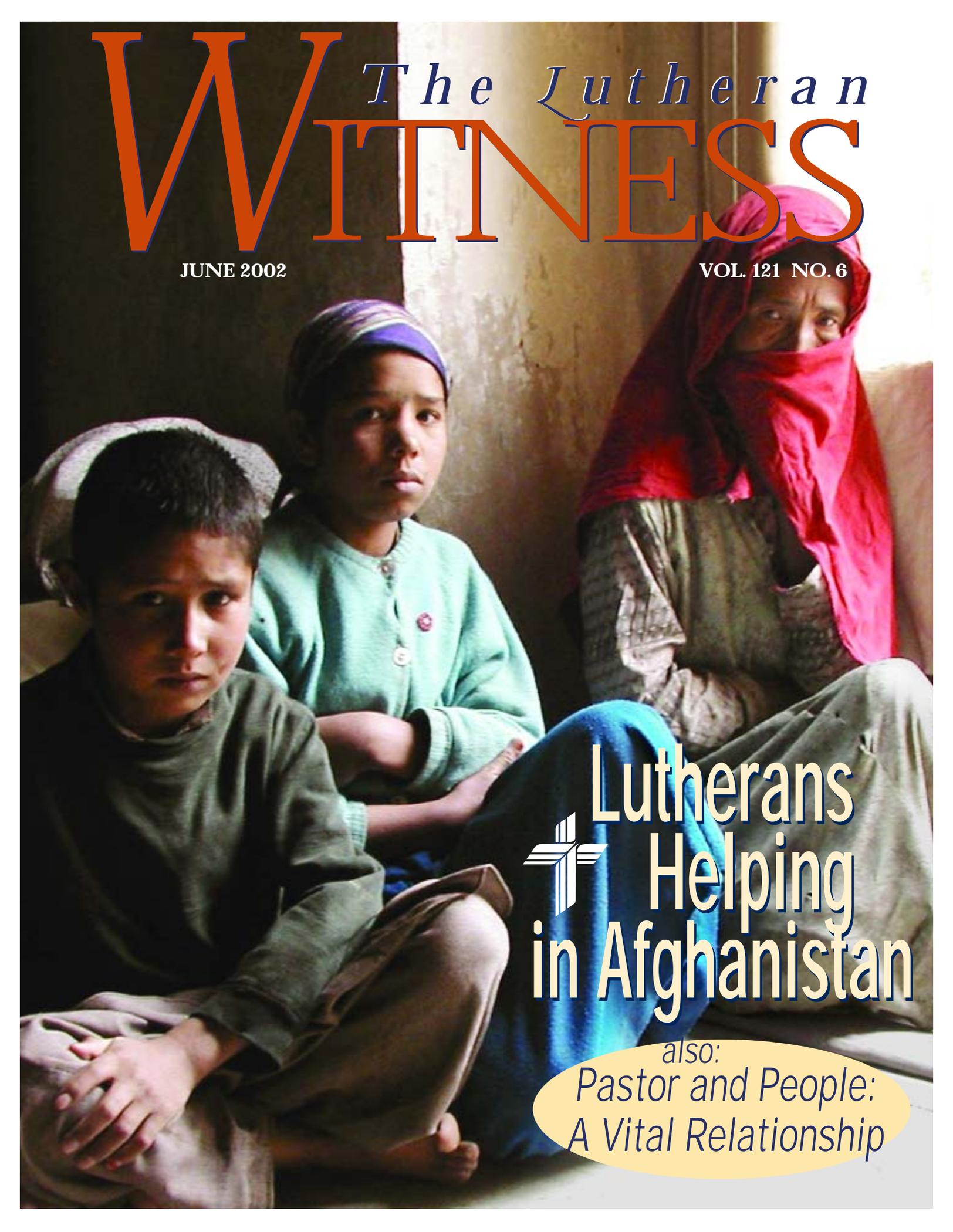


W *The Lutheran* WITNESS

JUNE 2002

VOL. 121 NO. 6



Lutherans ✚ Helping in Afghanistan

also:
*Pastor and People:
A Vital Relationship*



The LUTHERAN WITNESS

A MAGAZINE FOR THE LAYPEOPLE OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH — MISSOURI SYNOD

JUNE 2002

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Still wild about Harry



THE APRIL ISSUE OF *THE LUTHERAN Witness* contains six positive letters about Harry Potter, one negative and one apparently indifferent. However, the editors chose to head the "Letters" section with part of another negative reply on the subject.

Reader opinion obviously runs against the opinions of the editors and is thought through with considerably more logic and knowledge of how people, particularly our children, are honestly responding to the Potter works. Please, let's have less hysteria and more responsible reporting.

*David Liske
Tipton, Mich.*

HOW DISMAYED I WAS TO READ THE comments of six Lutheran Christians who see no danger in Harry Potter ("Letters," April '02).

I am thankful that as a parent I can make decisions about what my children read and see, and that I have the Bible to guide me. I am clearly taught to stay away from any form of witchcraft, divination, sorcery, etc. (Deut. 18:9-13). I wouldn't dare use Harry Potter to teach my children evil and good. That would be like using *Playboy* magazine to teach the evils of pornography.

*Barbara Brink
Storm Lake, Iowa*

GIVEN THE CURRENT CONTROVERSY OVER Harry Potter, fantasy, etc., I would like to offer the following guidelines to Christian parents:

1. Can your child tell you more about Jesus or St. Paul than he can about Harry Potter or Bilbo Baggins? If not, then your child's learning needs

to be addressed by you, the parents.

2. After reading a fantasy story, does your child think, "That was a fun story," or "Gee, I wish I was a witch"? If it is the latter, you need to act quickly to steer your child on a new course.

*David Liske
Tipton, Mich.*

Parents, know what your child thinks of these books. Discuss with your children what they are reading. Your child's spiritual well-being is your highest responsibility.

*Rev. Philip M. Heuser
Orchard, Neb.*

More to tell

I READ WITH GREAT INTEREST "BRINGING the Seminary to the Students" (April '02). Compliments to Paula Ross for the profiles of six of the 10 candidates who graduated. But it would have been even better to provide some of the other stories as well.

One in particular involves Rev. Edward Brashier of the greater Birmingham area. He tried seven years ago to enter the seminary but was turned down. His life has been turned around as a consequence of his association with Christ through Good Shepherd Lutheran congregation and its pastor. He applied to DELTO (Distance Education Leading To Ordination), which was originally designed to enhance lay ministry, and there he was—standing with the 10 at graduation time!

We in the Birmingham area are very proud of him and his commitment.

*Rev. Thomas R. Noon
Birmingham, Ala.*

I AM CONCERNED THAT SOME THINGS have been left out of "Bringing the Seminary to the Students."

First, there is no mention of my former pastor, Rev. Peter Ave-Lallemant, who worked hard to get this program accepted by the seminaries and was instrumental in getting two of the graduates into it.

But what really upsets me is that graduates Jim Reeves (a former member of Christ Lutheran Church here in East Point, Ga.) and Ralph Hough are never mentioned. These men have given much of their lives to be graduating from the DELTO program and deserve more than just a few lines without naming them. The hard work they have done is to be commended.

*George Kuechenmeister
East Point, Ga.*

Speaking from experience

THE APRIL "FAMILY COUNSELOR" QUESTION concerned a young girl who broke her engagement to a boy whose behavior was unacceptable and un-Christian. Her family was angry with her. The answer given by Theresa M. Shaltanis was very, very good. Out of love, I am writing this with the prayer that it will help the family that is struggling with that issue.

I had a similar experience. But after much hesitation, I went ahead and married a young man from a non-Christian and highly abusive family. During our 40-year marriage, they destroyed me in every way—physically, emotionally, mentally, morally and financially. For the past 14 years, I have been a regular outpatient at a mental-health clinic. The one thing I have left is my faith in Jesus Christ as my Savior and my active life in our LCMS church. I'd give anything to have broken the engagement. Those kind don't change. What you see is what you get. Trust in your common sense.

Name withheld

The roots of terrorism

BOTH THE OFFICIALS AND THE PEOPLE OF the Missouri Synod have been responsive to the trauma of Sept. 11. Rightly so, for the people who suffered from the devastation in New York deserve our sympathy and support.

However, it seems that we have not given much attention to the roots of terrorism. Terrorism is often an extreme method, however misguided, of calling attention to suffering and injustice. It will be impossible to rid the world of terrorism without addressing some of its causes.

Some 20 percent of the people on earth live in "absolute poverty." Even more are badly undernourished, and many of them are under social oppression as well. How might we better encourage one another to open our eyes and hearts to their need? We can hear the Old Testament prophets, and Jesus, as they arouse God's people to take up His great concern for the poor and the oppressed. We can be more responsive to Micah's call "to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with God" (Micah 6:8).

*Rev. Maynard W. Dorow
Arden Hills, Minn.*

Oops! Sorry!

THANK YOU FOR INCLUDING THE ANNOUNCEMENT of my appointment to the LCMS Health Ministries staff as national coordinator for LCMS Parish Nurse Ministries ("National News," May '02). The item did, however, identify both Rochelle and Roselle as my home. This is a common error.

I look forward to serving anyone interested in information about parish nursing. Mail can be sent to my home office (1225 Springdale Dr., Rochelle, IL 61068); telephone calls are welcome (evenings preferred) at (815) 562-6823; or I can be contacted at mschnorr@rochelle.net.

Thank you for making this correction.

*Marcia A. Schnorr, R.N., Ed.D.
Rochelle, Ill.*

The war may be mostly over in Afghanistan, but pain, suffering and need persist. Lutherans are trying to help.

LUTHERANS HELPING IN AFGHANISTAN

by Jonathan Frerichs

Why, eight weeks after the worst of the war in Afghanistan was over, were people still eating grass just miles away from the major Afghan city of Mazar-I-Sharif?

Original plans were that a whole convoy of food trucks would ease the hunger near this city. But now, as I visit here in March, only one immobile aid truck sits in a merchant's courtyard.

At a mound of wheat, workers were filling sacks, measuring each scoop against a set of weights on a hand-held scale. Others carried heavy sacks of wheat up a slender wooden ramp, slowly filling the truck bed.

Because of many difficulties in logistics, especially on the receiving end, just one load was now going as a trial run. Even this was several days behind schedule. Unknowns lay ahead as well, including armed clashes at a town along the route where factions were competing to fill the vacuum left by the departed Taliban.



Supported by Lutheran World Relief and other members of Action by Churches Together, Afghan aid workers load a truck with food bound for hungry people in the Zareh region near Mazar-I Sharif.

How many Zarehs?

At the destination, a place called Zareh, 10,000 families live in a microcosm of rural Afghanistan. They and their territory are afflicted by wars, by drought and then by war again.

Just weeks earlier, the Zareh region had been a base for Rashid Dostum, a major commander in Afghanistan's Northern Alliance. Taliban forces fought him there, burning villages and cutting down trees. But the area proved too inaccessible for the Taliban to conquer.

Now Zareh was proving itself too inaccessible for aid. "Our emergency survey found that one-third [of these families] need food aid," said Agi Amanullah, regional director for an Afghan aid organization supported by Action by Churches Together (ACT), an international alliance of churches and relief agencies (including Lutheran World Relief) assisting thousands of people recovering from emergencies in more than 50 countries worldwide.

It is through Lutheran World Relief (LWR) that U.S. Lutherans, moved by God's love in Jesus Christ, provide tangible aid to people in need around the world. LWR is a joint agency of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, which sends its contribution to LWR through its own LCMS World Relief, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.



Khanem Gul fetches a can of cooking butter from the ration provided by a local partner of Action by Churches Together (ACT) during the recent war.

From left to right: Khanem Gul's family including grandchild Kaleda, 10; her sole surviving son Mohamed Ibrahim; Naseema, 7; Sahrah, 5; and Gul herself. When the bombing of Afghanistan was most intense, food aid shipments into the country dropped off sharply. Yet Afghan aid workers, working under difficult conditions, were still able to help thousands of families, supported by Action by Churches Together (ACT).



Like many in Afghanistan, Rahilla's home and courtyard are made of adobe. As a vulnerable household, this family received a two-month supply of flour, cooking butter, sugar and blankets.

Hasibullah, 9, Rahima, 11, and Rahilla, 40. Hasibullah goes to school but Rahima stays home to take care of her sick mother.



“Half the children under five

are malnourished. Of those, 20 percent are severely malnourished,” he said. Amanullah’s staff had gone to Zareh from Mazar-I-Sharif as soon as the news of people eating grass got out. They brought some help then.

Now, nearly two weeks later, the first truckload of food was almost ready to leave. Ahead lay six or seven hours of very bad roads. Then each sack of flour would be transferred to the back of a donkey for another half-day’s journey over even rougher terrain to two villages where conditions were the worst.

This one operation says much about the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan—a calamity born long before Sept. 11, but one instantly upstaged by that tragedy and still relegated to its shadows.

There are other Zarehs. “There could be lots of Zarehs,” Amanullah said when the truck was ready.

“How many?”

“Nobody knows.”

“At the beginning of the crisis we agreed with the World Food Program on the danger of starvation,” said Mohammad Ehsan, program director for Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), a partner of Lutheran World Relief. “After the war, [aid] shipments have taken the edge off in many places. But much help is still needed, especially in remote places and in provinces like Ghowar and Badghis.”

In those two northwest provinces, Lutheran World Relief partners are providing assistance. The local aid organizations involved are currently surveying rural needs there and elsewhere. They will need new funds from ACT agencies in order to respond to what they are finding.

Back in Zareh, more aid is now due. How are its thousands of hungry families doing? Did the full aid convoy make it? News should be on its way out—by foot, donkey and truck, by radio, cell phone and e-mail.

Feeding widows and orphans

Last October and November, while the bombing of Afghanistan was most intense, food aid shipments into the country dropped off sharply. Yet Afghan aid workers, under horrific conditions, were still able to help thousands of families, supported in part by Lutheran World Relief.

Some made up for the lack of outside aid by purchasing food in city markets and arranging for it to reach hungry households quietly.

This strategy actually had advantages over outside aid. There were no convoys or distribution centers to attract attention from armed men. It helped the local economy, saved money and saved critical time.

Geir Valle, Afghanistan director for Norwegian Church Aid, credits Afghan partners: “This was what we were able to do, thanks to two local partner organizations. This is also something that nobody else was doing at that time.”

The job was done by seven Afghan non-governmental organizations that NCA has worked with for years.

These efforts provided 23,000 families with flour, rice, oil and sugar for two months, during and immediately after the heaviest combat. The beneficiaries were mostly widows and their children, households where the breadwinner was gone or disabled, and people displaced from their homes.

Will these people do better during peace? How they fare in the months ahead will be a critical indicator of post-war prospects for Afghanistan’s most vulnerable citizens. Already in early February, a sampling of beneficiaries showed that most of the food had been used up.

Here are the stories of two of the 23,000 Afghan families served by LWR and its partners.

A widow, three orphans, and an uncle gone mad

Khanem Gul and her family live just up the road from a former Al Qaeda training camp outside of Kabul. Their village is the yellow-brown color of the fields around it. They stayed home as American bombers destroyed the camp compound. “Where would we go?” Gul says, “We had nowhere to go.”

When a stray bomb exploded nearby, their clay home shook and a neighbor’s house fell down. War is like an unwanted but all-too-familiar visitor for Khanem Gul.

Her husband died 20 years ago fighting Russian invaders. Her first son lost a leg during that war when

he stepped on a land mine. Her second son went to prison under Afghanistan's Communist government, and disappeared.

Her third and last son died six years ago in a battle between two warlords. It was just before the Taliban took over. She took charge of his three children.

Then the son with one leg went mad, broken by the loss of his father and brothers. Now he lives downstairs. When it's cold he sits for hours under a quilt with the box of hot coals that many Afghan homes use for heat.

"In the summer I find work in the fields if I can," says this breadwinner who is jobless, landless and 64 years old. "I also get help from friends and relatives," she adds, and from groups like SIEAL" (a local NCA partner).

During the air raids, ACT funds bought emergency rations locally. "I received 100 kilograms of flour, 10 kilograms of cooking butter, seven kilograms of rice and four blankets," Gul recalls.

Then, with grace, she adds, "We are still standing because of them."

'A rocket killed my husband'

Questioned about their own lives, widows in Afghanistan often answer by telling about their husbands. It's as if their former status as a wife is the only status they will ever have.

Rahilla (her full name) was widowed six years ago when she was 35 years old. Her late husband, Mohamed Akbar, had something rare in a largely subsistence economy—a job with a salary. He worked for the government.

Governments come and go, in Afghanistan more than most nations. Akbar's job was with the regime that never quite took hold after the Soviets withdrew. By 1996, as Taliban soldiers closed in on

Kabul, his job began to look shaky. Then the fighting spilled over into the district where his family lived.

"One day, just over there," Rahilla says, gesturing beyond her courtyard, "a rocket killed my husband."

Six years later, Akbar's picture still hangs on the wall, but signs of his salary are long gone from the household. In freezing temperatures in an unheated house, his widow dresses in three layers of tattered cotton clothing. She has no work, no land, not even for a garden. Neighbors and relatives give her food and money, she says.

But for Rahilla, Afghanistan's latest war has brought two good



Nabila, 4; Abdel Kayum, 6; Khan Alia, a biology and chemistry teacher in a Kabul-area high school, and Allah Mir, his 80-year-old father, lived for eight months without any income. Fortunately, a local partner of Norwegian Church Aid was helping his school with supplies and food.

things: some much-needed food and some long-awaited freedom. As a vulnerable household, her family received a two-month supply of flour, cooking butter, sugar and blankets from a local partner of ACT. "I didn't get anything like this during the war that killed my husband," she says.

Also, the Taliban are finally gone. "I have been waiting for this for a long time. It was a Taliban rocket that made me a widow," Rahilla says. "Now I am hoping for better times."

MISSIONS SURVEY TEAM EXPLORES AFGHANISTAN

As this issue of *The Lutheran Witness* was going to press, a three-member missions survey team was wrapping up a two-week trip to Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The May 10–26 trip was sponsored by LCMS World Mission to "assess opportunities for establishing mission work" in those two countries, according to Dr. Allan Buckman, director for world areas with LCMS World Mission.

Members of the exploratory team are Rev. John Duitsman, area director for East Africa with LCMS World Mission;

Rev. Bob Smith, LCMS missionary to Indonesia; and Nazifa Atmar, a former Afghan refugee who is now a member of an LCMS congregation in Nashville. Atmar served as translator and sought to identify opportunities for ministries among women.

Among items on their itinerary, the team had planned to meet with representatives of other Protestant mission agencies and with government officials, especially those in education.

LCMS World Mission will make a decision on how to proceed based on the survey team's report, Buckman said.

—Paula Schlueter Ross



Jonathan Frerichs is communications director for Lutheran World Relief.

How does God intend pastor and people to relate?

A VITAL RELATIONSHIP

That question is critical for our life together.

by Robert Rosin

When pastor and people have a good and God-pleasing relationship, things click in the congregation and great strides can be made. But let problems and conflict enter the picture and everything comes to a screeching halt—or even slips into reverse, as matters go from bad to worse.

The relationship between pastor and people is vital to life in the church. That's why it's also vital that we understand God's intentions for the congregation and the public ministry.

If all is well in your congregation, thank God. But do we know why the relationship is healthy? Or, if there are problems, do we understand what lies behind them?

Given our fallen world, it's no wonder that tensions exist and that there are plenty of failings to go around. We need repentance and forgiveness. But first to get to that point and thereafter to chart a better course, we need to look at what undergirds the life and work of people and pastor—or, in short, "church and ministry."

The Synod takes a stand

At last year's convention, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod reached back to the mid-19th century to speak on church and ministry. Fossilized? Not really. Standing by the old? Only where it counts.



Times do change, and we do have to consider today's circumstances and problems. Yet God doesn't change, so the fundamental theological position remains the same even as the 21st century is off and running.

The convention adopted a resolution that points to a book written by the Synod's first president, Dr. C.F.W. Walther. The book's full title is *The Voice of Our Church on the Question of Church and Office [of the Ministry]*, but we call it *Church and Ministry* for short.

The Synod agreed that Walther's stance rests on what Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions say on this matter. There's always more to say, but anything more would run in the same vein, not off in some other direction—especially one that's explicitly rejected.

This is an important point, because there are so many positions on church and ministry vying for support, not only among other Christians but sometimes in our own congregations, too.

So, where does our Synod stand? It stands on *Church and Ministry* as a place to look that is Biblical and Confessional. In reaffirming as our official position what Walther wrote, the Synod wants to "say it right," to confess in its midst and before the world what God has said.

And what is proclaimed in *Church and Ministry*?

The best answer is to go to the texts themselves. Read last year's convention resolution (Res. 7-17A), read *Church and Ministry*, and hold Walther up to the light of Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions.

But let's look at some of the highlights to prime the pump for further study.

Some history

"Church and ministry" was a big issue for the German Saxons' 1839 start in Perry County, Mo. These folks faced thorny questions when they lost their bishop, Martin Stephan, after he was charged with immorality.

The key issue: Were they still church without their bishop? Walther gave a resounding "yes," with the Scriptures and Confessions for support.

Meanwhile, Prussian Lutherans led by Johann Grabau came to the United States and formed the Buffalo Synod. Rationalism (which denied miracles) and the Prussian Union (which mixed Lutheran and Reformed theology) convinced Grabau that the state church was dead while the true church moved with them to America. Seeking like-minded Lutherans, Grabau approached the Saxons. But he quickly realized that their positions, notably on church and ministry, were incompatible.

Grabau held, for example, that Christ gave the Office of the Keys not to the church in general or to each believer, but exclusively to the clergy. So, God deals with us only through the ministerial office, he said, and not through fellow Christians who have for us a word of admonition or grace. Church discipline, if necessary, is not a matter for the congregation but only for the pastor.

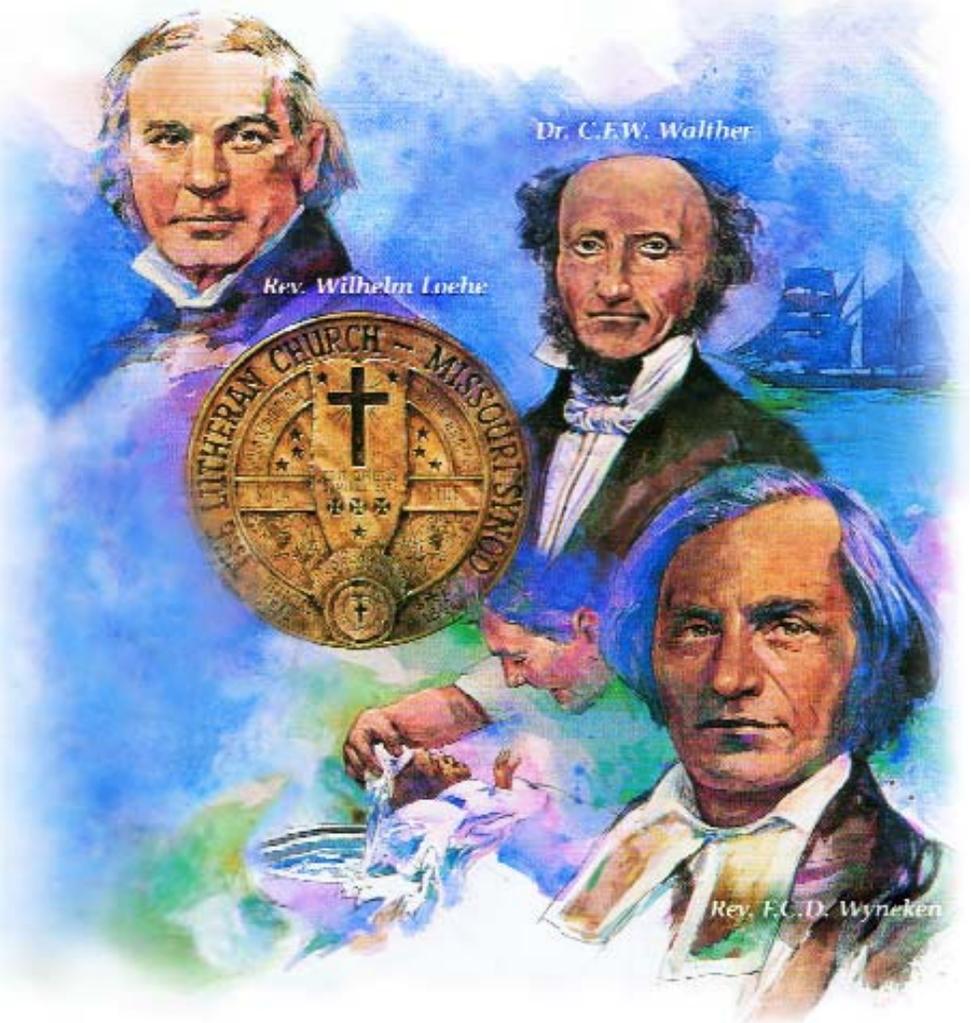
The congregation does not convey the ministerial office but rather Christ does, Grabau said. And a pastor raised up by a congregation without the help of other pastors is no pastor at all. Any absolution he speaks is empty, and what he distributes as the Sacrament of the Altar is not Christ's body and blood but merely bread and wine.

According to Grabau, ordination is an essential divine

ordinance, necessary for being in the office of pastor. Those ordained are in a rank distinct from the people. People ought to obey their minister in all things so long as they are not contrary to the Word of God—even, for instance, in such matters as erecting a new church or starting a school.

Church and Ministry, adopted by the Missouri Synod at its 1851 convention, was Walther's reply to Grabau.

The controversy continued and claimed a one-time ally of the Missouri Synod—Pastor Wilhelm Loehe of Bavaria, who had responded to calls from America for



pastors. He also backed a theological training school that grew to be the Synod's seminary in Fort Wayne, Ind. But with the Grabau-Walther exchange, Loehe feared that American democratic ideas were threatening church and ministry.

Walther and Pastor F.C.D. Wyneken, who would become the Missouri Synod's second president, went to see Loehe in an effort to heal the breach. But Loehe

declined. He believed that the office of pastor “propagated itself ... through those who possessed it.” Walther cited Luther. But Loehe said that Lutheranism had moved on and disagreed even with Luther himself. What’s more, he held, the Confessions weren’t final, either, but might be surpassed by a better understanding.

Walther understood that circumstances change so we may need new ways to explain things. But the Confessions were true *because* they properly reflected and restated what Scripture taught. Time would not change that.

Faced with this rift, Loehe held that disagreement by well-meaning parties made for an “open question,” a work in progress that might stand unfinished. But for Walther, true Lutherans by definition hold to the Confessions. Things don’t become open questions simply because someone disagrees and claims honest motives.

The priesthood of believers

Key points on church and ministry that distinguished the Missouri Synod back then are still confessed today—and still contested.

Properly speaking, the church is the gathering of saints—sheep who hear the voice of their Shepherd, called out of darkness into the light, made Christ’s through the washing of Baptism, through faith worked and sustained by the Spirit in the Word.

Hypocrites, unregenerate and heretics may be in the *visible* assembly, but the *true* church includes only true

believers. So, the true church is known only to God. We know it exists, though, where we find identifying marks: the pure preaching of God’s Word and administration of the Sacraments as Christ instituted them.

A congregation gathered around these marks is church in that place, people who by Christ’s righteousness make up the priesthood of believers. These, like all Christians, stand before God by Christ’s righteousness, and they all have the duty—the privilege—of speaking God’s Word to each other, knowing that they have the full authority of both Law and Gospel to admonish and forgive. It is to this priesthood that God gave the Office of Keys, as Walther and Luther (but not Grabau) knew. And the priesthood calls pastors to exercise the Keys in their behalf.

While God can gather His church even where the Word and Sacraments are not taught or used in perfect purity, believers ought to avoid such assemblies and embrace orthodox congregations and pastors.

The ministry

The public ministry is distinct from the priesthood of all believers. This office is established not by people as a matter of convenience, but by God Himself. It does not elevate those in it to set them apart or to make them special or more holy. It is a ministry of service, a ministry with the power to preach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments and to exercise spiritual judgment.

The office is filled by the congregation through an external “call” (not by a man’s inner desire), which makes the minister. Ordination is a practice or custom

Answers from the Archive

Already in its first constitution, the German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio and other States (today the LCMS) required that an archive be maintained and that a history of American Lutheranism be recorded. The Synod’s secretary, Pastor F. W. Husmann, was appointed archivist.

In 1851, out-going Secretary Husmann petitioned the Synod whether he might destroy some of the documents from earlier conventions that he deemed “useless.” Permission was granted and a bonfire was lit in the presence of pastoral witnesses. We can only imagine what went into those flames!

Fortunately, the notes from the

Synod’s fifth convention, held a year after the fateful bonfire, did not meet the same end. Pastor Ludwig W. Habel, the Synod’s new secretary, kept copious notes, all in the long, flowing German handwriting of the time. As in the past, the proceedings from the convention were published, but not everything from Habel’s notes was included. Nonetheless, the notes were carefully saved in the Synod’s “archive.”

Among the many matters dealt with at the 1851 Milwaukee convention was the Synod’s position on *Kirche und Amt*, or church and pastoral office (commonly referred to now as “church and ministry”). A year before, the Synod had asked

President C.F.W. Walther to address the convention on the topic of church and ministry. His presentation included *theses*, or specific statements, and *witnesses*—supporting statements from Scripture, the Lutheran Confessions and the private writings of certain individuals (e.g., Martin Luther).

Walther’s presentation satisfied the convention, which adopted it as the Synod’s official position. The Synod in convention also instructed that Walther’s presentation be published. The following year (1852), *The Voice of Our Church on the Question of Church and Ministry* appeared in print. The Synod subsequently declared Walther’s book to be the pure doctrine of church and ministry and its official position.

dating from the apostles and is the public confirmation of that call extended.

While all in the universal priesthood rightly proclaim the Word individually and privately in homes and families, the *public* proclamation—i.e., that done in behalf of the congregation—is a right conferred on one in the public office. The New Testament guides the church in calling those who properly may fill this office.

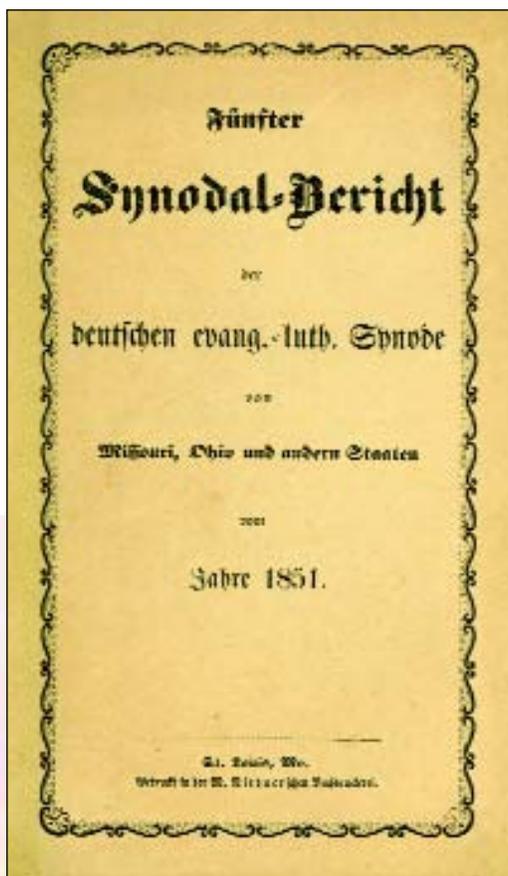
The pastoral ministry is the power, conferred by God through the priesthood of all believers, to exercise the spiritual rights of that priesthood in that public office on behalf of the congregation. As such, the pastoral ministry is the highest office in the church. Any and all other offices stem from it.

Throughout history, the church has established auxiliary offices to help the working of the ministry—as it did in Acts 6 when it appointed deacons, lest those in the ministry of the Word neglect some of their work. (Note that while the apostles identified the problem, it was left to the *congregation* to establish that work and to fill the positions. Elsewhere in Acts, even when apostles identified the need for co-workers in the office, the congregations finally elected and put those coworkers in place.)

One hundred fifty years later, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod gathered in St. Louis from July 14-20, 2001, for its 61st regular convention. Again, the Synod turned its attention to the true Christian teaching on church and ministry.

During that discussion, several people raised questions concerning the Synod's adoption of Walther's book as its official position. Had the Synod adopted only Walther's *theses*? Or were the *witnesses* also to be considered a part of the Synod's position?

At Concordia Historical Institute, the reference staff went to work—retrieving the official proceedings from the 1851 convention, a rare 1852 copy of Walther's *Kirche und*



Amt, and even Habel's unpublished convention notes. It was quickly determined that, clearly, the Synod had adopted as its official position on church and ministry Walther's *complete* work, *theses and* witnesses.

The 2001 convention adopted Res. 7-17A, which resolved "that the LCMS in convention reaffirm the decision of the 1852 convention in

A special relationship

Given this relationship of the universal priesthood and the public office, the ministry is owed respect and obedience when the pastor uses God's Word rightly. On the other hand, the ministry must not lord it over Christ's people, introduce new laws, or arbitrarily insist on ceremonies or "adiaphora" (things neither commanded nor forbidden by the Scriptures).

Excommunication is also something not to be done independently, that is, without involving the congregation. While the pastor has the duty to judge doctrine, those in the universal priesthood also hold this right and should be involved with representation and vote in church courts and councils.

Church and Ministry links people and pastor in a special relationship. The universal priesthood is foundational. Yet as a gift of God—one of many listed in Ephesians 4—respect and honor are due both the office and the office holder. That can be hard to maintain in a "hire-and-fire" culture like ours.

At the same time, Walther warns of the other extreme—of a tyrant in office. There *are* reasons a pastor, sadly, can be removed. Persistent false doctrine is an

recognizing C.F.W. Walther's book, *The Voice of Our Church on the Question of Church and Ministry*, as the official position of the LCMS."

This year, Concordia Historical Institute, the Synod's Department of Archives and History, celebrates its 75th anniversary. But its beginnings go back to the very first convention—the founding convention, in 1847—in Chicago, which called for an archive.

Today, CHI continues to serve the church in the task of preserving and recording its history.

—Rev. Mark A. Loest
Assistant Director
for Reference and Museum
Concordia Historical Institute
St. Louis, Mo.

obvious one. Immoral, scandalous behavior is grounds. Being unwilling or unable to perform official duties is another. That is the trio most often mentioned in Walther's writings, for example.

But over the decades — in an essay to the 1879 Iowa District convention, for example — Walther seemed to expand that list. He includes being domineering in office, or being deliberately unfaithful in pastoral duties. He also warned against pastors declaring something to be sin when God does not.

Noting that there are grounds for removal is not an invitation to target pastors simply because people want someone else. Yet there are times when it truly is better for someone to serve elsewhere, or perhaps not at all (times also for searching the Word and for prayer).

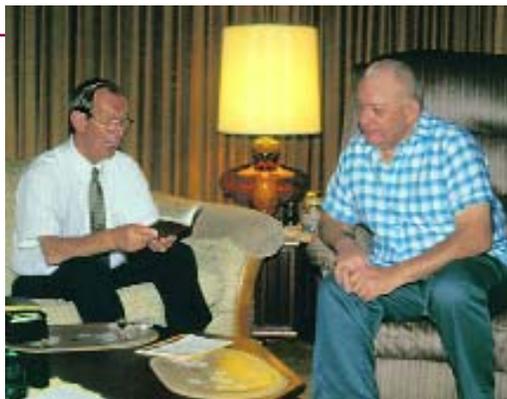
At bottom, the public ministry is God's office given to God's people for their eternal good.

Taking stock

Should pastor and people take stock of how they are doing as church in that place? Of course. God gives us talents, "reason and all my senses" to enlist in service.

But what is success? Numbers? Each new soul expands the priesthood of believers, but sometimes one pastor plants, the next waters, and finally an increase comes — or maybe not. The devil, world and our own flesh certainly complicate matters, and it is finally the *Spirit* who changes hearts.

No one is against numbers, but the focus rightly falls on faithfulness in ministry, in proclamation of the Word, in use of the means of grace. "Faithful servant" is often heard, not in the sense of a hired hand but as high praise for one entrusted with a precious stewardship. It is the Lord's church, ministry and means of grace, and a pastor seeks to be faithful to this all. He serves Christ not by ruling, but by minis-



tering to those called into the royal priesthood who also, at Christ's behest, called the pastor into their midst.

Pastors should be able to count on people to honor the office to which they've called him. He ought to know that the people are thankful for that work, that they pray for him and are willing to help as there is need and opportunity. And when people are willing to help, that's not elbowing in on the pastor's territory. Rather, that's finding ways to maximize what the office should be doing even while those in the universal priesthood can still witness.

The seminaries do not graduate enough now to replace each year's vacancies, and the problem won't end soon. The early church found ways to allow pastors to do what pastors are supposed to do, even as the baptized were more than spectators. *Church and Ministry* can guide us even as God's people think of ways to care for their own and to seek the lost.

That's Luther!

Convention Res. 7–17A reached back to the 19th century, and Walther passes us along to Reformation roots.

A year ago, I gave a copy of *Church and Ministry* to a German Reformation scholar. Before he read the book itself with all the citations from Scripture, Confessions and other theologians, he read the simple listing of 19 theses at the start of the book: nine on church, 10 on the ministry. When he finished, he

looked up and said, "Well, that's just Luther."

He's right. Loehe knew it, though he wouldn't accept it. Luther is there in both letter and spirit. No wonder — church and ministry were as bedeviled in Luther's day as in ours.

When their identity as church was under fire, the Lutherans of the 16th century affirmed the basics in the Augsburg Confession. Look at what is covered by the articles in this basic confession of our church: God, sin, Christ, justification — and then Article 5: "to obtain such faith God instituted the office of preaching, giving the Gospel and the Sacraments," an office held by one properly called (Article 14).

When Christians in Bohemia balked at Rome's insistence that Rome do the ordaining for the ministry to be valid — this is the "historic episcopacy" — Luther told the Bohemians that they themselves had the authority to raise up and put a man into office. In 1523 he had told Christians at Leisnig the same, outlining Scriptural grounds to judge teaching, to call, appoint and, sadly, even to dismiss. Scriptural grounds — because Luther knew this was all the Lord's. Walther knew it too.

And what of us? For a start, read Res. 7–17A. Your pastor has it. But also read *Church and Ministry*. Study it together as pastor and people. And as God gives us grace, seek to confess what He gives us to say about the church He creates, the ministry He has established and the Lord who has made us one by His blood.



Dr. Robert Rosin is chairman of the Department of Historical Theology at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.

All parties reach preliminary settlement in lawsuits

All parties to two lawsuits involving the LCMS Foundation and investment losses it sustained three years ago reached a preliminary settlement April 25.

Foundation President Mark Stuenkel announced that the Foundation will receive \$9,675,000 from "all potential sources."

"This is a global settlement from several sources," Stuenkel said. "The Foundation will not be involved in any further litigation on these matters."

Because of provisions of certain of the settlements, the amount and sources of specific settlement payments cannot be disclosed, according to Synod and Foundation legal counsel Leonard Pranschke.

"I'm very glad we were able to get these matters resolved," Stuenkel added. "It's good that the Foundation can now move forward with its mission: 'Linking Christians with giving opportunities.'"

The \$9,675,000 the

Foundation will receive is about a fourth of what is estimated to have been lost on investments in 1998.

In June 2000, the Foundation filed suit in federal District Court in St. Louis based on such losses against Vining-Sparks, the broker that sold the Foundation the investments--mortgage-derivative securities--that resulted in the losses.

Then, in September 2000, a class-action suit was filed in St. Louis County (Mo.) Circuit Court

against the Foundation, Vining-Sparks and certain individuals by 15 persons who claimed an interest in assets held in Foundation fixed-income portfolios.

The \$9,675,000 in payments resolves all claims, including both lawsuits and other claims that were settled without litigation. The lawsuit settlements are still considered tentative, because final approval of the class-action settlement requires giving notice to the class and a hearing, now scheduled for Aug. 15 in St. Louis.

LCMS deaconesses elect new officers

Members of the Concordia Deaconess Conference (CDC) elected a number of new officers during the CDC's annual meeting, April 15-17.

Deaconesses elected were Julie Heck, Marengo, Ill., secretary; Kelly Hardt, Collinsville, Ill., member at-large of the executive committee; and Joyce Ostermann, Fort Wayne, Ind., who was re-elected president. In addition, Dr. Michael A. Eschelbach, River Forest, Ill., was elected spiritual adviser for the conference.

The CDC, with 68 members, comprises deaconesses who serve or are eligible to serve LCMS congregations and recognized service organizations.

Storm spares Maryland church property

An F-5 category tornado packing winds of up to 300 miles an hour spared the property of Grace Lutheran Church, LaPlata, Md., but caused major damage to buildings on both sides of the church, said Grace Pastor Eric Peterson.

He said that trees near the church's property were

felled in the April 29 storm, but that only a few of the windows at the church were blown out.

The tornado, cutting a 24-mile-long swath, killed five people and injured almost 100 in LaPlata and nearby Prince Frederick, destroying more than 60 percent of LaPlata's business district. Some 300

area homes and businesses reported major damage, and another 158 buildings were destroyed.

Among Grace's 800 members, nine families reported significant damage to their property, and two lost their business offices, Peterson said.

Rev. David Percy, area coordinator for Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR), said that LDR will be in the areas affected by the tornado for the long haul.

Gifts to help tornado victims in Maryland may be sent to LCMS World Relief, P.O. Box 66861, St. Louis, MO 63166-9810. Earmark checks to "Maryland tornado" and make them payable to LCMS World Relief. Or, call the credit-card gift line at (888) 930-4438.



Few buildings are left standing in the business district of LaPlata, Md., after a tornado tore through the town April 29. Some 450 area homes or businesses suffered major damage or were destroyed in the storm.

Report on human cloning has marriage, family base

A new report on human cloning gained approval from the LCMS Commission on Theology and Church Relations at its April 18-20 meeting.

Titled "What Child Is This? Marriage, Family and Human Cloning," the report considers cloning within the context of a discussion of marriage and family.

Dr. Samuel H. Nafzger, the CTCR's executive director, said that the

report could be edited, printed and ready for mailing to all Synod congregations by sometime this summer. It will also be on the commission's Web site, www.lcms.org/ctcr.

"The aim of this report is to make a contribution to the ability of Christians to discern when to celebrate emerging gifts and when to witness against looming evils," says the report's

"Introduction."

Nafzger said that the report's "guiding principle" is found in a 1981 CTCR report that affirms marriage as "the only proper context for human procreation."

At the same time, he said, the new report asserts "that a child from cloning would be a human being, a creation of God. We distinguish the *process* from what a child *is*."

The new report on cloning was developed as a result of an action of the 1998 Synod convention, asking the CTCR "to help the church, on the basis of the Word of God, make informed ethical judgments concerning cloning and attendant issues." Nafzger said that some of those issues, including stem-cell research, will be considered in ongoing CTCR study.

Conference gets unanimous OK

The LCMS Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) and the Council of Presidents (COP) have unanimously endorsed a plan for a series of theological conferences throughout the Synod.

The plan was developed by a joint CTCR-COP committee in response to Synod President Gerald Kieschnick's call last fall for such gatherings.

"I believe that conferences such as these could help fulfill my vision of a day in our Synod when disagreements in doctrine and practice are discussed in a spirit of collegial trust, mutual respect and Christian love," Kieschnick said when he made the assignment.

CTCR Executive Director Samuel H. Nafzger said that the first of those gatherings will be a "model conference" to

set the tone and to train facilitators for district conferences to follow.

The model conferences will involve discussions from various viewpoints on what Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions teach about church fellowship, according to Nafzger.

It will also include worship, Bible study and opportunity for confession and forgiveness among participants.

Parishes test new hymnal

July 1 is the deadline for congregations to send to the LCMS Commission on Worship a completed questionnaire for field testing the Synod's new hymnal, which has a publication target date of 2006.

The commission, which is preparing the hymnal, sent materials for the field test to all Synod congregations in March.

"The commission

wants to stress how much it values the input of all congregations of the Synod," said Dr. Paul Grime, executive director of the commission. "While the materials that we have published may appear to be in finished form, at this point they are proposals waiting for reaction from the Synod."

Grime said that the commission is planning a second field test next year.

The 2002 field-test materials may be downloaded for printing from the commission's Web site, at <http://worship.lcms.org>. The site also has audio files of three new musical settings of the liturgy.

For more news--and more timely news--visit <http://reporter.lcms.org> on the World Wide Web. That's the Web site for *Reporter*, the official newspaper of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

Guild gives award to Carl Schalk

Dr. Carl Schalk has been named to receive the American Guild of Organists (AGO) Distinguished Composer Award for 2002. He is scheduled to receive the award July 6.



Schalk

Schalk is distinguished professor of music emeritus at Concordia University, River Forest, Ill.

The award "is given ... to recognize composers for outstanding contributions to the field of music," says an article in the April issue of *The American Organist*, the AGO magazine.

"Schalk has composed more than 50 hymn tunes ... and his choral compositions and hymn settings for congregations are widely performed," says an AGO news release.

Searching **SCRIPTURE**

WHERE DO I GO FROM HERE?

This month's "Searching Scripture" is from Part 5 of a five-part Bible study titled "The Way of Life: A Beginning." The entire five-part study is available online at <http://www.lcms.org/theway/> —Ed.

by Jerry M. Kosberg

Spiritual truth and spiritual life go hand in hand. In the first four lessons we began to look at some very basic Christian teachings about God and ourselves. In this final lesson we set the stage to follow God's call on our lives to follow him. We are asking: Where do I go from here?



1. First, let's remind ourselves of God's ultimate plan for you and for everyone. Read 1 Tim. 2:3-6. What is God's desire for everyone?

2. During Jesus' trial before the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, Pilate asked Jesus the question of questions. Read John 18:38. What was Pilate's question?

3. Earlier, in a prayer, Jesus had given the answer. Read John 17:17. What did Jesus say God's Word was?

4. Read 2 Tim. 3:16-17. What is God's relationship to the Scriptures?

What is the purpose of Scripture?

5. Spiritual truth binds people together with a spiritual bond. Read 1 Peter 2:5. What are the

images for the church in this verse?

6. Read 1 Cor. 1:2. Note carefully first how Paul describes the church of God in Corinth.

With whom do they share that?

7. Yet those "saints" in Corinth had immorality, factions, lawsuits, hypocrites and pride running amok among them. The church has always been filled with sinful people on the way toward getting their lives in order. Read Rev. 1:5-6. For what is Jesus praised?

8. The Christian church is about forgiven sinners being found and carried home in Jesus' love. Read Luke 15:3-7. If you had been that sheep, how would you have felt when Jesus picked you up and carried you home?

9. There is nothing like being a forgiven child of God because of

trusting in Jesus as your Savior. It is beyond description! Read Rom. 8:37-39. What is God's promise to you?

10. Read Rom. 10:9. What is God's promise to you?

Question for discussion:

It is common today to hear people say there is no such thing as absolute truth. How does a belief in God challenge that?

For further reading:

Read pages 153-168 in *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation*.



Rev. Jerry M. Kosberg is mission and ministry facilitator for the Pacific Southwest District.

'UNTIL DEATH DO US PART'

June is often chosen by couples as the month in which to get married. Many young men and women “tie the knot” in June. The term “June bride” is frequently heard. I’ve seen the schedules of a number of parish pastors for the month of June and it’s clear that this is a very popular month for weddings!

Terry and I, like many other couples, were married in a month other than June. In our case, it was a very cold 12-degree day in January in central Texas. Even though it occurred more than 36 years ago, in many ways it seems like almost yesterday.

May our good and gracious God continue to look with favor upon the wonderful institution and relationship of holy marriage!

Whether it occurs in June or in any other month of the year, we Christians fervently believe that God has richly blessed humankind with the gift of marriage. We also believe that the institution of marriage is designed by God Himself to be a lifelong relationship between one man and one woman, who solemnly vow ...

To love, to honor and to cherish each other ...

To forsake all others and to cleave only to each other ...

To live together ...

in sickness and in health ...

for better or for worse ...

for richer or for poorer ...

“until death do us part.”

God has revealed in Holy Scripture that He intends the joy of the physical aspects of the marital relationship to be experienced only within the bonds of marriage. He wants what is best for his children and He has decreed that faithfulness and fidelity of one man and one woman to one another are critical to the holistic health and happiness of His children.

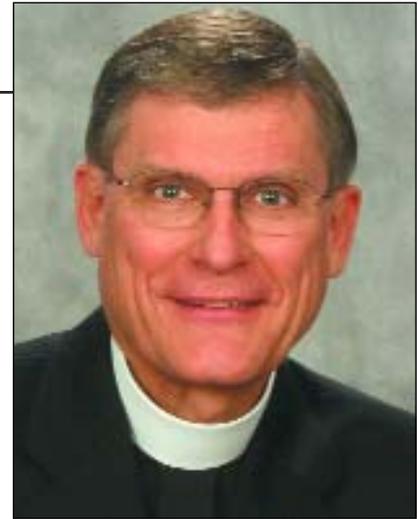
In the eyes of some, this concept is seen as “stone age” morality. This is particularly true in the entertainment industry, which would have us believe that there are no moral or spiritual restrictions for a physical relationship

between men and women. In addition, such thinking would hold that relationships between people of the same gender are not only possible, but also quite acceptable. We strongly disagree!

For those who love the Lord and endeavor to conform their lives to His holy will, the sacred bond of marriage provides safety and security for this most intimate of relationships. We who are privileged to experience the blessings of marriage have received a special joy that brings added peace and security into our lives.

It is by the grace of God that the sinful human flesh and the selfish human nature of two separate human beings are molded and melded into the “one flesh” of which the Bible speaks in describing the marital relationship: “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh” (Gen. 2:24 and Eph. 5:31).

Through the inspiration of His Holy Spirit, God has also revealed His will concerning the love and respect that a husband and a wife



are to have for one another: “This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband” (Eph. 5:32–33).

This month, as we celebrate the marriage of many young and not-so-young brothers and sisters in Christ, I encourage you to consider the following expressions of love and respect for the institution of marriage:

- Pray for those who will be marrying in the weeks and months ahead.
- Send a card of congratulations and assurance of prayer to married couples who might especially be in need of such affirmation at this time.
- Encourage some young unmarried person close to you to pray that God would send to him or her the right marital mate and that he or she would save himself or herself in premarital purity for that special person.
- Give thanks to God for the blessings of your marriage, even as I do, every day, for my own.

May our good and gracious God continue to look with favor upon the wonderful institution and relationship of holy marriage!

Jerry Kieschnick

John 3:16–17

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