

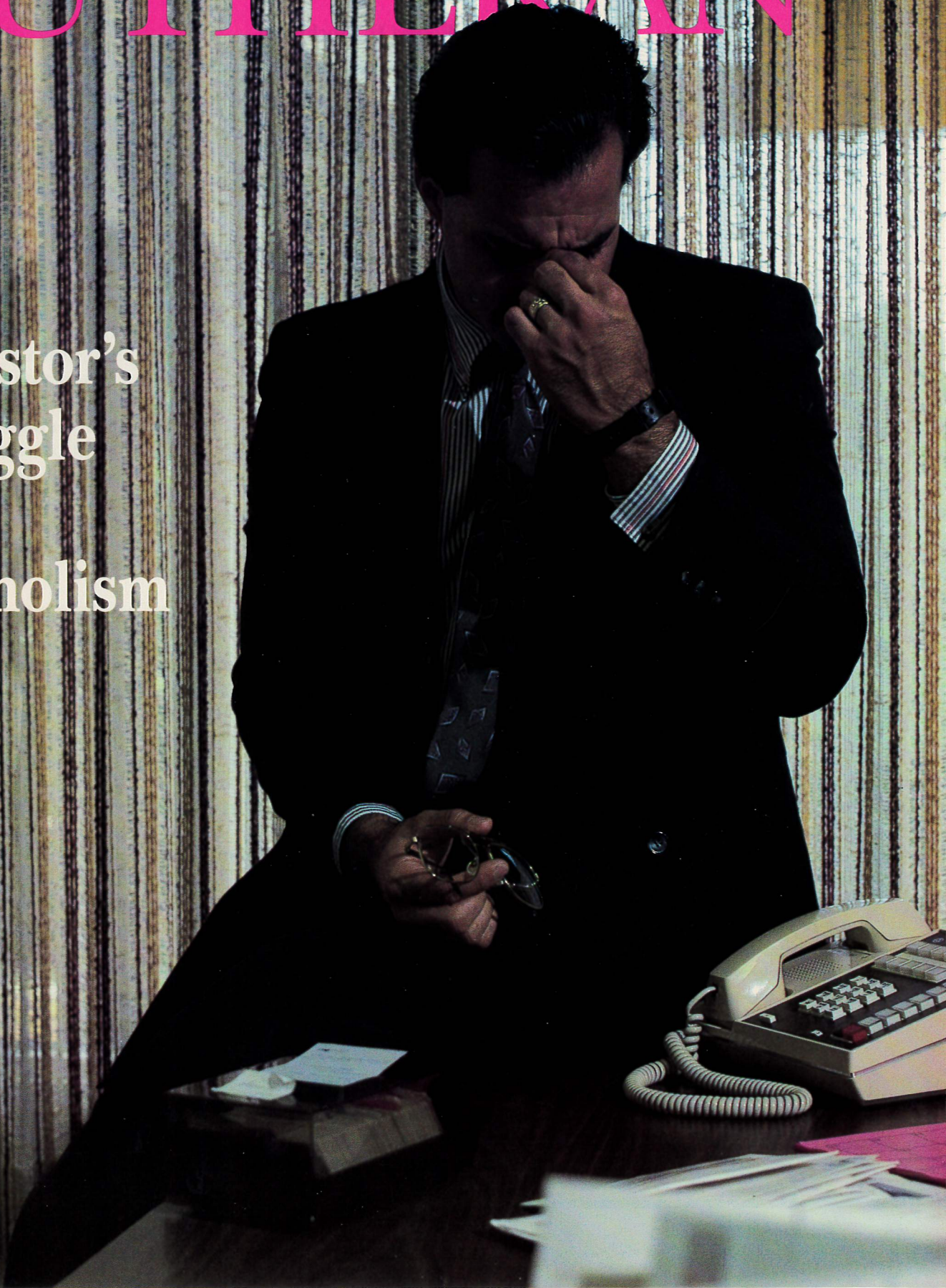
January 15, 1992

"I had an abortion
this morning" p. 30

NORTHWESTERN LUTHERAN

A pastor's
struggle
with
alcoholism

p. 24



Messiah's job description

by Robert H. Hochmuth

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners (1 Timothy 1:15).

“Other churches have support groups for people like me, and they have more activities, but I came back to our Lutheran church because what I need is forgiveness.” His was a troubled, yet assured soul, untangling itself from affliction and regret as he expressed his longing in a conversation in the pastor’s office. “And I knew I would find it here.”

By now the pastor’s heart was tingling, privileged to be witnessing the ongoing work of the Spirit and the abiding power of his word. What an endorsement for us to continue focusing on what really was the mission of our Savior and what really is his mission for his church.

For him

In a day when some people rate the gift of divine forgiveness low in a hierarchy of human needs, discerning believers still breathe a grateful amen when our Savior speaks about his priorities in his mission on our behalf.

Probably his words which first come to mind in this connection are: “The Son of Man has come to seek and to save what was lost.” He makes clear enough what the condition of sinners is without the Savior. For that reason people who regard messages about repentance and forgiveness as irrelevant or boring must be asked what regard they have for a holy God’s righteous demands.

Even if we are thoroughly familiar with his revealed truth, we may be susceptible to the pressure on churches to highlight temporal and social benefits for today’s distressed and lonely. It seems to be the way to attain a higher degree of what is called relevance in our here-and-now culture. Yet forgiveness remains mankind’s greatest need and our

*Christ’s assignment
for us who are his church:
not only
to preach forgiveness —
but also to show it,
share it,
exemplify what
it is to be forgiven
— by being forgiving.*

Lord’s most notable achievement.

Our Savior’s public ministry matches the apostolic description of his mission in the Timothy verse. For the paralytic there is first the assurance of pardon. The miracle of healing follows and then only after the preface: “That you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.”

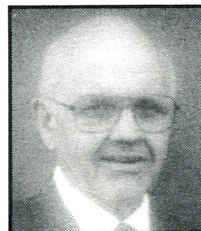
He fed five thousand, but afterward his emphasis is on the bread of life. Repeatedly Jesus effected miraculous cures, not primarily to attend to people’s bodily well-being, but as signs testifying to the validity of his claim to be the heaven-sent Messiah. Rereading the miracle chapters in the Gospel of John will confirm that.

For his followers

The night of the resurrection our victor bestowed his Spirit on his disciples, equipping and qualifying them for the high privilege pivoting on: “If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven.”

Filled with that Spirit, Peter climaxes the Pentecost events by offering baptism with the gift of forgiveness. Luke records the Lord’s directive for his disciples in his words: “Repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations.” Paul further declares how the church’s ministry to the world and his ambassadorship to Jew and Gentile is rooted in God’s forgiveness for sinners.

That remains his assignment for us who are his church in a perishing world today, and not only to preach forgiveness — but also to show it, share it, exemplify what it is to be forgiven — by being forgiving. What a treasure to dispense! What a significant calling to discharge!



Robert Hochmuth is pastor of St. Andrew, Sacramento, California.

May the Lord our God be with us
as he was with our fathers;
may he never leave us
nor forsake us. 1 Kings 8:57

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FEATURES

TRIUMPH OVER ADDICTION A pastor's struggle with alcoholism	24
Mkandawire celebrates 30 years by Ernst H. Wendland and Linda Phillips	26
Have you ever hugged a homeless person? by Don and D'Anne Thompson	28
"I had an abortion this morning" by Ellen M. Kuber	30

NEWS

Not just another dedication • Youth art month • New magazine published • Carol Voss gets Bethesda award • Book notes • Wegenke heads independent college association • Two colleges receive grants • Gunmen steal church offerings • Dakota-Montana and Michigan districts news • Undeclared season for Vanguard band.....	32
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DEPARTMENTS

THOUGHT FOR TODAY Messiah's job description by Robert H. Hochmuth	22
STUDIES IN COLOSSIANS Christ Jesus: The all-sufficient head of the church by Fredric E. Piepenbrink	36
EDITORIAL COMMENT The final guidebook by Carleton Toppe	37
I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW by Paul E. Kelm	38
LETTERS	38
FROM THIS CORNER by the editor	39
TEENTALK edited by Karen Spencer	40

FORWARD

- On the next page begins the final feature in the six-part series, "Triumph over addiction." We thank Phil Merten for coordinating the series, and we hope he'll be back with more articles on problems facing Christians today.
- This month is the 19th anniversary of the Supreme Court decision which legalized abortion. For those needing assistance or answers about an unplanned pregnancy,

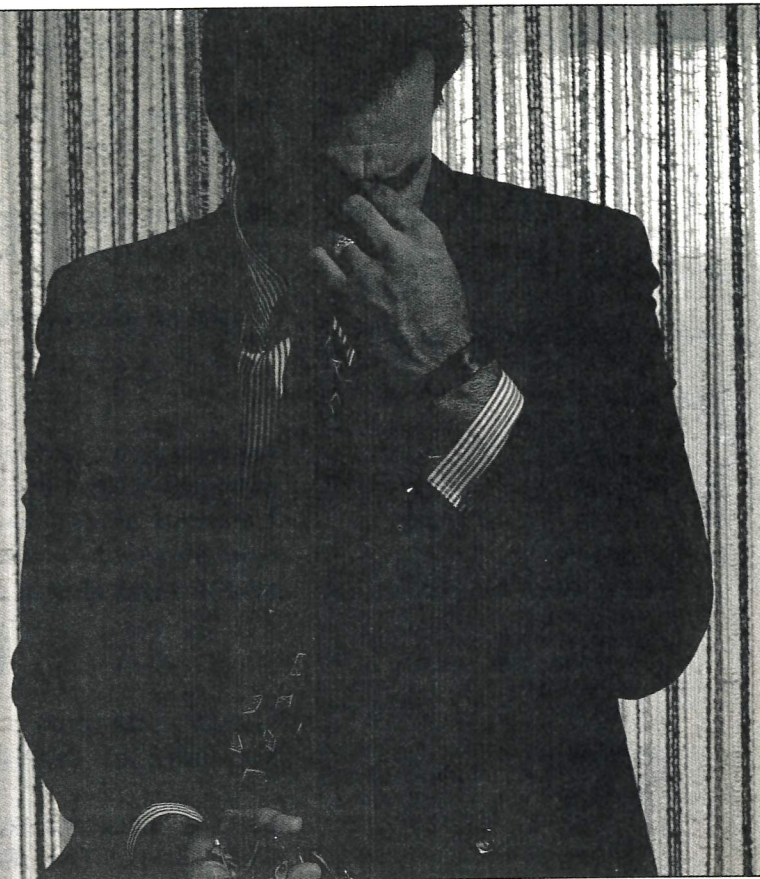
WELS Lutherans for Life provides 24-hour-a-day service through its counseling centers and telephone helplines. Ellen Kuber writes of her experience as a telephone counselor on p. 30.

- Those who appreciate Paul Kelm's writings will want to know that he will begin a new column, "Life is looking up," in the Feb. 1 issue. It will replace "I would like to know."

DJS

MRS. KEVIN SCHEIBEL

A pastor's struggle with alcoholism



The first time I got drunk was July 3. The last time I got drunk was December 31. Unfortunately, there were 20 years, not six months, between those two dates.

The first time was the summer after ninth grade. A friend and I sampled booze that night until I threw up and passed out. It took me two days to recover. I should have learned.

But 20 years later I woke up on New Year's Day and had to ask what I had done because I couldn't remember.

It took an hour to get drunk but 20 years to get sober. I lost my wife, my kids, and my calling in the parish ministry.

I grew up in a Christian home. We sat in the same pew each Sunday. We had devotions after supper. We said prayers before bed. I attended Lutheran grade schools and high school. To the best of my knowledge my mother never dropped me on my head when I was a baby.

Off to a running start

It wasn't until I went off to college to begin my studies for the ministry that my alcoholism got off to

a running start. Friday nights were spent in the bars. I found myself trying to be one of the "real men" who could survive an annual pilgrimage to all 25 local bars in one night and have a beer at each one. I made a fool of myself on several occasions, but I never recall anyone ever suggesting that I had a problem.

Seminary was the next stop. My use of alcohol continued and even increased. I remember skipping chapel and classes because I was hung over. I'd resolve to quit or cut back, but then I'd do it all over again. I should have talked to someone, but I didn't.

I graduated from the seminary and received a call. For years the problem lay dormant. However, as my parishes and responsibilities grew, the drinking returned.

At one point I could not imagine a day without drinking, especially after the final meeting of the night or the last service on Sunday. I was hung over regularly. I remember Christmas Eve services where the candles weren't the only things that were lit up.

I considered talking to my circuit pastor, but I thought I knew what his answer would be: resign. I feared to admit my problem. I looked for a WELS

*My wife was gone. My kids were gone. My ministry was gone.
The problem was mine — all mine.*

pastor who had worked through this problem successfully and was willing to talk about it, but I found none.

All this time God had not been stingy with blessings.

First, he gave me a very special woman who loved me. But I neglected her. Years of my being a good pastor but a rotten husband contributed to her nervous breakdown. Once she regained her strength she divorced me and escaped.

God gave me wonderful, spirited children. They left with their mother. One of them is back in my home now, but only after a stay at an adolescent treatment center for alcohol and other drug abuse.

God also provided me with good Christian friends. One would even follow me home after I'd been drinking just to be sure I'd make it. Yet no one admonished me or confronted me about my alcoholism.

On January 1 I really woke up. My wife was gone, so I couldn't blame her. My kids were gone, so I couldn't blame them. My ministry was gone, so I couldn't blame it. That left me. The problem was mine — all mine. I knew I was headed for physical and eternal destruction if I didn't change.

The Lord rescued me

So I quit. It was so hard. It was so easy. The Lord rescued me. And he used a wide assortment of people over a span of ten years in his rescue.

In my first year in the ministry he used a Baptist chaplain on an alcoholism treatment unit where one of my parishioners had been admitted. Before I went into the unit, the chaplain took me aside. He cautioned me about inappropriately using the law and imposing more guilt. He spoke to me about the need for forgiveness, restoration, and healing. That stayed with me.

Five years later God used a young businessman. I had taken one of my parishioners to a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous. A successful, articulate gentleman there stood up and said he had been fortunate enough to quit before he hit rock bottom. That stayed with me.

The key person was an Episcopalian priest. I heard this man speak to a group of 500 and tell

them how the police had picked him up out of the gutter at 2:00 a.m. on a Sunday morning. He received treatment. His congregation forgave him and took him back. Amazing. I finally had found a pastor who would admit that he had a problem. That stayed with me.

So I quit. I am still an alcoholic, but now a recovering alcoholic. Today the only alcohol that passes my lips is communion wine — at the same instant reminding me of my sin and God's forgiveness in Christ. The cup that enslaves is now the cup that liberates.

Sin or disease?

Whether alcoholism is a disease or a sin I leave to the physicians and theologians. I'm more concerned with the thousands of my fellow Lutheran Christians drowning in a sea of booze who need help. A quick "go and sin no more" from their pastor won't do it.

Here's what I now believe about alcoholism:

- That although there are others who can use alcohol, I can never use alcohol.
- That ignorance and biases within our church body about alcoholism and treatment methods often needlessly hinder recovery.
- That alcoholic ministers can recover and lead productive lives, and may be able to continue their ministries if we can facilitate their restoration and healing.
- That through the life and work of Jesus Christ, I live and die a forgiven child of God who will, for sure, go to heaven.
- That the God who saved me and granted me sobriety will do this for others.

Although the writer has chosen to remain anonymous, he would be happy to talk to others who are struggling with addiction. Contact can be made through Pastor Phil Merten (414/353-7337).

This story, unfortunately, is not unique. Dr. John Johnson, professor at Wisconsin Lutheran College and professional counselor, has studied this problem as a member of the WELS Care Committee for Called Workers, and his assessment is that "alcoholism and alcohol abuse among WELS laity, pastors, and teachers is at or above the national norms."



PHOTOS BY THEODORE SAUER

Clinical officer Alfred Mkandawire with Theodore Sauer, former administrator for world missions and a pioneer African missionary. Sauer says of Mkandawire: "Humanly speaking, he is more responsible for our continuing program than anyone else, even our capable, dedicated nurses. He is extraordinary and has a special kind of zeal to serve."

Mkandawire celebrates 30 years

by Ernst H. Wendland and Linda Phillips

Everybody in the Mwembezhi area of Zambia knows Alfred Mkandawire. They certainly should. He's been there long enough. Thirty years, in fact. He was there when our Lutheran Dispensary opened its doors for the first time in 1961.

And he's been there ever since. He has served together with 25 nursing sisters coming periodically from America during those 30 years. In the same years all of 17 missionaries have from time to time been taking care of our mission station on the same Sala Reserve compound.

Expatriates, in other words, have come and gone. Alfred has been a fixture. Serving with Alfred presently at the dispensary are Nurses Linda Phillips and Gretchen Zoldan. Missionary Philip Birner and Kingdom Workers Daryl and Nancy Lucke live on the same Mwembezhi mission station.

It can be said without exception that all of Alfred's coworkers regard him highly. His ready smile, his patient spirit, his faithful dedication to his work have contributed greatly to the uninterrupted functioning as well as the continued development of our synod's medical mission in Zambia.

Alfred also thinks well of his American partners. He has nothing but good to say about all of them. That's so typical of Alfred. He admires especially their willingness to adjust to living out at

Mwembezhi.

"You people must get very lonely out here, coming from America," he says.

Memories

It's rather amusing that he remembers the missionaries chiefly by their driving habits. One of them "very often drove in places where it was impossible to get through. Sometimes he did." Another "was very, very slow in his driving, yet he was killed in a most unfortunate accident." Generally "the sisters drive very fast."

It was Mrs. Meta Hoenecke who selected Alfred to serve as a medical assistant in 1961, when the dispensary program was inaugurated at Mwembezhi. Barbara Welch was the nursing sister.

Alfred remembers vividly when Pastor Theodore Sauer, field superintendent at the time, drove him out to the station from Lusaka, a trip of 50 miles through the bush. It seemed to Alfred "like going out into nowhere."

In the ensuing years he continued his studies by means of correspondence, attaining the government status of Clinical Officer. This qualifies him to manage a rural dispensary.

In addition to his many years of experience in dealing with tropical diseases, Alfred's greatest asset is his ability to understand the needs of his own peo-

ple. "I hear things you Americans don't hear," he states as a matter of fact.

Changes

"There have been some changes in our program here," Alfred muses as he contemplates one of the many questions put to him. "At first our work was more curative," he emphasizes. "We dispensed much medicine to people who were very sick, mostly with malaria and diarrhea. I can remember when our compound was filled with as many as 300 people, some who could barely stand up. Often the people complained we did not give them enough injections. They thought penicillin was the magic cure for everything, like going to a witch doctor. Although we still give out many medicines, we're now more interested in preventive health care — immunizing children, caring for women before and after they have babies, malnutrition, teaching people how they can take better care of themselves right where they live."

"At one time," Alfred continues, "we had several village outstations which we visited every week, like Keezwa and Shabasonje. But we ran into problems — sometimes not enough staff, sometimes our transport broke down. But that has changed. With our community health care program we now have a training course for people who can serve right in the villages."

Alfred explained the new approach to what is known as Primary Health Care. He is enthusiastic about it. He spoke at some length about a recent four-week study program held at the Mwembezi clinic, organized by our staff. Thirteen Africans successfully completed the training course to become community health workers.

These volunteers teach their people such things as boiling their drinking water, building latrines, growing food for more balanced diets, protecting food from flies, and dispensing simple first aid and anti-malarial medications. They advise when people should come to the dispensary. Every month these workers who serve without pay give a report of their activities.

Problems

"One of the biggest problems here," Alfred says, "is getting people in the villages to change their



Alfred Mkwandawire with his family.

health behavior. We need to be closer to the source of the disease. We should be less the center and reach out more to the people."

This does not mean work at the dispensary itself has diminished. The daily caseload is still high. Although most babies are now delivered right in the villages by traditional birth attendants, pre-and ante-natal care for mothers and babies continues.

Cholera and malaria epidemics still occur. Now AIDS has been added.

And so the battle for survival still goes on. Witchcraft remains a problem. "It will always be so," Alfred maintains. "It's a part of our culture."

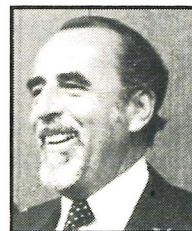
AIDS? "It's getting out of hand," he answers. "The people don't seem to realize how serious it is. They think it has to do with witchcraft. They deny AIDS exists, and so they continue in their old sinful ways." How sad, when statistics show that nearly 30 percent of pregnant women are HIV positive.

Is help from America still needed? "Oh yes, very much so!"

And so this veteran African co-worker carries on. He's a fellow Lutheran, serving on several boards and committees of the Lutheran Church of Central Africa. He epitomizes the chief purpose for which our medical mission program was inaugurated 30 years ago under the direction of the Hoeneckes, the Wackers, the Mennickes, and Dr. Tacke: to work toward a program in which the Africans could become more involved.

Of late Alfred has been talking more and more about retirement. The desire to return with his wife and four children to his Malawi homeland is growing. It's an African custom to return eventually to the place of one's birth.

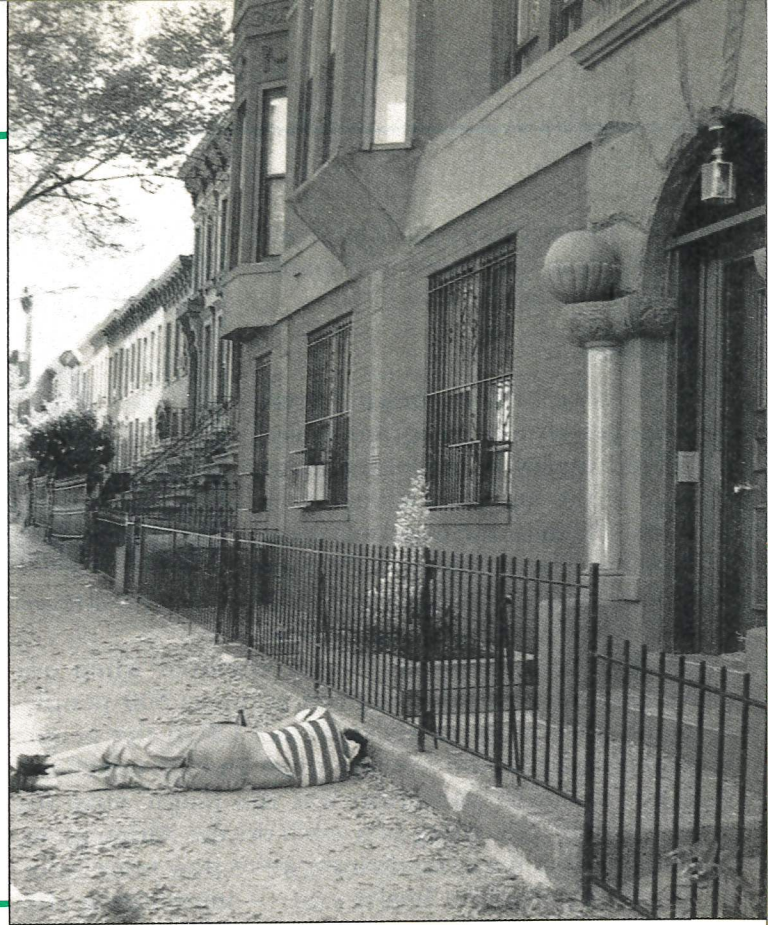
Yet one can sense the feelings of every one of our nursing sisters when the question arises, "We understand, Alfred. You deserve it. But please not during my tour of duty!"



Ernst H. Wendland teaches at the seminary of the Lutheran Church of Central Africa. Linda Philips is a nurse at the Mwembezi dispensary.

Have you ever hugged a homeless person?

by Don and D'Anne Thompson



DON: What could well be the most unusual weekend of my life began the Thursday before. I arrived home from work and was greeted by my wife with the question: "Can we go to Brooklyn, New York, this weekend?"

I led with my most incredulous stare and asked why. She explained that we had a WELS mission in the Park Slope area of Brooklyn that was at risk of closing. She wanted to go there and see if we could offer them some small encouragement in their struggle to survive.

She also told me the pastor was Dan Krause, who had been our vicar in a church we attended in Dallas, Texas. I remembered the young man as a vicar and liked him a lot — but Brooklyn!

Well, as most of you married men might guess, in matters where male assertiveness is called for, I found myself on a Friday night plane to Brooklyn.

Kennedy Airport never received a more apprehensive visitor. We were met by Pastor Krause and Lenny Peacock, a beautiful young dedicated Christian girl who was a member of the mission and worked tirelessly in its behalf.

My apprehension lessened as we became involved in the activities of the mission which were scheduled for the next day.

Pastor Krause, Lenny, D'Anne, and I were joined

by other members of the congregation early Saturday morning for an evangelism expedition to Prospect Park only a few blocks away from the mission. Teams were formed and each went about the park seeking anyone needing to hear the message of the Savior. You could not help but be inspired by the zeal of some of the members to share their new-found faith.

The effort at the park yielded an interested prospect to whom we witnessed for at least 45 minutes, and who gladly gave his address for the church mailing list.

As we returned from the park, I felt good about the witnessing but admittedly glad it was completed. Now we could comfortably look forward to the service on Sunday and then a return to the friendly confines of northern Virginia. What I had failed to do was ask Pastor Krause what was next on the schedule.

When we arrived back at the church, we talked about the witnessing session, with each participant explaining what his or her experience had been. Pastor Krause then announced that we were off to catch the subway and go to the WELS mission in Manhattan, where we would make sandwiches and distribute them along with tracts to street people at Port Authority and Penn Station.

That's what we did. I saw real evidence that Christ



Far left: A homeless man sleeping outside Pastor Krause's home in Brooklyn. Clockwise starting from the lower left: •All cultures are present in Prospect Park, only a few blocks from the mission. •Visitors from Oconomowoc, Wis., worked with members of Peace at the Fifth Avenue street fair, a witnessing event for the Brooklyn mission. •Don and D'Anne Thompson (left) with Ada Betancourt, a lifelong Brooklyn resident and recent confirmand who also joined the witnessing teams.

truly lives in the hearts of these Manhattan Christians who frequently do this type of mission work to demonstrate Christ's love for all.

D'ANNE:
There's no place like New York. Sure, we were shaky about witnessing in the park and train stations, but what a joyful adventure! As each team approaches a prospect, one prays while another does the talking. Each prospect receives a tract with a message of Christ crucified and the location of the church.

Have you ever seen the Holy Spirit transform someone through witnessing? Have you ever hugged a homeless person? There is great potential for growth in this mission field. New members in Christ are overflowing with joy that comes from their Bible instruction.

Saturday night, Don and I slept on a hide-a-bed in the pastor's living room. There are bars for safety on the windows and doors. The shouts outside during the night probably would have sent me under my pillow if they had been in English.

By morning, bed folded away, our bedroom evolved initially into a classroom for Bible class, then into a sanctuary for worship, and finally into a fellowship hall for a birthday celebration and a luncheon.

The place was filled with people from different

nations, yet people the world over are the same. They are loved by our Lord and Savior who died for all of us. They are extremely receptive to this message.

This mission, as well as our other multicultural missions, needs your prayers and support to continue the Lord's work. There is not enough manpower to handle such a diverse mission field. Pastor Krause and several of the members are working hard to get everyone involved.

Would you like to be a part of the lay ministry so desperately needed right now? Or can you part with some of your savings to help keep this mission going?

Are you wondering just what you can do to further God's word? Are you retired with talents and time to spare and filled with zeal and energy to do something really special? Are you a young person who likes to fight for a cause? Would you be willing to support yourself by working in Brooklyn or another mission, and join a mission team?

Contact the administrator for home missions, Pastor Harold Hagedorn, at 2929 N Mayfair Road, Milwaukee WI 53222; 414/771-9357; or Pastor Dan Krause at 376 6th Avenue #1, Brooklyn NY 11215; 718/788-2880.

Ask what you can do to help today.

The Thompsons are members of Bethlehem, Manassas, Virginia.

“I had an abortion this morning”

by Ellen M. Kuber

It is January 22, the anniversary date of the *Roe v. Wade* decision, which legalized abortion in the United States.

Every year this date brings with it a mixed bag of emotions for me. I feel a need to recognize this anniversary date with appropriate soberness and introspection. And yet I feel the Lord must have wanted to lighten the burden of this day for me, because he provided me with a special sign of his hope: Jan. 22 is also the birthday of my third child.

Part of my day is spent doing things like baking and decorating a birthday cake, chauffeuring the birthday boy to and from school instead of sending him off on the school bus, and going birthday gift shopping.

But part of my day is spent with abortion very much on my mind: I have pregnancy helpline duty tonight in my home, starting at 9:00 p.m., and continuing through the night until 8:30 the next morning. Typically, I don't get many calls on my weekly late-night time slot. But mentally I must be prepared in case a call comes in.

It is 11:15 p.m. I am in bed, just starting to drift off to sleep when the phone rings next to my bed.

“Hello, may I help you?” I ask, instantly awake and alert.

“I was wondering if you could tell me how long it takes to recover after the procedure,” a soft-spoken young woman asks.

“Can you tell me what procedure you are asking about?” I question gently. I am expecting that she will tell me she means an abortion procedure, but I cannot assume that is what she means. If she is referring to an abortion procedure, it is important that she hear herself saying the words.

She answers, “An abortion.” I explain that every woman will recover at her own speed, depending on how the abortion went, and that the policy at most abortion clinics is that they ask their clients to return in two weeks for a check-up.

What happens to the fetus?

“What happens to the fetus?” she asks quickly, her

voice soft and toneless. I explain that as the abortion is being done, the baby's body parts, other tissues, and liquids are collected in a jar. I can hear her beginning to cry softly, yet she doesn't stop me.

There is more to tell. I explain that part of the tissue is sent to a pathology lab for examination. The rest of the remains are dealt with in accordance with city ordinances. I am aware that my voice betrays my respect for the dead: it is soft and tinged with sadness.

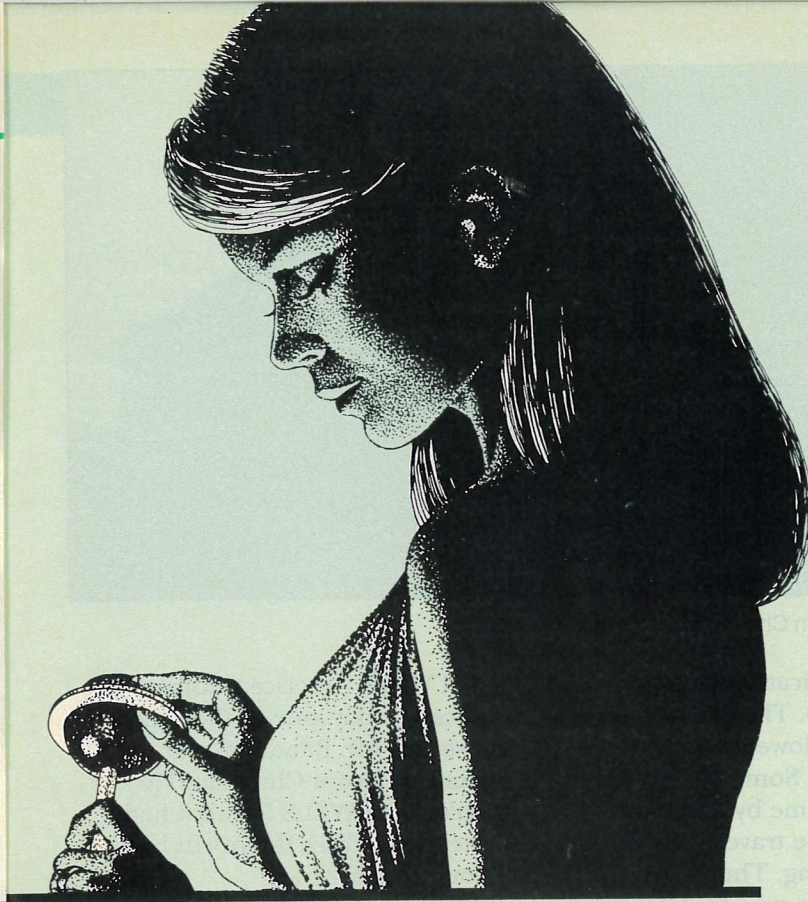
I tell her our city has an ordinance governing how fetal remains are disposed of. This is necessary, I explain, because in the past, some of the clinics were disposing of the babies' bodies in dumpsters behind the clinics. At one site children were found playing in the alley with the dead babies' bodies. Now, by ordinance, the babies must be delivered to a site to be incinerated.

“What's that?” she asks.

“Burning,” I say. My answer brings more tears, but the crying is soft and controlled. She seems so concerned — so much in touch with the reality of the end result of abortion. I hope to be able to spare her the pain she would certainly feel if she chose this legal option to continuing a pregnancy. But I don't know at this point whether she is pregnant.

What gave me the right to take this baby's life?

And so I gently ask her, “Are you considering an



abortion?"

"I had one this morning," she answers. "I was wondering where the baby was."

It is dark in the room but I close my eyes to the dull stab of pain I feel go through me — grief-struck for this dead child and this already hurting mother.

She tells me about her situation, her story. She speaks of the reasons she had the abortion: the absence of the baby's father's concern and support, fear that he would not have been a father to her child, and pressure from family members. But she offers these as explanations, not justifications.

"I feel like I took someone out of a safe, warm climate. . . . I wouldn't do it again, if I could turn back the clock. . . . I look at my three-year-old son and I wonder what gave me the right to take this baby's life. . . . How long will I feel this guilt?" she asks me.

Sadness overwhelms me. I pause to collect my thoughts for a reply. How can I tell her of the years of recovery ahead, of the pain in working through this experience, of her search for God's forgiveness, and especially self-forgiveness?

I reply that I am not able to predict how long she will feel guilt, but that there is hope for her in dealing with this abortion because she is so open to the reality of what actually happened — she is not in denial.

I explain there are support groups for women who are trying to cope with the aftermath of abortion,

and that women find it helpful to be able to talk to others who have had the same experience, who are trying to deal with their abortions.

"Have you had one?" she asks me.

"No," I answer.

I encourage her to call back if she needs a referral to a post-abortion syndrome support group. She tells me she is feeling better. She had had a hard time falling asleep tonight, even though she drank about five cups of tea. I remind her that tea is high in caffeine. She laughs softly and says that coffee doesn't keep her awake either. And besides, she assures me, tea comforts her. She thanks me for my time. We say good-night and hang up.

Mourning for a baby and its mother

I get up to write some notes on this call. It is hard to concentrate. I feel I have just attended a private wake.

I get back into bed, but am far from sleep. I mourn for this small, 12-week-old dead baby. I mourn for his mother, who told me about seeing her baby moving about on an ultrasound screen five days before she had his life ended.

I pray she finds God's forgiveness; that he would heal her of the memory she shared with me of feeling her baby moving inside her from one side to the other as the abortion procedure began.

My Lord, I ask, how can I be celebrating the birthday of a child one minute, and mourning the death of another child on his birthday hours later? How is it that I am grieving tonight with a mother who knows she is responsible for the death of her own child?

My tears stop for a moment as I listen to the grandfather clock striking midnight in the hallway downstairs. In a sense, it is an answer to my questions: For another year, the anniversary date of *Roe v. Wade* is over.

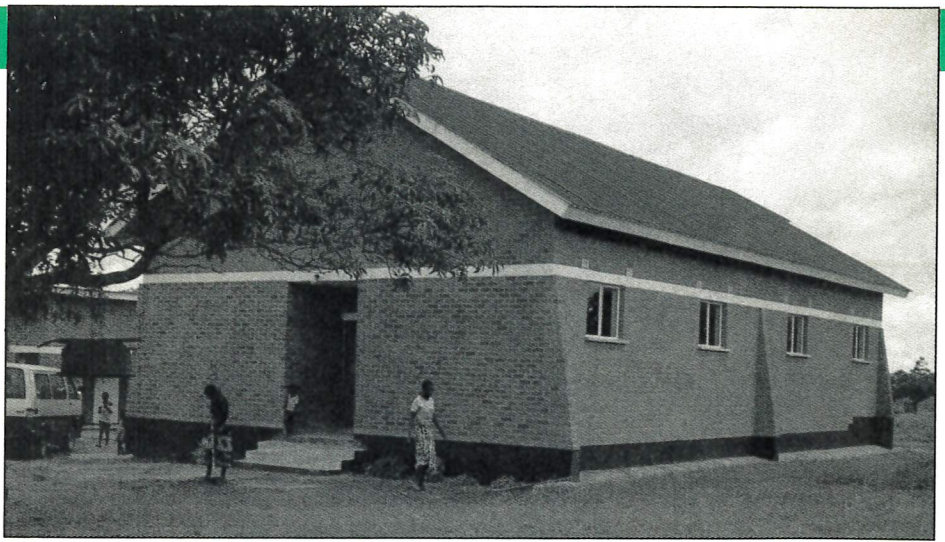
Ellen Kuber is a member of David's Star, Jackson, Wisconsin.

Not just another dedication

When St. Michael Lutheran Church was dedicated recently, it was not just another church dedication. In the United States such an event is no longer much noted outside the congregation. But this church was in Mzuzu, Malawi, and it had waited 18 years for a church home. Mission work had begun in this northern district of Malawi in the mid-'70s, but it was not until 1987, with the installation of Missionary Raymond Cox, that it had its first full-time, resident missionary.

Today in this district there are 856 baptized members in eight congregations. In the past five years Mzuzu has grown from 30,000 to 50,000 people. St. Michael is located in an area recently opened for high density housing expansion.

The church was built to seat 220



St. Michael Lutheran Church, Mzuzu, Malawi, Africa

people. On dedication day it was packed with 250. They came from as far away as Mlowe, 84 miles north of Mzuzu. Some walked for miles. Others came by bus, cars, and trucks. Some traveled by ship. They kept coming. They wanted to see their "new home." St. Michael is considered home headquarters for the northern district of the Lutheran Church of Central Africa.

The church was built with the

aid of WELS American dollars. On dedication day, one of the special guests was Mr. Banda, mayor of Mzuzu, a devout Christian. He thanked the WELS for all it had done, not only in the north but throughout Malawi.

Missionary Cox is now serving as principal of the Lutheran Bible Institute at Lilongwe. His replacement, Missionary Mark Wendland, has recently arrived at Mzuzu.

Youth art month

The Wisconsin Lutheran College and WELS Art Guild-sponsored Youth Art Month, this year titled "A Celebration of Art," will be held at the college from March 1 to April 15.

All WELS and Evangelical Lutheran Synod (public and parochial) students from grades K-12 are invited and encouraged to participate in this sixth annual youth art exhibit which regularly receives hundreds of entries from coast to coast.

Submitted works (one per student) may be paintings, drawings, prints, designs, sculptures, or mixed media creations.

For more information, address Debra Heermans, Wisconsin Lutheran College, 8830 W. Bluemound Rd., Milwaukee WI 53226; 414/774-8620.

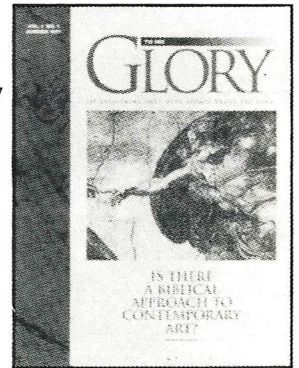
New magazine published

We welcome to the growing list of publications within the WELS, *Glory*, the first issue of which has just made its appearance. The magazine is scheduled to be published semiannually.

Editor of the impressive new magazine is Dr. Peter Fraser, assistant professor of English at Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee. "The purpose of the journal *Glory*," writes Fraser, "is to suggest a distinctively Christian approach to contemporary arts." The 24-page magazine offers a variety of Christian voices bringing their faith to bear on contemporary art.

"When it comes to the contemporary arts," Fraser comments, "the Christian is faced with a wonderful opportunity to speak. . . . He can refer to absolute standards revealed

in the Scriptures. He can view God's creation as a model for all human creation. He can discern the truth from the lie."



The first issue covers a broad spectrum of the arts from film review to the C. S. Lewis Wade collection at Wheaton College, Wheaton, Ill. Our readers may subscribe to this new magazine by writing Wisconsin Lutheran College, 8830 W. Bluemound Rd., Milwaukee WI 53226, enclosing \$10.00 for a one-year subscription.

Carol Voss gets Bethesda award

Carol Voss, a Watertown resident active in special education programs in the WELS, has been honored with the Christian Service Award from Bethesda Lutheran Home.

"Since 1968 she has been at the forefront in the development of special education programs within the church and in the public school system," according to executive director A.L.Napolitano. "She sent a clear message to people with mental retardation that the church cares."

The award honors Voss for more than 20 years of service. In 1968 she developed a Christian special education program at Woodlawn Lutheran Church, Milwaukee. From 1970-84 in the Milwaukee public school system she taught students with moderate mental retardation.

In 1976 she became involved in the Jesus Cares program, a Bible-based religious instruction pro-

gram for persons with mental retardation from school age and up.

Voss lives in Watertown with her husband, Rev. Robert J. Voss, who is president of Northwestern College.

In 1988 she introduced the Jesus Cares program to the Watertown area, serving approximately a 25-mile radius.

For more than 10 years she has been a member of the WELS Special Education Services Committee. She is actively involved with the WELS Pen Pal program and is a correspondent for the He Cares, We Care program of the WELS, reaching out to persons with developmental disabilities.

Bethesda provides Christian training and residential care for more than 700 children and adults with mental retardation at its Watertown campus and 35 facilities in 10 states.



Wegenke heads independent college association

Dr. Rolf Wegenke of Madison, Wisconsin, resigned recently as administrator of the Wisconsin Department of Development's Division of Economic Development to take over as president of the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities effective January 1.

In 16 years with the development department, Wegenke was instrumental in establishing a technology development fund, the manufacturing assessment center, block grants, and Wisconsin trade offices in Frankfurt, Hong Kong, Tokyo, and Seoul.

Wegenke is a long-time member of the board of regents of Wisconsin Lutheran College. Wegenke said he considered education "the single most important political and economic challenge of our generation."

Wegenke is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison and holds a doctorate in political philosophy from the University of Chicago. The association he heads fosters cooperation and the exchange of ideas between the 21 private colleges and universities in Wisconsin. It also represents them before governors and promotes private education's role in society.

Wegenke is a member of Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel, Madison, which also serves the students at the university. He has taught a popular Bible class for years at the chapel. He is also president of the WELS Campus Ministry Foundation and edits its newsletter.



Book notes

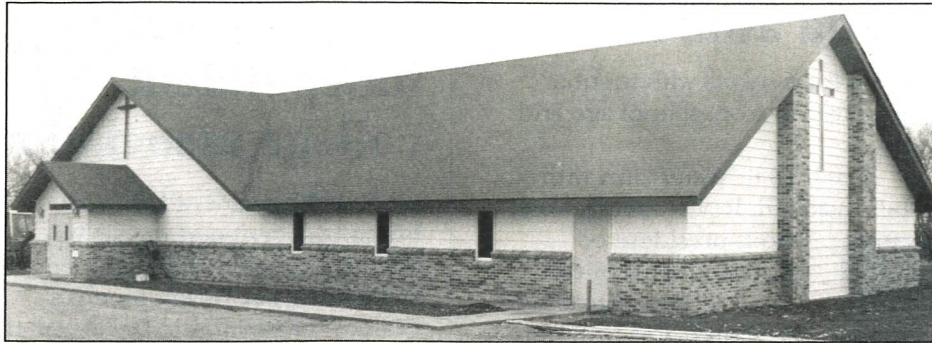
A book recently offered by Northwestern Publishing House will be of interest to the general reader. *Liberalism: Its Cause and Cure* by Gregory L. Jackson is intended to explain to the laity how reason has corrupted the Christian faith. "The wrong use of reason," Dr. Jackson contends in the book, "has become a weapon of destruction against biblical faith."

Jackson tackles in plain words such topics as the inerrancy of the Bible, the "urge to merge," the devastating consequences of the theory of evolution, the charismatic movement, the catastrophic decline of morals, and closes with the road to renewal in the church. The book is

helpful in expanding the religious horizons of Christians whose knowledge of the religious world is principally enlarged by newspapers, news magazines, and radio and TV.

If you are at all interested in the state of Christianity today and where it is headed, this book will provide you with an eminently readable map. Dr. Jackson received his master's degree in theology from Yale University and his PhD from the University of Notre Dame. He is presently serving Shepherd of Peace, Worthington, Ohio.

The book (softcover, 182 pp., \$8.95) may be ordered from Northwestern Publishing House by calling 1-800-662-6022. —JPS



First Church, Gary, S. Dak.

Two colleges receive grants

Northwestern College, Watertown, Wis., was recently awarded a \$21,500 grant from Aid Association for Lutherans, Appleton, Wis.

The college will use the grant money to review all brochures and devise a new series of recruitment brochures to be used during the next four to five years.

Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., was awarded a grant of \$15,675 from AAL.

The grant will be used by the college to implement a three-phase fitness program for the college's faculty and staff. "By implementing our new fitness program," said Prof. John Gronholz, project director, "we will reduce the risks of heart disease and provide an encouraging environment to adapt more healthy lifestyles, as well as exhibit healthier lifestyles for students to emulate."

Gunmen steal church offerings

On the evening of December 2 the finance committee of St. Marcus, Milwaukee, had completed counting the offering from three services, including a Thanksgiving Day service. The deposit slip had been prepared and two elders, Carl Buege and Tony Collura, were about to slip it into the bank's night depository.

The deposit was unusually large. Included in the weekly offerings was a special offering intended for the reduction of the large deficit the church was experiencing. Since St. Marcus is located in the central city, the \$17,000 deposit was a special gift from God who inspired members and friends to share generously with a church of modest means.

But an armed robber with four accomplices cut the joy short. With

a gun at his head, the elder surrendered the offerings and the robbers sped away, leaving behind two shocked elders. At this date the robbers have not been apprehended.

There is a brighter side, explained Pastor Mark Jeske. "Only about \$1700 was in cash and that is covered by our insurance. The rest was in checks, some for considerable amounts. All the checks were stamped for deposit, so they will do the robbers no good. We are contacting those who wrote checks so that they can duplicate the stolen ones."

Jeske, who was interviewed by local TV stations, also reported that the TV exposure and items in the newspapers brought over \$1,000 from people who heard or read about the robbery.

Dakota-Montana District news

First, Gary, S. Dak., dedicated its new church Nov. 3. Over 240 people attended the service. For the most part, the building was designed and constructed by congregation members. Due to the amount of volunteer labor, the total cost of construction was under \$120,000. . . . **Faith, Huron, S. Dak.**, distributed 4,000 balloons, 300 copies of Meditations, and 700-800 Family of God tracts at the state fair which ran from August 27 to Sept. 2. Pastor Curt Seefeldt reports there were 26 prospects gathered, and \$1500 in offerings to support the booth, but the greatest joy was the time volunteers spent in service to the Savior.

— Ronald L. Kruse

Michigan District news

St. Paul, Sodus, celebrated its 75th anniversary on Oct. 6. Guest speakers were Henry Klug, son of the congregation, and Robert Mueller, president of the Michigan District. . . . In restructuring the **district commissions**, the following were appointed: Jon Bendewald for the Commission on Youth Discipleship; Ronald Muetzel for the Commission on Adult Discipleship; Harold Hosbach for the Commission on Worship; Robert Hoepner for the Commission on Evangelism; Charles Buege for the Commission on Special Ministries; and John Vogt for the Commission on Parish Schools. . . . **Darlington, Ann Arbor**, burned its mortgage on Sept. 8. . . . After more than two years of delay, **Good Shepherd, Novi**, dedicated a new chapel on Oct. 13. . . . **Resurrection, Toledo, Ohio**, dedicated its church Nov. 10.

—James L. Langebartels

Undefeated season for Vanguard band



Members of the Vanguard band.

The Lutheran Vanguard of Wisconsin completed an undefeated season by being named grand champion parade band at the National Cherry Festival in Traverse City, Michigan.

The band, which performs during the summer, is made up of students from seven Lutheran high schools located in Wisconsin: Fox Valley in Appleton; Kettle Moraine in Jackson; Manitowoc; Northland, Wausau; Northwestern Prep, Watertown; Shoreland, Somers; and Winnebago Lutheran Academy, Fond du Lac.

The Vanguard won prizes in

parades and competitions in cities in Wisconsin, Illinois, and Michigan throughout the summer of 1991, and plans to extend its travels in 1992 to include the Calgary Stampede in Alberta, Canada.

While the band is in Calgary, they have been invited to be guests of St. Paul congregation. Craig Kitzrow, the band's director, said that during their stay the band members hope to assist the members of St. Paul with evangelism efforts in Calgary.

Obituary

Kenneth G. Seim
1926-1991

Kenneth G. Seim, born Aug. 8, 1926, in Stillwater, Minn., died Oct. 13, 1991, in St. Paul, Minn.

After graduating from Stillwater High School, he served in the US Navy during World War II. He completed his education after his discharge by attending Concordia College, St. Paul, and Concordia Seminary, Springfield.

He served parishes in Amery, Clear Lake, Gibson, and Two Creeks, Wis.; taught at Manitowoc Lutheran High School; and served as a missionary at Kowloon, Hong Kong. His final service was at Dale, Wis.

He is survived by a brother, George, and sisters, Mary Raithel and Shirley Koester.

Services were conducted at Salem, Stillwater.

When The Crying Stops *Abortion: The Pain and The Healing*

by Kathleen Winkler

The book is the result of in-depth interviews with 19 women who have had abortions and experienced problems afterward. Although this is a frank and often grim experience, the book doesn't stop with the pain. Rather, it carries the reader into the process of healing in Christ. These compelling testimonies, reflecting the stories of 19 women of different ages, races, and diverse backgrounds, is followed by a healing meditation from scriptures skillfully rendered in blank verse by Harold Senkbeil. *When The Crying Stops* is a timely and moving book that you will find hard to put down and difficult to forget. 200 pages. Paperback.

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\$9.99

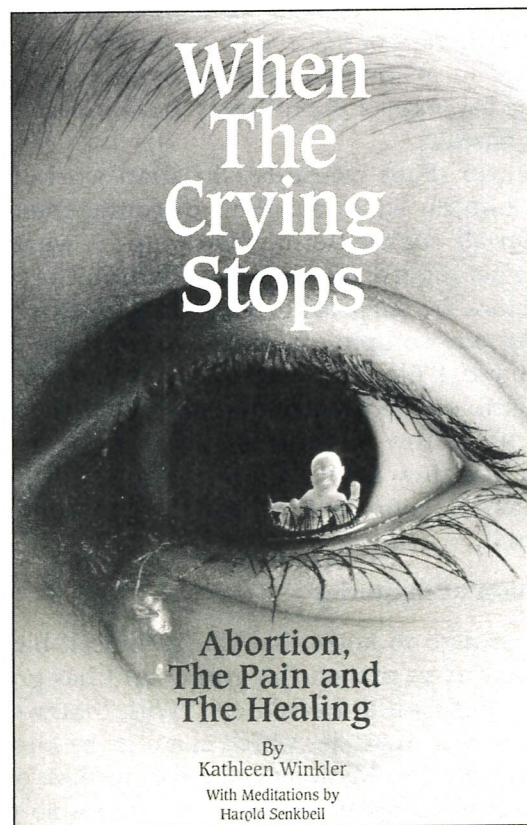
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NL



Christ Jesus: The all-sufficient head of the church

(Colossians 1:24-2:5)

by Fredric E. Piepenbrink

With their clerical garb many pastors wear a long piece of material that hangs over their neck, called a stole. According to one interpretation, the stole symbolizes a yoke worn by beasts of burden and depicts the "burden" every pastor bears to preach the gospel.

Most pastors would call the public ministry a privilege, but few would deny it is at the same time a burden, in the sense that it is never complete and often plagued with obstacles. It is at times like these that both pastor and congregation need the reminder from Paul's letter to the Colossians that as the all-sufficient head of the church, Christ's yoke is easy and his burden is light.

Joy in affliction

Whether it is economic woes, concern for the straying, just too little time, as pastors and congregations might experience today; or persecution, affliction, and imprisonment as Paul experienced in his day, one can expect the ministry, both called and lay, to be a burden.

However, Paul reminds Christian workers that such a burden is not for their discouragement, but joy. After all, such suffering "fill(s) up . . . what is still lacking in regard to Christ's affliction" (1:24). It should not be surprising that Christ's suffering in securing our complete and full redemption should be followed ("filled up") by the Christian congregation's suffering in proclaiming it. Should the master suffer while the servants go free? No, rather we rejoice that they have a share in the suffering with our Master, especially when the Master has so deigned it.

Revelation of mysteries

It is enough to know that Christ himself has commissioned us to preach the gospel and has given us "the word of God in its fullness." With that word the saints discover mysteries which can only be known by God's revelation. Mysteries like forgiveness of sins, justification, and sanctification. Mysteries so full of glorious riches from Christ that wherever that word

is preached and taught souls are filled with all wisdom. Mysteries not for just a chosen few but for all people that give them equal status in Christ.

And from where does the enthusiasm and energy and endurance in hardship come to carry on this great work? It comes from no one else but the head of the church, Christ Jesus himself.

Complete in understanding

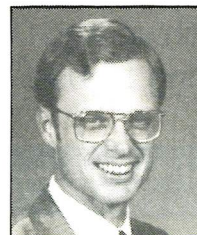
Paul could not help but reemphasize this all-important truth that all wisdom and knowledge leading to complete understanding is found in Christ Jesus. Then, as now, there were those who claimed a secret, hidden knowledge that only they had and only they could impart. These heretics had the potential of throwing the congregation at Colossae into doctrinal chaos.

But it didn't happen. Even though Paul was not personally present to guide their activity, the Christians at Colossae remained united and firm in the faith, under the governing and preserving hand of the all-sufficient head of the church — Christ Jesus.

It is unfortunate when any Christian church has to find itself in deep trouble before it begins to rely fully on Christ. How much better when we realize that in hardship or ease, membership growth or decline, financial boom or bust, doctrinal tension or tranquility, persecution or prosperity, Christ Jesus is still our head supplying all the energy and vitality, understanding, and wisdom we need, not just to live the Christian life but live it abundantly.

Knowing this will not give us cause to sit back and become mere observers, but to labor all the harder in joy, not in spite of difficulties but because of them. Knowing that the church is still the body of Christ, we do what Christ would be doing had he not

ascended into heaven to have all things placed under his feet for the good of the church and to be its all-sufficient head.



Fredric Piepenbrink is pastor of Atonement, Milwaukee.

The final guidebook

Last November, voters in the state of Washington were asked in a referendum whether doctors should be allowed to assist terminally ill patients to end their lives. Fifty-four percent voted against the proposal. Why did they? We can surmise reasons why the individual voters turned it down.

Many of the voters were aware of the direction taken in Derek Humphry's sensational book, *Final Exit*, a "how-to" guide to suicide. Its shameless support of the right of doctors to help terminally ill patients kill themselves must have frightened many voters.

They were not ready to approve the doctors' killing of their loved ones, knowing that the bereaved "might have to dwell with ceaseless doubt, guilt or scorn" (*Time*, 8/19/91).

There were voters who were repulsed by the thought of doctors becoming accessories to murder. "Doctors who assist in suicides violate the fundamental principle of the Hippocratic oath: First, do no harm. A physician's primary duty is to be a healer and sustain life" (*Milwaukee Journal*).

Others felt that less drastic solutions for the sufferings of the dying are available and should be pursued more vigorously: administer increasingly effective drugs. "Never before has medical science been so able to control pain" (*All About Issues*, winter 1991); give more positive counseling to patients who are mentally ill, emotionally distraught, or depressed.

Others knew about, or foresaw, abuses of laws that permitted "voluntary" (self-chosen) suicide, requested by the patient. Such "voluntary" suicide easily expands to "involuntary" suicide (without the request of the patient), suicide that doctors and that families of the dying choose for them. On previous occasions Derek Humphry has expressed the hope that America will follow the lead of Holland. There the Royal Dutch Society of Medicine endorsed euthanasia in 1984. From the very beginning "involuntary" (active) euthanasia has been practiced along with "voluntary." In Holland there is still a law on the books prohibiting active euthanasia, but no Dutch doctor who practices active euthanasia has been penalized in such a case in more than two decades. A recent questionnaire among the general public of that rather small country estimated there were 18,400 cases of active euthanasia per year (*All About Issues*).

Considerations like these would account for many of the negative votes on the referendum, but weren't there also other reasons, reasons that the media ignore or don't deign to consider?

We hope there were many thousands of Christians in the state of Washington who decided the issue on the basis of God's own guidebook for dying, his Book of Psalms. There we read:

"You are my God. My times are in your hands" (Psalm 31).

"From the Sovereign Lord comes escape from death" (Psalm 68).

From that all-merciful and almighty Lord also comes the invitation to the dying Christian, "Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you" (Psalm 50).

In humble submission to their sovereign Lord, dying Christians will pray his Son's prayer, "Your will be done." To that gracious God they will pray our Savior's dying words, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." In the issues of life and death, children of God will let their heavenly Father decide.

Carleton Toppe



Carleton Toppe, retired president of Northwestern College, lives in Watertown, Wisconsin.

by Paul E. Kelm

What is the purpose of registering for communion?

Registration provides a record that enables the church to identify those whose neglect of the means of grace jeopardizes their faith. To join a church is to ask for encouragement and admonition from fellow Christians (Galatians 6:1-2; Colossians 3:15-17; Hebrews 10:23-31).

Unfortunately, as much as a year or more may pass before the church initiates steps to reclaim those who've been absent from the Lord's Supper. Worship attendance is usually a more immediate way of detecting the evidence of spiritual indifference.

Registering for communion encourages the Christian to take the sacrament seriously. Examining one's own heart, affirming the real presence of Christ's body and blood with bread and wine, appreciating the "new covenant" of forgiveness in the death of God's Son, celebrating our oneness in faith and our fellowship with God in the sacrament — all this bears serious meditation (1 Corinthians 11:23-29 and 10:16-17).

Martin Luther wrote "Christian Questions" for those preparing to receive the Lord's Supper, to aid them in self-examination. The "Order of the Confessional Service" in our hymnal (page 46) testifies to the once prevalent practice of a special preparation for the sacrament prior to worship with communion. A genera-

tion ago members "announced" their intention to receive the Lord's Supper a day or more in advance, so that the pastor could focus the sacrament's significance, encourage self-examination with law and gospel, and provide an opportunity for private confession and absolution. Today most churches ask only registration for communion.

On the positive side, people commune more often today. Jesus' "Do this" and St. Paul's "When you come together" (1 Corinthians 11:20 and 24) urge frequent reception of this means of forgiveness. Our communion registration practice makes it easier for people to receive the sacrament often.

On the down side, preparation for receiving the sacrament may be slighted. Rationalizing replaces repenting when people don't seriously confront their sin. Familiarity may breed contempt when people spend no time contemplating the magnitude of God's love and his Son's sacrifice. The mystery of the real presence may be trivialized by mere repetition.

Our practice of registering for holy communion can do no more than remind people of the solemn nature and priceless blessings of the sacrament. You, dear Christian, prepare to meet your Savior there.

Paul E. Kelm is administrator for the Commission on Adult Discipleship. This concludes "I would like to know." A new column will replace it. See the Forward, p. 23.

LETTERS

"Triumph over addiction"

I want to commend Pastor Phil Merten for the series "Triumph over addiction." The church needs to realize that condemning the addicted person as a sinful being who only needs to use willpower to control his addiction is doing a great disservice to that human being.

I pray that more pastors will become informed about the complexities of chemical dependency, so that the people who need help can receive counseling that will start them on the life-long road to recovery.

*Sally M. Neils
Allegan, Michigan*

In response to the series on chemical dependency [Triumph over addiction], I feel happy this issue is being addressed. The church is beginning to really take a look and for that I am very grateful.

I knew early in our marriage we needed help, but when I would talk to my husband he would be angry.

I couldn't change him, so I went to treatment. Coming to believe that God loves me and helps me has brought me serenity.

I thank you for doing this series. We need to keep telling until some one listens.

Name withheld

Contributing editors

Robert Seefeld makes an interesting assessment of the NL's contributing editors (Nov. 15). He calls for "a more dynamic and contemporary group."

On subjects ranging from American morality, to personal responsibility, to sin, the editorial comments have been very good. They demonstrate a clear understanding of the American culture's

conventional wisdom. And they've repeatedly cut through it all by applying the power of the word to contemporary issues. Just when some new worldly thinking starts to sound not so bad, they've put us back on the path of God's better way.

*Bill Favorite
New London, Wisconsin*

(Obviously the editors agree with your assessment of editorial quality and are pleased that you said so.)

"With-it" articles

Thanks so much for the inspiring, "with-it" articles recently by Paul Kelm and Phil Merten. Pastors like Kelm, Merten, and Jim Aderman are bright spots in our synod, encouraging me that my gifts can be used for the church.

*Sue Fink
Manitowoc, Wisconsin*

Every year — that's *every* year — our 1200-plus congregations lose around 8500 communicant members. That category of losses is labeled by church statisticians "backdoor losses." They are communicant members who joined churches not in fellowship with us, or were dropped, or just plain disappeared. Extend the numbers for a decade and our heads reel: 85,000 communicants — out the back door. It is not surprising that with losses of that magnitude our net gains in baptized membership in past years has hovered around one percent.

This grim news is reported in a study of backdoor losses undertaken by the Commission on Evangelism. The two-year study, funded by a grant from Lutheran Brotherhood, was headed by Pastor Norman W. Berg, who prior to his retirement was administrator for home missions. The final report was issued recently in a plastic-bound booklet of 63 pages. It will be available soon from Northwestern Publishing House.

Studies of national church bodies indicate that about two million people drop their church affiliation annually. Berg points out that our percentage of losses is similar to that of national Protestant church bodies. Our dropout rate of 2.5 percent has remained fairly constant since 1968. "In the 40 years prior to 1968," Berg says, "the rate was significantly lower — a fairly consistent 1.5 percent per year."

The study also sought the reasons former members give for dropping out. (All data for the study was gathered either through questionnaires or telephone interviews.) A major reason, the study found, was the doctrine and practice of the synod. Forty percent of the former members cited this as a major reason. This is not a surprising figure for a church body that takes seriously its doctrine and practice. Personal relationships with pastors, teachers, and other members was cited by 13 percent as a reason for leaving. Another 32 percent mentioned personal issues for dropping out: family and personal problems, job and leisure interest conflicts, lifestyle, etc.

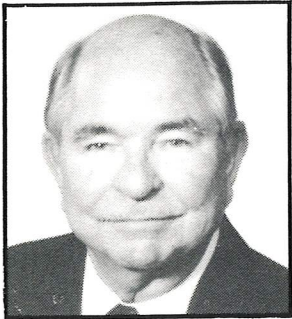
The study indicates that over half of our dropouts currently attend or have joined Lutheran churches not of our fellowship. Some 20 percent attend Protestant or Roman Catholic churches, while a whopping 29 percent remain unchurched.

In an interview discussing the study, Pastor Robert Hartman, administrator for evangelism, made an interesting comment. "What we tend to do," he said, "is to make it easy for people to leave church — we tend to neglect them." Studies suggest, he said, that if members drop out of church life for longer than a month or two and are not immediately contacted, the hope of regaining them, humanly speaking, is slim.

In the first six months of this year, the evangelism commission will be conducting workshops on the problem of backdoor losses in the 12 districts, in which congregations will be asked to grapple with this problem. The workshops will not present a specific structured program for member retention and reclamation "because we are convinced," the study concludes, "that the gospel-driven concern of the local parish for inactive members can express itself most effectively in a response that is tailored to its unique circumstances."

It will certainly further the cause of the gospel if you are able to attend one of these workshops.

James P. Schaefer



*About
two million
people drop
their church
affiliation
annually.*

Dear Lord

Dear Lord,
 You are my loving shepherd.
 You guide me closer to you, even though I often go
 astray.
 You've given me so many blessings I don't deserve.
 I shun you, yet you would never think of leaving me,
 Especially in times of suffering or sadness.
 I sin against you daily.
 And every time you forgive my sins.
 The most important blessing you've given me
 Is everlasting life,
 And you gave me that blessing
 Throughout the awful time you hung on the cross
 For all my sins,
 Even though I'm not worthy of it.
 I could never thank you enough
 For what you've done for me
 And what you continue to do for me, a sinner.
 I'll live my life serving you, obeying you,
 Praising and thanking you for all you've done
 To fill my life with your abundant love.

*Lori Lichtenwald
 California LHS
 Huntington Beach, Cal.*

*You are so eager to lead me,
 but all too often I'm anxious
 to go my own way.*

My good shepherd

As I think of the many ways
 You lead me to safety
 In this world of sin,
 I cannot erase
 The memory of the cross —
 How you graciously
 Poured out your blood
 For the sins of me,
 A wretched sinner.

*Wesley Wolf
 California LHS
 Huntington Beach, Cal.*

I shall not want

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want — or should I say I need nothing else?

When I was little I pondered the words "I shall not want," wondering why anyone would say he didn't want the Lord as his shepherd. Now I understand the meaning of the word "want" and see that it does not refer to not wanting the shepherd. For me, "want" is a comforting and discouraging word in one.

Lord, it is refreshing to know you care for me, to provide me with everything I need or want. I need not want other things than what you've already blessed me with. That leads to the sad part of the word. I have everything I need — family, house, clothes, food, education, but I still worry about petty things. How am I going to survive without new clothes? What is going to happen as I head for college? What will I eat? What friends will I make? Can't I see that you are always right there with me, guiding me through life?

You will always provide for me. You are so eager to lead me, but all too often I'm anxious to go my own way, like a curious lamb wandering from the fold. I should have to pay for all my sins and guilt, yet you gave yourself, the Lamb of God, not only for my immense load of sin, but for the whole world's sin. You took the debt upon your own shoulders.

Like a shepherd carrying a wounded lamb, you have many times carried me when I was too weak or lost. I truly know why you are called the good shepherd. I am in awe of all you do just for this one little lamb. Even though at times I may not remember to thank you for your wonderful helping hand, please keep guiding me.

Thank you, my good shepherd!

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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.