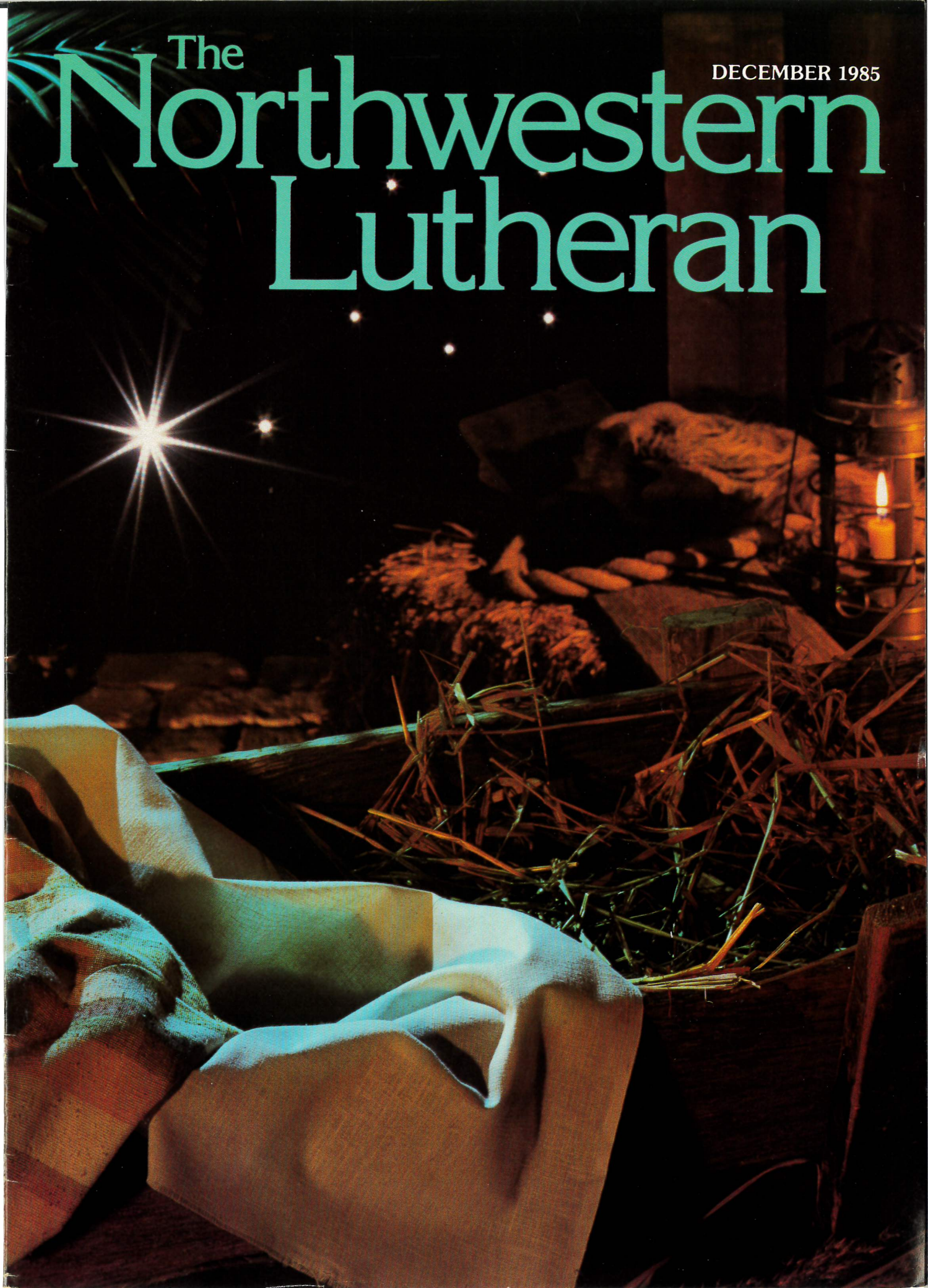


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*May the Lord our God be with us
as he was with our fathers;
may he never leave
or forsake us. 1 Kings 8:57*

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Of rags and riches

You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich" (2 Corinthians 8:9).

America is often viewed as a land of unlimited opportunity, and part of the popular dream is that anyone can succeed. Many a book, movie, and stage play have been based on the theme of someone's rise from rags to riches. We tend to like success stories. But viewed by that standard the Christmas account would have to be rated as a disappointment, a marked departure from the popular ideal.

Riches to rags

In speaking of Christ's coming into the world, the Apostle Paul tells the Corinthians, "Though he was rich, yet . . . he became poor." According to popular opinion, that's moving in the wrong direction.

Jesus Christ is true God. As such, he is the creator of all things. The Evangelist John says of him, "Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made" (John 1:2). He owns everything. He is the absolute ruler and master, "for by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities: all things were created by him and for him" (Colossians 1:16).

Jesus was rich, but he laid all that aside. He chose not to use what was rightly his. When born of a virgin mother, he was not laid into a soft and comfortable cradle but into a hard and bare manger. Nor upon

leaving that rude stall did he move into a fine palace or castle as his home. It is questionable whether he ever owned a home during his stay on earth, for he warned one would-be follower that while foxes have dens and birds have nests, the Son of Man does not have where to lay his head.

In his stay on earth there was no display of power or pomp or prestige. Rather, "he humbled himself and became obedient to death — even death on a cross" (Philippians 2:8). Though Christ at all times remained true God, yet to all outward observation rags were much more evident in Jesus' earthly life than riches.

Why did he do it? Why lay aside his power and wealth? The Apostle tells us plainly, "Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich."

Rags to riches

In our natural sinful state we had nothing. We were true paupers and beggars. Conceived and born in sin, we were not only blind to all good, but even worse, we were active opponents of God's will. As rebels and enemies of God we were hopeless and helpless, for "like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath," Paul says. "But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in trespasses" (Ephesians 2:5).

The rags of our righteousness have been replaced by the glorious robe of Christ's perfect righteousness earned by his sinless life and innocent death on the cross. In Christ we have become immeasurably wealthy. We

have forgiveness of sins, peace with God, a good conscience, the certainty of eternal life with God in heaven. In Christ we have it all.

Ours is indeed a rags to riches story, but it's not a "success story" in the usual sense of the term, simply because there is nothing we have done or achieved. It's all been done for us. It's a gift. It comes to us by grace.

Antidote to externalism

In the hustle and bustle of another Christmas season many people will again become so engrossed in the externals that the true significance of the season will pass them by. Christmas then becomes a matter of gift-giving and receiving, of tinsel and decoration, of festivities and food.

As an antidote to such externalism Paul reminds us, "You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." Knowing God's grace makes Christmas a truly special season. With its message of the lowly Christ Child laid in the manger it teaches us anew how God in Christ has brought us from rags to true spiritual riches. It is a time for us to pause and reflect, to marvel and wonder, and with the hymn writer to acknowledge:

"We are rich, for he was poor;
Is not this a wonder?
Therefore praise God evermore
Here on earth and yonder." □



Professor Panning is president of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin.

Christ in Christmas

This fall, with Christmas in the offing, there appeared in the letters column of our newspaper a letter denouncing the abbreviating of "Christmas" to "Xmas." Considering what the general public nowadays seems to think Christmas is all about, objections like this are not surprising. In the mind of the objector, this abbreviation was devised by scoffers for the express purpose of eliminating Christ from Christmas.

Not all who acknowledge Jesus as the Christ and observe Christmas as the anniversary of his incarnation see this objection as valid. They see the English "X" as corresponding to the Greek letter "Chi." This Greek letter (X) has been used as a symbol of Christ in Christian churches for centuries and is still in common use in our churches today. Thus Christ remains in "Xmas."

Nevertheless, many people, even though they may fully spell out the word Christmas, can and do effectively eliminate Christ from their observance of Christmas by ignoring the significance of the name Christ and by reducing the story of his birth to a legend, touching but not essential to the welfare of mankind.

Outright rejection of Christ is not unusual in our day. As man's knowledge and accomplishments increase, specifically in the areas of science and technology, so, it seems, does his ego. In his pride over these things he tends to assign the need for God to previous and lesser stages of human development and to promote himself to the position of supreme authority. Whenever divine word or revelation is invoked, he, like Pharaoh of old, is apt figuratively to sneer, "Who is the Lord?" From the lofty position which he has assigned to himself the benefits derived from the coming of Christ, as set forth in God's word, are arrogantly dismissed.

What has replaced the benefits of a Messiah in the thinking of those who take this (progressive?) viewpoint? Nothing. Nothing, that is, unless you count the fear and despair which return to fill the void. Man is reduced to glorying in himself and in the here and now. He approaches his end without hope. Modern fiction often attests to this. For example, a fictional, but typical, unbeliever in a modern English novel confesses that he is appalled by what he sees in his future. He exclaims, "It is a terrible moment when you realize that your future is not green pastures but the glue factory."

God's gift of Christ, which is the essence of Christmas, fills a need which even the Christless are finally forced to recognize. Among other things, it replaces the glue factory with green pastures.

To those who know this and believe this, eliminating Christ from Christmas is unthinkable.

Immanuel G. Frey



Pastor Frey serves at Zion, Phoenix, Arizona.

LETTERS

Sharing our Christmas

Every Christmas season I am disappointed and saddened when we receive from Christian friends cards that depict a secular holiday celebration — a jolly Santa, a reindeer or two, or trees, candles, presents and holly. In themselves there is nothing wrong with these, but is that all there is for a Christian to share in this holy, happy season?

While caroling at a home for the elderly, a white-haired lady clasped my hand and said, "A blessed Christmas to you." I smiled at her and responded, "Merry Christmas to you, too." "No, no, no," she exclaimed, "I said a *blessed* Christmas!" That remark made a lasting impression; there is a difference.

Every year we send our family picture, but the content of our hand-made card has been Christian. Perhaps someone, somewhere, will see that there is a difference in this Christian family, and perhaps that Lord will use this as another instrument of his grace. Perhaps more of us will feel comfortable sharing "a blessed Christmas!"

*Carol Egelseer
Hustisford, Wisconsin*

Outreach teams

In your October 15 issue you ran a column entitled "Joggers Beware! This church is looking for you." I was pleased to read about the outreach being done by the churches in Alaska. I was a part of that work and am still working with other churches to help them grow also.

Nonetheless I was a little disappointed that no explanation about the outreach team program accompanied the article. This program has existed for three years, assisting the small mission congregations to find unchurched people in their areas.

There are two teams each year. Each team consists of four teacher graduates and one pastor graduate. Their job is to train others to spread the message of salvation in their community. Alongside the churches' members, the team knocks on doors, follows up on the people who show interest and presents the word of God to all who wish to hear.

Traveling to help congregations has

its own special rewards. We have met many dedicated Christians in towns all over Alaska and Washington. We expect that we will also find many more in the towns to come.

With the prayers of the dedicated Christians who support our work, we look forward to training more people to find those who need a Savior.

*John Kuske
Outreach Team*

Tools available to us

We wish to thank the efforts of Pastor Liesener's evangelism program in Anchorage, Alaska (October 15). His use of the newspaper advertisement to assist in the Anchorage membership drive is well-timed and extremely appropriate.

The mass media (television, newspaper and radio) are tools that are available to us and when used in an appropriate fashion, similar to Pastor Liesener's, can spread the Lord's wonderful message to even more people than we are reaching now. The devil has used these media sources to sell all of us casual sex, perversion, the love of money, divorce, lower morals, secular humanism and just about anything else he wants us to buy.

In our opinion the time has come to devote our resources to the home mission field through the use of structured responsible mass media advertising. As young parents we would truly enjoy seeing a television show that dealt with the Christian fundamentals that we believe and applied them to a make-believe television family so that other people might be introduced to the Lord. Besides, it would be the only show on television that wouldn't promote anything the devil is selling.

*Dennis and Carla Mastin
Mequon, Wisconsin*

Deal with the real issue

I feel a need to respond to the first article in the new series "Where we stand" by Pastor Mark Braun (October 1).

While it is always important and edifying to be reminded of our synod's stand on issues of doctrine — I would like to see Pastor Braun develop a companion series to deal with the very real issue of the self-satisfied, even ar-

rogant attitudes we have sometimes been guilty of. Not just the "smugness" perceived in us by outsiders, but the real evidence of it in our rank and file.

This is never an easy flaw to admit, nor is it easily seen, especially from within. Let us not respond to criticism from friend or foe without giving that criticism prayerful consideration.

I would like to see our synod turn its focus of attention not just to "the service of Christ" as it relates to doctrinal stands, but also on the Christ-likeness that must be inevitably produced in us by the Holy Spirit through the truths of Scripture. Smugness, arrogance and self-satisfied attitudes must have no place in "where we stand." Let us be aware of this insidious sin and be as deeply bothered by this image of us as was Professor Kowalke who was moved to address it publicly.

*Christine Bills
New York, New York*

Update appreciated

Thank you for the update article on St. Paul, Honolulu (September 15). We at Pastor McWaters' former congregation, Prince of Peace, Thousand Oaks, Calif., have had only bits and pieces of information on what is happening over there.

We knew when Pastor McWaters received the call to Honolulu that it was for him: working with active young people who were uprooted from home and needing someone to welcome them with open arms.

We miss the McWaters family but we love to hear of God's work abounding.

*Judi Scheibel
Simi Valley, California*

We are in Korea

I would like to respond to the article "We should be in Korea" (October 1).

We Christians are in Korea. How else would there be zealous Korean Christians? Praise the Lord that the word of God has been and is being planted by Christians, of whom we are a part. We need not think that WELS has to be there when other Christians are doing the job. So let us be thankful that we are there.

*Mel Werth
St. Peter, Minnesota*

The bride is radiant. Beautifully dressed, she is perfect and without any blemish. The bridegroom rides a white horse and is accompanied by thousands. His head is crowned and his eyes ablaze.

Sound like an out-of-this-world wedding? It is. It's the Bible's description of the heavenly marriage between Jesus Christ and his church (see Revelation 19 and 21).

Throughout Scripture the Lord speaks of his relationship with his people in terms of a bridegroom and bride or a husband and wife. Jesus is the bridegroom who fills his people with joy (John 3:29). As our bridegroom, he has gone to prepare a place for us and will return to take us home with him (John 14:2,3).

At times the relationship is sad. The Prophet Ezekiel describes God's unfaithful people as "an adulterous wife": "You prefer strangers to your own husband!" (Ezekiel 16:32). But the Lord's commitment remains: "I will remember the covenant I made with you in the days of your youth. . . . I [will] make atonement for you for all you have done" (Ezekiel 16:59,63).

Not only is marriage a picture of the relationship between Christ and the church, the Bible also says that every Christian's marriage is to be based on Christ's love for his people. Nowhere is this clearer than in Ephesians 5. Here the Apostle Paul lays down the blueprint for Christian marriages. First he speaks to wives:

Wives, submit. . . .

"Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything" (Ephesians 5:22-24).

As the church submits to Christ and his word, wives are to *submit* to their husbands. Of course no earthly husband can match Christ's perfection and authority. But a Christian wife's attitude toward her husband doesn't depend on his personal attributes or qualifications. It rests on her attitude toward her Savior.

The Christian ideal here presented stands in sharp contrast to the wife who is domineering or who constantly argues with and contradicts her husband. According to St. Peter, this "gentle and quiet spirit" of a believing wife is her source of real beauty (1 Peter 3:3-5). And it does more for a marriage than all the nagging in the world.

One author relates the following true incident. A woman went to a counselor's office full of hatred and wanting a divorce. "Before I divorce him," declared the woman, "I want to hurt him as much as I can for what he did to me."

The counselor replied, "Go home and think and act as if you really loved your husband. Tell him how much he means to you. Admire all his good qualities; praise him for every decent trait. Go out of your way to be as kind, considerate and generous as possible. Spare no efforts to give of yourself to him in every way, to please him, to enjoy him. . . . *then* drop the bomb. Tell him how much you hate him and that you're getting a divorce. That will really hurt him."

After a couple months the counselor called the woman

WHAT GOD HAS JOINED by Roland Cap Ehke

An everlasting love

Last of a series

and asked if she was ready to go through with the divorce. "Divorce?" she exclaimed. "Never! I discovered I really do love him." Her actions had changed her attitude. (From *The Myth of the Greener Grass* by J. Allan Petersen.)

Being a submissive wife doesn't mean putting one's husband ahead of God. "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). Nor does it mean being suppressed. Read the description of the "wife of noble character" in Proverbs 31:10-31. This ideal wife is a shrewd businesswoman who also "watches over the affairs of her household." Being a submissive wife does mean recognizing the family structure God has established for happiness and living within that structure.

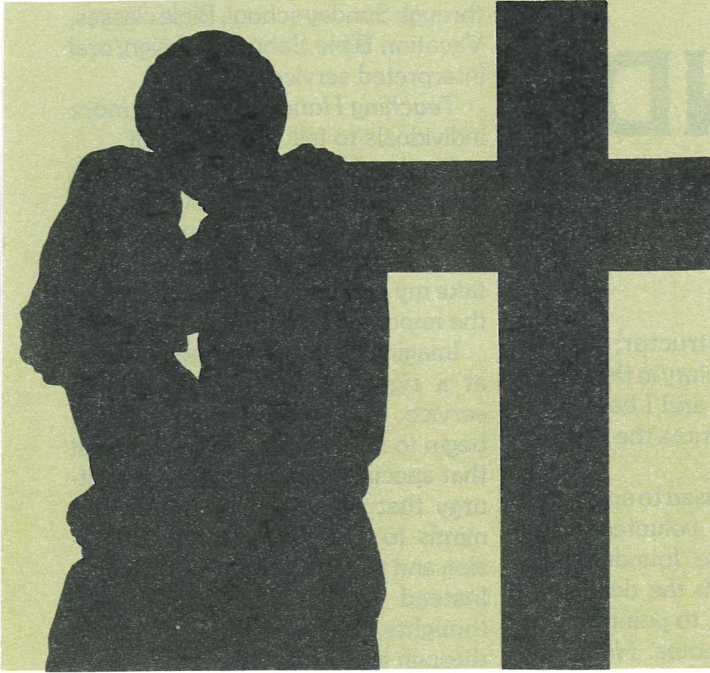
Husbands, love. . . .

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church — for we are members of his body. 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh' " (Ephesians 5:25-31).

The key word for husbands is *love*. A Christian husband realizes that his wife is a gift from God. "He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the Lord" (Proverbs 18:22). Now he is to love that special gift.

At first it might seem puzzling that the Lord *commands* husbands to love their wives. That's because we tend to think of love as an emotion beyond our control. But the love of which St. Paul speaks is not a feeling. Nor is it a self-centered what's-in-it-for-me love, which depends on how "deserving" one's wife might be.

While our English language describes numerous attitudes with the one word *love*, the Greek of the New Testament had several words for the various types of love. One was *eros*, passionate love. A second was *philia*, friendship. Another word, used in Ephesians 5, is *agape*.



This love “is 100 percent giving and zero percent taking,” writes Pastor Tom Trapp in an article entitled “Love” (*NL* 5/15/85). It is the kind of love exhibited by Christ “who loved me and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20).

For husbands this means a willingness even to lay down their lives for their wives. In day-to-day living *agape* love includes a readiness to sacrifice of your time (perhaps giving up Monday Night Football) and energy (maybe vacuuming and doing the dishes) for your wife’s interests. As Paul also indicates, a husband is to “feed” and “care for” his wife.

Since he is the head of the house, the husband is to take authority. For example, he is to see to the spiritual training of the children (Ephesians 6:4). While a Christian husband will delegate duties to his wife and children, finally the welfare of the household is his responsibility.

For all it entails, a husband’s headship doesn’t mean being a tyrant. Scripture directs husbands, “Love your wives and do not be harsh with them” (Colossians 3:19) and “be considerate” (1 Peter 3:7). And that brings us back to where we started. Husbands, model your behavior toward your wives after Christ’s love for you.

A profound mystery

“This is a profound mystery — but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband” (Ephesians 5:32,33).

What mystery is the apostle talking about? He’s referring to the wonderful fact that marriage is compared with Christ and the church. Had God not told us, we wouldn’t have noticed this comparison. Now that he has shown us, we are to apply it in our marriages.

In the final sentence in this passage, Paul sums it all up. Each husband is to love his own wife with a Christlike, self-sacrificing love. As the church submits to and honors

its Lord, the wife must respect her husband. Each partner is to strive to fulfill his role, regardless of whether the other spouse is doing the same.

There are obvious differences between the spiritual and physical relationship. Our union with Christ lasts forever; the husband-wife bond is only for this life and ends with death (Matthew 22:30). Earthly marriage is consummated with the physical union; “but he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit” (1 Corinthians 6:17). Christ’s dealings with us are always perfect; our dealings with one another are distorted by sin.

These differences only make the comparison between the two more awesome. God thinks so much of marriage and exalts it so highly that he compares it to our very salvation. Living by God’s model makes every marriage an honor. In this light our marital duties turn into privileges and our burdens into opportunities. A good marriage becomes even better and a difficult one yields satisfaction. It is a special joy when both husband and wife live by Christ’s model. As they seek each other’s welfare, they find their personal fulfillment as well.

There’s one more point I’d like to make about this model. In our relationship with Christ we need time to be with him and communicate. He speaks to us through the Bible. We speak to him in prayer. If our bond with Christ is to grow strong, we need daily contact. The same holds true in marriage. It has been said the biggest problem in marriages is not sex, money or incompatibility. The greatest problem is neglect. Take time together with the Lord and with each other.

In closing, we return to our picture of the heavenly wedding. The heavenly bridegroom declares to his bride, “I have loved you with an everlasting love” (Jeremiah 31:3). His dazzling clothes still bear the stain of blood — a reminder that he has laid down his life to free his bride from sin and death and Satan’s power.

What can we reply to such love? What can we say but, “I love you with all my heart”?

Ahead of us lies “the wedding supper of the Lamb” (Revelation 19:9). Meanwhile we live for him who first loved us. May our lives and our marriages brim with the love of Christ. And may the good Lord bless “what God has joined.”

The prayer for this final installment is adapted from Martin Luther’s Order of Marriage, 1529. It demonstrates that the values of married life remain constant through the centuries.

O God, you have created man and woman and have ordained them for the married estate. You have blessed them also with fruits of the womb, and have represented in marriage the union of your dear Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the church, his bride. We ask your unmerited goodness and mercy that you would not permit this your creation, ordinance and blessing to be disturbed or destroyed, but graciously preserve the same, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. □

Pastor Ehke is an associate editor at Northwestern Publishing House.

WELS HANDS

HELPING AND NOURISHING THE DEAF

by Irene Riege

Imagine yourself without hearing at your regular Sunday morning church service. You read the hymns, maybe sing along without voice. The liturgy is easiest to follow, but be prepared for confusion if there is any change in the order of service. For the sermon, the real message of the service, you'll find lipreading just isn't adequate. Do you feel more alone than in fellowship with your fellow Lutherans; more frustrated than spiritually enriched; more that you have talked to the Lord instead of opening your heart to receive his message?

WELS Hands, a program authorized early this year by the South-eastern Wisconsin District Special Ministries Board, is attempting to change that scenario for more of the hearing impaired in our congregations. Four of us with a vital interest in serving the hearing impaired, have joined hands for *Helping and Nourishing Deaf Souls*. Verna Weigand is a volunteer sign language interpreter; Beth Schulz is an interpreter and

sign language instructor; Estelle Vaichinger is a secretary in the WELS stewardship office, and I have been deaf for over 40 years as the result of spinal meningitis.

Hands are often used to symbolize workers, especially volunteers. But hands are also the foundation of communication with the deaf — to sign and fingerspell, to point, to gesture and to write notes. *Hands* attempts to serve the special needs of the deaf and hard-of-hearing.

Helping Hands to provide the extra services necessary for the hearing impaired to be active members of our WELS congregations.

Searching Hands to find the deaf and hard-of-hearing and invite them to our church services.

Linking Hands to promote understanding and acceptance for those who cannot hear in our hearing congregations.

Joining Hands with volunteers to bridge the gaps in service.

Nourishing Hands to help the hearing impaired grow in faith

through Sunday school, Bible classes, Vacation Bible School and sign/oral interpreted services.

Teaching Hands to educate more individuals to talk with the deaf.

Signing Hands to break through the barriers of silence and share the gospel with those who cannot hear.

Folding Hands in prayer, "Lord, take my hands and let them move, at the impulse of thy love."

Imagine yourself without hearing at a sign/oral interpreted worship service. As the interpreter's hands begin to move rhythmically, you feel that special quality of hymns and liturgy that prepares our hearts and minds to hear God's word. Confusion and uncertainty are swept away. Instead of crumbs and straying thoughts, the gospel message comes through loud and clear.

With the Savior's blessing and benediction you add a special prayer of thanksgiving that you were able to join in communion and fellowship with the assembled congregation. The Lord's message has reached you, strengthened and spiritually enriched you. Your heart and soul have been stirred. How beautiful are the hands and lips of those who bring understanding to the deaf!

For more information about this program write WELS Hands, 10131 W. Schlinger, West Allis, WI 53214.

Irene Riege is a member of Good Shepherd, West Allis, Wisconsin. She is second from the right in the first pew in the photo.



Beth Schulz, an interpreter and sign language instructor, demonstrating a "signed" sermon at a recent workshop.

Things don't just happen

by Richard D. Balge

He was born in the city of David. How did it happen that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, when his mother lived in Nazareth and the capital city of his people was Jerusalem?

It happened because a heathen tyrant chose to place all the subject peoples of his empire on the tax rolls. Caesar Augustus did not willingly cooperate in choosing the place where this child was to be born. But God used an emperor's ambitions and Roman pride to accomplish his divine purpose.

It happened because the Jewish people were permitted to register in their own way, by having each person go to the city of his ancestors. The idea of census was repugnant to the Jews, especially a census carried out at the command of a Gentile ruler. Still, "everyone went to his own home town to register," because the facts of life under Rome dictated that they must obey.

It happened because Joseph was of the house and line of David. It was not a convenient time for him and Mary to be traveling, since she was expecting a child. But the carpenter would not leave his pregnant fiancée in Nazareth to be at the mercy of malicious tongues, and so they went.

It happened because the Scripture must be fulfilled, which said:

"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
though you are small among the clans of Judah,
out of you will come for me
one who will be ruler over Israel,
whose origins are from of old,
from days of eternity" (Micah 5:2).

It happened because God moves in his own way to accomplish his own ends. That means that it didn't just "happen."

While all of them were busy doing what they had to do, while the town was full of people who had come to register for the tax census, while the innkeeper enjoyed boom times and had to turn guests away, while shepherds were keeping watch over their flocks, a child was born in a stable. What an unlikely and undesirable place for any child to be born. And through this child God intended to give a dead race eternal life.

The angel who announced Jesus' birth to the shep-

herds called him "a Savior . . . Christ, the Lord." How easily the familiar words roll off our tongues. Yet each of them is a Christmas sermon in itself. Savior: He is a rescuer from sin and its consequences and its power to ruin lives for eternity. Christ: Here is God's Man to do God's work in God's good time. There is no mistaking what the angel meant with the last title, Lord. He is the God of free and faithful grace, come to do what only he can do. God has given us himself as a present.

We are sure that we can celebrate this, that it is "good news of great joy" for us. The Epistle for Christmas Day says it in unmistakable words: "The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men" (Titus 2:11). It is universal. If there was ever anything that is truly for all races and nationalities, for every kind of people, it is the gospel of Christ's coming.

Today, while super powers struggle for dominance, when men know more about killing than about living, God still has his purpose and he is carrying it out. The mighty struggle and go under, common people busy themselves with small things without any regard for the Most High, but he continues to accomplish his gracious good will. Through ordinary people, sometimes in spite of important people, the good news of great joy is spoken to all kinds of people. Like the birth at Bethlehem, the death on Golgotha and the resurrection, the conversion of a sinner is not something that just "happens." The calling of sinners to repentance is the only reason he lets this world stand.

God has opened our ears to hear and our hearts to believe it. It didn't just "happen." He brought it about through others who spoke the word of God to us. He opens our hearts to share it. We have his promise that when and where the good news is shared he will make things happen. □



Professor Balge is dean of students and teaches church history and homiletics at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin.

The first performance of Handel's *Messiah* freed 142 men from debtor's prison. Here's how it happened. Sometime in the year 1741 the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, William Cavendish, extended an invitation to Handel to come to Dublin to present a series of benefit concerts in behalf of three charity institutions. Handel accepted; he made the trip from London, where he had lived for 30 years, reaching Dublin in November 1741. During the winter months he presented several oratorios and other works at the New Music Hall on Fishamble Street.

Meanwhile preparations were going forward for the first performance of his new oratorio *Messiah* which Handel had composed in 24 days the previous summer back in London. Finally on April 13, 1742, *Messiah* was introduced at a great and very special charity gathering "For the relief of the Prisoners in the several Gaols, and for the Support of Mercer's Hospital in Stephen Street, and of the Charitable Infirmary on the Inn's Quay." Handel had the assistance of the choirs of Christ Church and St. Patrick's Cathedral, whose dean at the time was Jonathan Swift (author of *Gulliver's Travels*). The Dublin papers described the new oratorio as an "exquisite Delight" and praised Handel's warm generosity in donating all proceeds to charity (the performers also donated their services). Four hundred pounds were distributed to the three "great and pious Charities," and 142 prisoners released when their creditors were satisfied.

Eight years later *Messiah* was again performed by Handel for the benefit of a charity, this time the Foundling Hospital (home for abandoned children) in London. After being elected a governor of the Foundling Hospital, he inaugurated an annual benefit concert of *Messiah* for this charity. In his will Handel gave to the Foundling Hospital "a fair copy of the Score and all Parts" of *Messiah* and vested all the rights to this institution resulting in a handsome revenue.

One may perhaps find in Handel's youth the kindling of this interest in such charitable activities. He was

born 300 years ago, February 23, 1685, in the German city of Halle. Seven years later a university was founded in Halle which very shortly numbered among its professors August Hermann Francke. Francke was a leading light in the Pietist movement and Halle University became a stronghold in stressing practical Christian living. Among the institutions which Francke founded was an orphanage for abandoned children. Handel enrolled at the university in 1702 and some of the pietistic spirit likely rubbed off on him.

Handel soon gave up his studies for a career in music. About this time he became acquainted with Georg Philipp Telemann who was studying music with Johann Kuhnau, Kantor of St. Thomas in Leipzig, a mere 20

the Roman Catholic Church.

In 1710 Handel returned to Germany and was appointed Kapellmeister of Georg Ludwig, elector of Hanover, who on the death of Queen Anne in 1714, became George I of England. November 1710 found Handel making his first trip to London where he soon took up residence and later became an English citizen. One of his tasks was to prepare ceremonial music for the royal house of England: birthdays, funerals, coronations, and special events. Here is the origin of his *Water Music* performed during a royal procession on the river Thames and *Music for the Royal Fireworks* to celebrate the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle (1749).

But Handel's consuming interest was the opera (44 in all). He wrote,

Handel and his Mes

by Victor H. Prange

miles from Halle. Telemann introduced Handel to the world of opera (there was a small opera house in Leipzig but none in pietistic Halle). Handel found in opera his true love.

The opera center of Germany at the time was Hamburg, and it was not long before Handel made his way to this northern city. In Hamburg he composed his first opera. Soon, however, Handel was off to Italy, music center of Europe. This was the country of Monteverdi and Corelli, of Vivaldi and the two Scarlattis, father and son. Here opera had been born. In Italy Handel became friends with the younger Scarlatti, Domenico, who was exactly his same age. All along the way Handel was learning. He was learning the art of writing for solo voice; and the Latin church music he composed prepared for the magnificent choral works of the future. It was in Italy that Handel first came to know really great singers and singing. He took commissions wherever he could find them. His patrons included several cardinals of

produced and directed operas for 30 years in several London theaters. But by and large the English middle class was not won over to this musical form presented in the Italian language and based on classical stories which too often were unknown and unreal. Only the aristocracy supported opera.

Handel was too much a businessman to stick with what was not profitable. Even while writing operas he had composed several oratorios. These were in the English language based on biblical events (Old Testament), and making more use of the chorus. Musically they differed little from an opera (solo arias and recitatives); but there was no acting or stage scenery. Yet they were advertised as "entertainment." For the last 18 years of his life Handel stuck with the religious oratorio. Among these in addition to *Messiah* were *Saul*, *Israel in Egypt*, *Samson* (based on the poem of John Milton), *Judas Macabaeus*, and *Jephtha*.

Not all the clergy were pleased

with these oratorios. This can in part be attributed to the new wave of religious revival stirred up by the Wesley brothers (John began field preaching in 1739) and Whitefield. Since the oratorios were generally performed in the same theaters where opera had been put on, attendance at these "playhouses" was frowned on by the more puritanical. The oratorio was regarded as opera with a religious veneer. In later years, however, John Wesley wrote after attending a performance of *Messiah* in Bristol: "I doubt if that congregation was ever so serious at a sermon as they were during this performance. In many parts, especially several of the choruses, it exceeded my expectations."

Eventually the English people took to Handel's oratorios with great en-

thusiasm. And the most popular of all is *Messiah*. *Messiah* is unique among Handel's compositions. No other oratorio uses New Testament texts (and even *Messiah* is drawn primarily from the Old Testament). It is divided into three parts: 1) the Advent of the Messiah; 2) the Sufferings of the Messiah; 3) the Kingly Reign of the Messiah. Extensive use is made of Psalms 2 and 24; Isaiah 40 and 53; 1 Corinthians 15 and the Revelation of John. The Messiah does not speak. Even words of Jesus ("come unto me") are changed to the third person: "Come unto *him*." One contemplates the Messiah and his work; but one does not hear his voice.

The climax in *Messiah* is reached in part 3 with the famous "Hallelujah Chorus" (Revelation 19:6,16; 11:15).

Handel had written many coronation marches for the reigning monarchs of England; but none of them can compare with this chorus of praise to the "King of kings and Lord of lords" whose reign shall be forever and ever.

To visit the grave of Handel one must go to Westminster Abbey in London where his body lies in the "poets' corner." When he was entombed a note was made in the burial register that there were empty places on either side of him. Charles Dickens filled one of them. Handel had come a long way from his native Germany. He came so far in fact that the Englishman who inscribed his epitaph erred on the year of his birth. It reads: George Frederic Handel, born 23rd February, 1684, died 14th of April, 1759."

To visit the grave of Bach, born 27 days after Handel, one must go to St. Thomas Church in Leipzig. This is significant. Bach lived in the church. His music grew out of the worship, the liturgy, the hymns of the church. Handel's music was first of all good theater. He was at home among the royal and the wealthy. Handel wrote no organ preludes for hymns; he made hardly any use of chorales. In Bach's cantatas and passions one hears the soul of the believer conversing person to person with the Savior. And the cross is never far away.

In Handel there is no sign of confession, no commitment to Christ. Music historian Paul Henry Lang concludes that Handel's religion was "a form of deism." His world was "full of questions demanding answers." Bach had found the answer to his questions. Yet God used Handel and his particular talents to create a moving proclamation of the glories of our Messiah, our King. We are eternally grateful for that. □

siah



George
Frederic
Handel
1685-
1759



Pastor Prange
serves at Peace,
Janesville, Wisconsin.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Whose birthday is it?

Do you still remember some of the birthday parties you attended as a child? Christmas is a birthday celebration too. But it might be well to remind ourselves whose birthday it is. That will have a bearing on how we celebrate.

There was always an air of excitement. You could hardly wait for the day to come. Not at all unlike the shepherds whom the angel told about a birth in Bethlehem. They couldn't get there fast enough. Everything else would have to wait.

Isn't it ironic that so many of the things we feel compelled to do during these days have nothing to do with the one whose birthday it is? That they almost keep us from remembering whose birthday it is? Don't let it happen! Say with the shepherds, "Let's go to Bethlehem now to see what happened there!" Our Bethlehem is the altar, the communion rail, the pulpit, the lectern, the font. There his birthday is observed on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, the Sunday after, New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, and all the Sundays and special services after that. The eternal God, whom the heavens cannot contain, became a child — to save us. How can we be anything but excited! Certainly we'll be there for the celebration — if we don't forget whose birthday it is.

And you always took a gift. The invitation didn't specifically say that you had to. But you wanted to. You were happy to be included and you wanted to show your appreciation.

With another American Christmas upon us no one has to tell us about gifts. For weeks we've been reminded how many shopping days are left. But gifts for whom? Gifts for the one who has everything, gifts for the one who already has more than he or she can use or appreciate, gifts for the one we'd just as soon cross off our list but don't dare? So time runs out on us, nerves become frayed, patience wears thin, budgets are bent out of shape. I'm not suggesting that we abandon all gift giving. Within reason there's much to commend it. But isn't it ironic that so much of our gift giving has little or nothing to do with the one whose birthday we're celebrating?

We're not told that the shepherds brought a gift. There's a reason for it. They had nothing to bring. But they brought the greatest gift of all — themselves. As they knelt before the Infant Jesus in humble awe and adoration they gave him their hearts. And didn't the Savior once say, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also"? Once he has our heart then everything else we have will be his too.

And if we don't forget whose birthday it is, then we'll also be deeply concerned about the one who doesn't have everything, who doesn't even know that the Babe in the manger was born and lived and died and rose again to save him. If we don't forget whose birthday it is, the Savior will be first on our gift list throughout the year so that the one who doesn't have everything can be told, "Cheer up! I have some great news for you. Unto you is born a Savior!"

Carl H. Muschke



Psalm 23

Christians can be sure

If Christians the world over were asked, "What is your favorite chapter in the Bible?" it is likely that the great majority would reply, "The 23rd Psalm." But while every Christian has probably read it, it is likely that very few have really studied it.

Jesus our Shepherd

The psalm was written by David, who was a shepherd in his youth, for others who, like himself, have come to know Jesus as their Savior. And certainly Jesus was thinking of this psalm when he told the Jews in Jerusalem, "I am the good shepherd . . . I know my sheep and my sheep know me. And I'm going to lay down my life for my sheep . . . My sheep listen to me as I talk to them . . . and they follow me. And I'm giving them eternal Life, so that they will never be lost." And so we all confess joyfully with David, "The Lord is my shepherd" (John 10:30).

How wonderful to be his sheep

This is the theme of this psalm — all the benefits those people enjoy who are Jesus' "sheep," that is, all those who believe in him as their Savior. They shall never want for spiritual food, nor for the necessities of this life, since God's providence will provide for their daily needs (v. 1b, Matthew 6:31-34). This thought is then expanded in the pictures of the green pastures and the streams where rest and refreshment will be found (the proper meaning of "still" is "quiet, restful"). This recalls Jesus' words to the weary, to come to him for rest (Matthew 11:28). Verse 3a continues this same thought, that Jesus refreshes and strengthens our inner man (soul); and the parallel passage, Psalm 19:8, tells us that he does this by *God's word*. Verse 3b amplifies this thought of our Lord's special guidance by pointing out that through his word he guides us along the *right road*, spoken of in Psalm 1. And the phrase "for his name's sake" tells us why he does all this — simply because this is what he in his great love for us *wants to do* as our Shepherd.

Sometimes, of course, we must walk through *dangerous* places, like the dark valleys where wild animals or robbers lurked, waiting to attack the sheep that was straying, or the unwary traveler. But even here Jesus' sheep need fear no evil or hurt, because our almighty Shepherd is right there with us, protecting us with his shepherd's rod and his staff. This pictures perfectly the

confidence and assurance described so wonderfully by the Apostle Paul in Romans 8:18-39, "Since God is for us, what difference does it make who is against us?"

Jesus, our host

Suddenly in verses five and six the picture changes abruptly, and we are pictured as *living in God's house* forever, with Jesus, God's Son, our continual host. And we are reminded of what Jesus told his eleven apostles the night before his death: "There are many rooms in my Father's house, and I'm going to get your place to live ready for you" (John 14:2). And that's what our Good Shepherd is doing right now.

In the ancient Jewish world inviting a person to a dinner was the greatest act of friendship possible. And this is why Jesus pictured our life in the new heavens and earth as a great *dinner* (Matthew 21:1-14), which is a reference to this part of Psalm 23.

Notice that it is Jesus, the king, who prepares this dinner and invites us as his guests, which is a great honor indeed. Imagine being invited to dinner by the president of the United States! And this is a far greater honor than that! It is Jesus who is supplying all the food, which will be the most delicious and nourishing spiritual food imaginable. He is also supplying all the entertainment, which will bring continual joy to our hearts.

And in the ancient world the host was also responsible for the safety of all his guests, while they were in his home, and took the proper measures to protect them from all their enemies. The host also anointed the heads of all the guests with sweet-smelling ointment, which was a symbol of the great joy he felt in having them and they felt in being there. The most beautiful and descriptive picture we have of this wonderful new life awaiting us in the New Jerusalem is found in Revelation 21:1-22:5, which is well worth your reading and careful study. And the closing phrase, verse 6b, assures us that we *shall* live in the Lord's house forever! □



Pastor Anderson is a retired pastor and seminary professor living in Naples, Florida.

NEWS around the world



Editor chides staffing proposals for the New Lutheran Church . . .

Commenting on staffing proposals for the New Lutheran Church, scheduled to begin operations January 1, 1988, Lowell Almen, editor of the Lutheran Standard (ALC), said in his column (11/1/85) that "regardless of what is said on the multitude of pages that outline the structure [of the New Lutheran Church], people — not words on paper — will shape to a great degree that new church's pattern, program, and tone. So the allocation of staff for the natural structure . . . may offer the most revealing glimpse of what the new church actually will be like." Almen points out that in the New Lutheran Church the allotted staff for world missions is 42, down 15 from the number requested. Further, home missions (outreach in the U.S.A.) is allotted 39 to do the work that now involves about 130 people in the three uniting church bodies. "In contrast," he said, "look at staffing proposals for the social issue-oriented elements of the new church." These elements have been allocated 85 staff people. "The combined total for staff of the new church's divisions — those responsible for new congregations, missionaries, education, social services and congregational life — is 182. Staff for the commissions, which in the past have been seen as supportive of the church's primary mission focus but not as its center, will total 198." What is emerging, he said, "is staffing that inevitably will shift central attention from global mission and new congregations in the United States . . . to issues in society." Almen suggests — with tongue in cheek — that the new church body ought to be named "Lutheran Church of the Latest Social Issue" or "Lutheran Church of the Present Moment."

Prayer in schools favored . . . In a recent Media General-Associated Press poll on school prayer, 74 percent of the respondents said prayer in public schools did not violate the constitutional principle of church-state separation. The poll found that support for silent prayer in American schools was widespread with large majorities supporting it in every age, race, economic and political group. One exception was among Jews, where a majority opposed school prayer. Jewish leaders have expressed concern that the Christian majority in the United States could impose its religious beliefs in the schools. One unexpected finding of the poll was that a surprising number — 25 percent — say they think the separation of religion and government, a pillar of the Constitution, is a bad idea.

Boy Scouts readmit atheist . . . Paul Trout, a 15-year-old West Virginian, has been readmitted to the Boy Scouts after the organization decided to remove language from its literature that defines God as a supreme being and to instruct local troops not to question boys on their specific religious beliefs. Paul was forced out of the Boy Scouts in April after stating that he did not believe in God. In June, Ben H. Love, chief executive of the Boy Scouts, sent Paul's parents a letter saying: "If a person does not have belief in a supreme being, then they cannot be a member of the Boy Scouts of America." At a recent meeting in Texas, the national executive board of the Boy Scouts passed a resolution reaffirming the Boy Scout oath, which requires duty to God. At the same time, it decided to remove the definition of God as a supreme being from scouting literature.

Religion essential to democracy Institute contends . . .

A three-year study by a leading liberal think-tank in Washington, D.C., has concluded that the future of American democracy depends on the strength of the nation's religious institutions, and calls for changes in public policies to accommodate religion in public life. The new study by the Brookings Institution also states flatly that secularism — defined as the idea of society based on non-religious principles — provides no adequate foundation for democracy in America. Democratic government "depends for its health on values that over the not-so-long run must come from religion," according to the study, which breaks with past positions taken by secular liberal organizations. Through religion, the study says, "human rights are rooted in the moral worth with which a loving Creator has endowed each human soul, and social authority is legitimized by making it answerable to transcendent moral law." Titled "Religion in American Public Life," the 389-page report forecasts a religious revival in the United States, and takes heart in surveys showing widespread belief in God and importance placed by people on religion. "After several years of decline, the share of youth expressing some form of religious faith in the 1980s has begun to rise. A new religious awakening seems well within the realm of possibility," it says.

Lutheran Student Movement faces withdrawal of LCMS . . . Lutheran Student Movement will probably face competition from a Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod national student group if a "drastic withdrawal" by the Missouri Synod from campus ministry cooperation continues. Pastor Edward A. Schmidt, secretary of campus ministry for the LCMS said in an interview that a separate Missouri Synod student group "may be down the road." He said some of Missouri's districts have requested its own student organization because LSM, a pan-Lutheran student group, has "not always reflected the confessional stance" of the Missouri Synod. □

News items appearing in News around the world represent current events of general interest to the readers of The Northwestern Lutheran and should not be interpreted as representing the views of the editors.

IN THE NEWS

NPH — a new look

by John A. Trapp

The counters lost count somewhere around 1,000 as carloads and busloads of sunny faces brightened the lobby at Northwestern Publishing House on the afternoon of October 20. It was a predictable sequel to the standing-room-only dedication service which preceded the open house. The service was held at St. John in Wauwatosa. Pastor Harold Wicke, retired editor of *The Northwestern Lutheran*, preached.

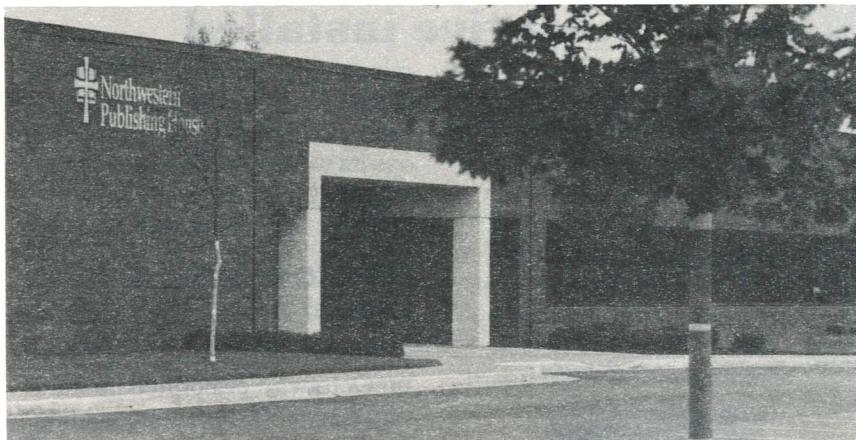
In recent years the NPH management and board of directors made a number of significant decisions which have strengthened considerably the synod's publishing arm. The most recent and most apparent change is the publishing house's move to a new \$1.5-million-dollar facility on 113th St. near Wauwatown Plank Road in the Milwaukee suburb of Wauwatosa.

The building covers 40,000 square feet. Opus Corporation of Milwaukee designed the building and constructed it on a three-and-one-quarter-acre site in the Tosa Business Park. Ground breaking was held on April 10, 1985, and occupancy took place less than four months later, on August 1.

It all began in 1876, when the synod established the "Synodical Bookstore" on Broadway in downtown Milwaukee and stocked it with theological and devotional books from an Oshkosh book dealer.

In June of 1891, the synod resolved to add a print shop to the store. Two months later, resolution became reality with the rental of a two-story facility at 310 North Third Street. On October 8 the new enterprise, which included a bookstore, pressroom and composing department, was incorporated as Northwestern Publishing House.

After two more moves down Third Street, the NPH board of directors wisely began to salt away funds for a future building program.



In the Northwestern Publishing House book and gift store are (left to right): Mrs. Duane Kuehl, Mr. Kuehl, treasurer of the NPH board of directors and Pastor George Rothe of Brown Deer, Wisconsin.

As a result, in 1913 NPH was able to construct its own 11,250-square-foot facility on Fourth Street between State and Cedar. Thirty-five years later the city acquired the entire block, tore down the building and devoted the land to a new sports arena.

The relocation search led to the purchase and remodeling of an ample building on the corner of 37th Street and North Avenue. This building not only afforded the expansion of the NPH production department, but it also provided the synod administration with a headquarters from 1948-1964.

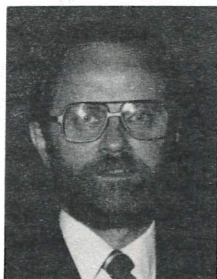
There was one particular historic event which, more than anything else, affected the timing of Northwestern's latest move and the loca-

tion and design of the new building. In October 1984 the NPH board of directors elected to close down all in-house printing and binding operations. Changing times and technology had brought the publishing house, in effect, full circle back into the synod's pressless era — not because of receding market, but, curiously enough, because production is overflowing and the market is now too large for NPH to serve efficiently without the help of outside suppliers.

With gratitude to God for their new home and with a fresh spirit of dedication, the members of the Northwestern Publishing House family welcome these changes as a wonderful new opportunity to provide the best of service.

Mission executive installed

Pastor John H. Kurth was installed on October 16 as worker training counselor for the Board for World Missions in a special service at St. Paul, Milwaukee. A former executive secretary of the world mission board, Pastor em. Theodore Sauer, preached the sermon. The installation was performed by Pastor William Meier of Phoenix, Ariz., chairman of the world board.



Kurth

Chairmen of the board's executive committees also assisted in the installation: Pastors Harold Essmann, Ronald Freier, David Kock, Kurt Koeplin and Frederic Nitz along with another former executive secretary of the board, Pastor em. Edgar Hoenecke of San Diego. The installation was held in conjunction with a meeting of the world board.

Kurth, 46, prepped at Dr. Martin Luther Academy and graduated from Northwestern College in 1961. Graduating from the seminary in 1964 he was assigned to St. Matthew, Butterfield and St. John, Darrfur, Minn. In 1967 he accepted a call to Bethel, Bay City, Mich. In 1978 he went as a missionary to Blantyre, Malawi supervising 15 congregations using both English and Chichewa languages. In 1982 he returned to serve as principal of Michigan Lutheran High School at St. Joseph, Mich.

In 1963 he married Baniata Behrens of Stillwater, Minn. There are four children Paul, 21; Peter, 19; Joseph, 18; and Karen, 12.

Kurth's responsibilities as worker training counselor are to conduct worker training seminars in fields where WELS has no expatriate

missionaries (at present Nigeria and Cameroon), to serve as resource to each world mission field as it develops its worker training program, and to develop an orientation program for WELS missionaries.

Dakota-Montana District

Ascension of Moorhead, Minn., on October 6 celebrated its transition from a mission congregation to a self-supporting congregation. Organized in 1965, it was originally served by Pastor Marvin Putz who also oversaw the construction of the mission chapel in 1967. The congregation currently has 120 communicants and is served by Pastor Richard Kanzenbach. . . .

On June 18 Mountain View Lutheran Church of Great Falls, Mont., celebrated the 25th anniversary in the ministry of its pastor, *John M. Engel*. Guest speaker was Pastor John Sullivan of Wetaskiwin, Can. Pastor Engel's first congregation was at Burke, S.D. From 1969-1977 he served as district missionary for the Dakota-Montana District. In 1977 he accepted a call to Great Falls. He serves the district as its second vice president and also as a circuit pastor. . . .

On June 30 *Our Savior of Bismarck, N.D.*, celebrated its 25th anniversary. Guest speakers were Pastor Timothy Bauer of Denver and Pastor George Rothe of Brown Deer, Wis. Organized in 1960 by Pastor Reginald Pope of Mandan, the congregation currently numbers 200 communicants and is served by Pastor John Ruege, Sr. . . . *St. Paul of Valley City, N.D.*, celebrated its 50th anniversary on August 4.

Guest speakers at the special services were Pastor William Russow and Pastor Donald Kolander, both former pastors of St. Paul. The congregation of 80 communicants is now part of a dual parish with Jamestown, N.D., and is served by Pastor William Allwardt. . . . *Elsie Herbst Schulke* was honored re-

cently by St. Paul, Faith, S.D., for her 50 years of service as Sunday school teacher and organist. She began teaching Sunday school in 1934 and a year later began her organist duties. . . . On May 5, *Trinity of Clear Lake, S.D.*, celebrated its 50th anniversary. Guest speaker was Pastor Daniel Gieschen of Adrian, Mich., a former pastor of the congregation. The congregation currently numbers 300 communicants and is served by Pastor William Russow. . . . *Bethlehem of rural Willow Lake, S.D.*, celebrated its 100th anniversary on June 23. Guest speaker for the festival service was Pastor Roland Zimmermann of Menomonee Falls, Wis., a former pastor of the congregation. The congregation was organized in 1885 by traveling missionary J. Johl. Since it was organized it has been served by 15 pastors. Bethlehem currently numbers 34 communicants and is part of a dual parish. Since 1961 Pastor Gilbert C. Bunde has served the congregation.



Schulke



Habermann

. . . St. Martin of Watertown, S.D., celebrated the 40th anniversary in the ministry of its pastor, *Elwood C. Habermann*, on June 23. Guest speaker at the special service was President Gerald Free of the Nebraska District. Habermann, a 1945 seminary graduate, has served congregations at Ridgely and Essig, Minn.; Haven, Reedsville and Kimberly, Wis.; and Norfolk, Nebr. In 1967 he accepted a call to St. Martin. St. Martin numbers 1000 communicants and maintains a Christian day school of 150 pupils. Habermann currently serves as a circuit pastor of the Dakota-Montana District.

— Richard Kanzenbach

IN THE NEWS

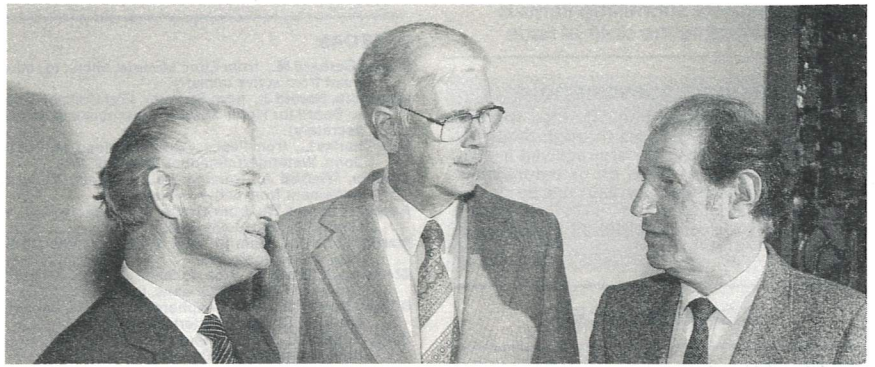
Michigan District

At the present time there are four pastoral vacancies in the Michigan District: at Redeemer, Big Rapids; at Shepherd of the Hills, Grand Ledge and Hope, Portland (dual parish); at Trinity, Saline (associate) in Michigan and at Grace, Kenton, Ohio. . . . The members of the Senior Class at Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw made their annual tour of the synod's seminary (Mequon), colleges (Northwestern and Dr. Martin Luther), publishing house and office building during the week of November 3. . . . On October 20 a special service was held at Zion, Monroe marking the retirement of Pastor Gerhard Cares from the active ministry. He began his ministry at Christ, Shields, Michigan in 1941 and has served Zion since 1955. . . . St. Stephen of Adrian, where Rev. Daniel Gieschen is pastor, celebrated its 125th anniversary with special services on October 20. The guest speaker in the morning service was Pastor Mark Gieschen, a son of the congregation, and in the afternoon service the guest speaker was synod president, Pastor Carl Mischke. . . . Pastor Robert Holtz of St. Matthew's, Freeland recently celebrated the 45th anniversary of his ordination. . . . New mission church buildings were dedicated by *Shepherd of Peace, Worthington, Ohio* on September 2 and *Good Shepherd, Novi, Michigan* on October 13. On November 17 *Our Savior, Hollidaysburg, Penn.* dedicated its new parsonage. . . . On September 8 *John M. Brenner* was installed as Dean of Students at Michigan Lutheran Seminary and *Daniel Drews* was installed as graduate tutor. On the same day *Winfried Schroeder* was installed as associate pastor at St. Luke, Vassar. On September 29 *John Gore* was installed as pastor at St. Paul, Monroe.

— Ed Schaewe

A REMINDER

There is only one issue of the Northwestern Lutheran in December.



Representatives of the Free Evangelical Lutheran Synod of South Africa and the Lutheran Church of South Africa recently met with the WELS Commission on Inter-Church Relations in Milwaukee. Here with President Mischke are President Guenter Scharlach, left, of the Free Evangelical Lutheran Synod and Bishop George Schulz, right, of the Lutheran Church of South Africa. Also present from South Africa were Dr. Wilhelm Weber, Prof. E. A. Albers, and Rev. Peter Ahlers. "Although no formal evaluation of the meeting has been released by the commission," reported President Mischke, "there seemed to be consensus that we are agreed with these churches on the doctrine of fellowship in spite of different doctrinal formulations."

WITH THE LORD

Mary E. Hahn 1950-1985

Mary E. Hahn (nee Hubbard) was born January 11, 1950 in Kenosha, Wis. She died in an automobile accident September 15, 1985 in Tomah, Wis.

A 1972 graduate of Dr. Martin Luther College, she taught school in New Ulm, Minn. and West Salem, Wis.

In 1974 she married James K. Hahn. She is survived by her husband; children, Melanie and Jason; parents Mr. and Mrs. Robert Hubbard; her paternal grandmother; two brothers and four sisters.

Funeral services were held September 18 at St. John, Barre Mills, Wis. and September 19 at St. Luke, Kenosha, Wis.

Erich Paul Kirschke 1896-1985

Erich Paul Herbert Kirschke was born December 24, 1896 in Brighton, Minn. He died October 11 in Milwaukee, Wis.

A 1915 graduate of Dr. Martin Luther College, for 50 years he taught school in Wellington, Minn.; Saginaw, Mich.; and Kenosha, Hustisford, Two Rivers and Milwaukee, Wis.

In 1917 he married Anna Schriefer. She preceded him in death in 1980 on the same date. He is survived by sons, Gerhard (Lorraine) and Lester (Agnes); daughters, Elenore (Pastor Gerhard) Cares and Lillian (Harold) Lorenz; 10 grandchildren and 19 great-grandchildren.

Funeral services were held October 15 at Christ, Milwaukee, Wis.

Chalmer G. Westhoff 1910-1985

Pastor Chalmer G. Westhoff was born September 18, 1910 in Bethalto, Ill. He died October 3, 1985 in Kansas City, Mo.

A 1936 graduate of Concordia Seminary, Springfield, Ill., he served congregations in Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska and Oklahoma before his retirement in 1977.

In 1937 he married Charlotte Finke. He is survived by his wife; sons, C. John and Richard; daughters, Charlotte Neher and Marianne England; brothers, Wilhelm and Charles; sisters Lillian McCauley, Dorothy Hartman and Abigail Szabo; 17 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren.

Funeral services were held October 7 at Mt. Moriah Terrace Park Chapel, Kansas City, Mo.

NOTICES

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

PREBUDGET SUBSCRIPTIONS

Prebudget subscription offerings will be credited as 1985 receipts through January 10, 1986 as long as they are received in the lock box, MB Unit 9102, on or before that date. The remittance Form 220 must be clearly labeled "December" or "1985" offerings; otherwise they will be credited for the new year.

CONFERENCES

Michigan District, Southeastern Pastor-Teacher Conference, January 27-28 at St. Mark, Flat Rock. Agenda: Exegesis of 1 Corinthians 6:1-8 (Herman); Seminar on Alcoholism.

Nebraska District, Central Delegate Conference, February 27-28 at Good Shepherd, Omaha. Agenda: Large Catechism — First Article (Kramer); Isagogical Study of Colossians 1 With Exegetical Study of Difficult Passages (Albrecht); Christian Education in the Home; How to Deal With Scouting in a Practical and God-Pleasing Manner in the Congregation (Berger).

Northern Wisconsin District, Rhinelander Pastor-Teacher Conference, January 17 at St. John, Enterprise. Agenda: My Time — How Much Is Too Much?; Stimulating Church Attendance.

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CHANGES IN MINISTRY

PASTORS:

Cares, Gerhard M., from Zion, Monroe, Mich., to retirement from active ministry.
Hagedorn, Harold J., from St. Peter, Fort Collins, Colo., to Board for Home Missions (associate executive secretary).
Iles, Charles L., from Peace, Cape Girardeau, Mo., to St. John, Waterloo/Immanuel, Marshall, Wis.
Koelplin, Winfred A., from St. Paul, Livonia, Mich., to retirement from active ministry.
Kneser, Thomas W., from Grace, Indianapolis, Ind., to Redeemer, Rice Lake, Wis.
Martin, LeRoy A., from St. Paul, Wonewoc, Wis., to St. Paul, Menomonie, Wis.
Sternhagen, David D., from Lusaka, Zambia, Africa, to Crown of Life, New Orleans, La.
Sutton, Donald R., from Shepherd of the Hills, Lansing, Mich., to St. Mark, Watertown, Wis.
Szep, Ronald C., from Emanuel, Forestville, Wis., to St. Luke, Little Chute, Wis.
Vogt, Wayne C., from Shepherd, Albuquerque, N.M., to Exploratory, Colorado Springs, Colo.
Voss, Verne N., from St. Paul, Jordan, Minn., to Pilgrim, Minneapolis, Minn.

ADDRESSES

PASTORS:

Gibbons, Gregory D., 5919-37th Ave., Kenosha, WI 53142; 414/652-0604.
Hallemeier, Delmer E. em., 400 Franklin St., Apt. 4, Watertown, WI 53094.
Hrobsky, Daniel C., Box 516, Faith, SD 57626; 605/967-2602.
Janke, Paul M., 36 Stonecrest Dr., Portland, ME 04103; 207/797-3207.
Main, Donald G., 510 Elk St., Elkton, SD 57026; 605/542-2231.
Pasch, Kenneth H., 832 N. Meridian, Apache Junction, AZ 85220; 602/983-4490.
Strackbein, John T., 2349 S. Ohio, Salina, KS 67401.
TEACHERS:
Bunkowske, Jonathan J., 1407 Elizabeth, Crete, IL 60417.
Essmann, David H., 704 Sidney St., Bay City, MI 48706.
Harley, Jonathan, 3272-70th St. E., Inver Grove Heights, MN 55075; 612/450-9313.
McNelly, Timothy A., 2595 N. Cramer St., Milwaukee, WI 53211; 414/771-1903.
Meitner, Merlin A., 1775-19th Ave., Kenosha, WI 53140; 414/551-0721.
Thompson, Lloyd E., Route 4, Box 190, Elkhorn, WI 53121.
Winkler, Craig C., 2322 E. River Dr., Green Bay, WI 54301; 414/432-8605.
Wrobel, Steven, R. 1, Eldorado, WI 54932.

COLLOQUY

In a colloquy conducted on October 17, Gerald Pundt of New Haven, Mo., formerly a pastor of Immanuel Ev. Lutheran (LC-MS) of Washington, Mo., was found to be in confessional agreement with the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. Mr. Pundt attended the summer quarter at our theological seminary in Mequon, Wis. and is eligible for a call into the ministerium of our Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

First Vice President Gerald E. Free
Professor Armin J. Panning
District President Gerhard W. Birkholz

REQUEST FOR COLLOQUY

Pastor James F. Schrader, Charlotte, North Carolina, formerly of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, has requested a colloquy for the purpose of entering the pastoral ministry of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. Correspondence relative to this request should be directed to the undersigned.

Walter F. Beckmann, President
North Atlantic District

REQUEST FOR COLLOQUY

Pastor Walter Elgin of Anchorage, Alaska, formerly of the Federation for Authentic Lutheranism, has requested a colloquy for the purpose of entering the pastoral ministry of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. Correspondence relative to this request should be directed to the undersigned.

President George Frey
Pacific Northwest District

MERGER

Christ the King Lutheran, a preaching station in the Joplin, Mo. area, has merged with Faith Lutheran, Pittsburg, Kans. In the interest of soul conservation, referrals in the South-West Area of Missouri should be sent to Faith, Route 3, Box 95, Pittsburg, KS 66762; Delmer J. Harders, pastor.

ALTAR PARAMENTS

Green and white paraments for altar, pulpit and lectern, in fair condition, are available to any mission congregation for cost of shipping. Contact: Altar Guild, St. Paul Lutheran Church, 799 St. Paul Dr., Slinger, WI 53086.

COMMUNION WARE AVAILABLE

Used communion ware is available to any congregation for cost of shipping. Contact Pastor Robert Smith, 557 Plantation Road, Pelican Lake, WI 54463; 715/487-5484.

COMMUNION WARE

A set of communion ware and also a cross and a candle set are available to any mission congregation for cost of shipping. Contact Pastor Dennis K. Strong, Zion Lutheran, 6430 County Hwy. D, Allenton, WI 53002; 414/629-5914.

PEWS NEEDED

A mission congregation is in need of pews for their new worship facility. Contact Pastor John Schuetze, 745 Happy Hollow, Hot Springs, SD 57747; 605/745-3340.

LITURGY AND AGENDA WANTED

A used copy of *The Lutheran Liturgy* and/or *The Lutheran Agenda* is wanted by a mission congregation. Contact Pastor Philip Henselin, 3304-5th St. N., Columbus, MS 39701; 601/329-4179.

SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS WANTED

Old Sunday school material, "The Story of God's Love" is wanted. Contact Pastor Thomas Fox, Bethany Lutheran, 3109 Diamond, Ames, IA 50010.

CHRISTIAN COUNSELING

Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Service of Milwaukee has several openings in the area of Christian counseling. They are seeking family therapists, an alcohol and other drug abuse (AODA) counselor and a certified educational psychologist. If you are interested and trained to counsel your fellow Christians at a church related agency, please send your resume to Joanne Halter, Director of Social Services, WLCFS, 6800 N. 76th St., P.O. Box 23980, Milwaukee, WI 53223; 414/353-5000.

COMMENCEMENT CONCERT

The Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary commencement concert by the male chorus is available in audio cassette for \$5.00 postpaid. Make out checks to Seminary Male Chorus and order from: Prof. James P. Tiefel, 11822 N. Seminary Dr. 65W, Mequon, WI 53092.

"OUR FAVORITE HYMNS"

The Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary male chorus has prepared a third set of "Our Favorite Hymns" in audio cassette only. Cost is \$5.00 postpaid. Order from and make out check to Prof. Martin Albrecht, 316 Highland Dr., Grafton, WI 53024.

WISCONSIN LUTHERAN SEMINARY MISSION SEMINAR

Date: January 22-23, 7:30 a.m. — 12:30; January 22, 7:30 p.m.

Theme: "Resolved We Will Reap the Harvest"

- I. Harvest Fields
- II. Harvest Hands
- III. Harvest Plans
- IV. Harvest Machinery
- V. Harvest Together

Seminar booklets may be ordered at \$2.00 (if picked up at the seminar) or \$2.50 (if mailed). Order before January 11 from: Ken Brokmeier, Mission Seminar Secretary, 6716 W. Wartburg Circle, Mequon, WI 53092.

FROM THIS CORNER

It is ironic that the Prince of Peace should have been born in Bethlehem of Judea. Within the bounds of historical records it is a land that is drenched with blood. A visit to Israel some years ago found Jerusalem and its surrounding territories an armed camp.

Since the time of Abraham when Canaan broke into history, that poor land has been soaked with the blood of native and invader. It started at the Valley of Siddim when four kings squared off against five kings. And it has continued to the latest act of terrorism in Israel today.

A glance at the map of the ancient world explains the blood of that era. Palestine was the natural land bridge between two great continents, Asia and Africa. Armies marched back and forth over that strategic bridge and left their blood and dead behind. And in Revelation, the land's Armageddon becomes — says Lenski — the symbolic “final battlefield against all the evil powers to their utter defeat.” On that tormented land rested the infant body of the Prince of Peace in a manger.

*This is
perhaps a
time of
opportunity*

Life in many parts of this world comes to a halt as we recall that birth. It would be a severe case of the sillies to suppose that all who celebrate are confessing Jesus as their God Incarnate Lord and Savior. Or that we will find them at the side of their crucified and risen Lord, as we find them at his manger.

But at the same time I don't think we should raise a self-righteous eyebrow at these celebrants. This is perhaps a time of opportunity. Never, since the founding of this country, have so many people been attracted to religion. Gallup tells us that nine in ten in the United States declare a religious preference. People have more confidence in the church than in any other key institution. People want their children to have religious training. People want religion to play a greater role in society. People want their faith to grow. All established by Gallup. They are looking for something.

As I write these words, Soviet General Secretary Gorbachev and President Reagan are meeting in Geneva. Peace talk is the big thing. The yearning for peace is so strong you can feel it. We ourselves pray that we “may pass our time in rest and quietness.” No one, however, ought to equate peace with heaven with peace on earth. Peace with heaven comes from the Prince of Peace, a gracious gift of the Father through Jesus Christ.

But with the Prince of Peace in our hearts, there is just a bit more peace on earth than there was before. If I carry heaven's peace in my heart, should not my family, my friends, my working world be able to say of me: there is a person with a heart of peace — an island of peace on earth. That is what the Prince of Peace is telling us these days.

James P. Schaefer

Christmas nostalgia

by Anita Zahn



The psalmist says, “I am fearfully and wonderfully made!” So wonderfully that all our past experiences are stored up in a portion of our wonderful brain. So fearfully and wonderfully that a sight, sound or smell can resurrect from our subconscious a memory of a particular event long past.

I can get a whiff of extinguished candle fumes, and memories of my childhood Christmases flood my mind.

We had electricity at our house but — and perhaps it was nostalgia on his part — my father always insisted on the little wax candles in their clip-on holders strategically placed on the tree so that they would not touch the branch above.

Each night after the supper dishes were washed we had a kind of ritual. The electric lights were turned off and Dad would light the candles on the tree. The family sat quietly around the tree enjoying the soft candlelight glow. After the candles were blown out, the aroma lingered. And to this day that aroma of any extinguished candle reminds me of Christmas.

Dad had also made a little wooden stable and an old-fashioned log fence which found its way under our tree year after year. From the dime store Mother bought little animals and little figurines of the holy family to complete the nativity scene.

Still vivid in my memory are the children’s Christmas services back in the middle twenties. At St. Peter Christian day school in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, where my sister and I

were pupils, the children’s service was held on the night of Christmas Day. The Sunday school Christmas service was on Christmas Eve.

We youngsters assembled in the classrooms, and a few minutes before church time we filed over to the church. As we walked along the sidewalk between the church and parsonage, the lights from the church shining through the beautiful stained glass window was a sight just too beautiful for this little girl. And coming into the warm church from the frosty outside and seeing the huge lighted Christmas tree, plus the excitement, sent chills up and down my spine.

I recall my first Christmas recitation. Coached by my first-grade teacher, the now sainted Miss Augusta Koch, I nervously recited in the loudest voice I could muster, “*Warum feiern wir denn das Heilige Weihnachtsfest?*” One of my classmates, who had been assigned the answer, memorized and recited it.

English was coming into use in the Lutheran Church, and there were English worship services, but our Christmas service was still interspersed with the Lutheran mother tongue — German. We sang many of the Christmas carols in German — *Ihr Kinderlein, Kommet; Stille Nacht; All Jahre Wieder; Gott ist die Liebe; Am Ferne Himmel Blinken*. The choir and the children sang a responsive carol. “*Wohin, Ihr Kinderlein, Wohin?*” sang the choir. We children answered, “*Nach Bethlehem ist un-*

ser Sinn.”

The Christmas tree was banked by huge bags of goodies containing an apple, orange, popcorn ball, candy and nuts. And we each received a book. These were gifts from the congregation, a reminder of “the Gift” whose birthday we were celebrating. The bags were so heavy, the little ones could scarcely carry them. I came across one of those books only recently after these many years.

And, of course, there was always a new dress. My sister’s and mine were gifts from a bachelor uncle. Mother used money he gave her to purchase material. And she, an accomplished seamstress, sewed them. Two especially stand out in my memory. One was a brown velvet trimmed with a burnt orange satin and the other of rose colored material with an accordion pleated skirt.

To a senior citizen the fact that these past Christmases can be recalled by the mere smell of the smoldering candle wick makes me even more aware of “how fearfully and wonderfully” our Creator created the mind. He knew that in creating that recall ability in us we derive pleasure, reliving those experiences long ago, as we pass them on to our children and grandchildren. □



Anita Zahn is a member of St. Paul, Lomira, Wisconsin.