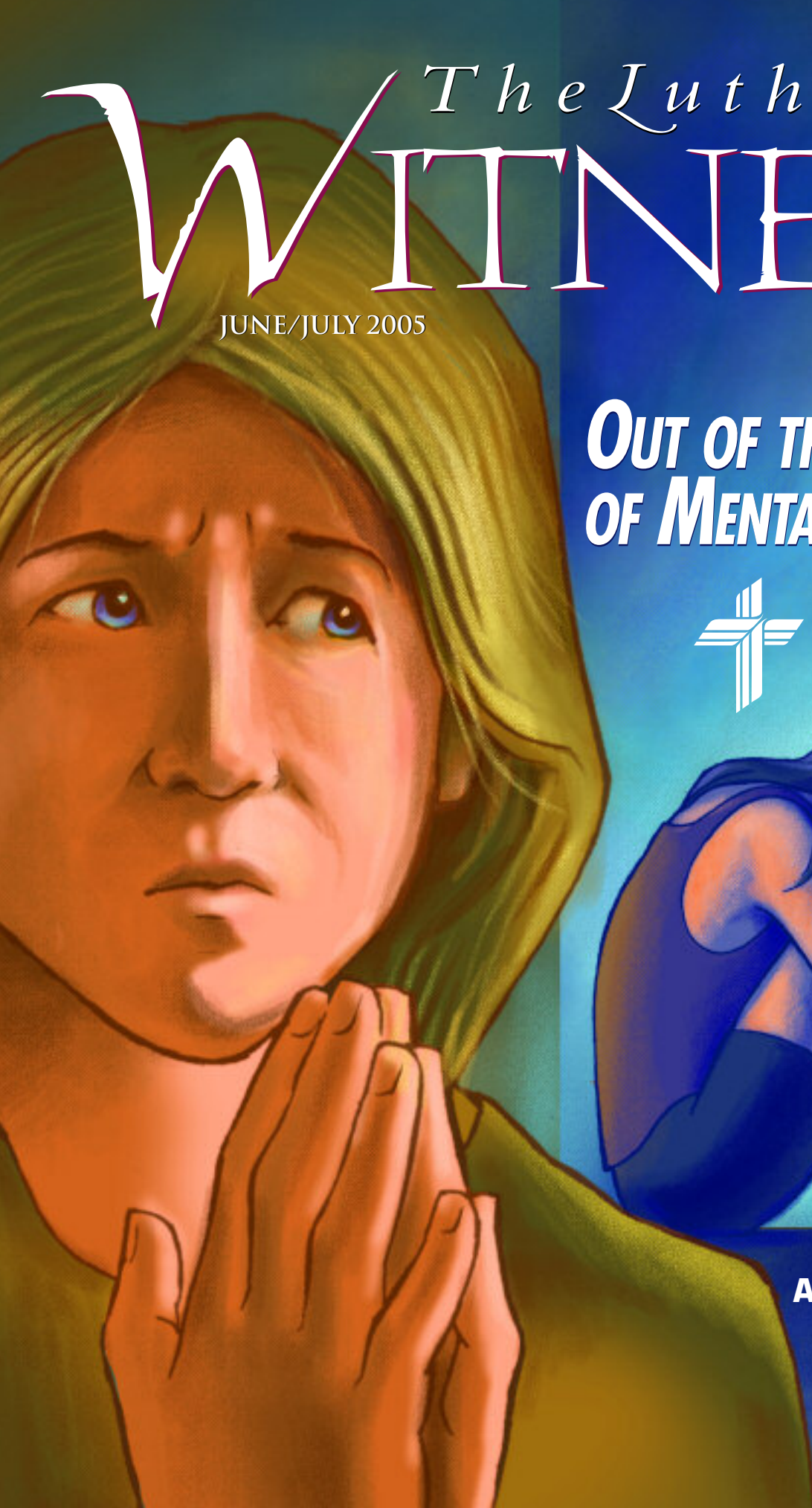


# The Lutheran WITNESS

JUNE/JULY 2005

VOL. 124 NO. 6

## OUT OF THE SHADOWS OF MENTAL ILLNESS



**Also: Civil Religion  
A Matter of Faith**



# The Lutheran WITNESS

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

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JUNE/JULY 2005

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## **The High Wall**

The cultural war in America is a war for the hearts and, ultimately, the souls of our nation.

*Hubert L. Dellinger, M.D.  
Memphis, Tenn.*

PRESIDENT KIESCHNICK DOES AN EXCELLENT job in "The Court and the Commandments" (April '05) of defining the issues and clarifying the traditional Lutheran viewpoint. The obvious question is, "How do we confront the excesses of the 'high wall of separation' permeating most of our legal system?"

I have long felt that many Lutherans, by overreacting to our namesake's Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms, have let our Reformed brethren fight political battles against anti-Christian laws without Lutheran help. Should our church align itself with a particular political party or threaten violence against those with whom we disagree? Of course not. But we should work within the political system by supporting likeminded candidates, expressing ourselves in public forums, and standing unashamedly with others in support of traditional values.

The cultural war in America is a war for the hearts and, ultimately, the souls of our nation. As the hymn of my youth enjoins us, "Onward Christian Soldiers."

*Hubert L. Dellinger, M.D.  
Memphis, Tenn.*

PRESIDENT KIESCHNICK'S ARTICLE APTLY reflects the dilemma all Christians face: We are compelled to defend our faith but struggle with how to do so in a pluralistic society.

Although arguments supporting public displays of the Ten Commandments may be legally sound, the Commandments are not the only or perhaps even the most relevant precedent. In the absence of an equally strident acknowledgment of

the contributions of, say, the Magna Carta, Plato's *Republic*, and the Code of Hammurabi, any preferential defense of a government-sponsored display of the Commandments serves only to satisfy our well-intentioned evangelistic instincts. The reality is, we live in a country whose government is established by and for all the people, whether they share our faith or not.

How much more useful it would be for us to concentrate our efforts on the opportunities we have to evangelize rather than relying on government institutions to do our work for us. Granite monuments don't bear testimony to Christ's love; active, caring Christians do! Praise God for the freedom to spread His message in a nation where it can be heard and lived!

*Jon Abel  
Richardson, Texas*

## **We're older than we think**

PROFESSOR WILLIAM MUNDT ("A Source of Harmony," Apr. '05) is correct in asserting that "The Lutheran Confessions announce to the world that we are neither Reformed nor Roman Catholic, nor anything else. We are Lutherans. We are unique or distinct."

The Lutheran Church is indeed distinct from both the Reformed churches and the Roman Catholic Church, which Prof. Arthur Carl Piepkorn (1907-73) said began at the Council of Trent in 1545-63 when some members of the Western Church who remained loyal to the Pope promulgated new dogmas. But we must be careful not to conclude

that the Lutheran Church is a new or unique church that came into being in the 16th century.

*The Book of Concord*, for example, begins with the three Catholic or Ecumenical Creeds. Its Preface states that our teaching is "briefly summarized in the time-honored, ancient Symbols" and describes that teaching as the "ancient, united consensus believed in by the universal, orthodox churches of Christ and fought for and reaffirmed against many heresies and errors."

The Augsburg Confession, which Piepkorn said was the chief "particular" creed of our church, states in the conclusion to the doctrinal Articles that there is nothing in the Augsburg Confession "that departs from the Scriptures or the catholic church, or from the Roman Church, insofar as we can tell from its writers."

In the preface to Articles dealing with abuses, the Augsburg Confession states that our "churches do not dissent from the catholic church in any article of faith but only set aside a few abuses that are new."

As Piepkorn stated on the back of the Lutheran Ashby liturgical calendar that he edited for many years, "The Lutheran Church is not a new denomination which came into existence some 450 years ago during the sixteenth-century Reformation. It is a part of the Church that has existed ever since our ascended Lord commanded His disciples to be His witnesses to the end of the age. Its faith, its doctrine, and its Symbolic books are evidence of this link with the past."

*Dr. Philip J. Secker  
Storrs, Conn.*

*Dr. Secker, director of the Arthur Carl Piepkorn Center for Evangelical Catholicity in Storrs, Conn., was the last student to earn a Th.D. under Arthur Carl Piepkorn before his death in 1973.*

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## ***A little decorum, please***

APRIL'S "FAMILY COUNSELOR" DIDN'T exactly address the concern of the person who doesn't "feel as close to God at church as I do at home. I am too distracted by all the people and activity. Is there something wrong with me?"

Perhaps it would have been helpful to delve a little deeper into the possible causes of the person's distractions. Was it the crying infants drowning out the sermon? The toddlers demanding their parents' attention? The youngsters driving their toy cars (with accompanying sound effects) on the pews? The teen snapping her gum? The twins flinging their Cheerios at each other? The grandmother constantly shushing the kids? These are all behaviors I noticed at a recent worship service—behaviors the parents chose to ignore while the rest of the congregation suffered in silence. They were all distractions that could have been dealt with immediately.

My brothers and I were taught church manners when we were young. We were told we were going to God's house. To show respect for God and fellow worshipers, we were taught to sit quietly. Most of today's young parents choose to ignore the distractions caused by their children in public. And most pastors, not wanting to offend anyone, are reluctant to address the issue. (The fact is, they shouldn't *have* to address the issue.)

The "Family Counselor" advised the letter writer to sit closer to the front, away from the families with youngsters, who typically sit toward the middle or back. There's always the idea of putting reminders in the bulletin about the crying room or nursery (hint, hint). This latter idea hasn't worked at my church, but maybe it would at yours.

How about an article in *The Lutheran Witness* on proper behavior in church and respecting the worship experience of others?

*Lynn Parke-Rick  
St. Cloud, Minn.*

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# YOU ARE NOT ALONE

*One of every five families today is struggling with a serious mental illness, but only a third of them seek help for a loved one with major depression, schizophrenia, bipolar, or other disorder.*

by Paula Schlueter Ross

**W**hen Pat Doyle was a child, her mother sometimes did strange things. She would close the curtains in the middle of the day, convinced that someone was spying on her. Every once in a while, she would mention the weird messages she was getting from the TV or the radio—messages meant just for her.

But when Doyle's mom crept into her daughter's bedroom in the middle of the night, woke the 10-year-old gently, and whispered, "Your father's trying to kill you," the youngster knew something was horribly wrong.

"I was startled out of this sleep, and I remember going into the bathroom thinking, was my dad really trying to kill me, or was there something the matter with my mom," she said, recalling the bizarre incident 37 years ago.

Doyle's mother, consumed with paranoia and unable to cope with life, had what was then called a nervous breakdown. Later that day she was taken, distressed and crying, to a psychiatric hospital for what turned out to be a monthlong stay, the first of many hospitalizations over the years.

But, at home, no one talked about it.

"There were no family meetings," Doyle said. "I don't believe my dad called the schools, and I don't believe anybody at church knew.

"We just suffered silently. And we suffered alone."

Today, much more is known about diagnosing and treating mental illness, and medications to treat major depression, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and other afflictions are better than ever.

Still, families suffer in silence. All kinds of families—from the poor to affluent, from those with little formal education to college-educated professionals. People of any age, race, or religion. Even Lutherans.

"These people are hidden in the congregation," says Linda Preus, who serves as an officer with the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI) Missouri board of directors and often speaks to groups about mental illness, as does her husband,



## IN HER OWN VOICE: A mentally ill teen shares her experience

former LCMS First Vice President Daniel Preus. “[Mental illness] is not just out there on the street—it’s in the home, in good homes, it’s hidden. And people would benefit from more open discussion about this, acceptance, treatment, and knowledge.”

Severe mental illness affects one of every five American families, including Christian families. One of every four hospital beds—more than heart disease, cancer, and respiratory illnesses combined—is filled by a mentally ill person, according to government studies.

Of every 100 Americans, one has schizophrenia and six are diagnosed with major depression. Many suffer unnecessarily—less than half of the 14 million Americans with depression are receiving treatment, say experts.

Caregivers suffer, too, and are “carrying one heck of a heavy burden,” says Bob Finley, retired president and CEO of St. Louis-based Glasco Electric Company. Finley’s wife, Hilde, recalls feeling overwhelmed in the mid-70s when the

*Families suffer in silence ... people of any age, race, or religion ... are hidden in our congregation.*

couple’s older daughter died, and their younger one, still in high school, became paranoid and delusional.

An all-state soprano who danced, played piano, and swam competitively, their younger daughter “had so much potential,” recalled Hilde. It was devastating and depressing to watch as chronic mental illness stripped that away, she said.

“There was a period of time where I wasn’t thinking about God,” said Hilde, a lifelong Lutheran. “I felt very

Aleisha Wood, 19, was diagnosed with bipolar disorder, or manic depression, about three years ago. As a public speaker for the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI), Wood takes part in “In Our Own Voice,” a NAMI program in which people who have a mental illness but are living stable, productive lives talk about their personal struggles and successes.

Wood doesn’t consider herself so much “well” as “stabilized.”

“I have a neurobiological brain disorder, and it’s not something that is ever going to go away,” she says. On the other hand, she hasn’t been hospitalized for almost three years, is taking “an extremely low dosage of medication which works for me. I no longer wish I was dead. I don’t feel as completely out of control as I used to.”

Says Aleisha: “I live a pretty normal, healthy, stable life, and you would never guess that I have a mental illness unless I told you.”

But she remembers the “dark days,” when she routinely cut her arms and tried to kill herself, and has kept a journal of her thoughts. Here are a few excerpts:

**Oct. 28, 2002:** “I seem to be doing pretty good at my special-ed school. It feels weird to be lumped into the special-ed category when I’ve always been ‘advanced’ or ‘gifted.’ Now I have ‘emotional problems.’ Lucky me. I feel like this is my fault. If I had tried harder, I could have caught up to everyone else.”

**Dec. 3, 2002:** “Kelly [a pseudonym] spent the night at my house. It’s been a while. We actually didn’t even talk that much. Everything just felt different from how it used to. I asked her about it. The whole me-being-bipolar thing still has her a little weirded out. I’m really not sure how I’m supposed to deal with that. It’s just so hard to have a best friend who it’s weird to hang out with, and who I can’t talk to about the problems in my life. I mean, she can’t really understand. My issues are just getting to school, fighting thoughts and urges to hurt myself, suicidal thoughts, and not winding up in the hospital again. But what’s hard for me, I guess, is that she doesn’t seem to want to try to understand.”

**Feb. 8, 2003:** “I’m sitting on my bed. I want to scream. I want to rip my hair out. I want to cry. I want to cut. I can’t do anything! If I scream, I’ll wake everyone. If I rip out my hair, people will notice ‘cuz my hair’s so short. If I cry, I dunno. I just can’t cry. Even though I want to. I’m not allowed to cut. I screwed up on that on Sunday, but I really don’t want any more scars. I hate my scars. I hate what I’ve done to myself.”

**Feb. 13, 2003:** “I miss having a relatively normal life. I hate my life the way it is. I hate myself, and I don’t want to. I want to cry all the time. I’m constantly miserable.”



*Aleisha Wood, left, gets a hug from a student at Glenbard West High School in Glen Ellyn, Ill., at a mental health rally in May. Wood spoke to students about her own mental illness on behalf of the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill.*

— PSR

## IF SOMEONE IN YOUR FAMILY IS DIAGNOSED WITH A MENTAL ILLNESS ...

- **Become educated about the illness.** Read books, visit Web sites, join organizations like the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI). To get started, contact NAMI at (800) 950-NAMI (6264) or [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org); the National Institute of Mental Health at (866) 615-6464 or [www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov); and the American Psychiatric Association at (888) 35-PSYCH (77924) or [www.healthyminds.org](http://www.healthyminds.org).
- **Find effective medical treatment.** You may have to change medications and/or doctors numerous times before you're successful.
- **Get enough rest.** Find someone who can give you regular breaks—and take them.
- **Don't withdraw.** Go to church, talk to people, don't be embarrassed to ask for help.
- **Join—or help form—a support group.** Contact NAMI to find out if a support group meets in your area. If not, find out if your church could provide meeting space (NAMI and other local organizations can provide speakers or group leaders). Advertise meetings in the congregation and community.

Dolores Segal and her husband, Dan, of St. Louis were “desperate” to find help when Dan was diagnosed with bipolar disorder nearly 50 years ago. They eventually founded the Depression Bipolar Support Alliance, which marks its 25th anniversary in November.

“The only way that Dan and I have been able to attain stability in our household with two family members experiencing the illness is through education,” says Dolores, whose daughter also has been diagnosed as bipolar. Through the support group, she said, “we not only help educate, but we also help people be aware of other resources in the community they can go to for help.”

Segal leads a support group that meets monthly at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Des Peres, Mo. At a recent meeting, a dozen caregivers told their personal stories and shared information on doctors, medications, and coping skills (number-one support principle: “Never give up hope!”). Segal also brought 20 books and about two dozen articles and reports on depression and bipolar disorder so that those attending the meeting would have resources at hand.

“Knowledge is the key,” said Kevin Smith, who helps facilitate the meetings. The support-group model is ideal, he added, because it helps families of the mentally ill realize that they are not alone.

- **Talk about the illness, don't hide it.** “Don't ask, don't tell” was the unspoken rule in Pat Doyle's home when she was growing up and her mother, who suffered from bipolar disorder, was in and out of hospitals. Doyle encourages families to hold regular meetings, including the ill person, if possible, to talk about the diagnosis, treatment, and related matters.

“I believe that Satan works best when things are secretive and when people are ashamed and in darkness,” Doyle said. “Christ is all about bringing the light to things, and I think that, through education, we bring the light.”

— PSR

angry. ... There were days I didn't want to get out of bed.” Back then, resources and support systems were nonexistent, say the Finleys.

But today, even with more sources of information and help to families with mental illness than ever before, many people still are not getting the help they need. Why?

“Unfortunately, there is still a great deal of fear, embarrassment, lack of understanding, and stigma associated with mental illness, which is far too often considered a weakness or moral failing of the individual suffering from such a disorder,” said Dr. Darrel A. Regier, executive director of the American Psychiatric Institute for Research and Education, and research director for the American Psychiatric Association.

Since many of the symptoms of mental illness, such as anxiety and depressed mood, also are considered normal human emotions, it's often difficult for families to immediately recognize when professional treatment is

needed, said Regier, a member of Pilgrim Lutheran Church in Bethesda, Md.

“In families within the church, there is often guilt that one's faith has not been sufficient to remove such symptoms,” he said.

Moreover, families may feel alone in their struggles because they don't understand that mental illnesses such as major depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, obsessive-compulsive disorder,

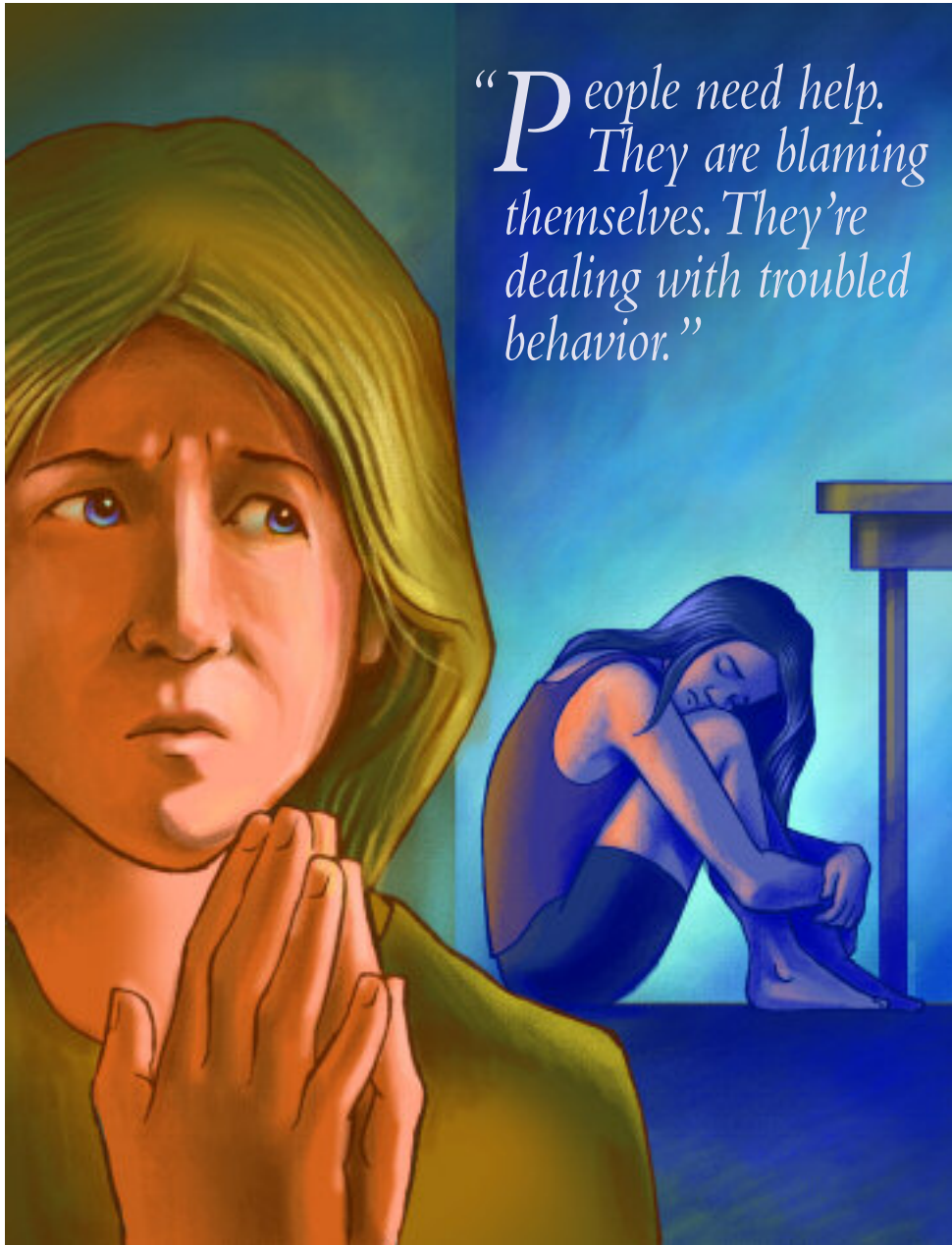
anxieties, and Alzheimer's disease “are all brain disorders that are not the fault of the individual person or family,” according to Regier.

Doyle says her dad, now deceased, used to characterize her mentally ill mother as “weak.”

“I don't blame him because that was the belief in those days—that people just couldn't handle things,” said Doyle, education coordinator for NAMI in DuPage County, Ill., and a member of Our Savior Lutheran Church, Carol



*Dolores Segal prepares for a meeting of the Depression Bipolar Support Alliance at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Des Peres, Mo.*



*“People need help. They are blaming themselves. They’re dealing with troubled behavior.”*

## HOW TO HELP

If one in five families in this country is directly affected by mental illness, you probably know someone—in your neighborhood, in your congregation, at school, or at work—who could use some understanding and support.

Here are a few ideas for reaching out to people with mental illness and their families:

- Ask how they are—don’t be afraid to talk about mental illness.
- Tell them about the free “Family to Family” and “Peer to Peer” classes offered by the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill.
- Listen to them, cry with them, don’t be judgmental.
- Send cards or call, offering your support and encouragement.
- If you send a card, tuck cash or a gift certificate inside to help with expenses. It doesn’t have to be a lot—even \$10 or \$20 will be appreciated.
- Visit them in the hospital or at home.
- Provide a meal, offer child care, do a household chore, or run an errand for them.
- Invite them to worship and sit with them in church.
- Pray for them, both personally and as a congregation.

— PSR

Stream, Ill. NAMI, she said, works to educate people that mental illnesses are biological brain disorders that can’t be overcome through willpower and are not related to a person’s character or intelligence.

Unfortunately, the struggles don’t always end, even for those who do seek help for what Preus calls “the most expensive illness in the world.” Even with health insurance, families often face huge financial setbacks, especially if the mental illness is severe and chronic.

Bob Finley says he spent “several hundred thousand dollars” on treatment for his daughter, who first

exhibited symptoms of chronic schizoaffective disorder when she was 14.

“I couldn’t make my daughter well,” said Finley, who, as a business executive, was used to solving problems. He has a binder almost three inches thick with information on his daughter’s 14 hospitalizations, numerous medications, and treatments since 1979. She now lives in a residential care facility and comes home on weekends.

“I’ve learned that I can’t solve [her illness], but I can do the best I can,” says Finley, adding, “The Lord helps me every night.”

Finley said he and his wife relied on their pastor for support when their older daughter, Nancy, became ill with cancer. The minister visited Nancy more than 100 times before she died at the age of 20.

But when the couple’s younger daughter became mentally ill—a biological predisposition triggered, they believe, by the death of her sister—the same pastor, then retired in another state, said he would pray for them but could offer little else. “He was a wonderful man,” said Finley, “but he didn’t feel qualified or comfortable in dealing with mental illness.”



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# *E*ducating families who are trying to cope with mental illness—and offering them support and hope—is the focus of “You Are Not Alone.”

If the church really wants to help the mentally ill and their families, Finley says, it should provide more training for pastors, a specialist or “hot line” for information, long-term housing for those with chronic and serious mental illness, and support for caregivers.

Dr. Bruce Hartung, executive director of the Synod’s Commission on Ministerial Growth and Support and associate professor of practical theology at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, said today’s LCMS seminaries offer some training on mental illness, typically as part of the pastoral counseling course. Hartung, who also is a psychologist and pastoral counselor, acknowledged that pastors and other church workers “can get scared of mental illness because they don’t understand it.” Education, he added, “is the answer” to changing those attitudes.

Likewise, educating families who are trying to cope with mental illness—and offering them support and hope—is the focus of “You Are Not Alone,” a seminar on mental illness that is designed and co-sponsored by NAMI and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, with funding from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans.

The pilot program, now available free to interested LCMS congregations, addresses three questions:

- What are the symptoms of serious mental illness and how do they affect the family?
- What do people with a mental illness experience and want?
- What can the church do to respond?

Project coordinator Linda Preus says the seminar is designed “not just to educate people but to connect people with real resources.”

Those resources include NAMI’s 12-week “Family to Family” class for families with a mentally ill loved one, and nine-week “Peer to Peer” class for people with a mental illness. The classes, both free, “really equip people to manage mental illness and change the course of people’s lives,” Preus said.

NAMI, a nonprofit self-help, support, and advocacy organization with 1,200 affiliates nationwide, was founded in 1979 to eradicate mental illnesses and to improve the quality of life for those whose lives are affected by them. Its Web site at [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org) offers information on the types of mental illness, their medications and treatment, how to find local resources and education

programs, and advocacy.

“People need help,” said Preus. “They are blaming themselves. They’re dealing with troubled behavior.” Just like physical infirmities such as cancer or heart disease, mental disorders require medicine, understanding, proper techniques, and help for living productive lives, she says. So, families should deal with mental illness “as a medical situation—it’s not [the ill person’s] fault, and it’s not the family’s.”

Preus’ advice is to become educated about mental illness and to seek treatment as early as possible, because most cases can be managed very effectively.

“The hope is greater than ever before,” she said.

Regier said he believes congregations can do much more to educate their members about mental illness and to support the families affected. He called the “You Are Not Alone” program “an excellent introduction for churches and families who would like to provide a more intelligent and compassionate level of support for families affected by a mental illness.”

Congregations also can support “vital community services” including “medical, vocational, supportive housing, and social welfare services that are frequently underfunded for the needs of these patients,” he said.

For more information about the “You Are Not Alone” program, contact LCMS Health Ministries at (800) 248-1930, Ext. 1381, or [lcms.worldrelief@lcms.org](mailto:lcms.worldrelief@lcms.org).



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*Paula Schlueter Ross is contributing editor of The Lutheran Witness*

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# RIGHTEOUSNESS AND RELIGION

*In our daily lives and vocations, God's Right Hand Kingdom and Left Hand Kingdom work together for His purposes.*

by Mark Sell

*This article is excerpted and edited from the book The Anonymous GOD, published by Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.*

—Ed.

As the phrase “God Bless America” echoes across our country, we often react emotionally. We *want* God to bless our country.

As Christians, however, we need to think about the “god” we address by this phrase. Who is this “god” whose blessings we desire for America? How are these blessings brought about? And how do we participate in our country and community while remaining faithful to the confession of the Christian faith?

Let's look at these questions through Martin Luther's “two-kingdom” theology of God's governance in two realms—the Left Hand Kingdom of society and government, and the Right Hand Kingdom of His Church on earth.

## The two kingdoms

Two-kingdom theology explains the relationship between Sunday morning and the rest of the week. It helps us live out our daily vocations. It speaks to the professional church worker, businessperson, factory worker, and farmer. It speaks to

mothers, fathers, sons, and daughters. It speaks to all the positions to which the Lord has called His people.

Two-kingdom theology also helps us make Christianity “practical.” It frees us to live in society and to engage fully in our communities as good citizens.

Because of two-kingdom theology, we can recognize others, even non-Christians, as good citizens with whom we engage in everyday life. Two-kingdom theology provides the order and justice the world needs as well as the forgiveness and eternal life won by Christ that humanity needs.

It helps us understand the yearning various communities have to be

religious, yet it permits Christians to be faithful to the one true God.

Two-kingdom theology distinguishes between the two realms. Although both are given by God and ruled by Him, they have different purposes, different tools, and different realities. While *distinct* from each other, the two kingdoms *depend* on each other.

Two-kingdom theology does not confuse civil order with spiritual salvation. Civil leadership and patriotism reign in the realm of civil order and just government, while an eternally just God rules in His Church through the submissive Lamb of God sacrificed for human salvation.

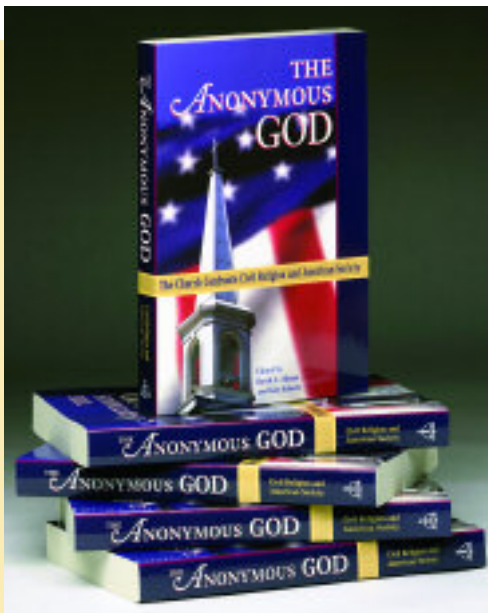
God and His actions are hidden in our everyday life in both kingdoms.



## The Left Hand Kingdom

### *Biblical Foundation*

The primary purpose of the kingdom of the left is civil justice and order. Its secondary purpose is compassion and grace, though not in the sense of Christ's forgiveness, but in daily kindness, mercy, and service to our neighbors—or, as Lutherans put it, civil righteousness. Read Rom. 13:1–7.



## THE ANONYMOUS GOD

Civil religion is a nationalism that uses religious means and words to promote national values and patriotism. For example, our money says “In God We Trust.” The pledge of allegiance reads “one nation under God.” We sing “God Bless America.” But who is this god of American civil religion?

*The Anonymous God* examines American civil religion in the light of historic Christianity with a series of essays by LCMS pastoral and scholarly leaders:

- ★ David L. Adams
- ★ Ronald R. Feuerhahn
- ★ David R. Liefeld
- ★ Cameron A. MacKenzie
- ★ Joel R. Okamoto
- ★ Alvin J. Schmidt
- ★ Ken Schurb
- ★ Mark E. Sell

Everything in this life begins with what God gives. God gives rulers their authority as His ministers or servants (Rom. 13:4). Rulers are to bring order and civil peace to society and protect temporal life. Their primary tool in this endeavor is reason, especially in civil law.

When well-reasoned laws are disobeyed, force is employed to maintain order and peace. In the kingdom of the left, civil righteousness (morality) is the measure of good citizenship. Those in authority are responsible for rewarding good and punishing evil.

In the kingdom of the left, the goal is to make society decent and good and just for *all* people, not to make the society Christian. Trying to do the latter would confuse the message of God's Word.

Efforts to “Christianize” society reflect a “*one-kingdom*” theology that attempts to treat church and state as the same thing. The result is theocracy.

To turn society into a theocracy is as wrong for Christians who desire to “Christianize” the laws of the land as it is for Muslims who seek to govern by the Qur'an. Both are contrary to God's Word and bring injustice to the community.

Justice and order in civil society also are important for the sake of the Church. Here is where it becomes clear that the two kingdoms depend on each other. The Church needs order and civility to be free to proclaim the Gospel. The whole Left Hand Kingdom is a scaffolding for God's ultimate purpose: the eternal salvation of His Church.

### *Luther's Small Catechism*

In his *Small Catechism*, Luther tells us in his explanation to the First Article of the Apostles' Creed that the kingdom of the left is founded in creation: “He richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life.”

This kingdom forms the environ-

ment for actions governed by the Fourth Commandment. All earthly authority flows through those who are second in authority only to God: *parents*. God gives parents power and authority to rule the earth—to maintain order, justice, and peace.

Police officers, rulers, executioners, and soldiers all carry out their functions in society because God has given parents the authority. Parents can't do everything, so they assign various tasks for the ordering of society. For example, teachers teach on their behalf.

The Church uses the power of the kingdom of the left to support her real purpose: proclaiming Law and Gospel, the Law to identify sin, and the Gospel to forgive it.

## The Right Hand Kingdom

### *Biblical Foundation*

Simply stated, the kingdom of the right is the Church. Christ is its Head. This kingdom is discussed in Eph. 1:22–23, Rom. 8:9ff., Col. 1:13, and Eph. 4:4–6.

The primary purpose and function of the kingdom of the right is eternal salvation through the proclamation of sin and grace.

Christ does not rule the Right Hand Kingdom through power but through humility, servitude, and faith created through the means of grace. God is present everywhere, of course, but only in His power—Law, not Gospel. God is present on earth for the Gospel's sake only in the means of grace.

Correspondingly, the Church's power lies in the hidden glory of the cross—of human words, of water, of bread and wine. This kingdom is manifested only as the Word of God is properly proclaimed and the sacraments faithfully offered. Through these means of grace come forgiveness, mercy, and Christ's saving presence.

In the kingdom of the right, God's Law exposes sin. *Spiritual* righ-

teousness is needed, not *civil* righteousness. Any claim of personal morality, goodness, or “becoming a better Christian” propels the claimant to hell. Punishment for any evil is total and complete. Eternal justice (justification) is found only in Jesus’ punishment for all the world’s sin.

Good works are not motivated by force in the kingdom of the right. As Christians, we do them voluntarily as sacrificial love for our neighbors, whether or not these neighbors are Christian. The only justice that counts is that of the Father, who brought His wrath to bear on Christ, then declared sinners justified by grace on account of Christ’s work for us.

The Church stands or falls on this justifying verdict. People can participate in the kingdom of the right only by faith. Faith itself is God’s gift through the means of grace. It does not result from a believer doing “more” to fulfill God’s Law. We can improve in our vocations, yet such improvements are a matter of the Left Hand Kingdom, not the Right Hand Kingdom.

The more we Christians understand God’s Law, the worse we see we are when judged by absolute standards of spiritual righteousness. Therefore, we rejoice to be clothed in the righteousness of Christ.

In the kingdom of the right there is no respect of persons. Everyone is knit together as one in the mystical body of Christ. The kingdom of the right is where God works His ultimate purpose.

The Church is not to create the civil realm in her image any more than the civil kingdom is to create the Church in its image.

### *Luther’s Small Catechism*

The *Small Catechism’s* teaching on the Church is found especially in the explanation to the Second and Third Articles of the Apostles’ Creed. In the Second Article we

confess the work of Christ for salvation. The Third Article focuses on the work of the Holy Spirit, who calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the Church through the work of Christ confessed in the Second Article. However, God always works through means, so the Holy Spirit brings the kingdom of God to us through the use of the First Article, creation. The Kingdom of God comes in word, water, bread, and wine. These gifts of creation are used with the Word to create what God’s promises call for.

### **Distinct yet dependent**

Although it may seem that neither of the two kingdoms needs the other, this is not so. The kingdom of the right benefits from societal order when it preaches the Gospel and administers the sacraments. The kingdom of the left depends on the goodness that only God’s Word can create in the hearts of believers who will go the extra mile, live a holy life, and bring repentance and mercy into the world. Each of the two kingdoms thus depends on gifts that the other brings into this world.

Neither kingdom can function well in the other’s sphere. In the category of civil righteousness, an unbeliever can be “good”—a good parent, a good governor, a good police officer, a good soldier, and so on. However, none of this makes the unbeliever good in God’s sight.

Likewise, the kingdom of the right does not possess the resources to bring outward peace to the world. (See Matt. 10:34.) Order cannot be maintained in the kingdom of the left by governments lavishing forgiveness upon lawbreakers. Chaos would result. Rather, when the kingdom of the right preaches the Word, hearers grow to love and respect authority as God’s gift.

The kingdom of the right *uses*

order. The kingdom of the left *needs* forgiveness.

The two kingdoms come together in our lives via vocation. God is doing His work through our vocation. When someone asks, “Where is God when I’m sick?” Lutherans answer: “He is working in the doc-

*All earthly authority flows through those who are second in authority only to God: parents.*

tor who diagnosed you, the pharmacist who dispensed your medication, and the auto worker who built the car to drive you to the pharmacy.” God provides through countless vocations in this life. It all begins with mother and father as we understand our relationship with our heavenly Father.

Because all callings come to Christians as forgiven sinners, no calling is higher or lower before God than another. Sometimes the call to be a pastor is misunderstood as somehow more special than other callings. However, the call to be a pastor is no “holier” than God’s call to be a parent, an architect, an engineer, or a student. We move from a forgiven relationship with God in the kingdom of the right into the variety of opportunities for service to the neighbor in the kingdom of the left. In our daily lives the two kingdoms are distinct, but they are never completely separate.



*Rev. Mark Sell is senior editor of academic, professional, and consumer books at Concordia Publishing House.*

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# A MATTER OF FAITH

## *By God or by accident?*

by David Cox

If any lot could be characterized as intellectual stragglers in the evolution of humankind, it would be editorial cartoonists. Their brains are permanently cluttered with juvenile humor. I know; I am one. We cartoonists are guys (mostly) who still can't believe we're actually getting paid for doing what once got us sent to the principal's office.

Some are paid quite well. Garry Trudeau, whose comic strip, "Doonesbury," is still atop of the cartoon heap, was the first to win a Pulitzer Prize for editorial cartooning 35 years ago.

Every editorial cartoonist tries to do what Trudeau does so well—get under his readers' skin, often by lampooning cherished values. He got under my skin when he took one of his many swipes at President Bush's intelligence.

One of his characters, Rev. Sloan, sitting at the kitchen table with another, Zonker, says, "You know, it's hard to believe we have a president who doesn't believe in evolution. It means the leader of the free world has closed his mind to *vast* areas of human experience and knowledge! Rejecting evolution requires him to repudiate the core tenets of entire fields of study ... such as biochemistry, genetics, ecology, paleontology, anatomy, physics, astronomy, geology, cosmology, history and archeology!"

"Whew ..." responds Zonker (and, presumably, Doonesbury readers), "Leaving what, gym and band?"

"Pretty much explains all those

C's, doesn't it?" quips Rev. Sloan.

Ouch. I didn't know I rejected the core tenets of history (I didn't even know history had core tenets). But it must be so, since I'm one of the millions of Americans who share the president's view.

Since there is no broad demand for commentary on armpit noises, we cartoonists have to come up with something to say about issues we really don't know all that much about. Even though we lampoon anything and anyone in the news, we're really not experts on war and politics and economics. Certainly not science.

So readers of Doonesbury should not surmise from its smug tone that Trudeau is an expert on the subject of origins. One doesn't have to be an expert to take potshots from safely within the fold of popular opinion.

Admittedly, I'm just another non-expert. I'm not a scientist or a scholar on the creation-evolution question. I'm just a layman with a healthy interest in maintaining fairness in the debate. But it seems to me the arrogance of the evolutionists is hardly justified given the theory's history, which is fraught with embarrassing errors and deliberate frauds. This history should, instead, inspire humility.

### **A history of blunders**

For example, scientists once believed the coelacanth (SEE-luh-canth) was an early evolutionary link, a supposedly long-extinct fish that was the first creature to walk on dry land—some 400 million years ago. Then a fisherman caught a live coelacanth off the coast of Madagascar.

Others have been caught since. The fish is indeed equipped to "walk" with its fins, but on the bottom of the ocean, not on land.

But there has been no "oops" from the scientific community. Instead, scientists continue to assert that the fossil is 400 million years old, explaining that the fish reached "terminal evolution"—meaning it is so perfectly suited to its environment that it has remained unchanged since before dinosaurs walked the earth. The evolutionists suffered a collective case of amnesia about their earlier assertion that the fish was the ancestor of land creatures.

The originator of Piltdown Man probably never imagined his hoax would fool the scientific establishment for more than 40 years. The prankster (some think it was none other than Sherlock Holmes creator Sir Arthur Conan Doyle) combined the chemically stained partial skull of a man with the jaw of an orangutan, its incisors shaved down to



believable proportions. The skull remained in the British Museum for more than 40 years before dating methods revealed that both parts of the skull were of recent origin.

Evolutionary theory itself continues to evolve as these frauds and errors, some quite spectacular, are brought to light.

Evolutionists should be embarrassed by their own history. But instead, they smugly dismiss those such as George W. Bush who see evidence of intelligent design in the ordered universe.

## Science by majority opinion

One might think evolutionists would respond to creationists with their best argument, their evidence, but instead they resort to ridicule, except in public settings where they don't want to appear rude. There they assert that evolution must be true since the vast majority of scientists accept it as true.

But this majority exists only within the closed circles of university science departments, where creationists routinely are denied faculty positions, tenure, admission to graduate schools, even a forum to

present their papers.

But evolutionists are finding it a losing battle. In truth, despite the concerted effort of organizations such as the National Science Teachers Association to purge public-school curriculum of all references to creationism or intelligent design, polls show for the first time in a generation that the majority of high-school graduates accept creationism over evolution as a more believable model. No wonder evolutionists are alarmed; one of their best arguments ("There are more of us than there are of you") is crumbling.

## Unanswered questions

It's not that there is no evidence for evolution. Creationists recognize adaptations *within* species, known as *microevolution*, and don't pretend to know the limits of those adaptations.

But there are gaping holes in evolutionary theory:

- Scientists can't explain the glaring absence of intermediate species in the fossil record.
- They have no answer to the mathematicians who have calculated the improbability of any organism evolving to such com-

plexity from such rudimentary beginnings, not to mention the infinite improbability of such evolutionary ascension occurring in the countless plant and animal species that inhabit the earth.

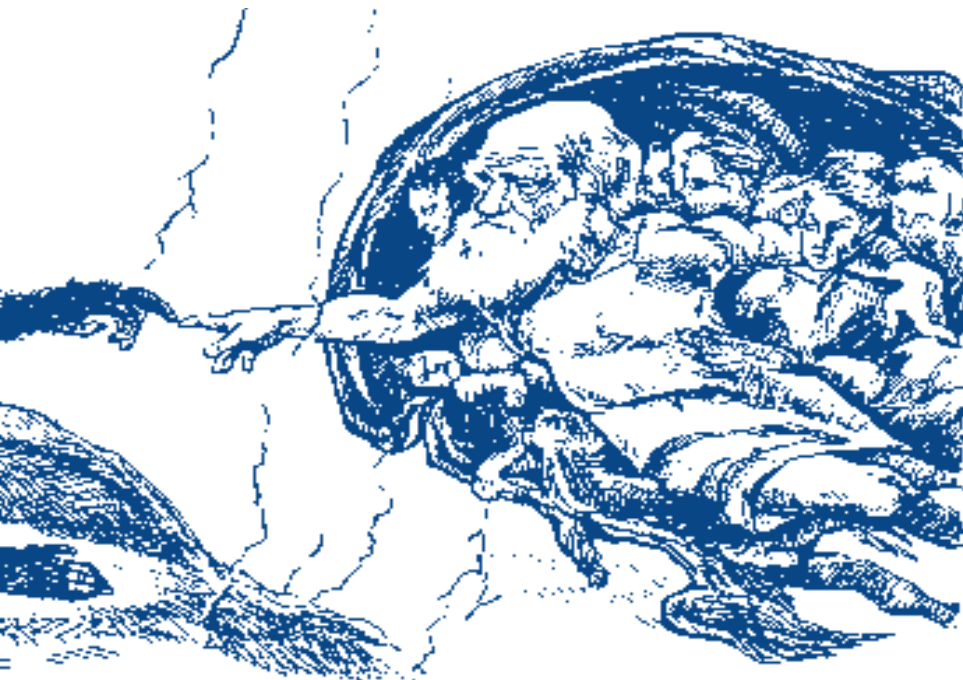
- The evolutionist can't explain the incredible balance of life at any scale, from the microscopic to the astronomical.
- And every attempt to explain the biggest flaw in evolution—the emergence of living organisms from non-living matter—has been an abysmal failure. You can't replicate something that never happened.

It's not for lack of trying. The late Dr. Stephen Jay Gould, paleontologist at Harvard University and science celebrity, attempted to explain the absence of intermediate species in the fossil record with his theory called "punctuated equilibrium," which hypothesizes that the changes occurred in rapid spurts that, presumably, never coincided with the catastrophic events that captured fossils of living organisms.

It is a fanciful theory destined for the scientific junk heap alongside the Piltdown Man, but not before the next fanciful theory is in place to carry the theory forward for true believers.

Carl Sagan, another science celebrity, broadcast messages on different frequencies into space to communicate with extraterrestrials. What was science fiction to the previous generation—the existence of intelligent life elsewhere in the universe—has moved into the mainstream.

It has to. The holes in evolutionary theory are too big to mask. But for those who steadfastly reject the possibility of a creator, there must be an alternative, even if it is something as farfetched as life on earth originating somewhere else in the universe.



## Science and faith

Creationism is the worldview that the universe is a product of intelligent design. It is a discipline rooted in religion, in faith. Although



***The wasp orchid is pollinated only by a specific wasp. Scientists were surprised to find “a system with seemingly limited evolutionary flexibility.” In other words, a real evolutionary problem since both orchid and wasp had to evolve their part of the system at the same time, or it wouldn’t work at all.***

it is unfair and inaccurate when evolutionists accuse creationists of shunning science, it is undeniable that our starting assumption is that God created the universe.

But evolution is also faith based. It is an attempt to forward an alternative theory of how we got here, a theory plausible enough to satisfy the hardened skeptics whose worldview starts with the rejection of God. But its plausibility is waning.

That’s why the theory of evolution evolves—to the point that serious scientists now entertain the possibility that life on earth originated in another part of the natural universe.

Since evolution exists to explain the universe in the absence of a creator, theistic evolution, the view that God used evolution as His method of creation, is intellectually dishonest. It is the position taken by those who are intimidated by jeers.

Darwinism is relatively young (*The Origin of the Species* was written in 1859), but rejecting the Creator in favor of naturalistic

origins is not. The Apostle Paul addressed it in his letter to the Romans.

“Since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. ... Although [godless men] claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles” (Rom. 1:20, 22–23).

“Doonesbury’s” Rev. Sloan might not be familiar with that passage because his creator is not. But he should be, as well as with God’s words in the Old Testament to Job: “Who is this that darkens my counsel with words without knowledge? Brace yourself like a man; I will question you and you shall answer me. Where were you when I laid the earth’s foundation? ... Have you journeyed to the springs of the sea or walked in the recesses of the deep? ... Can you bring forth the constellations in their seasons or lead out the bear with its cubs? Do you know the laws of the heavens? ... Do you watch when the doe bears her fawn? Do you count the months till they bear? ... Do you give the horse his strength or clothe his neck with a flowing mane? ... Does the eagle soar at your command? ...” (from Job, chapters 38–40).

Evolutionists sometimes praise (with barely veiled derision) the faith of creationists. But it really doesn’t take much faith to look at the universe and see the hand of the Creator. Billions of stars, each at the center of its own solar system, are but tiny dots scattered across countless galaxies throughout the vast universe, each body suspended in

balance with all the others by its own unique mass, rotation, and orbit. How much more faith it would require to believe that such balance happened by chance.

Nor does it require much faith to see the hand of God in the delicate orchid, which fascinated Darwin himself. Orchids provide a glimpse of the extravagant nature of God, who at creation, made tens of thousands of varieties.

One particularly remarkable variety is the wasp orchid. Part of its flower looks like a female wasp to human eyes and, more importantly, to the eyes of a male wasp. Its flowering period coincides with the wasps’ mating season. And the flower even emits the odor of a female wasp’s pheromone. When I see the wasp orchid I see not only the providence of a benevolent Creator, but His wisdom and wit.

The evolutionist has the unwavering faith to believe not only that the wasp and orchid evolved side by side in a symbiotic relationship, but that the orchid took on the odor, sexual cycle, and appearance of the wasp by natural adaptation.

Finally, it doesn’t take great faith to see the Creator’s hand in the sacrificing love one human being has for another, a love that endows a mother with supernatural strength when her child is endangered, a love that has been known to heal physical ailments, a love that leads a soldier to give up his own life to save the lives of his brothers in arms. The evolutionist says that capacity to love is merely conditioned behavior.

Call me a skeptic. I just don’t have the faith to believe that.



*David Cox is an editorial cartoonist with the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, managing editor of weekly newspapers in Arkansas and Missouri, and a former Lutheran school administrator. He is a member of Hope Lutheran Church, Batesville, Ark.*

## TAKE GOD AT HIS WORD

by Janice Long

If a friend asked you, “What do Lutherans believe?” could you answer? How do the teachings of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod differ from those of other Christian denominations? Do these differences matter?

The differences hinge on Holy Scripture and the interpretation of it. Our teachings on critical doctrines all have a connection with the past—the prophets and the apostles.

Dr. Robert Preus, in his book *Getting Into the Theology of Concord*, explains, “Sola Scriptura [Scripture alone] means that we Lutherans base our theology solely on the Scriptures of God and nothing else, not tradition, not human speculation, not modern scholarship, not our experiences or feelings or anything else.”

We believe the authority behind Scripture is God Himself, and the words of Scripture are His words to us. Hebrews 1:1 says, “God spoke to our forefathers.”

And Jesus told the Pharisees, “Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition” (Mark 7:13).

How do the following support this understanding?

John 17:17 \_\_\_\_\_

1 Thess. 2:13 \_\_\_\_\_

Many Christian denominations acknowledge that Scripture is God’s Word. Differences arise in the interpretation of Scripture and how our reason should be used in understanding it. Reason should be used, but as a servant

of the text, not to stand in judgment of the text.

We cannot hope to interpret Scripture correctly without God’s guidance. In these verses, who is enabling understanding?

Ps. 119:73 \_\_\_\_\_

Luke 24:45 \_\_\_\_\_

According to 2 Cor. 10:5, should Scripture correct our thoughts and understandings, or the other way around?

Question 4 of Luther’s *Small Catechism with Explanation* asks, “What is the key to the correct understanding of the Bible?” Answer: “Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, is the heart and center of the Scripture and therefore the key to its true meaning.”

How do the following passages support this answer?

Luke 24:13–27, 44 \_\_\_\_\_

John 5:39–40 \_\_\_\_\_

Acts 10:43 \_\_\_\_\_

With this understanding, Lutherans do not see the Bible as simply an “instructional book for life” or a set of moral examples. It is the story of salvation from cover to cover with the central character being God in human flesh, our Savior Jesus Christ.



Read 2 Tim. 3:14–17. What does Paul say about Scripture’s purpose and uses?

What does John say in John 20:31 about the reason for Scripture?

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod says along with Paul, we are “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone” (Eph. 2:20).



Janice Long is a member of Gloria Christi Lutheran Church in Greeley, Colo.





# THE BOOK OF CONCORD: A SOURCE OF HARMONY

## THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION

*In 1530, Lutherans summarized what they believed.  
Today, it is still our fundamental statement of Lutheran doctrine.*

by Jose Pfaffensteller

*Translated by Dr. Ronald Abresch,  
Peace Lutheran Church, Trail, and  
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**T**wenty-five years after Columbus discovered America, Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses on the Castle Church door in Wittenberg. This act, on Oct. 31, 1517, was the “kickoff” for the Reformation. In the years that followed, other groups opposing the Pope and the Roman church arose (including Reformed and radical groups), but Luther and his followers could not agree with them on important aspects of doctrine.

Meanwhile, Charles V, the Holy Roman emperor and the ruler of much of Europe, was seeking to build a European defense against the Ottoman military that had advanced through the Balkans and Hungary and now threatened Austria. For the sake of unity, he wanted to end the religious discord that had unsettled his empire.

In 1530, he summoned his princes and other representatives to

a diet (meeting) in Augsburg to discuss issues and reestablish religious peace. His interests, however, were more political than religious.

In response to Charles’ summons, John the Constant, the elector of Saxony, asked Luther, Philip Melancthon, and several others to prepare a statement of the Lutheran

position. The *Torgau Articles* (named for the city where they were commissioned) would be presented to Charles along with the *Schwabach Articles*. The former dealt with the corrupt practices of the Roman church, while the latter, written in 1529, addressed important points of doctrine. *(Continued on Page 22)*



**June 25, 2005, is the 475th anniversary of the presentation of the Augsburg Confession, depicted in this scene from the 2003 movie “Luther.” Just as Luther had stood before Emperor Charles V in Worms, Philip Melancthon and a group of German princes stood before the emperor in Augsburg. This told the world that the Reformation had taken root.**

*“Apology” means defense—  
and that’s exactly what the  
Lutherans of 1530 did. They  
defended their faith in Scripture.*

# THE APOLOGY OF THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION

by Paulo Buss

**T**he public reading of the Augsburg Confession at the Diet of Augsburg had significant consequences. Many representatives of Emperor Charles V’s German territories became aware that the Lutherans had been slandered and their teachings misrepresented. Many now also expressed openly their adherence to the Reformation.

In response to the Augsburg Confession, Charles V appointed a group of Roman Catholic theologians to prepare an answer—a “confutation”—to refute the Lutheran position as stated in their confession of faith.

A text prepared by this group, comprised of some of Luther’s fiercest opponents, had to be revised before the emperor accepted it. On Aug. 3, 1530, the imperial secretary read the Roman Confutation, written in the name of the emperor, in the same hall in which the Augsburg Confession had been read a few weeks earlier.

The Lutherans were not given a copy of the document. When they persisted in their request for a copy, Charles agreed to grant it to them under the condition they would not respond to it in print. He demanded the Lutherans accept the confutation, give up their confession of faith, and return to the teachings and practices of the Roman Catholic Church.

The Lutherans were willing to go a long way for the sake of peace, but they were not willing to act against

the Gospel and their conscience. Many now feared war was inevitable. (It actually came about, but later, in 1547.)

The Lutherans felt they had to defend their confession of faith and show the confutation had not disproved their doctrine on the basis of Scripture. Philip Melancthon and others prepared a draft of an apology (defense) of the Augsburg Confession, which they finished by Sept. 20. Two days later, the apology was presented to the emperor, but he refused to accept it. Charles then gave the Lutherans until April 15, 1531, to consider whether they would return to the Roman church.

After the diet, Melancthon continued working on the apology. He worked on it intensively and without interruption, improving it and expanding some of its articles, especially the one on justification. As one story has it, once while he was writing during a meal on a Sunday, Luther took the pen from his hand and told him God could be honored, not only by work, but also by rest and recreation.

## Focus on justification

The revision of the apology took Melancthon much longer than he anticipated, and it was finally published in late April or early May 1531. Subsequently, Melancthon made further revisions.

The apology is both a refutation of the confutation and a defense of the Augsburg Confession. While it elaborates on several of the articles of the confession, it is the article on justification that received the most

thorough and extensive treatment.

The doctrine of justification—the first and chief article of our faith, on which stands all that the Lutheran Church teaches—is not only treated extensively in the apology but also forms the basis for all the articles in the document. It also establishes the perspective from which the confession was written and is to be understood.

**Charles V had placed Martin Luther under the imperial ban after he refused to recant at the Diet of Worms. Charles was the most powerful man of his time, but he failed to stop the Reformation, underestimating the influence the German monk would wield.**



The truth it embodies and proclaims—that sinners obtain the remission of sins for Christ’s sake, by grace through faith—is what, above all, makes the Apology of the Augsburg Confession relevant and meaningful today for Lutherans and non-Lutherans alike.

In spite of its substantial theological content, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession is not a treatise of abstract theories but is aimed at believing, teaching, and confessing of the Good News that Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior.



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## LA IGLESIA EVANGÉLICA LUTERANA ARGENTINA

La Iglesia Evangélica Luterana Argentina (IELA) was established in 1905 and this year celebrates its centennial. The first missionaries were pastors from the United States. Since the 1940s, the IELA has trained its own pastors at its own seminary. Today, with 30,000 members, the church can see the fruits of its mission activities in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Paraguay, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Chile, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Spain, and in a mission in Uruguay.



## IGREJA EVANGÉLICA LUTERANA DO BRASIL

The history of the Igreja Evangélica Luterana do Brasil (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brazil) started in 1900 when the LCMS sent Rev. Christian J. Broders to survey the Brazilian mission field. He established the first congregation a short time after his arrival and was instrumental in securing more Missouri Synod missionaries for the country. These missionaries started a seminary and began publishing a church periodical in 1903. The next year, the new mission became a district of the Missouri Synod and remained as such until 1980. A protocol document signed that year made the Brazilian church a partner church of the Missouri Synod in God's mission in the world.

## THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION (Continued from Page 20)

### A new challenge

Upon arriving in Augsburg, however, the Lutheran delegates encountered a highly inflammatory publication written by John Eck, a Catholic adversary of Luther. Eck's *404 Propositions against the Lutheran Heresy* misquoted and misrepresented Luther and Melancthon, lumped Lutherans together with Anabaptists (a term applied to radical reformers who rejected infant Baptism), and charged that Lutherans were guilty of numerous heresies, including many of those

Written in a conciliatory manner, the confession emphasized Lutheran points of agreement with Rome, though it also clearly noted the differences.

The confession contains 28 articles. The first 21 present fundamental biblical doctrines. The remaining seven treat some of the abuses in the Roman church that the Lutherans had corrected among themselves.

Among the important topics addressed by the confession are those of original sin, salvation and justification by faith alone, the role of Word and Sacrament, a proper understanding of good works, and a correct understanding of the church and its rites.

The confession was signed by seven German princes and two representatives of German cities and read before the diet on June 25, 1530.

addressed by the early church.

Eck's charges caused the Lutheran delegation to reconsider its presentation to the emperor. A new document was needed, one that would demonstrate harmony between Lutheran teachings and the early church and distinguish Lutheran teachings from other Protestant ideas, especially those of the Anabaptists.

A new document was needed, one that would demonstrate harmony between Lutheran teachings and the early church and distinguish Lutheran teachings from other Protestant ideas.

Luther did not attend the diet. Charles V had placed him under an Imperial Ban, making Luther an outlaw and subject to arrest in Augsburg.

The task of preparing the new document fell principally to Melancthon, who, in consultation with Luther, transformed the Schwabach and Torgau Articles and other Lutheran writings into our Augsburg Confession.

### Banner and rampart

Truth and love, respect for authority, and the courage to confess the faith in the face of mortal danger converge in the Augsburg Confession. This teaches us to proceed in the same manner today: love people but never renounce the truth simply to "get along" or for one's own benefit.

The confession is like a banner that unites us and a rampart that defends us against error. It serves as a base and as an example for the proclamation and confession of our faith; for seeking the clear witness of God's truth; and for opposing, with courage and firmness, the abuses that continue; not forgetting the ingredient of love along with truth.



*Dr. Jose Pfaffensteller is rector of Concordia Seminary, Buenos Aries, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Argentina.*

## ABLAZE! ... FAN INTO FLAME! ...FOR THE SAKE OF THE CHURCH!

The Synod's 2004 convention adopted many resolutions of great importance for the future of our church body, including the following:

**Res. 1-02**, "To Promote 'Mission Outpost' Attitude":

*Resolved*, That each congregation, ministry, and school within our Synod ... understands itself as a mission outpost to all the unchurched and sees that its own community is a mission field today.

**Res. 1-04**, "To Commit to \$100 Million Ablaze! Fund-Raising Effort":

*Resolved*, That The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod ... commit itself to support the major fund-raising effort approved by the Board of Directors of the Synod and administered by the Mission Support Unit, with a goal of raising \$100 million above the regular LCMS World Mission budget in time to celebrate God's blessings by the 2010 synodical convention.

**Res. 1-05A**, "To Establish Ablaze! National Goals":

*Resolved*, That the Synod affirms the urgency of the national goal to reach 50 million unreached and/or uncommitted people with the Gospel; and

*Resolved*, That the Synod sets a national goal to begin 2,000 new congregations by the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.

(Note: In addition, the LCMS is working with our 29 partner churches around the world in an effort to reach another 50 million people outside the United States with the Gospel by 2017.)

**Res. 1-07**, "Ethnic and Urban Ministry":

*Resolved*, That the LCMS make evangelistic outreach the first priority of our church body by chal-

lenging our congregations to grow as the Lord intended while providing them with support that equips them to use the gifts God has given them to be the Holy Spirit's tools for bringing Christ to the nations and the nations to Christ, winning souls for Christ and His Kingdom.

These resolutions flow from the Synod's vision of:

One Mission, reaching lost people for Christ,

One Message, that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world,

One People, united by God's love in Christ.

The convention (Resolution 1-03) "endorsed and responded enthusiastically" to this vision "to encourage our entire church body toward a stronger zeal for mission outreach, evangelical confession, and efforts to achieve peace and concord in our midst ..."

Districts are already leading the way. For example, I am aware that the Indiana, Mid-South, Southeastern, Nebraska, Minnesota North, and Iowa West districts are planning or already have held training events to encourage their congregational members and leaders in outreach efforts. More are certain to follow. Also, numerous congregations are using *50 Days Ablaze*, a resource available on the *Ablaze!* Web site.

In the months and years ahead, I encourage you to remember these resolutions, and especially three related major endeavors underway in our Synod today:

*Ablaze!* is the Synod's effort by the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017 to reach 100 million people (50 million in the United States and 50 million around the world) with the Gospel



of Christ and to begin 2,000 new congregations. In response to God's grace in Christ, your role is critical in sharing the love of Christ with a person who does not yet have saving faith!

*Fan into Flame!* is the Synod's endeavor to gather \$100 million for support of missions in the United States and around the world. These dollars will be distributed in a way that supports mission work in local congregations, in Districts, in new mission starts and cross-cultural ministries throughout the Synod, and for global mission work.

*For the Sake of the Church!* is the Synod's campaign to raise \$400 million in endowments for our 10 colleges and universities and to double the number of LCMS students enrolled in these institutions of higher learning. Your support of this effort is very important as we identify and train professional church workers and other faithful men and women for leadership in our church in the decades ahead.

Thank you and God bless you for your prayerful involvement in and generous support of all these bold and courageous endeavors!

### **Jerry Kieschnick**

Lives Transformed through Christ, in Time ... for Eternity!

John 3:16–17

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