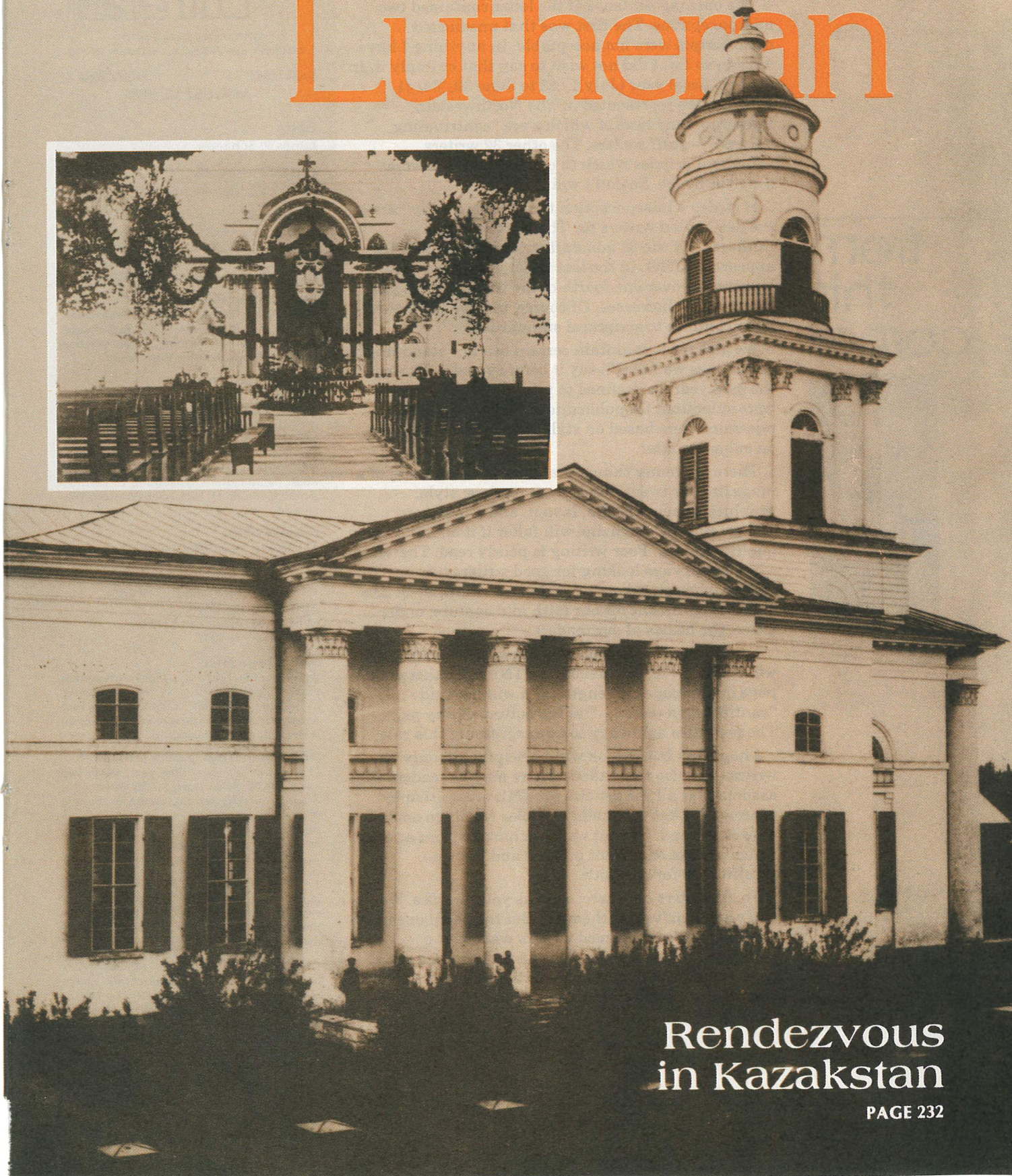
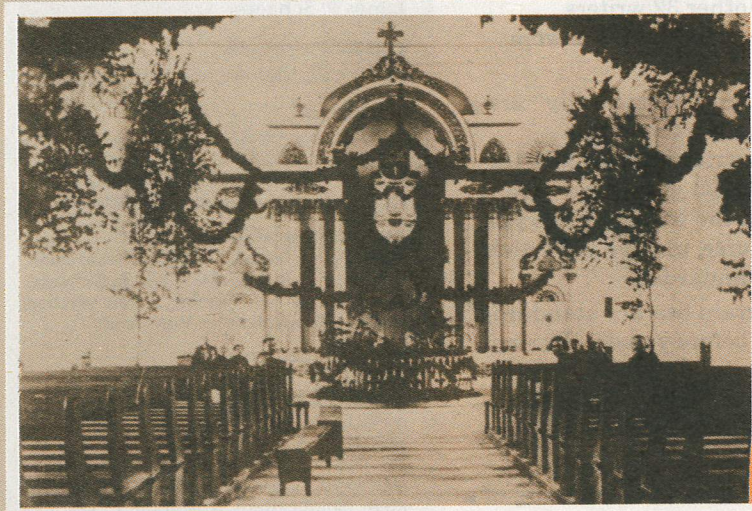


The
Northwestern
Lutheran

AUGUST 15, 1984



Rendezvous
in Kazakstan

PAGE 232

from this corner



Several months ago I received a letter in which a manuscript was enclosed. "I know," the letter began, "that you do not accept manuscripts which are unsolicited or from writers who are not pastors. But I thought you might make an exception in this case." The article was gladly received and has since appeared in print.

The opening sentence of the letter contained two misconceptions. The first was that unsolicited manuscripts were not acceptable. In anything I have written so far, I did not wish to say that or imply it. In the last fiscal year (July 1, '83 to June 30, '84) 41 writers were represented in The Northwestern Lutheran, only nine of which were "contributing editors" — staff writers. The other 32 writers submitted articles which in only a few cases were solicited by me. So don't wait to be asked!

It is also a misconception that "pastors only" are the designated writers for The Northwestern Lutheran. Of the 32 nonstaff writers whose articles appeared in TNL in the last fiscal year, nine were laypersons, over one-fourth of the writers. Each year that number increases. Of course, always the article must conform to scriptural standards.

We also try to maintain certain literary standards. Sometimes we fail (I'll say it before you do). During the past year we declined to print 35 articles which were submitted for publication. While most of the rejections were based on style, some were based also on subject matter.

There are many things that go into the making of a magazine for twentieth-century readers: style, graphics, timely articles, layout, and a few more things. But the magazine will falter if it does not carry quality writing. Poor writing is poorly read. Therefore — we are always looking for good writers (lay or clergy) who can take a subject of current interest or a subject significant for our faith and capture, under grace, the hearts of our readers.

Length is another problem. The discriminating eye will note that feature articles in TNL are either one page or two pages in length. You will not find "continued on page . . ." at the bottom of *any* page. The penalties are heavy for transgressing this rule.

I hope this inside look will be helpful not only for writers but also for readers. There may be readers who assume that all the articles for TNL are written by pastors. Or that we publish articles which go on and on without end. Or that we work hard to print articles which are not of current interest and have no significance for our faith.

To all writers out there: send us your articles. We can't and won't print them all. But the backbone of this magazine is the good writers who can be persuaded to write for it. And the last word on style? — "Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt" (Colossians 4:6).

James P. Schaefer

COVER — A Lutheran church located in Balzar, Russia. The date of the photograph is probably pre-World War I.

*May the Lord our God be with us
as he was with our fathers;
may he never leave
or forsake us. 1 Kings 8:57*

The Northwestern Lutheran

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Treasure for our children

The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field (Matthew 13:44).

Only one day left to live! What would you do? Such was the question asked of students in different high schools several years ago in West Germany. Their answers were revealing. Twenty percent of the young men indicated they would spend that day in drinking, drug taking, and illicit sex. Other students said they'd commit suicide rather than wait for death to come. Still others wanted their favorite pet near when they died.

How would we answer? How would we want our children to answer? Isn't that a good question as we begin shortly another season of Christian education in our congregations? When their last day comes, what do we want as *treasure for our children?*

What it is

Today we have bank vaults and safety deposit boxes, but in Jesus' day people had only their homes or fields. In the dark of the night or at the approach of the enemy the spade would dig into the sod and the treasure would be hidden, sometimes for years if the owner disappeared. Then one day the plow would hit a corner of the container and the treasure would appear in the furrow. No one had to tell the plowman what it was. It was his and he was rich!

What's the treasure? Need we explain? It's Christ with all that he is and all that he offers. It's his rubies of forgiveness, his silver of strength against temptation, his diamonds of hope for heaven. How tragic not to recognize the worth of this treasure. In the Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C., we found the

longest line of people ahead of a special glass case, protected by armed guards and an electronic alarm, housing the famous 44½ carat rare, deep-blue, Hope diamond. To so many Jesus and his treasures seem like pennies contrasted to the Hope diamonds of the world. To be rich and have what you want; to have fun and do what you want; to have power and make others do what you want; such are their goals in life. Possessions, pleasure, and power are the treasures they want for themselves and for their children.

Am I suggesting that we dispose of all our earthly goods and hope our children are never successful in life? Of course not! Certainly we need to train our children in earthly matters, teaching them how to acquire honestly and use honorably possessions, pleasure, and power. But above all, we need to do all we can to teach them about Jesus. When their last day on earth comes, he's the treasure we want them to have. Then they'll be eternally rich!

Where it is found

Where do you find this treasure? In the parable the man found it right under his feet in the soil. The Wise Men found it in a manger at Bethlehem; Simeon in the temple; the woman of Samaria at Jacob's well; Mary of Bethany at Jesus' feet; the malefactor at the center cross.

We've found it at the baptismal font, in the home of our parents, the church bench, the parish school classroom. Connected with all these was that blessed gospel message of God's love for us in Christ. Through that gospel, God's Spirit found us, brought us to faith, made us rich! Only in that gospel are Christ and his supreme treasures to be had.

Whether it's parochial school or Sunday school, Lutheran high school or Synod school, the treasure chest of the Word is to be central.

With that Word we can offer Christ and all that he is and has to our children. Do we realize what God in his grace has done for us? We have that Word intact with no cheap imitations thrown in or real gems thrown out. To our children we can offer in full that one treasure which counts when life's last day comes. Now let our use and support of that Word show that we realize what we have.

What it costs

The treasure in the field cost the man nothing. Someone else had paid for it. Yet it cost him everything as he hurried home to sell all he owned so that he could buy that field and have the treasure completely and permanently for himself.

Get the point? Salvation's price tag was something only God could afford. It required the blood of his Son, and God's love willingly paid the price in full. Now that completed salvation is offered freely to us. No strings are attached; the gift is free. Yet that free gift costs us everything. New values, new attitudes, new actions are ours, not because they are forced upon us or pressured out of us, but because we know what we have in Christ and want it more than anything else in the world. With Paul we join in saying, "I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord" (Philippians 3:8). With the hymnwriter it becomes, "Here, Lord, I give myself away. 'Tis all that I can do."

That, too, we want to teach to our children! □



Pastor Lauersdorf is at St. John's Lutheran Church, Jefferson, Wisconsin.

The making of a preacher

A few months back my wife received a letter from a friend who is a longtime Lutheran. One can sense her pain as she reports that she and her husband have been going to the Methodist church in town. Why? "Our biggest problem is not getting a thing out of the sermons. Pastor uses ideas and words that are way beyond the average person and no one understands what's being said."

That's not the first time I heard such a complaint from church members. It set me to thinking (again) about the making of a preacher. Our Synod has committed itself to a strong emphasis on the study of languages in preparing our pastors for ministry. English, Latin, German, Greek, Hebrew — all are normally required for entrance to our Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. At our seminary the study of God's Word in the original languages is stressed.

Most of our seminary students begin their study of the languages on the high school (prep school) level. Students entering the seminaries of other Lutheran church bodies may have had little language study. I recently heard of a student entering a Lutheran seminary who was required to take a one-month crash course in Greek before being admitted.

Does all this language study produce good preachers? Is it wise for us as a Synod to use our financial resources, the offerings of our people, to maintain our prep schools and their emphasis on language study?

One can hardly argue the point that language study is the first step to the making of a good preacher. For language study prepares the pastor to apply himself to the text of the Holy Scriptures. There can be no good preaching which does not grow out of such serious study of the Word of God, which is not rooted in the Word of God. As a Synod we must continue to give our future preachers the tools which will enable them to dig deeply into the Scriptures. We members of WELS should be prepared to support our worker training program with our offerings if we truly want to have good preachers.

But for preachers it's not enough simply to apply oneself to the text of the Bible. It's not enough to know the meaning of all the words, know the proper grammatical terms, know the historical context of the writing. The Word of God must be applied to people where they are. Sermons need to be practical and down-to-earth. Sermons must touch listeners where they hurt. To feel the pulse of the world is a requirement for good preaching. Preaching needs to be useful and relevant. That's a challenge for us preachers. It's work. It means knowing people — their frustrations, their fears, their anxieties, their doubts. And it takes the blessing of the Holy Spirit. All this goes into the making of a preacher.

Victor H. Prange



Pastor Prange
is at Peace,
Janesville,
Wisconsin.

letters

As others see us

I would like to comment on Pastor Gerlach's article, "As others see us" (May 15, p. 154).

"As Mr. M. saw it, he was turning a deaf ear to the church, not necessarily to God. The picture the church was projecting of itself to him was not true of his perception of reality."

Pastor Gerlach suggests the fault is with the King James Version, certain liturgical forms, hymns, prayers, etc., which are not modern. God is being presented in old-fashioned language, creating a poor image.

I agree a good pastor will apply God's Word to present-day situations. Our pastor always does that. He also prays in modern English, reads frequently from the NIV and is innovative in many areas.

But how much can you do with God?

The man Pastor Gerlach sat next to could have profited from a good sermon on who God really is and put a bit of humility into his bones. Jesus was very humble. He *trod* the fields, rode a donkey, told parables, healed the sick, forgave sins and died for us. Was he old-fashioned too? He didn't helicopter into Jerusalem, nor did he need a computer button to make his enemies fall back! *He had the power.*

There will be some who will not "get a hearing for it" — they don't like the message.

Vivian Roberts
Hopkins, Michigan

This letter has been prompted by Pastor Gerlach's article about his encounter in an airplane with a marketing man from a computer company who stated that he did not "put much stock" in the church anymore. After some discussion with his fellow passenger, Pastor Gerlach concluded that the man's alienation from church was over "matters of form, not with matters of substance."

One wonders had the airplane they were flying on experienced sudden decline in cabin pressure, causing the oxygen masks to drop in front of the passengers, if the marketing executive would have rejected his oxygen mask over matters of form: wrong color, unappealing shape, old date of manufacture, etc.? I seriously doubt it. A des-

perate man is unconcerned with "matters of form."

And that is just the point: the gospel of Jesus Christ is for the desperate. "Blessed are those who *hunger* and *thirst* for righteousness, for they will be filled."

This is not to say that the liturgies on pages 5 and 15 of our hymnal are inspired. Nor is it to suggest that there is some virtue in using archaic language in church. (The two congregations I serve hear the lessons and sermon text from the NIV.)

It is, however, to refuse to let someone who rationalizes his nonattendance at church and lack of hunger for God's Word to send me scurrying to the ecclesiastical computer in an attempt to find a more marketable form for the message of life.

Terry B. Nuckolls
Alpine, California

Pastor Gerlach lightly disposes of traditional church liturgy (pages 5 and 15 of the hymnal) as a mere formality and suggests that we might do well to replace it with something more modern and "relevant." I cannot question his sincerity or his motives, but I must question his methods. What he is saying sounds like an instant replay of portions of the divisive ELIM movement which nearly destroyed the Missouri Synod a few years ago.

To imply that anything old is outmoded and "irrelevant" is obviously a questionable generalization. Pastor Gerlach assures us that he is referring only to a change in form without a change in substance. However, the theoretical distinction between form and substance is not always easy to make in practice; also, form is often as important as substance in determining the nature or characteristics of certain things. If the exact form of our liturgy doesn't really matter (as implied by "Mr. M." as an inducement to abandon traditional forms of worship), why the persistent push to get rid of "pages 5 and 15 of the hymnal"?

Pastor Gerlach indicates that our failure to modernize our language and form of worship may lead people to think that "technological progress was passing God by." Such thinking is "relevant" only to those who fail to see God as the omnipotent and omniscient Creator. I cannot conceive of the Creator being or appearing to be less sophisticated than his creatures. It seems that the "articulate" (but mis-

guided) Mr. M. would have "the tail wagging the dog." Apparently he does not want to worship God but wishes to bring God down to his (human) size and status.

Leonard A. Mues
Salinas, California

Pastor Gerlach responds:

The intent of the article was not to emphasize that sin and grace must always be the essential components of a proper witness to the unchurched. The intent was rather to urge the church to sharpen its awareness of the image it projects of itself to the unchurched.

Correspondents Nuckolls and Roberts do not address the point at issue in the article. Yet they appear to concede the point by observing that contemporary translations and prayers are used in worship services in their churches. The article urges congregations to scrutinize themselves in other areas as well in their efforts to be adept at being all things to all men.

Correspondent Mues does address himself to the point at issue in the article. But he reads more into my words than I intended. The article does not advocate "lightly disposing of traditional church liturgy as a mere formality." Improve it, yes! Make it more readily understandable, yes! Dispose of it, no!

The "ELIM movement which nearly destroyed the Missouri Synod a few years ago" was not a movement which attacked form, as Mr. Mues suggests. ELIM directed a lethal blow at substance. The heart of the ELIM movement was the advocacy of the higher-critical method of Bible interpretation — a method of interpretation which undermines the authority of the Bible by denying its inerrancy and redefining its inspiration.

The article asks: "What unnecessary barriers do we put in the way of those we are trying to lead to the cross?" We are less than faithful servants if we do not keep on asking ourselves that question.

Letters between 100 and 250 words are preferred. Letters are subject to editing. Open letters, letters written to persons and letters written to another publication will not be printed. Full name, address and phone number should accompany each letter. Names will be withheld only under unusual circumstances. Address your letters to LETTERS, The Northwestern Lutheran, 2929 N. Mayfair Road, Milwaukee, WI 53222.

I would like to know

BY PAUL E. KELM

Our Synod teaches that the mission of the church is not a social one. An article I just read, however, uses the miracles of Jesus and passages such as Galatians 6:2 and 10 to argue for the church's social and political involvement in the "whole of life." I know that we're opposed to the social gospel and political involvement by the church. But how do we maintain that position in the face of this seeming scriptural evidence to the contrary?

The social gospel is the subordination of the good news that sins are forgiven for the sake of Jesus' life, death and resurrection to programs and proclamations focused on alleviating physical need. We are opposed to that. But ministering to the social needs of people need not be ignored in order to retain the church's primary mission of preaching the gospel. Some distinctions need to be made.

There is a difference between what Jesus did and what he commissioned the Church to do. Walking on water and dying for the sins of the world are instructive, not normative. Jesus' miracles testify to his divine power and love, but they do not create an agenda for the Church. The "commissioning passages" such as Matthew 28:19-20, John 20:21-23, and Acts 1:8 establish the Church's mission. Jesus articulated the purpose for his coming as "to seek and to save that which was lost," "to testify to the truth," "to preach the good news of the kingdom of God." But you'll search in vain for mission statements that describe Jesus' coming in terms of social purpose.

There is a difference between the Church's primary purpose and supporting objectives. Jesus commanded his disciples to love one another, then added that thereby "all men will know that you are my disciples." Knowing the Savior is what the Church wants for the world. Christian love is an invitation for others to know the source of that love. And such love is an inevitable result of knowing Jesus. Acts of Christian love apart from the gospel are not only impossible, but they would be counterproductive. They would encourage work-righteousness, the very thing that the epistle to the Galatians condemns. It is as a consequence of the gospel that Paul encouraged the Galatian Christians to live out the love they know and have in the Savior. The early Church (cf. Acts 6:2) illustrates the distinction between the primary purpose of meeting spiritual needs with the Word of God and supporting programs which alleviate physical want.

It is necessary to distinguish society's biggest problem from its attendant problems. Sin, the refusal of people to live God's will and the alienation of people from their God, is society's biggest problem. The results of sin are innumerable social ills. Treating symptoms instead of the disease would be only greasing the skids to hell. I have always resented the notion that our church simplistically separates the spiritual from other dimensions of life. In fact, what we do is demonstrate the linkage that comprehends the whole of life in God's world.

It is also necessary to distinguish what Christians do as **church** from what they do as individuals. Our churches encourage the involvement of their members in God-pleasing humanitarian projects and organizations that already exist to alleviate human suffering. We encourage active participation in the political process, without binding the consciences of our members in issues on which Scripture hasn't spoken. Unless the Church has a clear biblical directive, adopting a public position on contemporary issues would alienate those who hold legitimate opposing views and erode confidence in the message of salvation for which the Church exists.

Our church hasn't turned its back on the physical and emotional needs of society. Preserving the primacy of Christ's mission to save sinners probably means less fanfare about our "ministry to the whole man." Our Synod has a Committee on Relief to share our material resources with people in need around the world. Many local congregations have initiated "food pantries" for the poor and unemployed. Counseling agencies such as Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Service and Lutherans for Life demonstrate that love isn't just a theological word among us. We are a church body heavily committed to Christian schools precisely because we understand the tie between spiritual life and social life.

In Luke 17:19 and elsewhere Jesus tells a person who has been healed, "Your faith has made you well." Does this mean that a person who has faith in Christ should be healed of everything?

No. St. Paul's "thorn in the flesh" demonstrates that there can be faith without healing (2 Corinthians 12:7-10). In fact, like Paul the believer may discover that God has something better than healing to offer his afflicted. The Bible nowhere promises a cause-and-effect relationship between faith and healing, nor does the ministry of Jesus substantiate any such claim. To suggest an equation of faith with healing would be to question the salvation of every Christian who is suffering.

I'm not competent to judge whether "believing," an open-ended exercise in positive thinking, can release the body's own healing mechanisms. But faith is never the *cause* of divine healing. Our Lord, the object of faith and omnipotent ruler of the universe, heals. Faith brings us to that Lord to ask, expect, and recognize with gratitude his answer to our cry for healing. Such faith will also receive with thanksgiving the answer of God to withhold healing. □



Send your questions to *Questions, The Northwestern Lutheran, 2929 N. Mayfair Road, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 53222*. Questions of general interest are preferred. Sorry, questions will not be answered by correspondence.

Pastor Kelm is executive secretary for the Synod's Commission on Evangelism.

I believe . . . in the resurrection of the body

Dear Ben,

Thanks for your last letter. I don't have answers to all the questions you posed. But I do have some thoughts to share with you.

LOVE LETTERS ON THE CREED by Richard H. Stadler

I don't agree with the fellow in your dorm who thinks you can square reincarnation with Christianity. When we profess to believe in the *resurrection of the body and the life everlasting*, we are not subscribing to the notion of being perpetually recycled into new life-forms. The Bible emphatically declares . . . "it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment" (Hebrews 9:27).

His notion that the way you live the present life influences the life you receive upon being reincarnated has no parallel in Christianity. Our hope for resurrection doesn't rest on whether we were good boys and girls in this life. It rests solely on God's grace, his unmerited love.

I cannot explain how some of these people can claim to know intimate details about dead people whose lives they have never studied. I know on the basis of Scripture that it is *not* because they have lived before in some other body. Maybe they have a brain power we simply do not understand yet.

When Paul anticipated his death, he didn't entertain any hopes of a jaunt into another lifeform after death. Instead, he says, "We are of good courage . . . and prefer to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:8).

I have pondered some of the questions you raised in your letter. I know at the resurrection we will be given a body that is "imperishable and immortal," but I don't know what that will include. I do believe that our resurrected bodies will be like Christ's body. I take that to mean I won't have false teeth, glasses or hearing aids. Nor will people be afflicted with mental or physical handicaps.

That's why I'm concerned that we Christians remember our mission. It is not to guarantee life only to

those whose minds and bodies are capable of enjoying what someone has defined as a "quality of life." Our mission is to share the gospel with all humans, so even if they have to live this life with severe handicaps, they will be able to enjoy "life everlasting" forever free of them. To deprive the unborn or the newly born of a chance to meet Christ through the means of grace ignores our Christian identity and distorts the mission of his Church.

Christ's resurrection is our proof that a resurrection of the body is a reality when unbelievers challenge us to give evidence of one. What we do after that resurrection is beyond comprehension. I still have a sinful

*Don't fret yourself
with all those questions
that the Bible
simply hasn't answered.*

nature, and the thought of sitting around heaven singing hymns does sound mighty boring to that rebel in me. But when we are resurrected, we won't have that old bugger in us, and whatever God has planned for us will be a sheer delight.

So don't fret yourself with all those questions that the Bible simply hasn't answered. Rejoice that Christ has earned a slot for you in heaven and invite your friends, even the guffawing, scoffing ones, to receive his forgiveness and righteousness so they can be there too.

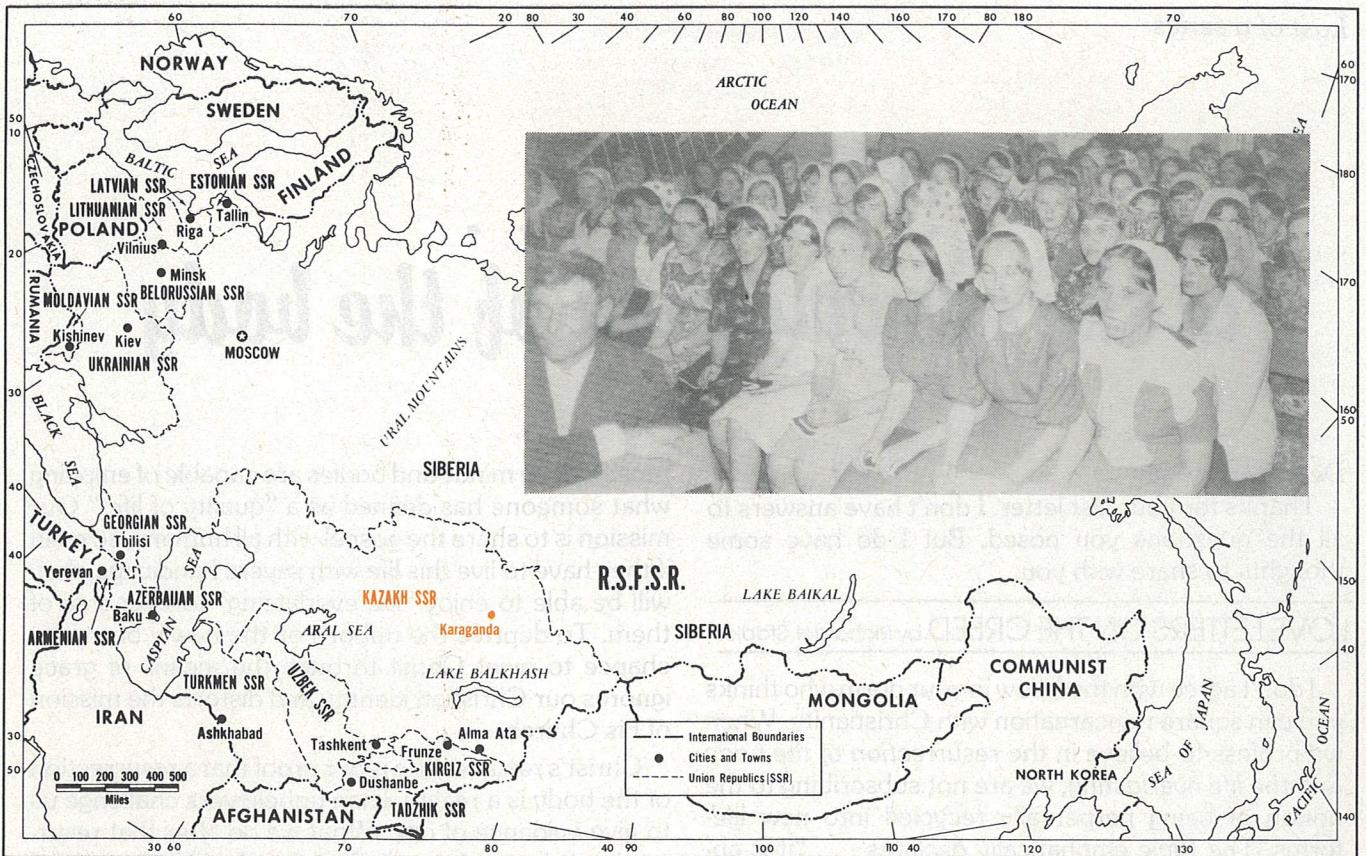
We'll see you when you come home on vacation. We'll have a chance to talk more then.

Love from your mother and me,



Pastor Stadler
is at St. James,
West St. Paul, Minnesota.

Dad



Lutherans gathered for worship in Karaganda, Kazakstan (Kazakh SSR), 1978 photo.

Rendezvous in Kazakstan

by John A. Trapp

There is a story from behind the iron curtain about a group of Christians who gathered secretly for worship. They had finished singing their first hymn when suddenly the door burst open and three soldiers rushed into the room, rifles in hand.

"Are you Christians? Are you worshipping here?" they demanded.

"Yes," the lector replied softly, clutching his tattered Bible.

"Anyone here who is not a Christian must leave!"

First one, then a second — then several more of the worshipers quietly slipped through the still-open door and disappeared into the night. The youngest soldier positioned himself next to the window, pulled back the heavy curtain and watched until he could be sure. "They're gone," he said.

On signal, he and his comrades quickly stashed their rifles and shook off their fur coats. "Well — let's continue with the service," they said. "We're Christians, too. We just wanted to make sure the coast was clear."

Had they anticipated the political fallout from two world wars and the rise of men like Joseph Stalin, Germans never would have planted their sons and daughters

on Russian soil. But they could not anticipate the course of world events.

During the years 1763-1767 Catherine the Great, empress of Russia, convinced more than 7000 German families to pack up their memories and follow their dreams into Russia. She promised them and their descendants a veritable paradise — large tracts of fertile land, temporary freedom from taxation, interest-free loans, freedom of movement, freedom from military service and freedom of religion.

To people who had inherited the waning decades of a century of warfare, who all their lives had found little respite from hunger, poverty, disease, military oppression and religious persecution, Catherine's offer was irresistible. It seemed too good to be true. And it was.

The passage to paradise proved in reality to be a one-way ticket back through the middle ages to a land just beyond the reach of civilization — the lower Volga. To the east of the river lay seemingly endless grasslands, to the west impenetrable hills and forests. It was a true frontier, full of danger and hardship.

The German colonists had to fight a grueling ten-year

battle with that wilderness until it finally yielded a satisfactory harvest. And, as if their struggle with nature was not enough, they had to contend with roving bands of robbers who descended on them from the hills and with tribes of fierce Mongolian nomads who were intent on displacing them forever from the grassy steppes.

Out of this furnace of affliction the German colonists forged their commitment to stay and build the foundation of a new society. And when it was done they, like their pilgrim counterparts on the other side of the globe, gave thanks to God. Unlike the American pilgrims, however, three out of every four of these German settlers were Lutheran. They built churches and schools and spared no pains in bequeathing to the next generation the faith of their fathers.

This they were able to do in an atmosphere of relative peace during the next hundred years and into the beginning of our present century. And they did it with an adequate supply of pastors and teachers.

But what Catherine gave, Stalin took away.

By the time that Joseph Stalin assumed leadership of his young communist nation, World War I had already cast a pall of suspicion over the Germans in Russia. And when Hitler's pre-World War II propaganda included the suggestion that Germans should expand to the east in search of more *Lebensraum*, it did little to help their cause. Stalin "began to see Nazi spies everywhere." During the years 1936-1938 he systematically "purged" the German Russian communities. All of their pastors, priests and leaders were either slain or deported to slave labor camps.

In August 1941 the Supreme Soviet of USSR issued a cruel decree which officially branded the Volga Germans as potential traitors and spies. By the time the smoke of World War II had cleared, ninety percent of all the Russian Germans had been shipped off to labor camps in Siberia and central Asia. Subsequent pressure from the West resulted in "amnesties" which liberated the people from their camps, but to this day they have been forbidden to return to their homes in European Russia.

Pockets of nearly two million displaced Germans are currently scattered throughout the cities and rural communities in Siberia, Kazakstan, and other central Asian provinces which border on China and Mongolia. It appears that this will be their permanent home.

Of these Soviet Germans, nearly sixty percent still list German as their primary language. And we can safely assume that those who worship together as Lutherans still do so in the language of their *Bibel*, *Katechismus* and *Gesangbuch*.

What is worship like for them today? According to a recent study by Dr. Sidney Heitman, "The general picture of a people without churches, clergy or formal religious life is still the rule among the Soviet Germans." The systematic repression of religion has forced the church underground.

Dr. Heitman writes, "Though most Soviet Germans are drifting away from their historic religions, a small

group is taking another course, the path of defiance and resistance to authority. They persist in conducting services and administering sacraments at the cost of harassment by the police and KGB, arrest, fines, exile and very severe prison terms. . . . Several notorious cases of martyred religious Germans were also given wide publicity in the West German press, but . . . barely any notice was taken. . . . The Soviet Germans are all but alone in their courageous defiance."

Last summer the Synod convention resolved to let these people know that they are not alone. In response to a special Luther-quincentenary memorial, the delegates voted for the establishment of a Central Asia Radio Committee which would initiate, through non-budgetary contributions, a German-language radio broadcast into the Soviet Union.

Early this spring a five-man committee was appointed and began its work. The members of the committee are Pastors Delmar Brick, John Brug, Kirby Spevacek, John Trapp and James Werner.

The response to the needs of this new venture has already been generous enough to fund a year's programming. Pending the selection of a radio speaker, the committee hopes to begin broadcasting a weekly half-hour German language worship service this fall. Plans also include the airing of this program via two transmitters — a medium-wave (A.M.) station in South Korea and a short-wave station in Manila.

The annual cost of the total package is projected at \$25,000. Measured in terms of the potential listening audience of more than a million souls, that represents an embarrassingly modest investment — less than two-and-one-half cents per person per year.

By God's grace most of us are ignorant of what life must be like under the watchful eye of a government that officially opposes Christianity. But what if it actually should come to this for us some day? How eager would we be then to confess Christ? How would we respond if "secret police" suddenly penetrated our worship service and put us to the test?

We say we are willing to die for Christ. If so, then we should be all the more willing to live for him, that is, for others who need our help now. □

Contributions for the CENTRAL ASIA RADIO FUND may be sent to:

Central Asia Radio Committee
Rev. John A. Trapp, Chairman
1055 Grandview Drive
Elm Grove, WI 53122



Pastor Trapp is an associate editor at Northwestern Publishing House.

New president elected in Dakota-Montana District

Delegates to the convention of the Dakota-Montana District meeting at Watertown, S.D., June 19-21, were surprised by the

conventions

unexpected announcement of President Wayne Schulz of Rapid City that he did not wish to run for another term, citing his long service to the district and the press of congregational duties. Schulz, 43, had served two terms as district president.

Delegates elected Edward J.

Werner of South Shore, S.D., as district president. Werner, a 1962 seminary graduate, has served his entire ministry at Our Savior, South Shore. Previous to his election as president Werner served as chairman of the district mission board.

Delegates received with alarm the report of a disturbing shortfall in the Synod's operating fund. Plans were immediately made by the circuit pastors to bring the emergency to the attention of the district congregations.

The delegates spent considerable time debating the report of the Administration Survey

Commission. In general the delegates found themselves in agreement with the report which is to be acted on at the 1985 synodical convention.

Delegates, however, did not approve of combining the home and world mission divisions into one division of outreach. They also asked the commission to reconsider its recommendation that members of boards, commissions and committees of the Synod must retire at 70. The convention urged that the Lutheran Apache Mission remain under the jurisdiction of the world mission board.

Reported by John A. Ruege

Minnesota district reelects President Birkholz

The Minnesota District convention, meeting at Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, June 26-28, reelected President Gerhard W. Birkholz of Litchfield to his fourth two-year term.

Birkholz, 56, is a 1952 seminary graduate and served at Northwestern Lutheran Academy, Mobridge, S.D., and held pastorates at Morristown, S.D., and Lake Benton, Minn. before coming to St. Paul in Litchfield in 1970.

Other officers elected were Gerhard A. Horn of Red Wing, first vice president; David M. Ponath of North St. Paul, second vice president; and Warren J. Henrich of Delano, secretary.

Delegates responded favorably to a program intended to increase offerings to the operating budget. Congregations were urged to use the program materials "as best

meets their needs."

To give opportunity for a more thorough review of the Administration Survey Commission the convention recommended that the 1985 Synod convention give the districts another opportunity to study the commission's report before the Synod convention takes final action.

Delegates expressed concern that there were no adequate safeguards to assure representation on various boards, commissions and committees from diverse geographic areas. Concern was also expressed for a clarification of the duties of an administrative officer for the Coordinating Council. Delegates urged that home and world missions not be placed in one division, and that the Apache Lutheran Mission continue

under the oversight of the world mission board.

In other action delegates agreed with a proposal of the commission for a "district board for parish services," but expressed their concern that some of the boards would lose their effectiveness lumped together in one board.

A redistricting committee had recommended that districts of the Synod with state names consider re-naming themselves. Delegates rejected the motion and voted to retain the title "Minnesota District" because the district started as the Minnesota Synod and they wished to maintain the historical continuity.

In attendance at the convention were 372 delegates representing 166 congregations with a baptized membership of 61,500.

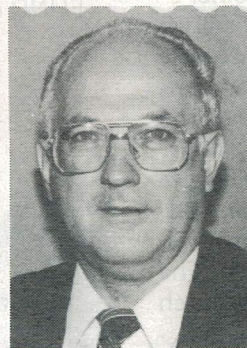
Reported by Charles F. Degner



President Werner
Dakota-Montana District



President Birkholz
Minnesota District



President Free
Nebraska District



President Beckmann
North Atlantic District



President Voss
Northern Wisconsin District

Free elected to eighth term

Delegates to the Nebraska District convention, meeting at Norfolk, Neb., June 18-20, reelected President Gerald E. Free to an unprecedented eighth two-year term of office. President Free is pastor of Good Shepherd, Omaha, and first vice president of the Synod.

In other elections Ronald N. Kaiser of Colorado Springs, Col., was reelected first vice president; Joel G. Frank of Plymouth, Neb., was reelected second vice president; and Teacher Earl R. Heidtke of Hadar, Neb., was elected secretary.

Taking note of the Synod's budgetary shortages, delegates recommended that each congregation review its synodical budget subscription by the end of July and strive for a better balance between congregational and synodical offerings.

Reaction to the report of the Administration Survey Commission was largely positive. But the delegates declined to endorse combining the home and world mission divisions into one division, and recommended that the Lutheran Apache Mission remain under the world mission board.

Delegates were reluctant to add further personnel to the administration of the Synod, questioning the advisability of the addition of an associate secretary in home missions; the engaging of a director of planning and program; creation of the office of secretary of secondary schools; and the addition of two members to the world board's executive committees.

Delegates concurred in the judgment of the commission that the office of district president not be made a full-time office. Instead the district president should be supplied with necessary pastoral and secretarial assistance. The convention also recommended that the president's congregation review the needs of its pastor every two years.

Reported by Tim Bauer

First meeting of new district

The North Atlantic District, formed in 1983, held its first convention at Our Savior Church of East Brunswick, New Jersey, June 12-13. Present were 52 delegates representing congregations as far south as North Carolina and as far north as Ontario.

By resolution of the district the following district officers' terms were extended for a full two-year term: Walter F. Beckmann of Falls Church, Va., president; Thomas C. Pfothenauer of Ottawa, first vice president; John R. Mittelstaedt of Largo, Md., second vice president; and Robert O. Balza of Christiana, Del., secretary.

Considerable time was spent by the delegates reviewing the preliminary report of the Administration Survey Commission. The convention recommended that the home and world mission divisions remain separate. It also recommended that executive secretaries be advisory members of the Coordinating

Council.

The convention went on record as favoring greater lay involvement on the synodical level and recommended a reconsideration of a mandatory retirement age for members of synodical boards, commissions and committees.

Opposing a recommendation of the commission that district stewardship boards be dissolved, delegates urged that the district boards be continued and that the Synod's stewardship board be given responsibility for funding the budget and the stewardship counselor be responsible to the board rather than the Conference of Presidents, which is presently responsible for funding the budget.

In view of the Synod's operating fund difficulties, delegates recommended that the district's congregations review their budget subscriptions with a view to increasing them.

Reported by Michael C. Crawford

President Voss reelected

Delegates to the Northern Wisconsin District, meeting at Fox Valley Lutheran High School, June 25-27, reelected President Carl W. Voss of Green Bay to his sixth two-year term.

President Voss, 54, a 1955 seminary graduate, served a parish in Beatrice, Neb., before coming to Green Bay in 1970 to organize a mission congregation. The congregation, St. Mark, today numbers 1100 baptized members with a Christian day school of 137.

Pastor Clarence Koepsell of Oshkosh was reelected first vice president; Pastor Douglas Engelbrecht of Neenah was elected second vice president; and Pastor Paul Kolander of Montello was reelected secretary.

Concerned over the Synod's current budgetary problems, the convention resolved that "we encourage our congregations to review their budgetary commitments for 1984 and

seriously consider upgrading the commitments." Congregations were also encouraged to welcome their circuit pastor "as he presents these important needs to our congregations."

Delegates agreed with the report of the Administration Survey Commission that the term of office of members of synodical boards, commissions and committees be limited; that district presidents not be permitted to serve also as synodical vice presidents; and that the office of district president remain a part-time office.

Delegates declined to endorse recommendations of the commission to legislate a mandatory retirement age for members of synodical boards, commissions and committees; and to combine the world and home missions into one operating division; and to engage a director of planning and program.

The convention urged

congregations of the district to become more fully involved in an institutional ministry in their area. For many years there had been a

full-time institutional chaplain serving the Fox River Valley. When the chaplain retired, he was not replaced and local

congregations took over the ministry on a part-time basis.

Reported by Jan C. Eggert

South Atlantic bids farewell to first president

The South Atlantic District, meeting at Bay Pines Lutheran Church of Seminole, Fla., June 11-13, bade a fond farewell to its first president, Pastor Raymond L. Wiechmann who is retiring from the ministry.

The convention honored him in its worship service at which President Gerald E. Free of the Nebraska District and first vice president of the Synod preached



President Guse
South Atlantic District

the sermon. An ox-roast dinner was also served followed by a special evening program. The retiring president received a gift of more than \$3200 and a letter of gratitude from each congregation.

Delegates elected John R. Guse, pastor of Beautiful Savior, Roswell, Ga., as the district's new president. Guse, 38, a 1972 seminary graduate, served a congregation in Lexington, S.C., before coming to Roswell in 1983. Since 1979 he has served as chairman of the district mission board.

The other district officers were reelected: Keith C. Kruck of Clearwater, first vice president; Rodney G. Busch of Fort Meyers, second vice president; and James L. Vogt of Bradenton, secretary. Pastor Richard L. Wiechmann of Gainesville was elected new chairman of the district mission board.

In other business the convention:

- added a third conference and seventh circuit because of the

increasing number of congregations;

- began the planning phase for a Southern Lutheran Academy with a projected opening date of 1990;
- concurred with most of the report of the Administration Survey Commission;
- urged that the Lutheran Apache Mission remain with the world mission board for the present;
- expressed reservations about any possible transfer of the Antigua mission field from

the home mission board;

- asked that there be a better balanced geographical representation on synodical boards, commissions and committees;
- recommended that the Conference of Presidents appoint a special committee to suggest ways in which district mission boards and congregations can become more involved in decisions relating to their physical plants.

Reported by John P. Huebner

Newly-formed South Central District retains its officers

The first biennial convention of the newly formed South Central District met at St. Mark, Duncanville, Texas, June 11-12. Since the district had been organized last October, there was no election of officers.



President Glaeske
South Central District

Present officers are Pastor Vilas R. Glaeske of Houston, president; Pastor Douglas L. Bode of Oklahoma City, first vice president; Pastor John P. Gaertner of Dallas, second vice president; and Pastor Donald W. Stuppy of San Antonio, secretary.

Special time was allotted to the Synod's budgetary crisis. President

Glaeske urged delegates to place the Synod's ministry at the top of their congregational budgets. Delegates asked each congregation to consider raising its 1984 synodical budget subscription.

Special time was also devoted to the report of the Administration Survey Commission. In general delegates approved of the 46-page report. Some areas, however, raised concern among the delegates. Placing the world and home missions into one division was not viewed "as an improvement for their effective functioning."

The proposed placement of the Commission on Evangelism under the division of parish services was also considered by the delegates to be a substantial change in visibility for the commission.

In other convention action Pastor James J. Radloff, the district mission counselor, was elected to the Synod's Nominating Committee; and Pastor Charles L. Learman, Teacher Paul Pappenfuss, and Joel Nitz were elected to the district Special Ministries Board. □

Reported by Charles L. Learman

Michigan President Zarling retires

President Waldemar J. Zarling of the Michigan District told delegates that he did not wish to be considered for reelection since he was retiring from the active ministry. Zarling, 71, of Benton Harbor had served as the district president since 1967 when Pastor Norman W. Berg resigned the office to accept the call as executive secretary of the home missions board.

In the news

President Zarling was born in Rockford, Minn., in 1913 in a parsonage. He attended Martin Luther Academy, New Ulm, Minn., and Northwestern College, Watertown, Wis., and in 1938 graduated from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary.



Zarling

After serving at Arlington, Minn. as teacher and assistant pastor, he received a call to the Lutheran Apache Mission at Whiteriver, Ariz. Subsequently he served congregations at Douglas, Ariz.; and at Waukesha and Newburg, Wis. In 1956 he became the first resident pastor at Good Shepherd, Benton Harbor, a congregation which presently numbers 325 baptized members along with a two-teacher school.

Prior to becoming district president, he had served as conference chairman, chairman of the district stewardship board, and first vice president of the district.

Good Shepherd held a special retirement service for Pastor

Zarling. The service was followed by a dinner and program at which a farewell gift was presented to Pastor Zarling from the congregation.

Reported by Marion Manthe

Minnesota

Anniversary at Smiths Mill

On Sunday, April 29, Trinity of Smiths Mill, observed the 25th anniversary of the dedication of its present sanctuary. The former sanctuary, built in 1892, had been destroyed by fire. Former pastor of Trinity, Rev. Ervine F. Vomhof, was the guest speaker. Trinity is presently served by Pastor Burgess Huehn.

Reported by Charles Degner

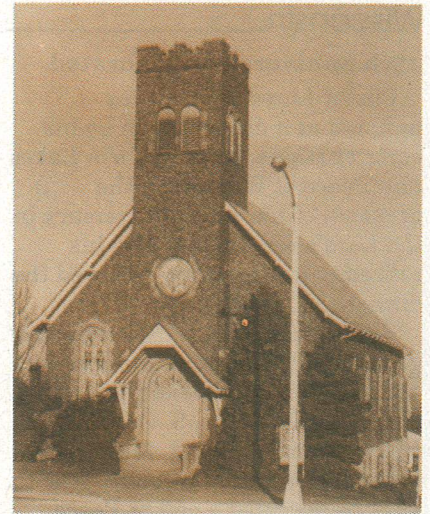
Washington

Double anniversary

Trace the roots of the Pacific Northwest District and you will be led to St. Paul Lutheran, Tacoma. The oldest WELS congregation in the Northwest (for many years the only WELS congregation in the far west), St. Paul was also the first German-speaking Lutheran congregation in the territories of Washington and Idaho.

Pastor Friedrich Wolf came a long way from his home in Ohio to answer to the call from seven German Lutherans in Tacoma. He arrived on March 22, 1884, and the first service was held on the 30th. All Germans were invited and 12 people attended. Ten years later, in 1894, St. Paul was organized, and on the same day the congregation dedicated its first church building. In 1895 Pastor Wolf and the entire congregation joined the Wisconsin Synod.

St. Paul served as the base for mission work in the Northwest. Pastor Wolf's travels took him north to Seattle and Victoria, B.C., east across the Cascades as far as Spokane Falls, south to Portland, and west to the Grays Harbor country of the coast. WELS churches founded through his efforts and still in existence include congregations in Yakima, Ellensburg, Omak, Portland and



St. Paul, Tacoma, Washington

Tacoma (Faith).

Pastor Wolf served the St. Paul congregation until his retirement in 1902. Seven pastors have followed him: H. Veistenz, A. Ernst. R. Ave-Lallemant, A. Sydow, W. Amacher, P. Madson and George Frey, the present pastor of St. Paul. Pastor Frey, also the president of the Pacific Northwest District, has served the congregation since 1959.

St. Paul's double anniversary — 100th of the first service and 90th of the organization — was observed on March 25. Pastor T. R. Adaschek of Yakima and Pastor Paul Madson were guest speakers at the special services.

In 1894 Pastor Wolf wrote in an article in the Synod's German publication, the *Gemeinde-Blatt*: "Lord, abide with me for the night is coming. This is my prayer, and the service of love that I desire from all my friends in Christ is to be supported by them in this prayer. God be praised! The Lord is good and his mercy endures forever. His mercy and goodness have given me the privilege to use my humble abilities in his mission work and to labor where he still finds me useful."

Today the Synod is still carrying on that labor in the Pacific Northwest. The seed which Wolf planted is still being planted and producing fruit. A mission-minded man like F. Wolf would surely be pleased to see how far the work has come.

Reported by James Oldfield

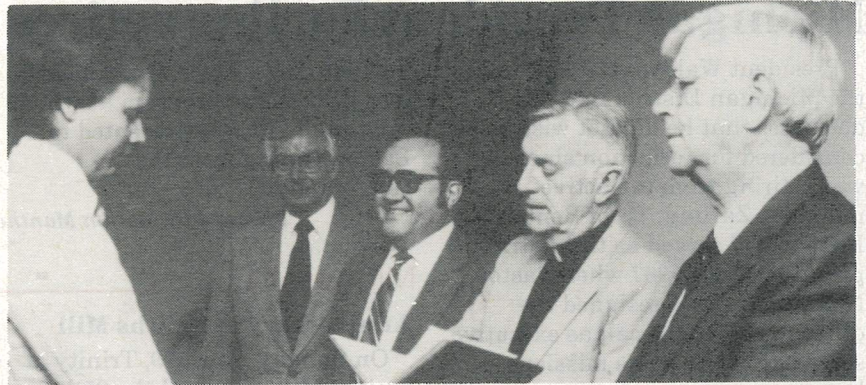
Wisconsin

40th anniversary celebrated

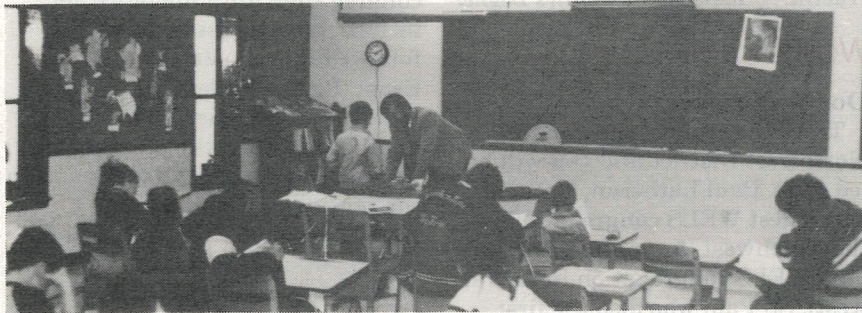
Pastor Lloyd Wenzel was honored at a dinner given by his congregations, Hope of Twin Lakes and Peace of Wilmot, on the occasion of his 40th anniversary in the Lord's service and also his retirement. A program followed the dinner.

Pastor Wenzel is a 1944 seminary graduate and over the years served congregations in Glendale, Ariz.; Winner and Witten, S. Dak.; Renville and Winfield, Minn.; and Manchester and Marquette, Wis. In 1974 he accepted a call to Peace and Hope churches where he served until his retirement. □

Reported by Robert Kleist



COMMISSIONING — On May 31 at the Synod's administration building Pastor Lee A. Neujahr was commissioned as a civilian chaplain to serve WELS members in the armed forces. Left to right are Pastor Neujahr, Richard Raabe, member of the Special Ministries Board (SMB); Alfons Woldt, SMB executive secretary; Pastor Ernst Lehninger, SMB chairman; and President Mischke. Neujahr is replacing Chaplain Donald L. Tollefson who has accepted a call to a stateside church. He will be stationed at Neunkirchen a Br., West Germany from which he will serve Synod members in southern Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Italy.



WHEN HOLY CROSS OF OKLAHOMA CITY celebrated its tenth anniversary in April, it also dedicated its new school building with education and fellowship areas. Prof. David Kuske of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary was the guest speaker. The congregation is presently served by Pastor David Huebner, a 1984 seminary graduate. Above is a view of the new facility with Principal Terrance Greening conferring with one of his students.

Looking back

from The Northwestern Lutheran

50 years ago . . .

The convention of the Lutheran Synodical Conference assembled in Milwaukee August 8-13. The business of undertaking a new mission in Nigeria on the west coast of Africa was given the most consideration. The convention recommended a committee of at least two be sent to Africa to personally investigate the merits of the plea from the Ibesikpo people in Nigeria and other missionary possibilities in Africa.

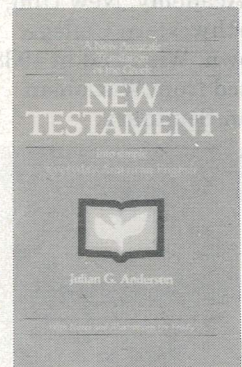
25 years ago . . .

At the Synod convention, meeting at Saginaw, Mich., the office of the president was made a full-time office. It was resolved that a qualified man be called to assume full-time re-

sponsibility as chairman of the Board for World Missions; a planning committee for the educational institutions of the Synod was called into being; a revised constitution and bylaws were adopted; the calling of a third missionary for work in Japan was approved; and a record \$3.4 million budget was adopted.

10 years ago . . .

The nine-month-old South Atlantic District assembled in June for its first biennial convention. In Synod-related questions, the district endorsed the calling of a full-time evangelism counselor and a full-time secretary of publications, the search for an acceptable new Bible translation, a greater support on the part of individual Christians for the work of the Committees on Relief, and the use of regionally supported institutional missionaries. □



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By Julian C. Anderson

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NOTICES

The deadline for submitting items for publication is five weeks before the date of issue

CHANGES IN MINISTRY

PASTORS:

Kiecker, James G., from St. John (Zilwaukee), Saginaw, Mich., to Wisconsin Lutheran College (history), Milwaukee, Wis.
Kogler, Richard A., from Northland Lutheran High School, Merrill, Wis., to Prince of Peace, Yucaipa, Calif.
Meiselwitz, Robert H., from Zion, Stetsonville, Wis., to St. Paul, Stevensville, Mich.
Russow, Howard E., from Calvary, Glenwood, Minn., to retirement from full-time ministry.

TEACHERS:

Aaberg, Nancy., from inactive to St. John, Stanton, Nebr.
Allerheiligen, David L., from St. John, Waterloo, Wis., to St. John (68th), Milwaukee, Wis.
Austin, Mrs. Lanny., to King of Kings, Maitland, Fla.
Behl, Christine., from inactive to St. John, Watertown, Wis.
Beutel, Marvis., to Apostles, San Jose, Calif.
Jaster, Rebecca S., from Centennial, Milwaukee, Wis., to St. John, Montello, Wis.
Kanter, John H., from Bethany, Concord, Calif., to St. Mark, Eau Claire, Wis.
Mickelson, RuthAnn., to Eastside, Madison, Wis.
Strandt, Marlene E., from Divine Peace, Largo, Maryland, to Messiah/Resurrection, Milwaukee, Wis.

ADDRESSES

PASTORS:

Bey, Gregory. 763 W. Broadway, Winona, MN 55987; 507/452-2976.
Beyersdorf, Allen R., 22672 Revere Rd., El Toro, CA 92630.
Biebert, Timothy. Rt. 4, Beaver Dam, WI 53916.
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Groth, Ellery W., PO Box 309, Mission, SD 57555; 605/856-4943.
Heftl, Roy W., 403 — 16th Av. N., Bangor, WI 54614; 608/486-2754.
Hollerup, Clair S., 6847 U.S. 41 South, Marquette, MI 49855; 906/249-1870.
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McCullough, William. Rt. 2, Winchester, IL 62694.
Miller, Dallas C., Rt. 1, Box 13, Goodhue, MN 55027.
Mueller, Timothy P., 1016 Church St. Waupun, WI 53963; 414/324-2298.
Olson, Steven O., 718 Washington Ave., Hastings, NE 68901; 402/462-9523.
Suckow, Joel. 416 McHugh St., Holmen, WI 54636.
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Wendland, Paul O., 2906 — 24th St., Hopkins, MI 49328; 616/793-7222.
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Rebers, Daniel D., 113 W. Brownell, Tomah, WI 54660.
Rittlerodt, John J., 23622 Via Calzada, Mission Viejo, CA 92691.
Schoeneck, Marcella A., 604 Randall, Rhinelander, WI 54501.
Stubalt, Douglas W., 726 El Sereno Dr., San Jose, CA 95123.
Ulrich, Timothy P., c/o Ralph Hardgrove, 10908 Vincent Ave. S., Bloomington, MN 55431.
Wade, James A., 724 El Sereno Dr., San Jose, CA 95123.
Waldschmidt, Carrie L., 652 Chemeketa Dr., San Jose, CA 95123.
Warning, Richard L., 811 NE 47th Ct., Oakland Park, FL 33308.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary

The Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Board of Control, with the approval of the Commission on Higher Education, requests the voting members of the Synod to submit names of candidates to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Prof. Irwin J. Habek.

The man called will be asked to assume the professorship of Dogmatics and New Testament. Please send letters of nominations together with pertinent information so that they are in the hands of the undersigned no later than August 21, 1984.

Pastor Paul A. Manthey, Secretary
 Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary
 Board of Control
 8419 W. Melvina Street
 Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53222

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS NORTHWESTERN PREPARATORY SCHOOL Dean of Students

The voting membership of the Synod is invited to submit in nomination the names of pastors with the aptitude and the qualifications needed to serve in the position of Dean of Students at Northwestern Preparatory School, Watertown, Wisconsin. This position was vacated by Prof. William Gabb who accepted a call into the parish ministry. Duties include supervision of student life in the dormitory and on the campus, spiritual counselling of students, and teaching classes in twelfth grade religion. Nominees should be men who have demonstrated the ability to deal evangelically with people, who understand and appreciate high school age youth, and who project a positive image of the ministry. Nominations, together with pertinent information, should be in the hands of the secretary no later than August 27, 1984.

Myron Kell, Acting Secretary
 233 N. Maple
 Watertown, WI 53094

CONFERENCES

Minnesota District. St. Croix Conference, September 11 at Brooklyn, Brooklyn Park. Agenda: Exegesis of Malachi 1:1 — 2:9; Scriptural Principles of Stewardship.

Nebraska District. Central Conference, September 17-18 at Garden of Gethsemane, Omaha. Agenda: Exegesis of Romans 7:14-25; Isagogical Study of Malachi; Basic Teachings of Methodism; Analysis of Chapter 4 of "Preach the Gospel."

Northern Wisconsin District. Rhinelander Conference, September 10 at Trinity, Wabeno. Agenda: Exegesis on Mark 4:34 — 5:20; Role of Women in the Church.

Southeastern Wisconsin District. Dodge-Washington Conference, September 11 at Bethany, Hustisford. Agenda: Exegesis of Hebrews 1:4-14; Money-Making Endeavors in the Church; Bible Study Course to Help Married Couples Develop Deeper Unity in Marriage.

CHANGE OF TIME OR PLACE OF WORSHIP

in the following exploratory areas or mission congregations.

WASILLA, ALASKA — King of Kings, above Brady's Floor Covering, Mile 44 Parks Hwy, Wasilla. 10:00 a.m.; Bible class/SS 9:00 a.m. (Summer schedule worship at 9:00). Pastor Rick Johnson, P.O. Box 872767, Wasilla, AK 99687; 907/376-7771.

MISSISSAUGA (TORONTO AREA), ONTARIO, CANADA — Divine Peace, 26 Ann Street, Mississauga. 10:30 a.m.; Bible class/SS 9:30 a.m. Pastor Roy W. Heftl, 1051 Cedarlglen Gate #39, Mississauga, Ontario L5C 3A7; 416/272-4835.

GROTON, CONNECTICUT — Worship for military and relocated WELS members will be held during the summer on Thursdays at 7:00 p.m. at Dolphin Community Center, Route 12, Groton. For further information contact Pastor Curtis J. Holub, 300 Buckland Rd., South Windsor, CT 06074; 203/644-2110.

POUGHKEEPSIE, NEW YORK — Trinity, YMCA in Poughkeepsie. 9:30 a.m. Pastor Thomas R. Gumm, 20 Tamarack Circle, Fishkill, NY 12524; 914/896-4644.

SUGAR LAND/STAFFORD/MISSOURI CITY, TEXAS — Redeeming Grace, Missouri City Fire Station, 1523 F.M. 2234, Missouri City. 11:00 a.m.; Bible class/SS 10:00 a.m. Pastor Mark Barenz, 1807 Trinity Station, Sugar Land, TX 77478; 713/980-4632.

WISCONSIN LUTHERAN SEMINARY AUXILIARY ANNUAL MEETING

All women of WELS congregations are invited to the 12th annual Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Auxiliary meeting October 6 at the seminary in Mequon, Wis. Registration and coffee hour at 9:00 a.m., worship service at 10:00 and the day's activities will conclude at 4:00 p.m.

Reservations preferred by September 23. A \$6.00 fee includes registration and dinner. Make checks payable to Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Auxiliary and send to Miss Lee Abraham, corresponding secretary, 3030 N. 83rd St., Milwaukee, WI 53222. Please include name, address, telephone, church membership and pastoral conference.

100th ANNIVERSARY

Grace, Town of Maine, Wausau, Wis., will celebrate its centennial August 19 with special services at 9:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. All former members and friends are cordially invited to participate in this occasion.

SOCIAL WORK SUPERVISOR NEEDED

The Health and Care Division of Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Service has an immediate opening for a full-time social work supervisor. Someone with geriatric experience preferred but will consider all applicants. Please call or write: Gary B. Yahr, Health Care Director, Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Service, 6800 North 76th St., Milwaukee, WI 53223; 414/353-5000.

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The story goes that the revivalist preacher was pontificating at a tent service: "Those filthy movies! They corrupt your minds! No more movies!"

A voice from the back called out, "Amen, brother!"

"And as for liquor," the preacher went on, "it's the worst poison known to humankind! No more liquor!"

Again, from the back, "Amen, brother!"

The preacher took aim a third time: "And then there's tobacco! It makes your mouth smell like a smokestack! It rots your gums! No more tobacco!"

This time, the voice from the rear called back, "Now you're meddlin'!"

May we rewrite that sermon a bit?

The Wisconsin Synod has taken a public stand against abortion. Each year, in the United States alone, more than a million and a half defenseless unborn children have their lives violently stolen from them before they had barely begun.

Amen, brother.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, alcohol plays a role in 50 of every 100 traffic accidents, 70 in every 100 murders, and is the greatest single cause for admission into mental health institutions. Dr. Robert Du Pont, president of the American Council on Marijuana, says, "The idea that marijuana is harmless and that its use is a normal part of adolescence have been among the most dangerous pieces of misinformation of the last two decades." A lighted marijuana cigarette contains 421 chemicals, some of which take the human body more than three months to expel.

Amen, brother.

No major medical or health agency has ever questioned the statistics concerning the dangers of smoking tobacco. Each year 350,000 Americans die prematurely from the effects of smoking. Smoking causes as many as 80% of

Meddlin' with Mitteldinge?

by Mark E. Braun

Do we find it easier to call something sin when it's somebody else's sin?

all cases of lung cancer. A smoker runs a 70% greater risk of death in any given year than a non-smoker. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, in May of this year, said, "We can say today, with greater certainty than ever before, that cigarettes are the most important individual health risk in this country."

Now are we meddlin'?

When a person is 20% or more overweight, he or she runs a greater risk of developing coronary artery disease and stroke. Being 20% overweight is a contributing factor in high blood pressure, diabetes, leg ulcers and fungal skin rashes.

Now are we *really* meddlin'?

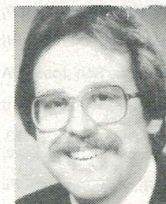
The Lutheran church has long recognized a somewhat subtle distinction. We believe there are many actions in life which God has not regulated. We have given such actions the latinized name *adiaphora*; our German fathers called them *Mitteldinge*, which is perhaps more

descriptive. Between those things to which God has said, "Yes," and those things to which God has said, "No," there are many matters that lie in the middle. And they may rightly remain in the middle as long as we do not do them to excess, to our physical harm, or to the point of sin. We have long considered drinking alcohol, smoking tobacco and eating all kinds of food as *Mitteldinge*, when done in moderation. When done beyond moderation, or when done to our harm, they no longer lie in the middle. They become sins.

But is it possible we are inconsistent? Is it possible for us to have blind spots, particularly about our own habits? I may have my blind spots. For more than ten years I was a smoker, and last summer my doctor told me that the chances of my developing diabetes after age 50 will be greatly reduced if I reduced. So far I haven't.

I hope I'm not pontificating. But may I ask some questions? If we take a stand against abortion — because it's murder — isn't it also right to take a stand against over-eating and smoking — because they threaten life and health? Is it possible for us, in one case, to see so clearly a violation of the fifth commandment, but that on another issue our vision is blocked? Do we find it easier to call something sin when it's somebody else's sin? Jesus said something about removing the plank from our own eye, didn't he?

The fifth commandment reads: "We shall fear and love God that we do not hurt or harm our neighbor in his body, but help and be a friend to him in every bodily need." Let's not be meddlin', but let's not be bashful either. □



Pastor Braun is at St. John's, Sparta, Wisconsin.