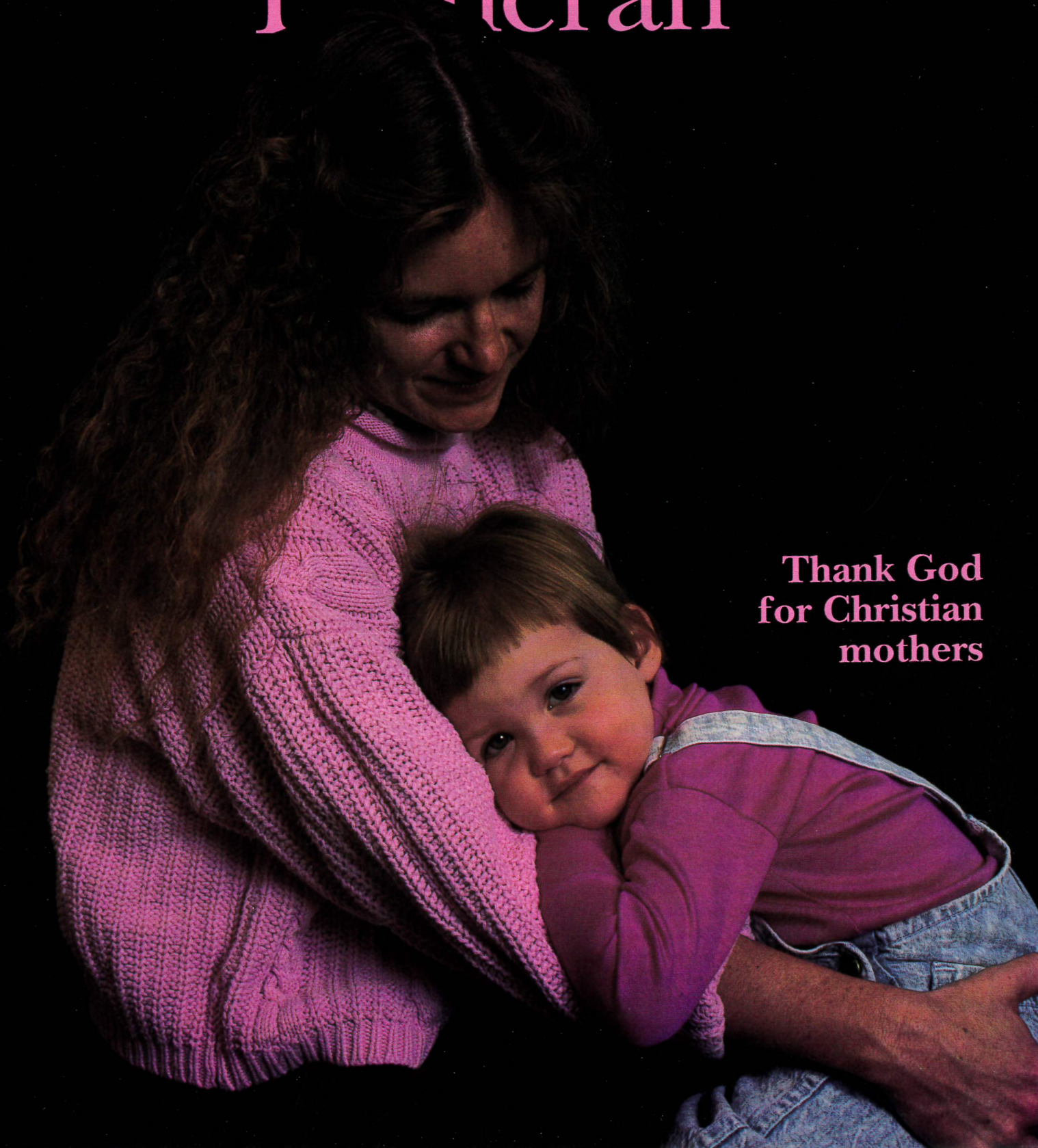


May 15, 1991

the
Northwestern
Irishman

**Thank God
for Christian
mothers**



Not retired but still in charge

by Richard D. Balge

He raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way (Ephesians 1:20-23).

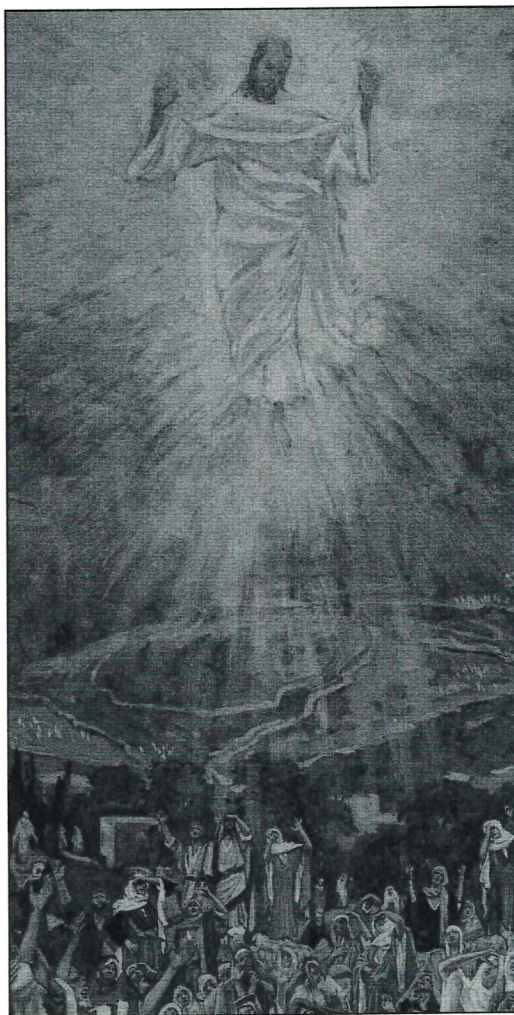
Here Paul tells us what it means that Jesus has ascended to God's right hand. The Savior has not gone into isolation to rest on his laurels or to relax forever with his angels. He is still present and active, always and everywhere exercising the almighty power that was his from eternity.

He lives and rules

That God raised Jesus from the dead is evidence that he approved the perfect life of love which Jesus lived in our place. It means he has accepted Jesus' sacrifice for the sins of the world. It is the assurance that all our covetous thoughts, unkind words, self-serving actions and acts of disloyalty are forgiven.

Jesus is above everything in heaven or earth or hell that might still accuse us. He is superior to any threatening power, visible or invisible. In him our eternity is secure, because he reigns "not only in the present age but also in the one to come."

"God placed all things under his feet." Every creature will at last acknowledge his authority, willing or not. When you and I must choose between serving the crowd or serving him there really can't be any hesitation or doubt. It is to him we owe our loyalty



JAMES T. TISSOT (1836-1909)

and our willing service.

You and I are members of "the church, which is his body." We are his visible representatives on earth. We are on the earth to act in his name. Remembering the price he paid for our forgiveness, let us serve him by being forgiving people, by sharing his message of forgiveness with others.

He rules in the interest of his church

It does not always look as though Christ has triumphed. It does not always look as though he is in charge. We know our foibles and follies—and sins—and we do not feel confident on the basis of what we see.

But what does our Lord's ascension tell us? It says that no one and nothing is above the authority and will of Jesus Christ. Everything serves his purpose, which is to gather and shepherd his church. His gospel is still the power to save, even when his law is being laughed

at, when the forgiveness of sins is dismissed as irrelevant, when the testimony of his church is muted by the doublemindedness of Christians.

In Luther's words: "We are, after all, not the sort of people who could sustain the church. . . . But the Lord has done it, is doing it now, and will do it." Jesus reigns to all eternity, not retired, but in charge.



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

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

the Northwestern Lutheran

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE
WISCONSIN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD

MAY 15, 1991 / VOL. 78, NO. 10

Editorial office

Rev. James P. Schaefer, Editor
Dorothy J. Sonntag, Assistant Editor
The Northwestern Lutheran
2929 N. Mayfair Road
Milwaukee, WI 53222-4398
Phone 414/771-9357 FAX 414/771-3708

Contributing editors

R. D. Balge, T. B. Franzmann, I. G. Frey, J. C. Gerlach, R. H. Hochmuth, P. E. Kelm, R. E. Lauersdorf, F. E. Piepenbrink, V. H. Prange, C. Toppe.

District correspondents

K. H. Pasch (Arizona), H. K. John (California), R. L. Kruse (Dakota-Montana), J. L. Langebartels (Michigan), R. M. Edwards (Minnesota), T. L. Wendt (Nebraska), vacant (North Atlantic), J. C. Eggert (Northern Wisconsin), J. S. Blum (Pacific Northwest), J. C. Voss (South Atlantic), C. L. Learman (South Central), R. A. Sievert (Southeastern Wisconsin), E. C. Stroh (Western Wisconsin).

Production

Production services of Northwestern Publishing House: Production manager, Clifford Koeller; Subscription manager, Suzanne Giese.

Subscriber service

For subscription service, write: Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 N. 113th St., Milwaukee, WI 53226-3284. Phone 414/475-6600, extension 5. Allow **four weeks** for a new subscription, subscription renewal or change of address.

Subscription rates (payable in advance)

U.S.A. and Canada—One year, \$8.50; two years, \$17.00; three years, \$22.50. Twenty-five or more unaddressed copies sent in a bundle to one address at \$5.50 per subscription. Every home mailing plan at \$6.00 per subscription. All prices include postage.

All other countries—Please write for rates.

The Northwestern Lutheran is available on cassette for the visually handicapped. For information, write: Workshop for the Visually Handicapped, 559 Humboldt Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55107.

THE NORTHWESTERN LUTHERAN (ISSN 0029-3512) is published *semimonthly, except monthly in July, August and December*, by Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 N. 113th St., Milwaukee, WI 53226-3284. Second class postage paid at Milwaukee, Wisconsin and additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to *The Northwestern Lutheran*, c/o Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 N. 113th St., Milwaukee, WI 53226-3284. ©1991 by *The Northwestern Lutheran*, magazine of the Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran Synod.

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FORWARD

■ The church growth movement is a fairly new development, but one which is rapidly growing. By following specific principles, say its supporters, churches can grow in numbers: provide ample parking space, for instance, so that people won't go elsewhere because the parking lot is full. But what if a congregation appears to be more concerned about increasing the number of church members than about saving lost souls? Is a church that brings in large numbers of people necessarily

building the Holy Christian Church? On the next page David Valleskey discusses the pros and cons of the church growth movement.

■ Two series end with this issue: Roland Cap Ehlke's articles on Christianity, cults, and world religions; and James Aderman's series on Amos. We thank them for their contributions, and look forward to reading more from them in the future.

DJS

The church growth movement



Just gathering people or building the Church?

by David J. Valleskey

Growth was the subject under discussion at a meeting of the St. John evangelism committee, or, to be more precise, lack of growth. Jim, the chairman of the committee, had put together a graph portraying the growth pattern of St. John over the past ten years. It revealed that the numbers had peaked seven years ago, leveled off for a few years, and then had begun a slow but unmistakable descent.

"At this rate," Jim remarked, "we could eventually cease to exist as a congregation; or at least we'd have to scale back drastically what we are doing. It seems to me we have to find some way to make our church grow."

"I've been thinking about the same thing," said Bob, one of the committee members, "and I'd like to share with you a book I came across the other day. It's interesting, easy to read, and may be the answer to our problem. Its title is *Your Church Can Grow*, and it's filled with all sorts of practical hints that could help us turn things around here."

Bob didn't realize it at the time, but in his browsing he had stumbled upon one of many similar books written from the perspective of the church growth movement, books with such titles as *How to Grow a Church*, *Ten Steps for Church Growth*, *Church Growth: Strategies That Work*, and *Leading Your Church to Growth*.

The church growth movement is a relatively new

development. It stems from the experiences of a missionary from the Disciples of Christ denomination, Donald A. McGavran. McGavran served in India during the 1930s, '40s and '50s. While there he became curious as to why some mission stations were growing and others were not. In time he isolated certain factors that were present in the churches which had experienced considerable growth but were not evident to a marked degree in the churches which had remained relatively static. These factors McGavran labeled church growth principles, which he defined as universal truths which, when properly interpreted and applied, contribute significantly to the growth of churches and denominations.

In the 1970s, under the leadership of students of McGavran such as C. Peter Wagner and Win Arn, McGavran's principles began to be applied to congregations in the United States. Since that time these men and others have added many more principles to those McGavran came up with. They have done this by following the same procedure McGavran did in India: by making a careful study of growing churches and denominations to discover, as McGavran put it, "reproducible patterns of growth which, if other congregations put into practice, can help them grow also." By one count, there are as many as 146 church growth principles that congregations might well be taking into account if they want to be, if not assured

of, at least given a good chance for growth.

Most of the findings of church growth research have not been all that surprising or controversial:

- Make sure you have enough room for everyone to sit. When your church is 80 percent or more filled Sunday after Sunday, it may be time to add a second service.
- Provide sufficient parking. People who are "church shopping" will probably go somewhere else if the parking lot has no room.
- Give the visitor a warm welcome.
- Engage in an ongoing program of new member assimilation. Get new members involved in the life and work of the congregation as quickly as possible.

Some church growth principles, while they can be understood correctly, provoke a little more debate. Church growth movement leaders, for example, urge congregations to make their Sunday morning worship a meaningful, uplifting, vibrant experience for the worshipper. That gives rise to a few questions: For whom is the Sunday morning service primarily intended? And who defines what is meaningful, uplifting, and vibrant?

There are also some church growth principles which cannot be squared with God's word. The most controversial is probably McGavran's homogeneous unit principle. This principle says that churches should concentrate their work within one racial or socio-economic group because, according to McGavran, people "like to become Christians without crossing racial, linguistic, or class barriers." In line with this principle, a church in a racially mixed neighborhood should not work at becoming racially integrated because that kind of church simply won't grow.

Which brings us to the nub of the matter. The church growth movement has to do with growing *a* church, not with growing *the* Church. These two do not have to be mutually exclusive. If many sinners are being led to repentance and trust in Jesus and then are joining a Christian congregation where through word and sacrament the Holy Spirit nourishes their faith and equips them for serving their Lord, that kind of growth certainly brings joy to the heart of God in heaven.

Not all church growth, however, is Church growth. If a congregation is concerned primarily about its growth rather than the growth of the Holy Christian Church, that will inevitably affect the way it carries out its work. It will start looking upon the

unchurched with the eyes of a businessman, seeing them as an untapped market, as potential "customers," and will then strive to bring them in by giving them what they want even though it may not be what they need.

A few months back (Dec. 17, 1990) Newsweek featured a rather perceptive article about the return to church on the part of the baby-boomers and the way congregations are using church growth principles to woo them. The article observes that "some of the least demanding churches are now in greatest demand." It notes further:

In their efforts to accommodate, many clergy have simply airbrushed sin out of their language. Like politicians, they can only recognize mistakes which congregants are urged to "put behind them." Having substituted therapy for spiritual discernment, they appeal to a nurturing God who helps his (or her) people cope. Heaven, by this creed, is never having to say no to yourself.

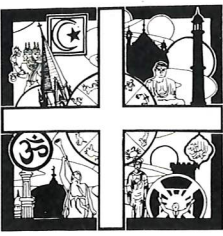
That may be a way to grow *a* church, but it's certainly not the way to grow *the* Church. The message of Christianity will always be an offence to the unbeliever. Take away the offence—the message of sin and salvation, law and gospel—and you have taken away Christianity.

So, what should the members of St. John evangelism committee do with *Your Church Can Grow*? They will want to remember that it and similar literature deal only with externals, with those things that have to do with making a church grow, not the Church. They can probably pick up a few helpful hints. They might, for example, appreciate research which provides an insight into the way unchurched people think. This could help them as they plan how to approach them with the word.

At the same time, however, the committee will want to remember that only God grows the Church and that he does this as his word, law and gospel, is communicated to people. It would be wise, therefore, for the committee to spend the majority of its time studying the word; planning how to get the word into the community; and then doing just that.



David Valleskey teaches pastoral theology and New Testament and is vice-president of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin.



Christ crucified

When we look at the vast array of non-Christian cults and religions, it's easy to become confused. Add to the older, established religions the hundreds of new ones that seem to spring up overnight and we face a bewildering forest of teachings, leaders, ideas, and practices. How can the Christian make sense of it all?

Happily, it's not necessary to know everything. A knowledge of basic teachings of several non-Christian religions makes it clear that certain common threads run through them all.

We need to be well-grounded in "the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints" (Jude 3). Then the countless new doctrines pouring at us from every side will not easily sway us.

Other religions differ from the faith of Jesus Christ in a number of basic ways. We'll look at three.

1. Authority

All non-Christian faiths have an authority which to them is higher than the Bible. That authority may be considered God's own word, as Christian Scientists honor the writings of Mary Baker Eddy. Or it may be considered an aid to studying the Scriptures, such as the publications of the Jehovah's Witnesses. Although Witnesses would say that their teachings are not placed above the Bible, in reality they are.

Consider the sources of authority of the nine subjects of this series:

- Mormonism—the writings of Joseph Smith and

pronouncements of the church hierarchy;

- Jehovah's Witness—official Bible study aids of the organization;
- Christian Science—the writings of Mary Baker Eddy;
- Hinduism—Hindu scriptures;
- Unification Church—writings of Sun Myung Moon;
- Islam—the Quran;
- Baha'ism—writings of Baha'i founders;
- Astrology—the movement of heavenly bodies as interpreted by astrologers;
- Satanism—*Satanic Bible* and other blatantly anti-Christian sources.

Satanism openly defies the Bible. The Hindu Scriptures do not take it into account (although Hindu missionaries in the West express respect for it). The others all claim to honor the Bible as God's word. But such honor is mere lip service, as they deny one key Bible doctrine after another in favor of their own authority.

2. Salvation

Drawing upon their own authorities, all non-biblical faiths teach a way of salvation contrary to God's word. They may picture salvation in various ways, whether it be the Hindu *moksha* (union with the ultimate reality of Brahman) or the godlike state of the Mormons.

In whatever manner they portray salvation, they

Full circle

The following are excerpts from a woman who writes of how she came "full circle" back to her Lutheran faith:

[Having lost my faith after leaving home] I was ripe for the Age of Aquarius movement, now known as the New Age movement. The teachings were easy for me to accept. I was god! . . . I got deeply into meditation, self-hypnosis, past-lives, special food diets . . . and all the rest of the spiritualism involved in their false teachings. I studied and practiced and eventually became a "Master Teacher" myself. As a result my life got worse.

Terrible bouts of depression, a growing fear of

the spirit world, and the prayers of family caused me to break completely with the cult's activities and associates.

The next two years I prayed and prayed for faith in the true God. . . . Who was Jesus? Was Jesus the way to God? The gospel was difficult to believe; it seemed foolish, like a fairy tale. I couldn't believe in Jesus on my own. . . .

It was an evening Lenten service in 1981; [the pastor's] sermon was entitled "Jesus the Exception to the Universal Law."

Jesus is God! I finally understood! The Holy Spirit had opened my eyes and heart. It was wonderful, joyful and so simple.

I had come full circle. The Lord in his goodness had brought me back home.

is the key

by Roland Cap Ehlke



agree on the way to get there. Every religion except Christianity teaches that we must save ourselves.

Some may say that God makes salvation possible, or that Jesus showed the way, or that his death on the cross together with our good works brings salvation.

But the Holy Scriptures

teach that Jesus' sufferings and death are payment enough for the sins of all people.

We can add nothing to what Jesus has done for our eternal salvation. He died once and that one sacrifice was sufficient. This doctrine cannot be overemphasized.

The Bible clearly teaches it in many places. "But when this priest [Jesus] had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God" (Hebrews 10:12). This truth is taught throughout the Bible, Old Testament as well as New: "He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5). And it is for this truth that the saints in heaven praise the Lamb of God: "You were slain and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation" (Revelation 5:9).

Hand in hand with the unscriptural notion of earning our own salvation is a tendency to downplay the seriousness of sin. Rather than recognizing it as a serious moral problem that keeps us from God and salvation, many see it as mere ignorance or a problem we can overcome with our own efforts.

3. Jesus

Every non-Christian religion has a distorted view of Jesus. Some, like the Mormons, will honor him as God. But they also teach that there are many other such gods and we can become one ourselves. To the Christian Scientist he is a divine idea. To the Jehovah's Witness he is a created angel. To the Muslim or Baha'i he is a lesser prophet than Muhammed or Baha'u'llah. To Hindus he is another guru or one of many manifestations of God. To Satanists he is a failure.

To the Bible-believing Christian, Jesus is the eter-

nal Son of God—true God and true man. Far from being one among many religious leaders, Jesus is unique. He alone is God incarnate—that is, God in human flesh. He alone is Savior of the world. He alone has conquered sin, Satan, and death.

Sooner or later everyone must face Jesus' question, "What do you think about the Christ?" (Matthew 22:41). When discussing our faith with others, let us always focus on the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Sharing our faith

Someone has called the modern cults "the unpaid bills of the Christian church." For years much of Christendom has been in a state of sluggishness and decline. It has idly watched as false prophets have boldly pulled thousands—no, millions—of members out of the churches.

Our Lord calls on us to take up the struggle for the souls of men, women, and children. This means we need to know something about what's going on "out there." Make the effort to learn something about other religions.

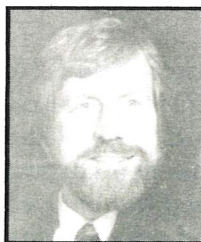
More importantly, we need a deeper knowledge of the Bible itself. Regular church attendance is a must. So is regular home reading of the Scriptures. Make daily Bible reading your goal.

We need to apply the Scriptures. "When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, 'Repent,' he willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance," wrote Martin Luther in the first of his *Ninety-Five Theses*. With the Lord's help let us turn from worldly ways and live a life of love.

God has given us the gift of prayer. Let's use it. Begin and end each day with prayer. Pray at meals, with fellow Christians, when alone. "Pray continually" (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

Finally, let's speak about our faith. As opportunity arises, tell others about Jesus. "But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord," says the apostle Peter. And then, "with gentleness and respect," he urges us,

"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have" (1 Peter 3:15,16).



Roland Cap Ehlke is an editor at Northwestern Publishing House.



Margarethe
Mueller

Pentecost ripples

Long forgotten memories flood back

by Evelyn R. Wilson

“Imagine that!” Mother said, smiling, when she saw the “Pentecost in Memory” article in the *Northwestern Lutheran* (May 15, 1989). It told of her childhood memories of the Pentecost celebrations in the *Johanneskirche* in Niederplanitz, Germany.

Imagine her surprise when informed that Pastor Gerhard Wilde, the present pastor of the *Johanneskirche*, was in the area and wanted to meet her. Pastor Wilde, president of the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church in Germany, had opened his copy of the NL, there to find his church pictured and written about. When he attended the 1989 WELS convention, he called me.

Pastor Wilde and his wife, Ingeborg, met my mother and what a visit it was! One by one, Pastor Wilde gently and kindly nudged her memory of days gone by. “Is the castle still there? Is our school still there?” Mother asked. Imagine, at age 94, to hear that some of her Christian day school classmates were still living, still walking on the streets of Niederplanitz, still attending Pentecost services in the *Johanneskirche*! Long forgotten memories flooded back in happy remembrance.

“And can you still sing?” asked Pastor Wilde. He began. Mother recognized the hymn immediately and joined in, as did Mrs. Wilde and I—with the help of the German hymnal. But no hymnal was needed for my mother. She had learned her beloved hymns more than 80 years ago and had never forgot-

ten them. “When the teacher told us to learn two or three verses, I always learned them all,” she often said. Our little choir of four sang on through several hymns, bound together in Christian love, family ties, and memories. What was this sudden blurring of words before my eyes and why this tightness in my throat? Did I see swimming eyes on other faces or was it that mine were so filled?

“It’s time for Mrs. Mueller to eat lunch,” burst in a nursing home staff member.

“Eat!” cried Mother in indignation. “I want to talk!”

But time was limited and the once-in-a-lifetime gathering came to a close with lingering handshakes and a touch of sadness.

We did not know, when our choir of four sang together, that within four months the Lord would take my mother to himself, gently and quietly as she slept. With prayerful patience she had awaited his hand to lift her to her heavenly home, never questioning his will for her. Often she quoted and clung to her confirmation verse: “Eye hath not seen, nor

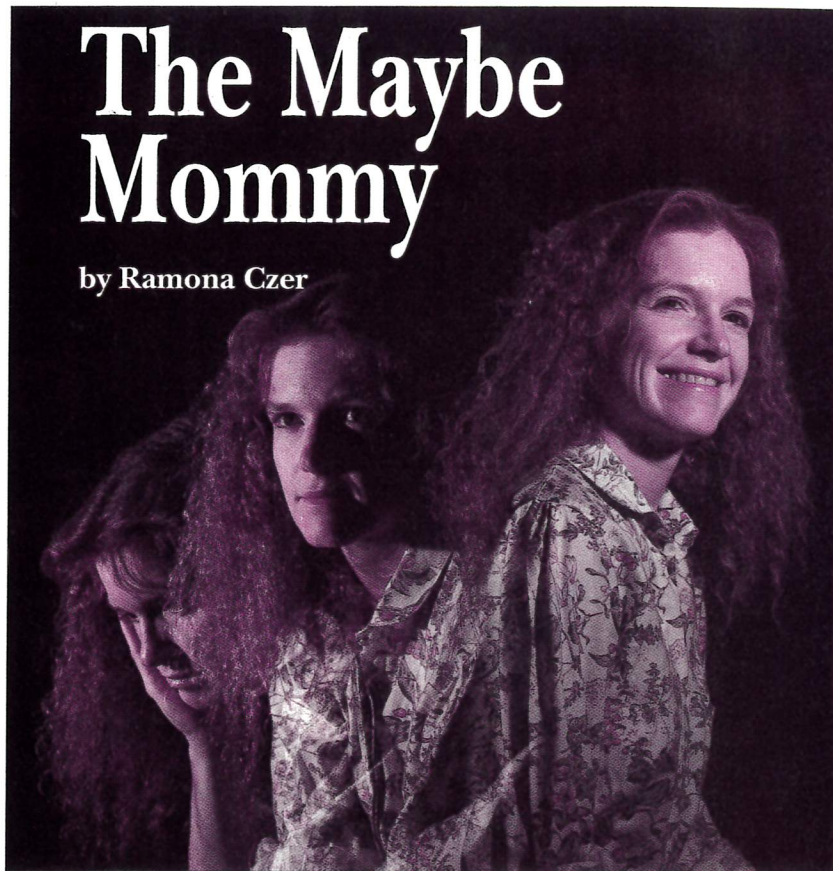
ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him” (1 Corinthians 2:9).



Evelyn Wilson is a member
of Mt. Lebanon, Milwaukee.

The Maybe Mommy

by Ramona Czer



MRS. KEVIN SCHEIBEL

I am the Maybe Mommy. So when my daughter asked, "Can I go on a walk around the block with Stephanie?" I said the inevitable: "Maybe." But she is only 5 and I meant maybe after lunch, a nap, a trip downtown to buy shoes; maybe after the nuclear holocaust.

Her little sister always hugs my maybes to her chest with trusting, pudgy hands, stroking them like precious promises that will soon grow up to be true. But this first-born child just ran crying into her room. What is a Maybe Mommy to do?

Later always seems nicer for decisions. Later, worry might release its tight hold on my chest and leave my voice free to say yes. Later the cards might reshuffle and deal us a rainstorm or an emergency, anything that will make no inevitable and easy to say.

I wouldn't say my maybes are lies. They're simply lazy noes or scaredy-cat noes or sometimes a yes with so many ifs trailing after it that the walk around the block will not be glorious tripping, only plodding responsibility. Yes, you may go, if you stay on the sidewalk, if you kick no rocks, talk with no strangers,

When I face my worries and hand them to God in prayer, Jesus reaches down and carries them for me.

and if you return in seven minutes and 23 seconds. Often my maybes are time-strangled: maybe when you're 7, or 21, or a grandmother—maybe even when you go to heaven.

I am the Maybe Mommy. Too afraid of yes, too afraid of no. But also afraid of all my maybes. I am caught between remembering what it felt like to be a daughter and learning to be a mother. Tired of being wishy-washy, I am not ready to give a firm no or a trusting yes. I am not ready to trust my parenting instincts, nor to trust my God with my daughter's safety.

This problem reminds me of a Mother Goose rhyme: "Mother, may I go out to swim? Yes, my darling daughter. Hang your clothes on a hickory limb,

but don't go near the water."

What we give with love, the hand of fear steals back. Fear strangles joy. But how will our children grow up healthy and whole without our hovering? Care is not worry. Worry, we teach them by our actions, is a lack of trust in Jesus.

I've written countless times in my journals about my worrying. It seems to be a sin the Lord and I have to go to battle against regularly. I've described the sin of worrying about money, worrying about my children, worrying about the effect of my worrying.

When I face my worries and hand them to God in prayer, they dissipate. Jesus reaches down and carries them for me. He turns the Maybe Mommy into a trusting mother of faith.

He has also taught me that no doesn't have to be the only answer. We can compromise, too. "No, but . . ." is often a good answer. I could take that walk with my 5-year-old and her friend. Together we could enjoy that sidewalk journey without fear and without risk, and Maybe Mommy would even discover the world is not such a scary place after all, with Jesus at her little girl's side.



Ramona Czer is a member of Timothy, St. Louis Park, Minn. This article is an excerpt from *The Tablet of My Heart*, to be published in August by Northwestern Publishing House.

More than

by Dorothy J. Sonntag



Zelma Piggee

Each weekday morning Zelma Piggee hands out food and philosophy at St. Marcus school in Milwaukee's inner city. The groceries are from the food pantry operated by St. Marcus congregation. The philosophy comes from her lively faith and a loving concern for others.

The food pantry meets a real need. Poverty is evident in the St. Marcus area, in a previous era a comfortable middle-class neighborhood. White flight led most of its residents to move to other parts of the city, leaving behind the poor and the aging. Today sagging porches and boarded-up windows give many of the houses a neglected look, and the once all-white area now is predominantly black.

As the neighborhood changed, St. Marcus changed. Originally a congregation of German

immigrants, today it reflects the multi-racial makeup of the area.

Mrs. Piggee grew up in the Baptist church and joined St. Marcus because she wanted her two children in its school. The children are adults now, but she has stayed at St. Marcus.

"My kids got their education here, and it was good," she says. "I love the school, and I wanted to give them something for what they've given me. I asked Mr. Gartner [principal of St. Marcus] if there was anything I could do. He said, 'Why don't you start a food pantry?' They were giving out food occasionally anyway. So I started, and it grew."

Most of the food comes from WELS congregations in the Milwaukee area. Gifts of money are used to purchase food from Second Harvesters, a group which makes food available at nominal cost to organizations providing food for low-income families.

In the three years the pantry has been in operation, over 400 people have received groceries from the food

pantry. Some have come only once; others come regularly. Piggee estimates that she gives food to over 200 people each month. The number varies from day to day. Since most recipients receive pension or government checks, more people need help when they're waiting for the next check to arrive. Many are out of work, but a number are retirees whose pensions do not cover expenses.

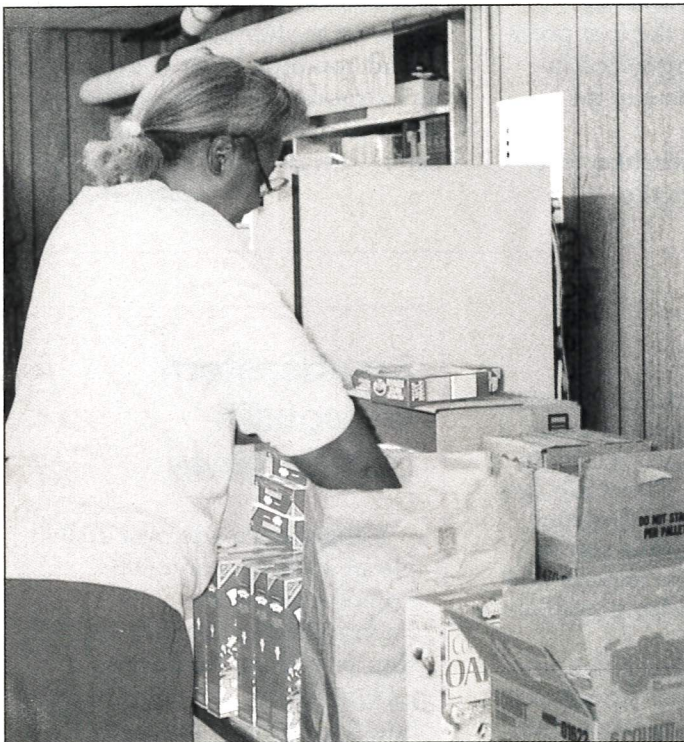
"We have about 10 or 15 a day, and then it goes up to 50," says Piggee. "We had 56 one day last month." She keeps careful records and requires identification. Recipients may receive food once a month.

"I'll say, 'Have you been here this month before? I don't want to be going downstairs, making a trip, if you're telling a lie.' You don't know if they really need it, but I hate to say no. I'd rather give food to

just a food pantry

someone who doesn't need it than turn down someone who does."

A pamphlet from the church is included in each bag of groceries. Piggee isn't sure everyone reads the flyer. "I tell them, don't be throwing the literature in the yard. At least take it home." At first she found flyers littering the schoolyard, but that problem has stopped. "I guess one told the others, 'Don't do it, or that lady'll be fussing.'"



PHOTOS BY DOROTHY SONNTAG

Mrs. Piggee fills bags in the food pantry at St. Marcus, Milwaukee.

She'd like to see more of the people who pick up food come to St. Marcus to worship. "They promise they'll come," she says, "but not many do. I ask them, 'When I come to church Sunday, why don't I see your face?'"

Mrs. Piggee has spoken about the food pantry at several Lutheran elementary schools and at Wisconsin Lutheran High School. "It was beautiful to talk to them. We've got a new generation out there."

Piggee's love for young people spills out into words and actions. When the young man at Second Harvesters who was supposed to load groceries onto her cart watched instead of helping, "I told him, 'If I gotta put all my stuff on my cart, I don't need a helper. You were lazy. I don't want you to lose your job. We've got plenty of young men now that don't have work.' He's been working real well ever since. We got to be good friends, and now he's handy. He helps a lot."

She speaks her mind to the people who come to the food pantry, too. "They call me the barracuda because I'm always fussing, especially with the young ones. I tell them, 'You know you should be downtown, working somewhere.'"

She has a special love for the children at St. Marcus. Sometimes she sits in the balcony during the worship service. "Those kids hate to see me coming up there. Every time one of them moves or makes a little noise, I look around. And they know I'm going to say something on the way down. They just need attention, that's all, and somebody to love them. I love them all."

Piggee isn't happy with the problems that have arisen in her neighborhood in the past years, but she likes what is happening at St. Marcus. "The Lutheran church has changed in the last 20 years," says Piggee. "Ladies didn't used to do anything. Now the women come to the meetings." She is glad for the difference. "If there's something I can do for the Lord, let me do it."

Piggee would like to find someone to take over the food pantry. "I'm going to be 70 on my birthday. I'd like to find someone that will take it, but I haven't found anyone. I have to run it until I can get someone I can really depend on."



She's sure the right person will be found. "I'm going to get the pastor to pray with me about it. We're gonna pray somebody into it."

Dorothy Sonntag is assistant editor of the Northwestern Lutheran

Editorial writer dies

Pastor Immanuel G. Frey, editorial writer for the Northwestern Lutheran for over 25 years, died on March 28 and was buried on April 1 in Phoenix, Ariz., where he had been born and served the last 44 years of his active ministry.

His first editorial, commenting on the Second Vatican Council, appeared in the December 13, 1964 issue of the Northwestern Lutheran. His last editorial appears in this issue and is titled "Thank God for Christian mothers." In the third last sentence of the editorial he bequeaths to his readers a rich legacy: "There is no substitute for knowing that there is a Savior who died for sinners that they might live in eternity." A legacy that he is now enjoying.

Frey, 75, was born in a Phoenix

parsonage and attended Martin Luther Academy, New Ulm, Minn., and Northwestern College, Watertown, Wis., before graduating from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis., in 1939. He tutored a year at Northwestern Lutheran Academy, Mobridge, S. Dak., and held pastorates in South Dakota and Nebraska before accepting a call to Arizona in 1944. In 1988 he retired from Zion, Phoenix.

In 1966 he was elected president of the Arizona-California District, succeeding the late Pastor E. Arnold Sitz, who was the first president of the district organized in 1954. Frey declined to run for reelection in 1983.

WELS President Mischke, who served for 17 years on the



Frey

Conference of Presidents with Frey, said that his contributions to that body "were always marked by good sound common sense supported by an extraordinary biblical literacy. His editorials — of the same character—always spoke to our hearts."

—James P. Schaefer

WELS receptionist retires

In years past the most widely-heard voice in the Wisconsin Synod was not the voice of President Mischke. It was the warm, friendly, courteous voice of Leola E. Erickson who retired May 3. Lee was the operator/receptionist at the church offices of the Wisconsin Synod. About 200 times a day the phone rings and Lee greeted the caller and added the words "Wisconsin Synod."



Erickson

Lee came to work for WELS—while it was still located at 35th and North—on January 3, 1977.

Vacations aside, the longest she has been away from her post was three days when husband Vernon suffered a coronary some years ago.

A long-time WELS member, Lee was confirmed (as was also Vernon)

at Christ Church on the south side of Milwaukee. In later years their membership was transferred to St. Matthew, Milwaukee. There are two

children—a daughter in Texas and a son in Milwaukee. Vernon and Lee are twice grandparents.

Retirement, she says, will find her sorting out her recipes, crocheting an afghan or two, and reading—"I love to read." In Milwaukee's brief growing season she will tend a garden.

Free now to roam about, Vernon will take her along to revisit the battlefields of the Civil War. ("He's a Civil War buff, you know.") And perhaps drop in on a few ante-bellum mansions.

Goodbye, Lee. We and 200 callers a day will miss you.

Southeastern Wisconsin District news

Volunteers made over 10,000 phone calls to over 6,000 homes inviting the unchurched to the first worship service at Our Savior, Lexington, Ky., on Palm Sunday. The new mission, served by Pastor Erich Stuebs, worships at 2566 Richmond Road. . . . **Four Wisconsin Lutheran High School seniors** are finalists in the National Merit Scholarship Competition: Matthew Harm, Suzanne Hegerty, Chris Doerr, and Scott Nell.

—Robert A. Sievert

College shows student art work

More than 350 pieces of art created by the young people of the WELS, kindergartners through high school seniors, were displayed at Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee, in April. The exhibit, organized in conjunction with National Youth Art Month, had entries from 13 states and Germany, Brazil, and Colombia. Entries included sculpture, drawing, painting, etching, and photography.

The show, built on the theme "God's Marvelous Creations," was sponsored jointly by the college and the WELS Art Guild Society. Overseeing the exhibit was Prof. Debra Heermans, chair of the college's art department. "This wasn't a competition," said Heermans, although awards were presented. "We wanted to encourage those young people who did outstanding work."

She believes the exhibit was unique. Other groups sponsor exhibits during Youth Art Month, she noted, but few display work by artists of such a wide range of ages and from so many different places.

The Art Guild Society, organized to promote fine arts in the WELS community, sponsors exhibitions, lectures, tours, and workshops, and publishes a quarterly newsletter. The society is open to all members of WELS congregations. For more information, write to the WELS Art Guild at Wisconsin Lutheran College, 8830 W. Bluemound, Milwaukee, WI 53226.

—Dorothy J. Sonntag



Kindergartners from St. John School, Wauwatosa, Wis., with the Noah's ark they entered in the art exhibit at Wisconsin Lutheran College.

Grant funds 17 projects

Aid Association for Lutherans (AAL) has awarded the Wisconsin Synod a \$250,000 grant which will be used to fund 17 different projects. AAL, the nation's largest fraternal benefit society, provides annual grants to Lutheran church bodies and institutions.

According to Dr. Wayne Borgwardt, WELS grants liaison officer, projects will include a workshop for missionaries who work with the homeless and minorities; development of a family enrich-

ment seminar for pastors and teachers; foreign language training for missionaries; a centennial history of mission work among the Apaches; continuing education for teachers in synodical schools; and a seminar for the hearing impaired.

"This grant gives us the potential to make things happen which are on the cutting edge," said Borgwardt. "These projects could be funded only with great difficulty through our regular operating budget."

Obituaries

Melvin W. Croll 1900-1991

Pastor Melvin William Croll was born March 17, 1900, in Manitowoc, Wis. He died March 21, 1991, in Green Bay.

A graduate of Northwestern College and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, he served at Whiteriver, Ariz.; Florence, Tipler, Greenleaf, Kasson, and Kekoskee, all in Wisconsin. He retired in 1973 after 50 years in the ministry.

He is survived by his wife, Edna; daughter Ruethele (Ralph) Bailey; nine grandchildren; and nine great-grandchildren. One son preceded him in death.

Adelbert A. Hellmann 1907-1991

Pastor Adelbert A. Hellman was born Oct. 3, 1907, in Nicollet, Minnesota. He died Feb. 17, 1991, in New Ulm.

After graduation from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in 1933 he served congregations in southeastern Colorado; Mound City and Goodwin, S.D.; Peshtigo, Rock Springs, and Slades Corners, Wis.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Verona, and a son, David. He is survived by a son, Robert (Susan), two grandchildren, and one brother.

THE BIBLE IN 365 READINGS

Continuing our program of reading through the complete Bible in one year, we list the sixth month of readings beginning June 1 and ending June 30.

- June 1 Psalm 96; 1 Kings 8:54—10:29
- 2 1 Kgs 11; Ecclesiastes 1—2
- 3 Ec 3—7:14
- 4 Ec 7:15—12:6
- 5 1 Kings 12—14:18
- 6 1 Kgs 14:19—16:34
- 7 1 Kgs 17—19:18
- 8 1 Kgs 19:19—21
- 9 1 Kgs 22; 2 Kings 1—2:18
- 10 2 Kgs 2:19—4
- 11 2 Kgs 5—8:6
- 12 2 Kgs 8:7—10:31
- 13 2 Kgs 10:32—14:14
- 14 2 Kgs 14:15—17:23
- 15 2 Kgs 17:24—18; Ps 59; Ps 6
- 16 2 Kgs 19; Ps 27; 29; 120; 140
- 17 2 Kgs 20—23:27
- 18 2 Kgs 23:28—25:30; Daniel 1
- 19 Dn 2—3
- 20 Dn 4—6:23
- 21 Dn 6:24—9
- 22 Dn 10—12
- 23 Ezra 1—3: 7
- 24 Ez 3:8—7:10
- 25 Ez 7:11—10:24
- 26 Ez 10:25—10:44;
Nehemiah 1—3
- 27 Neh 4—7:38
- 28 Neh 7:39-73;
Ps 127; 33; 13; 85
- 29 Neh 8—9:38; Ps 144; 99
- 30 Neh 10—11: 9; Hagga

NOTICES

**CALL FOR NOMINATIONS
Michigan Lutheran Seminary**

Nominations are requested for the position of dean of students at Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw. Nominees should be experienced in pastoral ministry, with a gift for dealing with people evangelically and applying law and gospel well in disciplinary situations, demonstrate rapport with youth, and have organizational and administrative skills.

Please send nominations and pertinent information by June 1 to Jerold Meier, 397 Auburn, Plymouth, MI 48170.

SYNODICAL TEACHER CERTIFICATION COURSE

Dr. Martin Luther College will be offering the following synodical certification course:

Rel 6021 **New Testament Epistles**; Instructor: Pastor Ronald Gorske; June 3-21, 9:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m., Monday through Friday; Fox Valley Lutheran High School, Appleton, Wisconsin; Fee: \$200, 3 credits.

This course is applicable toward elementary and secondary certification. Persons who wish to take the course for certification must have been accepted into the program before registration. For further information and application forms write or call John Isch, Director of Special Services, Dr. Martin Luther College, 1884 College Heights, New Ulm, MN 56073. Phone 507/354-8221.

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<small>minimum order 2000</small>		
• Flyers non-customized for direct distribution by your church \$8.00 per 100	_____	_____
		Total _____

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NAME OF CHURCH

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corner of Oakland and 4th)

CITY, STATE, ZIP

VBS DATES (when through when)

VBS TIMES (i.e. 9 A.M. to 12:00 noon)

CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBER

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2929 North Mayfair Road
Milwaukee, WI 53222**

The Sovereign Lord

by James A. Aderman

God's final and most severe pronouncement of judgment is about to be voiced as we begin reading at chapter seven. The Lord like a roaring lion stalking its prey has warned of the danger of godlessness. He has revealed his plans to destroy Israel at the hands of bloodthirsty invaders. Now the omnipotent Sovereign Lord, for whom there are no idle threats, unalterably commits himself to annihilating his faithless people.

But don't quit reading before you've finished chapter nine. The Sovereign Lord must live up to his name: "The Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished."

The plumb line

The section opens as Amos is given inside information about God's plans for destroying Israel. Upon Amos' intercession, however, the Lord relents. In both cases judgment would have struck the righteous and unrighteous alike. The third plan, however, introduces a gauge, a plumb line. Those measuring up will be spared; those found out of alignment will be razed.

The plumb line is quickly put to use. First it measures the priest Amaziah who forbids the Lord's prophet to speak. Judgment is harsh and humiliating. Next the principle of the plumb line is applied to Israel. Found ripe for judgment, God declares, "I will spare them no longer."

How does the plumb line of God's righteousness measure you? Does God's plumb line find you lacking, or do you have that "righteousness from God (that) comes through faith in Christ Jesus to all who believe" (Romans 3:22)?

The punishment described

Israel's punishment is to take two forms, the first a spiritual famine. Israel had long neglected God's word in spite of the steady stream of prophets the Lord had sent. Now God will withhold his word from them. Vainly will Israel search to find meaning in life and hope in death. "Men will stagger . . . , searching for the word of the Lord, but they will not find it." The young, too, will fall victim to religious quacks as

the errors of one generation are passed on to the next. Where does this same kind of famine rage today?

Then, when this once godly nation is reduced to complete spiritual ruin, God promises to unleash his physical destruction. There will be no escape. "Not one will get away" (9:1).

But wait. The rule of the plumb line will hold even in the midst of this slaughter. "I will destroy it from the face of the earth—yet I will not totally destroy the house of Jacob. . . . All the sinners among my people will die by the sword, all those who say, 'Disaster will not overtake or meet us' " (9:8,10).

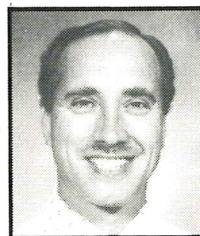
Yahweh, God of grace

It's on that thought that the direction of Amos shifts dramatically, mercifully. What unfolds next is one of the most beautiful descriptions of the messianic kingdom contained in the Old Testament. It's a description made even more breath-taking viewed against the backdrop of the rest of Amos' prophecy.

Don't miss the Lord's description of the coming king, the renewed nation, the rejuvenated earth, the lifestyle of his repatriated people, and the re-secured land in which they will live. Compare Revelation 7:10-17.

And did you notice the title "Sovereign Lord" (Yahweh) is used repeatedly in this section? Throughout the prophecy that term shows up twenty times, but eleven of those times are in this section. Poignantly the Lord pleads, reminding his people he is "the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God. . . ." Equally as touching is God calling Israel "my people." That term only occurs in this closing section. It is found five times in these 46 verses.

Without doubt God wants all to be saved. Forgiveness of sin and adoption into his eternal family are always available—even for the most sin-hardened. The Lord's rule of the plumb line still is in place. "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23).



James Aderman is pastor of Fairview, Milwaukee.

Thank God for Christian mothers

One Sunday is set aside in the month of May for honoring mothers. Children customarily seek to honor their mothers by sending them greeting cards, taking them out to dinner, presenting them with gifts and flowers, and the like. Sons and daughters who overlook these symbols of love and respect for their mothers are risking pangs of conscience for their neglect and disappointment on the part of their mothers.

The bond between mother and child is legendary. Which one of us can forget the Bible passage which reads, "Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne?" In addition, most mothers are there through sickness, injury, and trouble of any kind, and they are sympathetic with all the woes of the child. Also, they provide guidance which the child will remember through life.

There is one more thing which can be overlooked in the serious concern for the child's physical and mental well-being. That one thing is the mother's concern for the child's spiritual welfare, and lasts a lot longer than the child's life here on earth. In fact, it lasts forever.

That concern was exemplified by Eunice, the mother of Timothy. Timothy is the one to whom Paul addressed two epistles. His mother, aided by his grandmother Lois, reared Timothy in the Christian faith. That meant that Timothy was fully prepared not only for this present life but for the life to come as well. Physical care, mental preparation, an education—all are important, but spiritual training surpasses them all in importance. Everything else is incomplete.

God had given his Ten Commandments in writing to Moses on Mt. Sinai on the third month after Israel had left Egypt. Moses had said at the time: "These are the commands, decrees, and laws the Lord your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the Lord your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you." Eunice knew that and she followed God's decree given in Deuteronomy 6, "Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up." According to Paul's second letter to Timothy, Eunice and Lois led him to know and have faith in his Redeemer, a faith which all of them shared.

That faith will last a lifetime. When children stray, it will come back to them. There is no substitute for a child's learning to know what God commands. Also there is no substitute for knowing that there is a Savior who died for sinners that they might live in eternity.

Thank God for Christian mothers like Eunice. Faith is the most valuable heritage that mothers can leave their children.

Immanuel G. Frey



*Pastor Immanuel Frey,
of Phoenix, Arizona,
died March 28.
See page 192.*

by Paul E. Kelm

Ezekiel 28:25-26 reads: "This is what the Sovereign Lord says: When I gather the people of Israel from the nations where they have been scattered, I will show myself holy among them in the sight of the nations. Then they will live in their own land, which I gave to my servant Jacob. They will live there in safety and will build houses and plant vineyards; they will live in safety when I inflict punishment on all their neighbors who maligned them. Then they will know that I am the Lord their God." Is this still being fulfilled or has this already happened?

Ezekiel was God's prophet for Israel in exile, captive to Babylon and scattered across Mesopotamia for idolatrous impenitence. The segment of Ezekiel from which you quote presages God's judgment against pagan nations who cruelly took advantage of chastised Israel. The verses were fulfilled in the late sixth century B.C., when God used the Persian conqueror Cyrus to liberate the Jews, restore Jerusalem, and subjugate Israel's proud neighbors (see the remarkable parallel prophecy in Isaiah 45:1-13).

There are no unfulfilled prophecies regarding a return of Jews to Israel, despite the efforts of millennialists to interpret contemporary political events with Old Testament verses. Such Old Testament prophecies have been fulfilled, either in the return chronicled by Ezra and Nehemiah at Cyrus' decree or in the kingdom established by the Messiah—which is spiritual, not ethnic or geographic (e.g. Galatians 3:6-14).

God repeatedly warned Israel that their unfaithfulness would abrogate the promise of chosen status in a favored land (e.g. Leviticus 18:28; Deuteronomy 6:13-17 and 7:9-12). The Savior who completed God's "old covenant" with Abraham also terminated any "rights" of Israel for their rejection of him (cf. Matthew 21:42-43).

Recent efforts to increase our outreach to the unchurched may have obscured the need for regaining our own inactive members. Those who walk away or drift away without our intervention may add bitterness to weak faith and become lost. What is correct procedure for a congregation to deal with its inactive members?

Scripture doesn't prescribe procedure, but it does provide principles. Hebrews 10:19-39 is God's solemn message to those who've forsaken his word and fellowship, and God's encouragement to the rest of us to speak that message. Christians who "carry each other's burdens" (Galatians 6:2) will "speak the truth in love"

(Ephesians 4:15) when they "go and show a brother his fault" (Matthew 18:15). "Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction" (2 Timothy 4:2) is inspired counsel particularly appropriate for our ministry to the inactive.

My counsel is, first, to confirm the faith of active members through ongoing Bible study and integrate (new) members into the fellowship and ministry of Christ's church. Stop the drift! Close the back door!

The second thing a congregation can do is promptly respond to inactivity. Caring friends and relatives are the first line of defense. Careful attendance records will reveal a pattern of four-to-six weeks absence—the window of opportunity to regain people readily according to statistical research.

The third thing a congregation will do is train rescuers of lost sheep. Every member can receive biblical training to admonish and encourage drifting friends.

Fourth, a congregation can establish a strategy for regaining the straying, since one visit is frequently not enough. A "listening visit" seeks to discover the reasons for which a member has walked or drifted away. To "handle the word of truth correctly" (2 Timothy 2:15) we will want to know which message of God's word is best applied to the heart, mind, and situation of each individual. We will also want to correct whatever may be an offense to weak brothers and sisters. A "sin and grace visit" assures that inactive members hear once more their need for forgiveness and all Jesus did to accomplish that forgiveness. Don't assume that inactive members understand basic Christianity. A strategy of several visits will encourage honest disclosure by the inactive, demonstrate the church's love, clarify misunderstanding and correct misbelief, reinforce law and gospel, nurture the weak faith back to health.

The fifth thing a congregation must do is speak the solemn, personal warnings about the eternal consequence of willfully despising word and sacrament.

Ministry to inactive members is hard work, no less than outreach to the unchurched. Both are the church's work. Don't pit one against the other with old arguments about "cleaning up our own house first."



Send your questions to *QUESTIONS*, Northwestern Lutheran, 2929 N. Mayfair Road, Milwaukee, WI 53222-4398. Questions of general interest are preferred. Questions will be answered, however, only through this column.

Paul E. Kelm is director of the synod's spiritual renewal program.

Enticing people to church

I was disturbed when I read [a newspaper article] about one of our WELS church's methods to entice people to attend church. It seems they have a service which includes puppets, drama, and strolling singers, while it excludes organ music and the Lutheran liturgy.

I can't understand why a WELS congregation thinks it has to entice people to the church. Perhaps if our members understood better the words we sing and say, they would be less likely to discard this integral part of our worship. In my opinion, the WELS is remiss by not finding some way to educate people about the liturgy. If that were done, then maybe we wouldn't have to resort to drama, puppets, set designs, and strolling singers.

*Elenore F. Braun
Milwaukee, Wisconsin*

The church's pastor replies:

Our "seeker" service has been successful in bringing unchurched people to hear the message of Jesus Christ. The liturgical format our church uses is a time-tested way to meaningful worship. Yet in our metropolitan area without liturgical roots, liturgy is sometimes perceived as a barrier by those unfamiliar with it. The appreciation of liturgy is the product of education. It is our prayer to share the gospel in a non-threatening environment, and then educate people whose hearts are glowing with faith to the value and importance of liturgical worship.

I would not imply that all our churches should offer a once-a-month "seeker" service as we do. Older, established communities might perceive the service negatively, as opposed to the positive reaction we had. Orthodoxy is not the question; form is. It is my prayer that our synod will continue to be staunchly biblical, yet flexible, like the apostle Paul, to win as many souls for Christ as possible.

*Daniel W. Kelm
Divine Savior
Indianapolis, Indiana*

Christian giving

Paul Soukup's article regarding giving to Lift High the Cross (Feb. 1) was excellent. It gives assurance that when we give to the Lord, the Lord will not forget about us.

Every congregation has discussions about meeting the budget, building or adding to the Lutheran elementary school, supporting our Lutheran high schools and colleges and mission programs. Too often all we hear is "we can't afford it." It's sad when this response often comes from those with the highest incomes and the most money in the bank.

We should be reminded that 1) you can't take it with you; 2) nobody has ever been made poor by giving to the Lord.

*Alan Ross
Manitowoc, Wisconsin*

Let's do something

I have been to many Caribbean islands and wondered why only one Lutheran church (Where has the Lutheran church been, Feb. 15). It should be easy to survey these islands and should be done soon. Most of the islands use English. We would not need to send missionaries to study the language. Let's do something for these islands.

*Lou Leitz
Lansing, Michigan*

Where is the WELS?

"Where has the Lutheran church been?" writes Mark Henrich (Feb. 15) in reference to the lack of our churches in the Caribbean. How pertinent this question for so much of our globe, and even the United States. Is northern New England an example?

Maine has one WELS church. New Hampshire has two, and the people of Vermont can find but two WELS churches. All these congregations were started less than 20 years ago.

Where has the WELS been?

*Hilbert R. Siegler
Bangor, Wisconsin*

Community choruses

I am sad to see all this energy wasted in discussion about whether or not to sing in community choruses (letters, Feb. 15). If there is such an interest in singing great choral works in a mass choir, someone ought to provide a mass WELS chorus and orchestra. Forget the arguing, start planning. We don't have to wait for heaven to sing God's praises. We can and should do it here.

It is a big project and would require a tremendous amount of work and a highly competent director, but then I think God is certainly worth it.

*Patricia Backhaus
Waukesha, Wisconsin*

Imagine no religion

Unfortunately Joel Gerlach's words proved to be prophetic: "It isn't popular to attack a popular idol, especially when he's gone" (Letters, March 1).

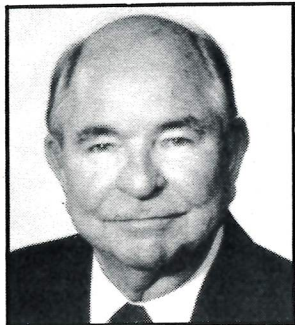
True, the errors in the article need correcting, but the message remains the same. With or without Goodman's work, the song speaks for itself. A man who would try to imagine a world with no religion cannot know Christ and his saving work, and therefore is a man who would struggle with personal demons and have no peace in his life. Recognize the man and his message for what it was, an attack on the Lamb of God.

*Tony McKenzie
Greenfield, Wisconsin*

Letters between 100 and 200 words are preferred. In the interest of conciseness, letters are subject to editing. Full name, address and daytime 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 53222-4398.*

Anually a booklet is published by the synod's statistician which is filled with a bunch of data about the synod—36 columns of data. The 1990 Statistical Report is just now being distributed. Although I know there is a tendency to yawn at statistics, I thought I would share a few of them with you.

When the statistics of a church body are cited, the size of the church body is most often listed in baptized membership or inclusive membership. Our statistical report includes both baptized and confirmed membership. In 1990 we grew by about 1000, for a baptized membership of 421,396. We lost about 200 confirmed members, a loss which reflects the demographics of that group. The growth in baptized membership may seem small, but there are a goodly number of mainline churches which are losing thousands of members each year.



Another interesting statistic is the average Sunday attendance, based on baptized membership. At the high end of the scale is the South Atlantic District with 60.7 percent of its baptized membership in church on Sunday. On the low end of the scale is the Northern Wisconsin District with 43.8 percent of its baptized membership in church on Sunday. Average for the entire synod is 45.8 percent, an increase of two-tenths of one percent over 1989.

The number of synod congregations increased by 13 during 1990 for a total of 1221 scattered through the 50 states. At the turn of the century almost all of our services were in German. In 1990 there were only 18 congregations that had German services with some regularity. But other languages appear in the report: two churches with services in Hmong; three churches with Spanish services; one church with Korean; and one church with Apache services.

Churches speak of "backdoor losses," people who for one reason or another leave the congregation—as opposed to being transferred to another one of our churches or another church of our fellowship. In 1990 the number of backdoor losses was 8955. "These are numbers we can't ignore," said President Mischke. "They indicate that we have to do a much better job of assimilating and retaining those whom the Lord gives us. . . . God is in charge of the harvest. We know that. But he works through the word he has entrusted to us. Some will go away. He tells us that. But our concern for souls will not let us . . . do nothing."

There is also a financial profile. In 1990 for all purposes our churches received \$140.9 million in offerings. This is an increase of \$7 million over 1989, an increase of about five percent. With inflation at 6.1 percent in 1990, offerings did not keep up with the inflation rate. Worse were the synod mission offerings: they increased one-half of one percent to \$15.6 million, \$75,000 more than the previous year. This meant that the synod lost hundreds of thousands of dollars in purchasing power during that year.

Now the disclaimer. Of course, this book doesn't even begin to tell the whole story. The whole story of the ministry of the means of grace by the WELS priesthood of all believers will be told only in God's good time. The only thing we know of that approaching revelation is it will be all grace.

James P. Schufer

A Mother's Day remembrance

by Lois K. Fager

She lived 100 years, six months, and one day. She had her hearing, sight, and sharp mind until her last breath. What a singular blessing she enjoyed!

Carolyn Hendel, my mother, was born in Red Wing, Minnesota, on Dec. 10, 1887. In the years ahead three sisters joined her family. When she was 13 a brother arrived. She was sent to tell an aunt the news and jubilantly announced, "We hit the jackpot this time!" (Telephoning would have been quicker, you say? Sure, but who had a telephone in 1901?)

Her family had been in the United States for several generations and spoke English at home. When it was time for her to go to catechism class, she had to learn the German language so she could be confirmed.

As she approached being of age, she was fond of boasting she was going to be her own boss and run her own life. The Lord taught her a hard lesson when, on her twenty-first birthday, she came down with diphtheria. After her brush with death she never forgot who was running her life.

In the early 1900s she was a milliner and so satisfied with being a career woman that she had no intentions of marrying—until William Kuether came to vicar at St. John in Red Wing. By the time he went back to the seminary, they had an "understanding." After his graduation they were married on Thanksgiving Day in 1912.

From then on Carrie's career was her husband and family. First in a northeastern Wisconsin mission area, where Will rode the caboose on the logging train from station to station. When the newfangled automobile became a reasonable mode of transportation Will had one as soon as possible, but Carrie never wanted to learn to drive it. Her cousin predicted that Will would "kill himself someday, speeding at 35 miles an hour."



Carrie was a devoted helpmeet, not necessarily seeing eye-to-eye with Will on everything. But he had wanted a spirited partner and he got one. She never shirked, she never belittled, she knew she was where she was because God put her there.

Carrie and Will raised six children. There was no doubt about the role each played in parenthood, and the children felt secure and well-loved. All six remained faithful to the Lord they were taught to love.

She had a saying for everything.

"The smartest one will keep her mouth shut" ended a lot of arguments

between her two little girls. And in the love of the Lord, we learned "What you have to do, you can do."

Carrie spent the last 15 years of her life confined to a wheelchair by crippling arthritis. She never lost her spunk, wishing once that "somebody would come and steal my arthritis."

Through all the years she lived in pain (and she would frequently wince while one just sat and talked with her), she kept her eyes and heart fastened on Jesus. Whatever happened, she would not let him go. To be with him was the crowning ambition of her life. When the use of her hands became severely restricted for other purposes, she continued to fold them in prayer.

We celebrated her hundredth birthday. She loved it. The pastor's devotion that day included a review of her life in God's hand.

Six months later God took her home. Secure now in his hands, there will be no more pain, no more

tears for her ever again. God chose her to live in his grace for more than a century. By that grace she touched many lives, and I thank him for giving her to us.



Lois Fager is a member of Beautiful Savior, Marquette Heights, Illinois. Pictured above is Carolyn Kuether with her first two grandchildren.