

THE LUTHERAN WITNESS™

VOL. 128 NO. 10 OCTOBER 2009



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UNREALISTIC—AND
FAITHFUL—PRAYER

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Providing Missouri Synod laypeople with stories and information that complement congregational life, foster personal growth in faith, and help interpret the contemporary world from a Lutheran Christian perspective.

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VOL. 128

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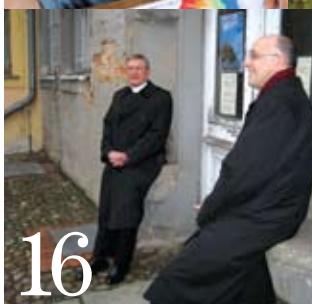
Working with autistic children can lead one to doubt one's faith. Yet, in Scripture, our heavenly Father reassures us that such doubt is misplaced.



7



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TO THE READER

We cover a lot of ground in this issue of *The Lutheran Witness*, from an overview of the current work of LCMS World Mission to stories about "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God," Martin Luther's most famous hymn; Wittenberg in the age of Luther; and our Synod's efforts today in that city. Online this month at lcms.org/witness, you can find links to *Reporter* summa-

ries of this year's 35 LCMS district conventions and to the latest news from the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Synod Structure and Governance, which is considering how best we in the LCMS can carry out our work together. Also online in our "Classic Witness" department are two Reformation stories from past

issues of *The Lutheran Witness*: "The Man Luther: Reformer," by Dr. David P. Scaer from 1983 and "Blest Halloween" by Rev. Mark Loest from 2001. We believe you will enjoy re-reading both stories.

James H. Heine, Editor
The Lutheran Witness
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Worried about Whom?

My oldest daughter went away to college this year, the University of Nevada at Reno to be exact. UNR is Division I. It is big, not huge, mind you, but big. We had to spend a whole weekend there recently just to learn about the place and what our child will be learning and living and doing. Guess what, college has changed since my wife and I were students.

On top of this, we both went to Concordia, Portland. More than 20 years ago for both of us. So the change in college life is even more remarkable from our perspective. Among other things, I am pretty sure there are more places to eat at UNR than there are places to eat in the town in which we live. Also, I suspect there are more people in my daughter's first-year math class than there were in the combined graduating classes of my high school and college.

I came home from UNR thinking there is so much more to deal with now in college than when we went to school. When we went to

Have I, as the head of my household, taught the pillars of our faith? Have we modeled a life for her so that she has seen what she should do? Have we done what God wanted us to do for her when He gave her to us as a gift? Our worst fear as parents is that we have failed in some way and that failure will cost our children down the road.

It is really I myself I am questioning. Parents tend to measure themselves by the success of their children. God does not do this. (If He did, He would pass. His Son was perfect, after all.) God knows parents are human and make mistakes. He knows our children—yes, even my daughter—are sinful. He loves us all anyway. More important for us as parents: He protects us and them anyway. He will watch over them. They will have ups and downs. He has plans for them, plans that may not go easy for them. We parents have done as well as our sinful human nature will allow us. Where we have failed, God has, and will, forgive us. He

It doesn't help because deep down it is not them
we are worried about; it is us.

Concordia, there really weren't the temptations and distractions that our daughter will have. (However, even there I managed to get into my share of trouble.)

As parents, we all have the same questions: Will our child make the right choices? Will she be strong enough to say no? Will her Christian training be enough to guide her? Will she apply those things she has learned at home, at Lutheran schools, and at church to her new life on her own? People can quote to me the train-up-your-child verse all day, and, for me, it does not answer those questions.

Why doesn't it answer those questions? It doesn't help because deep down it is not them we are worried about; it is us. We parents are questioning ourselves, not our children. Have we taught her correctly? Have I not done my job as Luther describes it in the Catechism?

won't hold it against our children. We must trust God to love and watch over our children when they go off to school. We must know that He loves and forgives us in how we raised them. So I leave you, my precious daughter, with this, my prayer, for you:

*Lord, please be with her
Night and day while she is gone.
May what she has learned as she
has been at home,
Together with Your love and grace,
Keep her safe and her decisions
good,
That no harm may befall her.
Amen.*

Mark Einspahr is a member of Trinity Lutheran Church, Gardnerville, Nev., where he is an elder.

LETTERS

Celebrating Pan de Vida

I was so pleased to read the article in the August *Lutheran Witness* about Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Detroit.

I am 81 years old, and I was confirmed and married at Bethlehem in 1946. I also attended Maybury School, which was mentioned in the article. Our first son, Jim, was baptized at Bethlehem, and shortly after that, in 1948, we moved to California. In 1993, I lost my husband to cancer, and a few months later, his sister, Myrtle, moved in with me. In 1996, we went back to Detroit for our 50th class reunion at Western High School. While we were there, we visited Bethlehem

Thank you for the article regarding Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Detroit. My husband, Rev. Dr. Melvin Zilz, grew up in that congregation. His extended family experienced the blessings of Baptisms, confirmations, marriages, and deaths within that church. It is a beautiful church building and school, and it is wonderful to see it being used for mission work in the community. May the Lord continue His work there with Rev. Lorenz and Deaconess Rodriguez!

Carole Zilz
Fort Wayne, Ind.

For all the saints

Dr. Mark Press' article, "Singing Our Mother into Eternity," in the August *Lutheran Witness* touched



Congratulations and God's blessings to Iglesia Luterana Pan de Vida.

Mary Ann Klopschinski-Lee
Pomona, Calif

and were a little disappointed in the attendance, but we were very pleased to see the wonderful condition of the church. It was a surprise to see the sign on the freeway exit: "Mexicantown." I almost felt at home, because the area in which I live in Pomona is well populated with Hispanics.

My present husband and I are members of St. Paul Lutheran Church. We are an "inner city" neighborhood; so we have several Hispanic members.

Congratulations and God's blessings to Iglesia Luterana Pan de Vida.

Mary Ann Klopschinski-Lee
Pomona, Calif.

my heart because we also sang my dear husband, Elmer, into heaven in January 2007. We, too, had sung numerous hymns those last hours, many from *The Lutheran Hymnal*. They included "Abide with Me," "Nearer My God to Thee," "I Know that Redeemer Lives," "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow," and "Now the Light Has Gone Away." Then we sang "For All the Saints," and as we concluded the last verse, Elmer breathed his last and entered heavenly glory.

What a comfort we as Christians have trusting in our Savior Jesus' atoning work of salvation for fallen mankind.

Dorothy M. Kuck
Frankenmuth, Mich.

By my side

As a former DCE who "defected" to the pastoral ministry, I found Dean Nadasdy's tribute in the August *Lutheran Witness* to be one of the finest and fittest tributes to these servants I have ever seen.

In the fall of 2006, DCE Larry Biel accepted the call to family-life ministry at Anchorage Lutheran Church, Anchorage, Alaska. He arrived the same week my wife of 37 years, Carol, was diagnosed with terminal cancer. At our second meeting, Larry looked me in the eye and said, "I'm here for you."

I believed him because in other situations I had seen that same look in the eyes of Dan Raguse and Bob Fossum, whom Dr. Nadasdy mentions, as well as Jay Musfeldt, James Quade, and numerous others. Larry was indeed here for me then and now.

I must correct my friend Dean on one point: [Rich] Bimler and [Larry] Biel did not come with guitars. But then, Fossum never owned a necktie either. All of them have been here for me when I needed them and here for the Lord and the congregations and ministries they serve. Thanks be to God!

Bill Warren
Anchorage, Alaska

Building trust

President Kieschnick is not the only one wanting the "climate of distrust" gone from among us as LCMS Lutherans ["From the President," August]. I, too. But how has this climate come about?

It has come about as one pastor and congregation practice open Communion week after week and a neighboring pastor and congregation don't. It comes about when one pastor and congregation allow secular love songs to be sung at weddings and a neighboring pastor and congregation don't. It comes about when one pastor and congregation permit an ELCA pastor to be part of an LCMS funeral service and another pastor and congregation

don't. It comes about when one pastor and congregation ignore a couple living together without holy matrimony and another pastor and congregation don't.

As in marriage, trust is built and maintained by consistent practice.

Rev. Michael Brockman
Christ Lutheran Church
Hutchinson, Kan.

Saying thank you

I appreciate the focus *The Lutheran Witness* has placed on pastoral education, most recently in the May issue. Pastors are necessary for the mission of the church, and seminaries are necessary to produce pastors. In fact, one of the reasons for forming our Synod was to establish seminaries to train pastors. Unfortunately, recent issues of *Reporter* and *Concordia Journal* state that Concordia Seminary in St. Louis receives only about 2 percent of its budget from the national budget of the LCMS, and due to the economic downturn, drastic cuts in its operating budget were necessary. Similar funding challenges exist at

(continued on page 27)



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LCMS World Mission and partners around the world are striving toward the goal of a global Lutheran mission movement.

Mission Multiplication



The global *Ablaze!* movement was conceived with the simple idea that each individual Christian is called by God to be a missionary in His service.

Lutheran church bodies around the world have latched on to this idea and have united around the *Ablaze!* goal of sharing the Good News of Jesus with 100 million people by 2017. In order for this vision to be realized, though, it is up to each of us to share the Good News with the people in our lives.

Rev. David Birner, LCMS World Mission associate executive director for international mission, points to the words of Eph. 2:10: “‘We are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.’ We are so valued by God, our Creator, that He claims us through Christ as His own for eternity. He also creates opportunities for us to engage other people with His message of love and life in Jesus.”

Even as God calls on each Christian to be a missionary, He also calls on the Church to multiply these efforts, as Paul instructed Timothy: “And the things you have heard me say

in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others” (2 Tim. 2:2 NIV).

Heeding this call, LCMS World Mission places missionaries in strategic positions where they can help Christians multiply their ministry efforts. Specifically, LCMS World Mission missionaries carry out their work in five unique, but interconnected, activities:

- **Outreach**
- **Church Planting**
- **Leadership Training**
- **Strategic Mission Development**
- **Global Multiplication**

Yes, LCMS missionaries often work in a combination of these areas. Yet, typically, a missionary—or a mission team—will focus on one primary type of service. Outreach is the core to all our mission activity. Whether church planting, leadership training, strategic mission development, or global multiplication, our work is to always multiply the number of believers sharing their faith.



Seth and Shannon Hoeppner and members of Trinity Lutheran Church, Battambang, Cambodia

OUTREACH

Outreach focuses on sharing the Good News of Jesus through one-on-one relationships developed in day-to-day life. In essence, all of us serve as outreach missionaries.

C.F.W. Walther, the first president of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, understood this and made it a focal point of his message to the early Lutheran church in America: “Every believing Christian should really be a missionary, that is that everyone has the duty to do everything within his calling and station in life to bring also to others the treasure of the saving knowledge which he has already found.”

For many LCMS Christians, this “calling and station in life” may be our local community, workplace, and home. For others, God has prepared a different “station”—the vocation of overseas missionary service.

At present, there are more than 1,100 people serving through LCMS World Mission, including career, long-term, and short-term missionaries; international educators; and military chaplains. Many carry out their missionary service with a primary focus on outreach, including Seth and Shannon Hoeppner, who serve at Trinity Lutheran Church in Battambang, Cambodia—the first Lutheran congregation in the country.

“We came to Cambodia with the desire to start an English class at the church as one way of outreach for the community,” explains Shannon. “After a few months of our own Khmer language training, we began classes. Every day we see that the people of Cambodia are hungry for His Word. They are in darkness, but there is a light on the horizon.”

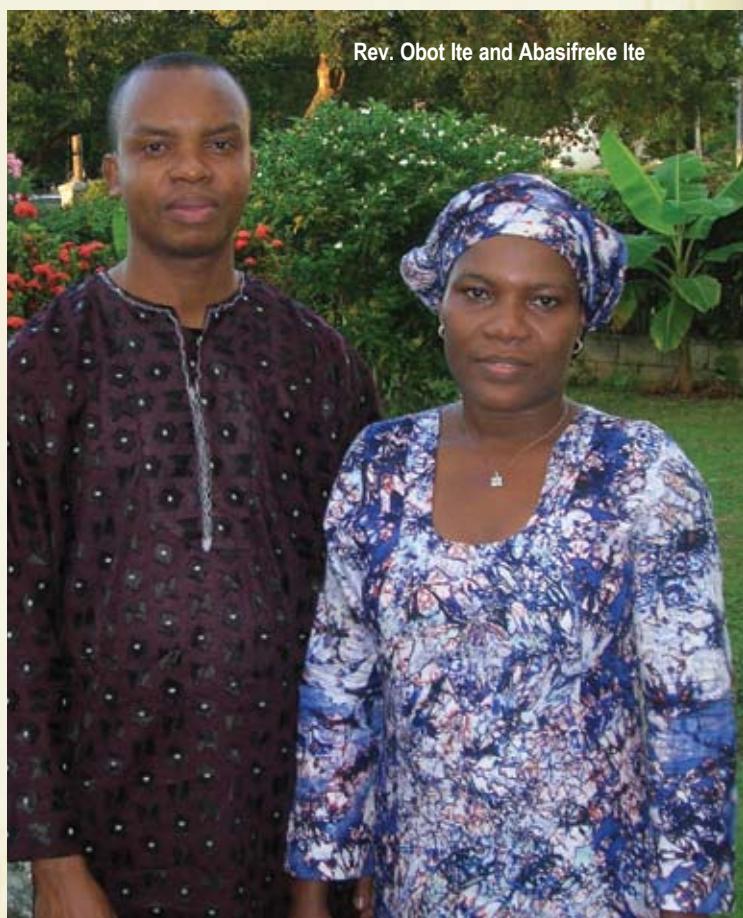
The family of an ESL student, Sa Haa, is one such example of how people have encountered Jesus because of the outreach in Battambang:

‘God created us and the opportunities for sending us out to engage others. Our joy, then, is discovering God at work and walking alongside Him.’

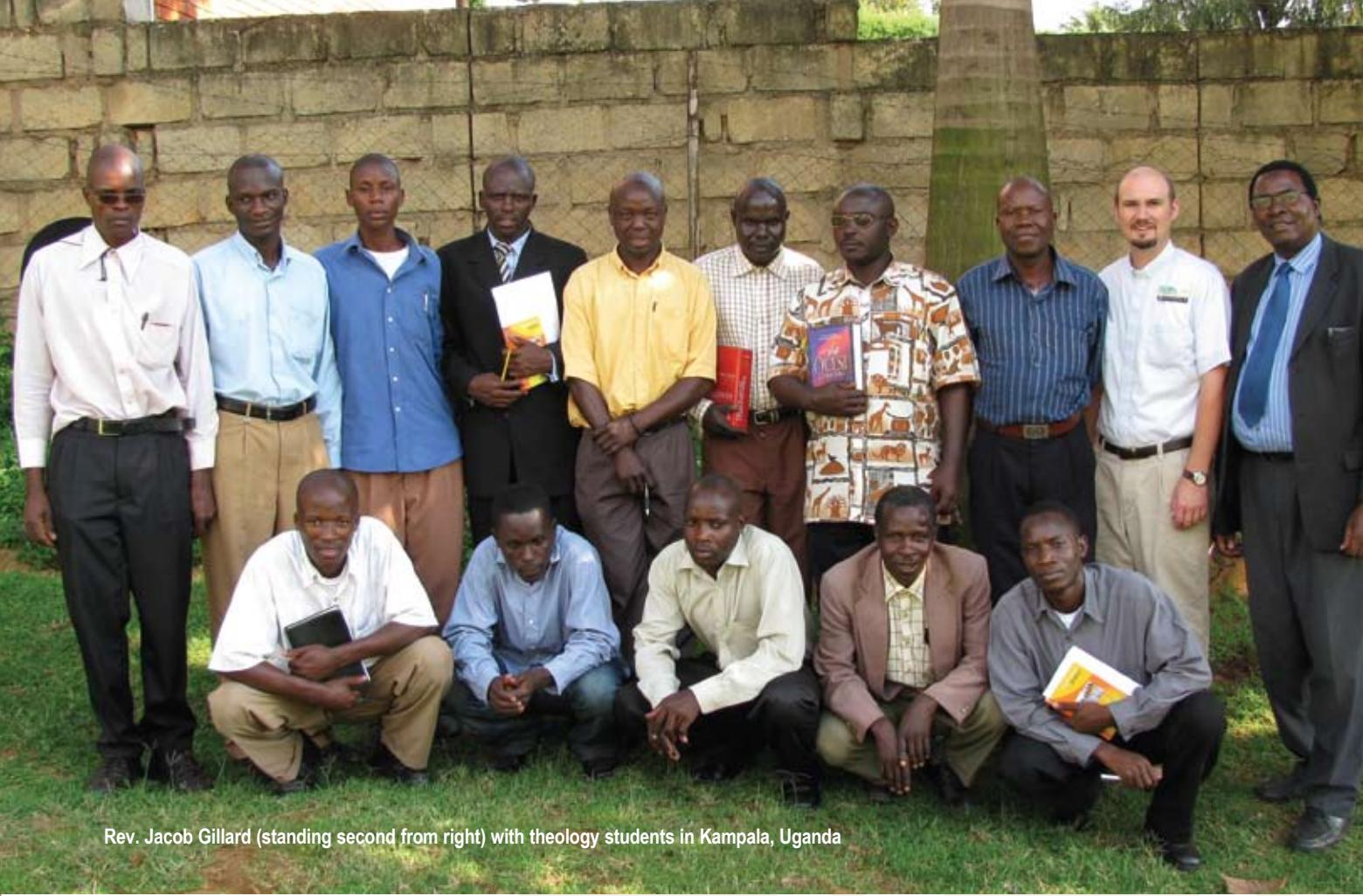
—Rev. David Birner

“Sa Haa is a new Christian, but his family had never had the chance to hear much about Christ or to meet other Christians,” Seth says. “A group of us from Trinity traveled the 40 kilometers to their home and spent the afternoon with them. We prayed that somehow God’s Word would come to them. Well, we were certainly surprised on Sunday, when during the opening songs, Sa Haa’s parents and his younger brother entered the church. They were greeted warmly. We could tell by their making the long trip that they are curious about our God and His plan for salvation.”

In addition to full-time outreach missionaries like the Hoeppners, LCMS World Mission also provides many opportunities for LCMS Christians to serve as short-term outreach missionaries around the world, and people of all ages are answering God’s call to serve His mission in this way. In 2009 alone, more than 580 individuals are expected to participate in short-term missionary service through LCMS World Mission.



Rev. Obot Ite and Abasifreke Ite



Rev. Jacob Gillard (standing second from right) with theology students in Kampala, Uganda

CHURCH PLANTING

Church planting focuses on gathering individuals who have encountered the Gospel into a larger community for further study, fellowship, and worship around Word and Sacrament. An important goal of church planting is to equip new believers to become outreach missionaries within their families, relationship networks, and communities.

Building on the foundations laid by a previous era of church-planters, LCMS missionaries work with local pastors and evangelists to connect new believers with vibrant congregations in their own setting and culture.

As part of the *Ablaze!* Alliance missionary program, Rev. Obot Ite and his wife, Abasifreke, were sent from the Lutheran Church of Nigeria as missionaries to Jamaica, with assistance from LCMS World Mission. They serve at St. Andrew Lutheran Church in Kingston, Jamaica, where they focus their efforts on church planting.

Rev. Ite is striving to equip the people of this growing congregation to reach out to their neighbors with the hope of planting new congregations on the island. His focus on church planting can be seen in the congregation's short-term goals, all of which have been initiated or completed:

- Double the number of active members
- Equip at least 20 members of the congregation so they can bring others to the Lord
- Hold a four-day rally
- Initiate an outreach to youth and form a team of 20 youth by year's end

'Every believing Christian should really be a missionary, that is that everyone has the duty to do everything within his calling and station in life to bring also to others the treasure of the saving knowledge which he has already found.'

—C.F.W. Walther

"We really thank God for the transformation and renewal of the hearts of members in this congregation since we began serving in Jamaica," says Rev. Ite.

LEADERSHIP TRAINING

As local congregations grow, so does the need for well-trained and equipped leaders to carry on the work. LCMS World Mission missionaries who focus primarily on leadership training typically work as professors or trainers in mission-training centers, Bible schools, or seminaries. *Leadership training* multiplies the effectiveness of each missionary since



Rev. Patrick O'Neal with a colleague from the Lutheran Church in Korea

every person he or she trains has the potential to share the Gospel with hundreds of people per month.

Two missionary couples in Uganda—Rev. Jacob and Michelle Gillard and Vicar Shauen and Krista Trump—are actively involved in leadership training.

Together with their co-workers in the Lutheran Church Mission Uganda (LCMU), Jacob and Shauen have launched a leadership-training program called Theological Education by Extension (TEE). They write:

"Our work involves intense teaching for 22 lay leaders twice a month in the capital, Kampala, as well as frequent trips in every direction to visit and encourage these men and their congregations. The teaching is a combination of lecture and interactive workshops. We're often in front, teaching; but we also tap Ugandans and short-term visitors. TEE delivers leadership training that is both practical and theological—ranging from seventh-grade catechesis to the university level. It is scheduled for the first and third weekend of every month, and the intensive instruction runs from Friday morning to late afternoon on Saturday. The leaders return to their congregations or preaching stations Saturday night, and by Sunday morning they're often putting into practice what they learned the day before."

"Not everyone who successfully completes the two-year program will apply for seminary. Some will find it better to remain in their local context and serve with their newly acquired TEE training. It's a privilege to help the LCMU meet their pressing leadership training needs!"

STRATEGIC MISSION DEVELOPMENT

As they grow and expand, communities of Lutheran Christians around the world form church bodies, schools and universities, social service organizations, and a myriad

In addition to full-time outreach missionaries. . . . , LCMS World Mission also provides many opportunities for LCMS Christians to serve as short-term outreach missionaries around the world. . . . In 2009 alone, more than 580 individuals are expected to participate in short-term missionary service through LCMS World Mission.

of other means through which they permeate and impact their world.

Strategic mission development is based on the insight that Lutherans around the world need relationships that establish trust and credibility in order to link these people and organizations together in action to accomplish the *Ablaze!* vision they all hold. Strategic mission development activity helps to link these organizations with the human and financial resources necessary to build capacity, partnerships, and activity around this vision.



On the Korean Peninsula, LCMS World Mission is working closely with the Lutheran Church in Korea (LCK) and Agglobe Services International, a U.S.-based nongovernmental organization, to develop humanitarian and agricultural projects for a series of collective farms in North Korea.

Together with their LCK counterparts, LCMS missionaries Rev. Carl Hanson and Rev. Patrick O'Neal have worked to generate support for these projects by developing partnerships with LCK congregations, LCMS congregations in Iowa, and Church of All Nations in Hong Kong, as well as other groups such as the LCMS Missouri District and the Lutheran Women's Missionary League.

"While this is a different type of work that we are now engaged in, it is a direct outcome of past effort," says Hanson. "We could not be here except for the vitality of the Lutheran Church in Korea and all the capacity they have to offer this future work."

GLOBAL MULTIPLICATION

Through their outreach, church planting, leadership training, and strategic mission development efforts, LCMS World Mission missionaries and their partners around the world are striving toward the goal of a global Lutheran mission movement dedicated to calling people into the kingdom of God.

Rev. Brent Smith



"Our sincere hope and prayer is that this movement would not be restricted to the present day or even to the present *Ablaze!* goals, but that God will grow this movement and use it to call people to faith in Jesus," says Birner.

It is an important task of missionaries in the 21st century to work with church leaders from many different cultural, ethnic, and national backgrounds to develop plans and strategies focused on working together and supporting each other's efforts to share the Good News with people who do not know Him.

One example of global multiplication comes from the Eurasia region, which includes Europe, Russia, the former U.S.S.R. states, and Central Asia. The rise and fall of Communism, the growth of Islam, and the tidal wave of globalization have profoundly affected the people in this region.

Rev. Brent Smith, LCMS World Mission's regional director for Eurasia, explains how no fewer than five Lutheran church bodies, the Concordia University System, and other specialized ministries are working together to make a difference in the region:

"In January 2008, after a year of preliminary research, an area facilitator was asked to relocate to start new work in a Muslim-majority country—a country once home to the early Christian church.

"Since then, eight additional workers have been trained and deployed to work in the areas of church planting, EFL (English as a foreign language), medical [outreach], and university outreach. Lutheran sermons are beginning to be broadcast on Christian radio. Lectures from guests have been read in the university. Two partner churches, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of England and the Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany, have participated in the new initiative, and the first short-term team was deployed in September."

While the country must remain unnamed, Smith says the multiplying of people who link others in outreach is taking the LCMS and its partners "to places they have never been before."

"We know that God has been at work, is working, and will continue to work His work of reconciling the world to Himself in Christ Jesus," Birner says. "God created us and the opportunities for sending us out to engage others. Our joy, then, is discovering God at work and walking alongside Him."

Based in Hong Kong, Joshua Lange (jwalange.wordpress.com) serves the LCMS as a communication-specialist missionary throughout Asia—finding ways to effectively communicate what God is doing through missionaries and mission projects in the region. Lange is a native of Jefferson City, Mo., where his home congregation is Faith Lutheran Church.



If you would like to



- **get involved** in missionary service through LCMS World Mission, visit www.lcmsworldmission.org/service to see the most up-to-date listing of short-term and long-term mission opportunities. You can also contact a placement counselor through mission.recruitment@lcms.org or call 1-800-433-3954.

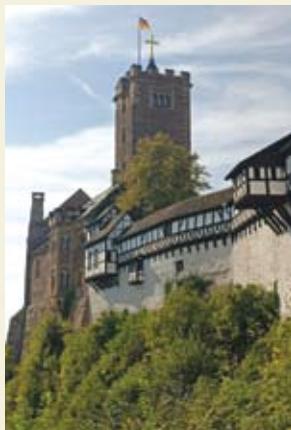
- **pray for and learn about** an LCMS missionary or missionary family, simply download Missionary Prayer Cards at www.lcmsworldmission.org/prayercards.

LCMS World Mission **QuickFacts**

- As the Global Gospel Outreach of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, it is the sending arm of the Synod.
- Sent its first overseas missionary, Rev. Theodore Naether, to India in 1895.
- Today, has mission work or relationships in more than 88 countries, including the United States.
- All international mission work is organized in four global regions: Africa, Asia, Eurasia, and Latin America.
- The LCMS has 30 official partner church bodies worldwide.
- Works in partnership with districts and mission organizations to support outreach, church planting, and church revitalization efforts in the United States.
- LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces is included in LCMS World Mission. The 220-plus LCMS chaplains are considered missionaries to the men and women of the armed forces.



A MIGHTY FORTRESS



More than ‘the Battle Hymn of the Reformation’

As a boy I remember celebrating our bicentennial in 1976. Everyone was proud to be an American, or so it seemed to a child. All across the nation were decorations of red, white, and blue. Fireworks lit up the night sky and parades rolled down the streets of cities and towns during the day. People had renewed interest in the founding fathers, and there was talk of freedom and liberty. Churches offered prayers for the nation, and pastors spoke with thankfulness on how the Lord had blessed America. When the “Star Spangled Banner” played, people were proud, and some were brought to tears. This was America’s song of independence, full of pride and hope.

I also remember being in church in October 1976 as the organ played “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God.” The procession marched down the aisle with the cross in front. The pastors wore robes with scarlet stoles. The entire congregation roared with lusty singing. What a moment! How proud I was to be a Lutheran on Reformation Day. When I sang “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God,” I felt as if I were thumbing my nose at the devil, the world, and all enemies of the Church. This hymn was the song of the Reformation, full of hope and pride.

Yet, is there more to this great hymn than I imagined at the time?

SEEKING COMFORT IN DISTRESS

Many people today think of “A Mighty Fortress” as the “Battle Hymn of the Reformation.” It is one of the most translated hymns in the history of the Church, having been translated into more than 200 languages. What many of us might not realize is that the Festival of the Reformation was not celebrated during Luther’s lifetime. Therefore, the hymn was not written to celebrate the Reformation, which is the commemoration of the publication of the Ninety-five Theses on Oct. 31, 1517. Only later, after the Thirty Years’ War (1618–48),

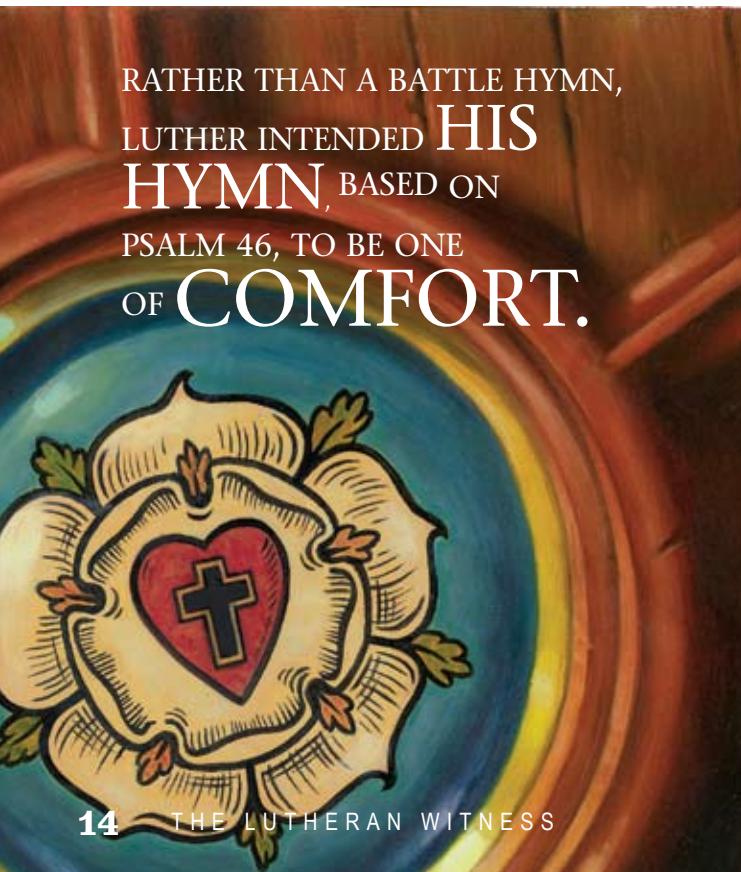
when the Reformation was celebrated as a regular part of the church year in Saxony, Luther's home region, did the hymn become associated with the festival.

Considering that "A Mighty Fortress" is Luther's most famous hymn, we know remarkably little about it. Nor are we even sure when Luther wrote it. The earliest existing hymnal in which it appears is from 1533. (From the records of 19th-century hymnologists we know that there were a few hymnals that contained "A Mighty Fortress" before 1533, but these hymnals were destroyed in the bombing of Dresden during World War II.) Most scholars think Luther wrote the hymn between 1521 and 1529, with the majority of scholars settling on 1527–28.

These years were some of the darkest in Luther's life. A heading from a broadsheet (something akin to modern "sheet music") of "A Mighty Fortress" published in Augsburg in 1529 reads "A Hymn of Comfort." Rather than a battle hymn, Luther intended this hymn, based on Psalm 46, to be one of comfort. While we are not certain what prompted Luther to write the hymn, scholars have suggested a number of events during these dark years.

In August 1527, a man who followed Luther's teaching was martyred. In the fall of 1527, a plague broke out in Wittenberg. In December 1527, Luther wrote to a colleague: "We are all in good health except for Luther himself, who is physically well, but outwardly the whole world and inwardly the devil and all his angels are making him suffer." A few days later, in January 1528, Luther wrote that he was undergoing a period of temptation that was the worst he had experienced in his life.

RATHER THAN A BATTLE HYMN,
LUTHER INTENDED HIS
HYMN BASED ON
PSALM 46, TO BE ONE
OF COMFORT.



When Luther speaks of "temptation," he uses the German word. While *Anfechtung* is translated "temptation" or "trial," it refers to anything that causes anxiety, doubt, fear, suffering, or terror in a person's life. For instance, in December 1527, Luther's daughter, Elizabeth, was born sickly. In May 1528, she died. The six months of wrestling with the Lord in prayer to save his sick daughter was a period of temptation (*Anfechtung*) for Luther. He was mentally and spiritually fatigued. He was under the cross of suffering. Yet, he took comfort in the Psalms and trusted in the promises of Jesus.

STRUGGLES IN THE CHURCH

Besides the challenges brought on by the plague and tragedy in his personal life, struggles abounded in the Church. From 1517 to 1525, most of Luther's focus was on abuses within the Roman church. From 1525 onward, the struggles came from multiple fronts. Luther felt that his family, reputation, and work for the Reformation—that his entire existence—was at stake.

Because of its association with Reformation Day, many people not only think of "A Mighty Fortress" as the "Battle Hymn of the Reformation," but also as a battle cry against the pope and Rome. Yet, when Luther likely wrote the hymn, his greatest challenge arose from other groups that had broken away from Rome. There were people who claimed to follow the Bible (and Luther) who wanted to revolt against the government, something Luther did not approve of. Others questioned whether pastors were necessary; they believed anyone could proclaim the Word of God. Some doubted whether infants should be baptized. The greatest and most divisive controversy among the reformers also took place during these years—the Sacramentarian Controversy, that is, the fight over the Lord's Supper.

For 1,500 years, the Church had understood and confessed that Jesus gave His true body and true blood to eat and to drink in Holy Communion. No one within the Church questioned this. After the Reformation began, various interpretations about the Lord's Supper appeared. People argued that Jesus could not really mean what He said, and that the words, "This is My body . . . This is My blood" needed to be understood in a different way. For instance, the Swiss reformer Zwingli argued that "is" did not mean "is" but rather "symbolized." Others argued that it is impossible for Jesus to put His body and blood on many altars at the same time. Still others said that because Jesus' body was in heaven, it could not be on earth, too. In total, several hundred different interpretations appeared, all denying that Jesus actually gave His body and blood to eat and to drink in the Lord's Supper.

Luther saw this controversy as directly related to the proclamation of the Gospel. He believed that the literal words of Jesus needed to be confessed and defended.

In this controversy, Luther argued that there was nothing more true, certain, or powerful than the Word of God. Indeed, the Lord's Word is a "mighty fortress." In the battle between Luther and the Sacramentarians, the Lord's Word



A rare copy of an early printing of "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God." This copy is in the Lutherhaus Museum in Wittenberg.

IN LUTHER'S DAY, THERE WAS THE **VERY REAL DANGER** THAT HE COULD LOSE HIS LIFE, ALL HIS POSSESSIONS . . . NEVERTHELESS HE SINGS THAT 'OUR **VICTORY HAS BEEN WON; THE KINGDOM OURS REMAINETH.**'

was the "trusty shield" to defend against their error and the "weapon" used to fight against them. The evil foe was using deceit and "deep guile" to obscure the words of Jesus.

In stanza 3, the hymn says, "Though devils all the world should fill." Luther truly believed he was living in the Last Days because the preaching of the Gospel—that we are justified by grace through faith—and the Scriptures were clearly taught, and controversy after controversy arose. The world seemed full of "devils" perverting the Lord's teaching. The stanza concludes, "One little word can fell him." In the case of the controversy over the Lord's Supper, the little word that "can fell" the devil is "is" from the Lord's words, "This is My body . . . This is My blood."

The hymn concludes by confessing that the Word of the Lord will remain in the world even if people are not thankful for it. In Luther's day, there was the very real danger that he could lose his life, all his possessions, his reputation, and his family. Nevertheless, he sings confidently that "our victory has been won; the Kingdom ours remaineth." Luther's hymn is one of comfort and hope in the midst of trial and temptation, and strife within the Church.

A HYMN THAT UNITES

A few years ago, I visited Madagascar. A vibrant Lutheran church exists there numbering in the millions. We arrived in time for worship on the first Sunday in Lent. While we could not understand the words spoken, many parts of the service were familiar because the liturgy of our churches is similar. The Gospel reading for the first Sunday in Lent is the temptation of Jesus. After 40 days in the wilderness, Jesus was tempted in every way that you and I will ever be tempted. He was tempted to question and doubt

the very promises of God. In the midst of His temptation, Jesus "felled" the devil with one little Word. He called on the promises of God recorded in the Scriptures. Because Jesus defeated the devil's temptations, we know that in Him we, too, will overcome the devil's temptations and trials. After this comforting Gospel lesson was read, we heard the melody of "A Mighty Fortress." Here in Madagascar, thousands of miles from our churches in America, the Malagasy were singing this great hymn of comfort. Through a common liturgy, lectionary, and this famous hymn by Luther, Lutherans around the world were united in confessing how the Lord is our Mighty Fortress.

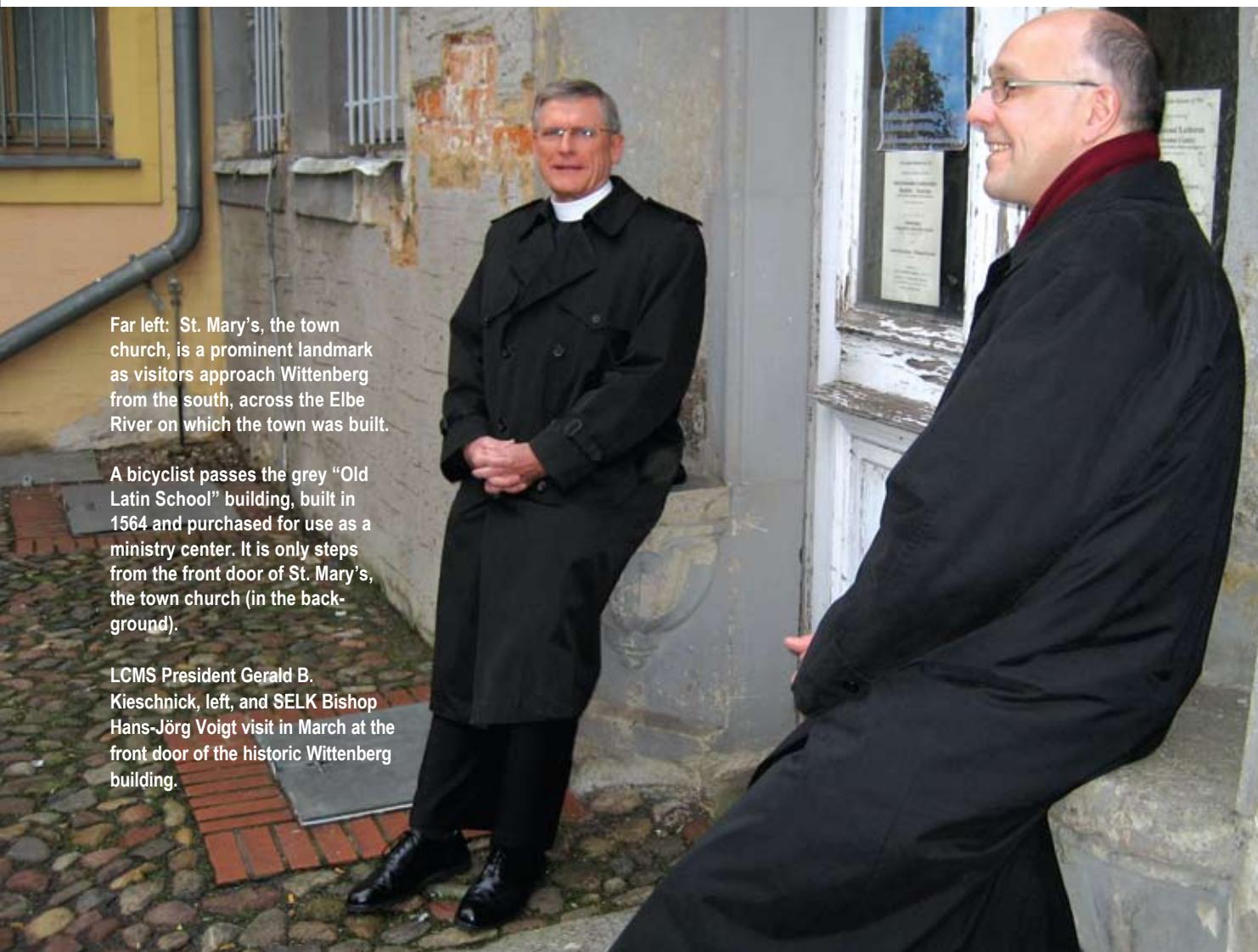
Although my understanding of this great hymn has changed since I was a boy, I still love to sing "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" on Reformation Sunday. Now rather than being merely the "Battle Hymn of the Reformation," the hymn is so much more for me. It is the great hymn of comfort in the midst of trial, suffering, and temptation. This hymn reminds us how Martin Luther, and others, preached the truth in love in the face of many obstacles and hardship. Rather than finding a single event behind this hymn, we can see how the plague, the death of his child, the controversies in the church, and other struggles in his life caused Luther to cling to his Lord, who is the Mighty Fortress of all those who trust in Him. Because of this, we can sing this great hymn of comfort, not only on Reformation, but also during Lent and whenever we are in need of comfort.

Dr. Albert B. Colver (albert.colver@lcms.org) is executive pastoral assistant for LCMS World Relief and Human Care.

A Wittenberg Update



Wittenberg. This picturesque German town, situated on the Elbe River about an hour's train ride south of Berlin, is where Martin Luther taught as a professor, preached in the Town Church, and ignited the Reformation by posting his 95 Theses on the door of the Castle Church.



Far left: St. Mary's, the town church, is a prominent landmark as visitors approach Wittenberg from the south, across the Elbe River on which the town was built.

A bicyclist passes the grey "Old Latin School" building, built in 1564 and purchased for use as a ministry center. It is only steps from the front door of St. Mary's, the town church (in the background).

LCMS President Gerald B. Kieschnick, left, and SELK Bishop Hans-Jörg Voigt visit in March at the front door of the historic Wittenberg building.

Wittenberg was Luther's home for 36 years. It's where he proclaimed God's Gospel of forgiveness and eternal life for all—by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, on the basis of Scripture alone.

Today, nearly 500 years later—in the wake of oppression first by Nazism, then by Communism—only about 15 percent of the town's 50,000 residents say they are Christian.

Enter The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and its German partner, the Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church (known by its German abbreviation, SELK). Working together, the two church bodies hope to renovate the "Old Latin School," a four-story high school built in 1564

that has been vacant for some 16 years and is just steps from St. Mary's Church—Luther's *Stadtkirche*, or Town Church.

The idea is to renovate the school as a new Lutheran ministry center sometime before the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017.

A detailed ministry plan is being developed. The original vision for the "Wittenberg project" includes the following:

- ✿ Re-establishing a German-language SELK congregation—to reach out to the town's non-Christians with the Gospel of Jesus Christ
- ✿ An "International Lutheran Welcome Center"—to give tourists an opportunity to learn

more about Martin Luther, the Reformation, and, most important, the Gospel that Luther and the other reformers restored to the Church

- ✿ A place for theological study—to enable Lutheran pastors, students, and laypeople to deepen their understanding of Reformation events, people, and theology

Both the SELK and the LCMS "believe that it is important that our churches and the theological confession for which we are known around the world be represented in Wittenberg, the birthplace of the Reformation," says Dr. Samuel H. Nafzger, new chairman of the super-



The LCMS and its German partner, SELK, want to renovate this former boys' high school so that it can be used as a Lutheran ministry center.
Inset photos—Mahsman, top, and Nafzger, bottom

visory board of the International Lutheran Society of Wittenberg (ILSW). The ILSW, a non-profit German corporation and a Recognized Service Organization of the LCMS, was established in 2007 to operate the Wittenberg project on behalf of the two church bodies. (See the October 2007 issue of *The Lutheran Witness*.)

Nafzger was named to the post July 22, succeeding SELK Bishop Hans-Jörg Voigt, who said he stepped down as the board's chairman "to advance this important project, putting the leadership into the hands of our American brethren." Voigt called Nafzger "ideally suited for the position" and "one of the leading theologians of the LCMS."

Voigt, who pledged to continue his support for the Wittenberg project "with all my heart," characterized it as "not only meaningful, but necessary."

Also at its July meeting, the board named Rev. David L. Mahsman to succeed Dr. Wilhelm Torgerson, who is retiring as the ILSW's managing director.

After serving four years as assistant to the executive director of LCMS World Mission, Mahsman began serving July 1 as director, special assignments, Eurasia, for LCMS World Mission. He will continue in that post as well.

Torgerson expressed high regard for his successor's background, noting especially his years of service as a church journalist. Mahsman was for 20 years the Missouri Synod's director of news and information and executive editor of its two official periodicals, *The Lutheran Witness* and *Reporter*.

"I am looking forward to getting to know the

Wittenberg community and its leaders, to developing many positive relationships, and finding ways to implement the goals that led to the founding of the ILSW by our two church bodies," says Mahsman, who is now based in Wittenberg.

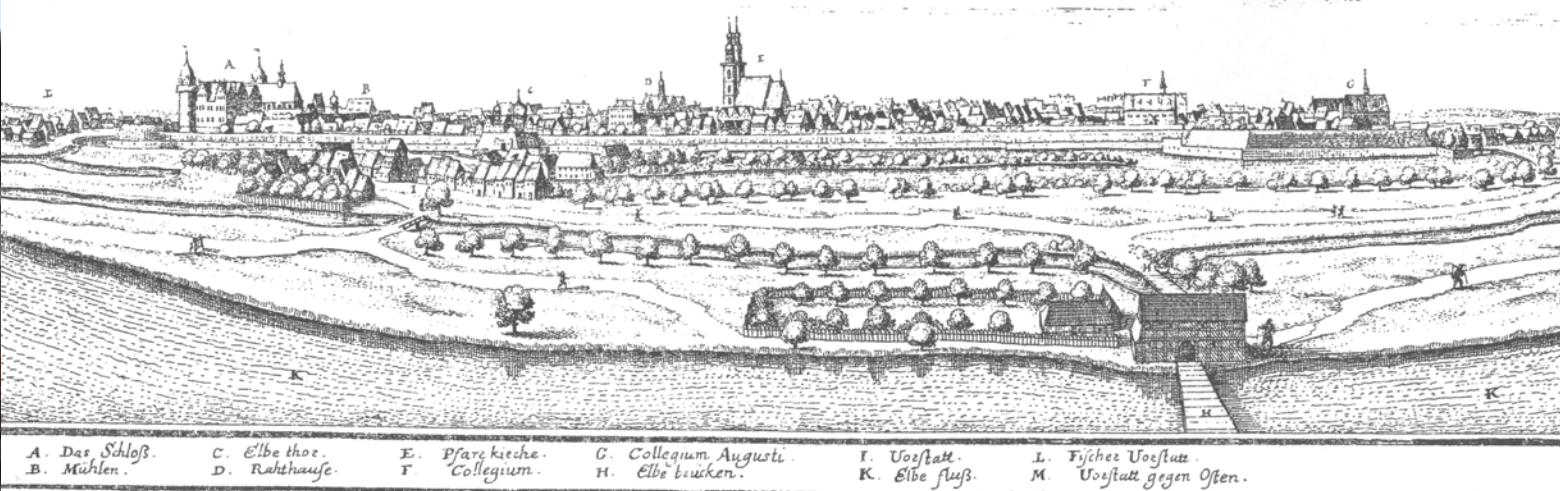
The 16th-century school building that will become the new Lutheran ministry center was purchased by the ILSW with a donation from the LCMS Central Illinois District Church Extension Fund. The project got its start from the SELK, LCMS World Mission, LCMS World Relief and Human Care, and Concordia Publishing House.

The Synod and the SELK hope that some \$4 million can be raised to renovate the building, which needs a new roof, a new stucco façade, new windows and doors, an elevator, new stairways, new heating and air systems, and inside furnishings.

The Wittenberg project is a formidable undertaking, but one with special opportunities, according to Mahsman. Not only will the Gospel be shared with the town's residents and hordes of tourists, but Lutherans can "gain a stronger, more confident Lutheran identity, and strengthen their own witness to Christ."

Adds Mahsman: "There is no better place for this to happen than in Wittenberg."

Paula Schlueter Ross (paula.ross@lcms.org) is a staff writer for the LCMS Board for Communication Services and a contributing editor for *The Lutheran Witness*.



In 1517, Wittenberg was a modest medieval town with a new university at the intersection of ancient trade routes in northern Europe. Yet, by the grace of God, from this unremarkable backwater on the Elbe River flowed a theological and intellectual revolution that changed the world.

Wittenberg—"White Mountain"—was, in truth, little more than a sand hill along the Elbe River flowing toward the Baltic Sea. From the mid-12th century, it guarded trade routes intersecting there, developing into a local devotional site for pilgrims and serving as a governmental center for Saxony-Wittenberg. The city's stature grew when the Saxon prince became one of seven voters who elected the Holy Roman Emperor, who ruled not Rome but the German lands.

In 1485, Saxony was divided between brothers Albert and Ernest. Ducal Saxony, including the territory's university in Leipzig, went to Albert, while Ernest's portion retained the vote for the emperor—hence Electoral Saxony. His son Frederick ("the Wise") wanted to educate his professionals at home, so Wittenberg University opened in 1502.

Scholasticism had long dominated late medieval universities, using syllogistic logic from Aristotle to unpack everything, including theology. Renaissance humanism (not to be confused with modern secular humanism) offered a rival approach, using the classical liberal arts. When the new university's charter called for teaching "posy and the arts," Wittenberg stood ready to usher in a new era.

Luther entered monastic life in 1505 and began studying theology in 1507, arriving in Wittenberg to finish

his doctorate in 1511 before staying on as a professor of biblical theology at the university. When biblical languages and history helped him discover the Gospel and understand God's working in history to save His people, he rejected Scholasticism and pressed to emphasize the liberal arts in Wittenberg's curriculum.

theology professors in exchange. That's how Luther got there. A new university building stood a few steps away, though Luther lectured in the cloister. And at the center of Wittenberg, St. Mary's Church served the townsfolk, with Luther regularly filling the pulpit. (He is buried, however, in the Castle Church, just in front of the pulpit.)

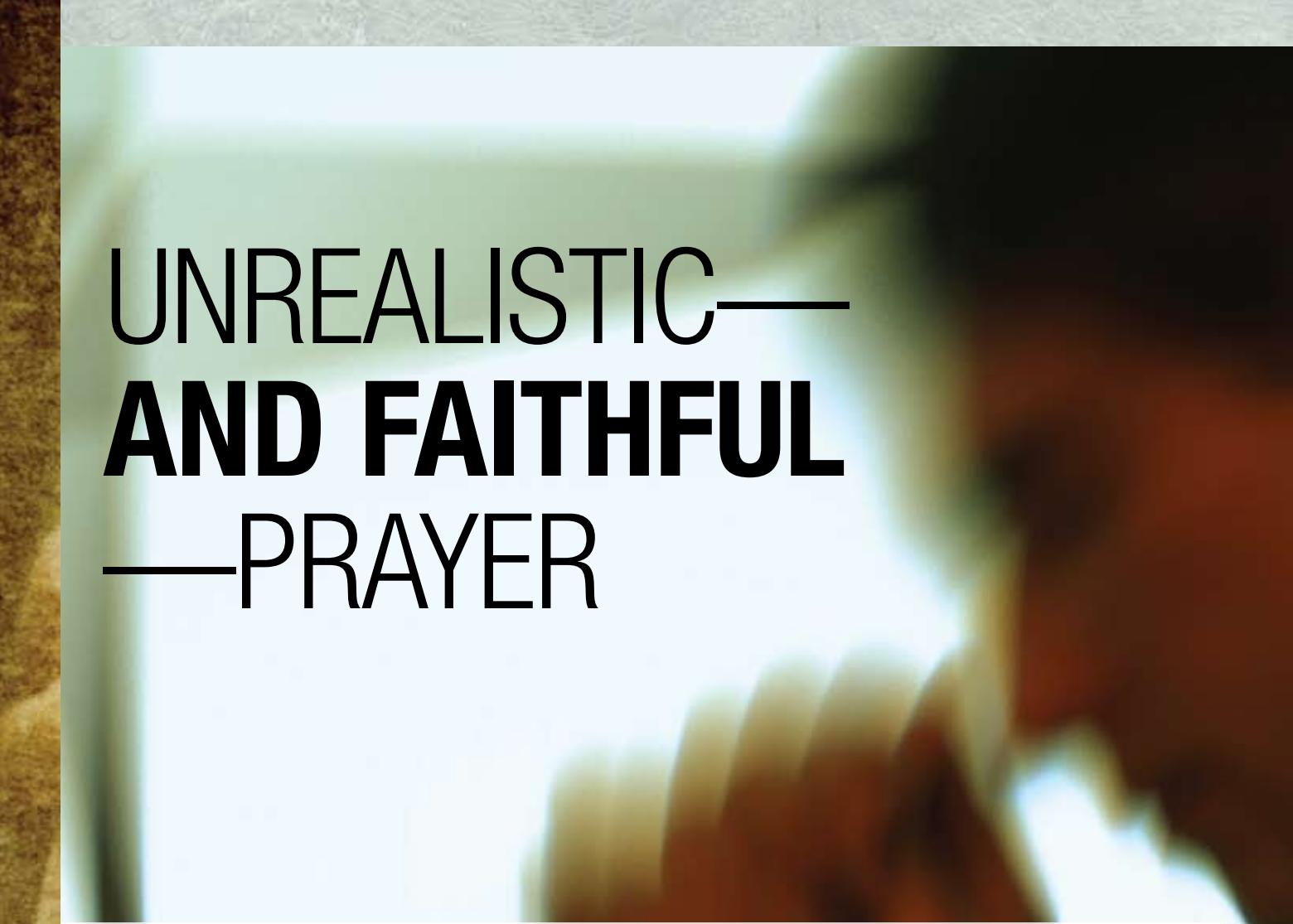
Wittenberg Then

As a result, students flocked to Wittenberg even before the evangelical Reformation further swelled the ranks. The city itself had about 2,000–2,500 residents and was roughly eight blocks long and four blocks wide. Elector Frederick replaced the old fortress with a Renaissance-era castle at one end of town, along with a church that housed one of the grandest relic collections north of the Alps. (The doors from the Ninety-five Theses were burned later, in 1760, during the Seven Years' War. Actually, the whole church was badly damaged. That's why today the Castle Church is whitewashed on much of the interior—to hide the smoke and fire damage.)

Near the other end of town, Frederick built a cloister for the Augustinians, who promised to provide

One historian called Wittenberg "Academic Siberia," and Luther would agree the place was modest at best. Although the university was moved to Halle in 1817, in Luther's day Wittenberg became the focal point of a theological revolution. It's all still there to see, even as the Reformation message goes on.

Dr. Robert Rosin is professor of historical theology at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and also serves with LCMS World Mission as coordinator for theological education in Eurasia.



UNREALISTIC— AND FAITHFUL —PRAYER

O Lord, our heavenly Father, almighty and everlasting God, You have safely brought us to the beginning of this day. Defend us in the same with Your mighty power and grant that this day we fall into no sin, neither run into any kind of danger, but that all our doings, being ordered by Your governance, may be righteous in Your sight; through Jesus Christ. Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (LSB, p. 228)

This prayer, or one like it, can be found in Catholic, Episcopal, and Lutheran rites. It's an ancient prayer, dating before A.D. 600. Similar prayers can be found in the Eastern Orthodox rites. Millions of Christians have prayed this prayer for more than a millennium.

But as ancient and beautiful as this prayer is, it is also audacious and completely unrealistic.

By the time I pray this at the close of Matins, I've usually been impatient with my children and with other drivers, and irritated that more people don't come to Matins with me. But even if I prayed this before Matins, while still in bed, even before opening my eyes, I'm not sure this petition

to live a day without sin could happen. When our sins are so ingrained in our thoughts, when one sees sin as woven into the fabric of our perceptions and intentions, our very being has sin attached. St. Sisoes (d. A.D. 429) reflected this in his final words: "Indeed, I know not if I have clutched at the very beginning of repentance."

True repentance is lifelong, and godly repentance must go as deep as the sin that ails us. A day without sin would be a day without words, a day without actions, a day without others, even a day without thought—an impossibility. The prayer is a completely unrealistic petition, so far outside our experience it is nearly insulting in its presumption.

That is the point of the prayer, however.

Christians are to flee from sin. St. John could be bold enough to write, "My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1 NKJV).

However unrealistic it is, the desire of the Christian is to follow after Christ, to be "perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48). The definition of "repentance" involves a determination to turn one's back on sin, to strike out in a new direction, to change the mind, to set it "on things above," to be strangers to this world and our sin-stricken flesh.

And so this petition to live a sin-free day is a prayer of humility. It is impossible for anyone to accomplish this; we sin by “thought, word, and deed,” as we say in the general confession. Praying for something so far out of our experience can only be an admission that God must accomplish it for us. It is only our Lord who may grant such grace and strength. So in humility it is our prayer that God would give us such grace as to accomplish this.

Despite the faithfulness and humility of this prayer, our “inner pragmatist” still tells us it is ultimately useless. Pragmatism tries to convince us there is no use in doing something or trying something that cannot be done. Goals should be realistic, else disappointment and despair may overcome. No matter the scriptural integrity or the beauty of this prayer, in the end it is impossible, and therefore pointless. That’s what our inner pragmatist tells us. There is no point in praying this way, that we should live a day without sin, because it can never be done.

So should we submit our faith to only those things that are of proven value, of demonstrated usefulness? Should we be practical, pragmatic Christians? After all, even devout Christian parents will caution their children from praying for the impossible—or what seems impossible for us.

To test this pragmatic function, we can ask, “Would a Christian pray the opposite?” Would a Christian pray that God would grant us our request to fall into sin? Should we keep our prayers within the limits of what may actually happen, within what we can reasonably expect? Should we measure what is possible and confine ourselves to that?

Praying that practical, realistic petition—that God would allow us to sin—would certainly be practical and realistic, but also completely satanic. Our faith is impractical, our hope is unrealized, our visions unseen, our lives

one of striving, but not yet attaining. This is a major theme of the New Testament; the apostles remind us not to sacrifice our hope in things unseen (2 Cor. 4:18) for what is immanent and tangible. “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1 ESV), and the Christian faith is one not of pragmatism, of realism, but of striving for the salvation that is ahead.

Martin Luther once wrote this:

This life is not godliness, but growth in godliness; not health, but healing; not being, but becoming; not rest, but exercise. We are not now what we shall be, but we are on the way; the process is not yet finished, but it has begun; this is not the goal, but it is the road; at present all does not gleam and glitter, but everything is being purified. (AE 32:24)

Hope is not hope if the thing hoped for is easily realized or immanently revealed. Faith is not faith if the things believed in are seen. The Christian who has received this faith and hope in things to come is a most unrealistic man or a most idealistic woman.

So for more than a thousand years, Christians everywhere have begun their mornings praying that they would not sin that day, hoping against hope that God would do the impossible for us, putting to death our inner pragmatists who warn it is impossible, and hoping that perhaps today, through God’s great help, we will conquer the sin that crouches at our door.

Rev. Christopher D. Hall is pastor of Redeemer Lutheran Church, Enid, Okla. He blogs at christopherdhall.com.



True repentance is lifelong, and godly repentance must go as deep as the sin that ails us. A day without sin would be a day without words, a day without actions, a day without others, even a day without thought—an impossibility.



In these latter days, God requires only faith, not an understanding of the world's minutiae. . . . On certain days, at quiet moments in the boy's room, I recognize that under my blinded eyes the Spirit may be moving in David and delivering to him an understanding that far surpasses my worldly wisdom.

Every morning I knock on the door of a small home in a working-class neighborhood outside Los Angeles. I slip cold hands into my pockets, wait, and listen for familiar voices on the other side of the door.

"David, he is here."

The door opens, and the boy's mother, not yet 30, smiles wearily and says with a heavy accent, "Hello, come in."

The boy himself stands near the television. Or in the kitchen. Or at his mother's side. He greets me with a high pitched "Seth!" and stamps his feet. When I first met the boy, he did not greet me at all. After a few months, he greeted me with a neutral blink. A few months after that, he began to open the door and blurt out, "Time to work!"

Today, the boy stands at his mother's side. I come in and kneel down and ask him how he feels this morning.

Naturally, he doesn't answer. The boy—we'll call him

David—is 6 years old. He has dark brown hair, dark brown skin, and dark brown eyes. He is autistic. He was diagnosed 16 months ago at a state-funded regional center; not long afterward, I started to work with him. Today, I take David's undersized hand and lead him to his bedroom, where we begin our first speech exercises.

I have worked with David for nearly a year-and-a-half. I work under the supervision of speech therapists and child psychologists. Their services are too expensive for most families with autistic children, so they train people like me (graduate students, mostly) to work in the children's homes on a part-time basis. The past two years, I have spent many hours with these children, helping them to perform simple tasks, to say simple things, to learn rudimentary skills that other parents take for granted their children will learn.

You know autism when you see it. Many children turn 5, 6 years old without uttering a coherent sentence. Before

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I met David, I worked with a girl who drooled and pinched her face whenever given food that was not entirely intact. I worked with a boy who, at 5, stared at reflected sunlight rather than playing with other children. Another boy I worked with had not learned to chew food properly. When I began to work with David, he had virtually no communication skills. He still wore diapers. He did not talk or even point when he wanted something.

When I looked into the eyes of David, on those first days, I sought the spark that glitters in the eyes of all children. I saw it occasionally. I saw

sure, but even now I catch his mother, on bad days, crying into her hands in the kitchen. A bad day would be when David points to his pants and says, "I love you, toilet" not long after saying, "I love you, Mom," underscoring the fact that David has not grasped the true meaning of the words, "I love you."

The strange connection between words and knowledge is never so clear as when working with young autistics. I try not to dwell on it. I try not to fathom the terrible logic of it. The serpent, we must remember, tempted Eve with logic, and I know too well where

explain this to a child who cannot tell me what he did 10 minutes ago? How would I explain this to an adult who has yet to learn the meaning of *Hello*?

I have no answer. On certain nights, I consider asking God, but I suspect that He will not answer because, in the end, I do know the answer, only find it unsatisfactory. It is what theologian Karl Barth answered when asked about the most important thing he had discovered after decades of academic, theological study: *Jesus loves me, this I know . . .*

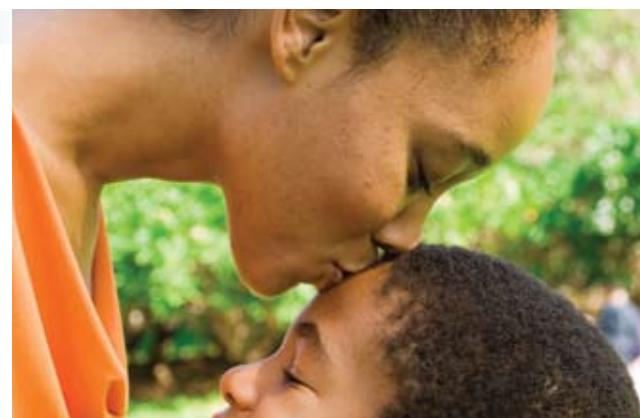
Could I teach David to understand those simple six words? Perhaps.

The strange connection between words and knowledge is never so clear as when working with young autistics. I try not to dwell on it. I try not to fathom the terrible logic of it. The serpent, we must remember, tempted Eve with logic, and I know too well where my own logic (the logic of a fallen mind) will take me—into doubt, into anger, into the agnostic mantra: **God would never let this happen.**

it when he laughed, when he learned to ask for cookies. But too often, I saw no spark in those wavering irises. I saw blankness. I saw disinterest. I saw David seeing the world, and it was a strange world of shapes and colors without names, of voices and figures without meaning. With each child, it is only through time and practice (and patience) that I witness an emergence from this disinterested shell. Sometimes a child emerges partially, like a girl who learns to say only what she has been taught to say. Sometimes a child emerges brilliantly, like a butterfly from a chrysalis. David has emerged only partially. He has come far, to be

my own logic (the logic of a fallen mind) will take me—into doubt, into anger, into the agnostic mantra: *God would never let this happen.*

And yet I always wonder: How will David and children like him, children more disabled than him (not to speak of the adults), how will they understand the Word when they cannot understand the words? How would I explain to David that God created the world, that 2,000 years ago He incarnated Himself in a Jewish peasant, and that this humble peasant sacrificed Himself on a cross because humanity had fallen and could not abide by God's moral law? How would I begin to



Perhaps then, when the boy understands the definition of love, when he connects feelings with words, I won't worry when I ponder the plight of children who cannot understand.

But what of understanding? Today, David and I work through exercise after exercise, trying to make him understand words, speech, and proper behavior. But at some point, through all the repetition, through all my striving to make David understand the things of the world, I slowly realize this: all understanding is trivial as long as we come to understand those simple six words: *Jesus loves me, this I know.* My faith commands me to believe that

Foolish Things of the World

the Spirit inhabits us in Baptism (Acts 2:38–39), that faith begins in that new birth (Titus 3:5–6—even for infants and autistics). My faith tells me to believe that an understanding of Christ's love co-inhabits regardless of linguistic abilities, regardless of educational abilities, regardless of what I think transpires behind autistic eyes.

Paul tells us, in a message often overlooked, that God has had His fill of the world's "wisdom." He writes: "For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe" (1 Cor. 1:21). It reminds me that what I take for foolishness, what I view as a lack of understanding, may be the grace of God Himself in disguise.

Paul further tells us that "God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise" (1 Cor. 1:27). I myself am put to shame in doubting God over the simple ignorance of an autistic

child. Who am I to judge what kind of knowledge and understanding brings glory to the Almighty? In these latter days, God requires only faith, not an understanding of the world's minutiae (otherwise only Ph.D.s would inherit the kingdom!). On certain days, at quiet moments in the boy's room, I recognize that under my blinded eyes the Spirit may be moving in David and delivering to him an understanding that far surpasses my worldly wisdom. It is a humbling possibility. It is humility itself. It reminds me that God continually shatters all expectations; that God appears where we never expect Him; that God uses the foolish things of the world to lower us all.

A member of St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Pomona, Calif., Seth Long is a graduate student and lecturer at California Polytechnic University, Pomona.



Disabilities Ministries and Your Congregation

by Dean Nadasdy

Autism is just one of many disabilities we may confront in life. Here are a few ways a congregation can serve people with disabilities and their families:

- **Invite and welcome** the disabled person as one who seeks to know Christ or as a fellow baptized disciple, called to worship, grow, and serve.
- **Develop a team** of individuals committed to lead the congregation in its ministry with the disabled. Often these teams are led by a "champion," with a deep passion for disabilities ministries. Be sure the team includes people with disabilities. A great question to ask: In what specific ways has God equipped our congregation to serve people with disabilities and their families? Pay special attention, too, to the barriers (architectural, administrative, physical, curricular, and attitudinal) obstructing ministry with the disabled.
- **Educate the church.** Begin with leaders and then help the whole congregation learn what to expect in worship and other settings from those with disabilities—sounds, movements, ticks, etc. What at first might be distracting or even annoying can over time be understood and accepted.

- **Work toward sensitizing** each ministry in the church (choir, youth group, Sunday School, small groups, etc.) to their unique opportunities for service with the disabled in their midst.
- **Identify the unique gifts** of each person with a disability. Disabled servants are also willing and able servants, each with a unique set of often extraordinary gifts and skills.
- **Host respite evenings** for parents or families of the disabled, providing care for the disabled family member at church while parents or family spend a night out.
- **Provide group support** for parents and families of those with disabilities—from a biblical, Christ-centered perspective.
- **Invite, train, and encourage** buddies, or partners, who will worship and attend classes with a disabled friend. These mutually caring relationships can grow deep and meaningful for both buddies along the way.
- **Network** with local agencies, group homes, and schools, offering assistance and partnerships in meeting the needs of the disabled in your area. Consider, for instance, offering transportation to worship services from a group home. Many people with disabilities have little or no contact with the church. Mission opportunities abound here.

One thing I've noticed about our congregation: We are all disabled in some way, some of us more visibly disabled than others. Yet, God's grace in Jesus Christ embraces us all, and because God is able, God can use us all!

Dr. Dean Nadasdy (nadasdy@woodburylutheran.org) is senior pastor of Woodbury Lutheran Church, Woodbury, Minn., and the Synod's fourth vice president.

Note: The "official notices" are published for a single purpose only: giving notice of a result, namely, changes in the Synod's membership rosters by the addition or deletion of the names of individuals and congregations. It is not always appropriate that reasons for the changes be identified in the published notices. Since a change can occur for any of a variety of reasons, no assumptions may be made merely from the fact that a change has occurred.—Ed.

Official Notices— From the Districts

TERRY J. REBERT, Lake Orion, Mich., resigned from the Ministers of Religion—Ordained roster of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod as of July 21 and is, therefore, no longer eligible for call consideration. REV. JAMES R. MCCOY, Fenton, Mich., resigned from the Ministers of Religion—Ordained roster of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod as of Aug. 13 and is, therefore, no longer eligible to receive a call—Rev. C. William Hoesman, President, LCMS Michigan District.

CIMBERLY PARRIS was removed from the Ministers of Religion—Commissioned roster of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod by the district president due to non-response, effective July 15, 2009.—Rev. Gerhard C. Michael Jr., President, LCMS Florida-Georgia District.

REV. BRADLEY HOPFENSPERGER, associate, Summit of Peace, Thornton, Colo., resigned from the Ministers of Religion—Ordained roster of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, effective Aug. 3, 2009. He is, therefore, no longer eligible for any call considerations.—Rev. Randall Golter, President, LCMS Rocky Mountain District.

Official Notices— Colloquies

PATRICIA L. FAGALIDE, West Chicago, Ill.; ELIZABETH GOODINE, Glendale, N.Y.; JOY ROBERSON, Worden, Ill.; RACHEL ZIMMERMAN, Edwardsville, Ill.; MARRIBETH CISSELL, O'Fallon, Mo.; CHERI FERNEDING, Irving, Texas; DANIEL HUSE, Onarga, Ill.; ASHLEY LESSMAN, Becket, Ill.; CORTNEY O'BRIEN, Grand Rapids, Mich.; WILFRED PENNINGTON, Centralia, Ill.; LINDA RUSSELL, Roseburg, Ore.; NICOLETTE SMITH, Lincoln, Neb.; HEATHER STAHL, Everett, Wash.; ANNALISA TOTH, Lake Orion, Mich.; and LISA A. SINGLETON, Grandville, Mich., have submitted their applications for the Teacher Colloquy Program of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod through CUEnet. JOHN LU, Irvine, Calif., has submitted an application for the Teacher Colloquy Program of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod through Concordia University, Irvine, Calif. RHONDA A. SYNOVEC, Shawnee, Kan.; ANGELA BRENNER, Jefferson City, Mo.; MEGAN A. MIESSLER, Winter Springs, Fla.; PATRICIA L. HAMILTON, Fort Worth, Texas; LEAH R. STEINBRONN, Boise, Idaho; BRIAN H. ZIELKE, Elburn, Ill.; RICHARD G. STENGL, Mosinee, Wis.; CHRISTOPHER BOCCALUPO, Islip, N.Y.; and ERICA I. CORLITO, Brooklyn, N.Y., have submitted their applications for the Director of Christian Education Colloquy Program of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod through Concordia University, St. Paul, Minn. Correspondence regarding their applications should be directed within four weeks after publication of this notice to Dr. William R. Diekelman, Chairman, Colloquy Committee, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295.

CHRISTINE BERGER, Las Vegas, Nev.; LARK MAYESKI, San Diego, Calif.; VALERIE K. MUÑOZ, San Diego, Calif.; SUSAN WINSCHER, Riverside, Calif.; and CANDACE McMULLAN, Riverside, Calif., have completed all requirements of the Teacher Colloquy Program of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and are, therefore, eligible to receive a call.—Dr. Becky Peters, Director, Colloquy Program, Concordia University, Irvine, 1530 Concordia West, Irvine, CA 92612-3203.

SANDRA K. BOSTIC, Cape Girardeau, Mo., and BRENDA S. SCHMIDT, St. Louis, Mo., have completed all requirements of the Teacher Colloquy Program of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and are, therefore, eligible to receive a call. KYLE J. MC CLURE, Conover, N.C., has completed all the requirements of the Parish Music Colloquy Program of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and is, therefore, eligible to receive a call.—Mark A. Waldron, Director of Teacher Colloquy, Concordia University Chicago, 7400 Augusta St., River Forest, IL 60305-1499.

NATHANIEL WATT, Green Bay, Wis., and TALITHA BEAUDEAN, Jackson, Mo., have completed all requirements of the Teacher Colloquy Program of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and are, therefore, eligible to receive a call.—Brian L. Friedrich, President and CEO, Concordia University Nebraska, 800 N. Columbia Ave., Seward, NE 68434-1599.

VICTORIA FONG, Tomball, Texas; ADAM KLUTH, Houston, Texas; TAYLOR SMITH, Tomball, Texas; and KIMBERLY CHAISSON, Tomball, Texas, have completed all requirements of the Teacher Colloquy Program of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and are, therefore, eligible to receive a call.—Dr. Jim McConnell, Assistant Colloquy Program Director, Concordia University Texas, 11400 Concordia University Drive, Austin, TX 78726.

JULIANE PAPLOW, Heron Lake, Minn., completed all requirements of the Teacher Colloquy Program of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and is, therefore, eligible to receive a call.—Dr. Stephen C. Stohmann, Director of Colloquy, Concordia University, St. Paul, 275 Syndicate St. N., St. Paul, MN 55104.

Official Notices— Requests for Reinstatement

RICHARD LATERNER, Jordan, Minn., and KURT OVERWAY, Hudsonville, Mich., have applied for reinstatement to the Ministers of Religion—Ordained roster of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. JENNIFER STOLLENWERK, Waukesha, Wis., and CHERYL WILLIG, Indianapolis, Ind., have applied for reinstatement to the Ministers of Religion—Commissioned roster of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Correspondence regarding these applications should be directed to the undersigned for receipt no later than Nov. 5.—Dr. Raymond L. Hartwig, Secretary, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295.

SMP Progress Report

The 2007 Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod passed Resolution 5-01B, "To Establish Specific Ministry Pastor Program." Res. 5-01B contained a reporting mandate: "That the Specific Ministry Pastor Committee submit a progress report to the Synod at least nine months prior to the 2010 convention." It is in compliance with this reporting mandate that the SMP Committee is pleased to provide its report to the Synod electronically in the form of a PDF document, accessed from www.LCMS.org/PastoralEducation. The report will

be posted on Oct. 14. Questions and comments may be directed to Dr. Glen Thomas, executive director, LCMS Board for Pastoral Education, 1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122; Glen.Thomas@LCMS.org; 314-996-1258.

Call for Nominations/Positions

The Lutheran Witness welcomes notices for positions available at affiliated entities and Recognized Service Organizations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The deadline for receipt of such notices is the 20th of the month two months prior to the publication month (e.g., Oct. 20 for the December issue). Send notices to karen.higgins@lcms.org.—Ed.

LCMS Florida-Georgia District Lutheran Church Extension Fund seeks applications and nominations for the position of **vice president**. The individual selected for this position will serve on the Florida-Georgia District Executive Team and be responsible for the operation and promotion of the Lutheran Church Extension Fund ministry. This full-time position is open to an individual who shall be a member in good standing of a congregation of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Core competencies include a strong mission-outreach ministry perspective, a grasp of financial and banking principles, demonstrated abilities in leadership, motivation, and an obvious servant/leader approach. Skills sought include those of a leader, organizer, communicator, team player, teacher, financial advisor, and counselor.

A detailed position description is available on the Florida-Georgia District Web site at <http://www.flga-lcms.org/financeLCEFVPJobDescription.pdf>, along with an application form. Applications and nominations must be postmarked by Nov. 30 and mailed to LCMS Florida-Georgia District, Attention: President, VP-LCEF Search Task Force, 7207 Monetary Drive, Orlando, FL 32809.

The following institutions of the Concordia University System (CUS) are seeking candidates for positions described below:

Concordia University, St. Paul, Minn., seeks to fill the following faculty position: **Dean, College of Education**.

Concordia University Wisconsin, Mequon, Wis. seeks to fill the following faculty positions: **Pharmacy Practice; English**.

Concordia University Chicago, River Forest, Ill., seeks to fill the following faculty positions: **Instructional Design and Technology, Mathematics**.

For more information about these and other CUS positions, including complete job descriptions, qualifications, and application process, visit <http://www.lcms.org/cusjobs> and click on "Positions Available at Our Campuses."

Anniversaries

The Lutheran Witness welcomes notices of no more than 50 words from LCMS congregations about their upcoming "milestone" anniversaries. The deadline for receipt of such notices is the 20th of the month two months prior to the publication month (e.g., Oct. 20 for the December issue). Send notices to karen.higgins@lcms.org.—Ed.

Zion, Bethalto, Ill., will celebrate its 150th anniversary in all worship services on Oct. 3–4. Rev. William Hemenway, emeritus, will be the guest

Just Friends?



My husband is a wonderful Christian man, caring and friendly with everyone. Frequently, he will have lunch with other women from work and our congregation to discuss “business” matters. He says men and women can be just friends. I am fearful of an affair, but he says not to worry. What do you think?

Thank you for your willingness to be open about a subject that is more common than many Christian spouses care to admit.

Your question speaks to the reality of sin in any relationship and the fact that every spouse is capable of unfaithfulness. Even King David, “a man after God’s own heart,” had an adulterous relationship, revealing the weakness of the flesh when tempted by sin.

Affairs are usually triggered by romantic thoughts and fantasies. For that reason, it is good to be reminded of the Bible’s admonition, “above all else, guard your heart [thoughts],” (Prov. 4:23 NIV). It may be that your husband’s friendships with other women are completely appropriate. It is also true that affairs frequently grow out of an innocent relationship with a neighbor, a person at work, even a fellow church member. Also, in the 21st century, affairs often commence through such online activities as e-mail, text messaging, and social-networking sites.

Without clear boundaries, opposite-sex friendships can quickly become entangling affairs. Frequent contact with a person who meets the emotional needs one’s spouse does not meet can lead to a powerful emotional connection that grows into a strong physical attraction. And the process often happens subtly. Think of a relationship like a bank account. A rich, rewarding marriage has a positive balance because the “deposits” (nurturing words and behaviors) exceed the “withdrawals” (hurtful actions and words). In a budding relationship between non-married friends, however, there is often little to find fault with, or reasons to “make withdrawals.” When that balance exceeds the account balance between husband and wife, the marriage is in danger. To avoid this, clear boundaries are essential, such as restricting your individual friendships to those of the same sex, and relating to people of the opposite sex only as a couple. In the case of lunches, I would encourage three or more individuals at the noon meeting when discussing “business” matters.

A marriage cannot be successful unless it is based on giving through self-sacrificing love. Christ’s relationship with the Church is the perfect example. I pray that by the time this column appears your husband has been willing to set reasonable limits with other women out of respect for your concern. If differing opinions persist, however, I encourage you to speak with your pastor or a professional counselor about how best to proceed.

Dr. Randy Schroeder is a member of the Pastoral Ministry and Missions Department at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind., where he is a professor of pastoral counseling.

Send your questions to Family Counselor, *The Lutheran Witness*, 1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295. Please include your name and address.

NOTICES

speaker. A catered banquet will be held after the 11 a.m. service Oct. 4. Contact the church office at 618-377-8314 or visit www.zionbethalto.org.

Oklahoma Avenue, Milwaukee, Wis., will celebrate its 75th anniversary with a 9:15 a.m. worship service Oct. 4. Congregational sons Dr. James Voelz will deliver the sermon and Rev. Ralph Tausz will serve as worship assistant. The service will be followed by a reception and meal. Contact the church office at 414-543-3580 or info@oalcs.org.

St. John, Monroeville, Ind., will celebrate its 160th anniversary at the 10:30 a.m. worship service Oct. 11. Dr. Dean O. Wenthe, president of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind., will be the guest preacher. A banquet will follow. Contact the church office at 260-639-6404 or flatrockoffice@eawifi.com.

Zion, Guthrie, Okla., will celebrate its 110th anniversary at the 10:45 a.m. worship service Oct. 11. Rev. W.R. Rains will preach. An Octoberfest luncheon and afternoon activities will follow. Rev. Barrie Henke, LCMS Oklahoma District president, will preach at the 4 p.m. worship service. Contact the church office at 405-282-3914.

Trinity Cristo Rey, Santa Ana, Calif., will celebrate its 100th anniversary at 4 p.m., Oct. 11. Guest speaker will be Dr. Robert Holst, president of Concordia University, St. Paul, Minn. A celebration banquet will follow at the Embassy Suites, 1325 E. Dyer Road, Santa Ana, Calif. Contact the church office at 714-542-0784.

St. Paul, Phoenix, Ariz., will celebrate its 50th anniversary with a worship service of praise and thanksgiving at 2 p.m. Oct. 18, followed by a catered dinner. Dr. Larry Stoterau will be the guest preacher. Contact the church office at info@stpaullutheran-az.com or 623-846-2228.

Faith, Carpinteria, Calif., will celebrate its 50th anniversary at the 9 a.m. worship service on Oct. 18. Rev. Loren Kramer will be guest speaker. A catered meal will follow. Contact the church office at 805-684-4707 or visit www.faithcarp.com.

Grace, Strong City, Kan., will celebrate its 125th anniversary at the 10:45 a.m. worship service Oct. 18, with a potluck fellowship to follow. Former pastor Rev. David Hutson, will be guest preacher at the 2 p.m. special celebration service. Contact the church office at 620-273-8685.

St. Paul, New Kensington, Pa., will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the dedication of its church with a 5:30 p.m. dinner at the Clarion Hotel, followed by a 7 p.m. service Oct. 23. Rev. Mark Ruppert will conduct the service, with some of the past pastors as speakers. Contact the church office at 724-339-2829 or St. Paul Lutheran Church, 1001 Knollwood Road, New Kensington, PA 15068.

St. Paul, Flint, Mich., will conclude its 100th anniversary celebration with a special seminar on Islam and Christianity, featuring Dr. Paul Maier, on Nov. 7. Dr. Maier will be the keynote speaker at the 10 a.m. worship service Nov. 8. Contact the church office at 810-239-6200.

Redeemer, Nacogdoches, Texas, will celebrate its 50th anniversary Jan. 22–24, 2010, with a Friday-evening coffee hour and a Saturday-evening dinner. The celebration will conclude with a morning worship service with the congregation’s first pastor, Rev. Beltz, emeritus, presiding. Visit www.redeemerlutherannac.com.

Post No Bills

As part of a Visiting Committee (VC) in a school accreditation process, I recently visited a Catholic high school in a neighboring community.

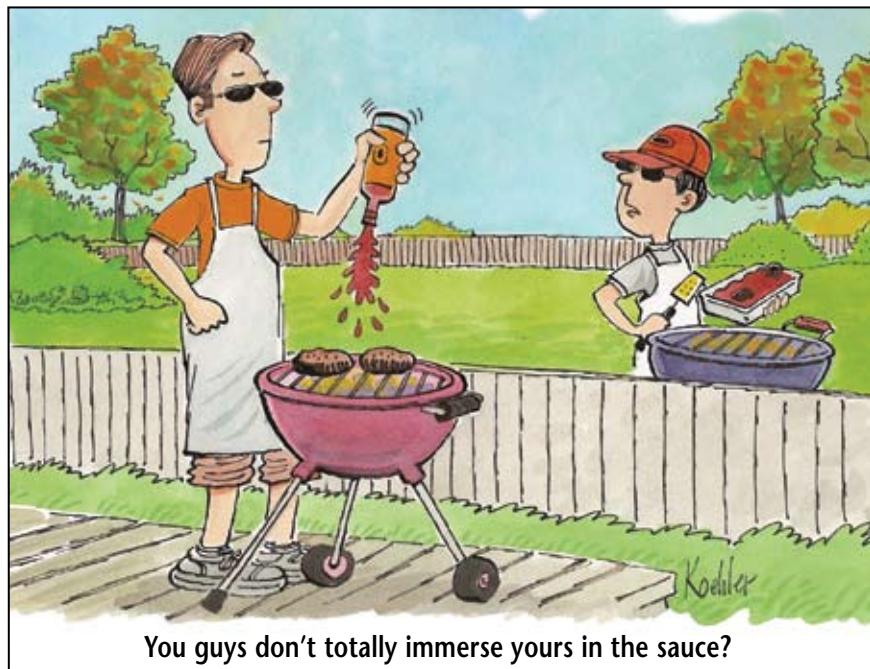
The first night of such a visit is usually an informal meet-and-greet for the VC and the stakeholders of the institution. After the president of the school, Father Nick, finished his introductions, it was our team's turn to do the same. Being the last of the VC to introduce himself, I quickly realized that I was the only non-Catholic in the room. I introduced myself as the principal and deacon of a Lutheran school and church and then jokingly added, "I guess I'm the token Lutheran tonight."

Father Nick responded without hesitation (and with a grin), "Oh, that's okay, Kris. You're still welcome. Just don't go posting anything on any doors!"

Kris Schneider
Bethany Lutheran School
Vacaville, Calif.

101 Donations?

George, my 4-year-old grandson, was asking my daughter-in-law, Molly, to read him a book. Unfortunately,



because George didn't have the title down pat, and because he didn't have the book in hand, my daughter-in-law couldn't decipher the title to which he was referring. George kept saying, "One dollar, one donation; one dollar, one donation!" Finally, exasperated, he

blurted out, "It's about puppies with spots!" Now my daughter-in-law knew: He wanted her to read *101 Dalmatians*.

Warren Viehl
Director of Christian Education
Messiah Lutheran Church
Lincoln, Neb.

LETTERS

(continued from page 5)

Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne.

While there are certainly larger issues at play, the need right now is for short-term financial assistance while we await new funding models to be developed and put in place. While "bailouts" are for self-standing, for-profit businesses, financial assistance in the form of donations is for not-for-profit ministries like our seminaries. The question of how we arrived at this point really isn't relevant right now—that is a matter being addressed elsewhere by the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Structure and Governance, the Board for Pastoral Education, the seminaries themselves, and, most likely, by the next Synod convention. For now, we simply need to address the current need at our

seminaries while we are working on a solution for the larger issues.

I suggest that each congregation and calling entity within Synod take up a collection and mail it as soon as possible to the Joint Seminary Fund. The specific program I recommend works something like this: (1) Ask each person in our congregations to give one dollar per pastor serving them and (2) that this program be called "One Dollar Says Thanks for Pastor!"

The dollar per pastor is intentionally low so that we can encourage the largest degree of participation, since it is good for everyone to say thanks for their pastor(s). These dollars, together (hopefully) with Thrivent matching funds, will express our appreciation, help out in a time of specific need,

and, as noted, be sent directly to the Joint Seminary Fund. I also encourage us all to pray for our seminaries and our faithful folks serving there. Pray also that better funding models will be put in place to support our seminaries for the sake of Christ's mission among us.

Rev. Ernie Bernet
St. Mark Lutheran
Mineral Wells, Texas

Read more letters to the editor at lcms.org/witness. We welcome letters that comment on articles in *The Lutheran Witness*. Letters may be edited for length and clarity. Send letters to "Letters," c/o *The Lutheran Witness*, 1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295; or send them via e-mail to lutheran.witness@lcms.org. Please include your name, postal address, and telephone number. Letters without this information cannot be considered for publication.

Four ‘Alones’

Sola is the Latin word for “alone.” For the Reformers, four *solas* rang through Sacred Scripture: *grace alone, faith alone, Scripture alone, Christ alone*. With the help of the Hymn of the Day for Reformation, “Salvation unto Us Has Come” (LSB 555), let’s examine what Scripture says about each *sola*.

If a *Lutheran Service Book* is available, sing or recite stanza 1 of “Salvation unto Us Has Come.” (LSB will enhance this study, but you can proceed without it.)

*Salvation unto us has come
By God's free grace and favor;
Good works cannot avert our doom,
They help and save us never.
Faith looks to Jesus Christ alone,
Who did for all the world atone;
He is our one Redeemer.*

Grace Alone!

Read Eph. 2:4–10. How did God show His great love for us? What was OUR condition when this love was given us? Cf. Rom. 5:8.

What did God do for us in Christ? (For another way of describing this, see 2 Cor. 5:19.)

Discuss: Why did God do this? What does “by grace” mean? Do good works come before, or follow after, grace?

Now sing or recite stanza 6 of LSB 555.

Faith Alone!

Read Rom. 3:19–28. What does the Law do to *all* people? Is it possible for anyone to be justified by “works of the Law”? Why? Cf. Matt. 5:48.

How did God “manifest” His righteousness apart from Law? Why is there no distinction?

Discuss: What did God set our Lord Jesus before us as? How is He to be received? How is God “just” and the “justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus”?

What does St. Paul conclude about justification? What does “apart from works of the Law” end up excluding?

Sing or recite stanza 9.

Scripture Alone!

Read John 8:31–36. What did our Lord say to the Jews who had believed in Him?

How do we do that? Cf. Col. 3:16.

What does His Word teach us? Cf. Jesus’ prayer in John 17:17.

What does the Word teach us about our bondage to sin? Cf. Ps. 51:5; Eph. 2:1–3.

Discuss: What does the Word teach us about the freedom we have in Christ? How does the Son set us free? Cf. Eph. 1:13, 14; Col. 2:13, 14.

Sing or recite stanza 7.

Christ Alone!

Read Acts 4:1–12. Why were the apostles in jail, and what did the officials want to know from them? How did St. Peter answer their question?

Discuss: What does St. Peter proclaim about Jesus? Why is there salvation in no other name? Cf. John 14:6. What is the unique gift that comes only through Jesus’ name? Cf. Acts 12:43.

Sing or recite stanza 8.

Sola, then: grace, faith, Scripture, and all because there’s only one Lord Jesus in whom we can be saved! On Reformation Day, we thank God for bringing such joyful truths to light again through the work of Martin Luther and the other reformers. A blessed Reformation festival to all!

Rev. William Weedon (weedon.blogspot.com)
is pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church,
Hamel, Ill.





Our Synod and Recent ELCA Actions

'Though we affirm the demands of God's Law without reservation, we Christians confess that the sins of the world have been forgiven through Christ's suffering and death on the cross.'

What are we in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod to make of actions taken by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America that express acceptance of certain homosexual relationships?

The ELCA's national convention, known as its Churchwide Assembly, voted in August to open the ELCA's ministry to gay and lesbian pastors and other professional church workers who are living in "committed relationships." In another action, the assembly approved a resolution that commits the ELCA "to finding ways to allow congregations that choose to do so to recognize, support, and hold publicly accountable life-long, monogamous, same-gender relationships."

By contrast, our Synod repeatedly has affirmed as its own position the historical understanding of the Christian church that the Bible condemns homosexual behavior as "intrinsically sinful." Such behavior is therefore contrary to the will of the Creator and constitutes sin against God's commandments (see Lev. 18:22, 24, 20:13; 1 Cor. 6:9–20; 1 Tim 1:9–10; and Rom. 1:26, 27).

Late in the ELCA's assembly, I brought to them greetings from our Synod and addressed their decisions regarding homosexual behavior:

"I speak these next words in deep humility, with a heavy heart and no desire whatsoever to offend. The decisions by this assembly to grant non-celibate homosexual ministers the privilege of serving as rostered leaders in the ELCA and the affirmation of same-gender unions as pleasing to God will undoubtedly cause additional stress and disharmony within the ELCA. It will also negatively affect the relationships between our two church bodies.

"The current division between our churches threatens to become a chasm. This grieves my heart and the hearts of all in the ELCA, the LCMS, and other Christian church bodies throughout the world who do not see these decisions as compatible with the Word of God, or in agreement with the consensus of 2,000 years of Christian theological affirmation regarding what Scripture teaches about human sexuality. Simply stated, this matter is fundamentally related to significant differences in how we [our two church bodies] understand the authority of Holy Scripture and the interpretation of God's revealed and infallible Word."

About a week after the close of the ELCA Churchwide Assembly, I was in Seoul, Korea, for the biennial conference

of the International Lutheran Council, an international association of 34 confessional Lutheran churches of which the Missouri Synod is a member. The ILC also addressed this issue, adopting unanimously a statement that said, in part, "Rooted in the Bible's witness and in keeping with Christian teaching through 2,000 years, we continue to believe that the practice of homosexuality—in any and all situations— violates the will of the Creator God and must be recognized as sin."

We must not—and do not—stop there, however. We in the Missouri Synod also affirm what the ILC statement goes on to say: "At the same time, we declare our resolve to approach those with homosexual inclinations with the deepest possible Christian love and pastoral concern, in whatever situation they may be living. Though we affirm the demands of God's Law without reservation, we Christians confess that the sins of the world have been forgiven through Christ's suffering and death on the cross.

"As the redeemed children of God, we lead our lives as 'saints and sinners' at the same time. We hope for full renewal and sanctification, but realize that these hopes are not completely fulfilled in this life. This applies to countless temptations. Our sinful condition calls for a lifetime of prayer and struggle. Confession and absolution provide a welcome refuge to receive the Lord's forgiveness, which He also offers through His Word and the Sacraments. This enables us to continue our personal struggles to live a God-pleasing life in the power of the Spirit."

As I told the ELCA assembly, it is only by God's mercy that there is hope for any of us poor, miserable sinners. May His message of sin and grace, Law and Gospel, resound to a troubled world so desperately in need of His love in Jesus Christ!

Jerry Kieschnick
John 3:16–17

Lives Transformed through
Christ, in Time . . . for Eternity!
e-mail: president@lcms.org
Web page: www.lcms.org/president