

## **Lutheran Lay Fellowship of Metropolitan Washington DC**



### **LUNCHEON MEETING**

**Thursday, August 2, 2012 – 12:00 noon**

Saint Luke Lutheran Church  
9100 Colesville Road at Dale Drive  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

### **Opening**

Bob “Sarge” Sargent opened the meeting of the Lutheran Lay Fellowship (LLF) by asking for those who were celebrating birthdays and anniversaries during the month of August. Devotions were then led by LLF’s Chaplain, Pastor Larry Schmidt.

### **Announcements**

Following lunch, Bonnie Priebe announced that Johanna Koenig was the recipient of our \$1,500 scholarship for 2012. She’s attending St. Mary’s College of Maryland where she aspires to a career in clinical social work carrying out professional rehabilitative therapeutic methods to change the lives of others who have been thrown into unfortunate situations. She feels her faith in God will allow her to have faith in the ability of her patients to change their situation. She is a member of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Gaithersburg, Maryland, where she has been active in many areas of the congregation, especially working with children. Johanna is bilingual, speaking both English and German. She’s also open water SCUBA certified and certified in CPR/ First Aid. We’re delighted to be able to provide this scholarship money to such a worthy young woman. We wish her well.

### **Presentation**

Michael J. Kurtz, PhD, retired National Archives archivist, spoke on the life of the Rev. Robert B. Lantz, the subject of his book Robert B. Lantz - A Transformative Life: "No Miracle - Just Hard Work." Pastor David Berg introduced Dr. Kurtz. Pr. Berg first met Pr. Lantz in 1974 at St. Paul's College, and feels he literally owes his life to him. Dr. Kurtz currently serves as interim pastor in Pasadena, MD., and lectures at the University of Maryland.

Dr. Kurtz began by positing that when you do a biography must ask: Does this individual merit a biography and are you capable of doing it? Dr. Lantz counseled Dr. Kurtz for many years, and even beyond that Dr. Kurtz recognized that his values, perspectives, experience, wisdom and insight in the field of clinical pastoral education and counseling was worthy of sharing. What made it possible was that there was treasure-trove of documentation: his CPE certification package, how he set up training programs, and clinical notes. Most remarkable was a "study of the self" paper done during his seminary years.

Who was Dr. Lantz? He grew up in South Amherst, MA, of Scots-Irish heritage, with values of hard-work, thrift, piety of his maternal Presbyterian forebears. His family, however, had numerous conflicts which helped him learn from them for his counseling work. He was a very angry, frustrated young man. His way out was work, as he stayed out doing school work and church activities. He came to understand the reasons for his familial limitations and conflicts. He worked his way through college as a Kirby vacuum salesman, ultimately a regional distributor.

During college he decided to become a pastor, being attracted to and supported by strong male figures. His own mother was emotionally distant and he was nurtured by another woman his father hired to provide motherly care. However, he realized that parish ministry was not where he felt called, but the arena of clinical pastoral education was then developing and he chose that route. He always taught his students to ask the question Why? He felt his mission was to help people do what they wanted to do, not what others wanted them to do. He learned that he could not solve or fix everything, but that sometimes things are out of one's control. After a brief, required stint pastoring a congregation, he worked with women in a CPE setting. He observed that for some women getting pregnant out of wedlock was a substitute for suicide as an attention-getting mechanism.

He moved on into CPE supervision, developing a deep pastoral relationship with his students, many of whom were thrown into CPE not of their own volition. He used the Rogerian counseling approach, listening and eliciting, rather than interpreting or labeling. He followed CPE pioneer Boyson's approach to study the living human document. He began the first chaplaincy and CPE program at Baltimore Hospital. From there he moved on to the Memphis Institute for Medicine and Religion, and expanded to training pastors from other denominations. He became a certified CPE supervisor at age 29.

At the time CPE was psychoanalytically based. His entrepreneurial talents were utilized as he developed a number of organizations. He taught at St. Paul's College in Washington, DC., which closed in the early 1970's, and so he opened the Washington Institute for Pastoral Counseling, and later the Maryland Institute for Pastoral Counseling in Annapolis. He employed only highly trained clinicians, not only pastoral counselors. John Kapanke, CEO of the Board of Pensions said Pr Lantz was the most financially savvy Lutheran pastor in America. He charged sliding scale fees, but would not deal with insurance companies. He felt people would value their experience more if they paid for it. Along the way he founded numerous counseling and consulting entities serving the

church and business organizations. He served on synodical candidacy (vocations) committees, advised Bishops, provided financial consultation to Lutheran organizations, helping them grow their endowments. With Kapanke he developed the Association of Pastoral Care Education, and ultimately got CPE sanction as an insurance-covered service. He was instrumental in the development of the first Masters and Doctoral level education programs in CPE.

He led a balanced life. He had a tremendous love of boating and the water, reinforcing his need for freedom, and where he was refreshed and replenished. He believed it's most important to live where you want to live: other things will come along, like work. He believed in the long, long, view of organizational life. The book title "No miracle, Just Hard Work" was his motto.

After Dr. Kurtz's presentations there was a question and answer period including the following as examples.

Q: Did he have spiritual directors in his life? A: He was a very private man. Richard Mylar, M.D., a psychiatrist at the Medical College of VA was a mentor. Henry Castler, active in the Lutheran church pastoral counseling arena; and the Hamma Seminary Dean were also instrumental in his life formation.

Comment: Bishop Graham admitted that he "passed under his eyes at the examining panel for pastors." He felt grilled and thought he might not be approved, and Pr. Lantz admitted "poking" at him.

Notes by Barbara E. Solt, PhD, LICSW