

Fallibilities

by [Martin E. Marty](#) in the [October 27, 1999](#) issue

Readers supply us with more items for this column than we can acknowledge or print, but we do our best to sneak these signs of human fallibility in among our weighty pronouncements. Recent mail has brought the following:

An Addlebury, Massachusetts, church invites hypocrites: "All who seek a closer pretense of Christ in their lives will be welcomed at communion." Must we Lutherans now believe in the "Real Pretense"?

The Pacific Lutheran University Scene describes the Nicene Creed as "an essential part of the doctrine and liturgy of the Lutheran and Episcopal churches since it was adopted by the church council in AD 325."

Where is God? A Sun City church bulletin answers that question by announcing the death of a 102-year-old woman, "who went to be with the Lord in Amarillo, Texas."

A church advertisement in Brunswick, New York, invented a new name for the day after Maundy Thursday: "Food Friday." No doubt flavored with vinegar and gall.

Sandra McNulty sent in a *Delaware County Times* (Delhi, New York) column which described 1899 church customs: "Every lady attending church on Easter Sunday would wear a hat, and some would have an entire wardrobe." McNulty imagines the rest: "We will now stand and sing, 'Just As I Am Without One Pleat.' Ladies wearing hats only remain seated."

A Cleveland Heights, Ohio, bulletin includes a prayer suggesting that corruption reaches deep, or high: "Cleanse the thoughts of your Holy Spirit . . ."

In Greenville, Tennessee, the promoters of a "Men's Day of Renewal" quote Proverbs 19:21 interestingly: "Many are the plans in a man's heart . . ." It's a dog's life.

In Tucker, Georgia, a church advertises an event called "Men's Night to Cook." The flyer proclaims, "All females are invited, whether or not you have a male to cook!" That's tender and rare.

In Seattle a Congregational Church that we won't identify advertises a parenting course: "A modest fee will be charged." Watch out for the special prosecutor—who might also be interested in an Appleton, Wisconsin, church whose name, if the advertisement is right, is "First Congressional United Church of Christ." Who legislated that name?

Unfortunately, a proofreader caught this one before it appeared in a Mennonite magazine; he or she was asking, "Where's the beef?" The uncorrected copy says that the Mennonites sent "two 20-foot containers filled with 67,200 pounds of MCC canned beer" to Albania. How's that for humanitarianism!

And a Wichita reader caught this interesting translation of the Spanish word for "eschatological." The bulletin of the National Shrine of Our Lady of San Juan (Texas) says the shrine is "a scatological sign." That's the living end!

An Oxford, Ohio, church bulletin prompts the congregation to pray for "all who are sick, insured, or disabled." These HMO days, being insured can sometimes be disabling.

Here's a winning name for a church, proposed by a Pennsylvania reader: "The Mount Zion Commandment Keeping Church of the First Born." I'm out. I'm a middle child.