

For the

# LIFE of the WORLD

July 2000. Volume Four, Number Three



**The Cute, the Cool, and the Catechized:  
Generational Segregation in the Church - p.4**

**Are Today's Ears Hearing the Timeless Message?:  
Law and Gospel for Every Generation - p.6**

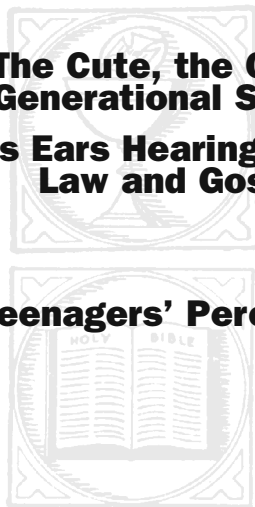
**Holding Dear Herman - p.8**

**Yours, Mine, or Ours:  
Teenagers' Perceptions of Church Music - p.11**

**In the Field - p.14**

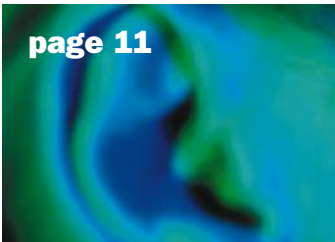


CONCORDIA  
THEOLOGICAL  
SEMINARY  
P R E S S



# CONTENTS

page 11



page 4



page 6



page 8



page 14



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

**PRESIDENT**  
Rev. Dr. Dean O. Wenthe

**PUBLISHER**  
Rev. Scott Klemsz

**EDITOR**  
Rev. John Pless

**ASSISTANT EDITOR**  
Monica Robins

**ART DIRECTOR**  
Steve Blakey

*For the Life of the World* is published quarterly by Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 6600 North Clinton Street, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46825. No portion of this publication may be reproduced without the written consent of the publisher of *For the Life of the World*. Copyright 1999. Printed in the United States. Postage paid at Fort Wayne, Indiana. To be added to our mailing list please call 219/452-2150 or e-mail Rev. Scott Klemsz at CTSNews. *For the Life of the World* is mailed to all pastors and congregations of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in the United States and Canada and to anyone interested in the work of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind.

## FEATURES

### 2 From the President

### 4 The Cute, the Cool, and the Catechized

By Dr. Gene E. Veith, Professor of Humanities, Concordia University, Mequon, Wis.

Even within regular-sized, one-worship-service congregations, there is generational segregation. Lutheran casualties of the worship wars might be surprised to hear that liturgical worship is now being hailed as the style of both the present and the future.

### 6 Are Today's Ears Hearing the Timeless Message?: Law and Gospel for Every Generation

By the Rev. Dr. Carl C. Fickenscher II, Assistant Professor of Pastoral Ministry and Missions, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind.

God's message is for all times, for all people. The Church's task is to proclaim that message to the world. Is the Word actually being received by all generations?

### 8 Holding Dear Herman

By the Rev. D. Richard Stuckwisch, Jr., Pastor of Emmaus Lutheran Church, South Bend, Ind.

This sermon was prepared for a funeral of an infant who passed away the night following his birth.

### 11 Yours, Mine or Ours: Teenagers' Perceptions of Church Music

By Dr. Barbara J. Resch, Coordinator of Music Education, Indiana University—Purdue University Fort Wayne, and Director of Children's Choir, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Fort Wayne, Ind.

Planners of youth gatherings and youth services typically assume that teenagers will be most open to the hearing of God's Word when it is carried by the styles of rock and popular music. There are several concerns with this approach to choosing music for worship, not the least of which is that it may be based upon a false assumption about teens' relationship to the music they consider "theirs."

### 14 In the Field

By Pam Knepper

Featuring the Rev. Martin Stahl, Regional Chaplain for Navy Region Southwest, San Diego, Calif.



# Holding

*The following is a sermon that was prepared for a funeral of an infant who passed away the night following his birth.*

**G**race, mercy, and peace from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen. The sermon text is the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary unto her cousin, Saint Elizabeth, as recorded by St. Luke in the Gospel appointed for this past Sunday, the Festival of Saint Mary, the Mother of our Lord. In the Name ☩ of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. [Amen]

Rick and Sheryl, as your Pastor, and as your friend, I find myself unable to express to you the full extent of my sympathy and the grief that I share with you. Indeed, over these past few days, I have found myself at a loss for words of any sort at all (unusual for me). At times I have wondered who is comforting whom, as your confession of faith in response to this tragic loss has encouraged me and strengthened my own faith as well. Now, today, I would so much like to answer all your questions. But I cannot. Typical of my nature, I would so much like to fix it all for you and make everything right. But I cannot. It is only the Word of the Lord that I am able to speak to you and give to you. But that is enough . . . The Lord was too eager to hold your dear Herman—more quickly and more closely than we could accomplish. I was already looking forward to baptizing him, even as you were planning to entrust him to the Lord through Holy Baptism, and Barb was so anxious to be his godmother. But the Lord has taken him into His arms and blessed him even more directly. It is the Lord's prerogative to do so, because Herman, as you know, belongs to Him. You have given him birth, but He has given him life—here on earth, and now in heaven.

Oh, how I bemoan our limited human perspective, which cannot see the true reality at work, and so we cannot help but grieve. But whatever it is you have wanted for your son, your prayers have been more than answered. He lacks nothing in Christ, his Savior. Everything belongs to him, and he lives more

fully now than you or me.

I am sorry for you, Rick, that you will not have the joy and thrill of taking Herman to Six Flags or Cedar Point (or maybe that isn't your thing). But if you were to go, perhaps with Tobias and Egon—as Zach and I went earlier this summer—you would find the better the ride, the longer the line. What any of us wouldn't give to go to the head of the line without waiting . . . Well, that is what young Herman has done; he has surpassed us all, and he is having the ride of his life (which has no end).

In doing so, his short life on earth has come full circle to a beautiful completion. For (by my reckoning at least) he was conceived at the beginning of Advent—at the beginning of this current Church Year—as we heard the preaching of repentance from Saint John the Baptist, and as we waited with the Blessed Virgin Mary for her days to be accomplished. And now, Herman's birth (here in time on earth) and his "nativity" in heaven have coincided with the Festival of Saint Mary, the Mother of God, as we have heard again her beautiful Song of Praise (the Magnificat) upon her Visitation unto Saint Elizabeth, the Mother of Saint John.

Among other things, Saint Mary here reminds you that our children are the Lord's. In her case, in particular, her Child was and is the Lord! But yours, no less than hers, belong to Him. So also Herman Matthew, who was "God's gift" to you—whom you intended from the start, by faith, to return unto Him (as Hannah did).

Thus have you done. Thus have your prayers been answered. Thus have your intentions been fulfilled.

But not at all in the way or in the time that you envisioned or anticipated. And the bonds of love—which God has also given to you—now make it so hard to let go. Which is why, as your family and friends and fellow members of the Body of Christ, we today not only mourn with you; but we rejoice on your behalf and in your stead, while you cannot, that Herman is the Lord's.

Now, among the many questions in your heart and mind, I know that you are searching for a "why?" To which I chiefly must respond that the good and gracious will of God is done, even without our prayer, on earth as it is in heaven, whether or not we can know or understand His loving purpose for us. He did not kill your son; nor did He desire Herman's death (nor your grief). He is the Author and Giver of Life. But death has come because of sin; and so the Lord has taken even this last great enemy, and He forces it to serve His mercy.

Thus does He bring life out of death, by His own Cross and Crucifixion. And thus does He bring the blessing out of the curse. As you have also confessed: "All things work together for good for those who love Him, who are called according to His purpose . . ."

---

**Whatever it is you have wanted for your son, your prayers have been more than answered. He lacks nothing in Christ, his Savior. Everything belongs to him, and he lives more fully now than you or me.**

---



# Dear Herman

By the Rev. D. Richard Stuckwisch

So, I shall tell you what I have thought, as your Pastor, as I have considered the “why” and the “wherefore” of it all . . . as I have also wondered, what could it mean (?), that parents who love children so much, who value human life so very highly, should lose their son to death.

There has been a lot of propaganda in this country (there still is) in support of the lie that children in the womb are not yet “real” or “truly persons.” That lie has deceived countless women into having abortions—confusing their conscience and hindering their chance for repentance. The same lie has also made it difficult, if not impossible, for those who have miscarried to mourn the loss of their unborn children.

But the difference of one day (of 20 hours) has betrayed the lie; and Herman’s death has given those other mothers and fathers this opportunity to grieve—with you, for your son, but also for their own dear children.

Because he has shown us—in our sight—what was already true long before he was born: that he is fearfully and wonderfully made, crafted by the hand of God in His divine Image (the Image of Christ) for life everlasting.

And along with that, lest wretched unbelief should cause you any doubts . . . because I know, Rick and Sheryl, you have worried that others might not realize or understand, that someone so new, so tiny and fragile as Herman, was and is a real person. . . . But lest there be any doubts, here stands our Gospel from Saint Luke:

Certainly, the Son of God, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ—who was, and is, and is to come—He has always been real and truly a person (indeed, from all eternity!). And among that great cloud of witnesses, who surround us even now, the Blessed Virgin Mary is our evidence and witness, that God has taken for Himself each and every stage of human life—beginning with conception, growing in the womb, and suffering birth.

Your Lord has thereby sanctified the unborn life, and newborn life, as truly precious in His sight . . . and no less redeemed by the sacrifice of His own flesh and blood.

What is more, while He was yet concealed in the womb of Blessed Mary—within her first trimester, perhaps not even “showing”—His unborn cousin, John, while yet in the womb of Saint Elizabeth, leaps for joy with faith and recognition of his Savior and his God (solely by the hearing of Saint Mary’s voice!).

While proud adults (in the imagination of their hearts) have tried to claim that little children “get nothing out of church,” that liturgy and sermons are meaningless and pointless for these little ones, Jesus Christ our Lord and Saint John the Baptist say otherwise! And you and Herman have showed us just how very important and significant it is that young children be in church (with their parents). For in the midst of all your grief, you also now have the blessed assurance that Herman has known the presence of his Savior and his God through the voice of His servant here in His Church. It was no stranger who took

Herman into His arms.

You have deeply regretted that Herman was not given the opportunity for Holy Baptism. And no one prizes the treasure of that Holy Sacrament more highly than I do. But Herman has taught us an understanding of things that we might otherwise be able to ignore. For too many parents have their children baptized, but fail and neglect—beforehand and afterwards—to bring their little children into the presence of Christ our God, into the sound of His voice, within His Holy Church. Yet, the same Word of God, which washes us with water in Holy Baptism, is also spoken and sung week after week in the Divine Service . . .

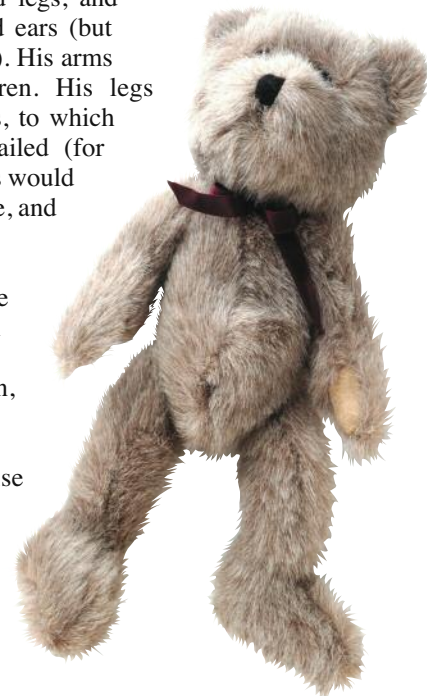
And through that Word, Christ has called Herman to Himself; He has taken him into His arms and blessed him.

Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of Christ. And for the past nine months, beginning with the Holy Season of Advent (1998), Herman has been hearing that Word . . . Sheryl, you have told me how he recognized and happily responded to the sound of your voice (and Rick’s) and to the noisy squeak of your rocker. How much more, then, did he know the voice of Christ and His divine Word!?

For that Word, which conveys the Holy Spirit, and which conceived the Son of God in the womb of a Virgin Mother, is able to do and accomplish far more abundantly than we could ever ask or think or imagine. It has given Herman life, because it is the Word of the Gospel, which is the Power of God unto Salvation . . .

Thus did Herman hear that God Himself was once a tiny Fetus, just like him! That He, too, was given arms and legs, and hands and feet, and eyes and ears (but probably not the Tribble nose). His arms would welcome little children. His legs would take Him to the Cross, to which His hands and feet were nailed (for Herman and for you). His eyes would look with mercy on His people, and His ears would hear their prayers . . .

As Herman’s ears have heard, that true God, begotten of His Father from all eternity, also became true Man, born of the Virgin Mary; that He is our Lord, who has redeemed you—an otherwise lost and condemned creature—from sin, death, and the power of the devil . . . not with silver or gold, but with His holy and precious Blood, His



innocent suffering and death; that He has done all this for Herman—no less than for you and for me—that we might be His own, and live under Him in His Kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness . . . even as He has risen from the dead and lives and reigns eternally.

Whatever else you might think or feel or experience (especially right now), it is this (and only this) that is most certainly true!

Now is the time, more than ever, to measure your life by faith alone—and not by sight. Your sinful heart will tell you that God has surely turned His face away from you, or that He is punishing you for some reason. For how and why else would your son be taken from you? But if and when those doubts and fears arise, know that your Lord has set before you here today the example of His Blessed Virgin Mary—His most highly-favored Lady—whose Son was born for this very reason: to die. And from the first she was told how this sword would pierce her soul at the foot of the Cross.

Your vocation as parents is lived under that same Cross, which redefines everything by a very different standard. It is why we are able to sing with Saint Mary—in the face of death and grief—that the Lord has shown strength with His arm (with a tiny, frail, infant arm . . . with a tired, bleeding, crucified arm). He has put down the mighty from their thrones—by ascending the throne of His Cross; and He has exalted the lowly in His Resurrection from the dead.

This we cannot see or feel; but we can only believe, and only by the Word and Spirit of God. We do not have His perspective, whose thoughts are not our thoughts, whose ways are not our ways. Nor do we have the perspective of eternity, from which a day is like a thousand years (no more nor less than seventy or eighty).

These perspectives we do not have—and perhaps we never will. We are not God, but His servants and His handmaids; it is for us according to His Word. But in that Word we have been given the blessed perspective of Christ and His Cross—the incarnate Son of God, who makes sense of it all. We live by His Word, by His faith. And He has remembered His mercy (toward Herman, and toward us).

Had I been given the privilege of baptizing Herman, I would have asked him, first of all, to confess his faith in the Holy Triune God—his own faith, in his own God. And this he would have done, employing the lips and voices of his parents and godparents, his Pastor, and his fellow believers in Christ.

How I wish that I could give you Herman’s faith right now—and Herman’s voice, and Herman’s perspective.

Among the many things we’ve talked about these past few days, you mentioned David and his son to me, before I even had the chance to give you that example. How David mourned and fasted while the child was still living—and sick and on his deathbed—in hopes that God would relent and spare the boy’s life.

What I have discovered in this story since we spoke, what I had never noticed before, is that David’s son died on the seventh day . . . And now, perhaps, you already know what I’m going to say:

He died before he could be circumcised, according to the Word of God, on the eighth day of his life. He died without the covenant and grace of circumcision.

Yet, David’s response is one of the most beautiful confessions of our faith. For when his son was dead, he rose from mourning, he washed his face, and he ate; because, he said, “While the child was alive, I fasted and wept; for who could tell whether the Lord would be gracious to me, that the child might live? But now he is dead; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.”

And so it is that you shall go to Herman, who is with the Lord forever. We could not baptize Herman here, but Christ has now bathed him in the waters of life, and dressed him in the white robes of His own perfect righteousness in heaven. And where it would have been seven or eight years (at least) before Herman could receive the Holy Supper here, the Lord has granted him “early Communion” at the Banquet Feast of the Lamb in His Kingdom. Where it is now also Herman’s voice—no longer the mutters and gurgles you know, but the voice that Christ has given him—that sings with Saint Mary (and with you):

“My soul now magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God, my Savior. For He who is mighty has done great things for me, and Holy is His Name!”

To whom be all glory and honor and praise, both now and forever, In the Name ☩ of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.



**You have deeply regretted that Herman was not given the opportunity for Holy Baptism. And no one prizes the treasure of that Holy Sacrament more highly than I do. But Herman has taught us an understanding of things, that we might otherwise be able to ignore. For too many parents have their children baptized, but fail and neglect—beforehand and afterwards—to bring their little children into the presence of Christ our God, into the sound of His voice, within His Holy Church. Yet, the same Word of God, which washes us with water in Holy Baptism, is also spoken and sung week after week in the Divine Service . . . And through that Word, Christ has called Herman to Himself; He has taken him into His arms and blessed him.**