

THE *Lutheran*

MARCH 5, 1986

WHAT ARE LUTHERANS LIKE?

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TERESA

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A LITTLE SALT

Heavy editing

One Sunday in a sermon introduction I was trying to explain to the congregation that a sermon is not to be equated with the infallible word of God. Neither, though, is it a product of a preacher's whims and fantasies. I explained that a preacher tries to be faithful to Scripture and preaches more than subjective opinions. One of my confirmation students in her weekly report on the sermon described what I said in one sentence: "Somewhere in between the preacher and the Lord is the truth."

—Robert M. Raabe
Lincoln, Neb.

Before God can deliver us, we must undeceive ourselves.

—Augustine

Satanic slip

Our congregation was planning an adult class for those considering the church for membership. The classes were advertised as primarily for those of other "demoninational" backgrounds.

—Waldo Schulz
Long Lake, Minn.



Boxing with Bach

The Central Pennsylvania Synod newsletter, *Central Penn Points*, recently said the following under a column with the heading "Recommended viewing": "The Well-Tempered Box, with Peter Ustinov, is now available in the synod's video library."

—Richard Englund
Chambersburg, Pa.

Needs help getting around

In his newsletter, Iowa Synod Bishop Paul Werger noted that a synod pastor, Alan Henderson, was hospitalized with a broken kneecap. A typo with the notice seemed curiously appropriate. It read, "Your remembrances and cars will be appreciated."

—Timothy D. Hubert
Mason City, Iowa

Left us in stitches

I'm a church secretary working near the room where the congregation's quilting circle meets. One day I overheard a participant paraphrasing Galatians 6:7 this witty way: "As you sew, so shall you rip."

—Gloria Albrecht
Duluth, Minn.

What lies behind us and what lies before us are small matters compared to what lies within us.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

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

CONTENTS

Volume 24, Number 5
March 5, 1986

- 4 **Lent with Mother Teresa** Gwen Haugen
My unforgettable spring with Calcutta's destitute dying
- 6 **What Are Lutherans Like?** Carl Reuss
A report on characteristics of America's merging Lutherans
- 10 **Working for Peace** Henri Nouwen
Last in a series of theological reflections
- 12 **The Broke Banks of Cherokee** James Schwab
A farm town with failing banks ponders its future
- 14 **Life After the Farm** Joyce Murphey
A Kansas woman reports there is hope beyond foreclosure

Departments

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| 9 One Blood, Many Colors | 29 My question is |
| 16 Kidbits | 29 Sight and sound |
| 17 News | 30 People |
| 19 Worldscan | 32 Now, I think |
| 22 Lutheran lists | 33 Letters |
| 28 News notes | 34 Editor's opinion |

Our cover is by David Greenberg. (Story on page 4.)

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Lent With Mother Teresa

By Gwen Haugen

Mother," I said, "would you bless me, please, before we leave?" The sainted worker among the poorest in Calcutta moved toward me, placed her brown, wrinkled hands on either side of my head, and prayed that the love of the suffering Jesus would fill my life and that I would always serve in his name.

In Calcutta they call Mother Teresa "Mother." It is a title reserved for the most dedicated workers among the suffering. Some of us who volunteered for a short time in her Home for the Destitute Dying were called "Auntie."

Hundreds of volunteers come to India from around the world to join with the Roman Catholic Sisters of Charity who serve selflessly in Mother Teresa's institutions.

My sister, Marie, and I made the trip during Lent last spring, acting on an inner urging which just never let go.

Each morning at the breakfast table in the YWCA International Guest House in Calcutta we talked with other volunteers and heard their plans for the day. I rejoiced in our diversity, even as we set out with a common purpose.

We worked with a young midwife from England, a young man from Wales, two young women from Japan, a woman professor from California, and two older American women.

Only the abandoned and hopelessly ill are admitted to the Home for the Destitute Dying. It is where Mother Teresa began her work in Calcutta. The home is attached to the temple built to honor the goddess Kali, and the turrets and domes are outlined against the sky. It is located in an area teeming with people, rickshaws, rattletrap taxis, crowded outdoor markets and vending stands.

That first time inside we looked for advice to one of the seasoned volunteers, for the Sisters of Charity are busy with their own work. He showed us the men's ward, the women's ward, and the multipurpose room which serves as kitchen and laundry. He showed us where our green work aprons hung, and then he left to minister to wasted and suffering men. Never have I faced a task with less instruction or advice.

We changed the rubber sheets, fed those who needed help, rubbed backs, sat with them, consoling. At times we sang to them, and we learned to know them, even the first day. We watched the sisters and saw that no job was too menial for them. They tended festering limbs, administered medication, mostly to alleviate pain, for more than one-half of those people were soon to die. We saw the brothers carry them out daily, the bodies wrapped in white shrouds, borne on shoulder poles. In the laundry room the sisters flog the clothes on stone vats, and hang them out on the roof to dry. They cook on the large wood stove which adds to the heat of the place. They wash the utensils, while crouching on the floor, using moistened ashes and jute.

One time we entered the home and watched in amazement the once-a-month overall cleaning. Patients are moved to a raised area where they rest on blankets. Then the sisters go to work, again with ashes and jute, scrubbing on their knees, chattering and singing.

When their workday is done the sisters go to the Mother House, their home and Mother Teresa's home. Here they begin and end each day with Mass. They meet in a room devoid of furniture except for the candlelit altar. On their knees for 45 minutes they chant, sing hymns, pray and dedicate themselves daily to a life of poverty and service. The windows are open to the clamor and chaos of the street outside, but yet there is peace and purity in that room.

After Mass, there is usually the much sought after opportunity to meet Mother Teresa in a hallway. So many people want to see her and ask for her advice and prayers. She appears tired, but her eyes are bright, and her attention is unwavering. Mother sees Christ in anyone who is troubled — physically or emotionally. When she talks about the poverty of Calcutta, she goes on to talk about another kind of poverty, such as she has found in America, the poverty of loneliness.

The sacrificial spirit of the Sisters of Charity pervades the city. One hot day we walked along Park Street at noontime, as the sun blazed on the walk. Then we saw the frail figure of a man collapsed next to the curb. People glanced at him as they passed by, but they walked on. Marie and I hesitated, uncertain as to the kind of help we could give. After a few steps we were stricken with the thought that we were like the others, and also very much like the priest and Levite of the Scriptures. We turned back, and then we saw them — the sisters in their white saris with blue borders. They had arrived in one of Mother's ambulances, which they drive on Calcutta streets, searching for such people. They were offering the man water and assistance. They were doing God's work, just like the Good Samaritan of Jesus' day.

They are following the example of Mother Teresa who, in 1948, walked out of the security of a convent onto the streets of Calcutta, committed to living the life of the poorest of the poor as she served them. The sisters give up everything when they enter the order, and they do it with joy. Each owns two saris and a bucket. As one of them stood with me by a bed in the Home of the Destitute Dying, she cheered the dying woman lying there, cajoling her into conversation.

Ideas differ about volunteerism in Mother Teresa's homes. Some say that Calcutta, a city almost out of control with its problems of disease, street-dwellers and unemployment, would have gone under, were it not for willing, overworked volunteers. Government people, frustrated at so much unemployment, feel volunteers may compound the problems. Whatever the right answer, the compassion in action, without remuneration, by the charitable people in Calcutta makes it as much a city with a heart as a city of misery. ■



What Are Lutherans Like?



**Lutheran attitudes
and beliefs differ sharply
from region to region.
A researcher offers
insights.**

The author is assistant for research coordination in the office of the presiding bishop of the American Lutheran Church. This is the first in a series of occasional articles on the new church to be published jointly by *The Lutheran* and *The Lutheran Standard*.

By Carl Reuss

Who are the "we, the people" — members of the American Lutheran Church, Lutheran Church in America and Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches — who are planning to form a new Lutheran church in 1988?

We're baptized, but our rate of infant baptisms isn't keeping up with our nation's birthrate. We're in all 50 states, but many of us drop out of church altogether if we move to the South or West. We're loyal to our traditions, but not all of us totally agree with Lutheranism's central theological emphases.

About 75 percent of us live in the North. But where we live in the North is one of the differences among our three church bodies. About 35 percent of LCA members and about 30 percent of AELC members live in the Northeast — Penn-

sylvania, New York, New Jersey and the New England states. But a mere 2 percent of ALC members live in the Northeast.

About 75 percent of ALC members and 60 percent of AELC members live in the 12 north central states bounded by Ohio, Kansas and the Canadian border. Forty percent of LCA members live in those states.

Lutherans living in the South are much more likely to belong to the LCA than the ALC or AELC, while Lutherans in the West are much more likely to be ALC than AELC or LCA. About 16 percent of LCA members are Southerners; that same percentage of ALC members are Westerners.

Important differences characterize the Northeast, Midwest, South and West. Those differences — with roots in prevailing economies; ways of living; dominant newspapers, radio and television stations; transportation routes, and history and tradition — also appear in our three church bodies. So perhaps what seem to be differences over “important” issues of church structure, polity and practice, or mission outreach mostly reflect where we live.

Apart from official church statistics, data about U.S. Lutherans are scarce. But in 1980, eight Lutheran bodies took part in a cross-section sample survey. The findings were published in *Profiles of Lutherans in the USA* (Augsburg, 1982). This article is based in large part on that study.

Most of us — 70 percent of AELC and LCA members and 80 percent of ALC members — grew up in Lutheran families. If we come from another denomination, that’s probably because we married a Lutheran.

It’s no big surprise that a majority of us are of German ancestry. Fifty-seven percent of AELC members and 51 percent of LCA members claim German ancestry. Members of German and Scandinavian ancestry are almost perfectly balanced in the ALC, with about 40 percent each. The LCA has a significant Scandinavian constituency (22 percent) and a larger proportion of persons of English ancestry (15 percent) than the ALC or AELC. Among Lutherans in the South, 20 percent are of English ancestry.

The *Profiles* study makes it clear that Lutherans are not great joiners. About the only organizations we join in sizable numbers are sports groups, church groups and groups related

to our jobs or professions.

Neither are we social activists. About the only causes in which we were involved in 1980 were gun control (many of our members are against it) and school or educational causes. This supports the contention that Lutherans are interested mostly in church, children, work and leisure.

A majority of us attend worship almost weekly and receive communion at least monthly. We pray — privately — and

say grace at meals. We read the Bible every once in a while — but at least one-third of us don’t open the Good Book even once a year!

Two-thirds of us say our religious beliefs are “very important” to us. Fewer than 5 percent of us regard them as “not too or not at all important.” Among Americans generally, some 56 percent say their religious beliefs are “very important,” while 13 percent regard them as of little importance, according to a 1984 Gallup survey.

Lutherans like being Lutherans. One-half of us say it would be “upsetting” to have to move to an area where there was no Lutheran church. Indeed, only 30 percent of us would *not* be upset at that prospect.

Our congregations vary widely in size. If we live in Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi or Tennessee, our congregation likely has fewer than 300 baptized members. But if we live in one of the five Great Lakes states, our congregation probably has nearly 550 members.

Why are we members of this particular congregation? It’s probably because of 1) the church’s location, 2) the fellowship and friendship we have with other members, or 3) because other members of our family attend there. Other factors, less compelling but still important, are the preaching and personality of the pastor.

We say we attend church 1) to worship God, 2) because we

need to hear God’s word, and 3) because we enjoy participating in the service. A few of us admit attending out of a sense of obligation or a wish to “feel God’s presence.”

What do we expect from our congregations? Whether we are ALC, LCA or AELC, more than four-fifths of us say Sunday worship (95 percent), communion (90 percent), and Christian education for children (83 percent). Just over one-half of us expect members to support one another in times of need (55 percent) and want a congregational ministry of

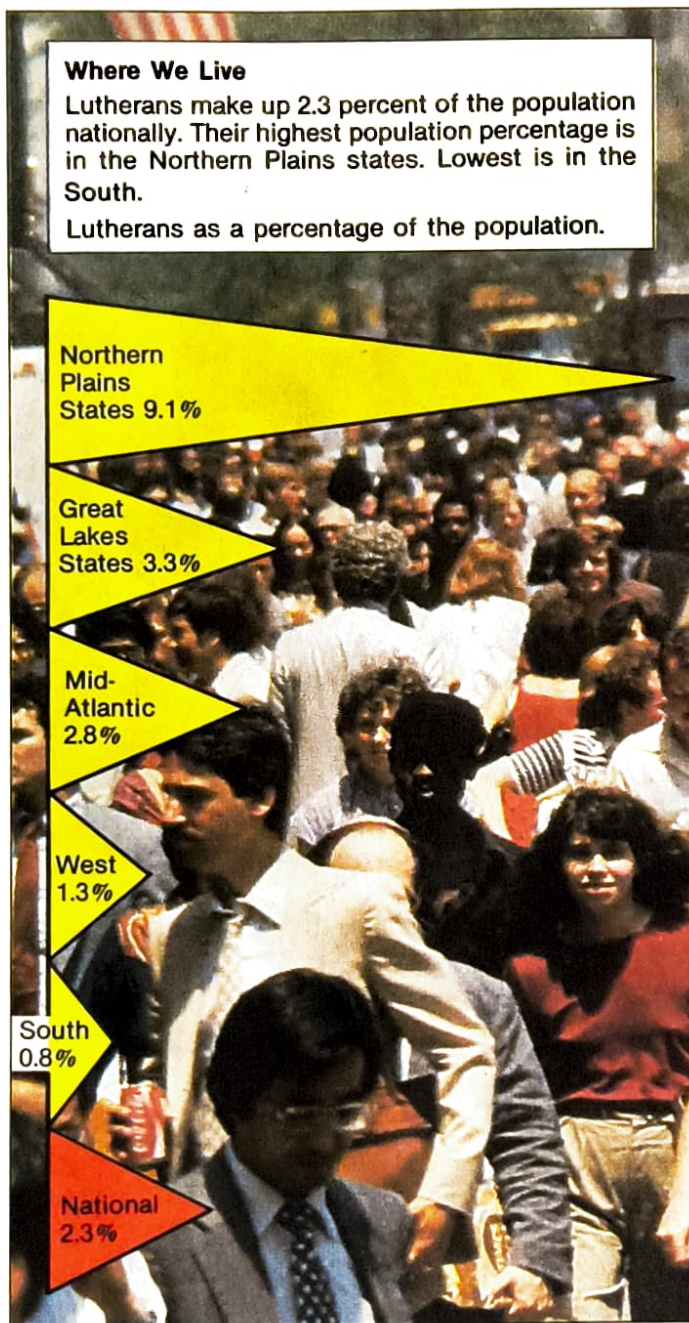


Photo by Camerique

service to people with special needs (51 percent).

We find a difference of opinion when members are asked to pick a sixth thing they expect from their congregations. "Bible study for adults" ranks next for AELC members, while ALC and LCA members pick "youth programs."

ALC, LCA and AELC members agree, however, that church-sponsored recreational activities, weekday prayer or worship, and small groups for sharing personal insights or concerns rank low among the things they expect from their congregations.

In deciding how much to give to the church, about one-third of us choose an annual amount based mostly on what we gave the previous year. Nearly one-fourth of us decide each week or month what we can afford to give. Twenty-six percent of AELC members practice percentage giving, compared with 20 percent of ALC members and 16 percent of LCA members. Most of us agree that pledging is necessary. Pledging is supported most by AELC members, least by ALC members.

Among members who have wills, about 20 percent say theirs provides a gift for the church. Of members who don't have wills, about 14 percent plan to leave a gift to the church, while 23 percent say they won't.

A 1985 survey asked several questions of Lutheran dropouts. Their main reasons for dropping out included too much emphasis on money in the church (55 percent), worship services that aren't meaningful (50 percent), pastors who don't seem interested in them as persons (47 percent), personal conflict with pastors (47 percent), irrelevant sermons (42 percent), church "overuse" of people and burnout (40 percent), and changes in their interests (39 percent).

How well we handle money questions, how we organize worship, how well pastors relate to their people, and how well the church uses the interests and energies of its members all seem crucial in maintaining the loyalties of Lutherans to their congregations.

U.S. Lutherans differ sharply by region in their agreement or disagreement with certain theological propositions. Overall, for example, 71 percent of us agree that "only those who believe in Jesus Christ as Savior can go to heaven." Seventy-five percent of Midwestern Lutherans agree with the state-

ment, but only 58 percent of Lutherans in the Northeast agree. Is a child "already sinful at birth"? Yes, say 63 percent of all U.S. Lutherans. In the Midwest, 70 percent of all Lutherans agree with this idea of "original sin," and 20 percent disagree. But in the Northeast, only 39 percent agree, while 50 percent disagree.

The *Profiles* survey presented Lutherans with 10 basic social issues and asked whether the church should be involved in each and, if so, how. Majorities agree that the church should be involved in minority-rights issues, church-state relationships, equal treatment under the law, substance-abuse prevention, and education in the schools. But majorities say the church should *not* be involved in local zoning laws, political campaigns and business-government relationships.

Lutherans are sharply divided on whether or how the church should be involved in two issues: handling crime and criminals, and medical-care.

Could the new Lutheran church play an important role in shaping society's answers to these and other social issues? And if so, isn't our influence likely to be greater in places where our numbers are larger?

Together, our three current church bodies make up 2.3 percent of the nation's population. We're 2.8 percent of the population of New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania, and 3.3 percent of the population of the five Great Lakes states. Where we're most concentrated — our critics say "dense" — is in the Northern Plains states: Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota. There we are 9.1 percent of the population. But we are but 0.8 percent of the population in the South and 1.3 percent in the West.

Lutherans are a distinctive breed of religious people. For us the quality of our earthly relationships — with family, friends and pastors — is critical. We want worship to be meaningful and relevant. We expect our church to help us grow personally and spiritually in relation to God, neighbors and self.

Sure, there's a self-centered streak in our goals and our expectations. So we pray each Sunday: "We confess that we are in bondage to sin.... Have mercy on us.... Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may ... walk in your ways." ■

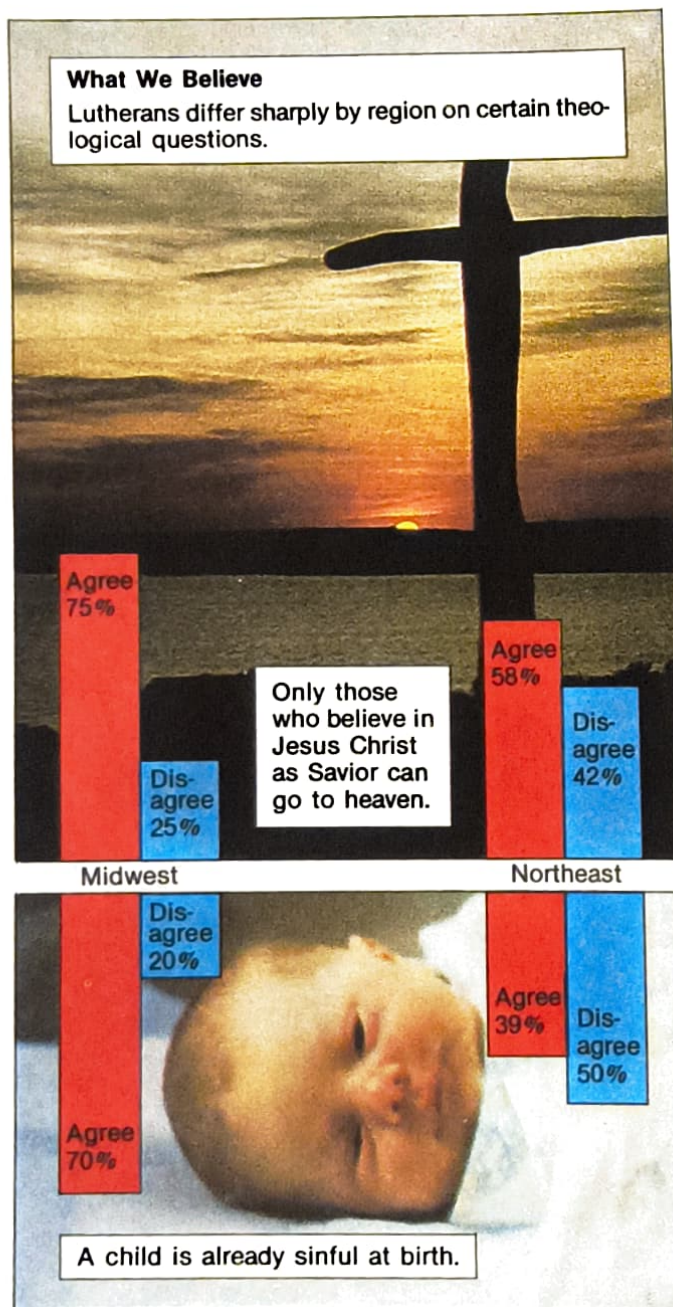


Photo by Gordon Curry

Photo by Camerique

ONE BLOOD, MANY COLORS



Black Lutherans develop their own ministries

By Michael L. Cobbler

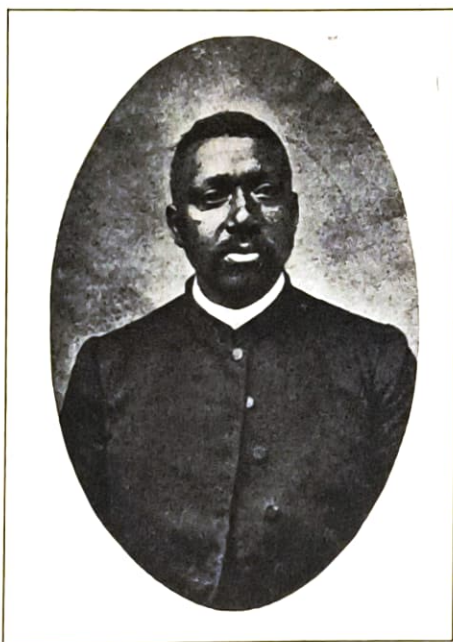
Black Lutherans have been developing ministries on their own for more than 100 years. The end of the Civil War set the stage. In the South the church was uncertain as to how to deal with the membership of the newly freed black Americans. The South Carolina Synod, for example, tried to keep the same relationship with its black members as it had before the war. The model that eventually took hold, however, was the establishment of separate places of worship for blacks, with the assistance of the synods to make it happen. This model produced the first three black pastor/developers, Thomas Frye, Michael M. Coble and Thomas Southerly. All served in North Carolina in the late 1860s and 1870s.

The first black Lutheran "master builder" came on the scene shortly afterward. The Rev. David James Koontz, who was licensed and later ordained by the North Carolina Synod and who served as a pastor from 1876-1890, had a hand in the establishment of three churches in North Carolina. His ministry was a series of "firsts": the first pastor of the second-oldest black Lutheran congregation in the continental United States (Grace, Concord, N.C.), the first black synod staff member, the first black Lutheran "bishop" (president of a synod), the first black pastor to serve the Lutheran church more than 10 years and the first black Lutheran pastor to have a "son of the congregation" called to the ordained ministry.

This is the fourth of five installments by the Rev. Michael L. Cobbler in a yearlong series on diversity and inclusiveness in the church. Cobbler is pastor of New Life Church, Camden, N.J.

Koontz accomplished all this in the face of financial hardship, broken promises from the synod and limitations on the scope of his ministry (he could minister only to black persons).

In 1884, Nathan Clapp and Samuel Holt were added to the roll of black pastors in the North Carolina Synod. As with Koontz, they were not allowed to take part in synod functions and received little or no support. Koontz requested in that year that the congregations he served be transferred to the General Synod (North). Instead of outright transfer, the North Carolina Synod suggested



Koontz

that he be supported by the General Synod but that he remain as the North Carolina Synod's missionary, under its supervision. The General Synod did not want to give support without direct accountability, so in 1886 it recommended that the North Carolina Synod advise the black pastors to engage in secular occupations for their support.

With little backing from the synod, and with the development of a small but active group of clergy and congregations, the time for self-determination had come. A petition to the North Carolina Synod in May 1889 asked "to organize the colored brethren and congregations now belonging to our synod into a colored Evangelical Lutheran Synod." This new church body was called "The Alpha Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Freedmen in America." Koontz,

known as the father of black Lutheran churches in North Carolina, was elected president. William P. Phifer was secretary and Samuel Holt was treasurer.

In organizing a synod of black Lutherans, the Alpha Synod had planned to be self-supporting. But it was to have a very short life. Just before its 1890 convention Koontz died. The convention was not held. In January 1891 Phifer sent a request that the synod be affiliated with the Synodical Conference whose work among black Americans was described in our last installment. The first black Lutheran organization had a life of barely three years.

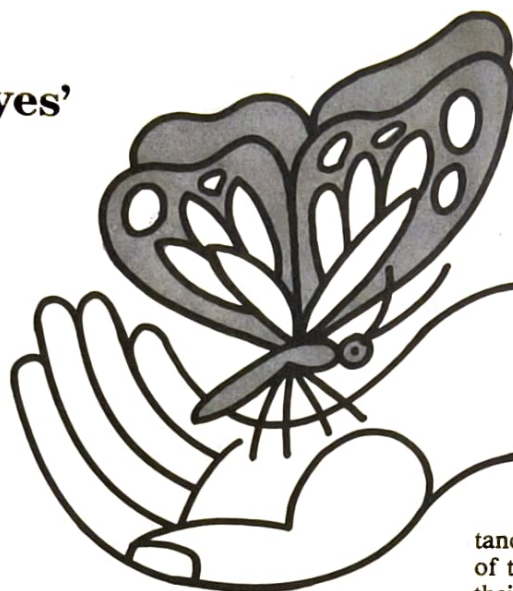
The struggle for self-determination did not receive serious consideration again until 1938 when the Synodical Conference debated the organization of a black synod. This did not come to pass, but it paved the way for the conference's black pastors and congregations to be integrated into the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

By the late 1960s many black clergy and congregations of the Lutheran church bodies had grown weary of waiting for white Lutherans to address their concerns. The time had come to formulate black responses to black concerns. Dr. Albert P. Pero, who was serving in Detroit, called a meeting of all black LCMS pastors, and in July 1967 a caucus was formed. Later, the planning committee was approached by the Rev. James Gunther, a black pastor of the Lutheran Church in America, to hold a caucus for the black clergy of the three main Lutheran bodies. This was accomplished May 7-10, 1968, in Chicago. Out of that meeting emerged the Association of Black Lutheran Clergy (ABLC) which, as Dr. Richard Dickinson writes, "ignored the existence of the denominational judicatories and struggled for a unified approach in black Lutheranism for effective ministry in the racial crisis."

Organizing the ABLC was the apex of black self-determination in the Lutheran church bodies, but it did not have a long life. Problems between the denominational judicatories which the black pastors had hoped to transcend proved difficult. After the passing of the ABLC, organizations for self-determination began to form along judicatory lines. But the quest for new forms for self-determination among black Lutherans goes on.

Next: Congregational life — and the black Lutheran future

Saying 'yes' to life and 'no' to death



Working

By Henri Nouwen

As peacemakers we must have the courage to see the powers of death at work even in our innermost selves, because we find these powers in the way we think and feel about ourselves. Our most intimate inner thoughts can be tainted by death.

When I reflect on my own inner struggles, I must confess that one of the hardest is to accept myself, to affirm my own person as being loved, to celebrate my own "being alive." Sometimes it seems that there are evil voices hidden deeply in my heart trying to convince me that I am worthless, useless and even despicable. It might sound strange, but these dark inner voices are sometimes most powerful when the outside world — family and friends, students and teachers, supporters and sympathizers — offer many compliments and cover me with praise. Precisely then there are voices that say: "Yes, but they really do not know me, they really cannot see my inner ugliness. If they would know and see they would discover how impure and selfish I am and they would withdraw their praise quickly." This self-loathing voice is probably one of the greatest enemies of the peacemaker. It is a voice that seduces us to commit spiritual suicide.

The central message of the Gospel is that God sent his beloved Son to forgive our sins and make us new people, able to live in this world without being paralyzed by self-rejection, remorse and guilt. To accept that message in faith and truly believe that we are forgiven is probably one of the most challenging spiritual battles we have to face. Somehow we cannot let go of our self-rejections, somehow we cling to our guilt, somehow we seem to find a strange kind of security in low self-esteem, as if accepting forgiveness fully would call us to a new and ominous task we are afraid to accept. Resis-

tance is an essential element of peacemaking and the "no" of the resisters must go all the way to the inner reaches of their own hearts to confront the deadly powers of self-hate.

I often think that I am such a hesitant peacemaker because I still have not accepted myself as a forgiven person, a person who has nothing to fear and is truly free to speak the truth and proclaim the kingdom of peace. It sometimes seems to me that the demonic forces of evil and death want to seduce me into believing that I do not deserve the peace for which I am working. I then become self-accusing, apologetic and even self-defeating, always hesitant to claim the grace I have been given and say loudly and clearly: "As a forgiven person I call forth the peace which is the fruit of forgiveness!"

My own inner struggles are not just my own. I share them with millions of others. One of the greatest sources of human suffering in our day is the self-loathing that fills the hearts of countless people. Underneath much self-assured behavior and material success many think rather little of themselves. They might not show it — since that is socially unacceptable — but they suffer from it no less. Feelings of depression, inner anxiety, a sense of spiritual lostness, and most painful — guilt over past failures and past successes — are often constant companions of highly respected women and men. These feelings are like small rodents slowly eating up the foundations of our lives.

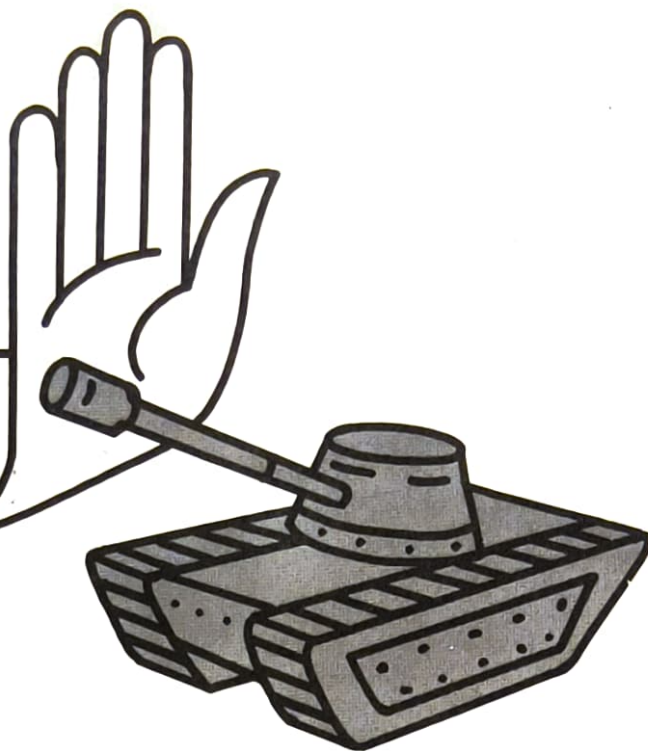
I believe that the battle against these suicidal inner powers is harder than any other spiritual battle. If those who believe in Jesus Christ were able fully to believe that they are forgiven people, who are loved unconditionally and called to proclaim peace in the name of the forgiving Lord, our planet would not be on the verge of self-destruction.

Resisting the forces of death is only meaningful when we are in touch with the forces of life we want to uphold. What is finally important is not that we overcome death but that we celebrate life. Here we touch one of the greatest dangers that face peacemakers: that peacemakers themselves become the victims of the evil forces they are trying to overcome. One of the reasons that so many people have developed strong reservations about the peace movement is precisely that they do not see the peace that they seek in the peacemakers themselves. Often what they see are fearful and angry people trying to convince others of the urgency of their protest.

A loving heart that continues to affirm life at all times and places can say "no" to death without being corrupted by it. A heart that loves friends and enemies is a heart that calls forth life and lifts up life to be celebrated. Indeed, only in

This concludes a three-part series on peacemaking. Reprinted with permission from the *New Oxford Review* (1069 Kains Ave., Berkeley, Cal. 94706) copyright ©1985. The author is a Roman Catholic priest living and working in France. He has written 19 books on Christian ministry and the spiritual life. The series is excerpted from *Peacework*, a forthcoming book to be published by Doubleday.

for Peace



the context of this strong, loving "yes" to life can the power of death be overcome.

Peace and joy are like a brother and sister; they belong together. I cannot remember a moment of peace in my life that wasn't also joyful. In the Gospels, peace and joy are always found together. This joy does not necessarily mean happiness. In the world we are made to believe that joy and sorrow are opposites and that joy excludes pain, suffering, anguish and distress, but the joy of the Gospel is a joy born on the cross. It is the joy of knowing that evil and death have no final power over us.

Thus the "no" to death can only be fruitful when spoken and acted out in the context of a humble, compassionate and joyful "yes" to life. Just as only grace makes us able to recognize sin, only life makes us see where death is at work. Resistance becomes a truly spiritual task only when the "no" to death and the "yes" to life are never separated.

Increasing starvation, hunger and poverty around the world and the increasing threat of a nuclear war offer us many reasons to be fearful, even despairing. When we hear the voices of death all around us and see so many signs of the superiority of the powers of death, it becomes hard to believe that life is indeed stronger than death. Long before anyone knew about nuclear war the writer of 1 Peter warned: "Your enemy the devil is on the prowl like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour" (5:8, *New Jerusalem Bible*). These words have a new and concrete relevance. They summarize well our fear. What is the writer's response to this lion? "Stand up to him," he says, "strong in (your) faith" (5:9). That indeed is the summary of the spiritual response to any threat. It is faithful resistance, a resistance not based on our experience, skills, intelligence or willpower, but on our faith in Christ, who has already overcome the powers of evil and death that rule the world. Because of Christ's victory over all death, individual as well as collective, death no longer has power over us. We are no longer locked in the dark world of despair but have already found our home in God, where death has no place and life is everlasting.

Although we are still *in* this world, we no longer belong to it. Our faith allows us to be even now members of God's household, and taste the inexhaustible love of God. It is this knowledge of where we truly belong that sets us free to be fierce resisters against death while humbly, compassionately and joyfully proclaiming life wherever we go.

Not every Christian feels called to participate in peace

demonstrations and many even feel critical of them, especially when civil disobedience is involved.

I have always felt a strong hesitation to break any law. Although I have taken part in demonstrations, so far I have not yet felt called to be arrested and go to jail, even though many of my friends have chosen that road. I have always wondered if going to jail would not alienate people from the cause of peace rather than attract them to it. But maybe I am too concerned about influence on others and not enough about faithfulness to my own spiritual commitment. Frankly, I am not so sure whether it is prudence or cowardice, conviction or practicality, faithfulness or fear that motivates me. I only know that what seemed so alien and unacceptable to me a few years ago now presents itself as at least an invitation to rethink my previous attitudes.

What is clear, however, is that our differences of opinion about demonstrations and civil disobedience should not be an argument for not working for peace. It is not important that all Christians act in the same way for peace or even agree on every style of peacemaking. It is important that their varied actions are all done and experienced as a form of personal or communal prayer. Because only then can we be lifelong resisters. This resistance may mean participation in demonstrations or in peace education programs. It may involve public speaking or writing. It may be a gentle response to a friend who is for fighting. It may be visiting the sick, helping the hungry or protecting the weak. As long as these actions come forth from an angry, hostile heart they may do more harm than good. But when they express gratitude for belonging to the house of God, we will no longer have to worry about their fruitfulness, since what comes from God never returns to God empty.

Prayer cannot be fruitful unless it brings us into a new and creative relationship with people. Resistance cannot be fruitful unless it deepens and strengthens our relationship with God. Prayer and resistance, the two pillars of Christian peacemaking, are two interlocking ways of giving expression to the peace we have found in the dwelling place of God. They come from the same source and lead to the same goal. ■

The Broke Banks of Cherokee

Two bank failures forced by sagging farm prices have Iowa Lutherans speculating about their town's future

By Jim Schwab

In much of the rural Midwest, bank failures have become almost as frequent as tornadoes, and time and experience are showing they have a similarly devastating impact on a small community. They can also pull a small community together.

That is the story the Rev. Delmar Carlson would like to tell about Bethlehem Church, where he is pastor. The 1,000-member church in Cherokee, Iowa, has witnessed two bank failures within a year's time that affected its members. In June 1984 the Farmers National Bank in Aurelia, just nine miles away, was closed due to insolvency, and in January 1985 the larger Steele State Bank in Cherokee also failed. Both had survived the Great Depression and had thereby built a deep reservoir of trust in the county.

While Cherokee County was unique in having two bank failures, it is nonetheless part of a larger and disturbing trend. While Iowa suffered three bank failures in 1984, it had already suffered nine by late last year and the nation had experienced no fewer than 66 in the same period. Nearby Nebraska and Kansas had already had eight each.

The deteriorating farm economy has been a leading factor in most rural bank failures and played the major role in both of Cherokee County's failures. Farm loans that appeared secure a few years ago have gone sour because low prices make it difficult for many farmers to repay them. Declining land values have threatened the security value of farm land as collateral on loans, but as farms are foreclosed and land is forced on to a depressed market, the decline in values accelerates.

The Federal Deposit Insurance Corp., as provided by law, protected the deposits of both banks. The predominantly local stockholders in the two banks, however, lost virtually everything. The FDIC took over problem, or "classified," loans while the new owners of the bank refused even some reasonably sound loans during the first few months. While borrowers in the hands of the FDIC had the option of finding new sources of credit to pay off their notes, other lenders often would have serious questions about refinancing such loans. Borrowers unable to refinance are forced to work out a settlement with the FDIC.

Bethlehem members involved in agriculture can have a surprisingly generous view of what they regard as FDIC foibles, yet it often contains an ironic humor born of frustration. Ken

Skadeland, for example, is a grain and livestock farmer in nearby Larrabee, whose loan at the Farmers National Bank was bought by the new owner, the Heritage Bank of Larrabee, shortly after the closing. His son, Kim, however, spent nine months negotiating with the FDIC before he was able to pay off his loan, which the new bank had chosen not to acquire.

Harold Peterson, a grain and livestock farmer with 900 acres near Aurelia, says that he visited with the FDIC about a note he had co-signed for another farmer. The FDIC refused the farmer's settlement offer, he says, and the farmer eventually was forced into bankruptcy. Peterson and Jim Mohn, a newly hired county extension agent, both criticize the FDIC for jeopardizing its own security on loans by taking too long to make decisions. In a county that experienced a 29 percent decline in farm land values in one year, the criticism is a credible one.

While many farmers at Bethlehem Church criticize what they regard as the impersonal bureaucracy of the FDIC, another member, Bruce Schmaedeke, is concerned about the impact of the economy on highly personalized, long-time rural banking traditions. Schmaedeke is vice president of the Cleghorn State Bank, in Cleghorn, a town of 275 people eight miles away. Although the bank president is the same age, and Schmaedeke, 33, knows he may never move up, he says he prefers the close relationships of small-town life, and wants his daughter to grow up in such an environment.

Schmaedeke says the Cleghorn bank, which has 90 percent of its loan portfolio in agriculture, is in no danger of failure. It has operated conservatively, refusing to accept real estate as collateral for farm operating loans. Still, he says, the bank wrote off \$30,000 in loan losses last year, more than in all of the last 10 years together.

At a bank where Schmaedeke knows 90 percent of his customers personally, the threat of foreclosure or insolvency has, he says, brought a couple of them to the brink of suicide. While emphasizing that most farmers remain honest even under severe pressure, he adds sadly, "It's hard to stay honest when your back is against the wall."

Schmaedeke also refutes the notion that those in trouble were strictly speculators. "A lot of people live very conservatively and drive 7-year-old cars. They just haven't been able to earn a profit."

It may be this sense of his business as part of the community, rather than apart from the community, that helps a congregation like Bethlehem, as Carlson says, to "pull together."

The author, an executive specializing in economics for the American Planning Association in Chicago, has studied farm problems extensively.

BANK &

Carlson likes to emphasize that the local banks themselves, like most businesses in Cherokee, are family-owned. Some people in Cherokee say the Steele State Bank failed in part because of owner Thomas Steele's reluctance to foreclose on troubled loans. Such a mutual tragedy does not foster adversarial relationships.

It does, according to Carlson, produce a "closing-in experience" and "a sudden feeling of panic," accompanied by a great deal of "silent suffering." The latter results from a sense of pride that makes it necessary to deny failure.

In such situations, Carlson says, the congregation can often be more effective than he can at "drawing people out of themselves." He cites the case of a member of the church who was "on the edge of the edge," although Carlson learned of the family's needs only after being informed by neighbors in the church. In such situations, he says, "I ask myself, 'How many more?'"

Yet, Carlson says, the experience "brings out the true nature of the church as a community banding together, not

to harp at each other but to reach out and try to help each other."

The help, however, was not limited to the congregation. Other churches in the area participated in some joint projects, such as a food pantry run by the Mid-Sioux Opportunities Center, a community action agency. Last March the churches conducted a food and donation drive to support the pantry. Many of the farmers at Bethlehem donated for slaughter animals that had broken limbs or other minor flaws, in order to provide meat for needy families.

Ardelle Staver, director of Mid-Sioux, says the very act of seeking emergency assistance is a painful one for most families, but especially for farmers. In a few cases, she says, wives

From left, Mohn, Peterson and Carlson in front of the building Steele State Bank once occupied. "A spirit of hope is still maintained."



have come in seeking aid, but asking that she not tell their husbands they had done so.

Carlson sees the church's role in the problem as twofold: pastoral and prophetic. The prophetic role came first in Cherokee, he says, and involved "gathering people together in meetings to air the problems," plus "approaches to congressional representatives and senators, and to the media."

In its prophetic role, the church's message was both long-term and immediate. The long-term questions involve the relationship of society to its food producers, and to the conservation of its food-producing resources, matters of social and economic justice. There was also the immediate question, in the Steele State Bank case, of getting farmers money to plant that spring, after a late January bank failure cut off for many

their expected line of credit for seed and fertilizer. The timing was somewhat different in the Farmers National Bank failure, because planting season was already over. Some farmers originally in debt to the Farmers National Bank, whose loans were not acquired by the new owner, had the double misfortune of winning their release from the FDIC by refinancing through the "friendliest bank in town," the Steele State Bank — just in time to be part of the second bank failure. ("How blessed can we be?" Carlson quips.)

Carlson, in his pastoral role, professes amazement at a "spirit of hope that is still maintained. A lot of hidden feelings are not being expressed, but there is still a hope that something is going to turn this economy around."

Still, there have been subtle alterations in farmers' tradi-

Foreclosure: Life After the Farm

By Joyce Murphey

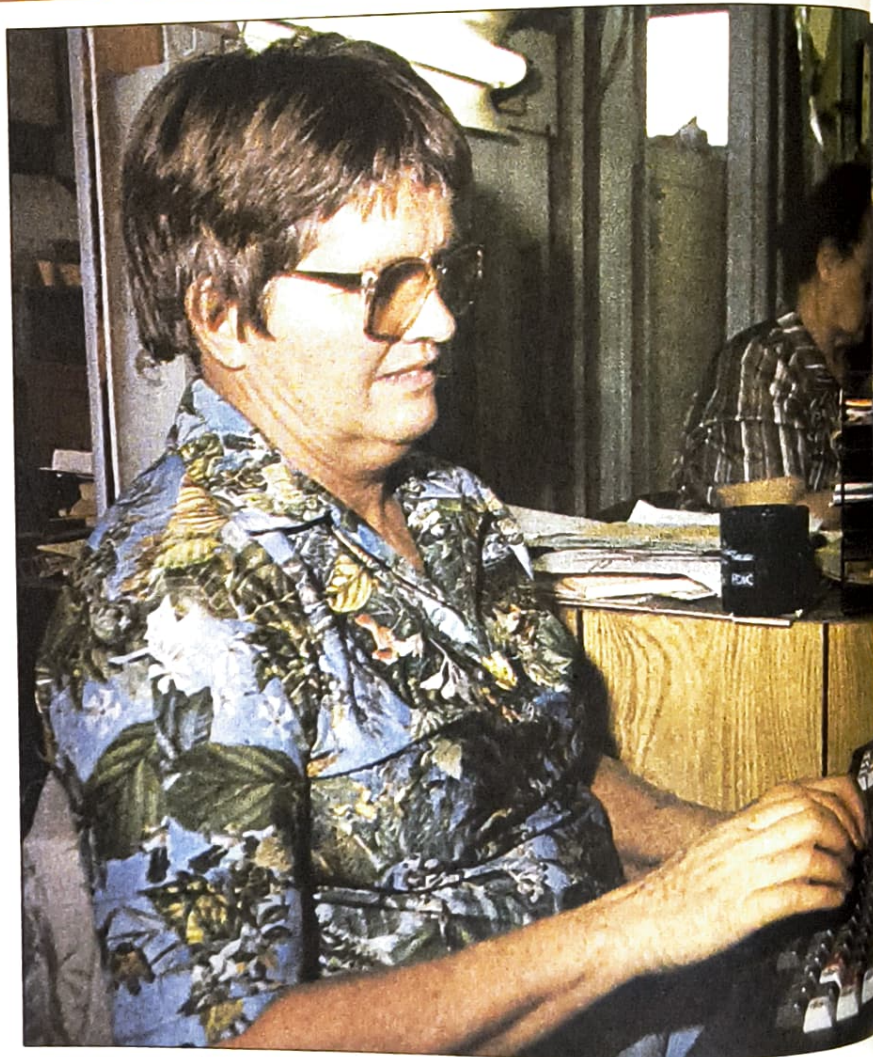
Move? Yes, we'll probably have to ... but not to town, ever!" So I replied to every query about what we were going to do after our farm had been sold in foreclosure proceedings.

We lost, despite Herculean efforts, the family farm we had been operating near Coldwater, Kan., since 1964. Part of it had been in the Murphey family for three generations. We were the first of what may be a tortuously long line of farmers forced out of business in our area.

We believed the Lord kept telling us, "Don't quit," and since we are rather stubborn people, that was not difficult. Folks less

devoted to the farm way of life might have bailed out in 1971 when a blizzard hit leaving 12 to 15 foot drifts which marooned our dairy herd and buried our sows and pigs alive for three days. That cost us a year's milk production and a feeder pig crop, but we didn't quit.

We dug in, refinanced and fought our way through livestock diseases. We expanded our sheep flock, had different livestock disease problems, and our wheat crop was destroyed by hail three times in six years (not to mention the routine errors in judgment we made along the way). We tried every avenue of cor-



Murphey: "The Lord tells us to bloom where we're planted"

The author belongs to the Coldwater, Kan., Assembly of God Church.

tional eternal optimism.

"There's been enough pain experienced that people aren't blind," Carlson says. "Historically, it's been the case that if the farmer got a good crop, he was OK. Now, he can get a bumper crop and go bankrupt. In the process, people are going to get weeded out. People will lose what they have, with all the human and emotional problems that go along with that. But what can you do? Who will help us? We are not blind to reality."

Indeed, there is a distinct realism in some of the questions raised by Bethlehem members now. Harold Peterson notes a visible deterioration in the maintenance of farm buildings and businesses in the countryside, due to a lack of profit. Jim Mohn cites a study showing that as many as 25 percent of

the area's young people may be leaving for the cities, while Ken Skadeland raises the question, "Who is going to take over the land?" Mohn fears the answer will be "outside investors," and that custom farming, where farmers grow food on contract, rather than as independent operators, will turn farmers into "mercenaries."

These issues become so broad, Carlson says, that for some people they can "become overwhelming," while others channel their frustrations into political activism. Carlson emphasizes the need to return profitability to farming through changes in public policy.

"For the life of me," he says after pondering that reality, "I can't see anything that will change the situation in the next six months to a year." ■



Photo by The Western Star

not disappoint anyone who trusted us. I still haven't the foggiest notion how the Lord will manage that, but I'm sure he can.

Paul's writings in Ephesians directed us to "... having done all, stand." For the past three years we have been in the process of auction sales and the farm has finally been liquidated.

Mike, my husband, felt the machinery sale was his "funeral." I felt the same way about the livestock sale. Time has healed that situation; the "body is now buried." The gate is locked on that phase of our lives, and there is no going back.

It seems that we often talk a good game about faith, but when we get right down to it, how much of it do we mean? As long as the land sale wasn't immediate, I could feel perfectly at peace. Then my faith bucket sprang a leak.

When the deadline was set, it was a new game. Feelings ranged from anger and frustration to wondering if we were the neighborhood lepers.

Since the girls were off to college and there was no livestock to tend, I took a job on the local newspaper which I thoroughly enjoy. Mike had filed for and won the election for district magistrate judge the previous year.

After the land was sold at auction, confrontations with the farm buyers forced us to look for another place to live.

"Sorry, no" in one form or another seemed to meet us at every turn as we exhausted the list of vacant area farm houses.

Then, by a series of negotiations, we were allowed to buy a house in town — even though I was still holding out for a place in the country. Mike thought I was losing control, agreeing to have him check into possible arrangements for the house, and then changing my mind.

Convinced that it should be a temporary arrangement only, I reluctantly agreed when terms were better to buy than to rent.

Everything then fell into place and the kids, with friends, moved us off the farm.

So here we are deep in the heart of downtown Coldwater, population 986. It's a community of kindly, loving people. It is, despite what I thought about moving to town, nice to walk to work without effort.

The whole foreclosure process has been brutal on our family.

Son Rusty, who hoped one day to take over the farm and had worked with us after vo-tech school, didn't even get up to bat. Daughters Sandy and Shauna also were profoundly affected. Sandy sat through the land sale with tears streaming down her face.

The Lord says, "Forgive ..."

Forgiveness occurs in different ways. Foreclosure is not the worst thing that could happen. It may have been the end of that particular way of life for us, but as Rusty remarked, "Maybe the farm served its purpose in giving us kids a good education and teaching us how to work ..." Hearing him say that took a tremendous load off us.

People watch us like bugs under a magnifying glass. Maybe if they see we're surviving foreclosure, then it might not be so traumatic for others.

Through it all, we kept our faith. I believe the Lord is simply telling us: "Don't ever quit. You just keep on putting one foot in front of the other. I will tend to the direction. Do what you're given to do until I give you something else. Don't run ahead of me or jump to conclusions."

The Lord tells us to bloom where we're planted.

We planted a garden and started making improvements around the house. I told Shauna, home for summer break, that we were going to be gone for a few days. "If the grapes and peach tree that I ordered come, please plant them."

"You really went wild, ordering all that stuff," she commented when we returned. "They don't look very temporary to me."

"No," I answered. "It's called taking root. I'm planting living things that will be part of our future. Here. Now."

Goodbye, farm. Hello, town! ■

recting problems and financing to no avail. Major creditors decided we were unfit to farm. Enter the foreclosure.

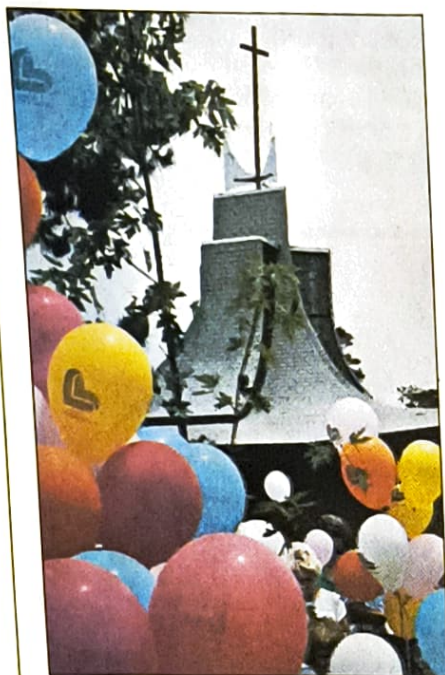
Voluntarily filing for bankruptcy was out of the question because we didn't think it was fair to our creditors.

Our prayer was — and is — that we would



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.



Children prepare to launch balloons

Florida youth celebrate IYY

Trees and balloons marked the celebration of International Youth Year by Holy Trinity Church, Fort Walton Beach, Fla.

"IYY's themes of participation, development and peace were to be carried out through an international tree planting project," explained Terrie Morgan, a member of Holy Trinity.

The church's youth group, the Triniteens, decided to plant trees as a pledge to the future of Holy Trinity's ministry. "The trees also are a symbol of our roots in this community," Morgan said.

On a Saturday morning the youth planted silver maple trees in various places throughout the city. They planted the last tree outside the church, then joined in a worship service.

Afterward the Triniteens said a prayer for peace and launched about 100 helium-filled balloons which filled the sky with bright colors.

Choirs sing to help others

A concert by youth choirs from four denominations in **Tulsa, Okla.**, raised money for Native American children in Oaks, Okla.

Called the "All-City Youth Love Concert," the event was planned by **First Lutheran Church, Tulsa**. The church's A Joyful Noise choir was among those singing. The other choirs were from Episcopal, Methodist and Baptist congregations.

"More than 75 children performed," said Lynn Endres, First's youth choir director. "Songs included spirituals, folk hymns, liturgical numbers and gospel," she said.

About 200 people attended the event. A freewill offering raised \$360 for The Oaks Indian Center, a ministry of the American Lutheran Church.

"The center serves children of the Cherokee Nation," Endres said. "It provides a loving home, food, clothing and education for 60 children between the ages of 6 and 14."

A second concert later this year will include more children's choirs and will benefit Oaks again, Endres said.

Singing for Africa

About 70 children, ages 3 to 16, from churches in **Bemidji, Minn.**, raised more than \$11,000 for African relief by forming a choir and singing. The money was given to the ALC World Hunger Appeal.

The ecumenical group performed for churches, schools and civic organizations. Audiences were asked to make donations.



This picture of Boaz and Ruth was drawn by Kyle Hannon, Advent Church, Wyckoff, N.J. Artwork by Hannon and other Sunday school students are used to illustrate Advent's monthly newsletter.

ELCA: New church name; Milwaukee is headquarters

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is the name of the new Lutheran church that is to be headquartered in Milwaukee.

The selection of the name and the headquarters city were among early decisions by the Commission for a New Lutheran Church meeting in Minneapolis Feb. 15-19. Both choices were departures from the recommendations in the agenda for the meeting.

Of the two names selected by the CNLC last September, Lutheran Church in the United States of America had received more support from members of the Lutheran Church in America, the American Lutheran Church and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches which hope to merge in 1988.

The other proposed name was the nearly identical Evangelical Lutheran Church in the U.S.A. But many respondents had also told the 70-member commission that the inclusion of U.S.A. was too nationalistic.

"Many people in the Caribbean feel excluded by the use of U.S.A.," said Minnesota Synod Bishop Herbert Chilstrom in proposing ELCA as the name. "And I checked with Canadians and they said they would not be offended by the use of America. In addition, LCUSA sounds like a corporate title."

ALC Vice President Lloyd Svendsbye praised the addition of "evangelical," noting its wide use by overseas Lutheran churches. The addition also avoided the use of LCA by the new church.

After only 13 minutes of discussion, ELCA was adopted with only a few "no"

votes. After brief applause, CNLC chairperson William Kinnison said, "Since we have named the baby, we must find a place to put it."

Headquarters debate

Debate on the headquarters lasted seven hours. The CNLC had tentatively agreed last fall on Chicago as the site, but after a cost analysis, a CNLC Task Force on Office Site Data recommended Minneapolis.

The switch came after the analysis indicated that start-up costs for the new church would be \$1,746,000 more in Chicago than in Minneapolis and that annual operating costs in Chicago would be from \$482,000 to \$1,989,000 more than in Minneapolis.

At the same time the task force acknowledged that "non-quantifiable" concerns such as newness, inclusiveness and commitment to ecumenism needed to be taken into account.

"I hope this group will not be guilty of making decisions that make it look like the dollar is almighty," said Dr. Robert J. Marshall, Columbia, S.C., declaring his intention to "demolish" the task force report. "Ecclesiastical and sociological factors are more important than financial and management factors in this decision."

Albert Anderson, head of the ALC Augsburg Publishing House, said Minneapolis is a "Lutheran city with easy access to government and to media. How can the church make a dent in society if its national offices are in Chicago?"

Pointing out that occupancy costs in

downtown Minneapolis are about the same as suburban Chicago, the Rev. Franklin D. Fry, Summit, N.J., said "we are dealing with the difference between a national city and a regional city. If we are going to be regional, Milwaukee and Philadelphia are cheaper than Minneapolis."

A number of suggestions about other cities produced a parliamentary morass and two series of test votes. One series saw Chicago defeat a combination of Minneapolis and Philadelphia 41-27, and then Milwaukee overtake Chicago 34-32. Milwaukee then defeated Indianapolis 45-20.

A second series of votes showed Minneapolis defeating a combination of Minneapolis and Philadelphia by a strong voice vote, and Minneapolis edging Chicago 35-33. Milwaukee prevailed over Minneapolis 50-17, and the CNLC then endorsed Milwaukee 59-9.

The vote also assigned inter-Lutheran offices to New York, a governmental affairs office to Washington, pension offices to Minneapolis, and a church publishing house to Minneapolis and Philadelphia.

The commission was sharply divided, with LCA sentiments not favoring Minneapolis and ALC commissioners not preferring Chicago.

Although the CNLC had little data before it about Milwaukee, the Wisconsin city emerged as a dark-horse compromise, with supporters hailing its neutrality, lower costs and ethnic diversity.

(A full report of the CNLC meeting will be published in the next issue of The Lutheran.) —EDGAR R. TREXLER

Seminary site shifts proposed

Massive population shifts and the need to be a more inclusive church should shape Lutheran theological education in the future, says a report prepared for the Commission for a New Lutheran Church. The report was to be discussed at the Feb. 15-19 meeting of the CNLC.

The report suggests eight seminaries in the new church, including a proposal to move Southern Seminary, now located in Columbia, S.C., to Atlanta, "the possibility of one seminary" from the present Gettysburg and Philadelphia seminaries, and the establishment of a new seminary in Texas.

The document notes that an offer from

Columbia (Presbyterian) Seminary and Candler (United Methodist) Seminary, both in Atlanta, "seems to be financially attractive." If such a move were made, the current Southern campus might become a continuing education center.

The report also suggests that Southern and Trinity Seminary, Columbus, Ohio, "enter into a closer relationship" for church mission in the Southeast.

Consultation is encouraged between the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago and Wartburg (American Lutheran Church) Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa, regarding a possible Master of Divinity program in Austin, Texas. The two seminaries

also are encouraged to cooperate with Pacific Seminary, Berkeley, Cal., and Luther-Northwestern Seminary, St. Paul, Minn., about a Denver House of Studies.

Regarding Philadelphia and Gettysburg seminaries, the report "strongly recommends" a common board for the two schools and location on one or more sites.

The report suggests that each seminary be incorporated as a seminary of the church and governed by its own board of directors. The document calls for "at least 50 percent" of the seminaries' educational and general operating budgets to come from a combination of churchwide and synod funds.

'Sabotage' destroys Namibia office

The main office of the Council of Churches in Namibia and a Lutheran high school were destroyed in late January in separate incidents which Namibian church leaders are calling "sabotage."

Dr. Abisai Shejavali, general secretary of the church council, said the early-morning fire in Windhoek was "in itself, nothing else than sabotage." Local fire and police

officials told him that gasoline and kerosene had been used in four places to start fires around the council building. No injuries were reported.

The council, which represents Namibia's major church bodies, has long been an active opponent of South Africa's occupation of the territory. About one-half of the Namibian population is Lutheran.

"You know we are living in a difficult situation," Shejavali said. "And when you are speaking the truth of the Gospel, you meet many problems."

School bombed

Members of the South African Defense Force are being blamed for a bomb blast at Oshigambo High School in northern Namibia, according to Bishop Kleopas Dumeni of the Evangelical Lutheran Ovambokavango Church.

No injuries occurred during the school blast, but the school's generating system was extensively damaged.

Two days after the explosion, Dumeni questioned a South African army officer who admitted that troops had left mortars at the school on the day before the explosion. The officer denied that the troops had returned the next day to ignite the explosion.



Nun keeps watch

A nun counts ballot boxes stored at a school after the presidential election in the Philippines. Roman Catholic bishops are challenging President Marcos' claim to re-election and may try to use the church's influence to force him from power.

Crumley, Moyer to visit Coptic pope, Istanbul

Lutheran Church in America James R. Crumley Jr. and Bishop Virgil A. Moyer of the Virginia Synod will go to Egypt early this month to visit Pope Shenouda, head of Coptic Christianity, and then travel to Istanbul to attend the Festival of Orthodoxy at the Ecumenical Patriarchate there.

The bishops also will go to Bratislava, Czechoslovakia, to meet with representatives of more than 400,000 Lutherans there. Many members of the LCA Slovak Zion Synod trace their ancestry to the country.

The visits to Egypt and Istanbul are a continuation of the LCA's increasing ecumenical commitments.



Shejavali and assistant assess damage

Broadcasters cheer Swaggart

As more than 3,500 religious broadcasters cheered, the Rev. Jimmy Swaggart said that those who criticize the political views of fundamentalist television preachers like himself are attacking "the word of God." Speaking at the annual convention of the National Religious Broadcasters, the evangelist also revived rhetoric which some fundamentalists have shunned when he declared that the United States "is a Christian nation."

Swaggart spoke after the Rev. John Buchanan, a Baptist minister and former member of Congress from Alabama, appealed to the broadcasters to acknowledge that people can disagree with them on political issues and "still be Christian."

Buchanan, leader of the liberal People for the American Way, also urged them not to condemn the whole education establishment as secular humanist.

Swaggart replied, "I don't have any kind words for public schools at all.... If not for Christian schools, this country would have gone to hell in a hand basket long ago."

The NRB represents 1,150 religious broadcasting organizations. Its annual convention has evolved into an extravagant display of preachers, telecommunications technology, entertainment and Christian

companies selling all sorts of products.

Black members at the convention charged that the organization's leadership "sabotaged" a fellowship breakfast at which the Rev. Jesse Jackson spoke. Only 150 people attended. Instead, more than 1,200 attended a separate, unofficial prayer breakfast in honor of the state of Israel.

Broadcasts to Russia

At a recent conference on Religious Freedom, Human Rights and International Relations, the content of religious broadcasts beamed into the Soviet Union by the Voice of America and Radio Liberty were sharply criticized as "archaic, monotonous and one-sided."

Critics claimed that the broadcasts are monopolized by the conservative Russian Orthodox Church in exile and that the "lack of contact with reality" places "in doubt its ability to attract listeners."

Other persons at the conference noted that "the present religious renaissance in the U.S.S.R. would not be possible without foreign broadcasting."

Radio Liberty and Voice of America together broadcast five hours and 25 minutes of religious programming in Russian a week.

Anglicans criticize British government

Tensions between the Church of England and the Conservative government of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher have been worsened by a church report that accuses the government of "grave and fundamental injustice" in its urban policies.

In the report a commission set up by Archbishop of Canterbury Robert Runcie says government housing policies emphasize home ownership for those who can afford it and generally ignore those who cannot. The document also notes that as many as one out of every four or five people across the country, and a much higher proportion of those living in "urban priority areas," live on the margins of or below an acceptable standard of living.

The document says that a Christian is bound to feel "profound unease" about the moral and spiritual effects of a consumer economy which depends "on the continual stimulation of all attainable desires." The report also criticizes the country's present appeal to economic self-interest, noting that "too much emphasis is being given to individualism and not enough to collective obligation."

Even before the report was published it was dismissed by government supporters as "pure Marxist theology." Runcie rebutted the accusations, calling the document a "Christian critique with, no doubt, political implications." He said that part of the report, such as its enthusiasm for small businesses, are pro-government.

A survey commissioned by the church showed that almost three-quarters of Anglican clergy oppose the present government. Observers said the survey affirmed that the old partnership that was said to exist between the church and the Conservative Party — a oneness of the middle-class, affluent and privileged — was collapsing.

Hindus protest pope during India visit

Pope John Paul II emphasized respect for non-Christian religions and for India's traditions of spirituality during his 10-day visit to the predominantly Hindu nation which has a Roman Catholic population of less than 2 percent.

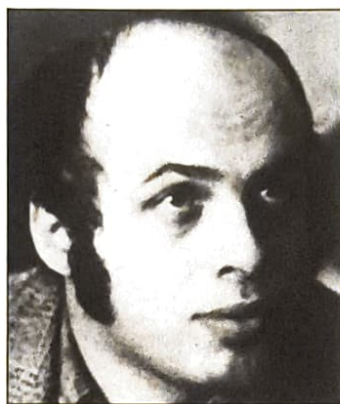
About 150 demonstrators from the right-wing Hindu Mahasabha group were arrested in New Delhi when they burned the pope in effigy.

The pope told patients at Mother Teresa's clinic in Calcutta that "I cannot take away your pain. But of this I am sure: God loves you with an everlasting love. You are precious in his sight. In him, I love you too."

WORLDSCAN

Television evangelist Pat Robertson admits that his Christian Broadcasting Network is supplying chaplains and Bibles to the *contra* forces trying to topple the leftist Nicaraguan government. Robertson, the *700 Club* host who is considering a run for the 1988 Republican presidential nomination, contradicted his earlier claims that CBN had no direct ties to the *contras*.

The vestry of Trinity Episcopal Church in New York's Wall Street area, one of the nation's wealthiest, is divesting its holdings in companies that do business in South Africa. The church will sell off \$10 million worth of stocks — one-fifth of the church's \$50 million investment portfolio — within 90 days in opposition to South African apartheid.



Jewish Soviet dissident Anatoly Shcharansky went immediately to Israel after his release in East Germany. A human rights activist, he spent nine years in Soviet prisons and labor camps.

study center. The Evangelical Church of West Berlin owns the house and has applied to the city for a grant from the public lottery to cover about one-half of the \$700,000 renovation cost.

The Rev. Robert Schuller, pastor of the Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, Cal., who preaches "possibility thinking," advises mainline Protestant denominations that are slipping in membership to quit talking about social ethics during Sunday services and speak instead about psychological hurts and needs. Ethical discussions should occur "in the classroom where there can be dialogue," Schuller says. "I'm sure of one thing. Church growth cannot succeed using the ethical approach."

A "hands-on" course on miracles has ended at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, Cal. The course focused on praying for the sick and dealing with claims about the supernatural that are often made in Third World countries. The theology faculty objected to prayers for healing in the classroom because "there are things that are appropriate when done in a church that are not appropriate in an academic setting."

Romania's chief rabbi, Moshe Rosen, is suspicious of the thousands of Christians, most of them Baptists, in the officially atheist country who want to convert to Judaism. Rosen generally turns them aside because he believes most of them want to become Jewish to enhance their chances of emigrating from Romania. The country has allowed tens of thousands of Jews to leave for either the West or Israel.

A panel revising the hymnal of the United Methodist Church decided to remove the "amen" at the end of most hymns, continuing the practice of recent Lutheran, Episcopal and Reformed hymnals.

Haitians celebrate regime's end

Haitians in Miami celebrated the downfall of Haiti's President-for-life Jean Claude Duvalier with demonstrations and parades. They also held worship services of thanksgiving.

Duvalier fled the country last month after his family had ruled the island for 29 years.

About 30 people gathered for a service at the Lutheran Haitian ministry center in Belle Glade, Fla. Preaching at the service was the Rev. Bernard La Combe, a former Pentecostal and now an American Lutheran Church pastor, who started the ministry.

During colonial times when the Haitians were taken out of Africa and put into slavery, they had "no human dignity left, but they survived," La Combe said. Even during the Duvalier terror "the hand of God was helping you like he did the children of Israel," La Combe told the worshippers. "You have not been abandoned."

La Combe used the 45-minute sermon to condemn voodoo, a pervasive force in Haiti where the illiteracy rate is estimated at 80 percent. "You must give God the glory," La Combe said, and not any superstitious beliefs.

During the service several Haitians testi-

fied about the hardships in their home country: murder, extortion, brutality and rape. With an average per capita income of \$350 in urban areas and \$175 in rural areas, Haiti is considered to be the poorest country in the world.

The immigration problems of Haitians in the United States are still mostly unresolved. The Duvalier departure could hurt the cases of many who applied for political asylum.

Despite their problems the worshippers were thankful. "They went through it and made it," said La Combe who also felt the Duvalier terror. "Others didn't make it. They're happy to be alive."

Group arrives in Haiti

A group of 23 hunger coordinators from the ALC arrived in Haiti during the turmoil that surrounded the departure of Duvalier. "We blindly arrived with the state department's permission," said Carolyn Kilday, a Lutheran Church in America Division for Mission in North America staff member who had been invited to join the group.

"No one had told us what was happening, but we knew things weren't normal," she said.

They heard gunfire every night. On Sunday when they went to church "it was shocking to see a church locked up and soldiers on guard," she said.

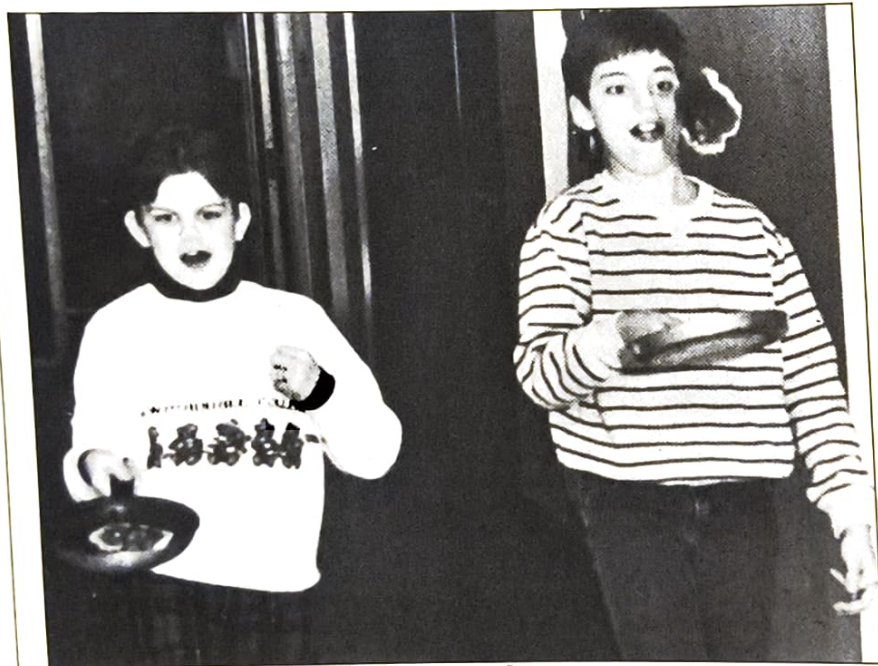
Their purpose in visiting south Florida and the Caribbean was "to listen to the poor, to learn from them and to acquaint ourselves with the real situations of hungry people very close to our own shores," said the Rev. George S. Johnson, ALC hunger program director, who led the group.

The Rev. Wayne L. Kendrick, New Richland, Minn., said, "I feel that we experienced a biblically *kairetic* moment for Haiti, a moment carrying the possibility and potential for change."

Some places originally on the program were not visited. "We wanted to avoid endangering people who might be accused of speaking to foreigners about the situation in Haiti. People risk their lives by speaking candidly about poverty there or calling for change, we were told," Johnson said.

However "we did get to talk to a lot of people," Kilday said. "We visited a clinic and had a tour of the area. Some were very nervous about our presence; there was a lot of fear," she acknowledged.

Dan Spencer of the Center for Global Service and Education at Augsburg College, Minneapolis, which organized the trip, said that despite conditions he had encountered elsewhere in Central America and the Caribbean, "nothing prepared me for the incredible poverty of Haiti."



Nikki Bremer (left) and Corey Stai practice for pancake race

Fun event precedes Lent

Pancake races in the halls of St. James Church, Burnsville, Minn., the day before Ash Wednesday was one of the ways the congregation hoped to call attention to the fact that Lent would be starting. Traditionally called Fat Tuesday, Mardi Gras or Shrove Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday is linked with various celebrations.

Pancakes often are a part of the celebrations because they are tied to the early English fat Tuesdays when the frying of pancakes gave the poorer classes a way of using up animal fats before the meatless season of Lent.

The celebration at St. James also included a parade through the halls of the

church led by the clown ministry youth group and the Barbary Coast Dixie Band. A New Orleans jazz concert accompanied by rich desserts followed.

An order of public confession was scheduled after the concert, harking back to old definitions of Shrovetide, as a time to "shrive" or get rid of one's sins or to receive absolution.

"We are taking a chance by promoting a basically secular celebration," said Ines Anderson, chairperson of worship and music at St. James. "Our goal is to increase public awareness of Lent and hopefully to increase attendance at our regular Lenten services."

Lack of funds closes program

The Share-A-Home program operated by Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota in Minneapolis is closing because of a lack of funds. The program which began in 1980 matched elderly persons living in their own homes with live-in help from younger adults in need of housing.

"LSS was ahead of its time when this program began in 1980," said Diane Daehlin, regional director of LSS/Metro West. "It is unfortunate our government currently has no funds for this type of service, which is surely much less expensive than institutional care."

Daehlin said that the clients served by the program have little income to contribute in support of the program and permanent or ongoing outside funding has not been found, despite months of searching.

Local foundations had provided the start-up funding for Share-A-Home. That money is no longer available. Although the program was cited as "exceptional" by Minneapolis Area United Way in 1985, no funding was allocated to the program.

Agency officials say that LSS attempted to support the program with contributions from Lutheran congregations in Minnesota. However, the churches are experiencing the crunch of a depressed farm economy and a depressed Iron Range. LSS could not raise the funds needed to operate the program.

Sandra Pranschke, who developed and coordinated the program, said that "we know we served a great need in this community. It has been a privilege to work with the many aging persons, their families and young live-in men and women who reached across generations in mutual support of each other."

LSS will continue to operate Share-A-Home programs in the St. Paul and Mankato areas with funding from local sources in those areas.

Consortium organizes

Representatives of the Lutheran Church in America Pacific Southwest Synod, the LCA Foundation and eight church-related agencies and institutions recently formed the Lutheran Ministries Consortium of the Southwest. The purpose of the organization is to encourage the growth and enhancement of the development efforts of its members.

The consortium is planning to employ its first development staff person early this year to be responsible for developing long-term financial support for consortium members.

Additional groups are expected to join the organization later this year.



Architecture reflects residents

The architecture and grounds of Golden Age Village, an apartment complex in Monterey Park, Cal., reflect the culture of the residents, 80 percent of whom are elderly Asian-Americans. The complex, managed by California Lutheran Homes, has 120 units. A condominium project and a nursing home are planned for the complex.

New agency adds services

A new social ministry organization called Lutheran Affiliated Services has been started in western Pennsylvania. With 850 residents and patients, 600 employees and an \$11 million budget, it is the largest church-related system for nursing and retirement care in western Pennsylvania.

The creation of the new organization culminates three years of discussions between St. John Home of Mars, Pa., an agency of the American Lutheran Church, and the Passavant Retirement and Health Center of Zelienople, Pa., related to the Lutheran Church in America.

"The boards of St. John and Passavant have agreed to affiliate in order to deliver a wide range of services to the elderly," said the Rev. Dar Vriesman, the new president of Lutheran Affiliated Services and executive director of St. John. He added that "by working together our organizations will continue offering high quality services — and, we will be able to do this more economically and efficiently."

The Rev. Elwood Culp, executive vice president of LAS and executive director of Passavant, added that "one of the benefits of the new structure is that St. John and Passavant will be able to focus their efforts on doing one of the things they do best: serving the elderly in need of institutional nursing care and supervised retirement living."

"People are living longer and their needs

are becoming increasingly more complex," Culp said. "With other organizations available under the LAS umbrella to address non-institutional services and emerging needs, our two institutions can concentrate on our residents and patients."

LAS will serve as an umbrella agency for nine separate corporations providing health and human care services.

The Rev. James Dollhopf, pastor of Mount Calvary Church, Erie, Pa., and chairperson of the new organization's board, said that one of the new agencies LAS will bring into existence is a shared services corporation to coordinate acquisition of products and services. "The intention is to keep the costs of operating necessities as low as possible."

Vriesman added that "there is a great need in western Pennsylvania to assist older people in contacting the agencies that exist right in their neighborhood to help them. Through our Augsburg Service Corp. we intend to meet that need." Where there is a void in necessary programs, Augsburg Services will fill the gap, he added.

Dollhopf added that "bigness in itself is not necessarily better," but the new organization provides for the creation of a wide range of services to the elderly. With new opportunities and challenges for organizations caring for older Americans "this step we have taken enables us to begin addressing these challenges," he said.



On the bag

Picturesque Swede Valley Church, Ogden, Iowa, is featured on more than 5 million grocery sacks of the 133 Hy-Vee grocery stores located in six states. Store officials say the church typifies the pioneer spirit of Iowa.

Ohio man gets new heart

Everything clicked ... worked so well; the Lord had to be there, says Robert Neff as he describes his last few minutes before undergoing heart transplant surgery.

On Nov. 7, one day after his 33rd birthday, everything did "come together" for Neff. A few hours earlier he was in a Columbus hospital with his pastor, the Rev. Robert Zoeller, who prayed with him and gave him communion. Neff's wife, Nancy, was working at a local bank near their home town of Bluffton, Ohio.

Within six hours after the death of the heart donor, Neff and his wife had been flown in separate planes to Presbyterian University Hospital in Pittsburgh, a leading transplant center. They met for a few last moments before he went into surgery.

Today, Neff says he has a new life, a second life. "Prior to surgery, I was a dead man. I felt like a corpse," he says as he describes the former pain. His hands were cold, his legs turning blue.

"If I didn't pull through, I was going to be with the Lord anyway," he says. "I couldn't lose." He believed his work on earth was not complete. He wanted more than anything to attend to his wife Nancy and his 4-year-old daughter, Rebecca. To prolong life meant one thing: a heart transplant.

On Sunday, Jan. 5, Zoeller saw Neff sit-

ting in church near the back. When welcomed back "to the family" by the pastor, Neff stood. "I feel very fortunate and blessed that I pulled through," he told his friends. He thanked them for their part in sending between 600 and 700 cards and for the gift of money totaling \$7,300.

Neff says that he told his friends they should assess their Christian priorities before going through a crisis like he did.

Neff works as an architect in Lima, Ohio. He hopes to begin working out of his home as his "second life" gets better and better.

Neff's surgeon, Dr. Bartley Griffith, says that a transplant is "not a panacea, but at least it's not inevitably fatal."

—DAVID BERG

Lutheran schools aided ethnicity

The first Lutheran colleges in the United States were "severely criticized in their early years as being too Americanized," Dr. Richard W. Solberg told a recent meeting of the Lutheran Education Conference of North America. Colleges founded by later immigrants "resisted the encroachment of both American language and culture as hazards of faith and pure doctrine," said Solberg whose book, *Lutheran Higher Education in North America*, was released at the meeting.

The 50 colleges and universities which make up LECNA "have served as conservators of their ethnic traditions," Solberg said. They also have "become more involved in the broader American educational community, partly through their own initiative but also in response to pressures of institutional competition, the drive for accreditation and the powerful forces of public policy."

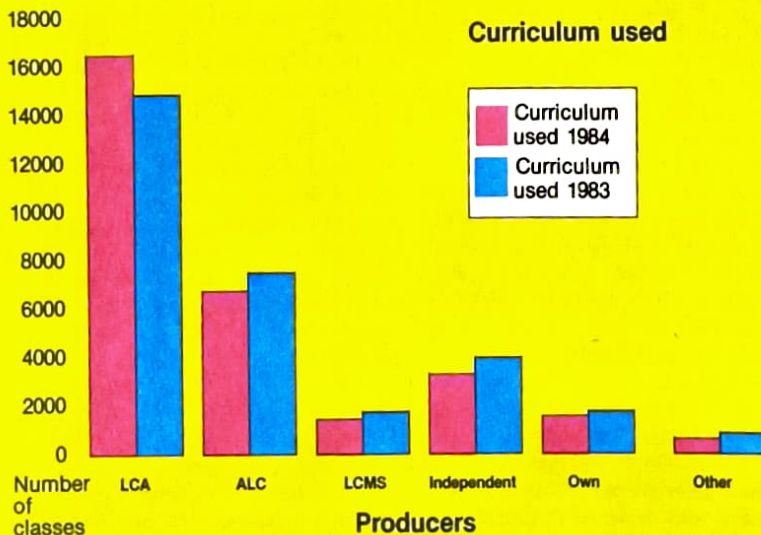
Solberg said that history attests to "the importance which Lutherans of all national origins and cultural differences have placed upon education at all levels."

William C. Nelsen, LECNA past president, called on the conference to organize a study commission on financing of Lutheran higher education. "No Lutheran youth should be denied this education we offer," said Nelsen who is president of Augustana College, Sioux Falls, S.D., an American Lutheran Church college.

LECNA on public policy concerns stated a willingness for the "higher education sector to take equitable budgetary cuts so long as such reductions are also made in entitlements, defense and all other areas in the federal budget." However, it also urged Congress to "preserve student aid uncut."

LUTHERAN LISTS

Lutheran Church in America congregations reported increased use of Sunday school curriculum produced by the LCA in 1984 compared with 1983. The information was reported for nursery through adult classes. Congregations also reported a decrease in use of materials produced by other groups.



Source: Congregational report forms

25 LCA volunteers get Lamb awards

Twenty-five Lutheran Church in America members received the 1985 Lamb Award from the Lutheran Council in the USA. The award is for service to youth and the church through volunteer work with such organizations as the Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of the United States of America, Camp Fire and 4-H Club.

The LCA members receiving the awards and their congregations are:

Thelma M. Antis, Brush Creek, Irwin, Pa.; Kenneth D. Brandenburg, Christ, Charleroi, Pa.; Ainslie W. Coons, Memorial, Rock City, N.Y.; Bobby Eugene Cress Sr., St. Paul, Salisbury, N.C.; Walter Diers, First, Rush City, Minn.; Donna Doty, St. Mark, Salem, Ore.

Marjorie Gustafson, First, Red Wing, Minn.; Omogene Hahn, Holy Cross, Moorestown, Pa.; M. Dennis Hedges Jr., St. John, Warren, Pa.; William H. Imhof Jr., Christ, Orelan, Pa.; Henry V. Jackson, Trinity, Sheridan, Wyo.; Richard Kohnken, Redeemer, New York (Queens).

Joseph P. Kristy, Trinity, Sheridan, Wyo.; James F. Marousek, First, Berwyn, Ill.; Grace M. Meck, Zion, Orwigsburg, Pa.; Edward L. Metka Sr., Christ, Harrisburg, Pa.; W. Glenn Neeley, Transfiguration, Cayce, N.C.; Terry H. O'Neill, Prince of Peace, Freeport, Ill.

Jacob R. Rayapati, Calvary, West Chester, Pa.; Doran H. Saxe, Pentecost, Milwaukee; Leonard G. Scheel, Bethany, Crystal Lake, Ill.; Robert Michael Floyd Smyser, Messiah, York, Pa.; David L. Snyder, St. Mark, Mechanicsburg, Pa.; Nils Trahnstrom, Our Saviour, Fairfield, Conn.; and Edith Christine Watson, Good Shepherd, Gaithersburg, Md.

Bethany launches \$20 million drive

Bethany College, Lindsborg, Kan., has launched a \$20 million five-year development campaign with \$5 million already received toward the goal. "It is the most far reaching development program that Bethany has ever designed and we believe it to be the largest for any Kansas independent college," said Dr. Peter J. Ristuben, Bethany president.

The \$20 million program includes \$9 million for permanent endowment, \$5.5 million for campus construction and renewal and \$5.5 million for annual operations.

Advance gifts came from estates, foundations and individuals.

The Rocky Mountain and Central States synods of the Lutheran Church in America have committed \$250,000 to Bethany College through the One in Mission campaign.

"The needs are clear and the mission of Bethany depends upon the gift support which is being solicited from our alumni, parents, business friends and others among our constituents and interested persons," Ristuben said.



Youth from St. Timothy gather in front of banner with rally theme

Tennessee youth hold rally

The theme was "Dancing in the Holy Water" and the mood was one of "getting to know you" as 185 Tennessee teens gathered for the first statewide Lutheran youth rally.

Planned by young members of St. Timothy Church, Hendersonville, Tenn., the weekend event brought together Lutheran Church in America and American Lutheran Church youth from grades seven through 12.

"One night we were brainstorming for ideas for the area LCA youth rally. Someone suggested that, in light of the upcoming Lutheran church merger, we invite ALC churches to participate," explains Paul Moffit, a member of St. Timothy and president of the Nashville Area Lutheran Youth Fellowship.

"We sent invitations to area congregations," says Sarah Weber, LYF treasurer who was in charge of housing for the rally. "So many responded that we had to turn people away." Those who attended spent Saturday night in the homes of St. Timothy parishioners.

During the event the youth discussed baptism and how to live out their baptismal vows and Christian faith on a daily basis. Guest speaker was John Deering, a St. Timothy member who was a prisoner of war in Vietnam.

"John talked about his years in Vietnam. He prayed every day but had to keep it a secret," Moffat says. After Deering's speech, groups of youth discussed how they would react in a similar situation.

The rally's musical entertainment included a performance by Christian rock singer Rhonda Mann whose songs included one about baptism. An evening cruise on

a riverboat continued the theme of water.

A folk worship service on Sunday was highlighted by a sermon in pantomime. The offering of \$150 was given to LCA Designated Advance Giving to help purchase irrigation pumps in Bangladesh, a project related to the rally's theme.

"The overall feeling was one of great accomplishment," Moffat says. "Participants remarked how well one event flowed into another. We hope that we inspired individual youth to set up similar retreats in their own churches."

"I think our success shows that teenagers are responsible people," Weber comments. "Many adult leaders told me how well we ran things."

Another all-Tennessee rally is planned for the fall.

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Minnesota emphasizes evangelism

Congregations in Duluth, Minn., placed six billboards around the city, inviting residents to "Come Celebrate, Go Proclaim With Lutherans in Duluth."

Augustana Church, West St. Paul, Minn., during its "Visitor Celebration Month" exceeded its goal of having more than 200 visitors present at its services.

At Nativity Church, Minneapolis (St. Anthony), a "Friendship Sunday" was attended by a dozen unchurched families who had been specially invited.

In all, 301 of the 329 congregations of the Lutheran Church in America Minnesota Synod have committed themselves to a three-year evangelism emphasis, "Come Celebrate! Go Proclaim!"

The emphasis was kicked off in March 1985 and the theme is already widely used on brochures, buttons and banners in congregations, as is the official hymn of the emphasis, *Rise, Shine, You People*.

The emphasis is intended to "undergird the witness life of individuals and congregations," said the Rev. Gary F. Anderson, pastor of All Saints Church, Minnetonka, and synod evangelism chairperson.

"It is not just a church growth program, although we certainly hope as congregations get more intentional about evangelism we will see some fruits of our outreach," he said.

Twenty-six clergy and 10 laypersons have been appointed as synod evangelists for the 1985-1987 emphasis. They act as consultants to congregations or as resource persons to lead Bible studies, to preach and to work with evangelism committees. They also assist congregations in planning more effective evangelical "outreach" within their communities and evangelical "in-reach" within their congregations.

One synod evangelist who has been involved with 10 congregations reported that "some are very enthusiastic, saying it is about time we put emphasis in this area. Others say they don't have time and cite small-town problems, including the depressed farm economy," said the Rev.



Billboard in Duluth proclaims theme of evangelism emphasis in Minnesota

Daniel D. Buendorf, pastor of First Church, Litchfield.

Buendorf adds that he is personally excited about the emphasis, noting that he had "never been exposed to anything like it in my life." He said it had helped him to see the importance of person-to-person contact — the way evangelism was done in biblical times.

Gladys Peterson of Chisago Lake Church, Center City, said being a synod evangelist has provided her first experience preaching. She said people were "very responsive." She urges members to "show love to one another" and "win back people who have been hurt or for some reason no longer come to church."

She pointed out that on an average Sunday only 25 to 35 percent of the members are in church. "I am wondering where the

other 65 percent are," she said, adding that congregations hope to get them back into church through evangelism "inreach."

Even before the new outreach program the Minnesota Synod was a fast growing segment of U.S. Lutheranism. For each year of its 25-year existence, it has continued to grow. With 284,590 baptized members, it is the largest synod in the LCA.

In calling on the Minnesota Synod to make evangelism a priority, synod Bishop Herbert W. Chilstrom said that "Lutherans are notoriously secretive about their treasure: justification by grace through faith. Most members depend on others to do outreach ministry. That is beginning to change — and it must change if we are to survive as a church. The New Testament mandates witness," he said.

—W.L. THORKELSON

Event begins witness effort

Representatives from 22 congregations gathered at Tabor Church, Kane, Pa., to express a concerted need for evangelical outreach in the area. The program kicked off a three-year emphasis called "Let the Earth Hear His Voice."

Despite bad weather and icy roads 93 people attended the five-hour event. The Rev. Paull E. Spring of St. John Church, Warren, Pa., said that the event "was not designed to answer questions to the individual congregation's problems in witnessing but simply to raise the consciousness level of our need to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ in everyday life."

Dr. C. Richard Evenson of the Lutheran Church in America Division for Parish Services staff shared anecdotes about how the witness of others had strengthened his faith.

The day also included small-group discussions on evangelical outreach needs and

the sharing of Bible study. At the concluding service the group sang the hymn *Let All Creation Hear His Voice*, written for the emphasis by the Rev. David M. Blank of Bethany Church, Sheffield, Pa., and Moriah Church, Ludlow, Pa.

Missions begin worship

Cristo, Nuestra Paz Iglesia, Victoria, Texas, an American Lutheran Church mission congregation, is holding Sunday worship at 9 A.M. in the chapel of Trinity Church, 402 Constitution, Victoria. The Rev. Joseph Wold is pastor/developer.

Living Lord Church, an ALC mission congregation in Vero Beach, Fla., has started holding Sunday worship at 10 A.M. at the Cox-Gifford Funeral Home, 20th Avenue and 20th Street on State Road 60. The Rev. William D. Wolfe, is pastor/developer.



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N. England includes Hispanics

The Lutheran Church in America has started its first Spanish-speaking congregation in New England. Iglesia Luterana San Juan organized with more than 100 members, pastors and members of other congregations and LCA New England Synod officials at the service.

Synod Bishop Harold Wimmer urged those present to "make the church as inclusive as it can possibly be. Nowhere," he said, "is the New England Synod's commitment to multicultural witness for Lutherans more evident than at Iglesia Luterana San Juan."

LCA outreach to Worcester's large Hispanic community, composed mainly of Puerto Ricans, began in 1981 when the Rev. Arthur Wyse was assigned to develop a Spanish-speaking congregation.

Wyse said that "as a congregation of a mainline Protestant church," the San Juan church offers Hispanics an alternative "to the Pentecostal churches of the area and to the Roman Catholic Church, from which many feel disenfranchised."

He found enough people interested in worshipping together to begin services in January 1982. "We originally used different churches," said Wyse. "Then the group decided it would like to have its own identity, which also would be better for growth in the community."

In 1984, with the help of church extension funds from the LCA, a site — already containing a church building — was purchased. "This is the type of help funds

raised by One in Mission will be providing in the future," said the Rev. Richard C. Peterman, director of the appeal.

The LCA entered the Hispanic community in Worcester following a study conducted at the request of the Lutheran Churches of Central Massachusetts. A congregation of the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches had urged the creation of a Spanish-speaking congregation at the suggestion of one of the AELC's Hispanic members. The AELC was unable to undertake the project.

Wyse, formerly a pastor of the American Lutheran Church, learned Spanish as a child when his parents were American Baptist missionaries to Nicaragua. After becoming a Lutheran, Wyse was an ALC missionary to Colombia for six years. Upon his return to the United States he served in a Spanish-speaking ALC congregation in Milwaukee until he was called by the LCA.

The LCA is beginning a second Spanish-speaking congregation in New England, Resurrection in New Haven, Conn. The Rev. Ruth Drews is pastor/developer. The congregation will include members of the black and Hispanic communities.

New England Synod staff associate for urban ministry, the Rev. Maria E. Erling, said, "New England is the kind of setting which calls for a great number and variety of mission strategies. In the cities we have widely different combinations of neighborhoods, ethnic groups, contemporary needs and community life."

Spanish materials prepared

The Lutheran Church in America has stepped up production of Spanish-language materials. The Rev. Ivis J. La Riviere-Mestre recently became full-time editor for Spanish-language resources in the LCA Division for Parish Services. She had been working part time.

La Riviere-Mestre will develop worship materials and catechetical resources for Spanish-speaking members of the LCA. She also is helping to develop a Spanish-language hymnal for LCA congregations.

While working part time she built a network of regional Spanish-speaking authors, she said, so that LCA materials can be created "by indigenous authors as expressions of the Spanish language." A native of Puerto Rico, La Riviere-Mestre had a bilingual ministry as assistant pastor of St. John Church, Union City, N.J.

The LCA has recently developed several new resources in Spanish. Lutheran Church Women just released two study guides and filmstrips about women in Appalachia and Mexico.

While LCW was preparing a filmstrip on Mexican women in Cuernavaca, the Mexican women expressed interest in a resource on women affected by poverty in the United States. So, Appalachia was chosen as the focus of a Spanish-English filmstrip, said Paula Kadel, director of interpretation for LCW.

In Chicago, the women's group at Incarnation Church doubled attendance at its monthly meeting for the showing of *Women in Appalachia: Just Keep Climbing*. Myrta Robles, leader of the group and a member of the LCA Division for Mission in North America management committee, attributed the increase in attendance to Hispanic women who came "because it was the first time we had Spanish resources."

"We needed something in both languages," she said, "something to bring the Spanish and Anglo women together."

Also planned by LCW are an annotated bibliography of materials in Spanish by other church bodies and organizations and a Spanish filmstrip about LCW.

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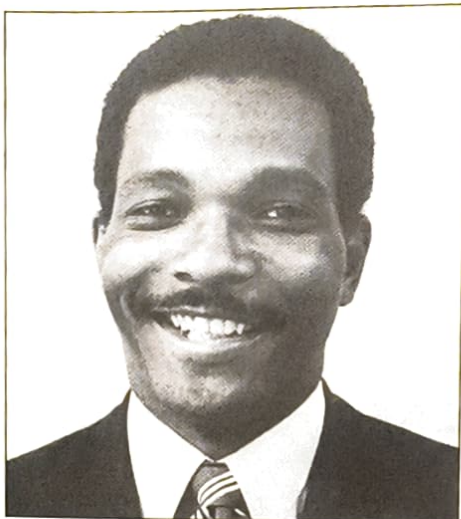
Staff member named chaplain

The Rev. Craig J. Lewis, director of theological education for the Lutheran Church in America, has been named chaplain for the 1986 LCA biennial convention which opens Aug. 25 in Milwaukee. Lewis is the first LCA staff member to be named convention chaplain, responsible for leading worship and preaching at daily services.

"The major criterion in the choice of a chaplain is effective preaching," said LCA Bishop James R. Crumley Jr., who made the appointment. "While he is a staff person of the LCA, Lewis preaches in congregations regularly. He has a particular interest in preaching, and practices sound principles of sermon preparation and delivery."

"I am confident that delegates and visitors to the convention will be effectively nourished with the Word as they go about the business agenda," Crumley said.

The 39-old-pastor has been head of the Department of Theological Education, a unit of the LCA Division for Professional Leadership, since 1984. Ordained in 1972, he was assistant director of the Urban League of Boston. He has been pastor of Advent Church in Cleveland and Resurrection Church in St. Albans, N.Y.



Lewis

In New York and Cleveland he was a leader in the NAACP. A graduate of Phillips Exeter Academy, Harvard College and Harvard Divinity School, Lewis has taught social ethics and African-American history at Cleveland State University and Philadelphia Seminary. He has been a member of the executive board of the LCA Metropolitan New York Synod, president of the Association of Black Lutherans in New York, and on the national executive council of the Association of Black Lutherans.

BOP closes stores, reduces personnel

Citing "insufficient revenue to maintain all projected operations," the Lutheran Church in America Board of Publication has closed three Fortress Church Supply Stores and reduced its staff. Branch operations were closed in Portland, Ore., Denver and Houston. Sixteen other branches are unaffected.

An administrative bulletin issued last month stated that "operations in the last two years have not come to full expectations and realizations of goals set by entire staff in meeting sales objectives."

It added that insufficient revenue has resulted "in the consolidation of staff and responsibilities." The board said it "regrets" the action but "we are required to operate within the funds available. It will undoubtedly be necessary to undertake further consolidation in a variety of areas."

The bulletin urged employees to continue expense control and to "meet and exceed" sales goals through satisfactory service.

Stephen Wagner, vice president for marketing and operations, said part of the problem is that buying habits have changed. "With the increase in two-career families, people just don't have the time to walk into stores to purchase items," he said. "They shop by mail or over the phone. We looked at that trend, plus the expenses of maintaining branch stores."

TV program features center at PLU

The Family and Children's Center at Pacific Lutheran University, Tacoma, Wash., is one of the programs featured on the NBC-TV documentary *Taking Children Seriously*, to be broadcast March 16. The television show focuses on children's problems including abuse, neglect and learning difficulties and on the creative ways these

problems are being addressed.

The center at PLU is a 1-year-old community outreach service that is "believed to be unique in the way it uses academic resources and students to provide needed community services otherwise unavailable," said James L. Peterson, director of university relations.

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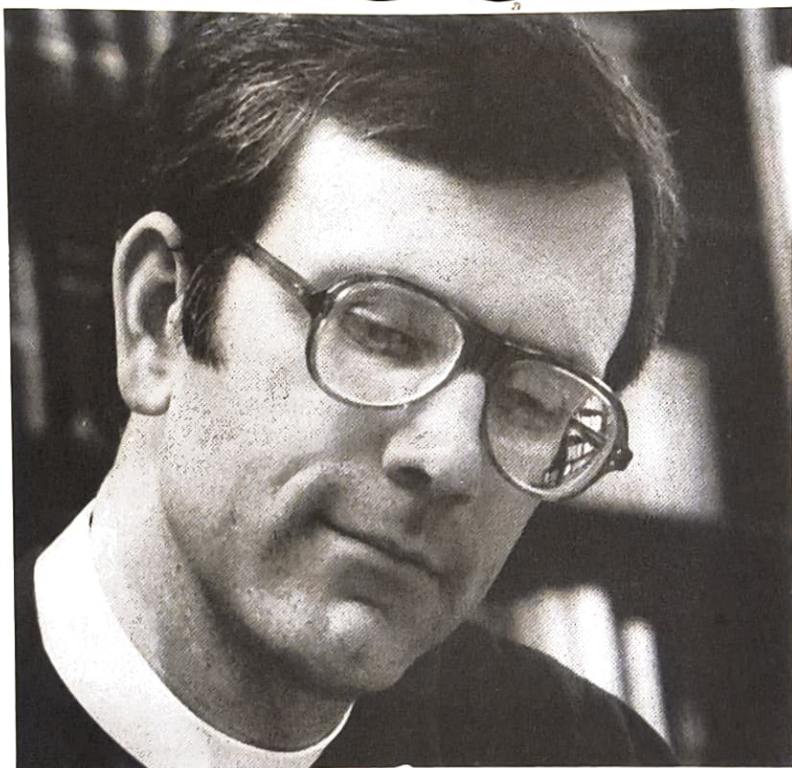
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BECAUSE OF YOU



Because of you, Pastor William A. Shafer, Grace Lutheran Church, Wyndmoor, Pennsylvania, is enhancing his ministry.

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Continuing education for pastors is high on the list of LCA priorities. The LCA's Division for Professional Leadership, synod bishops and their staff devote a significant amount of resources to encouraging pastors to improve their skills and keep up with developments in the fields of theo-

logy and parish ministry.

Pastor Shafer was also encouraged by his church council which granted him time and financial support, because the church council recognizes the importance of continuing education for the pastor.

He, incidentally, took a number of courses in preaching. Because of his background as a layman – he was for ten years director of financial aid and associate director of admissions at Haverford College – he recognizes the extreme importance of preaching.

So, remember Pastor William A. Shafer as you place your offering on the offering plate this Sunday.

NEWS NOTES

Concert aids farmers

A benefit concert for farm families was held at St. John Church, Des Moines, Iowa, recently to raise money for the Bishop's Emergency Farm Family Fund started last November by Bishop Paul M. Werger of the Lutheran Church in America Iowa Synod. The concert involved more than 30 people in three different musical groups. More than 100 people attended and about \$700 was collected in the offering. The two-hour concert was broadcast over a local radio station and more contributions are expected from the radio audience. Record sales from that evening also will go to the fund.

The money will be used to help farm families with health care, utility bills, food and clothing. "Maybe in some small way we can help eliminate one more thing that these families have to worry about," said Eileen Clausen, coordinator of the concert.

The bishop's fund now totals nearly \$40,000. Applications for the funds are being distributed through local LCA congregations and the Iowa Synod office.

Home receives grant

Salem Lutheran Home, Oakland, Cal., has received a \$600,000 grant in the form of an endowment fund from the King's Daughters Home Foundation. The earnings from the fund will be used to subsidize nursing care residents at Salem who are unable to pay the fees charged for their care. Salem Home provides residential and health care options to 200 men and women.

Building gets award

Seibert Hall, an 84-year old building on the campus of Susquehanna University, Selinsgrove, Pa., has been selected to receive an award at the Exhibition of School Architecture in San Francisco. The hall, which is on the National Register of Historic Places, was recently refurbished. It includes an auditorium, classrooms, seminar spaces, computer center, administrative offices, faculty lounge, housing for upperclass students and the campus radio station. Architectural designs of the building were displayed at the exhibition sponsored by the American Association of School Administrators and the American Institute of Architects.

Halley course offered

A course on Comet Halley and the solar system was offered by Midland College, Fremont, Neb., to the general public. It was taught by Dr. Gary Carlson, associate

professor of earth sciences and director of the college's planetarium. The course included study of Comet Halley and a survey of the planets, meteors and asteroids. It also included viewing the sky through the college's telescopes.

Choir sings on radio

The choir of St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minn., will sing on the Lutheran series of *The Protestant Hour* radio program. The weekly program is heard on 400 stations across the United States and is aired on the American Forces Radio and Television Network.

The programs this year will be aired from March 23 to May 11. Speakers will be Dr. John Vannorsdall, president of Philadelphia Seminary, and the Rev. Barbara K. Lundblad of Our Saviour Atonement Church, New York (Manhattan).

Church shares banner

The altar guild of Mount Olive Church, Rochester, N.Y., made two identical banners for the Epiphany season this year. One will stay in Rochester and the other will go to St. Paul Church, Leipzig-Grunau, East Germany. The quilted banners depict a

flame over a shell from which drops of water are falling onto the world to symbolize the commission of Jesus to make disciples of all nations.

The message "reminds us not only of world mission but also of the mission facing the Lutheran church in spreading the Gospel in a difficult setting for Christians," said the Rev. Keith Beaver of Mount Olive. Mount Olive has been working with the East German congregation since 1983 when it raised more than \$400 to help complete the church which was being built there to replace two rural churches. The land in the villages where the churches were located had been appropriated by the government to do mining.

Beaver first learned of the church when he and his wife, Mary, toured East Germany during the year of Martin Luther's 500th anniversary.

Class helps mission

A 16-member adult Sunday school class at St. Thomas Church, Hooversville, Pa., has been sending \$1,000 a year for the last three years to the Rev. Dean Peterson, missionary to Tanzania.

The class has tried to get the congregation involved by encouraging members to participate in the program by being weekly sponsors. Children have also been encouraged to participate by sponsoring the missionary on the child's birthday.

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MY QUESTION IS...

Q. Our parish sends support to a family, currently doing Bible translation in West Africa, who works with an organization called Lutheran Bible Translators. Is this a legitimate group which should be supported by our church?

A. Lutheran Bible Translators is one of several independent world mission organizations which have found support among Lutherans. Many, though not all, LBT workers and much of their support comes from Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod circles. In evaluating requests for support from such groups, you should review carefully the doctrinal statement under which they operate, as well as their financial statements and regular reports to constituency. You should also make sure that your parish's benevolence obligations to your own church body, which help to support its world mission enterprise, are being met, and that opportunities to support extra mission projects under church sponsorship are given careful consideration. It should not be necessary to play off "official" against "unofficial" mission efforts, as long as each is carried on in a responsible manner that does not conflict with the Lutheran confession of faith. But in situations where resources are limited, a congregation will want to give special consideration to those mission obligations that are inherent in its synod and church affiliation.

Q. A statement in *The Lutheran* ("God's Will for My Life?" Jan. 1) has me puzzled:

"God is a person." I cannot recall such a statement in the Bible. Can you set me straight?

A. The Greek word which is sometimes translated as "person," is used of God only in Hebrews 1:3. But "person" as used of the deity in Christian teaching has profound meaning and includes, among others, the following attributes: A person is that which exists of itself and is not to be confused with others; a person has a will; a person can be addressed as "you" and can address others as "you." Is the God whom we meet in the Bible such a God? Yes, indeed.

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

SIGHT AND SOUND FILM

A movie inspired by a woman's writings

The Color Purple commends itself; it conveys the stuff of legend, inspired by a brilliant woman with a gifted pen. It communicates a pointed motif of feminism, even though the time frame for its story line goes back more than 50 years.

The movie has received 11 Academy Award nominations, including best movie, best actress (Whoopi Goldberg) and best supporting actress (Oprah Winfrey and Margaret Avery).

Based on Alice Walker's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel about Southern blacks and directed by Steven Spielberg, *The Color Purple* forces the viewer to care about folks most would never know. The book consists of letters from separated sisters to each other and from one of the sisters to God. It is set in Georgia and at a Christian mission in Africa.

Without having first read the book, it's almost impossible to connect certain scenes, to know who is who and where and why. Ultimately, this doesn't matter as the unfolding film sequences are visually fascinating and gripping.

The book has been celebrated as a kind of feminist manifesto. The movie fulfills that expectation. The heroine, Celie (comic Goldberg in her film debut as a serious actress), is long-suffering to the point where the viewer hopes that she will rise in protest. Finally, she does and it marks her rebirth as a winner. Meanwhile, Sofia (Winfrey), the wife of her stepson, retrogresses from a saucy individualist to a broken slave after being abused in jail for sassing the



The young sisters, Nettie (left) and Celie, pledge a bond of kinship while standing in a field of purple flowers.

town's white mayor and his wife.

Avery plays the role of a blues singer, Shug, almost too well. Somehow, with her slick sophistication she doesn't seem to belong among the shanties of rural Georgia. Nevertheless, she is a compelling actress.

Danny Glover is too handsome and winsome to play the part of Celie's cruel and coarse husband. When he repents and changes, we are not told why or how. The book doesn't explain this either.

You cannot help but notice purple flow-

ers in the poetic opening of *The Color Purple*. The vivid blossoms appear again in the happy ending. In between you may experience sorrow and joy, you may cry and laugh, you may wince, yet be warmed by the vulnerable humanity. I recommend running to the novel to relive the story in depth.

—ROBERT E.A. LEE

The reviewer is executive director of Lutheran Film Associates, New York.

PEOPLE



Ballard and Metze

The congregation of Good Shepherd, Swansea, S.C., received an award from the Governor's Council on Rural Development for its contributions to rural community life. Among other ministries, the church shelters a program for recovering mental health patients, operates a clothing store and distributes free firewood. Pastor Tony Metze (right) was presented with the award by Al Ballard of the South Carolina Electric Cooperative Association.

Pamela Tucker, St. John-St. Matthew-Emanuel, New York (Brooklyn), was named assistant director of the Social Ministry Organizations Unit, LCA Division for Mission in North America, New York. The unit relates, on behalf of the LCA and its 30 synods, to more than 237 church-affiliated agencies providing health care, services to the aged and other social services throughout the United States. Tucker was previously employed by the Communication and Interpretation Department of Lutheran World Ministries.

The 1986 United Cerebral Palsy Poster Child for northeastern Wisconsin is **Stephanie Kurtz**, 5, Our Saviour, Fond du Lac, Wis.

A local newspaper recently praised the "good Samaritan" efforts of **David Morgan**, Zion, Flourtown, Pa. Morgan assisted a couple whose car had broken down on the Pennsylvania Turnpike. He spent a day driving them to auto parts stores and repairing their car.

Named Greenville Employee of the Year was **Joy McManus**, Redeemer, Greenville, Texas. She is assistant manager of the chamber of commerce and was chosen from employees nominated by firms within the city.

Marilyn McGriff, Siloa, Braham, Minn., and **Vern Bergstrom**, Mount Olivet, Minneapolis, have co-written a book, *Isanti County, Minnesota — An Illustrated History*.

The Rev. **Frederick M. Ritter Jr.**, a counselor and administrator for Community Health Services, Norfolk, Va., was elected chairperson of the Norfolk City Commission on the Handicapped. A retired LCA pastor, he is a member of Emmanuel, Virginia Beach, Va.

Lutheran Human Relations Association of America appointed **Cleo Davis Pruitt**, Augustana, Milwaukee, as director of its Covenant Congregation Program which unites 33 congregations in a nationwide network.

Dr. **Charles Oestreich**, president of Texas Lutheran College, Seguin, Texas, was selected chairperson of the board of the Council of Independent Colleges, a national service association of more than 300 small colleges.

Beverly Kilian, Emanuel, Stuyvesant Falls, N.Y., was chosen Mother of the Year by the Kinderhook Elks Lodge because of the many church and community activities she performs despite being in ill health.



Gott

Corinne Gott, Christ, Roanoke, Va., received an Outstanding Service Award from the Virginia League of Social Service Executives. Roanoke's superintendent of social services, Gott was cited for her interagency cooperation and work in behalf of children.

Regis T. Hubert, Trinity, Wexford, Pa., was one of seven metropolitan Pittsburgh residents awarded the Jefferson Medal for outstanding citizenship by the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* and WPXI-TV. He was cited for his entertainment of patients at the Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic, Pittsburgh.

The Rev. **Glenn Zorb**, Haven, Salisbury, N.C., received the Salisbury Jaycees Distinguished Service Award.



Lovell

New correspondent to *The Lutheran* for the Maryland Synod is **Linda Nansteel Lovell**, First, Ellicott City, Md. A free-lance writer and editor, Lovell has taught journalism on secondary and college levels and helped develop a school district's writing skills curriculum. She succeeds **Marsha Foss-Whetstone**.

Donna Lambourn, St. Peter by the Sea, Edmonds, Wash., was awarded the Certified Commercial Investment Member designation by the Commercial Marketing Institute. She helps clients meet investment objectives.

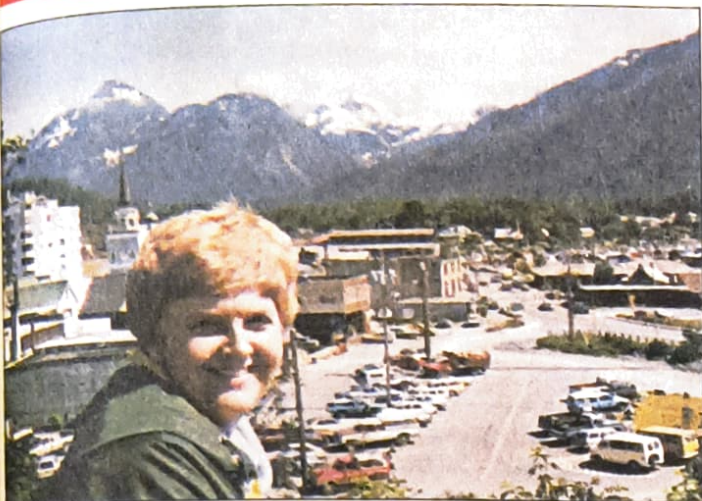
Beth Deter Szary, St. Paul, Durham, N.C., was named Direct Care Provider of the Year by the Community Living Association of North Carolina.



George Frederick Handel (left), **Martin Luther** and **Johann Sebastian Bach** are depicted in a stained glass window designed for St. Peter Church, Ottawa, to commemorate the composers' 300th birthdays and Luther's 500th. The antique glass used in the window is handblown and comes from Europe.

PROFILE

Ecumenical project benefits Eskimos



Nanci Jacobs in Alaska

When Peter and Nanci Jacobs, Our Saviour Church, Fort Collins, Colo., traveled to St. Lawrence Island last summer, they took more than their suitcases with them. The Jacobs went with 48 cartons containing 850 pounds of clothing, quilts, baby care items and handtools — much-needed items on this remote Alaskan island.

Located in the Bering Sea 35 miles off the coast of Siberia, St. Lawrence has no roads or indoor plumbing. Community wells supply the water. Subsistence hunting of whales and land animals is a part of life.

"About 1,000 Yupik Eskimo live in two communities, Savoonga and Gambell, on St. Lawrence," Peter Jacobs said. "They are famous for their carvings done in walrus ivory. The island itself is rich in prehistoric artifacts."

Peter Jacobs is professor of Native American Arts at Colorado State University and Nanci Jacobs is an elementary school art teacher. They went to the island to study the works of Eskimo artists and carvers. For about a year

prior to the trip, the couple corresponded with the Rev. Sigurd Kristiansen, a Presbyterian missionary who's been on St. Lawrence for almost 20 years. He told them about the need for basic necessities.

"We decided to solicit gifts from churches in Fort Collins," Peter Jacobs said. The response was overwhelming.

In addition to donating items, members of Our Saviour made 12 quilts. A Disciples of Christ church gave \$100 to purchase baby needs. A Seventh-day Adventist congregation contributed a large quantity of new clothing. Three airlines agreed to ship the items at no charge.

"The people on the island were very grateful," Jacobs says. Some of the gifts were immediately distributed, the rest were stored away for the needy at Christmas.

"At the time we didn't know just how great the need would soon become," he added. Shortly after he left, Gambell was destroyed by a fire.

"Our donations provided immediate relief for those families who lost everything," he said.

Clergy changes

California

Johnson, Dale B., on leave from call, to Mount Calvary, Cypress.

Colorado

Weber, Timothy, newly ordained, to Prince of Peace, Colorado Springs.

Connecticut

Myers, Bryan L., associate, Salem, Bridgeport, to Salem, Naugatuck.

Delaware

Davis, Bruce T., Advent, Philadelphia, to campus pastor, University of Delaware, Newark.

Florida

Anderson, Lowell L., Mount Zion, La Grange, Ind., to Trinity, Hollywood.

Grimm, Robert R., Resurrection, Hialeah, to First, Fort Lauderdale.

McCabe, William J., St. Michael, Wellington, to Our Saviour, Nokomis.

Strandlund, Donald R., Christ, St. Petersburg, to Grace, Lakeland.

Urban, Charles B., on leave from call, to chaplain, Martin Memorial Hospital, Stuart.

Georgia

Nieman, John B., received from Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, to Epiphany, Conyers.

Illinois

Boyd-Galezewski, James E., on leave from call, to St. James, Chicago.

Hetico, Robert P., Holy Trinity, Glenview, to on leave from call.

Indiana

Logan, John D., chaplain, U.S. Army Soldier Support Center, Fort Harrison, to retirement.

Kansas

Molander, Roy F., Assaria, Assaria, to retirement.

Maryland

Billeck, Donald R., St. Paul, Williamsport, Pa., to Zion, Takoma Park.

Hembrock, Richard G., on leave

from call, to Salem, Bakersville; Holy Trinity, Sharpsburg; Zion, Rohrsersville.

Otto, H.J. Siegfried, St. John, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, to Zion, Baltimore.

Michigan

Johnson, Jennifer E., newly ordained, to Siloa, Ontonagon; Faith, White Pine.

Livingston, Luther R., associate, Trinity, Grand Rapids, to retirement.

Rankinen, E. Olaf, chaplain, Senior American Center, Hancock, to Holy Trinity, Chassell.

Minnesota

Franke, Lloyd W., Atonement, Minneapolis (Bloomington), to retirement.

Winzig, Judy A., newly ordained, to associate, Bethany, Minneapolis.

Nebraska

Billington, Steven E., newly ordained, to Zion, Gothenburg.

New Hampshire

King, Gwendolyn S., on leave from call, to associate chaplain, Tucker Foundation, Dartmouth College, Hanover.

Pennsylvania

Callahan, Hazel J., on leave from call, to Nazareth, Wilcox; St. John, Johnsonburg.

Ernst, David W., on leave from call, to St. Stephen, Erie.

Olson, Donald E., Christ, Gettysburg, to on leave from call.

Wiktorek, Daniel E., on leave from call, to St. James, Bloersville.

South Carolina

Miller, Eddie C. Jr., St. Michael, Moncks Corner, to on leave from call.

Deaths



Veler

The Rev. Herbert W. Veler, D.D., 80, died Feb. 2 in Toledo, Ohio. Ordained

in 1932, he served First English, Mansfield; First, Lorain; St. John, Stony Ridge; St. John, Zanesville, and Good Shepherd, Washington Court House, all in Ohio. From 1958-62 he was president of the Ohio Synod of the former United Lutheran Church in America and from 1962-66, president of the Ohio Synod of the Lutheran Church in America. He retired in 1971.

The Rev. Jay W. Brown, 59, died Jan. 21 in Columbus, Ohio, from cancer. Ordained in 1967, he served St. Michael, Mifflin; Mount Zion, Lucas, and Christ, Carey, all in Ohio. He retired on disability in 1985. Prior to ordination Brown was a movie theater manager.

NOW, I THINK

By Jerilyn and Peter Breitsch

Terrorism in the church

We hear a lot of talk about "hostages" and "terrorists." Almost daily the newspapers and broadcast media are riddled with more news about car bombings, airplane hijackings, kidnappings and other terrorist activity. Iran, Lebanon, the "Achille Lauro" and Northern Ireland are among the places and events seared into our minds.

But terrorism is not limited to the large-scale activity of world events. Students are terrorized daily by other students who feel that someone does not fit the image of "their" school. Elderly people are terrorized when they fear for their safety walking on the streets. Minority people are terrorized by real estate agents who will not show them homes in an "exclusive" neighborhood. And now, we fear, terrorism has finally reached the church.

There is an understanding, or rather, a misunderstanding, in many congregations that one's offering is given to the church to meet the specific needs of that particular congregation in that particular situation. The giving of the congregation to the wider church is thought to depend on its ability to meet its current budget. Similarly, the existence of the congregation is dependent on the giving of its members. While this may be true from a purely practical standpoint, it leads people to believe that they can use "terrorist" actions to get their way in a congregation.

Remember when the *Lutheran Book of Worship* was first introduced? Some people were so upset with the new liturgy and the different hymns that they threatened to leave if the congregation didn't return to the form of wor-

ship in the old book. This type of reaction is little different from the terrorists who take hostages. It is a vain attempt to exert one's selfish wishes on the larger group. The same thing can happen anytime a pastor and church council try to initiate a change in a congregation's policy. Unhappy members complain about the worship schedule, choir anthems, the placement of the Christmas tree and anything else which might upset people. Those who oppose change will attempt to hold the entire congregation hostage by threatening to leave or to stay away from worship.

Along with this comes the threat of withholding one's offering because of disagreements with the pastor or church council. This represents a common misunderstanding of the theology of stewardship. Our offering does not represent our obligation to the financial maintenance of the congregation. It rather represents a small token of the gratitude we show to God for all the gifts which he has so graciously given us. It reflects our image of ourselves in relation to God.

In the liturgy we pray these words each time we prepare to receive the sacrament of the altar, after the offering is brought forward: "Merciful Father, we offer with joy and thanksgiving what you have first given us — our selves, our time and our possessions, signs of your gracious love. Receive them for the sake of him who offered himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord." Along with many others in the *Lutheran Book of Worship*, this prayer reminds us that our gift to God is a reflection of what he has given us. Withholding our offering does not hold God hostage; it holds us hostage to ourselves, our time and our possessions. We put ourselves first and God's place in our lives is moved down a notch or two.

Terrorism in the church does not work. The church of Jesus Christ cannot and will not be held hostage to the selfishness of human desire. Our presence in church and our offerings to the work of the church do not assure us of a church funeral, or a church wedding, or a better place in God's heavenly choir. All of this and much more is granted by the pure and unchanging grace of God. We cannot stand in the way of the proclamation of the Gospel. The ministry of Christ's church will continue despite human attempts to hold it hostage. As the prophet writes, "The grass withers, the flower fades ... but the word of our God will stand forever" (Isaiah 40:7-8). ■



The writers are co-pastors at St. Mark Church, Hackensack, N.J.

"Now, I think" is a regular feature in *The Lutheran*. Readers may contribute cogent, timely and varied analyses of issues in church and society. Material should be 800 words (about three double-spaced typed pages) in length. Opinions in this column do not necessarily reflect the views of *The Lutheran* or the official positions of the Lutheran Church in America.

LETTERS

No restrictions on baptism

Isn't the answer to the question, "Under what circumstances is it appropriate for a pastor to refuse to baptize an infant?" (*My question is...*, Feb. 5) contrary to Lutheran theology? In our congregation, we pastors realized that we had baptized more children of non-members than of members. Seeing a lack of responsibility on the part of these non-members (on-going attendance or involvement in the church or Christian nurture of their children) we decided not to baptize any children of non-members until the parents made a commitment to join the congregation. Our church council began a lively dialogue on this question and made it the focus of Bible study at a retreat. On the basis of Scripture and the Lutheran confessions we were compelled to reverse our decision and baptize the children of anyone who makes a request. Lutheran theology states that baptism is the action of God apart from the faith of parents, sponsors and pastors. As a Christian congregation we recognize our responsibility to and the sponsorship of the children we baptize. In addition to requiring parents and sponsors to attend a baptism class prior to the sacrament, council members have made a commitment to remember the baptismal date of non-member children

through telephone calls, sending cards and extending invitations to Sunday school. It is never an easy decision but we must be true to Lutheran theology in affirming that "Everything depends on the word and commandment of God" (*Large Catechism*, Section 52).

ALAN LOOSE
STEVE HASCHIG
Prior Lake, Minn.

Would Jesus say "no" to any baptism under any circumstances? What happened to "suffer the little children"? If a child has been brought for a baptism, someone cares.

GAYLE FOX
Stevens Point, Wis.

How can anyone insult people who bring their children to be baptized? How can anyone, including pastors, say who believes and who does not?

MINNA E. BREMER
Spokane, Wash.

Stanza for astronauts

I wrote the following verse in honor of the seven astronauts who perished Jan. 27. Set to the tune Melita ("Eternal Father, Strong to Save," *Lutheran Book of Worship* 467), it is intended as an alternate version of verse three: "O Holy Spirit, heart of love, / You beckon us to soar above, / And promise to be with us all / Whenever we in danger call. / O grant your strong and saving grace / To those who venture into space."

HAROLD E. BERG
Berkeley, Cal.

Ministry in the world

At a time when the Lutheran Church in America is giving special attention to the ministries of all God's people, it is helpful to read about Allegheny County (Pa.) Commissioner Barbara Hafer (*Pittsburgh's Political Nurse*, by Floramae Geiser, Jan. 15). Her efforts attest to a response to God's call to minister to the needs of our brothers and sisters. But it is troubling that Hafer's pastor is quoted as saying, "The bad thing about Barbara's political career is that we don't get the help from her that we used to. She's just too busy." If God's people are to be in ministry in and to the world, there will be times when some of them are indeed "too busy" to serve on congregational committees or go to choir practice. Instead of making such members feel guilty, our communities of faith should

Not for love of God

It was heartening to read Henri Nouwen's moving first installment on peace (*The Spirituality of Peacemaking*, Feb. 5). But it was a bit idealistic. If we wait on Christian love to surface or a divine solution to a dilemma of human origin, we increase the danger through naivete. Attempts to educate the public about the real possibility of nuclear war followed by nuclear winter are confused with "scare tactics." "We are in deep ignorance," writes Jonathan Schell in *The Fate of the Earth*. If we don't buy into the morality of peaceful co-existence, maybe our instincts for self-preservation will prevail until our religion catches up. Unfortunately, however, it is "threats of hell and hopes of paradise" that keep most Christians on the path, not love of the Lord.

JEAN BROWN
Savannah, Ga.

Wrong tithe

News notes (Jan. 15, page 30) describes erroneously the tithing action taken by the Minnesota Synod executive board. The resolution actually provides that 10 percent of the un-designated memorial and estate gifts received since 1982 would be remitted toward the synod's 1985 regular benevolence commitment to the Lutheran Church in America of \$3,256,184 — not an additional amount of that size. The actual amount to go toward the synod's benevolence was \$2,309.

RONALD C. PETERSON
Minneapolis

(The writer is assistant to the bishop of the Minnesota Synod.)

Wobegon woes

Surely it cannot be the shyness of the true citizens of Lake Wobegon but rather a misguided expression of Lutheran pietism that caused you to misname Wally and Evelyn's friendly establishment (*Garrison Keillor's Lake Wobegon*, by Wilfred Bockelman, Feb. 5). The complete name of their business is *The Side Track Tap*. One thing the German and Norwegian citizens of Lake Wobegon always insist upon is complete honesty about their town.

WALTER E. LEITZE JR.
Stark, Minn.

Unsaved Lutherans are dying and going into an eternity in hell; they need a message of and from Jesus Christ. The first four pages of *The Lutheran* for Feb. 5 were dedicated to a comedian or humorist and a fictitious place. In a time when people have become lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, let's not point to more detouring pleasures that choke the Word. I sorrow that a plug for itching ears has taken first place in a magazine that could and should move souls to repentance and salvation.

BRAD WHIPPS
North Branch, Minn.

be supporting them in their ministries in the world.

WILLIAM E. DIEHL
Allentown, Pa.

It could be called a Lutheran success story. But it contains some deeply distressing notions and a tone more appropriate to *Fortune* magazine than to the massive suffering of the discarded and disregarded unemployed. Hafer's vision for Pittsburgh mirrors the vast project called Renaissance II which consigns the city's steelworkers to the breadlines or to inferior non-union jobs which devastate the lifestyles they worked so hard to build. How glibly the comfortable and well-to-do proclaim solutions for the suffering from their havens of security.

OSCAR L. ARNAL
Waterloo, Ontario

EDITOR'S OPINION

By Edgar R. Trexler

Confronting media violence

Whether the dramatic film *The Color Purple* (see page 29) unfairly depicts black males as physically and sexually abusive of women is a matter of debate. Some men and women say it corresponds to their experiences; others disagree.

The irony is that many film and video presentations today, particularly those available directly in the home through cable and cassettes, show women being physically and sexually abused. Such exploitation has been going on for years, usually by male film producers. But now that the shoe is on the other foot, males are making a fuss.

Perhaps it's only just. But far beyond that, it raises the awareness of the violence and sexual violence in the media to a new height, and clearly places it on a collision course with common decency.

Sociologists and communications researchers maintained for years that film merely reflected society. But analysts now show statistically that there is a clear link between exposure to media violence and aggressive behavior.

In contrast to the blanket condemnation of the media which fundamentalists often take, the National Council of Churches has produced a widely respected study on the problems of exploitative sex and gratuitous violence in film, television, cable TV and videocassettes. Asking for a new "environmental movement," the report is intended to help churches "inform those in the industry that the right of freedom of expression requires a responsibility to protect the young."

The NCC study group was told about a segment of a film called *Toolbox Murders* which was shown on a *Phil Donahue* show. Because the film was shown on commercial television, a black band covered the nude woman's breasts. When she was shot and fell to the floor, the band followed her breasts. But no black band covered up the explicit scenes of a man driving nails into her body. The

resulting message is that viewers can't see breasts but it's OK to view just about everything else.

Researchers also tell us that heavy viewers of television and film violence develop greater apprehensions about the world than do light viewers. They develop a "mean world" syndrome. And with music video combining erotic material, teen idols and violence in a repetitive context, serious side effects may be developing in youth.

Attacking the situation is difficult. A handful of production companies create the bulk of films and videos and sell them to broadcasters and businesspeople, not to viewers. Pinpointing blame or assigning controls is difficult. The lack of a "common conscience" means that profit is rated more highly than the "common good."

Exploiting the public is a misuse of the First Amendment protection of speech. Although a pluralistic society must tolerate a variety of material, a way must be found for weeding out the "common bad." Not every film has to be allowed on every avenue, or for sale in every store. Limits are placed on how loud bullhorns can be at protest demonstrations. Not every video has the right to come into a home uninvited. Freedom of speech is not absolute.

To say that parents should monitor what their children watch is unworkable. In most households, both parents work. Children without cable TV or videocassette recorders in their homes can see many shows at homes where they babysit that do have cable and VCRs. Cable movie channels provide a mixture of films, so that one cannot be sure what will come next. Advance information is sometimes lacking. Some companies provide lockboxes on cable channels; some do not.

There are things, of course, that churches can do. Too many people don't realize or try to avoid the magnitude of the problem. Pressure on programmers and businesspeople is another way. But perhaps the most important role is for clergy, teachers, parents and others to train children and youth how to survive with integrity in a complex media environment. This means helping them understand what is "true to life" and what is fantasy. This means reinforcing the values we treasure as much as entertainment tries to reinforce its flawed view of life.

This approach may not be as restrictive or as visible as some might wish, but it candidly recognizes the pervasiveness of the problem. The entertainment industry may someday feel threatened enough to clean up its act. If it doesn't do so voluntarily, it will almost surely face court challenges. Until then, we can at least keep our eyes open as to how to interpret its poorest material.



The Causes

A World Hunger Diary—Day 2

I went to this seminar sponsored by the Division for Parish Services. Met people who are poor and people who work with the poor. Learned that hunger is caused by poverty. Whatever causes poverty causes people to be hungry.

Realized that some causes have to do with the way I live.

The more I learn about hunger, the more I want to know what or who keeps people from being able to feed themselves. Good that I went. Now I understand enough to act.



Hunger still exists, but progress is being made.

To support the task of educating people about the root causes of hunger, present your offering at your local church or directly to:

The LCA World Hunger Appeal Office
231 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016

☐ Please send me a World Hunger Appeal brochure.

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ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

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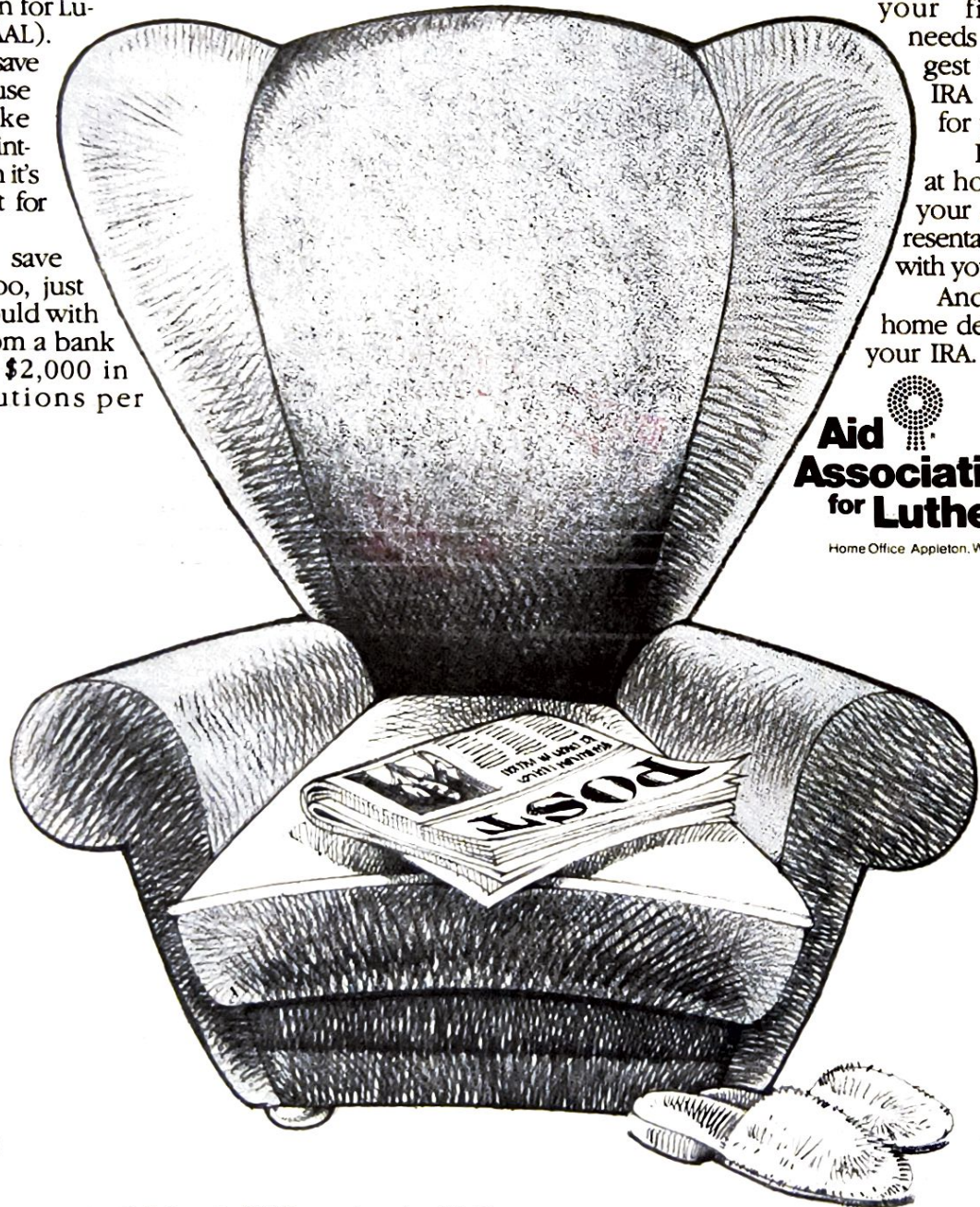
individual is tax-deferred.*

And you'll like our high interest rates, financial strength and retirement benefits you can't outlive.

In addition to all the savings, you'll get the kind of personal service your financial matters deserve. Your trained AAL representative will help you evaluate your financial needs and suggest the best IRA options for you.

It all starts at home with your AAL representative. Talk with yours today.

And get free home delivery on your IRA.




**Aid
Association
for Lutherans**

Home Office Appleton, Wisconsin 54919

*All wage earners can contribute up to \$2,000 a year toward an IRA. The amount increases to \$2,250 if you include your non-working spouse.