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Not a careful practice



“The announcements made in public services are frequently read from loose slips of paper, or made from memory. This practice does not bear the approval of methodic pastors. The announcements, though not in any sense part of the service, are certainly part of the congregational history, and to write them on loose slips of paper, which are or are not, filed, is not a careful practice, to express it mildly. Many pastors have had most disagreeable experiences when asked to verify certain announcements. To refer to a book in which these announcements have been written, and from which they have been read, is, of course, not conclusive evidence of the exact wording of each particular announcement as actually made, but it is a valuable bit of corroborative testimony, which may save, and in many instances has saved, considerable annoyance, especially when the pastor cultivates the somewhat time consuming practice of writing out his announcements, particularly the important official announcements, and then reading them exactly as they are written.” —from the Introduction to a leather-bound notebook entitled “Announcements,” published by Concordia Publishing House, ca. 1924

The mission of *Forum Letter*



I was recently filling out the paperwork required to submit some of *Forum Letter's* “best of 2008” to the annual awards program of the Associated Church Press, of which we are a proud member. The forms asked for our publication’s “mission statement.” That took me aback for a moment, since as far as I know, we don’t have one. I’m sure there are some readers who assume it must be something like “publish homophobic rants thinly disguised as theological reflection,” or “undercut Bishop Hanson’s efforts to make the ELCA a public church,” or maybe “advocate for arcane and irrelevant liturgical practices while dissing any liturgical innovation done since the Council of Trent.” But no, we’ve never written any of that down in mission statement form.

Truth be told, I’m not a big fan of mission statements, having been disillusioned by certain consultants whose mission statement reads something like “force everyone in the world to write a mission statement.” But I will admit there is some benefit to thinking, at least now and then, about why you do what you do. (I made up a mission statement for the Associated Church Press entry forms, which I will not inflict on you here.)

A couple of years ago, when I was preparing to take over the editorial duties, I spent some time reading through all the *Forum Letter* issues since the newsletter’s inception in 1972. I culled out an occasional paragraph here and there

where various editors had reflected on the purpose (the mission, if you must) of this publication. I was thinking then that I might write something about my own view of the *Letter* (which I have read regularly since the early 1980s). Never got around to that; and besides, my predecessor shamelessly scooped me by reprinting some of what I had gathered on his way out the door. But I'm working on this February issue on New Year's Eve, and so some nostalgic retrospection can perhaps be forgiven.

Fast and timely

When *Forum Letter* began in 1972, one of its aims was to "provide fast, timely, and perceptive coverage of the religious scene." That was before the internet, and we, like most print media, have sort of given up on the "fast, timely" part. We do still try to be perceptive, though this may not always be immediately apparent.

But more important in those early days was a commitment to be "a forum and news source within the Lutheran Church independent of any national Lutheran headquarters." That has continued to be a driving purpose here. The various house organs of North American Lutheranism offer the party line. That isn't meant as a criticism, understand; publications such as *Lutheran Witness* and *The Lutheran* no doubt have real written mission statements, and a big part of their mission is to present a positive and upbeat view of what's going on in their respective church bodies. There's a place for that, and I don't fault them for filling it.

Occasionally cranky

Our task is different, however. Here at *Forum Letter*, we are equally dedicated to serving our Lutheran community – but we know that sometimes this means eschewing "positive and upbeat," and we have the luxury of being able to be critical, satirical, and even cranky. Sometimes it means, in the words of one of my predecessors, publishing "news and viewpoints that the officialdom might neglect or prefer to quash." That initial issue of *Forum Letter* made clear that the Board of the American Lutheran Publicity Bureau would grant the editors "freedom to define and articulate their views within the limits of journalistic ethics, responsible churchmanship, and faith in Jesus Christ." The Board, to their credit, has never backed away from that commitment to

editorial freedom. We editors hope that even our occasional crankiness is always ethical and responsible, but then of course we're in bondage to sin, just like our readers.

Running through *Forum Letter* since its inception has also been a commitment – sometimes muted, more often overt – to Lutheranism as "an evangelical catholic movement of reform." That locates the *Letter* in a particular place on the theological spectrum of North American Lutheranism. This "evangelical catholic" and confessional perspective is admittedly not the mainstream in any of our church bodies, but it is a vibrant, healthy, and significant point of view, and one which we believe needs to be articulated.

Parish theology

My immediate predecessor, Russ Saltzman, often pointed out that *Forum Letter* is firmly rooted in the parish. Its editors have been parish pastors, and that gives it a particular flavor. I recently had an e-mail from a well-known theologian who complained (quite graciously and gently, I must say) about what he viewed as our tendency lately to move away from "high level theological gossip" in favor of "mini-theological essays" – shorter versions, he said, of what he can find in any number of other theological journals. That provoked a lot of thinking on my part (and an exchange of very helpful e-mails with the theologian).

It occurred to me that most of our readers are, in fact, not academic theologians but parish pastors and lay people. Many of them don't have easy access to "other theological journals" – or, if they do subscribe to them, they probably often find (this is a personal confession, not an accusation) little time to read and digest them. So if we offer "mini-theological essays" from time to time, it is because we think that this serves both our readers and our purpose. And, of course, some months there just isn't much "high level theological gossip," at least none we choose to pass on.

In the end – and I'm speaking only for myself here, not for my colleague Pr. Speckhard – I firmly agree with what Russ Saltzman often said: I write primarily for myself. If reading over my shoulder is helpful to you, I'm glad. If what we publish manages to advance some hypothetical mission statement, so much the better. But if I could have

one personal goal here, it would probably be something like the preaching advice given to me by a friend, the wife of a former pastor of mine, who said to me the day before one of the first sermons I ever preached: "Make the matchless message interesting." I find writing and editing *Forum Letter* to be

very interesting. I hope you also find the *Letter* interesting to read; and I've learned that when you don't, you let me know about it. For that I am usually grateful.

— by Richard O. Johnson, editor

Book review: *Christ Have Mercy*



Christ Have Mercy: How to Put Your Faith in Action by Matthew Harrison (Concordia, 2008).

For decades, it seems, bold problem-solvers have been congratulating themselves for having the vision to change a controversial "either/or" into a "both/and." But sometimes their "solutions" amount to nothing more than the clever gimmick of saying "yes" to mutually exclusive proposals. It is mere nonsense dressed up as visionary thinking. So it is refreshing to read a book that goes against the grain and addresses an age-old "either/or," not with a meaningless and predictable "both/and" solution, but with a hearty "neither/nor," backed up by a fully thought-out competing proposal.

That is what Matthew Harrison's new book *Christ Have Mercy* does with the issue of social ministry as it relates to the mission of the church. The author, a pastor who serves as Executive Director of Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod World Relief and Human Care, argues that advocates of what has been called (sometimes derisively) "social gospel" as well as those who dismiss social action by the larger church (except where conversion is the goal) are both wrong because they neglect the proper theological framework for discussing the mission of the church and thus miss the point of social ministry. Harrison then seeks to outline such a framework based on genuinely confessional Lutheran theology.

Unchristian water treatment plants

Both sides can make pretty good arguments. One who rejects as "social gospel" the idea of churches helping to build, say, water treatment plants in some third world setting can rightly point out that clean water does not advance the kingdom of God one iota. Such an endeavor is entirely of this

world and therefore not, properly speaking, a mission of the church. If every village had a state-of-the-art water treatment facility, if we cured AIDS today, eliminated our "carbon footprint" altogether, fed every single hungry person, and otherwise actually succeeded at any and every macro-level social goal floating around out there, we would still live in a world enslaved to sin, death, and hell, without hope, without peace, and bound for eternal destruction. So let secular authorities, private enterprise, and various non-church-related charities do their thing; we're about salvation, not sanitation. What matters is not what we die of or when, but the state of our souls before God.

On the other hand, it's pretty tough to read the New Testament and all that it has to say about wealth, sharing, and care for the sick and needy without getting the sense that somehow, some way, social action for the benefit of people in the here and now fits right in with the mission of the church, and not simply as a means of evangelizing. And it makes perfect sense to think that as the Body of Christ has grown from a few followers into a multi-billion member global phenomenon, so the organized efforts of that body on behalf of the poor and sick have naturally taken on a more macro-level (and sometimes political) character in terms of organizing society in ways that reduce poverty and disease.

Out to fix the world

Christians who take this approach sometimes come to regard the church almost as an impediment to Christian behavior. By this view, Christians are out to fix the world. Eliminating poverty, curing diseases, and wholesale niceness become the definition of the Christian life. Thus, evangelizing unbelievers with a view toward their conversion and eternal salvation gets dismissed as arrogant co-

lonialism or ecclesial imperialism, moral instruction (especially regarding sex) gets pooh-poohed as outdated and beside the point of the mission, and orthodox theology is disdained as dead and dusty dogma that does nothing to help people and much to cause enmity between them.

Lutheran divergence

Obviously, very few people overtly hold to either of these stereotypical extremes. But denominations as a whole, or at least their official leadership, can lean toward one side or the other. The two major Lutheran churches in America lean in opposite directions, and by most accounts the divide widens every year.

In concert with mainline Protestantism, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) at the leadership level tends toward the social-action-as-primary-mission-of-the-church view. Of course, nobody in any official capacity would ever say that, but on "ALPB Forum Online," I see countless complaints from comparatively conservative ELCA clergy that the denominational headquarters seems obsessed with the UN Millennium Development Goals for the Third World but can't seem to bring itself to care much about converting unbelievers or upholding doctrinal orthodoxy.

On the other hand, the more conservative LCMS, in keeping with what often gets dismissed as "the religious right," maintains a commitment to rigorous doctrinal standards and traditional Christian teaching regarding personal morality, and is zealous to the point of obsessive regarding evangelism, with the headquarters promoting an initiative called *Ablaze!* that seeks to reach 100,000,000 people with the Gospel by 2017. But complaints come in from the field that the synod is so obsessed with evangelism and sound doctrine that anything geared towards simply helping people gets viewed with suspicion if not dismissed as a false gospel.

Accordingly, the LCMS often seems to treat human care as strictly an evangelism strategy — giving people stuff is a way of getting them to listen to the gospel. Just giving people stuff without a "message" attached would serve no churchly purpose, and working with other churches and agencies on such efforts would garble the accompanying message because of the doctrinal disagreements among the sponsors. Thus, where the LCMS does

"human care" relief efforts, it tends to work alone.

Both are wrong

Harrison recognizes this widening divide in approaches among Lutherans, and does not offer the standard "they're both right." Rather he boldly claims both such approaches (as broadly stereotyped here) are wrong. A deeply orthodox Lutheran theologian, expert in the fathers of Lutheran orthodoxy such as Martin Chemnitz, and translator of Hermann Sasse and Johann Gerhard, Harrison has a passion for showing how the human care mission of the church need not be "social gospel" nor a mere strategy for promoting for the gospel, but is part and parcel of what it means to be the Church.

The book is arranged as a series of short reflections that could easily serve as Bible study material and includes study questions for each chapter, perfect for Christian book clubs or small group discussions. None of the chapters on its own is especially remarkable, but all of them are remarkable in how they relate to the other chapters. The cohesion of them around the central theme really is the whole point. It begins with the liturgy, especially the *Kyrie*, from which the book takes its title. The lame and misleading subtitle, "*How to put your faith into action*," is unfortunate, as it calls to mind some cheesy motivational or self-help book from the end-cap display in an airport bookstore. This is not a bullet-point-laden how-to book, which would be the last thing the church or the world really needs more of. A title that better reflected the contents would be something like *Christ Having Mercy: Christian Faith in Action*. So don't let the subtitle fool you.

Taking the theme of mercy, the first three chapters address the liturgy, the Trinity, and the incarnation, which set the stage for a theology of human care that includes the importance of the creeds and the centrality of baptism and communion. Later chapters acknowledge the bewildering unsolvability of theodicy and the meaning of suffering, and address several of the problems inherent in treating the soul but not the body or succumbing to a this-world focused, social gospel.

Set free to see the truth

The real key for Christians, claims Harrison, is that they have been set free to see the truth, which includes seeing people as people and in need of

mercy in myriad ways. Only the church, the body of those who know true God and true man in Jesus Christ, can see human beings for what they truly and wholly are and treat them accordingly. Thus, the church is uniquely qualified to offer real mercy to the whole person. It is the nature of Christ to have mercy, and the nature of the church to be the body of Christ in the world. The church properly formed by word and sacrament and equipped to see the truth cannot help but be merciful in every way.

The book is intended for all ages, so scholarly readers might grow impatient with the simple, borderline patronizing (as when the author carefully explains the pun “razing hell” for people who don’t know what razing means) explanations and illustrations. In that sense it is a “light read.” But the profundity of it is in the cohesion, in the way the whole Christian picture – the liturgy, the catechism, the life-situations – offers insight into and derives meaning from the centrality of the theme of Christ having mercy, which then informs the larger project of showing how human care fits right in.

Unapologetically Lutheran

Harrison admits his own position up front in the preface. “I write as a convinced, convicted, and unapologetic clergyman of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod. The public confession of the Lutheran church – most fundamentally stated in the Book of Concord – is my own, without equivocation.” This, coupled with the author’s sometimes pugnacious defense of the Lutheran position wherever it collides with other confessions on topics such as the sacraments, might turn off some readers. But every author speaks from somewhere; at least you don’t have to guess about this one, or feel as though there is an unspoken bias in the presentation or a watered-down presentation too bland to offend. The central theme certainly applies outside the realm of Lutheranism and so should interest all Christians who wonder how social action fits into the larger scheme of Christianity. But non-Lutheran readers may expect a heavy dose of aggressive Lutheranism.

Harrison’s full-hearted endorsement of the LCMS does not prevent him from making harsh judgments about his own church body. For example, in discussing the synod’s response to Hurricane Katrina, Harrison discusses past hopes for greater cooperation between the ELCA and the LCMS and

how those hopes seem to be waning as the two churches drift further apart. He says:

Those who disagree with the LCMS do so out of deep and principled conviction. We can only pray, ‘Lord, forgive us our (LCMS) sins and grant us all repentance!’ It is time, and past time, for the LCMS to develop and reclaim her capacity to act in the realm of human care. The issue is not about refusing to cooperate; rather, it is about the capacity and ability *to cooperate*. The LCMS has no one to blame but ourselves for our lack of capacity (people, funds, equipment) because we sent our money elsewhere. [p. 140, emphasis in original]

Clearly, Harrison is passionate on his subject and evangelically unafraid to step on toes.

Harrison also quotes extensively from the Bible, the Lutheran confessions, and prominent Lutheran theologians. In fact, most of the book consists of first-hand accounts of real situations, which serve as case-studies for applying these quotations. If you removed the pictures, footnotes, study questions, quotations, and personal stories, you’d have a very short book. But again, the theological and practical meat is not so much in this or that paragraph as in the arrangement of the stories and quotations in a way that holds everything together and puts human care in the proper context.

A “must read”

Because of the author’s visible and official role in the LCMS, many people within that church body might resent some of the personal stories (and pictures) as gratuitously autobiographical. Whether the topic is something national or global in scale like the Asian tsunami, Hurricane Katrina, or 9/11, or something more private though no less tragic like the death of a rural parishioner in a car accident, Harrison goes first to accounts of his reactions and actions. This gives the little vignettes that introduce each chapter a vivid and dramatic quality but sometimes puts the author in the way of his own point – simply a hazard of such autobiographical style.

More suited to working through serially with a group, *Christ Have Mercy* is not the sort of book that invites a straight-through reading. Neverthe-

less, this book deserves to be considered a “must read” for informed members of the LCMS and will be of keen interest to any Christian involved in social action and human care and desiring to under-

stand more fully the theological basis for such heavenly work in the dying world.

— by Peter Speckhard, associate editor

The “no longer common” table prayer

by C. Douglas Kroll



As a child my parents taught me the simple table prayer: “Come Lord Jesus, be our guest, and let Thy gifts to us be blessed.” It wasn’t long after that, that my great-aunt taught me to say that same prayer in its original German form: *Komm Herr Jesu, sei unser Gast, und segne, was du uns bescheret hast*. I came to know this as the “Common Table Prayer.”

While this “Common Table Prayer” in English was not a literal translation of the German, it conveyed the same message in a similar rhyming scheme. This prayer was printed in the *Lutheran Book of Prayer*, at least through the 1950s.

Placemats and plaques

As a result of modern Bible translations and the updating of the language of the church’s public worship, most of the “Thee, Thy, Thou and Thine” words of the King James Version and the older liturgical texts became “You” or “Your.” At some point, and for some reason—both unknown to me—the wording of the “Common Table Prayer” was updated as well. But instead of “Come Lord Jesus, be our guest, and let *Your* gifts to us be blessed, it became “let *these* gifts to us be blest.” This version is now commonplace in Lutheran and some other Protestant homes. It is also commercially available on placemats and plaques, and a musical setting is found in *Lutheran Service Book* (#776).

Today that table prayer is no longer “common” in the sense of “universal.” When my wife and I gather with family or friends and someone suggests that we all join in the “common table prayer,” one needs to specify whether it will be the “Thy,” “Your” or “these” version. Often there is a variety of words being prayed, even if one gives specific directions, since most of us just go on a kind of auto-pilot when praying a familiar text.

While the “these gifts” version may seem to

be just a more modern version of the “Common Table Prayer,” I believe that replacing the word “Thy” with “these” puts a different emphasis in the prayer. The word “Thy” makes very clear that the gifts (food and drink) on the table before us, come from God’s gracious hand. The original German prayer was even more specific: *was du uns bescheret hast* (“what *You* have bestowed upon us”).

Giver or gift?

By replacing “Thy” with “these,” the focus has been shifted from the source of the gifts to the gifts themselves. This version of the prayer focuses attention on “these gifts” of food and drink—not on the “Giver.” The word “gifts” does imply a giver, but “these gifts” leaves the giver uncertain. Are “these gifts” from our parents, the government, a neighbor, Mother Nature? Or are they from Almighty God?

Words are important. How we pray is important. There is a difference, and a significant one, between praying “let *Thy* gifts to us be blessed” and “Let *these* gifts to us be blessed.” Our prayer should focus on the Giver.

We live in an increasingly secular culture where God often goes unacknowledged. My personal liturgical preference is for “Thy” (as with “Thy kingdom come” in the Lord’s Prayer). However, if you think the word “Thy” is old fashioned or out of date, instead of replacing it with “these,” why not use the modern equivalent “Your”? “Let *Your* gifts to us be blessed” still keeps the focus where it should be: on God, the Giver of all gifts. The “these” gifts version seems to be ubiquitous so it will take a conscious effort, but it might be worth it—and it would certainly better express our confessional and catechetical conviction that God “has given me and still preserves my body and soul with all their powers,” and that God “provides me with food . . . and

all I need from day to day." If indeed that is "most certainly true," then should not our "common table prayer" articulate it?

C. Douglas Kroll, an LCMS clergyman and former Navy chaplain, is currently Assistant Professor of History at the College of the Desert, Palm Desert, CA. This is his first contribution to Forum Letter.

Omnium gatherum



Flawless errors • My predecessor often said that *FL* readers take an extremely proprietary interest in this publication, and that gets expressed in many ways. He was right about that (and about a few others things as well, of course). One reader let us know that the December issue was "tired and boring." How does he really feel, I wonder? This same chap pointed out that the phrase "*Requiesat in pacem*" was utterly incorrect Latin, that it should in fact be "*Requiescat in pace*" (though he did allow as how the *in* was "flawless"). For that error I am entirely responsible; the parenthetical remark was editorially added, and was not in Pr. Alms's original manuscript. In my defense, I argue that (a) I never took Latin, and (b) none of my proofreaders caught it, including the one whose wife is a Latin teacher, and (c) I had googled the phrase after I wrote what I thought it should be, and found some other people who thought so, too (though now that I look back at them, they appear to be at least as ignorant as I). A few months back, after another Latin boo-boo, I opined that maybe we should stick to English, which was probably good self-advice. But our reader also challenged the English word "moniker" which, he said, was inappropriately used. That word came from Pr. Alms's pen, but heck, my bad, since editors are supposed to catch things like that. Unlike my predecessor, I can't blame dyslexia, though I may be approaching mild dementia.

Doctor Pastor Dean Ms. • Someone took us to task for referring to Katrina Foster, the admittedly same-sex-partnered Bronx pastor who was disinvited to speak at Lutheran Southern Seminary, as "Ms. Foster" [*Omnium gatherum*, *FL* Dec., 2008]. This, he claimed, was a biased and inappropriate denial of the honorifics due The Rev. Dr. Foster, Dean of an ELCA conference. Nope, it was just a slip. We're well aware of our biases around here, but our doctrine of ministry is such that we recognize the validity of the orders of plenty of people in various states of stand-

ing or lack thereof with their respective church bodies, and try to refer to them accordingly. We doubt Pr. Foster is one of our readers, so she probably wasn't personally offended, but we apologize for the slip nonetheless.

Political disclaimer • This issue contains an extensive review by Peter Speckhard of a recent book by Matthew Harrison. Rumors abound that Pr. Harrison is being looked at with considerable interest by some in the Missouri Synod seeking an alternative candidate to President Gerald Kieschnick in the LCMS's next presidential election. We'll surely have more to say about that in the future, but we simply wanted to make it clear that we have reviewed Pr. Harrison's book on its own merits, with no intention of promoting any possible candidacy for ecclesiastical office. Nor have we been duped or snookered by anyone who might think us unaware of the current political maneuverings in the LCMS. We simply consider it a thoughtful book, worthy of review here.

More rumors and rumblings. • Another book associated with Matthew Harrison—he edited it, along with John Pless—is being discussed quite a bit in the blogosphere at present. The volume, *Women Pastors? The Ordination of Women in Biblical Lutheran Perspective* was published late last year by Concordia. Now, all of a sudden, it seems to be out of print, with promises of a "second edition" to be published in May. This begs the question: Why would such a book be out of print a year after its original publication date? Theories abound. The most straightforward one is that it sold well—though one then wonders whether it was snarfed up by LCMS members who honestly don't know what they think about this, or by those who need some shoring up of their own theological convictions because, you know, under President Kieschnick so much doctrine has gone mushy that women's ordination can't be far behind. The latter theory is one we've actually seen in some

of the more strenuously conservative blogs – the concern that “somebody” is pushing for ordination of women in the LCMS, and so this vigorous set of essays against women pastors had to be deep-sixed. On the other hand, more reliable rumor has it that at least a couple of essays in the book had, shall we say, some doctrinal problems that got by Missouri’s doctrinal review process, and after further review, a quick second edition was authorized to correct the errors. Well, better late than never; though it does raise the question of whether perhaps the fervor within the LCMS in favor of a male-only pastorate may sometimes become a lens through which other doctrinal issues can become a bit fuzzy. We might just have more to say about that in the future, after we’ve seen exactly what “editorial changes” might be incorporated into the “second edition.” Meanwhile, consider this “high-level theological gossip.” How much this might end up embarrassing CPH or the editors of the book remains to be seen.

Annual plea • Every December, our faithful subscribers receive a plea for financial support for the American Lutheran Publicity Bureau, publisher of *Forum Letter*. Used to be that was about the only such appeal I ever got, but now it seems nearly every subscription brings an annual plea (along with those of every college on whose campus I ever set foot). In ALPB’s case, however, this is a worthy and wonderful cause. You are aware of *Forum Letter* and *Lutheran Forum*, but ALPB also publishes tracts and books, all for the cause of “making the theological, liturgical, and devotional resources of our confessional heritage accessible and relevant to all Luther-

ans as well as our friends in other communions.” With its pan-Lutheran orientation and leadership, ALPB is truly unique in North American Christianity. As you probably know, subscription costs don’t cover the expense of publishing the Forum package, to say nothing of the other good work ALPB does. Due to a very serious printer snafu, the annual “Christmas appeal” didn’t get much farther than the printer’s doorstep by Christmas, but never mind. Tax-deductible gifts to ALPB are welcome for Valentine’s Day, Presidents’ Day, Ash Wednesday, Easter, or any other time you are moved to help with this ministry. The ALPB treasurer, Dorothy Zelenko, tells me that historically some 12% of our subscribers send an additional gift annually to keep this ministry going. This year we’re shooting for 15%, and you are invited to help us. You can send a contribution, made out to ALPB, to P. O. Box 327, Delhi, NY 13753-0327. You might also want to consider giving a *Lutheran Forum/Forum Letter* subscription as a gift – to your pastor, to a colleague, to a seminarian. They will appreciate it, and so will we.

Richard John Neuhaus • Just as we go to press comes word of the death of Fr. Richard John Neuhaus, following a brief illness. For many years a Lutheran pastor, Fr. Neuhaus was editor of *Forum Letter* from 1974 to 1990. A suitable recognition of his role in and contribution to 20th century Lutheranism (if such is possible) is planned for our next issue. For now, our thanks to God for his life and witness, and our prayers and sympathy for his friends and family (including his nephew Peter Speckhard, our associate editor.)

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