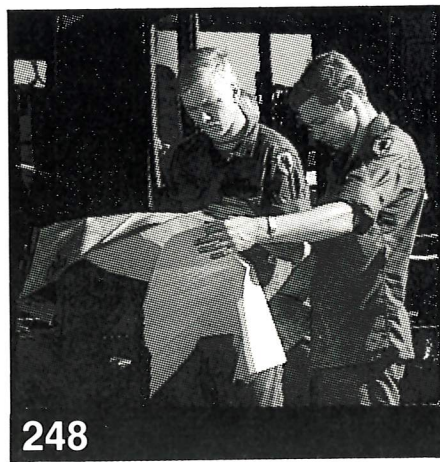
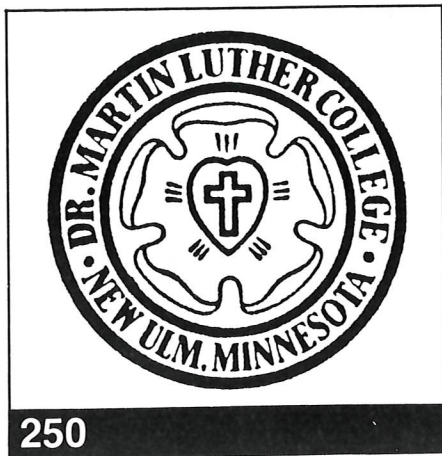


July 1989

the
Northwestern
Lutheran





FEATURES

The word for today by <i>Richard E. Lauersdorf</i>	243
Promises! Promises! Promises!	
Letters from Peter and Judas by <i>Julian G. Anderson</i>	245
God's holy children	
Contemporary moral issues by <i>Wayne D. Mueller</i>	246
Human sexuality	
Times for remembering by <i>Roland Cap Ehlke</i>	248
Dr. Martin Luther College graduates	250

COLUMNS

Editorial comment by <i>Immanuel G. Frey</i>	244
Sincerity and truth	
From this corner by <i>the editor</i>	259
From the president by <i>Carl H. Mischke</i>	260
If God Wills	

NEWS

Forty-six graduate from Northwestern College	253
Students play the market	253
New Testament published	254
Michigan district	254
Dr. Martin Luther College call assignments	255

WELS CONVENTION

Floor committees	256
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Celebrating Seventy-Five Years

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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**Northwestern
Lutheran**

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Promises! promises! promises!

by Richard E. Lauersdorf

"But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15).

What did we promise when we were married? To love, honor, and cherish each other? Of course. To protect our wife, provide for her, and permanently stand beside her? Surely. To remain in loving obedience and allegiance at our husband's side through all the changing scenes of life? Indeed. And all this until death did the parting.

How has it gone? In these days when in the past more marriages were forged than in any other, it might be well for us to review such promises. As we review, another promise comes to mind, one which stands behind every successful and enduring marriage. How has it gone with our promise, "We will serve the Lord"?

We will serve the Lord

How can we serve the Lord unless we remember what he is? The 110-year-old Joshua reminded the leaders of Israel what a Lord they had to serve. Theirs was a Lord who had brought them out of slavery in Egypt, through the walls of the Red Sea, across the sands of the Sinai desert, into the land of milk and honey. Even more, theirs was a Lord who had promised them a Savior, the seed of the woman, the Christ who would wash away each stain and let nothing of their sin remain. To this Lord he referred when he vowed, "As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."

What a reminder for our marriage. Unless the Lord in his grace constantly reminds us of what he is and has done for us, we can't even begin to serve him. When sin bends our spirit in marriage, how can we turn to him for relief unless by his grace we know him to be the Lord who assures us, "Go in peace, your sins are forgiven"? When sorrow dampens our heart in marriage, how can we turn to him for comfort unless we know him to be the Lord who says, "In all things I work for the good of those who love me"? When success fogs our head in marriage, how can we turn to him for humbling unless we know him to be a Lord who reminds us, "Without me you can do nothing"? And when death ends our marriage, how can we turn to him for confidence unless we know him to be a Lord who promises, "Because I live, you also

will live"?

We need to start, as Joshua did, with the emphasis, "We will serve the Lord."

We will serve the Lord

By ourselves we cannot love, but only hate him. By ourselves we cannot choose him, much less serve him. Only when he plants us in the soil of his word, grafts us on the vine called Christ, waters us with the dew of the gospel can we begin to green out in faith and bud forth in service toward him.

Joshua of old knew the secret of service to the Lord. So should we. If our marriage is to be Christian, our house filled with love, our children raised for eternity, our neighbors treated with respect, our daily lives carried out with meaning, then all must be done for the Lord in humble appreciation for what he has done for us.

The secret is to let him serve us. Let the word of Christ dwell in us and our homes richly. Let us draw near his holy supper frequently to be served by him with rich forgiveness and ready strength. Then we will be able to vow, "We will serve the Lord."

We will serve the Lord

Joshua spoke of himself and of his household in our verse. He knew what had gone on in the past; now he looked ahead to the future. Regardless of what others would do, he and his household together would serve the Lord.

That's how it is to go also in a Christian marriage. No longer is it, "I will serve the Lord," as I have tried individually in my life. Now it has become, "We will serve the Lord." Marriage becomes a joint effort, two hearts beating as one and two lives bent together into one for joyful service to the Lord.

Promises, promises, promises, that's what we made on our wedding day. How has it gone? So much depends on whether we have beneath all those promises that important one of

Joshua, "*We will serve the Lord.*" □



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

Sincerity and truth

A clergyman, born in England, wrote to the advice columnist of a newspaper. He had a complaint. He complained about the custom which he found in America of greeting both men and women with a hug. He branded it "one of the biggest culture shocks which I have had to face." Apparently the custom of hugging all and sundry was not the practice in England.

It is not the practice here either except among a certain element in Hollywood and among certain ethnic groups who mostly confine the practice to their own relatives. It can be downright embarrassing to a lot of other people.

The English-born cleric who protested the practice of indiscriminate hugging went further. He denounced it as "bespeaking a false intimacy." His opinion has been seconded: A lady wrote that she had attended a religious service in which there was a lot of hugging going on, and she felt that this was out of place. She declared, "I do not intend to become involved in this big display of love," and she added that she had no intention of hugging her way to heaven. Apparently she wasn't brought up that way. After all, it is a matter of culture or background, and some people are more emotional than others.

To continue in a similar vein: A Lutheran (not of our fellowship) made it a practice to sit in the balcony of his church where he was not expected to participate in what he called "the sharing of the peace," which in his church consisted of shaking hands with the person sitting beside or behind him. This embarrassed him. The church service, in his estimation, should be dignified, not chummy.

Hugging can be a genuine demonstration of love; likewise, a handshake can be a genuine evidence of friendship. A hug or a handshake is neither one when it is forced. Moreover, "making a statement" (to use modern and overused jargon) is subject to interpretation and can even be hypocritical. Christians should love one another, but that does not mean that that love be necessarily accompanied by emotional outbursts.

Above all, the worship of God must be characterized by "sincerity and truth" (1 Corinthians 5:8). These make our worship genuine.

Immanuel G. Frey



*Immanuel Frey
is a retired pastor
living in
Phoenix, Arizona.*

God's holy children

by Julian G. Anderson

After discussing the subject of our living hope, Peter turns to the kind of lives we are to lead as God's children, beginning with 1:13-16.

First, we mustn't fall asleep spiritually, but keep our minds alert and clear. The proper way to do this is to build all of our hopes on the gifts we will receive when Jesus comes back — namely, a new body which will be perfectly holy, and then God's invitation to join him in the wonderful new heavens which will be our new home.

Of course we mustn't let our sinful desires control our lives, but try to be holy in everything we do, just as God is holy, since we are now his children. What higher position could we attain to?

God has no favorites

Verses 17-19. Many of us can recall what a pain in the neck a "teacher's pet" was, and how unfair that seemed to all the others. But in verse 17 Peter reminds us that "God has no favorites. He treats everyone alike, and judges every person according to what that person has done." So we must remember that we are the ones who determine how God is going to treat us.

Since we call God "our Father," as we do every time we pray the Lord's prayer, we must remember that we are really living in a foreign country, because heaven is our home. We mustn't ever forget that, and become totally involved with what we're doing here on earth.

We also know what a high price was paid by God's Son to set us free. As Peter puts it, "That price was the precious blood of Christ, who was like a perfect lamb." No amount of money or material possessions could ever have made us, or qualified us, to be God's children.

A summary of the good news

Verses 1:20-2:3. Now Peter continues, "Jesus was chosen to be your sacrifice before the world was created, but it was just in these last times that God made it clear who he was, so that you would know him. And so because of Jesus you people now believe in God, who raised Jesus from the dead and gave him glory and honor. And so your faith and hope are in God." These two sentences cover thousands of years — from the time God chose his Son to be our atoning sacrifice, an untold number of years before the world was created, to some time in 67-68 A.D., when this letter was written, and another 1900 years to our era today.

But see how these points are stressed here, that we are now God's children, and therefore our faith and our hope are in God. Therefore we must live like God's children, who have truly been born again by the living and eternal word of God. And one of the signs of our new birth is that we have a genuine love for our fellow believers, who are our brothers and sisters. Finally, we are not just children of a human father, who must die, but also of a Father who can never die, which means that we also possess eternal life. The secret of living a really successful life here on earth is to remember these wonderful truths.

Then Peter sums up the above thoughts by quoting a portion of Isaiah 40:6-8:

"All human beings are like the grass and the plants,
and all their beauty is like the flower on a plant.
The grass and the plants dry up,
and the flowers fall off;
but the Lord's word lives on forever."

A fine description of the impermanence of life in this world.

Finally Peter sums up this whole section by reminding us that we who are God's children have tasted the Lord's kindness, quoting Psalm 34:8, and that we must try to get rid of everything that is evil and dishonest, that is, the sins of hypocrisy and jealousy and slander, which a person can slip into so easily.

Then he politely reminds us that we should really be like newborn babies, who are thirsty for the pure milk which feeds the soul — God's word — so that by drinking it we can grow up and be saved. The older we get the more we need to be reminded of this fact that we are always God's little children who daily need the pure milk that can be found only in God's word. And the truth is that there are precious few of us who are always conscious that we are children of God. □



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

What do the words crime, innuendo, molestation, bias, misconduct, discrimination, overtones, violence, and perversion have in common? They all follow the adjective “sexual” in today’s news reports. There is something especially repulsive about sexual sins. St. Paul gives one reason why this is true: “All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body” (1 Corinthians 6:18). A nation’s wholesale surrender to sexual immorality is an indication that it has forsaken even the most basic, natural knowledge of God. It is a sign that an angry God has turned people over to the consequences of their own passions (Romans 1:18-32).

Christians are rightly grieved by the blatant sexual immorality of society. We know that “the body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord” (1 Corinthians 6:13). Yet the believer, too, struggles with his sexuality. Seemingly irrepressible urges occupy our thoughts and sometimes spill over into our words and actions. What do we think about our own sexuality? How can we witness to the world while we are still struggling with our own flesh? What help does God’s word give us for this moral dilemma?

God made us sexual people

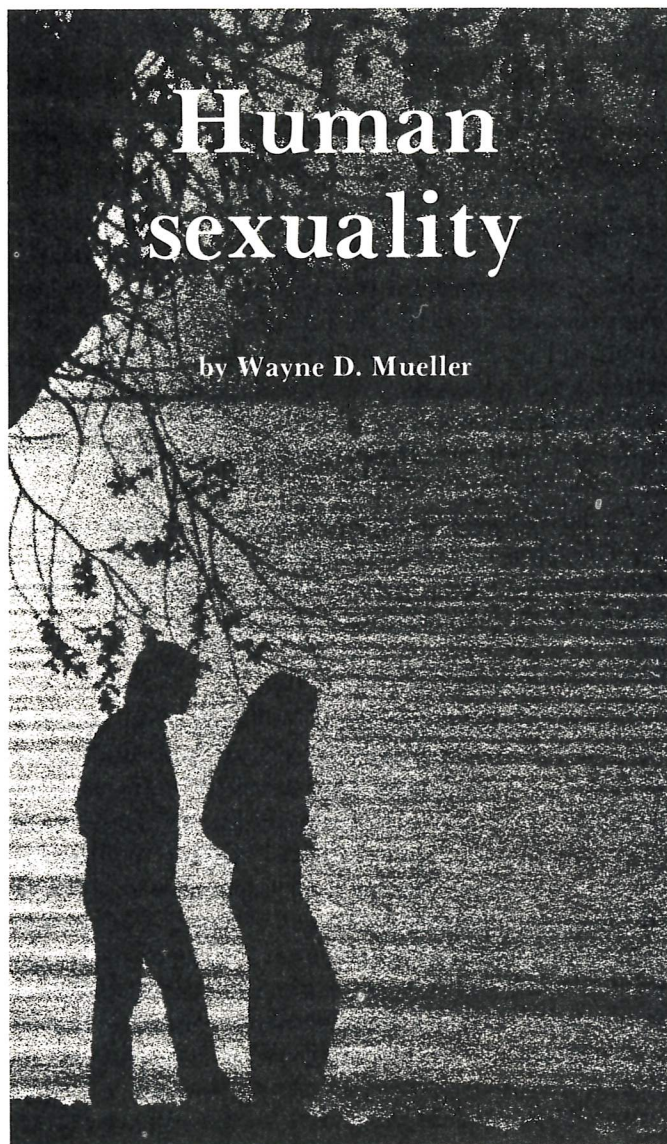
Sex is good. That bold, bald statement has the backing of Holy Scripture. It is true that God made us, first of all, human creatures. That is shown by Moses’ generic use of the word “man” (humankind) in Genesis 1:27 and by the use of the terms “man” in 2:7 and “woman” in 2:22. It is also true that God made his human creatures possessors of his divine image (Genesis 1:26,27). That image includes knowledge (Colossians 3:10) and sinlessness (Ephesians 4:24). But there is more. An essential part of our makeup as God originally created us is our sexuality.

In the same breath that the Bible says we are human and possessors of the divine image, it records that God created human beings “male and female.” These are specifically sexual words. God made us human, God made us possessors of his image, and God made us sexual. Think of what that means. A popular poster capsulizes the truth: “God don’t make no junk.” Since God created human sexuality — and God is good (Matthew 19:17) — then sex is good. “Every good and perfect gift is from above” (James 1:16). God himself draws this conclusion. He declared his work of the first five days to be “good.” But his crowning work on the sixth day he pronounced “very good” (Genesis 1:31). That evaluation includes his work of creating human sexuality.

God’s perfect creatures in a perfect world recognized their sexuality as the good gift it was. Moses writes, “The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame” (Genesis 2:25). Adam and Eve

Human sexuality

by Wayne D. Mueller



could stand in front of each other and before God without embarrassment. They had a confident appreciation of what God had made them: human, sinless, and sexual.

We lost our innocence

If we and the world around us were without sin today, we would consistently view our human sexuality as a good gift from a good God. But that’s not the way it is. You have probably noticed that just about everyone today wears clothes. Even if the weather is very hot, we cover up at least those parts of our bodies which especially identify our gender. And it should be that way. Since the fall into sin, we all have the tendency to hide ourselves from each other and from our God (Genesis 3:7). The modesty which comes from being aware of our sinful nature demands that we cover ourselves. Where that modesty is

lacking there is an inappropriate shamelessness. Wearing clothes is our way of admitting we lost something God originally gave to us. We have lost the image of God by which we could avoid sexual sins and recognize our sexuality as the Creator's gift.

But wearing clothes doesn't hide our spiritual nakedness. Only the Savior whom God promised in the garden can do that. Adam and Eve were not restored when they put on fig leaves (Genesis 3:7), but when God covered their sin with the promise of a Savior (v. 15). Only the white robes of Christ's righteousness (Isaiah 61:10) can cover the nakedness of our sin.

Sexuality is an integral part of our personal identities. The ungodly seek to gain a healthy view of themselves by declaring that they are free from sexual inhibitions. The Bible says it works the other way. First God declares us free of our sins by the blood of Jesus. Then through faith we gain a healthy view — God's view — of ourselves as human and sexual creatures in whom the image of God has been restored through forgiveness.

God blesses sexuality

When our stubborn, defensive old Adam is drowned by the blood of Christ, we are willing to hear what God has to say to us about his wonderful gift of human sexuality. If we go back to the beginning we can see how God wanted the intimate relationship of human sexuality to be enjoyed. God blessed intimate sexual union in Genesis 2:24 as an expression of the unity of the male and the female in marriage. This sexual union also has the blessing of God for bringing children into the world (Genesis 1:28). In the original, innocent world God needed only to tell Adam and Eve how to enjoy his gift of sex. God used no negatives when he addressed perfect people. He simply taught them two things: sex is good; enjoy it within the bond of marriage to express your loving commitment to each other and to bear children. You might say God had only one "rule" about sex: Enjoy it inside of marriage.

Our lives witness God's goodness

This is the part that the world just doesn't understand. The ungodly certainly look at their sexuality as a "gift," but they do not see it as a gift from God. Since they do not have God in their picture of sexuality, they are not willing to let God direct them in their use of this gift for his glory and their own blessing.

That's where we come in. The best way we can witness against the sexual immorality of the world is to cover the nakedness of its sin with the clothing of

Christ's righteousness. Unless the sexually immoral are led to look to Jesus as their Savior, they will never be godly and will never listen to the God who gave them the gift. Getting angry and disgusted will not bring about the change God wants (James 1:20). Moralizing will only lead to the accusation that we are self-righteously imposing our outmoded Judeo-Christian ethic on an unwilling pluralistic society.

Sharing Jesus with others, however, does not mean we can avoid speaking the law sharply to an unrepentant sinner. This isn't a perfect world. Negatives have to be preached to stubborn hearts. God's command to enjoy sexual intimacy inside of marriage means that intimate sexual contact outside of marriage is sinful. Contact your catechism for countless clear statements to that effect. We will explore some of these in future studies.

One of the pagan myths we want to attack with God's law is the idea that intimacy outside of the marriage vow can be a harmless pleasure, a "victimless crime." The evil quality of every sin is that it is first of all an attack upon the holy will of the Creator. That certainly holds true for sexual sins which abuse a good gift God gave and blessed for all people. Joseph understood that truth when he was tempted to seek sexual pleasure outside of marriage. Joseph refused (Genesis 39:10). "How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?" he said (v. 9). We want to emphasize that aspect rather than trying to force others to change their conduct with the threat of discovery, pregnancy, or disease. When we have led our neighbor to see that his sin is against God, we may have the opportunity to lead him to the cross of God's Son.

Our own frame of mind is important when witnessing to others. Our own sinful thoughts (Matthew 7:28), words, and actions (Ephesians 4:3,4) make us want to grab for fig leaves. A moral confidence that we are good enough to speak to others is pure self-righteousness. But a gospel confidence that in Christ God has forgiven even our sexual sins and has restored his image in us will give us the boldness to say what has to be said. We will be God's instruments to bring the sexually immoral to their Savior. We will unashamedly make the bold, bald statement: Sex is good. And we can be sure they will understand it the right way. □



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

by Roland Cap Ehlke

On May 5, 1961 Pres. John F. Kennedy declared that the United States was considering the use of American forces in South Vietnam. By the end of 1963 there were 16,300 U.S. military personnel in Vietnam.

This Independence Day, as we honor our nation and almighty God who has so blessed it, let us also honor those good Christian men who gave themselves to God and country in Vietnam. Seven thousand miles from the continental U.S., Vietnam was the land where our country's most recent major conflict and longest war was waged. It was the land our forces left with less than victory.

Vietnam. Those of us who remember the war have scattered TV, newspaper, and personal images of burning villages, rice paddies strewn with dead bodies, massive antiwar demonstrations throughout the U.S., friends or relatives who served. . . .

In July 1965 Pres. Johnson made an open-ended commitment to employ American military forces. By December there were 184,300 U.S. personnel in Vietnam. Early in 1967 the largest single U.S. land offensive of the war, "Operation Junction City," took place along the Cambodian border.

In the summer of 1970 I spent a few days in the Saigon area, while taking "the long way home" after a year of study in Israel before my last year at the seminary. At Long Binh military base near Saigon I was able to visit with a couple of former schoolmates in the service, Jerry Stolzmann and Paul Sullivan. I also visited with our WELS civilian chaplain, Pastor Waldemar Hoyer, stationed in Saigon. He showed me the hot, dirty, teeming streets of Saigon, throbbing with excitement and tension. Neither of us was aware at the time that my father would be his replacement. . . .

January 30, 1968 marked the beginning of the North Vietnamese Tet offensive, a massive coordinated Vietcong assault on major cities in South Vietnam. Two months later Pres. Johnson called for negotiations and then withdrew from the presidential race.

One person I was unable to visit was Jerome de

Times for remembering

by Roland Cap Ehlke

Galley. We had been roommates for a year at Northwestern Prep School. Jerome went on to Layton School of Art, in Milwaukee, graduating in 1968. A gifted artist, he had earlier designed the logo which is still used by our Lutheran Women's Missionary Society.

Having been drafted into the army, he spent Christmas 1968 at home on leave and then left for Vietnam. He turned twenty-five while in a hospital in Cu Chi, Vietnam, suffering from battle wounds. He died there on Palm Sunday, March 31, 1969. No WELS chaplain was able to get to him before his death. Instead, he was attended by a Baptist minister. . . .

By January 31, 1969 there were 542,400 U.S. military personnel in South Vietnam, the wartime peak. June 8 of that year Pres. Nixon announced the first troop withdrawal of 25,000.

Although no WELS chaplain was able to share God's word with Pvt. Jerome A. de Galley on his



Voss



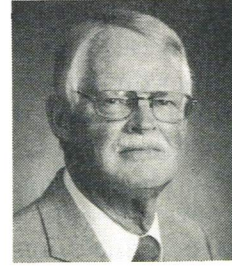
Scharf



Gilbert



Schwark



Hoyer



Ehlke



deathbed, our chaplains did reach hundreds of others in many different circumstances. (In the peak years of the war, there were as many as 600-1000 WELS soldiers in Vietnam. Many were contacted by the chaplains.) Between the years 1965 and 1972, seven WELS pastors served as civilian chaplains: Luther M. Voss ('65-'67), Erwin R. Scharf ('67-'68), Frederic Gilbert ('67-'68), Melvin A. Schwark ('68-'69), Waldemar R. Hoyer ('69-'70), Roland W. Ehlke ('70-'71), Karl J. Otto ('71-'72).

These men carried on a unique ministry. Because they were neither in the U.S. military nor government-salaried, they were under no pressure to compromise their doctrinal position. At the same time the military recognized their valuable service and gave them access to military transportation. They had more freedom of movement than the military chaplains and traveled throughout most of the country and even into Thailand. At times they visited bases completely surrounded by Vietcong forces. . . .



Otto



deGalley

On May 4, 1970 four students involved in protests at Kent State University were killed by National Guardsmen, touching off hundreds of antiwar protests throughout the U.S. By December 1, 1971 the number of U.S. personnel in Vietnam was down to 184,000.

At the bases the chaplains would meet with a handful of men — or occasionally with larger groups and often simply one-on-one. The soldiers were appreciative, according to Hoyer, “that their synod invested in a civilian chaplaincy.”

Sometimes they said it in other ways than with words. Chaplain Ehlke recalls, “At the Third Field Hospital I ministered to a man hit by a mine. He was not able to speak. . . . The way he responded was with his eyes. You used some familiar Bible passage with him — ‘For God so loved the world’ — and his eyes would light up.”

Following his stay in Vietnam, Chaplain Otto traveled through Europe and evaluated the military situation there. Because of the large number of WELS men and women, both as military personnel and civilians, a full-time chaplaincy was established in Europe. It continues to this day. . . .

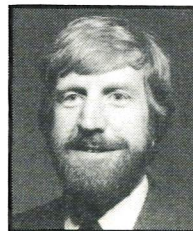
The last U.S. troops departed from Vietnam on March 29, 1973. On April 30, 1975 the last Americans left Saigon in the early morning as the Communist army began entering the capital city.

A quarter of a century has passed since the early years of the Vietnam conflict. Although we still live in troubled times, God has in recent years blessed our nation with peace. He has also blessed us with prosperity and personal freedoms, not the least of which is the freedom to worship him openly.

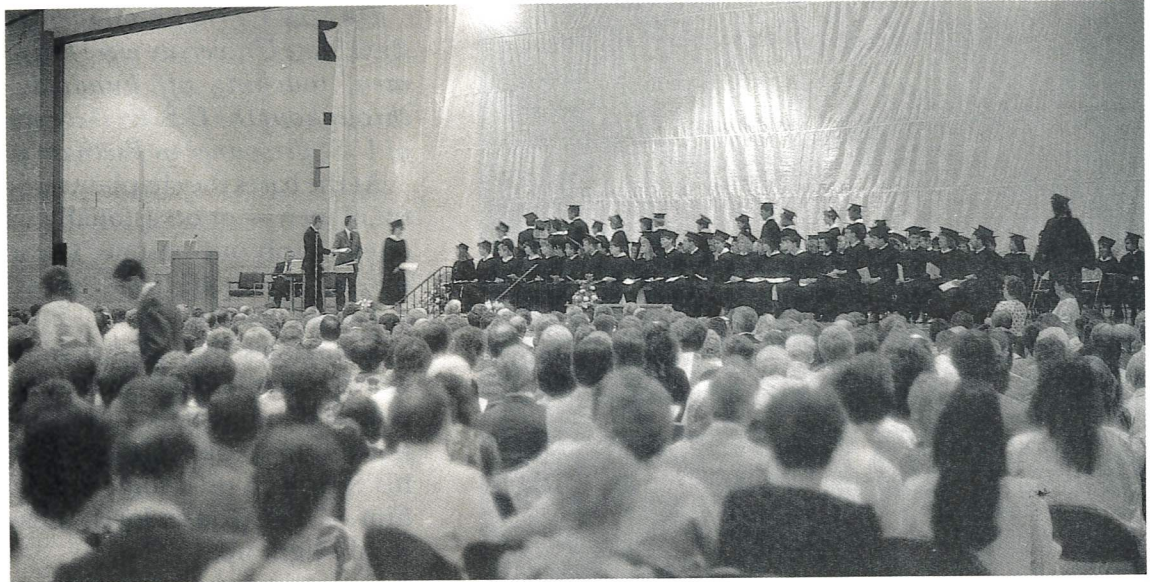
Let us not in these times forget the good men and women God has used in special ways to serve him and our nation. Let us remember those Christian soldiers who fought for our nation in faraway Vietnam, some of whom gave their lives there. Let us also remember those men of the cloth who served both God and nation there.

Within the space of a little over a month each year, the United States celebrates Memorial Day, Flag Day, and Independence Day. These are times for remembering. And having remembered, may we stand up for this great nation of ours and for our greater Savior

God before whom, in the words of Isaiah, “all the nations are as nothing.” □



Pastor Roland C. Ehlke is an associate editor at Northwestern Publishing House, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.



Dr. Martin Luther College commencement — May 20

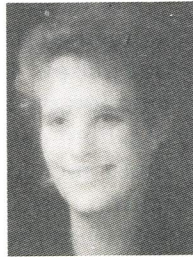
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New Ulm, Minnesota



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Combined Locks, WI



Jodie K. Battist
Lake Mills, WI



Jon M. Beagle
Arlington, OH



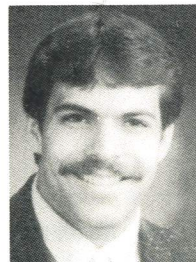
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Kiel, WI



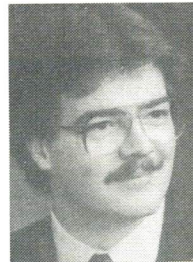
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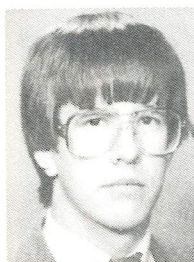
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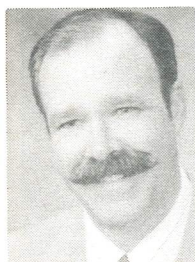
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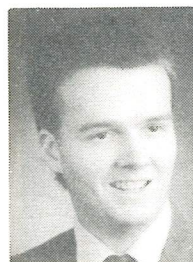
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Jeffery S. Fairbairn
El Paso, TX



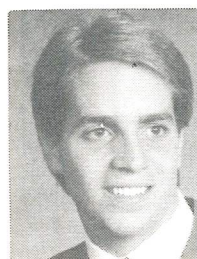
Barry L. Fischer
Solana Beach, CA



Philip T. Fischer
Lewiston, MN



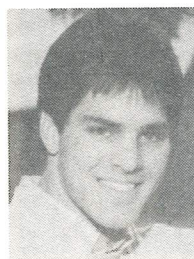
Ruth J. Genz
Jefferson, WI



Andre A. Gosch
Aberdeen, SD



Heidi K. Graf
Hustisford, WI



Joel A. Grulke
Watertown, WI



Deborah E. Gunther
Vassar, MI



Maria M. Habben
Tokyo, Japan



Jade E. Heiderich
Flasher, ND



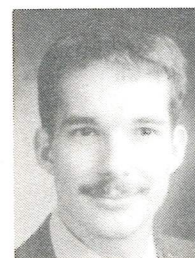
Patricia L. Hennig
Morton Grove, IL



Donna K. Herman
Seminole, FL



JoEllen D. Hesselberg
Bangor, WI



John K. Hoskins
New Ulm, MN



Paula A. Hoskins
Winneconne, WI



Rebecca L. Huhn
Watertown, WI



Kristi L. Jacobs
Lansing, MI



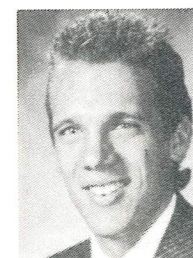
John L. Kaesmeyer
Saginaw, MI



Gretchen L. Kempf
Viroqua, WI



Debbie A. Kiecker
Fairfax, MN



Nathan J. Kieselhorst
Cedarburg, WI



Dyann R. King
Milwaukee, WI



Martha M. Klockziem
Saginaw, MI



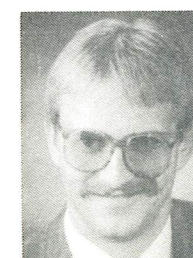
Amy L. Krueger
Reedsville, WI



Leanne M. Larson
River Falls, WI



Peter J. Lemke
Tacoma, WA



Troy L. McCargar
Mankato, MN



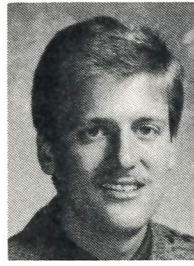
Darin D. Menk
New Ulm, MN



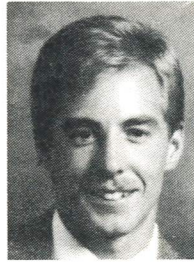
Jonathan P. Meyer
Holiday, FL



Pamela J. Miller
West Salem, WI



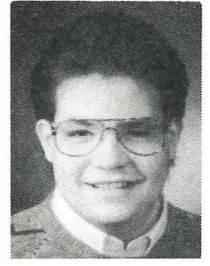
Alan M. Mindock
Sheboygan, WI



Bradley A. Nommensen
Sparta, WI



Linda J. Noon
Green Bay, WI



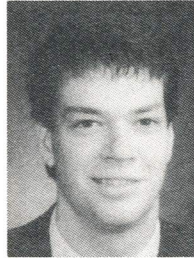
Todd A. Palmer
Appleton, WI



Joy A. Panzer
Brownsville, WI



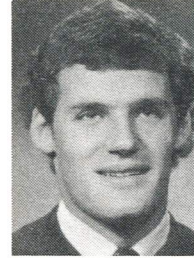
Roxanne M. Parker
Sun Prairie, WI



Eric J. Paulsen
New Ulm, MN



Andrew K. Plocher
Saginaw, MI



Phillip F. Rehberger
Oshkosh, WI



Julie A. Rogotzke
Sanborn, MN



Lisa M. Schairer
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Beth E. Schultz
Goodhue, MN



Sarah J. Schultz
Manitowoc, WI



Craig R. Sonntag
Manitowoc, WI



Todd R. Stoltz
New Ulm, MN



Jeremy J. Thiesfeldt
Richfield, WI



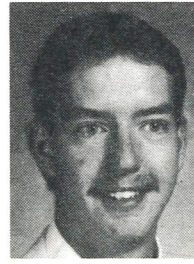
Joel P. Ungemach
Kenosha, WI



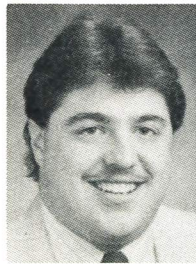
Kim Marie B. Wagner
Reedsville, WI



Susan M. Warner
Livonia, MI



Andrew P. Willems
New Ulm, MN



Ronald C. Wintrone
Milwaukee, WI



Marvin S. Wittig
Hartford, WI



Amy R. Woldt
Milwaukee, WI



David J. Zabel
Delano, MN

NOT PICTURED

Christine E. Desens
Maple Plain, MN

Elizabeth A. Eckert
Caledonia, WI

Daneen P. Enter
Nicollet, MN

Anne E. Gabb
Watertown, WI

Lori L. Hoover
Stetsonville, WI

Annamarie Y. Krueger
Milwaukee, WI

Amy E. Kuehl
Iron Ridge, WI

Sandy L. Kuehl
Watertown, WI

Lisa E. Kufahl
New Ulm, MN

Clifford L. Lagerman
Appleton, WI

Bethany L. Pittenger
Edmonds, WA

Judith A. Rupnow
Faribault, MN

Susan D. Schultz
Fond du Lac, WI

Rebecca L. Serwe
Shawano, WI

Noelle S. Theobald
Waterloo, IL

Eva M. Thierfelder
West Palm Beach, FL

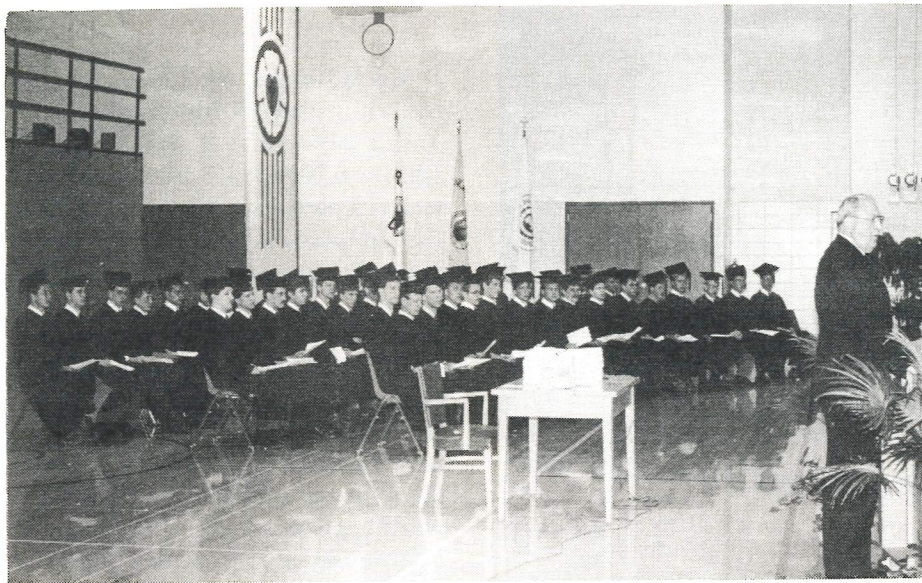
Jacqueline D. Valleskey
Mequon, WI

Grace A. Wessel
New Ulm, MN

Gregory S. West
San Jose, CA

In Absentia:

Patricia R. Meyer
New Ulm, MN



Graduation at Northwestern College

Forty-six graduates of Northwestern College, Watertown, Wis., received their bachelor of arts degrees on May 17. The following are the members of the 1989 graduating class:

Bode, Steven ... Prairie du Chien, WI
 Borgwardt, Daniel ... Brookfield, WI
 Borgwardt, Michael ... Brookfield, WI
 DeNoyer, Todd ... Waukesha, WI
 Fellers, Tadd ... Ft. Collins, CO
 Fricke, Joseph ... Watertown, WI
 Glaeske, Aaron ... Houston, TX
 Goens, Brian ... Clear Lake, SD
 Goetsch, Peter ... Cornell, WI
 Greschel, Eddie ... Watertown, WI
 Harbach, Dennis ... Kenosha, WI
 Hayes, Michael ... Watertown, SD
 Huebner, Paul ... Greendale, WI
 Jenswold, Joel ... Watertown, WI
 Kieta, Geoffrey ... Dowagiac, MI
 Koelpin, John ... New Ulm, MN
 Koeplin, Kurt ... Milwaukee, WI
 Kom, Brian ... Big Bend, WI
 Krafft, Thomas ... Greeley, CO
 Kreinheder, Paul ... Washington, D.C.
 Kuhnke, Gerald ... Watertown, WI
 Lindemann, Daron ... New Ulm, MN
 Mathis, James ... Pompano Beach, FL
 Mau, Kevin ... Watertown, WI
 Mittelstadt, Jeffrey ... Juneau, WI
 Mueller, Mark ... Marinette, WI
 Nitz, Paul ... Mequon, WI
 Olsen, Theodore ... Prairie du Chien, WI
 Radsek, Joseph ... Watertown, WI
 Reichow, Dennis ... Juneau, WI
 Schamber, Stephen ... Watertown, WI
 Schaser, Erich ... Darien, IL
 Schewe, Mark ... Prairie du Chien, WI
 Schroeder, David ... Oconomowoc, WI
 Schwanke, William ... Milton, WI

Sebald, Aaron ... Wauwatosa, WI
 Sievert, Philip ... Janesville, WI
 Solofra, Daniel ... Burlington, WI
 Spaude, Timothy ... Watertown, WI
 Stelter, Peter ... Two Rivers, WI
 Treptow, Earle ... Green Bay, WI
 Vertz, Tod ... Livonia, MI
 Wasser, Craig ... Fontana, WI
 Wassermann, Robert ... Maple Lake, MN
 Winterstein, Stephen ... Monroe, MI
 Zimdars, Thomas ... Lodi, CA

Students play the market

In December 1974 Mark Plautz donated approximately \$21,000 worth of common stock to Wisconsin Lutheran High School, Milwaukee, to add a "touch of realism" to the study of economics.

This common stock fund, managed by the students themselves with the help of a faculty advisor, has grown to its present \$85,000 value.

A condition of the gift was that the principal must remain intact as a "teaching aid." Dividends, however, may be used for items the budget is unable to fund. In the last 18 months over \$8,000 has been used to purchase furnishings and equipment.

Plautz, 92, lives by himself in an apartment in Alexian Village, a retirement community in Milwaukee. He continues to enjoy good health and prepares two of his own meals each day.

— Sharon Aderman



Commencement services at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary were held on May 26.



Faith, Columbus, Missouri, viewed, approved, and purchased their new parsonage in only eight days. Pastor Philip Henselin says "they may well have participated in the fastest land/building purchase in synod history."

New Testament publishers

After more than ten years of translating, editing and revising, *God's Word to the Nations: New Testament* (GWN) has been published by the Luther Bible Society.

More than 25 conservative Lutheran scholars contributed to the project, among whom were four professors of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. The work involved the updating of *The Holy Bible: An American Translation*, a project started in 1936 by Missouri Synod scholar William F. Beck.

GWN is both a revision and a translation. The goal of the Luther Bible Society is to publish the most accurate Bible in modern English; style the words and format to create an easy-to-read version for personal and study use; and to use terms that retain their dignity when read in worship settings.

Special features of the new version include spacious page layout with maps and illustrations located alongside the text. Outlines also are incorporated throughout the text along with bold lettering and

subtitles to enhance the meaning. The Book of Revelation, for instance, is set entirely in poetic style to reflect the literary style of the original.

The Greek word usually translated in English translations as "brothers" or "brethren" is translated in GWN as "fellow Christians" or "all the Christians." A footnote indicates the literal reading.

There is a 16 page glossary and an 80 page concordance. The appendixes fill 55 pages and contain explanations of Greek terms and exegetical and historical helps.

GWN is available from Northwestern Publishing House in three styles: paperback (\$9.95); hardcover (\$12.95); and flexcover (\$24.95), exclusive of postage and handling

—Mark F. Bartling

ONE ISSUE

There is one issue of The Northwestern Lutheran in July and August. The next issue will be dated August 1989 and will appear August 1.

Michigan District

Marie Bloom, nee Lehman, wife of Pastor Andrew Bloom, died on March 24 in Chelsea, Mich. She was born March 12, 1922, in Waterloo Township. She and Pastor Bloom were married in 1958. Funeral services were held on March 28 at St. Jacob in Grass Lake, Mich., where she was a lifelong member. . . . **St. John congregation of Hemlock** celebrated its 90th anniversary on May 7. Pastor Norman Pommeranz of Tampa, Florida, a former pastor at St. John, was the guest speaker. . . . **Pastor Harold Sauer** of St. Luke, Saginaw, has announced his retirement from the parish ministry effective June 30. . . . **David Jacobs**, principal at Emanuel First in Lansing, was appointed to the District Committee for Parish Education. . . . 13 pastoral, 6 vicar, 4 male teacher, and 12 female teacher **assignments** were made to the Michigan District by the synod's assignment committee. . . . At the present time there are three pastoral and two teacher **vacancies** in the district.

—Edward A. Schaeewe



Mrs. Mildred Hirschfeld was honored recently for thirty years as organist at Peace, Bradenton, Florida. She directed the senior choir for 23 years, as well as a junior choir and the Sunday school chorus. She also substituted at the organ for a number of WELS congregations in the South Atlantic District.

Dr. Martin Luther College call assignments

The Conference of Presidents met at Dr. Martin Luther College in New Ulm, Minn., on May 11 and 12 to assign calls into the teaching ministry to the following graduates. The assignments included graduates from this year's class and from previous years. Additional graduates will be assigned on July 11.

Arndt, William, Combined Locks, WI to St. Peter, Eldorado, WI
Battist, Jodie, Lake Mills, WI to St. Mark, Lincoln, NE
Behnke, Katherine, Kewaskum, WI to Peridot, Peridot, AZ
Berg, Darrell, Howards Grove, WI to Christ, Milwaukee, WI
Buhman, Chari, Sioux City, IA to Christ, Oakley, MI
Carter, Joan, East Jordan, MI to Faith, Antioch, IL
Desens, Christine, Maple Plaine, MN to St. John, Red Wing, MN
Eckert, Elizabeth, Caledonia, WI to Immanuel, Hadar, NE
Erdmann, Amy, Nodine, MN to St. Paul, Stevensville, MI
Fleischmann, Ronald, Rochester, MN to Peridot, Peridot, AZ
Fritze, Stephen, St. Louis Park, MN to St. Mark, Green Bay, WI
Genz, Ruth, Jefferson, WI to St. John, Juneau, WI
Gruelke, Joel, Watertown, WI to Beautiful Savior, Fort Wayne, IN
Gunther, Deborah, Vassar, MI to Gethsemane, Omaha, NE
Heiderich, Jade, Flasher, ND to Our Savior, Bylas, AZ
Hennig, Patricia, Morton Grove, IL to Trinity, Belle Plaine, MN
Henning, Rachel, New Ulm, MN to Trinity, Bay City, MI
Hesselberg, JoEllen, Bangor, WI to Christ, Zumbrota, MN
Huhn, Rebecca, Watertown, WI to Michigan Lutheran High School, St. Joseph, MI
Jacobs, Kristi, Lansing, MI to Beautiful Savior, Cincinnati, OH
Kaesmeyer, John, Saginaw, MI to Trinity, Nicollet, MN
Kammuller, Gwen, Waukesha, WI to First, LaCrosse, WI
Kelm, Paul, Bloomer, WI to Zion, Winthrop, MN

Kempf, Gretchen, Viroqua, WI to Trinity, Aberdeen, SD
Kieselhorst, Nathan, Cedarburg, WI to St. Paul, New Ulm, MN
Klatt, Ann, Menomonie, WI to Lola Park, Redford, MI
Klockziem, Martha, Saginaw, MI to St. Paul, Appleton, WI
Krueger, Annmarie, Milwaukee, WI to Jerusalem, Morton Grove, IL
Kuehl, Sandy, Watertown, WI to St. John, Baraboo, WI
Lagerman, Clifford, Appleton, WI to Nozomi, Tsuchiura, Japan
Larson, Leanne, River Falls, WI to Bethany, Saginaw, MI
Lauber, Connie, Fond du Lac, WI to Immanuel, Kewaunee, WI
McCargar, Troy, Mankato, MN to Salem, Edmonds, WA
Menk, Darin, New Ulm, MN to Siloah, Milwaukee, WI
Meyer, Jonathan, Holiday, FL to Redeemer, Edna, TX
Miller, Pamela, West Salem, WI to Bethany, Ft. Atkinson, WI
Mindock, Alan, Sheboygan, WI to St. Paul First, North Hollywood, CA
Nommensen, Bradley, Sparta, WI to Grace, Alma, MI
Noon, Linda, Green Bay, WI to St. John, Maribel, WI
Panzer, Joy, Brownsville, WI to Peridot, Peridot, AZ
Paulsen, Eric, New Ulm, MN to St. Matthew, Oconomowoc, WI
Pittenger, Bethany, Edmonds, WA to Shepherd of the Mountain, Reno, NV
Plocher, Andrew, Saginaw, MI to St. John, Dakota, MN
Rehberger, Philip, Oshkosh, WI to Northwestern Preparatory School, Watertown, WI
Rogotzke, Julie, Sanborn, MN to Immanuel, Forth Worth, TX
Schairer, Lisa, Ann Arbor, MI to Pilgrim, Mesa, AZ
Schultz, Beth, Goodhue, MN to St. John, Milwaukee, WI
Schultz, Naomi, Merrill, WI to Bethel, Bay City, MI
Schultz, Sarah, Manitowoc, WI to Lola Park, Redford, MI
Serwe, Rebecca, Shawano, WI to Friedens, Kenosha, WI
Sonntag, Craig, Manitowoc, WI to St. Matthew, Janesville, WI
Stoltz, Todd, New Ulm, MN, to Peace, Green Lake, WI
Theobald, Noelle, Waterloo, IL to St. Paul, Plymouth, NE

Thiesfeldt, Jeremy, Richfield, WI to Emanuel, St. Paul, MN
Ungemach, Joel, Kenosha, WI to St. John, Jefferson, WI
Valleskey, Jacqueline, Mequon, WI to Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, MI
Wagner, Kim Marie, Reedsville, WI to St. Matthew, Benton Harbor, MI
Warner, Susan, Livonia, MI to Trinity, Nicollet, MN
Wessel, Grace, New Ulm, MN to Good Shepherd, Downers Grove, IL
Willems, Andrew, New Ulm, MN to Trinity-St. Luke, Watertown, WI
Wintrone, Ronald, Milwaukee, WI to Grace, Prairie du Chien, WI
Wittig, Marvin, Hartford, WI to St. John, Caledonia, MN
Wolff, Karen, Pardeeville, WI to St. Paul, Norfolk, NE

The following were reassigned to the schools where they are now teaching:

Atwell, Susan, Trinity, Crete, IL
Braun, James, Faith, Anchorage, AK
Fenske, Lorna, Martin Luther Preparatory School, Prairie du Chien, WI
Gartner, Steven, Emanuel-Redeemer, Yale, MI
Gentele, Vernon, Salem, Milwaukee, WI
Goessner, Gary, Minnesota Valley Lutheran High School, New Ulm, MN
Jarvis, Tracy, North Trinity, Milwaukee, WI
Johnson, Daniel, Nebraska Lutheran High School, Waco, NE
Lillo, Jeffry, Michigan Lutheran High School, St. Joseph, MI
Rush, Gregory, St. John, Westland, MI
Stobb, Lynn, Martin Luther Preparatory School, Prairie du Chien, WI
Traub, Carmen, Grace, Eau Claire, WI
Zastrow, Darren, Calvary, Thiensville, WI

NORTHWESTERN PUBLISHING HOUSE Summer Store Hours

The summer hours for the NPH store from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend are as follows: **Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; Saturday, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.** The hours for the office are the same as before: Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Vacationers are welcome to come and browse at the Northwestern Publishing House store, 1250 N. 113th Street (one block north of Watertown Plank Road on 113th St.), Milwaukee, Wis.; 414/475-6600.

**THE 50TH BIENNIAL CONVENTION OF THE
WISCONSIN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD
August 7-11, 1989 / Martin Luther Preparatory School / Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin**

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No. 17 CONVENTION TRAVEL

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NOTICES

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

WISCONSIN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD CONVENTION

The fiftieth biennial convention of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod will be held, God willing, August 7-11, 1989 at Martin Luther Preparatory School in Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin.

The opening communion service in the campus chapel will begin at 9:00 a.m. on Monday, August 7. Professor William Zell, retiring president of Northwestern Preparatory School, will preach the sermon. The closing service will be held immediately after the last session on Friday, August 11. The preacher will be Karl R. Gurgel, president of the Western Wisconsin District.

The opening session of the convention will be held immediately following the opening service. Delegates are asked to arrive early to register in the lobby of Gym 1 either on Sunday or before the opening session.

The convention theme is "Grow-Go-Glow." Bible studies on the theme will be presented by Mr. Robert Grebe, Professor John Brug and Pastor Alan Eckert.

Housing will be provided for all delegates and meals will be served in the school dining hall. Each delegate will receive a letter from the synod secretary before May 31, certifying him as a delegate to the convention and informing him whether he is to serve on a floor committee. Detailed instructions regarding travel and housing will be mailed by the school to each delegate in the middle of June.

Mail sent to delegates during the convention should be addressed in care of Martin Luther Preparatory School, Prairie du Chien, WI 53821. Delegates may be reached by telephone at 608/326-8480.

David Worgull, Secretary
Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

ADDRESSES

PASTORS:

Biedenbender, Michael K., 1402 E. Preston, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858; 517/773-2629.
Grant, Cary P., 833 Fairfield Ave., Battle Creek, MI 49015; 616/962-3884.
Mutterer, Timothy I., 186 Wagontire Rd., Myrtle Creek, OR 97457; 506/863-7707.
Schulz, Edmund O., 310 Boulder St., Hutchinson, MN 55350.
Stahlecker, Gregory D., 24 Washington Blvd., Kenton, OH 43326; 419/674-4916.
Suckow, Joel E., 121 Eau Claire St., Schofield, WI 54476.
Zell, William G., P.O. Box 173, 509 Jackson St., Mishicot, WI 54228.

TEACHERS:

Pankow, Joel M., 411 N. Cedar, Apt. 203, Lansing, MI 48912; 517/487-5307.
Schaefer, Michael G., 15902 S. Hemlock Rd., Oakley, MI 48649.

HEALTH WORKSHOP

Lakeshore Area Lutheran principals' conference K-12 curriculum committee will conduct a workshop on health August 17, 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Manitowoc Lutheran High School. Sectionals will be offered on accident prevention, personal health, community and environmental health, family life education, mental and emotional health, nutrition, prevention and control of disease, and substance use and abuse. The registration fee is \$10.00. Contact Cindy Whaley, 12008C CTH C, Valders, WI 54245; 414/758-2498.

EQUIPMENT OFFERED

Free for the cost of shipping to any congregation or group: AB Dick spirit duplicator, Rex-Rotary stencil copier, 3M thermofax machine. Contact Pastor Joel Lintner, 521 N. Apollo Rd., River Falls, WI 54022; 715/425-0023.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS NORTHWESTERN COLLEGE

Since Prof. Gary Baumber has accepted the call to serve as editor-in-chief at Northwestern Publishing House, and since Prof. John Braun has accepted the assignment to succeed Prof. Baumber as Director of Recruitment and Admissions, Northwestern has a faculty vacancy in the field of English.

Authorized by the Board for Worker Training, the Northwestern Board of Control seeks from the voting members of the synod nominations to fill this vacant professorship. Nominees should be qualified in the field of English. The called professor will be asked to teach composition and literature.

All nominations and pertinent information should be submitted by July 21 to Pastor Harold Sturm, Secretary, Northwestern Board of Control, W6910 Cty. Hwy K, Arlington, WI 53911.

CHANGES IN MINISTRY

PASTORS:

Bartels, Harry K., from Beautiful Savior, Fort Wayne, Ind. to Good Shepherd (ELS), Brownsburg, Ind.
Bieber, Timothy P., from St. John, Beaver Dam, Wis. to St. Paul, Ridgeland, Wis.
Goeglein, Mark A., from San Juan, El Paso, Tex. to Grace, Yorba Linda, Cal.
Hartwig, Thomas R., from Trinity, Manitowoc, Wis. to Minnesota Valley Lutheran High School, New Ulm, Minn.
Klein, Scott A., from Apostles, San Jose, Cal., to Hope, Fremont, Cal.
Koelpin, Philip A., from Mt. Calvary, Flagstaff, Ariz., to Redeemer, Tucson, Ariz.
Luchterhand, Lyle L., from Bethany, Manitowoc, Wis., to St. Paul, Dale, Wis.
Sauer, Harold A., from St. Luke, Saginaw, to retirement.
Schmeling, Arlyn L., from Zion, Torrance, Cal., to Zion, Springfield, Mo.
Schoeneck, Gregg P., from St. James, Prairie du Sac, Wis., to Grace (associate), Oshkosh, Wis.

TEACHERS:

Averbeck, Rachel, to Winnebago Lutheran Academy, Fond du Lac, Wis.
Bandy, Barbara, inactive, to Faith, Tacoma, Wash.
Biorn, Barbara, inactive, to St. John, Red Wing, Minn.
Dobberstein, Sandra, inactive, to Christ, N. St. Paul, Minn.
Enter, Joy, inactive, to Trinity, Nicollet, Minn.
Fenske, Daniel J., from Peridot Mission, Peridot, Ariz., to St. John, Waterloo, Wis.
Morgan, Jill, inactive, to Bloomington, Bloomington, Minn.
Nolte, Beth, inactive, to St. John, Manitowoc, Wis.
Paul, Corrine, to Trinity, Kiel, Wis.
Rausch, Ann, to Good Shepherd, Benton Harbor, Mich.
Reinhard, Renee, from Good Shepherd, West Allis, Wis., to St. Jacobi, Greenfield, Wis.
Schwanke, Marilyn, to St. Peter, Weyauwega, Wis.
Sellnow, Larry M., from East Fork Mission, Whiteriver, Ariz., to St. Paul, Brownsville, Wis.
Wheeler Ellen K., from Christ, Milwaukee, Wis., to Fairview, Milwaukee, Wis.

WINGS

(WELS Network of Growing Singles)

Attention: all WELS singles, age 21-98 (including those once married and now single): You are invited to the third annual singles retreat to be held Sept. 15-17 at the Yahara Center in Madison, Wis. Join in a weekend of spiritual growth and fellowship aimed at the Christian single. Registration forms will be sent to everyone already on our mailing list. If you are not on the list, please write to WINGS, Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Service, Box 23980, Milwaukee, WI 53223.

ANNIVERSARIES

Ixonia, Wisconsin — St. Paul (140th); July 22, 7:30 p.m. German service. Prof. Richard Strobel, speaker; Prof. William Birsching, organist. Ice cream social following service. July 23, 8 and 10:30 a.m. Pastor Richard Pagels, speaker; Ione Ibelling, organist. Dinner following service. 2 p.m. outdoor service. Pastor Percy Damrow, speaker; Coralee Kolbow, organist.

HYMNALS WANTED

A growing mission congregation needs used copies of The Lutheran Hymnal in reasonably good condition. Contact Pastor David Lau, Lone Star Lutheran Church, 6096 New Copeland Rd., Tyler, TX 75703; 214/581-6887.

VBS FOR HEARING IMPAIRED

Vacation Bible school for hearing impaired children ages 4-12 will be held July 10-14 from 1:30-3 p.m. at Good Shepherd School, 1337 N. 100 St., West Allis, WI 53214. Contact Verna Weigand (414/547-3096), Joy Maresh (414/637-2221), or WELS HANDS, 10131 W. Schlinger, West Allis, WI 53214 for registration or additional information.

POSITION AVAILABLE EDUCATIONAL/GROUP COUNSELOR

Wisconsin Lutheran Child & Family Service is seeking a full-time Christian counselor and educator. Qualifications: WELS or ELS member. Masters degree or bachelors degree plus 5 years experience. Special skills: communication and media skills; knowledge of group interaction and dynamics; initiative and innovation in developing Christian programs for healing or enrichment. Position available July 1. Contact Joanne Halter, Director of Social Services, WLCFS, 6800 N. 76 St., Box 23980, Milwaukee, WI 53223; 414/353-5000.

VACATION IN NEW ENGLAND

Parsonage in Rhode Island is available Aug. 3-17 for use by preacher and family. 20 minutes from ocean beaches, 1 hour from Boston, 3½ hours from New York City. Preacher needed for Aug. 6 and 13. Contact Pastor David A. Kehl, 401/434-2858 or 401/434-4078.

WELS FILM/VIDEO RENTAL

THE CITY THAT FORGOT ABOUT CHRISTMAS

1988 20 min. ½" VHS color PIJ
A kindly old carpenter builds a life-size nativity scene to bring the Christmas gospel to a village that had lost it. This animated cartoon gives teachers and parents an opportunity to talk to children about the real meaning of Christmas. Rental: \$7.50

WHO BROKE THE BABY?

1988 28 min. ½" VHS color SCA
In this video anti-abortion, spokespersons answer the arguments commonly used to defend abortion. Rental: \$7.50

LITTLE VISITS WITH GOD, Vol. 2

1989 50 min. ½" VHS color PI
Based on the devotional book, *More Little Visits with God*, this video cassette presents ten 5-to-8 minute devotions which include prayers, questions and suggested Scripture readings. Recommended as an alternate to afternoon devotions in primary and/or middle grade classrooms. Also highly recommended for home devotions for families with children from pre-school through middle school age. Rental: \$7.50/1 wk; \$10.00/2 wks.

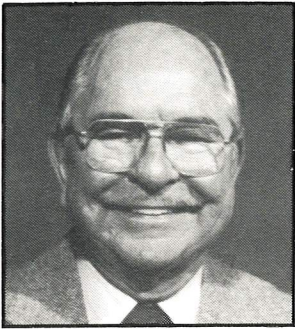
LEARNING ABOUT SEX

1989 15 min. ea. ½" VHS color PIJSCA
This series of video tapes is an update on the Concordia Sex Education Series which is in our lending library. Using drawings of the sex organs, the videos deliver sex information appropriate for the targeted age group, emphasizing that sex is a gift of God which is to be used according to his will. The series includes:
Why Boys and Girls Are Different (ages 3-5)
Where Do Babies Come From (ages 6-8)
How You Are Changing (ages 8-11)
Sex and the New You (ages 11-14)
Love, Sex and God (ages 14 to young adult)
Rental: \$7.50 each

THE MASONIC LODGE: WHAT GOES ON BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

1989 170 min. ½" VHS color CA
Jack Harris, a 32nd degree Mason, goes through the rites and rituals of the Masonic Lodge and identifies their anti-Christian character. This rather lengthy tape is divided into six segments, each describing a different ritual. The pastor must be prepared to correct the rather prominent decision theology in this video. Rental: \$7.50/8 days.

Send your order for renting the videos 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.



Although it has been hovering around for a couple of years, a new word is taking off — cocooning. It has turned up on the evening network news, a half dozen syndicated columnists have written about it, and though it has not hit its cover, Time has mentioned it. Life expectancy? Two years at the outside. (Well, how long do we expect a trend to last?)

As yet there is no standard definition. The word refers to the current tendency of the baby boomers to huddle on weekends, rather than run to the country club, attend wicked parties, or hit the beaches. After a frantic week by working spouses, families welcome a 48-hour wayside to do some laundry, bake bread, grill a bratwurst or two, and curl up in front of the VCR with the latest video release. A hot tub, a slab of Brie, and vintage chablis also are helpful. According to the prophets of righteousness, the trend is more evidence of the growing selfishness and lack of caring among the folks in this country.

But cocooning has always been around. It is a clinical manifestation of the presence of original sin. Original sin seats us in the center of our universe: the only one that counts is I. “Am I my brother’s keeper,” is rooted within the first family on the planet. From this vile prison there is but one escape. Only the reconciling love of God in Christ can re-center us. The word of reconciliation turns us around to live to him who died for us and rose again.

In the church militant no one ever becomes perfect at living “unto him who died for us.” Since original sin still works in the reconciled, there are many relapses along the way. In our family life, there are the quarrels and hateful words which separate brother from brother and husband from wife and son from father. Pursued to their bitter end, they cause broken homes and families, all the worse because they contradict the reconciling word which brought us first to faith and stamped us as the children of God. This state of affairs is not unnoted by the infidels who are put off more by Christian neighbors unable to reflect the love of Christ than by the fallen Bakers and Swaggarts.

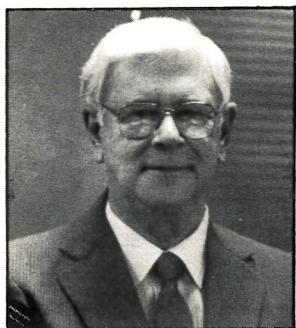
And cocooning happens in our corporate church life. It is understandable. The congregation is the community which enfolds the believer. It nourishes the sinner with the gospel in word and sacrament. It prays at the sick bed. It supports the mourners. It rejoices with the jubilant. It counsels and comforts. It takes a lot of sanctified living to break out of that cocoon, to catch a vision of the one holy Christian church, the communion of saints, as its hosts unfold before St. John’s eyes in Revelation.

In a few weeks a small segment of that church — the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod — will meet in biennial convention. The concerns that unite the 1200 congregations are not trivial: an adequately trained teaching and preaching ministry; a Scripture-bound faith and church life; worship and curriculum materials faithful to the word; a ministry for “special” members, like the blind, the deaf, the mentally retarded. The 420,000-member church plants colonies of Christians — at home and overseas — in response to Christ’s word: “Go and make disciples of all nations.” To see all this and appreciate all this one must be de-cocooned.

In the neighborhood of 500 delegates will be meeting at Martin Luther Preparatory School, Prairie du Chien, Wis., for five days in August to shape a future, under God, for that fellowship. They solicit your prayers. They need your prayers. If I know God’s people, they will have your prayers.

James P. Schaefer

If God wills



The fiftieth biennial convention of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod will be held, God willing, at Martin Luther Preparatory School, Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, from August 7-11. The delegates, chosen from our 1200 congregations in all parts of the synod, will review the work we have done together during the past biennium and adopt a work program for the next two years. They will do this after studying the reports from our various boards, committees, and commissions in which they give an account of their stewardship to the synod that elected them and outline their plans for the future.

We cannot emphasize too strongly that such planning is not an attempt to program the Holy Spirit. No one can do that. "Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain." But that hardly excuses us from doing careful planning.

The Bible says a great deal about planning. The greatest plan of all is God's plan of salvation centered in the cross of his Son. There was nothing haphazard about that plan. Nothing was left to chance. The plan was precisely formulated and meticulously implemented.

On a much lower level of planning the Proverbs of Solomon commend the lowly ant. They're creatures of little strength, the holy writer says, but they're extremely wise. They store up their food in the summer. They plan carefully for winter. And no one builds a tower without counting the cost.

So it isn't careful planning the scripture condemns, but planning that fails to make God an essential part of the planning equation. It's planning that forgets the little phrase: "If God wills." God's plans may not coincide with ours because they're so much higher and better and wiser than our own.

We need to remind ourselves daily that only the Lord builds his church and he does it only through the means of grace. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal. A priceless commodity has been entrusted to us jars of clay — the gospel of our living and victorious Redeemer which alone can save our souls. "And you will be my witnesses," he said. There can be no more compelling motive for us to be faithful stewards of all that God has given us, stewards who recognize that God has placed us in a crooked and depraved generation in which we are to shine like stars as we hold out the word of life, stewards who will not do the Lord's work carelessly and complacently and assume it is the Lord's will when we fall on our face. But precisely because we are the church, because we are bearers of the everlasting gospel we will want to be careful planners, but planners who do not omit God from the planning equation; planners for whom the bottom line, after we have prayed and employed all the knowledge and skills that God has given his church and have exercised all the faithfulness of which we are capable, planners for whom the bottom line will always be, "If God wills."

That kind of planning has its foundation in God's word and has the promise of his blessing.

Carl H. Muschke