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[REDACTED]
Burbank, CA 91501
January 10, 1991

Dear Sirs,

I am unable to find words adequate to express my thanks to CSPAN—Connie Doebele, Brian Lamb and all the rest responsible for the two series from Germany. Petr Stastny has become a welcome old friend. I was totally addicted to the programs for four hours each day—plus the repeats. I also taped them.

Being a Lutheran (of German heritage on my father's side), I found it informative, enlightening and wonderfully well done.

I am enclosing articles from the Lutheran magazine. If you go back again (and I pray that you will), try to explore in more detail (I know you touched on it) this transformation of schools and the emphasis on consumption with loss of human connection for survival as mentioned in these articles.

To me these are problems where I live—too much of a rat race where greed is king. It seems that only tragedies or catastrophes bring out the best in us.

Again thank you!

FEB 5 ANS'D

cc: Connie Doebele
Brian Lamb
Barry Katz

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Loan fund up \$7 million

■ **The rate** of investment in the ELCA Loan Fund's mission investment program has risen sharply in recent months, fund officials say.

As a result, several newly organized congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America have started construction on their first church buildings.

The revolving loan fund lends money to new and developing congregations to buy land for a site, construct a church building or purchase a parsonage. Earlier this year, when the loan fund was out of ready cash, at least 20 congregations had to put building plans on hold.

New investments in the fund have increased from \$400,000 a month to about \$2 million a month, said ELCA Treasurer George Aker. Investments in the fund stood at \$71 million in November, up \$7 million from the first of the year, said Kenneth L. Murken, the fund's chief financial officer.

More than 7,000 individuals, congregations and institutions have money invested in the loan fund. Twenty-two ELCA synods have investments in the fund ranging from \$1,000 to \$350,000.

Investors can put money in for periods of one, three, five or 10 years. (There is a 1.5 percent penalty for early withdrawal.) The minimum investment is \$100. Interest rates vary, reflecting the fluctuations in certain U.S. Treasury securities. Lately, they have ranged from 8 percent to 8.5 percent.

Savings, endowments and memorial funds of ELCA congregations total \$750 million. "We'd like to get just 10 percent of that," Murken said.

Investors can designate funds to be loaned to a specific congregation, if it is on the Division for Outreach's waiting list to begin building as funds become available.

The loan fund has borrowed money from Chase Manhattan Bank in New York at prime interest rates to maintain its ability to make loans to congregations. But earlier this year, "we were bumping up against the limit that Chase would let us borrow," Murken said. Borrowings from Chase have been reduced from \$16 million to \$7.5 million in recent months.

The fund's total assets are \$185 million. Of that amount, \$100 million is currently loaned out to congregations, and \$75 million is in real estate holdings. ■

ELCA Loan Fund's big investors

Depositor	Amount
Lutheran Brotherhood	\$2,000,000
Pacifica Synod	38,000
North West Lower Michigan Synod	100,000
National Lutheran Campus Ministry	100,000
Tressler Lutheran Services, Mechanicsburg, Pa.	250,000
Trinity Lutheran Church, Abilene, Kan.	100,000
Pilgrim Lutheran Church, Indianapolis	250,000

(Note: This list reflects new investments of \$100,000 or more made since July 25. Loan fund officials said they hope to announce shortly three other investments from social ministry organizations—\$1 million from a group in the East, \$1 million from a group in the Midwest and a "multimillion" dollar investment, also from the Midwest.)

Source: ELCA Loan Fund

Survey finds 4 percent of ELCA members tithing

■ **Only 4 percent** of ELCA members "tithe," give 10 percent of their income to the church, a recently released survey indicates.

The survey was conducted for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America by its Office for Research, Planning and Evaluation, which termed the statistic on tithing "sobering."

"Less than a quarter even reach the mark of 5 percent [of income], and the median percentage of income given is 2.6 percent—about one-quarter of a tithe," the "Lutherans Say" survey says.

The ELCA is trying to increase the number of tithers among its members as part of its Mission90 emphasis.

Respondents who reported their giving to the church had a median giving level of \$780 a year—or \$15 a week.

Only 47 percent of respondents said they make a pledge. They pledged a median of \$960 a year, or \$18.46 a week. (That is, half the respondents pledged less than \$960 and half more than that.)

Researchers cautioned that the results "probably overestimate actual levels of pledging and giving among ELCA members." The results represent only members age 13 or older and do not include clergy.

More affluent members give more in absolute terms, the survey found, but they give a smaller proportion of their income than the less well-off. Older members and those actively involved in congregations give more dollars and give a larger proportion of income. ■

"There is no statistically significant relationship, however, between whether one pledges and what proportion of income one gives to the church," the report says.

Giving to other charitable organizations did not appear to have a negative effect on giving to the church.

The mail survey went to a random sample of ELCA members. A total of 855 members completed the questionnaire. The survey presented a "special problem of bias," researchers said. Respondents "may overstate the generosity of their giving to the church," and "those who give less generously than others may be less likely to answer questions on giving."

The amounts pledged varied tremendously, from \$12 a year to \$10,000 a year.

Those who are more educated or have a higher income are more likely to pledge, as are older members and very active members.

Predecessor church body affiliation was also cited as a factor. Seventy-five percent of respondents who came from the former Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches said they pledge. For members of the former Lutheran Church in America the corresponding figure was 54 percent, and for members of the former American Lutheran Church, 41 percent.

An analysis of the figures estimated that for every \$10,000 increase in income, a member's giving increases by \$226; for every 10-year increase in age, giving increases by \$117. ■

NEWS ANALYSIS:

Germany: The divisions persist

■ In the 1950s, Western media often claimed that the Evangelical Church in Germany [EKD] was the last enduring all-German link across the Iron Curtain between East and West.

Yet former East German churches are now dragging their heels on reunification. Why? Active, white-collar members of the East German evangelical church liked what they had become. By the 1970s most of them were proud of their self-identity. It steeled them against the ridicule of Westerners, who assumed they should want nothing more than to depart for the West. It made daily hardship worthwhile.

The East Germans' convictions made it possible for them to cough down the road in a gray, plastic, two-cylinder Trabant automobile without being fazed by legions of Mercedes roaring by.

This East German self-understanding is now under attack: Did they fight to achieve their small-but-beautiful philosophy for nothing? East German believers have regarded themselves as "poor but purer" than their West German colleagues. They assumed the West German church's wealth was achieved through accommodation with the economically, politically and militarily powerful.

The West now expects Easterners to cast aside the pride of being an underdog and join them in the ranks of the world's successful. To do so, the Eastern church will have to drop its resistance to state-collected church taxes, above-average salaries for clergy and military service by Christians. The East regards its much-treasured credibility to be at stake.

In the past, the East German church did not need to consider the opinions of Christian military officers when issuing pacifist statements. Officially, the East German army had been purged of Christian officers. Such clarity on peace questions is no longer secure.

In October, an internal paper of the Christian Democratic Party surfaced. In it, Eastern Germany's church leaders were "graded" according to past political performance. The paper admonished party faithful to infiltrate Eastern church circles.

Easterners tend to equate such attempts with those of the past communist government: The authorities promise privileges in exchange for political loyalty. Eastern pain is heightened by the conviction

Hand in Hand
mit unseren
kapitalistischen
Bruderländern!

Die Lehre von
Ludwig Ehrhard
ist richtig, weil
sie wahr ist!

Kapitalisten
aller Länder,
vereinigt Euch!



PROTESTERS demonstrate in East Berlin against German unity Oct. 2. Their signs allude to slogans once common in East Germany.

tion that the wrong values have triumphed. Eastern activists conclude that plans to increase economic consumption twofold can hardly be accepted as a model for the world to copy.

One element in jeopardy is what Dr. Manfred Stolpe, outgoing chief "diplomat" of East German Protestantism, calls the "fellowship of solidarity." Where no one was particularly wealthy or poor, the barriers between people were lower, Stolpe said. In past times, East Germans had to cultivate human connections and friendships to obtain hard-to-get supplies. Now the German Mark has replaced human contact as the magical key to any product.



STOLPE

The Rev. Friedrich Schorlemmer, pastor of Martin Luther's *Schlosskirche* in Wittenberg, has reported on East Germans' political sophistication. In the past, people sought, at considerable risk, to educate themselves on current affairs. Some fear that an avalanche of consumption will suffocate the intellectual curiosity and moral fervor of East Germans.

East Germans cherished their special contacts to churches in developing socialist

countries, such as Cuba and Nicaragua. A missions executive in East Berlin fears that his mission's relationship to the German-founded Tanzanian church will change dramatically. "The Tanzanians talked to the West Germans about money; with us, they talked about content," he said.

In a turbulent session of the East's Berlin-Brandenburg church synod Oct. 20, the majority voted to accept a system of state-collected church taxes. But they also introduced a minimum tax for low-income members, proposing that the West Berlin synod do likewise. "This may be the only time the Western churches change anything to accommodate us," said the Rev. Gerhardt Hildebrandt, pastor of East Berlin's *Sophienkirche*.

The unequal burden

Westerners imply that East Germany's heritage was a total failure and that the desire to retain remnants of it is the sign of a backward-looking, sentimental mind. "I can't throw away those 40 years," a kindergarten director protested. "They're part of who I am, and people will need to accept me for what I am."

In view of these beliefs, the statement of an East German Christian-Democratic politician, the Rev. Christine Lieberknecht, causes resentment among her theological colleagues. "In the future, the Eastern

churches will have not other choice but to accept, step by step, the laws and bylaws of the [West German] EKD," she said.

East Germans believe Westerners are profiting most from reunification. Westerners are becoming wealthier, the Easterners, poorer. Only a Westerner can afford to purchase a house in East Germany.

Thousands of homeowners fear that former owners, who fled to the West decades ago, will be successful in getting their their Eastern holdings returned to them. Salaries run 50 percent to 70 percent lower than in the West. Many civil servants sent to the East for an interim period receive more compensation for the hardship of working in the East than Easterners do in total salary. Only the Western economy is flourishing.

Bishop Gottfried Forck, Evangelical Church in Berlin-Brandenburg, protested vehemently against Western hesitance to invest in eastern Germany. "They wanted first of all to destroy our industry so that they could take it over more easily," he said. Westerners have not reduced the size of their pie slices in order to assist the East; Easterners assume they will receive larger slices only if the size of the pie increases.

On unification day, Oct. 3, Western speeches were decidedly more optimistic than Eastern ones. Forck labeled it "a day for contemplation." In stark contrast to West Germans, a survey revealed that slightly more than half of all East Germans felt more fear than joy. The threat of unemployment is taking an emotional toll.

The pace of unification has also been a source of East-West suspicion. "We don't want simply to be embraced and then take over all the laws of West Germany," Forck said. Time for contemplation is needed. "We can't do that in close cooperation with the sisters and brothers in the Federal Republic. We have to do that independently, by ourselves," he said.

Another observer concluded: "These are profoundly indignant people who need time to work through their indignation." At least for the active, white-collar church, the emotional division between East and West will remain indefinitely. A 38-year-old Baptist said, "Maybe my children will become West Germans, but I have been branded by the [German Democratic Republic]. I will always remain an East German."

■ BILL YODER

Yoder, of Evanston, Ill., is in Berlin doing research for a book.

'Die Wende' comes to East German school

■ **Laurie Gabel**, a member of All Saints Lutheran Church, Traverse City, Mich., was part of an ELCA group that visited East German churches shortly before the German reunification. Here is her account of one stop on the itinerary:

The Wilhelm-Pieck School smelled of chalk dust, children and cafeteria food. Two small boys, out of class on an errand, stared open-mouthed at six adult visitors. Giggling, they turned and disappeared around a corner. Small blond heads peeked from doorways. Shoes were lined up on mats in the hall to keep classrooms clean.

Members of an Evangelical Lutheran Church in America delegation were the first Westerners allowed to visit this public school in Zwickau, in what was formerly the [East] German Democratic Republic. We were the first to sit in its classrooms—a real mark of *die Wende*, "the change."

Over coffee Herrn Flaemig, the school director, told the group what *die Wende* means to East German schools. Only last year Flaemig was an art teacher. He was also a supervisor—a position that allowed him to intercept and conceal offensive dictates from the Communist government. When the change came, the former director lost his job. In the balloting for a new director, Flaemig was elected; his predecessor received not a vote.

Flaemig has set himself the task of creating a school that is open to all. The school's communist name—"It gave us a stomachache," Flaemig said—will be replaced by "Nikolai," the name of the city's first church. The street outside will be renamed after an anti-communist actress. A new parents' council will be put in place.

New textbooks are needed. The old ones emphasized communist policies. Whole chapters of many texts are simply being torn out or ignored. The director said he hopes for new books, but he does not know how he will get the money to buy them.

The schools have a credibility

problem. Students were taught one thing last year, and now they are being taught something entirely different—by the same teachers. Youth don't know whether to trust the teacher or the textbook.

Not every teacher welcomed the change. While many had demonstrated and prayed for peace, others remain staunch Stalinists. Reconciliation is difficult. Veteran teachers are being asked to go back to school to learn new ways. Many of the faculty are unsure and suspicious. With such division among teachers, it is not hard to imagine similar differences among students.

Entering a classroom, we found it almost like that of an American school. It was the first day of English class after the summer holiday. The students were somewhat inattentive, whispering and fidgeting, excited to have visitors. Their teacher, most nervous of all, introduced the American guests. One child stepped forward and said, "Class 5B is now ready for the lesson." The teacher said "Good morning" in English and asked about the students' holidays, urging them to speak in English. They were hesitant, speaking almost inaudibly and with difficulty.

Our East German translator asked if we could talk with the children. I showed them Michigan on the map, talked about cherry trees and Lake Michigan and passed around pictures. Bishop Robert Studtmann of the Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod was the real hero: He talked about something the students already knew about—cowboys and Indians.

The cafeteria—not at all like an American one—had only one offering on the menu, and everyone ate it. With the change in Germany, food is more expensive in the East; some students can't afford it. The change isn't good for everyone.

For Flaemig and his colleagues, running the school in this new era will require a careful balancing act. □

LAURIE GABEL



MALPICA (left) ordains Gonzalez, Abad and Ebanks.

First Cuban Lutheran pastors ordained

■ **Packed into** a pastel blue-and-white Methodist church on the Isle of Youth, 90 miles south of Havana, some 100 Cuban Lutherans watched Nov. 4 as three men became the first Cuban Lutheran pastors in history.

One of them, the Rev. Ramon M. Benito Ebanks, has been serving as president of the Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Cuba since the government officially recognized the church May 7.

"Never in my wildest dreams did I expect to be in Cuba to give the body and blood in the sacrament," said Caribbean Synod Bishop Rafael Malpica-Padilla of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. At the request of the Cuban church, Malpica officiated at the ordinations.

The preacher was Dr. Alberto Pereyra, associate professor in the Lutheran Seminary Program in the Southwest, a Wartburg Seminary outpost in Austin, Texas. Josefina Nieves Lebron, president of the ELCA Hispanic Association, presented each pastor with a carved wooden cross.

After being ordained, the pastors' first official act was to set aside Samuel Ruiz Avalos, a student at an interdenominational seminary in Matanzas, as a deacon.

Each pastor will serve a parish. But since the fledgling church has very little money and owns no property, each pas-

tor also holds a job in the state-run economy. Ebanks, 49, a plumber, will serve St. John Lutheran, a congregation of 90 members located on the Isle of Youth. The island lies in the Caribbean Sea, 60 miles south of Cuba's "big" island. The parish also has two other preaching points.

The Rev. Antonio Abad Alvarez, 63, a street cleaner, will be pastor of Christ the Redeemer Lutheran Church, Havana, where Ruiz, the church's secretary, will assist. The church has about 45 members. The Rev. Ramon E. Gonzalez Guevara, 28, works in the fields during the week and serves a new congregation of seven families in Pinar del Rio.

Although Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod efforts in Cuba date back to 1907, no Cubans had ever been ordained. Mission efforts were conducted in English with pastoral leadership provided by missionaries. The LCMS began Spanish-language work in 1956, but no pastors had been ordained when the LCMS left Cuba in 1959 after the rise of Fidel Castro.

Lay leadership took over the church. Abad is credited with keeping much of the church alive in those years.

After the government confiscated the only three Lutheran church buildings, members met in homes or in borrowed Methodist and Episcopal churches. The government still holds the buildings. Two

are in Havana—one used as a film studio, the other for housing. A large tract on the Isle of Youth—including a church building, parochial school (used recently as a science academy), parsonage and athletic field—is now vacant. The government has promised to return it to the church.

The Sunday afternoon ordination service capped a two-day celebration. On Saturday evening, 43 Havana-area residents rode a Soviet-made hydrofoil for two hours to the Isle of Youth. Along with local members, the group gathered under a grape arbor on the roof of Ebanks' home, a sturdy concrete structure. They had a festive meal of *caldosa*, a mixture of bananas, sweet potatoes, pork, chicken and fish, cooked over an open fire.

That evening, Ebanks announced that the next day was "Red Sunday," when organizations traditionally work in the fields. "Our church constitution says we work for the betterment of society, so a bus will pick us up at 8 a.m.," he said. "We'll work for two hours, then come back and get ready for the service."

A busload of Lutherans moved out the next morning to cut sweet potato "slips," the ends of vines that are planted for the next crop. On their ordination day, the new pastors were first workers, then clergy. ■

EDGAR R. TREXLER

Trexler is editor of *The Lutheran*.