

FORUM LETTER

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Inside this issue:

A view of the church
in Sweden

Omnium gatherum

When one ponders . . .



4 When one ponders what is happening at present, it seems to become more evident as time passes that we must reckon with three trends within the Lutheran Church: It is entirely possible that some of those . . . who lean toward modernism and who pursue a rationalistic approach to theology will move farther and farther down into the dark pit from which some of the other Protestant groups in America are now trying to emerge after having been without the Gospel for a long while. This group, we believe, will be small in number. It is equally probable that there will be another segment of Lutherans to which possibly every Lutheran synod of America may make a contribution. The members of that segment will also follow a rationalistic approach to theology. They will develop a theology by what they suppose to be logical deduction in which the findings of their own minds are accorded a status of equality with the revelation of God as given us in the Holy Scriptures. This will be a kind of Lutheranism which preaches the Gospel as though it were law and which loses the Gospel as a power of God unto salvation through which the Spirit of God changes human hearts and human lives and builds the dynamic Kingdom of God. Between these two extreme groups which are likely to emerge there will stand the great bulk of Lutherans in America who will take their position squarely on the foundation of the prophets and the apostles with Jesus Christ as the chief cornerstone and who will abide by the accepted confessions of the church as a true and correct exposition of the Scriptures. Their reliance will be upon the Spirit of God and to them the Gospel will be that living message of divine love through which this Spirit fills the hearts of men with the peace which surpasses all understanding and makes of them partakers of the victories and triumphs of the crucified and risen Christ. —O. A. Geiseman, in the *American Lutheran*, October, 1953, p. 22.

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Lutheran unity redux



Back in the 1950s, the *American Lutheran* (predecessor of *Lutheran Forum/Forum Letter*) spent a good deal of space talking about “Lutheran unity.” At one point an editorial comment was made that events were unfolding so rapidly that the monthly magazine could hardly keep up with them.

That was a very long time ago, and “Lutheran unity” is a topic of little interest these days. Those “unfolding events” in the 1950s led to the mergers that formed The American Lutheran Church and the Lutheran Church in America, which in turn ultimately resulted in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in

America. Relationships between the ELCA and the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, always frosty, entered what appeared to be a new ice age, with Missouri steadily backing away from even what few cooperative ventures they shared with the ELCA, and ELCA officials making it clear that they really couldn't care less.

Not quite so isolated

The ELCA scratched its dialogue itch by holding fervent conversations with Episcopalians, Reformed, Methodists, Catholics, Moravians, and just about anyone other than Missouri Lutherans. At the same time, the ELCA, the final product of the "Lutheran unity" movement so active in the 1950s, started down the path of disunity, with various groups peeling off to form Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ, the North American Lutheran Church, and some other much smaller entities. All the while, the Missouri Synod seemed to maintain a splendid and satisfied isolationism.

A recent announcement, however, made it apparent that Missouri isn't quite as isolated as it might have appeared. It turns out there have been a series of meetings between leaders of Missouri, the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS), and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS). The latest meeting, held in December in Jacksonville, FL (you know, right there in the heart of Lutheran country), resulted in a "mutually approved report . . . about the status of these informal meetings," signed by all those present and directed to their respective synods.

How it used to be

Let me back up a bit to offer a brief history lesson, particularly to our ELCA and former ELCA readers, who tend to have a blind spot when it comes to American Lutheran history. It's a pretty serious blind spot, actually; I've encountered a good number of ELCA pastors, especially younger ones, who don't have a clue what the Evangelical Lutheran Synod might be, and whose only knowledge of the Wisconsin Synod is that "they're even more right-wing than Missouri." It doesn't say much for the level of instruction in American Lutheran history in most of our seminaries, but that's an article for another day.

For several decades, the more conservative

Lutheran bodies were united in what was called the Synodical Conference of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. In its early days, there were a number of synods that dropped in and out of the Synodical Conference (including some that were ancestors of today's ELCA), but by the 1950s that group consisted of one large member (LCMS), one somewhat smaller member (WELS), and two much smaller members (ELS and the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church). The ELS, until 1957 known as the Norwegian Synod, was a group of Norwegian Lutherans (logically enough) who had declined to be a part of the merger that created the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America in 1917.

But in the 1940s and 1950s, Missouri—always the "big brother" in the Synodical Conference—was inching toward greater cooperation and even unity discussions with some of the less conservative Lutheran synods, and both the WELS and the ELS began expressing increasing alarm. This led to the ELS suspending its fellowship agreement with Missouri in 1955; the WELS followed suit in 1961, and both groups withdrew from the Synodical Conference. The Conference thus collapsed, and the very small Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church ultimately merged with the Missouri Synod. In the years since, the WELS and the ELS have been in fellowship with one another (that is, what we used to call "altar and pulpit fellowship"), but have had little to do with the Missouri Synod.

A surprise

So the announcement that the LCMS, the WELS and the ELS have been having "informal meetings" came as something of a surprise, at least to those Lutherans not closely connected to those groups. There are a number of things that are very interesting about this, at least to this outsider (an ELCA pastor who is interested in what's going on elsewhere in the Lutheran world).

The first is the observation that these meetings have been very different in nature from most inter-Lutheran or ecumenical discussions in the past. Describing them as "informal" is fair enough; they were not authorized or called by any official action, but simply arranged by decision of the leaders of the groups (though apparently all three church bodies, in their national conventions, subsequently passed resolutions "encouraging" further conversation).

Indeed, the report suggests that the impetus for the first meeting in 2012 was the election of new leadership in Missouri (Matthew Harrison) and Wisconsin (Mark Schroeder). The unspoken implication is that previous leaders, for whatever reason, were not much interested in conversation. That's a good reminder that sometimes personalities play a significant role in how church bodies relate to one another.

Interesting, too, is the whole concept of conversations between "leaders." All those who signed the report are indeed people who hold leadership positions in one of the three bodies – presidents, vice-presidents, seminary professors, executive staff. All, far as I can tell, are pastors (and therefore male), all white, all somewhere in the category of "middle-aged." (David Benke, former president of the LCMS's Atlantic District, commenting on a photograph of the signers – most in jeans and polo shirts – quipped, "18 Midwestern white dudes getting a sunburn. Garrison Keillor would be proud.") Let's just say this is a not a group that would have assembled under the ELCA's representational principles. I'm not saying that's necessarily a bad thing, understand. It's just different.

"Informal" might also describe the report itself. Inter-Lutheran conversations in the old days often resulted in a series of "theses" upon which the participants had agreed; ecumenical dialogues these days result in a somewhat similar report. This one is more narrative in nature, presented under three headings: Surprises, Agreement, Challenges.

Not that surprising

The "surprises" are surprising mostly in that they were surprises. The first one was that they "have much in common." Who'd have thought? The LCMS participants were surprised "to learn how much pain was caused and still exists in ELS and WELS" in the wake of the controversies of the 1950s and 1960s. That also would not be much of a shock to anyone who has read any of the literature about those conflicts from the perspective of those two bodies. WELS and ELS participants expressed surprise at "how open [Missouri's leaders] are to listening and trying to understand the viewpoint of others." One can see how that might be a surprise; Missouri has not lately been known for its sympathetic listening skills.

When it came to "agreement," the group was

apparently surprised yet again to see how much they agreed on. This harmony, they wrote (in a gratuitous slap at some other Lutherans) is "quite astonishing in our world today and not at all to be taken for granted among those who claim to be Lutheran." There followed a long list of "biblical doctrines or practices" on which the three groups agree. Many of them, frankly, would be agreed upon also by most other Lutheran groups (the Trinity, the person and work of Christ, justification by grace through faith, the real presence, law and gospel). A few of them decidedly would not (rejection of women's ordination, rejection of infant communion, Genesis 1-11 as actual history).

All three synods expressed agreement with *A Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod*, that controversial document from 1932 that some in Missouri argue has been improperly elevated to binding confessional status. As an outside observer, I find it fascinating that the WELS and the ELS seem to revere that LCMS statement almost as much as the most conservative of LCMSers.

The participants also noted agreement in some other areas – the doctrine of the church, certain social issues such as sanctity of life, human sexuality and religious freedom, and objective justification. What's notable here is the inclusion, or intrusion, of agreement on social issues as a matter for theological discussion.

Challenges

The section on challenges outlines "a number of significant differences (real or perceived)" that still must be "thoroughly addressed." This is followed immediately by an assurance that there is no expectation that the groups will "reestablish church fellowship in the near future," since all agree that "church fellowship requires complete agreement in doctrine."

The first "challenge" is the doctrine of the ministry. Here the group recognized that in practice, their churches exercise the ministry in quite similar ways. "But we talk about the necessity of the pastoral office in different ways and present the scriptural basis of the doctrine differently, in part due to our different histories and the different concerns that we face." That's a very sophisticated statement – and one, truth be told, that is quite similar to what is often said in ecumenical dialogues: an admission that

“we talk about things in a different way” but that in fact what we mean to say may not be all that different. Of course when ELCA Lutherans and Episcopalians say something like that, the LCMS dismisses it as surrender of principles.

The second “challenge” has to do with church fellowship. The groups found that they agree on closed communion (I could have told them that), but they disagree on prayer fellowship. That was one of the biggest bugaboos back in the 1950s. Missouri had gradually come to the conclusion that it was acceptable to pray with other Christians with whom one is not in full fellowship, while WELS and ELS insisted that to do so is unchristian unionism. It’s hard to imagine that either side is going to acquiesce to the other on that issue; one wonders if this suggests the possibility of a movement in the LCMS to retreat to the older concept more than fifty years after having rejected it.

Other issues which the report admits have not yet been discussed include the roles of women and men in the church, cooperation in externals, and international church relationships – as well as “the consistency of practice in our church bodies.” It also admits that “none of us sees an easy path to fellowship, and none of us wants to compromise any part of God’s Word in the process.”

Mutual respect and trust

The report concludes by rejoicing that progress has been made, that conversations have been “positive and friendly,” and that a “level of mutual respect and trust” has been built up among these

leaders. It admits that a reestablishment of fellowship is “a goal for which we pray and work” (even though that seems far off). It suggests that perhaps these leaders can “look for ways to include others from our synods in these inter-synodical discussions.”

The sentence that really caught my eye was this: “But even if we are not able to practice church fellowship, we have found benefit in talking together about church work, in patiently trying to understand the issues better, and in providing a measure of encouragement in our lives of repentance and fidelity to Scripture.” Wow. That’s a pretty nice statement, and a very big admission: that even if it seems impossible to agree, there is some good in talking with and patiently listening to one another, encouraging one another to be faithful. It’s hard to imagine the leaders of Missouri saying such a thing with reference to the ELCA; it’s equally hard to imagine the leaders of the ELCA saying those words with reference to Missouri – or, for that matter, to the NALC or the LCMC.

But that is what discussions between churches really should be about, isn’t it? We can’t always expect to resolve differences, and we shouldn’t try to paper them over and pretend they don’t exist. What we should do, what we must do, is continue to talk with one another, listening to one another, considering the idea that we may be wrong and in need of correction, longing for the unity for which Christ prayed.

– by *Richard O. Johnson, editor*

A view of the church in Sweden

by **Kim-Eric Williams**



As an American Lutheran pastor I spent a year working in Täby Parish in 1972-73; in the summer of 2014, I returned and served as a priest for a month in Karlshamn-Trensum Parish. While Täby was the largest parish in Sweden in a growing suburb of Stockholm, Karlshamn Parish is in the southern province of Blekinge, and is a city of 31,000 which also administers two country churches.

Although the Church of Sweden has been independent of the government since the year 2000,

little seems to have changed. Sunday offerings still go only to benevolences. Pastoral salaries are paid out of a national fund, according to a grid plan based on ability and years of experience. These monies have been held by the church since the Middle Ages and are still invested for the sole purpose of supporting pastors. Program funds for local churches are raised by a voluntary, locally determined taxation remitted on national income tax forms. Taxpayers may indicate whatever parish or religious group they wish for their church contribu-

tion. Of course a person can simply refuse to pay any religious contribution and thus have a lower income tax. This "escape clause" has resulted in a considerable loss of members for the Church. In the year 2013, 25,454 left the Church and 8,377 adults joined the church in addition to those baptized.

Hitchings, hatchings, dispatchings

The catch, however, is that persons who leave the Church of Sweden cannot get married in the church, have their children baptized, or have a priest officiate at their funerals. (Some parishes, though, have made exceptions for a major contribution; one parish in Stockholm is rumored to be willing to waive the membership requirement for a wedding if a contribution of \$500 is received.)

The Church of Sweden still manages all of the cemeteries in the country and is compensated by taxes paid by everyone for this service. The great majority of these cemeteries are located near church buildings but some are large urban oases. In all cases a distinction is made between members of the Church and those who confess another faith; the latter have their own areas and non-denominational spaces are provided for their officiants. Despite these liberal provisions, well over 90% of funerals are handled by the Church of Sweden and it was not unusual in Karlshamn for the four priests in the parish to have 2-3 funerals a week. This is an opportunity for grief counseling and a chance to develop a personal relationship with a family.

The number of baptisms and confirmations has fallen precipitously. It doesn't mean that either rite will disappear, but that the old social motivation to be baptized and confirmed is no longer valid. It is also common now for youth to receive Holy Communion before Confirmation as part of the Eucharistic renewal that has led to most Sunday worship being a full mass; there are often also weekday masses in larger churches. In Karlshamn there were two weekday masses as well as the major High Mass on Sunday morning.

The Church has given a great deal more emphasis to baptism, encouraging family visits in all cases. In addition to a baptismal candle and certificate, each family gets a memento — a small engraved silver leaf or fish, for instance, that is hung on a display board in the church near the font. Once a year a special baptismal remembrance liturgy is held, often

on Candlemas, and the mementos are given to the parents. This jewelry is then placed on a necklace for the baptized to wear, remembering the day of their incorporation into the church.

Music evangelism

Music is still a major emphasis in the church's life, with professional church musicians and pipe organs now supplemented by Taizé chants and new hymns. The current 1986 hymnal with its appendix has 800 hymns; another 100 are found in a supplement. No doubt this is one of the largest national hymn collections in the world. The first 325 hymns are shared with all of the other major Christian groups in Sweden. Music evangelism is a real possibility in Sweden. Sacred concerts are frequent and always well attended. When the Baltic Festival brought 200,000 visitors to Karlshamn last summer, a "Festival Mass" featuring American jazz and a 50-voice choir filled the thousand-seat Carl Gustaf Church in the city center. More than 100,000 Swedes sing in church choirs, and the Sunday liturgy is by far the greatest source of musical performance in the country.

Sunday worship is considerably lighter than it was in the last century. The ponderous General Confession of Sins by Olaus Petri is rarely used. There are nine alternative Eucharistic Prayers and the emphasis is on participation, with laity assisting as lectors and in the distribution. A number of trial rites are now in use in preparation for a new common liturgy. A new Bible translation in 2000 is already in wide use.

What many visitors fail to see is the widespread conference, retreat and camp work that dioceses and individual foundations maintain. Rättsvik in Dalarna and Sigtuna near Uppsala have international reputations, but each of the thirteen dioceses has its own center that operates year around.

Outside the Church of Sweden

The second largest church in Sweden is now the Roman Catholic Church, whose 44 parishes span the country and number over 103,000 members. If all of the Poles, Croats, and Assyrians who have immigrated into Sweden are counted, the number of adherents is closer to 200,000. There are also some notable Swedish converts, among them Ulf Ekman, a former Lutheran priest who led a charismatic

megachurch in Uppsala for many years before converting to Catholicism in 2013.

The former Swedish Mission Covenant Church (1878) joined forces with the Baptist Union and the United Methodists in 2012 to found the Eumenia (Ecumenical) Church. With a membership of 85,000, it is a member of both the Reformed and Baptist World Alliances, although a large majority of its members come from a Mission Covenant background. Nearly as large as this denomination is the Pentecostal or "Philadelphia" Church with over 83,000 members. Its emphasis on personal commitment and emotional expression makes its appeal similar to that of the independent megachurches in the United States.

The tiny Swedish Mission Province is a Lutheran body that was formed in 2003 in opposition to women in ministry. Advocating for a stringent Lutheran orthodoxy and supported by conservative Lutheran bishops from Africa, it deplores what it sees as moral drift and denial of the Scriptures. It is similar to other anti-establishment groups organized among Episcopalians and Lutherans in the United States. It highly disapproves of the acceptance of homosexuality and same-sex marriage in the Church of Sweden. Its chance of future success seems slim without the benefit of the historic buildings of the Church of Sweden and in a country in which women are highly represented in all the professions and hold more than 50% of the seats in the parliament. Women have been ordained in the Church of Sweden since 1958 and two of the thirteen current bishops are women—as is the Archbishop, the Rt. Rev. Antje Jacklen. She is a brilliant ecumenist and theologian who has lived in both Germany and the United States.

Structures

While the Church struggles with secularism, it still holds about 70% of the population as members in its 1,400 parishes. Last year between concerts, masses and programs it counted 15 million visits in its churches. Its democratic structure has been adjusted since its independence from the government, but it seems to represent fairly the needs and wishes of the faithful. The bishops regularly express themselves on social and ecclesiastical issues, yet their letters are seen as instructive rather than as prescriptive. A balance between participation, administra-

tion, and theological leadership is still being sought, as it is in all churches. The Church of Sweden was never actually a state church in the sense of being ruled by the government; rather it has been a national church which earlier had its own Estate in the parliament. With democratic reforms in the 19th century, it developed its own national assembly.

One of the challenges in the newer structural reforms is how to handle rural parishes. Often located in under-populated areas, their income is hardly able to manage a budget and support their historic structures. Increasingly they have been "adopted" by larger nearby congregations, becoming part of a parish. In many cases the reality is no longer one pastor in a parish but staff ministries working together with multiple congregations, employing several priests, musicians and other parish workers.

Paying with plastic in a medieval church

A new furnishing in some narthexes is what looks like an ATM. In reality it is a device that allows people to give electronically with their debit or credit card. One can choose a monthly contribution to a local congregation or give to world mission, development aid or the Swedish Church Abroad. Most congregations have websites, and one can surf the web to read theological essays on Baptism, the Eucharist and any number of topics.

The number of medieval churches and otherwise architecturally significant church buildings owned by the Church of Sweden is immense. They are a part of the landscape, history, and culture of each province. Not only those with faith on their minds, but city planners, cultural historians, tourist boards and local antiquarian societies take a strong interest in their preservation. Because Sweden never had a French or Puritan revolution and has been untouched by war for more than 200 years, there is much to see and admire.

Ecumenical and interfaith concerns

Ecumenism has left its mark in Sweden. The Church of Sweden cooperates in all major ecumenical organizations and regularly lends its facilities to other Christian groups, from Eastern rite Catholics and Orthodox to Pentecostals. The Provoo Agreement has led to much exchange between the Nordic Lutheran churches and the Church of England. Thus the large Frederik Church in Karlskrona has three

boys' choirs modeled after the Royal School of Church Music in London. Since the World Council of Churches Assembly in Uppsala in 1968, almost every church has a candle-globe. Visitors pray for their intention, give a donation for world mission, and light a candle in a wrought iron globe. The English tradition of Christmas Eve Midnight Mass is gaining in popularity at the expense of the traditional Christmas morning Matins (*Julotta*). Many old pilgrimage routes have been revitalized for hiking and meditation, especially around the ancient abbey of St. Birgitta at Vadstena and Nidaros/Trondheim, the traditional resting place of St. Olaf in Norway. Youth groups make spiritual retreats on such routes that connect medieval sites, and hiking enthusiasts learn something about the way of the Cross.

The second largest faith in Sweden is now Islam. It is estimated that more than 300,000 Muslims (4% of the population) now live in Sweden, primarily in the larger cities. They represent some 40 countries and are predominantly Sunni, though 60,000 are Shias. The largest number come from Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, and areas in former Yugoslavia. European Union regulations mandate open borders in Europe and encourage the acceptance of political refugees. Many of the new residents are secularized, and only 106,000 have registered as supporters of a local mosque. Muslims may have their own elementary schools supported by the govern-

ment as long as they teach democratic values and "world religion," yet oversight on the part of the authorities seems to be weak.

It has been difficult to integrate these groups into the homogeneous Swedish society. While Swedish industry needs more workers, Muslims suffer unemployment rates that are 10% greater than ethnic Swedes, and housing is strongly segregated. The challenges for Sweden to become multi-ethnic are many and are mirrored by similar situations in France, Germany, the Netherlands and Denmark.

An evangelistic door

Even after eight years of rightist government, the Swedish social net is intact. Poverty has been largely eliminated and taxes cover any medical or personal emergency that can be imagined. But the Swedes have deep spiritual needs; they have a strong streak of nature mysticism, and are often lonely. In fact Sweden has the highest concentration of single-person households in Europe. The search for meaning and value in life and for love that results in authentic community provides an open door for the Church to evangelize the coming generations.

Kim-Eric Williams is a Swedish instructor at the University of Pennsylvania, and archivist at the Lutheran Archives Center at Philadelphia. This is his first contribution to Forum Letter.

Omnium gatherum



Some children see him bronzed and brown • According to the *New York Post*, a suit has been filed against the Metropolitan Museum of Art by one Justin Renel Joseph because of paintings which depict Jesus as having "Aryan" features. Arguing that he himself has "black hair like wool and skin of bronze color," he is offended by "the implication that someone who possesses physical features like the plaintiff could not be the important historical and public figure of Jesus Christ" and this "caused the plaintiff to feel, among other things, rejected and unaccepted by society."

It's a conscience • Of course there's a lot of that going around these days, isn't there? — and particu-

larly on college campuses, where students now demand "trigger warnings" so that they can avoid anything that might upset them. Amid all the baloney came a wonderful note of sanity from Everett Piper, the president of Oklahoma Wesleyan University. He was approached by a student who was offended when the chaplain preached a sermon on love; it upset the student, because he didn't feel or show love himself. (At this point in his essay President Piper felt compelled to say, "I'm not making this up.") Piper's response to the student: "That feeling of discomfort you have after listening to a sermon is called a conscience. . . . The goal of many a good sermon is to get you to confess your sins — not coddle you in your selfishness. The primary objective of the Church and the Christian faith is

your confession, not your self-actualization." The President went on to say: "Oklahoma Wesleyan is not a 'safe place,' but . . . a place to learn: to learn that life isn't about you, but about others; that the bad feeling you have while listening to a sermon is called guilt; that the way to address it is to repent of everything that's wrong with you rather than blame others for everything that's wrong with them. This is a place where you will quickly learn that you need to grow up. This is not a day care. This is a university." To read the whole statement, go to www.okwu.edu/blog/2015/11/this-is-not-a-day-care-its-a-university/.

Bye bye Boy Scouts • One of the continuing "disagreements" between the Missouri and Wisconsin Synods is the propriety of Lutheran young men being Boy Scouts ("scoutism," as the disputants back in the 1950s called it). Wisconsin saw it as unionistic (in part because the Lutheran boys might be forced to worship with non-Lutherans at summer camp, and in part because the whole program, with its "oaths" and "laws," smacked of lodgism), while Missouri was more confident that their boys could be shielded from such dangers. Now the LCMS has dissolved its longstanding "Memorandum of Understanding" with the Boy Scouts because of the latter's acceptance of gay adult leaders. A letter from President Harrison to congregations said this didn't mean they couldn't charter BSA troops, but it warned them that they might be facing some discrimination suits, and hinted that the LCMS couldn't really do much to help them. Do you hear an "I told you so" coming from Wisconsin?

Even with credentials • I noted a few months ago the article in the *Christian Century* (Aug. 5, 2015) about Nicole Garcia, set to become the ELCA's "first transgender clergy person of color." I came upon that article again as I was doing some filing, and noticed something I didn't mention before. Ron Roschke, assistant to the bishop of the Rocky Mountain Synod, was quoted as saying that Garcia "will offer the church a gracious and powerful example of the gifts transgender rostered leaders can offer to the world and to the people of God." Garcia has some fears, however; "Even though I have church credentials as a national church leader and a background in counseling, who will hire a 58-year-old Latina trans clergyperson?" Maybe Pr. Roschke could explain to her that Lutherans don't hire pastors, they call them. Truth is, it's probably being 58 that's her biggest obstacle to "getting hired."

Fresh start • Speaking of transgender people, an article in *The New York Times* (Oct. 29, 2015) tells us that lots of churches are developing rites to "celebrate" one's changing identity. In one of the reported instances, a divinity school student in Berkeley was "rebaptized" at a UCC church. That practice, though, is "still somewhat rare," according to the article. The writer interviewed Justin Tanis, managing director for the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies in Religion and Ministry (who knew there was such a thing?), who wants to develop an alternative rite "because a rebaptism would symbolize that the person had fallen out of some promises." Nothing like a good baptismal theology.

—roj

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