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The novelty and the joy



We are left with the only interpretation consistent with the character and teaching of Hosea and true to the analogy he draws between his own experience with Gomer and Yahweh's experience with Israel.

Gomer was a pure woman when he married her, and continued pure till after the birth of her first child. . . How then are we to reconcile with this the statement that God commanded His prophet to take such a woman? In this way, and we owe the idea mainly to W. R. Smith. When some years after his marriage Hosea became aware of Gomer's character, and, while brooding over it, he by a natural anticipation of which other prophets also afford instances pushed back his own knowledge of the providential purpose in his marriage to the date when that purpose began to be fulfilled, the date of his betrothal or wedding. This, though he was then unconscious of its fatal future, had been to Hosea the beginning of the word of the Lord. On that voyage he had sailed with sealed orders. This is true to nature, and may be matched from our own experience. The beginning of God's word to any of us — where does it lie? Does it lie in the first time the meaning of our life became articulate, and we were able to utter it to others? It lies far beyond that, in facts and relationships, of the Divine meaning of which we were at the time unconscious, though now we know. How familiar this is in respect to the sorrows and adversities of life: dumb, deadening things that fall on us at the time with no more voice than clods falling on coffins of dead men, we have been able to read them afterwards as the call of God to our souls. But what we thus readily admit about the sorrow of life may be equally true of those relations which we enter with light, unawed hearts, conscious only of the novelty and the joy of them. —George Adam Smith, *The Book of the Twelve Prophets, Commonly Called the Minor* (Revised edition, Harper & Brothers, 1928), 250-251.

Remarkably unremarkable

by Bradley Everett



The Lutheran CORE and North American Lutheran Church (NALC) Convocations, as well as their jointly sponsored theological conference, held July 21-25 at the Citadel in Charleston, SC, were, well . . . remarkably unremarkable.

It reminded me of a much larger version of the annual meeting most pastors hope for — good turnout (678 for the NALC Convocation and 215 for CORE), those in attendance were engaged, the necessary business was handled,

and everyone left ready to resume their regularly scheduled lives without having endured any great stresses or surprises.

At the NALC's July 24-25 Convocation, there were no issues of great controversy, no motions requiring parliamentary fine-tuning, no long line-ups for microphones so delegates could speak for or against the matter before the assembly. The NALC's "pending" application to join the Lutheran World Federation received little mention during the formal proceedings. (NALC Bp. John Bradosky had sent a letter to the LWF on July 11 requesting clarification regarding certain points of the LWF's decision.) There were elections for various positions, including a board of regents for the newly established North American Lutheran Seminary, but even these lacked the drama most of us have come to associate with church-wide gatherings. The only item of business being passed to the congregations for ratification was a change to Section 7.01 of the NALC Constitution which would state, "A Convocation of the NALC shall be held annually," deleting the current specification of the month of August.

Vitality without drama

But lack of drama should in no way be mistaken for a lack of vitality. The theme of the Convocation, "Standing With...to Withstand," encouraged delegates to reflect on what it means to be a disciple of Christ, what bearing witness to that relationship might entail, as well as what is involved in fulfilling the Great Commission to make disciples.

This was done in two ways. The first was to allow extended greetings from international and ecumenical guests who are enduring challenges and persecution in their particular circumstance for the sake of the gospel. This was reemphasized with a lengthy presentation from Voice of the Martyrs, a non-profit charitable organization that works with persecuted Christians worldwide.

The second was to hold up the ministry of the Navigators and their partnership with the NALC. The Navigators is an interdenominational ministry focused on helping people grow in their relationship with Christ. In the past this centered more on one-to-one ministry, but in recent years the Navigators has implemented Church Discipleship Ministry, where the organization works with congregations to assist them in being intentional about

discipleship. The NALC executive staff is participating in the program, as are congregations in Texas, Illinois, Ohio, Iowa and eastern Pennsylvania. Pastors and lay people who are involved in this project spoke of their experiences in "Discipleship Minutes" which were scheduled at various points in the Convocation. Representatives of the Navigators also presented two workshops on Friday.

Challenges and tests

As anyone involved with the church could have expected, both of these focuses came with their own particular challenges and highlighted some of the tests facing the NALC. For example, in his greetings to the assembly, Pr. Valery Hryhoryk noted that in Belarus all religious activity must be registered with the government, all religious literature is subject to government censorship, missionaries can't be invited in and religious educational institutions can't be established. He went on to explain how, in the midst of such circumstances, the Lutheran church is working to creatively share the gospel of Christ.

Also present were Pr. Martin Fromm and Dr. Werner Neuer from the International Christian Network, a worldwide association of Christians of various confessional affiliations based in Germany. Speaking from his perspective as a pastor in Germany, Fromm noted that issues such as abortion, euthanasia, marriage and family confronting the church now were strikingly similar to those addressed by the Barmen Declaration in 1934. He stressed the importance for the church of being guided by Scripture and then providing guidance based on Scripture.

So far smooth sailing.

Uncomfortable waters in a new reality

Representing the Swedish (Lutheran) Mission Province were Bp. Roland Gustafsson (who preached a wonderful sermon at the Friday Eucharist) and Pr. Bengt Birgersson, General Secretary, who brought greetings to the Convocation. Pr. Birgersson gave a brief background on the Swedish Mission Province, noting that the issue over which the Mission Province initially split with the Church of Sweden was the ordination of women. Granted, the division was decades in coming, in part because, while the government allowed for women's ordination in 1958, they included a conscience clause for

bishops and pastors that remained in effect until 1993 when the Council of Bishops began refusing ordination to those who dissented. By that time there were many other points of doctrinal difference between the Church of Sweden and the Mission Province, but women's ordination was really the precipitating factor.

Of course this caused some discomfort since the NALC ordains women — one of whom, Pr. Melinda Jones, served as chaplain for the Convocation. But this is part of the new reality for the NALC. The Lutheran churches it is closest to doctrinally on a variety of other matters may not agree with the NALC on women's ordination. In many respects, the challenges facing the Mission Province in terms of faithful witness to the gospel in Sweden are quite familiar to members of the NALC in their North American context. So how do you work together with those with whom you have both substantial agreements but also important points of difference?

Theological tension?

In a similar vein the presence of the Navigators raised issues with some of the delegates. Here too it is a matter of having substantial agreement but also important points of difference. Simply put, while everyone involved agrees on the importance of discipleship, the theological tradition the Navigators comes out of is not Lutheran, and their material often sounds more like Billy Graham than the *Small Catechism*.

These challenges are being addressed. For their part, the Navigators organization is open to learning from the NALC about the particularities of Lutheran theology. At their national Church Discipleship Ministry conference this past April, Bp. Bradosky was a keynote speaker and gave two well-received workshops entitled "Lutheranism 101." The conference's Sunday morning worship was straight from the *Lutheran Book of Worship* with Bp. Bradosky presiding, General Secretary Pr. Mark Chavez preaching and Assistant to the Bishop for Ministry and Ecumenism Pr. David Wendel serving as assisting minister.

The NALC, rather than building its own discipleship program from the ground up, has chosen to enter into a partnership with the Navigators, deciding there was enough common ground that it

would be not just workable but beneficial.

Making disciples in a confessional church

Of course the pieties expressed within the NALC are diverse enough that there are those who have minimal concern with the theology of the Navigators, while there are others who question if it is sufficiently confessional. In conversation over the course of the convocation, I heard both of these perspectives as well as many somewhere in between. Frankly, given the madness many experienced in the past few years of upheaval in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, it is nothing less than a blessing to have people discussing how best to become and make disciples for Christ.

An important part of discipleship is providing training for pastors. This past year the North American Lutheran Seminary (NALS), approved last year, began operations. The Seminary Center is located at Trinity School for Ministry in Ambridge, PA, with a House of Studies on the Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary campus in Charlotte, NC. Dr. Amy Schifrin was called to serve as president of the seminary late last year. There are approximately 16 full-time students at the Trinity campus, with another five or six at the House of Studies. In the NALC there are about 50 students in total studying at 20 different seminaries. The full-time faculty includes, in addition to Schifrin, Dr. David Yeago at Trinity and Dr. Mary Havens, who directs the House of Studies. Part-time faculty includes Dr. James Nestingen, Dr. Monte Luker, and Dr. Nathan Yoder.

Other business

With the seminary up and running, delegates elected members of a new Board of Regents. Elections were also held for a couple of seats on the Executive Council and for the Court of Adjudication.

Financially, the NALC is doing just fine. Giving is keeping pace with the expenses, and has even allowed for some new projects (training for missions and disaster response teams, an annual spring preaching conference, and a new part-time staff position potentially to support the NALC house church movement). The 2015 budget passed easily and without controversy. There was an additional bit of good news: the 501(c)(3) umbrella tax

exemption group ruling was finally obtained from the Internal Revenue Service.

The NALC's developing relationship with the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod and Lutheran Church Canada was evident as Dr. Joel Lehenbauer (Executive Director of the LCMS Commission on Theology and Church Relations) and Pr. Rudy Pastucha (LCC Third Vice-President) brought greetings from their respective church bodies. Also in attendance but not addressing the Convocation were Dr. Travis Boline of the Anglican Church in North America and Dr. Marcus Kunz, Assistant to the ELCA Bishop for Theological Discernment.

CORE kickoff

The Lutheran CORE Convocation kicked off the week's meetings with worship on Monday night, followed by business on Tuesday. The nature and mission of Lutheran CORE is undergoing some significant changes. For one thing, at next year's convocation constitutional changes will be brought forward to change the form of governance to better reflect how CORE operates – moving from a model of operating like a "small synod," with the convocation being the main legislative body, to one more like a "small non-profit," where the steering committee will oversee the group's business. The thought is that this will make the organization's operations more efficient.

Another change could be forced by finances. In the wake of the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, CORE was the beneficiary of congregations and individuals redirecting benevolence, as well as a substantial contribution from the Solid Rock group. Since then giving has declined annually, due in large part to those benevolence dollars going to new church bodies. With a deficit last year and another projected for the coming year, it isn't clear if it will be feasible to hire a replacement for CORE Director Pr. Steve Shipman when he retires next August.

The members of CORE see a need for its continued existence, but the question needing to be answered is, "What does Lutheran CORE offer its members and the larger Church, and how can this best be done?"

Facilitating conferences

One possible answer is that CORE may con-

tinue to help facilitate theological conferences such as the Canadian Rockies Theological Conference and the theological conference held in conjunction with the NALC and CORE Convocations. Having members from various Lutheran bodies, yet not belonging to any specific denomination, Lutheran CORE has a pan-Lutheran nature (a show of hands indicated attendees from the ELCA, NALC, LCMC, LCMS, and Free Lutheran churches) which could create a neutral space for confessional Lutherans from various groups to meet and talk. It will be interesting to see CORE's direction when it gathers August 10-11, 2015, in Dallas.

In between the two convocations was the theological conference, the theme of which this year was "Rightly Handling the Word of Truth: Scripture Canon and Creed." It featured presentations by Robert Benne, Stephen Hultgren, David Yeago, Mark Granquist, R. David Nelson, Amy Schifrin and Christopher Seitz. Behind the scenes, while the CORE Convocation was taking place, a Young Theologians Symposium was meeting – about 20 "young theologians" gathering to hear and present papers on the topic "Christological and Pneumatological Dimensions of Discipleship Post-Christendom."

Changing of the guard

Originally organized by Carl Braaten and Robert Benne, the reins of the theological conference have now been turned over to Amy Schifrin who will be assisted by Nelson, Yeago and Paul Hinlicky. In honor of its founders, this event will be known as the Carl E. Braaten and Robert D. Benne Lectures in Theology. The theme for next year's lectures will be theological reflections on martyrdom and the suffering of the righteous – a timely topic given current events.

Next year's Lutheran CORE Convocation (Aug. 10-11), the Braaten/Benne Theological Lectures (Aug. 11-12) and the NALC Convocation (Aug. 13-14) are set for Dallas, TX. It's probably too much to ask for another "remarkably unremarkable" week of worship, theology and business in 2015, but one can certainly hope.

Pr. Bradley Everett serves Ascension Lutheran Church in Calgary, AB, an NALC congregation.

Doing the Charleston

by Russell E. Saltzman



The North American Lutheran Church (NALC) met in historic Charleston, SC, July 25-26. I say “historic Charleston” because in 1742 Henry Melchior Muhlenburg – founder of the famed Pennsylvania Ministerium – landed in Charleston from Germany, and was greeted by members of St. Matthew’s Lutheran Church, who had been there for some long while before Muhlenberg arrived on American colonial soil. On a later journey to Charleston, after decades in Pennsylvania, Muhlenburg somewhat ungenerously described Charlestonian inhabitants as “sallow” of skin – “as if they had come out of the graves.” Too much sun screen, one suspects.

Born out of the fire of the 2009 decisions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on gay clergy, the NALC is still fishing its way through American denominational waters as a “micro-synod” (a term I once coined, as everyone doesn’t remember). This situation is not unexpected in a brand new church. But as one Lutheran observer writing in a recent *Christian Century* article puts it, the NALC is “the ELCA without gays.”

No bashing

Not hardly. Gay ordination wasn’t *the* issue; it was merely one, albeit the last, of an array of issues long festering among more traditionalist Lutherans within the ELCA: the abortion statement, health plan payments for abortion, the ELCA/Episcopal accord (which, self-disclosure, I endorsed while editor of this publication, and no, I wouldn’t do it again), the persistent confusion of social policy advocacy for the content of the gospel. All these and more were deeply troubling to many.

Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC) was initially organized out of those earlier disputes (and not a few LCMC congregations are now, incidentally, dually affiliated with the NALC). Nonetheless, ordination of gay Lutherans to the ministry finally tipped the overloaded canoe that became the NALC.

Strangely, though, the ELCA directed very little of its ire toward the LCMC and the former ELCA congregations belonging to it. The NALC,

however, aroused overt anger that verged on downright snarky. There are plenty of NALC stories recounting mean-spirited responses by some synod bishops to congregations and pastors wanting to leave the ELCA.

Why the NALC bothered the ELCA

Why did the ELCA unhappiness fall on the NALC and not the LCMC? For one thing the LCMC never much bothered behaving like a denomination. There was a different psychology operating. The LCMC defines itself as an “association.” (An LCMC pastor tells me it is really more like a co-op.) The LCMC simply doesn’t carry the same sense of existential threat as the NALC. Formed out of ethical and confessional concerns, the NALC directly challenged the ELCA on fidelity to both scripture and confession, calling the ELCA’s moral compass defective. It was sex for the ELCA; for the NALC it was other stuff plus sex.

Still, giving the *Christian Century* article its due, the NALC produced a structure that indeed *looks* very much like an ELCA synod, even though it *feels* different to those in the NALC.

But it doesn’t feel the same

The ELCA, for starters, has synods that really are too large for one bishop. The synods are not infrequently stretched over large geographical expanses. Most ELCA congregations never see their bishop and really never expect to unless trouble is brewing in the congregation. Around the bishop are arrayed a number of assistants or associates (given title inflation), and splattered across the synod are any number of clusters, conferences, or whatnots of congregations, usually headed by a dean (whose primary calling is that of a parish pastor) appointed by the bishop.

That, more or less, is exactly what the NALC has produced, with a couple twists: deans are elected by their mission district and are expected to be deans while also being parish pastors, and the NALC borrowed the general-secretary concept from African Lutherans. That’s about it. The NALC now has some 380 congregations, most east of the Missis-

issippi, divided among twenty-three or so mission districts; like the ELCA, they tend to follow state lines. One district has three congregations (that may include California) and the largest has at least fifty. The rest all hover in between. Few NALC congregations may realistically expect to see their bishop; for at least some of them, that's just fine.

But while the NALC looks like an unusually large, cumbersome ELCA synod, it does not feel like it, not in convocation at any rate. Convocation has become a gathering of trusted comrades and companions. I have no other description. There is a fierce sense of having been called to something good. The NALC will grow, I predict, and it will grow without cherry picking dissatisfied ELCA parishes (though I expect there are still a few of those pending).

Still, the NALC is new and a little bit creaky. I can count four creaks.

ELCA Assembly brouhaha

1) NALC Bp. John Brodosky accepted an invitation to attend last year's ELCA assembly as one of the ecumenical guests. Mostly, Brodosky ended up as a bit of ecumenical eye-candy, along with all the other ecumenical guests arranged on the stage. Judged by the aftermath, Brodosky's participation was a misstep, however well-intentioned. Brodosky went solely to indicate the NALC's willingness to cooperate with the ELCA whenever and wherever possible. Me, I think he should have waited awhile before showing up, but I well understand the irenic impulse.

Brodosky's attendance or non-attendance would hardly matter at all except for what happened next. NALC staff loudly complained that remarks by then-Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson were a deliberate accusation that the NALC is a church that defines itself by what it is against, unlike the ELCA which is for, well, absolutely everything. The NALC was never mentioned by name, but it is said Hanson spent some eye-contact with Brodosky while saying it. Whether that happened is open to disagreement. Certainly NALC staff thought it did (as well as some ELCA folks), but numerous others, both ELCA and NALC, dismissed Hanson's remarks as merely one of his awkward ecumenical moments and thought his intention was misinterpreted.

2) Maybe that's so and maybe not. Yet the issue was inelegantly aired in a longish NALC

newsletter op-ed. It should never have been made public. It made everyone except Hanson look churlish. Even if Hanson set out deliberately to insult the NALC, it was not a fit issue to air in the national newsletter. The episode also reveals the constraints faced by the newsletter's editor. He apparently is expected without question to print everything handed to him. An editor who is in fact permitted to exercise editorial judgment and who is actually expected to edit might have saved the NALC some embarrassment.

Ecumenical junkets and setback

3) All the national staff was out of the country visiting African Lutherans some months ago. It indicates the NALC isn't as organized as it ought to be. (People who dislike organized religion should give us a try.) When every NALC staff member shares some part of ecumenical relations, as they do, everybody gets an ecumenical trip. Too much of that may generate some undercurrent of murmuring.

4) The NALC's membership application to the Lutheran World Federation was a bust, but I can't describe it as a misstep. I supported it and defended it with the congregations in my mission district, largely because African Lutherans said they wanted at least one reliable American Lutheran voice on their side of the biblical issues. Duly ratified, the application represented an enormous amount of NALC energy. Yet for all that, one heard few howls of disappointment when the application got turned away. The remarks I heard in Charleston indicated, had they let us in, fine, and fine that they haven't.

Challenges

In coming years as the NALC matures it will have three main challenges: support for its mission congregations, support for pastors who are frequently isolated from other NALC pastors, and the forging of real relationships with other Lutherans while retaining a distinctive witness. It may also grow beyond its present governing capacity, and that too represents a coming challenge.

Pr. Russell E. Saltzman, the immediate past editor of Forum Letter, is a dean in the NALC, a featured writer at www.firstthings.com, and author of Speaking of the Dead, now available at alpb.org.

Omnium gatherum



Call day • In the June issue, I said that, as far as I knew, the LCMS's "call day" is unique to that church body. I am informed that the Wisconsin Synod has a similar tradition, not just for graduating seminarians at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, but also for teachers graduating from Martin Luther College. As with the LCMS seminaries, the WELS services where calls are announced are live streamed. I am happy to be corrected.

Why are we here again? • On Trinity Sunday, I made my debut as a lector at the Episcopal congregation we're attending, and was thrilled to be able to read the first chapter of Genesis. The next day I happened to be at an event at an ELCA congregation and I picked up a bulletin left over from Sunday; I was [insert appropriate adjective here] to see a note: "In the interest of time, the first lesson will not be read this morning." Let's see, given what the other two lessons were that day, omitting the first one left a total of eight Scripture verses. Seventeen, if you count the Psalm. But at least this note has the virtue of honesty. And then there was plenty of time for the synod assembly report.

Creds • One of our attentive readers thinks I was a little too hard on the Southern California congregation with the quirky "creed" used in a baptismal liturgy. He observed that the text as quoted is in fact based on Luther's own paraphrase of the Nicene Creed, *Wir glauben all' an einen Gott*. Good catch, and maybe it gives them a little cover. But only a little. It is at best a paraphrase of Luther's paraphrase — fairly close in the first stanza, less so in the second and third. And while it might work as a hymn, using it as "the creed" in a baptismal liturgy is not likely what Luther had in mind.

Uncompromising commitment • A recent issue of *Garden and Gun* magazine (that's a publication that bills itself as "a celebration of the rich and vibrant culture of the South"), there is an advertisement for an investment firm called Welch Hornsby which features a photo of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. The firm, you see, advertises its "uncompromising commit-

ment," and they seem to think that Bonhoeffer is a good example of their brand. Go to their web page and you'll find a whole series of brief bios of such examples, drawn mostly from the fields of politics, sports and science. Each mini-biography ends with the tag, "His [or hers] was an investment in a life of uncompromising commitment." It all sounds so very altruistic, until you note that their own mission (which, they assure us, is unwavering) is "to provide uncompromising commitment to build and preserve the wealth of individuals, families, and institutions." That's just a tad different, I'd say, from the "uncompromising commitment" of Bonhoeffer (and virtually everyone else on their list). But hey, whatever sells.

Oh, the irony • I got a few comments from people about my reflections on the LWF denying, for the time being, membership for the NALC. One reader found it quite ironic, even humorous, that I, of all people, would accuse LCMS President Harrison of publishing comments about something that's none of his business. It is kind of ironic, I guess, but then the vocation of an editor is somewhat different from the vocation of a church body president. There are things his job requires him to do which I shouldn't do. And vice versa.

What language can I borrow? • One of our readers was a little taken aback by a comment in a recent issue ["Promises, promises," *FL* June, 2014] that referred to Pr. Todd Wilken as having a "self-consciously confessional Lutheran point of view" which I interpreted to mean that he comes from the "more conservative end of the LCMS spectrum." Was I, he asked, meaning to concede the terms "confessional" and "conservative" to the LCMS "right wing"? No, I didn't really mean to do that at all, and it would have been better, perhaps, to say "self-identified confessional" rather than "self-conscious." One challenge that faces an editor of a publication like this is that there is a distinctly different language that is spoken in various Lutheran church bodies (all of which are represented among our readers). Say "confessional" in LCMS circles and it sounds a bit different than if you say it in ELCA

circles. (Admittedly in some ELCA circles, they would stare at you blankly at the term “confessional”; that wouldn’t happen in Missouri.) Another challenge is that even the best-informed of us have trouble keeping the parties straight in church bodies not our own. So how do you describe someone like Pr. Wilken (or anyone else) in terms that will make sense to an ELCA reader who’s never heard of him, but not tick off (or elate) an LCMS reader who has a strong opinion about him? That, dear reader, is the delicate dance the editor of an inter-Lutheran publication must dance. It ain’t always easy.

Try to understand • Along those lines, there’s been some talk over at *Forum Online* about one camp—or maybe it’s just a single tent or two—in LCMS called the Association of Confessing Evangelical Lutheran Congregations (ACELC). There’s that word again. This is a group, seemingly centered in the heartland, that think Missouri has really gone off the rails in the direction of unionism, syncretism, and all the other Missouri bugaboos. They’ve recently produced and posted a video, “If Not Now, When?” It outlines at great length the ten issues they think define the hand basket in which Missouri is on the way to hell. It all started, not with Seminex, but with “A Statement” issued by a few dozen Missouri pastors and professors back in 1945—an episode that few outside of Missouri are likely to know about, but which still arouses passions in Missouri as if it had happened last week. If you want to learn something about these passions which roil and churn in the LCMS, you might take a look at the video. For many outside of the Missouri Synod (and not a few inside,

as well), it will be a remarkable learning experience about the real Missouri right wing. You’ll find it at <http://tinyurl.com/lhupevx>.

Lutherans and popular culture • That’s the theme for the biennial meeting of the Lutheran Historical Conference, held this year at Wisconsin Lutheran College in Milwaukee October 10-12. (See, ALPB isn’t *quite* the only pan-Lutheran independent group left standing.) Looks like an interesting line-up of papers, as well as a tour of the historic Lutheran churches out in Koshkonong. Cost is \$140. For more information, go to <http://luthhist.org/>.

Details emerge • ALPB’s 100th anniversary dinner is set for Sunday, October 12, 5 to 9 p.m. at JC Fogarty’s in Bronxville, NY. The cost is \$40 per person, and the gathered crowd will be addressed by Prof. Robert Benne and your editor, speaking about the future and the past of the ALPB respectively (and respectfully, no doubt). RSVP by October 1; if you didn’t get an invitation and would like one, contact Donna at dkralpb@aol.com.

Day brighteners • Pastors love to get them, and so do editors. Recently a reader wrote: “Keep up the good work! Sometimes I agree with you; sometimes I have to think about it!” That’s our goal: agree or not, we want to you think about it. One of the best gifts you could give ALPB on its 100th birthday is to give a gift subscription of the *Forum* package to someone that needs to think about things Lutheran. You can do that online at www.alpb.org. — roj

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