

FORUM LETTER

Volume 41 Number 4

April 2012

Inside this issue:

The illusion of
segregated funds 4

Apostle of the second
chance 5

Omnium gatherum 7

The American
Lutheran Publicity
Bureau is on the web
www.alpb.org

FORUM LETTER is published monthly by the American Lutheran Publicity Bureau (www.alpb.org) with LUTHERAN FORUM, a quarterly journal, in a combined subscription for \$27.45 (U.S.) a year, \$49.95 (U.S.) for two years, in the United States and Canada. Retirees and students, \$22.00 a year. Add \$8.00 per year for Canadian, \$12.00 for overseas delivery. Write to the Subscription Office for special rates for groups. Single copy, \$2.50.

Editor: Pr. Richard O. Johnson
<roj@nccn.net>

Associate Editor: Pr. Peter Speckhard
<pspeckhard@hotmail.com>

Member: Associated Church Press.

EDITORIAL OFFICE: P. O. Box 1394,
Grass Valley, CA 95945. <roj@nccn.net>

SUBSCRIPTION OFFICE: American
Lutheran Publicity Bureau, P. O. Box 327,
Delhi, NY 13753-0327 <dkralpb@aol.com>
Telephone 607-746-7511. Postage paid at
Delhi, NY and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send changes of address
to P. O. Box 327, Delhi, NY 13753-0327.

Copyright © 2012 by the American
Lutheran Publicity Bureau.
ISSN 0046-4732

The silence was a presence



The old lady said, "These fourteen years I have been praying the Jesus Prayer almost continually, and never have I perceived God's presence at all." . . . I said, "If you speak all the time, you don't give God a chance to place a word in. . . . Just sit, look round, and try to see where you live. . . . And then take your knitting and for fifteen minutes knit before the face of God, but I forbid you to say one word of prayer. You just knit and try to enjoy the peace of your room." She didn't think it was very pious advice but she took it. After a while she came to see me and said "You know, it works." I said "What works, what happens?" because I was very curious to know how my advice worked. And she said "I did just what you advised me to do. I got up, washed, put my room right, had breakfast, came back, made sure that nothing was there that would worry me, and then I settled in my armchair and thought 'Oh how nice. I have fifteen minutes during which I can do nothing without being guilty!' and I looked round and for the first time after years I thought 'Goodness, what a nice room I live in—a window opening onto the garden, a nice shaped room, enough space for me, the things I have collected for years.'" Then she said "I felt so quiet because the room was so peaceful. There was a clock ticking but it didn't disturb the silence; its ticking just underlined the fact that everything was so still and after a while I remembered that I must knit before the face of God, and so I began to knit. And I became more and more aware of the silence. The needles hit the armrest of my chair, the clock was ticking peacefully, there was nothing to bother about, I had no need of straining myself, and then I perceived that this silence was not simply an absence of noise, but that the silence had a substance. It was not absence of something but presence of something. The silence had a density, a richness, and it began to pervade me. The silence around began to come and meet the silence in me." And then in the end she said something very beautiful which I have found later in the French writer, Georges Bernanos. She said "All of a sudden I perceived that the silence was a presence. At the heart of the silence there was He who is all stillness, all peace, all poise." — Anthony Bloom, *Beginning to Pray* (Paulist Press, 1970), pp. 92-94.

Totalitarian seminaries



Academic freedom has been something of a shibboleth for quite some time in institutions of higher learning. Seminaries are no exception. We are still reliving the battles of a generation ago at Concordia Seminary, where, to put one of several available constructions on it, the struggle was between the freedom of faculty and students to engage in unlim-

ited academic inquiry and the responsibility and power of denominational leaders to enforce what in their view are the necessary standards of the church body.

In a remarkable twist of fate, a similar battle is taking place today on many seminary campuses. This time it is students who are in the crosshairs, and perhaps because students are, in the end, without much power, the story doesn't get much publicity.

The hammer of the law

The issue is our old friend "inclusive language." Not content to convince by winsome teaching or argument, ELCA seminaries, several of them, have come down hard on the rules. Law trumps gospel, you know. So, for example, Wartburg Seminary's *Student and Community Life Handbook* decrees that "it is expected that all . . . graduates will enter ministry with an awareness of the personal, cultural, moral, and theological issues involved in the worldwide effort to move toward inclusiveness in church life and use of language for humankind and expansive language for God. It is, therefore, expected that all Wartburg Theological Seminary students will intentionally develop the linguistic and pastoral skills that will prepare them to lead their communities into a tradition of inclusivity that exhibits integrity and avoids awkwardness."

(Let's pause there just to note the delicious irony of that turgid quotation ending in an appeal to avoid awkwardness.)

And lest a poor student not quite get what they're driving at here, the hammer of the law comes down: "Accordingly, it is Wartburg Seminary policy for faculty, staff, and students, that during corporate worship, convocations, and class discussions, as well as in all written assignments (tests as well as papers), seminary publications, and scholarly works, a high standard of inclusiveness will be maintained. *It is standard procedure, for example, to return to students for revision any essay submitted which does not aim at the inclusive use of language.* [Emphasis added.]

Identical language used to be found in the handbook for Gettysburg Seminary, which sort of makes you wonder where it came from. Gettysburg has since revised the statement, perhaps in response to some critical inquiries. It now reads: "All verbal behavior in corporate worship, classes, personal in-

teractions, meetings, and convocations is invited to exhibit the highest linguistic expression, which is charitable, thoughtful, diverse, expansive and inclusive. . . . The same standards of excellence also apply to all written materials in the community: bulletins, written assignments, tests, seminary publications, scholarly works, Board of Directors materials and materials on the Seminary's web site." It goes on to cite a couple of "resources for assisting the process of strengthening a gospel-based linguistic community." One of them is the *ELCA Publishing Standards Manual*, about which more in a moment.

Kinder and gentler

Some of the seminaries are not quite so radical as to threaten the return of papers and exams. Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, for example, relies on forceful instruction. "Inclusive language," they lecture, "is not limited to the words we use to describe people. Inclusive language also includes the words we use about God. The words we use to speak to and about God affect how we understand all of life. Our language about God should reflect our understanding that we are all created in God's image. We may not intentionally use language that excludes, but if the effect of our language is that others are excluded, then our language is not inclusive. Language that includes is language with dignity. . . . Members of the LTSP community are expected to use and to encourage the use of appropriate language in spoken and written expressions."

Wow. It would be hard to imagine a statement that shows more clearly how groupthink has pervaded the realm where the banner of academic freedom once waved.

Ecumenical sensitivities

Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in Berkeley has a reputation of being one of the more, shall we say, *avant-garde* of the ELCA institutions, but its position is actually a bit more nuanced. The reason seems to be that PLTS is part of a consortium, the Graduate Theological Union. The GTU has a policy that expects students to use "inclusive language" with regard to human beings, but does not mandate this with regard to language about God—in recognition that the consortium is made up of schools from different denominational backgrounds with differing sensitivities.

So PLTS endorses the GTU policy. Oh, but then they add that in written work, students must explain their decision to use, or not to use, “inclusive language with regard to God.” No indication of whether the explanation is graded.

Driven from Chicago?

Some of the seminary policy statements cite *Guidelines for Inclusive Use of the English Language for Speakers, Writers and Editors* issued by the ELCA Commission on Communication way back in 1989. Curious about it, I tried to find that document on the ELCA website, but without success. (Among other things, I tried a search for “Commission on Communications” and it took me to the page of the Marketing and Public Relations team. Truth in labeling is an admirable thing.)

The *ELCA Publishing Standards Manual* (2003) cited in the Gettysburg student handbook seems to be the latest incarnation of this directive. The introduction to this document says that it is “intended to serve as the primary source of standards applicable to all resources produced by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.”

Style manuals are common enough, of course. We have a sort of one here at *Forum Letter*, just to help us stay consistent on matters of capitalization, abbreviation, and so forth. The ELCA document, however, goes beyond this: “In contrast to previous guidelines that focused exclusively on matters of editorial style, this manual also contains additional ELCA policies that are applicable to resource content.” In other words, the ELCA (including its “separately incorporated ministry” Augsburg Fortress) claims the right to dictate not only punctuation but actual content of materials published.

Academic freedom

Of course they do have that right. But the question that must be raised is whether this power extends to papers written by seminary students. And that is where the issue of academic freedom rears its ugly head. Hard as it may be for people in high places in the ELCA to believe, not everyone endorses the idea that so-called “inclusive language” about God is meet, right and salutary.

There is some truth to the proposition that language shapes the way we think. But that’s the crux of the matter, you see. If indeed language

shapes the way we think, then requiring a certain kind of language is to require that we think in a particular way. The language police become the thought police. No one is allowed to think other than how we say they should think.

And so academic freedom flies out the window.

Totalitarian speech codes

There was a time when all Lutheran seminaries tried pretty hard to enforce Lutheran doctrine. It was understood that they were training Lutheran pastors, and Lutheran pastors should be familiar with and committed to the Lutheran confessions. As these schools began to dip their toes into the wider seas of academia, notions of academic freedom began to float around. Yes, the seminaries should teach from the Lutheran confessional point of view. But in the academy, there has to be considerable freedom—freedom to disagree, freedom to challenge, freedom of expression.

That is why any attempt to force use of “inclusive language” is so utterly wrong-headed, even totalitarian. Back in 1994, the Council of the American Association of University Professors approved a statement *On Freedom of Expression and Campus Speech Codes*. “Freedom of thought and expression,” they said, “is essential to any institution of higher learning. . . . On a campus that is free and open, no idea can be banned or forbidden. No viewpoint or message may be deemed so hateful or disturbing that it may not be expressed. . . . Some may seek to defend a distinction between the regulation of the content of speech and the regulation of the manner (or style) of speech. We find this distinction untenable. . . . Free speech is not simply an aspect of the educational enterprise to be weighed against other desirable ends. It is the very precondition of the academic enterprise itself.”

Seminary faculties and administrators would do well to review this document, and others pertaining to academic freedom. Demanding that students conform to the strictures of so-called “inclusive language” flies in the face of what the seminaries claim to be. Such totalitarian regulations are unworthy of any Christian institution, but particularly of those allegedly dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge.

—by Richard O. Johnson, editor

The illusion of segregated funds

by Evan McClanahan



We Christians take seriously God's command to be good stewards of all that we have. We want to support that which is good and oppose that which is evil. We want to encourage the virtuous and discourage the vicious. We do this not only by financing that which we deem good, but by ensuring that our money, once it leaves our hand, isn't funding that which we consider evil.

But that becomes increasingly difficult. The issue has been highlighted by the controversy over the Obama administration's ruling that every employer-sponsored insurance policy must cover the cost of contraception, even if the employer is a religious institution with conscientious scruples against contraception. Roman Catholic leaders were the loudest protesters against this mandate, though by no means the only ones; churches not necessarily morally opposed to contraception saw the move as a clear threat to religious freedom. LCMS President Matthew Harrison, for instance, testified against it before a Congressional committee in February.

Tactical retreat?

The administration made what appeared to be a tactical retreat. Church institutions, it agreed, would not be required to pay for contraception coverage. But—and it's a big “but”—their insurance companies would still have to cover the cost for providing contraception at no charge to the insured.

As the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has made clear, forcing insurance companies rather than religious institutions themselves to provide free contraception is nothing short of a cynical sleight of hand. Lutherans for Life's recent statement says it well: “The Obama Administration's ‘compromise,’ by which religious organizations' insurance companies will pay for contraception, is no compromise at all and is totally unacceptable. This is a matter of religious conviction, and that which we must not pay for directly, we must not subsidize indirectly.”

Can our money be pure?

If one Fox News poll is to be believed, the American public and especially women agree that insurance should cover birth control. So the question

must be asked: in an environment where it is getting increasingly difficult to segregate funds, can our money ever be pure?

That particular problem certainly predates the current debate over contraception. Federally-funded abortions have long outraged Christians who do not want any of their money to pay for the procedure. Every year Congress passes the Hyde Amendment provision that prohibits the federal government from funding any abortion. This provision shields taxpayers from funding that which they find anathema—at least in theory. The federal government provides funding to Planned Parenthood—the single largest provider of abortions in America—to the tune of \$363 million in its 2008/2009 fiscal year.

Accounting chicanery

But don't worry; Planned Parenthood segregates such government largess. Federal funds are very carefully earmarked only for noble causes, like administrative staff or research for women's health, or some other benevolent and charitable work. Only money received from private donations or fees for abortions actually covers the abortions themselves. What a relief! No taxpayers can be considered complicit in an abortion because of careful accounting. Talk about following the letter of the law.

A groundswell against government funding of Planned Parenthood has now surged because the public recognizes that this kind of accounting is chicanery. One would have to be pretty naïve not to notice that one ledger line is able to be as high as it is precisely because another ledger line has its own line of funding.

Designated giving

Pastors know how this works. We've all had the angry or pious parishioner who decides to write in their check's memo line what his tithe will go for this month. Mad at the pastor? Make sure the check goes to overseas missions, so as not to finance his salary. Think the youth group is embracing paganism? Write “For property only” at the bottom of your check so the Youth Director doesn't get your

support.

Segregating funds is one of the few ways parishioners have to voice their concerns. Pastors often rail against such parochialism (because we should be “one body” and all that), but we rarely have the courage to fight it. In the end, we justify it, because we allocate the grump’s check to overseas mission and tell our treasurer not to cut the usual quarterly check from the general fund for the same thing.

Choosing a policy

When a church body chooses an insurance plan, the same questions must be asked. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America’s Portico plan does finance elective abortions, much to the consternation of its more conservative laity and clergy (and arguably in conflict with the ELCA’s own social statement on abortion). Knowing that, the North American Lutheran Church (NALC) made it a point to choose an insurance plan that would not cover elective abortion. (It does cover abortion if the life of the mother is threatened.)

How? It wasn’t easy. First, Hahn Financial of Sioux Falls, SD, presented a group plan that did not cover elective abortions, itself something of a rarity. So no NALC pastor or congregation will be providing funds for anyone in a group of over 12,000 participants to have an elective abortion. That covers the present. Second, they found a plan with several qualities that seem to offer freedom from future state encroachment (e.g., the plan is self-funded and

ERISA-based). In other words, if the government treats this plan as they have in the past treated similar plans, the insurer will not be forced to cover contraception or elective abortion. That covers the future, at least as well as it can be covered.

Ephemeral segregation

But one can see the legal hoops that have to be jumped through to ensure such a simple protection. What about those without such protections? Even if abortions are not mandated to be covered now, many within the Roman Catholic Church see the contraception mandate as a foot in the door. If the government can force insurance policies to cover the full cost of contraception, it isn’t much of a leap to see required abortion coverage in the future.

And so Christians with moral scruples about these matters find themselves in an increasingly complex economy, where it is harder and harder to keep one’s money pure. Maybe that was never possible. Perhaps there is no way to avoid cavorting with institutions or funding practices we find immoral. All of our money is, after all, tainted with sin because we are all tainted with sin. That said, where we can control what we fund, we should do so; those promises of segregation always turn out to be ephemeral.

Evan McClanahan is a member of the board for Lutherans for Life (www.lutheransforlife.org) and pastor at First Evangelical Lutheran Church (NALC) in Houston, TX. This is his first contribution to Forum Letter.

Apostle of the second chance

by James A. Bergquist



On Easter Sunday, our churches usually are overflowing. The next week, on the “second Sunday of Easter,” there’s often plenty of room in the pews. And that’s too bad, because on that Sunday we meet the disciple Thomas in one of the richest Easter texts of all, John 20:19-31. Thomas shows up every year on this Sunday in all three lectionary cycles; no other Gospel text has been given that distinction.

We find the genuine Thomas both in John’s Gospel and beyond it in later church tradition. The text itself summarizes and climaxes the fourth Gos-

pel. It is not primarily about “doubting Thomas,” as if the disciple was a modern post-Enlightenment skeptic demanding empirical evidence. Rather this text takes us to the heart of John’s Gospel. From beginning to end the Johannine message is about life over death, light overcoming darkness, fruit emerging from dying husks, and God’s new creation transforming the old.

Thomas in the text

Thomas stands central within John 20:19-31 because he comes to embody the promise and chal-

lence of that Easter message. The disciple Thomas missed his first chance. He wasn't there in the house when on the day of resurrection Jesus appeared to the ten disciples. The first time around he did not hear Jesus' transforming greeting of "Peace," that echoing reality of God's promised *shalom* to an embattled world. He missed the commissioning words "as the Father sent me, so I send you." And he missed the empowering act when Jesus "breathed" on them, the gift of new life as echoed from Genesis 2:7 and Ezekiel 37:1-14.

But he was there the next week. He heard again the promise and challenge of "peace," that word of hope. He was reminded of God's sending, from which come our words for apostle and mission (the one from the Greek *apostolos*, "the sent one," and the other from the Latin *missio*, "the sending"). And Thomas experienced the breath of God's new creation. He got a second chance, and he made the most of it. We see it in what he said: "My Lord and my God!" – the culminating confession of the fourth Gospel.

Thomas in the tradition

And we see it as well in what Thomas *did* – his global missionary vocation, a story that takes one beyond the Gospel into early traditions of the church. Thomas who missed his first chance used his second chance to become Thomas the "Confessor" and Thomas the "Apostle."

The story of Thomas is for all of us who have flubbed first chances and have longed for an opportunity to start over and try again. The story of Thomas is for all of God's people to attend to the apostolic confession and the apostolic mission.

But what about Thomas the Apostle who stands beyond the Gospel texts? Was he really the first missionary to India? Is that what he did with the second chance he got in life? Nearly 40 million Christians in India today think so and claim to be linked to the church Thomas founded in India. How can we avoid being intrigued during the Easter season by the largely little-remembered Thomas missionary epic that begins in John 20:19-31?

Early in the history of Christianity there was a dynamic though largely un-remembered expansion of the church into Asia. When Paul and others were ministering in Europe, still other apostles, mostly unknown, were the evangelists of the East –

both groups heeding the word of sending in John 20:21.

Lost churches

Out of the movement eastward emerged several churches of the Oriental Orthodox tradition – in Syria, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, China and India, to use modern names, as well as the Oriental/African Orthodox traditions among Coptic Christians in Egypt and in Ethiopia. Syrian Christian missions were linked to India from the second century. The story of these missions has been told well by Samuel Moffett in his two-volume *A History of Christianity in Asia* and more recently by Philip Jenkins in *The Lost History of Christianity*. For almost a thousand years these Christians in Africa and Asia represented the majority of Christians in the world before Islam replaced or diminished them by 90% by 1200 AD.

What have survived until now are ancient churches in Ethiopia and Egypt, as well as the Thomas Christians of India (quite distinct from Greek and Russian Orthodoxy). Thomas Christians today in India are divided among several Syrian Orthodox churches and the Mar Thoma Church (a reformed group), all still using Syrian liturgies; some Roman Catholics (the Portuguese in the 1500s tried to hijack Syrian Christians); and a few Church of South India Protestants. All mostly claim descent from the Apostle Thomas.

Having lived as a resident and frequent long-term visitor in India since 1966, I have met many students and leaders from all of these churches who accept the Thomas story. The tradition remains visibly alive on both the western and eastern coasts of South India. Near the international airport of the southeastern city of Chennai, the old Madras, there is a rocky hill called "St. Thomas Mount" where Thomas was thought to have been wounded. Farther inland is the "Little Mount" where he is said to have died his martyr's death. On the seashore is a church named in his honor where Thomas is said to have been buried. A rather garish underground grotto marks the spot. The road linking the three sites is still called "Mount Road."

Could he? Did he?

Could Thomas have gotten to India? Travel between the Roman Empire and India was common in the first century. There is no doubt that Thomas

could have followed established trade routes either by land or sea. Let me share a personal anecdote. One time I was visiting the west Indian city of Mangalore. Wandering down to a small harbor, I got talking to the Muslim crew of an open-hulled boat. They spoke the language I had learned in Madras. They were loading a cargo of rice and oyster shells that, they said, they were taking to Zanzibar in East Africa. I asked how they intended to get there. The answer: "Same as it has always been done. We coast up along the Pakistan and Arab lands and down along Somalia to Zanzibar, and then we let the trade winds blow us back across the ocean to India."

But if Thomas could have gotten there, did he? A book from about 200 AD, *The Acts of Thomas*, tells some rather far-fetched tales about Thomas. One story has a certain King Gundaphorus from what is now Afghanistan/Pakistan asking Thomas, apparently known as a carpenter, to come to build the king a palace. Thomas took the money, spent it on the poor, and later explained to the furious king that the poor were indeed his true treasure.

This account is probably a legend — except there was a real King Gundaphorus in India in the first century; and besides, the Jesuit missionary Francis Xavier pulled the same stunt on the Portuguese rulers of Goa in the 16th century. But what is there not to like about a story that, applied today, would divert Wall Street bonuses to the unemployed? Besides, it so succinctly illustrates the intent of Jesus' three-fold greeting of "peace" in John 20:19-29.

Apostolic faith

There is also a bit of fascinating history that may support the Thomas-to-India tradition. A biblical school in Alexandria, Egypt was established about 170 AD by the renowned scholar Pantaenus.

Soon thereafter a delegation of Christians arrived from South India and petitioned Pantaenus himself to go to India to support these young Christians in dialogue with Hindu Brahmin philosophers. Was this Christian delegation from the church Thomas established? Perhaps, but the tradition is mixed. In any case, Pantaenus found it natural to embark on a journey of global mission. Was Pantaenus irreplaceable? Did he desert his tenured post? Hardly. India was served. His successors in Alexandria, to the enormous good fortune of the early church, included the great church fathers Clement and Origen.

Thomas at Easter reminds us of the oriental Christian heritage that once was and that in part still remains. Perhaps we all need to be Thomas Christians. We will be enriched by what he said and did. Thomas the Confessor teaches us to care for the apostolic faith; Thomas the Apostle reminds us that missionary sending and receiving are permanent marks of the Church. Mission, Jesus says in John 20:21, is God's mission, not ours. It is to be done, as Thomas did it, in the way of Jesus, whom God sent. Its goal is *shalom* for the world.

Thomas got a second chance. It gave him both a promise and a challenge. In Thomas we find the heart of the Easter message. That message is nothing less than that our failed first chances are not final. There is a new creation offered to each of us, and a challenge to live it out the second and all subsequent times around.

Dr. James A. Bergquist is retired President of Trinity Lutheran College in Seattle, a former missionary to India, seminary professor and dean, pastor and director of American missions in both the ALC and the ELCA, and for the past eleven years a post-retirement visiting professor at seminaries in Hong Kong and India.

Omnium gatherum



Making a point • I was recently visiting with a couple of pastors whose congregations have left the ELCA, and the conversation turned to their relationships with the Board of Pensions (I'm still using the old letterhead). The one

had been told that because he and his congregation were now in the North American Lutheran Church, his health coverage would be terminated. So he scrambled to get signed up with the NALC program (see "Portico pettiness" in the January 2012 *Forum*

Letter). A few days later he got a call saying that since he was fairly near retirement, he could stay with the ELCA program. He was not amused. The other pastor, who with his congregation moved to the Missouri Synod, was allowed to stay in the ELCA program. The only difference, he said, is that now his pension statements come addressed to "Mr." rather than "The Rev." So how should we file that? Would it go under "ELCA's messed up doctrine of ministry that allows only those on its roster to be called "The Rev."? Or under "Portico pettiness"?

Kudos • After our sniping at *The Lutheran's* recent articles on applesauce communion and Dr. Seuss Eucharists, it is only fair to say that Timothy Wengert's article in the March issue, "Our Lutheran Liturgy: Raising a shout for its Bible roots," is a refreshing bit of attention to the liturgy as Lutherans have understood it. One can even overlook the rather cheesy cheerleader photographs that go along with the article. Where are the feminists when you need them?

Office closure • We could not manage in the ALPB office without our dedicated office manager, Donna Roche. She handles subscriptions, orders of all kinds, and who knows what else, and she has done so for some 23 years. Donna will be having some major surgery in late April, and because she is indispensable, the office will be closed from April 27 to May 21. During that time you can continue to place orders on line or by mail, but please understand that they will not be filled until after Donna returns. So if

you are planning to order confirmation gifts or other items that you need before June, please get your orders in immediately. And please pray for a successful surgery and speedy recuperation for Donna. Thanks for your understanding and prayers.

So soon we forget • This issue contains a little essay by James Bergquist on St. Thomas, a companion piece to last month's reflection on St. Patrick. Last month I said that the St. Patrick piece was his first contribution to *Forum Letter*, but Dr. Bergquist tells me I'm wrong about that, that we have previously published pieces by him (in 2002 and 2006). *Mea culpa*. My only excuse is that both those articles were published when I was only the lowly associate editor. That, and the old gray cells, they ain't what they used to be.

Got words? • Sometimes readers wonder how we go about soliciting pieces for *Forum Letter*. The answer is that while sometimes we do ask for contributions, more often people send us unsolicited articles and sometimes we use them. It is a "forum," after all. If you've got something you think needs saying, give it a shot and send it to us. We don't promise to use it, and we can't offer you any remuneration beyond the glory of being published (and thus perhaps adding to your list of hits when you google yourself), but we do promise to read what you send and give it careful consideration. If you're reluctant to work on something that may be rejected, you can always start by e-mailing me and asking me whether we might be interested in an article on such-and-such. I'll probably be honest. —roj

Address Service Requested

DELHI, NY 13753-0327
POST OFFICE BOX 327

LUTHERAN FORUM / FORUM LETTER
AMERICAN LUTHERAN PUBLICITY BUREAU

NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
MASON CITY, IA 50402
ALPB