

For the

# LIFE of the WORLD

March 1998. Volume Two, Number One



- Through All Generations - p.7**
- Needs of My Generation - p.10**
- From Where Do "Christian" Children Come? - p.12**
- The Golden Thread of God's Presence - p.14**
- In The Field - p.16**

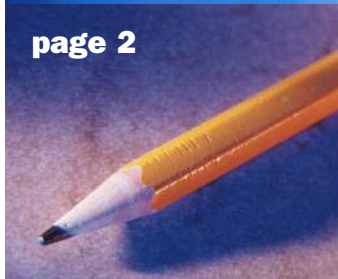


CONCORDIA  
THEOLOGICAL  
SEMINARY  
P R E S S

# CONTENTS



page 7



page 2



page 14



page 10

## For the **LIFE** of the **WORLD**

**PRESIDENT**  
Rev. Dr. Dean Wenthe

**PUBLISHER**  
Rev. Scott Klemsz

**MANAGING EDITOR**  
Pam Knepper

**EDITORIAL ASSISTANT**  
Lisa Ramey

**ART DIRECTOR**  
Steve Blakey

**EDITORIAL COMMITTEE**  
Rev. Dr. Arthur Just  
Rev. Scott Klemsz  
Pam Knepper  
Deaconess Pam Nielsen  
Lisa Ramey  
Rev. Robert Roethemeyer

**PHOTOGRAPHER**  
Richard Rutkowski

*For the Life of the World* is published quarterly by Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 6600 North Clinton Street, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46825. Icons taken from Luther's Small Catechism, Copyright 1943, Concordia Publishing House. Used with permission. No portion of this publication may be reproduced without the written consent of the publisher of *For the Life of the World*, Copyright 1998. Printed in the United States. Postage paid at Fort Wayne, Indiana. To be added to our mailing list please call 219/452-2150 or e-mail Rev. Scott Klemsz at CTSNews. *For the Life of the World* is mailed to all pastors and congregations of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in the United States and Canada and to anyone interested in the work of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind.

## FEATURES

**2 Letters to the Editor**

**6 From the President**

**7 Through All Generations**  
by Dr. Gene Edward Veith  
Dean of Arts and Sciences  
Concordia University, Mequon, Wis.

The Christian church should be the place where generational differences are transcended, not reinforced. Only a church which resists being merely one generation can be relevant to them all.

**10 Needs of My Generation**  
by Ben Mayes  
Admissions Counselor  
Concordia College, Seward, Neb.

The perceived needs of young people are no different from those of other generations. Young people, like everyone, need the forgiveness only Jesus can give to cover over their many sins.

**12 From Where Do "Christian" Children Come?**  
by Rev. Dr. Charles A. Gieschen  
Asst. Professor Exegetical Theology  
Concordia Theological Seminary  
Fort Wayne, Ind.

God makes and keeps us His children through His means of grace. So, too, with our children. We do not make our children Christians. That is a work He accomplishes.

**14 The Golden Thread of God's Presence**  
by Helen Kraus  
Cape Elizabeth, Maine

God's presence has woven a golden thread throughout her life. This thread has created a life that is sustained by God's Word and His Sacraments.

**16 In The Field**  
by Pam Knepper  
Managing Editor  
For the Life of the World

Features the Rev. John Fiene, Pastor at Advent Evangelical Lutheran Church, Zionsville, Ind.



# PRESENCE

By Helen Kraus

## “You have made us for Yourself

and our hearts are restless until they rest in You.” These memorable words come from St. Augustine and are found in his Confessions. His was a journey from the wilderness of sin and alienation from God to the gift of faith and a life dedicated in service to his Lord, the Christ. In His love and mercy, God chose Augustine for His purposes and granted him the power to do His bidding through the gift of Word and Sacrament. The golden thread of God’s presence was ever with him.

I now place before you a large spool of this golden thread of God’s presence in my own life. Imagine, if you will, a collage of people and events that I will recall from my childhood until the present. They will all be sewn and fitted together with this very unique and precious thread—sewn and fitted into a collage of reminders and assurances of God’s presence—a collage of God’s people, God’s goodness, God’s forgiveness, God’s care, God’s comfort, a collage sustained by God’s Word and Holy Sacraments.

My collage begins with faithful parents who brought me to the baptismal font where adoption into God’s family took place. Here I was joined to Christ in His death and resurrection as one of His redeemed saints and sinners. The collage adds a baby brother eighteen months later.

My parents were married during the Great Depression and chose to live on a farm where they could do things together, raise their own foods, sell meat and dairy products for their livelihood and raise their children in peace and solitude.

On one of their busier days they left my brother and me (ages 6 and 5) to our own playful imagination. My mother had carefully cleaned and scrubbed an old icebox and left it to dry on the back porch. My brother suggested we pretend that the icebox was a car and that we go on an adventuresome trip to our grandmother’s house. He crawled into the section where the 50-pound block of ice was stored and I climbed into the larger side section. Quickly we pulled the doors shut never realizing that they would be permanently latched from the inside! Darkness surrounded us and fear filled our little beating hearts. We pounded on the walls with our fists, screamed for help, called for our parents, but no one came. We waited for someone to find us but no one responded! We then decided to talk about Jesus and His promises to always be with us and began to sing, *I Am Jesus’ Little Lamb*, a song we had learned in Sunday school. After singing through it many times we eventually drifted off to sleep.

After much searching and many anxious hours we were eventually found by our parents. Their worst fears were realized when they opened the icebox and found us motionless, without smiles, in a peaceful sleep. My parents rushed us to the family physician where my dear brother was pronounced dead. I was still alive!

What was the meaning of this unwinding of the golden thread of God’s presence? What would I do without my brother? I was confined to bed for many weeks to gain back my strength. My parents comforted me and assured me that my brother was in heaven.

Just days prior to this event, my brother and I had talked about heaven. Will there be streets of gold and big mansions that we could live in? Will there be angels that we could see and touch? What will God be like? My brother assured me that Jesus would take us there some day because He loved us. Known to God are all His works and ways from the foundation of the world. He never makes mistakes. He knows why he often leads us to tears though we may not know. When great tragedies and sorrows come to us we are apt to think that God has forgotten us and will not hear our cries for help. “For the Lord will not reject forever, for if He causes grief, then He will have compassion according to His abundant loving kindness” (Lamentations 3:31, 32). This was also the comfort of my mother and our extended family.

The golden thread of God’s presence unwinds further. Two years later my father became very ill with encephalitis, a disease carried by the mosquito that caused inflammation of his brain. Various treatments were administered but to no avail. He struggled for life for some three months while my mother and I cared for him at home. I recall how my mother cried to her Lord to extend his earthly life, to continue a complete family, to help my father with his own fears, yet her prayers were always asked according to God’s will. My mother, my new baby sister and I were at his side when he died. I knew that God’s angels had carried his soul to heaven. Aunts and uncles assured me that my brother was now with my daddy!

As a young child, I do not recall being angry with God about these family losses. Why? God had blessed me with a caring and comforting mother, grandparents, aunts and uncles, church friends and loving neighbors. Life went on with a mother who worked harder than anybody I have ever known. She made our home a place of joy where relationships with family and friends were continuous. Life went on with a mother who had family devotions with us every morning and could always be found reading her Bible at night for her own personal comfort, understanding and growth. She made the church the center of our life. She sent my sister and me to Lutheran day school, made sure we had piano lessons and sacrificed much so we could have a college education. We both became Lutheran teachers.

The golden thread of God’s presence unwinds once again. While in teacher’s college, I met a handsome and zealous seminary student. Our goals were identical, our interests the same, our hearts were united and we married after his seminary training was completed.

His first call was to a congregation in New York City—a congregation of deaf and hearing-handicapped. What a challenge! My husband had been trained in sign language at the seminary and I began my training by spending time with church members. I joined the sign choir, played the organ and taught Sunday school in sign language. We traveled by bus and subway to have services in the New York neighborhoods of Harlem and Long Island. The golden thread of God's presence was ever with us. I was privileged to help my husband serve other congregations for the deaf in Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minn. and St. Louis, Mo.

A call to an inner-city congregation in Brooklyn, N.Y. presented new challenges and opportunities for our growing family. We now had four sons and one daughter. We worked as a family to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to the many unchurched that lived in our immediate neighborhood. Those were wonderful and productive years. Our five children grew to love people of every race, were privileged to attend Lutheran schools, took advantage of many cultural events and learned to be interdependent and take care of others. Even today New York brings them together in reminiscences of childhood. The golden thread of God's presence kept us in His care.

The following years took us to a mission congregation in the state of Maine and to a troubled congregation in Connecticut. The golden thread of God's presence unwinds in unusual places and circumstances. The northeastern part of the United States is for the most part unchurched—its people follow the old axiom “deeds not creeds.” Our struggles and long hours were sometimes tiring and seemingly fruitless, but God would have His way and provide us with caring and loving people. During these maturing years, God granted a strengthening of faith, a deeper knowledge of His Word and a greater trust in His promises.

A professorship at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Ind. brought a new perspective to our lives. Our children had completed college, some had married and we enjoyed grandchildren. Life on a college campus was invigorating and stimulating. Journeys to Brazil, Australia and New Zealand to establish work among the deaf and hearing-handicapped were an added assignment as the golden thread of

God's presence continued to join together the collage of God's people in our lives during the seminary tenure.

An invitation to teach at Westfield House, the Lutheran Study House at Cambridge University in England, was accepted for one quarter. We were accompanied by three students from the seminary and spent many enlightening and edifying hours studying and exploring this beautiful medieval city. My husband made himself available for preaching on weekends and was able to preach in every Lutheran church in England, Scotland and Wales with the exception of one. Would you call this anything else but the golden thread of God's presence?

While in England, my husband developed an irritating pain in his right leg and was resigned to believing it was a pulled muscle from his daily fast walking. On our

---

**Blessed Dr. Martin Luther states, “When your heart is confirmed in Christ, then the suffering of Christ should become an example for your whole life and you should regard suffering in a different manner. If pain or illness besets you, think of how little this is compared with the nails and the crown of thorns of Christ. Fortify your heart, saying, “Why, then, should I not suffer some small woe when My Lord in the garden sweated blood, with fear and anguish?”**

---

arrival back to the United States, he saw his physician who suggested that x-rays be taken. A cyst was found on the inner and outer wall of his bladder. The biopsy proved the worst scenario—cancer! Radiation and chemotherapy followed for four months. The treatment affected his immune system and eventually he suffered from kidney and bladder failure and died. The visitation, care and concern for both of us was overwhelming. The chaplain on the oncology floor at the hospital is now my pastor—the golden thread of God's presence—most certainly.

Yet one of God's dedicated servants had been called by Christ to His nearer presence. One of our children posed this question, “Why would God allow one of His zealous servants to suffer so and take him away from spreading His Word of salvation?”

Blessed Dr. Martin Luther states, “When your heart is confirmed in Christ, then the suffering of Christ should become an example for your whole life and you should regard suffering in a different manner. If pain or illness besets you, think of how little this is compared with the nails and the crown of thorns of Christ. If you have to do or leave something which you do not wish to do or leave, think of how Christ was caught and bound and led hither and thither. And if affliction or any other adversity, physical or spiritual, grieve you, fortify your heart, saying, “Why, then, should I not suffer some small woe when My Lord in the garden sweated blood, with fear and anguish?”

Now, O Lord, what wilt You have me do? My collage of the golden thread of God's presence continues with servanthood—His choice for me. He now grants me the gift of time for service to His Body, the church, in many new ways. He grants me time for grandchildren, in-depth Bible study, visitation of the lonely and ill, developing an altar guild, writing, travel to visit friends and family, and time for meditation, prayer and thanksgiving. In all of human language there is no sweeter word to the believer's heart and ear than the sweet little word “grace.”

What a boundless and fathomless ocean it reveals of God's loving kindness and mercy. It is redeeming grace, which spared not God's own Son, but nailed Him to the cross in my place. It is converting grace which could not see the sinner die in his sin, but brought him to saving repentance and faith. It is sanctifying grace which fills the pardoned sinner's heart with paths of righteousness. It is comforting grace which chastens but for a moment. It is deathless grace that leads to life eternal with Christ. It is free grace which asks nothing in return from the sinner and remains sure. “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and today and forever,” the Bible tells us. To His almighty and loving hands I can safely entrust my life and my loved ones. To Him be all glory.

My collage of the golden thread of God's presence will be completed in heaven when I will be joined with Christ and all His blessed saints. Amen and amen!

*Helen Kraus is a member of Redeemer Lutheran Church, Cape Elizabeth, Maine.*