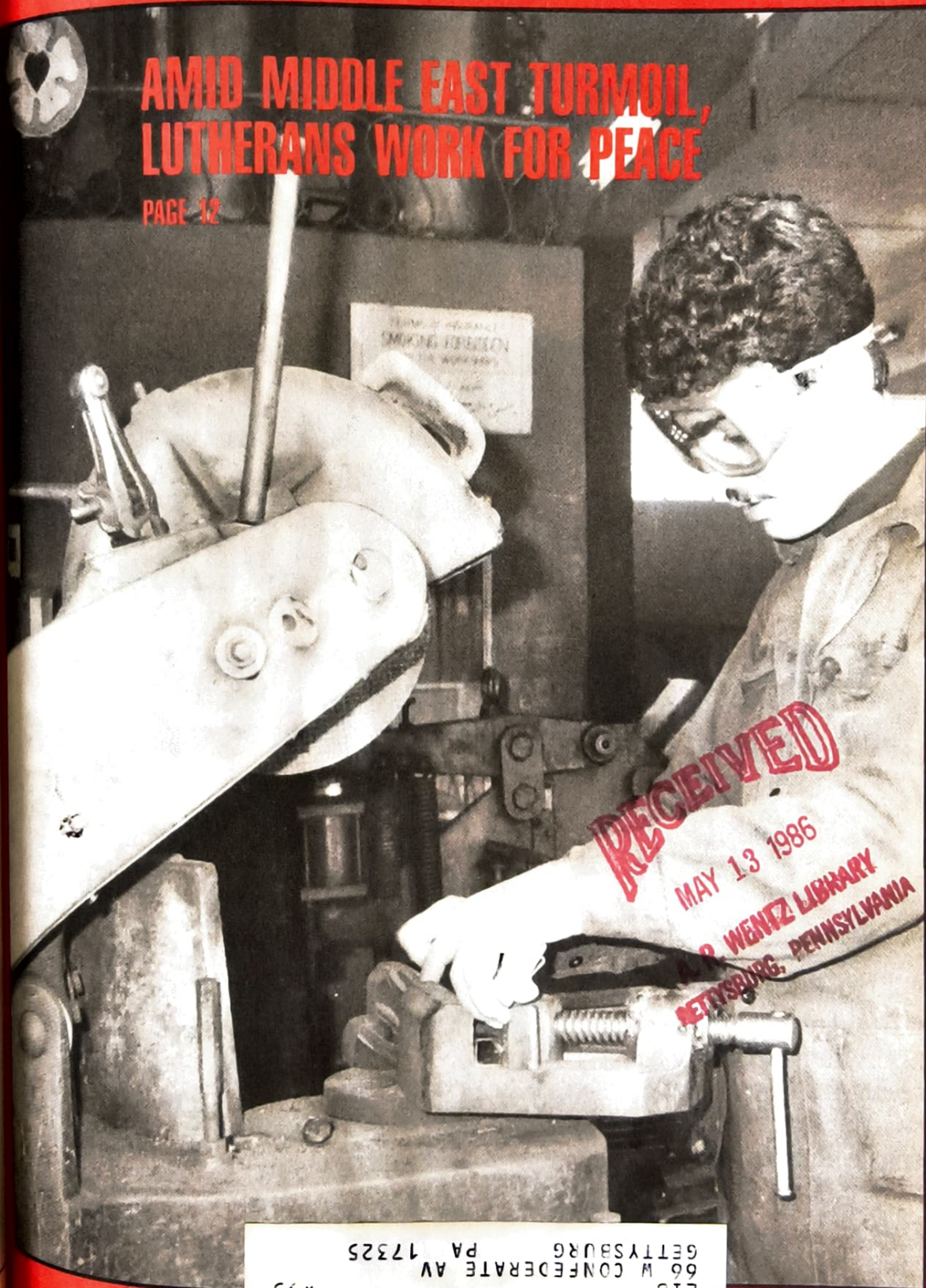


The Lutheran Standard®

MAY 16, 1986

AMID MIDDLE EAST TURMOIL, LUTHERANS WORK FOR PEACE

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What would life be like if we didn't take care of our environment?

Our members hope you never have to find out. That's why Lutheran Brotherhood is proud to announce our "Friends of the Environment" project in nearly 600 branches across the nation on June 14. This is Lutheran Brotherhood's way of celebrating National Fraternal Week.

This symbol identifies all our members who enthusiastically donate time and effort to make America a better place to live.



 **LUTHERAN BROTHERHOOD**
A Fraternal Benefit Society

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by H. H. Morris

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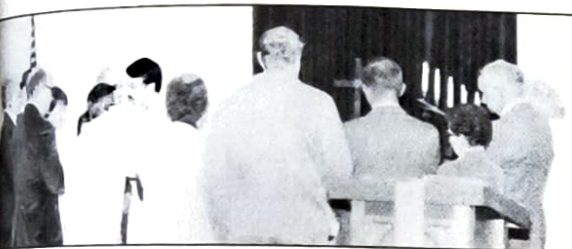
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COVER: This young man is a vocational student in a Beit Hanina Training Center operated by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) on the West Bank in Israel. This school is one of several programs offered by LWF in that region. For a firsthand report on these peacemaking efforts, see "We Are Helping," beginning on page 14.

Church-state debate:

CHRISTIANS AGAINST CHRISTIANS

by H. H. Morris

A group of parents in the Baltimore area started by monitoring sex education courses in the public schools. Now the group is challenging the ways the curriculums of area schools deal with values. In challenging the schools, the members loudly profess their Christianity.

The U.S. Supreme Court last year threw out Alabama's law mandating daily "meditation" in the public schools. So legislators in Alabama and other states are looking for new ways to restore school prayer.

Now awaiting a decision by the United States Supreme Court is a complex Pennsylvania case about whether a student religious group can meet in a school during a free period. The school board says allowing the group to meet would amount to an establishment of religion; the students insist that Bible study is as important—and as legal—as chess or drama.

U.S. Lutherans—and other Christians—face a dilemma whenever we face church-state conflicts. Our natural impulse is to support our fellow Christians. Often, however, we discover that to follow that impulse is to expose our own members, and especially our children, to legally sanctioned intolerance.

Battles of past 20 years

Those of us in public education have watched these battles wax and wane over the past 20 years. If we've learned nothing else in those years, we've seen what a diversity of expressions of the Christian faith exists in this nation.

Unfortunately, those who yell the loudest that they speak for Christianity refuse to accept this diversity. Their idea of school prayer is structured devotions that must reflect a very narrow set of doctrines—but be supported by everyone's tax dollars.

Let me give you an example. I head an academic division of a community college. Our division includes

a few courses in philosophy, including a pair with the literature and religious thought of the New Testaments. The professor who teaches these courses has a second job: He's an ordained Presbyterian minister.

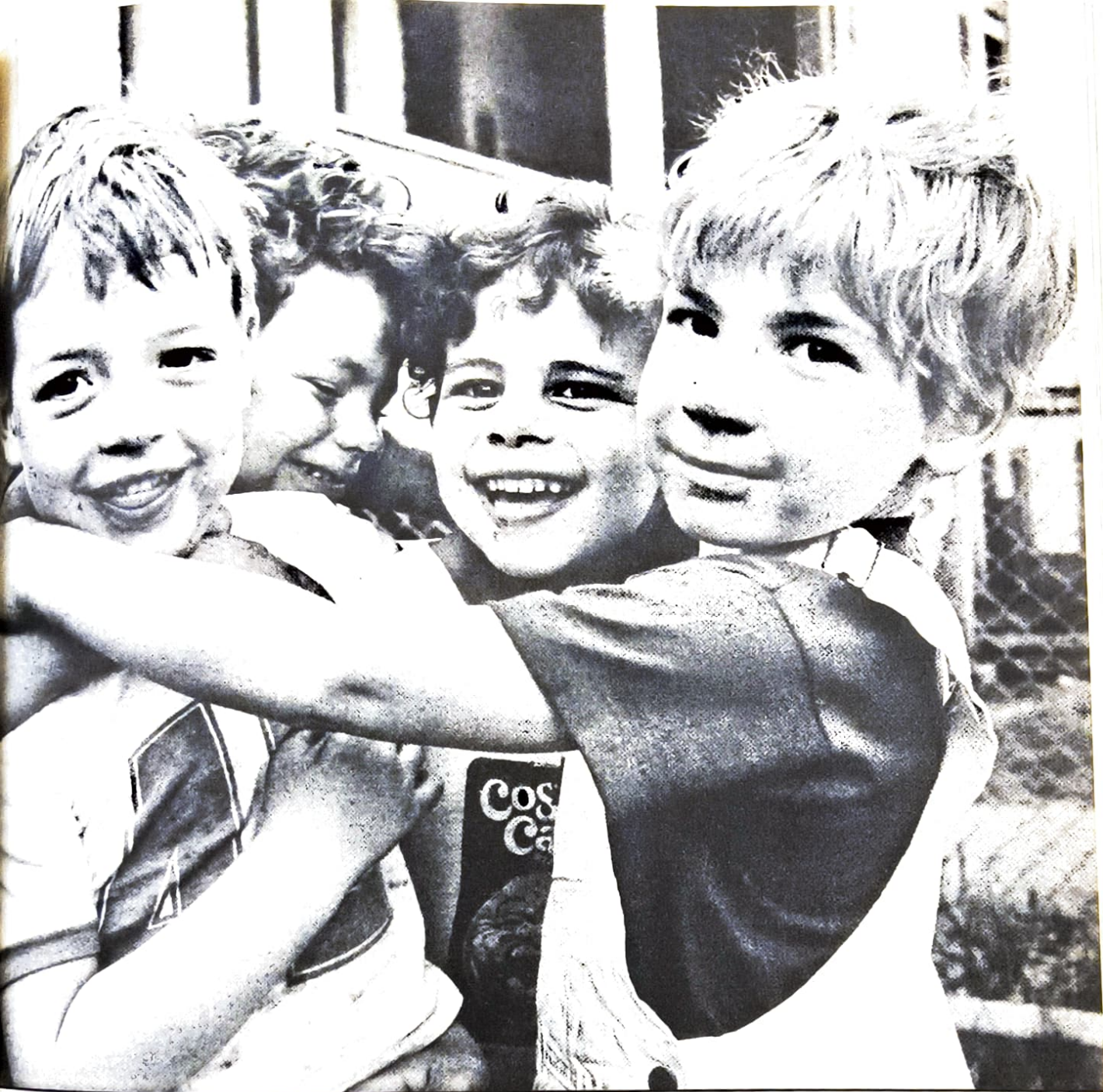
Several self-styled Christians have filed complaints with me because this professor refuses to permit "testimonies" as valid contributions to class discussions on such matters as the Aramaic language or the poetic format of Old Testament prophecies. The protestors don't care that this man spends most of his days preaching the gospel. He has crossed them out. Therefore, he is an atheist who should be removed from the classroom.

No defense

Similar problems arise in the first half of an American literature course, in which students spend several weeks reading the works of the Puritans. One of the professors is an extremely devout Catholic. I also teach the course on occasion. He and I agree that testimonies about how "I found Jesus" don't really explain more than Edwards's carefully constructed sermons or Howard Taylor's convoluted poetic meditations. But Catholicism and my Lutheranism are no defense. They're just proof that we're bound for hell.

Incredible as it may sound, a simple course in English composition—that most boring of all college classes—can create church-state conflicts. Being a teacher again often demands that one convert every writing assignment into an impassioned, albeit poorly written sermon. God doesn't grade grammar, we're told. If teachers do—or if they suggest that the topic does not match the assignment—atheism and secular humanism are clearly running rampant. Apparently, God does not believe in brains, either.

The results are even more absurd when these



the sake of our children, Lutherans need to realize that the important question isn't whether there's prayer in the schools, but if there officially mandated prayer, who will do the praying?

still professing their great faith, enter the realm of public morals. One "good Christian woman" (her name is not given) demanded that I fire an art historian for examining Rome by reading from Suetonius. The art historian is a staunch Lutheran who feels guilty if she misses a Sunday service, but that meant nothing to the explainer.

"No Christian would read such pornography," she said. "And if you believed in God, you'd fire that woman once."

My loud whoops of laughter didn't help my cause. The kindest thing I can say for Suetonius, who matter-of-factly cataloged many of the sins of the ruling Romans, is that he's the least boring of the Roman his-

torians. Take my word for it: The biblical account of David and Bathsheba is more graphic than anything Suetonius wrote.

We accept them

Present laws and practices make these people nuisances, and I'm paid to deal with them. So long as such fanatics don't interfere with serious students' educations, their beliefs fit into a free society. We Lutherans may shudder at their strange theology, but we accept them as fellow Christians.

But my experience is in a college, a place for adults. The stakes change when these people put pressure on teachers and administrators in elementary and second-

'You are looking at a battle to control young minds and to preach to children who are compelled by state laws to attend.'

ary schools. Now you are looking at a battle to control young minds and to preach to children who are compelled by state laws to attend.

An important common thread connects the examples I've listed. All these attacks were on Christian men and women who belong to denominations that don't emphasize emotional born-again experiences. I've tried to recall complaints made with the same religiously oriented bitterness about nonbelievers or members of other religions, but I can't recall one.

Who will do praying

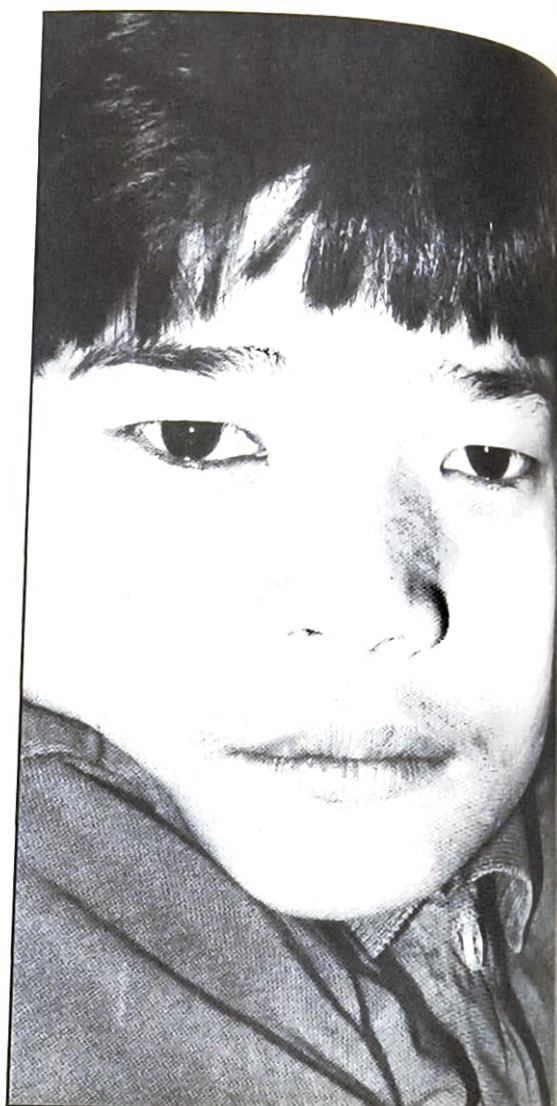
For Lutherans, and for all concerned Christians, the important question isn't whether there's prayer in the schools, but if there's organized school prayer, who will do the praying?

Our Lutheran liturgy emphasizes public prayer. We teach our children to participate silently as the leader speaks petitions on behalf of all of us. If we have taught well, our children will transfer that importance to any prayers spoken in school. What if prayers or devotions become an opportunity for someone to question their salvation? For example, do you want your children told by the school's prayer leader that infant baptism means nothing and that they are headed for hell unless they *really* find Jesus?

A political solution is to join with members of other liturgical churches to create a committee of clergy who will write prayers so meaningless that they offend nobody—except God. It's bad enough that our children have to hear so many insipid prayers offered before ceremonies, conventions, and ball games. Do we really want them to begin thinking that any prayer offered aloud five times a week means nothing?

Besides, the whole school prayer issue is misleading. No law prevents any student or teacher from praying silently at any time during the school day. As an old "Funky Winkerbean" comic strip pointed out, both humorously and truthfully, anyone who thinks there's no prayer in public schools has never watched students facing a tough exam.

Consider another church-state issue: lessons that



No law prevents any student or teacher from praying silently in school. But state-sponsored prayers would have to be so meaningless that they would offend no one—except God.

contain "values" that aren't Christian. The Baltimore group has condemned an arithmetic problem in which students are asked to compute the pay scale a mother uses to compensate her daughter for doing household chores. Parents shouldn't pay children for working around the house, the group says. They say the problem is opposed to Christian values.

These absurdities don't mean that the people who represent the state always are right. I've seen schools refuse to rent their facilities to churches willing to pay for utilities and janitorial services. That's carrying church-state separation too far—and it denies taxpayers a chance to collect some honest rent.

Someone's special interest

Most church-state conflicts are manufactured to serve someone's special interest. We Lutherans hardly ever start them—probably because we are a mainstream church and our values seldom conflict with the

of most of society. Society owes to us, and to our brothers and sisters in other mainstream churches, ethical standards and values which the majority of people accept.

Ours is a quiet form of the Christian faith. We are moved by grace through faith, but we agree with St. James that faith must be accompanied by works. So we don't yell; we *do*. This is why secular society has turned so much from the church over the last 20 centuries.

Street corners aren't our thing. Neither are public school classrooms. No Lutheran is ever likely to win a testimony contest with one of the emotional born-again

types. Our faith has a richness of growth that can't be reduced to a single moment.

So examine closely every purported church-state conflict. You'll find that most aren't between Christianity and the state at all, but between one point of view and the rest of society. ■



H. H. Morris is associate dean for humanistic studies at Harford Community College in Bel Air, Md. He is a member of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Aberdeen, Md.

RESPONSES FROM READERS

EDITOR'S NOTE: Advance copies of "Christians Against Christians" and a questionnaire that included agree-disagree questions and space for comments were sent to a randomly selected group of 1500 LUTHERAN STANDARD subscribers. Completed questionnaires were returned by 306 persons, a response of 20%.

Our opinions on some issues

The author is right when he says that Christians who emphasize "emotional born-again experiences" usually are more interested in attacking other Christians than in challenging non-Christians.

Agree	62%
Disagree	19
Other	14
No answer	5

Whether to have Bible reading and prayer in the public schools should be decided by majority rule in each community.

Agree	31%
Disagree	63
Other	5
No answer	1

Because children already can pray privately and silently in public schools, organized prayer isn't necessary.

Agree	81%
Disagree	14
Other	3
No answer	2

Religious training belongs in homes and churches, not in the public schools.

Agree	79%
Disagree	13
Other	8
No answer	—

The United States Supreme Court was right in holding that officially prescribed prayer and Bible reading don't belong in the public schools.

Agree	73%
Disagree	22
Other	4
No answer	1

"Religion in the Public Schools," a statement of comment and counsel adopted by the 1984 general convention of the American Lutheran Church, says, in part: "Officially prescribed prayer and Bible reading exercises in the school are essentially devotional in character and constitute an offense to religious liberty. . . . Laws mandating 'voluntary' prayer in the pub-

These responses may not be representative of all readers who received questionnaires or of all readers of THE LUTHERAN STANDARD.

How do *your* answers compare with the answers of the readers who returned the questionnaire and offered their comments?

Public schools are unnecessary since truly voluntary prayer is now possible. Moreover, were the state to mandate such prayer, it would be no longer genuinely voluntary. . . . Devotional exercises to cultivate and nurture the religious faith of young people do not belong in the schools but in the home and the church.

Agree	83%	Other	3%
Disagree	12	No answer	2

People who are a majority in a community ought to have the right to have their beliefs taught in the public schools, no matter what other people think.

Agree	9%
Disagree	89
Other	1
No answer	1

Student Bible-study groups should have as much right to use school facilities before and after school and during free periods as drama, photography, or chess clubs.

Agree	69%
Disagree	25
Other	4
No answer	2

Secular humanism is running rampant in the public schools in my community.

Agree	18%
Disagree	62
Other	11
No answer	9

Most elementary, junior high, and senior high school teachers I've known share the values I hold most important in life.

Agree	71%
Disagree	15
Other	10
No answer	4

The author is correct when he says that "ours is a quiet form of the Christian faith" and that "we don't yell; we *do*."

Agree	81%
Disagree	7
Other	8
No answer	4



My views on church-state issues usually are closest to the positions of: The American Lutheran Church 87%

The American Lutheran Church	87%
American Civil Liberties Union	3
The Rev. Jerry Falwell	3
No answer, other	7

Comments of readers

We don't yell, we barely whisper. We do, but only after great urging! —*The Rev. Ray Korry, Alma, Wis.*

We don't yell; we don't *do*; but God loves us anyway. —*Name withheld, Brooklyn Park, Minn.*

My concern is that the author encourages the reader to blame one Christian group for creating the conflicts. I believe more emotionalism in our "quiet form of Christian faith" is desirable. We Lutheran Christians are usually too "lukewarm."
—Arnold Flessner, *Clarion*, Iowa

Hear! Hear! for Dr. Morris. We're tired of hearing all persons who disagree with some aspect of belief labeled "secular humanists." It makes it sound as if secular humanists are an organized club with a constitution and bylaws, dues, and meetings on alternate Wednesdays. Thanks for this well-reasoned article exposing this kind of thinking. —*Jon and Nancy Larsen, Minneapolis*

Bravo! Well written and to the point. I hope Morris's article wakes up some of the more apathetic members of the ALC.
—Name withheld, Fargo, N.D.

I am delighted and comforted to see an article such as this! And, as we pastors are often confronted with this type of attitude, perhaps an article on how to defend ourselves from such people who "know the truth" would prove helpful. —*The Rev. Conrad W. Grosenick, Evansville, Ind.*

I am not as concerned with this issue as I am with the far left position of the administration of the church. They speak for the church but in no way do they represent the people of the church. —*Name withheld, Fergus Falls, Minn.*

We do not feel threatened by people who testify to being born again, as Mr. Morris seems to feel. We feel a real spiritual kinship with them as fellow believers. —*Mr. and Mrs. Gerald R. Allen, Wheaton, Ill.*

As a former school-board member, I am well acquainted with the methods used by this type of "super Christian." We dealt

with several well-organized attempts to remove curricula and library materials from the public schools. These people do little more than promote intolerance and bigotry. —*Shirley Thompson, Lakeville, Minn.*

Since I spent most of my working years as a teacher/school principal, separation of church and state is very important to me. I believe most teachers feel the same way, but one must remember that others would use their positions in promoting certain Christian ethics or beliefs that would be objectionable to many. —*Roland Dain, Fennimore, Wis.*

I have been a Christian public school teacher in small towns in North Dakota for 28 years. I have never thought it was right for me to "teach" my religion in the classroom, but try to live my beliefs in and out of school, as eyes are always watching and ears listening. —*Lola Leir, McHenry, N.D.*

Separation of church and state was meant to keep any one religion from dominating. It was never meant to make of this country the atheist state it has become. —James Farnham, Robbinsdale, Minn.

We must work hard to understand the various other religions of the world. We know we are in a minority. Sometimes we are not even good ambassadors of our faith when we encounter people in other parts of the world. —Name withheld
Danbury, Wis.

I don't feel that religion should be taught in public schools. I do feel, however, that if a team wishes to have a prayer before a game or competition, they should be allowed to do so. —*Name withheld, Gays Mills, Wis.*

Every time the state, or a religious group, mandate anything it further removes personal responsibility. . . . I have never even considered asking a politician or preacher *when* where I can pray. Only I know! —*Linda Clement, Highmore, S.D.*

"I prayed whenever I wanted to in school, and I doubt if anybody else was even aware that I was praying."



I would have liked to have seen more of a positive character in the discussion. We oppose the demand for school prayer but we do so *because* we value prayer so highly. —*The Donald Schultz, Chisholm, Minn.*

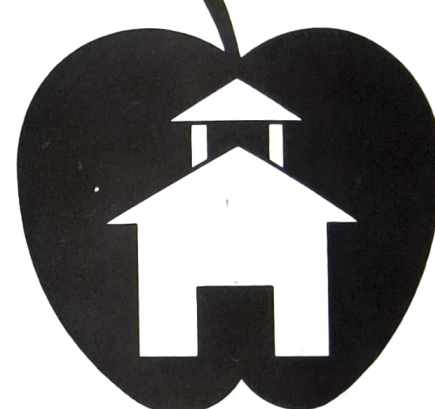
I prayed whenever I wanted to in school, and I doubt anybody else was ever aware that I was praying. I prayed during both classes and athletic events when I felt it necessary. My prayers were always done silently. —*Stan Timmerman, New Hampton, Iowa*

I trust the school system to teach my children moral values consistent with mine; but I will teach them their prayers.

have long disagreed with prayer before a sports banquet, for instance. It is so watered down as to be meaningless. Far better to give us one minute of silence to pray for ourselves.

Our schools are increasingly filling church times with athletics and other events, and teachers refuse to allow kids to play in games if they haven't attended practices. Coaches feel the game is more important than anything. —Name withheld, Island, Minn.

We have some strange teachers at this time. —Name withheld, Walcott, N.D.



The Rev. Jerry Falwell has become a pompous windbag, and he should not be allowed to say anything on politics, pornography, or be allowed to go to Washington, D.C., to be consulted on various subjects at the White House. —*Name withheld, Sparta, Wis.*

The Rev. Jerry Falwell is a jerk. —*Name withheld, Duluth, Minn.*

These so-called born-again Christians are acting like some of the people during the Salem witch hunts and trials. Many innocent people will be hurt because of this close-minded attitude. —Ross O. Smith, Ankeny, Iowa

While agreeing on church-state separation, I feel all religions—Christianity, Judaism, etc.—should receive equal attention in history classes. We should not deny the fact that this country was founded on fundamental principles such as freedom of religion. —Mrs. Ralph Petersen, Madison, N.J.

I agree that no one should inflict his beliefs on children in schools—and that prayers which offend no one may have no meaning. Silent prayer in school can never be outlawed.
—Lois Harrington, Circleville, Ohio

I would not want our school-age children led in prayer by someone whose religion I did not believe in. This could easily happen, simply because they were in a majority in a particular public school. But Christians should also respect the rights of those of other faiths not to feel compelled to join in prayer not of their faith. — *Gordon Hansen, Cedar Falls, Iowa*

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At one time, I was disquieted when the children in my kindergarten class could no longer "recite" a little prayer while having treats (it was reciting more than praying). After much soul-searching, I arrived at the conclusion that teaching about God and about prayer should be the responsibility of the church and the home. —Mrs. Joseph N. Basney, Barefoot Bay, Fla.

Schools should teach morality, integrity, and responsibility, but not religion as such. —Beverly Casey, Missoula, Mont.

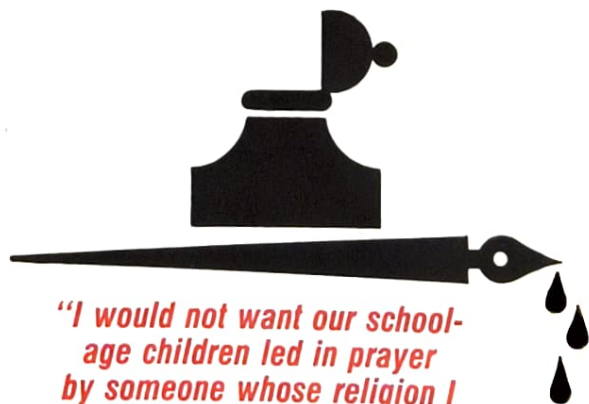
As a pastor, I have a greater problem with people who have had religion stuffed down their throats, as it were, than with those who have never heard the Word at all. . . . I would be very upset if I knew that someone was teaching my young people that infant baptism was a waste of time. —The Rev. Darryl Landsverk, Williston, N.D.

The misguided zeal of the born-again Christians is nothing short of a cancer growing very quickly within the mainstream churches. They do not wish to save the nonbeliever—they are too busy pulling down the faith of longtime Christians. —Tom Ragazinskas, Velva, N.D.

Humanistic teaching is not a much-discussed subject in our area. . . . However, Christian schools have sprung up in two area towns, which may tell you something. . . . Your paper is really opening up a can of worms, printing an article written by an associate dean of humanistic studies. —Name withheld, Underwood, Minn.

Secular humanism is running rampant in our communities and—I am afraid to say—in the church! —The Rev. Thomas A. Skrenes, Ishpeming, Mich.

I do not believe in a human-controlled God who is put into neat little boxes tied up with what some "Christians" think he should be or how he should act. Mine is a great God; theirs is a little god. —Name withheld, Canal Fulton, Ohio



"I would not want our school-age children led in prayer by someone whose religion I did not believe in. This could easily happen. . . ."

I would not want my child to be subjected to the prayers or "meditation" of someone whose beliefs were different from ours. . . . One of the greatest blessings God has bestowed on us is the freedom to think as we wish. As the old German folksong so aptly puts it: "And even if one locks me into dark prisons, it is all for naught, since my thoughts cross the barriers and tear the walls asunder: Thoughts are free!" —Name withheld, Ramsey, N.J.

At St. Mary's Church in Chicago:

GOD'S SPIRIT AT WORK

by Michelle Sanden Johlas

"I see an outpouring of the Holy Spirit," says the Rev. David Raben, assistant pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church, Ottawa, Illinois. "The story of the book of Acts is happening here at Trinity and in Humboldt Park."

What's happening is a growing partnership between Trinity and St. Mary's Lutheran Church in Humboldt Park, Illinois. These two congregations of the American Lutheran Church were brought together through the ALC's Mission Partners program, which enables established congregations to help newer ministries with money, supplies, and labor.



Members of Trinity Church recently pledged more than \$51,000 to retire the debt on St. Mary's all-in-one hall, church, education center, and food pantry. In addition, they deliver weekly collections of food and clothing to St. Mary's, about a 90-minute drive away. The congregations are planning several "people" exchanges, including the youth and women's groups, and several joint times of worship.

The pastor at St. Mary's, the Rev. Gary Mills, says the congregation appreciates the monetary gifts from Trinity Church and other Mission Partners, but money is not the most important part of those relationships.

"It's the food and clothing where people react the most," Mills says. "They're overjoyed to get those things, because that touches them where they are, where the congregation works in the community."

"I anticipate a personal relationship with Mission Partner congregations," Mills continues. "The money is just a very gracious gift."

Mills estimates that Trinity members deliver about 250 pounds of canned goods and five large boxes of clothing each week. St. Mary's runs a food pantry to

supply those in need "on an emergency, not sustenance basis." About 250 people use that service weekly; most are not members of the St. Mary's congregation.

The clothes shelf is open to "anybody in the city of Chicago," Mills says. He estimates that between 250 and 300 people a week get clothes from the congregation.

Evangelism tools

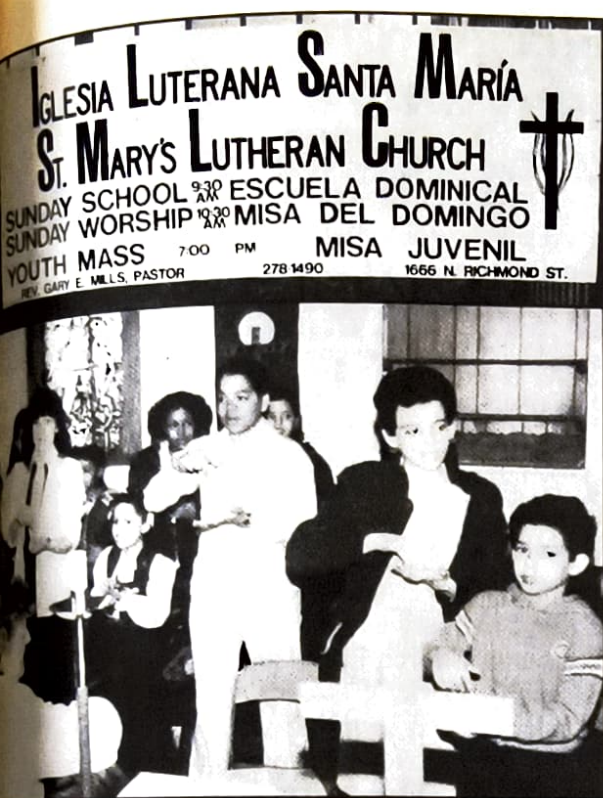
"Both the food pantry and the clothing shelf become evangelism tools for us," Mills says. "Many of our current members found out about us through these services."

Mills continues, "The Holy Spirit is really at work here, bringing people to church. St. Mary's Church is now seen as the center of this community. And our Mission Partners have helped that happen. Lay people in our Mission Partner congregations may have an easier time than clergy seeing and responding to the basic needs of people."

Trinity member Jim Boe, who chairs the "St. Mary's committee," says he and other members became interested in the Mission Partners program and Humboldt Park ministry at the 1985 Illinois District convention.

Boe says, "We paid off our education building at Trinity three or four years ago, and we needed a good project to fire us up. We were looking for something to keep our people excited and spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ."

It wasn't until Trinity members met with Dr. Don Johnson, the ALC's service-mission director for the area, that the partnership began. Last spring, Johnson and Illinois District Bishop Ehme Osterbur met with 12 debt-free congregations. They asked the congregations' representatives to consider giving a low-interest loan to one of several Mission Partner congregations to help reduce the debt on their parsonages. St. Mary's was on the list of potential recipients.



Students in St. Mary's Sunday school enjoy singing as part of their program. St. Mary's Church has become a stabilizing influence in the lives of its members and in the Humboldt Park area, where it's located.

The Trinity delegation approached Johnson after the meeting. "They said, 'We don't know if you're on the right track,'" Johnson recalls. " 'We just think our people—knowing the need—should be able to give the parsonage at Humboldt Park as a gift. Forget the loan.' " Johnson was delighted.

In early March 1986, Johnson received a check for \$51,750 from members of Trinity to pay off St. Mary's loan from the ALC's Church Extension Fund.

Trinity's senior pastor, the Rev. Gene Peisker, says

the Mission Partners program helps build many new relationships: between the congregations as units, between members of both churches, and between members of the same parish. He points out that Trinity and St. Mary's serve different kinds of people, and members are growing from that interaction.

Trinity Church serves the predominantly White, upper-middle-class population of Ottawa, a city of 16,000 people and LaSalle County seat. St. Mary's, on the other hand, ministers in an inner-city, multiracial, and multicultural setting. Humboldt Park has been called one of the country's toughest neighborhoods: In 1984, it had the nation's highest number of juvenile homicides per capita, 55 street gangs, and eight times the national average for unemployment. About 85% of the people in the neighborhood are unchurched.

Greater interest in outreach

Johnson says many Mission Partners gain greater interest in the church's outreach, often showing renewed enthusiasm for the work of the whole church.

Boe believes that is happening at Trinity. "St. Mary's is the mission we're involved in right now. We can see this kind of thing happening 60 miles away, and we know it's happening all over the world."

Raben adds, "As we get to know people and see how lives are changed by the gospel, we can become more sensitive to the mission taking place in the rest of the world. This partnership is a springboard." ■



Michelle Sanden Johlas is assistant editor of *The Lutheran Standard*.

One of many

Trinity Lutheran Church in Ottawa, Illinois, is only one of many Mission Partners congregations for St. Mary's Lutheran in Humboldt Park. According to the Rev. Gary Mills, pastor at St. Mary's, and Andrea Lee, national coordinator of the Mission Partners program, more than 40 other congregations help the Humboldt Park church.

Illinois District congregations in partnership with St. Mary's are: Zion—Lawndale, Chicago; Our Lord's, Chicago; Medill Ave-

nue, Chicago; First, Blue Island; Grace, Elmwood Park; Cross and Crown, Arlington Heights; Trinity—Laramie, Chicago; St. James, Western Springs; Grace, Westchester; Bethel, Chicago; St. Stephen, Midlothian; Grace, East Dubuque; Calvary, Lee; and Atonement, Chicago.

Congregations in Wisconsin are: Scandinavia—Farmington parish, Scandinavia; youth from Grace, Tomahawk; and Trinity, La Crosse. Minnesota congregations include: Our Redeemer's, Benson; St. Philip's, Minneapolis; Big Fork, Big Fork; and Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary, St. Paul.

Iowa congregations are: Vernon, Dows; First, Dows; Zion United, Clear Lake; and East Clermont, Clermont.

Other partner congregations with St.

Mary's are: Good Shepherd, Liberal, Kansas; Sheridan, Lincoln, and St. John, Beatrice, both in Nebraska; Zion, Spokane, Washington; Trinity, Brooklyn, New York; New Life, Grand Forks, and Peace, Fargo, both in North Dakota; Faith, Pierce, Idaho; First St. Paul, Burlington, Colorado; Christ, Whitefish, Montana; and Good Hope, Arlington, and Zoar, Perrysburg, both in Ohio.

Congregations of the Lutheran Church in America that are partners with St. Mary's are Trinity, Benson, Minnesota; and St. James, Norwood Park, Edgebrook, and Bethlehem, all in Chicago. St. Mary's also has received Mission Partner support from individuals, Guardian Insurance Company of Chicago, Chicago's 14th Precinct Police Department, and the U.S. Customs Service.

*When a congregation
dissolves, many share
the pain.*

"I DON'T WANT TO LEAVE MY CHURCH"

by Mark W. Pries

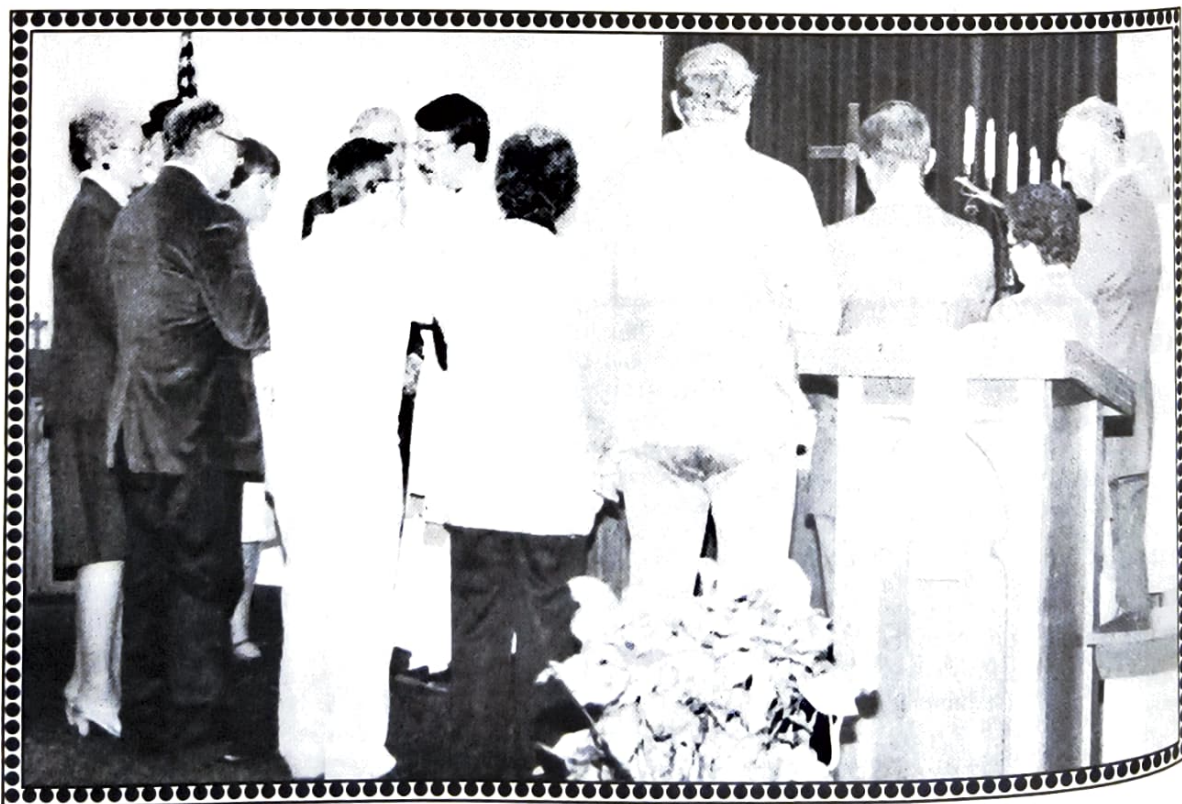
David often thinks about his family of faith at Salem Lutheran Church, an American Lutheran Church (ALC) congregation five miles south of Parkersburg, in north-central Iowa. David, who has Down's syndrome, has a gift for saying what he feels, while others often bury their feelings in their "maturity."

Fire destroyed Salem's building in 1955, before David was born. Some members said then that it was time to close. But most stayed, and the church was quickly rebuilt on the same site.

When a congregational meeting was held in 1968 to discuss improving the parsonage, many

members were surprised, at the meeting's conclusion to find themselves now "yoked" with Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Ackley, about 15 miles west. How the district president and representatives of the Ackley congregation happened to be present to encourage the yoke still remains a mystery to many Salem people. Salem had not been part of a two-parish since 1932. The fire of '55 and the yoking in '68 were harbingers, but David didn't know it.

The Salem congregation voted in June 1985 to dissolve the yoke. David, although 24 years old and a confirmed, communing, voting member, didn't say much. He needed time to sense what was happening.



Members commune for the last time in Salem Church with Pastor William Bentzinger, now of Belmond, Iowa, serving (left, front) Enola, Raymond, and David.

Raymond, David's father, was president of Salem. He presided at the meeting when the yoke was broken. He knew what David didn't: that the decision meant Salem would close.

Enola, David's mother, had been president of Salem's ALCW, active on committees of the ALC's District, committed to providing Sunday school for Salem's ever-fewer children, and determined to finish the Search Bible study series at Salem. She, too, knew that Salem would close by year's end.

Marilyn taught David's Sunday school class. She had longed for, and found, a caring, friendly Lutheran congregation. Like David, she had been happy at Salem. Now she knew she would have to find a new congregation in 1986.

Fannie, David's 84-year-old grandmother, had been baptized, confirmed, and married at Salem. There she had brought her children and had endured her husband's funeral. Fannie knew what David didn't: that no longer would she be able to sit in Salem's sanctuary and review her memories.

On October 13, 1985, after much deliberation, the members of Salem voted to "merge" with Bethel Lutheran Church in Parkersburg. The decision really meant that Salem would be absorbed by Bethel. Now David started to sense the sadness and frustration of being without his church. Other members were trying to make the best of things by talking about the "mission of the church." But David wasn't ready for that.

When Bethel's pastor came to Salem to preach one Sunday in November, most Salem members agreed it was a good idea, because it would help people get acquainted with their new pastor. But Pastor Bill wasn't preaching. David didn't like that, so he walked out of the sanctuary during the sermon. After worship, Raymond and Enola encouraged David to shake the preacher's hand. David, through his tears, said, "I don't want to leave my church."

A question mark

On Thanksgiving eve members of both congregations gathered at Salem for a joint service. The singing was thankful, but to the Salem people, each phrase seemed to end with a question mark. Bethel's pastor preached about the 10 lepers at the side of the road. The Salem people felt like lepers at the side of State Highway 14. With the other worshippers, David pleaded, "Lord, have mercy on us!"

The last Sunday of 1985 would also be the last day of worship at Salem. The day was billed as one of thanksgiving and praise for 92 years of Word and sacrament ministry, but the potluck before the closing service resembled a funeral luncheon. David filled his plate, then ate slowly and silently, ignoring all who tried to cheer him.

Pastor Bill preached about "living stones" at the closing worship. Chancel furnishings and appointments would be given to Bremwood Lutheran Children's Home, a facility in Waverly, Iowa, that serves emotionally troubled teenagers. Membership records were turned over to Bethel's pastor, as a sign that Bethel would care for the people of Salem. David was hurting. He stayed, but he couldn't watch.

On the first Sunday of this year, the people of Salem became Bethel's newest members. For 40 years, from 1892 until 1932, the congregations had intermittently shared pastors. Now they shared a pastor, a building, programs, and a name.

A planned car caravan from Salem to Bethel was canceled because of a snowstorm. Salem's bell wouldn't be brought to Bethel until spring. Salem's pulpit Bible would have to be a sufficient symbol for all to see that the people of Salem had come to a new place.

Felt strange

David didn't have "his seat" at Bethel. He felt strange in this bigger place filled with strangers singing an unfamiliar liturgy. But he stayed. He went to the high school class and to the potluck. He is finding his place, making friends, learning new melodies, and beginning again.

Meanwhile, ALC national executives, the district president, Raymond, Fannie, Marilyn, and the other members of Bethel are struggling to resolve the remaining Salem matters. An auction of some of the church's effects brought enough money to make some necessary improvements at Salem Cemetery. A lawyer is working to free Salem's building from the perpetual land lease signed in 1892, so it can be moved to Bremwood in Waverly to be used as a chapel. Bethel's pastor is busy updating records, helping the Salem people get involved in the life of their new congregation, and helping all members of Bethel renew their focus on mission.

David still doesn't know all that is happening. He only wants to listen, to sing, to smile, and to be God's child where he is. But for David, the mission of the church is more than new buildings, new programs, new members, and new endeavors. God is doing mission in David, whose tears, smiles, hugs, and handshakes speak for the people that once were Salem and now are Bethel. ■



Mark Pries is pastor of Bethel Lutheran Church in Parkersburg, Iowa.

Lutherans are working
through education and health care
for peace in the Middle East.

WE ARE HELPING

by Jennifer Norris Peterson

Abed Ibrahim returns from lunch, walking down a sunlit road on the Mount of Olives. Using a lightweight pole, he quickly finds his way up the steps to the workshop where he is employed six days a week. He unlocks the door and heads down the hallway to the room where he will spend the afternoon making laundry baskets. The basket reeds soon begin to fly under his fingers.

Ibrahim is blind and has only one hand. Before joining the workshop, sponsored by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), he could not find a job. He has logged 11 years in the workshop, and seven years ago he married. Now he has two daughters and a son. "Without this job, I could not make my family survive," he explains.

Haigush Aharonian, a Lutheran World Service supervisor in Jerusalem, says persons with disabilities often do not feel accepted in the Middle East. "Most blind persons were sitting idle, and many people viewed them as a burden to society," she claims. "But LWF was a pioneer in the field of starting sheltered workshops for them. We provide the raw material, and they provide the will and the labor to become self-supporting citizens."

In 1968 LWF established workshops that now employ 20 blind persons. LWF provides facilities and equipment, and the revenue from the products provides salaries for the workers. Sales of brushes, cane products, and floor mats in 1983 reached \$70,000.

During first Arab-Israeli war

LWF's presence on the West Bank stems from the efforts of the Rev. Edwin Moll, a pastor on sabbatical in the Middle East in 1948. Moll saw the plight of Palestinian refugees during the first Arab-Israeli war. The initial work, which Moll considered a temporary response to an emergency that would be resolved in a few weeks, has expanded to include the operation of Augusta Victoria Hospital, eight village health centers,

a vocational training center, and a scholarship program in addition to the sheltered workshops.

View of Jerusalem

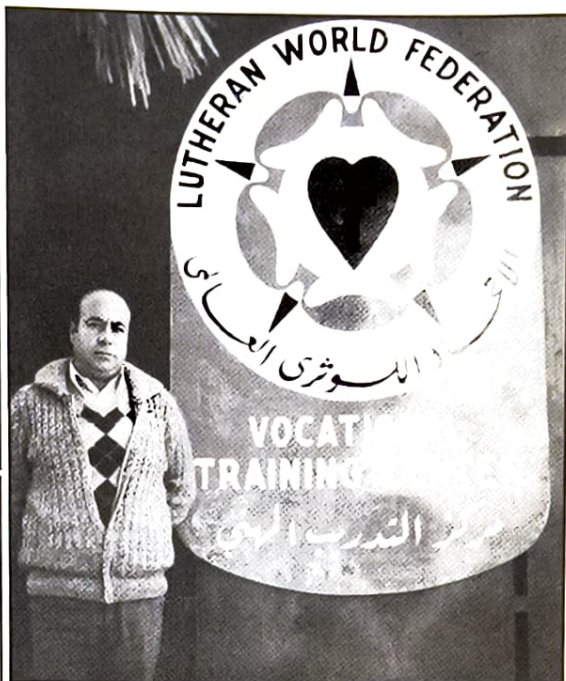
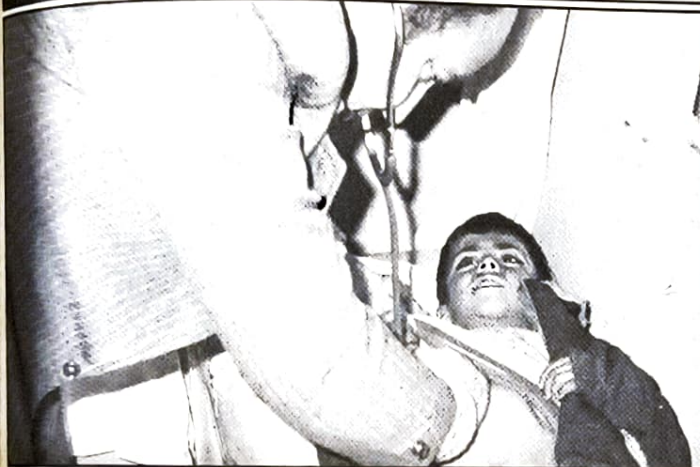
A massive stone structure, originally dedicated to Kaiser Wilhelm in 1910 as a hostel for pilgrims, sits up from the Mount of Olives and commands a view of Jerusalem. There LWF, in partnership with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), operates Augusta Victoria Hospital. This hospital, which each year serves about 25,000 inpatients and outpatients plus another 20,000 patients through the village health centers, is the backbone of medical care facilities for Palestinian refugees in Jerusalem and the West Bank. Departments include surgery, internal medicine, gynecology, and pediatrics.

Other area hospitals provide medical care to patients with health insurance, but few Arabs on the West Bank carry insurance due to its high cost. Without the services extended by Augusta Victoria Hospital and the village health centers, medical care would be beyond the financial reach of many families.

The village health project, a community outreach endeavor of Augusta Victoria Hospital, offers a range of health services in villages that previously had no such care available. The aim is to provide preventive care to Arab children, pregnant women, and breast-feeding mothers in 26 villages. Each day two medical teams comprised of a doctor, nurse, baby nurse, and medical dispenser, travel to designated West Bank locations where hours for service have been established.

Ahmad Nassar, who directs the village health program, describes the pilot project in Qibiya in 1978. "We approached the mukhtars [village leaders who also have legal responsibilities] for a facility, believing it was important not to give the villages everything for free. We wanted to teach them to depend on themselves."

The building offered by the mukhtars had previously been a clinic, but for the last four years it had been



Lutheran World Federation offers a wide range of services to West Bank residents, ranging from health care to vocational training. A metalworking student (clockwise from top) receives "hands on" experience at the LWF Training Center in Beit Hanina. Michel Grietern, shown by the center's entrance, supervises the school's 140 students. Dr. Yosef Hamad, a member of the LWF village health team, examines a young patient with bronchitis. He remembers seeing many cases of malnutrition but adds the staff sees much less of it now.

animals. The mukhtars agreed to prepare doors and windows, and LWF provided the necessary equipment and staff for the clinic. In the new facility, staff members weigh patients, take their temperature and blood pressure, and interview them about their medical history. These preventive practices were not possible in the mobile clinics that LWF previously operated, where people waited outside in the road for medicine.

Volunteer labor

The idea spread, and representatives of other villages came to LWF to request permanent health facilities. Nassar says his response was, "If you want a health center, I want a building." Some villages built new facilities, using volunteer labor. Within three years, eight centers were in operation, providing care for 20,000 patients annually. The mobile clinics were phased out.

Nassar believes great progress has been made in the 15 years since the health centers opened. "We had a hard time convincing mothers to have their babies vaccinated," he says, "but now they know when babies should be vaccinated, and they want this done. They resisted having their babies weighed, saying, 'Our grandparents were never weighed.' But now they want their babies weighed, even if they are not sick."

A midwife, who accompanies the medical team on

a rotating basis, advises pregnant women about proper nutrition and encourages them to go to a hospital for delivery (not Augusta Victoria, since it has no obstetrics department). According to Nassar: "The word *hospital* used to seem dangerous to them. They thought people went there only to die. But after many years of teaching and explaining, they go there now."

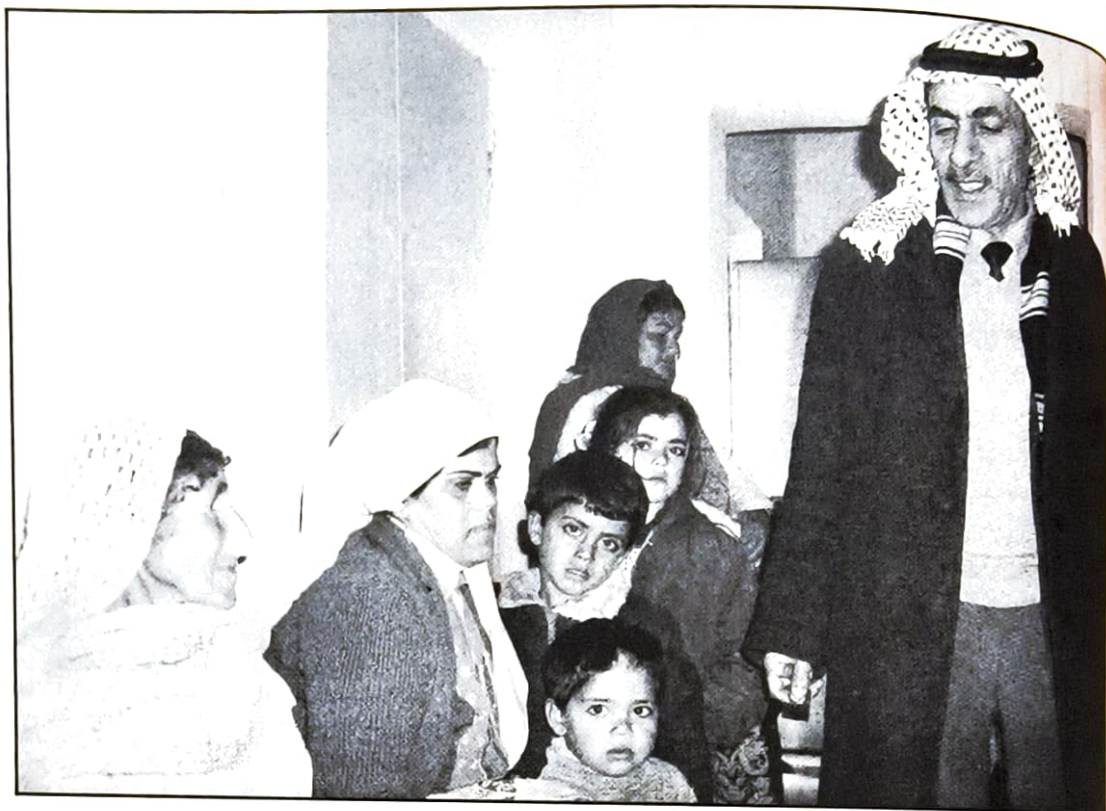
He explains that the most important thing is to gain the people's confidence. "If they have no confidence in us, they will listen but not follow our advice. But after a time, they see that we are helping them. I tell the staff to have patience and not give up if the people don't follow their instructions immediately."

Balanced diet

The staff has witnessed a dramatic improvement in health standards. Dr. Yosef Hamad, a doctor on one of LWF's village health teams, remembers seeing many cases of malnutrition, but adds, "We see much less of it now." The staff shows people how to maintain a balanced diet and teaches mothers to give supplementary feedings to underweight babies. They emphasize teaching people to help themselves. The team has trained some of the local women, for example, to give first aid and administer injections.

Providing medical care in these rural communities with no electricity is not easy. "Our work," Hamad says,

Ahmad Nassar, director of LWF's village health program on the West Bank, wants to teach the people to depend on themselves.



"consists of meeting the most necessary needs." But more than improved facilities, he wishes for an increased supply of medicine. The staff members purchase medicine for use in the health centers, but they also rely on donated medicines.

But the staff, despite the lack of sophisticated equipment, has gained the confidence of the people. Villagers come from miles around, on foot or on donkeys, winding their way across the rocky hills, to receive the health care LWF offers.

Vocational training

In Beit Hanina, a town on the outskirts of Jerusalem, LWF provides a different kind of service. There LWF operates a vocational training center for 140 "needy and academically qualified students" who study auto mechanics, carpentry, or metalwork over a three-year period.

About 50 students are accepted into the program each year from among about 350 applicants. Some live on campus; others commute. Each week they attend 45 hours of classes, divided into 17 hours of theoretical and 28 hours of practical education. Classes include physics, chemistry, Bible, math, history, English, Arabic, and trade history.

According to Musa Qirry, a teacher at the center for more than 20 years, "the aim of the school is to help people to get a living so they can help their families." He points out that other centers in the area focus more on theoretical questions, "but here students take measurements to figure out how much material they

need to order before executing a project. They use their hands and minds at the same time."

During 1983 the training center collected \$98,370 in income, including school fees of about \$210 per student. Customers pay for work completed at the center, such as car repairs.

LWF also has a scholarship program for university students from the West Bank and Gaza. Approximately 60 students receive aid each year. Priority is given to candidates from the neediest families. The aid is given on a 50% loan-50% grant basis. Scholarship recipients may choose their course of study. According to Haigush Aharonian, "The successful ones generally have their minds set on studying prestigious subjects—law, English, or medicine—irrespective of the needs of the region." Because of a saturation of qualified students in these areas, she encourages students to consider other subjects, which may lead to better chances of local employment.

During 35 years of service in Jerusalem and the West Bank, LWF has gained the trust and appreciation of the Arab people. They look to LWF for a wide range of services that offer hope in a region dominated by conflict. ■



Jennifer Peterson is communications director for the ALC's Commitment to Mission program.

Prayer requires honesty

by Pamela Fletcher

The way I pray changes as constantly as I myself change. As a child, I used prayers my mother taught me. As I grew older, I began praying my own prayers.

In the last months, these prayers have had three parts: worship, confession, and intercession. All three together make for a lengthy prayer, and when I pray honestly, much energy is used. But I come away with peace and confidence in God, and that is worth all my time and effort.

The first part of my prayers is worship, because before I can concentrate and pray sincerely, I need to remember why I believe the poor man from Nazareth is God and why he is everything to me. Often the way I go about this is to sing to God, making up melody and words as I go. God doesn't mind when the tune wavers, my voice cracks, and the words are somewhat less than poetic.

Once I know again who God is, the second part of my prayer comes naturally: confession. By this time, I've remembered how unlike God I am. Until I confess this and receive forgiveness, I'm incapable of addressing God with any confidence, let alone intimacy.

After confession, the next part is intercession, for myself and for others. The thought of intercession often dismays me. I complain to God, "There's too much to pray for!" But when I come to intercession after worship and confession, my attitude is different. I understand then that though I cannot pray for everything, the prayers I do offer will be heard and actually will make a difference in the world.

Honesty is crucial

My prayers are not always this orderly. Ultimately, their degree of orderliness is not what I consider most important, though it's certainly helpful. Honesty is the most crucial aspect of my prayer life.

If I am not honest with God when I pray, if I am not willing to tell my Lord



HOW I pray

exactly what I think and exactly how I feel, then I build a wall between us. The wall tells God to go away when he wants to be invited in. The wall hurts God; the wall hurts me.

What enables me to pray honestly to God is my understanding of his character. I know God to be powerful, compassionate, and loving, a God who suffers with all in the world who suffer. This knowledge gives me the assurance that even I am precious to God and that it matters to the ruler of the universe if I pray or don't pray.

Throughout my short life, there have been several turning points in my coming to terms with God's character. Certainly the most important was the day I went from liking Jesus to loving him madly!

Dancing my praise

Another significant turning point was the night I tried dancing as a way to praise God. Slowly, as I danced, I was filled with certainty that God was watching and was pleased to watch me dance for him alone. I knew then that I was beautiful and precious to God simply because I loved and worshiped him.

When I pray now, remembering this—and of course remembering Jesus—helps me to pray with honesty and assurance. Then I pray to God the Parent, and even to God the Divine Lover and Spouse.

I have prayed silently, out loud, by singing, by dancing. I also have prayed by writing my prayers. For me, I am most honest when I write. If I'm angry at God, I write that; if I'm confused and frightened, I write that; if I'm joyful, I write that.

In the end, perhaps the question we should ask is not *how* we pray, but *why* we pray. I encourage everyone to pray because God considers each one of us absolutely precious and is always delighted to hear from us. And if we have to begin by saying that we're mad at God, let's do it! God will still be overjoyed to hear from us because such honest communication is much better than our silence that rejects him. ■



Pamela Fletcher is a May graduate of Scripps College, Claremont, Calif. She is a member of Sierra Evangelical Lutheran Church in her hometown, Sierra Vista, Ariz. She was one of the writers for Faith Prints (Augsburg, 1985), a devotional book for youth.

I THINK



TRANSITION:

"I could no longer deal with her condition, but I could still give to others."

by Dorothy Jentoft

My mother, Thora Paulsen, died last month. I loved her very much, but I couldn't visit her in the nursing home every day or even every week. It wasn't that I didn't have time—I could find time. It was because I could no longer deal with her condition.

She was 82 years old when she died, and for the past few years she had been steadily declining, both mentally and physically. Before she came to live in our home, she lived 400 miles from us. During the last year she lived independently, we visited her every two or three months to check her condition. We let her maintain her independence as long as possible. When the time came, she was ready to move in with us.

It is difficult to watch your parent lose her independence, and to switch from being your mother's daughter to being a mother to her. While my mother was living with us, I worked through many of my own feelings and helped Mom work through hers. Our Lord helped me through the transition, usually with only my plea of "Help me, Lord!"

My mother lived with us for eight months. It was a difficult time. We watched her deteriorate mentally—and discovered that senility alone did not make her eligible for county-paid nursing home care.

In August 1985, my mother stepped up one step, broke her hip, and fell—yes, in that order. It was explained to me that as people grow older and their bones become brittle, it's not uncommon to break a hip, *then* fall.

Blessing in disguise

Mother's accident was a blessing in disguise. No, I don't believe that God caused it to happen. But I believe he allowed it to happen so that matters could progress in an orderly fashion. The night I left Mom in the hospital, I was overwhelmed by a sense of relief that someone else was now caring for her.

When a parent dies suddenly, you cope with instant grief. When your parent dies slowly, the griev-

ing is prolonged. My grieving started when my mother's personality began to change and she became a stranger to me. She was still my mom physically, the mom I loved, enjoyed, laughed with, and sometimes got angry with was gone. When I visited her she seldom seemed to recognize me. That hurt—a lot!

The nursing home was full of old people like my mom. I quickly noticed that there were few visitors to that wing. People are quick to say that no one cares—and I probably had said that myself. But there is a reason so few people visit the residents in that wing. Sometimes you can cope with only so much, then someone else has to take over. Thankfully, quality nursing home care was available (in our situation, at least), and there were special people who gave the care my mom needed.

I couldn't visit my mom very often in the last few months of her life, but I could visit the shut-in next door. I could still give to others in my community and where I work. I was thankful that God could still use me to love and care for others.

My giving to my mom was coming to an end. I trusted the people in the nursing home to take care of her. Turning her over to them had been heart-wrenching. But I knew I was also turning her over to our Lord. His loving arms were around her, and when her body finally gave out altogether, I knew that he had carried her to a far better place, where she is whole again. ■

Dorothy Jentoft lives in Beloit, Wis., where she is parish secretary at St. Paul's Episcopal Church and a member of Our Savior's Lutheran Church.



LETTERS

Catholic' in the Creeds

Wyle R. Darnauer
Huber Heights, Ohio

As a pastor who year after year has to explain, teach, and continually interpret the word "catholic" not only to confirmation classes, but also to adult Lutherans, I am disturbed and unhappy over Lutheran bureaucrats insisting on the use of this word (April 4, p. 7). Surely, if we want the concept in our Creeds we can do better than use a confusing word.

It further puzzles me when our leaders refuse to use the word "inerrant" in the new ELCA constitution "because it is a confusing word, given to much misunderstanding." In addition, we are using the word "inspired" when this word has at least seven different meanings. It is clear that Lutheran theologians do not mean what the typical Lutheran layperson means by the word. One can only wonder what the "hidden agenda" of our leaders is, when they are so careful about "straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel."

Judy Milleville Stroble
Cardington, Ohio

For the umpteenth time, somebody is trying to explain the meaning of the word "catholic." My pastor explained this to me in our catechism classes 50 years ago. We know what it means, and we still prefer the word "Christian." It's a good word, it's self-explanatory, and it's even used in the Bible.

My French-Huguenot ancestors left France after the bloody St. Bartholomew's massacre by this not-so-holy Catholic church. Let's not always present the Lutherans as the bad guys.

Ben S. Parker
Port Ludlow, Wash.

Why wouldn't a simple transposition of words solve the problem, making it read, "... the holy church catholic"? The meaning would be the same—only the words defused.

Ralph L. Sundin
Citrus Heights, Calif.

A helpful word? Not by my definition of the word "helpful." Pastor Schlichting's article sounds more like he is trying to rationalize the use of the word "catholic." Whether you use a large or small "c," the connotation is universal in denoting a Roman Catholic, not Christians at large. Playing games with a common word as to it being a noun or an adjective does not change its long-standing meaning to the masses.

Dee Wallevand
Paradise, Calif.

I had a hard time saying "catholic" when I said the Apostles' Creed, but Pastor Schlichting's article helped me understand it and now I feel comfortable saying it.

Music videos

Sara S. Villarreal
Racine, Wis.

I am writing because of my concern over the issue of music videos (April 4, p. 9). I am 16 years old, and my parents have not allowed a television in the household since my little sister was born in 1973. I have grown up as an avid reader of many types of books and a writer also. Their [our parents'] purpose was to keep the corruption away from my little sister and myself. Unfortunately, the only way to do that would be to lock us in [our] rooms.

My sister and I are both what would be called popular, and we enjoy friends of every kind. Therefore, we have had the opportunity to watch television. We have seen MTV. What the people who have decided that videos are sinful have not taken into reckoning is that many people turn on MTV as a radio and don't watch it.

Eirene Tatham
Olathe, Kan.

I do agree with some points the author mentioned. The majority of music videos do promote sex, drugs, violence, and in some rare cases, satanism or the occult. These are videos that should be banned or redone to please members of the Moral Majority as well as the general public.

As for mentioning Tears for Fears and David Bowie, the author was somewhat mistaken. On Tears for Fears's first album, there is a song that describes today's society—"Mad World." It describes what it's like when no one cares for anyone but themselves. This is an example of a type of song that gets little airplay on MTV, but when it does it has a lot to say.

Grieving at funerals

Helen Kronberger
Auburn, Calif.

I, too, joined in the "joyous celebration" of my late husband's death and funeral, but never felt quite right about it [March 21, p. 16]. It is a terrible blow to have been beside a person so many years here on this earth, and then suddenly that person is cut off from your life. Of course we can do our grieving in private. We all do that, but what's wrong with grieving in public?

Richard Bansemer
Rural Retreat, Va.

Pastor Romstad said in his "I Think" article that "without the free expression of grief, a funeral can easily become an exercise in denial." So true. However, his solution for a "return to sadness" runs the greater danger in Christian worship of exercising the denial of Easter. What we have to accomplish is both grief and celebration—a smile on the face with tears on the cheeks.

New Lutheran church matters

Henry C. Jespersen
Fairbanks, Alaska

Personally, I am very excited about the new church and its possibilities. To be formally joined by our brothers and sisters in the Lutheran Church in America and Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, to pool ideas, resources, and community talents is exciting. In a nation that is increasingly non-Christian, there is enormous strength in joining and sharing.

The words of the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians are very clear that doctrinal "purity" must be secondary to love for our sisters and brothers. Being right is not everything. Loving our Lord and attempting to live out that love in our daily lives is.

Jon R. Haack
Austin, Tex.

CNLC members have shown concern for many viewpoints in their revision of statements on ministry and faith. These are examples of attempts to include diverse views of many believers in the new church's documents. All of us would do well to remember that our own particular view or position may not, in fact, grab the big show's spotlight.

Karl H. Hertz
Springfield, Ohio

Quotas are necessary because the White male clergy leadership of the church (with a few exceptions) lacks credibility. I don't like quotas, but I must accept quotas because I need the Law in my life to help me move toward faithfulness.

Bruce S. Sheppard
Minneapolis, Minn.

You will never get a new Lutheran church that will totally please everyone, but if we remember that what we share—the gospel and our Lutheran traditions—compels us to be together, any problems we may have with the outcome will become secondary.

Native Americans in South Dakota

Mrs. Ervin H. Dieterich
St. Ansgar, Iowa

I do hope your article about the South Dakota Indian situation [Feb. 21, p. 13] jars the American Lutheran Church into being active in helping our Native Americans with food, clothing, and education to help them become self-supporting. This would require technical training and possibly the establishment of some cottage industries. I have been perturbed at the church's emphasis on world hunger drives when we have thousands of destitute and needy persons in our country. I'm not against world hunger projects, but I strongly feel we are neglecting our own needy.

NEWSFRONT

Will ALC hunger appeal dollars be tapped for community and economic development?

- **ALC Church Council to hear request**
- **Plan to use ALC pension funds for development purposes shelved**

The Church Council of the American Lutheran Church is receiving a request this month to authorize the spending of ALC Hunger Appeal monies for economic development projects in poverty communities.

The request follows a recommendation from the April 4 meeting of the church's inter-unit work group on community and economic development. The work group was appointed by the Church Council last year to explore recommendations "concerning structural change, policy study, and budget considerations" around potential ALC economic and community-development action.

Either \$250,000 or 5% of 1986 Hunger Appeal receipts, whichever is larger, is requested "for hunger-related community-development projects in 1987 through the Division for Service and Mission in America (DSMA)." The action, if approved, would instruct the division to "consult with leadership of the Coalition of Black Members (CBM) and staff of the Office of Church in Society (OCS) in implementation of this plan."

Invest in mission

A plan by the work group to use ALC pension funds for economic development in poverty communities was put aside. The proposal, "Using Investments to Fulfill Mission," intended for submission to the ALC Church Council, was shelved for future use as background for a paper on community and economic development as part of the mission of the church.

The group reviewed the first draft of the proposal at its January meeting. The draft was under revision when ALC Presiding Bishop David Preus in-

tervened, calling a meeting of the directors of the ALC Board of Trustees, Board of Pensions, OCS, and DSMA to discuss the "first-class disagreement" about the use of pension funds for economic development projects.

Expressing his belief that putting forth a proposal over which staff are "militantly divided" would be irresponsible and would disrupt the council, Preus asked the group to drop the issue. He said he saw no way for the proposal "to be effective in the remaining life of this church."

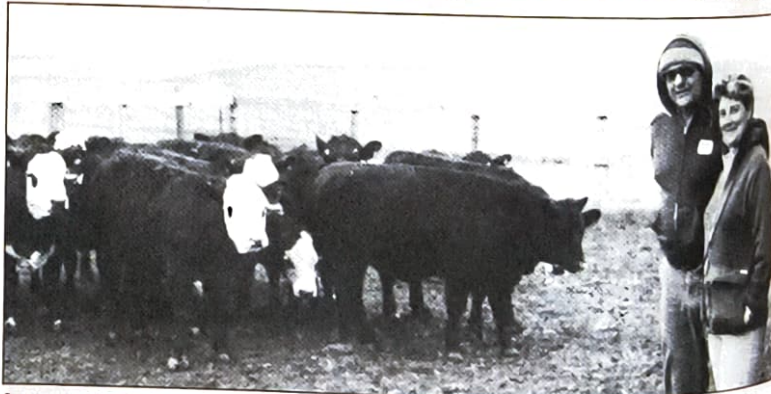
The work group—looking ahead to the proposed new church—stated its position on the subject in a resolution moved by the Rev. Theodore L. Menter, Port Huron, Mich., a member of the Board of Pensions: "The work group . . . affirms that community and economic development is part of the mission of the church and understands that the investment of funds of the church may be made in ventures oriented to-

ward community and economic development to aid low-income people both rural and urban settings in the United States, whenever such investment can be done with prudent requirements for beneficiaries' rights and legal requirements."

CBM President Athornia S. member of the work group, acknowledging the short timetable, said, "I remain steadfastly in favor of the approach [of using investment funds]." He went on to affirm his belief that "alternatives are there to provide good return and social investment."

Charles Bachman, manager of administrative services for the Board of Trustees, disagreed. He explained, "Despite reports that pension and investment funds can be securely and profitably used for community development, the position of the Board of Trustees is [its] Investment Committee is skeptical that they don't believe it's true."

Calves for Commitment



Iowans blend centennial, commitment to mission

Fourteen members of Salem Lutheran Church, a congregation of the American Lutheran Church in Correctionville, Iowa, have purchased 14 feeder calves—at about \$300 each—as a way to celebrate the congregation's centennial and to respond to the challenge of the ALC's Commitment to Mission program. Larry and Lynda Winn (pictured) care for the animals in their feedlot. Proceeds from the project are estimated to be \$8000, which will be given to a Mission Partner congregation in Iowa during Salem's centennial service, Aug. 2, 1987. Richard A. Thompson, Commitment to Mission director in the Iowa District, applauded the project and said: "Here is an open-country parish approaching the challenge with great creativity."

ALC district — LCA synod concerns tallied

The chart below summarizes key new-church resolutions submitted to district conventions of the American Lutheran Church and synod conventions of the Lutheran Church in America held prior to deadlines for this issue.

Stories on 10 ALC district conventions—summarized in the chart—are found on pages 26–32. Reports on five earlier ALC district conventions can be found on pages 25–27 of the May 2 issue of THE LUTHERAN STANDARD.

ALC Districts

LCA Synods

	N. Wis.	Ill.	S.E. Minn.	E.N. Dak.	W.N. Dak.	S.W. Minn.	Iowa	Ohio	South- ern	N. Pac.	Central	South- eastern	Eastern	S. Pac.	S. Wis.	ALC TOTAL	Mich.	Tex.- La.	Pac. N.W.	Iowa	South- eastern	Fla.	LCA TOTAL
Adopt Jan. 1, 1988 start-up date					•	•	•						•	•		5	•	•		•	•		4
Open quota system		•	•				•					•		•		5	•			•	•		3
Against quota system	•			•	•	•			•		•		•			7		•					1
Use Milwaukee national offices	•														•	2							—
Reconsider Milwaukee		•	•							•	•		•	•		6					•	•	2
Racial concerns		•	•		•			•		•	•				•	7							—
Non-discriminatory salary and/or pension contributions	•	•	•				•		•	•			•		•	8							—
Voting rights for retired clergy																—	•	•	•		•	•	5
Women's commission/organization				•			•		•				•		•	5		•					—
Authority of Scripture	•						•	•	•						•	5		•					1
Congregational authority	•	•		•		•	•		•			•	•		•	9	•	•					2
Termination of congregational membership/property ownership		•					•		•				•	•		5							—

New-church budget, executive staff planned

The projected amount of the 1988 budget for the proposed church looks large. But the tasks assigned to that new structure are even larger. This became clear last month in a meeting of planners from the three uniting churches.

They were told that about \$109 million will be available for the churchwide program.

But initial requests for the divisions, offices, and commissions came to some \$144 million, a figure pared to about \$124 million in three days of deliberation. Further cuts will be made later.

Planners estimate that \$82,723,000 will come from the 11,000 congregations of the proposed church. Another \$35 million is expected in "designated funds" for hunger programs, overseas missionary support, and other activities. And \$1.1 million is anticipated from other sources.

Of this income, \$10 million is set aside in a "flexibility fund" to cover relocation costs for staff, new programs that the church may establish, possible errors in income and expenditure projections, and related needs.

Top executives for the proposed

new church will be chosen in March 1987 by the 10-member Transition Team of the three uniting churches, if this plan is approved at the August church-body conventions.

These executives will be chosen from a panel of candidates presented by the team's recruitment and interview committee.

To provide balance

This plan, suggested by Dr. Reuben Swanson, secretary of the Lutheran Church in America, will allow the Transition Team to make sure the new church's executive cabinet is balanced and includes a fair ratio of persons from the uniting church bodies.

The Transition Team includes the three churchwide bishops and seven other persons.

To be chosen by the team are the heads of the divisions, commissions, offices, pension and publishing programs, and the church's periodical.

This plan, Swanson says, will assure some continuity in church staffing and will allow time for churchwide staff to make plans to continue working in the new church or seek other employment.

Day of Prayer for S. Africa

Congregations of the American Lutheran Church have been encouraged by the World Council of Churches and the Lutheran World Federation to recall the tenth anniversary of the Soweto massacre, in which over 500 persons died at the hands of South African police.

Observance of the day of fasting, remembrance, prayer, and commitment for justice and peace in South Africa is recommended for June 15 or 16. C. F. Beyers Naude, general secretary of the South African Council of Churches, said the purpose of the day is to pray that "the present unjust rule of apartheid [in South Africa] be brought to an end, [and] that apartheid and racism in all its forms in all countries of the world be removed and destroyed."

Under this proposal, other executive staff will be picked by the executive directors for approval by the new church's boards.

Heartland farmers: 'Hope lightens load'

"If they take our hogs, can they come and take our house and our parents, too?"

"I can't think of one thing I can do to save the farm."

"Every day for three months, this farmer would start his day by going to the top of the hill to look out over the farmland he used to own."

"I would stand at one of our living room windows at 3 A.M., looking out into the darkness, wondering how I could pay the \$320-per-day interest on our farm loans."

Speakers at the "Hope in the Heartland" conference shared these true-life glimpses into the fractured lives of many of today's farmers. The nearly 70 participants who gathered in Des Moines, Iowa, April 2-4, included members of the American Lutheran Church (ALC), Lutheran Church in America (LCA), and Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS). Six persons—two from each church body—were invited by bishops from the nine midwestern states to continue shaping the churches' response to the rural crisis.

The churches' representatives heard time and time



Symbol of hope

again that response to what was going on in rural America had to be shaped by the word hope, and that churches could not only bring the message, but in many situations already were. Some farmers present at the conference had walked through the valley of the shadow of foreclosure and gave testimony to the power of hope

to sustain the people of God.

But participants were reminded of the many farmers still in the valley. Joan Blundall, director of consultation and education at North West Iowa Mental Health Center, Spencer, Iowa, said when she was home ill two-and-a-half days in March, she received 91 calls that related to persons in need.

University of Minnesota rural sociologist Dr. James Krile spoke about the future of farming from the perspective of values. He noted the growing dislocation of many agrarian values in America, such as "those who work hard will be successful."

Said one participant: "In some ways we have lost a series of values and are having trouble finding acceptable replacement values." Said another: "We need to help people construct another image built from faith and other values." But participants came back to the tough *how* question time and time again.

Arnold Stuthman, a farmer who recently faced foreclosure and member of Christ Lutheran Church (LCMS), Columbus, Neb., said he sat down at the kitchen table with his family to decide what was most im-



Iowa caucus in heartland

Dr. L. David Brown (pictured left), listens to a concern of the Rev. David Hoover, a pastor of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) from Cedar Rapids, as the Rev. Thomas Wink (pictured center), an LCMS pastor from Sac City, listens. The three participated in the Iowa work group during the "Hope in the Heartland" conference.

portant, and they concluded that God, health, and family were, without question. They determined what to sell off, and did. He said things have turned around and that he had "never had a better year than last year." Said Stuthman: "The Lord gave us the tools to get through it."

His experience is one heard time and time again by Bishop L. David Brown of the ALC's Iowa District. Said Brown: "Those going through the ag crisis have found a sense of God's presence in their lives." He noted that while the Iowa economy is suffering, church giving has increased. "People have reordered their priorities."

Merle Boos, LCA director of town and country ministry, encouraged farmers to push the church for help. "The church is filled with resources," he said.

What can congregations do to respond? Resource persons indicated the importance of informal networks of support, such as extended family and friends from congregations. Pastoral calls in homes of farm families were termed "a must," as well as the pastors' role in charting some constancy amid the many changes buffeting farmers. Rural pastors were urged to give members large doses of tradition and ritual. Warned the Rev.



Donald Romsa

Donald Romsa: "Rural congregations shouldn't get caught up in programming to the point of excluding what they do best—Word and sacrament ministry, which underlines the farmers' worth and uniqueness."

Romsa, director of life enrichment at Lutheran Social Services in Wichita, Kan., shared characteristics of families who survive crisis. Romsa, quoting *A Gift of Hope* by Robert Veninga, said that almost

without exception, survivors credit "someone who stands beside them, supports them, and gives them a sense of hope."

Kenneth E. Roberts

Use of 'ELCA' resurfaces

The question of who owns the name proposed for the new Lutheran church has been raised. The Eielsen Synod, a lay-led group with two congregations in rural Minnesota, reportedly claims it still is incorporated in Wisconsin under the name "Evangelical Lutheran Church in America" and is not willing to relinquish the name. Bishop James R. Crumley Jr., leader of the Lutheran Church in America, said in the report that the Eielsen Synod is "proud of its [140-plus year] history" and it was not right for a "big bullying church . . . to say we can steal this name because so few people are involved."

One LCA official said lawyers were checking to see if some agreement could be reached with the Eielsen Synod. However, Dr. Arnold Mickelson, coordinator for the Commission for a New Lutheran Church, reiterated in a later interview that the "name ELCA had been reserved and we had no trouble doing it." Said Mickelson: "The Wisconsin secretary of state's office didn't indicate any problem; in fact, I have the certificate [of confirmation of name registration] in my office."

Flood relief nearly \$70,000

Lutherans contributed supplies, volunteer labor, and nearly \$70,000 in relief following the Nov. 4 flood that ravaged parts of West Virginia and surrounding states (see *L.S.*, Jan. 10, pp. 20-21), according to the Rev. David A. Lee, pastor of Calvary Lutheran Church, a congregation of the American Lutheran Church in Brandywine, W. Va.

Large gifts helped to purchase new trailer homes, relocate trailer homes, and repair permanent homes and farm buildings. Smaller gifts were shared with those who lost livestock, freezers of food, and food in fruit cellars.

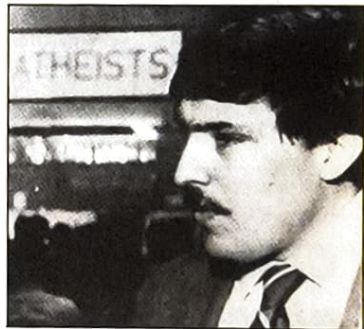
QUICK LOOK

AUGUSTANA COLLEGE President William C. Nelsen has resigned as president to become chancellor of the school, concentrating on fund-raising. He has been president of this liberal arts college in Sioux Falls, S.D., since July 1980. His resignation is effective as soon as an acting president is named by the college's board of regents. Nelsen is the 17th president in the college's 125-year history. Augustana has an enrollment of about 1,800 students and is affiliated with the American Lutheran Church.

THE TRIAL OF TWO FORMER SOLDIERS accused of murdering the Rev. David Ernesto Fernandez, a Lutheran pastor from El Salvador, was postponed April 10 for a second time. A source in El Salvador said defense lawyers refused to proceed with interviewing jurors and withdrew from the case. The action forced the judge to postpone the case until lawyers became available. The trial initially was scheduled to be heard in San Miguel in November 1985 but was postponed then for a lack of jurors. The trial had been rescheduled for San Salvador in the hope that a jury could be seated.

THE TRIAL OF 55 PERSONS, including the Revs. Susan and Brian Burchfield, missionaries of the American Lutheran Church in South Africa, has been set for May 22. They were arrested at the Cape Town airport March 7 when they gathered to say farewell to a German missionary family (see *L.S.*, April 4, p. 17). At the pretrial hearing April 22, the court building was surrounded by 100 heavily armed police and four large armored vehicles, while the courtroom was ringed by 20 military police with guns, according to Solveig Kjeseth of the Namibian Concerns office in Dubuque, Iowa, who talked with Susan Burchfield. Many of the defendants who filed assault charges against the police for allegedly beating them March 7 have been subjected to severe harassment, according to Kjeseth. "You know that they are trying to frighten you and you try to resist it," said Susan Burchfield. "But it is scary. . . . It's very exhausting."

JON MURRAY (pictured), 32-year-old son of Madalyn Murray O'Hair, 67, has assumed leadership of American Atheists, after O'Hair announced to the group's convention that she was stepping down. O'Hair, founder and president of the group, said she had established "a viable American institution that is going to remain." The group, based in Austin, Tex., claims 30,000 members, with chapters in 30 states. O'Hair's career has been dedicated to removing all vestiges of religion from public institutions.

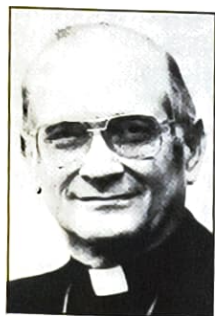


PASTORAL LETTERS: About 100 United Methodist bishops from around the country unanimously condemned nuclear armaments and termed the U.S. policy of nuclear deterrence "a dogmatic license for perpetual hostility between the superpowers." The bishops' stand, detailed in the pastoral "In Defense of Creation: The Nuclear Crisis and a Just Peace," was the first by a major religious group to reject the policy of stockpiling nuclear weapons for deterrence, a keystone of U.S. defense strategy for 40 years. Elsewhere, a committee of Catholic bishops abandoned plans to write a formal pastoral letter on women in response to complaints by church women's groups. Said one committee member: "[The pastoral] made women the problem." The bishops instead will write a "pastoral response" to women's concerns.

AN APPEAL is expected in the Arizona sanctuary case. Six sanctuary movement workers were convicted on May 1 by a federal jury of conspiring to smuggle Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees into the United States. Two others were convicted of lesser charges and three were acquitted after a six-month trial and 47 hours of jury deliberation over nine days. The defendants contended they lawfully aided people who were fleeing persecution in their homelands. Immigration and Naturalization Service Commissioner Alan Nelson hailed the verdict, saying it shows the sanctuary movement must work within the law.

LCA Bishop Crumley raises questions about new church

"Union is not the only factor to consider" in the prospect of bringing together the Lutheran Church in America (LCA), American Lutheran Church (ALC), and Association of Evangelical



James Crumley

Lutheran Churches (AELC), according to LCA churchwide Bishop James R. Crumley Jr.

Bishop Crumley suggests "the solid embodiment . . . of our self-understanding and self-identity as Lu-

therans" may be even more important than focusing only on uniting the three church bodies.

Writing to LCA clergy and lay professional church workers late last month, Crumley urged them to look at the proposals for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and ask: Will such a church "assist us to make in a more effective way the true witness of Lutheranism and to relate that witness to other churches and to the world?"

ALC Presiding Bishop David Preus addresses new church issues on page 37.

Declares Crumley: "We have a unique witness to give from our confessional position [as Lutherans]. We want our understanding of the gospel to influence the life of the churches and the culture. For that to happen, Lutherans need to be together, to work as one confessing family."

He cautions against insisting that the new Lutheran church be patterned after the LCA, but, he adds, "we can only apply to any design for a church our understandings, our faith, [and] our commitments."

Proposals for changes

He drew attention to actions of the LCA synod bishops and LCA Executive Council (see *L.S.*, May 2, pages 20-21) and affirmed his agreement with proposals offered by them for changes in plans for the new church.

Bishop Crumley charges that the doctrinal understanding of the nature of the church has not been clear as the foundation for the ELCA. "While we

in the LCA have always viewed the congregation as a primary unit of church, we have never simply equated 'church' and 'congregation,'" Crumley says. "There is one, holy, catholic, apostolic church in whose life congregations share, but which they did not create."

He urges that proposals involving congregations and the whole church be studied carefully to determine "whether they will preserve the understanding of [the] church as more than congregations."

Crumley sees the current descriptions of ministry in the ELCA as creating confusion, which is a serious problem because "ministry is so crucial to the understanding of church itself and . . . is the critical factor in many of our bilateral dialogs. . . ."

He adds, "What is at stake is not simply how people practice their profession, but Word and sacrament, the audible and visible means by which God constitutes and nurtures the church."

Sources of confusion

Confusion arises, however, "when the Office of Word and Sacrament (the ordained ministry) is seen to depend on other offices, [is] confused with them, or [is viewed as] derived only from the will of the people," Crumley says. "Theological premises, not democratic principles, must be determinative here."

The draft constitution gives all pastors the right to vote at synod conventions, but denies retired pastors that right, a provision Bishop Crumley questions.

A place at synod conventions also is allocated to "rostered" persons, such as parochial school teachers in the present AELC, a proposal the LCA bishops have opposed.

Bishop Crumley says he thinks not making bishops automatic delegates to the ELCA churchwide assembly is a mistake. At the same time, he questions why the proposed constitution bars bishops from serving on the national Church Council or the boards of

Chilstrom remains optimistic about unity in proposed church

Bishop Herbert Chilstrom of the Lutheran Church in America's Minnesota Synod remains "optimistic about Lutheran unity," in spite of questions being raised by LCA churchwide Bishop James R. Crumley Jr. and actions by LCA synod bishops and the LCA Executive Council.

Declares Chilstrom: "I am confident we will have a new church Jan. 1, 1988," the target date for the proposed Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Chilstrom, who was one of the leading candidates for churchwide bishop when Crumley was first elected to head the LCA in 1978, thinks love and marriage offer the best analogy for the present stage of discussion. Issues now being debated, he believes, resemble a "lover's quarrel" before the wedding. "I do not suggest that we take the quarrel lightly," he says. But he notes that differences often "get resolved and the wedding comes off as scheduled."

Chilstrom suggests that this "quarrel" may prompt people in congregations to rise up and say to those in leadership, "It's time for these Lutherans to come together!" He adds that efforts already have begun to find solutions to points of differences before the meeting of the Commission for a New Lutheran Church, June 23-25 in Seattle.

Crumley raises new church

David Preus ad-
vises on page 37.

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LCA seeks review committee

A 13-member "reception" committee should be appointed to review plans for the proposed new Lutheran church before the conventions of the Lutheran Church in America (LCA), American Lutheran Church (ALC), and Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (AELC) in late August, declares the LCA's Executive Committee.

The proposed committee should be composed of three LCA synod bishops, three ALC district bishops, three members of the LCA's Executive Council, three members of the ALC's Church Council, and one AELC representative.

None of them should be a member of the Commission for a New Lutheran Church, staff to that commission, or a person involved in the Transition Team of the three churches, the LCA action declared.

national church agencies. He also disagrees with provisions prohibiting a pastor from being an officer of the congregation he or she is serving.

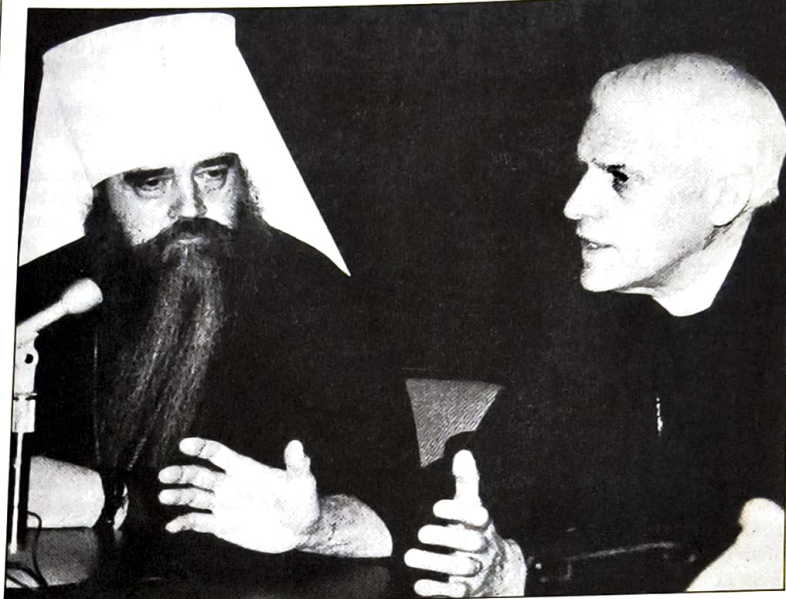
Different histories

In relation to ecumenical concerns, he notes that the three churches involved in the proposed new ELCA "have quite different histories and programs" of relationships with other churches. He calls for a strengthening of the ecumenical commitment expressed in the new church's constitution.

Regarding "quotas" that are aimed at assuring representation by women and minorities at conventions and on boards and committees of the new church, Crumley acknowledges that there are differences of opinion "as to how the church can best embody inclusiveness."

Individuals "can affirm a principle and appropriately disagree with a method of implementation," Crumley says, adding that present new-church proposals on "quotas" raise problems for "free elections."

'Soviet Union not atheistic'



Russian Orthodox leader hosted by Preus

Metropolitan Filaret (left), the second-highest ranking Russian Orthodox church leader, discussed Russian Christianity, peace issues, and church unity during a visit to Minneapolis hosted by Dr. David W. Preus (right), presiding bishop of the American Lutheran Church. During his visit to U.S. church leaders—under the auspices of the National Council of Churches in the U.S.A.—Filaret said he encountered church people who remarked that the Soviet Union was an atheistic country. "I corrected them," said the Russian Orthodox leader, who oversees international relations for the church's estimated 50 million members. Only the Communist party is atheistic, he said, and many members of the Soviet society are active Christians who are at work developing a socialist society. At a press conference, he pointed to the government's gift of a monastery—in anticipation of the church's millennial anniversary in 1988—as a sign of the church-state relationship.

ALC college cancels tours; overseas terrorism blamed

Concern over terrorist activities caused officials at Wartburg College, Waverly, Iowa, to cancel all overseas trips—scheduled primarily for spring and summer—related to the school.

The college, affiliated with the American Lutheran Church, canceled: the Wartburg Choir tour to the Continent; the Castle Singers tour to the United Kingdom; foreign-language study groups to Spain, France, and Germany; the football team's trip to West Germany and France; and a summer alumni tour to Italy.

Officials at St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minn., said no international

programs of the school had been canceled, but that the study program in Egypt—scheduled for fall—was being evaluated. The school would likely arrange for a backup site rather than change the course location at this time, they said.

The ALC-affiliated school reported increased responses from students wanting to participate in global study programs next year. About 50% of St. Olaf graduates complete part of their study abroad. Orientation to international study programs includes what to do in case of a terrorist attack, officials said.

Southern District debates new confession of faith

The Confession of Faith for the proposed Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) drew considerable debate at the convention of the American Lutheran Church's Southern District.

Two different motions to amend the proposed constitutional statement on the authority of Scripture were defeated. One of those would have added the words inerrant and infallible to the constitution.

Meeting April 25-27 in Austin, Tex., delegates approved the changes proposed by the ALC executive committee for the constitution's "quota" language and asked for a similar change in synodical constitutions.

How to handle congregational property if a group decides to leave the ELCA was another issue of debate. A motion that calls for property to remain with the majority if two-thirds of members at a regular meeting vote for secession, and for the property to remain with the minority if fewer than two-thirds vote for secession, was carried 174-163. The vote was counted twice; figures from the first tally were 166 in favor, 167 opposed.

Delegates affirmed the proposed pension plan for the ELCA and the proposed study process on the doctrine of ministry.

In other new-church action, delegates:

- called for the elimination of the



Early birthday party

A traditional mariachi band helped participants at the joint convention of the ALC's Southern District and the LCA's Texas-Louisiana Synod celebrate "New Beginnings" for the proposed new Lutheran church.

Commission for Women, assigning the commission's goals and objectives to the Commission for Church in Society;

- approved the formation of a youth organization as a constituted auxiliary of the new church;

- memorialized the ALC general convention to call for the new church to include a men's organization as a constituted auxiliary;

- memorialized the ALC Church Council or its successor body to authorize a study on the equalization of clergy salaries; and

- requested that the Commission for a New Lutheran Church publicly address several questions about the formation and purpose of the ELCA's Multi-Cultural Commission.

"New Beginnings" was the theme for the joint convention of the ALC's Southern District and the Texas-Louisiana Synod of the Lutheran Church in America. The groups had separate business sessions.

AELC participants

In one of the first actions of ALC business, delegates passed a resolution that officially acknowledged convention visitors from the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches and granted them speaking privileges during debate. Delegates also approved travel subsidies for AELC guests.

LCA churchwide Bishop James R. Crumley Jr. preached at Friday's worship, while the ALC's Southern District Bishop August Wenzel presided. ALC Presiding Bishop David W. Preus preached at Sunday's worship.

Dr. Joseph Sittler, Lutheran theologian and distinguished professor in residence at the Lutheran School of Theology, was keynote speaker for the convention.

In other action, the 356 lay and 282 clergy delegates, representing the district's 285 congregations:

- memorialized the ALC not to take action on altar and pulpit fellowship with the Reformed and Presbyterian churches and to instead commit that issue to the ELCA;

- reelected the Rev. Stanley Sultemeier, Spring, Texas, district vice president; and

- approved a 1987 budget of \$950,990, which is \$10.60 per confirmed member.

Michelle Sanden Johlas



"All in favor..."

Delegates at the South Pacific District convention got used to holding their voting cards aloft.

S. Pacific affirms new-church timetable

"How many of you have prayed that God would give us a good convention?" Bishop Nelson W. Trout asked delegates to the convention of the South Pacific District, April 25-27 in Los Angeles. Most delegates raised their hands. Then, after delegates unanimously approved the first report of the credentials committee, Trout jokingly said, "Let that be a signal of the vote we're going to vote!"

The convention, on the theme "Together in Mission," was a good one for most delegates and observers probably agreed. But many voice votes were too close to call.

The 461 lay and 264 clergy delegates affirmed Jan. 1, 1988, as the starting date for the proposed Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). They said the Commission for a New Lutheran Church (CNLC) and other bodies had adhered to the original timetable for Lutheran union and that "indications are that such accomplishment is possible."

The delegates voted 334-264 to affirm the CNLC's present proposals for quotas for women and minorities in representative bodies of the new church beyond the local congregations. They also expressed their approval of the statement on Scripture proposed by the CNLC.

The South Pacific delegates

to affirm the CNLC's proposals regarding congregational ownership of property, with one exception: They said two-thirds of a congregation's voting members—rather than the majority the CNLC proposes—should be required both to leave the ELCA and to keep the congregation's property.

Also approved was a resolution asking the ALC Church Council to examine the "viability" of Milwaukee, the CNLC's proposed site for the new church's national offices, "in light of potential increased costs." The resolution says the CNLC should reconsider its choice of Milwaukee "if this appears to be a real problem."

The delegates adopted a 1987 district budget of \$1,414,055, which translates to \$12.33 per confirmed member. But although the overall budget is 27% higher than the district's current budget, officials said most of the increase is to pay termination costs for present staff not hired by the new church. They said the district should be prepared for the "worst-case scenario," adding that they expected most of the termination money would not need to be spent.

Homosexuality debated

The delegates had a long and at times heated debate over homosexuality. First they asked the new Lutheran church to study the ALC's 1980 statement on "Human Sexuality and Sexual Behavior" and consider its implications for ministry. Then they adopted, 257-220, a resolution declaring that "homosexual behavior is part of our fallen nature, and therefore is to be viewed as sinful"—but only after approving an amendment adding that "we . . . affirm our solidarity with homosexual persons by confessing that we, like they, are sinners in need of the gospel."

In his report to the district, Bishop Trout said that while he had "many questions about the new church, one question I do not have is whether God wants the ALC, the Lutheran Church in America, and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches to come together." There never would be a merger, Trout said, if "God were waiting for the ALC, LCA, and AELC to be perfect before coming together." Said Trout: "God promises not to forsake us as we step into the future."

Donn McLellan

North Pacific delegates look toward new church

"Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love," sang the 677 delegates from the 293 congregations in the American Lutheran Church (ALC) North Pacific District at what they expect was their last convention as an ALC district.

"We share our mutual woes, our mutual burdens bear," they continued. Judging from convention discussion, many of them, in singing that hymn, may not only have been recalling the past quarter-century of mission in the region. They also were singing in anticipation of union with the Lutheran Church in America and Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in the proposed Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

In dealing with issues related to the new church at the April 25-27 convention in Seattle, delegates urged rejection of the proposal that 6% of benevolence contributions from former LCA congregations in the ELCA be deducted to pay for the projected \$41 million in medical benefits for retirees in that church's pension program.

"We should take one another as we are, in becoming the new church," speakers suggested, adding that the 6% proposal is merely a paper gimmick. Quit maintaining divisions between congregations, they argued. Proceed into the new as one united church.

This matter was one of some 50 concerns presented in resolutions and sense motions on the new church. Delegates also:

- asked that a two-thirds majority vote, rather than simple majority, be required for congregations seeking to leave the ELCA;

- suggested calling the ELCA's national leader "presiding bishop," because "this title better describes the office in its entirety";

- urged the Commission for a New Lutheran Church to reconsider Milwaukee as proposed headquarters site and instead provide a summary of site considerations to this year's church-body conventions for a vote on the common location (if no agreement emerges from the conventions, Minneapolis and Philadelphia should be used until a



"We have listened . . ."

Patsy Gottschalk of Spokane, Wash., a member of the new-church commission, told North Pacific District delegates, "We have listened to you and we will continue to do so" in shaping the proposed new Lutheran church.

choice is made by the new church, declared the resolution);

- sought a more positive statement than the one in the current constitution, by-laws, and continuing resolutions on the ELCA's relationships with independent Lutheran organizations;

- requested that the new church "build an ongoing evangelism training program" for congregations, "using not only publications and seminars but [also] people and example"; and

- proposed changing the name of the ELCA's Commission for Women to Commission on Gender, Age, Disabilities, and Family Status.

Delegates also adopted a 1987 district budget of \$1,037,618.

Not bread alone

District Bishop Clifford Lunde, in his report, said: "To be concerned about hunger . . . justice, and peace apart from a concern to bring all people under Christ's rule by faith is to fall into the trap of believing that humans can live by bread alone. To be concerned about bringing people to baptism and faith in Christ without . . . [caring] about their need for daily bread . . . is to deny that [Christ] is Lord of all creation and all of life. . . ."

Dr. Hubert G. Locke, dean of the public-affairs graduate school at the University of Washington, told delegates that churches face the problem "of dealing with the Rambo-like mentality" now rampant in the United States. He wondered "if we have learned anything as a nation" from the events of the past half century.

Lowell Almen

Bomb scare interrupts Ohio District convention

The Blanchard Valley Blue Grass Boys played a little longer than expected at the banquet of the American Lutheran Church's Ohio District convention, held in Lima, Ohio, April 17-19. The extra time enabled local police to determine whether or not a suspicious-looking box outside the convention center was indeed ticking, as had been reported.

Police were taking no chances, since a car had been bombed earlier in the day in another part of town. As banquet guests were being allowed to leave the hall by a side exit, police determined that no bomb was present.

The rest of the convention went according to plan as the 253 clergy and 262 lay delegates, representing the district's 275 congregations, acted on several matters related to the formation of a new Lutheran church. They approved two resolutions from the district's Luther League officers calling for increased youth participation—"voice and vote"—both now and in the proposed new church.

But, after extended debate, delegates defeated a resolution that would have asked the Commission for a New Lutheran Church (CNLC) to "strengthen the statement on the Bible in the Confession of Faith" of the proposed new church's constitution by calling the Bible "the final authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life." One delegate countered by saying, "Jesus Christ himself is the final authoritative source of our faith."

Bishop supports new church

In his report to the district, Bishop Robert W. Kelley said: "The documents are not what we all feel completely comfortable with, but I think it's like jitters before a marriage. I am firmly committed to where God has led us—to be a new Lutheran church by January 1, 1988."

Kelley challenged delegates to take seriously the convention's theme "Together in Mission." "My concern is that we see this time not just as an interim



"A purpose beyond ourselves"

Ana de Garcia, ALC missionary in Nicaragua, told Ohio District delegates, "It is most appropriate when we are entering a time of union we not forget that union is for a purpose beyond ourselves."

to live through, but an interim to live in mission as people of the Ohio District," he said.

Dr. Fred Meuser, president of Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Columbus, Ohio, recounted his experiences related to the merger of the Lutheran Church in America's Hama School of Theology and the ALC's Columbus seminary eight years ago. "We have experienced merger on a smaller scale," he said. "Our students today take it for granted that the decision to merge was the right one, but it was not without cost, effort, or pain."

As the last scheduled convention of the Ohio District was drawing to a close, the Rev. Larry Hoffsis, district vice president and convention chaplain, led delegates in final devotions. "It's time for us to say good-bye, and it isn't easy," he said. "As Christians, though, we don't need to be afraid of the 'good-byes,' because it will be followed by another 'hello' when we drink the new wine together in heaven."

In other action, delegates—

- asked the CNLC to assure the continuance of the Committee on Rural Ministry until a successor organization can be established in the new church;
- affirmed a resolution rejecting the belief that peace and security can be ensured by the development of new weapons systems;
- elected the Rev. David Gabel of Lima, Ohio, as the district's clergy representative on the ALC Council; and
- approved a 1987 budget of \$1,023,551 ("the Ohio District's first million-dollar budget," according to Bishop Kelley), which amounts to \$10.66 per confirmed member.

James M. Huber

New church sparks debate in Iowa

Delegates voiced support for Jan. 1, 1988, start-up date for the proposed new Lutheran church during the convention of the American Lutheran Church's Iowa District.

Meeting April 18-20 at Wartburg College, Waverly, delegates debated a resolution calling for a "flexible" timetable for beginning the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

After spirited debate, delegates affirmed the quota language of the ELCA's proposed constitution.

The convention memorialized the ALC Church Council to request the ELCA's start-up budget not exceed the current budgets of the three union bodies. It also memorialized the council to endorse the constitutional proposal for separately incorporating women's organization in the ELCA.

Other new-church issues that received attention were congregational authority, equalized pension plans for lay and clergy workers, and a "modest" pension plan in the ELCA without greater contributions for elders and pastors.

'Rethink mission'

The 395 lay and 338 clergy delegates gathered under the theme "Together in Mission." The Rev. Per Olsson, keynote speaker and principal of the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Madagascar, challenged delegates to rethink mission.

"Mission is not something the church just happens to do or finally adds to its ongoing program," he said. "Mission is what the church is all about."

Delegates heard a report from district president L. David Brown about his recent trip to Namibia, South Africa, and Ethiopia. He said churches in developing nations "have to show us the way to do mission."

In business sessions, delegates of the district's 396 congregations:

- insisted that the ALC Board of Trustees immediately complete the mandated divestment from corporations doing business in South Africa, and memorialized the ALC general convention to "take whatever action is necessary to fulfill this mandate immediately";

- encouraged congregations to set up partnerships with struggling established congregations affected by current economic conditions;

- passed a resolution in response to the rural crisis that called for, among other things, continued involvement in support networks and conflict mediation;

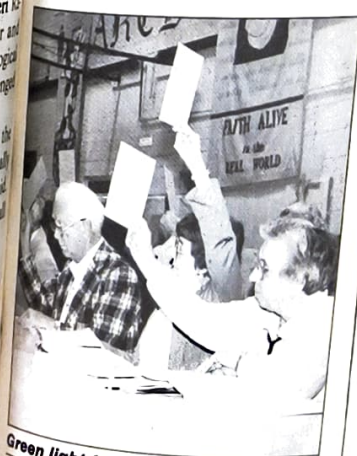
- reelected the Rev. Dennis Dickman, Waverly, to the ALC Council;

- called on the ALC general convention to change the constitution to allow voting status for youth on the Church Council, and called on the Commission for a New Lutheran Church to provide for a certain percentage of youth as voting delegates at the constituting conventions for the new church and its synods;

- after considerable debate, restored the \$20,000 district support for L'Chaim continuing education center; and

- approved a 1987 district budget of \$1,311,086, which is \$8.90 per confirmed member.

Michelle Sanden Johlas



Green light for merger

Lay delegates (from left) Leonard Madsen, Our Savior's, Audubon; Alice Christiansen, Our Savior's, Audubon; and Nellie Ickes, St. Paul's, Irwin, show support of the Jan. 1, 1988, start-up date for the new church during the Iowa District convention.

COMING:

June 13

Report on ALC visit to church in Namibia

ALSO ON NEW CHURCH:
The funny side of being Lutheran

50 resolutions

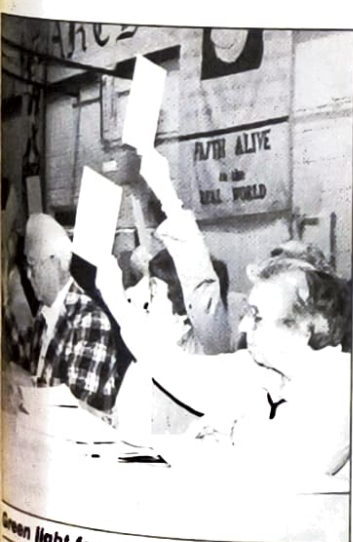
Concern for rural one of many new addressed by the delegates, the most in recommended for conversion majority attempted to implement CNLC proposals. The proposed headquarters of the new church, drew criticism during with Dr. Kathryn Baer, general secretary. Two resolutions suggesting a different preferred. One reaffirmed the proposal of Chicago, while proposed Kansas City, argued located closer to developing

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Central delegates seek stronger rural effort in proposed church

Rural ministry in the proposed new Lutheran church was clearly on the minds of the 302 lay and 199 clergy delegates at the American Lutheran Church (ALC) Central District convention at Kearney, Neb., April 9-12.

Delegates from the five-state district, many of whom live in rural areas, pointed out that "33% of all U.S. Lutherans live in rural settings," and that strong rural ministry will be vital to the life of the new church. Delegates said proposals from the Commission for a New Lutheran Church (CNLC) failed to take seriously enough rural ministry and the crisis conditions affecting rural people and their congregations.

Numerous resolutions supplementing CNLC proposals were adopted by overwhelming margins. Noting the "limited structured support for rural ministries" in the ALC, Lutheran Church in America, and Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, the convention asked the CNLC to propose offices for rural ministry at the national level and in the nine regions of the new church, with a national committee to oversee the office's work.

The convention also adopted a proposal from southwest Nebraska delegates that asks the ALC to allow its current national director and committee on rural ministry to continue until their successors are established in the new church.

50 resolutions

Concern for rural ministry was but one of many new-church issues addressed by the delegates. Fifty resolutions, the most in recent memory, were proposed for convention action. The majority attempted to correct or supplement CNLC proposals.

The proposed site for the headquarters of the new church, Milwaukee, drew criticism during open forums with Dr. Kathryn Baerwald, ALC general secretary. Two resolutions, each suggesting a different city, were offered. One reaffirmed the CNLC's proposal of Chicago, while a second proposed Kansas City, arguing that it is located closer to developing population



Symbols of wholeness

The Central District convention commissioned Reinhold Marxhausen, professor of art at Concordia College, Seward, Neb., to create original artworks from broken items brought by convention delegates. The art—representing the hope for wholeness in the new church—was auctioned during the convention. More than \$3000 was raised for the district's new congregations.

areas in southern and western states. Delegates approved the Kansas City proposal by a near-unanimous vote. Kansas City delegates said after the vote that they would work with officials from their city to develop a presentation for the CNLC's June meeting.

In other actions relating to the new church, delegates:

- reaffirmed the CNLC's proposed quotas to insure inclusive representation of women and minorities;
- asked the CNLC to provide for a men's auxiliary in the new constitution; and
- requested the CNLC to provide mission director positions in each of the nine regions of the new church, with another 18 such positions to be distributed as needed throughout the church.

The delegates, representing the district's 271 congregations, also—

- urged the ALC Board of Trustees to move more deliberately toward divestment of ALC pension funds from corporations doing business in South Africa, and urged congregations to seek alternative pension plans for their pastors if total divestment is not achieved by Jan. 1, 1988;

- approved a 1987 budget of \$539,730, or \$7.20 per-confirmed-member; and

- reelected the Rev. Ronald Beckman, Parker, Colo., to the ALC Council, and elected Sol Bird Mockicin, Oaks, Okla., to the standing committee for the ALC's Office of Communication and Mission Support.

David Miller

David Miller, pastor of St. Mark Lutheran Church in Olathe, Kan., is editor of "Heartbeat," the Central District's supplement in The Lutheran Standard.

Eastern District OKs flurry of new-church resolutions

Forty-one resolutions related to the formation of the new Lutheran church dominated the 54 resolutions submitted to the Eastern District convention of the American Lutheran Church, April 24-27 in Baltimore, Md.

The 227 pastoral and 187 lay delegates, representing 252 congregations, overwhelmingly affirmed the timetable for the new church. They tabled resolutions to delay the new church until Reformation Sunday 1988 or until acceptable new-church compromises could be worked out and the Commission for a New Lutheran Church (CNLC) replaced by a committee of bishops.

Bishop E. Harold Jansen said he was convinced of the "soundness of the plan for the new church" and urged delegates not to "lose the moment." The bishop of the Maryland Synod of the Lutheran Church in America, Dr. Morris G. Zumbrun, told the delegates that "the Spirit is leading us to a new church. The time for the new Lutheran church has come."

One delegate drew thunderous applause when he said, "We Lutherans have the most extensive prenuptial agreement in history. Let's get on with the wedding!"

Delegates concurred with the recommendation of the ALC Church Council's executive committee and the Council of Bishops, requesting that specific quotas be eliminated—with the exception that 60% of decision-making groups be laypersons. A resolution with specific goals for inclusiveness lost 149-147.

In other actions related to the new church, delegates:

- recommended that additional staffing for congregational life concerns be placed in regional centers rather than synods;
- endorsed a new women's organization separately incorporated and responsible to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America church council and its assembly;
- encouraged the establishment of a National Disaster Service to coordinate the new church's response to natural and other environmental disasters;
- changed the vote needed for termination of relationship with the ELCA from majority to two-thirds majority;



International pastors

Pastors of the three international congregations of the Eastern District made special presentations at the district's final convention. Pictured are: (row one, from left) the Rev. Jack Lien, International Church of Copenhagen, Denmark; and the Rev. Harry Cleven, American Lutheran Congregation, Oslo, Norway; (row two, from left) the Rev. Thomas Andersen, Peace Lutheran Church, Bermuda; and Bishop E. Harold Jansen.

- affirmed the CNLC's proposals regarding the ownership of church property;
- proposed that the ALC delay altar and pulpit fellowship with Presbyterian and Reformed church bodies until the issue is studied in the new church; and
- requested that the office for the bishop be placed in Washington, D.C.

Kurt Schmoke, chief prosecutor for Baltimore, shared his five principles for a theory of justice and specific ways to reform the penal system in America. He noted that Maryland, in whose prison system the ALC's Community of St. Dismas prison congregation is located, has the third highest incarceration rate in the United States. "The Maryland prisons," he said, "were intended to house 9500 inmates; they hold 13,000."

Special "Mission Minutes"—brief slide presentations of new mission congregations within the district—were highlighted throughout the convention.

The district approved a three-year goal of \$1,450,000 for Commitment to Mission, and announced that \$208,500 already had been received or pledged. The district approved a 1987 budget of \$580,875, or \$9.70 per confirmed member.

Kenneth E. Roberts

S. Wis. bishop praises CNLC for 'sensitive compromises'

"Strident statements" made by "two or three" members of the Lutheran Church in America's executive council may have given the impression that the LCA is "bailing out" of the proposed Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), Bishop Herbert Chilstrom of the LCA's Minnesota Synod told delegates to the convention of the American Lutheran Church's Southern Wisconsin District. But those opinions are "surely not a majority opinion in the Lutheran Church in America," said Chilstrom who is optimistic that "we'll have a new church and have it on time." Chilstrom said issues of tradition, not theology, divide the three uniting church bodies. He said there is "a lot of room for negotiation."

"On balance," said Southern Wisconsin District Bishop Peter Rogness, "the Commission for a New Lutheran Church has done a remarkable job." Rogness told the delegates that the CNLC had found "middle ground" in



It fits!

The 1987 budget presented and adopted, at the convention of the Southern Wisconsin District was illustrated in the form of a giant jigsaw puzzle. Delegates were first shown the reverse sides of the puzzle pieces, which displayed proposed spending in major budget categories.

"sensitive compromises" in areas. "I don't think the new church is in jeopardy—I hope it isn't," Rogness told the delegates, meeting 18-20 in Oconomowoc. Rogness said the CNLC "has been a gift of the church to us," and he said the new church "will be a gift."

The 436 lay and 161 clergy delegates overwhelmingly approved a resolution supporting the proposed new church and the "schedule in place." But also approved language, recommended by the executive committee of the ALC's national church council, that calls for "fair representation" on representative bodies beyond the congregation of women and men, persons of color, and persons whose native languages are other than English—rather than the percentage quotas recommended by the CNLC.

Other new church actions

In other actions regarding the proposed ELCA, the delegates—

- asked that the women's and Luther League organizations be included within the new church's congregational life unit;
- called for deleting sections of the proposed constitution that say synods (dioceses) and the churchwide organization retain "all authority in all matters" not otherwise granted to congregations, synods, or churchwide organization by the constitution or bylaws—while retaining a similar "reservation of authority" for congregations;
- asked that a uniform 9% pension contribution be established for the new church, rather than the CNLC's proposed rates of up to 12%, which would vary according to age;
- commended the CNLC for its recommendation of Milwaukee as the site of the ELCA's national offices; and
- asked the CNLC to substitute the term "diocese" for "synod"—a request some delegates said they supported to avoid confusion with the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

In other actions, the delegates—

- approved a 1987 district budget of \$175,200, or about \$5.34 per confirmed member, and asked congregations to give \$4.70 per confirmed member to Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan;
- elected Rhode Braunschweig of Madison lay vice president of the district;

- asked the ALC to continue its direct support for rural ministries and that a rural ministry commission be made part of the new Lutheran church.

Donn McLellan

Wolber reelected bishop in Southeastern District

Dr. David A. Wolber, bishop of the youngest and smallest but fastest growing district in the American Lutheran Church (ALC), will continue in that role until Jan. 1, 1988.

Delegates to the Southeastern District convention in Atlanta, April 24-27, voted unanimously to return Wolber to office for one year, with provision for another election at a special convention in 1987, if the start of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is delayed.

From 86 congregations, when it was created in 1980 out of southern portions of the Eastern and Ohio districts, the Southeastern District has grown to 115 congregations, with more now being formed. In 1985 it ranked second among the 19 ALC districts in increased benevolence giving.

Heavily involved in ministry with Haitians and Hispanics, the congregations were represented by 111 clergy and 161 lay delegates at the convention, which emphasized the importance of being "Together in Mission."

Among the guest speakers was Ana de Garcia, an ALC missionary in Nicaragua, who also led one of five small-group discussions on global mission. In an emotional plea for peace, human rights, and economic development for the people of Nicaragua, she asked the delegates to be aware of the "exaggeration, misinformation, and

distortion of much of what you hear" regarding American involvement in Central America.

Issues relating to formation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America occupied much of one day at the convention and resulted in numerous sense motions and resolutions asking the Commission for a New Lutheran Church, among other things, to:

- retain the quota system for representation in the new church;
- give high priority to financial support for the church's colleges and universities;
- maintain authority of the congregation by deleting paragraphs 8.31 and 11.31 in the proposed constitution;
- limit national and synod bishops and other officers to two successive terms in office; and
- address the need for wider involvement with minority people than the proposed Commission for Multicultural Ministries can provide.

The district's concern for people with special needs was reflected in resolutions dealing with alleged voting rights violations in Alabama, victims of AIDS and their families, support for Bread for the World, and the social and economic dilemma of minority youth and Haitian refugees.

Haitian Concerns Sunday

Delegates called for a Haitian Concerns Sunday and designated half of the convention offering as a Mission Partners gift to support legal and human services for Haitian refugees.

They adopted a budget of \$254,559 for 1987, equivalent to \$8.75 per confirmed member.

"This district has become a truly caring family," said Dr. Albert "Whitney" Schmidt, former vice president of the district, who preached at the closing worship.

"As a family," he said, "we never will gather in just this way again, but we are taking that family spirit into a new situation, where something newer and greater is about to happen."

"We go on our way rejoicing, with a tear, perhaps, in remembering gratefully what has been, but with a shout of joy for what is yet to be."

Lila C. Clawson



Governor's commendation

Pastor Carl Mittermaier (right) reads a document from Alabama's Gov. George Wallace, commending Bishop David Wolber and service-mission director Onnie Hinkle for their role in establishing new ministries in Hampton Hall in southwest Montgomery.

S.W. Minn. District affirmed in partnership

Under the theme "Behold God's Grace," 641 delegates, observers, and visitors gathered for the 25th and final convention of the Southwestern Minnesota District of the American Lutheran Church at Southwest State University in Marshall, April 11-13.

Based on Philippians 1:2-11, the theme was amplified by three goals:

- to appreciate as partakers God's grace in history;
- to affirm as partners the district's mission with all God's people; and
- to announce as proclaimers God's vision for the world.

The partnership goal emerged most clearly as the convention progressed. Bishop Darold Beekman sounded that note in the opening communion service: "We are partners with God's purposes as he moves through history, and such partnership allows us to look forward as we explore new dimensions of partnership among people with whom we have not been open."

Russian Christians

Dr. Anton Ugolnik, a Russian Orthodox theologian from Lancaster, Pa., urged delegates to see their Russian brothers and sisters in faith as fellow "partakers of grace, partners in mission, and proclaimers of the Word." He reminded them that "for my children it is a Russian accent that speaks to them of Christ."

First World-Third World partnership was evidenced during a Bible study that featured a dialog presentation between Pastors Bruce Benson and Benti Gerba, who serve as campus ministers at St. Olaf College in Northfield. Pastor Benti—on leave from the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus—challenged delegates to see themselves as "existing"—not "potential"—partners with Third-World Christians.

Delegates passed a resolution that encourages the ALC's general convention to pursue pulpit and altar fellowship with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Reformed Church.



Partnership

The Rev. Paul A. Ranum (standing), district minister, seeks a consensus on wording of a resolution with Bishop Will Herzfeld of the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (left) and Bishop Darold Beekmann of the ALC's Southwestern Minnesota District.

Another approved resolution—reflecting partnership with those on the land—calls for "immediate creation of laws that will establish for American farmers a fair return on equity, consistent with that of other American commerce."

In resolutions that addressed partnership issues in the proposed new Lutheran church, delegates:

- asked that further clarification be made regarding uncommitted authority as it affects congregational, synodical, and churchwide expressions;
- commended the Commission for a New Lutheran Church for its past efforts and requested that "... the leadership of the uniting churches pursue their concerns for the new Lutheran church in the same spirit of partnership and trust"; and
- supported the inclusive design of representation in the proposals for the new church.

In other business, the convention reelected the Rev. John E. Quam, Marshall, to the ALC Church Council; Sharon Rostberg, Hutchinson, to the standing committee for the ALC's Office of Communication and Mission Support; and Gerald Ankerfelt, Glencoe, to the board of the ALC's Division for Service and Mission in America.

The delegates also increased the rate of support from congregations for district ministries in 1987 from 6% to 6½%.

Delwayne Hahn

Delwayne Hahn, pastor of the American Lutheran Church, serves as director for Commitment to Mission in the Southwestern Minnesota District.

No modesty in Modesto

Dr. Kirby J. Hensley, bishop of the Universal Life Church, Modesto, Calif., was scheduled to be crowned April 11 as King of Aqualandia, a country—formed in the 1950s—that claimed the ocean floor as its land mass, according to a news release from the church's international headquarters in Modesto.

The church, which claims it represents God, anointed Dr. Hensley as its king during a formal coronation—to which Phil Donahue, Norman Lear, Morley Safer, and others have been invited—and "will at that time establish the kingdom of God on earth." According to the release, the kingdom has been promised a seat on the United Nations.

Neuhaus asks: 'Is religion second best?'

by Robert Di Veroli

A noted Lutheran scholar told a Roman Catholic audience that political views have become more important than religious views in American churches.

"We have arrived at the point where American religion... [when] in many religious leadership circles it is more



Richard Neuhaus

important than what you think of U.S. policy in Central America... what you think of the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ," said Dr. Richard Neuhaus, a Lutheran clergyman and social critic.

Neither liberal nor conservative religious leaders can claim to speak for their church constituencies on social questions, he said, since Christians hold a variety of views. He charged the

U.S. churches are "fast becoming appendages, little cabooses" to partisan political movements rather than holding up independent and distinctively Christian models of how to live.

Speaking at the University of San Diego, a Roman Catholic school, he said much of U.S. Roman Catholic leadership has abdicated its role as a shaper of culture by imitating mainline Protestant leaders' condemnations of the basic assumptions and institutions of U.S. society.

Neuhaus, director for the Center on Religion and Society in New York, said many activists on Catholic diocesan peace and justice commissions believe, as do many Protestant leaders, that on balance the United States is a force for evil rather than good.

Marxist forms of liberation theology that view U.S. capitalism as imperialistic, militaristic, and racist are extreme examples of such a mentality, he said.

He said he believed the church should speak out only on clearly moral

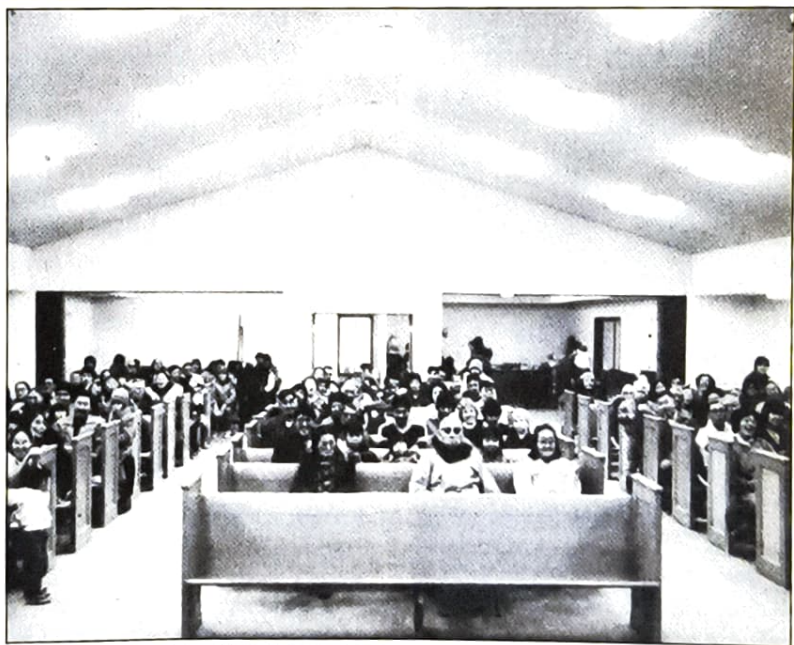
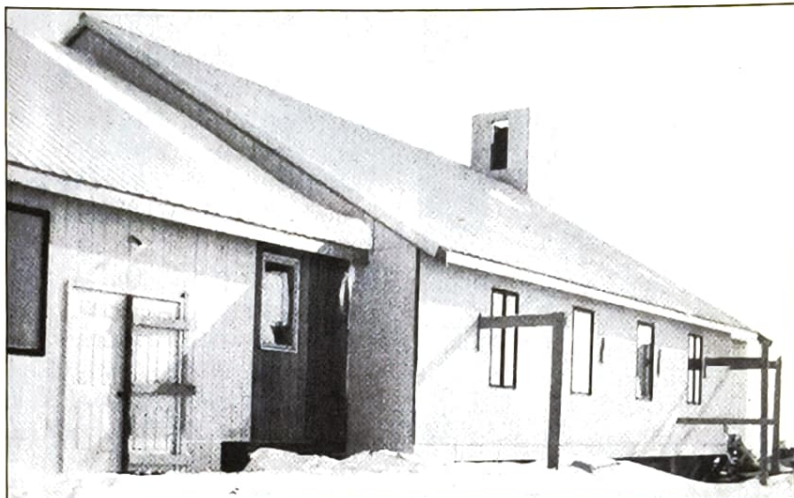
questions and leave politics to lay people. The church should get over the notion that "somehow you aren't doing anything in the real world unless you're making a political difference."

There are no "specifically Christian answers" to school prayer, Central America, South Africa, the MX missile, and many other issues on which the re-

ligious right and left frequently deliver pronouncements, said Neuhaus. With the exception of anti-Semitism, abortion, and slavery, "there is no 'the' Christian position on almost any question in public view today," he said.

Robert Di Veroli is a Religious News Service correspondent.

Shishmaref church in use



After fire: new building, Presbyterian pews

"Shishmaref Lutheran Church is using surplus pews from University Presbyterian Church [Seattle] and is completing some minor finishing work in the church basement," said the Rev. Lud Siqueland, service-mission director in the North Pacific District of the American Lutheran Church. The church, destroyed by fire in March 1984, was rebuilt with the help of many ALC members. It was dedicated Palm Sunday 1985. The congregation, the only one in the village of more than 400 people, is served by the Rev. Steven and Candace Dahl, who are completing their third year of ministry in the Eskimo community. One Shishmaref Church member, a world-renowned Eskimo artist, designed and built the church's altar cross from rosewood strips and pieces of ivory, Siqueland said.

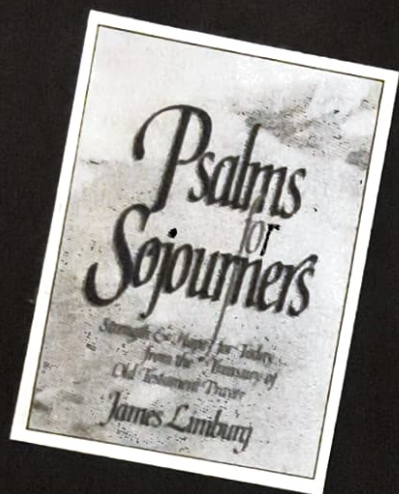
Anniversaries

- 125—Our Savior's Lutheran, Calamus, Iowa, June 22.
- 125—Our Savior's Lutheran, La Crosse, Wis., June 20–22.
- 100—Petersburg Lutheran, Petersburg, N.D., June 15.
- 100—Bethany Lutheran, Emmetsburg, Iowa, June 14–15.
- 100—St. John's Lutheran, Waucoma, Iowa, May 31–June 1.
- 100—St. Olaf Lutheran, Reynolds, N.D., June 21–22.
- 100—Martin Lutheran, Casselton, N.D., June 20–22.
- 90—Zion Lutheran, Churchs Ferry, N.D., June 8.
- 80—Bethany Lutheran, Woonsocket, S.D., June 22.
- 75—Our Saviours Lutheran, Patterson, Calif., June 22.
- 75—East Writing Rock Lutheran, Stady, N.D., June 14–15.
- 75—Trinity Lutheran, Lockney, Tex., June 15.
- 50—St. John's Lutheran, Evansville, Wis., June 22.
- 35—St. John Lutheran, Los Banos, Calif., June 1.
- 25—Abiding Peace Lutheran, Kansas City, Mo., June 15.
- 25—Resurrection Lutheran, Sandusky, Ohio, April 20 and 27.

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Newsmakers

► **Dr. Wi Jo Kang**, associate professor of world mission at Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa, was installed as a tenured faculty member of the American Lutheran Church seminary on April 1. Dr. Kang, a graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, joined the Wartburg faculty in 1980. He holds M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Chicago.

► **Dr. Paul J. Christiansen**, retiring conductor of the Concordia College (ALC) Choir of Moorhead, Minn., was honored by the College of St. Thomas, a Roman Catholic school in St. Paul, Minn., which is celebrating its 100th anniversary. The citation that accompanied Christiansen's centennial medal said his choirs over the last 49 years "have achieved international distinction and acclaim," and that the composer-conductor maintained throughout his career "a freshness of spirit, vitality, and an unquestioned position on the cutting edge of the choral music field."

► **Lynne Lorenzen**, Ventura, Iowa, amassed 1,770 points during her junior year to bring her basketball career total to 4,802 points—an average of 65.5 points per game. A member of Zion United Lutheran Church (ALC), Clear Lake, she has received all-state honors three times in the six-player sport. The class president and member of the National Honor Society was also one of 10 young women chosen to rep-



Wi Jo Kang



Lynne Lorenzen

resent the USA Sports Federation in Israel, where they played Israeli team.

► **Leigh Lerner**, a Reformed pastor from Mount Zion Temple, St. Paul, Minn., has offered himself for the office of bishop of the proposed new Lutheran church. He said his "utter objectivity," which derived from "having no familiarity with the subject at hand," would fit him perfectly for easing the new church through the dangerous doctrinal differences. The tongue-in-cheek suggestion, he told the *Minneapolis Star and Tribune*, was the result of the Jewish holiday of Purim, a time when Jews traditionally treat "serious subjects in unserious ways."

► **The Rev. Nelson C. Meyer**, ALC pastor, has been elected president of the Coalition of Ohio Lutheran Agencies, a group of 15 Lutheran agencies that will deliver more than \$35 million worth of social ministry in Ohio during 1986. Meyer remains as president of Lutheran Social Services of Central Ohio, in Columbus.

Salzmann reelected by publication board

Dr. Richard Salzmann of Pound Ridge, N.Y., has been elected to a second one-year term as chair of the American Lutheran Church (ALC) Board of Publication.

Dr. Salzmann recently retired as vice president and editor-in-chief of Research Institute of America, based in New York.

Charles Feste, an attorney in Fargo, N.D., was renamed vice chairperson of the nine-member board. Reelected secretary was Judith Lehman, an educational administrator in Hoffman Estates, Ill.

The board oversees the work of the ALC's publication unit that is commonly known as Augsburg Publishing House. Augsburg, which ranks as the third-largest Protestant church-owned publishing house in the United States, has six regional distribution centers.

Dr. Albert E. Anderson, chief executive officer and executive secretary of the board, reported that 84% of what is distributed by Augsburg Publishing House is published by Augsburg. He noted that this is the result of steady growth in the church's comprehensive publishing effort.

ACC clergy deaths

The Rev. Erling C. Grevstad, 86, Madison, Wis.: born Oct. 29, 1899; died March 28, 1986; served parishes in Lead (1928-34), Howard (1934-39), and Brandt (1939-42), S.D.; U.S. Army chaplaincy (1942-46); parishes in Cleveland, Ohio (1946-55); Franksville, Wis. (1955-58); Seneca, Ill. (1958-59); interim pastorate (1959-61); Cambridge, Wis. (1961-67); nursing home chaplaincy, Stoughton, Wis. (1967-74); retired in 1974.

The Rev. Alan J. Hatlen, 54, pastor of Christ the King Lutheran Church, Snohomish, Wash.: born July 17, 1931; died April 19, 1986; served parishes in La Center (1957-63) and Mountlake Terrace (1963-77), Wash.; in Snohomish since 1977.

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OFFICIAL NOTICE

Pursuant to the constitution and bylaws of the American Lutheran Church (8.11., 8.13., 8.13.11., 8.13.12., 8.13.21.) upon decision of the Church Council and at the call of the Rev. David W. Preus, general president, the thirteenth General Convention of the American Lutheran Church will meet, God willing, in Minneapolis, Minnesota, August 23-29, 1986. The convention will begin with a opening session at 4:00 p.m., Saturday, August 23, and conclude at approximately 12:00 noon, August 29, 1986.

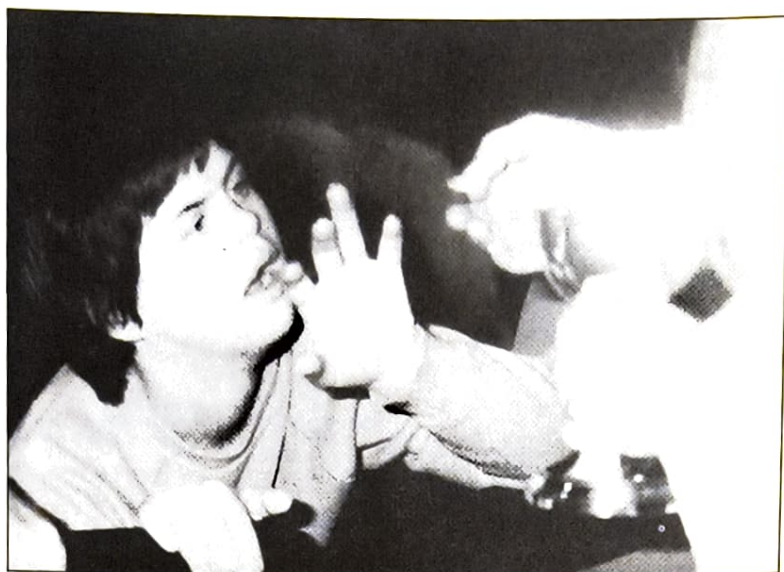
Corporations will meet as follows: Augsburg College, August 24, 1986; Dana College, August 24, 1986; Luther College, August 24, 1986; St. Olaf College, August 24, 1986; Texas Lutheran College, August 24, 1986; Wartburg College, August 24, 1986; American Lutheran Church, August 26, 1986; Evangelical Lutheran Church, August 26, 1986; Board of Administration of the Lutheran Church, August 26, 1986; United Evangelical Lutheran Church, August 26, 1986; and Zion Society for Christ, August 26, 1986.

Kathryn W. Baerwald, general secretary

Lutheran Standard.

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New to the clergy roster

Information provided by ALC general secretary's office.

ASTA, THEODORE W., Three Lutheran Dr., Nashua NH 03063 (ext. min., Christ the King).
LOHMAN, CHARLES W. B., 140 First St., Washburn IA 50706 (Re-deemer).
JENSEN, DAVID I., 5035 Rainbow Blvd., Shawnee Mission KS 66205 (Westwood).

Pastors' changes of address

Information provided by ALC general secretary's office.

AAKER, VINCENT O., Decorah IA, to Box 7038, Rochester MN 55903 (dir., Bethany Samaritan Inc.).
ALBERTSON, MYRON L., 2101 Kimball Ave., Waterloo IA 50702 (ext. min., Iowa Head Injury Assn.).
BACKE, JOHN F., New York, to 31-31 95th St., East Elmhurst NY 11369.
BAESLER, RONALD D., C.P. 53, 93250 Estelo RS Brazil.
BAKER, HARRY R., Oshkosh WI, to 500 W. Woodley, Apt. 109, Northfield MN 55057 (ret.).
BAUER, CHARLES J., Lakeside OH, to 1636 Parkgate Dr., Kissimmee FL 32741.
BAUMGARDNER, THOMAS T., Tallmadge, to 80 E. Markison Ave., Columbus OH 43207 (interim, Emmanuel).
BENTS, MARK F., Mpls., to 2261 Clark St., Eagan MN 55122.
BOWERS, RAYMOND P. Jr., Mpls. MN, to 7721 N. Alpine Rd., Loves Park IL 61111 (Living Christ).
BROCKMEYER, ROGER A., Jamestown, to 715 Belmont Rd., Grand Forks ND 58201 (chap., United Recovery Ctr.).
BUNGE, BYRON C., Rochester MN, to Proctor Community Hospital, Peoria IL 61614 (chap.).
BURCHFIELD, BRIAN, 5 Arundel Rd., Ronde Bosch 7700, Cape Province, Republic of South Africa.

BURCHFIELD, SUSAN VANHOY, 5 Arundel Rd., Ronde Bosch 7700, Cape Province, Republic of South Africa.
DE GWECK, STEPHEN W., USAF-HCD, USAF Academy, Colorado Springs CO 80840.
DOCKTER, THEODORE O., Napoleon, to 209 W. North St., Lima OH 45801 (ext. min., St. Luke).
FLACK, SIDNEY L., France, to B.P. 31, Tolagnaro 614 Madagascar.
FOSTER, RICHARD L., Mpls. MN, to 168 W. 100th St., New York NY 10025 (Trinity).
GOLL, MARVIN I., 131 Coventry Ln., Peoria IL 61614.
GREENQUIST, VERNON C., Gillespie, to 1035 Browning Ln., Lake Zurich IL 60047 (Lake Zurich).
GUTHRIE, JERRY F., 1285 Meadow Way Cir., Hollister CA 95023 (new cong.).
HALVORSON, JOHN V., Box 456, Decorah IA 52101 (ret.).
HANSEN, RICHARD L., 103 Ridge Rd., Albert Lea MN 56007 (ret.).
HANZALIK, JOHN P., Oshkosh WI, to 224 Southwick Ct., Vernon Hills IL 60061.
HILL, DANNY L., Claremont CA, to c/o Mary Dowling, 2809 Nichols Blvd., Longview WA 98632.
JORGENSEN, CRAIG N., Tacoma, to 25320 Lake Fenwick Rd., Apt. 101A, Kent WA 98032.
KIBLER, RAY F. Jr., 816 N. Oceanbluff Ave., San Dimas CA 91773 (ret.).
KNIGGA, LARRY W., Ida MI, to 02454 Adams Ridge Rd., R. 3, Defiance OH 43512 (Bethlehem).
KRUSE, GORDON N., 6724 Backton, Klamath Falls OR 97601.
LUCIN, MARTIN S., Austin, to Immanuel Lutheran Church, Clara City MN 56222 (co-pastor).
MANCINI, ERNEST A. Jr., Concordia College, Moorhead MN 56560 (dir., alumni rel.).
MATHSEN, RAYMOND M., 16200 S. Pacific Hwy., Apt. 21, Lake Oswego OR 97034 (ret.).
MAYS, LOWELL H., 202 S. Park St., Madison WI 53715 (dir., human ecol.).
MEGORDEN, DANIEL I., St. Paul, to Sixth St. and Sixth Ave., International Falls MN 56649 (co-pastor, Zion).
MOELLER, PAUL, Alamo TX, to 3-289 US24, R. 2, Box 138, Liberty Center OH 43532.
ODDEN, ARTHUR K., Anaheim, to 11701 Studebaker Rd., Norwalk CA 90650 (chap., Southland Home).

ODDEN, ROBERT P., Dubuque IA, to 2225 W. Broadway, 308, Anaheim CA 92804.
OHNSTAD, ROBERT E., Big Rapids, to 420 W. Second St., 49347 (St. Thomas).
PETERSON, GARY DEAN, Mount Vernon, to 2500 E. Broadway, Bellingham WA 98226.
PETERSON, TIMOTHY E., Rosholt, to Box 273, Princeton IA (loy).
PHILABAUM, TIMOTHY P., Richmond MI, to 314 E. 14th St., Perrysburg OH 43551 (co-pastor, Zoar).
POLLARD, JAMES F., 73-777 Krug Ave., Palm Desert CA 92260.
ROEHL, JULIUS A., 425 E. 7th Ave., Apache Junction AZ 85201.
RUNNING, PAUL H., Everett, to 1610 Fir Island Rd., Mount WA 98273 (interim, Fir-Conway).
RUUD, PHILLIP R., Blooming Prairie, to Box 395, Mabel First (Mabel First).
SAHL, THOMAS J., 530 Third Ave. Dr. S.E., Hickory NC 28601.
SCHELPER, ARNO H., Marion St., Box 265, Partridge MS 39216.
SHELSTAD, DAVID L., Denver IA, to 707 Lakeland, Apt. B, MS 39216.
SHOUSE, RICHARD H., 9320 Meadow Way, Everett WA (Price of Peace).
SOELDNER, W. THOMAS, 10 Mildura St., Kensington NSW, Australia, Republic of South Africa.
THOMPSON, LAWRENCE L., Connell, to Box 666, Clarksburg, WV 26306.
TJARKS, STEVEN A., McCook, to R. 2, Box 31, Superior WI (Salem).
TOMLINSON, JOE H. Jr., Issaquah WA, to c/o Cammer, Route, Box 109A, Ballard WV 24918.
TRAUTMAN, DALE C., Mpls. MN, to 1330 S. University Dr., ND 58102 (Olivet).
VAN HUNNIK, GERRIT, Vining, to 1919 18th Ave. S., Moorhead MN 56560.
WECHT, DAVID I., 9221 Bellbeck Rd., Baltimore MD 21244 (asst., LSS).

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Four generations



All born outside United States

A special baptism at Calvary Lutheran Church, a congregation of the Lutheran Church in America in Murdock, Minn., brought together four generations of the same family, none born in the United States. They are: Great-grandmother Margaret Mueller (seated center), Coon Rapids, Minn., born in Korea; her daughter Katherine Clark (standing), Coon Rapids, born in Iran; Clark's daughter Carljean Larson (right), Murdock, born in Papua New Guinea; and Larson's son Timothy Jeong Eui, born in Korea. Margaret and late Rev. Henry Mueller were missionaries in Iran for the Lutheran Orient Mission. Rev. Merrill and Katherine Clark were missionaries of the American Lutheran Church who served in New Guinea, and the late Scott A. Larson, Carljean's husband, was LCA pastor serving both Calvary and the thesda Lutheran churches in Murdock.

FROM OUR PRESIDING BISHOP

New-church issues must be faced

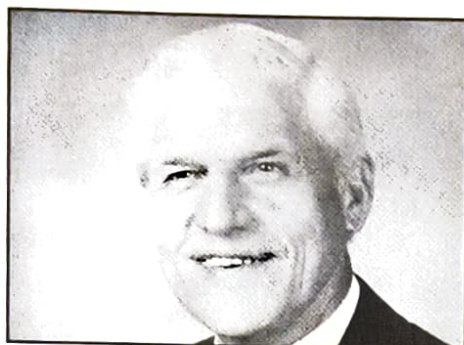
A broadly representative 70-person Commission for a New Lutheran Church (CNLC) is in the final stages of preparing a constitution and bylaws for recommendation to the August convention of the American Lutheran Church, the Lutheran Church in America, and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches.

This responsible process deserves to be affirmed. Each of the three churches is being asked to anticipate new ways of working in synods (what are in the ALC call districts) and in a new national church body. Compromises are proposed for practices that differ markedly in the present three churches. While it is impossible for members of the three church bodies to feel a complete sense of continuity as we move into the new church, the CNLC has been sensitive in seeking compromises that do not require more from one church than another.

I am certain that the ALC Church Council will, at its meeting this month, adopt resolutions calling for significant changes in the proposed constitution and bylaws. The CNLC will have to deal with strong recommendations from each of the three church bodies. This is the nature of the negotiating process, and we affirm it.

Congregational self-determination. The ALC is a union of congregations. The key question is: How much authority should synods and the national church have over congregations? ALC history and practice suggest that such authority should be limited, as it is in the present ALC constitution: (a) to faithful adherence to the doctrines of the ALC; (b) to apply discipline when loyalty to this church's doctrinal position is evident; (c) to enlist wholehearted cooperation with the program approved by this church.

Most ALC members believe that congregational self-determination should be as extensive as possible. Present CNLC proposals call for significantly increased synod authority in recommendations to congregations—and proposals for even broader synod authority.



Inclusiveness in the new church affirmed by all. Our practices should coincide with insistence that membership in Christ's church not be limited by race, gender, clergy status, or ethnic background. The issue is strategy: Should *requirements* be established for representative assemblies, councils, boards, and staff? Or should *goals* for inclusiveness be sufficient? The CNLC proposal compromises by mandating proportions of clergy-lay, male-female, and majority-minority for churchwide assemblies, councils, committees, boards, and other organizational units, while making them goals for the synods. Proposals for goals without mandates for both churchwide and synod expressions will be presented to CNLC at its June meeting.

Pension and benefit plans. Long, hard negotiations have led to a CNLC-proposed compromise on the costs of a new pension and benefits plan for pastors and lay employees. Present ALC employers' costs are 18% of salary. AELC costs are less, but in the LCA the amount is 23% of salary. The compromise calls for a basic 20% contribution by each congregation or employing agency, plus a 1% to 3% pension contribution for all plan participants 35–65 years of age. So the average employer payment would be about 21% over the next 30 years. The employing organization also has the option of providing an additional amount of up to 3%. That means congregations now providing higher payments may continue to do so. But proposals are being made to put the

required payment at 23%. That would require a 5% increase from ALC congregations and other employing bodies.

About \$41 million in major-medical benefits for retired LCA pastors, not funded by the present LCA program, will be paid from regular benevolence offerings of LCA congregations. No other way of handling this matter could be found.

Ecumenical issues of substance raised. Responses to recommendations growing out of Lutheran-Reformed dialogues and Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogues are being forged. This is an area where compromise may be difficult.

Ordained ministry. Greater clarity on this matter is being sought. The issue of ministry will continue to be a source of difficulty for Lutherans. So the plan for a study of this matter in the new church is timely.

Start-up costs for the new church require attention. As always, needs exceed available funds. It now appears that transition costs exceed available funds. Preliminary mission-support figures for 1988 soon will be available. Hard work and compromise will be necessary to settle these financial issues.

The site of national offices. The CNLC's decision on Milwaukee is being challenged from various sources. Among alternatives to be considered is a proposal by the original site committee to use present offices in Minneapolis, Philadelphia, and New York for a period of years until the new church can make its own decision.

Recent actions by the LCA's Executive Council make it clear that significant differences on these and other matters will have to be faced this summer. Resolution of these issues is required if the new church is to be born on schedule. The ALC's Church Council will be diligent in seeking God-pleasing answers to the problems before it.

David W. Preece

YOUTH ALIVE

What is love, anyway?

by Jay A. Bates

I looked across the classroom at her. "She's absolutely gorgeous!" I thought to myself. Without thinking about it, I grabbed my pencil and etched her name on my notebook. I let out a soft sigh and mumbled, "I must be in love."

Doesn't that sound familiar? I know I've said it many times. It's amazing how quickly we teenagers can fall in love. "Love" is such an easy word to say, yet such a difficult word to define. It isn't anything we can physically touch, but we can see the results of it. What is love, anyway?

Poets and songwriters have dealt with that question for centuries, and possibly the best definition of love can be found in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. "Love is patient and kind, love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."

We teenagers are at the age when we are experimenting with dif-



ferent relationships. Through our dating, we are looking for the type of person we might like as a spouse. But instead of developing a firm base for an intimate relationship, we

sometimes jump into a relationship that leads to a terrible heartache because we didn't know enough about each other.

A few years ago, a popular song included the lyrics: "Love takes time, and it's hard to find." Relationships of every kind—with your boyfriend, girlfriend, or best friend—take time to develop. We must get to know the people with whom we become involved: What are their interests, their values, their dreams? We don't necessarily need to know everything about them, but certainly more than their class schedules or whether they are good kissers.

We can use God's unselfish and all-encompassing love as a model for our relationships with other people. And we need to remind ourselves that without God, love is impossible.

"Youth Alive" is a page by, for, and about the youth of the American Lutheran Church. Youth are invited to submit original stories and essays (about 750 words) about their faith and how it relates to their everyday life. Send submissions to: Michelle Sanden Johlas, THE LUTHERAN STANDARD, 426 S. Fifth St., Box 1209, Minneapolis, MN 55440.



Jay A. Bates is a freshman at Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, Wash. He is a member of Bethlehem Lutheran Church there and was one of the writers for Faith Prints (Augsburg, 1988), a devotional book for youth.

Faith for the Older Years: Making the Most of Life's Second Half by Paul B. Maves (Augsburg, paperbound, \$9.95) is the best book yet for learning to grow older. Maves has been studying aging for 40 years and now, in his 70s, he passes on to us what has proved helpful in his own life. He shows us how to make the necessary transitions that come with growing older, how to cope with pain and suffering, how to prepare for death, and how all of life can be marked by satisfaction, continued learning, and creativity.

Genesis 37-50: A Commentary by Claus Westermann (Augsburg, clothbound, \$21.95). Westermann's magnificent three-volume commentary on Genesis is now complete, and stands as the most comprehensive, up-to-date, and perceptive interpretation of

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Genesis in English. The translation is so fresh and clear that all serious Bible students will benefit from it. Make sure it is available in your church library.

God: The Question and the Quest by Paul R. Sponheim (Fortress, clothbound, \$19.95). "Persons of Christian faith, persons of other faiths, persons of no faith—all need to come together in conversation about God," says Dr. Sponheim of Luther Northwestern Seminary. His work then is directed not only to those who believe, but also to those caught between belief and unbelief in "inner struggle."

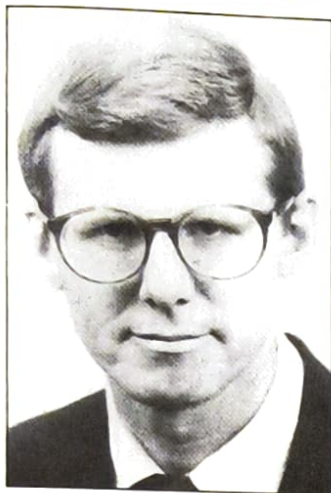
A Gift of Hope: How We Survive Our Tragedies by Roger Veninga (Little, Brown, clothbound, \$14.95). After the death of a close friend, Veninga became interested in how people react to heartbreaking tragedies. He showed how ordinary people have found innovative and creative ways to cope with such crises as loss of a spouse or child, suicide, illness or accident, an unwanted divorce, or loss of livelihood. The three ingredients Veninga considers to be the keys to surviving are forgiveness, acceptance, and hope. This book, which also lists support groups and books for further reading, will help many people regain purpose and meaning in their lives.

Roderick Olson
Augsburg Publishing House
Minneapolis, MN

THE BACK PAGE

a column of
editorial opinion

**"Like many of us
'mainline Chris-
tians,' I'm not com-
fortable with cer-
tain forms of piety,
evangelism, and
theology."**



It happened some 20 years ago. My friend Tom and I were interested in radio and TV broadcasting and had, despite the fact that neither of us was yet 20, found paid work in broadcasting. I don't recall our exact reasons, but one Saturday afternoon we decided to visit the modest studios of the new Christian radio station in my town. The announcer-engineer, welcoming our company, explained the station's operations and equipment. Then, suddenly, he asked, "Say, have you fellows been saved?"

We, who had been stalwart leaders of our respective Methodist and Presbyterian youth groups, hadn't doubted that we were, and I think we mumbled something to that effect. What I remember most clearly, however, is that we quickly departed.

Like many of us

I've changed in many ways in the years since, but, for better or worse, not in *that* one. Like many of us "mainline Christians"—a term sometimes translated as "declining in relative numbers"—I'm not comfortable with certain forms of piety, evangelism, and theology.

Neither, clearly, is H. H. Morris, author of "Christians Against Christians" (page 4). Professor Morris, whose manuscript arrived, unsolicited, on my desk a few months ago, complains that some "self-styled Christians" at his college attack—in ways that go far beyond traditional scholarly criticism—both their textbooks and

their professors in attempts to impose their narrow-minded theology on the world. He acknowledges that it's part of his job (and I sense that he's up to the task) to deal with students of all sorts. But he worries what happens when these "fanatics" attempt to impose their "strange theology" on elementary and secondary schools in the form of organized school prayer and attacks on curriculum materials.

How, we wondered, would readers of THE LUTHERAN STANDARD react to Morris's argument? To find out, we mailed Morris's article and a questionnaire to a randomly selected group of readers well in advance of our deadlines for this issue. Their responses appear on pages 7-9.

Overall, the readers who returned questionnaires agree with Morris. While 18% of the respondents agree that secular humanism "is running rampant" in their public schools, a solid majority—73%—agree that officially prescribed prayer and Bible reading don't belong in the public schools.

Surprised and comforted

It's hardly surprising that most respondents—all members of congregations of the American Lutheran Church—say their views on church-state issues are closer to the positions of the ALC than those of the Rev. Jerry Falwell. But I was mildly surprised, and comforted, when the percentages in response to that question (see page 8) turned out to be so extreme: 87% for ALC positions, versus a mere 3% for Falwell's positions.

Most ALC members, at least most of those who returned our questionnaire, may agree on some key questions about church-state relations. But it's clear from the comments on pages 8 and 9 that there's a wealth of opinion, not to mention wisdom, on these issues among our readers.

Donn McLellan

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