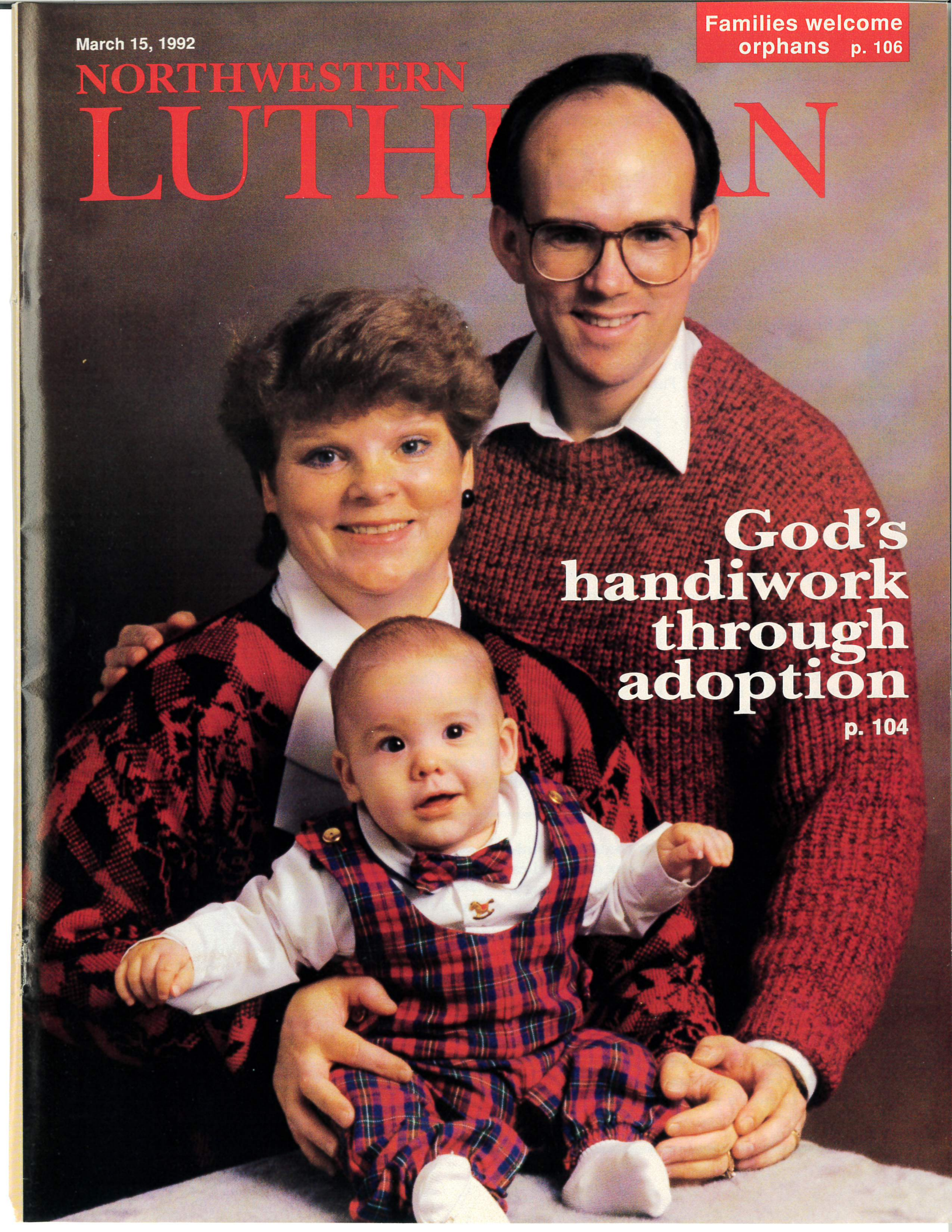


March 15, 1992

Families welcome
orphans p. 106

NORTHWESTERN LUTHERIAN



**God's
handiwork
through
adoption**

p. 104

Our Lord's ambassadors on earth

Citizens of heaven

by Richard D. Balge

The apostle Paul was probably the most active and energetic worker the church has ever had. He did not sit around waiting to be taken to heaven. For him, life on earth was to be lived and it was to be lived for Christ. He seized every opportunity to do what Christ called him to do. Yet he did not forget and he does not want us to forget that we are citizens of heaven.

Our claim to citizenship

In Christ who died for us and rose again we have become heirs of eternal life. His resurrection is the first great crack in the prison of death, the guarantee of our resurrection. This inheritance which he won for every human being is ours by faith alone. Even that faith is God's gift.

He will change these lowly bodies in which we have sinned and which are subject to death. He who has the power to control the universe will use that power to raise up our dead bodies to be like his glorious body. Meanwhile, through faith, we are already citizens of heaven. Paul is saying what we have learned to sing: "Heaven is my fatherland; heaven is my home."

Our conduct as citizens

How are we to conduct ourselves as citizens of such a grand country? Paul says, "Join with others in following my example." Perhaps we can't point to ourselves, as the apostle could, as examples for imitation. But the Spirit of God does enable us to strive to conduct ourselves in such a way that we encourage and

strengthen one another while we live together as "aliens" on this earth. It is important to realize and appreciate that we are Christians together, not individualists interested only in our own salvation with no one to encourage us and no one who needs our help.

There are negative examples, to be sure: "Many live as enemies of the cross of Christ." The lives of many are a denial of the Lord who bought them and their unholy living crucifies him anew. "Their god is their stomach," says Paul. That is, they are slaves of their own appetites and impulses. Their pride is what they should be ashamed of, and this world is the limit of their horizons. They cannot nullify the salvation won for them on the cross or undo Christ's redeeming work — except for themselves. They can reject it, however, and some do and that is to weep.

God keeps us in this world and in our earthly citizenship for a while to do his work on earth. As citizens of heaven we are here to encourage one another in the life of faith. We are here to share the hope of eternal life with those who have no hope, or whose hope is wavering. We are here to love those who are least lovable, speaking the word of God's forgiveness in Christ. Citizens of heaven, yes, but our Lord's ambassadors on earth, too.

Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you. For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body (Philippians 3).



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

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

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FEATURES

- God's handiwork through adoption** by Craig W. Campana104
- Families welcome orphans**
by Paul E. Baumler with Dorothy J. Sonntag106
- The Chapel can be a dangerous place** by Wendy L. Greenfield108
- Ex Corde: Music "from the heart"** by Dorothy J. Sonntag110
- WHAT LUTHERANS BELIEVE
- What are the Lutheran Confessions?** by Wayne A. Laitinen112
- LIFE IS LOOKING UP
- Body language** by Paul E. Kelm113
- Saying it with flowers** by Paul M. Mueller120

NEWS

- Tsuchiura landslide update • Radio program is not a joint venture
• Back to Hong Kong • Michigan, South Central, and
Southeastern Wisconsin Districts news114

DEPARTMENTS

- THOUGHT FOR TODAY
- Citizens of heaven** by Richard D. Balge102
- PARABLES OF GRACE
- Startling good news** by Mark E. Braun116
- EDITORIAL COMMENT
- Move the college? (Part two)** by Carleton Toppe117
- READERS FORUM118
- FROM THIS CORNER by the editor119

FORWARD

- Pictured on the cover are Craig and Linda Campana with son Corey. Craig tells of the emotional difficulties he and his wife underwent, and how they coped with them, when they found they were unable to have children. The Campanas decided to try to adopt, not through a social service agency, but by independently seeking a child. The Campanas' story begins on the next page.
- The public media — including USA Today — carried a number of stories about the Ukrainian orphans

brought to America in January by a group of WELS and ELS members. NL's intern, Paul Baumler, traveled to Chicago with a notebook and camera to be present when the children arrived. Not a professional photographer, he wasn't sure of which pictures to take. "What I did," he told us, "was watch the USA Today photographer, and if he took a picture, I took one, too." We don't know how USA Today's pictures came out, but you can see Paul's, together with his story, on page 106.

DJS



God's handiwork through adoption

We set out on a course to locate a baby to adopt. We had cards that had our name, adoption phone number, and "We desire to adopt" printed on them. We handed them out to everyone we met.

by Craig W. Campana

As I sit here and watch our new son sleeping, I marvel at how blessed my wife Linda and I are. We are full of joy and thanksgiving as we look back on the last year and reflect on how the Lord has touched our lives when he chose us to become Corey's parents through adoption.

We started out five years ago, a newly married couple looking forward to our life together and starting a family. After one year of unsuccessful attempts to conceive, we sought medical help. The diagnosis was infertility due to a congenital birth defect. I was born with Klinefelter's Syndrome, which is rare and affects one in 500 men.

Further medical treatment or adoption were the only options that were given in our attempt to become parents. We consulted with our pastor before we opted to seek further medical treatment. The treatment was not covered by insurance, which limited the length of time we could pursue it. After several attempts that failed, we were left emotionally wrought and financially devastated. We sought the help of professional support groups, hoping they would link us to others dealing with infertility issues.

Realizing that if we learned to talk about our infertility we might heal, we became active in RESOLVE of Southeastern Wisconsin. The information, referrals, and contacts were invaluable, but never dealt with the spiritual issues of infertility. We relied on prayer to help us cope with the experiences we were having and the emotions we were feeling.

Although our church was a haven for us, we found

it hard to cope when we saw other couples enjoying the blessings of parenthood. Baptisms, Mother's and Father's Days, even the children's services were difficult. Such occasions brought tears to our eyes. We felt alienated from our church friends, because they had children.

We knew if it was the Lord's will we would someday be parents. But it would be in God's time. If we would never become parents, God would find a way to use our love for children.

We began familiarizing ourselves with adoption agencies, their requirements and waiting periods. We investigated different agencies and found we might wait years before receiving a baby. Finally, we became involved in an adoption support group and learned about independent adoption.

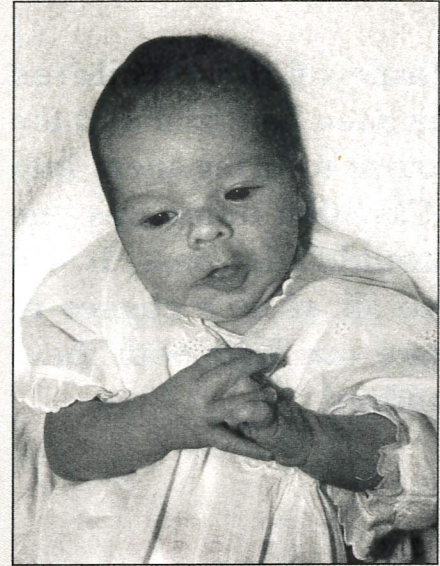
My wife and I began talking to everyone we met, telling them our story, educating them about adoption. We set out on a course to locate a baby to adopt. We had cards that had our name, adoption phone number, and "We desire to adopt" printed on them. We handed them out to everyone we met, and even included them with our Christmas cards.

One month after Christmas, a call came from our former pastor who had received our card. He knew a young woman who was making an adoption plan for her unborn baby, and told her about my wife and me.

When she called, she was excited about placing her baby in a Christian home. And we were equally excited. She sent us photographs of her and her



Linda and Craig Campana leave the hospital with son Corey.



Corey in his grandfather's baptismal gown. The gown was 72 years old.

family, and we sent her a video showing us with our families and friends. As we made preparations for the birth and placement of the baby, we felt God's continued guidance.

There was a five-month wait until the baby would be born, which gave us time to get the myriad of paperwork, home studies, interviews, and investigations completed. For the most part, everything went well, although there were times we needed to feel reassured that this was God's plan for us. The waiting seemed endless.

We started to dislike weekends, when our minds were freed from work-related activities. We would stay at home, thinking and praying about the adoption. We spent a great deal of time sitting by the phone, and began to worry when it didn't ring.

Each time there was a lull in the communication, we would pray for a sign that things were still moving. We always received signs, little ones that almost went unnoticed, or larger, more miraculous ones. While waiting we had the support of our families, our friends and coworkers, and our adoption support group.

It was during one of the more stressful times, while trying to work out the legalities of an interstate adoption, that we received the call telling us our baby was ten minutes old. He was born on June 11. When we arrived at the hospital on June 15 to pick him up, we met his birth mother and had a chance to thank her personally for the gift she was giving to us.

We named our son Corey Matthew. He was baptized on Father's Day with his birth family and adoptive family there to celebrate together. The pastor who had married my wife and me, and had helped with the adoption, baptized him.

To proclaim our joy and thankfulness in the Lord's plan for us, we chose this poem to include in Corey's adoption announcements:

*From anxiety and darkness
comes a ray of shining light.
You've sent a precious child to us,
O God of wonder and might.
You know how much the wanting
and you know how long the wait,
But from all of this frustration
comes a joy that's oh so great.
We feel your presence around us
and we know you truly care,
When we look into this tiny crib
and see our baby lying there.
You've made another miracle
which came to us today,
You've given us this special child
who's now forever home to stay.
How thankful we are this minute —
our prayers have all come true.
We're a family through adoption,
and we owe it all to you.*

Craig Campana is director of video services at Northwestern Publishing House. He and Linda are members of Gloria Dei-Bethesda, Milwaukee.

“None of these children has been baptized and the chance to bring them into a Christian home was one I couldn’t let pass. It will give all of us a chance to share our faith with these children.”

Families welcome orphans

by Paul E. Baumler
with Dorothy J. Sonntag

On January 28, 126 Ukrainian orphans arrived in Chicago to spend four months with sponsor families in Wisconsin and Illinois. The children, ranging in age from 5 to 12, came from three orphanages in Ternopil. Arriving at O’Hare International Airport, the children were taken to the Ukrainian Cultural Center to be introduced to their host families.

Larry Marquardt, a member of St. John, Libertyville, Ill., who helped organize the project, said half of the children were placed with Ukrainian families in Chicago and the others with WELS families in northern Illinois and southeastern Wisconsin. Some of the students are attending Shoreland Lutheran High School in Somers, Wis. Others are studying in home schools or attending Lutheran elementary schools in Racine, Kenosha, and Burlington, Wis., and Zion and Antioch, Ill.

The children were brought to the US under a program set up by Thoughts of Faith, a Lutheran orga-

nization that does radio mission work in Ukraine. John Shep, an Evangelical Lutheran Synod pastor who is director of the mission, originally sought just to raise money for food for the orphanages. But the lack of food and fuel in Ukraine made him fear for the children’s survival during the winter. They are scheduled to return to Ukraine in May.

The orphans’ traveling expenses, which totaled well over \$100,000, were paid for by two businessmen, Marvin Schwan and George Skestos, who are active in Thoughts of Faith.

According to Marquardt, a member of the world missions board, language is an obvious barrier, but not one that can’t be overcome. “The children are at the age where learning another language comes rather easily,” he said. “Also, the number of volunteers who speak Ukrainian in the Shoreland district will make the transition easier.”

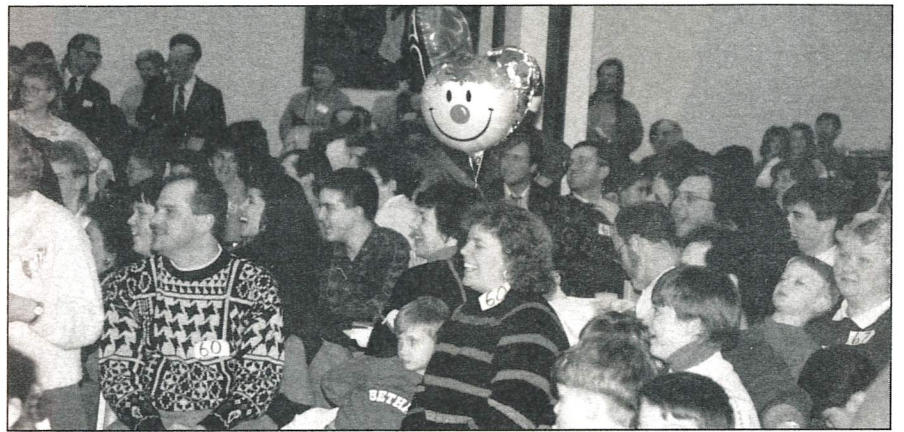
Marquardt noted that the transition might be



PHOTOS BY PAUL BAUMLER



The Ukrainian Cultural Center in Chicago was crowded with families welcoming children from three orphanages in Ternopil, Ukraine.



made easier because many of the children will be attending the same schools and churches. "They will be able to relate their experiences to someone who may be experiencing the same situation," he said.

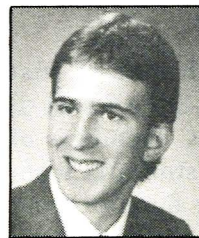
To the Marquardts and the other sponsors, the program is an opportunity to tell of the Savior. The Marquardts are hosting three children, ages 9, 11, and 14. "None of these children has been baptized," said Mrs. Marquardt, "and the chance to bring them into a Christian home was one I couldn't let pass. It will give all of us a chance to share our faith with these children."

Marquardt said the overall goal was to take a greater interest in the orphanage system in Ukraine. "The idea is to operate the orphanages in Ukraine in a manner much like our Lutheran schools." Because Pastor Shep has worked in Ukraine for 12 years and has the necessary experience and credentials to establish Lutheran schools

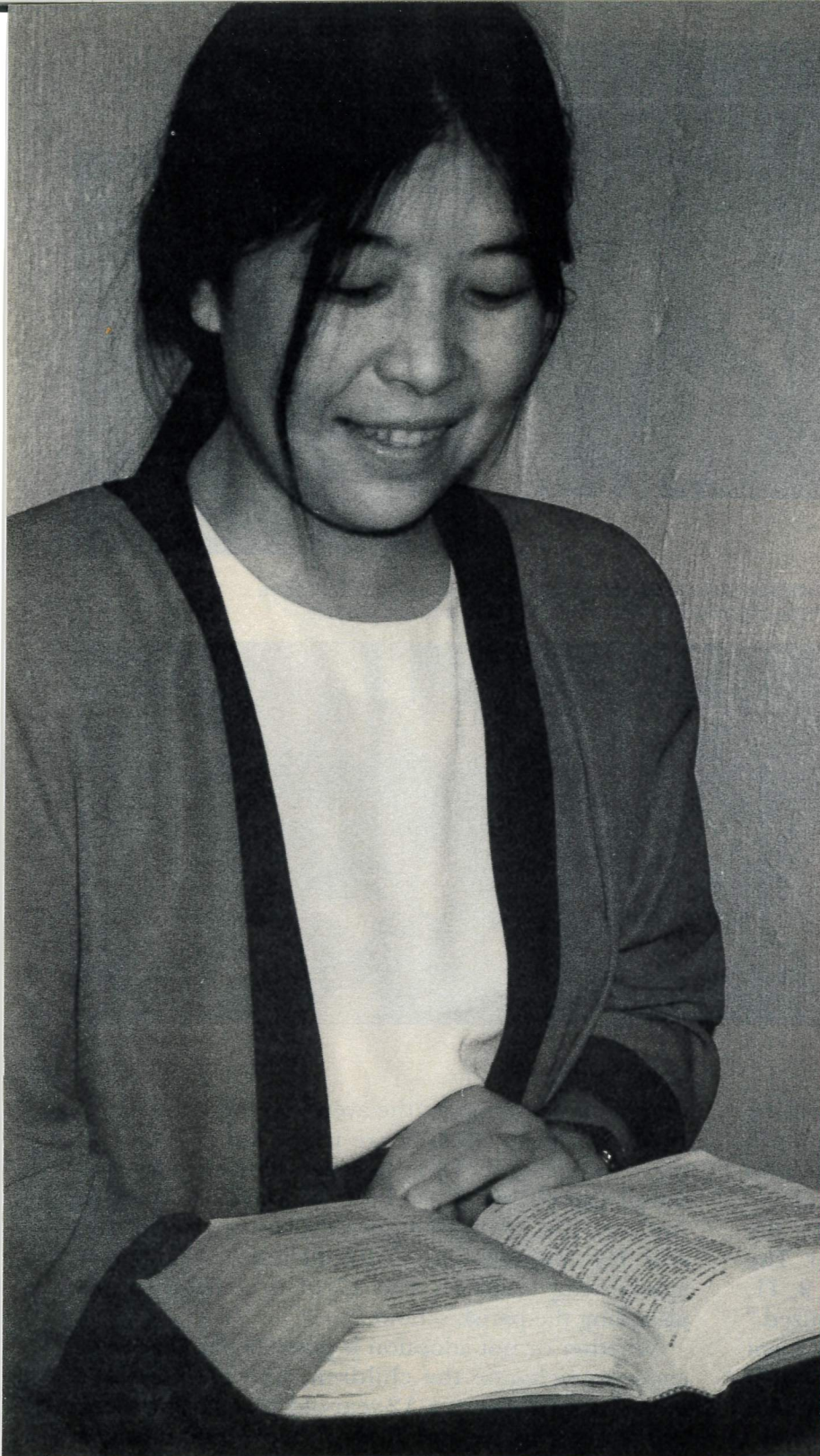
there, said Marquardt, "the avenue is there to take."

Although the children are in the US only on visitors' visas, many of the host families are eager to adopt the children, said Pastor Darald Gruen of Antioch, and are working with a lawyer toward that end. His congregation, Faith, includes a number of sponsoring families, and 17 of the children are attending the parish school.

Whether or not adoption is possible, families were eager to welcome the children. Ken Henderson's family is sponsoring a 12-year-old boy. "I felt there was a need to be a sponsor," said Henderson, a father of three from Burlington. "There's room in my heart to love another child, if only for a short time."



Paul Baumler, a member of Jordan, West Allis, Wis., and a senior at Carroll College, recently completed an internship with Northwestern Lutheran.



The Chapel can be a dangerous place

For the Chinese who are planning to return home

by Wendy L. Greenfield

Xiao Min

Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel is just around the corner from State Street in downtown Madison, Wis. Members of the Chapel are mostly students from the University of Wisconsin or young families from the downtown area.

Like many small churches, the members of this congregation know each other and are friends. They like to chat after church. For many, the Chapel seems to be a pleasant and comfortable place; but for the Chinese from the People's Republic of China who are planning to return home, the Chapel can be

It's considered disloyal to the Chinese government to be loyal to Jesus.

a dangerous place.

"It's considered disloyal to the Chinese government to be loyal to Jesus," said Pastor Tom Trapp, one of two pastors at the Chapel.

"There's a lot of interest in Christianity among the mainland Chinese, but they have to be very careful politically," Trapp said. "They can get into trouble back home. They can be reported."

"Some of the Chinese students may be working with their government," said Pastor Tom Schnick, the second pastor at the Chapel. "Different students may be reporting the activities of other students to the Chinese government."

"It's very real," said Sandy Grant from The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod campus ministry. "They don't want to be identified as Christian by family or government. You can feel the vibrations when they think someone is watching them."

Terrell Smith, a staff member at Intervarsity Christian Fellowship (an international student ministry), told about an experience that he had while working in Germany two years ago.

"A Chinese scholar decided to become a Christian," said Smith, "and he let it be known. And he disappeared. We never really did find out what happened to him. As far as we can ascertain, his government revoked his permission to study and whisked him back to China."

"I don't think the Chinese government or the official line is against Christianity per se," said Smith. "I think the feeling is against all religion, that religion is a waste of time."

Several of the Chinese attending Bible studies and services at Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel became interested in Christianity after sending their children to the Chapel's vacation Bible school to practice English and learn more about the American culture.

Pastor Schnick recalled an incident after the Chapel's weeklong vacation Bible school last summer.

"There was a group of mainland Chinese parents standing around waiting to pick up their kids," Schnick said. "They were speaking Chinese. And because a couple of people I knew were there and

listening and speaking along with them, I knew what they were talking about. They were saying, 'What are we going to do? Our children believe in Jesus. What are we going to do?'"

"The children are learning about Christ, and they're telling their parents," said Judith Metzger, Sunday school superintendent at the Chapel. "Their parents are becoming interested."

Xiao Min (pronounced Show Min) became interested in Christianity after sending her daughter to the Chapel's Sunday school. Last year she became a Christian and was baptized at the Chapel.

Xiao Min can talk about her faith without being afraid, as she once was, because she is going to be able to work and live in America. Before she was sure that she could stay, she feared that other Chinese would find out about her interest in Christianity.

The future is uncertain for Chinese Christians returning to China, Xiao Min said. She believes that if she returned to China she might have the opportunity to worship if she did it secretly.

"I just be careful," she said. "Don't let somebody know. If the government know, that means maybe sometime I get in trouble." Asked what kind of trouble she meant, she responded, "I don't know. In China you cannot imagine. In China everything controlled by government: how much your wage is, what kind of house you live. Everything."

"If she goes back," Pastor Schnick explained, "she may have to live in a smaller house, because the size of your house is determined by the government. She may have less responsibility and pay on her job. She may suffer other social recriminations. In the past people have even been put into prison. She just doesn't know."

Pastor Schnick said he has learned a lot from Xiao Min. "Xiao Min taught my wife and me about valuing the things we have in our country that God has given us, like freedom."



Wendy Greenfield, a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin—Madison, is a member of St. John, Wauwatosa, Wisconsin.

EX CORDE

Music "from the heart"

by Dorothy J. Sonntag



If you think of church workers as staid and somber, the members of Ex Corde want to change your mind.

When this musical group is performing, they engage in antics that might be described as undignified and tell jokes best described as groaners. They display emotion openly — especially their happiness in the Lord.

The message they want to get across is that serving the Lord brings joy. And they'd like the young people in their audiences to think about serving him, too.

All of the group are in the ministry. Phil and Vicki Boileau, Ric Gibson, and Lyle Strehler teach in Lutheran schools. Dan Simons and Rod Pudell are pastors.

"We want to show that pastors and teachers can have fun," said Phil Boileau, "that we're normal people."

"We try to encourage kids to consider being pastors and teachers, or to serve the Lord in some other way," added Vicki. "We want to show them we have fun doing what we do, and they could, too."

"We're proclaiming Christ through music and having fun at it," said Lyle Strehler, "and we always make it a point to try to get kids interested in the work of the church. After a concert, a lot of them talk to us about the ministry."

The group got started when Ric Gibson was in charge of planning the entertainment for the 1981 youth rally. He called on his friends for help, and they put together a musical group. After the rally they received requests to perform at church functions and Lutheran high schools. They've appeared regularly at subsequent youth rallies, and they recently made a tape.

At first they played secular music. In 1985 the group presented its first concert of Christian contemporary music. Simons calls the concert a "key turning point. CCM was new to us, and we liked it."

"It was so much fun," Vicki said. "We liked being together and doing our music. And to praise God, too! It was a spiritual high."

"Hymns are still meaningful and I enjoy them, too," said Simons. "Contemporary Christian music is just one way of doing it. We don't want to replace the Lutheran chorales. Music is just the envelope. It's the message that matters. But you don't use the same kind of envelope for every message."

"I see people being spiritually uplifted by this music," said Phil. "It's not for everyone, but it's been a comfort for us, and it's been the same for



Left to right, Vicki Boileau, Rod Pudell, Dan Simons, Lyle Strehler, Ric Gibson, and Phil Boileau.

*“Music is just the envelope.
It’s the message that matters.
But you don’t use the same kind
of envelope for every message.”*

other people. Paul said we should be all things to all people. To communicate the gospel message of Jesus Christ, we need to use every way possible.”

Changing the kind of music they played helped to lead to the decision to change the group’s name. Originally calling themselves PTO (for Pastor-Teacher Organization), they chose Ex Corde. “It means ‘from the heart,’” explained Strehler, “and it describes the kind of music we play.”

Besides offering a way to recruit for the ministry, concerts can also help with evangelism, Vicki Boileau notes. “Sometimes it’s easier to invite a friend to a Christian concert instead of church on Sunday morning. It just might be the first step.”

Finding time to rehearse is difficult, since half

the group lives in Wisconsin and half in Minnesota. “We meet halfway at Tomah or Sparta [on the western edge of Wisconsin] to practice before a concert,” said Vicki. “Another problem, with six called workers, is to find a date when there’s nothing going on.”

“Our responsibilities and obligations to our congregations come first,” said Dan Simons. “We work this in as we’re able to. Our congregations are extremely supportive and make it easy for us to stay involved.”

They enjoy performing, but Ex Corde members say receiving recognition isn’t their goal. “Before we do a concert, we always have a prayer,” Phil said. “We ask the Lord to direct our hearts and minds to serve him.”

“Besides, we don’t have much opportunity to get an ego problem,” added Vicki, “because we make enough mistakes to keep us humble. God makes sure of that.”

(“From the Heart,” recorded by Ex Corde, is available on cassette tape for \$8.50 and on CD for \$12.50. Tapes and CDs can be ordered from Ex Corde, Olive Branch Ministries, 833 Marshall Rd, Shakopee MN 55379; or call 612/445-2885. For shipping and handling add \$1.50 for the first item and 50¢ for each additional item.)

Dorothy Sonntag is assistant editor of Northwestern Lutheran.

What are the Lutheran Confessions?

by Wayne A. Laitinen

The Lutheran Confessions are writings which Lutheran Christians have pointed to as accurate statements of their biblical faith. The collection of these writings is called the Book of Concord. It consists of three confessions of faith which have been accepted by Christians of all ages: the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed.

The remaining writings are distinctly Lutheran in origin, though they, too, proclaim the universal truth of Scripture: Luther's Small Catechism, Luther's Large Catechism, the Augsburg Confession, the Defense of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, and the Formula of Concord.

Where do the confessions fit?

Someone may ask, "If the Bible is the only source of Christian teaching, where do confessions of faith fit in?"

In the time of Martin Luther, it was generally accepted that to be a member of Christ's church was the same as being a member of the Roman Catholic Church. When Luther's attempts to reform his church from within failed, he found it necessary to explain to friends and enemies alike that he was not starting a new religion. He was calling his church back to what the Bible had been teaching all along. When asked what he believed about God, he pointed to the ancient creeds as concise statements of his biblical beliefs. When Lutherans were asked to explain how they differed with Roman Catholicism or religious splinter-groups, Lutherans wrote new confessions of faith, salted with Scripture references, to explain their convictions.

The Lutheran Confessions are just as important today. If you were to ask a Baptist, a Catholic, a

Lutheran, or even a Jehovah's Witness the basis for his religion, you might receive the same answer from all of them. Each one may say, "The Bible."

That can be very confusing. But Isaiah gives us a simple solution: "To the law and to the testimony!" (Isaiah 8:20). In other words, "Go to the Bible and find out whose teachings are right and whose teachings are wrong." God's word is truth. God's word is clear. It cannot possibly lead us in so many different denominational directions at the same time. Since God's word is the only standard by which all churches must be judged, we must ask each one, "How do you understand what the Bible says?"

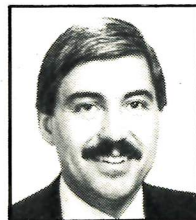
An explanation of Bible teaching

By the same token we owe an explanation to those who ask us, "How do you Lutherans understand the Bible?" The creeds, the catechisms, the Augsburg Confession, the Defense of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, and the Formula of Concord, provide the answer.

To be sure, the Spirit-breathed Scriptures are the only guide in Christian faith and life. The Lutheran Confessions provide an explanation of Bible teaching and applications to life.

The Bible remains divine master. The confessions are human servants. Those who wrote the Lutheran Confessions and those who adhere to them are following the apostles' encouragement, "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have" (1 Peter 3:15).

Next: The creeds



Wayne Laitinen is pastor of Palos, Palos Heights, Ill.

Body language

The Bible is full of body language,
from the solemn bow to the exuberant clap

by Paul E. Kelm

Pastoral training includes the study of a number of languages no one speaks. One such language, however, is not included in the curriculum. Body language.

Body language is caught more than taught. I was reminded of that a few Sundays past as I turned to see who the soloist was. Frozen in mid-swivel, I recalled the glaring face of a woman in the pew behind me at age four. That stern look, and some personal misapplication of the story of Lot's wife, taught more deportment in church than countless parental lectures.

Childhood lessons

There are other body language lessons from childhood in church. Ushers, for example, come in at least three categories. Children instinctively know not to ask for a bulletin from the "ecclesiastical bouncer" or "church mannequin" types.

Kneeling at the altar communicates both reverent awe and fellowship with God long before a child comprehends the sacrament.

My little brother wouldn't leave church until he'd received his handshake from Pastor Sauer, who would bend, hold you with his eyes, and then transport you momentarily to the Savior's side with a smile that was grace without words.

Even comparative theology was expressed in body language back then. "Holy roller" is self-explanatory. Catholics crossed themselves before free throws. Lutherans, as you know, stand up and sit down like jacks-in-a-box.

Later lessons

Only later in life have people taught me how a hug communicates Christian love. Now, if only we would develop signals that distinguish huggers from non-huggers before it's too late. Body language can be subtle.

I've learned to look at shoulders and hands and eyes, not just listen to words. People are usually more honest in body language. I've learned about "space" and "lean" and inflection because I don't want to intimidate or bore. There are countless teachers to whom I am indebted, and most of them don't even know it. Unfortunately, I still communicate haltingly in body language.

Bible lessons

The Bible is full of body language, from the solemn bow to the exuberant clap, when it describes our approach to God. Posture is an aid to devotion. "Make his face shine upon us" and "Lift up his countenance upon us" are grace and mercy communicated in body language. Visual phrases paint the picture worth a thousand words.

My favorite biblical body language, though, is "Lift up your heads." When you do it, I can feel it. When I do it, I see more of God in life. When we all do it, there is a hallelujah chorus in sign language.

Life is looking up!

Paul E. Kelm is administrator for the Commission on Adult Discipleship.

Tsuchiura landslide update

In the fall of 1991 the WELS mission property in Tsuchiura, Japan, about 40 miles north of Tokyo, was partially buried by a landslide. The parsonage and school could not be used because of the danger of another landslide. Missionary David Haberkorn and his family are living in rented quarters, as is Teacher Laura Schroeder. The church on the property is in no danger and is presently also serving as a schoolroom. Missionary Glen Hieb and his family who live on the property are also in no danger. The only way the property could be rendered safe is by the construction of a retaining wall. Missionary Haberkorn recently brought us up to date.

Our entire little church body has been striving to gather as much money as possible to pay towards a retaining wall to save our property. This wall is estimat-

ed to cost from seven to eight hundred thousand dollars. Since such a huge amount of money seemed impossible (humanly speaking) to gather from the three hundred members of our church, many prayers were sent to the throne of God asking for a solution to this problem.

The Lord brought an answer to our prayers through the work of the son of one of our oldest members, Mr. Kamo. Mr. Kamo's son, who is not yet a Christian himself, just happens (or was it God's plan?) to work on these kinds of projects for our prefecture. Through his untiring efforts, our project was chosen for funding by both the Ibaraki Prefecture and the government of Japan.

So please praise the Lord with us! Construction on the retaining wall to save our property is scheduled to begin the end of March

Our entire little church body has been striving . . . to pay towards a retaining wall to save our property.

and will be finished, God willing, sometime this fall. Neither the parsonage nor the grade school will be able to be used until the wall is finished.

The LECC and the WELS may still have to invest some rather large sums of money into this project because we may have to pay for the removal or relocation of several structures so that the large machinery needed for this project can be used. But thanks be to our Lord that the bulk of the project has been taken on by the prefectural and national governments! Please keep the success of this project in your thoughts and prayers.

Radio program is not a joint venture

Recently a news item appeared in several places in the religious press which referred to a new hour-long sacred classical music FM radio program, "Joy," as "the first joint venture into ministry that has ever been done" by the three largest Lutheran church bodies, of which the Wisconsin Synod is named as one.

The new radio program available to radio stations across the country is produced by KFUE-FM in St. Louis, an entity of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The program, on a trial run, is funded by a grant from Aid Association for Lutherans. A word of explanation is in order since the news report places us in violation of Wisconsin Synod fellowship principles, based on Romans 16:17 and

other Scripture texts, which forbid joint worship with those not in doctrinal agreement with us.

Occasional meetings by WELS divisional representatives with other church body representatives, hosted by AAL and Lutheran Brotherhood, have been going on since at least the mid-1970s. These meetings involved potential grants to all Lutheran bodies for specific purposes, and the advice of all Lutheran bodies is solicited by AAL or LB about the terms of the grants, since grants for a pan-Lutheran project often preclude WELS participation.

There is no expression of fellowship in such meetings — no joint prayer or worship. The 1961 resolutions of the synod, suspending fellowship with the Missouri Synod on

the basis of Romans 16: 17, will not permit a manifestation of a fellowship which does not exist.

When WELS persons have been present for other types of consultations hosted by AAL or LB, they have been present as observers, and it has been usually so noted in any publicity released in connection with such an affair.

Even in these meetings where WELS persons are present as observers, there is no expression of fellowship. With recent changes of personnel at both AAL and ELCA offices, this distinction may have been lost sight of. If there are future news releases in matters of this nature, and if WELS is present, WELS status will be carefully noted.

Back to Hong Kong

Tom Frei and his wife Melánie, shown with Kelly, Jonathan, and Eric, are returning to Hong Kong, where they had been missionaries for the Evangelical Free Church of America. When doctrinal differences led them to resign, Gary Schroeder, a WELS missionary in Hong Kong, introduced them to the Wisconsin Synod. In December, after a year of study at Wisconsin



Lutheran Seminary, Tom was commissioned as a missionary, and the

Freis are returning to Hong Kong, this time to serve in the WELS.

Michigan District news

Beautiful Savior in Grove City, Ohio, celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the congregation on November 10. . . . On November 17, **Our Shepherd in Warren** celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary in the ministry of their pastor, John Henderson. . . . **Appointments:** Mr. John Rathje, Pastor Nathan Strobel, and Teacher David Lecker were appointed to the District Commission on Adult Discipleship. Teachers Scott Monroe and Paul Wichmann were appointed to the District Commission on Parish Schools. . . . On February 28, Pastor Karl Otto retired as the executive administrator of the **Martin Luther Memorial Homes**. . . . **Good Shepherd, Burton**, dedicated a new church on January 19. . . . The

South Central District news

Members of **Cross of Christ at Universal City, Texas**, dedicated their worship facility March 17, 1991. The congregation, on the northeast side of San Antonio, held its first service in 1985. . . . **Atonement, Plano, Texas**, has dedicated its first worship facility. The attractive chapel serves as the worship home for the nine-year-old

installation service of Pastor Larry Ellenberger as **Mission Counselor to the northeast region** of WELS (serving the Michigan and North Atlantic Districts) was held on January 19 at Resurrection in Toledo, Ohio. . . . Pastor Tom Johnston of Grass Lake has accepted the call of **Huron Valley Lutheran High School** in Westland to serve as its liaison with conference congregations, counselor, and instructor; he will begin his duties March 1. The school also reports that five computers were added to the computer resource center, and that they have begun a second year of the "In His Service" program, which provides an opportunity for students to be involved in congregational ministry.

— James L. Langebartels

congregation. . . . Members and friends of **Shepherd of the Hills, Fredericksburg, Texas**, gathered to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Pastor Floyd Mattek on Aug. 19. . . . On Dec. 8 **Our Savior, San Antonio**, hosted a service of praise for 25 years of blessings.

— Charles L. Learman

Southeastern Wisconsin District news

After five years of teaching music and English at **Shoreland LHS**, Mrs. Laurie Biedenbender resigned, awaiting the birth of her first child. Shoreland is participating in a study of attitudes toward Christian education which is funded by the Siebert Lutheran Foundation. . . . **Kettle Moraine, Shoreland, and Wisconsin Lutheran high schools** are participating in an outcome-based curriculum development project funded by a grant from Aid Association for Lutherans. . . . **Faith, Sussex**, celebrated its 25th anniversary on January 12. . . . **Spiritual growth** for the faculty of Wisconsin Lutheran High School focused on family relations in a six week Bible study course entitled, "Jesus Come Home," conducted by Pastor Wayne Mueller. Dr. John Koehn and Dr. Pat Magestro of Cardinal Stritch College led the professional growth seminars during the first semester stressing motivation and teaching. Stress management will be the topic for the second semester. . . . **Atonement, Milwaukee**, dedicated its new organ January 12.

— Robert A. Sievert

Jesus' parables reveal how he turns everything upside down

Startling good news

by Mark E. Braun

Our Lord's initial parables — parables of the kingdom — were told on a single day beside the lake of Galilee. In them, Jesus foretold the surprising expansion of the kingdom; Satan and his wickedest allies could not obstruct it.

Good news, all of it — yet likely to be misconstrued, even by his closest followers. The larger question was: what kind of king would he be? And what sort of kingdom was he growing?

What kind of king?

For a thousand years, the scraps of David's once glorious empire had become the doormat for a string of foreign invaders. Assyria and Babylon overran the northern and southern kingdoms of Israel. For two centuries Judah survived as a pip-squeak western province of the Persian empire. Then came Alexander, imposing Greek thinking and lifestyle. Finally, six decades before Jesus' birth, Palestine surrendered to Rome.

Predictions of vast growth and power in Jesus' kingdom inspired a false dream in many of his hearers' hearts: A new David will arise!

Soon after he told his kingdom parables, Jesus fed the 5000; the crowds shouted, "Let's make him king!" Jesus had to flee the multitudes and send his disciples away, or they too would have been smitten by the fever. He withdrew from the busy villages of Galilee, north to Phoenicia, east to the Decapolis. Still the crowds came after him.

So he took his disciples still farther north, to Caesarea Philippi, and there he asked them the most important question of their lives: "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" After a variety of Gallup-type responses, he pressed further, "But what about you? Who do you say I am?" Peter answered for them all, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Only heaven itself could have given Peter that reply. We might expect Jesus to clap his hands with joy. At last they know who I am! But then and there

he began to unfold a second truth, harder to fathom: their Lord must be captured and crucified. The same Peter who had just confessed him as the Christ reacted with horror: "Never, Lord! This shall never happen to you!"

What kind of kingdom?

At the transfiguration, Peter gushed how good it was to be there, gazing on all Jesus' glory. Peter even proposed that a shrine be erected, so Jesus could stay there forever, his majesty eternally on hold. No more talk about dying! How could a crucified Christ bring any kingdom at all?

Our Lord devoted his final months to teaching his disciples that the only way the kingdom would come was through his suffering, dying, and rising again. If that weren't distressing enough, he also told them that anyone who followed him could expect the same sort of future. Whoever wanted to come after him must deny himself and take up his cross. The one who hoped to be great must make himself least. If you'd like to be first you've got to go last. The way to be great is to serve — just as he came not to be served but to serve, to give his life a ransom for many.

It was in these circumstances that Jesus told a second set of parables. In them he revealed, even more than in the first set, how he turns everything upside down. Instead of orchestrating his career toward a stunning triumph, he would suffer what would seem a gruesome defeat. Yet this apparent weakness and failure was the Father's one and only plan to restore lost sons and daughters to his family.

What a surprising story. What startling good news.

That's why we call this second set of stories "parables of grace."

Next: The lost sheep and the lost coin.



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

Move the college? (Part two)

The March 1 issue of Northwestern Lutheran raised several questions about the effect the removal of Northwestern College from Watertown, Wis., to New Ulm, Minn., would have on NWC's enrollment of pastor-training students. This issue presents more questions about the ability of an amalgamated Dr. Martin Luther — Northwestern college to enroll the larger numbers of pastor-training graduates the seminary and our synod need.

Pastors who are graduates of NWC have generally been the best recruiters for the pastoral ministry. Their personal ties to Northwestern and their alumni loyalty to their single-purpose, pre-seminary college have yielded significant recruitment benefits for the synod's pastoral ministry. Will this natural support be diminished if NWC fades into an amalgamated college?

In its present location, Northwestern College is less than 45 miles away from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in Mequon. There are frequent contacts between the seminary faculty and the Northwestern campus, contacts that are a plus for the seminary recruitment program. The frequent unofficial contacts between seminary students and NWC students are a very significant factor in encouraging wavering or undecided Northwestern students to give the seminary a try. Will much of the seminary's recruitment be lost if NWC is located 400 miles from Mequon?

The growing shortage of pastors has spurred planning for a staff ministry, other than pastors and teachers, to help ministry needs in the decade of the '90s and into the next century. A five-year college program, or its equivalent, is being organized to train this ministry. The program is to be installed at Dr. Martin Luther College. If NWC is transferred to the DMLC campus, will the less extensive and considerably briefer staff ministry program tend to undercut the eight-year pastor-training program, half of which is conducted on the same DMLC campus?

It was the experience of The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod, with its preparatory department-college department combination schools, that a high percentage of their preparatory department graduates enrolled in the college department. The 125-year experience of Northwestern College and Northwestern Preparatory School on the same campus has been parallel to the LCMS experience. Would separation of NWC from NPS, its most productive feeder school, also decrease the number of NPS graduates enrolling at an NWC on the DMLC campus?

Our college at Watertown is a unique pre-seminary college. The worker-training program of which it is a central part is long and challenging. The calling for which its young men are preparing themselves is a demanding one, but it doesn't offer great financial rewards and public prestige. Other more highly regarded and handsomely remunerated professions beckon to Northwestern's well-qualified students.

In pursuing their singular and uncommon purpose, NWC students need the support of a corps of their fellow-students, with whom they share the goal of becoming pastors, who help each other shape a positive attitude toward that special ministry, who strengthen each other's commitment to achieving their common goal. NWC is a West Point, not like an ROTC at Madison. Would NWC maintain its vital spirit, its *esprit de corps*, if it were no longer an independent college with a single shining purpose?

Would an NWC remaining in Watertown be freer to render its service to the seminary and the synod?

Carleton Toppe



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

Religious reading

Dear letter writer: Congratulations! We need watchmen and women on the heights to keep our synod's publications on the straight and narrow. However, you are a little hard on the magazine. Of the Oct. 15 issue you wrote: "I count two articles with Scripture text and six secular articles. We are a religious publication, not Readers Digest" (Letters, Dec. '91).

Just because I do not quote a Scripture passage when I talk about the Savior does not make it a secular presentation. An article about the Christian life, detailing God's will, without quoting scripture does not equate with Readers Digest.

If you want exclusive theological reading, subscribe to Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly, available from Northwestern Publishing House.

Take it from an 80-year-old who still keeps an eye on his confirmands.

*Wilmer Valleskey
Brownsville, Texas*

Don't mix arguments

Letters (Dec.) call abortion what it is: murder. Many people don't believe the Bible says so, but we know it.

So I wonder whether we should mix our arguments for Christ with our arguments for the unborn. We will be accused of forcing our Christian beliefs upon our secular fellow citizens, and the pro-choice movement will call our view "only Christian."

Let's try to make everyone a Christian, and let's try to make everyone aware of the purely scientific facts, which are wholly sufficient for a pro-life position.

*Ulrich Motte
Munich, Germany*

Positive messages

I am a teenager and I listen to Christian rock. Rev. Jonathan Rupprecht states (Questioning Christian rock, Feb. 1) that the appearance of these musicians imitates the appearance of some secular rock groups. What should really mat-

ter is the message these musicians are singing about. God warns us not to judge people according to outward appearance. Only he can see what is in their hearts.

Some of the positive messages in these songs are belief in Jesus, our Savior is the only way to heaven, and Jesus did everything for us. We should be rejoicing in their messages.

If bad can influence good, why can't good influence good? By listening to this kind of music we are giving and sending a good message to others around us.

Promoting Christ is good, whether by Christian rock music, a traditional hymn, or sacred organ music. Teens are the largest group to leave the church. Using this music might help bring them back.

*Sally Meier
Milwaukee, Wisconsin*

Why only male teachers?

I thought there would be more information why the synod felt it was necessary to pass the resolution to ordain male teachers. Don't most of our teachers, male and female, receive the same education from Dr. Martin Luther College?

I asked why only male teachers are to be ordained and was told male teachers do not have withholding taxes taken out of their pay. Why not? What makes male teachers' pay different from female teachers' pay?

I have been told some of our churches do not take withholding taxes from the male teachers and do not pay the employers' share of Social Security. As a result our male teachers have to seek pension plans from other sources because they cannot pay the whole amount. Is this fair?

*Norma Ruffer
Pittsfield, Massachusetts*

Robert Van Norstrand, administrator for the synod's Board of Trustees, responds:

The federal government considers pastors and male teachers "ministers of the gospel" since both perform sacerdo-

tal functions. Tax laws allow, but do not require, withholding from ministers. While ministers are employees for income tax and benefit purposes, they are self-employed for social security purposes. Congregations may help pay social security taxes for their pastors and male teachers, but the payments must be reported as taxable income.

Touching hearts

I am thankful for our NL. It has always been a wonderful publication, but has been having features that touch the hearts of many people. The spiritual renewal features have been needed for some time.

All the articles in NL are inspiring and stress faith in action. God bless you. Keep up the great work.

*Carol Bockman
Faith, South Dakota*

WELS Connection videotapes

March topics

- International students at Michigan Lutheran Seminary
- Miss Michigan

April topics:

- Museum of WELS history
- Home missions: Maple Grove, Minnesota

For more information, contact *CCFS, WELS Administration Building, 2929 N. Mayfair Rd., Milwaukee WI 53222*. Cost of a year's subscription is \$48.

NOTICES

**REQUEST FOR NOMINATIONS
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

In view of the impending retirement of Pastor Robert C. Van Norstrand from the position of Administrator for the Board of Trustees, the Board of Trustees requests the nomination of candidates for this position. By resolution of the synod, the candidate shall be a theologically trained man or a consecrated layman. It is essential that the candidate have administrative, analytical, and communication skills, with a strong vision of the church. It is also important that the candidate have good business acumen, and above all, a heart full of faith and love. Nominations, together with appropriate background information, are to be submitted by April 17 to Rev. Ralph E. Scharf, 1215 South 100th Street, West Allis, WI 53214.

COLLOQUY REQUESTED

Pastor Robert A. Strawn, formerly a member of The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod while serving in Loveland, Colo., has requested a colloquy for the purpose of entering the pastoral ministry of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. Correspondence relative to this request should be addressed to Pastor Joel G. Frank, President, Nebraska District, Box 222, Plymouth NE 68424.

Of the 215 issues of Northwestern Lutheran which have been published since I became editor, none has created more of a stir among our readers than the story in the January 15 issue about the former WELS pastor who is a recovering alcoholic.

True, it was the first time in the 78-year history of Northwestern Lutheran that such an article appeared in the magazine. The volume of letters and phone calls — pro and con — far exceeded anything we had anticipated. Since it appeared in a series of articles entitled “Triumph over addiction,” which featured with little reader response three laypersons (male and female) and a teacher, we were not prepared for the response to this final article of the series. It was an extraordinarily well-written account, relating his struggle with alcoholism in which he lost all, and his final break, under God, with the addiction.

There were some who feared that our readers would misunderstand the article and look at their pastor with a question mark: Is HE an alcoholic too? When an instance occurred in the mid-1980s which could have been construed as reflecting on the character of our pastors and the dignity of the pastoral office, I replied — as I reply today — that our pastors are not judged on the basis of what appears in Northwestern Lutheran but on their work in the parish to which the Holy Spirit has assigned them.

This does not discount the fact that there are those who have difficulty “putting the best construction on everything” or with St. Paul’s ways of love. Although it was apparent from the article, we perhaps should have noted that the events recounted happened some years ago.

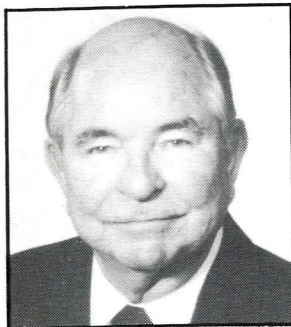
Since then at least two things have happened. One, the counseling skills of our pastors have been sharpened substantially. Aiding that process are counseling workshops held periodically synodwide for our pastors under professional leadership. Two, the synod has in place a special program offering counseling and assistance to our called workers and their families by Christian counselors. The word the alcoholic pastor thought he would have received from his peers is his own perception. Based on his own account, one must conclude that he did not actively seek counseling from any of his peers.

Some have pointed out that the article will not make the job of our college recruitment teams any easier. We have had trouble lately recruiting students for both the pastoral and teaching ministries. This state of affairs, I fear, will persist long after the article by the recovering alcoholic pastor has been forgotten. The odyssey of the alcoholic pastor will not keep students away, just as little as the mother’s commendation (Letters, 2/15), “Without Northwestern College’s chapel services, and prayers for guidance, strength, and knowledge, my son might have given up,” will bring a flood of students to the school.

The article shared with our readers the experience of one pastor with alcohol. Like all narratives of this nature, the experience says nothing about your pastor. The fact that the state of Wisconsin has been recently described as a state “saturated with alcohol,” that over 50 percent of our membership resides in Wisconsin, and slightly less than 50 percent of our pastors and congregations are located in Wisconsin, says nothing either about the layperson living next door or the pastor serving your congregation. And that’s the way statistics are!

I hope this helps you understand better the sad, sad story a former pastor and recovering alcoholic shared with our readers.

James P. Schuyfer



The article shared with our readers the experience of one pastor with alcohol. Like all narratives of this nature, the experience says nothing about your pastor.

Saying it with flowers

by Paul M. Mueller

Former football player and present day pitcher Merlin Olson in one of his frequent commercials urges us to "say it with flowers." His pitch is an exhortation to express your feelings by means of a bouquet. A couple of the members of St. Peter Lutheran Church in Modesto, California, have found a way to "say it (their faith) with flowers."

When Carol Coutrakis was shown an article about a retired florist in Florida who made a Holy Week floral arrangement, she shared the article with the owner of the flower shop where she worked. Margaret Werth, Carol's boss, had been coming to church with Carol the previous few months. Together they decided to make their own Easter reminder.

Each portion of the arrangement was carefully chosen to tell the Passion story.

- The bread, grapes, and chalice look back to the institution of the Lord's Supper when Jesus began the sacrament in which he gave us his body and blood with the unleavened loaf and wine.
- The coins represent the money Judas received for his betrayal of the Savior.
- The black cloth is symbolic of Good Friday when Jesus was deserted by his friends, condemned by his opponents, and crucified by foreign soldiers.
- The cluster of dogwood blossoms forecast the crucifixion, since the cross is said in Christian legend to have been made from the trunk of the dogwood tree.
- The circle of thorns hanging from the cross remind us of the crown of thorns placed on Jesus' head.



- The white cloth and nearby stone speak of Jesus' burial clothes and the stone the angel rolled away from the tomb.
- The cluster of Easter lilies commemorate the resurrection and emphasize the assurance all Christians have of life after death.

"While we were working on the floral arrangement, it created a great deal of curiosity among employees and customers in the shop," said Carol. "It gave us the opportunity to explain the symbolism of Easter Holy Week as portrayed in the arrangement."

Carol started bringing her co-worker Lynn to church and to the Bible information class. Lynn was confirmed last year.



As for the floral arrangement, it was first displayed Maundy Thursday, the same night in which Margaret, her husband Keith, and three other adults were confirmed.

Paul Mueller is pastor of St. Peter, Modesto, California.