



An Interview With *Terry*

By Beth Foreman

Grab a tall cool glass of iced tea and curl up in your favorite chair for a visit with Terry Kieschnick, wife of the Rev. Dr. Jerry Kieschnick, the “first lady” of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Imagine her sitting next to you with that genuine smile and contagious laughter. Listen as she graciously shares her stories and her faith — with a hint of that comfortable Texas drawl. Y’all are invited to take a peek into her life...

This summer issue of the Quarterly explores women as they face life’s changing chapters. What are some of the chapters in your life?

Oh my! I have had my share of transitions over the years! It’s a wonderful life being married to a pastor and especially our experiences since Jerry became president. We love what we’re doing together. Living out of a suitcase is interesting. Sometimes I’ll get to the hotel and open up my suitcase and say, “Oh! Look at what I packed!” It’s sometimes a surprise and always an adventure.

What is the best part about being the “first lady” of the LCMS?

I love meeting all the people across the country and around the world. The travel has been exciting. Yes, it’s challenging — especially getting used to all those different hotel pillows. They’re either pancakes or hard as concrete! I’ve learned to laugh a lot, though, especially at myself.

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Tell us about your travels.

It's an adventure to wake up in the middle of the night and think, "Which way is the bathroom?" We're on the go all the time. I've gone with Jerry to Alaska, Asia, Germany,

South America, Africa, Hawaii, and all over the United States. Every place has been special but going overseas has been such fun. However, we don't really go and sight-see or sit on the beach. When we visited Hawaii, it would have been nice to sit on the beach all day and read a book, but we were busy visiting mission congregations, schools and people. We did have a little time to snorkel in the bay — and the phone didn't ring once while we were in the water! I also had the greatest experience fly-fishing in Alaska. I'll never forget the beauty and seeing a magnificent eagle overhead. Wow!

Does any one experience stand out in your memory?

I'll never forget being in Africa, a place of God's beauty. One of the church services in Nigeria lasted for five hours; it was such a beautiful service. The congregation danced up to the altar with the offering. And the women? They truly love the LWML and some of them walk miles to get to a meeting!

Tell us about your family.

One of my favorite subjects! My Prince Charming, the love of my life, and I have just celebrated 40 years of marriage.

And your children...

We were blessed to have the best of both worlds. Our Angie came along — and I even watched her come into the world. I thought, "Hey, I've come this far, I'm going to watch this birth!" Then we waited and waited for our next baby and he came in a completely different way. We adopted our son when he was two years and two months old. He was old enough that we thought we shouldn't give him a new name. And when we found out his name was Andrew — this was the boy's name we'd picked out when I was pregnant with





Angie! We had the best of both worlds, and now I can share this chapter of my life with many other women who are considering adoption.

And your grandchildren...

Our children and grandchildren live in Texas, but we try to spend as much time with them as we can. Angie and Todd, our "son-in-love," have two children: Kolby, who will be 12 years old in July, and Kayla, who will be 11 in August.

You've had your own work experiences, haven't you?

When my children were young, I stayed home with them and loved it. I was so busy being a mother and I did some things on the side in those early years. Then I spent 17 years managing a wholesale fine jewelry business in Texas: buying and selling diamonds, managing a large showroom, working with jewel-

ers and doing some consulting work. I had to get used to putting on pantyhose every single morning!

So, what drew you away from that fast-paced and exciting life?

One day I was asked to speak to a women's group and as I prepared, I realized it might be time to change chapters in my life. Jerry's term limit as Texas District President was nearing its close, and when he was considering his options, I chuckled and kidded with him — as I love to do — "Whatever you do, I just don't want you in my kitchen!" When he was elected Synod President, he joked with me, "I guess I won't be in your kitchen!"

You have a passion for ministering to pastors' wives, right?

Oh, yes. The pastor's wife is an unsung hero. My hat and my heart go out to them. Some are so happy and fulfilled. And some are really hurting. I try to share what I've learned from my own experiences. I tell them that when they go to a new church, they need to build





Terry with husband Rev. Dr. Gerald Kie-schnick, President of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

friendships. It's a balancing act, and as God's special angels, they have challenges especially when they move.

How about all of your moves?

I leave part of my heart in every place we've lived. We started out — the seminary years — in Springfield, Illinois, which for this Texas gal was the end of the earth! God called Jerry to Biloxi, Mississippi, and then to Beaumont, Texas; he started mission churches first in Winnie and then in Georgetown. We spent many years in Texas. That's our home.

What's a "typical" day in your life?

Well for starters, I don't have a social secretary. I am my own social secretary! I have a little office at home where I check e-mails and write notes. Really, I'd love to just sit and grow hair, but it just doesn't happen very often! I do enjoy reading mysteries, romances, and cook-books. I love to cook.

So, do you entertain often?

Oh yes! And I love it! We have entertained all kinds of groups in our home, including the LWML Executive Committee members last year. It's one way I can reach out to others. I'm sometimes cooking for 60 people — and I enjoy every minute of it. It's my love gift to many people. I tell them to take off their shoes, take off their ties, and relax.

What do you want to share with our LWML readers?

The women are the heartbeat of our church and LWML is such a powerful force. The organization has already accomplished so much for missions — the sky's the limit! I am encouraged to see some changes for today's women. It's a different world. For example, what's going to make a single mom take her kids through the McDonald's after a long day at work, park them at a babysitter, and then go to an LWML meeting? What will she hear there? And the young women need mentors. They need women to pray for them and encourage them.

How about living as a 21st century woman? What words of wisdom do you have?

We are our own worst critics! We aren't perfect and we make mistakes. But we have to be happy with ourselves and then we can be happy with others. Women need to take care of themselves — make time each day, even if it's only 15 minutes where you get all pruned in the bathtub! Take a walk. Polish your nails. Read a magazine. Stop to notice the little blessings. Maybe your bones are going *snap, crackle, pop*, but we can still see His presence around us. And let

the beauty He's given you shine forth!
You go, girl!

What do women today need?

They need to sit down and spend time with God, for starters. And women need other women. God gave us two arms so we can reach out and love somebody. Women can be everything they dream — maybe not all at once. We have different chapters in our lives. Some women can juggle work and family better than others. Me? I loved being home with my children and keeping my home for my family. Then I was able to go and do different things when they were grown.

Do you have a favorite Bible verse?

Oh, there are so many! Every year I have different verses that give me strength and focus. This year my special verse is...*for this purpose I have raised you up, to show you my power, so that my name*

may be proclaimed in all the earth (Exodus 9:16 ESV).

Any closing thoughts for our readers?

Cherish all the chapters in your life. God has placed you in this place and for this time. Let Him use you! These past few years have reminded me of the importance of laughter. Learn to laugh a lot, especially at yourself! And remember one of my favorite verses: *Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the LORD your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you* (Deuteronomy 31:6 ESV).

Hugs and blessings to all the LWML women. I appreciate all you do. God bless your day!

Beth Foremen is Features Editor for the Lutheran Woman's Quarterly.

Board of Directors Meet in St. Louis

Not only did the LWML Board of Directors conduct business at its meeting in St. Louis earlier this year, but they also had the opportunity to worship at the Chapel of St. Timothy and St. Titus at Concordia Seminary and help their LWML sisters in need.

The weekend kicked off with a tour of the LWML exhibit at the Concordia Historical Institute on the seminary campus, followed by a worship service in the chapel, with Seminary President Rev. Dr. Dale A. Meyer as the proclaimer.

The weekend ended with the presentation of a surprise gift of \$3,555 given to



Louisiana–Mississippi District LWML President Marcia Wittenburg by LWML President Linda Reiser. (See photo.) Because the LA–MS District had faced so many challenges after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the members of the LWML Board of Directors brought monetary gifts to help their sister district meet its 2004–2006 biennium mite goal.