

# FORUM LETTER

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## Some predestined friends

### Inside this issue:

Clergy looking like clergy 4

Pepped-up worship 5

*Omnium gatherum* 6



[The city of God, i.e., the church] must bear in mind that among her very enemies are hidden her future citizens; and when confronted with them she must not think it a fruitless task to bear with their hostility until she finds them confessing the faith. In the same way, while the City of God is on pilgrimage in this world, she has in her midst some who are united with her in participation in the sacraments, but who will not join with her in the eternal destiny of the saints. Some of these are hidden; some are well known, for they do not hesitate to murmur against God, whose sacramental sign they bear, even in the company of his acknowledged enemies. At one time they join his enemies in filling the theaters, at another they join with us in filling the churches. But, such as they are, we have less right to despair of the reformation of some of them, when some predestined friends, as yet unknown even to themselves, are concealed among our most open enemies. In truth, those two cities are interwoven and intermixed in this era, and await separation at the last judgment. — Augustine of Hippo, *The City of God*, 1, Preface, 35 (trans. by Henry Bettenson; Penguin Books, 1972), 45-46.

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## Lutheran nooks and crannies



I've been on the road a lot this fall, traveling to or through many nooks and crannies of American Lutheranism — both geographically and psycho-spiritually. The occasion for much of this traveling is some work on a current project: writing the history of the American Lutheran Publicity Bureau, which celebrates its centennial this year. ALPB's technical birthday was arguably just last month; it was October 14, 1914, that the organization met for "permanent organization" (though a planning group had been working since January of that year).

### The heart of Lutheranism

I started in St. Louis, which some (you know who they are) would claim is the very heart of Lutheranism in our land. I spent four days working both at Concordia Historical Institute (which functions as the LCMS archives) and the library of Concordia Seminary — both excellent facilities, and both located on the seminary campus (which, by the way, is a lovely campus indeed). The good folks at CHI were most helpful. They have a good collection of materials pertaining to the early days of ALPB, which actually started out as an independent organization within the Missouri Synod. The seminary library is also a great facility for research in American Lutheran history.

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I was a little surprised that there weren't many students using the library, but then it was only the first week or two of the semester. There were definitely plenty of students in the chapel the day I took a break and meandered over for the chapel service; clearly Concordia students make worshipping together a priority.

### The office of the president

One day I was treated to lunch by Pr. Will Weedon, Director of Worship for the LCMS. Pr. Weedon also gave me the Cook's tour of the LCMS's "International Center" — a very impressive building indeed. I got to peek into President Matthew Harrison's office, for which they really ought to charge admission. It's full of historical artifacts, manuscripts, a fabulous collection of books. I don't know how the man gets any work done.

I drove back to Chicago on a Sunday, and stopped off to worship at St. Paul's Lutheran in Hamel, IL, where Pr. Weedon is the former pastor and is still a member. They recently completed a renovation following a fire, and the worship space is lovely. I, of course, did not commune (I had done so at an early service that morning at an Episcopal church in St. Louis), but I enjoyed being there and singing some good Lutheran hymns.

In Chicago, I spent a day at the ELCA archives. The difference between that facility and CHI is quite pronounced. The ELCA archives is housed in a facility some distance from Higgins Road, essentially in an industrial district, so there is little foot traffic. There is a comfortable reading room for research, and the staff (much, much smaller than at CHI) is helpful, but it is clearly a facility designed simply for preservation and research. In contrast, Concordia Historical Institute is more like a well-funded historical society, with a museum attached, located in an accessible place, attractive to the casual visitor as well as the researcher.

### Water your lawn

A day at the archives was sufficient for my purpose, and I then drove north to Mundelein, IL, to the general retreat of the Society of the Holy Trinity. As always, it was a refreshing and renewing three days: great worship (led by the chaplain, Pr. Pari Bailey), great preaching, stimulating speakers. This was year two of a three-year emphasis on the "un-

holy trinity" (sin, death and the devil), so the focus was on death — a sober subject, to be sure, but a very enriching discussion. One of the scheduled speakers was Francis Cardinal George of the Chicago archdiocese, but he was unfortunately hospitalized at the time. He sent a replacement, though, Fr. Lawrence Hennessey, professor of dogmatic theology at Mundelein Seminary (where the retreat was held). It was widely agreed that his presentation more than made up for the disappointment over Cardinal George's inability to be present. Fr. Hennessey rather off-handedly made a remark that many thought was the most memorable comment of the retreat: "If you think the grass looks greener on the other side of the fence, it's time to water your lawn."

This Society continues to be a remarkably and healthily pan-Lutheran group — arguably the most pan-Lutheran around, with members from ELCA, LCMS, NALC, LCMC, ELCIC, LCC, and smaller groups I can't remember. When we pray for bishops and presidents of our church bodies, the list is very long. It would probably be fair to say that Society members aren't quite "typical" of pastors in any of those church bodies. But we do enjoy being together to pray, talk, and have good fellowship.

### The next leg

After ten days at home, I was off again, this time to the Lutheran Historical Conference biennial meeting. LHC is another pan-Lutheran group, but with a somewhat different configuration. It includes folks from the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, along with ELCA and LCMS; no significant representation from NALC or LCMC at this point, but then those groups don't have much history yet, so maybe that accounts for it.

In fact the meeting this year was at a WELS institution, Wisconsin Lutheran College in Milwaukee. That was a fascinating experience for me. Like most ELCA pastors, I don't have much contact with WELS — and particularly so because in my part of the country there just aren't many WELS congregations. Truth be told, I wondered just what this visit to a WELS site would be like.

But I have to say that the college was extraordinarily hospitable to us. The welcome was warm, the facilities were excellent, the students and faculty were friendly and helpful. It is pretty darn clear that this is a *Lutheran* college; the Lutheran identity is just

everywhere. This is not so much the case, you may have noticed, at the church colleges of some other Lutheran church bodies. I wandered into the library and was a little surprised (pleasantly, though) to see that their current periodical section included not just the WELS magazine *Forward in Christ*, but also both *The Lutheran* and *Lutheran Witness* (as well as the publications of some smaller Lutheran church bodies). It did not, however, include *Lutheran Forum/Forum Letter*. I guess there's a limit.

The theme this year was "Lutherans and Popular Culture," and the papers were (as always) quite an interesting lot. One of the most intriguing was presented by an ELCA deaconess, Sr. Marilyn Stauffer, on "Lutherans and NASCAR." There's quite a connection there, about which I had no idea. Most of these papers will eventually be available in the *Journal of the Lutheran Historical Conference*.

### Historic divisions

Part of this biennial conference is always a tour of some kind. We were treated first to a visit to the WELS headquarters. The third-largest Lutheran church body in the U.S. has recently moved to a new facility, which had previously been built as a sort of showcase by a Milwaukee construction firm. It is quite a place; what was once a high-end cabinet showroom has been converted to a chapel. WELS really scored pretty big here; they got the building at a very good price, and, as I understand it, had a cash buyer for their old headquarters who paid them the same amount, so it was a no-cost upgrade. Their president's office is a lot more modest than President Harrison's, but then WELS is a lot smaller (numerically, I mean).

We then headed west to two historic congregations in Koshkonong, WI: West Koshkonong Lutheran Church, and Western Koshkonong Lutheran Church in Stoughton, WI. Read those names again; it isn't a typo. These two congregations are perhaps 50 yards from each other, but one (West) is ELCA and the other (Western) is affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS). If you're up on your Norwegian Lutheran history, you'll know the story. What is now West Koshkonong Lutheran was one of the earliest Norwegian Lutheran congregations in the United States, established in 1844 by the Norwegian Synod. It broke apart in the 1880s over the election controversy. Pastor J. A. Otteson ran afoul of

the congregation when he espoused the "Missourian" position on predestination, and he was deposed; the congregation joined the "anti-Missourian brotherhood." His supporters then organized Western Koshkonong Lutheran Church, which stuck with the Norwegian Synod. When the three Norwegian church bodies merged in 1917, Western was among those who just said "no" and became part of the "Little Norwegian Synod." Pr. Otteson's portrait hangs in the line of pastors at both congregations, though more prominently at Western.

Both congregations today are clearly of Norwegian heritage (you can tell by the Norwegian inscriptions above the altar), but they have virtually nothing to do with one another. The ELS pastor spoke to our group, and was well-informed about the history and the doctrinal differences. The ELCA pastor didn't really seem to know much about it, and admitted that the only time he'd ever been in the ELS church was when somebody gave him tickets to their Lutefisk dinner. (Did I say these two congregations are 50 yards apart?) I suppose it is natural for a "secessionist group" to have a stronger sense of history. Still, this is a pretty sad reminder of Lutherans not playing nicely with others.

### Centennial banquet

I left the LHC meeting early to get to the ALPB centennial banquet in New York. The attendees certainly represented a different slice of Lutheranism than what I had seen in Wisconsin. (I mean that in a good way.) It was good to see some friends, as well as to meet some new people who are regular and appreciative *FL* readers. I sat across the table from Jon Vieker, assistant to LCMS President Harrison. All the Lutheran denominational heads were invited to this dinner, but Harrison is the only one who sent a representative. Pr. Vieker brought greetings in a gracious and thoughtful manner.

The evening's program included a presentation by yours truly on the history of ALPB, and another by Prof. Robert Benne on the future of ALPB. The two papers, I understand, are slated for publication in a forthcoming *Lutheran Forum* issue, so if you weren't able to be there, you can at least get a taste of it. You unfortunately can't get a taste of the excitement and enthusiasm of that room full of ALPB supporters and fans, happy to be together and happy to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of a remarkable

organization.

As for me, I came home once again marveling at the breadth and diversity of the Lutheran experience in America. As Raymond Brown put it in

the July issue of *FL*, there's more to Lutheranism in America than the stories Garrison Keillor tells. A lot more.

— by Richard O. Johnson, editor

## Clergy looking like clergy

by Raymond J. Brown



As a layman, I am aware of pastors debating among themselves (and sometimes individually within themselves) whether or not to wear the clerical collar. For some the donning is effected almost all the time. For others it is never worn, since it is a ridiculous showpiece or remnant of popery. For yet others the clothing choice depends upon the occasion.

Well, I prefer to see the collar. But let me preface my preference with a reality check.

### Ministry in boxer shorts

A friend of mine who left this mortal coil a few years ago had been a chaplain with the 9th Marines "Walking Dead" Battalion in Vietnam. One night during a mortar attack on an I-Corps compound, he donned battle helmet and ran about ministering, decked out in his T-shirt and boxer shorts. Once everyone got safe or dead, a grunt stared grimly at Father Norman Ricard inside a bunker. And the chaplain just looked back and said sarcastically, "Whassa matter wid you? Never seen a chaplain in his skivvies before?" The jarhead then pointed at the sky pilot's foot, which was oozing blood from a shrapnel wound of which the clergyman had been wholly unaware.

Devotion to duty is a powerful thing, more powerful than any dress. It has been said that U.S. Marines could anonymously engage in combat wearing only their skivvies, and the enemy would still quickly know damned well that they were fighting U.S. Marines. The uniform is a symbol, not the reality, of cadence to arms. I am sure that the same applies to any pastor worthy of his calling, including one praying and evacuating the wounded while sporting GI issue u-trou amid nocturnal explosions.

So, no, the daily dress of a pastor does not define, outline, or prove authentic Gospel ministry. But neither is it inconsequential.

### Evangelical catholics and Haugean pietists

Now my own background and emphases are evangelical catholic. My bias is admittedly inbred, familial, and reaching back to youthful formation. Yet to say that dress is unimportant would be to deny the Biblical narratives. As we are reminded on stewardship Sundays, the Bible says a lot about money. It says a lot about clothing also, though the Biblical canon is less than didactic on this subject, particularly for our own latter days. Others of the more Haugean outlook have their heartfelt biases, too. I have heard complaints at Lutheran CORE convocations about "too many black shirts."

But here is why I think the clerical collar is a good thing.

### The collar confesses the call

I was a career U.S. Coast Guard officer and thus often in uniform. One thing I was always aware of is that my garb represented something much bigger and more important than myself. Indeed, I was never acting upon my own strength of personality (or suffering for its weakness); neither my submission nor my authority were of my own creation.

I certainly cannot speak for the ordained, as that call has never been mine, but I should think the same sartorial reminder that I am not my own confers both a healthy humility and confidence. And it silently speaks that there is something to live up to even when tired, angry, saddened, or clueless.

### The collar provides opportunities

A number of pastors have mentioned to me in recent years that the collar occasions opportunities to "make the good confession" which would otherwise not occur. Sometimes it is an individual observing the dress and then simply engaging in conversation on matters spiritual. Sometimes there is a crisis; unlike someone asking if there is a doctor in the house, the pastor can readily be identified.

Also, and perhaps a small thing, the sight of the collar reminds people that our Lord is yet present among us. That may not be apparent to a pastor walking the street, or exiting a building lobby, or entering a restaurant, but I can tell you it is a very real thing—and a silent comfort to some.

I suppose I should also add that the collar occasionally gets a traffic violation summarily dismissed by a cop. It also keeps the rest of us from evaluating the pastor's taste in civilian clothing (and some clergy have absolutely no clue whatsoever).

### Not just one of the guys

Some pastors really want to be one of the guys (or gals). Sorry, you are not. And your flocks do not want you to be.

The sainted Bishop Bo Giertz provides a powerful passage (well, many, but here is one in particular) in his classic *Hammer of God*. The older Pastor Bengtsson visits and scolds young Pastor Torvik for not donning clericals, Torvik instead wanting "to come as an ordinary human being" to his people. Pastor Bengtsson sharply responds, "Then you are flying under false colors. You are no

ordinary person. You have been ordained by the Church as a servant of the Word."

Personally, I can honestly employ the trite expression, "Some of my best friends are pastors." I can also honestly write I have known a turkey or two in holy orders along the way. But the pastor's vocational call should never be considered ordinary or functional. Any in their flock who might think so could use some catechetical instruction. But most parishioners do not want to think so. This may well render the clergyperson lonely at times, but leadership occasionally has that price. The prototype was lonely at Gethsemane.

### Adiaphora

Some will no doubt dismiss this issue as *adiaphora*. I would readily agree that a difference is only a difference if it makes a difference. But sometimes the white collar does make a difference.

*Raymond J. Brown is a member of the Board of Directors of the American Lutheran Publicity Bureau. He is a participant in the Lutheran Coalition for Renewal.*

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## Pepped-up worship



*Editor's note: I have recently had occasion to browse through issues of American Lutheran, a magazine published by the American*

*Lutheran Publicity Bureau from 1918 until 1966, at which time it was succeeded by Lutheran Forum. I came across the following editorial in the December, 1934, issue, which is good evidence that the more things change, the more they stay the same, and that the worship wars are ever with us. Oh, and you thought I was stodgy.*

Here and there one encounters the sentiment among clergy and laity that our Lutheran church services, in order to be made more attractive, must be stripped of all formality and must conform themselves, at least in a measure, to the old-fashioned meeting-house form of worship. Our services, we are told, must be "pepped up." Somehow or other the rather expressive American slang term "pep" jars upon our nerves when connected with the hour of worship in the house of God. We cannot concede

that life and vigor in the service demand the absence of a dignified formality.

### Lilting ditties

We have tried to worship in a service where the pastor preached not from a pulpit but from a lectern and during his discourse paraded up and down, occasionally throwing the folds of his gown back and thrusting his hands into his pockets. The hymns were of the Moody and Sankey type. The choir sang lilting ditties from collections issued at the rate of one every quarter year by some church music factory. The sermon was slangy and interspersed with jokes. We were regaled with an additional feature number of a coloratura soprano with six vocal lessons behind her, tremulously and uncertainly attracting our attention to her own much adorned personage under the pretense of singing to our edification and to the glory of God. The announcements

were a form of ballyhoo for various social affairs which the organizations of the church were to put on in the near future. The whole service had the characteristic of cheapness and the prevailing informality was reflected in the audience, which moved about restlessly, nudged and whispered, and in general conformed itself completely to the attitude of the pastor.

### The value of dignity

We are not agitating for liturgical extravagances nor for the introduction of pompous medieval forms, but we do believe that when a Lutheran congregation assembles in the house of God it assembles for worship and that the hour of worship may be full of life and vigor without making any concessions to the cheap methods of the spellbinder and entertainer. The value of dignity in the service cannot be overestimated. The approach to the throne of mercy is an act which calls for reverence and solemnity and the sacredness of the congregational hour of devotion must be reflected in the attitude of both pastor and people. The maintenance of strict church decorum does not call for a sacrifice of forcefulness. We believe that the preacher has a much easier approach to the hearts of the people after they have been brought into a worshipful mood than after they have been excited and "pepped up" by sensational antics or even by appeals to their sense of humor.

The orders of service suggested in our hymnbook, if properly and intelligently used, will

prevent our services from becoming stereotyped. There is enough flexibility in them to permit of extensive variation and the local church is treading on dangerous ground when it discards our accepted Lutheran forms and begins to experiment with the cheap methods of the professional revivalist.

### Colored hosiery

Ordinarily an assembly congregation betrays the character of its service even before the service begins. Groups of idle chatterers, a buzz of conversation from the pews, a suppressed titter here and there, are unmistakable indications that there will be a lack of worshipful decorum in the coming service. The minister probably will slouch in his chair, will probably yawn prodigiously without even taking the trouble to use his hand as a screen. We may anticipate that he will sit with crossed legs, exhibiting a length of colored hosiery to the gaze of the congregation. We may look forward to the injection into the service of meaningless solos and of disturbing announcements. The organist will probably play some light opera selection as a postlude, and the congregation will depart, amused, perhaps, but spiritually unrefreshed.

Whatever attitude we may take in the current discussion of liturgical forms, it cannot be denied that there is much room for improvement in pastoral and congregational church habits, and that the stressing of the dignity and solemnity in our services is a project worthy of our most earnest attention.

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## Omnium gatherum



**ELCA without gays** • In the September issue, Russ Saltzman quoted a "Lutheran observer" as referring, in a *Christian Century* article, to the NALC as "the ELCA without gays." Turns out the author of that article was Luther Seminary's Mark Granquist, but Saltzman's comment was misleading. Prof. Granquist actually said that "some of [the NALC's] critics call it 'the ELCA without gays.'" He assures me, however, that he disagrees with those critics (as was clear in the context of his article). So while there may be a "Lutheran observer" or two who would describe the NALC that way, Mark Granquist isn't one of them.

As for Saltzman, when he learned of this, his comment was, "Where the hell was my editor?" Someone on the *First Things* blogs, to which my predecessor often contributes, referred to him as "dour." I don't really believe that; cranky, maybe, but not dour, at least not by temperament. But our apologies to Mark Granquist for the misleading reference.

**NALC with more students** • In the same issue, Brad Everett wrote that the North American Lutheran Seminary's House of Studies at Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary in North Carolina had "five or six students." Program director Dr. Mary Havens

informs me that there are actually a dozen students enrolled in the program this fall, and this is only the second year of the program. Would that all Lutheran seminaries showed that kind of growth. Could be Pr. Everett was counting in Canadian numerals.

**Spiritual journey** • There's a blogger, "The Spiritual Journeyer," who has set out on "a religious journey through Chicago." The idea is that the Journeyer will visit a different church every Sunday for a year, and write a report on the experience. At this writing, a Greek Orthodox and an ELCA congregation have been visited. It's an interesting insight into what strikes visitors to a congregation, especially visitors whose own church background is rather limited. (The Spiritual Journeyer is apparently of nominal Lutheran roots.) You can follow the blog at [www.chicagonow.com/religious-journey-through-chicago](http://www.chicagonow.com/religious-journey-through-chicago).

**Alternative history** • The American Lutheran Publicity Bureau, our publisher, will be releasing a centennial history of the organization, which will be available next year. In the meantime, the redoubtable Herman Otten of *Christian News* infamy has beaten us to the punch with "A History of the ALPB: 1914-2014: A Century Toward Apostasy and Victory." In his typically hysterical fashion, Mr. Otten claims that the ALPB has won a "victory" because the LCMS has essentially given in to its apostasy. It makes for interesting reading, if you've got a strong stomach and rather perverse sense of humor.

**It's not the post office** • Those who receive *Forum Letter* by U. S. mail often grouse about how long it takes for them to get their copy. Sometimes that's the post office's fault, and sometimes it isn't. When our trusty office manager Donna found herself receiving more inquiries than usual about the August issue, she got suspicious and called the printer. The printer investigated and discovered that there was a bag of them sitting there in his shop that never got mailed. So now they have been mailed, and presumably you've received your August issue by early November. On the other hand, if your November issue is late, it's likely my fault. With my October travels, I had hoped to have the issue to the printer before I left town. Didn't happen, and so it was a few days late on my end. *Mea culpa*.

**Delayed criticism** • Perhaps because of that August snafu, I'm even now getting responses to the article about "modern creeds" ("Promises, promises") in that issue. Most of them very politely point out that one of the "creeds" I criticized was a paraphrase of Luther's *Wir glauben all' an einen Gott*; I acknowledged that missed allusion in the September issue (which, one might think, these responders would have noted since they probably got that issue before the August one, but they may not have known what I was talking about in September). Others were sharper, such as the reader who accused me (unjustly) of doing my research on Wikipedia and insisted that the paraphrase was hardly "weak, muddled and misconceived" (as I had written). Sorry, but I'm sticking to my guns on this. There are two problems with the "creed" as presented in the original article. The first (and really the more serious) is that it is absolutely inappropriate to substitute this paraphrase of Luther's paraphrase of the Nicene Creed for the Apostles' Creed in the baptismal liturgy. I perhaps did not make that clear enough in the original article, but that is what I meant by saying that this did not express "the faith in which we baptize." It is the Apostles' Creed that expresses that faith, and that is what should be used in the baptismal liturgy. The other issue is that the paraphrase is a considerable weakening of Luther's hymn, and an even greater weakening of the important Trinitarian and Christological expressions of the Nicene Creed. I did, however, particularly like the comment of Pr. Jeffrey Zetto, who suggested that if one wanted to use Luther's paraphrase, "it might be well to sing it" (using the version, for example, at #411 in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, "We All Believe in One True God"). He acknowledges that "it is obscure, chant-based hymnody that no one in their right mind would want to sing, let alone be able to sing. Except my mother's kindergarten classes (20 years of them) at Redeemer Lutheran Church, Westfield, NJ."

**On proofreaders and editors** • We so often take the people "behind the scenes" for granted. Here's evidence of the importance of sharp-eyed proofreaders: In an October 1 *Christian Century* item on the decline of Methodism in the United Kingdom, reprinted from the Religion News Service, I noted the following: "The brothers Charles and John Wes-

ley were ordained Anglicans who defied the Church of England's establishment by holding open-air meetings and writing more than 6,000 hymns urging industrial and agricultural laborers to turn their backs on alcohol and gambling." While I'm not an authority on the subject, I am reasonably knowledgeable about Wesleyan hymnody, and I'm hard-pressed to think of even one hymn whose subject is alcohol and gambling. For that matter, this piece could have used an actual editor; the Anglican establishment didn't really object to the hymns, and nearly all those hymns were written by Charles, not John. John's hymn output, while of fair quality, was meager, and consisted primarily of translations from German hymn writers. (Did you know that he was probably the most significant translator of German hymn texts into English prior to Catherine Winkworth? A couple of his translations – e.g., "Jesus, Thy Blood and Righteousness" – are still in common use in hymnals that contain anything written before 1980. The things you learn in *Forum Letter*!)

**Speaking of editing** • As I wrote the previous item, I wondered whether the Missouri Synod made use of any of John Wesley's translations, so I looked at the *Lutheran Service Book* (a fine hymnal, to be sure) and found that it includes two Wesley translations – but that they inexplicably name the great 18th century evangelical Anglican as "John B. Wesley." Again, I'm no authority, but as far as I can learn, the suggestion that Wesley had a middle name (Benjamin) rests on pretty slim evidence, and is generally not even mentioned by modern scholars. Wesley never used a middle name or initial himself, and

never mentioned that he had one (and he was a prolific journal writer). Even the 19th century writers who claimed he had a middle name admitted that none of his 18 or so siblings had two names, but cited a vague "Wesley family tradition" as evidence for John being the exception. I admit that I didn't check Wikipedia on this, but it seems pretty odd and very idiosyncratic that Concordia Publishing House would decide to refer to Wesley as "John B." Who at CPH decided to do this? Were they trying to hide the fact that they were using Methodist translations of German hymns? Inquiring minds want to know.

**In favor of diversity** • Diversity seems to be a primary goal of many churches these days, and we want to do our part. Reaction to Pr. Karl Johnsen's piece in the October issue ("A series of immodest proposals") has ranged from wondering why we would publish such "scatological and ranting thoughts" of a "clearly non-objective man" to a description of the article as a "gem" and an expression of the "hope [that] this is only the first of many articles from him" and a suggestion that the article "be reprinted in all national church magazines." We appreciate the latter thoughts, but regard them as unlikely. One reader emailed us that October "is the issue where I decide to just be removed from the [subscription list]"; another said that after reading that issue he "had to e-mail a sincere 'thank you' to you as the editor of this award-winning newsletter and to all the contributors who make the *Forum Letter* a true joy to read and reread." As they say, it takes all kinds, and we're glad our readership is diverse enough to include many of them. – roj

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