

June 15, 1992

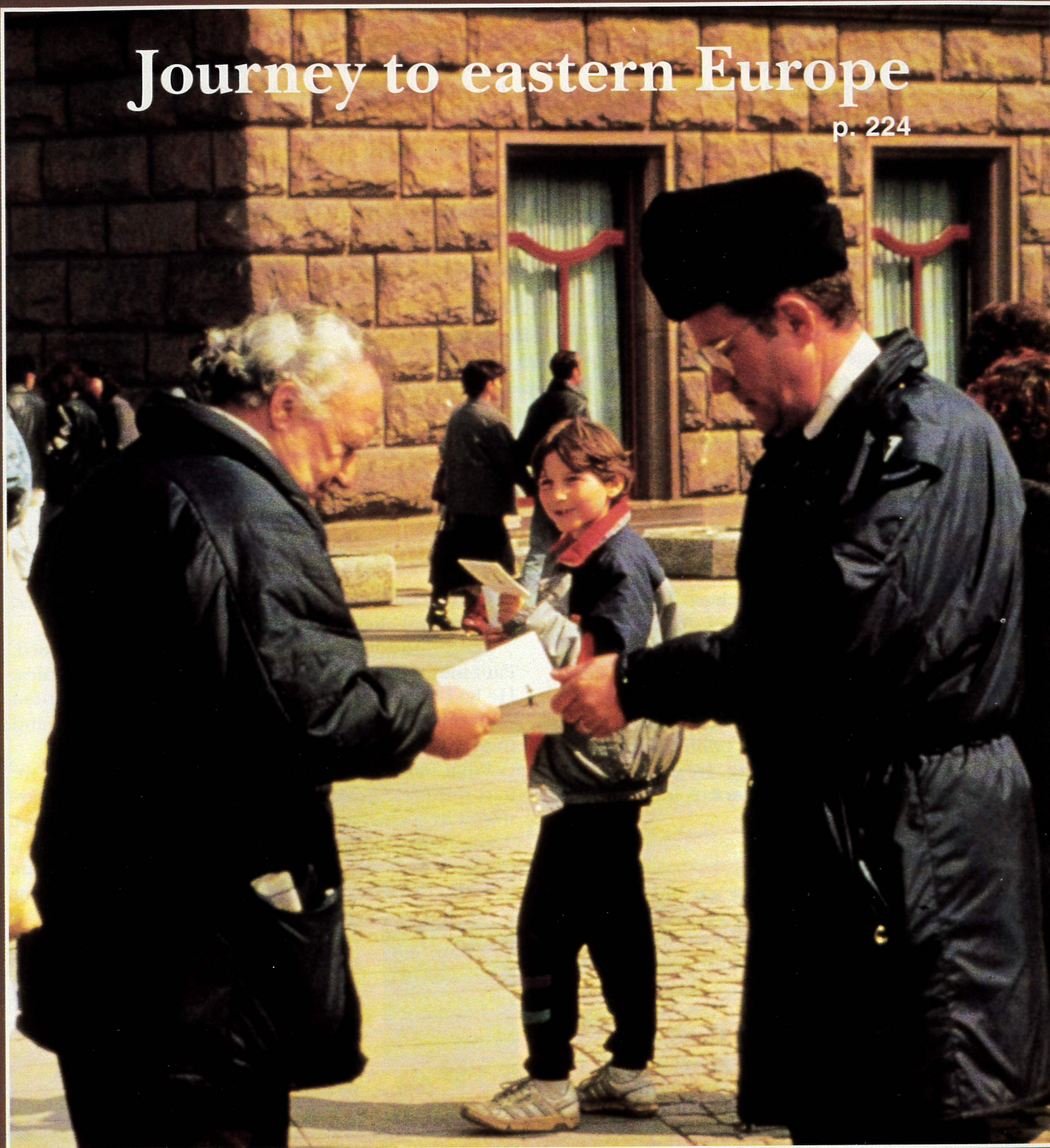
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# NORTHWESTERN LUTHERAN

## Journey to eastern Europe

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# Fathers at work

by Richard E. Lauersdorf

“Utility crew at work,” said the sign at the edge of the highway. Sure enough, a short distance ahead, there they were, hard at work digging those unsightly lines underground.

If a similar sign were placed outside our homes on Father’s Day, what might it say?

## Hard at work

Of course, fathers work hard, at least those who care. They could tell us how difficult it is these days to make a living. Bringing home the bacon, or we might say the fish and chicken in our cholesterol conscious age, has not become any easier. In the corporate world there are downsizings of program, cutbacks in spending, reductions in staffing, with the result that many a father watches warily, wondering whether his position is the next to go. In the plant it’s not much different as a slow economy and shrinking profit margin reduce jobs and paychecks. Even the little set aside doesn’t help as much as before since interest rates have declined.

Hard at work? You bet. Many a father could buy into that.

Besides, doesn’t a father want his family to have a bit more than what his father gave him? Perhaps even a little or a lot more than what the fellow next door is doing for his family? Such desires, often for the wrong reasons, keep a father scrambling, so that he might end up losing sight of what God wants him to be for his family.

## Taking the easy way out

Are we as fathers taking the easy way out? Ask yourself which is easier—to maintain a house or make that house into a home? To bring home a paycheck or to build into that home adequate family time? To be a good provider or a spiritual leader? To see to it that children are taught in the faith by others or to be a daily example of the faith to them ourselves? Preoccupation with the earthly can eat away at our time and energy so that we end up limping in the

work our heavenly Father has for us as his stand-ins with his children.

Paul the apostle never married and yet clearly understood what Christian fathers were to do. Under the Spirit’s guidance, he, in our verse, even compared that work to his own all-important task as a spiritual leader.

## A father at work

Look how Paul dealt with God’s children at Thessalonica. When they were hesitant in heart, like a father he strongly encouraged them.

God’s children need instruction about the road to walk and also frequent push along the way. When they were fainthearted in fear, like a father Paul tenderly comforted them.

God’s children meet frequent opposition on heaven’s highway and receive wounds which require bandaging. When they were slack in walk-

ing by God’s will, like a father Paul firmly urged them on.

God’s children can waver in their walk and need both careful challenging and charging.

With fatherly care and counsel from God’s word, Paul met the needs of those believers at Thessalonica. He had the highest goal in mind for them. He wanted each one of them to live for their father on earth and then with that Father in heaven.

What more important fathering can there be! If we had fathers who pushed up their sleeves and perspired in such effort, it’s time again to thank God for them. If those fathers are still with us, it’s time to turn to them with our thanks. And if God has made us fathers, it’s time to rededicate ourselves to being more like them.

What the world, the church, and our children need is fathers hard at work—the right way!

*For you know  
that we dealt with each of you  
as a father deals with his own children,  
encouraging, comforting and urging you  
to live lives worthy of God,  
who calls you into his kingdom and glory  
(1 Thessalonians 2:11,12).*



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

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

# NORTHWESTERN LUTHERAN

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE  
WISCONSIN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD

JUNE 15, 1992 / VOL. 79, NO. 12

### Editorial office

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

### Editorial Commission

Prof. Richard D. Balge (chairman), Mr. John Barber, Prof. John A. Braun, Mr. Mark C. Brunner, Rev. Victor H. Prange.

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### Production

Production services of Northwestern Publishing House. Production, layout: Clifford Koeller. Subscription: Suzanne Giese (manager), Sandy Arndt.

### Subscriber service

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

### Subscription rates (payable in advance)

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

*All other countries*—Please write for rates.

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NORTHWESTERN LUTHERAN (ISSN 0029-3512) is published *semimonthly, except monthly in July, August and December*, by Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 N 113th Street, Milwaukee WI 53226-3284. Second class postage paid at Milwaukee, Wisconsin and additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to *Northwestern Lutheran*, c/o Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 N 113th Street, Milwaukee, WI 53226-3284. ©1992 by *Northwestern Lutheran*, magazine of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

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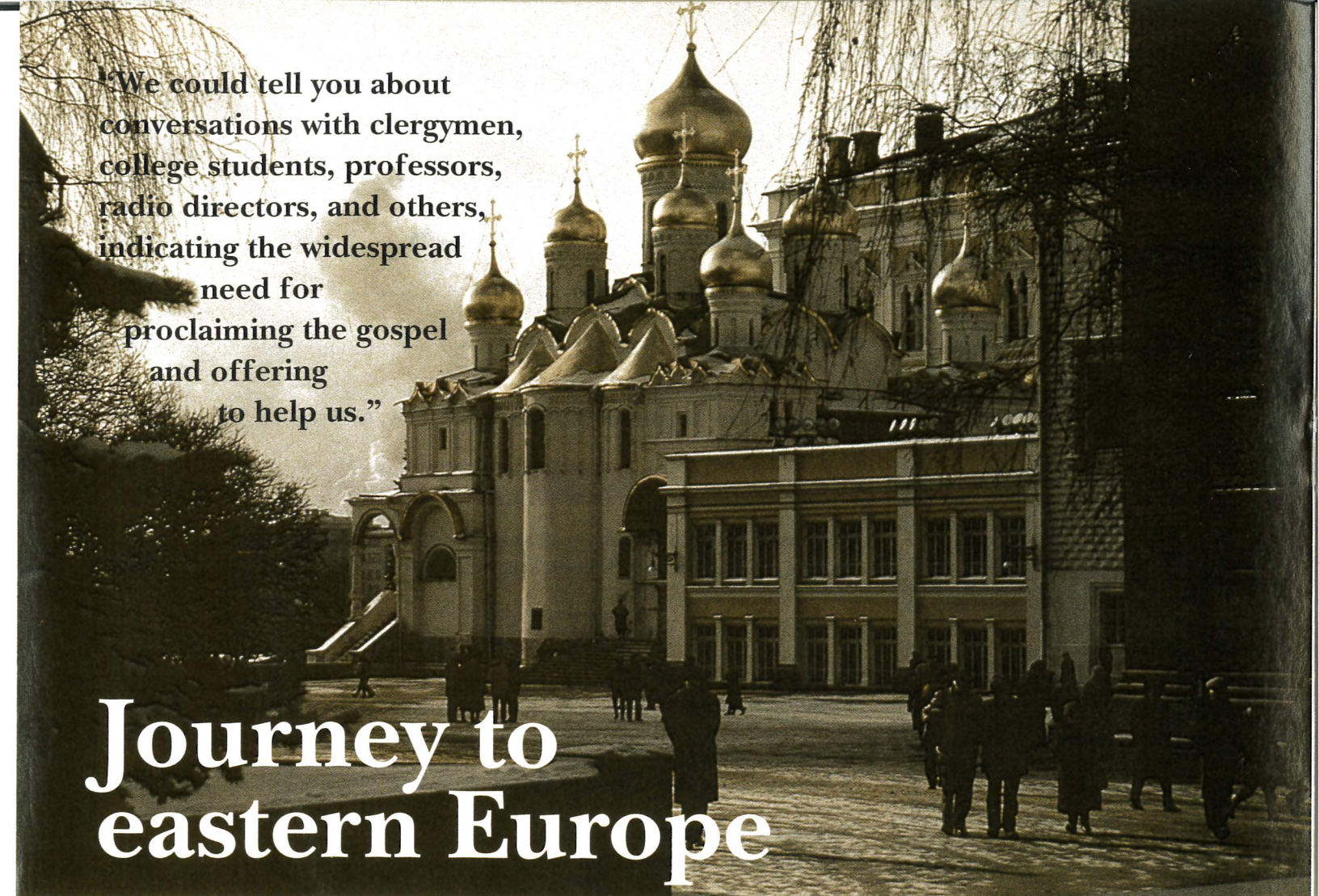
## FORWARD

■ On the cover is Missionary Kirby Spevacek (right) sharing Christian literature with a willing Bulgarian recipient. Spevacek and Gary Miller, missionaries to eastern Europe, joined Pastor Harold Essmann, a member of the world mission board, to explore mission possibilities in the former Soviet Union. Essmann's report, which begins on the next page, is encouraging. "There is a spiritual hunger in Russia," he says, and "many are anxious for us to come and preach the gospel." Essmann reports that the people they met welcomed them and officials of the countries they visited—Russia, Romania, and Bulgaria—are willing to cooperate with the churches. Essmann is con-

vinced that now is the time to begin mission work in Eastern Europe. "How long such cooperation will continue is not known," he says. "The time is now."

■ In the June 1 issue was the first part of the report issued by the committee authorized to study the feasibility of restructuring the synod's school system for ministerial education. That section dealt in the consolidation of the schools, especially the prep schools, and discussed the financial issues. The second section (p. 228) discusses the colleges and the committee's recommendation: combine DMLC and NWC—on a new campus now.

DJS



"We could tell you about conversations with clergymen, college students, professors, radio directors, and others, indicating the widespread need for proclaiming the gospel and offering to help us."

# Journey to eastern Europe

Chapels within the Kremlin in Moscow, Russia.

by Harold A. Essmann

**T**he tremendous territory covered by Russia and the newly freed countries in eastern Europe create a huge mission field where today there is a genuine hunger for the gospel. To explore these possibilities a mission team consisting of Pastor Kirby Spevacek, Pastor Harold Essmann, and Mr. Gary Miller was commissioned by the world mission board to visit Russia, Romania, and Bulgaria.

We spent a couple months gathering information on the countries and people to be visited. We read books about the Russian people. We gathered information from other mission agencies to find where and how they were working. We screened statistics. Finally, we spent several days prior to the first journey reviewing all the material.

## The first journey

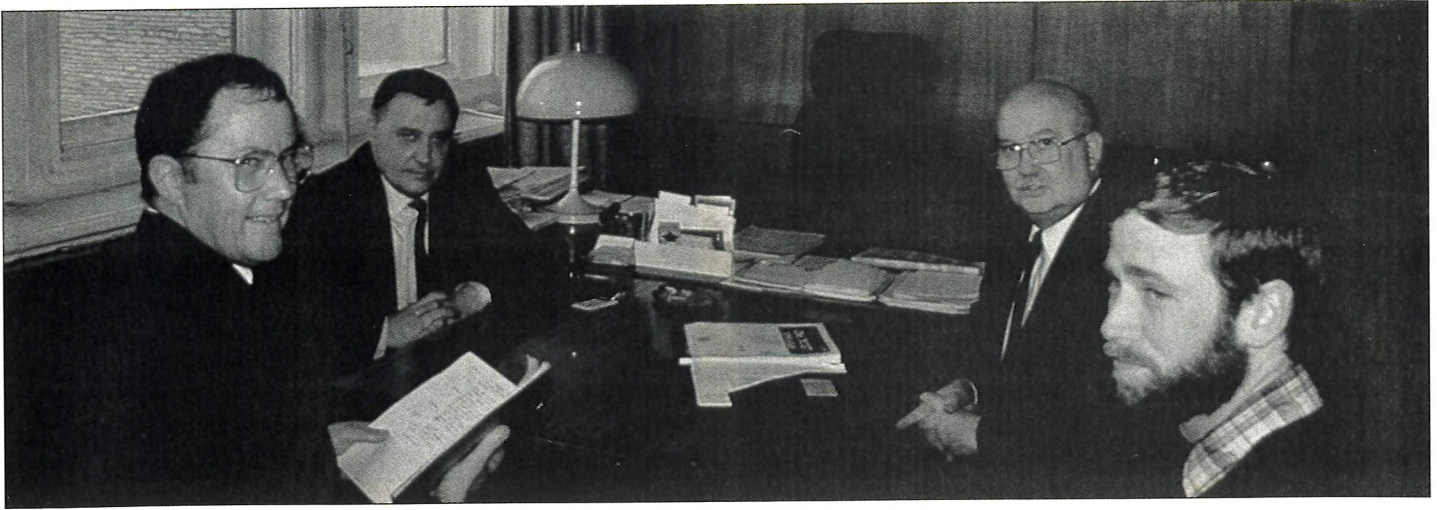
We made three journeys, two into Russia and one into Romania and Bulgaria, during February and March.

On our first journey we concerned ourselves with gaining information about entry into Russia and conditions in St. Petersburg and Moscow, cities we had visited in 1991. In addition we visited Lutheran church officials in Riga, Latvia, and also made a brief visit to Novgorod in Russia.

We found that living conditions for foreigners have improved greatly over the past year. Many more products and goods can be found in some stores and in farmers markets.

On the other hand, living conditions for the Russian people have deteriorated. While goods are available to them, the high cost of those goods and the low wages of the people make it impossible for most Russians to afford the goods. The long lines that were evident last year, as people sought to buy scarce goods, have for the most part disappeared.

But there is a greater hunger—a hunger for the gospel. John Poysti, whose father conducted a radio ministry to Russia for 37 years, put it this way: "There is a spiritual hunger in Russia, not a spiritual revival in



The mission team meets with the Director of National Russian Radio in Moscow. Left to right: Pastor Kirby Spevacek, Radio Director, Pastor Harold Essmann, and Mr. Gary Miller.

the extant church. Many young men leave their churches and form mission societies because the old churches are not reaching out.”

Other interviews revealed that many are anxious for us to come and preach the gospel and will help us register with the government. Such registration is now a much simpler task than just a year ago. Others will help us find housing and helpers to carry on gospel work.

All this is possible today because of the new attitude of the government toward churches and the helpfulness of the Russian people. How long such cooperation will continue, however, is not known.

Before we had gotten very far along in our investigation of mission prospects in Russia, one thing became overwhelmingly evident. Lutheran literature is nonexistent. Except for a Lutheran agenda dating from 1898, Luther's enchiridion, and a photocopy of an old Lutheran hymnal in Russian, we saw nothing available in Russia that would resemble confessional Lutheran books or pamphlets. Our first priority must be to provide various kinds of good Christian literature.

The people of Russia are said to be 100 percent literate. That they have an insatiable desire to read is evidenced by the many bookstores, kiosks, and sidewalk stands that offer reading material.

Of even greater importance is the desire of people who have been in spiritual darkness for so long to learn about Christianity. Their needs are simple. Their desire is to learn about Christ. We can help, through literature, to show them the way of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

There are also other means to reach out with the word. We investigated the use of Christian information centers. Such centers can provide Christian literature, instruction classes, English classes and worship services to those desiring them.

We also explored the use of radio and television.



A farmers market in Moscow.



A group of boys on Red Square in Moscow.

Other mission agencies have been broadcasting the gospel over radio for decades. Television, however, has been made available to churches only recently. We uncovered television stations willing to give free time to telecast religious programming.

### The second journey

After a short respite in Plzen, Czechoslovakia, where mission team members Spevacek and Miller



An apartment complex in Rostov, Russia.



A German Lutheran pastor in his church in Novosibirsk, Russia.

live, we began a second journey into the very heart of Russia.

On the second journey we visited other cities in Russia to determine mission potential in them. These cities included: Rostov-on-the-Don, Taganrog, and Volgograd in the southern Volga River basin as well as Ekaterinburg, Novosibirsk, and Akedemgorodok in western Siberia.

Rostov is considered the gateway to the Caucasus. This city of one million inhabitants has five Russian Orthodox churches, a Baptist church, Armenian church, and a Jewish synagogue. There was no Lutheran church, although we know some Lutherans are found in the city and attend the Baptist church on occasion.

In Rostov we met with the president and a dean of the city's university. It has ten to twelve thousand students, many from foreign lands. The university needs English and church history instructors.

Formerly known as Stalingrad, Volgograd conjures up visions of the vicious bloody battle that took place there in World War II, or as the Russians call it, the Patriotic War. One cannot overlook the massive, dramatic memorial erected on Magayev Kurgan, a hill that dominates the city. It memorializes the 700,000 Russian soldiers who fought in that battle and especially the thousands who died in it.

Today Volgograd is a new city, completely rebuilt following World War II. There are a couple of Protestant churches in this city of one million people. A small Lutheran congregation of fifty members that conducts services in German is an hour's drive from the city center.

Ekaterinburg, a city of one and one-half million formerly known as Sverdlovsk, is an industrial city closed to tourists until just recently because missiles were produced in it. The people of this city were most friendly. For the most part, the people of Russia are very friendly to Americans. This is another positive

factor in doing mission work among them.

The gateway to Siberia, Novosibirsk, with a population of one and a half million, is the third largest city in Russia. A comparatively young city, it was founded in 1883 when the Trans-Siberian railroad crossed the mighty Ob River at that particular site.

What makes this area a particularly promising mission area is that just ten miles away is an academic center at Akademgorodok containing a prestigious university. The center was begun in 1957 when the country wanted to develop Siberia and needed a scientific center there.

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*Good Christian literature is lacking,  
but we felt an openness to the gospel.*

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A visit to the university revealed a need for instructors in English, church history, and religion. In Novosibirsk we met with the director of the only television station in the area. He is a Christian and after viewing a "Communicating Christ" video (a Bible course) was anxious to televise the entire series free of charge. The station serves not only the Novosibirsk city and oblast (political region) but also the Kamerov, Tomsk, and Barnaul oblasts and the Altai area. The Lord truly is opening door after door of mission opportunity for us.

And so we could go on. We could tell you about conversations with clergymen, college students, professors, national radio directors, and others, all indicating the widespread need for proclaiming the gospel and offering to help us to do just that.

There is spiritual hunger in this nation. The time is now.

### **The third journey**

After a short rest following the second journey into



The mission team visits a television studio in Novosibirsk, Russia, at Akademgorodok University.

Russia, the mission team visited Romania and Bulgaria in eastern Europe to carry out a preliminary investigation of mission opportunities in these two countries.

The first country visited was Romania. We visited the capital, Bucharest, and the large city of Cluj in Transylvania in northwestern Romania.

In Bucharest we visited with a pastor of the German Lutheran Church. He reported that his church body is losing many members because his church services are conducted in German and the Germans are moving back to Germany. The German Lutheran Church in Romania, once numbering well over 100,000 members, has a membership now of only 40,000.

In Cluj we visited with a pastor of the Hungarian Lutheran Church. His church body has 32,000 members and is growing because it is reaching out to Romanians as well as to Hungarians and Germans. The pastor expressed his thankfulness that we visited with him because, he said, they often feel forgotten by Lutherans in other parts of the world.

Leaving Romania, we traveled to Bulgaria, a country of nine million inhabitants. We visited the capital city of Sofia as well as Varna, a large city on the Black Sea. There is no Lutheran presence in the country of Bulgaria. In fact, only one percent of the population is Protestant. As in Russia, good Christian literature is lacking, but we felt an openness to the gospel. Tracts passed out on the main square of Sofia were readily received and even sought after.

Bulgaria offers many opportunities for mission. Its people are well educated. They have changed from a socialist economy to a privatized free market. Government reforms have been accepted peacefully.

Unlike in Russia and Romania, the rural population in Bulgaria seems to be easier to reach. Those 38 and younger are largely unbaptized. Over eight percent of the people are Turks. Work among the Turks could lead to mission work in Turkey, a country



A street scene in Cluj, Romania.



A street scene in Sofia, Bulgaria.

closed to expatriate missionaries.

### The future

At the end of the three mission journeys, the mission team spent nearly a week evaluating the information gathered, planning a strategy, producing a plan of action, and making recommendations for future work.

That extensive and detailed report was presented to the Board for World Missions. The board, charged with carrying out the world mission program of our synod, has approved an expanded exploration using additional missionaries and lay volunteers. The board is proposing that some Lift High the Cross funds previously approved for another world mission project be temporarily redirected as needed. The 1992 WELS district conventions and the 1993 synod convention will be given details possibly leading to further action.

The Lord has been good to us. He brought us home with a report filled with opportunities to proclaim the gospel in Russia and in Bulgaria.

*Harold Essmann, a retired pastor, is secretary of the Board for World Mission's Committee for Mission Expansion.*

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**We have an opportunity to develop a strong system  
for generations, not just for a few years**

# Combining the colleges

by **Herbert H. Prah**

*(The 1991 synod convention authorized a special committee to study the feasibility of restructuring the synod's ministerial education system for pastors and teachers. The chairman of the committee, Pastor Herbert Prah, is summarizing the committee's report in a two-part article for Northwestern Lutheran. The first part appeared in the June 1 issue. This is the second part.)*

**T**he 1991 synod resolution called for a restructuring of our worker training system, not a dismantling of it. Our congregations spend millions of dollars each year to train pastors and teachers in our confessional Lutheran faith. We accept the cost.

In return we want a worker training system that is strong, growing, and viable, providing us with faithful and well-educated pastors and teachers who clearly and confidently show us the way to eternal life.

Last year our synod resolved to revamp the system, combining our two Wisconsin preparatory schools and amalgamating our two colleges. We will take particular note in this article of combining the colleges.

## **The necessity**

If the two Wisconsin prep schools are combined on the Watertown campus, an enrollment of over 400 is anticipated by the year 2000. If Northwestern College (projected enrollment 241) were to remain on the same campus, severe overcrowding would occur in the dormitories (472 capacity), classrooms (525 capacity), gymnasium, music, and student union space.

On the other hand, the New Ulm campus projects an enrollment of 616 for the year 2000. NWC's projected enrollment of 241 can easily fit (with the addition of a men's dorm) on this campus with its capacity for approximately 1000.

The mission and vision of our synod for the year 2000 calls for 140 teacher and 70 pastoral candidates

each year. No one seriously doubts our ability to recruit an ample supply of teachers. The concern centers on the supply of pastors.

## **The concerns**

The Mission/Vision 2000 goals require 373 students enrolled in the college pastoral program, about 130 being freshmen enrollees each year. For the past decade, an average of 67 freshmen have enrolled at NWC. Optimistic projections for the 2000-01 school year put the student body total at 241.

A shortage of pastors is staring our synod in the face. Will the merger solve this shortage?

Humanly speaking, nothing will, in the short term. Remember, for us to have 70 seminary graduates in the year 2000 we need 130 freshmen in NWC this year. The total enrollment is 196.

Will combining the colleges make this shortage worse? Some fear it will. We do not. Both sides agree we must keep on recruiting diligently.

## **Fear of crossover**

Those who fear that the "bottom will drop out" of pastoral track enrollments if NWC moves to New Ulm see zero growth in pastoral track enrollments to the year 2000. The prime catalyst for this fear is "crossover," students opting out of the pastoral track and into the teacher or staff ministry programs.

Crossover is a fact of life in higher education across our nation. Many college students are undecided about their calling early in their college years. Experience shows, however, that students in rigorous programs are able to stay focused despite numerous other course offerings surrounding them. A good peer group, positive reinforcement from home, and on-campus encouragement from advisers, deans, and dorm staff would all play an important role in minimizing losses from the pastoral track.



On the other hand, students enrolled in other disciplines at the combined college may in fact cross over into the pastoral track.

A combined college may well be more attractive than the present arrangement to the undecided student who is interested in public ministry, but not sure where his gifts lie. The major hurdle posed by today's two options would be eliminated. Combined recruitment departments from the two colleges would allow for more intensive and repetitive efforts. And there is some question how well we can continue to recruit to an all-male campus for the next several generations.

### **The need for a long-range plan**

One overriding emphasis in this issue is the need for a comprehensive, long-range plan. Some may view the various capital projects the synod has done in the past few decades to be piecemeal efforts to fix the system. We have an opportunity now to put an end to the disruptive debate that is sapping our ministerial education system of its strength and vitality and to develop, as much as humanly possible, a strong, growing, and viable system for generations, not just a few years. Short-term, single-focus decisions will not satisfy. We need a comprehensive approach.

### **The down side of a New Ulm location**

With the current school arrangement, NWC students are only an hour's drive from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. Close contact, a decided plus, is easy to maintain. College men get acquainted with the seminary in an easy, natural way through inter-school contacts. Locating the pastoral track in New Ulm puts these schools a day's drive apart and cripples this relationship.

In addition, the New Ulm location is a significant distance from the majority of elementary and secondary schools needed for student teaching experience. It also should be noted that 50 percent of NWC's student body is from Wisconsin.

### **An alternative proposal**

Combining the colleges as well as the prep schools is feasible. We offer a preferred alternative, however. We suggest that the combined college would have more strength, growth, and viability if it were located

in Wisconsin. The new campus would be closer to the population center of our synod and to a larger number of elementary and secondary schools, essential for student teaching experience. A Wisconsin location would maintain the proximity of the pastor track to the seminary and maintain that vital relationship. A new campus would be state-of-the-art, energy-efficient, asbestos-free, handicap-equipped, and more cost effective to operate.

Preliminary estimates put the cost for a 1000-student campus between \$30,000,000 and \$40,000,000. We fully realize this would be a major undertaking, but also believe that a unified synod would support this project if it believed in the need for a combined

college and saw long-term benefits and cost efficiency.

### **Foolish risk or calculated faith?**

Our forefathers recognized the need to change the structure of its ministerial education system to meet changing needs. A century ago the three synods, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin, worked out a plan for their schools that called for sacrifice but served well for generations.

The world into which we are called to preach and teach is rapidly changing. The changes called for in the 1991 resolution are not without risk. But they are not foolishly supported. There is risk in leaving things as they are. The financial liabilities alone are catching up to us.

This is not a time to be timid. We pray the Lord give us all his Holy Spirit to believe anew in our mission as a synod, that we recommit ourselves to the vital role our ministerial education system has in this mission, and that we carefully and objectively compare the present system with the plans outlined above.

Our discussion will continue in the coming months. Let's keep long-range benefits clearly in view, with the understanding that some sacrifices will be made for the good of the whole situation, and with the resolve to support fully the 1993 synod convention decision.

The vitality of our ministerial educational system is the issue. The spiritual vitality of our synod is the beneficiary.

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*The combined college  
would have more  
strength, growth,  
and viability  
if it were located  
in Wisconsin.*

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*Herbert Prael is pastor of St. Mark in Eau Claire, Wis.*



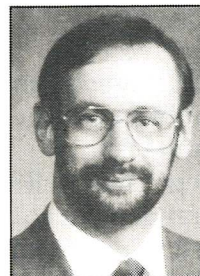
# Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary

## Mequon, Wisconsin

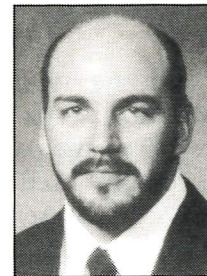
### 1992 GRADUATES

At the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary graduation service on May 29, 38 graduates received their Master of Divinity degrees. Call assignments to the pastoral ministry are listed on page 234.

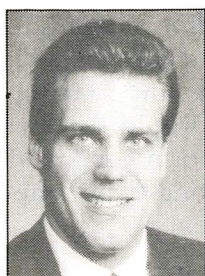
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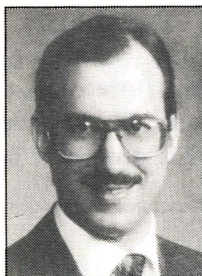
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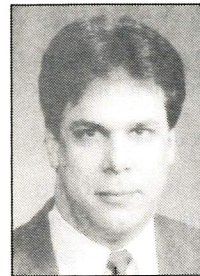
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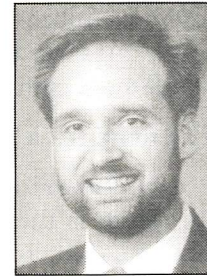
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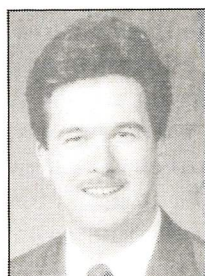
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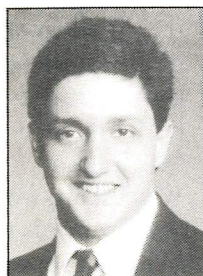
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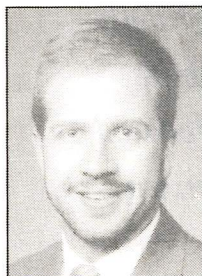
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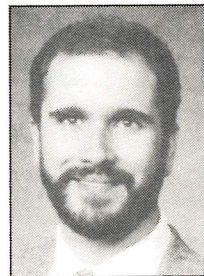
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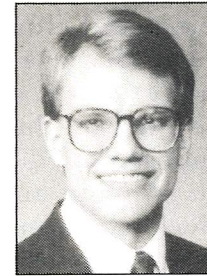
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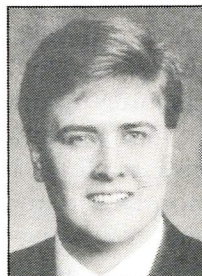
**John R. Hildebrandt**  
Oshkosh, Wis.



**Timothy P. Honke**  
Tawas City, Mich.



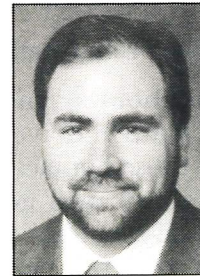
**Michael T. Jensen**  
Hartford, Wis.



**Thomas D. Kock**  
Minocqua, Wis.



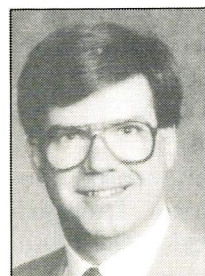
**Craig R. Korth**  
Marshfield, Wis.



**Daniel R. Kroll**  
Beloit, Wis.



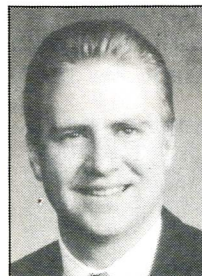
**Timothy P. Kuske**  
Grove City, Ohio



**John T. Melke**  
Charlevoix, Mich.



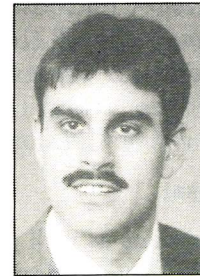
**Mark T. Panning**  
Mequon, Wis.



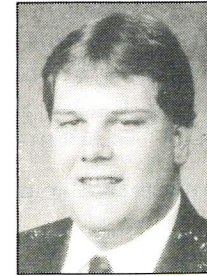
**Donald W. Patterson**  
Garland, Tex.



**Roger S. Quandt**  
Kearney, Neb.



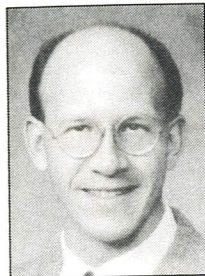
**Glenn T. Rosenbaum**  
Saginaw, Mich.



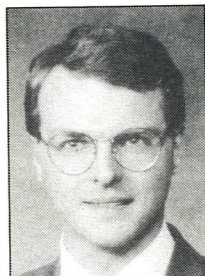
**Mark H. Rosenberg**  
Tecumseh, Mich.



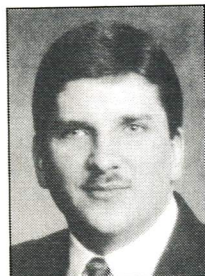
**Andrew C. Schultz**  
Neshkoro, Wis.



**Robert P. Siefert**  
Eagle River, Wis.



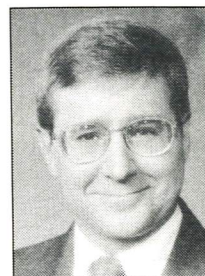
**Paul C. Stratman**  
Kendall, Wis.



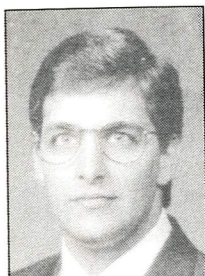
**Thomas G. Unke**  
Manitowoc, Wis.



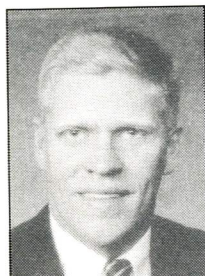
**Daniel R. Voigt**  
Marshfield, Wis.



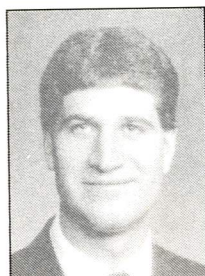
**Paul G. Waldek**  
Clifton Park, N.Y.



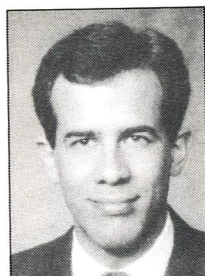
**Luke C. Werre**  
Dakota, Minn.



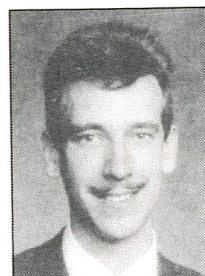
**Douglas M. Westenberg**  
Watertown, Wis.



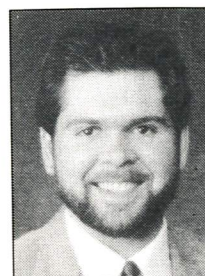
**Kevin P. Westra**  
Beaver Dam, Wis.



**Daniel A. Witte**  
Bartlett, Ill.



**Bradley D. Wordell**  
Green Bay, Wis.



**Eric J. Ziecker**  
Springville, N.Y.



## Dr. Martin Luther College

New Ulm, Minnesota

### 1992 GRADUATES

At the Dr. Martin Luther College graduation service on May 16, 61 graduates received their Bachelor of Science in Education degrees. Call assignments to the teaching ministry are listed on page 235.



**Pamela J. Barker**  
Kenosha, Wis.



**Patricia A. Bratz**  
Brillion, Wis.



**Lynn M. Buman**  
Kiel, Wis.



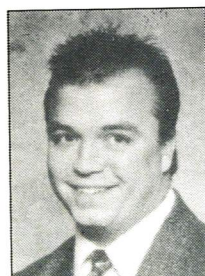
**Ellen S. De Loye**  
Laguna Niguel, Cal.



**Rebecca M. Dengler**  
Tacoma, Wash.



**Deborah C. Doletzky**  
Wayne, Mich.



**John M. Dorn**  
Watertown, Wis.



**Mary B. Dorn**  
St. Joseph, Mich.



**Tonya R. Fagan**  
Swartz Creek, Mich.



**Jill L. Gaertner**  
Weslaco, Tex.



**David D. Gartner**  
Bradenton, Fla.



**Tina M. Goltz**  
San Diego, Cal.

Dr. Martin Luther College graduates continued



**Bethann Y. Greco**  
Omaha, Neb.



**Kelli L. Green**  
Mounds, Okla.



**Wendy S. Gurgel**  
Lake Mills, Wis.



**Denise A. Hecht**  
Vassar, Mich.



**Sara J. Henderson**  
Warren, Mich.



**Chany L. Holmes**  
Waukegan, Ill.



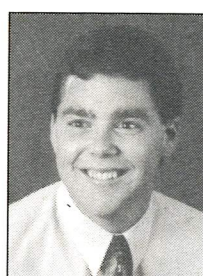
**Amy M. Hopp**  
Nicollet, Minn.



**Tania R. Jacobs**  
Charles City, Iowa



**Julie L. Keifenheim**  
Fond du Lac, Wis.



**Craig K. Kiecker**  
Fairfax, Minn.



**ReBecca H. Klann**  
Glendale, Ariz.



**Tamara J. Koepsell**  
Oshkosh, Wis.



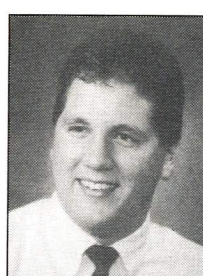
**Karen S. Kriewall**  
Ann Arbor, Mich.



**Laura D. Kuckhahn**  
Gibbon, Minn.



**Jenell D. Larson**  
Roberts, Wis.



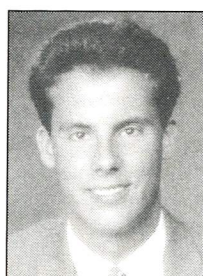
**Steve S. Lauber**  
Fond du Lac, Wis.



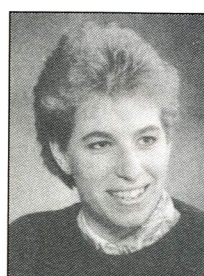
**Kristine S. Lemke**  
Tacoma, Wash.



**Johanna M. Lillo**  
Anchorage, Alaska



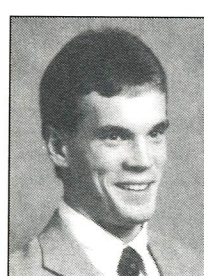
**Theodore E. Manthe**  
Oak Creek, Wis.



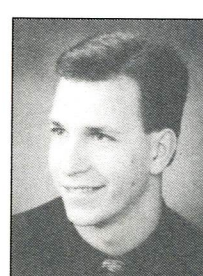
**Susan L. Marquardt**  
Kewaskum, Wis.



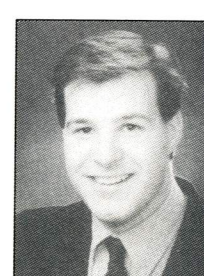
**Brian L. Miller**  
Montrose, Mich.



**Mark W. Murphy**  
Appleton, Wis.



**Scott C. Nerby**  
Hartland, Wis.



**Kevin A. Neuman**  
Fort Wayne, Ind.



**Dina R. Nordness**  
Milwaukee, Wis.



**Kelly L. Paulsen**  
New Ulm, Minn.



**Kristin A. Paulsen**  
New Ulm, Minn.



**Linka M. Petersen**  
Taylor Mill, Ky.



**Naomi B. Rodenbeck**  
Waterloo, Wis.



**Brad D. Schaper**  
New Ulm, Minn.



**Kristin L. Schaser**  
Darien, Ill.



**Elizabeth A. Schimmel**  
North Mankato, Minn.



**Heidi S. Schmidt**  
Norfolk, Neb.



**Laura L. Schmidt**  
Noblesville, Ind.



**Amy B. Schneider**  
Savanna, Ill.



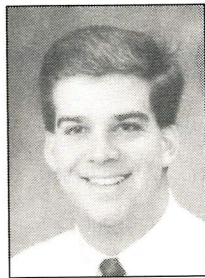
**Lynn M. Schultz**  
Fond du Lac, Wis.



**Maria E. Sebald**  
Wauwatosa, Wis.



**Joelle D. Shuster**  
Toledo, Ohio



**Mark A. Stein**  
Denver, Colo.



**Gretchen M. Stelljes**  
Columbia, Mo.



**Susan M. Tessmer**  
Mukwonago, Wis.



**Sheila M. Thompson**  
Whiteriver, Ariz.



**Julie K. Wade**  
Watertown, Wis.



**Pamela J. Weis**  
Burleson, Tex.



**Christine M. Wempner**  
Marietta, Ga.



**Jeffery P. Wiechman**  
Oshkosh, Wis.



**Darnell J. Zachman**  
Plymouth, Minn.

NOT PICTURED

**Ethan A. Allen**  
Wyoming, Mich.

**Debora J. Bahlmann**  
Nicollet, Minn.



## Northwestern College Watertown, Wisconsin

### 1992 GRADUATES

The commencement service was held May 13 at Northwestern College for 39 graduates who received their Bachelor of Arts degrees. The two students honored as speakers for the 1992 class in the fields of humanities and religion respectively were Jonathan Bilitz and Michael Roth.

**Arndt, Patrick**, Watertown, Wis.  
**Bilitz, Jonathan**, Oakfield, Wis.  
**Bitter, Thad**, Oakfield, Wis.  
**Bode, Gary**, Delano, Minn.  
**Cerny, Paul**, Milwaukee, Wis.  
**Engel, Todd**, South Haven, Minn.  
**Frick, Robert**, West Chicago, Ill.  
**Gabb, Mark**, Watertown, Wis.  
**Gierach, John**, Sheboygan, Wis.  
**Goelzer, Christopher**, Eau Claire, Wis.  
**Golisch, Benjamin**, Livonia, Mich.  
**Gunderson, Paul**, Wood Lake, Minn.  
**Hartmann, Jon**, Milwaukee, Wis.

**Johnson, Joseph**, Yakima, Wash.  
**Kom, Mark**, Big Bend, Wis.  
**Krahn II, Richard**, Oconomowoc, Wis.  
**Lepak, Phillip**, Houghton, Mich.  
**Lindeman, Loren**, Brandon, Wis.  
**Lindemann, Peter**, Watertown, Wis.  
**Martin, Peter**, Port Charlotte, Fla.  
**Miller, Eric**, Brandon, S. Dak.  
**Neumann, Steven**, Beaver Dam, Wis.  
**Pagel, David**, Livonia, Mich.  
**Robbert, Robbin**, La Crosse, Wis.  
**Romberg, Robert**, Winneconne, Wis.  
**Roth, Michael**, Hales Corners, Wis.

**Rutschow, Paul**, Downers Grove, Ill.  
**Schmidt, Stephen**, Coon Rapids, Minn.  
**Schultz, Donald**, Milwaukee, Wis.  
**Seafert, Larry**, Bay City, Mich.  
**Steinke, Joel**, Beloit, Wis.  
**Verbeke, Jeffrey**, Capac, Mich.  
**Wagenknecht, Steven**, N. Richland Hills, Tex.  
**Wasser, Steven**, Fontana, Wis.  
**Waterstradt, David**, Citrus Heights, Cal.  
**Wattles, Kevin**, Lincoln, Neb.  
**White, Paul**, Fox Lake, Wis.  
**Zabell, Jon**, Watertown, Wis.  
**Zarling, Michael**, West Bend, Wis.

## Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary call assignments

The Conference of Presidents met at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis., May 11-12, to assign calls into the pastoral ministry to the 1992 graduates here listed. The assignments also include graduates from previous years.

- Arndt, Steven J.**, Menasha, Wis., to Nebraska LHS, Waco, Neb.
- Bauer, Derrick D.**, Jefferson, Wis., to Bethany, Bruce Crossing, Mich.
- Baumann, Jon A.**, Sutton, Neb., to Faith, Huron, S.Dak.
- Baumler, Daniel G.**, New Berlin, Wis., to cross-cultural ministry, El Paso, Tex.
- Bernthal, Thomas J.**, Missoula, Mont., to Christ the Redeemer, Barre, Vt.
- Boeder, John C.**, Prairie du Chien, Wis., to Abiding Savior, Elk River, Minn.
- Cox, Jon N.**, Wauwatosa, Wis., to Beautiful Savior, College Station, Tex.
- Danell, Jr., James C.**, Green Bay, Wis., to Bethlehem, Hortonville, Wis.
- Eggers, Brian A.**, Waukesha, Wis., to St. Paul, North Mankato, Minn.
- Else, Ross H.**, Eau Claire, Wis., to Riverview, Appleton, Wis.
- Getka, James J.**, Rice Lake, Wis., to Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Mich.
- Hansen, Tony J.**, Eau Claire, Wis., to Zion, Akaska, and St. James, Tolstoy, S.Dak.
- Jensen, Michael T.**, Hartford, Wis., graduate assistant to the president of the Northern Wisconsin District
- Kock, Thomas D.**, Minocqua, Wis., to exploratory, Tri-Cities, Tenn.
- Koelpin, Paul E.**, Watertown, Wis., to exploratory, Columbia, Md.
- Korth, Craig R.**, Marshfield, Wis., to Calvary, Eaton Rapids, Mich.
- Kroll, Daniel R.**, Beloit, Wis., to Lutheran Church of Central Africa, Ndola, Zambia, Africa
- Kuske, Timothy P.**, Grove City, Oh., to Martin Luther Preparatory School, Prairie du Chien, Wis.
- Malchow, Philip D.**, Watertown, Wis., to exploratory team, Commonwealth of Independent States—Russia
- Melke, John T.**, Charlevoix, Mich., to Zion, Van Dyne, Wis.
- Panning, Mark T.**, Mequon, Wis., to Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn.
- Patterson, Donald W.**, Garland, Tex., to Holy Word, Austin, Tex.
- Quandt, Roger S.**, Kearney, Neb., to Grace, Dakota, Minn.
- Rosenbaum, Glenn T.**, Saginaw, Mich., graduate assistant to the president of the Minnesota District
- Rosenberg, Mark H.**, Tecumseh, Mich., to exploratory, Greensboro, N.C.
- Schultz, Andrew C.**, Neshkoro, Wis., to Grace, Portland, Oreg.
- Schwanke, Larry R.**, Aurora, Ill., to Emmanuel, Zephyrhills, Fla.
- Sebald, William M.**, Saginaw, Mich., to Good Shepherd, Lafayette, Ind.
- Seifert, Robert P.**, Eagle River, Wis., to Lutheran Church of Central Africa, Blantyre, Malawi
- Stratman, Paul C.**, Kendall, Wis., to St. Jacob, Grass Lake, Mich.
- Tackmier, Bill J.**, Owosso, Mich., to Zion, St. Louis, Mich.
- Unke, Thomas G.**, Manitowoc, Wis., graduate assistant to the president of the Michigan District
- Voigt, Daniel R.**, Marshfield, Wis., to Northwestern Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis.
- Voss, Mark S.**, Milwaukee, Wis., to Salem, Milwaukee, Wis.
- Waldek, Paul G.**, Clifton Park, N.Y., to Lutheran Church of Central Africa, Lilongwe, Malawi, Africa
- Waldschmidt, Richard A.**, Lake Mills Wis., to Grace, St. Joseph, Mich.
- Werre, Luke C.**, Dakota, Minn., to Grace of God, Dix Hills, N.Y.
- Werth, William W.**, Litchfield, Minn., to Abiding Faith, Fort Worth, Tex.
- Westenberg, Douglas M.**, Watertown, Wis., to Northwestern College, Watertown, Wis.
- Westra, Kevin P.**, Beaver Dam, Wis., to Martin Luther Preparatory School, Prairie du Chien, Wis.
- Witte, Daniel A.**, Bartlett, Ill., graduate assistant to the president of the Southeastern Wisconsin District
- Wobeck, Matthew F.**, Windward Islands, West Indies, to St. Paul, Douglas, and Grace, Warren, Ariz.
- Wordell, Bradley D.**, Green Bay, Wis., graduate assistant to the president of the Western Wisconsin District
- Ziecker, Eric J.**, Springville, N.Y., to Mt Sinai, Montrose, Mich.

The following have been permanently assigned to their present field of labor:

- Gawel, Alfred J.**, Gethsemane, Milwaukee Wis.
- Haag, Daniel E.**, St. Peter, Globe, Ariz.
- Quandt, Michael J.**, West LHS, Hopkins, Minn.

The following have been reassigned to their present field of labor:

- Brokmeier, Kenneth A.**, Martin Luther Preparatory School, Prairie du Chien, Wis.
- Hirsch Paul A.**, Northwestern Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis.
- Koehler III, Ronald G.**, Martin Luther Preparatory School, Prairie du Chien, Wis.
- Lindemann, Michael A.**, Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn.
- Qualmann, John D.**, Northwestern College, Watertown, Wis.
- Raddatz, Stephen H.**, Nebraska LHS, Waco, Neb.
- Schmeichel, Duane C.**, Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Mich.
- Wessel, Keith C.**, Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Mich.
- Wright, Bradley P.**, Abiding Word, Highlands Ranch, Colo.

### South Atlantic District news

**Peace, Bradenton, Florida**, dedicated its new worship facility and school/office addition on March 1. The new church has a seating capacity of 330. The congregation will use the original church building as a fellowship hall. Two classrooms with office space were added for the school. Pastor James Pope reports that one of the many blessings of the building program was the enrollment of the archi-

tect's son in the school. . . . The members of the South Atlantic District continue to praise God for the generosity of its fellow members throughout synod. Offerings remitted to Lift High the Cross continue to bear fruit. **Christ the King in Port Charlotte, Florida**, served by LeRoy Martin, averages over 50 people in attendance each Sunday. They have been holding regular Sunday worship services since December 15, 1991. Pastor Christopher Kruschel of **Living**

**Savior in Brandon, Florida**, reports that 53 were in attendance for the first worship service on Palm Sunday. Joel Jaeger will arrive this summer to replace Matthew Wobeck to carry on exploratory mission work on the island of **St. Lucia in the West Indies**. All of this outreach and all the souls touched by the saving message of the gospel are a direct result of the Lift High the Cross offering.

—Jonathan C. Voss

# Dr. Martin Luther College call assignments

The Conference of Presidents met at Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., May 7-8, to assign calls into the teaching ministry to the 1992 graduates here listed. The assignments also include graduates from previous years.

**Anschuetz, Michael**, Tawas City, Mich., to Lakeside LHS, Lake Mills, Wis.  
**Barker, Pamela**, Kenosha, Wis., to Zion, Egg Harbor, Wis.  
**Birsching, Deborah**, Sebawaing, Mich., to Beautiful Savior, Grove City, Ohio  
**Bratz, Patricia**, Brillion, Wis., to Buffalo, Cochrane, Wis.  
**Buman, Lynn**, Kiel, Wis., to St. John, Burlington, Wis.  
**Cereske, Kurt**, Saginaw, Mich., to Bethlehem, Hortonville, Wis.  
**DeLoye, Ellen**, Laguna Niguel, Cal., to Emanuel, Tawas City, Mich.  
**Dengler, Rebecca**, Tacoma, Wash., to Centennial, Milwaukee, Wis.  
**Doletzky, Deborah**, Wayne, Mich., to Immanuel, Kewaunee, Wis.  
**Dorn, John**, Watertown, Wis., to Good Shepherd, West Bend, Wis.  
**Fagan, Tonya**, Swartz Creek, Mich., to St. Lucas, Milwaukee, Wis.  
**Fairbairn, Jeffrey**, El Paso, Tex., to St. John, St. Paul, Minn.  
**Fein, Leah**, Bay City, Mich., to Friedens, Kenosha, Wis.  
**Gaertner, Jill**, Weslaco, Tex., to Bethlehem, Hortonville, Wis.  
**Gartner, David**, Bradenton, Fla., to St. John, Redwood Falls, Minn.  
**Goessner, Gary**, Milwaukee, Wis., to St. Matthew, Oconomowoc, Wis.  
**Greco, Bethann**, Omaha, Neb., to Trinity, Crete, Ill.  
**Green, Kelli**, Mounds, Okla., to Christ, N. St. Paul, Minn.  
**Gregorius, Justin**, Iron Ridge, Wis., to Northwestern Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis.  
**Gurgel, Wendy**, Lake Mills, Wis., to St. Matthew, Niles, Ill.  
**Hecht, Denise**, Vassar, Mich., to St. Paul, Ixonia, Wis.  
**Henderson, John**, Warren, Mich., to St. John, Dowagiac, Mich.  
**Henderson, Sara**, Warren, Mich., to First German, Manitowoc, Wis.  
**Hopp, Amy**, Nicollet, Minn., to Mt. Olive, Bay City, Mich.  
**Hough, Paul**, Kenosha, Wis., to Apostles, Billings, Mont.  
**Jacobs, Tania**, Charles City, Iowa., to St. Paul, Norfolk, Neb.  
**Kiecker, Craig**, Fairfax, Minn., to Trinity, Johnson, Minn.  
**Klann, ReBecca**, Glendale, Ariz., to Peace, Green Lake, Wis.  
**Koepsell, Tamara**, Oshkosh, Wis., to Zion, Moberge, S.Dak.

**Kriewall, Karen**, Ann Arbor, Mich., to Bethany, Saginaw, Mich.  
**Kuckhahn, Laura**, Gibbon, Minn., to Martin Luther Preparatory School, Prairie du Chien, Wis.  
**Larson, Jenell**, Roberts, Wis., to Abiding Word, Houston, Tex.  
**Lauber, Steve**, Fond du Lac, Wis., to Grace, Falls Church, Va.  
**Lemke, Kristine**, Tacoma, Wash., to St. Mark, Eau Claire, Wis.  
**Makinen, Robert**, Appleton, Wis., to Zion, Sanborn, Minn.  
**Malchow, Timothy**, New Berlin, Wis., to Nebraska LHS, Waco, Neb.  
**Manthe, Theodore**, Oak Creek, Wis., to Northwestern Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis.  
**Marquardt, Susan**, Kewaskum, Wis., to Emanuel-Redeemer, Yale, Mich.  
**MGhgy, Julia**, Williamston, S.C., to St. John, Fairfax, Minn.  
**Miller, Brian**, Montrose, Mich., to Peridot, Peridot, Ariz.  
**Miller, Patrick**, Beaver Dam, Wis., to Good Shepherd, Omaha, Neb.  
**Mittelsteadt, Gregory**, Fond du Lac, Wis., to Faith, Tacoma, Wash.  
**Murphy, Mark**, Appleton, Wis., to St. John, Dakota, Minn.  
**Nerby, Scott**, Hartland, Wis., to Grace, Yakima, Wash.  
**Neuman, Kevin**, Fort Wayne, Ind., to Good Shepherd, Sioux Falls, S. Dak.  
**Pasbrig, Jonathan**, Phoenix, Ariz., to Nebraska LHS, Waco, Neb.  
**Paulsen, Kelly**, New Ulm, Minn., to Martin Luther Preparatory School, Prairie du Chien, Wis.  
**Paulsen, Kristin**, New Ulm, Minn., to St. John, Fox Lake, Wis.  
**Petersen, Linka**, Taylor Mill, Ky., to First, Elkhorn, Wis.  
**Saeger, Brian**, Juneau, Wis., to St. Paul, Lake Mills, Wis.  
**Schaper, Brad**, New Ulm, Minn., to St. Marcus, Milwaukee, Wis.  
**Scharf, Rebekah**, Oakfield, Wis., to Northwestern Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis.

**Schaser, Kristin**, Darien, Ill., to Trinity, Brillion, Wis.  
**Schimmel, Elizabeth**, North Mankato, Minn., to St. Paul, Sheboygan Falls, Wis.  
**Schmidt, Heidi**, Norfolk, Neb., to St. Luke, Vassar, Mich.  
**Schneider, Amy**, Savanna, Ill., to Gethsemane, Oklahoma City, Okla.  
**Schroeder, Laura**, Poccatello, Idaho, to St. John, Stanton, Neb.  
**Schultz, Lynn**, Fond du Lac, Wis., to Our Savior, East Brunswick, N.J.  
**Sebald, Maria**, Wauwatosa, Wis., to St. Paul, Norfolk, Neb.  
**Shuster, Joelle**, Toledo, Oh., to Christ the Lord, Brookfield, Wis.  
**Stein, Mark**, Denver, Col., to St. Peter, Appleton, Wis.  
**Steljes, Gretchen**, Columbia, Mo., to Immanuel, Medford, Wis.  
**Sweetman, Rebecca**, Fresno, Calif., to St. Lucas, Kewaskum, Wis.  
**Tessmer, Susan**, Mukwonago, Wis., to Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn.  
**Thompson, Sheila**, Whiteriver, Ariz., to Trinity, El Paso, Tex.  
**Vogel, Lisa**, Zion, Ill., to Evergreen LHS, Kent, Wash.  
**Wade, Julie**, Watertown, Wis., to St. John, Dowagiac, Mich.  
**Weis, Pamela**, Burlleson, Tex., to Nozomi, Tsuchiura City, Japan  
**Wempner, Christine**, Marietta, Ga., to Our Savior, Pomona, Cal.  
**Wiechman, Jeffery**, Oshkosh, Wis., to Gethsemane, Omaha, Neb.  
**Wohlrs, Kristi**, Brookfield, Wis., to St. Paul, Round Lake, Ill.  
**Zimmermann, Natalie**, Lakeside, Ariz., to Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Mich.

## NOTICES

### CALL FOR NOMINATIONS DR. MARTIN LUTHER COLLEGE

With the approval of the executive committee of the Board for Worker Training, the board of control of Dr. Martin Luther College requests the voting constituency of the WELS to nominate the names of candidates to replace Prof. Robert Averbeck, who has accepted a call into another ministry. Candidates should be qualified to teach art methods and other professional education courses. Please send names of nominees and pertinent information by July 3 to Pastor Robert Bitter, 173 E Waupun St, Box 277, Oakfield WI 53065.

### THE CHRISTIAN LIFE CASSETTE TAPE AVAILABLE

A recording of the latest program of Milwaukee's Lutheran Chorale, titled *The Christian Life*, is available through Northwestern Publishing House. The music illustrates the various times and activities of the Christian's life: Baptism, Confirmation, Marriage, Christian Vocation, Worship, Cross and Comfort, Hour of Death, The Body's Sleep, and Resurrection and Life Eternal.

The price of *The Christian Life* cassette tape (stock no. 34-4147) is \$8.95 plus transportation and handling costs. To order call NPH toll-free at 1-800-662-6022; Milwaukee area call 475-6600 (9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday).

## WELS Connection videotapes

### July topics:

- "Jesus Cares" program serves the developmentally disabled
- Gospel outreach in India

### August topics

- Home mission exploratory in Layton, Utah
- Home mission exploratory in Port Charlotte, Florida

For more information, contact *CCFS, WELS Administration Building, 2929 N Mayfair Road, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398*. Cost of a year's subscription is \$48.

# A look at the Athanasian Creed

by Wayne A. Laitinen

**T**he Athanasian Creed has two main parts. The first and largest part deals with the Trinity. Here the creed lays out the mystery that there are three distinct persons in one Godhead: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. All three enjoy equal status as God. Yet this statement of faith guards carefully against both of the notions that there are three gods (tritheism) and the notion that there is only one person in the Godhead (unitarianism), not three.

## Two natures of Christ

The second part deals with the mystery of the two natures of Christ. Jesus Christ is both God and man. He has all the attributes of God because he was begotten of the Father from eternity. He has all the attributes of man by his birth of a human mother. As the Son of God, Jesus can say, "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30). As the Son of Man, Jesus can say, "The Father is greater than I" (John 14:28).

The framers of this confession denounced the popular idea of their day that there are two personalities. Instead it affirms that "He is not two, but one Christ." Another prevalent heresy was the idea that Jesus' divine and human natures were blended into a new and altogether different nature. This confusion of substance was also condemned.

An echo of the second article of the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds can be heard toward the end of this creed. Here Jesus' redeeming work and his glorious exaltation are summarized.

Parts of this confession make some twentieth century Christians scratch their heads and wonder.

## The catholic faith

The words "catholic faith" appear repeatedly. Although it is explained in *The Lutheran Hymnal* as the "universal" or "Christian" faith, still some of us feel a little uncomfortable using it. It is simply a confession that this is the faith of all true Christians throughout the world. It is not a concession to the teachings of any visible church body.

The suspicion that the word "catholic" may, indeed, have something to do with a Rome-based denomination is heightened by the next-to-last paragraph: "And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting; and they that have done evil, into everlasting fire."

At first blush, this seems to contradict the gospel of justification by grace alone. However, we must keep in mind that Holy Scripture speaks the same way. Our Savior said, "A time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned" (John 5:29).

It is important to understand that in God's eyes good works are not merely outward acts of kindness. They are works done out of faith in Jesus' free gift of salvation. Without saving faith, everything we do is an evil work—no matter how generous a charity it may be. But with faith, even the offer of a cup of water receives the Savior's eternal blessing. That is why the apostle writes: "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Hebrews 11:6). Paul explains that even the faith which sanctifies our actions is a gracious gift of the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 12:3).

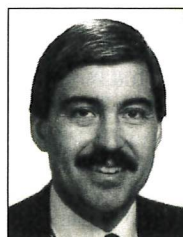
## A confession of faith, not of doubt

Some people take offense at a creed which insists on adherence to all of its articles of faith and condemns those who do not believe them.

We live in an age which believes that, if there is a God at all, it is doubtful that anyone can know for sure what he is like. So the worldly-minded man wishes to create God in his own image. To him, the greatest sin is to affirm that God is who he reveals himself to be in Scripture—regardless of what people think.

But when the worldling arrogantly strikes out at the God who so lovingly revealed his saving person and purpose, he makes a mockery of God's loving revelation and earns for himself God's everlasting wrath. Unpopular as it may be, the Athanasian Creed affirms the gospel. After all, it is a confession of faith, not a confession of doubt. It also bears the Christian's burden of love by warning those who would reject God's grace.

Far from being offended, the child of God rejoices both at the confident proclamation of the gospel in this creed and its condemnation of everything that is not gospel.



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



## A lesson from the Chicago flood

**F**or lack of a minor repair the Chicago loop was shut down the week before Easter at a cost of millions of dollars. A cable company survey crew had earlier reported knee-deep silt and water leaking through the crumbling walls of an old underground freight tunnel, but repairs were put on hold. The maintenance work was not done and disaster struck. Examples could be multiplied of what happens to buildings and airplanes and highways when maintenance is neglected.

The dictionary says maintenance is “the action of continuing to keep things going rather than to create anew.” Keeping things going rather than creating anew is not very exciting. Chicago’s leaders were much more interested in the plans for a spanking new third airport than in what was happening to crumbling underground structures nearly a century old.

But it’s not only underground tunnels and church roofs which need to be maintained. So do structures like faith and family and personal relationships. That’s where worship and Bible study come in. That’s why the family gathered for devotions or a single person at prayer is so important. Our faith is in need of daily maintenance.

So are marriages. Couples deeply in love on their wedding day wonder why six months later their relationship has deteriorated. The problem may be a lack of maintenance. The little acts of kindness so important in the courting days are often neglected once the routine of married life sets in.

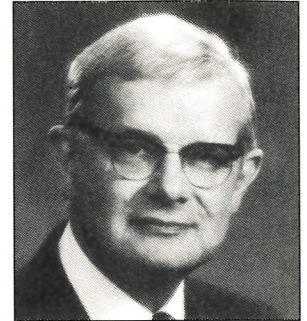
Love and understanding are two of the most important ingredients in maintaining personal relationships. The father or mother who shouts at the screaming child in the store, “You quiet down or I’ll give you something to cry about,” is showing little of either. How much better to hug the child and seek to understand the problem.

Pastors need to be especially good at maintenance ministry. Members of congregations often put up with less than inspiring preaching as long as those important little things are done: the telephone call returned, the sick person visited, tactful patience demonstrated, confidentiality guarded.

Relationships are maintained by sharing the joys and sorrows of life. A mother told of sending her young son to the store. When he didn’t return as soon as she had anticipated, she ran out to look for him and found him skipping up the street singing. “Where have you been?” she asked. “Well,” he began, “Susie dropped her doll and it broke.” His mother interrupted, “And you had to stay and help her pick it up?” “No, mommy,” he explained. “I had to stay and help her cry.”

Each day we have opportunities to maintain good relations with the people around us. Chicago found out what happens when maintenance is neglected. Take a lesson from the Chicago flood.

Victor H. Prange



*Victor Prange is pastor of Peace, Janesville, Wisconsin.*

How long will we enjoy an extended year of grace?  
And how well have we used it?

## The fig tree

Luke 13:6-9

by Mark E. Braun

It was the kind of headline you'd expect to read by the supermarket checkout counter: "Pilate slaughters Galileans at the altar. Blood mixed with their sacrifices." Jesus added a tabloid teaser of his own: "Siloam tower collapses. Eighteen dead."

Why did the crowds recount these horror stories? "Do you think," Jesus wondered, "that because they died so terribly, they were worse sinners than everyone else?"

Disasters like these must be somebody's fault. There's got to be someone to blame. There has to be a reasonable explanation. And a reasonable explanation for life's disasters can conveniently leave others off the hook. These bad things must not be happening to them because their sins aren't as bad.

Absolutely untrue, Jesus replied. That's not how God runs the world. Every catastrophe in nature and every atrocity among men is in reality God's call to a change of heart. "Unless you repent," Jesus warned, twice, "you too will all perish"—not in a political bloodbath or beneath poorly constructed masonry, but in permanent separation from God.

Which led to a parable. Easily overlooked is the tiny detail that this fig tree was planted in a man's vineyard. Maybe it was common to plant figs among the grapes, yet its privileged location meant this tree received uncommon good care from its owner. Grace isn't something extra, dragged in at the end to patch things up; undeserved kindness lies at the beginning of this story.

It took three years for a fig tree to become established. Then for another three seasons the owner came looking for fruit but went away disappointed. His patience had run out. "Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?" Fruitlessness not only disappoints; it depletes the resources on which other plants can grow.

The twist comes when the owner's employee, his

vinedresser, asked for another chance. "Leave it alone for one more year," he begged. Instead of rewarding the tree's fruitlessness with judgment, he offered to lavish it with one last season of grace. "If it still won't bear fruit, then cut it down."

Within the heart of God beat two powerful, contrary emotions. There is absolute hatred of sin; he will condemn men and women as much for the good they've failed to do as for the evil they've committed. Yet within his heart also beats inexhaustible love for his estranged sons and daughters, and he moved with reckless mercy to win his rebels back.

The owner's displeasure pictures God's justice, but the vinedresser's plea portrays the Father's grace, and illustrates the compassion of his one and only Son. The apostle John explained: "We have one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:1,2).

Jesus told this story on his way to Jerusalem; it was still a parable of grace. During the last week of our Lord's life, he enacted a second parable with an unproductive fig tree; that time, however, he pronounced, "May you never bear fruit again." The next morning this barren fig tree was withered from its roots. The year of grace had elapsed; judgment was no longer suspended. Fruitlessness finally received what it deserved.

How long will we enjoy an extended year of grace? And how well have we used it? The one thing God never promised any of us is tomorrow.

*Next: The great banquet.*



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

With the exception of 99 families of the synod—if they all are subscribers—our readers may be tempted to skip six pages of this issue. Six pages of faces and names, known only to far less than one percent of our readership. But before you yield to yon temptation, I would invite you to reflect with me on the significance of these pictures, each with a name attached, almost evenly divided as to sex, 51 men and 48 women.

The six pages I have just mentioned carry the graduates of our two terminal schools for the synod's pastoral and teaching ministries, and their first assignment in those ministries. Both schools—Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and Dr. Martin Luther College—have faithfully served the synod for more than a century. The graduates of Northwestern College, also listed, will continue their education at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary this fall.

For some reason there was a time when the graduates of these three schools were not reported in the NL. In searching past issues of NL, I noted that until 1939 there was not even a listing of seminary graduates, not to speak of their pictures.

The first seminary graduates to crash the pages of NL was the class of 1939. There they are in the July 2 issue of that year, all 20 of them in a shadowy class picture, beginning with H. Bergholz and ending with F. Tiefel. I can only guess at the sudden change. Just a month before, the editorship of NL had passed to William J. Schaefer (yes, my father), who for the next 18 years never missed a year's graduating class, nor has any been missed since.

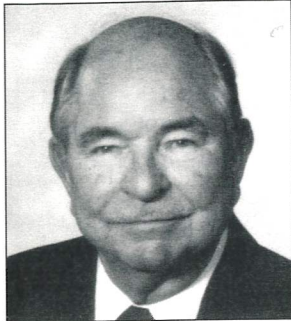
WJS (editors, with typical WELS modesty, used initials in those days) had the idea that these graduates were God's gift to his church—pastors for its pulpits and teachers for its classrooms. They were the 20th century fulfillment of St. Paul's words: "Christ chose some of us to be apostles, prophets, missionaries, pastors, and teachers, so that his people would learn to serve and his body would grow strong." These are special graduates, WJS was saying, and NL ought to say so.

The pastoral course includes college plus four years of specialized education, one year of that as vicar (intern). The education is cast in the classical mode, reminiscent of the German *gymnasium* with its classical backbone. Facility in four languages is required: German, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, the languages of classic Lutheran theology.

And one more matter. The appearance of these graduates on our pages was and still is a tribute to their fathers and mothers. Many vocations these days have their rich rewards, but fathers and mothers guided and supported their sons' and daughters' choice for the ministry of the church. Paul reminds Timothy that this is a "noble task," but not the road to fame and fortune. Jesus introduced his disciples one Thursday to the New Testament ministry by washing their feet. "I have set an example," said Jesus, "that you should do as I have done for you." Hardly the right way to "get ahead" in this world.

Thank you, moms and dads, for sharing your sons and daughters with us. Their appearance on these pages is our way of saying thanks.

James P. Schaefer



*The appearance of the graduates on our pages is a tribute to their fathers and mothers.*

## Labels applied to people are almost always inadequate and all too often destructive

# Labels

by Paul E. Kelm

**L**abels identify. Imagine a supermarket without them. But manufacturers can't just say whatever they wish on a label. Truth in advertising is a principle of consumers' rights.

Labels warn. The bright green "Mr. Yuck" sticker or the universal symbol of a red circle with a line through it are supposed to scare people away. Of course, you can't run around putting "Mr. Yuck" stickers on things just because you don't like them. There are criteria.

Labels stick. Some you can't seem to remove no matter how hard you try. Remember that.

You see, people get labeled—without standards or criteria. Sometimes the labels identify, but sometimes they misrepresent. Often labels warn, but not always responsibly. For sure, labels stick.

### Pharisaical labels

The Pharisees wore labels, phylacteries, and prayer shawls that proclaimed them right and righteous. How dare anyone disagree! Jesus called that hogwash, whitewash to be precise. Christians ought not wear the robe of righteousness or the badge of orthodoxy as signs of superiority. To God alone the glory! Clerical robes and advanced degrees ought not become means for pulling rank and intellectual bullying. "You are not to be called 'Rabbi,'" Jesus said, "For you have only one Master and you are all brothers."

The Pharisees understood the power of labels. To discredit Jesus and the freedom of grace, they called him a glutton and a drunk. For a Jewish audience they tagged him a pretender and for the Romans they hung "terrorist" on him. It worked. He was crucified by the press, then by the authorities.

It took Jesus' disciples some time to learn the sorry lesson of labeling. "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean" was a message God repeated for Peter and Peter repeated for the other apostles. Then "Gentile" ceased being a slur and became a mission.

### Inappropriate labels

Labels applied to people are almost always inadequate and all too often destructive.

I was proud to be labeled Lutheran, until the news media focused on Lutherans who deny Scripture and

march for gay rights and abortive "choice." Now I'm not sure what the label "Lutheran" means in our world. "Conservative" may describe an uncompromising stance on God's word in some circles, but there are too many political overtones and social agendas attached to that label for me to wear it comfortably. "Ambitious" describes a person who is hard working—and a person who is a ruthless ladder-climber. Labels are almost always inadequate shorthand for complex people.

Some people have been called "gifted" from the time they were children; and that label has made their lives impossible attempts to measure up. Others have worn labels like "slow learner" and lived down to the expectation. The social sciences' penchant for categorizing people has created psychological caricatures and sociological stereotypes. Thus we're all minorities and co-dependents (whatever that means) of one kind or another. Labels are all too often destructive reductions of multi-faceted human beings.

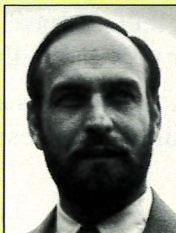
### Church labels

What about labeling in the church? "Delinquents" skip church. "Alligators" make life miserable for church leaders. And we're urged to be friendly to the "unchurched." That kind of labeling sends all kinds of unfortunate messages. "Traditionalists" do "maintenance ministry." "Visionaries" must be infected by "church growth." Such labeling dismisses people rather than discussing issues. Rather than distinguish, it obscures truth; it polarizes people instead of correcting and instructing.

"Speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into Christ" (Ephesians 4:15). Please pause before you stick "Mr. Yuck" labels on people.

When the world pins derisive labels on us, we can rejoice to be counted worthy of suffering for Christ's name. "Christian" was originally an epithet. When Jesus comes to write on us his new name, then we will rejoice to be everything that label says about us.

Until then, life is looking up!



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