

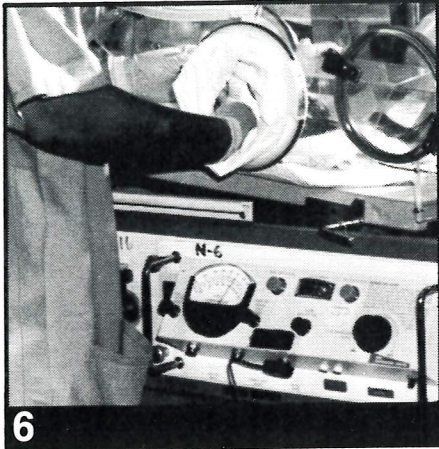
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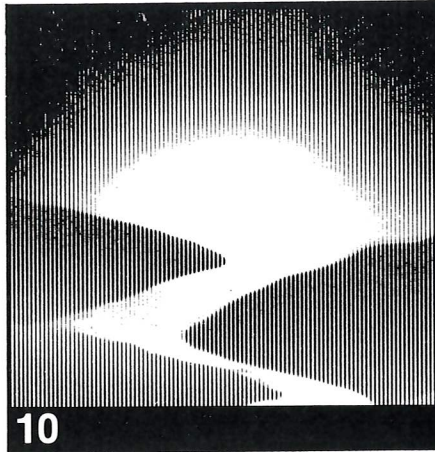


Medical ethics:

A challenge to faith



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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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Changing years the right way

by Richard E. Lauersdorf

I will lift up my eyes to the hills — where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth (Psalm 121:1,2).

Changing years is easy, isn't it? All you have to do is take down the old calendar and put up the new. And then don't forget to write 1988 the next few days. What's so hard about that?

For the thinking person it's not quite that simple. Parts of the past year he would just as soon forget about, but erasing them is not so easy. Nor is stepping off into the dark unknown of a new year a light matter. Such a person welcomes advice about changing years the right way.

Look up, not down

It's not easy to look up. We'd much rather follow the lead of the world and look down — at ourselves. From little on we do this. "I do it myself," pouts the little one whose shoe you are trying to tie. "Leave me alone," responds the teenager to whom you are trying to give advice. "That's not the way we do it," objects the senior citizen when changes are proposed. Human beings tend to look down at themselves and all too often Christians tend to follow their lead.

Now listen to the Psalmist. He did not write, "My help comes from *me*." It's, "My help comes from the *Lord*." Forget this and we are in trouble. Who are we that we can help ourselves? How mighty is our right arm and how foolproof our plans? How often this past year didn't we fret and even fail because we looked in the wrong direction? How cautious and concerned aren't we already about the new year because we look down at insufficient mortals instead of up at an almighty God? Want to change years the right way? Then look up — at God. He made heaven and earth. He surely can and will take care of us. We can trust him.

Look back, then ahead

Changing years involves also a backward look. Were there no joys in the year sped so swiftly by? No moments of meaningful love shared with spouse or children? No proper pride in the achievements and advancements of family members? No successes in our jobs or professions? No lighter moments on the lake or at the ballgame? Let's not forget from whom

such blessings flowed and how easily he can grant them also in the new year, if they should be for our good and his glory.

Does the backward look involve something painful? Were there times when I blew it in my dealings with my fellow man, perhaps even with those closest to me? Times when I tried so hard and yet fell right back into sin's old ruts and felt so bad afterwards? Times when people I cared for were hurting or in the hospital? Times when the load of trouble seemed two hundred pounds heavier than I could carry? Times when I just couldn't get a grip on my depressed or down feelings?

*It's enough
for us to know,
not what the
new year holds,
but who holds
the new year.*

Tell me, where are some of those problems now? Many are gone, lifted by the loving hand of an almighty God. Some may be still with us, yet we made it through the year in spite of them. A gracious God helped us bear them and even to grow because of them. Will such a Lord forsake us in the year ahead?

We don't know what might happen to us or who of us will still be here when the next year rolls around. Nor do we need to know. It's enough for us to know, not what the new year holds, but who holds the new year. It's the Lord who went all out to save us and whom we can trust now to go all out to fill 1988 with what he knows is good for us. His love and forgiveness and concern do not change with the calendar.

When we look at him, changing years is easy. □



Richard Lauersdorf is pastor of St. John, Jefferson, Wisconsin and the synod's first vice-president.

Double income, no kids

In case there are others, besides the writer, who have been unacquainted with the word “dink” — it is an acronym, a “word” made up of initial letters of four words: Double Income, No Kids. “Dinks” are young marrieds who believe that they should have it all, that they can have it all, and who arrange not to have children, so that they will have it all. And they don’t want to wait until they’re in their fifties before they can live the good life — luxury sedans, glamor vacations, designer clothes, lovely homes, dining in gourmet restaurants. With a “double income” and “no kids” they believe that they can have it all — and then, perhaps after ten or fifteen years, they will think of having a child, when they can give it all the advantages of the “good things” in life that they have laid by.

It doesn’t take a Christian to recognize the materialism and the self-serving of such “dinks.” Even people of the world can see that “dinks” make self-gratification and material pleasures their life’s goals. They live for things, material things, fine things, expensive things. They are like the rich man in the parable, who filled his barns with grain and then looked forward to taking his soul’s ease.

The person who told the parable of the rich man concluded it by saying, “You fool!” The rich man was a fool for dreaming that man’s highest purpose in life is to accumulate an abundance of material things and thus to assure himself of a cornucopia of earthly pleasures. To the “dink,” too, the parable affirms, “You fool!”

There may be few such crass “dinks” in our congregations and in our ministry. But we may be sure that there are more than a few in our midst who, in varying degrees, have been affected by the spirit of “dinks.” The spirit of self-gratification and of self-indulgence is in the air they breathe in our land. They don’t welcome children, because they interfere too much with a comfortable life-style.

To such, too, the speaker of the parable, the Lord Jesus Christ, says, “You fool!” “Fools,”

— for thinking that their self-chosen, deliberate childlessness will be applauded, as though they don’t owe a legacy of life they could give to those who come after them, despite their having received their legacies from those who came before them.

— for denying existence to children Jesus yearns to welcome into this kingdom, and for whom the salvation he has won stands ready.

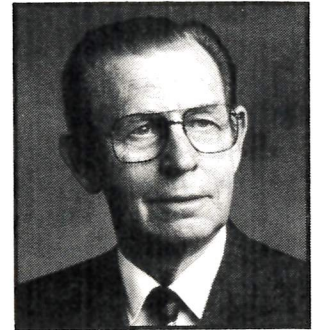
— for prizing double-income careers and life-style more than the God-pleasing roles of Christian mothers and fathers.

— for imagining that materialism affords greater rewards in life than does rearing a family of God-fearing, responsible, caring children.

— for depriving themselves and their fellowmen of the services and the blessings God would have their sons and daughters contribute to the world we live in.

When Esau saw his brother Jacob returning from Mesopotamia with a family of children, he asked, “Who are these with you?” Jacob answered, “They are the children God has *graciously given* your servant.” Children are still gracious gifts of God today.

Carleton Toppe



Carleton Toppe
is the retired president
of Northwestern College,
Watertown, Wisconsin.

“Glory”

by Fredric E. Piepenbrink

Back in September we started this seven-part series on the Gospel of John by saying that it is not a different gospel but *the* Gospel that is *different* — different in the date of writing, different in content, different in style. When it comes to style, John stands alone in his use of a prologue.

In 18 simple verses at the very beginning of the Gospel, John was able to capsize the entire Gospel which follows with words and phrases filled with meaning. We have studied 5 of them: “Word,” “Life,” “Light,” “Witness” and “Children of God.” One yet remains. It is perhaps the most marvelous of them all in that it encompasses the entire ministry and work of Jesus. The word is “glory.” John wrote in the prologue, “We have seen his (i.e. Jesus’) glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

Glory in his miracles

According to the commentator, Hendrikson, Jesus’ glory was “the attributes of deity (God) shining through the veil of his human nature.” With this definition, one aspect of Jesus’ life which vividly demonstrated his glory was, of course, his miracles. After the first miracle at Cana John wrote, “He thus revealed his glory, and this disciples put their faith in him” (2:11).

The authentic, uncontestable, totally verifiable miracles of Jesus attracted people’s attention. And those who were honest with themselves could not help but recognize that here was a man who was more than a man. Here was none other than one in possession of the power and the glory of God himself while veiled in human nature.

But Hendrikson’s definition of glory was demonstrated by Jesus in another way. John added in his prologue, concerning that glory, the words “full of grace and truth.” Jesus’ glory also shone through when he exhibited divine grace and truth through the thick veil of his own human suffering and death.

Glory in his passion

John wrote in his prologue, “For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ” (1:17). The law of the Old Testament with its elaborate worship system of rest and sacrifice, its civil and social regulations, could only provide a shadow for grace and truth. When Christ Jesus came to earth he showed the reality of “grace and truth.”

The two are intimately joined. We might say “grace in its fullness.” It was the “full grace” of Christ which gave true spiritual rest from the burden of sin. It was the “full grace” of Christ which resulted in the ultimate sacrifice of man for the salvation of many. Because of this infinite love and blessing that would come upon all, Jesus said to his disciples concerning his passion, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified” (12:23).

What makes us Christians marvel about the Christ we worship is not only that we live and move and have our being in him by his mighty power, but that he was mindful of us and was willing to sacrifice himself for our eternal good. For that, *To God be the glory!*

Alive in “The Word”

Read for yourself in the Gospel this glory of Christ which John introduces in the prologue.

2:1-12 The first glory-filled miracle: Cana.

4:43-54 The royal official experiences the glory of Jesus.

6:16-21 Jesus walks on the water.

12:20-36 Jesus connects his death to his glory.

16:4b-15 Jesus’ glory continues to this day through the work of the Holy Spirit.

17:1-25 Jesus prays that all might glorify both the Father and the Son for his work of redemption.

18:1—19:42 The glory of Christ was demonstrated through his passion: arrest, hearing, trial, crucifixion, death and burial.

20:1-19 The glory of Christ shines forth in his resurrection.

21:1-14 Jesus’ miraculous catch of fish.

21:15-23 We have the opportunity, as Peter did, to glorify our crucified and risen Lord by our life.

Congratulations! If you have been following this seven-part series and have read all the Bible passages assigned, you have now read the entire Gospel of John. □



Fredric Piepenbrink is pastor of Atonement, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

The shape of the Lutheran ethic

by Wayne D. Mueller

Gone are the days when your pastor's toughest medical counseling was talking to grandma about entering the nursing home. The advance of technology, the growth of the health care industry and the huge investment of the government and the private sector in medical care have presented some real challenges to our faith.

More likely than not your pastor has recently offered advice to his members on organ transplants, donating their bodies to science, living wills, cremation and euthanasia. A recent letter to this magazine asks, "What about artificial insemination, *in vitro* fertilization, surrogate mothers, etc?" We could add a few others such as genetic screening, sex pre-selection, genetic manipulation and artificial organs.

Reaction

Your turn will come to answer some of these tough questions about medical ethics. How will you react? You might wonder whether anything new must somehow be opposed to God's natural order of things. Or you might conclude that the Bible has little to say to these complicated situations, so it doesn't make much difference what one decides. You might simply go to a counselor you trust and follow whatever advice is given. Or, if it is a family decision, you might try to come to a resolution which is least painful and most satisfying to everyone.

Inside and outside the church people have been wrestling with medical-ethical dilemmas. The word "ethic" means the approach one takes to deciding what is right and wrong. A situational ethic, for example, suggests we are not bound by any set of rules or laws. Instead we should weigh all the circumstances and decide what is best in each situation. The love ethic says the only rule for decision making is love. Just do whatever you think is the most loving thing to do. Another ethic suggests that the end justifies the means. So, do whatever will produce the best results for you and the others involved.

The Lutheran ethic

The challenges posed to our faith by medical dilemmas may sometimes seem insurmountable and the decision-making process horribly complicated.

But once we recognize the challenging questions are really opportunities to exercise our faith, we have begun to understand our Bible-based Lutheran ethic. Like everything else we do in life (Colossians 3:17), making decisions in health care and life and death issues is an opportunity to glorify the God who redeemed us from sin and calls us his children.

Not law-centered

Unlike the approach to problem solving in many conservative and fundamentalist churches, our Lutheran ethic is not centered on the law. We have learned from little on that outward obedience to the Ten Commandments is not the first thing God looks for when he judges what pleases him.

So our decision making does not start with a search for rules and laws. After all, God does not have specific rules about all the decisions we make. Where, for instance, is the Bible passage about artificial insemination? Sometimes more than one of God's laws applies to a situation. Then, what do we do? The Christian will be as confused as the unbeliever if he approaches medical questions first on the basis of law—even if it's God's law.



Faith is first

When God determines the ethics of a decision, he first looks at the heart of the one who is doing the deciding. Before God accepts what a person does, he looks to see why he is doing it. God looks for faith, not just any faith, but faith in his Son Jesus, the Savior. God is the one who puts this faith in our hearts. He wants every action, every decision we make, to come from a heart that loves Jesus.

Without such faith in the heart, no decision is ethically good in the eyes of God. Jesus said, "Apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). Whenever we have a tough decision to make, the first thing we want to do is take ourselves in for an examination. "Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves" (2 Corinthians 13:5). Whoever approaches a tough decision without faith in Jesus Christ will produce something unethical, no matter what he does (Matthew 12:33-35). For "without faith it is impossible to please God" (Hebrews 11:6).

Faith in the heart is the beginning of God-pleasing decision making, but it is not the only part. Faith in Jesus is trust, an attitude of dependence on God. That means that the believer comes to God and not to the world for answers to his tough questions (Romans 12:1,2). He comes on his knees with the confidence that someone is listening on the other end. Faith trusts that a loving and wise God has answers and will provide them.

Faith looks to the law

So Christian ethics means more than having faith. Faith never operates in a vacuum. "Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead" (James 2:17). Christian faith always seeks to please God in the way God wants to be pleased. Because our sinful nature exists alongside our spiritual nature, we must always ask our Lord what he wants us to do. He answers that question in his law.

The law God has written in Scripture provides many great principles and applications for the field of medical ethics. In the Bible we see God as the author of life and death. He begins human life through conception but may end it in any number of ways. He claims our bodies as his possession from conception to the grave and has appointed us to take care of them. God has established the husband and wife as the family setting in which children are to be conceived and born.

Since our faith leads us to please God in the way he wants to be pleased, the Christian rejects all ethical systems which sidestep God's moral commands. We

don't accept an ethic in which "love," the situation or the end is used to justify a decision. TV may portray "love" as the reason to shorten a life of suffering by euthanasia, but God's law says, "Thou shalt not kill." The circumstances of a busy working family may demand mother's commitment to a home for the elderly, but will that always be what God's law of love prescribes? The commendable goal to alleviate a rape victim's grief does not justify the murderous means of abortion.

Faith sets a goal

We don't believe that the end justifies the means, but faith does set a goal for its good works. The goal of those who believe in Jesus and follow God's law is to give glory to God before the world and to serve our neighbor. Sometimes when God's law doesn't give us the specific answers we want, keeping that goal in mind will help us to an ethical decision.

The frustration of not knowing exactly what to do can be a healthy frustration. It is healthy if it drives us back to our Bibles in search of a stronger faith. It is good for us if it makes us more eager students of God's will. It is beneficial if it brings us back to our knees to acknowledge God's greater wisdom and our need for forgiveness.

Our Lutheran ethic reminds us that decisions that start with faith must end with faith. Tough decisions will always leave us with some human doubts. Our own sins, the sins of others against us, the limitations of our sinful human reason, our imperfect knowledge of God's will make all our decisions less than fully satisfying. Satisfaction for the Christian comes only through faith in Christ. We can always be satisfied that his love prompted our actions, his word guided our decisions and his perfect merit forgives our imperfect conclusions.

More

This is our Lutheran ethic. It begins with faith in Jesus, looks to the law for guidance in what pleases God, sets service to God and neighbor as its goal and trusts God to cleanse away what is still imperfect in our decisions. This is how we live all our life to God. We need to keep this ethic in mind as we approach the tough questions in medical care. □

Next time: *Some specific questions.*



Professor Mueller teaches theology and New Testament at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin.

“You
need
to
fill
that
emptiness”

by Ed Severson

After being married for 22 years, Tucsonan Ruth Becker became a widow one night in 1982, when her husband shot himself to death.

“When you lose your spouse, there’s a great emptiness,” she said. “You need to fill that emptiness up.”

The other day she sent me her slender book, “Left Alone: A Book on Widowhood.”

“Left Alone” is Becker’s second book. It is about how, as a Christian woman, she has been able to fill the emptiness in her life after her husband died.

I was glad to get her book, because I had read her first one, “Jon: Lessons in Love.” Again it was how Becker, a Lutheran, was able to come to terms, as a Christian woman, with a terrible problem — her son’s severe retardation.

Every once in a while, you run across someone who seems to be able to absorb life’s blows better than most and bounces back stronger than ever. To me, Becker is one of those people. Like everyone else, I’m always interested to find out where strong people get their strength in tough times.

Becker and her husband, Gordy, a gifted and popular mathematics teacher, had a good marriage. They raised four of their own children and were the foster parents of four others. But about a year before Gordy died, he changed.

“One day he took all his clothes, put them in the truck and took them down to Value Village (a second-hand store),” Becker said. “That’s when I began to suspect we were going to be faced with some difficult problems.”

He became increasingly unstable, until the night he finally reached into a closet and grabbed a rifle.

“His pupils dilated, and he was in a totally different world,” she said.

Becker and her daughter fled the house, and by the time she was able to summon the police, Gordy had killed himself.

For Christians, suicide is a sin, and one of the first things Becker worried about was whether her husband’s soul was at rest. Even though she knew he hadn’t been in his right mind when he took his life, it was important for her to know that he had been forgiven.

“I need to know that he is in your heavenly mansion,” she prayed.

The other day she recalled the moment when her answer came.

“It wasn’t thunder and lightning; it wasn’t a voice that I heard or anything dramatic,” she said. “It was just a knowledge in my heart of God saying, ‘Gordy’s with me.’”

Later she had to learn to grieve for Gordy in her



Ruth Becker Schaller

own way.

"No one else knows the intricacies of your most unique relationship with your spouse, or comprehends your deepest needs," she writes.

One way she chose to handle her grief was to get back to work as an instructor in the college of nursing at the University Medical Center.

At one point someone said, "People are saying you don't seem to feel very bad about all this."

"The dean pays me to come and teach," Becker replied. "He doesn't pay me to come and grieve."

She found out that, as far as others were concerned, it was almost impossible for a widow to grieve "properly." To bystanders they were either too happy or too sad.

In her book she tells about one woman who had been widowed after 31 years of marriage. She decided to go on a diet, and by strict discipline was able to take off more than 70 pounds. Her family was upset because they felt that now she was too beautiful and men would take advantage of her.

Becker points out that at the same time widows are being criticized for the ways in which they are trying to put their lives back in order, they have to somehow come to terms with their new loneliness.

One day in church, for instance, she thought she saw Gordy, but then she realized it was someone else.

"The stab of pain is there, but not too bad," she writes.

More difficult for her as a Christian woman was confronting her womanly needs.

"When our spouses die, our desires do not," she writes. "Denying our feelings does not make them dissolve and vanish."

In her book she gives several specific examples of the type of temptations that a woman can encounter. In one incident — after Gordy had become ill — an attractive, intelligent married man wanted to become intimate with her.

"You need love," he said. "You'll feel like a woman again."

She asked him how many people he'd known who had had affairs. He said he knew a number of them. She asked how many of them had remained friends. He admitted that few even continued to speak to each other.

"Your friendship has been and is of great value to me," she said. "I do not want to risk losing it, nor your respect."

Becker said that although their differences on that topic have risen again from time to time, she has remained the man's friend.

"The Christian woman is no less susceptible to temptation than any other woman," said Becker. "I was trying to say: 'Remember that you're a Christian woman; realize these things are going to happen ahead of time; prepare for them; and don't find yourself in a situation that's very tempting and you haven't even thought about.'"

In her book Becker has included a letter to Gordy and all he meant to her.

"It's Mother's Day and I'm here in church," she writes. "I am a mother because of you; something I will always be grateful for. . . . Almost all I am and have today is a result of our marriage."

At the end of the letter she tells Gordy that she knows she'll see him again in heaven with Jesus.

"No wife could ask for more," she writes.

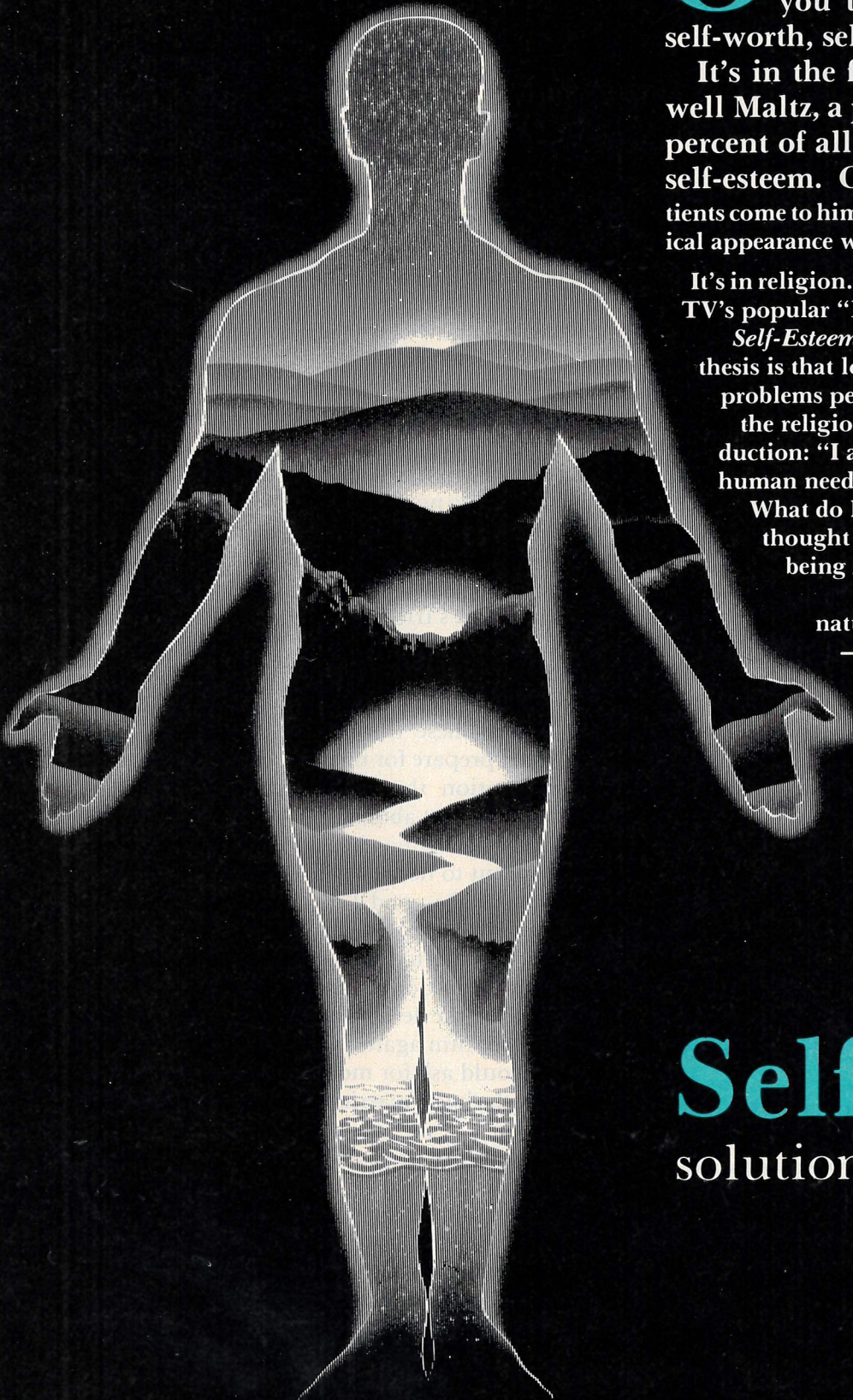
Since then she has remarried and continues to build on her life.

"I didn't want to let his death control my whole response to life," she said. "I am basically a happy person; I look for the happy things in life."

Personally, I think "Left Alone" is a fine book written by a strong woman, which will help widows find new hope in their loneliness. □

To order "Left Alone" see page 18.

Ed Severson is a reporter for The Arizona Daily Star, Tucson. The article is reprinted with permission.



Our culture is being flooded with talk about self-esteem. Wherever you turn you find references to self-worth, self-image and self-esteem.

It's in the field of medicine. Dr. Maxwell Maltz, a plastic surgeon, said that 95 percent of all Americans suffer from low self-esteem. Obviously many of his patients come to him believing that changing their physical appearance will increase their sense of worth.

It's in religion. In 1982 Dr. Robert Schuller, host of TV's popular "Hour of Power," published a book, *Self-Esteem, the New Reformation*. His major thesis is that low self-esteem lies at the root of the problems people face in our world. He shocked the religious world when he said in the introduction: "I am convinced that the deepest of all human needs is salvation from sin and hell. . . .

What do I mean by sin? . . . 'Sin is any act or thought that robs myself or another human being of his or her self-esteem.' And what is 'hell'? It is the loss of pride that naturally follows separation from God — the ultimate and unfailing source of our soul's sense of self-respect."

It's in politics. In 1986 the California State Legislature adopted a bill authored by Assemblyman John Vasconcellos, creating the California Task Force to

Self-esteem

solution to all problems?

by Thomas B. Franzmann

Promote Self-Esteem and Personal and Social Responsibility. The legislation is founded on the premise that low self-esteem is at the root of social problems such as the following:

- 1) Chronic abuse of alcohol
- 2) Other drug use and abuse
- 3) Crime and violence
- 4) Recidivism and chronic criminal behavior
- 5) Chronic welfare dependency
- 6) Teenage pregnancy
- 7) Failure to learn and dropping out of school

The task force, consisting of 25 leaders from a broad spectrum of society, is charged with studying the effects of low self-esteem in our society and with recommending steps for raising the self-esteem of the citizenry. Regarding his bill, Assemblyman Vasconcellos said: "We need not resign ourselves to a malfunctioning society. To do so is fatalism at best, self-fulfilling prophecy at worst. If we continue merely to treat symptoms rather than search for causes, we abandon hope of solutions. Continually treating symptoms is neither cost-effective nor responsible. It's like looking for better ways to drag bodies out of the river instead of attempting to fix the bridge."

Parents and teachers have known for many years that children do respond well to efforts to make them feel good about themselves and their accomplishments. Employers have attained similar results when they followed principles that build up their employees rather than "knock them down." Yes, there is a growing body of evidence revealing a cause and effect relationship between low self-esteem and social behavior which is damaging to society.

Some, perhaps much, of what is being said about self-esteem can be helpful to us. But there are several things that concern this writer regarding the current emphasis on self-esteem.

One is the idea that low self-esteem is the root cause of social evils. Leaders like Schuller and Vasconcellos would have us believe that our problems will go away if we can only eliminate the cause — low self-image. That seems to conflict with what Scripture teaches about sin as the root cause of our problems. Low self-esteem, damaging as it may be, is still a symptom, not the disease. Schuller's redefining of sin to fit his new philosophy does not come to grips with the real nature of sin nor the horrible consequences of it. No matter how appealing the vision of a utopian society may be, dare we clasp it to our breasts if it requires changing what God's word clearly says?

Another matter of concern in this issue is the very real danger of creating a society that produces large numbers who "feel good about themselves" in this life but are not prepared for the next. They will feel

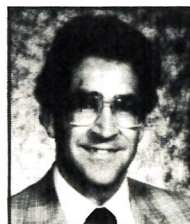
good about themselves until they enter hell. Then they will feel bad about themselves — forever.

We must ask: Will Christian love unconditionally approve a movement in society which appears to provide earthly benefits but actually makes it harder for the recipient to accept eternal benefits? History has shown that any form of self-righteousness creates a false sense of security in the heart and makes the individual less receptive to God's grace in the gospel. Isn't that one of the truths we find in the story of the Pharisee and the tax collector? Wouldn't we say the Pharisee had high self-esteem, while the tax-gatherer saw himself as a wretched sinner? Yet the tax-gatherer was the one who went home with a right status before God.

Still another matter of concern is what appears to be a glaring contradiction in the whole theory. That is the frequent occurrence of anti-social behavior on the part of individuals who have very high self-esteem. Some leaders in government, who obviously feel good about themselves, still steal from public funds, have sexual affairs, use terrible language and run roughshod over the rights and privileges of others. Some self-assured people who have risen to the pinnacle of leadership in religious circles have not been immune to behavior that is extremely costly to the church. Obviously high self-esteem does not guarantee behavior that benefits society.

Evangelical Lutherans have always believed that "feeling good about oneself" is a state of mind that follows a proper application of law and gospel. The law of God reveals our sins, wounds our consciences, crushes us and makes us feel helpless before the Almighty. The law makes the sinner feel like a worm. But the gospel's message of love and forgiveness in Christ Jesus heals the wounds, restores the soul and instills new life and hope in the believer. The gospel makes us feel new and alive, ready to face the world as soldiers in the army of the living God. Rejoicing in our status as children of God, we approach our responsibilities in church and society with a song and a smile, doing our level best to carry them out in a way that pleases our Lord and Savior.

There is no substitute for that. Attempts to solve the problems that beset society by means of a solution that does not include Christ will come up short. Improving people's self-esteem may help in many situations, but it is not the cure-all for which some are hoping. □



Thomas Franzmann is pastor of St. Mark, Citrus Heights, California.

The dissolution of the Synodical Conference

by Victor H. Prange

At the August 1963 convention of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod the resolution was adopted that "in solemn protest against the departure of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod from the historical doctrinal position of the Lutheran Synodical Conference, the Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran Synod now withdraw from said Conference as it is presently constituted." The Evangelical Lutheran Synod took the same action leaving only the Missouri Synod and the Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (Slovak) as members of the Synodical Conference.

In 1966 the latter two synods joined with the former members of the National Lutheran Council (TNL November 1) to form the Lutheran Council in the United States of America (LCUSA). So it was that the Synodical Conference, born in 1872, came to its end.

The intent of the Synodical Conference had been to express and promote unity among Lutherans on the basis of agreement in doctrine and practice (TNL October 15). Several generations of Wisconsin and Missouri Synod pastors and people stood shoulder to shoulder as confessional brothers. In fact the Missouri Synod proposed in 1932 that a committee be appointed "to investigate the feasibility and possibility of the organic union of the synods constituting the Synodical Conference." Nothing came of this proposal and by the mid '30s Missouri was seeking closer ties with the American Lutheran Church (TNL December).

The 1938 convention of the Missouri Synod rejoiced over the progress made in the doctrinal discussion with the ALC but noted that "under the most favorable circumstances much time and effort may be required before any union may be reached." In the following year the Wisconsin Synod cautioned that no acceptable doctrinal basis had been established between Missouri and the ALC and urged that a single document, clearly spelling out the contested doctrines, be drawn up. Such a doctrinal statement was put forward in 1944, but it failed to find acceptance by either church body.

Meanwhile World War II had broken out, profoundly affecting the lives of all Americans. Many voices were raised calling upon the churches to work together in caring for the needs of service personnel and people ravished by war. The Missouri Synod entered into the national military chaplaincy program and agreed to co-operate in various war relief efforts.

At the same time doctrinal discussions between the

Missouri Synod and the ALC went forward leading in 1949 to the "Common Confession — Part One." Four years later a second part was issued. The Wisconsin Synod found this doctrinal statement to be "inadequate." It declared that the adoption of the Common Confession by the Missouri Synod "involves an untruth and creates a basically untruthful situation since this action has been officially interpreted as a settlement of past differences which are in fact not settled."

The Wisconsin Synod conventions in the 1950s as well as the conventions of the Synodical Conference were dominated by a discussion of the issues which were threatening a break in church fellowship between the two synods. By 1955 many members of the Wisconsin Synod were ready to terminate this fellowship. However, another effort was undertaken in the late 50s to resolve the differences. An excellent statement on Scripture was approved by all four bodies making up the Synodical Conference. But it was over the doctrine of church fellowship that an impasse was reached in the discussions between Wisconsin and Missouri.

In August 1961 the Wisconsin Synod met in convention in Milwaukee. At this meeting a lengthy resolution was approved by a majority of the delegates which suspended "fellowship with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod on the basis of Romans 16:17-18." The word "suspend" was explained as having "all the finality of termination during the duration of the suspension, but contains the hope that conditions might some day warrant the reestablishment of fellowship." With this resolution a fellowship of over ninety years was broken.

The Missouri Synod continued talks with the American Lutheran Church leading to a "Joint Statement and Declaration" approved by both synods purporting to show the existence of doctrinal agreement. The 1969 convention of the Missouri Synod declared fellowship with the ALC. But four years later Missouri took a turn away from closer relations with other Lutherans and in 1981 terminated fellowship with the ALC and refused to become a partner in the formation of the new Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (TNL May 15). □



Victor Prange is pastor of Peace, Janesville, Wisconsin.

“Are you there, Dad?”

by James R. Woodfin

It was a dark and stormy night, really!

As we cleaned up the last of our lantern-lit supper, we heard the first mutterings of distant thunder. It wasn't long until the wind began to pick up and muffled lightning started to blink itself awake.

“Goin’ to get some rain tonight,” observed our 13-year old sage. Those in the group who were awake enough to comprehend the weather forecast nodded in agreement, finished up their chores and headed sleepily for the canvas confines of our “pop-up” tent camper. Our nine-year-old shot a quick, anxious glance at the rumbling, blinking sky just before stepping through the door.

About the time we finished our “good night prayers” and slithered deliciously into the welcome embrace of our sleeping bags, the first smattering of raindrops found the metal roof of our camper.

By now the lightning and thunder had increased significantly in frequency and volume. The tent lit up with each flash of lightning and the ground shook under the force of the confirming thunder blasts. The wind was quickly whipping itself up into a young gale. The tent rocked and heaved and flapped under the onslaught and, suddenly, the storm was upon us in full fury.

Sleepiness fled in favor of apprehensiveness as the rain began battering the roof with the ferocity of machine-gun fire. The thunder was an unrelenting artillery barrage. Lightning stabbed and crashed and sizzled.

Inside the false security of our thin canvass walls, we watched and listened . . . and waited, anchored to nothing but a steady stream of anxious prayer as all of nature went berserk around us.

About the time the storm reached the peak of its frenzy, a small hand reached up from the lower bunk where our nine-year-old lay curled up in a ball of apprehension. As he sought out comforting contact, his soft voice — barely audible above the din of the raging storm — asked, “Are you there, Dad?”

Dad reached down, enveloped the small hand in his and replied in what he hoped was a reassuring tone of voice, “Yes, I’m here — everything will be all right.”

Almost immediately the small hand relaxed and shortly withdrew into the warm folds of the sleeping bag. The calming effect spread to the rest of the group and it soon became apparent that in the midst of the rampaging violence that surrounded us, apprehension had evaporated. The sounds of relaxed and contented sleep drifted up from the bunk below.

The storm gradually lessened in fury until, finally, as though exhausted by its tantrum, it fell silent. But not for long! A half hour later it was back with renewed energy and a fierce determination to outdo itself.

Five times during the night the storm recycled — fading away only to reprise its performance — with a vengeance! The grand finale was at about 4:30 in the morning. Through all of it, perfect peace dwelt softly in the sleeping bag in the bunk below.

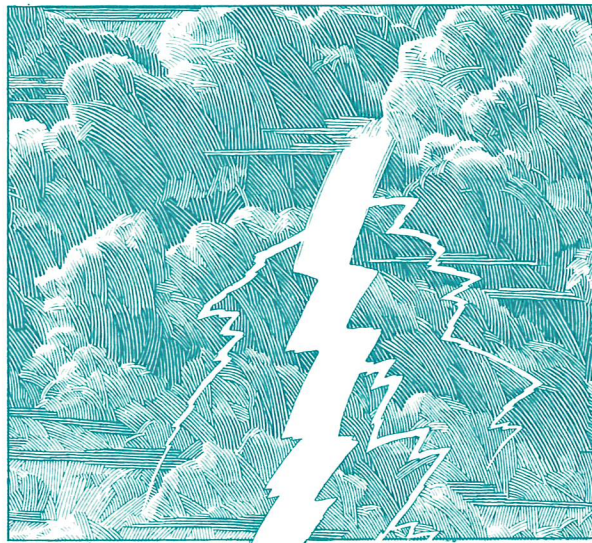
By dawn’s first light we crept from our canvas cocoon to survey the damage. Evidence of the storm’s furious rage was everywhere. Most impressive were the large amount of lightning-strike scars.

But, Dad had been there and, for the family, everything *had* turned out all right.

There is, of course, a parable here — and a lot to think about.

About reaching up to our Father in the midst of crisis or turmoil and asking, “Are you there?” And his patient and loving assurance that he is *always* there — crisis or not — and that he is willing and able to keep us safe in any circumstance.

Then there is the matter of “child-like faith” as contrasted with the “mature doubts” of those who have outgrown the simple word: “Only believe.” □



James Woodfin is a member of Redeemer, Huntsville, Alabama.

Reflections on creation science

You must have decided to make The Northwestern Lutheran controversial to publish "Reflections on creation science" (November 15) because this article is based on highly debatable opinion rather than hard fact. Its first problem may be that the author is defining creation science in a way that many creation scientists would reject.

Its second problem is the statement that "Good science is whatever a majority of scientists say it is at any given time." Ignaz Semmelweis of Vienna discovered and proved that doctors were spreading childbed fever by not washing their hands between patients. Fellow doctors hounded him into an asylum for his trouble, and the profession did not accept his findings for 45 years. Though he stood alone, Semmelweis was teaching "good science." His detractors were not.

May I also venture a controversial opinion? I believe the whole court-controversy would end if Christian creationists would stop trying to get creationism taught in public schools and would instead press for one simple change: that teachers, while teaching evolutionism, give the evidence for *and against* believing that the universe is billions of years old, letting the student make up his mind. Giving the evidence for a young earth and a young universe would truly be science, but then the child could turn to the religion of his choosing to decide why he thinks the earth is the age he thinks it is.

Roger Kovaciny
Columbus, Ohio

Although I respect Dr. Gerlach's line of reasoning in the November 15 issue, I take issue with it in two ways.

First, I see nothing unscholarly in a two-model approach. When there are only two possibilities, i.e., someone made it — or — it made itself, what is scientific about throwing out 50 percent of the possibilities on the basis that any theory implying a supreme being is unworthy of credibility and open presentation and is "religion"? Is that open, honest academic inquiry?

Secondly, Dr. Gerlach *emphasizes* that scientific discovery is *open-ended*, *falsifiable* and *tentative*. That is *not* the way it is presented in texts, journals and National Geographics and books I have read. It's presented in an irrefutable, after-the-fact manner I greatly resent because it is so presented to defenseless minds of both believing and unbelieving children. I believe that it is the Christian's responsibility and is exegetically sound to use Ephesians 5:11-13 and I believe creation science is trying to do this — not "prove" the existence of God or the truth of Genesis.

Marvin Van Haaften
Oskaloosa, Iowa

Thanks for Singles Retreat

I was one of the fortunate ones who was able to attend the 1987 WELS Singles Retreat in Madison, Wisconsin. It was an event that has changed and motivated my life in various ways.

This retreat brought together a variety of people from different backgrounds and areas of the country. However, we all had one common bond. We were all *single* Christian adults who had a wonderful opportunity to share our faith in our Lord and Savior with one another.

The presentations and discussions enabled us to share our thoughts and needs as single Christians. Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Service and Wisconsin Lutheran College recognized the needs of single Christians by co-sponsoring this inspirational weekend. Their support, along with a grant from AAL, helped make this weekend possible. However, it would not have been the true success it was without the dedication and commitment of the members of the steering committee.

I pray that this ministry *to* and of single Christians continues to grow and prosper in the Wisconsin Synod.

I thank once again all who were involved because they made it a very special and fulfilling weekend for myself and all who attended.

Paul C. Stubelt
Wixom, Michigan

Everything has changed

While it remains true that "nothing has changed" relative to the "basic issues of the Reformation," (November 1, From this corner) nevertheless, Roman Catholicism has seen a radical transformation since Luther's day.

During Vatican II (1962-65), for the first time, it took the position that God reveals himself in all faiths. It affirmed that "each branch of the human family possesses in itself and in its worthier traditions some part of the spiritual treasure entrusted by God to humanity."

It also called for a synthesis of the theories of science, notably psychology and sociology and Christianity. The church must "adapt the gospel to the grasp of all as well as to the needs of the learned" as "the law of all evangelization." This means that the culture of those who hear the gospel decides how the gospel is to be adapted, and "the Bible is made subservient to the current theories of the social sciences," thereby stripping it of all objective authority. This movement toward universalism has become a guide not only in Catholic missions, but it is also a "worldwide political principle" which lends itself to support revolution to achieve human rights.

Historic Christianity believes in a God who has said and done decisive things in the past; however for the Roman Catholic Church such axiomatic truths as the incarnation, revelation and resurrection have become paradigms of the political liberation which can take place here and now. Thus the mission of the church, in their eyes, has become man-centered and not God-centered.

In short, "nothing has changed" and everything has changed.

Richard A. Krause
Marietta, Ohio

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.

New head installed . . . Dr. Herbert W. Chilstrom was installed on October 10 as the first bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The installation service was held in Chicago. Also installed in the ceremony were Rev. Lowell Almen, secretary of the ELCA; Christine Grumm, vice-president; and George Aker, treasurer. Chilstrom, Almen and Grumm were elected by the ELCA's constituting convention last April and Aker was appointed treasurer by the ELCA's Church Council. Missouri Synod President Ralph A. Bohlmann and Dr. Samuel H. Nafzger, executive secretary of the synod's Commission on Theology and Church Relations, attended the installation.

Boiler room schemes . . . Investment fraud — often called “boiler room schemes” because of where many of them originally operated — consists of promoters concocting investment schemes that have zero possibilities of making money for anyone other than themselves. Victims of investment fraud are often retirees and those who have recently lost a spouse and are unfamiliar or unsure about how to handle savings opportunities. In an examination of the problem by a gathering of church, government and business representatives in Washington, D. C. last month, they were urged to spread the word about the increasing frequency of investment fraud. The advice was also given that if investments are to be made and questions arise, the local Better Business Bureau or the office of the state's attorney general should be consulted.

Peale returns . . . Dr. Norman Vincent Peale, 89, returned to the pulpit of New York City's Marble Collegiate Church on October 11 for the first time since he retired from the pastorate three years ago. The occasion was the 35th anniversary of Peale's book, “The Power of Positive Thinking,” and the 133rd anniversary of the present Marble Collegiate Church building. The Reformed Church in America congregation was started in 1628 and is the oldest church in the country with a continuous ministry.

Catholic saints still popular . . . Most Catholics still pray to the saints as much as or more than they did years ago, according to a recent poll by *U. S. Catholic* magazine. Results of the survey, in which the magazine polled 1000 of its readers, show that 67 percent of the respondents continue to pray to the saints; 68 percent try to imitate the lives of the saints; and 61 percent often ask saints to intercede for them. More than half of the respondents said they ask a saint for special help at least weekly.

Mainline churches soft on communism . . . “Anti-communism is as essential a component of human decency as it is to be anti-Nazi,” Dr. Richard Neuhaus, director of the Rockford Institute on Religion and Society, recently told a New York audience. He said that “the friends of freedom who do not understand the enemies of freedom are doubtful friends of freedom.” Although some leaders of mainline denominations refrain from criticizing communism because they want to be “open-minded” and “balanced,” Neuhaus said, “there is no ‘other hand’ on some questions.” He charged that “large sectors of American religious leadership have become, and have been, over the last four decades, apologists for oppression.” Although he said this has not always been their conscious intent, “objectively speaking, that has been the consequence of their work.”

Why the Missouri Synod loses members . . . Nationally-known church consultant Lyle Schaller says the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod is losing members primarily because of understaffing in congregations. Schaller said the LCMS needs to use lay workers more effectively. Congregations with memberships of 100 to 200 people should have a part-time worker whose sole function is outreach, he said, and larger congregations should have a full-time worker. People born after 1950 prefer to join large, theologically conservative churches. To attract the young, the synod needs to help its large churches grow even larger. He also suggested planting new churches and relocating congregations that are not reaching their full ministry potential at their present site.

Little new action in Rome . . . The month-long synod on the role of the laity in the Roman Catholic Church ended October 30 with Pope John Paul II praising the gathering for its “profound and stimulating” ideas on the place of women and youth in the church. It was clear, however, reported Religious News Service “that any new understanding of the roles of women and youth would remain, at least for the time, on the level of ideas.” The final text of the conference indicates that in the last days of the meeting, conservative prelates managed to block attempts by North American bishops to expand the role of women to the non-ordained ministries of the church. In the final text there was no trace of specific proposals to allow women to become acolytes, lectors and altar girls that had been included in a preliminary version. □

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.

Evangelism workshops offered synod-wide

From January through June of 1988, district evangelism committees will be offering area workshops entitled *Gearing Up For Evangelism*. "That title may not be broad enough," reported the synod's administrator for evangelism, Paul Kelm. "The content of the nine-hour workshop addresses the planning process of the congregation's entire ministry." Lay leaders and pastors will find multiple application of such workshop subjects as "Motivating Members," "Constructive Self-Analysis For Congregations," "Principles Of Planning" and "Enlisting Volunteers For Meaningful Roles."

Workshops will provide congregations with practical tools for self-study, community analysis and developing a mission statement that has congregation-wide owner-

ship. A thirty-minute videotape entitled *Other Sheep* and a ten-week Bible study course are included among workshop materials, to assist congregations in building mission/ministry awareness.

Gearing Up For Evangelism is the first of five such workshops. The board for evangelism hopes to assist congregations in building a logically phased outreach strategy over the course of five years. The board's staff and district coordinators will each year develop a "generic" workshop with practical resources, then present the workshop in sixty or more locations around the synod.

Dates and sites for *Gearing Up For Evangelism* will be publicized within each district by the evangelism coordinators.

Superintendent installed

Installed on October 4 was Pastor Ronald K. Heins as superintendent of Wisconsin Lutheran High School, Milwaukee. The position became vacant when Pastor Wayne Borgwardt accepted the call as administrator of the synod's Board for Worker Training.

As superintendent of the oldest and one of the largest Lutheran high schools in the country, Heins will be responsible for the overall administration of the school in the areas of finance, education, student life, facilities, staff and constituent relations.

Heins interrupted his ministerial education to work toward a doctorate in communications at Michigan State. In 1967 he graduated from the seminary and was assigned to Brookings, S. Dak. In



Heins

1973 he was called to St. John, Wauwatosa, Wis., where he served as senior pastor for 14 years.

In 1966 he married Mary Ten-Pas, who is an assistant professor of communications at Wisconsin Lutheran College.

Also installed in the same service were Allen Greschner, Paul Bases, Gilbert Tatge and Dale Walz. The installation was performed by Pastor James A. Aderman, chairman of the board of directors.

Minnesota District

St. Paul of Cannon Falls celebrated two dedication services in November. On November 8 a new Rogers 640 organ was dedicated and one week later the dedication service was held for the new church and school addition. St. Paul's 270 baptized members are served by Mark Schwertfeger. Richard Carver and Sally Buck teach the 35 students in the school. . . . On November 22 **Mt. Olive of Shakopee** dedicated its new and relocated church and fellowship hall. The congregation, which had outgrown its previous church building, is served by Rodney Puddell. . . . **Ascension of Rochester**, served by Alvin R. Kienetz, dedicated its fellowship and education addition on September 13. . . . **Christ of North St. Paul** completed a year-long observation of its centennial. Five special Sundays were observed stressing the themes of prayer, music, anniversary and confirmation reunion, synod and missions and Christian education. Former pastors, sons of the congregation and synod officials took part. Christ is served by David M. Ponath and also maintains a Christian day school where Michael L. Butzow is principal. . . . Zion of Sanborn recognized its organist, **Lois Dammann**, for 47 years of service with a special celebration on October 18. . . . In September Trinity of St. Paul honored **Virginia Mathews** for serving as Sunday school teacher for 50 years. . . . The 25th anniversary in the ministry of **Pastor Marvin Doelger** was celebrated at St. John, Caledonia, on October 24. . . . In August the Lutheran Institutional Ministry Association installed **Pastor Lloyd A. Hohenstein** to serve the hospitals and institutions of the Minneapolis and St. Paul area, covering the four county Twin Cities areas. Pastor Waldemar Geiger of Rochester preached for

the service held at Good Shepherd in Burnsville. To contact our pastors, phone Pastor Geiger at 507/289-4958 or Pastor Hohenstein at 612/561-7809.

— Robert Edwards

Nebraska District

Prior to the beginning of the school year, members of Good Shepherd of Omaha celebrated the 20th year of teacher **Richard Brei's** service in the teaching ministry, all of which have been spent at Good Shepherd. . . . On September 13 the members of Redeemer in Hastings honored **Alma Jugert**, who taught Sunday school at Redeemer for 40 years with only two absences — once due to a broken kneecap and once due to surgery. . . . On September 20, **Trinity of Winner, S. Dak.**, celebrated the 70th anniversary of its founding. A former pastor, Norris Baumann, was guest speaker. William Allwardt serves the congregation. . . . **Pastor Edward Krueger** retired on October 15 after 53 years in the preaching ministry. . . . **Abiding Word in Highlands Ranch, Colo.**, recently received authorization to proceed with the construction of a worship/education/fellowship unit. This planned community, modeled after Mission Viejo, Calif., is Colorado's fastest-growing community with 2500 homes already built and 27,500 more projected. By the year 2000 it is predicted the population will be 100,000, where a few years ago antelope and coyotes made up the citizenry. . . . Members of Salem in Colorado Springs held a special service of thanksgiving for the 30 years their pastor, **Ronald Kaiser**, has served in the teaching and preaching ministry. Pastor Joel Frank was guest speaker. Pastor Kaiser was elected president of the Nebraska District in 1986.

— Timothy Bauer



Mrs. Vala Jensen stands with her son Jesse on the future site of Abiding Word in Highlands Ranch, Colo. The sign was made by Mrs. Jensen.

North Atlantic District

In celebrating its upcoming 25th anniversary, members of **Grace, Fall Church, Va.**, have pledged \$18,000 in special gifts to aid mission work in another part of the Washington, D.C. area. This Loudoun County, Va., project has been given exploratory status and is calling a pastor to serve full time in the mission effort work there. . . . **Bethlehem of Manassas, Va.**, begun as a daughter congregation of Grace, dedicated its chapel in June. The new facility seats 200 and also provides a fellowship area. Pastor Paul Ziemer serves the 123-communicant congregation. . . . At other new mission stations we find **St. Paul of Ottawa, Ontario** supplying 18 months of funding to **Redeemer of Pembroke** for a full-time pastor, James Shrader, who began his work in June. . . . In September mission explorer, Pastor Tom Haar, began gathering prospects for a new mission in **New Market, Ontario** (near Toronto). . . . Pastor Ed Spreeman of **Abiding Word in Orleans, Ontario** is beginning to reach out to serve families in Montreal. . . . Mission explorer, Pastor Tom Pankow, began worship services in September in **Bucks County, Pa.** (near Philadelphia). . . . **Our Redeemer of Newport News, Va.**, served by Pastor Don Stuppy, has selected an architect for a worship facility. . . . **Peace of Manhattan, N.Y.**, has enlisted the services of graduate David Rosenbaum to carry on a

"share-time" ministry to assist Pastor Glen Thompson in bringing the gospel to America's largest city. . . . The 25th anniversary of **Grace, Falls Church, Va.**, also marks the 25th anniversary of the roots of our district and the 25th anniversary of our work as a synod on the East Coast. . . . District fellowship is seen in events such as the 16th **Annual Labor Day Retreat**, hosted by Faith of Pittsfield, Mass., which brought members and friends from congregations stretching from New Jersey and New York to Vermont and Maine to gather at Camp Chimney Corner in Becket, Mass. . . . **The New Lyfe** (New England WELS) youth organization gathered for its 1987 retreats, spending its winter days in Vermont enjoying the ski slopes of Bolton Valley. The summer retreat placed them in the setting of the White Mountains of New Hampshire on Lake Ossipee. . . . Six congregations gathered at St. Paul in Ottawa, Ontario in September for an **evangelism workshop** under the theme, "The Gospel According to You." . . . On November 1, WELS and ELS congregations of the New England area gathered at St. Paul in Amherst, N.H. for a **Reformation Festival Service**. . . . On November 22 the choirs from Baltimore, Md., East Brunswick, N.J., and Falls Church, Va., joined together at Peace in King of Prussia, Pa., for the **Advent/Christmas Choirfest**.

— David Kehl

THE BIBLE IN 365 READINGS

Continuing our program of reading through the complete Bible in one year, we list the eighth month of readings beginning January 16 and ending February 15.

January	16	Revelation 6 — 11:19
	17	Rv 12 — 16:21
	18	Rv 17 — 20:15
	19	Rv 21 — 22:21
	20	Psalms 109, 94, 62, 47, 108
	21	Job 1 — 5:27
	22	Jb 6 — 8:22
	23	Jb 9 — 11:20
	24	Jb 12 — 14:22
	25	Jb 15 — 18:21
	26	Jb 19 — 21:34
	27	Jb 22 — 26:14
	28	Jb 27 — 30:15
	29	Jb 30:16 — 32:22
	30	Jb 33 — 36:16
	31	Jb 36:17 — 39:12
February	1	Jb 39:13 — 42:17
	2	Psalms 73 / 1 Chronicles 1
	3	1 Ch 2 / Psalm 104
	4	1 Ch 3 — 4:43 / Psalm 19
	5	1 Ch 5 — 6:48 / Psalms 134, 8
	6	1 Ch 6:49 — 7:40 / Psalms 15, 52
	7	1 Ch 8 / Psalms 76, 77, 124
	8	1 Ch 9 / Psalms 97, 86, 82
	9	1 Ch 10 — 12:22
	10	1 Ch 12:23 — 16:6
	11	1 Ch 16:7 — 18:17
	12	Psalm 55 / 1 Ch 19 — 22:5
	13	1 Ch 22:6 — 24:31 / Psalm 149
	14	Psalm 122 / 1 Ch 25 — 27:15
	15	1 Ch 27:16 — 29:30 / Psalm 40

NOTICE FOR CONGREGATION TREASURERS

The cutoff date for pre-budget subscription (PBS) receipts in the synod's post office lock box is the last business day of each month. *December 1987* lock box offerings will be credited as 1987 receipts through *January 11, 1988* as long as they are received in the lock box on or before that date and are clearly labeled as "December" offerings on the Form 220.

Norbert M. Manthe
Chief Accounting Officer

NOTICES

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

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS SPECIAL GIFTS COUNSELOR

The Conference of Presidents herewith requests additional nominations for the position of special gifts counselor. The original list of nominations appeared in the October 15, 1986 issue. Because of the nature of the work involved this position is to be filled initially by a man with pastor training.

The voting membership of the synod is invited to nominate qualified candidates for this position. The special gifts counselor will be responsible for designing, implementing and regularly updating a plan for the WELS special gifts program. This will include identifying potential donors and making personal visits to encourage and receive special or designated gifts. It will also be his responsibility to recruit and train part-time special gift solicitors in various areas of the synod enabling them also to conduct personal visits in a God-pleasing manner.

Nominations, including pertinent information, should be in the hands of the secretary of the synod no later than January 15, 1988.

Rev. David Worgull, Secretary
1270 North Dobson Road
Chandler, Arizona 85224

POSITION AVAILABLE PRODUCER/DIRECTOR OF AUDIO AND VISUAL MATERIALS

The Northwestern Publishing House is expanding its ministry to the audio and visual media and we are searching for a *producer/director* for this new endeavor. Applicants must have expertise and experience in producing and directing in the audio and visual media with a special emphasis on video production. This is a full-time staff position which offers the challenge and opportunity to serve the church in this lay ministry.

Please submit a complete resumé including salary requirements, by January 15, 1988 to: Mr. Thomas W. Spaulding, Manager, Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 North 113th Street, PO Box 26975, Milwaukee, WI 53226-0975; 414/475-6600.

CELEBRATE CHRISTIAN RECOVERY!

The fifth annual Alcoholism Awareness Retreat sponsored by Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Service will be held April 29 through May 1, 1988 at a retreat center in Milwaukee, Wis. Various speakers and workshops will offer Christian insight and challenge for growth to individuals or families recovering from alcoholism. Topics for children may be presented if numbers warrant. A special banquet meal and entertainment are being planned to help celebrate the fifth anniversary of the retreat.

For further details or reservations contact Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Service, 6800 N. 76th St., P.O. Box 23980, Milwaukee, WI 53223. Or phone 414/353-5000. Ask for John Cook or Susie Zimmermann.

WISCONSIN LUTHERAN SEMINARY MISSION SEMINAR

Dates: January 27-28, 7:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

January 27, 7:30 p.m.

Theme: "That They May Proclaim His Praise" (Isaiah 43:21)

- I. To Their Friends
- II. To Their Community
- III. Throughout the World
- IV. With All Possible Means
- V. With God's Presence and Power

A special feature of the seminar is that the WELS Board for World Missions will hold one of its meetings at the evening session on the 27th. The audience will be able to listen in on the meeting, and will have the opportunity for input.

ANNIVERSARIES

Falls Church, Virginia — Grace (25), April, 1988. Anyone with pictures, memorabilia or other items of interest please send to Grace, 3233 Annandale Rd., Falls Church, VA 22042.

Left alone

See page 8

for a feature article on this compelling book.

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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CONFERENCES

Southeastern Wisconsin District, Southern Conference, January 12 at First Lutheran, Lake Geneva. Agenda: Exegesis: 1 John 2:28-3:10 (Meyer); The Doctrinal Statements of the ELCA (Lehninger).

Western Wisconsin District, Central Conference, January 18 at Northwestern College, Watertown. Agenda: Exegesis of Haggai Chapter 2:1-9 (Hunter); Dancing in Lutheran Schools (Grosnick).

CHANGES IN MINISTRY

PASTORS:

Agenten, Richard A., from St. Paul, Platteville, Wis., to Bethlehem, Urbana, Ill.

Kuske, John D., from Exploratory, Beaumont, Tex., to Redeeming Grace, Sugar Land, Tex.

ADDRESSES

PASTORS:

Kruck, Keith C., 741 Campbell Rd., Madison, TN 37115; 615/865-2268.

Lindloff, Mark A., 410 Main St., Box 35, Melstone, MT 59054; 406/358-2489.

Nitz, Daniel M., 39500 - 60th St., Burlington, WI 53105; 414/539-2979.

“Give me
a light
that I may
tread safely
into the
unknown”

The year 1988 promises to be a gripping year. It is an election year, but not just any election year. It's time to change the watch in Washington, D. C. For the first time since the 1950s a president will have served two full terms in the White House. Five presidents have served in between, the longest gap between two-term presidents in the twentieth century.

We haven't messed around much with the national political scene in this magazine, and we don't intend to start now. But to me the election appears to be one of the more crucial ones of the century. For the first time in 50 years an administration has seriously threatened the Roosevelt heritage of an activist government. Will the Reagan program survive his retirement from office? A lot of future history hangs from the answer to that one.

The record-breaking stock market plunge on Monday, October 19, will echo well into the new year. The plunge, reflecting a new perception of the budget and foreign trade deficits, could have serious consequences on the economic vitality of the nation. The prospect, at this time, is not at all reassuring.

Foreign policy will certainly be an issue in the presidential election. President Reagan's foreign policy has been reviled by his critics even though it is largely shaped by forces that existed before and will prevail after his term of office. Nations, large and small, in the marketplace of ideas are flexing new-found muscles which scorn the ponderous and strident ways of a USA-style democracy.

In the religious world things will also be happening. Close to home, we will be launching a renewal program authorized by the 1987 convention. A director for the program will be called in January from a list of candidates which appeared in the December issue of *The Northwestern Lutheran*. We may authorize and we may plan and we may program, but “it is God who gives the increase.” Amidst all the stir the renewal effort will require, that word of Paul will not be forgotten.

Further from home will come the beginning of a new church body, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, a 5.3 million-member church and the fourth largest Protestant denomination in America. The new Lutheran church, uniting a number of diverse theological strains, has yet to find its identity. The bishop of the Synod of Metropolitan Chicago, Dr. John Tiejn, installed in office less than a month, has already resigned. This may presage a stormy year for the infant body as theological pluralism nourishes factionalism.

On New Year's Day, 1939, as night descended on Europe and the machines of war were warming their engines, King George VI of England quoted this advice in his message to the Empire: “I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year: ‘Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown,’ and he replied, ‘Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than the known way.’ ”

Royal advice — even if it isn't a direct quote from him who said, “I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”

James P. Schaefer

1040

Uncle Sam's Christmas card

by Wayne A. Laitinen

As I walked into the house, kicking the snow off my boots, I noticed that Carol had sorted the day's mail into several piles on the dining room table. One stack consisted of the usual ads for office equipment and post-Christmas sales. Below that lay a Christmas letter from a seminary classmate who is now a missionary in Taiwan. I was eager to open that one.

But then my eyes darted over to a solitary piece of mail with an enormous "1040" printed across the top in bold type. I had come to the realization that the high joy of Jesus' birth-celebration was about to melt into the sobrieties of sitting for hours with receipts in one hand and the calculator in the other. After that there would be the transfer of money from savings into checking and the final checks for federal, state and city taxes.

I made some joke to my wife about Uncle Sam remembering to send us his Christmas card — a day late.

Let's face it, our tax money isn't always used the way we think it should be. Some think that our country is spending too much on national defense and others think we are spending too little. Perhaps some of our government officials are overpaid. Others have been caught with their hand in the till. It was discovered that the Pentagon has spent thousands on parts which are worth a few thin dimes. Anyone who watches the evening news knows the litany of financial and ethical problems with the United States government.

Why, then, should we put up with the I.R.S. and pay taxes?

Jewish spies who loathed paying taxes to the Roman government put a similar question to Jesus. "Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" they taunted. You will remember that Jesus masterfully answered by asking to see a denarius. When they displayed the currency it was obviously Roman. The emperor's profile was pressed into it. The inscription even

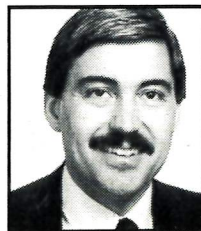
claimed that Caesar is a god. Yet such a blasphemous coin was gladly kept in the pockets of Roman and Jew alike! Jesus had unveiled their hypocrisy. People were all too eager to bask in the blessings of Uncle Caesar when he was minting coins for them, protecting them from enemy invasions, building roads and water-works . . . but pay Caesar for these blessings? Sacrilege!

Jesus pointed out that the government is not only a cow to be milked; it's a cow to be fed. "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's."

For those who love their income more than their Lord Jesus, 1040 will always be the number of the beast. They will always find excuses for cheating on their taxes or refusing to pay them. If anyone had such a reason, Jesus did.

You will remember that Jesus told the Jews to pay taxes to the government only three days before that same government unjustly put him to death. That very denarius which Jesus spoke about on Tuesday may have paid the executioner to put spikes through his hands on Friday. It doesn't seem fair, does it? Then again, Jesus never promised that Caesar would always use our taxes in a fair way. As Christians, we *will* find a government where there is no waste and no injustice, but not on this tired earth.

I suppose that receiving my tax forms on the day after I celebrated my Savior's birth is pretty good timing. He came to earth as a baby to give me more than the collected revenues of the world could buy — forgiveness of sin and eternal life in his kingdom! Filling out my 1040 is just another way of obeying him and saying, "Thank you, Jesus, for all you've done!" □



Wayne Laitinen is pastor of Arlington Avenue Lutheran, Toledo, Ohio.