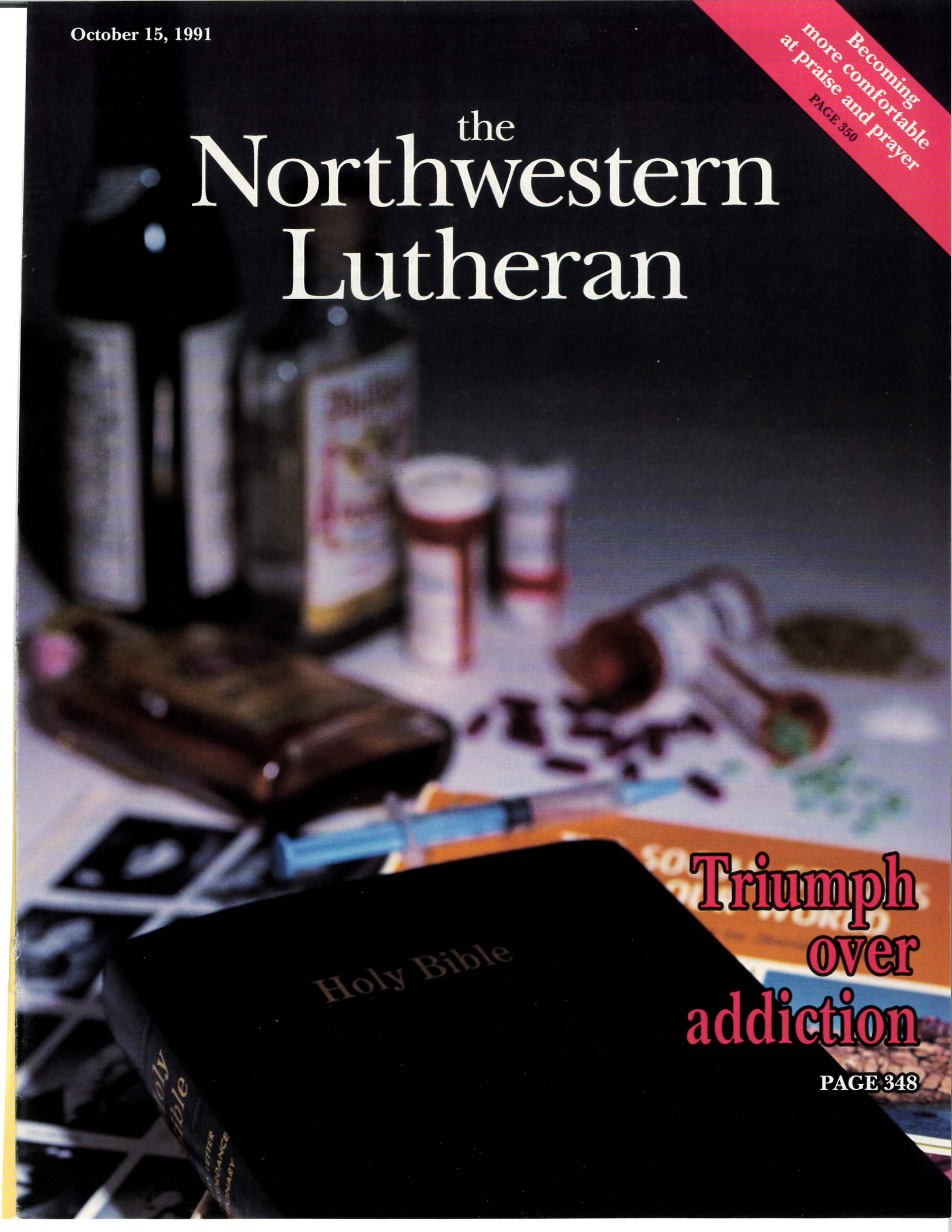


October 15, 1991

the Northwestern Lutheran

Becoming
more comfortable
at praise and prayer
PAGE 350

A photograph of a desk with a Bible, a pen, and a book titled 'SO... THE WORLD'. The Bible is in the foreground, and the book is in the background. The scene is dimly lit, with a focus on the Bible and the book.

**Triumph
over
addiction**

PAGE 348

Peace

by Richard E. Lauersdorf

"Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called sons of God" (Matthew 5:9).

"Gulf war veterans welcomed home at Labor Day programs," read the headline in the newspaper. "East-West relations after the war — the cold war ends after collapse of the coup in Moscow," ran the lead article in the weekly newsmagazine. How the world needs and hungers after peace.

Peace — an elusive commodity

Peace is not something with which the world is well stocked. Every day our world lives and breathes conflict, as the newspapers and magazines show.

Is it much different with us? How many of us are at war with ourselves over something we've done in the past, are involved in right now, or are contemplating for the future? Would any of us care to open our hearts wide and show the turmoil going on there? How many of us are at war with someone else? Wars without and within — that's what it seems to be.

Why? The answer is seriously simple and spelled in one word — sin. Conflict is caused by sin and that sin is in our hearts. There we find the peace-breaker called selfishness. The selfish person can never be a peaceful person. Let no one advance above him, gain more than he, have brighter ideas than his. He must be first, and such striving invariably leads to conflict.

A second peace-breaker is revenge. Let his dignity be wounded, his path crossed, his plans spoiled, or so it seems, and revenge starts burning in his heart. It gets worse and worse as he schemes how to get even.

The third peace-breaker is envy. Shakespeare called it "the green sickness." Envy sold Joseph into slavery, drove David into exile, threw Daniel into the lions' den, and put Jesus on trial. Where envy lurks, people roll up their sleeves, ready to quarrel, begrudging others almost anything.

Do we know people like this? Even more seriously, am I ever like that? Would I rather push ahead than back down? Hit back or hit first rather than turn the other cheek? Get even rather than patch things up?

Such serious questions, honestly answered, show how elusive a commodity peace really is.

So where is peace to be found? Not in summit meetings with endless talk about the limitation or the elimination of nuclear weapons. Nor in extensive seminars seeking to analyze and program the human being. But in Jesus. "Through him," Paul said, "God was pleased . . . to reconcile to himself all things . . . by making peace through his blood shed on the cross" (Colossians 1:20). Only in Christ and his full forgiveness can true peace be found. Without him the world cannot live at peace with itself or die at peace with God.

Peacemakers — an exclusive company

Consequently, only believers in Christ can be peacemakers. Jesus said so when he called them "sons of God." They resemble their heavenly Father, showing concern for peace as he does. They seek peace, even giving their best to obtain it, as he did on Calvary's cross. The nearer believers dwell through word and sacrament beneath the cross of the Prince of Peace the more they resemble him in daily life.

So, people of God, let's practice peace. "Blessed are the peacemakers," Jesus said. Blessed are those in the home who don't always insist on having their own way or the last word. Blessed are those in the community who share with neighbors and are concerned about others. Blessed are those in the congregation who pitch in and work for all areas of the kingdom. Blessed are those who seek correct information and support wider efforts with fellow believers in their synod.

Such are numbered among that exclusive community known as children of God. Already here on earth people will know to whom they belong, and in heaven the Father will delight in calling them his children.

This side of heaven our peace-making efforts will not be perfect, but that's no excuse to stop trying. Let our hearts hunger after that important need — peace.



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

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

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FORWARD


■ Drug and alcohol abuse is reaching epidemic proportions on our nation. The church is not immune; the problem is also "in our pews and even our pulpits," says institutional chaplain Philip Merten. His article on the next page is the first in a series about WELS members who have seen Jesus' triumph over addiction.

■ Many of us will admit that too often we talk to God only in rote recitations of memorized prayers. For some valuable help on making

your conversations with God spontaneous and meaningful, don't miss Paul Kelm's latest article on spiritual renewal, beginning on page 350.

■ Your prayers are requested for editor James Schaefer, who recently underwent surgery. Since each issue is prepared several weeks in advance of publication, by the time you read this he should, God willing, be well on the way to recovery.

DJS



Chemical dependency: Hellish but not hopeless

by Philip W. Merten

The way I look at alcoholism and other drug addiction has changed a lot during the time I've been a minister. A lot of it has to do with people like Tammy. Tammy (not her real name) is a cocaine addict I met when she came

into a drug treatment center. I ministered to her again in a hospital cardiac unit. She'd relapsed into cocaine use, and cocaine can do a real number on a person's heart muscles.

I ran into her again in Milwaukee County jail. Tammy funded her cocaine habit through prostitution. She got caught and became a recipient of county hospitality for five months.

During that time Tammy and I had a lot of long talks. She'd become an expert at stuffing her real feelings deep inside and usually smiled and spoke with a free and easy manner. But the pain still came through. She was smiling when she told me, "You know, since I've started using cocaine, I've lost my little boy, I've lost my family, I've lost my health. I've nearly lost my life a few times — and I keep going back for more. Sometimes I wonder what it's gonna take."

Her smile and easy manner tried to hide it, but inside she was screaming in agony, screaming for help. Tammy was one of the millions in our country trapped in the twisted and insane world of addiction, a world that a non-addicted person can barely begin to imagine.

When I started ministering at my first congregation I began to see the need to come to grips with the hellish phenomenon of addiction. A couple in that church — I'll call them John and Barb — admitted right from the start that they were recovering alcoholics. I welcomed their candor and the insights they shared, and for a while they were a real blessing to me and my family and my congregation.

But then things started changing. John became dissatisfied with Bible study as the way to spiritual growth, and he kept asking for books that would give it to him all at once. They spent less and less time with their recovery group or their congregation. John quit his job and started trying crazy new avenues of work, each time thinking he'd found the goose that would lay golden eggs. "Possibility thinking" became their motto, and any mention of sin in my sermons became a further excuse for them to distance themselves from the church.

One day when I called on them at their home Barb poured herself a glass of beer. I stared, and hesitated, and said something really profound like, "Can you do that, Barb?"

She answered, with a smile, "Oh, yes; I've worked my recovery program so thoroughly for so long that now this doesn't affect me at all."

I couldn't remember anything in my seminary education that covered this situation. So I said, "Okay," and went on with what I'd started to say before she'd poured the beer.

It wasn't too long before John and Barb dropped from the scene altogether, quitting the church and moving out of state with some bad debts on their heels.

Looking back on it now, I can see it all fitting together: the desire for a quick fix and the impatience with taking time to achieve goals, the perfectionism and denial of faults, the running away from problems and conflicts. It was all alcoholic thinking, and it was all leading up to relapse. But at the time all I could think was, "I don't understand this at all."

That was the first of many frustrating experiences dealing with addicts and their families. The world of chemical dependency seemed to have its own logic, language, and rules, and I didn't have a clue as to how to minister to people trapped in this world. So I began taking in all the educational opportunities on addiction I could find. I started learning things about the twisted world of addiction, such as:

- The addict's problem goes way beyond getting high; he's living a life dominated by self-hatred, resentment, loneliness, and fear.
- The addict can't just summon up the willpower and quit; he's become physically, emotionally, and spiritually bankrupt. He won't start recovering without outside help.
- The addict isn't using alcohol or drugs for fun; he's using them to anesthetize his inner pain, to try to feel "normal."
- There's no such thing as a "cure" for chemical dependence; there's only the ongoing, lifelong work

of recovery.

Serving as a missionary with Wisconsin Lutheran Institutional Ministry (WLIM) brings me into daily contact with chemically dependent people in jail, hospitals, and drug treatment units. I'm constantly finding out more about the hellish trap Satan has laid for human souls through chemical dependency.

But I'm also finding out what power Jesus has to dismantle this trap. For instance, let me tell you more about Tammy. During her time in jail I shared Jesus' free and unconditional love with her, and I could see the difference it was making.

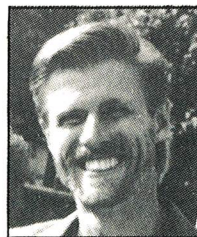
Her smiles began to be more genuine. She started asking, "Jesus forgives me; so what's keeping me from forgiving myself?"

The day Tammy was released from jail was a day of mixed feelings for me. I was glad to see her free, but I knew she was on the edge, teetering between going on with her recovery and going back to the streets.

That day also happened to be the day of a WLIM delegate meeting. I asked the delegates to pray with me for her. Together we went to the Lord and pleaded with him to surround Tammy with his protection and bind Satan from speaking his lies to her. The next day I got a call: Tammy had applied and been accepted at a long-term drug treatment center.

I've seen Tammy several times since then. She's still struggling. But now the Holy Spirit's power is helping her in her struggle.

In the rest of the articles in this series other people who have seen Jesus' triumph over addiction will tell their stories. Some will be non-addicted people who help addicts in their struggles; others will be people whose lives have been poisoned by chemical dependency. All are members of WELS congregations.



The problem is not in the gutter. It's in our pews and even our pulpits. So is the triumph: the triumph of Jesus over addiction.

Philip Merten is a chaplain with Wisconsin Lutheran Institutional Ministry.

Revitalizing our spiritual communication

by Paul E. Kelm

Alex grew up in a traditional religious culture. His Christian education emphasized memorizing and answering questions of fact, with written examinations to solidify learning. Such “passive” (sit and listen) and “cognitive” (aimed at rational comprehension) approaches meant that Alex knew his Bible well, but didn’t feel comfortable expressing himself spiritually. Alex’s church prized reverent dignity in worship. Emotionalism and subjectivism were evils frequently condemned. As a result, Alex’s faith and worship were objectively focused on God and his grace, but experience had taught Alex to stifle religious emotion and question “personal” spirituality.

Peer pressure is an aspect of every religious culture. Alex learned early on that if you sang too loudly, people in the pew ahead would turn with a chilling look. Parents reserved God-talk for formally religious settings and used memorized prayers. The unwritten norms of Alex’s friendships ruled out anything overtly spiritual. Alex got the message.

That’s one explanation for the fact that Alex’s faith is largely nonverbal. There is another explanation.

It wasn’t the cat that got Alex’s tongue. It was the serpent. Failing in his effort to keep Alex from the word of renewal, Satan sought to frustrate God’s intent for renewal — the expression of faith. A handy collection of half-truths and whole-cloth lies are his means to stifle Christian communication. Recognize variations on these themes?

- Worship is what you do in church.
- Too much religion will make you mad.
- When all else fails, try prayer.
- Religion is a personal thing.

The Christian faith is for communicating. When the Pharisees chided Jesus because the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices, Jesus told them that the stones would cry out if his people didn’t. Praise will out! In describing his self-imposed exile from God, David wrote: “When I

kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.”

Christians need to talk with God. The confession of faith, before God and man, is so essential to Christianity that Paul says: “It is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.”

Without a healthy praise-life, Christianity becomes mundane — focused on the three-dimensional, five-sensual world around us. Without a healthy prayer-life, God becomes distant and unrelated to the personal issues of “real” life. Without the confession of faith in mutual encouragement and admonition, Christians are isolated, left to fend for themselves spiritually. Without the confession of faith in Christian witness, Christians are insulated from those whose stark unbelief makes faith more precious and mission more significant.

Praise

Let’s explore the components of our spiritual communication — the praise and prayer that are a Christian’s response to God.

Praise is the glory due God for all that he is, the awe inspired by all that he’s done, and the gratitude of a forgiven child who dares to say, “This is my God.” It is natural to the new life in Christians to echo the psalmist: “Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord: let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.”

You can ogle a newborn and coo about how cute. Or you can marvel at God’s creative wisdom, power, and love in that gift of life. You can wake up grumbling about short nights, unbearable heat or cold, and the rush hour that will launch another day of stress. Or you can awaken to hear birds, smell coffee, touch a loved one, see a sunrise, and praise God for another day of opportunity. You can butt your head against problems, hassle with people, and pop a pill. Or you can tick off undeserved blessings, thank God for supporters and challengers, and hum a hymn.

*Praise
isn't just a
psalm or song.
It's an attitude.
See God behind
the staging of life,
and experience wonder,
joy, confidence,
and thankfulness.*



Praise isn't just a psalm or a song. It's an attitude, a way of life. Stifle the emotions of praise or quarantine hymns in the church, and your outlook on life turns sour. See God behind the staging of life, and experience wonder, joy, confidence, and thankfulness, and your outlook on life will soar. Paul urges: "Whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable . . . think about such things. . . . And the God of peace will be with you" (Philippians 4:8,9).

Perhaps in this scientific era there is less marvel at the wonders of creation. Perhaps in a democratic society concepts such as "King" and "Lord" don't put us in our place. Perhaps this jaded generation sees too little, expects too much, and trivializes superlatives like "awesome." Perhaps a culture that has psychologized sin away cannot value the price Jesus paid for forgiveness. Perhaps this self-centered age has simply forgotten God. For certain, fallen human nature has never wanted to praise the exalted God.

That's why such communication from the Christian is initiated by God's communication to the Christian. The word of God cuts your sinful legs out

from under you and leaves you in a posture of praise, then lifts you off your feet with the indescribable joy of pardon. The word of God gets your chin off your chest with the wonders and promises of God, so that you can see beyond your feet and marvel at the greatness of God.

Want some suggestions? Read a psalm each morning on arising and reflect on what it says about your God while you wash and dress. Learn a hymn verse-of-the-week so that the melody you can't get out of your head has words worth remembering. Listen to recorded praise, classical works of Christian art, traditional hymns or contemporary praise songs, on the way to work or in a setting of meditative quiet. Let yourself go in a sing-along or just let the tears of grateful faith run down your cheek. Add a familiar hymn or an antiphonal psalm to your family devotion.

Prayer

Prayer is a child's jabbering to her father about the events of the day, and it is an adult's wrestling with the Lord whose wisdom seems hidden. Prayer

can be a stream-of-consciousness commentary to an omnipresent Friend, as well as solemn supplication before the Lord of the universe. Prayer is taking what's on my heart and laying it on the Father's heart. It's the valve that releases emotional distress and psychological pressure. It's the catharsis that gets the evil out of my system. It's a mental inventory of people and situations in need of divine direction. And it's a thank-you note to the giver of all good things. Prayer is all of that, in Jesus' name. You see, Jesus makes prayer make sense.

Without Jesus, we don't pray. We think, why would God listen to me? Why should he care? I'm insignificant to him; worse, he's angry with me. What good would it do to pray? God's going to do what he feels like anyway.

Enter Jesus. Jesus takes away the guilt distancing us from our God and reintroduces us to the Father who loves us. Jesus is the living proof of how much God cares, how well he understands, how intimately he is involved with us. Jesus assures us that God has decisions pending, waiting to hear what we ask in our Savior's name.

Without Jesus, we don't pray. We get all wrapped up in what we're doing and just forget about the One who gave us things to do. Or we're so embarrassed about what we've been doing that we just can't pray. Sometimes we're angry about life and treat God as if it were his fault. Then, when we realize how foolish that is, we feel foolish to pray.

Some of us are intimidated by the thought of stuttering before the ruler of the universe. Some of us aren't sure what God wants to hear from us and what to ask for. It seems weird, at first, just thinking prayers to God, and the mere thought of praying out loud can make your neck sweat. But mostly, we just don't feel like it.

Enter Jesus. You listen to him in his word, and somehow you feel like saying something back. Watch him in the word, and you just know he can do something about what's troubling you, too. Jesus models

prayer, booming one-sentence prayers in public and all-nighters by himself. Jesus teaches prayer, because the disciples had just as much trouble as we do getting over our inferiority complex.

The Lord's Prayer is what he taught; and when you think about it, that's still the best way to cover the prayer bases. But I think it's when you see Jesus carrying your cross to Calvary that you just have to say something. Say something, in Jesus name!

Want some suggestions? Use drive time or mindless work for short prayers, clearing with God all the things that run through your mind. Try "praying in pictures" rather than words as you envision people and projects. It's that kind of conversation with God Paul had in mind when he wrote: "Pray continually." Associate repeated situations with short prayers: mealtimes, exams, familiar temptations, trying situations, decisions, and the like.

Jesus encouraged us to also go "into your room, close the door, and pray to your Father." Structured prayer time best follows meditation on Scripture. Listening to God triggers meaningful response.

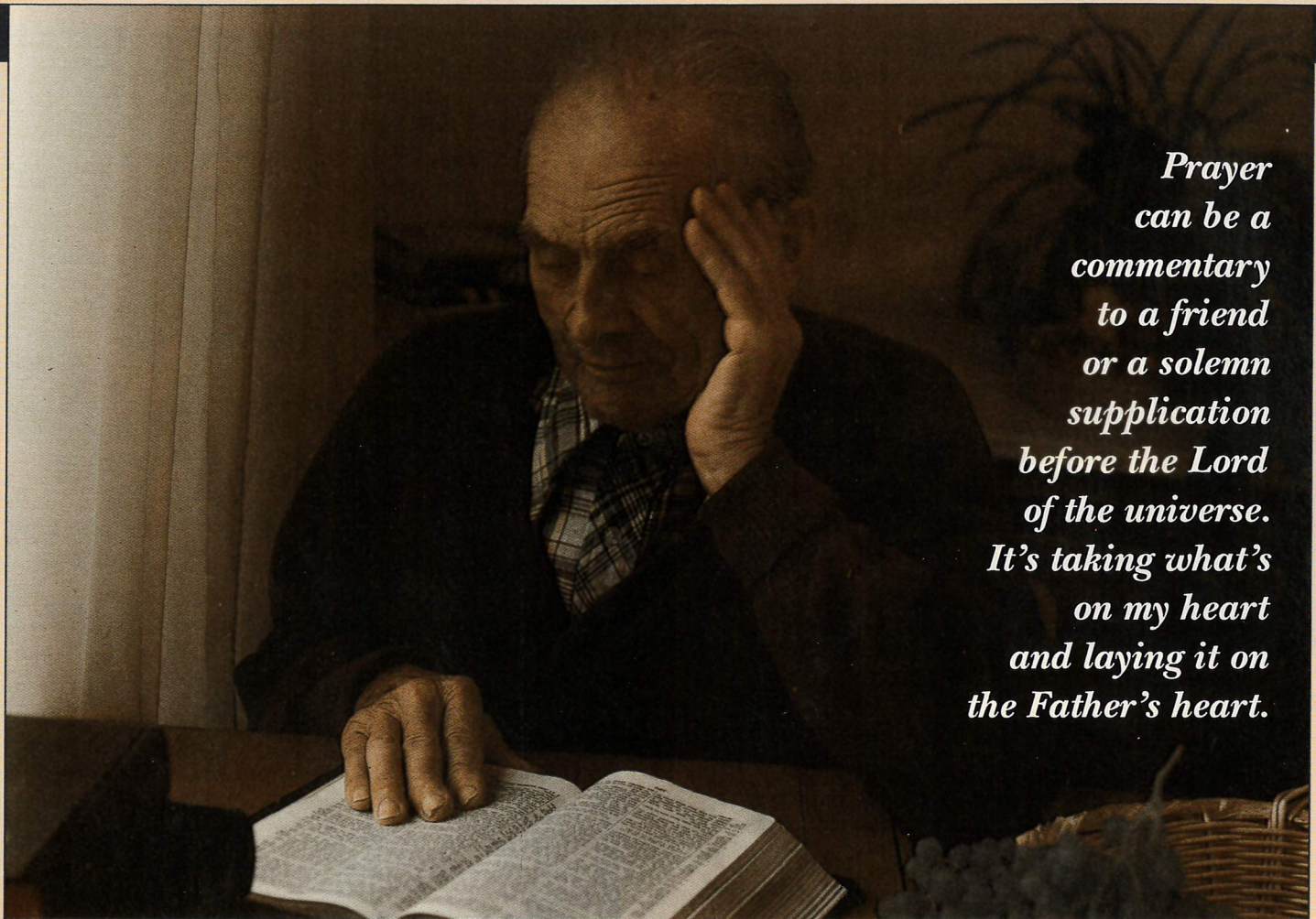
I'd suggest the acronym **TRIP** as an outline for prayer. Begin with T — **Thanksgiving** for blessings enjoyed and prayers answered.

R is for **Repentance**. Clear away the wrongs and failures, the negative attitudes and ungodly feelings, always with the reminder that Jesus stamped PAID over all those sins.

I stands for **Intercession**. Remember before God your family and friends, your church and its missions, your government and nation, your world and people whose plight reaches your heart via the evening news.

P is for **Petitions**. Ask about whatever's bothering you. Ask also for the Christian character, gifts, and strength to face the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

It will organize and discipline your prayer life to keep a prayer journal or, at least, a "to pray" list. Keep track of people who need your intercession



*Prayer
can be a
commentary
to a friend
or a solemn
supplication
before the Lord
of the universe.
It's taking what's
on my heart
and laying it on
the Father's heart.*

and projects that need God's intervention. A prayer partner will encourage and point your prayer life, praying with you and for you. Your family is the first place to share prayer. Your church can help you identify prayer partners.

Spiritual communication

Relationships are only as healthy as their communication. Without communication, distance separates people, trust is damaged, hurts are magnified. Our relationship with God is no different. We need to hear him, understand him, accept what's on his mind. He wants to hear from us — how we feel, what's happening, where he fits in.

I suspect the primary reason for poor spiritual communication is that we don't listen very well. When we don't hear God's word, read God's word, meditate on God's word, there isn't much to say or much inclination to say it. Slowly, we shut God out of our life, only to discover how bitter or hollow or frustrating life is when God is on the fringe.

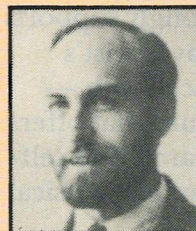
I suspect the second reason for poor spiritual communication is that we're not very observant. We miss what God has done in our world and is doing in

our lives; we have little about which to ask, less about which to marvel, and nothing for which to say thanks. Closing our eyes to the evidence of God in life is inevitably to see fears and worries everywhere.

The third reason for poor spiritual communication is simply lack of experience. We can become more comfortable at praise and prayer, more eager and more voluble. God puts us at ease with kindly invitations to come to him. God breaks the ice and bares his heart to us in Scripture. He gives us words for response in the psalms, discussion starters in the epistles, and historical examples of spiritual conversation throughout. The Holy Spirit turns groans into petitions and, I'm sure, a "wow" into a hymn.

And it gets easier, this communicating with God. We become less self-conscious, less guarded, more spontaneous and open. We become ourselves, children of a heavenly Father.

Alex, tell your Father how you feel.



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

Malachi, left to right: John Kisting, Vicki Houtler, Dan Saar, Suzanne Grzanna, Wes Schmandt

Music with a message

by Dorothy J. Sonntag

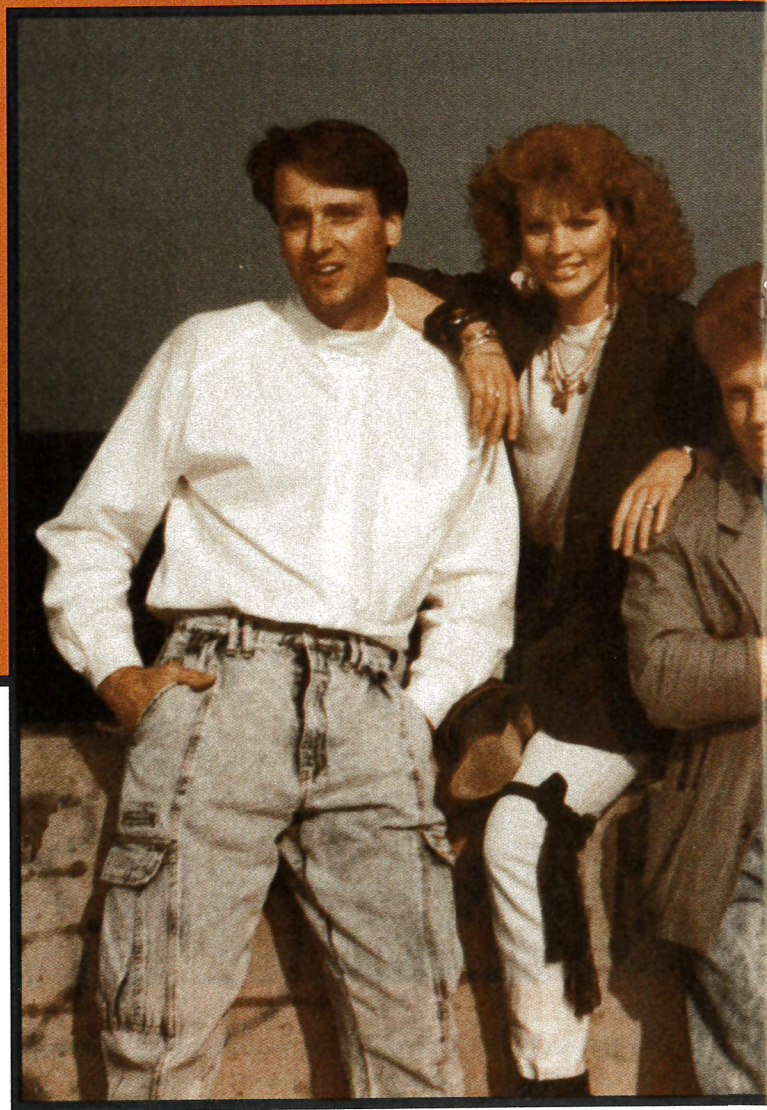
“I’m a Christian first, a musician second,” says John Kisting. “I think everyone in Malachi feels that.”

Although rock music fans know Malachi as a group that performs contemporary Christian music, Kisting, the guitarist, is quick to point out there’s more to Malachi. “The band is five people,” he says. “Malachi Ministries is anywhere from six to a dozen people.” They minister in a variety of ways. Since its beginning in 1983, about 40 different people have been associated with the group, which takes its name from the Hebrew word for “my messenger.”

The ministry is an arm of Christ Lutheran Church in Pewaukee, Wisconsin. The congregation provides a place for the band’s weekly practice and includes some funds for Malachi in the yearly budget. The church also loaned Malachi the several thousand dollars needed to travel to Los Angeles to play at the WELS youth rally in July.

Kisting is grateful for the congregation’s encouragement. “It’s a pretty conservative congregation,” he says, “but they believe in what we’re doing. We really appreciate that.”

Christ’s pastor, James Behling, strongly supports Malachi. “Malachi’s mission is to relay Christ’s message to young people who are faced with — and too often caught up in — a culture that offers confusing messages, changing standards, and self-centered values. Malachi is more than just musical performance.”



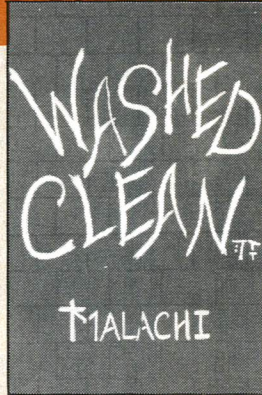
Behling helps train counselors who work with Malachi. “They’ve assisted in ministry to the handicapped, and in suicide and drug abuse ministries,” he says. “Although their music ministry reaches many people at once, the one-to-one ministries are no less important.”

The counselors are present at the concerts. “Before the concert we’ll announce they’re there,” says Kisting. “There might be people who might be suffering. If they are moved by the message the music presented, there should be somebody there who can help them. We’re ministering by the message we’re presenting and the Christian values we present on stage, but also we’re available if they need someone to talk to.”

The group intersperses its gospel-based music with gospel-based talk. “We do three or four songs. Then we’ll talk. We don’t preach at them. We talk to them.”



LORI KISTING



WASHED CLEAN
by Malachi

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Northwestern Publishing House

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(Milwaukee area 475-6600)

Stock #34-2072 **\$7.98**

Malachi funds most of its activities through the sale of cassette tapes, T-shirts, posters, and buttons. "It costs money for publicity, for our sound company, to rent auditoriums, to travel to the concert. We're not trying to be commercial. Those extra merchandising items are the way this ministry funds itself." The band recently produced a new tape, *Washed Clean*, available from Northwestern Publishing House.

Malachi's members work or attend school in addition to their ministry. "It does become tiresome," Kisting, a sales engineer, admits. "We practice every Sunday afternoon. When we do concerts, sometimes we're gone overnight. I do a lot of the promotional work. And it takes a lot of time and effort for writing and recording."

He's glad his wife, Lori, doesn't complain about the time he devotes to Malachi. "I give a lot of credit to my wife. We met when Malachi was play-

ing at a retreat. Maybe that's why she's so supportive of us — if it hadn't been for Malachi, we might not have met."

Kisting acknowledges that some people don't think rock music and the gospel can mix. "Rock in itself is not bad," he says. "Unfortunately, rock music has gotten a bad rap because of the people who made rock music famous. It's not rock music itself that's bad, but the people who are doing the music, and the message they're giving."

Kisting says he hasn't received many negative comments about Malachi. "I think a lot of parents are supportive of us, even though they don't like rock music. They like that we're there for the kids. Some people say our music is loud, and it is. But we make sure the lyrics stand out."

The group writes its own music. "Usually I start with the basic song," Kisting says. "I write the lyrics. Wes, the drummer, adds the rhythm. Vicki [the lead singer] and Suzanne [on keyboard] write a melody. Dan writes the bass. It's very much a collaborative effort."

The result is the gospel in music. Music that teens will listen to. Music with a message: "We're washed clean/by the blood/Christians, live for Christ/Be messengers of Christ."



Dorothy Sonntag is assistant editor for the Northwestern Lutheran.

Students help with VBS

Students traveled across the country this past summer to volunteer their services for cross-cultural evangelism outreach through vacation Bible school.

Volunteers from the three synodical preparatory schools — Martin Luther Prep, Michigan Lutheran Seminary, and Northwestern Prep — worked with Project HOST (Hispanic Outreach, Study, and Training). The 13 students who participated studied Spanish language and culture for three weeks in Guadalajara, Mexico, and then assisted with vacation Bible school at San Juan, a Spanish mission in El Paso, Texas. Over 70 children attended.

“Without Project HOST, a mission congregation like San Juan would have difficulty in handling so many children,” said Pastor James Connell. “But with HOST’s help they could. And they did.”



Mwembezi means “shepherd,” and for a full year the people of Mwembezi Lutheran Mission in Zambia, Africa, had been asking the Lord to send another shepherd to lead their flock. At long last Pastor Philip Birner, shown with wife Sue, was led to accept the call. The Birners left for Africa in September.

Also in the news

Gerald Davis, one of the founders of Kingdom Workers and its treasurer since its beginning in 1989, died August 13. Davis, 59, suffered a stroke. He was a member of Zion, Hartland, Wis. . . . Missionary **Gary Schroeder**, a 16-year veteran of the synod’s Hong Kong mission, celebrated his 25th anniversary in the ministry in August. . . . **Bishop Herbert W. Chilstrom**, 59, was reelected head of the 5.2 million member Evangelical Lutheran Church in America at the church’s convention in Orlando, Fla. . . . Prof. David Valleskey, elected by the convention as chairman of the **Commission on Special Ministries**, has declined to serve because of a heavy work load. Pastor Kieth Kuschel of Trumbull, Conn., has been appointed to the vacancy. . . . **Finalists in the National Geographic Society’s geography bee** in Minnesota included three students from WELS schools: Christian Eisenbeis of Burnsville, Sarah Spessard of Cannon Falls, and Benjamin Lemke of St. Louis Park. . . . Pastor Roland Cap Ehlke declined to serve another term as president of the **WELS Historical Institute**. Elected in his place is Dr. James Kiecker of Wisconsin Lutheran College. Dr. Arnold Lehmann, retired from the faculty of Northwestern College, is the new editor of the *Historical Journal*, a semi-annual publication of the Institute.



PHOTOS BY DOROTHY SONNTAG



More than one way to communicate: Rod Walters uses his computer; Joy Maresh uses sign language.

Convention for the hearing impaired

Two languages — English and American Sign Language — were in use at the WELS convention for the hearing impaired, held in Milwaukee July 26-28. The convention offered workshops, worship, recreation, displays, and fellowship for over 100 participants.

The group discussed ways of ministering to the hearing impaired. "Over 80 percent of the deaf are unchurched," said Pastor James Naumann of Palatine, Ill. "The work is urgent. We ought not to waste any time."

Some of the people with impaired hearing talked about the difficulties they face in church. They need qualified interpreters,

they said, and experiences that fit a deaf person's needs. "Treat us as individuals," said one participant, "not as a group. Remember I'm a person."

"I go to the interpreted service," added another speaker, "but I want to be involved in other activities so I can feel I am part of the church."

Rod Walters, who lost his hearing as an adult, pointed out that people who become deaf as adults "face different barriers. They may not know sign language." Walters brought the lap top computer he uses to communicate. He read the screen as his wife typed the speakers' words.

Interpreters who met in a work-

shop on signing the worship service agreed that hymns are often more difficult to sign than sermons. "We don't want the sermon written out — just the text and maybe an outline," said one interpreter. "But it's not fair to get the hymns on Friday or Saturday. We need the better part of a week."

The convention was sponsored by the WELS Committee for the Hearing Impaired. Information about services available can be obtained by contacting the WELS Special Ministries office, 2929 N. Mayfair Rd., Milwaukee, WI 53222.

— Dorothy J. Sonntag

Nurse is off to Africa

"Our daughter has gone off to Africa." Most recently, Jerry and Darlene Zolldan of Anchorage, Alaska, were added to the number of Wisconsin Synod families who can say that.

Their daughter Gretchen was commissioned at Pilgrim, Minneapolis, in June. She has since left for Central Africa where she will practice her nursing skills at the

Mwembeshi Medical Mission in Zambia.

More nurses are needed. If this highly specialized form of ministry has caught your attention, more information can be obtained by writing Mrs. Linda Phelps-Golembiewski, 1576 W. Howard



Nurse Gretchen Zolldan (center) with her parents, Jerry and Darlene Zolldan.

Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53221; 414-383-1131.

Kingdom Workers hold convention

WELS Kingdom Workers, organized to foster support for mission work, met at St. Paul school in New Ulm, Minn., Aug. 2-4 for its biennial convention. The organization's purpose is to heighten awareness of mission needs and opportunities, to coordinate lay efforts in mission work, and to promote and provide support for mission programs. In the first six months of 1991 Kingdom Workers gave over \$47,000 to mission projects.

Those attending the convention heard reports on programs funded by Kingdom Workers in Hong Kong, Africa, Taiwan, and Colombia, and lay evangelism programs in Florida and Idaho.

The convention also sponsored a mission fair, with 35 WELS organizations participating. The displays drew over 350 visitors, accord-

ing to Kingdom Workers executive director Mark Krueger.

"The most important thing that's going to happen in the next two years," said president Robert Grebe, "is Communicating Christ." Grebe was referring to a videotaped set of lessons for lay people to use in evangelism.

"I have a dream," said Grebe. "I want 4000 people — one for every 100 WELS members — using the tapes."

Grebe has another dream. He wants Kingdom Workers to help put into action a "WELS Soul Saver Corps" of lay people willing to give a few years to full-time evangelism. "The people are there," said Grebe. "We need to find them, equip them, and send them."

— Dorothy J. Sonntag

Southeastern Wisconsin District news

The inner city vacation Bible school conducted at **Siloah, Milwaukee**, drew a record attendance of 369 children. The VBS was made possible by donations totaling over \$3000 from throughout the synod. An intensive program during the three summers from 1970-72 (attendance averaging 315 per summer) was discontinued because of lack of funds and workers. From '83-'87 attendance dropped to below 100. With increased donations and more than 80 volunteers, 1991 was again a record year. . . . Two Indiana churches celebrated the tenth anniversary of their pastors' ordination. Holy Scripture, Fort Wayne, celebrated the anniversary of **Glenn Schwanke**. Divine Savior, Indianapolis, celebrated the anniversary of **Daniel Kelm**.

— Robert A. Sievert

Western Wisconsin District news

Immanuel of LaCrosse noted the 40th year in the ministry of teacher **Ursel E. Seidl** on June 2. During his years of service he has been principal, organist, and choir director in addition to teaching no less than three (sometimes five) grades in his classroom each year. . . .

Pastor Wilbert Schulz of St. Stephen, Beaver Dam, celebrated 55 years in the ministry in June. He has been at St. Stephen since June, 1979. . . . **Pastor Fred Werner** celebrated the 50th anniversary of his ordination at St. Paul, Onalaska, on June 30. . . . **Grace, LaCrosse**, celebrated the 25th anniversary of its building dedication on June 2. . . . Articles by **Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Service** counselors in the district are appearing in the district newsletter for the benefit of pastors, teachers, and congregational presidents.

— Elton C. Stroh

Obituaries

Lora Haelhke 1906-1991

Lora Haelhke was born Sept. 10, 1906, in Hamburg, Wis. She died on Sept. 3, 1991, in Marshfield, Wisconsin.

She graduated from Wisconsin Lutheran High School in Milwaukee and attended Dr. Martin Luther College in New Ulm, Minnesota.

She taught in Lutheran elementary schools in Tomah, Hortonville, Beaver Dam, Athens, and Medford, Wis. for a total of 31 years.

She is survived by several cousins.

Funeral services were held in Athens, Wisconsin.

John A. Westendorf 1923-1991

John A. Westendorf was born Aug. 23, 1923, in Saginaw, Michigan. He died Sept. 1, 1991, in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

A graduate of Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Northwestern College, and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, he entered the ministry in 1949. He served churches in Williamston and Livonia, Michigan; Brookfield, Wisconsin; and Saline, Michigan. Among the offices he held, he is best known as a member of the synod's Committee on Relief, serving from 1957 until 1991, and as chairman for many years.

He is survived by his wife, Marion; two sons, Jonathan and David (Kathleen); two grandsons; one sister; and three brothers.



Mission of the WELS

As men, women, and children united in faith and worship by the word of God, the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod exists to make disciples throughout the world for time and for eternity, using the gospel to win the lost for Christ and to nurture believers for lives of Christian service, all to the glory of God.

THE BIBLE IN 365 READINGS

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

- Nov.**
- 1 Ezekiel 20:45 — 22
 - 2 Eze 23 — 24:14
 - 3 Eze 24:15 — 25
 - 4 Eze 26 — 28
 - 5 Eze 29 — 32:16
 - 6 Eze 32:17 — 34
 - 7 Eze 35 — 37
 - 8 Eze 38 — 39; Psalm 37
 - 9 Eze 40 — 41; Ps 24
 - 10 Eze 42 — 45:8
 - 11 Eze 45:9 — 48
 - 12 Esther 1 — 5
 - 13 Est 6 — 10; Ps 83
 - 14 Psalms 137, 42, 129, 126; Malachi
 - 15 Ps 89; Mark 1:1-31
 - 16 Mk 1:32 — 3; Ps 146
 - 17 Mk 4; Ps 107
 - 18 Mk 5 — 6:29; Ps 142
 - 19 Mk 6:30 — 8:26
 - 20 Mk 8:27 — 10:31
 - 21 Mk 10:32 — 12:37
 - 22 Mk 12:38 — 14:31
 - 23 Mk 14:32 — 15
 - 24 Ps 22, 16, 21, 67; Mk 16
 - 25 Ephesians 1 — 3; Ps 48
 - 26 Eph 4 — 6
 - 27 Song of Solomon
 - 28 Romans 1 — 2
 - 29 Ro 3 — 5
 - 30 Ro 6 — 8

NEW!



I would like to know

by Paul E. Kelm

As Christians, we want to know what God has to say about questions that trouble or puzzle us, and we want to be satisfied with answers that are derived from God's word. *I Would Like to Know*, compiled by the popular Northwestern Lutheran series by the same name, addresses matters of Christian faith and life about which any Christian might have questions. It covers a broad range of topics from abortion to worship — 87 in all. Pastor Kelm's answers are not intended to be exhaustive treatments of the subjects listed. Rather, they are just brief answers to specific questions, and they are supported by holy Scripture. 176 pages. Paperback.

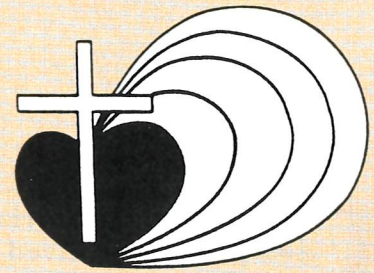
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The net

Matthew 13:47-50

by Mark E. Braun

The Jewish historian Josephus, who lived a generation after Jesus, said there were more than 200 villages and towns in Galilee in his day, the smallest of which contained more than 15,000 people.

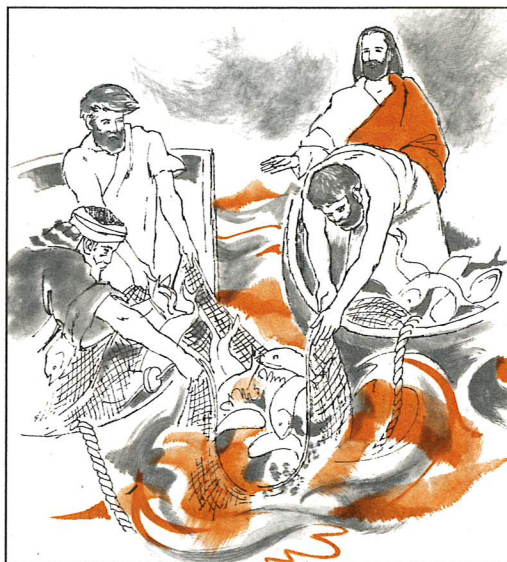
Although he may have exaggerated, his depiction of first century Galilee is accurate. It was a bustling, densely populated corner of the Roman empire, crowded with merchants and craftsmen, farmers and fishermen. The hub around which all this activity occurred was the harp-shaped lake of Galilee (a "sea" only to those who haven't seen many other bodies of water).

It was hardly a surprise to see fishermen there stretching their nets across the water or sorting their catch for market.

Yet when Jesus selected this scene to illustrate another truth about the kingdom, there were at least two surprises in this picture.

One surprise is how wide the kingdom sweeps. "Once again," he said, "the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish." Fishermen used long trawling nets, with corks attached to keep one edge afloat while lead weights dragged the other edge along the lake's bottom. The net was drawn through the water by two fishing boats, then pulled together by long ropes. Unlike sport fishermen who choose lure, bait, and hook to catch a certain kind of fish, this net entrapped "all kinds of fish."

The wide sweep of Jesus' kingdom is no surprise to us, but such a notion was hardly self-evident to his initial audience. First century messianic expectations did not offer great prospects for Gentile converts. A favorite rabbinic blessing pronounced: "Blessed are you, Lord our God, king of the world, that you have not made me a Gentile or a servant or a woman." Jesus was disparaged for being too eager to welcome



SALLY SCHAEFLER

the wrong sort of people.

But the net of the gospel stretches across man-made divisions of culture and skin color and ethnic origin. That's no surprise any more!

The second surprise is that although the kingdom sweeps wide, the catch is narrow. "When [the net] was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away." Sinai laws distinguished between clean and unclean seafood, but the distinction would not be so visible in the kingdom. "The angels will

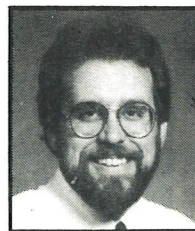
come and separate the wicked from the righteous." Those in whom the Spirit created saving faith are declared good; those who refused the Savior remain bad and are "thrown . . . into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

It's not enough, Jesus is saying, to be gathered into the external net of the gospel. Not everyone who hears the good news believes it, and not everyone affiliated with visible Christendom has come into the kingdom. "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord' will enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 7:21). The right bloodline is no guarantee; Paul said, "Not all who are descended from Israel are Israel" (Romans 9:6). You have to be more than a brother-in-law of the Lord.

It is tempting to speculate who will be reckoned good fish and who will be thrown away. But that's not our business, and now's not the right time.

The Savior's net still sweeps the sea of humanity. Jesus is still catching men and women for the kingdom.

Next: The owner of a house.



Mark Braun is director of spiritual programming and instructor of theology at Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee.

The pursuit of happiness

Recently a cartoon appeared in the *New Yorker* which pictures a lad on his tricycle and next to him a little girl holding a large kite. A leafy vine encircles the porch pillar behind them. Overhead the sky shows a single wispy cloud. Neither of these children appears to have a worry in the world. Yet the caption reads: "I can't wait to grow up and be happy."

I clipped that cartoon because it expressed so well what many are seeking: happiness. Young people look to adulthood as that time in life when they will finally discover happiness. And those with gray hair dream of the idyllic days of youth. Where is happiness to be found?

Thomas Jefferson declared that the pursuit of happiness, along with life and liberty, is one of the inherent and unalienable rights with which the creator has endowed all people. Jefferson argues that "to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men" and that when government is destructive of these rights, people have the right to alter or abolish it. This doctrine suggests that one of the purposes of government is to help people be happy. It is a large assignment and perhaps a reason why citizens find fault with government.

The Greek philosopher Aristotle, who lived four centuries before Christ, took up the subject of happiness in his *Nicomachean Ethics*. Aristotle maintained that every human action and pursuit aims at some good. What is the ultimate good? His answer: the happy life. "Happiness . . . is the end of action."

But how to be happy? To the poor man, happiness is to be wealthy. To the person who is sick, happiness is to be well. To the student in school, happiness is completing successfully the course of studies. Yet there are many people, healthy, wealthy, and wise who are not happy.

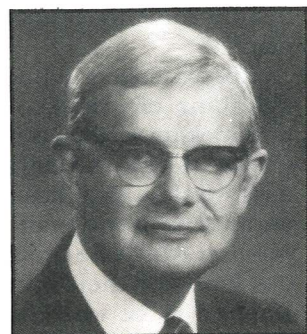
Aristotle concludes that the life of thought is the best life, the life most likely to bring happiness. "Those who wish for an independent pleasure should seek it in philosophy." What seems to Aristotle as the most likely way to pursue happiness has hardly won universal acclaim and even fewer takers.

In the generation of believers which followed the apostles of our Lord, there was a pastor named Ignatius who served as bishop of the church at Antioch, the city from which Paul set out on his mission journeys. Ignatius pursued happiness in a way quite different from those suggested by Jefferson or Aristotle.

Ignatius was brought to Rome to suffer death by being thrown to the lions. He looked forward to his martyrdom with joy. To the church at Rome he wrote: "I know where my happiness lies! I am now beginning to be a disciple. May nothing turn me aside, for I want Jesus Christ! Let fire and cross and beasts be my lot — only let me come to Jesus Christ!"

Ignatius pursued happiness by way of the cross of Jesus Christ. There is no sure happiness for anyone apart from that cross.

Victor H. Prange



Victor Prange is pastor of Peace, Janesville, Wisconsin.

Don't replace God with wisdom

In the article "Don't be stupid" (June 15), Pastor Schnick argues that philosophers shouldn't be seeking wisdom by trying to stamp out stupidity, but the analogies used to support this argument fall short. It may be true that if a doctor relieves sickness, health is the outcome, or that if lawyers banish injustice, justice will rule. However, it is not true that if we remove stupidity, wisdom will take its place.

The absence of stupidity is not the definition of wisdom. The problem with seeking wisdom is not its emphasis but rather the devil's power to make wisdom and those who attain it more important than God. Those who are truly wise are fully aware of the limits of their minds. Socrates claimed to be wise not because of how much he knew, but because he realized how much he had to learn.

*Edith M. Siemers
Milwaukee, Wisconsin*

Just say no

When one hears "theological errors . . . millennial predictions that warp Scripture," and teachings that diminish God's grace (I would like to know, June 15) can anyone honestly say that such teachers have "respect for the Scriptures"?

Can we objectively say that such teachers are characterized with a "commitment to Christ"? It is better for us to identify their "compromised teaching" as false doctrine and such teachers as false prophets.

Speaking of false prophets Christ said, "By their fruit you will recognize them" (Matthew 7:20). Error and truth are as different as black and white. John urges us to reject such false prophets: "If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take him into your house or welcome him. Anyone who welcomes him shares in his wicked work" (2 John 10,11). God's word does not promote the toleration of error; rather, the child of God will swiftly and vigorously renounce the spiritual poison of the false prophet.

Our nation has adopted a "Just

Say No" policy to stem the use of illegal drugs. How much more vigorously should we oppose the drugs of the soul, the poisons of false doctrine. When the enticement to take the poison of heresy is great, let us give the sheep of our flock the Scriptural advice: Just say no.

*Leroy P. Dux
Muskegon, Michigan*

Decision of synod convention

When my four granddaughters grow up I would like to see each of them succeed in whatever she pursues, limited only by her talent and drive — certainly *not* her gender.

At the 1991 synod convention here in New Ulm it was declared by vote of the delegates that all women are subject to all men. This view of scripture was not unanimous, either in committee or on the convention floor.

Certainly it was ill-timed — when we are trying to recruit our brightest young women into the teaching ministry. (Where I understand they will not be allowed to teach adult males or even vote in a faculty meeting.)

Lest you think there is an escape route, this edict applies to life outside the church body as well! Can you picture a doctor subject to her orderly? Or a judge subject to her stenographer? How about a teacher being subject to her janitor? Is then the pursuit of such careers a sin?

At the convention there were other voices expressing sound judgement. For the sake of my granddaughters, and yours, may they yet be heard.

*William Tacke
New Ulm, Minnesota*

Saving souls vs. new programs

I read with great sorrow the continued devastation of our Mission programs among the Apache Indians. It started last year; teachers were cut, necessary aids were taken away. The remaining people tried to take up the slack. People who were overworked now found themselves trying to shoulder the entire burdens.

It happened again this year, only the cuts have been more extensive. Not only at East Fork which we are familiar with, but also other Indian missions.

The reason given is the shortage of funds. This for me is hard to understand. If we have abundance of money to support new programs of the synod, ranging from the controversial Church Growth Movement Program to our Mass Media Ministry, surely we should be able to find some funds for our Indian brothers and sisters in Christ.

I feel the upcoming Christmas 1991 outreach, "Precious is the Child," completely misses the target of delivering the message of our Lord to the unbelievers. This national television presentation could run into hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Could we better use our resources to save the souls of the Apaches and others?

*Robert F Koester
Lakeville, Indiana*

Pastor Robert Hartman, administrator for evangelism, responds:

The decision for allocating funds for the Apache missions is made by the Board for World Missions. Budgeted funds are not being used for "Precious is the Child," which is supported by voluntary donations.

Sex education

I am a concerned parent. I would like to warn parents of children going to public schools. Do not let your children enter a course in sex education. Most do not teach abstinence, but that sex in a "caring, loving relationship" is perfectly fine.

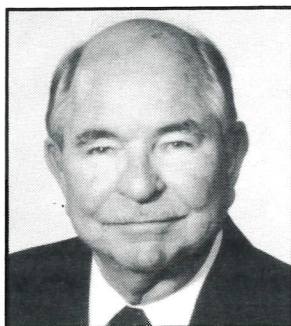
Parents, get involved in your children's school. Faith in Christ and morals matter.

*Jay Gottschalk
Racine, 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.*

Another one of those church conferences was held the other day in Englewood, Colorado. Participating in the interdenominational conference were about 250 pastors with Sunday worship attendance of 1000 or more, together with other church staffers and business people. The purpose of the conference, funded by Episcopal businessman Robert C. Buford, was to find ways for congregations to attract more people without compromising their message.

A number of experts on church growth principles added muscle to the conference. Among the experts were George Barna, George Gallup Jr., Lyle Schaller, and Tom Sine — icons in the church growth movement. A less likely participant was Peter Drucker, the octogenarian management consultant to many of the Fortune 500 companies in the United States over two generations. Among business consultants his name is spoken mostly with awe.



Of the four church growth experts mentioned above, I have heard three of them speak at some length. Judging from that experience as well as their written record, Peter Drucker's advice to the conference must have been of a different nature. To say that is not a put-down of the church growth movement.

I share the judgment of Prof. David Valleskey that one "can probably pick up a few helpful hints" from the church growth folks. One of these "helpful hints," Barna pointed out to the conference, is embedded in 1 Corinthians 9:22: "I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some."

"One of the weaknesses of the mainline liberal church," continuing with Drucker, "is that it hasn't maintained the common vision. Spiritual needs within the congregation are not addressed. The leaders see the church as dedicated to social causes outside the church, but the congregation doesn't see it that way."

The church does have a mission, according to Drucker, and it comes straight out of the Bible. "Basically we are to bring the gospel to all people. Very clear. Very simple."

It's terribly hard for the church to say no, Drucker goes on, "yet the effective ones do. They know what their mission is, and they make no apologies. Churches have to admit that some causes are not their responsibility, even though people often feel that the church exists to take care of problems."

In gauging whether one is on course, the church can use a standard similar to other non-profits, Drucker said. "All non-profits have one essential product: a changed human being. This is a different approach from business. In business, your goal is not to change the customer, it's to satisfy the customer. . . . The church's aim is to make a difference in the way a parishioner lives, to change the parishioner's values into God's values."

Good advice that takes us right back to the Good Book. In the gospel and its promises are the hopes of this world anchored. The church, the body of Christ, is the only agency commissioned by God to bring his promises to the world. There is no other agency. To be deflected and enticed from that unique commission turns the body of Christ into another advocate of social agendas, a diversion which has been with us at least since the Tower of Babel.

James P. Schaffer

Katie, organist since age 12

Imagine playing the organ for your own confirmation. Katie Scheibel did. Katie is the full-time organist for Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Thousand Oaks, California. Each week her job includes accompanying choir practice and playing for Sunday school and two worship services. Not too unusual until you learn that Katie, now 19, has been the organist since she was 12.

It all began when, as a second grader, Katie would come home from church and try to pick out the hymns on the family piano. Her parents decided to protect their ears from all those harsh notes, so piano lessons started and continued for five years. By the time she was in sixth grade Katie was playing an occasional hymn, prelude, or postlude at church. Soon after, Katie became the full-time organist.

Besides her confirmation, Katie has played for weddings, installations, her grandfather's memorial service, and her nephews' baptisms, where she was also their sponsor. Perhaps the hardest was playing her father's favorite hymn, "I'm but a stranger here," at his funeral five years ago.

Katie attends Moorpark Junior College and would like to become a psychologist. Between classes she can be found babysitting, doing aerobics, counted cross-stitch, or crafts, and teaching a group of Pioneer Girls. For four years she has spent a week each summer helping at Good Shepherd Bible Camp in the San Bernardino mountains.

Katie says that other than knocking a bulletin off the organ onto the worshipers below, her worst moment was when she turned the page during the



PAT SCHEIBEL

liturgy to find the next page torn out. She faked it and no one seemed to sense her temporary panic. She also recalls another service when she fell asleep during the sermon. Luckily, the pastor's "amen" was loud enough to get her to the organ before the next response.

Whatever the future brings, Katie sees herself at an organ each Sunday morning. With the grace of God, that's where she'll be.

— Pat Scheibel

TeenTalk, a monthly feature, is edited by Karen Spencer. Young people ages 12-18 are invited to send brief articles, artwork, photos, or news on teen activities to *TeenTalk*, Karen Spencer, 2297 E. 25th Place, Yuma, AZ 85365. Include your name, address, school, church, and a self addressed stamped envelope for return.