

The Northwestern Lutheran

JULY 1986

**Jefferson and
religious freedom**

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is beautiful**

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**Liberty
throughout
the land**

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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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Freed to serve

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. . . . You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love (Galatians 5:1,13).

Independence Day, the Fourth of July, is a day for Americans to rejoice in the precious gift of freedom. It is a day to pay tribute to the men who were instrumental in making it happen. We remember those who lived by the determination, "Give me liberty or give me death." We acknowledge the wisdom of statesmen who wrote into our constitution such a host of political, personal, and religious freedoms that we can scarcely imagine what life without such privileges would be like. Truly, we have been richly blessed! We do well to set aside a day to remind ourselves what we possess in a free country.

But there is also an element of danger in Fourth of July patriotism — one might almost say, Fourth of July religion. We tend to think of America as a Christian nation. Our coins bear the motto, "In God We Trust." Is our freedom perhaps a payoff for our trust in God? Is freedom an inherent right of children of God? Do Paul's words to the Galatians lend support for that idea? Not if we look carefully at what he is saying.

Free in Christ

When Paul wrote, "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free," he was writing to people who had very few of the political and personal freedoms we enjoy. He was writing to people who had fallen under the military and political domination of the Romans and had been incorporated into their empire as the province of Galatia.

What then is Paul speaking of when he says, "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free"? Paul was not a political activist. When he came to Galatia, he did not agitate for "rights," or organize resistance groups, or train "freedom fighters." He simply preached the gospel. "I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified" was true of Paul wherever he went. Paul preached the message of Christ's perfect life and his innocent death in the sinner's stead.

Free from God's law

A just and holy God rightly expects perfect holiness and complete obedience from his creatures. He demands it and is justly angry with all who do not show that perfection. But what was impossible for us weak and frail sinners, what we could never do for ourselves, that Christ has done for us. He took our place. He lived the perfect life we could not live. He died the death we sinners

should have died. For us he fulfilled God's requirements — and thus set us free from those requirements.

To live in a free country, with its freedom of choice, free speech, free enterprise, is a precious privilege. But to be a member of the kingdom of God, free from the demands of God's holy law, free from an accusing conscience, free from the pressure of trying to earn salvation because it's already been earned for us — that is an infinitely greater freedom. And it is that freedom to which we've been called in Christ.

Paul says, "You, my brothers, were called to be free." But he also alerts us to the fact that we have not only been freed from something; we have also been freed for something. He continues, "Do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love."

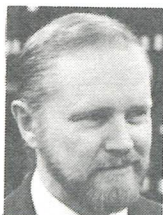
Free to do God's will

There is nothing we *have* to do in order to earn God's favor. That has been taken care of by Christ. But there are a great number of things that we as redeemed children of God now *want* to do. We have been freed from the demands of the law so that freewillingly we might do what God wants of us. And what that is Paul makes clear in the words, "Serve one another in love. The entire law is summed up in a single command. 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

Free to serve

Nowhere does the heart set free by faith in Christ have greater freedom to love and serve the neighbor than in a free country such as ours. There is not one to whom we may not speak, no one whom we may not help, no place where we may not go. And the opportunity for charitable deeds is exceeded only by our opportunities for spiritual service. We may share the good news of a Savior wherever, whenever, and with whomever we please.

As we again observe another Independence Day, let us not take lightly God's blessing of political freedom. It is the setting in which he lets us use to the full our spiritual freedom, the freedom to show our love for him by a life of service to our family, our church, our community, and our country. □



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

Liberty throughout the land

It will be a gala affair when the Statue of Liberty is rededicated the weekend of our nation's birthday. It cost more than a quarter of a billion dollars to renovate this famous statue, but Americans don't regret the huge outlay. This great monument, which has greeted millions of immigrants when they reached our shores, and has welcomed back millions of our fighting men from deadly wars, holds a special place in our hearts, even if most of us have not felt the thrill of sailing into New York harbor to see that famous torch held high for us and for all the world to see.

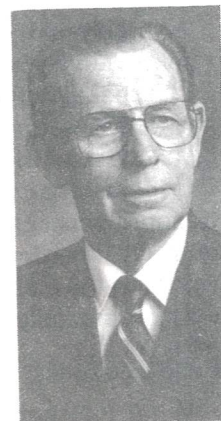
For this statue represents one of our cherished national blessings; it proclaims our country's liberty. Our freedoms are the envy of billions of this world's people: freedom of assembly, freedom of worship, the right to run for office and the right to vote, freedom to choose our place of residence in any of our fifty states, freedom of opportunity, freedom of speech, even freedom to "trash" the country that pours out its blessings on its thankless and shameless sons and daughters.

God-fearing Americans know these freedoms are God-given. No matter what price our forefathers paid to win them, no matter how many sacrifices have been made along the way to preserve them, this liberty has not been ours to provide or ours to ensure. America's liberty is purely grace that God has shed on our fair land. As he endowed it with immense material blessings, so it is he who has also crowned it with its precious liberty.

The festivities, we are told, will be so stirring that they will move "billions to tears." Would that they could move our nation to tears, to tears of sober reflection. How grateful have we been for blessings that billions of this world's people long to share with us? Do self-centered Americans realize that they are turning their liberty into license when they think only of "my rights," and interpret liberty as the freedom to "do as I please"? How blind our self-indulgent people are not to see that the abuse of liberty will inevitably cost them their liberties! How foolish they are not to understand that to demand liberty without accepting discipline and order will result in a nation demanding discipline and order without liberty (to paraphrase Eric Hoffer)!

Christian and non-Christian alike will be in the vast audience that will be viewing the celebration of the 100th birthday of the Statue of Liberty. The Christian will have to do the praying that she may not become only a splendid image of hollow memory of freedoms our nation once had but forfeited.

Carleton Toppe



Professor Toppe is president of Northwestern College, Watertown, Wisconsin.

Advice on staying strong in faith

Last days Christians, Peter tackles important issues for us in his second epistle. He impresses us with the divine authenticity and authority of the Bible (1:12-21); he warns us against false teachers (2:1-22); and he describes the Last Day (3:1-18). But before all that, he shows us how to keep the fires of our faith burning vigorously (1:3-11). That section is the focus of this Bible study.

The introductory verses (1:1,2) are few. Peter's pen urgently races into his message.

Depend on the Lord (v. 3)

Advice on staying strong in faith during the last days is the apostle's first major point. A vibrant, healthy faith in Jesus is fed on a diet of an ever-increasing knowledge of "him who called us by his own glory and goodness." That knowledge is gained through contact with God's word (Romans 10:17). It's through God's word that Christians are given "his divine power" (Romans 1:16). His power provides "everything we need for life and godliness." The more we know about our God, the more we learn to depend on him. The more we depend on God, the more firmly we stand in the Lord and against Satan's last days' ploys.

Remember God's promises (v. 4)

Remember God's promises is the next encouragement toward a healthy faith. In his word God "has given us his very great and precious promises," promises which assure us of two things. First, through Jesus we have become new creatures, remade in God's image (we "participate in the divine nature," also 2 Corinthians 5:17). Secondly, since Jesus has provided us with his righteousness (Ephesians 2:3-5) and enabled us to say "no" to unrighteousness (Titus 2:11-14), we are empowered to "escape the corruption of the world."

Live up to your faith (vv. 5-9)

Peter has advised us of our need for God's gracious power and of the assurances of his great promises. Now he challenges us to express our gratitude to God by living our faith. A list of seven spiritual qualities, the fruits of faith, is offered as spiritual goals: goodness, knowledge,

self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love.

And the reason Christians will strive to add these qualities to their Christian walk: "If you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (v. 8). The Christian needs to practice the faith he learns about in the Scriptures. What the believer experiences as he lives out God's will for him will serve to reaffirm what he has learned in the classroom of the word.

Those who aren't concerned about living for the Lord are spiritually shortsighted, if not blind; they obviously have wiped out of their minds the tremendous price Jesus willingly paid to forgive them (v. 9, also James 2:14,17). Saving faith will evidence itself by godly living.

Enjoy your secure position with God (vv. 10,11)

In these last days we can also take comfort because we have been elected by God to be his own from eternity. "Make your calling and election sure," we're advised. Of course, our having been chosen by God is an accomplished fact (Ephesians 1:4 testifies "he chose us . . . before the creation"). But faith in Jesus confirms our election to us. Consequently, we "make our . . . election sure" by strengthening our faith through continuing contact with the word and sacraments and by striving to produce the fruits that prove to us we have faith (vv. 5,6).

Notice the Lord's double promise (v. 11): "If you do these things, you will never fall, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." But the credit for our enjoying those promises goes to our God alone. "His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness" (v. 3). □



James Aderman is pastor of Siloah, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.



A wedding is a worship service

Where we stand

by Mark E. Braun

The wizened veteran pastor was negotiating with an earnest beginner: "Let's make a deal. I'll do all your funerals if you'll take all my weddings."

What a peculiar outlook, thought the rookie minister. Isn't a wedding a happy occasion? People are in love, making promises, anticipating the future. A funeral is an acknowledgment of death, and with it come tears and sadness. Why would a pastor prefer funerals to weddings?

I have heard other seasoned preachers express similar sentiments a dozen times. Sobering experience has led me, if not to agree with them, at least to understand them.

Why? Funerals, it turns out, are more than acknowledgments of death. They are celebrations of victory. Sometimes children die. Sometimes the bodies of young adults are carried to the cemetery. But many Christians die in old age, after living full lives. Above all, these are *Christian* funerals. A child of God has been welcomed into the homeland of the heavenly Father. Believers come to be comforted. Skeptics come to show respect. People *listen* to funeral sermons.

Weddings? Sometimes they're joyful. Sometimes they're respectable. And sometimes they're awful, or worse.

There may be disputes over music. What's appropriate for a wedding? "We've Only Just Begun"? Or John Lennon's "Love"? Or Stevie Wonder's "I Just Called to Say I Love You"? One wedding, in my own conservative neighborhood, featured a recording of Jimmy Durante singing "Fairy tales can come true, it can happen to you. . . ."

There may be awkward attempts at homemade vows: "We will respect each other's individuality and not change each other for our own gratification." Or: "We hereby commit ourselves to a serenity more flamboyant and more foolish than a petalfall of magnolia." A couple may promise to remain together "as long as we both shall love," or "as long as we both shall wish."

Brides may resist the mandate to "obey." Three-year-old ringbearers or flower girls sometimes provide harrowing suspense: will they make it safely up the aisle and through the rite without performing preschool gymnastics, or bursting into tears, or suffering bladder failure?

Groomsmen or parents or even the bridal couple may show up slightly tipsy. A wedding can become a circus. As one organist put it, "Everything but the elephants."

All this, and then some, has moved more than one experienced pastor to suggest, "I'll gladly do all your funerals, if you'll perform my weddings."

It would be simplistic, of course, to try to cure such wide-ranging ailments with one brief principle. Nonetheless, let me try: A wedding is a worship service to Jesus Christ.

The center of worship is not the bride but the Lord. The glory is directed not to the bridal pair but to the Triune God. The love story we celebrate is not between sweethearts at the altar, but between Savior and sinners. Every earthly wedding is to be patterned after the union of Christ the bridegroom and his bride the church for whom he died.

A wedding is a worship service to Jesus Christ. What does this mean? It means that a wedding service will contain the same basic elements which characterize all proper Christian worship: God comes to us in word and sacrament, and we respond with praise and service. Melodies will be tasteful and dignified. Lyrics will speak to God and about God as Scripture does. Guests are reminded to respect the worship traditions of the host congregation. The same fellowship principles which guide us in other worship services also apply to weddings.

Must all wedding music be composed in the sixteenth century? No. Is the church organ the only suitable musical instrument for a church marriage service? I don't believe so. Must a wedding service include a three-part, twenty-minute sermon? It need not have three parts nor last twenty minutes. Are the bride and groom allowed a chaste kiss at the close of the service? A kiss too may be done to the glory of God, but it might be wiser to wait until the wedding is over. Is it proper to applaud at the end of a wedding service? I don't think it is. How much fanfare is permissible? That's not the right question. For whom is the fanfare intended?

A wedding is a worship service to Jesus Christ. If we follow that principle throughout a service of marriage, more pastors might come to feel as much satisfaction after performing weddings as they do after conducting funerals. □

Pastor Braun serves at St. John, Sparta, Wisconsin.

A caring and sharing weekend

Alcoholism: Battling back

by John K. Cook

“**O**nward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war, with the cross of Jesus, going on before.” As I sing this hymn in church a picture of the Crusades and the Middle Ages often come to mind. But as we sang this hymn for the closing of the third annual Alcoholism Awareness Retreat, held recently at a retreat center near Hubertus, Wisconsin, something was different. Here were 74 people from four states, both recovering alcoholics and families, who realized they truly *were* going back to a battle. But they were returning to their lives, after a weekend of mutual strengthening, with the confidence that their Savior would be with them.

I attended my first Alcoholism Awareness Retreat, sponsored by Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Service, three years ago. I didn't know what I would find there, but what I found has kept me coming back each year. An evaluation from one of this year's participants calls it “a place where I found true Christian sharing and caring.” This was a retreat that began and ended with hugs and tears as people shared their feelings and lives with each other. Recovering alcoholics and families have come to know that the best way to recover is to share what you have received. This caring and sharing was evident all weekend.

A person once said to me, “You alcoholics. When you were drinking you bragged about how much you drank, and now you brag about how much you don't drink.” But that isn't what the Alcoholism Retreat was all about. Let me share some of the things that took place that weekend.

I heard the keynote address on “Traveling Heavenward in Recovery,” emphasizing that both faith and recovery are important in our lives here on earth. I saw people applying passages to their lives in an effort to structure their family life according to Scripture. In a workshop, entitled “Priorities in Recovery,” I heard people share how they keep Christ first in their lives while struggling with all their other problems. I also heard of



WLCFS retreat participants, left to right, William Bertram, Susan Zimmermann, John Cook and Fred Matzke.

special problems with which women alcoholics have to deal in the workshop, “Issues for the Recovering Woman.”

There were the groups of two or three people who went off in a corner to share a certain problem, followed by the hugs and tears that said, “I care and love you.” There were the social hours of fun and song. There were the long walks used for meditation or to offer help to someone. What I saw was a lot of Christian love.

As we got ready to leave the retreat with promises of returning next year, we knew that we had become a family. We had shared our doubts and fears but also happiness and hope. While we left with a little sadness, we also left with renewed faith in the love of our Savior.

There was another happy realization that came from this year's retreat. In three years we had outgrown the facilities near Hubertus. Our Christian people are beginning to see alcoholism as a problem, but one that can be helped. Because of the growing interest, next year's retreat will be held at the Cousin's Family Center in Milwaukee. The dates are April 24-26, 1987. If you wish any information concerning the retreat or the Alcoholism Awareness Program, please contact the Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Service, P.O. Box 23221, Milwaukee, WI 53223. □

John Cook is alcohol and other drug abuse program coordinator for Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Service, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

The grave of Thomas Jefferson is marked by a plain obelisk inscribed at his direction with his own words, "and not a word more":

Here is buried Thomas Jefferson
Author of the Declaration of American Independence
of the Statute of Virginia for religious freedom
& Father of the University of Virginia.

One is struck by the fact that Jefferson makes no mention of his services as the third president of the United States, as governor of Virginia, or ambassador to France. Rather his epitaph recalls the life of a man dedicated to freedom: political, religious, educational.

Most Americans are aware of Jefferson's role in authoring the Declaration of Independence. The five-man committee which included Benjamin Franklin and John Adams appointed to prepare the declaration asked Jefferson to draft it. On July 4, 1776, twelve states agreed to the written declaration and ordered copies to be printed. It is one of the curiosities of history that death came to both Jefferson and Adams on the same day, the 50th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1826. Our nation will ever honor Jefferson for his role in drafting this document of freedom.

Jefferson is less well remembered for authoring the Statute of Virginia for religious freedom. Independence from the English crown raised the question of the legality of the colonial codes of law. The Virginia Assembly named a committee to make recommendations to revise the laws. Jefferson's name headed the list of committee members. To him fell the special task of looking at the laws concerning crimes and punishments, public education and religion.

By the spring of 1779 the committee was ready with its report to the General Assembly. Approximately half the bills became law without serious amendment. One which met strong opposition was the bill Jefferson had framed concerning religious freedom. The colonial laws of Virginia were oppressive: heresy was defined as a capital offense; denial of the Trinity or the divine authority of the Scriptures was punishable by disabilities and even by imprisonment. Though these laws were seldom enforced, majority opinion still favored some form of an established church, an official state church.

Jefferson's proposed bill did away with the entire structure of state-supported religion: "We the General Assembly of Virginia do enact that no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place, or ministry whatsoever, nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested, or burthened [sic] in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer, on account of his religious opinions or belief; but that all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinions in matters of religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge, or affect their civil capacities."

Jefferson and religious freedom



by Victor H. Prange

Enough people regarded this bill as a “diabolical scheme” when first introduced to prevent its passage into law. By the year 1785 sentiment had changed. Jefferson was now across the Atlantic in Paris serving as American ambassador to France. It was his dear friend James Madison who persuaded the Virginia legislators to reconsider Jefferson’s bill for religious freedom. It was finally approved and signed into law on January 19, 1786. The year 1986 marks the 200th anniversary of the enactment of Jefferson’s Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom.

In a letter to Madison Jefferson reported that the Virginia act was received in Europe “with enthusiasm. I do not mean by the governments, but by the individuals which compose them. . . . It is comfortable to see the standard of reason at length erected, after so many ages during which the human mind has been held in vassalage by kings, priests & nobles; and it is honorable for us to have produced the first legislature who had the courage to declare that the reason of man may be trusted with the formation of his own opinions.”

One cannot fail to note the stress which Jefferson lays on “reason” as the rule and guide in all religious matters. Throughout his adult life Jefferson steadfastly maintained this opinion: religion must be reasonable; whatever is contrary to reason must be rejected.

In 1787 he wrote to his seventeen-year-old nephew Peter Carr: “Read the bible then, as you would read Livy or Tacitus. . . . Those facts in the bible which contradict the laws of nature, must be examined with more care, and under a variety of faces. . . . Keep your reason firmly on the watch in reading them all. . . . Your own reason is the only oracle given you by heaven.”

For Jefferson Jesus was a lawgiver, the reformer of the morals of the Jews. In later life he and John Adams (a Unitarian) exchanged letters on their religious views. “It was the reformation of this ‘wretched depravity’ of morals which Jesus undertook,” Jefferson writes to Adams. “In extracting the pure principles which he taught, we should have to strip off the artificial vestments in which they have been muffled by priests. . . . There will be found remaining the most sublime and benevolent code of morals which has ever been offered to man.”

Jefferson insisted that he was the “real Christian.” Ten years before his death he describes his abridgement of the gospels which he called “the Philosophy of Jesus.” “A more beautiful or precious morsel of ethics I have never seen; it is a document in proof that *I am a real Christian*, that is to say, a disciple of the doctrines of Jesus, very different from the Platonists, who call *me* infidel and *themselves* Christians and preachers of the gospel.”

Jefferson’s brand of Christianity denied the divine nature of Jesus Christ. Writing to Dr. Benjamin Rush, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson made his attitude toward Christianity quite plain: “To the corruption of Christianity I am indeed opposed; but not the genuine precepts of Jesus himself. I am a Christian, in the only sense he wished any one to be; sincerely at-

tached to his doctrines, in preference to all others; ascribing to himself every *human* excellence; & believing he never claimed any other.”

Near the end of his life Jefferson compared the teachings of Jesus with those of John Calvin. “The doctrines of Jesus are simple, and tend all to the happiness of man. 1) That there is one only God, and he is all perfect. 2) That there is a future state of rewards and punishments. 3) That to love God with all thy heart and thy neighbor as thyself, is the sum of religion. These are the great points on which he endeavored to reform the religion of the Jews.

“But compare with these the demoralizing dogmas of Calvin. 1) That there are three Gods. 2) That good works, or the love of our neighbor, are nothing. 3) That faith is everything, and the more incomprehensible the proposition, the more merit in its faith. 4) That reason in religion is of unlawful use. 5) That God, from the beginning, elected certain individuals to be saved, and certain others to be damned; and that no crimes of the former can damn them; no virtues of the latter save.”

One is not at all surprised that Jefferson’s religious opinions were roundly denounced by many of the clergy. Martin Van Buren recalled as a youth hearing New York clergymen preach that Jefferson’s election to the presidency would lead to “burning of Bibles, the prostration of religion, and the substitution of some Goddess of Reason.” In the campaign of 1800, Alexander Hamilton described Jefferson as “an atheist in religion and a fanatic in politics.” After Jefferson’s election one found clergymen reluctant to read prayers for the president of the United States.

Today we are able to view Jefferson and his religious beliefs more dispassionately. Yet no orthodox believer can accept his version of Christianity. We dare not make reason the one true God. While appreciating the ethical teachings of Jesus, one has an altogether false understanding of his work if we believe that he came to reform the morals of the Jews. Jesus came into the world to save us and all people from sin and death. As the eternal Son of the Father, very God of very God, he died and rose again. Salvation is by faith in the merits of Christ; it is not the result of our own merit.

Jefferson was justly proud of the contributions which he made to religious freedom. The citizens of our nation are free to preach and practice their religious beliefs without interference from government. Our thanksgiving for religious freedom will show itself by faithfully making use of this blessing to the glory and praise of God. □



Victor Prange is pastor of Peace, Janesville, Wisconsin.

Just what is wrong about a couple living together without being married? I found myself unable to give an adequate answer when my conviction that this is sin was challenged. What's worse, the challenge came from a fellow member.

The Bible clearly intends sexual relations for marriage and restricts sexual relations to marriage. Old Testament law even required that marriage follow premarital sex in at least one form (Deuteronomy 22:28). In condemning sexual immorality Hebrews 13:4 speaks of sexual relations as “the marriage bed.” In establishing that marriage is lifelong, Jesus quotes the words of Genesis — “one flesh” (Matthew 19:5), an expression St. Paul defines as sexual union in 1 Corinthians 6:16. One chapter later (7:2 and 9) the apostle says that people should marry if they want to have sex “because there is so much immorality.”

The New Testament lists sexual immorality — sex without marriage — among the acts of a sinful nature that condemn those who “live” in them (Galatians 5:19; 1 Corinthians 6:9). In fact, 1 Corinthians 6:18 warns against fornication as a sin against one’s own body, the temple of the Holy Spirit. St. Paul’s call to sexual purity and control in 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8 concludes with the warning that sex apart from marriage violates no mere moral code of church or society, but the will of God; and that is to reject God himself.

Jesus exposed the “living together” relationship of the woman at Jacob’s well as a sin that necessitated a Savior (John 4:18). Like that woman, people living together today are abusing their conscience and thereby inhibiting its witness to the need for forgiveness. They cannot truly love one another when they refuse the commitment God attaches to sexual love.

Neither society nor state recognize “living together” as marriage. It lacks the lifelong commitment of God’s will and the legal regulation of the government. Rationalizations about “a meaningless piece of paper,” “but we love each other,” and “discovering whether we’re compatible avoids messy divorce” beg the question. And research demonstrates the emotional damage done by a broken “living together,” similar to a broken marriage.

At best, two people who do intend a lifelong commitment by a “common law” relationship initiate the relationship in disobedience to government. That’s sin (Romans 13:1). If one or both are members of the church, they are guilty of offense — destructive example to both believers and the world (Ephesians 5:3).

At worst, mere living together and the continued, impenitent justification of such pseudo-marriage condemns the sinner.

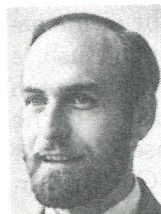
Is it a sin to hate the devil? Does God hate the devil? Does God hate those souls now in hell? How does one reconcile passages such as John 3:16 if God does hate the devil and souls in hell?

Anthropomorphism is attributing human characteristics to God in order that we might better understand him. It would be presumption to use such anthropomorphic terms as “hate” to charge God with inconsistency. God has revealed himself in verbally inspired, propositional human language that our minds can comprehend. All that God is and does, however, exceeds the capability of human minds to grasp, dissect, arrange into fallible systems of logic and judge. We must attribute any paradox in our understanding of God to the limitations of our knowledge and reasoning (Romans 11:33-36).

Though no passage flatly states: “God hates the devil,” Psalm 5:5,6 verifies that God “hates all who do wrong . . . who tell lies.” Certainly God hates the “father of lies” and author of evil. Precisely because “God so loved the world” (John 3:16), he hates the usurper who corrupted the human race and seeks its eternal destruction. God’s people, too, hate the devil — not with the poison of preoccupation, but with the sober, spiritual judgment of those who “love righteousness and hate wickedness” (Psalm 45:7).

Jesus urges us to love our enemies because God does (Matthew 5:43-48). But Jesus also asks us to hate those who oppose him and our relationship with him (Luke 14:26; Psalm 139:21-24), just as God hates evildoers. To both love and hate the wicked is no more a contradiction in us than it is in our God. There is a “righteous hatred,” for the sake of God and good, that does not violate love, contaminate our hearts or give way to spiteful acts and words.

The souls in hell are beyond God’s hatred and love. That is one measure of their torment. God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezekiel 18:23). His just judgment falls on the impenitent and unbelieving without malice. □



Send your questions to *Questions, The Northwestern Lutheran*, 2929 N. Mayfair Road, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53222. Questions of general interest are preferred. Questions will be answered, however, only through this column.

Pastor Paul Kelm is the synod’s executive secretary of evangelism.

Dialing for doctrine

In the April 1 issue I expressed sharp criticism of David S. Payne's February 1 article, "Stepping from one rock to the other," because it expressed exuberant praise of Christian contemporary music without any words of caution about the heterodox theology that sometimes is promoted by and mars that music.

I was pleased to read Payne's May 1 article, "Dialing for doctrine," in which he repeatedly stressed that "Christian radio listeners . . . need to develop ears which detect false doctrine." I also appreciated Paul Kelm's comments on the same subject and in the same vein in his April 1 "I would like to know" column.

I'm still not prepared to jump on the contemporary Christian music bandwagon that seems to be picking up momentum in our WELS midst, but my foot-dragging may be due to my age (over fifty), my ultra-conservative upbringing and my preference for most of those "old-fashioned" hymns in our hymnal that unquestionably have passed the test of time.

*Reuel J. Schulz
West Allis, Wisconsin*

Government has not helped economy

I take exception to the comment in the article "Pay attention to the farmer" (May 15), "Our government has made an honest effort during the last years to help the economy, not hurt it."

Evidently the author has been educated by the press and television. Has inflation stopped? Have we full employment? Farmers are not the only ones hurt. When young people go out into the world, starting work at the minimum wage, they find they can barely exist. I don't see or feel a recovery in our economy.

We are farmers on marginal land and appreciate the fact that family members need to seek work off the farm. It seems to me that our educated leaders are quite shallow in their knowledge. We have to reach further than the TV or newspaper for a broader knowledge.

*Donald Hirte
Weyauwega, Wisconsin*

Exchanging pulpits

I am writing in response to the letter which questioned the matter of pastors exchanging pulpits for the special Lenten services (May 1).

The old adage "variety is the spice of life" can also apply to the pulpit. There are many people who enjoy hearing a variety of preachers during the Lenten season. And there are many fine sermon series that can be presented by a team of pastors. It also is an enriching experience for pastors to preach in congregations beyond their own and have the opportunity to minister to and visit with other members of the "household of faith." From a practical standpoint a Lenten pulpit exchange also relieves a pastor of some sermon preparation time during a very busy time of the year.

One other point is worth noting. It should be reassuring to our lay people to be able to hear a variety of preachers and yet hear the same gospel of our crucified Savior presented in its truth and purity.

*Oliver H. Lindholm
St. Peter, Minnesota*

In response to "Exchanging Pulpits," there are a few reasons why pastors exchange pulpits.

Looking back on December, I counted 11 services that were held at our church. During Lent there were 15 services. The amount of time spent preparing these many sermons and worship services is staggering. Exchanging pulpits serves to lighten a pastor's heavy schedule during these busy times of the church year.

I feel it's good for our pastors to go to other churches, to meet and preach to our fellow believers, and also for fellow churches to get a chance to know our pastor. I enjoy listening to and meeting neighboring pastors who visit our church during the Lenten and Christmas seasons. I find it heartwarming and uplifting to hear others preach Christ's message of salvation in a different format than I'm used to hearing.

*Sharon Pitt
Neenah, Wisconsin*

Article appreciated

A recent comment in TNL reminded me to write about a course on *Megatrends* I taught as a Bible class topic last year. An article by Pastor Joel Gerlach (September 15, 1984) moved me to try the course; in particular his comment that we should "recognize that megatrends will have an impact upon the church in the future for good or for ill."

My congregation's education committee scheduled the course for the spring '85 quarter. It was "sold out," and I've been asked to repeat it.

Thank you for Pastor Gerlach's article which started this all.

*Henry Bohl, Jr.
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania*

Display flag properly

In visiting other churches of our synod I notice that the U.S. flag is not always displayed properly. At this patriotic time of the year let's set everyone straight. The Federal Flag Code (as amended 1976) simply states:

When displayed from a staff in a church or public auditorium, the flag of the United States of America should hold the position of superior prominence, in advance of the audience, and in the position of honor at the clergyman's or speaker's right as he faces the audience. Any other flag displayed, should be placed on the left of the clergyman or speaker or to the right of the audience.

Now that you all know, let's correct the situation as necessary.

*Ray W. Connick
Pickett, Wisconsin*

Letters between 100 and 250 words are preferred. In the interest of conciseness, letters are subject to editing. Full name, address and phone number should accompany each letter. Names will be withheld only under unusual circumstances. Letters cannot be acknowledged, nor can all letters be used. Address your letters to *LETTERS, The Northwestern Lutheran, 2929 N. Mayfair Road, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53222.*



121 graduate from Dr. Martin Luther College

In a special service on May 17, one hundred twenty-one graduates received bachelor of science in education degrees at Dr. Martin Luther College of New Ulm, Minn. The 1986 graduates are:

Affeldt, Lynn Germantown, WI
 Bame, Cynthia Benton Harbor, MI
 Banaszak, Thomas .. Menomonee Falls, WI
 Bartel, Sandra New Ulm, MN
 Bauer, Cynthia Granger, IN
 Bauer, Kurt Kawkawlin, MI
 Beaudin, Yvonda Racine, WI
 Best, Diana Santa Maria, CA
 Biedenbender, Jonathan .. Benton Harbor, MI
 Biga, Corin Milwaukee, WI
 Blaaid, Susan New Ulm, MN
 Bode, Randy Tacoma, WA
 Bodi, Patricia Milwaukee, WI
 Brickham, Susan Neenah, WI
 Buch, Kevin Waterloo, WI
 Carter, Elisabeth East Jordan, MI
 Delf, Andrea Burnt Hills, NY
 Detjen, Julie Combined Locks, WI
 Dobberstein, Susan Medford, WI
 Dorn, Jeffrey New Ulm, MN
 Drews, Danica Milwaukee, WI
 Droster, Teresa Lake Mills, WI
 Eisenmann, Terri ... Johnson Creek, WI
 Frankenstein, Christine .. Beaver Dam, WI
 Free, Carla Omaha, NE
 Freudenwald, Karen Caledonia, WI
 Freudenwald, Kathryn ... Caledonia, WI
 Fuerstenau, Brian Racine, WI
 Ganyo, Sharon Mequon, WI
 Goens, Susan Clear Lake, SD
 Goodall, Richard Cedar Rapids, IA

Grandberg, Stephen Greenfield, WI
 Hanel, Darla Prior Lake, MN
 Harder, Cynthia Big Bend, WI
 Held, Mary Loveland, CO
 Henrich, Ann Redwood Falls, MN
 Henrickson, James ... Bloomington, MN
 Herrian, Paul Jackson, WI
 Hinderer, Kathryn Puyallup, WA
 Hoerning, Gina New London, WI
 Hoppe, Carolyn Victor, MT
 Hunter, Paul St. Paul Park, MN
 Jensen, Jeanne Waupun, WI
 Jones, Stuart Neenah, WI
 Kell, Daniel Watertown, WI
 Keller, Kevin Menomonee Falls, WI
 Kelm, Paul Bloomer, WI
 Koelpin, Mark New Ulm, MN
 Koepsel, David Oshkosh, WI
 Kolander, David Appleton, WI
 Kopczynski, Keith Gibbon, MN
 Koslowske, Jo Anna Moline, IL
 Krueger, Karen Greendale, WI
 Krueger, Philip Milwaukee, WI
 Kuehl, Elizabeth Watertown, WI
 Kuske, Peter Grove City, OH
 Lange, Denise Hartland, WI
 Lehne, Theresa Lambertton, MN
 Lewiston, Mary Sparta, WI
 Lindeman, Karen Brandon, WI
 Loersch, Lori Howards Grove, WI
 Lutze, Sara Manitowoc, WI
 MacKain, Timothy .. South Charleston, WV
 Mann, Carol Waukesha, WI
 Marti, Beth Sleepy Eye, MN
 Marti, Nereda Sleepy Eye, MN
 Markgraf, Daniel New Ulm, MN
 Melso, John Oconto, WI
 Nelson, Suzanne Yakima, WA
 Noeldner, Jean South Shore, SD
 Ohr, Mark Greensburg, PA
 Pansch, Julie Graceville, MN
 Peter, Sarah Sodus, MI
 Peters, Laura New Berlin, WI
 Plath, Thomas Milwaukee, WI
 Raasch, Beth Goodhue, MN

Radichel, Laurie Prescott, AZ
 Radtke, Colleen Scotia, NY
 Radue, Joel Neenah, WI
 Ragan, Daniel New Ulm, MN
 Rausch, Catherine Banks, OR
 Rausch, Sheryl Benton Harbor, MI
 Retzlaff, David Lomira, WI
 Ristow, Timothy West Allis, WI
 Robinson, Paula Milwaukee, WI
 Rosenbaum, Steven Saginaw, MI
 Scharkow, Christina Saginaw, MI
 Schlender, Duane Watertown, WI
 Schneider, Karen ... Prairie du Chien, WI
 Schroeder, Edward Green Bay, WI
 Schultz, Amy Wausau, WI
 Schultz, Mark West Bend, WI
 Schultz, Theckla Merrill, WI
 Scriver, Paul New Ulm, MN
 Seidl, Ellen La Crosse, WI
 Simonsmeier, Ruth .. Howards Grove, WI
 Sonntag, Jon Milwaukee, WI
 Spannagel, Ruth Bay City, MI
 Stadler, Elaine Durand, MI
 Stelljes, Heidi New Ulm, MN
 Stern, Philip Waukesha, WI
 Tietz, James Juneau, WI
 Ulrich, Mary Burnsville, MN
 Unke, Julie Manitowoc, WI
 Warner, Juliene Livonia, MI
 Weiss, Monica Warren, MI
 Wendland, Beth Hillsboro, WI
 Westendorf, Miriam Milwaukee, WI
 Wetzel, Anne Benton Harbor, MI
 White, Kenneth Caledonia, WI
 Williams, Mark New Ulm, MN
 Witte, Debra Streamwood, IL
 Wittig, Marlene Hartford, WI
 Yerks, Cathy Flagstaff, AZ
 Yerks, Troy Hutchinson, MN
 Zachow, Laurie Brown Deer, WI
 Zahn, Patti Oconto, WI
 Zellmer, Timothy New Ulm, MN
 Zimmerman, Debra Fox Lake, WI
 Zink, Carole Hales Corners, WI
 Zoellner, Bonnie New Holstein, WI



51 graduate from Northwestern College

On May 21, fifty-one graduates of Northwestern College of Watertown, Wis. received their bachelor of arts degrees. The following are members of the 1986 graduating class:

Albrecht, Joel Brookfield, WI
 Andrus, Eugene La Crosse, WI
 Backhaus, Curt Glendale, AZ
 Birsching, David Sebawaing, MI
 Blauert, Timothy Milwaukee, WI
 Boeder, John Bloomington, MN
 Buchholz, Jon Tucson, AZ
 Danell, James Red Wing, MN
 Gaertner, Joel Dallas, TX

Gerbing, Timothy Fond du Lac, WI
 Grams, Michael Pewaukee, WI
 Gronemeyer, Franklin .. Germantown, WI
 Haag, Daniel Sedona, AZ
 Hadler, Jon Blyas, AZ
 Handorf, Steven Watertown, WI
 Hoh, John Black Creek, WI
 Kahrs, Steven Colorado Springs, CO
 Krug, Norvin, Jr. Oakfield, WI
 Kuether, Lon Grafton, WI
 Lidtke, Paul Manistee, MI
 Limmer, Wilhelm El Paso, TX
 Mayhew, William Valentine, NE
 Mielens, Scott Bay City, MI
 Nitz, Jonathan Sun City, AZ
 Nuss, Stephen Watertown, WI
 Oehlke, Christopher Woodville, WI
 Panning, James Mequon, WI
 Prael, Dennis Appleton, WI
 Qualmann, John Iron Ridge, WI
 Quandt, Michael Tyler, TX

Reich, Daniel Loretto, MN
 Riley, Michael Oregon City, OR
 Rixe, Rodney Graceville, MN
 Schwanke, Larry Manitowoc, WI
 Schwark, James Manitowoc, WI
 Sebald, William Wauwatosa, WI
 Seiltz, James Black Creek, WI
 Siverly, Keith Waukesha, WI
 Spaude, Joel Watertown, WI
 Stellick, Kevin Monroe, MI
 Strobel, Nathan Milwaukee, WI
 Stuebs, Erich III Manitowoc, WI
 Uhlenbrauck, Kurt Watertown, WI
 Uhlhorn, Wayne New Ulm, MN
 Von Deylen, Marc Ft. Wayne, IN
 Voss, Mark Green Bay, WI
 Waldschmidt, Richard Waupun, WI
 Werre, Jonathan Dakota, MN
 Wildauer, Martin Dearborn Hts., MI
 Winkler, Patrick Watertown, WI
 Wobeck, Matthew Onalaska, WI



No longer genuine Lutheran churches . . . In an unprecedented action the faculty of Concordia Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind., one of two seminaries in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, is requesting the convention of the LCMS meeting this summer in Indianapolis that the synod "record its conviction, with deep regret, that the doctrine and practice of the merging churches, the American Lutheran Church, the Lutheran Church in America, and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, are such that the latter are as such no longer genuine Lutheran churches from a traditional and confessional point of view." The seminary faculty also urges the convention to direct the synod's "officials to continue to maintain a confessional Lutheran voice in every appropriate forum, including discussions with the merger of 1988, but to channel synod's main ecumenical efforts into the cultivation of true confessional unity with our orthodox sister churches throughout the world and into the restoration, if possible, of full confessional unity with the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod." The proposal is based mainly on the declaration of pulpit and altar fellowship with Reformed church bodies, among them the Episcopalian Church, or the recommendation to make that declaration, and on the destructive inroads made by the historical-critical method within the three church bodies.

Robertson a formidable political force . . . TV evangelist Pat Robertson, who "prayed away hurricanes from Virginia Beach to New York," will be a formidable "X factor" in the 1988 presidential campaign, according to conservative columnist Cal Thomas. Declaring that Robertson's prayers may be his secret weapon, Thomas quipped, "If he can do that with hurricanes, what can he do with incoming missiles?" Thomas, former vice president of the Moral Majority, said he did not know many people who thought Robertson could win the Republican presidential nomination. Depending on how well he does in the early primaries, however, the host of television's 700 Club could influence the party's platform and might extract certain bargaining chips if the race is close between Bush and Kemp. Thomas told a meeting of Minneapolis journalists. Meanwhile in Anaheim, Calif., Robertson told reporters that "I'm being asked by tens of thousands of people to get involved in the process, to run for the Republican nomination. They think that I would be

the one who would enunciate the views and the point of view of Ronald Reagan, and they would like to have a champion for this point of view." Robertson is an ordained Southern Baptist minister and founder of the Christian Broadcasting Network.

The most American denomination . . . Lutherans make up what is "perhaps the most American denomination in the United States today," pollster George Gallup, Jr., an Episcopalian, told a gathering of Lutheran Church in America staffers in New York. In a recent address to the LCA Division of Parish Services staff, he said that Lutheran opinions on such social issues as abortion, gun control, premarital sex and alcohol abuse closely parallel those of the general population. The number of Lutherans who are church members is slightly higher than for other denominations, Dr. Gallup said, although church going is a little lower. "Overall, Lutherans are slightly more upscale, slightly more Republican, and slightly more conservative" than the general population, the pollster said. He added that they are also "somewhat older, and a higher proportion of them are women." Of more than 50,000 Americans surveyed by the Gallup organization's Princeton Religious Research Center since 1982, an average of six percent identified themselves as Lutherans, Dr. Gallup said. He reported that among non-Lutherans polled, about 25 percent gave Lutherans a highly favorable rating, one percent an unfavorable rating and 29 percent didn't know what they thought of Lutherans. Dr. Gallup criticized the Lutheran churches and his own Episcopal Church for what he called their "extremely small" non-white membership. "That bothers me as an individual," he said.

Ignore religious clauses of the First Amendment . . . The American tradition of religious liberty is virtually ignored in high school textbooks, according to a new study by Americans United for Separation of Church and State. "The concept of religious freedom is largely ignored in the curriculum of our nation's public schools," said the study.

The Bible is winning . . . The Bible is winning more people over to Christ today than at any time in history, for the very simple reason that at last they can understand the Bible. This viewpoint, the sum of over 40 years of experience, was presented by Dr. Eugene A. Nida, one of the chief architects of modern translation theory and practice, to the 170th annual meeting of the American Bible Society in New York City. One way in which it can be seen that the Bible is winning people in record numbers is the increase of over one thousand percent in Scripture distribution during the past 18 years by the world's Bible societies, with well over a half billion copies distributed in 1985 alone, said Dr. Nida. "One of the main reasons for this increase is that now people can understand the Scriptures because they are being published in the languages they use everyday." □

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.

New worldwide federation of churches urged

The synod's Commission on Inter-Church Relations (CICR) will propose to the 1987 WELS convention that a worldwide federation of churches be established which would continue to uphold the confessional position of the former Synodical Conference of North America.

The former Synodical Conference was formed in 1872 by conservative Lutheran church bodies to promote confessional Lutheranism in the United States. By the mid-1900s its principal members were the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (Norwegian) and the Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (Slovak Synod). The conference was dissolved in 1967 after both the WELS and the ELS had withdrawn, charging the remaining members with violating Scriptural fellowship practices.

"The purpose of the new confer-

ence," said the CICR, "would be predominately confessional. It would aim to bring together churches or synods so that they might strengthen one another in their confession to Scripture and to the Lutheran confessions and present to the world (religious or otherwise) a united confession of faith on a sound Scriptural basis."

Periodically the conference would meet "to address those issues that have arisen and troubled the church in recent years." Examples cited by the commission include a statement on Scripture, on its proper interpretation (hermeneutics), and on fellowship (ecclesial relationships with other church bodies and Christians).

Specifically mentioned by the CICR as potential members are the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of East Germany and the Lutheran Confessional Church of Scandinavia. Also mentioned are the "more organ-

ized" of the synod's sister mission churches throughout the world whose primary synodical contact now is the synod's Board for World Missions.

Also eligible for membership in the proposed conference would be all synods or churches "who are in full agreement on the confessional basis of the conference and are not involved in fellowship with churches that in any way deviate from the confessional standard of the conference."

The proposal is contained in a report of the CICR to the 12 districts of the synod which are meeting this summer to elect their officers for two-year terms, pursue matters of district interest, and to review the work program of the synod.

Minnesota District

Immanuel of Woodville, Wis.

celebrated its 100th anniversary on Sunday, June 22. William Kirchner, former pastor of Immanuel, preached the sermon for the morning service. Immanuel is presently served by Pastor James Schumann. . . . **Christ of Eden Prairie, Minn.** dedicated its new worship facility on June 2. Pastor Gerhard Birkholz, president of the district, preached for the 4:00 p.m. service. The new facility will give the congregation visibility from the highway. It also supplies the members of Christ with a much-needed worship facility to complement their W/E/F unit. The congregation is served by Pastor Greg Lenz. . . . **Christ of Cambridge, Minn.** marked its 10th anniversary with a service of thanksgiving on June 29. Pastor James Lindloff preached for the occasion. Alfred Jannusch is the pastor of the congregation. . . . **St. Paul and St. John of New Ulm, Minn.** conducted a canvass of the city at the end of April. Students from Minnesota Valley Lutheran High School and Dr. Martin Luther College were enlisted to help in the project.

— Charles Degner

Schroeder retires at Northwestern

Prof. Erwin M. Schroeder, dean of the Northwestern College faculty, retired at the end of the past school year. He served on the faculty at Northwestern since 1944 as professor of Latin and librarian.

A 1938 seminary graduate, he served for one year as dean of men at Bethany Lutheran College, Mankato, Minn. before accepting a call to



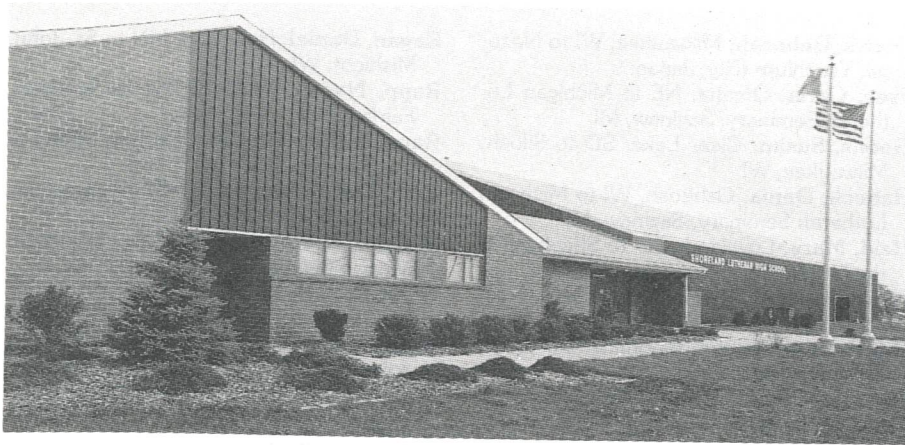
Schroeder

Woodville, Wis. In 1942 he accepted a call to St. Paul, Ixonia, from which he came to Northwestern.

He was responsible for converting

the library to the Dewey decimal system, a task which was supposed to take him ten years. "After six years," reports the *Black & Red*, the student magazine, "Prof. Schroeder had the 18,000 volumes organized. . . . Many times he worked until two in the morning. During these years he spent so much time at school that one of his own sons even started to call him 'professor.'"

Schroeder and his wife will travel extensively visiting their eight children, strategically located around the country, and 31 grandchildren. The six sons are pastors: Kent and Mark of Oconomowoc and Fond du Lac, Wis.; Lynn and Keith of Saginaw and Bay City, Mich.; Neal of Renton, Wash.; and Joel of Overland Park, Kans. The two daughters have married into the ministry. Jean is married to Prof. James Westendorf of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis., and Joyce is married to Dan Feuerstahler, principal at St. John, Lannon, Wis.



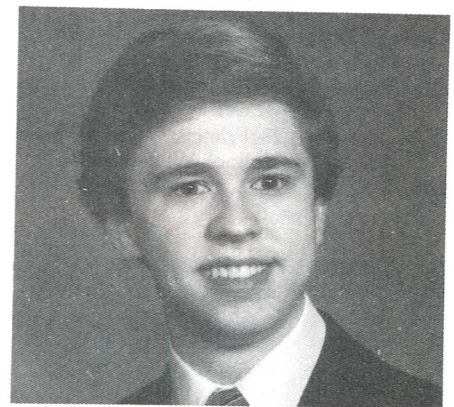
Shoreland Lutheran High School

Shoreland Lutheran celebrates fifteenth

On May 4 Shoreland Lutheran High School of Somers, Wis. celebrated its 15th anniversary. President Carl H. Mischke addressed the membership of the Shoreland federation at a service of celebration and thanksgiving.

Shoreland held its first year of school at the elementary school of Friedens Lutheran Church, Kenosha, in 1971 with Pastor Edgar Greve serving as principal. Eight years later the school moved into its permanent building in Somers. Directly off the interstate, many of its 243 students are drawn from suburban Milwaukee on the north to Illinois congregations on the south with the nucleus of students from Burlington, Racine and Kenosha.

When Greve retired from the principalship in 1984, Dr. Ray Dusseau of Atonement, Milwaukee, was called to succeed him. Dusseau heads a faculty of 16.



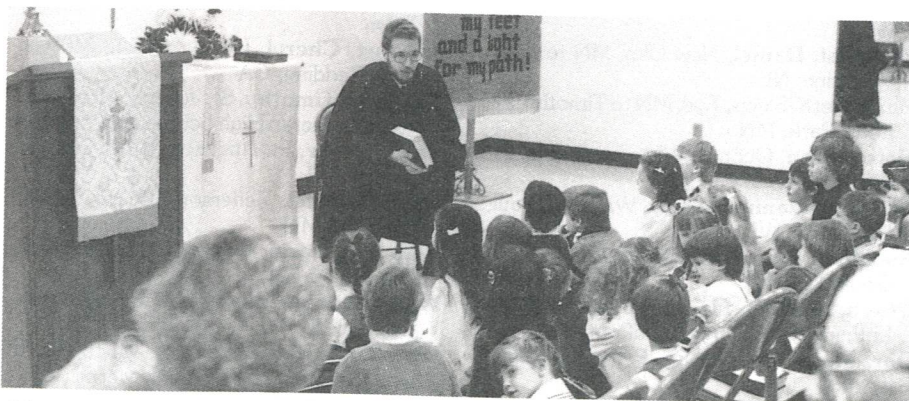
Aaron Schindler of Wisconsin Lutheran High School, Milwaukee, was selected as one of the 141 Presidential Scholars, the highest honor bestowed on graduating USA high school seniors. Aaron was also the recipient of an Aid Association for Lutherans all-college renewable scholarship. Next year he will major in physics at MIT, Cambridge, Mass. He intends to continue on to his doctorate. He summed up his high school education with high marks for the school where "the teacher dedication is outstanding." His favorite teacher, naturally, is Ken Leverence, head of the school's math department. The family are members at St. John, S. 68th St., Milwaukee, where Aaron also attended parochial elementary school.

— David Kehl

North Atlantic District

Grace of Charlotte (Matthews), NC dedicated its new church on May 4. Pastor Paul Schmiede was preacher for the service. John Guenther, pastor of the 31-communicant congregation, expressed thanks for Reaching Out and the CEF, which made possible the building of the new church. . . . **St. John of Christiana, Del.** dedicated a new \$10,000 Allen computer organ on May 8. The money for the purchase came mostly from memorials given in memory of a member who had died of cancer and one who, together with his fellow soldiers, died in the plane crash in Gander, Newfoundland. . . . **Bucks County, Penn.** will begin a new mode evangelism outreach with graduate Tom Pankow. . . . **King of Kings in Clifton Park, NY** cele-

brated its 10th anniversary with a special evangelism seminar, "Witness Where You Are," led by Pastor Paul Kelm on May 31 and a special service on June 1 with Pastor Kelm, who was instrumental in beginning the congregation, as guest preacher. The congregation of 120 communicants is served by Pastor Erich Waldek. . . . **St. Paul of Ottawa, Ontario,** hosted a LWMS seminar May 3 with seven congregations participating. . . . On May 26 in Kingston, Ontario, WELS pastors of Ontario hosted a **Free Conference** as a forum for sharing of information about teachings and practice. The meeting involved presentation of papers and discussion only. In attendance were seven pastors and laymen of WELS, one from the ELS and seven from the LCMS of Ontario.



Abiding Savior of Elk River, Minn. held its first worship service on May 4. Pastor Dan Schoeffel is shown holding the children's lesson for over 30 children present at the service. A total of 127 people attended the inaugural service for the exploratory mission. Pastor Schoeffel is the first pastor for the mission and has been getting ready for the first service since last August when he was ordained and installed.

IN THE NEWS

DMLC call assignments

On May 14 and 15 the Conference of Presidents met at Dr. Martin Luther College in New Ulm, Minn. and assigned calls to the following graduates of this year's class or classes of previous years. Additional assignments will be made when the Conference of Presidents again meets at the college on July 23.

Affeldt, Lynn, Germantown, WI to Mt. Lebanon, Milwaukee, WI
Banaszak, Thomas, Menomonee Falls, WI to First, Elkhorn, WI
Bauder, Cynthia, Granger, IN to St. Andrew, Chicago, IL
Bauer, Cheri, Appleton, WI to St. John, Fremont, WI
Beyersdorf, Scott, Milwaukee, WI to Mt. Calvary, La Crosse, WI
Blaalid, Susan, New Ulm, MN to St. Peter, Weyauwega, WI
Bode, Randy, Tacoma, WA to St. John, Watertown, WI
Brickham, Susan, Neenah, WI to Mt. Olive, Bay City, MI
Cady, Coral, Holmen, WI to St. Paul, New Ulm, MN
Callaway, Susan, Green Bay, WI to Redeemer, Fond du Lac, WI
Carter, Elisabeth, East Jordan, MI to Emanuel, New London, WI
Christensen, Jean, Denmark, WI to Crown of Life, Hubertus, WI
Delikat, Judith, St. Francis, WI to East Fork Lutheran High School, Whiteriver, AZ
Dietrich, Adele, Saginaw, MI to Jerusalem, Morton Grove, IL



Northwestern Publishing House recently received the 1986 Wauwatosa Chamber of Commerce Civic Appreciation Award for the construction of their new building. The awards are given annually to recognize companies which have significantly improved the business community of Wauwatosa. Presenting the award to board chairman, Pastor Gordon Snyder (left), is Thomas Enright, president of the Wauwatosa Chamber of Commerce.

Draws, Deborah, Milwaukee, WI to Nozomi, Tsuchiura City, Japan
Free, Carla, Omaha, NE to Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, MI
Goens, Susan, Clear Lake, SD to Siloah, Milwaukee, WI
Habeck, Dania, Oshkosh, WI to Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, MI
Held, Mary, Loveland, CO to Shepherd of the Mountains, Reno, NV
Henrich, Ann, Redwood Falls, MN to St. John, Minneapolis, MN
Henrickson, James, Bloomington, MN to Zion, Torrance, CA
Hoerning, Gina, New London, WI to St. Martin, Watertown, SD
Hoppe, Carolyn, Victor, MT to Outreach Team
Hough, Suzanne, Rapid City, SD to St. John, Two Rivers, WI
Hunter, Paul, St. Paul Park, MN to St. John, Juneau, WI
Jensen, Jeanne, Waupun, WI to Outreach Team
Keller, Kevin, Menomonee Falls, WI to St. Peter, Weyauwega, WI
Koelpin, Mark, New Ulm, MN to St. Mark, Green Bay, WI
Koepsell, David, Oshkosh, WI to Calvary, Sheboygan, WI
Kopczynski, Keith, Gibbon, MN to Faith, Dexter, MI
Kraus, Kim, West Allis, WI to St. Paul, Wisconsin Rapids, WI
Krueger, Karen, Greendale, WI to St. Matthew, Winona, MN
Lange, Jane, Watertown, WI to Redeemer, Edna, TX
Lehne, Theresa, Lambertton, MN to Trinity, Kaukauna, WI
Lindeman, Karen, Brandon, WI to St. John, Pigeon, MI
Loeck, Rebecca, Appleton, WI to Grace, Oshkosh, WI
Lutze, Sara, Manitowoc, WI to St. Matthew, Milwaukee, WI
Mann, Carol, Waukesha, WI to Martin Luther Preparatory School, Prairie du Chien, WI
Markgraf, Daniel, New Ulm, MN to Zion, Valentine, NE
Marti, Beth, Sleepy Eye, MN to Timothy, St. Louis Park, MN
Melso, John, Oconto, WI to Immanuel, Ft. Worth, TX
Nelson, Suzanne, Yakima, WA to St. Paul, Lake Mills, WI
Noeldner, Jean, South Shore, SD to First, Green Bay, WI
Oesch, Michael, Pigeon, MI to Evergreen Lutheran High School, DuPont, WA
Ohr, Mark, Greensburg, PA to Outreach Team
Peter, Sarah, Sodus, MI to Immanuel, Waupaca, WI
Plath, Thomas, Milwaukee, WI to St. John, Sleepy Eye, MN
Radue, Craig, Neenah, WI to California Lutheran High School, Tustin, CA
Ragan, Daniel, New Ulm, MN to St. John, Mishicot, WI
Rapp, Naomi, Hartford, WI to St. John, Fairfax, MN
Rausch, Sheryl, Benton Harbor, MI to Petra, Sauk Rapids, MN
Ring, David, New Ulm, MN to Immanuel, Gibbon, MN
Ristow, Timothy, West Allis, WI to St. John, Manitowoc, WI
Robinson, Paula, Milwaukee, WI to St. Paul, Rapid City, SD
Rosenbaum, Steven, Saginaw, MI to St. John, Fremont, WI
Schacht, Brent, S. St. Paul, MN to Evergreen Lutheran High School, DuPont, WA
Schmudlach, Scott, Beaver Dam, WI to Bethany, Manitowoc, WI
Schneider, Karen, Prairie du Chien, WI to St. John, Red Wing, MN
Schroeder, David, New Ulm, MN to St. Mark, Citrus Heights, CA
Schroeder, Edward, Green Bay, WI to Trinity, Kaukauna, WI
Schultz, Amy, Wausau, WI to Our Savior, Pomona, CA
Schultz, Jeffrey, Fond du Lac, WI to First German, Manitowoc, WI
Schultz, Theckla, Merrill, WI to Our Savior, San Antonio, TX
Scrifer, Paul, New Ulm, MN to Zion, Greenleaf, WI
Sebald, Nathan, Wauwatosa, WI to Cross of Christ, Coon Rapids, MN
Seidl, Ellen, La Crosse, WI to St. Paul, Brownsville, WI
Simonsmeier, Ruth, Howards Grove, WI to St. Stephen, Beaver Dam, WI
Snyder, David, Milwaukee, WI to Grace, St. Joseph, MI
Speidel, Tamara, Menomonie, WI to Martin Luther Preparatory School, Prairie du Chien, WI
Spannagel, Ruth, Bay City, MI to Good Shepherd, West Allis, WI
Stern, Jonathan, Waukesha, WI to Garden Homes, Milwaukee, WI
Stern, Philip, Waukesha, WI to Outreach Team
Tabbert, Cheryl, Helena, MT to Mt. Calvary, Redding, CA
Tahaney, Timothy, St. Joseph, MI to Evergreen Lutheran High School, DuPont, WA
Tews, Roger, Ft. Atkinson, WI to First, La Crosse, WI
Tracy, Daniel, Jefferson, WI to Trinity, Johnson, MN
Watchke, Karie, Blaine, MN to St. Mark, Green Bay, WI
Weiss, Monica, Warren, MI to St. Andrew, Chicago, IL
Wendland, Beth, Hillsboro, WI to Northland Lutheran High School, Merrill, WI
White, Kenneth, Caledonia, WI to Immanuel, Hutchinson, MN
Yerks, Troy, Hutchinson, MN to Trinity, Brillion, WI
Zeamer, Gerald, Morrison, WI to Nebraska Lutheran High School, Waco, NE

Did you know...?



Here are some little-known facts about the important role Lutherans played in the founding and early history of the United States:

- 1) Lutherans were in America seven years before the Pilgrims.
- 2) The first book translated into any American Indian language was Luther's *Small Catechism*.
- 3) The first "Stars and Stripes" was made by Sara Austin and the Ladies Aid Society of Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Philadelphia. It was presented to John Paul Jones and received the first salute granted to the Star Spangled Banner in Europe. It is now in the National Museum in Washington, D.C.
- 4) Our Statue of Liberty was made by a French Lutheran, Frederic Auguste Bartholdi.
- 5) Washington's army at the Battle of Trenton was composed largely of Lutherans.
- 6) It was a Lutheran boy who called a Lutheran sexton to ring the Liberty Bell.
- 7) The Liberty Bell was hauled from Philadelphia to Allentown, Pa., by a Lutheran, Fredrick Leiser, in 1777. The bell was then hidden under the floor of Zion Lutheran Church.
- 8) The second oldest military unit in America was formed by 137 men from St. John's Lutheran Church, Charlestown, S.C., in 1775.
- 9) The first president of the Continental Congress was a Lutheran, John Hanson. He served until Washington was inaugurated.
- 10) A Lutheran, Michael Hilligas, became the first treasurer of the United States, serving until Alexander Hamilton took office.
- 11) It was illegal to hold Lutheran services in New York until 1664.
- 12) A Lutheran pastor, Fredrick A. C. Muhlenberg, was the first speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives. With John Adams, he signed the first ten amendments to the Constitution, known as the Bill of Rights.
- 13) Another Lutheran pastor, Peter Muhlenberg, was largely responsible for the Virginia Legislature's passage of a bill establishing religious freedom in 1786. Soon other states followed. The First Amendment was the result.
- 14) General Von Steuben, a Lutheran, saved the U.S. Treasury \$600,000. His "Rules of Discipline" created our national army and still form the basis of our military tactics.

*Adapted from St. Paul Lutheran Church Bulletin,
North Hollywood, California*

NOTICES

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

CHANGES IN MINISTRY

PASTORS:

- Farley, David J.**, from Good Shepherd, Phoenix, Ariz., to Exploratory, Bakersfield, Calif.
Hleb, Glen R., from St. John, Dowagiac, Mich., to Japan.
Mueller, Richard W., from Lord and Savior, Crystal Lake, Ill., to Exploratory, Waunakee, Wis.
Stock, Reuben L., from Good Shepherd, Wolf Point, Mont., to retirement from active ministry.
Waterstradt, Ronald L., from St. John, Clare, Mich., to Christ Our Redeemer, Poway, Calif.
Wenzel, Kenneth L., from St. John, Peshtigo, Wis., to St. Paul, Wonevot, Wis.
Zarling, John W., from Arizona Lutheran Academy, Phoenix, Ariz., to Risen Savior, Chula Vista, Calif.

TEACHERS:

- Fink, Gloria J.**, from St. Paul, Round Lake, Ill., to Memorial, Williamston, Mich.
Gosse, Mary, from inactive to Riverview, Appleton, Wis.
Lemke, Susan, from inactive to Zion, Crete, Ill.
Lohmiller, Frederick M., from Trinity, Kaukauna, Wis., to Trinity, Nicollet, Minn.
Noldan, Edna, from inactive to Zum Kripplein Christi, Iron Ridge, Wis.
Tjernagel, Gwen, to Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn.

ADDRESSES

PASTORS:

- Allwardt, William H.**, 1218 E. 7th St., Winner, SD 57580; 605/842-0636.
Baer, George S., em., 1408 Neenah St., Watertown, WI 53094.
Baumann, John C., 4 E. Jefferson St., Freeport, IL 61032; 815/232-8659.
Engel, John M., Box 576, Monticello, MN 55362; 612/295-5315.
Harstad, Adolph L., P.O. Box 310091, Lusaka, Zambia, Africa; 281593.
Johnson, Ricky R., 1601 N. Lucille St., Wasilla, AK 99687; 907/373-0777.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS NORTHWESTERN COLLEGE President of the College

Professor Carleton Toppe's resignation as president of Northwestern College will be effective June 30, 1987. The Board of Control of Northwestern College requests the voting members of the synod to place names in nomination for this office.

The position requires a man with theological (seminary) training; he need not necessarily be a member of the present faculty. His teaching activity will be suited to his training and preference.

Nominations, with pertinent information, should be in the hands of the undersigned no later than July 15.

Rev. Harold Sturm, Secretary
NWC Board of Control
Route 1, Box 43
Arlington, WI 53911

NORTHWESTERN COLLEGE Position Opportunity

Northwestern College, located at Watertown, Wis., is seeking applications for the position of assistant business manager. Members of our WELS congregations interested in this position are requested to forward a resume, including educational background, previous experience, salary needed, and references to Mr. Glen Pankow, business manager, Northwestern College, 1300 Western Ave., Watertown, WI 53094 (telephone 414/261-4352).

An application blank will be sent to those who express their interest and to those who are recommended by others. Applicants should possess training and experience in the field of accounting and personal computer programming and operations. Applications should be dated no later than July 15, 1986.

ONE ISSUE

There is one issue of The Northwestern Lutheran in July. The next issue will be dated August, 1986.

EXPO '86

Expo '86 is being held in Vancouver, British Columbia through October 13. En route you are invited to worship at the following churches:

St. Matthew, Spokane, Wash. Services June 15 to August 31 on Sunday at 9:00 a.m. and Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. Located at N6905 Country Homes Blvd., Spokane, WA 99208; Pastor Douglas Scherschel, 509/328-0839.

Salem, Edmonds, Wash. Service 11:00 a.m. Located at 100 W. & 232 S.W. in Edmonds. Take exit #177 off I-5, follow ferry route to 100 W., turn left on 100 W. (10 min. off freeway). Pastor Ralph Baur, 206/542-3003.

ANNIVERSARIES

Pomona, Calif., Our Savior (25th), August 24, 4:00 p.m. Pastor James Humann, 250 East Grove St., Pomona, CA 91767; 714/624-7116.

Vassar, Mich, St. Luke (50th), 8:15 and 10:45 on September 14 (potluck) and 21 (pig roast); September 28, 10:30 (mission fair); October 5, 4:00 (banquet). Contact Pastor Orville Maasch, 117 N. Brady St., Vassar, MI 48768.

NEW!



Teenager, Let Christ Be Your Only High

By Walter C. Riess

The author relates the horrors of hard drugs and warns against experimenting with any drugs. He also shows Christ's power to free people from addiction and to offer them a better, more lasting "high."

Paper. **12N1732 \$1.95**

To place your order simply complete this order form and mail in your order. Please add 10% of the total dollar amount of the order (\$1.50 minimum — \$3.00 maximum) for handling and transportation costs. Wisconsin residents also add 5% state sales tax to total dollar amount including transportation and handling charges.

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Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53226-0975

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LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

The Christian Educators for Special Education will present a program August 14 on "Emotional Aspects of the Child with Learning Difficulties," George LaGrow, professor at DMLC, as speaker. The meeting will be held from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Sheraton Mayfair, 2303 N. Mayfair Rd., Milwaukee. Cost is \$5.00 for members, students and new graduates; \$10.00 for nonmembers. After August 1 the registration fee will be \$15.00. Send check payable to CESE, 6098 N. 35th St., Milwaukee, WI 53209; 414/464-1494.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL For Hearing Impaired Children

A vacation Bible school for hearing impaired children will be held July 14-18, 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. at St. Paul Lutheran Church, S66 W14325 Janesville Road, Muskego, Wis. For registration or further information call Verna Weigand at 414/547-3092.

SIGN LANGUAGE FOR KIDS

A sign language workshop for children will be offered for the first time on July 15 and 17 at Wisconsin Lutheran College, 8830 W. Bluemound Rd., Milwaukee. Grades K-4, 10:30 — 12:00. Grades 5-8, 12:30 — 2:00. Your children will learn how to convey messages by using sign language, body language and facial expression. They will also learn to fingerspell their names and sign their favorite songs. For information call Beth Schulz, 774-1611; for registration call WLC, 774-8620.

FAMILY CAMPING

Camp Lor-Ray, owned and operated by an association of WELS and ELS churches, has 30 fully-developed campsites nestled among pines on a private lake in Michigan, available for overnight or week-long stays through Labor Day (reasonable rates). Follow hwy 31 to Russell Road exit (3 1/2 mi. N. of Muskegon); continue north on Russell (1 1/2 mi.) to camp sign. For further information contact: Milt Karnitz at the camp, 5281 Russell Road, Twin Lakes, MI 49457; 616/766-3152 or at his home, 2233 Hudson St., Muskegon, MI 49441; 616/755-2004.

EXPLORATORY SERVICES

to determine the potential for establishing a WELS mission in the area. Services are held on Sundays.

ELK RIVER, MINNESOTA — Abiding Savior, 15413 NE 95th St., Elk River, 9:30 a.m. Pastor Dan Schoeffel, 15413 NE 95th St., Elk River, MN 55330; 612/441-5250.

WELS FILM/VIDEO RENTAL

HOW TO GET ALONG WITH YOUR PARENTS
1986 50 min. 1/2" VHS color JSC

This is a four-part presentation on two video tapes. It first emphasizes the importance of a good relationship with parents. Parents are God's representatives and should be honored as such. But it also recognizes that parents are not perfect as God is perfect. Therefore Christian children also need to love and forgive parents as God has forgiven them. Rental fee: \$15.00 each tape.

- TAPE 1 —**
Part I: Seeing God Through Your Parents' Eyes
Part II: Being a Peacemaker in Your Home
- TAPE 2 —**
Part III: Learning to Obey Your Parents
Part IV: Seeing Life from Your Parents' Point of View

DEVIL AT THE WHEEL
1986 37 min. 1/2" VHS color JSC
Ken Pestana reenacts his conversion to Christ in this powerful docudrama. Formerly a member of a gang of rebellious teenagers, Pestana found himself in jail — where he also found the Word of God. A true-life story with an important lesson for all teenagers. Rental fee: \$15.00.

JESUS: HIS LIFE AND HIS LAND
1986 55 min. 1/2" VHS color PJSC
This video takes the viewer on a tour of the Holy Land, showing many of the places that Jesus visited, as they appear today. Rental fee: \$15.00

Send your order for renting this video to WELS FILM/VIDEO RENTAL SERVICE, Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 North 113th Street, P.O. Box 26975, Milwaukee, WI 53226-0975. Phone 414/475-6600.

AUDIOVISUAL AIDS

HERE WE STAND (FS-A02-HWS)
1983 16 min. C color IJSCA

This is the filmstrip version of the motion picture that has been in our library since 1983. The film brings Martin Luther into the twentieth century to observe the Wisconsin Synod in action, and he likes what he sees. It is intended to help Wisconsin Synod people appreciate their heritage, and to show outsiders what the Wisconsin Synod stands for.

ROCK AND THE CHRISTIAN'S ROLE (VHS-18-RCR)
1986 120 min. 1/2" VHS color SCA

In 1985 the WELS Committee on Youth Ministry prepared a presentation on rock music for the International Youth Rally. Later this presentation was repeated and put on video-tape at Wisconsin Lutheran High School. The presentation is designed to help Christian teenagers see for themselves what is good and what is bad about rock. The first hour gives examples of rock music that is offensive to the Christian faith. The second hour examines the value of Christian rock music. Although the presentation was intended for teenagers, parents will also benefit from this video. Grade school children and young teens may not be mature enough to make good use of this material.

With annual subscription, or rental, order from AUDIOVISUAL AIDS, Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 North 113th Street, P.O. Box 26975, Milwaukee, WI 53226-0975. Phone 414/475-6600.

NEW WELS CHURCHES

Names Requested

In recent months the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod began work in the states and cities listed below. Please send all names of members who moved into the general area of these cities, as well as names of people who may be interested in a Wisconsin Synod mission, to:

WELS MEMBERSHIP CONSERVATION
2929 N. Mayfair Rd., Milwaukee, WI 53222

Names as well as pertinent information regarding members referred will be forwarded to the nearest pastor and/or mission board chairman.

Alaska	.....	Anchorage (South)* Juneau*
Arizona	.....	Chino Valley* Cottonwood* Gilbert* Glendale (North)* Tucson (Northeast)* Tucson (Southwest)* Fayette/Bella Vista*
Arkansas	.....	Bakersfield*
California	.....	Pleasanton* Poway Colorado Springs (East)* Deltona Jupiter*
Colorado	.....	Miami (Hispanic)* Ocala*
Florida	.....	Panama City* Atlanta (North) Buffalo Grove/Wheeling* Streamwood*
Georgia	.....	LaFayette*
Illinois	.....	Houghton/Hancock Elk River*
Indiana	.....	Shoreview*
Michigan	.....	Omaha (Southwest)* Roswell*
Minnesota	.....	Manhattan* Poughkeepsie*
Nebraska	.....	Fayetteville*
New Mexico	.....	Dickinson*
New York	.....	Marietta* Toledo (Northwest)* Bucks County*
North Carolina	.....	Custer*
North Dakota	.....	Abilene* Amarillo* Atascocita* Besumont*
Ohio	.....	San Antonio (Northeast)* Sherman* Waco*
Pennsylvania	.....	Everett*
South Dakota	.....	Spokane Valley* Woodville/Bothell*
Texas	.....	Parkersburg* Madison (Hispanic)* Portage* Waukegan*
Washington	.....	New Market*
West Virginia	.....
Wisconsin	.....
Ontario, Canada	.....

*Denotes exploratory services.

FROM THIS CORNER

Last night I watched the NBC "white paper" documentary, *Divorce Is Changing America*. There was nothing to cheer about. If they were tuned in, I wondered what our Wisconsin Synod families felt about it.

Major national studies of Lutheran attitudes and beliefs, preferring to focus on the three larger Lutheran church bodies, have regularly omitted the Wisconsin Synod. An exception is *Profiles of Lutherans*, a 1980 national study of Lutherans. The study indicates that social issues which matter most to our WELS families are issues which touch upon their children, family and church.

Wisconsin Synod families, the evidence suggests, are devotedly patriotic and have done their share of bleeding and dying for the United States. It's not surprising because the country has been kind to them. The nineteenth-century German immigration wave, where the WELS has its roots, involved mostly peasants and lower-class artisans. Through their industry and thrift both have prospered in America.

Issues such as Afghanistan, Nicaragua, Cambodia and South Africa may seem remote. But an issue, such as featured on the NBC documentary, is close to where most WELS families live. Partly because we cannot lock the trends of society out of our homes, and partly because the subject undermines an essential strength of this country — the strong family. The strong family is the bedrock that steadies and sustains society. For us society without the family or with a mortally wounded family is unthinkable.

Socrates pointed out that a child has many teachers — the Saturday cartoons, Mr. Rogers, a second-grade teacher, his peers, the local reverend. But the family remains the matrix for personality formation, where the underpinnings of character take place. That's what makes the NBC statistics (hardly new) so dreadful.

For example, one out of every two marriages ends in divorce — 1.2 million marriages expire each year. No-fault divorce, a milestone of legislation, has become a major cause of poverty for divorced women — divorce boosts the husband's standard of living, while the divorced wife's declines. Children of divorce are five times as likely as their peers from stable marriages to be expelled or suspended from school and twice as likely to repeat a grade. Ugly. That's what it is. Ugly.

There are no easy answers. If there are none for our own family problems, how can we find them for 86 million households in the country? But there is a place to start — in our own homes. Let's pull for homes where our word, pledged at the altar, binds. For homes where love and concern are works not words. Homes where patience and grace work out our problems without anyone taking a walk. Homes where their country is carried to God each night. Homes that understand that ill-fed and ill-clothed and ill-housed children anywhere will, like a vicious loop, have ill-fed and ill-clothed and ill-housed children. At least it's a start to carrying the love of God in Christ to our neighbors and to bracing it in our own heart.

Hard? Who said it was going to be easy?

James P. Schaefer

*Hard?
Who said
it was
going
to be
easy?*



America is Beautiful

by Holly Beckman

“**G**od bless my homeland,” I prayed that night with tears in my eyes. I was preparing to go back to the United States after being gone two years. It was a trip I looked forward to very much. It was also a trip that brought back memories.

When I had left the United States, I felt disillusioned with politics and government. So much corruption was exposed, and a few years earlier a relative and friend had been killed in a country that didn’t really seem to appreciate our nation’s assistance. So often I thought, Where are we going? Our leaders should look back at the founding fathers and realize how they struggled to form our democracy.

The years went by for me. I lived overseas. I decided to pray for my country every night. “God bless my homeland, its democracy and the leaders you put in charge, dear Lord.” Now I was on the outside looking in. I could see many things I didn’t appreciate before and had taken for granted. I developed a stronger and deeper love for my country.

As I was going through customs, I thanked God for a safe trip back to the States. Most everyone else had been on vacation, but when my turn came I explained that I lived in a foreign country. People stopped and looked. I proudly held my daughter and showed the paper signed by the U.S. consul that verified a U.S. citizen’s birth abroad. It was the first time my daughter’s tiny feet would touch American soil, and she would take her first look at her native land. How much I wanted to tell her about where I grew up and the places we would visit and the people we would see.

What I’ll always remember about the first trip back was a baseball game! I hadn’t sung “The Star Spangled Banner” for a long time. Would I remember the words? The music started and I could barely sing. I tried to sing louder while wiping my eyes, but as I looked around me, hardly anyone was even trying to sing. I couldn’t believe it. If only they realized the innumerable blessings God has given America — orderly election of government officials for over 200 years, a consistent democracy, varied natural resources, abundance of food, opportunities not available in most other countries and — freedom!

Freedom! A word that says so much to us, the American people — especially about our freedom of worship. The most important part of our lives is the worship of the one true God, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. We are free to do that in America.

God bless our homeland! America is beautiful! □



Holly Beckman and her husband, Pastor David Beckman, reside in Seminole, Florida.