



30th Anniversary

CONCORDIA
DEACONESS
CONFERENCE
Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

BLUES News

BLUES NEWS...

An official publication of Concordia Deaconess Conference (CDC). Distributed eight times a year, it serves our members by circulating devotional thoughts and articles, professional submissions, and member announcements.

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OUR CONFERENCE

Concordia Deaconess Conference - Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is a free association of certified and LCMS rostered deaconesses, who subscribe to and live by the confessional position of the LCMS and who hold membership in a congregation or partner church of the same.

We work to provide opportunities for spiritual, personal, and professional growth and fellowship for deaconesses and support for diaconal service in Christ.

Donations for the work of the conference, a 501(c)(3) organization, may be mailed to Carol Schroeder at Epiphany Lutheran Church 4460 Lyons Rd Lake Worth, FL 33467-3614.



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Sisters in Christ, this is my last article for *BLUES News* as president of CDC. How time flies! So much has happened in these past four years. It has been a joy and honor to serve and represent you and this wonderful organization. Getting to know many of you better through emails, phone calls and Facebook has been a particular joy. Let's keep in touch!

Many times it has been my privilege to talk about CDC as an organization and about you, its members. How people light up with joy when they hear about deaconesses and all of your varied service in the name of Jesus. This is our 30th year as a conference and 30 years since the LCMS began training deaconesses.

I was one of those early students, a freshman at Concordia College River Forest, Illinois, back in 1980. When I arrived on campus, the word "deaconess" was not in my vocabulary or understanding, but there was a friend told me about it and urged me to check it out. Am I am ever glad that she did!

As students we regularly interacted with CDC members, all nine of them! They came to our classes and devotions and invited us to join them at conference. How these women helped to form us into deaconesses! They taught us about the work, the mind and the heart of a deaconess. They were our mentors and they visibly lived what they confessed.

Thirty years later nine members have grown into 100+. One synodical training program has become three, and God continues to bless the Concordia Deaconess Conference beyond what any of us could imagine.

CDC is 30 years young! We have matured and grown. We are well established and the church knows who we

are both at home and abroad. Later this month we gather together to celebrate 30 years of God's leading and blessing—I can't wait!

Our banquet speaker asked for some guidance on his address, my words to him were, "Help us to remember the past and reflect on the present with an eye toward the future."

As I think about these things, the words of our Lord through the prophet Jeremiah ring in my ear: "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope" (Jeremiah 29:11). That hope and future is realized in the death and resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He is our hope and it is in His name that we serve those He places upon our path. May our Lord bless and keep you as you serve.

In Christ, Deaconess Pamela Jane Nielsen

PS. I encourage you to send pictures from graduation and installation services, as well as conference, to photos.cdc@gmail.com.

THIS ISSUE

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BOOK REVIEW:
Russell D. Moore's
ADOPTED FOR LIFE,
(WHEATON:
CROSSWAY BOOKS
2009).

Rev. Moore writes:

"Whenever I told people I was working on a book on adoption, they'd often say something along the lines of, 'Great. So, is the book on the doctrine of adoption or, you know, real adoptions?' That's a hard question to answer because you can't talk about the one without talking about the other. Also, it is not as though we master one aspect and then move to the other—from the vertical to the horizontal or the other way around. That's not the picture God has embedded in his creation work.

"The Bible tells us that human families are reflective of an eternal fatherhood (Eph. 3:14-15). We know, then, what fatherhood ought to look like on the basis of how our Father God behaves toward us. But the reverse is also true. We see something of the way our God is fatherly toward us through our relationships with human fathers. And so Jesus tells us that in our human father's provision and discipline we get a glimpse of God's active love for us (Matt. 7:9-11; Heb. 12:5-17). The same truth is at work in adoption." (*Adopted for Life*, 17)

I found this book to be eye-opening. Although I wouldn't agree with every theological jot and tittle, Russell Moore does a profound job of taking the Word, Work, and Promises of Christ very seriously and applying them in every day circumstances.

This book offers practical insight into adoption and cultural reactions to it through a penetrating theological lens. This book really affirms the Gospel as it answers the question, "Are you *really* a child of God or 'only adopted'?"

Mary J. Moerbe



Linda Cosgrove's installation on 8/13/06. Used by permission.

I recently walked into a rural Walmart in Indiana and saw a Muslim woman working there, strikingly visible wearing a black veil, her *hijab*. This was not a woman tucked away from society or contact with others.

From a Western perspective, Muslim women often symbolize oppression and discrimination against women. We may imagine them far away, uneducated, and disrespected. And while there are certainly women who fit that description around the world, it's not necessarily the best starting point when interacting with an Islamic woman in the United States of America. And Islam is becoming more and more common, in cities, suburbs, towns and countryside.

Islamic culture has a very different worldview than what we may be used to. First of all, they don't believe in progress the way that many of us do. While western cultures tend to strive toward education and technological advancement, Muslims believe that the true golden age was while Muhammad was alive. Yes, education and inventions can have their place in Islam, but obedience to Allah is emphasized more than trying to understand him or the world, even to the point of having rules about all facets of life. In some cases from what to eat to how to eat it!

But although followers of Islam may admit that they fall short or make mistakes, they do not recognize how

pervasive sin is. With our understanding of original sin, we know that sin is as much like a disease as it is an action. It's a conscious *and unconscious* rebellion! It taints what we do, think, and even feel. So when we hear terminology like "Savior from sin," it fills us with joy! We know that we deeply need a Savior, and by the Spirit every part of us can ache for Him. But in Islam, the term savior is as likely to be political or earthly than a religious one.

In Islam, it is incomprehensible that God would become Man. Their "Bible" is about their responsibility toward Allah, and not God's gracious, life-giving Word and mercy towards humanity. Yet they have the same needs of body and soul that we do. They are sinners. They need people to talk with. They have questions, feel guilt, and seek virtue. They have family troubles, illnesses, and disasters.

Our cultures and assumptions may be different, yet God has given us His gifts to share. And to cross such boundaries He has given us a wide array of terms with which to speak about Him: Redeemer, Reconciler, Substitute, etc. He intertwines Himself with creation by working through His Word and Sacraments. And He works through each one of us—through our vocations—to serve each other in all of our most human needs.

OUTREACH TO MUSLIM WOMEN

Some Assumptions to Think About

Mary J. Moerbe

Christians also lead lives of obedience to God, but ours is an obedience that overflows, not from ourselves, but from the gifts He gives. Ours is a God who has revealed Himself and gives understanding! He came in the flesh to reconcile the world to Himself and now gives us life, faith, forgiveness, and salvation through His Spirit. Ours is not a religion that constantly looks within, but one that proclaims instead who God has revealed Himself to be, what God has done, and what God continues to do.

When talking with Muslim women, we may need to stretch our biblical vocabulary. We may need to listen very carefully to see what might be driving their thoughts or questions. We may need to "become all things to all people" (1 Corinthians 9:22), but we have been given the Words of life and we can pray to be His vessels of mercy to whomever we meet. We can strive toward wisdom and discernment.

Mary J. Moerbe

"Me he hecho débil a los débiles, para ganar a los débiles; a todos me he hecho de todo, para que de todos modos salve a algunos." 1 Corintios 9:22

DIACONAL OPPORTUNITY: A MILITARY PROJECT

Carolyn Brinkley

To the far right is the cover of the 15 page coloring book designed by Deaconess Intern Carolyn Brinkley for Chaplain James Lucas. It will be distributed by the Afghan Military to establish goodwill with village people.



Can you imagine sitting in a tiny, windowless, tunnel basement office in Fort Wayne but being able to give diaconal care to countless suffering people who live halfway around the world in the horrors of war? This is the amazing opportunity of Concordia Theological Seminary's Military Project.

This was not always the case. The beginnings of the Military Project were focused only on providing for the basic earthly needs of our troops. But a deaconess sees things differently. Every task becomes an avenue to bring the mercy of Christ in not only a physical way, but also in a spiritual dimension.

In Martin Luther's Morning and Evening Prayers we pray, "For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul and all things." Our Heavenly Father cares for all aspects of

our being, physically and spiritually. This is clearly seen in the ministry of Jesus for He not only provided earthly bread, but also the Bread of Life. This is now the paradigm for the Seminary's Military Project in caring body and soul for our LCMS chaplains and those they serve, both soldiers and the indigenous people of Iraq and Afghanistan.

How is this done? Our Lord provides opportunity.

THE DIVINE SERVICE

Every two weeks the CD "Voice of Bethlehem" is sent. This contains two abbreviated Divine Services consisting of Scripture readings, sermon, liturgy and hymns. Cheryl D. Naumann, whose son David is currently serving on the front line in Afghanistan, writes, "You have provided something so precious in a situation where he has no worship."

CARE PACKAGES

Four times per year boxes are mailed containing: basic supplies of food and toiletries, "Words of Encouragement" written by the Seminary community, sacred music of Good Shepherd Institute and Kantorei CDs, devotional materials according to the Church Year, magazines—*For the Life of the World*, *The Lutheran Witness* and *Good News*, and theological books for distribution among the troops. In the April shipment the newly released *Christians Can be Soldiers* was included. This fresh translation of Luther's *Whether Soldiers Too Can Be In a Holy Estate* deals with the

moral dilemma of serving in combat and the conscience that is plagued with guilt when faced with taking the life of another. The next shipment will include *The Spirituality of the Cross* by Gene Edward Veith.

UNIQUE NEEDS OF OUR CHAPLAINS

Supporting our chaplains is ongoing and presents a myriad of diaconal opportunities for body and soul care. Chaplain Douglas Fleischfresser requested copies of *Martin Luther's Small Catechism* that resulted in "one adult affirmation on Christmas Eve along with an adult baptism/affirmation. It was a wonderful and joyous night on FOB Prosperity in Baghdad, Iraq."

Chaplain James Lucas asked that a culturally sensitive coloring book be designed for the Afghan military to be used in establishing goodwill with village people.

Another chaplain communicated that warm clothing was needed for 19 women living in a prison with their 10 children. The women were not criminals but had been put there by their families. Along with the sweaters, shawls and blankets what joy it was to include the Afghan coloring book, crayons and colored pencils providing beauty and creativity for these women and children!

Other requests from chaplains include: flannel sheets, popsicles, a wall mounted movie screen,

orphanage supplies of hats, mittens, scarves, books and toys, Advent wreaths, food, games and books for remote camps, a DVD player, Christmas decorations, CDs of hymn accompaniments, digital cameras and palm frond crosses. Currently dental kits are being sent in response to a request from Chaplain Russ Dewell. He writes, "The Afghans have no commercial access to toothpaste brushes, floss or mouth wash. This is a major factor in their low age mortality of late forties."

Churches and individuals from across the country are joining together in this goodwill service project.

Although the Military Project in previous years attended only to the physical needs of our soldiers and chaplains, now diaconal opportunities abound for body and soul care. For the deaconess these two areas of service cannot be separated.

Learning to see the possibilities transforms the mundane. What a privilege and joy it is to have a vocation that incorporates spiritual care with whatever earthly task is given!

Carolyn Brinkley

CALENDAR

July 7—Deadline for submissions to the next issue of *BLUES News*

July 10—64th LCMS Convention in Houston, Texas

July 18—Deadline for theme suggestions for next few *BLUES News*

CDC OFFICERS**President:**

Pamela J. Nielsen

Vice President:

Deborah Rockrohr

Secretary:

Cheryl D. Naumann

Treasurer:

Carol Schroeder

Membership:

Linda Cosgrove

Conference Logistics:

Ruth McDonnell

Spiritual and**Professional Growth:**

Renée Young

Spiritual Counselor:

Reverend John Berg

revberg@mac.com

Prayer requests can be emailed to the prayer coordinator at cdcprayers@comcast.net.

Digital pictures can be emailed to photos.cdc@gmail.com.

Members may purchase extra cross pins or insignias for themselves from Linda Cosgrove.

Please contact Linda Seward to use the CDC banner.



“A young woman gazes into a mirror. But what does she see? Perhaps she sees someone who believes such advertising slogans as ‘Indulge yourself,’ ‘You deserve a break,’ and ‘You’re worth it,’ all of which invite her to make herself the center of the universe. Or perhaps she sees a person who believes she ought not care for herself at all. Maybe she is that sort of Christian who would live so selflessly that she would neglect her own needs and risk running herself down.

To balance these extreme views of yourself, the Scripture says, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’

The Scripture commands that you ‘honor one another above yourself’ and share your faith with others so that they might also know God’s

forgiving love. By showing love for others—including enemies—in this way, you show love for your Lord. Your love for your neighbor expresses faith and trust in Jesus: ‘Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of Mine, you did for Me.’

But such love for your neighbor does not mean that you must abuse yourself and neglect your own needs! Rather, follow your Lord’s example, both praying for yourself (something many Christians hesitate to do) and caring for yourself, in order that you might be strengthened to serve.

A Christian’s self-care goes much deeper than prayer and rest. You care for yourself by looking into God’s

**DEVOTIONAL
BOOK EXCERPT**

*TO ALL ETERNITY:
THE ESSENTIAL TEACHINGS OF
CHRISTIANITY*

This beautifully illustrated book pairs Luther’s Small Catechism with art and meditations to intrigue the eye and enrich our understanding.

Word, which strengthens your faith and gives you love for your neighbor. You care for yourself by daily returning to your Baptism. You care for yourself through regular participation in Holy Communion. The Lord provides these precious means to sustain you and prepare you as a witness for His kingdom.

Look into the mirror of your own life, Christian! See there not the center of your own universe—but rather the center of God’s universe—that He loved you so much that He gave His Son to die for you.” (p. 122)

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