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Lutherans Concerned issues 'Call for Dialog'

By David Barlett

Lutherans Concerned/North America has recently distributed "A Call for Dialog," a theological document offered as a resource for gay and lesbian Christians and for the churches.

Approved by the LC/NA board last fall, the Call for Dialog is the result of more than two years of study, writing and redrafting by a Task Force on Theology. The task force included several ordained people, and the redrafting was based on comments by LC/NA members, theologians and church leaders.

John Ballew, president of LC/NA, said the document originated in the need for a specifically Lutheran, theological perspective on ministry by and to gay Christians. The result is a resource for Lutheran clergy and laity, and "a particular gift of Lutherans Concerned to the ecumenical lesbian and gay community," Ballew said.

"There's really not been a lot of good theology — particularly in the Lutheran churches — on this issue," Ballew said, noting some positive activity among Presbyterians, Episcopalians and the United Church of Christ.

Ballew said the Call for Dialog will be widely distributed to church leaders, including all district/synod bishops and presidents, and to national church leaders. The document will also be made available to congregations and pastors "to take the issue of homosexuality — which is an abstraction — to make it more real and concrete," Ballew said.

The Call to Dialog includes four major sections: Gay and Lesbian Persons in the Church, Theological Issues, Biblical Issues, and the Ministry of Reconciliation.

"With few expectations gay and lesbian persons are not welcome in the church," the first section notes. "Law, rather than Gospel, has predominated in much of the counsel of the church."

In the theological issues section, the Dialog discusses the need for acceptance of gay, lesbian and bisexual orientations as part

of human sexuality, "the good gift in which our ability to love finds its home."

"By condemning their homosexual orientation and natural feelings of affection, the church has impaired the emotional lives of thousands," the document states. "In the name of love, we affirm all relationships in which persons mutually seek the welfare and growth of the other."

The discussion of biblical texts widely cited as condemning homosexuality relies on leading scholarship to outline the inaccuracies of translation, the "textual misappropriation" and the cultural contexts of the passages which produce the anti-gay interpretations.

In the final section, the Call for Dialog stresses LC/NA's commitment to reconciliation: "Reconciliation summons the Christian community to address the common issues of humanity, especially in order that it grow in love and that the model of love is applied to all human relationships."

The impact of the document has already been positive, Ballew said. Several bishops and leaders have asked for large quantities to distribute in their synods or districts, he noted.

The LC/NA statement is also expected to have an impact on the Lutheran Church in America's study on homosexuality, and on the American Lutheran Church's statement on pastoral care to people with AIDS.

Ballew said the most significant aspect of the Call for Dialog is that the document comes not only from a theological perspective, but from a definitely gay Lutheran perspective. He hopes the Call for Dialog will be read as a statement by thoughtful, caring, gay people.

The status of gay people in the Lutheran churches is "really in flux," Ballew said. The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod has rebuffed all attempts at dialog initiated by LC/NA, he said, though "a substantial minority" of 20-25 percent of LC/NA's member-

ship is Missouri.

The ALC and LCA have taken more moderate positions, Ballew said, and concern has been demonstrated on the part of several regional bishops.

The AIDS health crisis has added a note of urgency to the church's awareness of its gay members, he said. Pastoral care to people with AIDS, many of whom are gay men, is unavoidable, and so far church statements have called for a caring attitude.

"The church must stand up and articulate that Lutherans don't believe God uses illness as a punishment," Ballew said.

The LCA study on homosexuality will be presented to the church's Executive Council about July 1. The study is not a new social statement, Ballew said, but focuses more on pastoral care.

The church's recognition of lesbians and gay men is growing because of gay involvement in the ministries of local congregations.

"I think more and more gay people are coming out, and more and more becoming known to pastors and congregations," Ballew said. "You can't really fear a person the way you can an abstraction."

Nevertheless, Ballew added, if the Lutheran churches don't soon do something to reconcile with their gay members, those members will move to other denominations.

Lutherans Concerned/North America is a 12-year-old society of gay, lesbian and non-gay Christians working to foster a climate of understanding, justice and reconciliation regardless of sexual orientation. Members represent all Lutheran churches throughout the U.S. and Canada, organized in 23 chapters.

Copies of "A Call for Dialog" are available at a cost of \$1.50 for single copies, 2-9 copies at \$1 each, 10 or more at 75 cents each. A group study guide is being prepared. Write LC/NA at P.O. Box 10461, Ft. Dearborn Station, Chicago, IL 60610.



LHRAA co-directors Susan and Charles Ruehle were ordained to the ministry April 6 at Reformation Lutheran Church (LCA) in Milwaukee. At center above, is Rev. Ed Weiskotten, assistant to the bishop of the Wisconsin-Upper Michigan Synod. The Revs. Ruehle will be associate pastors at Reformation, in addition to continuing their work with LHRAA.

Salvadoran girl raped by Army

A 14-year-old resident of a refugee camp in El Salvador was raped by men in Salvadoran Army uniforms April 13, according to information reaching Lutheran offices in the U.S.

Ana Daisy Garcia Enrique, a resident of the Fe Esperanza Refugee Camp operated by the Lutheran Church of El Salvador, was raped by three men in uniform. They are presumed to be soldiers from the nearby Nejapa Army Base.

After the incident, Garcia's mother and Pastor Medardo Gomez went to the Army base to report the incident. The commander of the base was reportedly cooperative and provided a group of soldiers who had been on duty the night of the incident. Garcia was unable, however, to identify her attackers from the group.

Norman Barth, executive director of Lutheran World Relief, sent a telex to Edwin Corr, U.S. ambassador to El

Salvador, describing the Garcia incident and requesting Corr's assistance in investigating the incident.

"We request information on the status of the investigation of the rape of Miss Garcia and seek your assurance that there will be no further harassment or violation of the human rights of Lutheran church workers and the residents of Fe Esperanza," the telex said.

Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod officials also sent a telex using the same text as LWR. The Lutheran Church of El Salvador and the LCMS are partner churches.

Incidents of harassment of Lutheran church workers by armed men in civilian clothing have also been reported. These incidents include the presence of men armed with shotguns in a Mercedes-Benz car parked opposite Resurrection Lutheran Church in San Salvador.

Alaskans press native claims

Protection of native lands, native subsistence and native self-government are the principal issues facing Alaska natives.

Native lands ownership is in imminent danger of being lost because of the unique terms of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) of 1971. The 44 million acres reserved to natives under the Act were not placed in tribal ownership or reservations, but conveyed to corporations in which individual natives held stock.

To protect native stock and land ownership for a time, sale of the stock was prohibited and developed land granted tax immunity until December 18, 1991. On January 1, 1992, the stock can be sold freely, and shortly thereafter all lands will be subject to taxation.

Unlike lands held by tribes in the lower 48 states, those owned by native corporations under the ANCSA are now subject to loss to creditors through bad debts, insolvency and tax foreclosure.

For Alaskan natives, subsistence hunting, fishing and trapping are not just economic necessities; they are essential to sustain the natives' lives.

The state has failed to enforce the first rights of natives to hunt, fish and trap under federal legislation passed in 1980. It has also refused to

permit Alaskan native tribes to enforce such rights.

The constant erosion of native self-government stems from the state's mistaken position that, except for the Metlakatla Tribe, no tribal groups in Alaska have government powers like those held by tribes in the lower 48. The Department of the Interior has also waffled on this issue.

The Alaska congressional delegation and Rep. Morris Udall have introduced legislation (SB2065/HR4162) at the request of the Alaska Federation of Natives. The bill would extend beyond 1991 the prohibition on sale of stock shares, thereby providing one very critical protection against the loss of native land.

This legislation does not provide adequate protection, however, against two of the greatest threats to Alaska natives: losses resulting from insolvency and tax foreclosure. It also totally fails to address the protection of native subsistence and self-government.

Some 100 native village tribes submitted additional legislation to Congress in April. It supplements the pending legislation by including those native concerns not now addressed adequately. It would confirm that Alaska natives

(Continued on page 3)

For more information
on the 1986 Human Relations Institute
see page 4

Caucus promotes growth of Asian Lutherans

By Kwang-Ja Yu

Ten years ago there were 12 Asian pastors and lay workers in the U.S. Lutheran churches. Today, they number more than 50. While traditionally Asian Lutherans were centered on the West Coast, today Asian ministries have spread as far east as New York and as far south as Texas.

Since 1975, more than 80,000 Southeast Asians have been resettled by Lutheran congregations through Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services. But seldom have these new families been effectively integrated into the lives of the sponsoring congregations.

This concern was reflected in recommendations adopted during a joint meeting in Los Angeles, Nov. 4-7, 1985, of Asian pastors and lay professionals from the American Lutheran Church, the Lutheran Church in America and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches.

Several Asian pastors described the usual pattern in the U.S. Lutheran congregation: A Southeast Asian family is helped in establishing itself and starts attending worship services with the congregation. Over a two-year period, faced with English as the only language used in the congregation, the family drifts away and begins worshipping with an Asian-language group, almost

always non-Lutheran.

In brief, the Lutheran church, which has been a leader in the resettlement of Asians in this country, has not attracted many into the life of the church because of the language and cultural barriers. Therefore, ministry to these people is urgent. The Lutheran church needs to identify and recruit potential church leaders from these people to provide the services they need.

The November meeting urged Lutheran churches to begin producing worship, parish education, stewardship and evangelism materials in a variety of Asian languages, including Cambodian, Hmong, Laotian, Vietnamese, Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Hindi.

With a shortage of pastors whose language skills allow them to serve especially Cambodian, Hmong, Laotian and Vietnamese people, the Asians suggested that churches establish a process to certify lay ministers who can work among the Indochinese groups until pastors can be found with appropriate language skills for these groups.

During the conference, Asian Lutherans chose 10 representatives for a joint executive board which will guide the new Lutheran Asian organization. The joint executive board met February 4-5 in Los Angeles and has scheduled a second

meeting May 14-15 in Chicago.

There are many gifts that Asian Lutherans can bring to the new Lutheran church as well as to this society. All Asian Lutherans hope that the new Lutheran church will be committed to inclusiveness, for the leadership of the present church bodies is predominantly white male pastors.

They pointed out that a quota of 10 percent

representation by people of color and primary language other than English has been controversial but is a deliberate and intentional way to involve more people of color and language other than English in the leadership of the Lutheran church.

Kwang-Ja Yu, a Korean pastor of the ALC, is serving as associate pastor of Emanuel Lutheran Church (LCA) in Dallas, Texas.

Federal death penalty proposed

By John Lillie

A grim sort of history was made in April when two people were executed within a period of 14 hours.

Jeffery Allen Barney was put to death in Texas by lethal injection April 15. Hours later Daniel Morris Thomas was put to death in the Florida electric chair. Thomas's execution was preceded by a seven-minute struggle with prison guards in the death chamber as he tried to prevent them from strapping him into the chair.

The public gives little notice to executions in this country anymore. They are becoming too commonplace to be newsworthy.

Against this backdrop, the U.S. Senate is preparing to take up a federal death penalty bill. Sponsored by Judiciary Committee chair Strom Thurmond, Senate Bill 239 has bipartisan support. Republican Thurmond is joined by Sen. Dennis DeConcini, D-Arizona, as co-sponsor.

The bill moved easily through the judiciary committee earlier this year. Sen. Thurmond has called this one of his chief legislative initiatives this year, and has vowed to bring it to the floor of the Senate.

Although the recent executions were carried out under state statutes, opponents of capital punishment fear that passage of federal death penalty legislation, could give impetus to proponents of capital punishment in the 13 states without it.

Critics claim that the bill is constitutionally deficient. It allows for the penalty of death even when no homicide was committed, notably in

cases of treason and espionage, and attempted assassination of the president.

Many also believe that under S239 juries are given insufficient guidance in determining whether or not to impose the death penalty. This could make imposition of the death penalty capricious and unconstitutional under the Supreme Court's ruling in Woodson v. North Carolina (1976). That decision calls for "reliability in the determination that death is the appropriate punishment in a specific case."

Many others claim that the death penalty — no matter how it is administered — constitutes cruel and unusual punishment. For example, last October the execution of William Vandizer in Michigan took 17 minutes and required five jolts of electricity.

Supporters of capital punishment are equally as firm in their belief that the sentence of death deters those who commit violent crimes.

Dr. Hugh Beacu of Tufts University, in testimony before a House committee, spoke against this argument.

"No one can dispute the point that capital punishment, when carried out, does effectively incapacitate the offender," Beacu said. "But this has nothing to do with deterrence, which operates by threat and intimidation, not destruction of the capacity to break the law. More importantly, it is not clear whether it has anything to do with crime prevention."

John Lillie is assistant director for human services at the Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs.

resources we recommend

Women...A World Survey

By Ruth Leger Sivard. A summary of developments relating to women, 45 pages filled with statistics, charts, graphs and maps; a wonderful resource. FROM: World Priorities, Box 25140, Washington, DC 20007, 202-965-1661; \$5.00.

Nicaraguan Women:

Unlearning the Alphabet of Submission. An interesting collection of articles and reflections on Nicaraguan women. FROM: Women's International Resource Exchange (WIRE), 2700 Broadway, Room 7, New York, NY 10025, 212-666-4622; \$3.00.

Seeking Safe Haven:

A Congregational Guide to Helping Central

American Refugees in the US. The revised, 1986 edition offers a very informative, comprehensive and useful presentation of current Central American concerns. A versatile handbook produced by the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service and Church World Service. FROM: Central American Concerns, LIRS, 360 Park Ave. South, New York, NY 10010; \$5.00.

Guidelines for Inclusive Language:

This brief booklet is divided into sections on sexual, racial, ethnic, religious and material/physical bias. Under each category are several helpful suggestions and comments about using inclusive language. A helpful resource. FROM: Office of Communications, Lutheran Church in America, 231 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016; single copies free.

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Let's Sing in Community + Cantemos en Comunidad

This is a collection of songs from the hymnal used by the churches in the Diocese of Cuernavaca, Morelos, Mexico. They were recorded by the young people of the parish who play guitars, mandolins and other instruments for the mass of the church of Plan de Ayala.

These songs of liberation and celebration reflect the music of the church in Central and South America. The collection of 22 songs includes hymns and liturgical selections (kyrie, songs of praise, etc.). The set contains a tape and booklet with words in Spanish, English translations and music lead sheets.

The set is available from Lutheran Human Relations for \$7.50 plus \$1.00 postage and handling. This music project is produced by Lutheran Human Relations in cooperation with the Mission Discovery program of the Division for Service and Mission in America. (ALC).

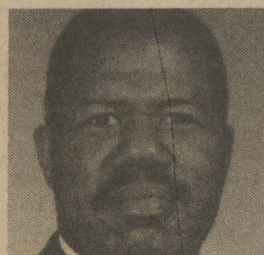
Este recurso musical consta de selecciones del himnario utilizado por la Diócesis de Cuernavaca, Morelos, México. Las canciones fueron grabadas por los jóvenes parroquiales que tocan guitarra, madolina y otros instrumentos para la misa de la Iglesia de Plan de Ayala.

Estas canciones de liberación y celebración reflejan la música de la iglesia tanto en la América Central tanto como en la América del Sur. En la colección de 22 canciones se encuentran himnos y selecciones litúrgicas (kyrie, cánticos de alabanza, etc.). El casete queda acompañado por un folleto con la partitura musical vocal, acordes de guitarra, letras, y traducciones al inglés.

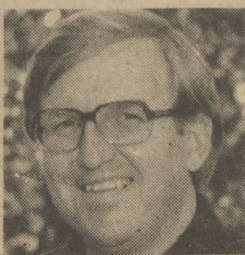
El juego se consigue a través del LHRAA por \$7.50 más \$1.00 por franqueo. Este proyecto es producido por LHRAA en cooperación con el Mission Discovery Program del Division for Service and Mission in America (ALC).

Six candidates nominated for LHRAA board

The following persons have been nominated to fill three vacancies occurring on the LHRAA Board of Directors in July 1986. A ballot will be sent to all LHRAA members in late May. The three persons receiving the highest number of votes will become a part of the nine-member Board of Directors. Board members with continuing terms are: Marlene Helgemo, Minneapolis, Minn.; Elli Kim-Bauer, Los Angeles; Wi Jo Kang, Dubuque, Iowa; Barbara Ruhe, Hartford, Conn.; Judy Roos, St. Louis, Mo.; Ted Schroeder, St. Louis.



Michael Cobbler
Camden, NJ. Associate pastor of the Camden Lutheran Parish (LCA). Active in urban ministry concerns, author of articles on the life and witness of Black American Lutherans.



D. Thomas Ford, Jr.
Americus, Ga. Director of Development, Habitat for Humanity. Ordained LCA pastor. Active in social ministry concerns in church and society.

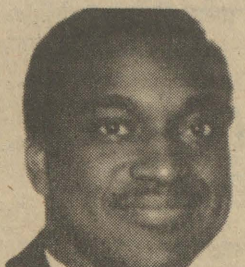


Margaret Gula
Coral Springs, Fla. Volunteer lay worker in the church. Active in refugee ministries in Florida; member of the ALC Taskforce on Racial Inclusiveness.

Frances Scott
Milwaukee, Wis. Retired. Active in Lutheran Church Women, member of Wisconsin-Upper Michigan Synod Inclusiveness and Diversity Taskforce.



James Thomas
New York, NY. Pastor of Lutheran Church of the Advent (LCA). Active in the Association of Black Lutherans and member of the LCA Peace Commission.



Lou Jeanne Walton
Gary, Ind. Associate professor of social work, Valparaiso University. Youth choir director, St. John's Lutheran Church (LCMS), Gary. Member, National Association of Social Workers.



World-wide prayer and fasting set to support South Africans

On June 16, 1976, Black school children demonstrating against inferior education under South Africa's apartheid system were shot and killed by police during a peaceful march through the Soweto township. The six months of violence which followed claimed nearly 1,000 lives and is known as "the Soweto uprising."

In December 1985, 90 church leaders from Africa, Australia, North America and western Europe gathered in Harare, Zimbabwe, to confront the worsening situation in southern Africa. As South African and Namibian Christians described the horrifying violence, a number of Western leaders realized that change in southern

Africa had to be fueled not only with eloquent words but with decisive actions.

As a result, a public statement of alarm and commitment, the Harare Declaration, was issued. Christian leaders declared the present situation in southern Africa to be a kairos moment of truth: God is asking people to choose sides and challenging the church to decisive action at a critical period in history.

The Harare Declaration included a call to prayer and fasting to end unjust rule in southern Africa; immediate and comprehensive sanctions, including an end to all bank loans to South Africa; support of South African movements working for

the liberation of their country, and immediate implementation of U.N. resolution 435 calling for independence of Namibia from South African rule.

North Americans who are far removed from the violence of apartheid may be tempted to side with national or economic interests without realizing that such actions are hurting and killing our sisters and brothers in southern Africa. Our faith in Jesus Christ, however, calls us to transcend the personal interests for the sake of God's people and to side with the suffering people in South Africa and Namibia.

Here are several suggestions to help you and your congregation to get started:

1) On Sunday, June 15, pray for the people of Namibia and South Africa as well as for our own fuller sense of community with them. Use the resource entitled "World Day of Prayer and

Fasting" available from Lutheran World Ministries. Reproduce enough copies for a bulletin insert.

2) On Monday, June 16, engage in personal prayer; members of your congregation may wish to come together to pray. Fast during one or more mealtimes knowing that Christians all over the world also will be praying and fasting as we together hunger for stronger bonds of community with the churches in southern Africa.

3) Call the "African Hotline" for a three-minute recorded message on how to advocate for improved U.S. policies toward southern Africa. The number is 202-546-0408.

4) Learn more about how apartheid effects the life of the churches in southern Africa. For more information, contact LWM, 360 Park Ave. South, New York, NY 10010, 212-532-6350.

Lutherans terrorized in S. Africa

A series of events including the beating of a U.S. volunteer worker is causing renewed concern for the safety of church workers in the northern area of South Africa.

The attack on Beth Ann Burris, a Presbyterian from Indianapolis, occurred March 8 at the headquarters of the northern diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in South Africa. Burris was beaten with sjamboks, hard leather whips carried by police.

Burris, who has been working in social service and relief programs in the diocese, was not detained and eventually received medical attention for lacerations to her face, back and chest.

When Rev. N. Phaswana, executive secretary of the northern diocese, went to the police to protest the attack, he was detained without charge and not released until two days later.

In early February, the Venda security police detained eight church leaders. Unconfirmed reports were that the eight included Lutheran

pastor Z.C. Nevhutalu. When VANGUARD went to press in late April, the eight were still in custody.

Two U.S. missionaries were arrested March 7 in Cape Town during a security sweep by police at the Malan airport, the American Lutheran Church reported. Brian and Susan Burchfield, along with 31 other people, were charged with "committing a nuisance or disorderly or indecent act."

They were detained for six hours and released. Following a court appearance on March 10, they were ordered to stand trial on April 22.

Northern diocese Bishop Solomon Serote, his wife and Rev. T.S. Farisani were stopped at a roadblock March 16. They were detained when a young policeman found letters and news clippings in their luggage. After being taken to the police station where Farisani was tortured in 1981, they were released.

Panel proposes funds for development

The American Lutheran Church's Inter-Unit Workgroup on Community and Economic Development has requested authorization to spend ALC Hunger Appeal monies for community development projects. The workgroup recommendation will go to the ALC Church Council meeting in May.

The new request sets aside the original plan to use ALC pension funds for economic development in poverty communities. The latter proposal, "Using Investments to Fulfill Mission," was shelved for future use as a background paper rather than submitted to the Church Council.

The workgroup was appointed by the Church Council last year to explore recommendations "concerning structural change, policy study and budget considerations" for potential ALC economic and community development action.

"Using Investments" was under revision when ALC Presiding Bishop David Preus called a meeting of the boards of trustees and pensions, the office of Church in Society, and Division for Service and Mission in America. Preus called the inter-office discussion of "Using Investments" a "first-class disagreement." Preus asked the workgroup to drop the issue to avoid disrupting the Church Council.

In a resolution, the workgroup affirms "that community and economic development is part of the mission of the church and understands that the investment of funds of the church may be made in ventures oriented toward community and economic development to aid low-income people in both rural and urban settings of the United States, whenever such investments can be done

with prudent regard for beneficiaries' rights and legal requirements."

"I remain steadfastly in favor of pursuing the approach (of using investment funds)," said Athornia Steele, president of the Coalition of Black members and a member of the workgroup. Steele added that he hopes that "concern for these issues are kept in front of this church and the new church" and emphasized that "alternatives are there to prudently provide good return and social involvement."

Despite reports that pension and other funds can be securely and profitably used for community development, "the position of the Board of Trustees and the Investment Committee is simply that they don't believe it's true," according to Charles Bachman, manager of administrative services for the trustees.

Rev. Raymond LeBlanc, chairperson of the workgroup, expressed "frustration" that in these discussions "the boards of trustees and pensions haven't helped us crack this rock; they just say, 'We can't,' without making any progress toward a healthy resolution of our differences."

The Hunger Appeal recommendation closely followed words suggested by Bishop Preus. Either \$250,000 or five percent of the 1986 Hunger Appeal receipts, whichever is higher, are requested for community development projects in 1987 through the Division for Service and Mission in America. The resolution instructs the division to consult with the Coalition of Black Members and the staff of the Office of Church in Society in implementation of the plan.

Alaska natives

have the same rights and powers as natives in the lower 48 states.

In the case of land held by the native corporations, this would mean that those transferred to native tribes would be covered by the Indian Non-Intercourse Act and would also be protected by sovereign immunity. Native tribal ownership could not be lost by any means whatsoever — either voluntary or involuntary — except through an act of Congress.

The village proposal would place the protection of native subsistence rights under tribal authority and give tribes power to regulate sub-

sistence activities within their respective territories.

The state, which has failed to protect native subsistence rights, would retain authority over activities only insofar as necessary to conserve the species. This arrangement is essentially the same as with tribes in the lower 48 on their respective reservations.

For further information on Alaskan native issues, contact Lare Ashenbrenner, Alaska Office, Native American Rights Fund, 310 K St., Suite 708, Anchorage, AK 99501, 907-276-9680.

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BOOKS·BOOKS·BOOKS

Lay Voices in an Open Church

by Celia A. Hahn
Alban Institute, 1985

The author has done an extraordinary work of listening to lay people, sharing research already done by others on the subject of lay ministry, and sharing some of her own experiences in the church. The 62 pages are full of choice gems of wisdom within five chapters. The intriguing titles and sub-themes help the reader to identify with Ms. Hahn's personable style and basic premises which arouse the curiosity of others "who have been there." She speaks of needs and expectations of lay people, the yearning for a caring community, the connection with everyday life. She poses the Oscillation theory — moving back and forth between the church and the world — and of the importance of both the private and corporate sides of religious life.

People say that they look for a church that is alive, that is clear about its task (focus). Most laity need a vision of the transcendent coupled with a loving community where they can get some help in their task of making meaning in life. Even recognizing the contradictions and ambiguities that exist — the need to meet God alone and our need for belonging and commitment to a community of faith, for example — most of us share the Biblical images of servant, people of God, the prophetic tradition and stance which help us risk, fail, be forgiven, and go on.

The author concludes that the relationship between the church's task and the world — whether it is across the street or across continents — is of crucial importance to laity. The church which is "open to the world" equips laity for their ministries which are normally in the world. Therefore that church should look beyond its own ecclesiastical concerns and strive to hold up serving "in and out" by empowering its people in a mutual ministry.

Reviewer Marion Voxland is a lay staff worker, serving in the North Pacific District Office of The ALC.

Contra Terror in Nicaragua

by Reed Brody
South End Press, 1985, \$8.50.

Despite a negative vote from the House of Representatives, President Reagan's \$100 million aid package to the Nicaraguan *contras* is back on track, after receiving Senate approval. The Sandinista response was matter-of-fact; as reported in the New York

Times on Easter Sunday, the Voice of Nicaragua radio station said, "Nothing good will come from Congress, and we must be prepared."

That means, too, that the North American public should be prepared for a heavy dose of rhetoric about those gallant Freedom Fighters who are standing tall against the militantly aggressive Marxist-Leninist thugs in Managua (one waits to see Mr. Reagan mount a platform in downtown Tegucigalpa and proclaim, *a la JFK, Yo soy una contra!*). The odds, however, are that it will probably pay off. Never mind that \$100 million is hardly enough to win a war; it is enough to escalate the killing, on both sides, and to distract attention from a diplomatic and regional settlement of the conflict.

Chances are that Reed Brody's book will not change many minds that are already set, and even the uncommitted will be warned of Brody's intention by the title. Nevertheless, it is a basically dispassionate summarization of *contra* activity in the Nicaraguan countryside. And certainly the form of that activity suggests that *contra* policy is to persuade through violence and terror.

The bulk of the book is given over to affidavits collected from Nicaraguans who have been attacked, wounded, tortured or kidnapped by *contra* guerrillas. It might be argued that some of them represent half-truths or exaggerations; but even if that is so, the documentation exposes a consistent pattern of brutality by *contra* forces.

Altogether, 145 separate affidavits are quoted from, and all from eyewitnesses or victims of *contra* attacks. Almost all of these are workers or peasants, not soldiers.

The book is the result of a fact-finding mission — from September 1984 through January 1985 — under the auspices of the Washington Office on Latin America, an independent human rights organization sympathetic to the Sandinista government. Brody himself was, before his trip to Nicaragua, an assistant attorney general for the State of New York.

There is little that is shrill or melodramatic about *Contra Terror*; it does provide, for those who oppose aid to the *contras*, considerable data about the murderous use of that aid. Unfortunately, political issues have overwhelmed humanitarian concerns in the *contra* debate so far. But a judicious use of Brody's material might help to bring about a more balanced discussion of the U.S.-Sandinista tension.

Incidentally, there are also some valuable appendices in the book, particularly the second, which outlines the identity of the

contras (and their links to Somoza's National Guard) and the private organizations in the U.S. that provide them with military and other aid.

Reviewer Jerome Nilssen is pastor at Lake Park Lutheran Church in Milwaukee.

Woman on Death Row

by Velma Barfield
Oliver-Nelson Books, 1985, \$6.95

Woman on Death Row is the story of Velma Barfield until the time of her execution by lethal injection on November 2, 1984, by the state of North Carolina. She was convicted in 1978 of killing four people and was the first woman to be executed in the United States since 1962.

Velma's early life was a difficult one in which she seldom experienced the joys of childhood. The years of pain, anger and anxiety followed her into adult life and left her little emotional strength upon which to draw. Finally, comfort and temporary relief were found in prescription medications. Eventually she became addicted to as many as twenty-five prescription drugs over a period of ten years, leaving her numb and lifeless.

While on death row, Barfield experienced a religious conversion, becoming a source of help, support and encouragement to others during her six and one-half years in prison. Velma explains that she wanted to share her religious experiences and the peace that God provided to her with other people experiencing difficulty in their lives. Barfield's message comes across powerfully.

The book raises several important issues. For example, the complexity of medical and pharmaceutical professionals and the penal system in maintaining Barfield's drug dependency cannot be overlooked. Furthermore, one must ask what the benefit is to society as a result of this execution. We urgently need to question the purpose and efficacy of the death penalty in the United States. We must ask why.

Woman on Death Row is the moving story of Margie Velma Barfield, a woman whose spirit and strength embraced those in her presence. One can not ignore the human tragedy of this account and our failure as a society to recognize and attend to those who cry out in desperate need.

Reviewer Darcee Anderson lives and works at the Grunewald Guild in Leavenworth, WA.

South African theologians issue kairos letter

"The time has come. The moment of truth has arrived. South Africa has been plunged into a crisis that is shaking the foundations and there is every indication that the crisis has only just begun and that it will deepen and become even more threatening in the months to come. It is the Kairos or moment of truth not only for apartheid but also for the Church."

So begins "Challenge to the Church: A Theological Comment on the Political Crisis in South Africa." Known as the Kairos Document, the statement was drafted by the people of South Africa: Black and white, lay and clergy, Protestant and Catholic. The 151 church people who signed the statement represent 16 denominations.

The word "kairos" is Greek for "crisis and opportunity" and the Kairos Document calls on Christians "to participate in the struggle for liberation." It challenges church leaders to support civil disobedience, consumer boycotts and work stoppages as means of achieving a just society.

The document also offers a critique of "state of theology" which it terms "the theological justification of the status quo with its racism, capitalism and totalitarianism." This theology "blesses injustice, canonizes the will of the powerful and reduces the poor to passivity, obedience and apathy," the document says.

The statement is also critical of South African church leaders who have criticized apartheid only in "a limited, guarded and cautious way."

Many of the documents's writers have begun questioning the sufficiency of non-violent actions against apartheid. The Kairos Document claims that the principal of non-violence has been used "as a blanket condemnation of all that is called violence (and) has not only been unable to curb the violence in our situation, it has actually, although unwittingly, been a major contributing factor in the recent escalation of State violence."

The Kairos Document includes a theological discussion of

violence based on biblical texts. It suggests that some acts called violence — such as throwing stones and burning cars — may be legitimate acts of self-defense against the violence of the police.

Father Buti Tlhagale, a Black South African theologian who signed the Kairos Document, said, "What seems a senseless destruction of life and property, of schools and buses and delivery vehicles, is seen by young Blacks especially as an aggressive statement of radical protest, of self-affirmation: a tactic to compel the government to reckon with their frustrated aspirations."

The Kairos Document concludes with a "Challenge to Action" which includes proposals for transforming church activities in support of the resistance to apartheid.

The Kairos Document was published in the United States by Theology Global Context, Stony Point Center, Crickettown Road, Stony Point, NY 10983. Copies are available at \$1.50 each for single copies; five or more at \$1 each.

IN THE NEWS ...

"Women of Faith: Same Journey, Different Paths" is the title of a national, ecumenical conference scheduled for Chicago June 19-22. Workshop topics range from feminine spirituality to the impoverishment of women. For more information: Laurie Michalowski, 1020 S. Wabash #401, Chicago 60605.

The Justice Department will try Stacey Merkt again on charges of transporting and conspiring to transport illegal immigrants. Merkt's conviction was thrown out by a court of appeals last June. Pre-trial hearings are set for May 5.

The trial of two former soldiers accused of murdering Rev. David Fernandez, a Lutheran pastor in El Salvador, has been postponed a second time because of a lack of jurors. Courts in San Miguel and San Salvador have been unable to seat a jury. "The Lutheran church and family members are very disappointed," said a source in El Salvador.

The Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) signed precedent setting contracts with the Campbell Soup Company and its Vlastic subsidiary, and growers supplying these companies. The contracts were signed Feb. 18-19, and FLOC president Baldemar Velasquez announced a suspension of the Campbell's boycott on Feb. 21. A 3-year contract signed with 20 Ohio tomato growers and a 4-year contract with 12 Michigan cucumber growers cover well over 550 workers.

The Southwest Minnesota (ALC) district convention not only affirmed the creation of a new Lutheran church, but approved proposals for inclusiveness of ethnic and racial minorities and women in the church. The votes were 367-5 and 302-59, respectively, in the largely-rural district.

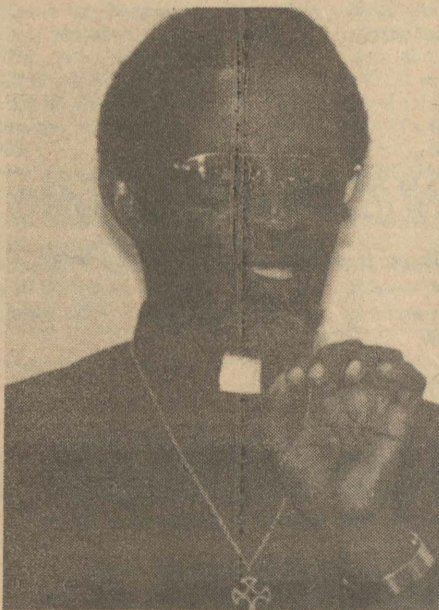


"They Speak of Hope" is a new videotape telling the story of persecution and freedom in the midst of the violence of El Salvador. Over 40,000 civilians, all of them innocent victims, have been killed in this country's civil war. This half-hour videotape with study guide covers the war's effects on the church and the people it serves. As, for example, above, the Rev. Medardo Gomez of the Lutheran Church in El Salvador baptizes an infant.

Another new videotape is "Namibia — Tell the World," a portrayal of current conditions in Namibia, highlighting the positive role of the church. The 52-minute production features an interview with Lutheran pastor Zephaniah Kameeta. The program can serve either as an introduction to Namibia concerns or as an update for those who are already well informed.

Each VHS videotape rents for \$10. Contact LHRAA for a reservation date.

1986 Human Relations Institute



Rev. Maurice Ngakane

The 1986 Lutheran Human Relations Institute will take its theme from Revelations as it seeks to "sing a new...from every tribe and tongue and people and nation." The Institute will be held July 25-27.

Dr. Maurice Ngakane, a citizen of South Africa and a member of the staff of the Office for World Community with the Lutheran World Federation, will keynote the Institute at Carroll College in Waukesha, Wisconsin.

Also at the Institute, the Paul Boe Award will be presented to U.S. missionary Rev. Richard Wangen. The award is given by the American Lutheran Church. After the presentation, Pastor Wangen will speak about his experiences in Brazil.

Additional speakers and leaders for the weekend's events will include Audrey Russell of the Lutheran Church in America's Division for Mission in North America and Rev. John Schramm, a pastor from Minneapolis, who will each speak on the new songs being sung by people in the church.

Rev. Lydia Kalb, a member of the Commis-

sion for a New Lutheran Church, will preach Sunday morning. Thelma Megill-Cobbler and Rev. Michael Cobbler of Camden, N.J., will provide closing reflections.

Plenary sessions, a bible study and workshops on many issues will complement the formal presentations of the Institute. Worship, an integral part of the Institute, will be led by Ray Makeever and Tony Machado, both of Minneapolis.

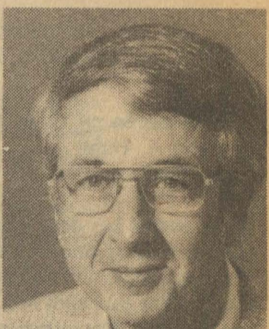
Youth and teen programs are also essential aspects of the Institute. Separate programs are offered for ages 5-12 and 13-17.

Registrations before July 12 will be \$115 for the first family member, \$95 for other family members or students. These costs include two nights' lodging and all meals. The youth program is \$65 for the first child, \$60 each for other child. The late registration fee after July 12 will be \$10 per person.

To register, complete the coupon below and return to David Barlett, registrar, LHRAA, 2703 N. Sherman Blvd., Milwaukee, WI 53210, or call 414-871-7300.



Audrey Russell



Rev. John Schramm



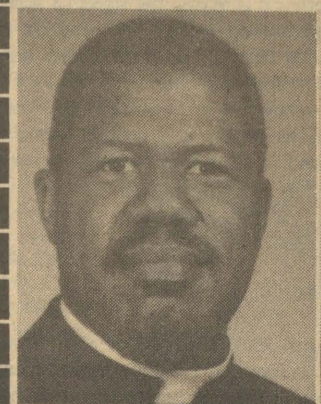
Tony Machado



Ray Makeever



Rev. Lydia Rivera Kalb



Rev. Michael Cobbler



Thelma Megill-Cobbler

SING A NEW SONG

NAME(S) _____

YOUTH _____
please indicate names and ages

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE () _____

REGISTRATION

Adult, registration only \$55 \$ _____

(no lodging or meals)

Student or second family member, \$35 \$ _____

registration only

HOUSING AND MEALS

Two nights, all meals \$60 \$ _____

YOUTH PROGRAM (4-16 yrs)

Registration, meals, lodging:

first child \$65 \$ _____

other children, each \$60 \$ _____

After July 12, late registration fee: \$10 \$ _____

Enclosed is my check to cover

registration and housing costs..... \$ _____

Scholarship assistance available upon request

Lutheran Human Relations 414-871-7300
2703 N. Sherman Blvd. Milwaukee, WI 53210

1986 Human Relations Institute, July 24-26 Carroll College, Waukesha, Wisconsin