

# The Voice

## of Our Saviour Lutheran Church

Volume 11, Issue 5

May 2009

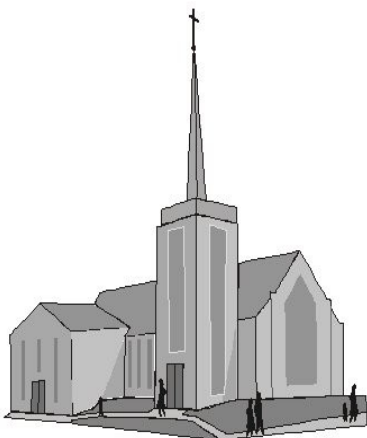
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### THE HELPER (John 14:16)

- Pastor Marek Sabol -

A war ends with thousands of people killed and displaced, lives and property destroyed. Perhaps most heart breaking are the little children left crying, hungry, terrified and alone. Where there is war and violence, there are orphans, small and insignificant in the mass of humanity gathered in huge refugee camps. We wish that we could do something to brighten their lives – show them the love they are missing, give them security and warmth, hope and faith. Our faith, and life with Jesus, gives us the kind of security for which these orphans long. The people whom Jesus loved came to depend on him. The disciples knew Jesus in a very close and personal way. They walked, talked, ate, shared good times and bad times together. They felt confident and safe in Jesus presence. Jesus knew the devastating impact that his leaving would have on his followers. Therefore he promised: "I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor (παράκλητος) to be with you forever - the Spirit of truth. I will not leave you as orphans. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid" (John 14:16,18, 27). A counsellor can sit and listen to your problems, and perhaps provide advice now and then, but the word used in the Greek New Testament "paraclete" means someone who is not only a listener, but also a teacher, an adviser, someone who actively guides you to make good choices that are in accordance with God's will. "Paraclete" finds its origins in the law courts. A paraclete was an advocate, who spoke on behalf of another person, who represented and who looked out for the interests and well-being of others. Jesus comes so close to all believers that he touches the very hearts, symbolizing an end of an orphan-like existence. We are no longer alone or helpless. We are able to face the future, for God himself is standing right at our side. He is standing with us as we move through the various circumstances of this imperfect and often broken world without ever abandoning or forgetting about us, empowering us to serve our Lord in the church. There will be those times when we will feel like orphans – lonely, lost, unloved, vulnerable or sad. But we thank Jesus for his promises to us, and feel reassured that He "will not leave" us "as orphans" ... He "will ask the Father, and he will give" us "another Counsellor to be with" us "forever."



## OUR SAVIOUR LUTHERAN CHURCH

715 ROOSEVELT AVE., OTTAWA

Church Office 613-722-0802

Pastor Sabol 613-296-6375

(Web page: [www.geocities.yahoo.com/oslc\\_2000](http://www.geocities.yahoo.com/oslc_2000))

**Sunday: 9:00 a.m. Bible Class**  
**9:45 a.m. Sunday School**  
**10:00 a.m. Worship Service**



### Council's Corner

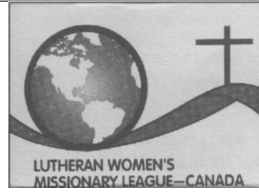
Church council met briefly on April 26. after service with five members present. After pastor opened with a prayer, the minutes of the last meeting were approved. There was no report on Education, but informally it was noted that attendance had substantially improved. Attendance at worship service continued to be a cause for concern, but has improved marginally in the past few weeks. Dave Jones, Property reported that the new photocopier, a much smaller machine which can serve as a low-volume photocopier, but also as a printer, printing material from files was now operational. The cost had been considerably less than anticipated, and it was estimated that it could make copies for about four cents each, including paper and depreciation, much cheaper than commercial photocopying. The piano in the nave, which belongs to the Ottawa Korean Methodist church has been tuned at a cost of \$110, and we are using it regularly. Some annoyance has been expressed by our neighbour about teenagers using the ramp at the rear door. This is a recurrent problem, particularly at this time of year, and he has undertaken to call the police on our behalf to seek regular police checks. Bob Witt, Treasurer, reported that receipts for January through April were \$12,928.53 less than expenses, despite the contributions by the Koreans. This is becoming a critical situation which will require dipping into our investments. Mark Schieman reported that the organ technician, Mr. Gauthier had submitted an estimate for repair of the organ. He thought that it could certainly be done for less than \$3000 and possibly for less than \$1500. Voters Assembly, who meet on May 3 will be asked to authorize entering into a contract with Mr. Gauthier to make the necessary repairs.

### KEN CURRIE TO BE HONORED

Resolutions to be debated by the district convention in Windsor from May 10-13 were distributed the last week of April. They include a resolution to honour Ken Currie of this congregation for 18 consecutive years of service on the Board of Directors, including 9 years as Chairman of the Board, and 6 years of Secretary. Including two years as a director from 1965 to 1967, when he led the campaign to establish Lutherwood (where he served as a director for 9 years), he will have spent 20 years on the Board of Directors. The resolution proposes not only to thank him for his service, but to make him Honorary Chairman of the board. Ken declined to accept nomination for another term, feeling that it is time for younger people to take over.

*Glad our bulletin didnt say that department -*

The Rector will preach his farewell message after which the choir will sing: "Break Forth Into Joy."



### LWML Update

The April 11 meeting was attended by 21 women and Vivien. We were delighted to have seven young Sudanese women with us, and hope that they will join our fellowship on a long-term basis. Pastor Sabol opened the meeting with a reading regarding the honouring of famous people on the anniversary of their death. He noted Louis Pasteur, the developer of pasteurization, and contrasted that with our remembrance of Christ in Holy Communion. The wonderful difference is that Christ is actually present with us in his body and blood. Kim Jones led us in a clever Christian growth activity with plastic Easter eggs which opened one by one to reveal a tiny symbol, and a message of reassurance that Christ is with us no matter what our circumstances. Christine Pollex was our guest speaker, telling us about an LWML visit to Nicaragua She had wonderful pictures to help us follow her tour. Her enthusiasm and humour contibuted to a very interesting talk. She brought home to us the very large differences in both culture and material possessions between Nicaragua and Canada. Else Piepenberg and Elizabeth Patzer served as hostesses and provided wonderful refreshments. We hope that the ladies of the congregation will join us for our nest meeting, on May 9<sup>th</sup>.

*Edrith Currie*

President

### DEFICIT REACHES ALARMING PROPORTIONS

Bob Witt, Treasurer, reports that as of April 30

Receipts	\$35,603.83
Expenses	\$48532.36
Deficit	\$12,928.53

He comments further that it appears certain that we will have to draw on our investments to cover expenses in the near future although we may be OK for May as there will be five Sundays. It hardly needs to be added that drawing on our investments is not a viable long-term strategy. The first reaction to such bad news is that we need to increase our individual giving, and that would certainly help. However we also need to look at trends within our own congregation and society in general. Our members are getting older, and several good contributors have died in the past year. These trends are not unique to our congregation but are noticeable throughout our church, and indeed all churches, including non-Christian ones. We need to examine carefully whether our congregation is still viable, and if not what can be done about it. We have the luxury of substantial investments which give us time to reflect on and make these decisions, but we are getting a clear message that reflection needs to start now!

**THE TOTAL ADEQUACY OF JESUS**

(Colossians 1:15-2:15)

Paul now turns to creation, held to be evil by the gnostics. He says that Jesus is firstborn (1:15), a title of honour (see Exodus 4:22), and a messianic title (Psalm 89:27) It does not mean that Jesus was created, as is plain from 1:16 which states that through him all things were created. The gnostics, like the Jews had a complicated hierarchy of angels and powers. Paul places Jesus so far above these powers that he is their creator. In fact 1:17 emphasizes that they were created for him, and that only through him does all continue to obey physical laws ('hold together'). Thus Jesus is the creator, sustainer and final goal of the world. Paul then turns to Christ's relation to the church. He is the head of the church (1:18) but also its beginning. The term in Greek (*arche*) means not only beginning but source. Christ is also the 'firstborn from among the dead', that is not only living, but a guarantee of our resurrection. Thus he is supreme over all things, but to reconcile, not dominate, through his blood. Note that **all** things are reconciled, that is all creation. In 1:21-23 Paul draws the practical conclusion. The aim of reconciliation is holiness, that is amendment of life, and standing fast in the hope of the gospel. Deliberate or careless sinning and neglect of the gospel cannot be reconciled with reconciliation. Paul now turns to his own work (1:24-2:5). 1:24 seems a daring thought in comparing the effect of Paul's suffering to those of Christ. Anyone who serves the church is doing the work of Christ, and if this service involves suffering and sacrifice, that affliction is producing in some sense results similar to those of Christ's suffering. Paul then states tersely his mission - to make known a new discovery that had been secret for ages, the message that salvation was not only for the Jews but also for the Gentiles. (1:26-27). This simple declaration was a powerful attack on both gnostics and judaizers. The gnostics held that salvation was available only to a small group the elite with special, secret knowledge. The judaizers wished the Christian church to become Jewish, complete with its legal obligations, in effect denying that the Gentiles could be saved. Paul flatly rejects both views. Notice the enormous scope of the task which Paul assumes - to present everyone perfect in Christ (1:28). Paul closes this section with a justification for the letter (2:1-5). It is his way of encouraging and strengthening the Christians in Colosse. Paul took responsibility for the churches founded by his influence, even those he never saw. His response to problems in these congregations makes his letters so valuable. They were not theological treatises, but statements of practical answers to practical problems. Experience has shown that these problems recur over and over again in every generation of the church. His answer to the problem at Colosse is tersely given in 2:2-4,

namely to cling to Christ alone, and not be fooled by fine-sounding arguments that would put Him in a subordinate place. Laodicea (2:1) was a much larger town than Colosse, and within sight of it. Addressing the letter to Colosse would be a boost to the self-confidence of the church. Paul now turns to the proper response to the sublime majesty of Jesus Christ, faith and newness of life (2:6) expressing itself in joyful thanksgiving (2:7). 2:8-23 deal directly with the troubles at Colosse. No doubt the phrases went directly to the heart of the matter, but since we do not know exactly what the errors were, they are more difficult for us to understand. However it is clear that they involved 'additions' to Christ, that is allegation that belief in Christ and redemption by his suffering and death were insufficient for salvation. The first error was to insist on a human philosophy (2:8) that is a complex system of thought not comprehensible to the simple. The word translated 'take captive' (*sulagogein*) was used for a slave dealer carrying off a captured population. The gnostics claimed their teaching had been handed down by word of mouth from Jesus to Mary, or Matthew or Peter, that is on human tradition. No teaching can be correct which is at variance with scripture. The phrase 'basic principles of this world' (*stocheia*) has been much discussed. It refers to elements set in ordered fashion, for instance soldiers or letters of the alphabet. It can also refer to the elemental spirits of the world, that is to astrology. Both meanings may be included here. Paul's answer (2:9-10) is that Christ is all powerful, including power over any spirits. The troubles in Colosse also included judaizers insisting on circumcision (Genesis 17:10). Even among Jews, thinkers had recognized that cutting off the foreskin did not make a man righteous (Exodus 6:12, Leviticus 26:41), but rather cutting off what was against the will of God. 2:11-12 emphasize this cannot be done by men, but only by Christ. The only way this could be done was by killing the old man by baptism (immersion) and bringing forth the new man. 2:13-15 give a powerful picture of this process. The NIV translation is not very helpful here. The word in 2:14 is *cheirographion*, which means literally an autograph but had the acquired meaning a note signed by a debtor acknowledging his debt. Again NIV has the unfortunate 'cancelled the written code'. The Greek is *exaleiphein* which refers to removal of ink from papyrus (so it could be used over). The sense is that the record of our sins has been completely expunged. 'Written code' does not refer to an impersonal legal code. 2:14 is similar to the phrase we sometimes use 'to spike a document', that is cancel it, but stronger in its reference to the crucifixion. 2:15 uses the word for stripping weapons from a defeated foe. The idea is that of a Roman triumph in which the victorious general had prisoners in his train.

**DISTRICT CONVENTION**

The 8<sup>th</sup> regular convention of Lutheran Church-Canada East District meets May 10-13, 2009 at the Holiday Inn in Windsor. The work of the convention is to hear reports about the work of the church in our district and synod, to approve the financial statements, to establish policy, and to elect officers, boards and committees. This convention is unusually important in that there will be a major turnover of officers, and important policy decisions will be made. Seven pastors are candidates for president, a full-time and most influential post, namely Revs. Gilvan de Azevedo, Kevin Fast, Warren Hamp, James Keller, Donald Schieman, Timothy Teuscher, and Paul Zabel. Pastors Azevedo (pastor of the host congregation, First Windsor) and Zabel (pastor of St. John, Clifford) are thought most likely to succeed Rev. Allen Maleske who is retiring after serving three three year terms. Rev. Maleske will be honoured for his years of service by being made an Honorary President, and Ken Currie, who is retiring after serving 18 years on the Board of Directors will be made Honorary Chairman of the Board. In policy matters resolutions will come before the convention to permit the Board of Directors to permit them to balance the budget by drawing from the capital reserve of the district. Naturally this cannot be done indefinitely so the incoming board will have to quickly establish a plan to balance income and outgo in the face of declining membership and income. Some guidelines for this process are also the subject of convention resolutions, namely that the board should support both new work and existing congregation. Other resolutions envisage a modified system of governance. One of the more novel resolutions seeks to increase the number of directors from 9 to 11 with 4 regional vice-presidents. (A similar system is used in the Central District.) A resolution to call a full-time mission executive is again before the board. It has twice been declined by previous conventions due to cost. It is also proposed to adjust giving to synod as a proportion of district income, rather than a fixed amount, and to establish the position of 'district liaison' to increase the communication between district and congregations. A resolution will also be debated to sell the district office building and move in with another compatible organization. In doctrinal matters, the synod will be asked to take a position on the role of the Virgin Mary, to affirm Walther's view of the proper relations between church and ministry, and to clarify the meaning of the 'great commission' (Matthew 28:18-20). These resolutions amount to a slightly veiled criticism of the seminary, since they imply that proper doctrine is not taught there. The convention will also be asked to work toward a uniform practice of closed communion, a perennial topic of discussion. All in all, it looks like a very interesting three and a half days. Our congregational delegates are Pastor Sabol and Ken Currie.

**OUR SAVIOUR LUTHERAN CHURCH**

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**Church Council**

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Treasurer;	Bob Witt	613-839-5434
Secretary;	Kim Jones	613-841-9042
Social Ministry	Betty Goode	613-726-1350
Worship;	Mark Schieman	613-224-0893
Education;	Dang Deng	613-521-0303
Youth	Lam Reat	613-321-7580
Property;	Dave Jones	613-723-7358
Membership;	Elders	

**Elders**

Gerry Untereiner	613-828-2757
Ken Currie	613-224-8317

<b>Financial Sec'y</b>	Shirley Striez	613-836-5448
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<b>Altar Guild</b>	Edrith Currie	613-224-8317
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**Sunday School**

<b>Administrator</b>	Shirley Striez	613-836-5448
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<b>Usher Coordinator</b>	John Kiiffner	613-228-0703
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<b>Cradle Roll</b>	Elizabeth Patzer	613-821-2650
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<b>Church Secretary</b>	Ken Currie	613-224-8317
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<b>Newsletter Editor</b>	Ken Currie	613-224-8317
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**Submission directions:** The editor solicits ideas and contributions for the newsletter. If you have information, programs or notices of which the congregation should be aware, please share them with the rest of us. Personal contributions are welcome and encouraged. Contributions may be left in the newsletter mailbox in the boardroom, given to the editor or emailed to kcurrie@ncf.ca. The editor can be phoned at 613-224-8317. Contributions are subject to editing. The deadline for the next month's newsletter is the usually the last Tuesday of each month, but subject to change. Please note that we cannot publish material which has appeared elsewhere without proper attribution.

**WEB SITE CHANGES**

Those of us who have some 'geekish' pretensions will have noticed that Yahoo! Has announced that it will close its geocities web-hosting service this fall. Since our congregational web-site ([www.yahoo.geocities.com/oslc](http://www.yahoo.geocities.com/oslc)) is hosted there, we will have to find another host. Geocities was very convenient because it was free, but that was probably its downfall, since Yahoo! could not find a way to make money from it. The editor has been experimenting with other sites such as Facebook and MySpace, but no solution is obvious as yet. I would therefore appreciate it very much if readers could give me their opinion and experience, verbally or by email, about the best place to go. (For all you who are electronically challenged, it does make a difference. Most of our recent visitors have told us that they found us via our web-site.)

Why didn't Noah swat those two mosquitoes?

**ANNOUNCEMENTS****A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO -**

**Sherri Clay** who served the altar during April, to **John Kiiffner** and **Willard Kranch** who assisted with communion, to **Bob** and **Debbie Witt**, **Mark Schieman**, **Brendon Kiiffner**, **Peter Bath** and **Paul Striez** who ushered, to **Shirley** and **Paul Striez**, **Carolyn** and **Rob Lauzon** and **Bob Wood** who counted and deposited the collections, and to **Edrith Currie** and **Else Piepenberg** who hosted the monthly coffee fellowship.

**MORE THANK YOUS:**

A very special thank you to all those who helped make Holy Week and Easter a very special time; to **Heather Koss-Huisman**, who selected and accompanied the choir music for Good Friday and Easter, to **Kim Jones** for her flute solo, to **Tatiana Sabol** who selected and arranged Easter flowers, to **Sherri**, **Robin** and **Lyndsay Clay** for their service on Maundy Thursday, to **Rob Lauzon** and **Paul Striez** for draping the cross for Good Friday, to **Mark Schieman** and **Dave Jones** for providing Easter brunch, and to all the host of anonymous helpers who ensured that all ran smoothly.

**SUNDAY SCHOOL**

Teachers have been pleased with the attendance, ranging between 8-12 children each Sunday. Parents efforts to get the children to Sunday school is appreciated.

(This is the most complex musical joke I have ever heard. Have fun working out all the puns. For those of you who aren't musical, you will have more evidence that puns are the lowest form of humour.)

C, E-flat and G entered a bar. The bartender said, "Sorry, I don't serve minors." The E-flat left and the C and G had an open fifth between them. After a few drinks, the fifth was diminished and the G was flat. An F entered and tried to augment the situation but was not sharp enough. A D entered and excused himself to the bathroom, saying, "I'll just be a second." An A entered but the bartender wasn't convinced that this relative of C was not a minor. Then the bartender noticed a B-flat hiding at the end of the bar. "Get out, right now!" he exclaimed. "You're the seventh minor I've found in this bar tonight." The next night the E-flat returned to the bar in a 3-piece suit. The bartender said, "You're looking sharp tonight. This could be a major development." This was the case, when the E-flat took off the suit and everything else to stand there au natural. Eventually, the C sobered up and realized in horror that he was under a rest. He was brought to trial, found guilty of contributing to the diminution of a minor, and was sentenced to ten years of D.S. without the possibility of a Coda. On appeal, he was found innocent of any wrongdoing, even accidental, because the accusation was bassless. The bartender decided he needed a rest -- and closed the bar.

**FOURTH STREET LEVEL CONFERENCE**

In late March the posh Westin Hotel across the canal from Parliament Hill again provided the setting for Street Level, the fourth gathering of frontline anti-poverty workers from churches and organizations across Canada. For people who have friends sleeping under bridges, \$300,000 might sound like an extravagant price tag for a four-day conference on poverty and homelessness. But the band of anti-poverty pioneers who organized the fourth Street Level conference are helping Canada's evangelical Christians pay better attention to the call of social justice. "We started Street Level because we had no voice," says Rick Tobias, CEO of Yonge Street Mission in Toronto. "We couldn't get our denominations to listen. We had to go outside the Church for support." The first Street Level drew 250 delegates representing 22 denominations. Nearly 400 delegates attended this year's event from 59 agencies that spent a total of \$132 million last year to provide food, shelter, advocacy, dental service, health supplies, palliative care, education, employment counselling, work skills training and more for people without homes, fighting addictions, looking for work or battling mental illness. The third conference three years ago unveiled the Ottawa Manifesto which declared that "the care of poor and vulnerable people of all ages is a central tenet of our faith" followed by a clear call to action. This year they followed it up with a document on evangelism. "We believe that the dichotomy of social justice vs. evangelism is, from a biblical standpoint, profoundly false," it states. "Bearing witness to the gospel involves calling people to a personal faith in Christ which includes a new vision of a just and compassionate society." During the four-day event delegates from homeless shelters, food banks, street missions, youth ministries, advocacy groups and churches swapped stories, attended workshops and absorbed the music of Steve Bell and the gentle words of Sister Sue Mosteller from l'Arche Daybreak. Conference goers lounged in the lobby, stretched out on crisp sheets and swam in the hotel pool. Refreshing tired workers was the main goal says conference co-chair Tim Huff. "If they went home and felt cared for and in some way more whole than when they came, and a little less broken I'd call it successful."

**FUNERAL WISHES**

The congregation has a form permitting members to specify their wishes for their funeral, including location, hymns, readings, and even material for an obituary. Few of us wish to think about our funeral, so that very few forms are now on file, but they remove great stress from survivors at an emotionally difficult time. The form is available on request from Ken Currie.

Why is it called tourist season if we can't shoot at them?

# Agnus Day by James Wetzstein



**BIBLE PASSAGE** — Jesus answered him, “Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; and the word that you hear is not mine, but is from the Father who sent me.” I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. You heard me say to you, ‘I am going away, and I am coming to you.’ If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you this before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe. (John 14:24-29) Agnus Day comments on a reading for the sixth Sunday of Easter (May 17), with quirky humour which makes us question some of our comfortable assumptions. Agnus Day is the creation of Rev. James Wetzstein, Associate University Pastor at Valporaiso University. Jim lives with his wife Tracey and their son Gabriel. Tracey often helps with punch lines. Gabe, not so much. There's a dog, a couple of cats, but no sheep. You can see other cartoons online at [www.agnusday.org](http://www.agnusday.org).

## SOME THOUGHTS ON POVERTY

In Canada, there is a fairly general consensus that faith-based groups play an important role in dealing with the poor. In Ottawa we think of the Caldwell Family Centre, the Shepherds of Good Hope, the Union Mission and Habitat for Humanity, among others, all explicitly faith-based. Even though the political climate in Canada is generally opposed to giving public money to groups with religious affiliations, there is little opposition to support for these groups. The United States is generally a much more religious country than Canada, but is curiously conflicted about support for faith based organizations. President Bush in 2001 created the White House Office of Faith-based and Community Initiatives but opinions remain divided about the participation of faith-based organizations in the delivery of federally funded social services. President Obama has announced his support for partnerships "between the White House and grassroots groups, both faith-based and secular." Americans strongly favor government aid to the poor. 62% of Americans agree that the government should do more to help the needy Americans, even if it means going deeper into debt. But 31% say religious organizations can do the

best job while the same number (31%) say federal and state government agencies and about as many (29%) say non-religious, community-based organizations. A solid majority of Americans (67%) favor allowing churches and other houses of worship to apply for government funding to provide social services, but nearly three-quarters (73%) say religious organizations receiving government funds should not be allowed to hire only people who share their religious beliefs, and 61% oppose allowing groups that encourage religious conversion to apply for federal funding. Similar figures probably apply to Canada. These Canadians and Americans seem quite conflicted about what religion does. If Christians are committed helping the less fortunate, why should they not ask for the same commitment from the helpers that they employ? Studies have shown that a religious commitment is an important link in escaping from the lifestyles that produce poverty, suggesting that encouraging conversion could be a good way to fight poverty. In Ontario, courts have held that Roman Catholic school boards can demand a religious allegiance from their teachers, and the system has operated satisfactorily. Why should a similar test not be reasonable for faith-based social services.

**AMERICANS CHANGE EARLY/OFTEN**

Canadians famously consider themselves different (and better) than Americans, but trends in the United States have a way of showing up here a few years later. When it comes to religion, Americans change their affiliation early and often, according to a national study released April 27. Findings from the Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion and Public Life show that America's religious landscape is in even greater flux than previously believed. The report estimates that 47 to 59 percent of U.S. adults have changed affiliation at least once. And while most who abandon their childhood faith do so before age 24, many of them change their mind more than once. Most described just gradually drifting away from their childhood faith. "Because American religion is so diverse, it should not surprise us that reasons people move from one religion to another would also be diverse," said John Green, one of the authors of the report and a senior fellow at the Pew Forum. America's Catholic bishops pointed to the survey's findings that 68 percent of Catholics have carried the faith from youth to adulthood as a sign of resilience "in the face of something as horrific as the sexual abuse crisis." Among Protestants who were formerly Catholics, one in five cited the sex-abuse scandal as one of several reasons why they had left the Catholic faith. But only a small number - 2 to 3 percent - cited it as the sole reason. But the survey also found that the Catholic Church has netted the greatest loss because it has not matched its high retention with recruitment compared with other churches. The number of Catholics leaving the church outnumbers joiners by 4-1. The fastest-growing group - people who describe themselves as unaffiliated - has shown steady gains year to year but less retention as many members of this category are spiritual seekers who eventually find what they're looking for. About half of the former Protestants and Catholics who are now unaffiliated say they lost religion because they view religious people as "hypocritical, judgmental or insincere." More than 46 percent said they made the switch because they think institutions focus too much on rules and leaders focus too much on power and money. While nine out of 10 former Catholics and Protestants gave two or more reasons for leaving the religion of their youth, more than two-thirds said they "gradually drifted away from the religion."

At Sunday School they were teaching how God created everything, including human beings. Little Johnny seemed especially intent when they told him how Eve was created out of one of Adam's ribs. Later in the week his mother noticed him lying down as though he were ill, and said, "Johnny, what is the matter?" Little Johnny responded, "I have pain in my side. I think I'm going to have a wife."

**PLUS CA CHANGE -**

Those with long memories may recall that St. Peters Lutheran Church on Sparks Street engaged in a protracted battle with the City of Ottawa over the Clegg House, a property behind the church which it had bought, which the city claimed to be a historic landmark, and the church considered to be derelict and in need of demolition. In the end the church demolished it without the approval of the city, and the site is now a parking lot. A curious echo of this controversy has now arisen in Washington D.C. On Aug. 7, 2008, the Third Church of Christ Scientist filed a lawsuit in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia challenging the designation of its church building as a historic landmark. The church is a rare Washington, D.C., example of Brutalism, a modern architectural style popular in the mid-20th century. In December 2007, the D.C. Historic Preservation Review Board designated the church building a historic landmark, effectively barring the congregation from altering the exterior of the building without the district's permission. Congregants argue that because the concrete building's enormous size and lack of windows detract from worship and make the space expensive to heat and cool, the district should grant the congregation's request to demolish the structure and build a new church in its place. But the district has denied this request, and the church has sued. The church alleges violations of two federal religious freedom statutes - the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) and the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act of 2000 (RLUIPA) - as well as the Free Exercise Clause in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. (The Free Exercise Clause generally prohibits the government from discriminating on the basis of religion.) RLUIPA grew out of the U.S. Supreme Court's interpretations of RFRA and the Free Exercise Clause, and is now at the center of many controversies over how the government regulates religious use of land.

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*(Now that the editor is officially 'old' he tends to collect 'old' jokes. Hopefully these don't cut too close.)*

I've sure gotten old! I've had two bypass surgeries, a hip replacement, new knees, and fought prostate cancer I'm half blind, can't hear anything quieter than a jet engine, take 40 different medications that make me dizzy, winded, and subject to blackouts, have bouts with dementia, poor circulation, can't remember if I'm 85 or 92, have lost all my friends. But, thank God, I still have my driver's licence

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**THE SENILITY PRAYER** : Grant me the senility to forget the people I never liked anyway, the good fortune to run into the ones I do, and the eyesight to tell the difference.

**2009- THE YEAR OF DARWIN**

(This article by John G. West originally appeared in *The National Review*)

February 12 used to be known in classrooms across the U.S. as Abraham Lincoln's birthday. But over the last decade, an increasing number of schools and community groups have decided to celebrate the birthday of the father of evolution instead. 2009 marks the bicentennial of Darwin's birth and the 150th anniversary of the publication of *The Origins of Species*. Darwin Day celebrations provide an eye-opening glimpse into the world of grassroots Darwinian fundamentalism, an alternate reality where atheism is the conventional wisdom and where traditional religious believers are viewed with suspicion if not paranoia. Promoters of Darwin Day deny that their activities are anti-religious, but their denial is hard to square with reality. According to the Darwin Day website, the movement's inspiration was an event sponsored by the Stanford Humanists and the Humanist Community in 1995. The "San Francisco Atheists" put on an annual festival featuring a Darwin impersonator. Given such sponsors, it should be no surprise that Darwin Day events often explicitly attack religion. At a high school in New York a few years ago, students wore shirts emblazoned with messages proclaiming that "no religious dogmas [were] keeping them from believing what they want to believe," while in California a group named "Students for Science and Skepticism" hosted a lecture at the University of California, Irvine, on the topic "Darwin's Greatest Discovery: Design without a Designer." This year in Boston there is an event on "Biological Arguments Against the Existence of God." A musical group calling itself "Scientific Gospel Productions," meanwhile, mocks gospel music by holding annual Darwin Day concerts featuring such songs as "Ain't Gonna Be No Judgment Day," and my favorite, "Randomness Is Good Enough for Me," the lyrics of which proclaim: "Randomness is good enough for me./ If there's no design it means I'm free./ You can pray to go to heaven./ I'm gonna try to roll a seven./ Randomness is good enough for me." The original "honorary president" of Darwin Day was biologist Richard Dawkins, author most recently of *The God Delusion*. Dawkins is best known for such pearls of wisdom as "faith is one of the world's great evils, comparable to the smallpox virus but harder to eradicate," and "Darwin made it possible to be an intellectually fulfilled atheist." The Darwin Day group's current advisory board includes not only Dawkins but Eugenie Scott of the National Center for Science Education (an original signer of the "Humanist Manifesto III"), philosopher Daniel Dennett (who praises Darwinism as the "universal acid" that eats away traditional religion and morality), and *Scientific*

*American* columnist Michael Shermer (an atheist who writes that "Science Is My Savior" because it helped free him from "the stultifying dogma of a 2,000-year-old religion"). Perhaps in an effort to revise the image of Darwin Day as merely a holiday for atheists, last year a professor from Wisconsin urged churches to celebrate "Evolution Sunday" on or near Darwin Day. But the fact that some liberal churches have now been enlisted to spread the Darwinist gospel cannot cover up the anti-religious fervor that pervades the Darwinist subculture. Although journalists routinely write about the presumed religious motives of anyone critical of unguided evolution, they almost never discuss the anti-religious mindset that motivates many of evolution's staunchest defenders. On the few occasions when the anti-religious agenda of someone like Dawkins is even raised, it is usually downplayed as unrepresentative of most Darwinists. What Darwin Day shows, however, is just how ordinary the anti-religious views expressed by Dawkins are among grassroots Darwinists. Far from being on the fringe, Dawkins' views form the ideological core of mainstream Darwinism. A look at the major critics of the theory of intelligent design reveals similar views. Barbara Forrest, co-author of the anti-intelligent design harangue *Creationism's Trojan Horse*, is a long-time activist and board member with a group calling itself the "New Orleans Secular Humanist Association," although she fails to disclose that fact in her book, and reporters studiously avoid asking her about her own religious beliefs. The anti-religious outlook of many of Darwin's chief boosters exposes the hypocrisy in current discussions over Darwin's theory. The usual complaint raised against scientists who are skeptical of Darwin's theory is that many of them (like the vast majority of Americans) happen to believe in God. It is insinuated that this fact somehow undermines the validity of their scientific views. Yet, at the same time, defenders of Darwinism insist that their own rejection of religion is irrelevant to the validity of *their* scientific views—and most reporters seem to agree. Of course, in an important sense these defenders of Darwinism are right. Just because leading Darwinists are avowed atheists or agnostics does not mean that their scientific beliefs about evolution are wrong. Scientific propositions should be debated based on their evidence, not on the metaphysical beliefs of those who espouse them. But if Darwinists have the right to be debated based on evidence, not motives, then scientists who are supportive of alternatives to Darwin's theory such as intelligent design should have the right to expect the same treatment. If Darwin Day helps expose the blatant double standard about religious motives operating in the current evolution debate, then its evangelistic boosters will have performed an invaluable public service—however unintentionally.

**SYNOD AND DISTRICT NEWS****PASTORS PENSION PLAN COSTS INCREASE**

The state of the economy and the decline in investment returns was top of the agenda when the team of men and women who manage Lutheran Church–Canada’s Worker Benefit Plans (WBP) met recently. Like most other pension plans, the WBP pension fund suffered a net loss in 2008. "All pension plans are now experiencing significant funding challenges and we're no different," explained board chair Lois Griffin. "Were it not for the economic collapse, LCC’s pension plan would be on track." The Board of Managers heard reports from its advisors on market outlooks as well as options for handling the funding decline. The board concluded that while markets will slowly rebound, action is required now to ensure the ongoing strength of the plan and therefore it will need to increase the contributions from employers as of July 1. "For most congregations, this will mean about \$75 to \$100 extra per month," Mrs. Griffin noted. The board will continue to look at ways to rebuild the fund, Mrs. Griffin said, adding that no decisions about the pension plan are easy. "We want to ensure the pensions for our workers are secure. At the same time, we don't want to cause undue financial hardship for our employers." Full details of the contribution increase will be mailed to employers. As well, staff of the Worker Benefit Plans will be available at the three upcoming District Conventions to provide information and answer questions. LCC’s Board of Directors appoints the managers. Current members include Lois Griffin, chair, Steve Raine, Jerry Reglin, Rev. Jef Koenig and Dwayne Cleave, LCC’s treasurer. Director of Worker Benefit Plans, Inge Schroeder, is an advisor to the managers. The Board of Managers also oversees the health benefits of LCC church workers and employees. The current market situation has not affected this part of the Worker Benefit Plans.

**CONCORDIA HIGH SCHOOL IN DIFFICULTIES**

Lutheran Church Canada’s Board of Directors’ task force and Edmonton’s, Concordia University College (CUCA) and Concordia High School (CHS) met in March to continue planning the next stage in separating high school operations from those of the university college as well as working on plans to secure the high school’s financial future. In recent years, what was once one institution has been restructured to meet changes in provincial funding requirements. Both educational institutions now face funding challenges due to declining enrollments. CUCA has already made difficult decisions and the high school is now in the process of doing the same. "It’s a unique situation," explained Board of Directors’ chairman, Randy Stefan. "Concordia College started with a high school program only, then developed

a university program under one institution." He said that as a result of that history, the two institutions became entwined at the financial level. "The new understanding separates the two institutions to the benefit of each. Lutherans can no longer think of Concordia as one institution." As of June 30, 2009 Concordia High School will no longer be administered through the university college’s business office. This requires CHS to establish its own financing. An updated business plan is being finalized for presentation to the task force in April. Any new financing arrangements would require approvals from the CHS Board of Governors, Synod’s Board of Directors and possibly the ABC District Board of Directors. The high school faces a difficult challenge, not just in balancing the books, but also in providing enough class choices to attract sufficient students. It is also struggling to find local Lutherans to fill current and upcoming vacancies on the Board of Governors. All Canadian Lutheran high schools have been having a difficult time balancing financial books. CHS is in a more favourable position than the two Ontario high schools in Kitchener and Windsor, because CHS receives government funding on a per student basis. Grace Lutheran School in Kitchener recently announced that it will sell its property. First Christian Academy in Windsor has had to ask the district for financial help.

**CONVENTION RESOLUTIONS PUBLISHED**

Delegates to the East District convention recently received resolutions prepared by four committees which will come before the convention. These resolutions are the result of overtures submitted by congregations, pastors conferences and the Board of Directors and departments. The committees are directed to examine all resolutions, but may combine, or alter them as they judge fit, and may recommend adoption or rejection. The convention may in turn accept, reject, alter, or recommit resolutions (the last meaning that the committee is, in effect, told to try again) The resolutions are divided into four groups, Outreach and parish services, administration and structure, finance and doctrine and practice. Some of the resolutions which are liable to attract most attention is one to call a mission executive. This has twice been rejected at past conventions due to cost, and does not seem likely to succeed this time either. Another proposes to increase the size of the Board of Directors from nine to eleven, with four regional vice-presidents. The Board of Directors is asking for permission to use district capitol in the budget, in effect to run a deficit. Doctrinal matters asks the convention to admonish the seminary to teach pastors to affirm Walther's position on the duties and authority of the congregation and pastors.

## May 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					<b>1</b>  Jeremiah 37-41	<b>2</b>  Luke 3-4
<b>3</b> 9:00 Bible class 9:45 Sunday School 10:00 Worship 11:30 Voters meet 2 Corinthians 9-10	<b>4</b>  Exodus 29-32	<b>5</b>  2 Samuel 20-24	<b>6</b>  Psalms 60-62	<b>7</b>  Orleans Bible Study  Job 41-42	<b>8</b>  Jeremiah 42-46	<b>9</b>  10:00 LWML  Luke 5-6
<b>10</b> 9:00 Bible class 9:45 Sunday School 10:00 Worship  2 Corinthians 11-13	<b>11</b>  Exodus 33-36	<b>12</b>  1 Kings 1-4	<b>13</b>  Psalms 63-65	<b>14</b>  Orleans Bible Study  Proverbs 1	<b>15</b>  Jeremiah 47-52	<b>16</b>  Luke 7-8
<b>17</b> 9:00 Bible class 9:45 Sunday School 10:00 Worship  Galatians 1-3	<b>18</b>  Exodus 37-40	<b>19</b>  1 Kings 5-9	<b>20</b>  Psalms 66-68	<b>21</b>  Orleans Bible Study  Proverbs 2-3	<b>22</b>  Lamentations	<b>23</b>  Luke 9-10
<b>24</b> 9:00 Bible class 9:45 Sunday School 10:00 Worship  Galatians 4-6	<b>25</b>  Leviticus 1-3	<b>26</b>  1 Kings 10-13	<b>27</b>  Psalms 69-71	<b>28</b>  Orleans Bible Study  Proverbs 4	<b>29</b>  Ezekiel 1-6	<b>30</b>  Luke 11-12
<b>31</b> 9:00 Bible class 9:45 Sunday School 10:00 Worship  Ephesians 1-3						