparents arrived from China, Lisa Wong and her parents worshiped at a local Anglo Lutheran congregation. "While we appreciate our church very much," said Lisa's father, "we also wish we could go to an Asian Lutheran church nearby so that Lisa may become better acquainted with her heritage."

How many of the Lutheran Church in America's 10,000 baptized Asian members (most of whom belong to Anglo congregations) would share Wong's sentiment and wishes? While no formal survey on this topic has been taken, informal conversations indicate that a large number would agree. "It's nice to belong to the Lutheran church," said a *nisei* (second-generation Japanese American) couple in a small town in Pennsylvania, "but we wish the church would help us to retain our culture. We are particularly concerned for our children, as we are quite isolated from the Japanese community." The church, in the opinion of these parents, should be a bridge between cultures.

However, the parents' concern may not be shared by all of their children, for many reasons. The Rev. Charles Kuo, pastor of Chinese Lutheran Church, San Francisco, articulated some of them. "Some of our young people don't pay any attention in par-



The Rev. Daniel Chu (left) speaks during Transcultural Seminar at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago.

ticular to their own cultural heritage," Kuo observed, "because they came over here when they were small and didn't have a chance to learn the culture before coming. And once they got here there is little opportunity for them to learn it in school. Moreover, some decided to learn American ways so that they may survive in this country. Besides, it is hard to try to maintain one's culture with little or no institutional support."

How do those who did have training in their own cultures view themselves after they become Lutherans? "I see no conflict between Lutheranism and Japanese culture," says Yosh Hokama, a member of Lutheran Oriental Church in Torrance, Cal. "I am very comfortable in the church and with my culture," echoes Hazel Suzuki, a member of the same congregation. "I am very proud of my culture and I intend to retain my heritage."

Even though most of the Asian Lutherans belong to Anglo congregations, there is little heavy concentration in any of them. Like the Asian population itself, they are found in every state. Asian membership in Lutheran churches is not a new phenomenon. The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod began work in New York City's Chinatown in the 1930s. As a result, True Light Lutheran Church came into being.

Some of the predecessor bodies of the LCA also attempted to minister with Asians in the early 1950s. The former United Lutheran Church in America, through the late Dr. L.S.G. Miller, a former missionary to Japan, initiated work among the Japanese in Los Angeles. He was assisted by the Rev. Paul Nakamura. The Rev. D.G.M. Bach worked with the Japanese in California's Fresno area.

The ULCA also had Asians on its clergy roster. The Rev. Daniel Chu, now retired and

living in Federal Way, Wash., was one of the first to serve in Anglo congregations. He was followed by his brother, the Rev. David Chu, the Rev. Paul Nakamura and the Rev. Sam Ujiie, all of whom are still in active parish ministry.

The Asian membership in the LCA is now growing phenomenally. "In some ways, the growth rate of Asian Lutherans in the United States is higher than in some Asian countries where the LCA has mission work," observed a recent immigrant pastor from Taiwan.

What happens to an Anglo congregation that experiences an increase in Asian membership? "It has been an education and a challenge to our people," says a pastor whose Midwestern congregation has a good number of Southeast Asians. "To me," he continues, "it has been a challenge as well. This is particularly true in the areas of culture, language, communication and pastoral care. When you don't understand their culture and language, you just can't communicate meaningfully and do an adequate job in caring for them." The same pastor also sees the presence of the Southeast Asians as an opportunity for ministry and service.

What is there about the Lutheran church that draws the Asians into its fold? "The Lutheran church cares," observes a Southeast Asian who left Vietnam five years ago and was a recent arrival from one of the refugee camps in Thailand. "The pastor," shouted one Japanese American as he hurried away from church one Sunday morning. "The Lutheran worship and theology have appeal for me," says a Chinese American woman thoughtfully.

The Lutheran church means different things to different people. For Asians it means at the very least tradition, care, relationships, worship and theology — but it is not yet a bridge.

Next: An Intentional Ministry



This is the second of five installments by Dr. Edmond Yee in a yearlong series on diversity and inclusiveness in the church. Yee teaches world religions and directs the multicultural ministries program at Pacific Seminary, Berkeley, Cal.

Is 'Open' Adoption a Good Idea?

Lutheran Social Service of Texas has pioneered an approach that's gaining national favor

By Peter J. Faur

Within hours after her son was born in Dallas, Colette Smith (not her real name) faced the biggest decision of her life. Whom would she choose to adopt her baby?

Colette had worked for several months before the birth with counselors from Lutheran Social Service of Texas. Now, to help her make the choice, the new mother received a number of profiles of couples approved by LSST.

"I knew after reading the profiles that I wanted my child to be adopted by Gary and Caryl," she says.

"It was apparent from what they had written that they were very much in love with each other. Gary and Caryl emphasized that the child they adopted would be raised as a Lutheran. More than anything, I wanted my son to grow up in a Christian home."

It may seem unusual that Colette, the birthmother, would have the privilege of choosing a home for her baby, now a 2-year-old named John Andrew. Colette and the adopting couple, however, have chosen to take part in "open adoption," an alternative to traditional adoption being pioneered by LSST.

Of the roughly 250 adoptions LSST handles each year, about 60 percent include some form of openness. The agency offers traditional adoption for those who want it. It carefully evaluates people who request open adoption to be sure they are ready to handle it.

The author is a corporate speechwriter for Southwestern Bell Corp. in St. Louis.



Silber: Open adoption questions long-held beliefs

LSST has received national attention for its open approach, with coverage on ABC-TV's *20-20*; *Good Morning, America* and *World News Tonight*; NBC-TV's *Today*, and CBS *Morning News*. The director of LSST's San Antonio office, Kathleen Silber, is recognized as an expert on the subject.

Open adoption also seems to be gaining in favor nationally. LSST recently contacted 29 Lutheran agencies to determine interest in the concept and 22 responded. All said they would allow the birthmother to spend time with the child before adoption. Another 20 would permit the mother to name the child and send gifts after the adoption. Eighteen said they would permit birthparents to take part in selecting the adoptive parents. Seventeen said they would facilitate correspondence between the two sets of parents. Thirteen would permit pictures to be shared and eight would facilitate face-to-face meetings if the two parents wished.

Open adoption, Silber says, grows from a belief that the

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secrecy of traditional adoption has caused emotional complications for many birthparents, adoptive parents and adoptees.

Colette says she found open adoption to be a welcome opportunity during a trying time of her life.

"Once I decided to put my child up for adoption, I had misgivings," Colette says. "I knew his father and I wouldn't marry, and I knew I couldn't provide the child with a stable home life.

"I wasn't comfortable with the idea that I would never know anything about him after the adoption was finalized. I couldn't imagine being cut off completely from the child I would bring into the world. Then I heard about LSST's program.

"I have no desire to come between John and Gary and Caryl. They are his parents, and I respect their right to raise John as they wish. I'm grateful that they understand I'll

always be concerned about John and will want to know how he is."

What's the attraction of open adoption for the adoptive parents? First, they have easier access to information about the child's medical history. Second, they're better prepared to factually answer their child's question about birthparents.

Third, they gain a better understanding of the dignity of their role as adoptive parents, so they don't feel as if they're "second best."

And fourth, they have the satisfaction of bringing peace of mind to the birthparent, who gains assurance that the adoption is working out well.

Over time, Colette, Gary and Caryl have become more involved than most people in open adoption. They know one another's addresses and phone numbers and have met several times. Colette and John know one another fairly well, although at this point John doesn't understand that Colette is his birthmother.

Says Caryl: "It's wonderful for us to know Colette. We can see the love she has for John. When the time comes to explain to John why Colette wanted him to be adopted, we can say with certainty that it was because she loved him so much, not because she didn't want him."

Gary adds: "We believe Christ wants us to respond to Colette's need to know about John. She doesn't deserve to suffer the deprivation most birthmothers face simply because she loved her son enough to want the best possible life for him."

Open adoption strikes at the foundations of long-held beliefs about adoption. LSST's Kathleen Silber argues that it's time such beliefs are questioned.

Silber says traditional adoption continues because of four myths.

First, contrary to popular belief, Silber says, birthmothers and couples who give their babies to adoptive parents *do* care. They usually are performing an extremely caring, unselfish act — much more unselfish than having an abortion for convenience or keeping the child to satisfy their own needs.

Letters provide a mainstay of open adoption and bring caring attitudes into the open.

The letters are exchanged between birthparents and adop-



Silber counsels a birthparent: "We take seriously Christ's words that 'the truth shall make you free.'"

tive parents and between birthparents and adoptees, when the latter can understand them. The agency usually acts as the go-between, although in some cases relationships have developed to the point that individuals communicate directly.

"The letters accomplish different things for different players in the adoption drama," Silber says. "For birthparents — especially birthmothers — the letters constructively focus feelings of love and loss. For adoptive parents, letters bring empathy for and insight into the birthparent's situation. For adoptees, the letters give positive answers about why they were placed for adoption."

Second, contrary to common belief, secrecy isn't necessary, Silber says. She points out that secrecy and sealed birth records didn't exist until the turn of the century. Belief was widespread then that tendencies toward such social problems as promiscuity and criminal behavior were inherited. Social work was in its infancy, and social workers used secrecy as a strategy to make adoption more acceptable to middle-class families. Social workers became intermediaries between birthparents and adoptive parents, giving assurances that a child was without physical, emotional or mental defects.

The system couldn't work without sealing birth records to conceal the background of the child. Eventually came the practice of creating a new birth certificate with the adoptive parents listed as if they were the birthparents.

"Today, secrecy's defenders say it 'protects' the parties involved in adoption," Silber says. "Supposedly, the birthparents will feel less pain if all reminders of their child are out of sight."

"The adoptive parents, it is believed, are spared having to recall the pain of their infertility by having a constant reminder of the way their family was formed. And they're protected, supporters say, from the possibility of kidnapping by birthparents who changed their mind."

"The adoptee, it is argued, is protected from unfavorable information about his birthparents and from the conflict of having two sets of parents."

"For the people who choose open adoption, however, these rationales are unsatisfactory. They'd rather have information about one another."

"Birthparents find comfort in learning about the family their child is with and the progress the child is making. Adoptive parents come to know the birthparents as real people, not stereotypes. Adoptees will be able to channel psychological energy into reaching their potential instead of dwelling on such questions as 'Why was I given for adoption?' and 'Who are my birthparents?'"

Keith Schmode, director of LSST's North Texas Regional Office in Dallas, makes this point: "The whole idea of secrecy often creates unnecessary fears and anxieties for those involved in the adoption process. The birthparents fear that their decision worked out badly for the child. The adoptive parents fear that the child and the birthparents will want to reunite. The adoptee fears he or she was unacceptable to his other birthparents or came from a horrible background."

Third, unlike what many believe, birthparents *don't* forget about the child they put up for adoption.

But believing that they forget makes it easier for those around the birthparents to handle the situation. Relatives and friends don't have to confront the grief felt by the birthparents. The adoptive parents don't have to face their fears that the birthparents will change their minds. And adoption agencies can avoid helping birthparents with grief.

"We don't think it's fair to the birthparents to let them fall victim to this myth," Silber says. "LSST provides extensive counseling after an adoption to help them with their grief."

"By opening up communication through letters to the adoptive parents and the adoptee, we give birthparents an outlet for sharing their feelings about the adoption. Also, they grow in their conviction that their decision was best for the child."

Fourth, unlike what many believe, adoptees *are* curious about ancestry like anyone else. Their curiosity is evidence only of a healthy, inquisitive mind, not of a lack of love for adoptive parents.

"If you lock this information away, you're creating unnecessary fear and frustration," Silber says. "We've found that older adoptees who want more information about their birthparents usually love their adoptive parents very much. They simply want to know two things: 'Who do I look like?' and 'Why was I given away?' They're looking for information to untangle their pasts and help predict their futures."

What about the fear that adoptees will find something unpleasant in their pasts?

"One's roots and origins are part of a person's reality," Silber says. "Circumstances under which birthparents relinquished their child are invariably understandable if the facts and full truth of the situation are known. Most often the welfare of their child is the birthparents' main concern. To deny the adoptees access to these facts is to lock them into negative fantasizing about birthparents and themselves."

"We take seriously Christ's words that 'the truth shall make you free,'" Silber explains. "In the large sense, of course, this means that knowing the truth of God's redemptive love frees us to reach our full potential as his children and servants. We're no longer captive to fears that human beings are unloved and abandoned by God." ■

Soapsuds and Prayer

By Mary Vaughn Armstrong

Ellie had hurried over to me at the coffee hour after church. "I wanted to let you know right away," she said, her dark eyes almost black with excitement. "Dad's surgery went wonderfully. He's coming home day after tomorrow." Then she grew serious, resting her hand on my arm. "Thanks for praying for him."

I nodded, but all at once I felt miserable. Although I knew many people had been praying for her father, I wasn't one of them. Until this moment I hadn't even thought about his stomach surgery. Ellie and I were good friends, and the previous Sunday we'd talked about how worried she was. I'd promised to pray for him and for her, and I had meant it.

But that afternoon our oldest son had a bike accident and hurried into the house, holding his wrist. We'd rushed him to the hospital emergency and a fracture had been set. After I'd fixed dinner and put the children to bed that night I was exhausted, my promise to pray for Ellie long forgotten.

Knowing I'd let Ellie down gnawed at me. In my own life, prayers of faithful friends had carried me through many rough days. I considered praying for other people to be one of my highest privileges as a Christian. I'd meant every word of my promise to pray for Ellie's father, and was shocked at how easily I'd forgotten.

A few weeks later I stood at the sink cleaning up after dinner. If someone had given me a penny for every minute I've spent here, I thought, I'd have a fortune. I glanced out the window at the red geraniums blooming across the lawn, then turned my attention to the corners of the casserole dish I was

washing. Moments later I looked up again to admire the kitchen windows I'd washed that day. Then, as if seeing it for the first time, I studied the vertical wooden frame between them. An idea dawned. What, I wondered, if I covered that bare wood with the names of people I was praying for, and turned the time spent at the sink into a time of prayer?

I liked the idea so much I hardly waited to dry the soapsuds from my hands before hurrying to the pad of scratch paper we kept by the phone. I searched my mind for things friends and family had recently asked me to pray about. Seven requests came to mind, and I printed each one on slips of paper about an inch wide and two inches long. Then I folded tape into tiny circles and fastened one to the back of each paper. Carrying them to the sink, I stuck them neatly up and down the wooden support between the windows. That night, washing dishes took on a dimension of opportunity for me.

That time of prayer grew richer as weeks and months passed by. I replaced old prayer slips with new ones and looked forward to the special time my Lord and I would have together as I washed dishes.

Recently, a much-needed teacher and counselor joined the staff of our church. As he, his wife, and their three sons drove 1,800 miles in a three-car caravan, a small prayer slip urged us to support them as they traveled. When a young husband and father in our church abruptly lost his job not long ago, a prayer slip went up immediately.

Today I'm glad that I forgot to pray for Ellie's father, because God used that experience to deepen my prayer life. He took my failure just as it happened and gave it back to me transformed into strength. ■

The author is a free-lance writer from Spokane, Wash.

APRIL 16, 1986





KIDBITS

Send your stories, art, photos, puzzles and craft ideas (but no poetry, please) to Em Romin at *The Lutheran*, 2900 Queen Lane, Philadelphia, Pa. 19129. Payment to young contributors for material published is a *Kidbits* T-shirt.

Halley's comet swings by Earth

By Rob Ferber

After spending 75 years in the far reaches of the solar system, Halley's comet is making another of its once-in-a-lifetime appearances.

You may already have seen the comet. It looks like a faint, fuzzy star with a tail. It's so dim because the part of the comet we see is a big, thin cloud of dust and gas, not solid like the moon or the Earth.

The dust and gas come from the surface of a small solid object in the comet's center. This



Ferber

object is like a dirty snowball. As the comet approaches the sun, the sun's heat warms the snowball and makes it evaporate faster. When the ice evaporates, it carries more dust with it, increasing the amount of material in the cloud around the comet.

As the cloud grows, the part we see enlarges and becomes brighter. The "tail" is the part of the cloud blown out behind the comet by the stream of particles given off by the sun.

Comet cloud shrinks

As the comet moves away from the sun, it cools down, decreasing the amount of material blown off its surface. Because less and less material leaves the comet, the cloud we see shrinks and fades until it cannot even be seen in a telescope.

The comet continues on in its cold orbit until it approaches the sun again and repeats the entire

process. It takes Halley's comet about 76 years for this cycle.



Looking like a fuzzy light with a tail, Halley's comet streaks across the sky in this photo taken in January by Bradley Severa of Midland College, Fremont, Neb. He used a telephoto lens placed on top of a telescope.

process. It takes Halley's comet about 76 years for this cycle.

People in the Northern Hemisphere had the best chance to view the comet around March 15. This spring Halley's comet heads south as it approaches the sun. By April 10 the comet was very low in the southern sky and at its brightest.

The comet will once again head north, rapidly fading and moving west. By May 1 it will be

too faint to see in the evening twilight. In late summer and early fall it will be visible for a few months only through powerful telescopes before it fades completely.

The author, 16, is an avid astronomer with a two-axis tracking telescope in his home observatory. He recently was involved with a video feed to his school of Voyager II's photographs of Uranus. He is a member of Church of the Foothills, La Canada, Cal.

Headquarters site debate grows

The choice of Milwaukee as the headquarters city for the new Evangelical Lutheran Church in America continues to foster debate. At the same time, as Lutheran Church in America, American Lutheran Church and Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches bishops in Wisconsin send promotional materials about the city to church leaders, efforts are under way to ask the Commission for a New Lutheran Church to "reconsider" the action and give new attention to Chicago and Minneapolis.

City officials in Milwaukee say the new church would boost the city's economy by about \$36 million a year. Of Milwaukee's 600,000 population, about 126,710 are Lutheran. Of this number, some 45,000 would belong to the ELCA. The area also is the site of the conservative 410,000-member Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

"I'm delighted because Milwaukee represents a lot of Lutheran people and it's only right a place like this should be chosen," said LCA Wisconsin-Upper Michigan Synod Bishop Robert S. Wilch. "The quality of life is unmatched."

But many disagree. The executive board of the LCA Pacific Southwest Synod directed Bishop Stanley Olson to express to the CNLC its "surprise and negative reaction" to the choice. Olson said the board cited the costs and difficulty of air transportation to Milwaukee, among other concerns.

"We have worked hard to place Lutheran witness in centers of American and world Christian leadership," Olson

said. "Milwaukee speaks symbolically of a retreat into our ethnic insularity of former days." He added that "Lutheranism has lived to regret the hundreds of times when dollar-saving decisions placed our congregations in cheap, off-the-beaten-path locations."

ALC Bishop Ehme Osterbur of the ALC Illinois District said he was shocked over the choice because "I thought common sense ... dictated either Chicago or Minneapolis" as the headquarters.

LCA synod staff in Milwaukee "feel a bit put down" about the negative feelings toward the city, said Glen Holmquist, an assistant to the bishop. "It doesn't make a doodly-doo where we are located. Is the main thing maintaining a headquarters or evangelizing the world?"

Chicago committee

A Chicago Committee on Site Selection has sent a letter to members of the CNLC asking it to reconsider its "repudiation" of Chicago. The committee, led by the Rev. Gerald Molgren, assistant to the bishop of the Illinois Synod, said the data about Chicago was "distorted" in its presentation to the commission.

He noted that Fantus Corp., an independent firm hired by the CNLC to gather data on Chicago, Minneapolis and New York, had arrived at its higher cost figures by drawing on the "luxury end of the spectrum." The report said that operating costs would be \$482,000 to nearly \$2 million per year more in Chicago than in Minneapolis. Other observers have noted that the cost

figures for headquarters in suburban Chicago were about equal with those for downtown Minneapolis.

Molgren said that the figures "show that a church that lives modestly will find ample, adequate space in the vast and varied Chicago market at a cost that is competitive with any other Midwestern city."

Dr. Charles Anderson, president of Augsburg College, Minneapolis, and head of a local group supporting Minneapolis as the headquarters site, circulated a letter to ALC bishops disputing the Milwaukee decision. He said a separate study conducted by Fantus for Forward Wisconsin, an economic development group, shows Minneapolis to be cheaper than Milwaukee in nearly every area.

Anderson says the report indicates that operating costs in Milwaukee could range from \$10.7 to \$12.9 million, compared with Minneapolis' range of \$10.8 to \$12 million. He said Milwaukee start-up costs would be about \$6.4 million while Minneapolis would be \$4.7 million.

Bishop questions merger

In a letter to Illinois Synod pastors, Bishop Paul E. Erickson said last month that the Commission for a New Lutheran Church "has lost its way." He noted that this spring's synod convention will give careful attention to the commission's report.

"All of us had high hopes for the new Lutheran church," Erickson wrote. "I believed that we could build upon the best in each of the merging bodies. I had dreams that we would have a vital, vibrant church which would allow Lutherans in the United States to take their rightful place as a national Christian community."

"Unfortunately," Erickson continued, "a series of compromises has left us without a doctrine of ministry, a reduction in pension contributions, a headquarters location in a regional rather than a national and international city, and a confused plan of

organization that has no clear lines of responsibility and authority."

In answer to his question of what went wrong, Erickson wrote that "it was a noble experiment to put 70 people together and charge them with the responsibility to give us a new church. I believe that the inability of the CNLC to develop a clear ecclesiology — a theological understanding of the church and a clear polity for the new church, an understanding of what it means to be in a structure which will enable mission — has been the problem."

He noted that when he has been asked about the high cost and confusion of merger, he answers, "Yes, there may be a better way to strengthen mission." When asked about the advantages of the new church, he responds, "I am not sure what the advantages are."



Ethiopian visitor

Lutheran Church in America Bishop James R. Crumley Jr. (right) meets at LCA headquarters with Dr. Solomon Gidada, development director of the Ethiopian Evangelical (Lutheran) Church Mekane Yesus. The Ethiopian church reports that efforts on the African drought have brought a new ecumenical spirit to Ethiopian churches and improved relations between the EECMY and the country's Marxist government.

LCA bishops visit Copts, Orthodox

Talks with Coptic Pope Shenouda III in Cairo, Egypt, and the presence of two Lutheran Church in America bishops at the Festival of Orthodoxy in Istanbul last month advanced Lutheran relations with key segments of Eastern Orthodoxy, said Dr. William Rusch, LCA director of ecumenical relations.

The visits by LCA Bishop James R. Crumley Jr., Bishop Virgil Moyer of the Virginia Synod, and Rusch "went far beyond courtesy and protocol," Rusch said by telephone from Istanbul.

In the case of Pope Shenouda III, head of millions of Coptic Christians, the visit

was a "good beginning," Rusch said. Coptic Christians are among those who dissented from the decisions of the Council of Chalcedon in 451, disrupting the unity of the church and contributing to the breakup of the Byzantine Empire.

Although a minority in Egypt and in the Orthodox world, the Coptic church has recently experienced a renaissance, and has sought wider ecumenical contacts. In meeting with Pope Shenouda III at St. Mark Cathedral in Cairo and during a visit to a Coptic monastery at Wadi el Natrun, the LCA delegation discussed the ecumenical document *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, and the "condemnations" that had been exchanged between the Copts and other Christians after the earlier schism.

Alexandria 'delighted'

The visit to Egypt also included talks in Alexandria with Nicholas VI, patriarch of

Alexandria. Nicholas VI heads the segment of North African Christianity which accepted the decisions of the Council of Chalcedon. Because it sometimes feels "very much ignored" by other Christians, the church received the Lutheran delegation "with delight," Rusch said.

The Istanbul talks marked the second Crumley visit to the Ecumenical Patriarch, given primacy of honor as head of Eastern Orthodoxy. The patriarch also received nine Lutheran bishops last fall for extended discussions of Lutheran-Orthodox relations.

Crumley reported that two representatives of the patriarchate will attend the LCA convention in August. Most likely the representatives will be named from the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America, the bishop reported. The Ecumenical Patriarch also will send personal greetings to the convention.

Officials protest attacks on church

American Lutheran Church officials expressed "deep concern" last month over the arrest of two ALC missionaries in South Africa. The Revs. Brian and Susan Burchfield were arrested as they assembled informally at Cape Town's Malan Airport to bid farewell to the family of the Rev. Gottfried Kraatz, German missionaries who were returning home after the South African government refused to renew their visas.

According to Brian Burchfield, 56 people were arrested as police "stormed the terminal in camouflage uniforms, carrying riot batons." The pair was arrested as they tried to protect a woman who attached herself to them amid verbal and physical harassment.

After being charged with "committing a nuisance or disorderly or indecent act in an airport," the couple was released after six hours. A hearing is scheduled April 22.

Church harassed

"Grave concern" over the harassment of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa was expressed recently by officials of the ALC, Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches and the Lutheran Church in America.

They said they were "outraged" by an attack by police on the headquarters of the Northern Diocese of ELCSA. They described as "acts of senseless violence" the beating of a church worker, detention of church officials and members, the use of tear gas inside a church building to disrupt a peaceful meeting of the Northern Transvaal Council of Churches and the destruction of the church's equipment.

In another development, members of an ALC travel seminar were refused visas to visit South Africa. An improvised tour of Namibia and Ethiopia replaced the visit.



The Rev. James Oines talks with a reporter about paid informer Cruz who allegedly infiltrated Alzona Church (ALC), Phoenix, where Oines is pastor.

Defense calls no witnesses

In a surprise move, the defense in the Tucson, Ariz., trial of 11 religious leaders accused of smuggling Central American refugees into the United States rested its case last month without putting a single witness on the stand. Defense attorneys had announced that Immigration and Naturalization Service Agent James Rayburn, who directed the 10-month undercover investigation of the sanctuary movement, would be their first witness.

Rayburn was on the stand ready to testify when the 11 defense attorneys stood in turn and said that on behalf of each of their clients, the defense rested.

Defense attorneys then requested that the four witnesses under house arrest for refusing to testify be set free. District Judge Earl Carroll said he would consider the matter.

Defense Attorney Michael Piccaretta said that after reviewing the government's case against the defendants, the lawyers decided not to present any witnesses of their own. "When you're ahead 27-0, why play the final quarter?" Piccaretta asked.

"The government took care of our defense," said the Rev. Ramon Quinones, one of the two Mexican defendants charged in the case. "The government has shown, even with the lies of (undercover informant) Jesus Cruz, that in this case the vocation of the church of Christ has been expressed," said the Catholic priest. Cruz had infiltrated church gatherings attended by undocumented persons, and then informed government agents about them.

The case was expected to go to the jury early this month.

Role of computer grows in churches

The U.S. religious community is turning to computer technology for everything from preparing sermons to doing church budgets, from Bible study to exchanging information and ideas with people around the country. At last month's Computer Assisted Ministry Conference in Los Angeles, one person likened computer use to a revolution, comparable to the advent of the printed Bible five centuries ago.

The hottest topic at the conference was telecommunications — connecting computers by telephone so that users can converse with one another, share information and, as reported by one person, hold an ecumenical service.

"The fact that from my home in British Columbia I can be in constant and immediate touch with a Methodist pastor in South Carolina, a Presbyterian officer in Indiana, a Baptist in California, as well as new friends in my own denomination all across Canada transforms the church into something I have never known before," said David Lohead, a professor at Vancouver School of Theology. He gave the keynote address titled "Does God Love Computers?"

The nearly 400 people at the conference saw computer programs for church use such as SuperGREEK, Jonah's Journeys, Bible Trivia, The Philistine Ploy and Scripture Scanner. Other programs available parallel those used by business and industry for financial and record keeping and word processing. These include programs to help churches generate form letters to acknowledge contributions and keep track of birthdays and wedding anniversaries.

Swedes mourn Palme, slain prime minister

Swedish political and religious leaders attending an ecumenical memorial service for Prime Minister Olof Palme said hatred and violence would some day give way to justice and peace, causes for which the assassinated Lutheran political leader was known.

The service was held in Palme's congregation, the Storkyrkan, in Stockholm.

Among those who spoke at the memorial service were two South Africans, Anglican Bishop Desmond Tutu and Dr. Allan Boesak, leader of the World Reformed Alliance. Former West German Chancellor Willy Brandt spoke during a two-hour state funeral service.

In an earlier statement, Church of Sweden Archbishop Bertil Werkstrom said, "Our church shares the suffering of the knowledge that such a death could have taken place in our land."

WORLDSCAN

The third phase of international Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogue began last month in Bossey, Switzerland, co-chaired by Lutheran Church in America Bishop James R. Crumley Jr. and Catholic Bishop Karl Lehmann of Mainz, West Germany. This phase, expected to last six years, will deal with justification, the nature of the church and sacraments. Dr. Robert Jenson of Gettysburg (Pa.) Seminary delivered a major paper. The Lutheran World Federation and the Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity sponsor the dialogue.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the Air Force may bar an Orthodox Jewish officer from wearing a *yarmulke* (skullcap) while on duty. The court said constitutional freedom of religion guarantees carry less weight in the armed services than in civilian society. The court also decided not to hear a Williamsport, Pa., appeal on whether high school students may meet in classrooms to pray and read the Bible. The effect of the decision was to let stand a federal appeals court ruling that the sessions could be held.



Brouwer

negative consequences of its policies in one part of the world or to gain support for a military approach to conflicts in another."

An Italian court acquitted three Bulgarians and three Turks accused of conspiring to kill Pope John Paul II in 1982. Because the court cited lack of evidence, the verdict does not mean that the six persons are innocent. Defense lawyers and the prosecutor said they will appeal the decision.

Sympathy for mercy killing is on the increase, U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop told a conference in St. Louis. He said that as the number of elderly people and hospital care costs grow, more people support euthanasia as a way of choosing compassion, avoiding suffering or preserving the dignity of life.

United Methodist clergy divorce and marry more than laity, according to a church study. While 82 percent of the participants remain married to their original partners, the same survey showed that twice as many United Methodist clergy as laypersons say they are divorced or separated, and more than three times as many clergy as laypersons say they have been married more than once.

Churches are "fast losing the battle for cities," according to a study by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. Christians made up 69 percent of the world's urban population in 1900, but today they total only 46 percent, said Dr. David Barrett, a missions research specialist. Major reason for the trend is the rapid growth of predominantly Muslim cities. Projections indicate that by 2000 Chicago and New York will drop off the list of the world's 25 largest cities because their growth rate will not keep pace with Third World cities.

Declaring that true liberation comes from salvation through Christ, the National Association of Evangelicals convention adopted a position paper stating that the message of repentance should not be isolated from activity in the social and political arenas. An NAE officer said the organization would never have produced such a statement 10 years ago.

Attendance, giving go together

Differences in per capita giving in the Lutheran Church in America paralleled regional differences in worship attendance and membership growth in 1984, according to a study from the LCA Division for Parish Services. The South and West lead in all three areas, the report shows.

The study was released at a recent meeting of the division's management committee. Among the findings are that differences in annual per capita giving range from a median of \$340 in the South to \$231 in the Northeast; that synods where members contribute the most to their congregations also show the highest giving to synods, and that this trend is reflected in synod giving to the national church.

Dr. Edward Utte, DPS project director for evaluation, cautioned against "looking at the top all the time," because "some encouraging things are happening in some synods which are low on the list." He cited Minnesota, Nebraska, New Jersey and New England synods as examples.

Utte also noted that on the average, congregational giving keeps up with inflation, but commented that "synods do not share in that fully because of pressures on the congregations" to meet increased costs.

Because synods where members give the most to their congregations also show the highest giving to synods, the report says a "stewardship way of life and attitude" marks overall giving in some synods.

Youth Gathering planned

The planning committee for the 1988 Lutheran Youth Gathering should try to assure that at least 10 percent of the youth attending are from racial and ethnic minorities, the management committee said.

The committee also voted to request the

LCA Executive Council to advance up to \$150,000 for the gathering.

New materials

Fresh catechetical materials relating to the lives of students and the promotion of adult education should be an important focus of the division in the next two years, the management committee said.

Joint projects

More than 50 cooperative projects related to congregational life are already under way, said a report to DPS and the American Lutheran Church Division for Life and Mission in the Congregation.

Also during a joint meeting of the two agencies, copies were distributed of a newly released resource notebook for Lutheran congregations which lists more than 400 resources available from the ALC and LCA.

Board shocks women

The ALC Board for Life and Mission in the Congregation in a separate session voted to "request that the new women's organization not be separately incorporated" and requested "that the ALC Church Council support this resolution and

commend it to the Commission for a New Lutheran Church."

Marlene H. Engstrom, president of the ALC women's organization, expressed "mostly shock" at the action.

Bonnie L. Jensen, executive director of American Lutheran Church Women, said that the women who are the planners from the three churches "have been unanimous in their position that the women's organization should be directly responsible to the church convention and the Church Council, not to another board of the church. This action by the board, which would overturn three years' work by the planners, is exactly the kind of thing we want to avoid in the new church," she said.

Board member Kathy Berge Stensgaard of Castle Rock, Colo., said incorporation would inhibit the church's ability to view "women as full partners."

Rural fund urged

Stating that the proportions of the current rural crisis are comparable to those of the declared "urban crisis of the late 1960s," the board also requested a similar declaration and funding for the rural situation from the ALC Church Council.

LCW seeks transition funds

More than \$1.1 million will be sought by Lutheran Church Women for its share of transition costs for the women's organization of the new Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the LCW board of directors decided at a recent meeting.

The new organization will incorporate the Lutheran Church in America's LCW with the women's organizations of the American Lutheran Church and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches.

The funds will help finance a constituting convention for the new organization, tentatively scheduled for June 11-14, 1987, in Milwaukee. Also covered will be initial staffing and set-up costs.

The LCW proposal requests special offerings from each LCW congregational group on the basis of size, with groups of under 20 members asked to give minimum gifts of \$50-\$75, groups of 20-39 asked to give at least \$100-\$150, and groups of more than 40 members asked for \$200-\$250.

The LCW board also approved "Genesis '88," a program to seek individual gifts for the beginning of the new women's organization.

Delegates to the constituting convention of the new organization should be broadly inclusive, the board agreed. Minority representation and geographic distribution are among criteria. Participation by a broad

range of ages and by women inactive in existing Lutheran women's groups also is recommended.

The LCW board approved a 1987 budget totaling \$2,671,675, including a goal of a \$1 million gift to the LCA.

The 1985 annual gift from LCW to the LCA totals more than \$800,000, reported Dr. Kathryn Kopf, LCW executive director. "The gift to the whole church is an important and visible aspect of our work," said Kopf, "but it has to be looked at in the context of all the things LCW gives to the church, for example, strengthening women in ministry."

LCW also gave more than \$54,000 in interest income from organizational endowments to the LCA's Divisions for World Mission and Ecumenism, and Mission in North America.

Grants and scholarships totaling almost \$20,000 were approved by the board. The organization will grant \$8,000 from its Fund for the Development of Human Resources to 11 projects in the United States, Canada and Africa.

LCW will provide \$11,250 in scholarships to 15 LCA women pursuing graduate and undergraduate degrees in the United States in 1986. These grants go to LCA women doing college or graduate school work later in life.

Synod conventions

April 18-20

Florida: Holiday Inn Airport, Tampa, Fla.

Pacific Northwest: Cavanaugh's Inn at the Park, Spokane, Wash.

Southeastern: Radisson Inn, Atlanta.

Iowa: Airport Hilton Inn, Des Moines, Iowa.

April 23-25

Michigan: Long Convention Center, Lansing, Mich.

April 25-27

Texas-Louisiana: Palmer Auditorium, Austin, Texas.

May 8-10

Rocky Mountain: Hilton Hotel, Albuquerque, N.M.

Youth struggle with carrying cross

Carrying a cross for a community Lenten service caused some embarrassment for youth at St. Paul Church, Middlebury, Ind., but it also provided some lessons.

The Middlebury Ministerium decided to involve youth in this year's Community Lenten Services. The young people were asked to carry an eight-foot wooden cross in and out of each Sunday evening service and then carry the cross from their church to the site of the next Lenten service, reported the Rev. James Simpson, pastor of St. Paul.

When St. Paul's turn came "our Luther Leaguers did an admirable job at the service. There were lots of participants," Simpson said.

But on Monday when it was time to carry the cross publicly about a mile to the Methodist church, "only a few showed up," Simpson said. "The comments went from 'What if someone would see me?' to 'Carry it all the way down that hill?' to 'Why not just load it in the car and take it?'" Simpson said.

"Three brave girls finally volunteered," he continued. "As they walked with a car in front and one in back with blinkers flashing for safety, traffic backed up on the 'S' curve.irate drivers glared and shook fists as they sped by the kids after being held up a few moments," he said.

"Carrying a cross somehow sets people up for abuse from the crowds," Simpson added.

Heart was heavy

Kristen Simpson, 13, one of the youth who carried the cross, said that "as we started out, the cross really wasn't very heavy, but as we went along some cars beeped at us, some in a hurry, some drivers were even angry. Then the cross started getting heavier, not in weight but in my heart," she said. "I felt sad and disappointed."

"I thought to myself," she added, "maybe this is a little like Jesus felt and look at what he did for me. I can at least carry this cross for him," she said.

"When I put the cross down in the other church yard for the next Lenten service, I realized that what really mattered was not what other people said or thought, but that I had carried the cross," she said.

Kim Troyer, who also helped carry the cross, said that "I was afraid that people I knew would see me and laugh; I was so embarrassed and felt uneasy about doing it."

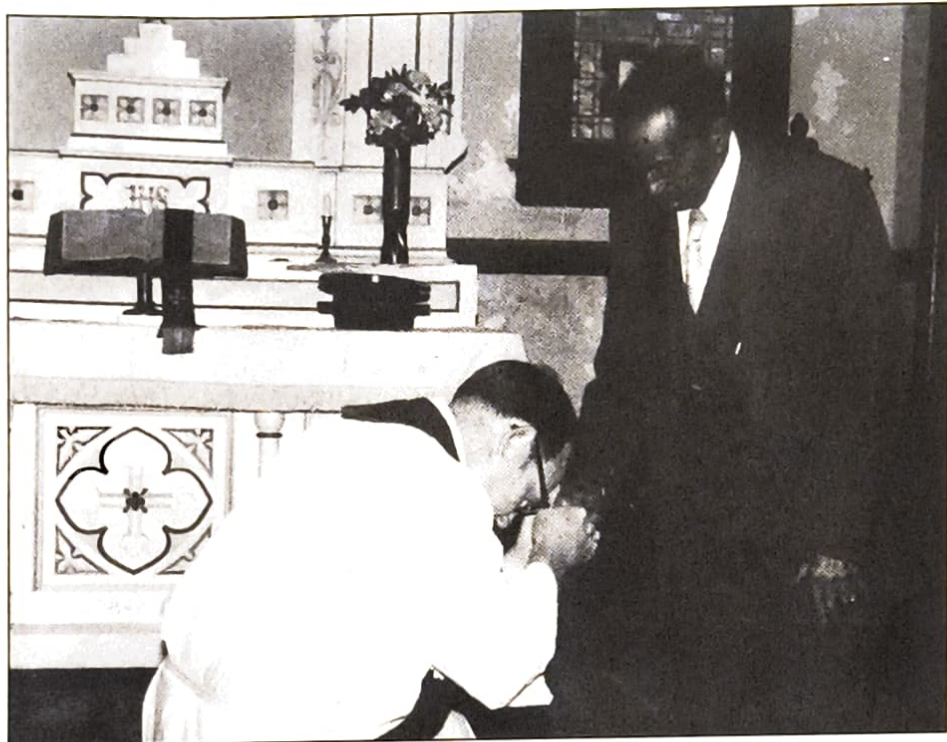
She said that she did see some people she knew in cars that passed, but "the cross-carrying experience wasn't nearly as bad as I had imagined it would be. Jesus had to

carry the cross by himself and at least I had others helping me," she said.

"The young people who carried the cross learned that for many, being a Christian is an embarrassment," Simpson said. "It's all right in church, but we certainly don't want anyone outside of church to know we are Christian," he said.

"I'm not criticizing our youth," Simpson added. "I doubt whether many of our adults would eagerly volunteer to carry the cross. I mean, who of us would want to carry a cross?" he asked. Yet Jesus says people should "forget themselves, take up their cross every day and follow him."

—FLORAMAE GEISER



Wold kneels before the Rev. Thomas Washington as he asks forgiveness during the mission congregation's first worship service.

Pastor asks reconciliation

The Rev. Joe Wold, pastor/developer of Cristo, Nuestra Paz (Christ, Our Peace) Church in Victoria, Texas, knelt before a Spanish-speaking woman and a black man and asked forgiveness during the mission's recent first worship service. In Spanish and then in English he said on behalf of the Lutheran church and especially this newly forming congregation, "For any frustration, anxiety or fear you have suffered from discrimination and prejudice, I beg you to forgive."

Speaking to the 67 visitors and members, Wold reminded them that in 1957 the U.S. Supreme Court made its famous decision on desegregation. "We live in a different time, but there may be some brother or sister who has reason to hold something against us," he said.

"It is not possible to have all the people we have wronged here this morning," he added, but said that the two he knelt before represented them in a symbolic way. Every-

one present at the service was asked to turn to another worshiper and say, "I beg you to forgive," to which the other was to reply, "All is forgiven."

Wold noted that "this is symbolic, of course, and no substitute for really going to offended persons to make peace."

He added that "one day we will go to a worship service of a neighboring Baptist church or a Roman Catholic church and ask them to forgive us for anything we have said or done to offend them. After all, the name of this new congregation is Christ, Our Peace. There is no better way to have peace than to be reconciled to other Christians," he said.

The mission is being developed by the American Lutheran Church. It is meeting in a former chapel of Trinity Church, a Lutheran Church in America congregation. Wold, now on the clergy roster of the ALC, formerly served as an LCA missionary in South America.

Dead infant found in dorm

A newborn baby found dead in a dormitory room at Thiel College, Greenville, Pa., in February died of neonatal neglect, according to an autopsy report released last month. However, the county district attorney has decided no charges will be filed against the mother, a 19-year-old student at the school. The woman is currently under a doctor's care.

"She didn't do anything to the baby to cause the death, other than not caring for it properly," the county coroner said. "It was just neglect after birth, I suppose, from not knowing," he said.

The baby, which was born alive and weighed more than 7 pounds, was discovered Feb. 26 after the mother apparently fainted in the hallway of her dormitory and was taken to a local hospital. A college nurse and a student found the baby's body in the woman's room. College and police officials said they believed the infant had been born about 17 hours earlier, late in the night of Feb. 25.

Dormitory residents said they didn't know the woman was pregnant and had heard nothing unusual that night. According to the students, the woman's roommate was not in their room that evening.

School to remove cigarettes

They were removed about 10 years ago from **Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minn.** They've never been on the campus of **California Lutheran University, Thousand Oaks, Cal.**, but **Wittenberg University, Springfield, Ohio**, has them in the bookstore and student union. One can be found at **Bethany College, Lindsborg, Kan.** There are three at **Muhlenberg College, Allentown, Pa.**, and their probable removal is causing controversy.

"They" are cigarette vending machines and they will be removed from their present locations on Muhlenberg's campus if school officials act on the recommendation of Kurt Salsburg, residence hall director.

Salsburg administers contracts with the vending company that owns the three cigarette machines on campus. He said he is recommending the service be stopped because Muhlenberg doesn't want to endorse the sale of cigarettes. If the treasurer's office approves, the machines will be removed over the summer when current contracts expire.

About 200 students and faculty have signed a petition against the removal, calling it "an infringement of our individual rights."

Salsburg emphasized that the college was

not prohibiting smoking, pointing out that cigarettes could still be bought in two nearby off-campus establishments.

He said the college's "wellness board" initiated the idea of removing the machines after it learned that the American Medical Association suggested Congress take measures to eliminate all machine-vended cigarettes, cigarette advertising and free samples of cigarettes. The board, dedicated to providing a healthy atmosphere for students, reportedly urged Muhlenberg administrators to comply with the AMA requests.

When Salsburg asked for preliminary comments on his plan, he received about 20 to 30 responses, mostly from faculty and staff. Those rejecting the removal said it limited personal freedom. Those who approved it stated that an educational facility should not be involved in cigarette sales.

Taking away the machines "is not a major issue," Salsburg said, noting that no one has given any reasons against removal that "we didn't already take into account."

Salsburg may be right, said Steve Waldhauser, a spokesperson for Gustavus Adolphus. "There was some controversy when we got rid of the machines but there hasn't been any movement to bring them back. People got used to their absence."

Classes held despite pickets

Classes at Upsala College, East Orange, N.J., continued last month despite a picket line set up on campus by laid-off college maintenance workers and housekeepers. A number of students and other union members joined in the demonstrations, which lasted about three weeks.

Seven of the college's 75 faculty members held classes either in the school chapel or at off-campus locations. The rest continued to teach in their classrooms.

"Some of the seven supported the workers while others were concerned about the students who didn't want to cross the picket line," explained Lillie Anderson, a college spokesperson.

She said that the demonstrations started after Upsala's board of trustees voted, as a cost-saving step, to subcontract maintenance and housekeeping with an organization experienced in providing such services to institutions. Previously, people performing these jobs had been directly employed by Upsala.

Anderson said that the termination benefits extended by Upsala to the 37 "displaced" employees included job counseling. She added that more than one-half of the terminated maintenance workers have been hired to work at the school by the subcontractor, who also was interviewing the former housekeepers.

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LCA pastor helps capture abductor

A Lutheran Church in America pastor was instrumental last month in capturing a man who had abducted a parishioner and her child to get money for a drug debt.

The Rev. George Mocko, Ascension Church, Baltimore (Towson), received a phone call from member Mary Young. She asked for several hundred dollars and said she would come to the church to pick it up. Sensing something wrong, Mocko contacted police who surrounded the church.

Unknown to Mocko, Young and her 2-year-old son were being held captive by an intruder who had broken into their home. The man threatened her with a razor knife and demanded money.

Young, her son and the suspect headed for Ascension in Young's car. Noticing several marked patrol cars, the abductor decided to go to the school across the street from the church to have Young phone Mocko to take the money to the school. However, police spotted the victim's car and converged on the school.

Young was able to grab her son and run out to the officers.

Officers apprehended a suspect identified as Eric Von Smith, 26. He was charged with kidnapping, armed robbery and other offenses.



Promoting adoption

Lutheran Family Services of Northwest Indiana and Catholic Family Service are co-sponsoring a publicity campaign promoting adoption as an alternative to single parenting and abortion. Holding a poster to be used in the promotion are Bishop Norbert F. Gaughan (left) of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Gary and Bishop Ralph Kempski of the Lutheran Church in America Indiana-Kentucky Synod.

Members need 'people spots'

A yearlong study of seven denominations in Central Pennsylvania shows that "as new members are received in a church's front door they are quickly lost out the

back door." The study of 711 congregations, including 103 Lutheran, was conducted by the Rev. James W. Moss Sr., director of church growth and development, General Conference of the Churches of God. He reported his findings to 40 participants in a recent workshop at First Church, Watsontown, Pa.

Moss said church members need "people spots," which he described as enough physical space in which to be comfortable, coupled with a warm relationship to other members with feelings of emotional and spiritual comfort.

Although church architects say that 18 inches is an adequate pew space per person, Moss found that "this is not a comfortable space for most people. We need at least another 3 inches on each side to really relax," he said. "We normally don't like to rub shoulders with other people in church. We need similar 'breathing space' in our relationships with people too."

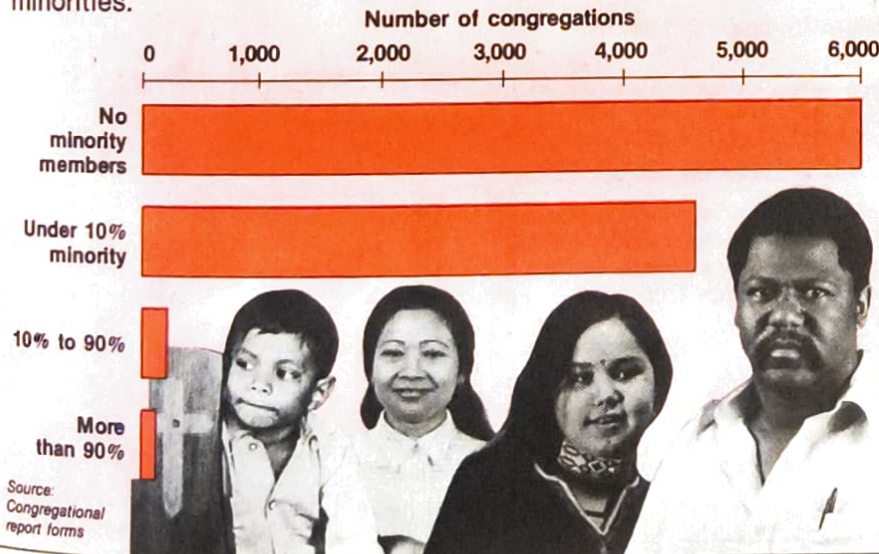
Moss proposed that congregations develop new small groups as a way of assimilating new members. "If a class or group is more than 7 years old, it is difficult to gain entrance except through marriage, introduction by an 'important' person or 'crashing,'" he said. "And since 60 percent of us are introverts, 'crashing' can be very painful." Consequently, many new members simply drop out.

Moss is conducting a series of workshops throughout the Central Pennsylvania Synod.

—ALTON MOTTER

LUTHERAN LISTS

Recent reports from congregations of the churches which will make up the new Evangelical Lutheran Church in America show that more than one-half, 54.7 percent, of the congregations in the merging churches have no minority members. Forty percent of the 87,000 minority members are found in 1.2 percent or 129 congregations. These report that more than 90 percent of the members are minorities.



Senior citizens study computers

Students became the teachers when 13 residents of the Florida Lutheran Retirement Center, DeLand, Fla., attended a computer seminar in a local high school.

The school's computer club decided as a service project to share its knowledge of computers with senior citizens. Computer teacher Daryl Procter contacted the center.

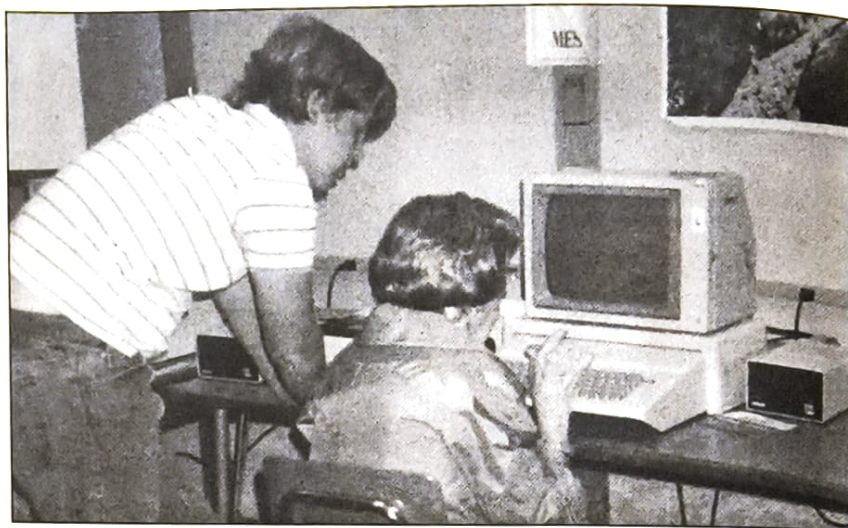
"It worked out well because we had just acquired an Apple computer and the school uses Apple equipment," said Marilyn Snow, the center's program coordinator.

The seminar began with Procter giving the residents a general introduction to and history of computers. Then the students took over.

"They worked one-on-one with the senior citizens, allowing them to learn basic word processing," Snow said. Many of the elderly had never typed, so they "hunted and pecked" at the keyboard in order to compose a short letter or poem.

Once the manuscripts were finished, Procter showed the residents how to use the computer's printer to convert letters from the screen to paper.

The "senior students" were delighted. "I have nephews who work with computers every day and I did not know what they were talking about," said resident Carol



James Irving helps Rose Schmidt learn to use the computer

Agor. "Now I have some idea."

Another person complimented the young teachers: "The kids were great. They knew what they were talking about," and added, "It's nice to know that at our age we still can learn about today's innovations. With a little practice it won't be as difficult as it looked at first."

"We hope to get our residents more and more interested in the computer so they will feel at ease working with the one at the center," Snow said. "But the best to come out of this morning of sharing is the special feeling that grew between the kids and the residents. It was a real feeling of caring and mutual respect."

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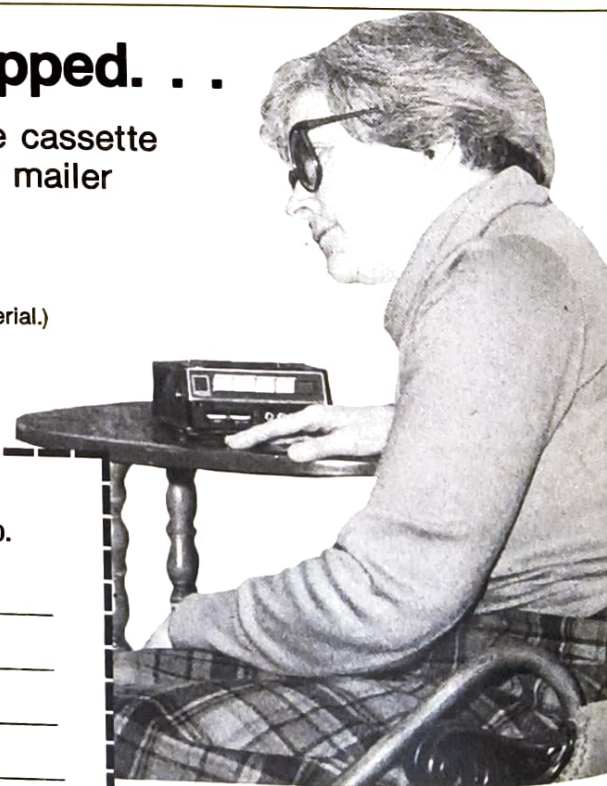
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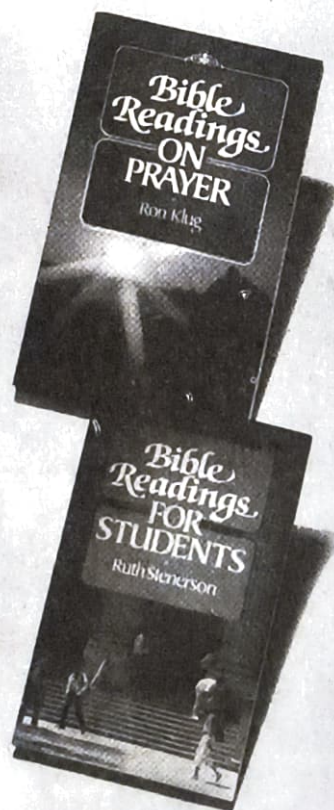
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AUGSBURG

Office building provides housing

A 14-story office building in northwest Philadelphia, vacant for the past three years, will soon be the site of senior citizen housing, thanks to the involvement of concerned Lutherans.

The art deco design Barker Building is being rehabilitated into 86 rental units for low-income senior citizens and disabled people through a \$4.5 million grant to Germantown Interfaith Housing from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

GIH is a non-profit corporation set up in 1981 by eight congregations, including Trinity Church in the Germantown section of Philadelphia.

The Lutheran Home at Germantown, Philadelphia, is providing consultation during the design and construction phase.

"We will manage the rentals and oversee operations after the construction is completed," said the Rev. Arnold L. Tiemeyer, home president. The initial contract is for two years.

A manager and secretary will provide services at the site, Tiemeyer said. Maintenance and housekeeping will be supplied by the Germantown Home staff on an "as needed" basis.

GIH's involvement in senior citizen housing began a few years ago. After twice being rejected in its proposals to renovate another local building, GIH bid for the Barker Building. Member congregations donated money to fund the design of the plans that had to accompany the proposal. Trinity was among the first to contribute, giving \$2,000 to the project.

"Trinity became involved in response to the local need and because of the opportunity to work ecumenically," said Pastor P. Richard Grove.

Plans call for GIH to move its offices to the first floor of the renovated facility. Seventy-five percent of the housing units will be one-bedroom apartments and the rest will be efficiencies.

—MICHAEL MERKEL

Missions begin worship

Two Lutheran Church in America mission congregations have started holding worship services.

Christ the Servant Church is holding services at 10 A.M. at La Petite Academy, 217 Cedarhurst Circle, Henderson, Nev. The Rev. Phillip A. Hausknecht is pastor/developer.

Iglesia de la Resurreccion is holding services at 11 A.M. in its building at 158 Davenport Ave., New Haven, Conn. The Rev. Ruth Drews is pastor/developer.

BARRY LANG'S a man with vision... a goal... and a plan



Barry Lang in one of his brush churches.



One of his church schools with teachers.

Barry Lang, Pastor of Bong Mine Lutheran Parish in Liberia, says, "Our Bong Parish has a goal. That goal is to help fulfill the Great Commission of our Lord (Matthew 28:18-20). But we also have a plan. Our plan, stated simply, is that of developing and multiplying disciples through a ministry of LAY TRAINING, WINNING them to Christ, BUILDING them in the faith and SENDING them to the world with the good news of God's love and forgiveness."

Barry and his people are well on the way. In just one year recently new "self-help" churches were dedicated in Myean and Willietta, served by Barry from his base in Bong Mine, bringing the total outreach

to 24 congregations and preaching points. Giving increased 42.5%, bringing the total increase to 493% over ten years. In addition \$450 was raised by the congregation for World Hunger, earmarked for brothers and sisters in Ethiopia... this from people in a country where the average income is about \$30.00 per month!

You can help Barry and other missionaries like him by participating in the Designated Advance Giving Program (DAG). Send your gift today—and ask for the 1986 booklet describing other DAG projects and suggesting a variety of ways in which your entire congregation can support this personalized giving program regularly.

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PEOPLE



Vacaro

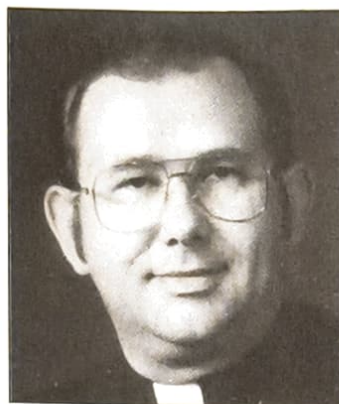
Helenruth Vacaro, St. Paul, Shively, Ky., received the Jericho Friend Award from Cedar Lake Lodge, LaGrange, Ky., for her work with people disabled by mental retardation.

John Wott, University, Seattle, was appointed executive secretary/treasurer of the International Plant Propagation Society. He teaches urban horticulture at the University of Washington, Seattle. **Audrey L. Jordan**, another University member, spent six weeks in Matiguas, Nicaragua, on a volunteer construction brigade which built homes for families in a farming cooperative.

Dr. **Douglas Hoeft**, Bethlehem, Elgin, Ill., won an award from the Illinois State Board of Education for his work as a public school administrator. He is assistant superintendent of schools in Kane County.

During its annual honors convocation Muhlenberg College, Allentown, Pa., awarded an honorary doctor of science degree to Dr. **John Trainer Jr.**, president of Lenoir-Rhyne College, Hickory, N.C. Receiving an honorary doctor of laws degree was **John Ammarell**, president of Newberry (S.C.) College.

Dr. **Gayle Swanson**, associate professor of English at Newberry (S.C.) College, has co-written *Conversations with South Carolina Poets*. The book's foreword was written by poet and novelist **James Dickey**.



Fink

New correspondent to *The Lutheran* for the North Carolina Synod is the Rev. **Ronald W. Fink**, Good Hope, Hickory, N.C. A member of the synod communications committee for 10 years, he succeeds the Rev. **Paul Conrad**, Epiphany, Winston-Salem, N.C.

Clarence E. Orth, Incarnation, Reading, Pa., was honored by the Ancient and Illustrious Order, Knights of Malta, for his 63 years of service as recorder of the local commandery.

The Rev. **Ronald Meyer**, Shepherd of Life, Arlington, Texas, received the Paul Harris Award from Rotary International. A donation of \$1,000 was made to the Polio Plus Program in Meyer's name.

Kenneth Gibson, St. John, Pearl City, Ill., received top honors in the Illinois Young Farmer Discussion Meet, held in St. Louis. Gibson is a high school teacher and operates a 130-acre farm.

Hubert V. Park, Holy Trinity, Raleigh, N.C., received the Watauga Medal from North Carolina State University. Professor emeritus of mathematics, he was given the school's highest non-academic honor for his "dedication to students, math education and the university."

Brian Tyndall, Redeemer, Milwaukee, won a photo contest sponsored by *The Milwaukee Journal*. He entered a picture he had taken in Morocco.



Tesch

Tamara Marie Tesch, Ascension, Augusta, Ga., was named Miss Georgia and will compete in the Miss USA competition in Miami.

PROFILE

Laotian undertakes journey of faith

Khamphou Sisouphanthong tells people that his first name is pronounced "kung fu" in English. And like the self-defense experts, he has led a life full of downs and ups, including a journey from being "a Christian in name but a Buddhist at heart" to experiencing "the touch of God."

Now employed in Indochinese ministry by Zion Church, Rockford, Ill., Sisouphanthong was a telephone technician in Laos until he escaped to a refugee camp in Thailand in 1976. He came to the United States, settling in Illinois where he "spent all my money by drinking."

Initially sponsored by a congregation, Sisouphanthong was told that if he attended church, someone might get him better work. "So I went and was even baptized," he recalls, but "I was far from being called Christian. I only did it to get a good job."

After moving to Rockford, Sisouphanthong was laid off. Pastors Ralph Leonard and Denver Bitner then asked him to work for Zion, attending to the basic needs of the growing number of Indochinese refugees. Leonard said they were impressed by his education and command of English.

But still Sisouphanthong was not happy. He says that although

The Rev. **Melvin Langeland**, Trinity, Pomona, Cal., was honored by the Pomona Valley Council of Churches for helping to provide housing for disabled and elderly persons. Also honored was **Shirley Langeland**, his wife, for her work in community literacy programs.

Christopher Hooker-Haring, Holy Trinity, Catasauqua, Pa., has written *Graduated Training: A New Approach to Distance Running*.

New president of Church Women United of Texas is **Barbara Gundersen**, Holy Trinity, Irving, Texas.



Sisouphanthong (right) and his wife, Sonny, sing a hymn.

he was working for the church he was not of the church. Then one day "God touched my heart" and "I was filled with the Holy Spirit. I cried and cried and cried" because "I realized I was a sinful being. I knew something warm was growing in my heart."

Sisouphanthong says he now has a "responsibility to share the love of Jesus" with others and would like to "pursue the ministry." Leonard and Bitner are working with the Illinois Synod to establish a program to prepare Indochinese people for training as Lutheran pastors. Sisouphanthong hopes to become its first participant.

—YUTAKA KISHIMOTO

Clergy changes

New Jersey

Steele, G. Stanley, Bethany, Gloucester City, to Atonement, Asbury Park.

Steele, Stephanie S., newly ordained, to Atonement, Asbury Park.

Stoner, David L., newly ordained, to associate, St. Michael, Cherry Hill.

New York

McDermery, Frederick L., Grace, Greenwood Lake, to St. Andrew, West Hempstead.

Holmboe, John E., Transfiguration, Rochester, to retirement.

Selzer, John P., Prince of Peace, Clifton Park, to on leave from call.

North Carolina

Selzer, Dennis L. Jr., Grace, Bessemer City, to Cross of Christ, Concord.

North Dakota

Lundeen, Ronald A., Messiah, Fargo, to on leave from call.

Ohio

Cook, Frederick C., Holy Trinity, Torrington, to Faith, Oxford.

Oregon

Liaquist, Merrill, on leave from call, to St. Peter, Tillamook.

Thelin, Liano G., on leave from call, to associate, Good Shepherd, Salem.

Pennsylvania

Cholke, Robert W., on leave from call, to Immanuel, East Lansdowne.

DeHerman, William M., Christ, Orlend, to Redeemer, Philadelphia.

Ferrence, John V., St. Mark, Pleasant Gap, to on leave from call.

Gallion, Donald R., Salem, Dover; St. Paul, East Berlin (under synod administration), to only serving Salem, Dover (under synod administration).

Goranson, Brinkley C., Trinity, Arendtsville (under synod administration), to retirement.

Hoffman, Jack R., St. Paul, Hanover, to associate, Holy Trinity, Lancaster.

Kauffman, Stephen R., Evangelical, Durham, to St. John, Slatington.

Neff, Paul H., assistant, St. Paul, Glenside, to Resurrection, Haverstown.

Thomforde, Christopher M., St. Paul, Dansville, N.Y., to chaplain, Susquehanna University, Selinsgrove.

Vannorsdall, John W., chaplain, Yale University, New Haven, Conn., to president, Philadelphia Seminary.

Wanner, Joan A.M., Chestnut Grove, York Springs; Lower Bermu-

dian, Bermudian, to on leave from call.

Wysocki, Allan S., Zion, Glen Rock, to Trinity, Codorus.

South Carolina

Gragg, Stephen T., Salem, Dakota City, Neb., to Holy Trinity, North Augusta.

Hallman, E. Arden Jr., St. John, Lexington, to chaplain, Newberry County commission on alcohol and drug abuse, Gilbert.

Yost, John L. Jr., St. Matthew, Charleston, to retirement.

Tennessee

Jenkins, Michael E., St. James, Greeneville, to associate, First, Nashville.

Texas

Leinen, Linda L., associate, Christ the King, Houston, to Emmanuel, Inez.

Nuechterlein, Anne Marie, associate, St. Luke, Richardson, to American Lutheran Church.

Utah

Anderson, Roger H., Trinity, Sheridan, Wyo., to Our Saviour, Salt Lake City.

Virginia

Delaney, David K., on leave from call, to St. Mark, Grafton-Yorktown.

Herman, John D., associate, Christ, Fairfax, to Bethlehem, Lynchburg.

Mayer, Jacob L. Jr., Messiah, Mechanicsville, to St. Michael, Blacksburg.

Morgan, Paul L., Christ, Roanoke, to retirement.

Roepeke, James A., St. Peter, Churchville; Redeemer, Staunton, to on leave from call.

Washington

Lofsvold, Laurel A., interim pastor, Elim, Brush Prairie, to on leave from call.

Nelson, Marlene A., newly ordained, to Elim, Brush Prairie.

Olson, Lester G., Gloria Dei, Olympia, to on leave from call.

Rosenberg, Andrew J., reinstated to clergy roll, to Gloria Dei, Kelso.

Wert, Thomas G., Gethsemane, Tacoma, to Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada.

Wisconsin

Demlow, Douglas M., Faith, Ishpeming, Mich., to St. John, Elkhorn.

Fehr, R. Howard, First, Iron Mountain, Mich., to Sabylund, Stockholm.

GERMANY

Magalee, John E., chaplain, U.S. Army, Frankfurt, to retirement.



"Terri" and "Kevin" (foreground), two characters in the daytime television drama General Hospital, walk down the aisle of St. John Church, Charleston, S.C., after their marriage. Several members of the congregation appeared as wedding guests in the episodes which were televised in February.

Deaths

The Rev. Herbert J. Brede, S.T.D., 91, died Feb. 18. Ordained in 1920, he served St. Paul, Palmer, Kan.; Immanuel, Good Thunder, Minn.; Zion, Caroline; Immanuel, Cedarburg, both in Wisconsin; St. Paul, Chicago; Christ, Indianapolis, and St. Paul, Jasper (Haysville), both in Indiana. He retired in 1960.

The Rev. Millard L. Kroh, 83, died Feb. 23. Ordained in 1928, he served Mount Union and St. Paul, both in Uniontown, Md.; St. Paul, Friedensaal and Trinity, all in Seven Valleys, Pa. He retired in 1964.

The Rev. George I. Melhorn, D.D., 82, died Feb. 28. Ordained in 1928, he served Trinity, Bedford, and Moxham (1943-71), Johnstown, both in Pennsylvania. He retired in 1971.

The Rev. E. James Mollenauer, 87, died Feb. 18. Ordained in 1926, he served St. John, Shenandoah; Our Saviour, Irwin, both in Pennsylvania; St. John, Syracuse; St. John, New York (Manhattan), both in New York, and Good Shepherd, Valley

Station, Ky. He also was a pastor/developer in Philadelphia. He retired in 1964.

The Rev. William Ostermann, 86, died March 7. Ordained in 1930 by the Evangelical Augsburg Church in Poland, he served congregations there until 1947. After coming to the United States he served St. Paul, Philadelphia. He retired in 1965.

The Rev. Donald A. Steward, 64, St. John, Fredericksburg, and Zoar, Lebanon, both in Pennsylvania, died Feb. 21 of cancer. He had served the congregations since his ordination in 1952.

The Rev. John W. Whetstone, D.D., 73, died March 12. Ordained in 1938, he served Evangelical, Reedsville; St. Andrew, Muncy; St. Mark, Philadelphia, all in Pennsylvania, and Holy Trinity, New York (Manhattan). From 1955-68 he was associate director of the Commission on Church Architecture of the LCA and the former United Lutheran Church in America. He retired in 1976.

NEWS NOTES

Members lend hand

Members of Trinity Church, Ashland, Ohio, lent a helping hand recently to the Queen Louise Home for Children, St. Croix, Virgin Islands. The group which included a carpenter, an electrician and a mechanic remodeled bathrooms, repaired roofs and worked on agency cars. "We are very grateful for their wonderful gift of service," said Agnes Christopher, superintendent of the home. "If Trinity had not chosen to help, Queen Louise Home would still be waiting for these needed repairs."

Trinity maintains a fund for such projects. The home serves children newborn to 12 years who cannot live with their families because of abuse, neglect or abandonment. The five-member work crew included Tim Baum, Willie Daniels, Phil Kershner, Dennis Sacuett and David Wertman.

Who has the buttons?

"Kiss me, I'm Lutheran," was the phrase printed on buttons at Marquette University in Milwaukee. The buttons were an attempt to make the Lutheran presence known at the predominantly Roman Catholic school. An ad which appeared in the campus newspaper gave the time and place Lutheran Eucharists are celebrated on campus "with a kiss of peace." It added, "If you're not Lutheran, but you could use a kiss, we have extra buttons."

Agencies cooperate

Bethphage Mission Inc. of Nebraska and Lutheran Service Association of New England have entered into an agreement to provide homes for the developmentally disabled in Connecticut. Bethphage has purchased four homes and engaged Lutheran Children and Family Services of Connecticut to manage the facilities which will be known as Bethphage of Connecticut. Bethphage projects the development of 15 to 20 group residences under the agreement. LCFS is also planning to establish an additional 15 to 20 group residences in Connecticut.

Ordinance debated

Lutherans in the Detroit area have reacted negatively to a newly enacted ordinance by the city of Dearborn, a Detroit suburb, which restricts use of Dearborn parks to Dearborn residents. Charges have been made that the law was passed to keep minority groups from using the parks.

The Detroit Conference of the American Lutheran Church opposed the new regulation and called upon Lutherans in the area

to forego using mercantile facilities in cities that have such prohibitive regulations. The executive committee of the Metropolitan Detroit Lutheran Parish passed the same resolutions and recommended them to local Lutheran congregations.

College provides aid

Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minn., has established a financial assistance program for students from rural communities. Called the Andrew Thorson Scholarships, the program will provide awards ranging up to \$3,000 for qualifying students from rural areas and small towns. The scholarships, named for a farmer who worked to bring a college to St. Peter, acknowledge the contributions the rural community has made to the founding and development of Gustavus Adolphus.

The scholarships are available to students from Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, North Dakota and South Dakota who demonstrate financial need and who live in a community of fewer than 2,000 residents or attend a rural school with a senior class of fewer than 100.

President named

William E. Hamm, vice president for university relations at California Lutheran University, Thousand Oaks, was named president of Waldorf College, a two-year college of the American Lutheran Church in Forest City, Iowa. Hamm succeeds Dr. Arndt F. Braaten who resigned last year to accept a call as pastor of Immanuel Church, Cresco, Iowa. Dr. Morris Wee of Minneapolis has been interim president.

Astronauts honored

Resurrection Church, Houston, during recent Sunday worship included a memorial service for the seven astronauts who died in the Challenger space shuttle. Members of the congregation wore red-white-and-blue ribbons and the organist wore a special ribbon with white roses. Pictures of the seven astronauts were displayed in the sanctuary.

Representing the Cub Scout pack sponsored by the congregation, Michael Wilson of Resurrection presented seven live oak trees to be planted on the church grounds in memory of the astronauts. "Today, as we remember the passing of our fallen heroes, we must not lose sight of their dream to explore the heavens and unlock the secrets of the universe," he said in presenting the trees "as a reminder of their dedication and that dream."

Luther adopts policy

The Board of Regents of Luther College, Decorah, Iowa, has instructed the college's investment adviser to divest any stocks which do not conform to the principles of the Teacher's Insurance Annuity Association-College Retirement Equities Fund, which invests retirement funds from colleges and universities and their faculty and staff.

The fund urges the companies in which it has invested to sign the Sullivan Principles or to withdraw from South Africa. In its principles the fund also asks the firms to make no new loans to the South African private sector, to refrain from entering any joint ventures with South African businesses and to deny support to the "homeland" policy.

CLASSIFIEDS

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TRAVEL BARGAINS! ALPINE HOLIDAY: Leisure trip; Oktoberfest, Vienna, Salzburg, Romantic Road, Sept. 22-Oct. 5. SCANDINAVIAN ODYSSEY: Options: Leningrad, Lapland. July 15-30. Dr. A. Lehenbauer, 18W095 Williamsburg, Villa Park, Ill. 60181. 312-495-2863.

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MY QUESTION IS...

Q. In our parish we offer the option of imposing ashes on people's foreheads according to the directions of the Ash Wednesday liturgy of the *Lutheran Book of Worship* (Ministers Edition, page 129). What criteria should be used in deciding who can receive the ashes? What age level or membership status should be required for participation in this rite?

A. The Ash Wednesday liturgy and accompanying rubrics give no directions on this subject. So one must look at the nature of the service itself to see what it implies. This liturgy seeks to encourage a conscious awareness of one's sin and a spirit of repentance. The ashes also remind us of human weakness and mortality. The rubrics direct that "those who desire to receive ashes come forward and kneel before the altar." So some capacity to contemplate the power of sin and death in one's life and to "desire" this symbol of repentance would seem to be required. Specifying an age level or membership status seems unnecessary, since it is so much a personal decision. You are concerned about whether infants should be given ashes. While the Ash Wednesday liturgy is not really designed for them, no harm is done by including those brought by their parents. The ashes are not a sacra-

ment, but a ceremony, a solemn visual aid. Much of the church's worship has a corporate as well as an individual purpose. To include small children in ceremonies whose words and symbols may be temporarily beyond their individual understanding may at least have the value of binding them more closely to the corporate life of the church.

Q. What are the wage guidelines for a pastor?

A. Most synods of the Lutheran Church in America have their own set of guidelines. Criteria used to set dollar amounts vary. Among them are such considerations as length of service, size of congregation(s) served and general cost of living in a geographic area. The LCA Division for Professional Leadership also suggests that compensation planning include evaluation of pastoral effectiveness, leading to merit increases where appropriate. Your synod office will provide your church council with relevant information; DPL offers a compensation planning workbook.

Q. I am an obstetrical nurse. We are sometimes called upon to baptize infants when clergy are not present. What is the position of the Lutheran church on baptism of the

stillborn and non-viable miscarried fetuses?

A. Lutheran theologians classically have taught that baptism is for the living and actually born. If a child is alive at birth, whatever the stage of fetal development, it may be baptized. The church recognizes the validity of emergency baptism by laity. There are two cautions which you should observe. First, you should not baptize anyone unless requested by a parent or responsible party. Second, you should not worry about the salvation of the stillborn or the non-viable miscarried fetus. As John Gerhard, 17th century "archtheologian" of Lutheran orthodoxy, wrote: "We neither can, nor ought to, rashly condemn those infants that die either in their mother's womb, or suddenly for any cause before receiving baptism; we should rather conclude that the prayers of godly parents, or, if the parents in this matter are neglectful, the prayers of the church, poured out before God for these infants, are mercifully heard, and that they are received into favor and life by God." This position is consistent with the teaching of Scripture on God's grace and baptism as understood in the Lutheran confessions.

Answers are researched and compiled by Editorial Associate Glenn C. Stone.

CAPITOL CURRENTS

Refugee aid can bring felony charges

It has been six years since civil war broke out in El Salvador. Many displaced by the fighting or terrorized by death squads have sought refuge in the United States. They have been joined by Guatemalans fleeing military repressions, including massacres of Indian peasants, and by Nicaraguans fleeing the intensifying war.

The U.S. government maintains that the Central Americans are here solely for economic reasons and pursues a policy of deportation. Last year 3.1 percent of Salvadoran and 1.2 percent of Guatemalan asylum applications were granted. And, despite the Reagan administration's assertions of human rights abuses by the Sandinista government against the Nicaraguan people, only 8.6 percent of Nicaraguans were granted asylum. The rest face deportation back home.

By comparison, 37.9 percent of the Poles received asylum as did 53.7 percent of Iranian applicants.

Many churches have responded by providing the Central Americans with food,

shelter, employment, counseling and moral support. Many do it quietly. Another 250 or so have declared "sanctuary" and brought this controversial issue into the public eye. Whether done publicly or not, it is a felony to "harbor," "transport" or "aid and abet" persons without documents.

Congregations in the Southwest have struggled to find an appropriate response to the plight of Central American refugees. Confronted daily with the reality of refugees in desperate need, some congregations have made a hard choice — to open their doors.

Several congregations in Arizona which have assisted Central American refugees were infiltrated by the Immigration and Naturalization Service, contrary to established INS procedures. Undercover agents and informants attended meetings, religious services and Bible studies and, in many cases, secretly taped them. The infiltration led to a 71-count indictment of 16 church workers and the arrest of some

60 refugees. It also poisoned the sense of trust essential to a vital faith community.

The churches infiltrated included an American Lutheran Church congregation and several Presbyterian churches. A lawsuit was recently filed by the churches, challenging the government operation on First Amendment grounds.

This legal case casts a new urgency on the church's attempts to respond to this human tragedy through legislative remedies such as the Deconcini/Moakley bill to suspend Salvadoran deportations or provide relief from deportation through "extended voluntary departure." Until a solution is found which recognizes that refugees fleeing death and civil war deserve protection, the government, like the church, ought to be trying to resolve the issue through dialogue and public discourse, not through spies in places of worship.

—CHARLES V. BERGSTROM

The author directs the Office for Governmental Affairs, Lutheran Council in the USA.

NOW, I THINK

By Gladys Lane

No double standard for refugees

My attention was riveted by two related but dissimilar articles on facing pages in a recent issue of *The Lutheran*.

The first, headlined "Police arrest Lutheran leaders," concerned two Lutheran lay workers in El Salvador, arrested by the national police without charge. One man was head of the Lutheran church's agricultural program; the other headed the youth program of Resurrection Church in San Salvador.

In El Salvador today, a person who works within the framework of Christian beliefs is frequently subject to arrest and imprisonment. A concerned Christian does not have to speak out or declare which political faction he or she supports to be in danger. His or her daily living of the faith, working to feed the hungry, minister to the sick, comfort the fearful and oppressed, teach and nurture the children, or labor with the poor and homeless, is enough evidence to put a life in jeopardy. In God's court of justice, such actions would convict a person of being a follower of Christ; in El Salvador this daily living of the faith is a dangerous path to follow.

My husband and I have grown to love the country and the people of El Salvador. Christians there walk a tight-rope, torn between concern for their lives and the lives of their families, and the need to follow their faith wherever it may lead. They are constantly aware that they may be forced to flee their country and to seek refuge in a strange land because faceless accusers have given shadowy testimony against them. What would happen to these Salvadorans if they fled to the United States? They would likely be denied refuge and political asylum on the grounds that they have not demonstrated a well-founded fear of persecution. They would be labeled "economic refugees" and would be speedily deported to their homeland.



The author, a member of University Church, Gainesville, Fla., and her husband are sponsors for a 13-year-old Salvadoran girl whose father was a leader in a land-reform project before he was kidnapped and killed. The Lanes have visited El Salvador three times.

"Now, I think" is a regular feature in *The Lutheran*. Readers may contribute cogent, timely and varied analyses of issues in church and society. Opinions in this column do not necessarily reflect the views of *The Lutheran* or the official positions of the Lutheran Church in America.

The second article is entitled "Agency resettles Romanian." According to this report, a Romanian merchant seaman left his ship in Jacksonville, Fla., and requested political asylum. He did not mention fear for his life because of race or religious beliefs, did not tell of death threats or arrests by government, was not required to demonstrate "a well-founded fear of persecution." Because he was a citizen of Romania, a communist country, he simply requested refuge in the United States.

Within 48 hours after leaving his ship, through the help of Lutheran Social Services of Northeast Florida, the man had been given a place to live, a new job and had been promised political asylum. He wanted a better life in the United States for himself and his family and had the courage to take the necessary action to achieve this. The Rev. Dale G. Gatz reported that the seaman was brought to the agency office by immigration officials after the agency offered to help. We are proud that Pastor Gatz and LSS assisted this man and other refugees from Romania in their search for a better life.

But as we look at El Salvador we see people who are equally deserving of our love, assistance and protection. We see industrious, concerned people who somehow manage to go about their daily work, striving to hold the threads of their lives together. We remember in our prayers the Salvadoran family whose father was taken from his home by night and killed because he was the leader of a small land-reform project. We remember with love the Christian lay worker and his wife who told us of their love for their country but who were prepared to flee if there was any threat to themselves or their children. We think with sorrow of the Lutheran pastor who was killed in November 1984. The trial of the two soldiers accused of the murder has been postponed because jurors are afraid to serve on such cases. We remember with concern the young Lutheran lay worker in San Salvador who was afraid to speak with us on the telephone, who knew she was being watched by the military because she worked with the poor.

We pray that peace will come to El Salvador and to all the nations of the world. Until this happens, we believe that we Americans must continue our tradition of welcoming victims of war and persecution. As Christians, we are obligated to open our arms and hearts to our brothers and sisters from El Salvador, from Romania, from wherever innocent people flee brutality and oppression. ■

LETTERS

Giving content to commitment

My good intentions more often than not come to naught unless I clearly identify each task, decide how and when it will be done, and reinforce it by some means of accountability. Similarly, the Commission for a New Lutheran Church has provided clear identity, priority attention and a public means of accountability for the church's intentions. I wish it wasn't necessary to be so calculated in carrying out our good intentions, but since we are still creatures, careful monitoring is needed. We are not "trampling on trust" (*Editor's opinion*, March 19) but giving content to our commitment, even as we do in formalizing marriage promises, enacting city ordinances or even making use of the lectionary to guide us through the themes of the church year. We need quotas to ensure our move toward inclusiveness for the same reason we need the 55 mph speed limit to ensure greater safety on the highways. As a "convert" to this way of thinking, I am most grateful for the leadership and challenge given us by the CNLC.

JAN ERICKSON-PEARSON
Chicago

If the CNLC is serious about quotas to ensure that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is inclusive, why only quotas based on clergy/laity, sex, color and language? Why not quotas for the disabled, elderly, youth, maybe even for the divorced, separated and single, to name just a few? Perhaps what is really needed is more trust and faithfulness to the Word of God.

PETER A. RUSTICO
White Plains, N. Y.

Legalism makes laws requirements for salvation. How sad that the brush of "legalism" is spread against an effort to limit the domination of white males in the present Lutheran bodies. Forming a constitution requires establishing rules by

Wrong Rochester

"Church shares banner" (*News notes*, March 5, page 28) should have placed Mount Olive Church in Rochester, Minn., not in New York. Our smaller Rochester is the home of the Mayo Clinic, IBM and other wonderful people, including the altar guild of the parish I serve as pastor who made the twin banners for both our congregation and St. Paul Church in Leipzig-Grünau, East Germany.

KEITH W. BEAVER
Rochester, Minn.

which we consent to live together. Quotas are a tragic necessity. The CNLC is to be commended.

BURTON EVERIST
Dubuque, Iowa

Even as we read about significant ethnic gains in aggressively evangelistic denominations ("Conservatives lead in ethnic growth," *News*, March 19, page 17), the CNLC devises elaborate quotas for inclusiveness which are no more than rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic. Sharing the good news of Jesus Christ has historically made disciples of all peoples. A Lutheran church with 1.9 percent minorities will be inclusive only by aggressive evangelism, which is like guerrilla warfare — house to house, hand to hand. In the trenches of spiritual warfare where conversion takes place, who will stop to ask the ethnic composition of leadership? The CNLC should sound the bugle of a radical devotion to evangelism and create a structure dedicated to that end.

PETER HOLMER
Kirkland, Ill.

I agree with the editor that the quota system is contrary to the letter and spirit of democratic governance of the Lutheran

church. More importantly, it flies in the face of the principles of Christian love and trust the church has always proclaimed. Quotas imply that the interests and representation of so-called minorities cannot be entrusted to anyone not a member of that minority, no matter how devoted, dedicated and unprejudiced a Christian. Instead of being "inclusive," quotas *exclude* those elected not because of accident of birth but selected on the basis of merit.

FREDERICK R. HODOSH
West Chester, Pa.

As presented, the CNLC plan is blatantly anti-clerical. The function of the clergy as keepers of the keys should not be taken lightly. As a student of American religious history, I would remind the CNLC what happens to a church whose faith is determined by "democratic" lay vote. "American religion" is a far cry from the biblical faith of the Reformation. Isn't it about time the CNLC faced its task from the perspective of historical roots and eschatological mission rather than from the pragmatic common sense (and culturally conditioned) position they seem to have adopted?

ANNABELLE S. WENZKE
State College, Pa.

Which way peacemaking?

Henri Nouwen's Feb. 19 article, *The Holy Obligation of Peacemaking*, has the wrong title. It should read, *The Theology of Unilateral Disarmament*. Nouwen takes a noble, biblical issue — the love of life and peace — and raises it above all other considerations. The result of these good intentions gone awry is theological violence and imbalance. He says "all we do should be done in the service of peace." This is most certainly not true. Sometimes peace must give way to righteousness, justice or freedom. He says "peace is the divine gift offered to all who affirm life." If he means that peace which passes all understanding, he is wrong, because that peace is bestowed only on those who "affirm" Christ as Lord. If he means earthly peace, he is both wrong and silly. Such an idea is foreign to both revealed truth and observed experience. But the witness of Scripture and experience never deters pacifists like Nouwen in the march toward their human-made millenium. Their aim is unilateral disarmament and they will twist Scripture to make it support that.

KILE SMITH
Philadelphia

Nouwen speaks of "Jesus Christ as the man of peace who did not choose to appeal to his Father who would promptly send more than 12 legions of angels to his defense (Matthew 26:53), but who chose to die on a cross in total disarmament." It wasn't peace in his heart that made him do that. He had a mission from his Father to accomplish: to die so that we who believe in him might live. Taking a verse out of context is dangerous. Nouwen should read Matthew 26:54.

MARILYN SHARE
Coshocton, Ohio

We need to acknowledge that many people trying to do what is right and "Christian" are convinced that powerful nations have an obligation to protect weaker ones. Although decisions on when to act and who to assist are rarely easy, we cannot "cop out" and say that because the situation is not perfectly clear, we won't use our strength at all. The essence of being Christian is knowing that there is forgiveness, whatever choice you make.

BARRY C. SAUNDERS
Salt Lake City

EDITOR'S OPINION

By Edgar R. Trexler

Nicaragua: Of *contras* and credibility

The spectacle last month of 200 religious leaders at the U.S. Capitol accusing the Reagan administration of intentionally lying to generate support for \$100 million in aid to Nicaraguan *contras* was a sad commentary on the lack of trust between the two groups.

I was visiting Nicaragua and El Salvador at the time, talking with Protestants and Roman Catholics, educated persons and peasants, in cities and in rural areas, and with U.S. Embassy personnel. Many different views were expressed, but I can't escape the conclusion that there are discrepancies between what I heard there and what I hear back home.

That comment isn't made lightly. Nicaragua is a trouble spot; its government is Marxist. How much of a Soviet threat it may be, I don't know. But I do know there are questions of credibility. For instance:

— Many *contras* are Miskito Indians who don't oppose the Sandinistas on ideological grounds. Rather, they are fighting the Sandinistas because the government tried to move them off their mountain homeland to protect them, Moravian missionaries insist.

— An Assemblies of God lay preacher told me that since the end of the Somoza regime (which the United States supported), schools and health care are available for his children. "If that's communism," he said, "then I can't say it's a bad thing";

— A church elder who is part of a cooperative that has been given land by the government and credit to buy machinery and seed, asked me to "tell U.S. churches that we are suffering because of the government, but not the people, of the United States. We know the difference";

— Devout Roman Catholics support the Sandinista government even though the church hierarchy does not. They say the church lost credibility with its people because it criticizes the Sandinistas but did not speak out against the

Somoza regime;

— Many evangelical churches work closely with the government to improve living conditions for their people. They insist that this does not constitute ideological agreement;

— At the U.S. Embassy, personnel did not refer to Nicaragua as "Marxist" or a "totalitarian regime" or to the *contras* as "freedom fighters." Their calmer language gave credence to comments by U.S. missionaries that Washington does not reflect the embassy's views.

Back home, U.S. newspapers pointed out that the Drug Enforcement Administration disputed Reagan's assertion that top Nicaraguan government officials are deeply involved in drug trafficking. Also, a poll used by the administration to show that Central Americans support the Reagan policy turned out to be 8 months old; a more recent poll showed quite a different story.

At least three things seem pertinent to the continuing conversations in Washington about aid to the *contras* (a situation now more acute after the Libyan attacks):

First, negotiations clearly are better than war, especially U.S. participation in talks involving the Contadora group of seven South American countries and Mexico who have called on Central American countries to reduce their military expenditures, stop supporting guerrillas in neighboring countries and promote democracy.

Second, church people with whom I talked in Nicaragua would not ask whether you can be Marxist and Christian. "Atheistic" is not part of the nature of that government. President Ortega is a practicing Roman Catholic. The Soviet Union has severely restricted churches; not so in Nicaragua. If Nicaraguans say anything about the relationship of their faith and their government, it is likely to be, "If you are Christian, how can you not favor the improvement in social and living conditions that are taking place?"

Third, the issue of credibility cannot be emphasized too much. Marxist countries are not all alike. More sophisticated understanding, rather than broadside accusations, are essential. A high-ranking person at the U.S. Embassy in El Salvador told me pointedly that part of the problem in U.S. understanding of Central America is that church reports distort things. That type of comment invites misunderstandings, if not distrust.

Most Americans are people of good will; they want to do the right thing. They want to trust their government; they want to trust their church leaders. When these groups say different things, people are confused. People should think twice before they believe accusations that the church is distorting things.



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