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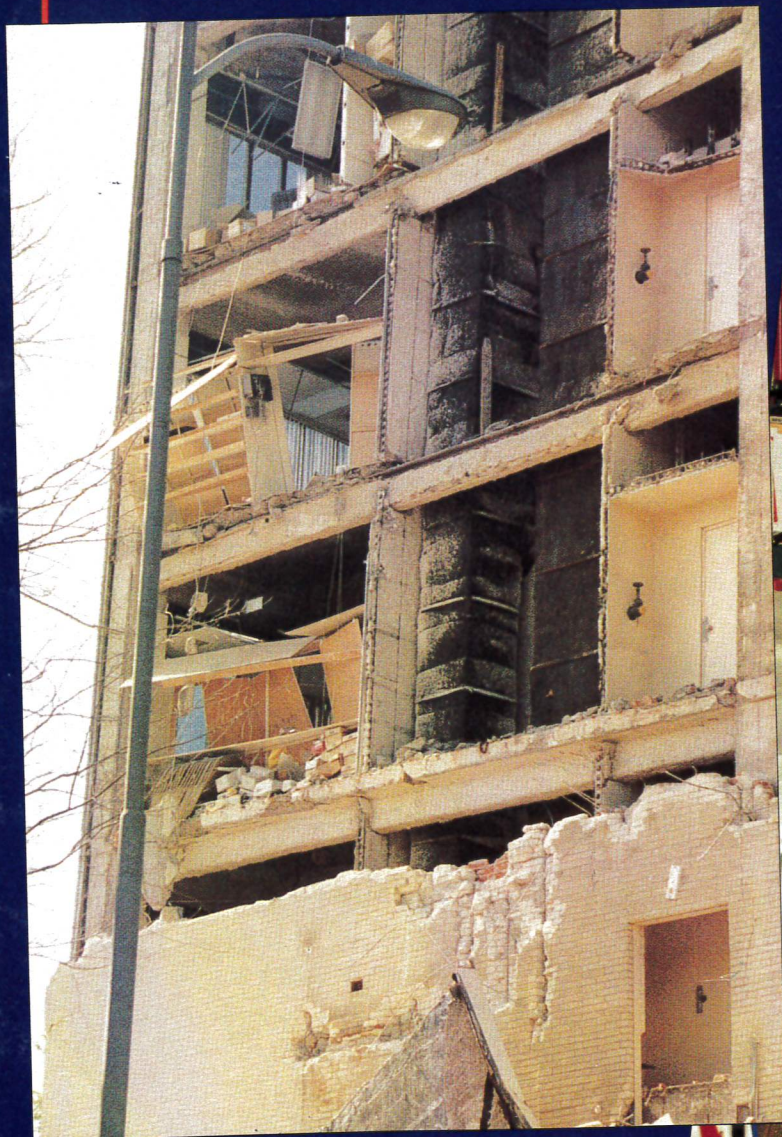
NORTHWESTERN LUTHERAN

May 1994



Christians cope with the California quake

p.6

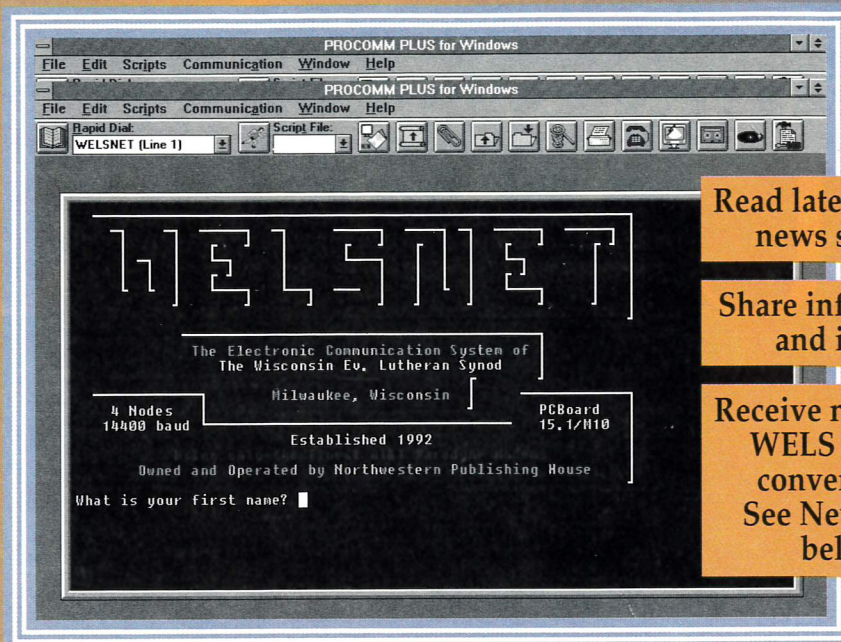


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How many families do you know who fit the description "Happy family"? The more frequent modifier heard among those working in the field these days seems to be the buzzword "dysfunctional."

As antidote for the latter and encouragement for the former, God's Scriptures can instill appreciation for his kind of functioning family.

Even average degrees of self-regard and rivalry are more than enough to turn any family atmosphere into conflict and bitterness. With the interaction of selfish natures, just maintaining a tense equilibrium exhausts all the common sense people can muster.

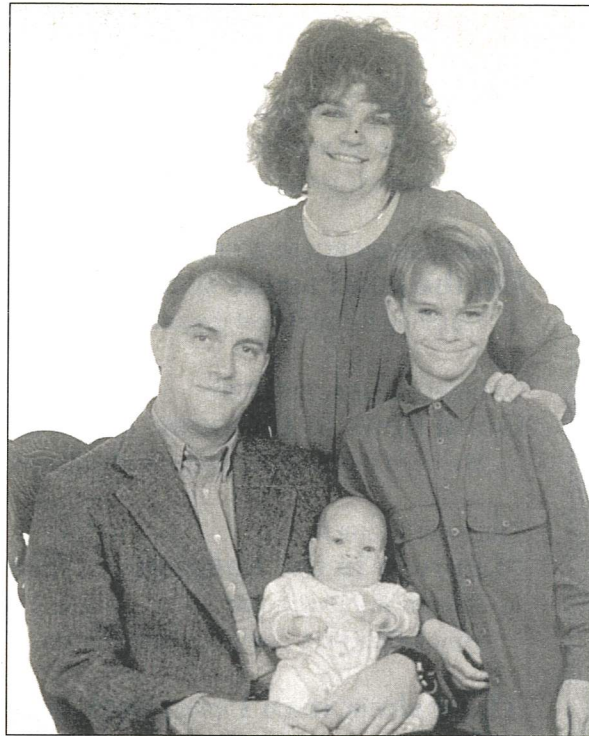
It's next to impossible for people to be in genuine harmony with each other for very long if individually they are at odds with God and his role for them.

The spirit

How different when each member of the household trusts Jesus Christ for pardon and enjoys personal assurance of a place in the family of God. Under God, that is the arena where happy family functioning originates.

It's what we anticipate in the case of the convert's family in Acts 16. In that setting the atmosphere can be: We're so glad to be saved that it shows in how we regard one another and how we view our responsibilities toward one another.

To make a point: A family is the sum of sinful parts, and problems are inherent. But concentration on the negative may be depriving us of the encouraging glow of our God's fatherly smile. He has redeemed each of us at the cross. At the open tomb he established assurance meant for each of us. At baptism he laid claim to each of us.



MRS. KEVIN SCHEIBEL PHOTOGRAPHY

Habitat for happiness

by Robert H. Hochmuth

*"The whole family was filled with joy,
because they had come to believe"*
Acts 16:34.

The eternal God has a high calling for each one in the house. This makes a household of believers a privileged circle of people who can afford to spend the cheering dividends of his unending promises on each other day by day.

Failures and tensions still stain the family fabric, but they are bleached in the assurance of God's plan and purpose for his eternal family.

The specifics

Providing for bodily needs is a prime, God-instituted, family responsibility. The weekly grind can be enervating, even unnerving, when undertaken by people whose view of life renders them and their dependents mere earthlings.

Conversely, for the family functioning under God, he is the goal. To be his and to serve him for time and eternity makes life worthwhile.

Furthermore, children are not liabilities, they are assets. They are means by which God's design for his world will go forward. Training them to take up their role for him is a significant and satisfying privilege. With God, everything in family life has meaning, inspiring cheerful dedication and perseverance.

By revealing his mercies and claiming our hearts, our Savior-God creates constructive attitudes also toward community, career, and citizenship. In the turmoil of today's world he pours out his saving love for us to absorb in such measure that it rubs off on each other in our family circle and reveals itself to other people: here's a blessed family enjoying being children of God through Jesus Christ. What a privilege!



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

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

NORTHWESTERN LUTHERAN

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE
WISCONSIN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD

MAY 1994 / VOL. 81, NO. 5

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Subscriber service

For subscription service, write: Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 N 113th Street, Milwaukee WI 53226-3284. Allow **four weeks** for a new subscription, subscription renewal or change of address. (If you have a question on your subscription phone 1-800-662-6093, ext. 8; Milwaukee area phone 414/475-6600, ext. 5.)

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—Air Mail, \$35.50 for one year. Surface Mail, \$23.50 for one year. Prices include postage.

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

NORTHWESTERN LUTHERAN (ISSN 0029-3512) is published *monthly* 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. ©1994 by *Northwestern Lutheran*, magazine of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS). Printed in the USA.

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BITS & PIECES

- The day after the earthquake hit southern California, we called the churches in the vicinity of the quake. We were thankful to learn no WELS members were killed or seriously injured. We asked what they did and how they felt during the earthquake. How do they deal with the stress and anxiety? For the story of how your fellow Christians are coping, see page 6.
- Pentecost—May 22—is a day to celebrate the grace and power of the Holy Spirit. Yet this day usually receives far less attention than other festival days in the church year. Do Lutherans minimize the work of the Holy Spirit? Is the Spirit indeed the forgotten Person of the Trinity? See page 18.
- God has blessed the people of the WELS. Our immigrant grandfathers prospered and became middle class citizens, says Glen Thompson—but that prosperity has cut us off from the poorer classes of society. How can we share the gospel with them? See “Good news to the poor” on page 12.

Dorothy Sonntag

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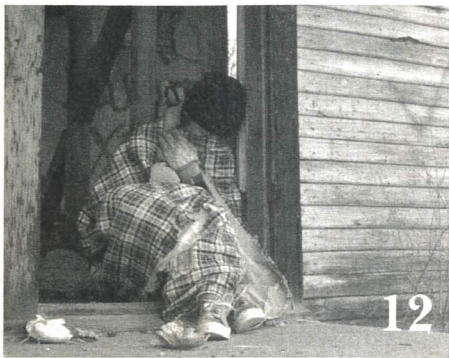
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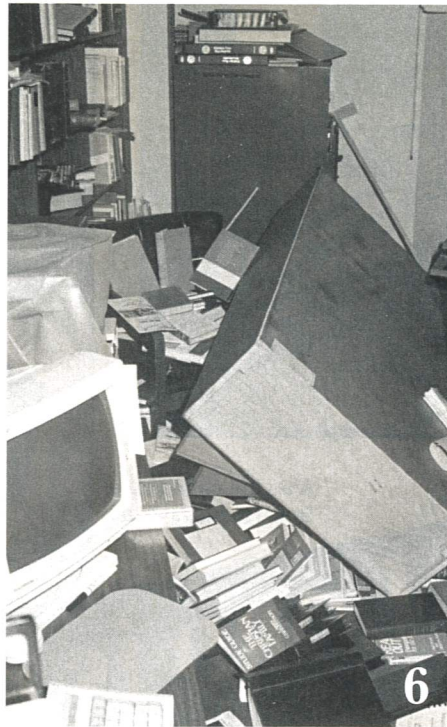
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On the road again



Good news to the poor



The LORD is my rock

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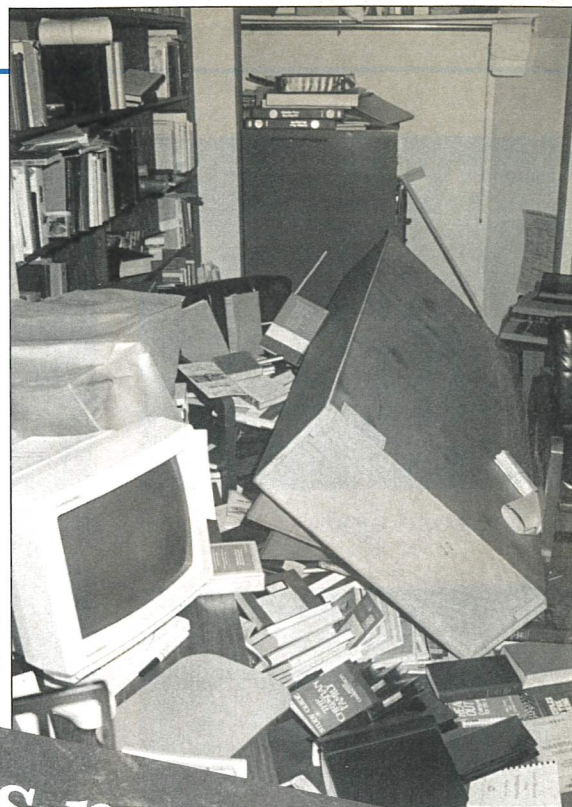
THE EDITOR'S PEN

A little heaven for the home, but no home in heaven
by Gary P. Baumler34

Do you use the Bible to tell you how to live, or to give you life in Christ?



The back wall of this store collapsed.



After the earthquake: Brad Ragner's study.

PHOTOS SUPPLIED BY DOUG FOUND, MARY PALMQUIST, BRAD RAGNER

The LORD is my rock

When the

“The earth trembled and quaked. . . .” Psalm 18:7

In a sin-cursed world, God sometimes allows the powers he created in nature to unleash indescribable fury. Only God can help those caught in it. Those who believe follow the lead of the psalmist: “In my distress I called to the LORD; I cried to my God for help” (18:6).

On January 17 an earthquake rocked southern California. WELS members who live in the Los Angeles area describe their experiences.

“A horrendous rumble”

Lois Found, whose husband is pastor of Prince of Peace in Thousand Oaks, wrote down her impressions: “A horrendous rumble . . . inability to get one’s footing as the house shakes uncontrolled . . . endless glass breaking . . . wood cracking . . . water sloshing from the toilets . . . grab one’s

shoes . . . dash to the support arch . . . an eternity of shaking—40 seconds . . . the house quivers and rests.”

“The roar the earth makes”

“I couldn’t hear all the glass shattering, the furniture moving and tipping over. Nothing. Just the roar the earth makes when it decides to reshape itself,” wrote Mary Palmquist, whose husband David is pastor of St. Paul First in North Hollywood.

“The noise is very much like a crack of thunder, except that it just keeps going and going and going. . . . And I’m not talking the thunder that gently bounces around the mountains, I’m talking about the crack you hear when lightning hits the ground in your backyard. . . . Words of thanks went up that we were okay. But prayers for those I knew were

not going to be okay followed quickly behind.”

“The house was wobbling like jello”

“Sharon and I were in a sound sleep when all of a sudden a huge *Crack! Boom!* literally threw us up in bed,” Bradley Ragner, pastor of St. John, Tarzana, wrote to his family and friends. “The jerking kept on going. The house was wobbling like jello. In the darkness we heard things crashing down and glass shattering. And it kept going on.

“The waves of aftershocks . . . pounded and pounded the house. . . . the smell of gas was up and down the street, all over the neighborhood. . . . Flames could be seen rising up above the trees to the north; flames miles away and yet high enough to sputter about our trees.”

In the wake of the quake

“The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away;” said Job, “may the name of the LORD be praised” (1:21). In a materialistic society like ours, it takes but one earthquake to realize how fragile and passing material things are. Blessed are those who have the Lord Jesus Christ when earthly possessions are trashed.

“Everything ruined or damaged”

Carey and Randi Pomerantz, members of Gethsemane, Los Angeles, had to evacuate their apartment building. “This meant putting everything into large trash bags and dragging them out,” they

said. “It has taken a full two weeks just to sort through the bags. It is really sad to see everything you own either ruined or damaged.”

“Scooping up the kitchen”

“We were lucky. Even though we did not have electricity, we had water, telephone service (sort of), and we were not forced to turn off our gas,” said Mary Palmquist. “But scooping up the kitchen and dumping it in the garbage pail was all we could do.”

Sacristy and study in shambles

As soon as their house stopped quivering, Lois and Doug Found

headed outside to check the church and fellowship hall. “Closets, sacristy and study are in shambles,” she wrote. “Glass items are unrecognizable. Stained glass windows are cracked; the brick altar has lost its mortar; yet bricks remain stacked haphazardly.”

A home destroyed

Brad Ragner, concerned about his parishioners, reached most of them by phone and visited some in person. “I stopped off at one home that has been completely destroyed,” he said. “The people had earthquake insurance. But the deductible alone is \$18,000.”

quake shook southern California, Christians learned anew of the only solid rock.

Life spared

By God’s grace, no WELS members died in the earthquake. For Randi and Carey Pomerantz, the Father’s protective hand was particularly evident. Their apartment was just across from the Northridge apartment building that collapsed, killing 17 people.

A narrow escape from death

“Randi was awake when the quake started,” wrote Carey. “We jokingly blame the earthquake on her, since she had just finished organizing her drawing table (this is normally in total confusion). When she felt the first tremors, she got up and ran to the hallway door jamb. She escaped being crushed to death by only a second or two since the piano, two bookcases and

With no electricity, Shelah Found holds a flashlight to view damage.

hundreds of books crashed onto the drawing table in the quake.

Randi did not escape injury. “She was thrown about in the door jamb like a ping pong ball and was badly banged up and bruised,” Carey said.

Carey, meanwhile, suffered a cut over his eye when his toolchest slammed against the bedroom door and the tool box struck him in the head. Then, as he struggled to get out of the bedroom and join Randi in the hallway door jamb, he stepped on broken glass and sustained a deep puncture wound in his foot.

“Hysterical screaming out in the street”

“Normally, an earthquake feels like a rolling sensation,” Carey



wrote. “In this earthquake, it felt as though the earth was being punched over and over. Every piece of furniture was thrown about and everything we owned was heaped up in piles in each room. Nothing escaped damage.

“It was eerie and scary, hearing hysterical screaming out in the street. . . . It took a full four hours to move enough things to be able to get out of the apartment.”

A rock that will not quake

Disasters strike fear and cause distress. No one is immune from them. “No one but no one has recovered from the quake,” said psychologist Lilli Friedland, part of an LA disaster response team.

Christians, however, have their God who will calm the fear and relieve the distress. “The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer” (Psalm 18:2).

“It’s all you can do to hold yourself together”

Bradley Ragner knows about fear. “Eventually the stress really starts to hurt,” he wrote. “It’s all

you can do to hold yourself together from one moment to the next. You are constantly asking someone to remind you of God’s love, of God’s power, that if this were Judgment Day Jesus would be coming to save you and not to scare you, that your partner really loves you, that—in spite of your numbing fear—you actually feel for and care for your partner.

“You pray to God for a break from all of this so that you can stop acting like some automaton, so that you can breath and say, ‘Thank you.’”

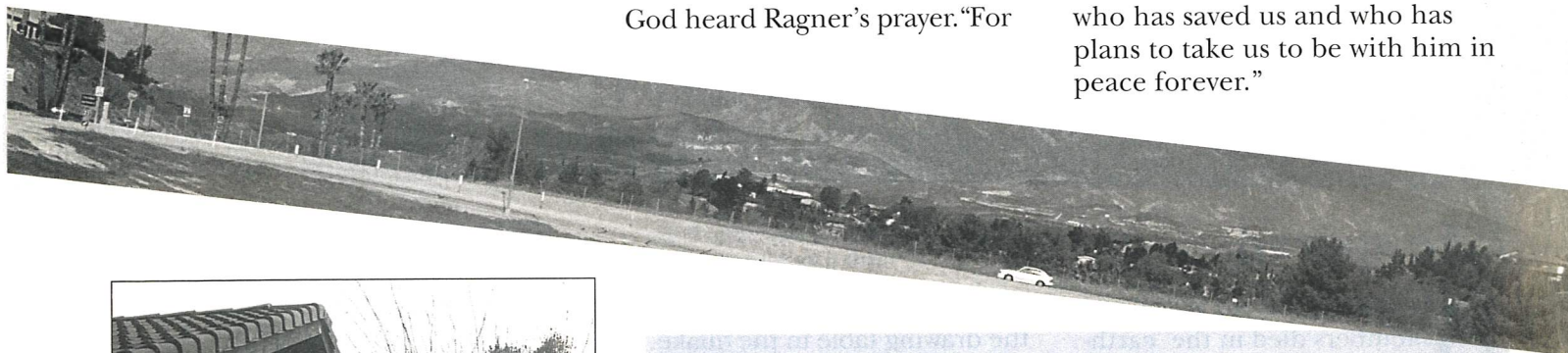
“It sure feels good to join with fellow believers”

God heard Ragner’s prayer. “For

me the watershed really came when Sunday services were over,” he said. “It’s a long way to Sunday when an earthquake happens at 4:31 a.m. Monday. It sure feels good to join with fellow believers to sing, ‘On Christ, the solid rock I stand; All other ground is sinking sand.’”

“It is such a relief to join in confessing our sins and hearing God’s forgiveness, to hear the Word, to confess our faith, to pray to God in sorrow and thankfulness, to receive the blessing.

“Part of it is just getting back to life, to what we know. But most of it is hearing again that we live in a world gone wrong, but we have a God who remembers us and who has saved us and who has plans to take us to be with him in peace forever.”



Supports propped up this house’s walls.

President Gurgel visits quake victims

President Karl Gurgel visited six Los Angeles area WELS churches on January 22 and 23 to talk with pastors and parishioners. The churches had relatively minor damage, he said, and no WELS members were killed or critically injured.

“I saw unbelievable destruction,” he reported. “It was devastating. Our people were very grateful that God had spared their lives and that they had no serious injuries.”

One mother told him that on the day after the quake, her three-year-old daughter wrapped herself in plastic bubble wrap. “If there’s another earthquake,” the child told her mother, “I don’t want to break.”

Gurgel felt several aftershocks while he was in California. “They were not frightening,” he said, “but they really brought to mind the transient nature of this life. I’m glad we can rely on something firmer than the ground we stand on.”



A building takes on a new shape after the quake.



This store was destroyed.

Families whose homes were unsafe camped in their yards.



You may send donations to
WELS Committee on Relief,
 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398

Thank you for your prayers and love

WELS Christians everywhere have prayed for the victims of the earthquake, and the Committee on Relief sent \$200,000, which was passed on to people in need.

Pastor Kenneth Strack, chairman of the Committee on Relief, reports that relatively few gifts have been received for earthquake victims. Fortunately, money was available from the committee's general fund. "The letters I've received indicate the money has been used well," said Strack, "and that people are appreciative."

Here are samples of the heartfelt thanks:

... we had much to be grateful for and indeed have thanked the Lord over and over for his blessings in having watched over us. . . . The demonstration of Christian love which made the gift of money possible is appreciated and will be remembered all of our lives. A sincere thank you to all.

Gloria and Bill Wandler

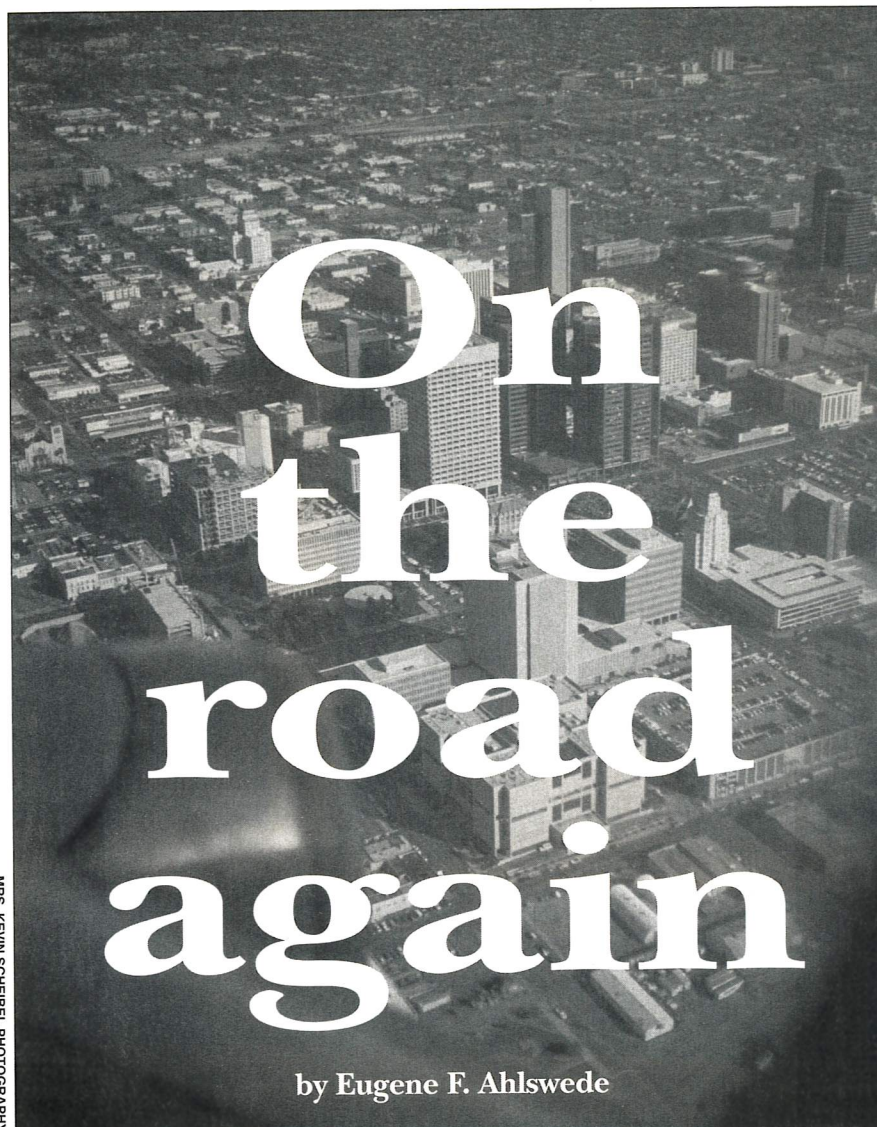
Our thanks are heartfelt and can only cause us again to reflect on God's gracious hand as he

directs material relief and spiritual comfort. We continue on with our Lord's promise: "I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

Carl and June Loeper

In all of this, the Lord has reminded us of how very small and powerless we are and of how humble we must be as the recipients of great generosity. We realize, now more than ever, that we have continuously received even greater gifts from him through faith.

Michael and Carol Petz



MRS. KEVIN SCHEIBEL PHOTOGRAPHY

On the road again

by Eugene F. Ahlswede

As a child he preached to the cows. Now he flies about the West, fulfilling his childhood dream.

It's six in the morning and my wife is dropping me off. The lights of the airport glisten like jewels in the cold morning darkness. I check in, check my bags, and sit back to await my plane on B concourse. As I sit there, I think of how I came to be a mission counselor.

I remember sitting in church with my parents. I couldn't have been more than eight or nine. The pastor was preaching. I can see him vividly. He spoke of the Savior's love and his forgiveness.

I was deeply moved, and I thought, "I wish I could tell other people about the Lord." I smile as I remember that afterward I preached to the cows while I fed them.

I remember another pastor, Theodore Stern, coming to my house and talking a long time to my dad and mom. Would they be willing to send me to school

in Watertown? Perhaps, if it were the Lord's will, I would become a pastor.

By God's grace, I did become a pastor. I worked in established congregations and new missions. For a while I was on a district mission board. Now, after 30 years, the Lord has called me to be mission counselor.

Fishing

They're calling my flight. The plane is a United 737. The seats are a bit small, but I can get from Denver to most of my destinations in a little over an hour.

I wear a fishhook pin in my lapel. The fellow next to me notices it and we begin to talking about fishing. Then I tell him I'm a fisher of men. You'd be surprised how many opportunities there are to talk about the Savior while traveling.

When we land in Houston, I pick up my bag, go to the rental car counter, and I'm on my way.

Planning

It's three hours to my first stop. This afternoon I'm visiting a young man who was just assigned to a new mission. He's been well-educated, but it's not always easy to put theory into practice. It's hard enough to adjust to the ministry. Being a mission explorer has special challenges.

Does he have questions? Does he understand that he must be accountable to those who sent him? I'll encourage this new missionary to spend the first hour each day in the study of God's Word. You can't get anything out of an empty pitcher.

I'll urge the young man to plan—to plan his day, and to help the believers who make up his mission nucleus to plan. They can accomplish so much more with careful planning.

Mission work is a battle. It is an attack on the devil's kingdom. Pastor and people are the Lord's army. We can't waste time. We'll set up a schedule for regular meetings with the mission worker and his flock.



Vicki and Eugene Ahlswede

My job is to encourage pastor and congregation to make contacts with the unchurched, to work toward self-support but, above all, to reach people with the Word. The Holy Spirit works saving faith by the Word.

Encouraging

I'm on the road again. This evening I'll be visiting a missionary and his family.

I ask for time to speak to the man and his wife. Is she happy? A pastor's wife is important. She needs to know that her fellow Christians appreciate the things she is doing to help her husband proclaim the Savior's love.

I'll be conducting a Friendship Witnessing seminar here in the morning. After it reaches a certain size, a

mission can forget to do outreach.

The kind missionary and his wife ask me to spend the night with them. The seminar goes well. God's people want to serve him. They are happy to be encouraged to reach out to their friends, relatives, associates, and neighbors with the gospel.

Preaching

I'm on the road again. I've got a little over 150 miles to go. Texas is a big state. For that matter, so is Arizona; so is Colorado. All the West is big.

Tonight I'll sleep in an EconoLodge. I'll be preaching in the morning, encouraging pastor and congregation to serve the Lord with gladness.

After the service I'll lead the senior Bible class. I'll tell the people of the precious treasure they possess and I'll help them see how they can do things in their church—establish visitor parking, contact newcomers, plan a Festival of Friendship—to reach out to their community.

Praying

It's Sunday night and I'm on the way home. As the seat belt light goes out I start to daydream. I think of my good wife. She'll be waiting for me. I think of my children. I think about my own comfortable bed.

Then I pray. Airplanes are a good place to pray. I pray that God will keep our missionaries and their families filled with a zeal to serve the Lord. I pray for those missions that are struggling. I pray that our synod will appreciate the wonderful grace God has shown and that our people will work and give and pray so that the sweet message of forgiveness might be proclaimed.

Tomorrow I'll write to each of the pastors I've visited to reinforce the encouragement I gave them. I must remember to send that brother in Austin my files on a Festival of Friendship Sunday. The South Central mission board will want a report on my visits. Where will I be next weekend? Oh, yes, Omaha.

Vicki is waiting for me at the gate. I'm home again. Thank you, Lord.

Eugene Ahlswede is mission counselor for Arizona, Colorado, and the Nebraska and South Central Districts.



The exploratory mission at Layton, Utah, is among those Ahlswede counsels. Peter Unnasch is the pastor.

Good news to the poor

Once rural, the WELS has become a small town and suburban church body.

We are cut off from the poorer classes of society. But we need to share the gospel with all people, even the poor.

by Glen L. Thompson



MRS. KEVIN SCHEIBEL PHOTOGRAPHY

A man lies sleeping in the doorway of an abandoned building. A woman wrapped in layers of old clothes guards a shopping cart containing all her earthly belongings. A child rummaging in a garbage bin finds a half-eaten sandwich and greedily devours it.

We've all seen the pictures on the evening news or in the paper. Some of us may even see such sights on a regular basis.

Though the poor are always with us, they are not always easy for us to see. Few of them speak publicly about their condition, and one can argue what "poor" really means. In 1992 the US Census Bureau would have classified your family of four as living in poverty if your income for that year had been below \$14,335. Most of us would have had a tough time getting by on

that amount, and so did the 37 million Americans who fit that description.

How Christians help the poor

There are no easy answers to poverty. Welfare has not solved the problem. Drug and alcohol addiction and the breakup of the family are contributing factors. Low levels of education and lack of job skills complicate the matter further. As a result, even the most hard-working and best-intentioned person often cannot break out of the cycle of poverty.

The Bible teaches us compassion for the poor. The Old Testament commanded the Israelites to alleviate the suffering of the poor. Jesus taught his disciples to give alms to the poor. Since the time of the early church, Christians have been founders and major

contributors to charities benefiting the poor. Our WELS Committee on Relief sets aside funds for this purpose, and many local congregations distribute food and aid to the needy.

While we strive to alleviate poverty, Christians have another gift to give—the gift that truly keeps on giving. A meal and warm clothing can make life more bearable, but only the gospel can truly heal.

Nothing new here, you say? By God's grace we all know that the gospel is our greatest gift. That's why we need to share it with all people, even the poor. For a number of reasons, we haven't shared it as well as we might.

Why we've been cut off from the poor

During the 20th century, God has blessed the people of the WELS physically and spiritually. Our fathers and grandfathers, cut from hard-working immigrant stock, prospered and became middle class citizens. Once rural, we have become a small town and suburban church body.

However, this rise has cut us off from the poorer classes of society. We live on the right side of the tracks and in more affluent neighborhoods. It is difficult for us to bring the gospel to people we cannot identify with and whom we only occasionally see.

The '60s and '70s were a time of mission expansion for our synod. As we spread across the continent, we placed new congregations in every state. Usually we started congregations in communities to which WELS members were moving and in which people were prosperous enough to repay the loans given to buy parsonages and build churches. We seldom had the resources to establish congregations in poorer neighborhoods. Metropolitan areas became impoverished wastelands from which many churches fled.

How we can reach out to the poor

We want to bring the gospel to the people living in those impoverished wastelands. To reach out to the poor, the Committee for the Evangelism of the Economically Deprived, part of our synod's Multicultural Mission Committee, wants to "create

awareness, acceptance, and partnership by the members of the WELS in evangelistic activity among North America's poor." It hopes to aid existing congregations and begin work in new areas.

The committee is raising money for its first project: a full-time lay evangelist to work among the poor with Trinity Lutheran Church, Bay City, Michigan.

The cultural gap between the middle class and the poor is great. The poor also tend to be highly transient. These factors often make it difficult to integrate them successfully into our congregations. If we can't bring them to us, we have to go to them.

Of course we want to reach the unchurched with Word and sacraments, but we may have to do more. Rather than simply giving them Bibles, we may have to teach the illiterate to read. To demonstrate the love of Christ, we may have to show the needy our love in physical ways.

Why we should reach out to the poor

In a time when money is tight, you might think we should plant congregations among the more affluent, to broaden our financial base so that later we can evangelize

the poor. Money will always be scarce, however, and Jesus' command remains clear: Go to all people.

Jesus himself reminds us that stewardship is not necessarily a matter of dollars and visible results. In the parable about the heavenly feast, the master commands his servants, "Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor."

Jesus said it even more directly: "When you give a banquet, invite the poor and you will be blessed. . . . Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

Let's follow his advice.



Please send your ideas and donations to Evangelism of the Economically Deprived, WELS Board for Home Missions, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398.

Glen Thompson, a member of the Committee for the Evangelism of the Economically Deprived, teaches at Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw.



MRS. KEVIN SCHEBEL PHOTOGRAPHY

Jennifer rushed in the door after school, shouting, "Laurie's sick. . . . She's in the hospital. . . . She might die! . . . I'm so scared."

Rebecca, Jennifer's mother, already knew. One of the women at her midweek Bible study had heard from the church secretary that Laurie's mom had taken Laurie to the hospital that morning.

No one was sure what was wrong. She had symptoms of the flu, but the doctors had ruled that out. Now they were waiting to get test results so an accurate diagnosis might follow.

Best friends

Laurie was Jennifer's best friend. They sometimes stayed overnight at each other's house. Laurie slept over at their home just two weekends ago. What a bundle of energy! A good student. A little shy, but eager and enthusiastic.

Rebecca also felt a bond with Laurie. She too had been raised by a single mom, and remembered with some pain how hard it was for both mother and daughter. For the mom it was like a juggling act—earning a living, keeping a home, giving emotional support to her daughter, maintaining an active church involvement, traipsing to school sports, and on and

"Laurie's in the hospital . . . She might die"

How a
Christian
family
reacts
to illness

by Thomas B. Franzmann

on. Her own mother, though loving and pleasant, seemed worn out most of the time. It seemed that way for Laurie's mom too.

It wasn't easy for the daughter, either. Her mother, the person she depended on most for support and encouragement, couldn't always be with her. When her mother was home, she had so many irons in the fire that she couldn't give full and patient attention to her daughter's problems. It was hard to be the child of a single parent.

Rebecca felt she could understand, perhaps better than most, the situation in Laurie's household. She longed to be able to help.

Comfort and understanding

One need confronted her now: her own daughter was distraught. Jennifer had seen illness before. There were the usual colds and ailments in their own home . . . the time Grandpa had undergone surgery . . . the news she picked up on TV. Some of the most memorable movies Jennifer had seen dealt with illness and death. But this was the first time she had confronted the possibility of death with someone as young, and as

close to her, as Laurie.

Rebecca and Jennifer sat on the sofa in the living room. Rebecca asked Jenn to tell her what she knew. How long had Laurie been absent from school? Did anyone know how long she'd be in the hospital? Could she have visitors? It was hard for Jenn to sit still and talk, but slowly she was able to settle down.

Then the tears came. "I'm scared, Mom," she said. They hugged and held each other without saying anything more.

The quiet moments gave Rebecca a chance to review some of the thoughts that had helped her get through other times like this.

She remembered that we live in a world in which we expect tragedy and trouble. She thought of several Bible stories about the Lord's compassion. She recalled Scripture passages promising that

the Lord always has a purpose when he allows hardship to come into his children's lives. She especially liked the one in which God promises he will never test his people beyond what they can bear.

Rebecca wasn't good at remembering passages by chapter and verse, so she couldn't show them to Jennifer in the Bible. But she was able to talk about them with her daughter. Some of them Jenn had heard in Sunday school and confirmation classes. Some of the thoughts were new to her—or at least seemed new because of the present situation.

As they talked about the Lord and his love, Jennifer felt a quiet comfort regarding her friend. Laurie was God's child, and he would keep her in his powerful and loving care.

Jenn also felt close to her own mother. "Thank you, Jesus," she thought, "for a mom who loves me and is there for me when I'm hurting."

Ways to help

Jennifer said, "Mom, what can we do to help them?"

About that time, other members of the family came

drifting in. One by one they shared the important news of the day. Laurie was special to all of them. They wanted to know more details, sketchy as they were. All were concerned for Laurie.

"That little family has such a hard time," Jim commented. "Now this! What can we do to help?"

Rebecca said, "Jenn and I have some ideas. Let's have our dinner and talk about them."

Around the dinner table they discussed plans. They decided Laurie's mom would be too pressed for time to come for a meal. But they could put together some dishes she could heat in the microwave. They would add a few special touches to show they cared.

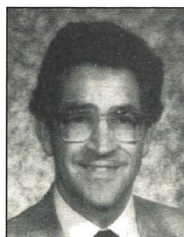
They decided to find out whether Laurie could have visitors. Last weekend Laurie had admired a little pocket calculator of Jennifer's. Jenn

wanted to take it to her or, if that were not allowed, to ask Laurie's mom to take it to her.

Without being "pushy," they would try to spend some quiet time with Laurie's mom, to share with her the comfort that God's Word brings. They would be alert for hints of things she needed with which they could help.

They were eager to get going, but before they left the table they took a few minutes for their devotion. This time they spent a little more time than usual in prayer. They asked the Lord to keep Laurie in his care, to give strength and courage to her mother, to bless the doctors and nurses, and to help their family show Christian love in whatever ways he opened to them.

Rebecca wasn't good at remembering passages by chapter and verse, so she couldn't show them to Jennifer in the Bible. But she was able to talk about them with her daughter. As they talked, Jennifer felt a quiet comfort. Laurie was God's child, and he would keep her in his loving care.



Wellspring, a family devotional magazine, is available from Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 N 113th St, Milwaukee WI 53226-3284. Call toll free 1-800-662-6093, ext. 8. In the Milwaukee area call (414)475-6600, ext. 5. Phone weekdays between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

Tom Franzmann is pastor of Our Redeemer, Santa Barbara, California.

The richest man I ever met

**Peace with God, assurance of sins forgiven,
joy and contentment, love of family, and respect
from others made Louis Martin truly rich.**

by Samuel M. Clemons

Over the years I've met a number of wealthy people, such as successful physicians, attorneys, and corporate executives. I attended college with heirs to family fortunes earned in the publishing business and department store chains. I've met lottery winners, entertainers, and professional sports players. But the richest man I ever met was in a class by himself.

The richest man I ever met died at the age of 101 years and 10 months. His name was Louis Martin. He was born to German parents in 1891 in what is now Poland. He came to America as a young man and settled in Michigan. By the time of his death, he had experienced and acquired the best life has to offer.

How Louis Martin became rich

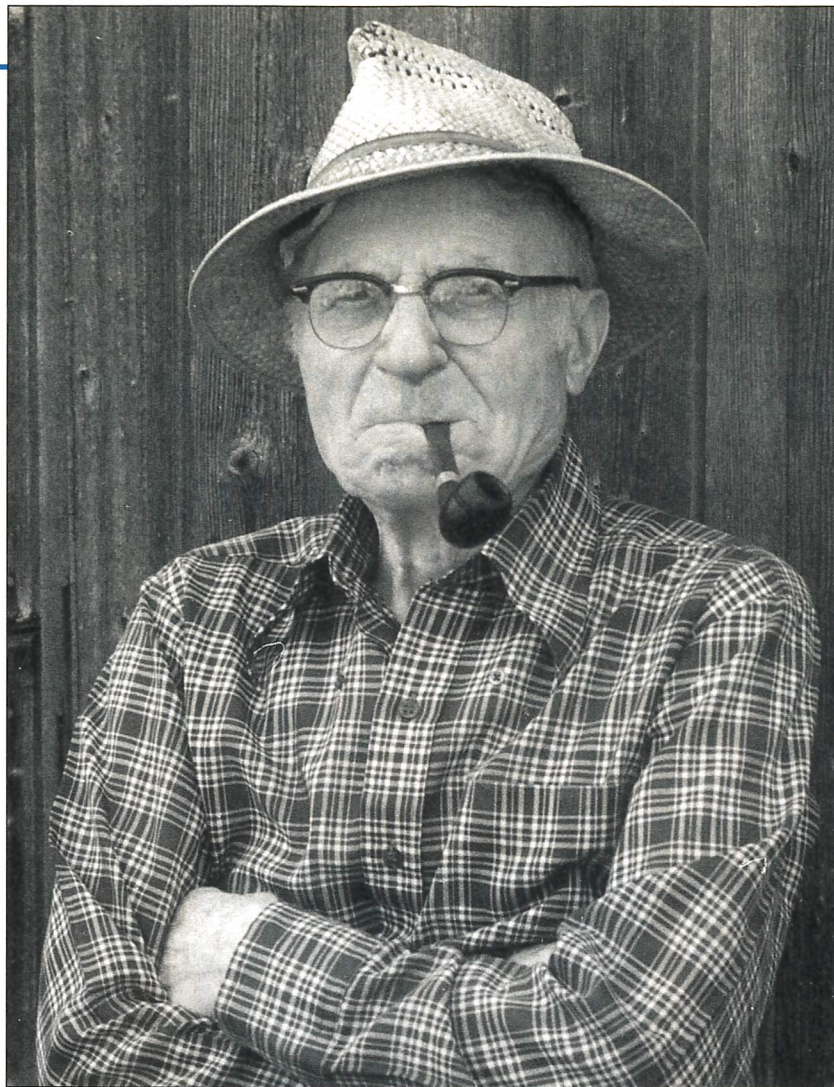
Louis Martin was a fruit and vegetable farmer in Benton Harbor. During the growing season he worked long, hard days. As a farmer his livelihood was at the mercy of variations in temperature and rainfall, sunshine and frost. His life was marked with physical labor

and also with innumerable blessings. Because, you see, Louis Martin was a child of God.

From early youth he had learned the Word of the Lord. He knew God's wonderful plan that brought Jesus to earth to live as our substitute under God's law and die as our substitute under God's wrath. Through faith in Jesus, Louis Martin was God's child and an heir of eternal life.

Throughout his life, Louis Martin evidenced an ever-growing, ever-strengthening faith. He continued to hear, learn, and study God's Word. He became a living example of Jesus' promise in Matthew 6:33, "Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." God gave all the necessary things, the truly important things in life, to Louis Martin in abundance. He had what many wealthy people lack and would pay millions to get.

He was completely at peace. He was at peace with God through faith in Christ Jesus. He was at peace with his neighbor. His marriage was the source of many blessings, as God intends a marriage to be. He enjoyed a long and happy wedded life. He raised his



Louis Martin

children in the fear and knowledge of God, and he enjoyed their love, respect, and honor. He lived to see his grandchildren (of whom my wife is one) and his great-grandchildren.

His body, trained by years of physical labor and attuned to moderation in food and drink, was strong and healthy. He enjoyed gardening, leaf raking, and snow shoveling up to his hundredth year. His mind remained sharp and active until late in life.

He was content with life, and enjoyed the best this life has to offer. He was rich, and these riches were not affected by interest rate fluctuations, stock market drops, recessions, or inflation. Though he was rich in this life, he is richer by far now in his heavenly home.

How you can be rich

Who's really rich—people with large incomes and many possessions? After exhausting themselves in pursuit of worldly wealth, people discover they are no happier. Many miserable millionaires live with doubt and fear, loneliness and emptiness.

You can get the most out of life, enjoy life to the fullest, without worldly wealth. You might not live as long as Louis Martin, but you can have all the good things this life has to offer.

Begin with humble faith in Jesus Christ, confident that by his death you are redeemed. Increase your wealth by searching and studying God's Word, so that you grow in faith. Then, out of gratitude and love, conform your life to God's will. Jesus says, "If you love me you will obey what I command." He also promises that those who hear the Word of God and obey it will be blessed.

Peace with God, assurance of sins forgiven, joy and contentment, love of family, and respect from others make a person truly rich. I know it's possible to have these riches in abundance, because I've seen God's promise fulfilled in the life of Louis Martin, the richest man I ever met.



Samuel Clemons is pastor of Atonement, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Lutherans do not address many prayers to the Holy Spirit.
We don't speak much about the Spirit either,
not the way we speak of the Father and the Son.
Perhaps it's true, as some have said, that the Holy Spirit is

The forgotten Person of the Trinity

by Gary P. Baumler

“O Holy Spirit, strengthen our faith through this Word we have studied, and lead us to live God-pleasing lives because of it. Amen.”

Our pastor closed the Bible class with this prayer. Do you see anything unusual about it? Have you heard a prayer like it recently? How often do you pray in this way?

I'm referring to the opening words of the prayer: "O Holy Spirit." We Lutherans do not address many prayers to the Holy Spirit, do we? We don't speak much about the Spirit either, not the way we speak of the Father and the Son. Perhaps it's true, as some have said, that the Holy Spirit is the forgotten Person of the Trinity among us.

Is he?

What the Holy Spirit has done for us

We shouldn't forget God's Spirit. Just look at what he's done for us:

- When you cast down your eyes and torture your soul and cry to God, "Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner," the Holy Spirit has convinced you of your sin by God's perfect law.
- When your children pray, "Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray thee, Lord, my soul to keep," the Holy Spirit, through the good news of Jesus, has made them confident that the Lord cares for their souls.
- When your mother on her death bed speaks of the glories of heaven awaiting her with Jesus, the Holy Spirit has kept her faithful even unto death.
- When you find strength to get through another

day because you know God loves you, when you avoid temptation because you know God's will, when you remain hopeful in hard times because of Jesus—God's Spirit is working in you.

Everything we are and have as Christians we owe to the Holy Spirit. Contrariwise, as Luther said, "Whatever the Holy Spirit does not perform—however good, just, and holy it may appear to be—is flesh."

Have we forgotten the Spirit?

Jesus said that the Holy Spirit is our "Helper," sent to us by him and the Father. The Holy Spirit helps us cope and find comfort in our sin-plagued world. The Holy Spirit teaches us God's truth. He brings glory to Jesus by revealing the truth of Jesus. He works through God's Word.

By all means, we should remember the Holy Spirit and pray to him. But let's not assume he's been forgotten just because we refer more often to the Father and the Son. The nature of the Spirit's work will lead us to do so. The more the Spirit works in us, the more we will think of Jesus, and the more we will think of the Father and his plan of salvation. When the Holy Spirit does his work in us, our faith in Jesus grows.

The best way we can be more involved with the Spirit is to read God's Word and use God's sacraments. The best way we can honor the Spirit is to honor the Savior.

"O Holy Spirit, keep us close to Jesus."

Gary Baumler is editor of Northwestern Lutheran and WELS Director of Communication.



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Mass Media Ministry

Media director John Barber answers questions about the synod's Mass Media Ministry, a department of WELS Evangelism.

What's the purpose of Mass Media Ministry?

Its continuing purpose is to help congregations and the synod at large to use mass media to proclaim the gospel. We help congregations use media to become better known and received in their communities. We provide professional counsel and services without charge. We can recommend methods for evangelism outreach, help with production—audiovisual, print, or live presentations—and supply evangelism materials.

What we emphasize is pre-evangelism by using the media to get the attention of the uncommitted and the unchurched. Radio, television, newspaper, or billboard announcements serve only as door-openers. They don't replace the need for personal witness. Evangelism still depends on Christians sharing their faith.

Isn't it wrong to use the media to spread the gospel? Couldn't we even be using the devil's tools?

Media can be used improperly or in a God-pleasing way. It's just a way of communicating. And it's not new. Luther used the printing press, for example. Jesus used miracles and parables as word pictures.

How many congregations use the services and materials your ministry provides?

Since 1982, when fewer than 10 percent of our congregations used our services, we've seen an increase of over 400 percent. Over 650 churches have used Mass Media resources.

Have media-assisted efforts produced any increase in WELS membership?

Remember, what we are doing is pre-evangelism, gaining the attention of people so that with personal follow-up and witness the Holy Spirit can work in their hearts. In that context the answer is yes.

Can small churches use the media?

Effective use of media doesn't depend on the size of a congregation. Many low-cost and no-cost options are available. In smaller communities, newspaper and radio are usually very cost effective.

How does a congregation get started?

Get to know the media people in the community and nurture that relationship. Newspaper editors and radio and TV program directors are always look-

ing for news stories and new material. Of course, the Mass Media office is here to consult and assist.

Where do you get your ideas for the media tools you produce—radio and TV spots, brochures, media campaigns, etc.?

From the Bible. When we're asked to come up with something, the first thing we do is pray about it. As the work develops, we employ the talents of a group



Lynne and John Barber consult on a project. Lynne is secretary for Mass Media Ministry. The third member of the department is Kristin Ellenberger, special projects coordinator. John Barber, who studied at Juilliard School of Music and Ohio State University, joined Mass Media Ministry in 1982. Previously he was a performer in films, television, and Broadway musicals and a producer of stage shows, films, and television commercials.

of WELS professionals, fondly called our "media consortium," people talented in the audio and visual arts. We also seek input from the people who are going to use what we produce.

We've heard of a program called "Life Talk." What is it?

It's a two-minute daily radio program that addresses issues in an inspirational way. There are two 10-week series available. Each week deals with a life-related topic—marriage, finances, work, and so on.

A church, or group of churches, can sponsor a series. In each program, the opening and closing allows time to invite the audience to visit a church for worship or special events.

For a catalog of materials and services, call WELS Evangelism/Mass Media, 414/256-3281.

Do you have questions about the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod—how it functions, how decisions are made and carried out? Please send your questions to *OPEN DOORS*, Northwestern Lutheran, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398.

Board for Ministerial Education reports progress on school amalgamation

To prepare for the 1995 opening of the combined pastor and teacher ministerial college in New Ulm, Minn., and the combined preparatory school in Watertown, Wis., the Board for Ministerial Education has approved the following plans:

On the New Ulm campus, prepare to accommodate 750 students, with growth to 900. Plans call for more student housing, an addition to the academic building, rehabilitation of the administration build-

ing, and site improvements.

On the Watertown campus, prepare to accommodate 450 to 500 students. Plans call for student housing, a new academic link, a student union, dormitory improvements, site improvements, and property acquisitions.

Planned improvements on the New Ulm campus

Student housing	\$2,486,000
Academic link	\$3,106,000
Rehabilitation of Old Main (administration)	\$1,108,000
Site improvements	\$ 500,000
Total	\$7,200,000

Planned improvements on the Watertown campus

Academic link (including chapel expansion)	\$2,833,000
Student union and lockers	\$1,197,000
Dormitory improvements (tutor apartments)	\$ 100,000
Site improvements	\$ 170,000
Property acquisitions	\$ 100,000
Total	\$4,400,000

Master plans are in place at both sites to guide future construction.

New schools named: Martin Luther College, Luther Preparatory School

The synod's new schools now have names: Martin Luther College and Luther Preparatory School.

The college, to be formed by joining the pastoral and teaching ministry schools on one campus in New Ulm, Minn., will be subtitled WELS College of Ministry. The two academic programs will be pastoral ministry studies—to prepare men for entrance into Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary—and educational ministry studies—to prepare men and women for the teaching ministry and staff ministry.

Luther Prep will be formed by combining Martin Luther Preparatory School, Prairie du Chien, Wis., and Northwestern Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis., on the Watertown campus.

Dr. Wayne Borgwardt, ministerial education administrator, reports the names were chosen by the two schools' boards of control after meeting jointly and with focus groups from throughout the WELS.

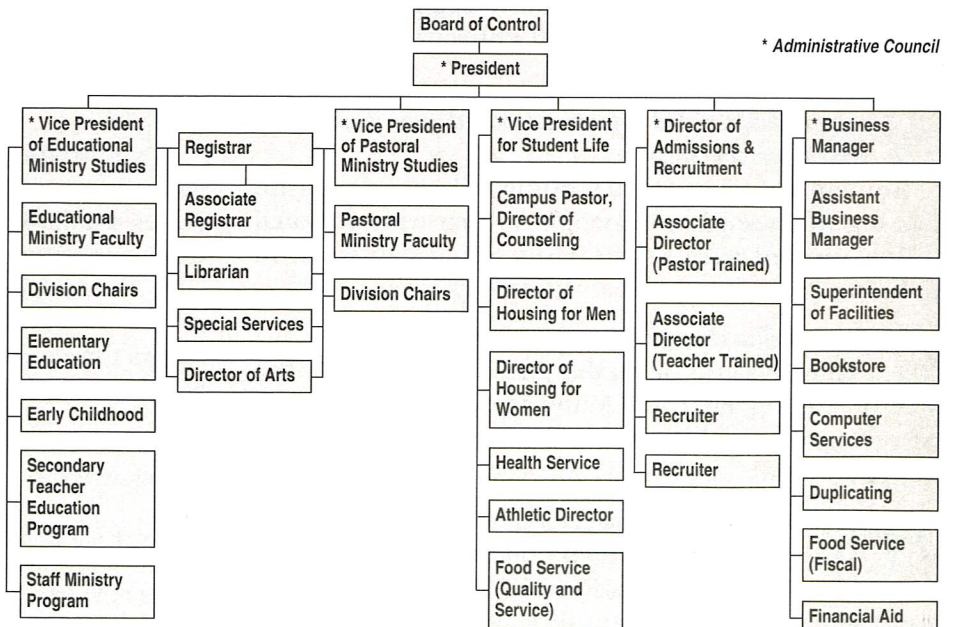
Responding to a request for ideas for school names, WELS members

submitted over 40 suggestions. Among the names for the prep school were Luther, Northwestern Lutheran, Sola Christe, Wartburg, WELS Heritage, Our Savior, and Luther Central.

Names suggested for the college

included Alpha Omega, College of the Reformation, Gethsemane, Gloria Dei, Living Water, Living Word, Luther Northwest, Midwestern Luther, Minnesota Lutheran, Petra, Pilgrim, Redeemer, St. Martin, and WELS Eternal Life.

MARTIN LUTHER COLLEGE STRUCTURE



Eggert memorial collection to be established

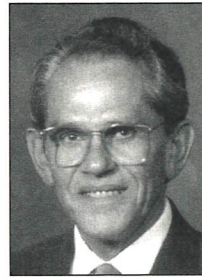
Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary's library at Mequon will soon have a new addition. The synod's Commission on Worship has authorized the Kurt J. Eggert Hymnological and Liturgical Memorial Collection to be shelved, if possible, in the seminary library.

"Pastor Eggert was a lover of good books," commented Pastor Victor Prange, chairman of the commission, "and his library included some unique treasures, especially in worship and music. Over the years he had also amassed a vast storehouse of choral literature. When the commission discussed a fitting memorial for Pastor Eggert, the suggestion to establish a hymnological collection at the seminary seemed most appropriate."

The commission's resolution was prompted by a number of memorials received in Eggert's memory. Eggert, who died in 1993, was the

project director for *Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal*, and a former member and chairman of the Commission on Worship.

The commission also appointed Mrs. Ruth Eggert, Dr. Arnold Lehmann, and Pastor James Schaefer to a committee to implement the resolution. The committee met with seminary librarian



Kurt J. Eggert was project director for *Christian Worship*.

Prof. Martin Westerhaus and received his wholehearted cooperation.

Forming the initial collection will be Eggert's extensive hymnological and liturgical library and the books used in the preparation of *Christian Worship*. The collection will be enlarged by additional books as funds become available, and by gifts from other sources.

Inquiries or gifts for the collection may be sent to Eggert Memorial Collection, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398.

—James P. Schaefer

Fifteen homes sold in Prairie du Chien

In preparation for closing the campus at Prairie du Chien, the Board of Trustees (BOT) has sold all 15 off-campus homes owned by the synod or by professors and their families who will have to move. The sale provides for a lease back of the homes at least until August 1995, when the move will be complete.

Clair Ochs, administrator of the BOT, explains that this transaction protects the appraised value on the privately owned homes, returns the synod investment on the homes, assures the families "they will not be thrown out on the street," and takes away the concern of having to sell the home when a call comes.



Retreat participants enjoy a discussion.

Christian men's retreat a first

Men's retreats are not new, but the one held at Camp Philip, Wautoma, Wis., in March was reportedly the first of its kind in the Wisconsin Synod. Hosted by Star of Bethlehem, New Berlin, Wis., the retreat attracted 51 participants from age 21 to retired, mostly from southeastern Wisconsin.

The purpose was to give the men an opportunity to build their relationship with the Lord and

strengthen themselves as leaders at church, in the home, and in the community. Second, the retreat afforded the men opportunities to talk with each other about their faith-life and gain from the Christian support of the others.

The interaction was "fabulous" said Michael Wiechmann, principal of Star of Bethlehem and one of the retreat's planners. And, yes, they hope to have one again next year.

WELS attendance dips

Figures show that the number of WELS members attending church each Sunday has dipped by about 4,000 this year, following a period of relative constancy. That represents an average of just under four persons fewer per church per week.

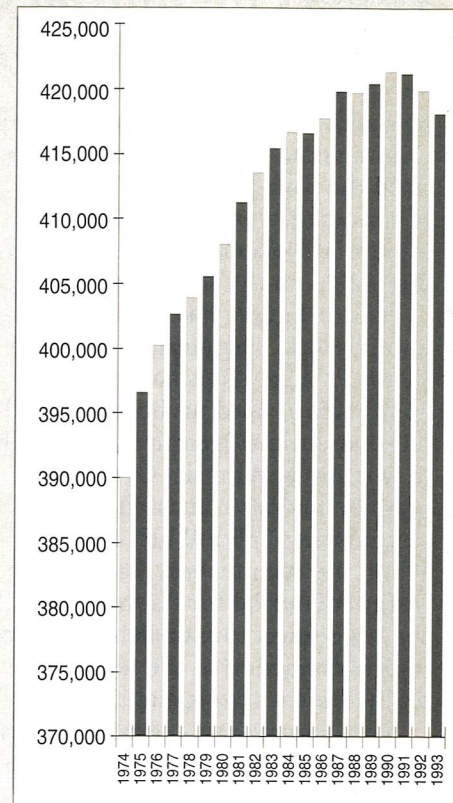
In a 20-year period, the attendance ranged from a low of 177,073 in 1974 to a high of 195,412 in 1984 to 187,324 in 1993.

The percentage of the total membership attending ranged from 45.4 percent in 1974 to 47.0 percent in 1980 and 1981 and back to a low for the period of 44.8 percent in 1993.

Although some of the variables might be attributed to improved methods of record keeping, it seems safe to conclude that attendance in WELS churches has stagnated over the last six years.

WELS 20-year attendance figures

Year	Total Membership	Total Attendance	Attendance Percentage
1974	390,028	177,073	45.4
1975	396,545	182,807	46.1
1976	400,201	186,494	46.6
1977	402,573	185,989	46.2
1978	403,910	185,395	45.9
1979	405,512	186,941	46.1
1980	407,987	191,754	47.0
1981	411,216	193,272	47.0
1982	413,503	191,145	46.3
1983	415,368	193,146	46.5
1984	416,657	195,412	46.9
1985	416,624	193,313	46.4
1986	417,755	194,673	46.6
1987	419,806	194,370	46.3
1988	419,750	192,665	45.9
1989	420,419	191,711	45.6
1990	421,396	192,999	45.8
1991	421,189	192,062	45.6
1992	419,939	191,492	45.6
1993	418,134	187,324	44.8



Total Membership

Top team, top coach

Wisconsin Lutheran High School, Milwaukee, girls' basketball team won the Wisconsin Independent Schools Athletic Association Division I state championship in March. They reached the final game

by defeating Pius XI, Milwaukee, in the semi-finals. Pius had been state champion for a national record of 12 consecutive years.

The team's coach, Robert Lehninger, was named Wisconsin girls' basketball coach of the year by the Associated Press, the Milwaukee Journal, and the Milwaukee Sentinel. That news surprised him, he said, but he wasn't surprised at the girls' victory. "I felt they had a good shot at it."

Lehninger said the girls' victory



Wisco girls with their state championship trophy.

was reported "in papers all over the country—even the New York Times. The school's getting some good publicity."

—George A. Ferch

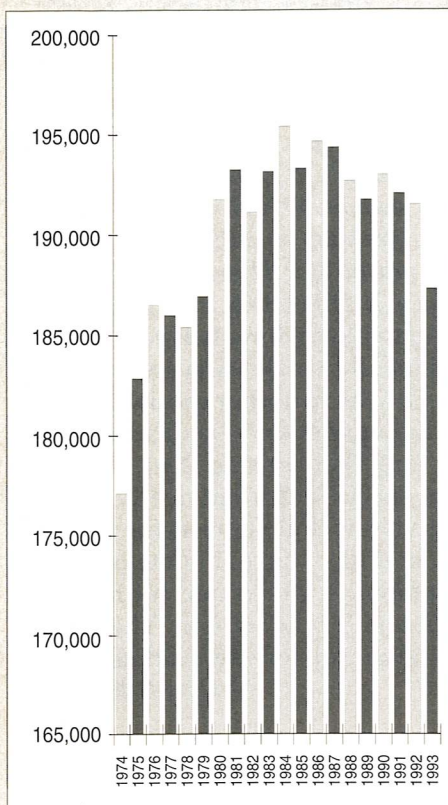
Obituary

Marguerite L. Hamisch 1911-1993

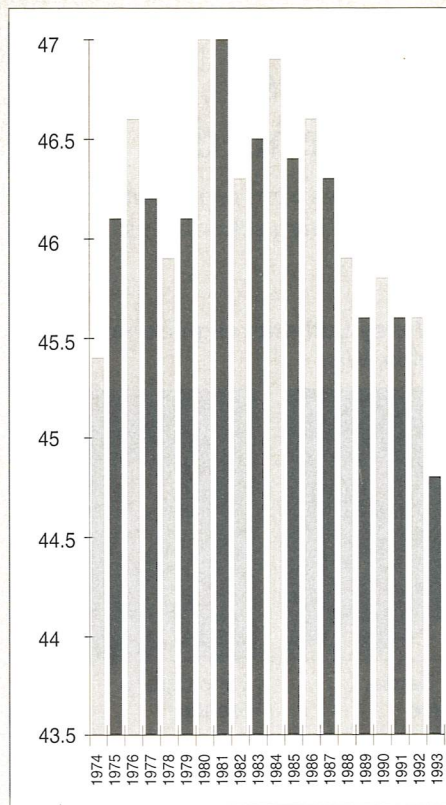
Marguerite L. Hamisch was born Feb. 10, 1911, in Butte, Montana. She died March 4, 1993.

A graduate of Dr. Martin Luther College, she taught at Boyd, Minn., Winona, Minn., and Tomah, Wis. She retired after 46 years of ministry.

She is survived by her brother, Frederick, and sister-in-law, Olive.



Total Attendance



Attendance Percentage

Former missionaries recognized

The Board for World Missions (BWM) has presented plaques retroactively "With gratitude to God in recognition of faithful service" to 71 living former WELS world mission pastors. "It seemed a fitting conclusion to the world mission centennial celebration," said BWM administrator Duane Tomhave, "to recognize the part of these men in 'proclaiming the eternal gospel to every nation, tribe, language and people.'" The board intends to continue the practice as missionaries return in the future.

Touch of laughter

The family lived in an apartment building and had become good friends with an elderly woman who lived across the hall. She invited them for dinner. Before they began, she asked the children to say grace.

"At our house we don't say grace," replied 5-year-old Mark. "We say, 'Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest.'"

*Gertrude Schmiede
Saginaw, Michigan*

Little Dawn was eagerly waiting for her uncle, a student at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, to arrive. "You'll have to be patient," I told her. "He has to come all the way from the seminary."

"The seminary?" Dawn puzzled. "Isn't that a place for dead people?"

*Dot Sonntag
West Allis, Wisconsin*

Contributions are welcome. Please send them to *LAUGHTER*, Northwestern Lutheran, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398.

Dakota-Montana District

Prayers, a lock-in, and a pancake breakfast preceded the Festival of Friendship (a service especially planned for members to invite friends) at **Shining Mountains, Bozeman, Montana**, on February 13.

In the weeks preceding the Festival of Friendship, we asked members to think of friends, neighbors, schoolmates, and family members who were unchurched. Members named 93 unchurched souls and committed themselves to speak to 48 of them about the Savior and invite them to the Festival of Friendship.

We put the names on the altar. During Sunday services we prayed that God would open their hearts to our invitations and to the message of his grace.

On the night before the festival,

we had a youth lock-in. Parents and friends came to help and brought snacks. Steve Bauer, a college student, braved the night to stay as chaperon for nine children who are members and two unchurched friends.

After volleyball, bingo, snacks, and a devotion, we bedded down in sleeping bags on the floor. In the morning the young people prepared a pancake breakfast for members, families, and friends.

Fifteen nonmembers were in church that Sunday, seven as first time visitors.

We thank God for taking the hard part—converting hearts. Ours was the joyful task of inviting people to come and see their Savior. God willing, we'll do it again next year.

—Ronald L. Kruse

YOUTH NEWS

Please send photos or news on teen activities to **YOUTH NEWS**, Northwestern Lutheran, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398.

WELS wrestlers pin a win

WELS high schools were well represented on the champion's platform at the Wisconsin Independent Schools Athletic Association state wrestling tournament in February.

Jon McGarry, Winnebago Lutheran Academy, Fond du Lac, was named the state's most valuable wrestler. McGarry, a senior, had an undefeated season.

Besides McGarry, state championship winners were Jere Carolfi, Manitowoc Lutheran; Earl Ehrhardt, Wisconsin Lutheran, Milwaukee; and Jarod Benrud, Luther, Onalaska.

Runners-up included Jim Dolphin and Dan Ebeling from Wisconsin Lutheran; Dan Blohm, Fox Valley Lutheran, Appleton; and Shane Nebl, Winnebago.

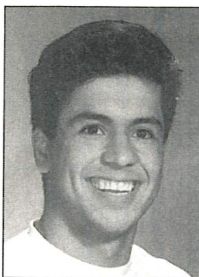
Steven Cornell, 6, won \$890 at a hockey game recently when he picked up a winning raffle ticket that a fan who had left early had thrown away. Steven gave half his winnings to his church, Shepherd of the Hills in Anchorage, Alaska, because, he said, "It was a gift from God."



Five countries represented

Five countries were represented at three WELS high schools this school year.

Fox Valley Lutheran High School, Appleton, Wis.

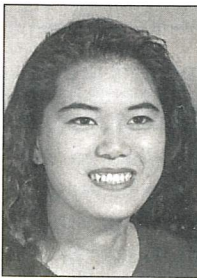


Luis Garcia,
Mexico



Chris Gigant,
France

Kettle Moraine Lutheran High School, Jackson, Wis.



Mika Nakamoto,
Japan



Minori Yamaki,
Okinawa

Northland Lutheran High School, Wausau, Wis.



Jan Reichel,
Czech Republic



Lucia Vizcaino
Medina,
Mexico

Book notes

He Hears My Voice: Prayers from Meditations. *Northwestern Publishing House. 160 pages, softcover, \$8.99 plus \$3.35 for postage and handling, stock no. 06N0705.*

Do you want to enhance your daily prayer life? Then this book is for you. It offers daily morning and evening prayers for a half year. In addition, it contains prayers for the church year, for other special days (including Mother's Day, Father's Day, and Thanksgiving Day), and for other special times and needs. These last include prayers for the sick, in time of need, in time of temptation, for marriage, for missions, and for the unborn. The book is in large type for easy reading.

—Gary P. Baumler

The New Age Is Lying to You by Eldon K. Winker. *Concordia Publishing House. 224 pages, softcover, \$10.99.*

You have never heard of the New Age? Then join three out of every four of us. But you have been exposed to it in some way, whether through the homilies of John Denver or from Shirley MacLaine. If you missed it there, try the Ninja Turtles or Star Trek.

Winker cites this definition: "The New Age movement is an umbrella term referring to a variety of people, organizations, events, practices and ideas. Sociologically speaking, it is not a centrally organized movement with one human leader. . . . Rather it is a constellation of like-minded people and groups all desiring a spiritual and social change that will usher in a New Age of self-actualization."

The movement has infiltrated education, business, health care, and politics, to name a few places. Some who have heard of it—perhaps from MacLaine's *Out On a Limb*—found it rather harmless.

To sound a loud and clear warning to Christians comes this book by Pastor Eldon K. Winker, the former Director of Organizations for the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. He sorts out New Age's varied manifestations in our society, and brings God's Word to focus on them.

"Upon the unsuspecting," he writes, "upon those who are not well-grounded in the foundational teachings of the Christian faith, and upon those who are not discerning with regard to the spread of New Age ideas, the New Age exerts its subtle but deadly influence in almost every aspect of our society."

With a fair and keen eye for

New Age infiltration into the world around us, Winker appropriately applies the Scripture with faithfulness and discernment. A copy of this book should find a place in every home, especially those with young people, and also in every church library.

—James P. Schaefer

A Skeleton in God's Closet by Paul L. Maier. Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville. 336 pages, softcover, \$12.99.

Did you ever think you might take a basic lesson in archeology—and like it? Paul L. Maier's *A Skeleton in God's Closet* offers you that and a love story and an international mystery all in one. The text never runs

dry; and if it stretches the imagination in places, you don't mind following where it is leading.

Skeleton does more than tell a good mystery story. It scrutinizes the very fabric of the Christian faith. You will want to examine critically the assumptions that drive the story line. Above all, you will want to remember that the book is fiction. Good fiction.

—Gary P. Baumler

These book may be ordered from Northwestern Publishing House by calling toll-free 1-800-662-6022. In the Milwaukee area call 414/475-6600. Phone between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. on weekdays.

NEWS AROUND THE CELC

Seventy years of mission work in Europe

May will mark the 70th anniversary of WELS mission work in Europe. In 1924 the Wisconsin Synod sent Pastor Otto Engel to Lodz, Poland, to help St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Free Church get its start. By 1939 the mission in Poland had grown to 12 congregations and 14 preaching stations, with 11 pastors serving almost 5000 souls.

Most of those members and pastors fled the Russians in 1945 and settled in eastern Germany. The WELS continued to provide financial support, and the congregations survived in spite of communism. Today they are part of the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church (ELF) of Germany.

That church body now enjoys freedom to preach without government intervention, thanks to the collapse of communism in Germany. The price of freedom has been high,

News reported in this section is about the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference, an international federation of which WELS is a member.

however. As eastern Germany adjusts its economy, costs have skyrocketed. Unemployment is high.

WELS provides aid to ELF only through special gifts. Your offerings are needed so that the synod can

continue 70 years of mission work in Europe. Please send your gifts to the Germany Support Fund, WELS, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398.

—John F. Vogt

Work is warming in Russia

"It has been quite warm this week," wrote Sarah Malchow from Novosibirsk, Russia, on February 7, "about 10 or 15 degrees above zero." More than the weather is warming for the WELS mission in Russia.

So far missionaries have solicited 2500 of 30,000 "flats" (apartments) in Akademgorodok and offered a free Bible to anyone who came to visit the Christian Information Center established by the missionaries. Over 500 people have come and more than 400 of them signed up to study God's Word there, using the "Communicating Christ" video series in Russian.

As a result, mission staff members conduct over 20 classes each week

(three or four each day) of 6 to 12 people per class, and over 50 people are on a waiting list. Over 20 people usually attend Bible class (taught in English), over 40 children attend Sunday school (using materials in Russian), and over 60 attended a recent bilingual worship service. The missionaries are working hard to learn Russian. Meanwhile, they depend heavily on interpreters to communicate God's gospel.



A Russian *Small Catechism* by Martin Luther, 291 pages, printed in Finland.

Bill amended: private schools don't need certified teachers

Private school supporters who flooded Capitol Hill with protests claimed the victory when an amendment to HR 6, the House's education funding bill, was removed from the bill Feb. 24.

The amendment, Section 2124, stipulated that states receiving federal funds for education require teachers in schools under the jurisdiction of the agency to be certified. Opinions differed over whether the amendment could be interpreted to include private

Most states do not now require certification for private schools. About 600 of the synod's 1800 teachers are state certified.

schools.

On Feb. 24 the House replaced

Section 2124 with an amendment that limits federal control over private, religious, or home schools.

Dr. Daniel Schmeling, administrator for the Board for Parish Schools, said that Section 2124 could have meant that teachers in WELS schools would have to become certified by the state in which they teach. Most states do not now require certification for private schools, he said. About 600 of the synod's 1800 teachers are state certified.

Christians slow to switch denominations

Despite some appearances and predictions of decline in denominational loyalty, a recent study reported in *Religious Studies Review* finds that "the majority of church members never change denominations." Although switching churches, in general, has increased from 1973 to 1990, "switching between denominational families has not." Except under exceptional circumstances, Lutherans remain Lutherans; Baptists, Baptists; and Catholics, Catholics.

However, "switchers are more fervent than stayers; they go a little more, give a little more, and pray a little more." It seems that when persons switch denominations, they do so because they take their religion seriously (Reported in *Context*, March 1, 1994).

News reported in this section is derived from Religious News Service, Ecumenical Press Service, Evangelical Press Service, and Lutheran World Information.

Marital infidelity overstated

Don't be too quick to accept at face value reports that marital infidelity is rampant in the world. Recent studies in Britain, France, Denmark, and Ireland reveal that only five percent of men and two percent of women had more than one sexual partner during the last year. When one changes focus from monogamy

during the past year to fidelity over the course of a marriage, the rate of infidelity goes to 15 percent: 10 percent for women, 20 percent for men. While hardly exemplary, these figures compare favorably with reports of 37 percent of men and 25 percent of women having extramarital affairs.

Membership of mainline churches declining

Over the past 20 years, collectively, mainline Protestant denominations have dropped nine percentage points of the population. In 1974 they accounted for slightly over half of adults, with 51 percent naming one of the denominations as their preference. By last year the proportion fell to 42 percent.

During the same period the proportion stating a Roman Catholic preference has remained about the same—starting out at 25 percent in 1967, rising to 29 percent by 1983, but then dropping again to 26 percent in 1993.

Baptists, divided about evenly

between Southern Baptist and all other Baptist denominations, are the largest of the Protestant denominations. They accounted for 21 percent of the adult population for many years, but now have slipped to 19 percent.

The ranks of Methodists have dropped from 14 percent in the 1960s and 70s to just 10 percent in the 1980s and 90s. Lutherans also have edged down slightly from seven percent in earlier years to six percent in the most recent readings of religious preference.

Presbyterians are at five percent and Episcopalians at two percent.

Religious belief index hits all-time low

The final figures for 1993 from the Princeton Religion Research Center Index tell us that key indicators of religious beliefs and practices in America are at their lowest level since data began being collected five decades ago. Currently the index stands at 649. In the 1950s the index twice peaked at 750. A perfect score would be 1000. That figure would be reached only if every person in the country made a total commitment to God and church.

Paradoxically, the importance people attach to religion has been rising, and so has their identification with specific faiths and denominations. Membership and attendance at worship services have held fairly steady.

The eight individual components of the index revealed the following for 1993:

- Just 53 percent of people said they had a "great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in the church or "organized religion."
- Confidence in the clergy dropped to 52 percent of the populace.
- Belief in God or a universal spirit has ranged from 94 to 99 percent over the past five decades.
- Ninety-two percent of adults say there is a religious denomination or faith they prefer.
- Sixty percent felt religion answers today's problems.
- Church membership is at 69 percent of the adult population.
- Those rating religion as very important in their lives represent 59 percent of Americans.
- Forty percent of the adult population could be found at a place of worship during a typical week.

Clergy's image tarnished

From 1977 to 1985 the public judged the clergy to have the highest standards of honesty and ethics of all professions, with 67 percent rating them either high or very high. Now, however, the clergy ranks fourth behind pharmacists, college teachers, and engineers, with a 52 percent rating.

Christian radio on the increase

In the past two years, the number of religious television stations has dropped two percent, to 274. But religious radio has shown an 11 percent increase, to 1,566 stations, according to the Directory of Religious Media. Since 1980 religious broadcasting has grown 33 percent. Since 1970 it's up 422 percent.

Scriptures available in 2062 languages

The Scriptures were translated into 44 new languages last year, bringing to 2062 the number of languages in which at least one book of the Bible can now be read. The complete Bible is available in 337 languages.

The Bible or portions of it can be read in 587 African languages, 513 Asian languages, 358 Central

and Latin American languages, 341 Pacific languages, 189 European languages, and 71 North American languages.

However, more translation remains to be done since, according to the United Bible Societies, 6000 languages are spoken throughout the world.

Chanting makes popular hit

Much has been made about popular music forms in the church, but now a group of Benedictine monks from Spain have turned the tables. The Monks of Santo Domingo De Silos Abbey have climbed to the top of Spain's pop charts singing Gregorian chant in Latin.

Gregorian Chant, also known as plainsong, consists of a single melody without accompaniment or harmonizing parts. Following their unexpected success in Spain, the Monks have also released a single CD, "Chant," in the United States.

Don't keep this magazine! Give it away.

Encouraged by someone's story of faith? Uplifted by a Bible study? Inspired by a devotional thought? Share *Northwestern Lutheran* with a family member, friend, co-worker—or a stranger.

Write or call to let us know how (and if you want, why) you shared your copy. We'll replace it free. Contact *Northwestern Lutheran*, WELS, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398; 414/256-3232.

The deadline for submitting notices is six weeks before publication date.

**CALL FOR NOMINATIONS
Northwestern College**

Subject to the approval of the Board for Ministerial Education, the Northwestern College Board of Control requests the synod's voting members to nominate candidates for professor of history. The person called will replace James Korthals, who accepted a call.

Nominees should be seminary trained and have experience in pastoral ministry. Please submit nominations with pertinent information by May 31 to the secretary, Pastor Kenneth Gawrisch, c/o Northwestern College, 1300 Western Ave, Watertown WI 53094. The list of nominees will be shared with the Conference of Presidents and will be available upon request from the college.

**CALL FOR NOMINATIONS
Michigan Lutheran Seminary**

The Board of Control of Michigan Lutheran Seminary wishes to augment the list of candidates for school president. Voting members of the synod are invited to nominate additional names for this position. Please send nominations with pertinent information to Secretary Jerold Meier, 397 Auburn, Plymouth MI 48170.

RESULT OF COLLOQUY

In a colloquy conducted March 3, James F. Esmeier, formerly a teacher in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, was found to be in confessional agreement with the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod and is now a member of the teacher roster of the synod.

First Vice President Richard E. Lauersdorf
Professor David Kuske
District President David N. Rutschow

**WELS MINISTERIAL SCHOOLS
1994 Graduations**

- May 14 10:00 a.m. Dr. Martin Luther College
- May 18 10:00 a.m. Northwestern College
- May 18 10:30 a.m. Michigan Lutheran Seminary
- May 18 1:00 p.m. Northwestern Preparatory School
- May 19 10:00 a.m. Martin Luther Preparatory School
- May 27 10:00 a.m. Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary

MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS

The Medical Clinic on Wheels, a medical mission of Thoughts of Faith (a church-related organization of the ELS), seeks a medical director to coordinate the medical program based in Ternopil, Ukraine. Qualifications include MD licensure, ability to travel to Ukraine three to four times a year, a high degree of medical and personal ethics, and strong devotion to conservative Lutheranism. The clinic also seeks doctors and dentists to volunteer 10-14 days or more in Ternopil. For more information, contact Ed Meier, PO Box 37, Stoughton WI 53589; 608/873-5099; Fax 608/873-1630.

AREA CODE CHANGE

In the Michigan area, if you dial area code 810 and you receive a message such as "Your call cannot be completed as entered," try dialing area code 313. You should be able to get through to the correct telephone number. Some of the 810 area codes listed in the 1994 Yearbook are in error.

MANUSCRIPTS REQUESTED

Northwestern Lutheran welcomes unsolicited manuscripts. These must be typed and double-spaced. Please send one copy only. Manuscripts not accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope cannot be returned. Although there are exceptions, feature articles should not be fewer than 500 words or more than 1000 words. Send manuscripts to *Northwestern Lutheran*, WELS, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398. (NL mail is delayed if it is sent to the publishing house.)

MODEL WORSHIP SERVICE

The WELS Commission on Worship will hold a model worship service at Calvary, Thiensville, Wis., at 1:00 p.m. on July 15. A discussion session concerning worship will follow. A hymn festival will be held at 7:15 p.m.

NPH MUSIC WORKSHOP

Northwestern Publishing House invites musicians to its annual new music workshop. The choral, organ, and handbell sessions will be held at Calvary, Thiensville, Wis., July 16. For information and registration call NPH 414/475-6600 ext. 163.

NAMES WANTED

Survey work preliminary to conducting exploratory services. People interested in WELS services, contact person noted.

HOLLAND/ZEELAND, MICHIGAN—Lord of Life (ELS), Pastor Mike Smith, 231 Standish St, Holland MI 49423-5294; 616/395-0848.

ANNIVERSARIES

DAKOTA-MONTANA DISTRICT—(75). Mobridge, S. Dak. July 10, 1995. Early motel reservations essential. Contact Zion, Mobridge; 605/845-3704 or 605/845-2702.

BRAINERD/BAXTER, MINNESOTA—Christ (25). June 12, 10 a.m. Dedication of new building. Noon meal with program following. For information call 218/678-2529.

BILLINGS, MONTANA—Apostles (25). Aug. 14, 9:30 a.m. Reunion Sunday. Brunch and fellowship following. Sept. 25, 10:30 a.m. Festival and rededication service, followed by dinner and fellowship. For information call 406/656-7141.

RAYMOND, SOUTH DAKOTA—Bethlehem (110). June 19, 10:30 a.m. Lunch to follow. 605/532-3766.

LANNON, WISCONSIN—St. John (100). Special events each month beginning June 19. Anniversary service May 1995. For information call 414/251-2910.

MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN—Gethsemane (100). June 12, 3 p.m. at Wisconsin Lutheran High School. Dinner to follow. Call 414/645-1613.

ITEMS AVAILABLE

COMMUNION TRAY—silver, with individual cups. Call Bob Olson, 805/943-1372.

PARAMENTS—altar and pulpit, green and white. Available for cost of shipping. Contact Dorothy Priske, evenings, 414/484-3618.

ITEMS NEEDED

ALTAR ITEMS—cross, candles, communion set, offering plates. Pastor Mike Smith, 231 Standish St, Holland MI 49243-5294; 616/395-0848.

CHOIR ROBES—Bethlehem, Manassas, Va. Harlan DuBois, 10225 Pettus Pl, Manassas VA 22110; 703/335-1786.

RELIEF HOUSEPARENTS NEEDED

New Beginnings, a home for mothers in Denver, Col., needs couples or women to serve as relief houseparents. Housing and utilities will be provided in exchange for your services in our apartment complex. Call Craig or Judy Schwartz; 303/355-9343.

CHANGES IN MINISTRY

PASTORS:

- Bittorf, Reinhard E.**, from Holy Trinity, New Hope, Minn., to retirement.
- Kock, Norval L.**, from Nebraska LHS, Waco, Neb., to Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Mich.
- Olson, Steven O.**, from Immanuel, Hutchinson, Minn., to St. Paul, Cudahy, Wis.
- Putz, Marvin A.**, from retirement to St. Peter (semi-retirement), Eldorado, Wis.
- Steele, Loren E.**, from Emanuel, St. Paul, Minn., to cross-cultural outreach, St. Paul, Minn.
- Steinbrenner, John W.**, to exploratory outreach, Boise, Idaho.

TEACHERS:

- Bauer, Karen K.**, from Immanuel, Medford, Wis., to St. Paul, Bangor, Wis.
- Bauer, Paul A.**, from Apostles, San Jose, Cal., to Lakeside LHS, Lake Mills, Wis.
- Behrens, Ella**, to Lord and Savior, Crystal Lake, Ill.
- Bitter, Alan A.**, from Christ, Grand Island, Neb., to St. John, Baraboo, Wis.
- Bode, Randy P.**, from St. John, Watertown, Wis., to Northwestern Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis.
- Brown, Eric R.**, from Beautiful Savior, Cincinnati, Ohio, to Christ, North St. Paul, Minn.
- Diels, Joyce A.**, from Manitowoc LHS, Manitowoc, Wis., to Minnesota Valley LHS, New Ulm, Minn.
- Gast, Guy G.**, from Bethany, Kenosha, Wis., to Grace, Glendale, Ariz.
- Hackbarth, Todd A.**, from Lincoln Heights, Des Moines, Iowa, to Mt. Calvary, LaCrosse, Wis.
- Hartwig, Donald R.**, from St. Paul, Fort Atkinson, Wis., to retirement.
- Klatt, Michele L.**, from St. Paul, Cannon Falls, Minn., to Pilgrim, Mesa, Ariz.
- Kratz, Diane L.**, from St. Paul, Franklin, Wis., to St. John, Wauwatosa, Wis.
- Kulow, Jane E.**, from St. Peter, Milwaukee, Wis., to St. Paul, Muskego, Wis.
- Matthies, Bethel E.**, from St. Lucas, Kewaskum, Wis., to retirement.
- McCargar, Troy L.**, to St. Peter, Chaseburg, Wis.
- Moll, Philip R.**, from Trinity, Waukesha, Wis., to Michigan LHS, St. Joseph, Mich.
- Robbert, LeRoy A.**, from Mt. Calvary, LaCrosse, Wis., to St. Stephen, Beaver Dam, Wis.
- Schmitz, Donna M.**, to St. John, Fox Lake, Wis.
- Sievert, Scott R.**, from St. Paul, Plymouth, Neb., to Our Savior, Wausau, Wis.
- Storm, Jay S.**, from Emanuel, Tempe, Ariz., to Immanuel, Kewaunee, Wis.
- Wentzel, Laurie**, to Divine Grace, Lake Orion, Mich.
- Wierschke, Elizabeth**, to Shoreland LHS, Somers, Wis.

Are you thinking of a special mission gift?

A gift for the Lord's work in your will? Need assistance for your will? An experienced WELS gift planning counselor will help you. The service is free, but the decisions are yours.

Arizona-California District John Coleman 602/598-9003	Nebraska District Robert Weimer 402/728-5530	South Atlantic District Lee Vaccarella 1-800-827-5482
Dakota-Montana District Robert Weimer 402/728-5530	North Atlantic District John Graf 1-800-827-5482	South Central District John Coleman 602/598-9003
Michigan District Norman Stellick 517/789-8893	Northern Wisconsin District James Klein 414/432-4434	Southeastern Wisconsin District John Graf / Lee Vaccarella 1-800-827-5482
Minnesota District Jon Scharlemann 507/637-3812	Pacific Northwest District Paul Soukup 608/242-1020	Western Wisconsin District Gerald Heckmann Paul Soukup 608/242-1020

HEARING IMPAIRED CONFERENCE

A national conference sponsored by the WELS Mission for the Hearing Impaired will be July 1-3 in Manitowoc, Wis. Information and registration forms are available from Gene Seidel, 8955 W Palmetto Ct, Milwaukee WI 53225; 414/536-1651.

Ephphatha, a quarterly newsletter published by the Mission for the Hearing Impaired, is also available free of charge from the same address.

VOLUNTEERS FOR INNER-CITY VBS

Volunteers needed to help with Milwaukee inner-city vacation Bible school June 12-24. Contact John Roebke, 5947 N 36th St, Milwaukee WI 53209; 414/438-0144.

LWMS CONVENTION

The 1994 Lutheran Women's Missionary Society national convention will be held June 24-26 at Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee, with accommodations at area motels. For further information, call Jane Oswald, 414/453-6866, or your congregation's reporter.

DO YOU SPEAK SPANISH?

Spanish-speaking teachers are needed for vacation Bible school June 20-24 at Christ, Milwaukee, for morning and evening classes. You need not be fluent in Spanish. Contact Stephen Mueller or Nathan Strutz, 6717 W Wartburg Cir, Mequon WI 53092; 414/242-7276 (after May 28, 414/282-7354).

LUTHERAN CHORALE CONCERT

The Lutheran Chorale invites you to its concert May 8 at 2 and 7 p.m. at Grace Lutheran Church, 1209 N. Broadway, Milwaukee, Wis. The concert will feature works of the late Kurt Eggert, the chorale's founder and director for 36 years, and is dedicated to his memory. A freewill offering will be taken.

INDY 500 RACE FANS

You don't need to miss worship if you're attending the Indianapolis 500 on May 29. Grace Lutheran, 24 S. Lynhurst Dr., invites you to worship May 28 at 7:15 pm. The service will be preceded by a fellowship dinner for race fans at 5:30. We're about two miles from the track. Call for directions: 317/244-8244 or 317/244-5616.

OWLS CONVENTION

OWLS—Organization of WELS Lutheran Seniors—will celebrate its tenth anniversary at the annual convention July 12-14 in Madison, Wisconsin. Join us for this special event and share in tours, workshops, fun, and fellowship. For information, contact the OWLS office at 8420 W Beloit Rd, West Allis WI 53227; 414/321-9977.

PREACHER NEEDED

Baltimore, Maryland—Preach in exchange for lodging June 26 and July 3. Contact Dale Reckzin, 9121 Old Harford Rd, Baltimore MD 21243; 410/668-3886.

PREACHER REQUESTED

Vacationing in Hawaii? Stay in our Honolulu parsonage in exchange for preaching July 17 and 24. Pastor Roger Rockhoff; 808/422-4693.

VACATION LODGING—PASTORS

Free lodging on a farm, available year-round, for one to three nights to any pastor and his family traveling in the Wisconsin Dells area. Accommodations are in the loft of a log home. Phone 608/986-4692.

NORTHWESTERN PUBLISHING HOUSE STORE

Vacationers welcome

Vacationers are welcome to visit the NPH store, 1250 N. 113th Street (one block north of Watertown Plank Rd. on 113th St.), Milwaukee, Wis.; 414/475-6600.

Summer hours from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend are as follows: **Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; Saturday, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.** The hours for the office are: Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Financial report WISCONSIN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD

SYNOD MISSION SUBSCRIPTION PERFORMANCE

Twelve Months ended December 31, 1993

Twelve Districts	Subscriptions		Offerings Received		
	Communicants 12/31/92	Total Amount for 1993	Twelve Months Offerings	Percent of Subscription	Annualized Average per Communicant
Arizona-California	16,453	\$ 930,107	\$ 920,340	98.9	\$ 55.94
Dakota-Montana	9,292	437,779	422,575	96.5	45.48
Michigan	37,412	2,134,460	1,939,300	90.9	51.84
Minnesota	45,686	2,422,707	2,384,585	98.4	52.20
Nebraska	9,820	531,323	521,014	98.1	53.06
North Atlantic	3,625	346,890	327,886	94.5	90.45
Northern Wisconsin	61,179	2,475,051	2,294,911	92.7	37.51
Pacific Northwest	4,566	271,448	238,945	88.0	52.33
South Atlantic	6,148	406,478	391,563	96.3	63.69
South Central	3,845	289,065	307,312	106.3	79.93
Southeastern Wisconsin	58,507	3,293,073	2,981,727	90.5	50.96
Western Wisconsin	60,586	2,960,400	2,741,732	92.6	45.25
Total — This Year	317,119	\$16,498,781	\$15,471,890	93.8	\$ 48.79
Total — Last Year	317,793	\$16,428,857	\$15,757,146	95.9	\$ 49.58

BUDGETARY FUND

Statement of Changes in Fund Balance

Six Months ended December 31, 1993

	1993 Actual	1992 Actual	1993 Budget
Revenues:			
Synod Mission Offerings	\$ 7,212,308	\$ 7,335,415	\$ 7,471,000
Gifts and Memorials	140,523	108,936	158,000
Bequest/Planned Giving Income	74,535	282,419	188,000
Tuition and Fees	3,623,241	2,955,740	3,453,000
Other Income	39,774	44,424	53,000
Transfers — Endowment/Trust Earnings	93,739	111,295	116,000
Transfers — Gift Trust	3,481,131	3,130,250	3,676,000
Transfers — Continuing Programs	770,661	745,563	875,000
Transfers — Other	-	113,863	-
Total Revenues	\$15,453,912	\$14,827,905	\$15,990,000
Expenditures:			
Administration Division	\$ 1,329,831	\$ 1,166,620	\$ 1,352,000
Home Missions Division	2,710,814	2,933,271	3,017,000
World Missions Division	3,301,214	2,876,250	3,649,000
Ministerial Education Division	8,170,613	6,906,151	7,885,000
Parish Services Division	561,835	551,256	603,000
Fiscal Services Division	744,084	714,355	732,000
Total Expenditures	\$16,818,391	\$15,147,903	\$17,238,000
Net Change for the Period	\$ (1,382,479)	\$ (319,998)	
Fund Balance — Beginning of Year	\$ 1,075,572	\$ 968,348	
Fund Balance — End of Period	\$ (306,907)	\$ 648,350	

Randy E. Matter, Controller

WELS Connection videotapes

May topic

- Los Angeles earthquake

June topics

- Vacation Bible school
- Puerto Rico mission

July topics

- West Virginia foster family
- WLIM Deaconess

August topics

- Campus ministry
- TEAM ministry

For more information, contact *CCFS, WELS Administration Building, 2929 N Mayfair Road, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398*. Cost of a year's subscription is \$54.

The workers in the vineyard

Matthew 20:1-16

by Mark E. Braun

At the burial of a prominent rabbi, a story was told about a king who hired a work crew and saw how one worker outshone the others. After working only two hours, the king took this laborer aside and walked with him the rest of the day. At the end of the day, the king gave the one who'd only worked two hours the same pay as the rest. When they objected, he told them, "I'm not being unfair. This worker has done more in two hours than you have all day long."

That story matched the mood of first century Judaism. Many believed their relationship with God hung on a bargain of obedience and rewards. The gauge was faithfulness to God's law and the traditions compiled to preserve it. The more one obeyed, the more fully one could be guaranteed God's acceptance.

"Hey! What's the deal?"

The story Jesus told about workers in a vineyard began in a similar way. A landowner made a deal at dawn: a day's pay for a day's work. To keep the numbers simple, let's say he offered them \$10 an hour—\$120 for a twelve-hour work day. But the landowner hired more workers, at 9, at 12, at 3, and finally, at 5. There was nothing outstanding about the 5 p.m. crew; if anything, they were distinguished only by their disinterest in doing a day's work.

At quitting time, the foreman handed out wages, and the eleventh hour workers got \$120. The crew who'd worked since sunrise did some quick mental arithmetic. "If they got \$120 for one hour of work, and we worked for 12 hours, we should get \$1440." They tore open their pay envelopes and— "Hey! There's only \$120 here. What's the deal?"

The deal was grace. Here's where Jesus' story parted company with the law bargains of the rabbis. The landowner gave his money away, not based on what

his workers deserved, but only on his own outrageous generosity.

That makes this a parable of grace. After all, this was exactly how Jesus said his Father deals with sinners: no bargains, no deals, no obedience, no rewards. Only grace.

"Listen, pal. I'm not being unfair"

But then things took a nasty turn. The workers hired at daybreak griped at how they were treated. "We don't object to your charity, but why can't you be more generous with us? Look at how long and hard we worked. You aren't being fair. You owe us!"

There's where they were wrong. He owed them nothing. The NIV doesn't quite capture the landowner's frosty reply: "Listen, pal. I'm not being unfair. You're telling me I can't do what I want with my own money? Or does it bother you that I've

got a big heart? Take what's yours and go away."

Jesus told this parable after Peter had blurted out, "We have left everything to follow you. What then will there be for us?" Jesus heard in the question the ominous sound of bargains and rewards; he wanted to make it clear that no one comes into the kingdom by merit. Those who think they've earned a place are told, "Go away."

"So the last will be first, and the first will be last," Jesus said. "All this," explained Martin Luther, "is spoken to humble those who think they are great, so that they trust in nothing but the goodness and mercy of God."

In spite of all its grace, the story of workers in the vineyard also becomes a parable of judgment.

Next: The ten minas.



Mark Braun teaches
at Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee.

*Jesus makes it clear
that no one comes into
the kingdom by merit. Those
who think they've earned a
place are told, "Go away."*

Was that the voice of the Holy Spirit?

In recent church periodicals, we've been reading about a new spiritual experience in which the Holy Spirit is said to be causing people to see the Scriptures in a brand new light. That new light often suggests that the Scriptures don't really mean what they plainly say and what the Holy Spirit has guided Christians to understand them to mean throughout most of church history. Words are being put into the Holy Spirit's mouth, making him say things he never would.

The Holy Spirit teaches us in Scripture, for example, that "all Scripture is God-breathed" and that the authors of Scripture spoke "not in words taught by human wisdom but by the Spirit." The Holy Spirit says he inspired the authors of Scripture. Why would the Holy Spirit want to contradict his own words and lead people to conclude that what he has so plainly stated and preserved in writing all these years isn't true—that Scripture is human wisdom subject to mistakes and errors?

In Acts, the Holy Spirit inspired Luke to tell us that Peter, "filled with the Holy Spirit," said salvation was found in no other name under heaven than the name of Jesus Christ. Yet people today, claiming to be filled with that same Holy Spirit, suggest that God may have other ways of saving people besides faith in Jesus Christ.

The apostle Paul, who claimed to be writing by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and whose writings the church has for almost 2,000 years accepted as divinely inspired, speaks quite clearly about the role of women in the church: that as they serve the

Lord, they are not to be in positions of authority over men. By that same Holy Spirit, Paul called homosexuality "an indecent act . . . a perversion . . . and a symptom of a depraved mind." Yet we hear people suggesting that the Holy Spirit, who may have caused Paul to draw such conclusions in his day, gives us the right to draw different conclusions about those same issues today.

We don't have all the answers. The Holy Spirit hasn't revealed them all to us in the Scriptures. Where the Holy Spirit hasn't spoken, there you and I may come to different conclusions. We may even be led to those different conclusions by the Holy Spirit, who has placed us into different situations and given us different opportunities to serve. But where the Holy Spirit has spoken in the Scriptures, there we must listen, believe, and act accordingly.

The Spirit, who's called the Spirit of truth, isn't going to say one thing in the Bible and then whisper the opposite into our ear or heart. The Holy Spirit doesn't contradict himself. He says what he means and means what he says. If the Holy Spirit tells us something in the Scriptures, and a little voice within us begins to say, "That probably doesn't mean what it says," we ought to wonder where that voice is coming from and not be too quick to say, "That was the voice of the Holy Spirit."

Walter F. Beckmann



Walter Beckmann is pastor of Grace, Falls Church, Virginia, and president of the North Atlantic District.

If the Holy Spirit tells us something in the Scriptures, and a little voice within us begins to say, "That probably doesn't mean what it says," we ought to wonder where that voice is coming from.

by John F. Brug

Why did the new hymnal (Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal) change the opening words of the Nicene Creed to "We believe"? Since none of us can confess faith for someone else, we should say "I believe."

The words were changed to "we believe" because this was the original wording of the creed. This wording is also used in both hymn versions of the creed, including the one written by Martin Luther (CW 270, 271).

Christians have never been reluctant to confess their faith together. Jesus taught us to pray, "Our Father, who art in heaven." Paul told the Corinthians, "It is written: 'I believed; therefore I have spoken.' With that same spirit of faith we also believe and

*Christians have never been reluctant
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Jesus taught us to pray,
"Our Father, who art in heaven."*

therefore speak, because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in his presence" (2 Corinthians 4:13,14). Peter confessed the faith of the apostles, "We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God" (John 6:69).

The beauty of Peter's confession was not lessened by the presence of the hypocrite Judas (John 6:70). We can confess our faith with other members of the congregation without worrying about whether some hypocrite is present. Weeding out hypocrites is God's job, not ours.

I am dismayed that the synod would find "we believe" acceptable in the Nicene Creed. If our service were restricted to believers only (as it was in the early church), the words might be appropriate. But when guests of other faiths are present, this wording makes us express fellowship with those who don't share our faith.

It would be no less unionistic to recite "I believe" together with adherents of false teaching than it would be to say "we believe" with them. The joint con-

fession of faith would be the offense, not the wording of the creed.

In other words, it would be wrong to recite either version of the creed in a worship setting that allowed equal rights to truth and error. Our services are not such a setting. No rights or recognition are given to error. Visitors of another faith are not providing their input to the service; they are receiving our doctrine. Visitors of another faith who are present to witness an event such as a baptism can, and often do, refrain from participating in the service.

If nonmembers should not be present during the creed, they could not be present during hymns or prayers either, since there is no essential difference between these and the creeds. Even in the early church, nonmembers were excluded only from the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

Concerning the new hymnal: why do we have to return to Catholicism where the minister chants the psalm? Why do we have to pray someone else's prayer from a book?

Chanting psalms did not originate with Catholicism, but with David who wrote the psalms to be sung in public worship. If you look at the headings of the psalms in your Bible, you will see that many contain musical directions. These "prayers from a book" are God's own words, given through inspiration of the Holy Spirit. What better songs could we sing in our services than songs from God's own book.

We do not have to sing these songs in any particular style. They can be sung by the pastor, the congregation, the choir, or any combination. Congregations and pastors that prefer to read them can do so. Congregations have many options in how they choose to use the psalms.

Chanting the psalms is simply returning to their original use as described in Scripture. Even if the practice had originated in Catholicism, that would not in itself be reason for us to reject it. We should judge customs on their own merits, just as Luther did at the time of the Reformation.



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

John Brug teaches theology and Old Testament at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin.

Celebrating cultural diversity

I rejoice that WELS congregations are reaching out in love to our neighbors of all races. "Negotiating in love" (March) reminds us that we ought to be considerate of people's background in our Christian witness. However, the article goes beyond the Great Commission when it calls us to "celebrate cultural diversity."

On Pentecost the apostles communicated the gospel to a culturally diverse crowd. The apostles' starting point was always the same. All races shared a common rebellion against God. The apostles also proclaimed Jesus Christ as God's answer to the eternal dilemma of every race.

The Holy Spirit mentions nationalities in Acts, not to celebrate the results of the Tower of Babel, but to celebrate Jesus' cure for Babel. By God's grace, all races were called to one hope, one body, one faith, one baptism, and one Lord. In Christ there is neither Greek nor Jew, male nor female, slave nor free.

It might be worth considering whether our emphasis on cultural diversity is an unnecessary offense to the gospel. To the extent we celebrate anyone's culture, aren't we shifting our heavenward gaze back to the divisions Christ came to erase? If Pastor Sorum needed to be taught rap illustrations to help him effectively proclaim the gospel, how would a Galilean fisherman fare? Or a simple layman armed with a Bible? Doesn't the lingo of a subculture make the gospel less inclusive of other cultures?

In making our churches "user friendly" to those in our community, let the congregation decide in love its worship forms. Perhaps we could celebrate less our "Anglo" or "African" roots and simply boast in the Lord.

*Wayne Laitinen
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma*

Multi-cultural or cross-cultural?

Pastor Sorum's article in the March NL was especially encouraging. I read with great pleasure his conviction of holding onto the "non-negotiables," the full and free forgiveness in Jesus,

preserved and promoted as the heart of our Lutheran heritage. Our Lord has also given us freedom in communicating this gospel treasure to all cultures.

I only wish our Multicultural Ministry Committee would change its name. Terms like "multi-culturalism" and "diversity" are so misused by secular humanists and blasted by talk radio that they communicate the opposite of our message and our mission. What we are really doing is "cross-cultural," using Christ's own Word and sacraments to lay his cross across the valleys of sinful racism that divide. Beauty in diversity can't hold a candle to our glorious oneness as brothers and sisters in Christ. "Cross-cultural ministry" seems more unifying.

*Mark Cordes
Shoreview, Minnesota*

Thanks for March issue

First, thank you for "Dinosaurmania" (March). Complementing it nicely was Gerhold Lemke's letter encouraging Christians to educate themselves and others on the creation/evolution issue. Christians should look to Christian scientists for their scientific views. Likewise, Christian scientists should work within a Biblical framework rather than trying to append Christianity to anti-Biblical interpretations of data.

Second, I support John Neish's call for Christians to come out of their "prayer closets" and become active in promoting Christian views. A government based on Biblical principles will serve its people better than a government with an unbiblical foundation.

*Eric Blievernicht
Southfield, Michigan*

Let's talk about politics

I am writing in response to John Neish ("Christians should be politically active," March). I am fully in accord with him.

We, as Christians, should openly discuss political matters and political candidates to determine the candidates and/or proposals not in accord with our principles and values. I also

feel that we are under obligation to encourage believing Christians to take part in the electoral process and to run for office. At this point, our participation is crucial.

*Elsie Miller
Dearborn, Michigan*

In the interest of conciseness, letters are subject to editing. Full name, address and daytime phone number should accompany each letter. Names will be withheld only under unusual circumstances. Letters cannot be acknowledged, nor can all letters be used. Address your letters to *READERS FORUM, Northwestern Lutheran, 2929 N Mayfair Road, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398.*

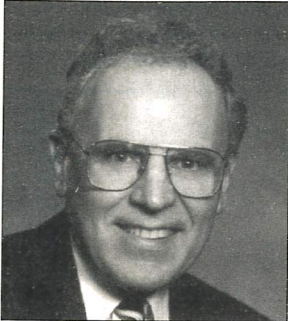
June '94

- 1. Ezekiel 22
- 2. Ezek. 23
- 3. Ezek. 24
- 4. Ezek. 25, 26
- 5. Ezek. 27, 28
- 6. Ezek. 29, 30
- 7. Ezek. 31, 32
- 8. Psalm 73
- 9. Ps. 74
- 10. Ps. 75, 76
- 11. Ps. 77
- 12. Ps. 78:1-39
- 13. Ps. 78:40-72
- 14. Ps. 79, 80
- 15. Ps. 81-83
- 16. Ps. 84
- 17. Ps. 85
- 18. Ps. 86, 87
- 19. Ps. 88
- 20. Ps. 89:1-37
- 21. Ps. 89:38-52
- 22. Ezekiel 33
- 23. Ezek. 34
- 24. Ezek. 35:1-36:15
- 25. Ezek. 36:16-38
- 26. Ezek. 37
- 27. Ezek. 38
- 28. Ezek. 39
- 29. Ezek. 40:1-47
- 30. Ezek. 40:48-41:26

One of the marks of God's people is their love for his Word. Many have said, "I will start at Genesis and read the Bible through to the end." But the project is soon abandoned. These proposed readings—5 to 10 minutes each day—will take you through the entire Bible systematically and with variety. The next month's readings will appear in the next issue.

THROUGH MY BIBLE IN THREE YEARS

A little heaven for the home, but no home in heaven



To offer help for life outside of faith in Jesus Christ is like suggesting a health food diet for a terminally ill patient.

Was this out of character for Billy Graham? Did I miss something?

Reporting on his Mission 1994 Crusade in Tokyo, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association says Graham focused his message on the "heart of the gospel, contained in the single verse John 3:16."

So far so good. But look at what immediately follows:

"The Bible is a guide to how to live your life in your home and business," he said. "Even if you don't accept Christianity, you should read the Bible because it will help you in your life, whatever your faith may be."

Did Rev. Graham mean what he said? Or was this directive a clever ruse to get the unsuspecting Japanese to read the Bible and, he hoped, see their sin and their need for a Savior? I have to believe the first because the second choice is unthinkable. But how did Mr. Graham get from the "eternal life" through faith in God's Son as promised in John 3:16 to the Bible as a how-

You will search the remainder of John's Gospel long and hard to no avail for an answer to that question. Instead you will find that the Bible shows you first who Jesus is and what he has done to prepare heaven for you. You will hear Jesus saying, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6).

Yes, I know Jesus also calls for another. And just that advice could go a long way toward improving lives. But for how long?

To offer help for life outside of faith in Jesus Christ is like suggesting a health food diet for a terminally ill patient. It won't cure the disease, but it will be good for you. Worse yet, it is offering a guide for living to the spiritually dead. If you have no life, does it really matter?

Perhaps it seems unfair to isolate the single statement by Billy Graham and make so much of it. However, his people gave it the prominence it's getting. And we need to see it because it points up a fundamental problem with the way many people view the Bible. It is not foremost a book to tell us how to live, but a book to give us life in Christ. The living follows.

Gary J. Baumler

Christianity: It's a Whole New Way of Looking at things!

Building a Christian home in the center of a tempest isn't easy. It requires digging deep into the rock, building on a solid foundation, using quality building materials and having tools which are sharp and true. The same is true for your local church-home. To build up the family of God – your family and the other members of your congregation – an environment for spiritual growth and nurture is needed.

Using our common lectionary (ILCW) of God's Word as the foundation, the Commission on Adult Discipleship has developed worship and devotional tools for studying seven emotions or characteristics. There are basic

building blocks like Faith, Love, and Humility, as well as Discipleship, Talents, Success, and Priorities.

Worship materials include introductions for the weekly readings, sermon studies, hymn suggestions and an original choral piece.

Study materials include topical Bible studies, devotions for teachers, object lessons for children (for home or school use) and an original choral piece for children. (An optional Bible study, coordinated clip art, banner planner, and financial

planning materials are also available for congregations who wish to use this theme for their financial stewardship emphasis.)



Maybe you were too young to remember your life before the Holy Spirit called you to Christ, yet everyday you see around you how the world views temptations, challenges, successes and failures. The world's views haven't changed since God confronted a sinful Adam and Eve. By comparison, Christianity offers a new perspective. Come take a look with us!

A Whole New Way of Looking at:

Humility	Pentecost 18, 19, & 20 September 25, October 2 & 9	Love	Easter 4, 5, & 6 May 7, 14 & 21
Discipleship	Advent 1, 2, & 3 November 27, December 4 & 11	Faith	Pentecost 2, 3, & 4 June 18, 25 & July 2
Talents	Epiphany 2, 3, & 4 January 15, 22, & 29, 1995	Priorities	Pentecost 5, 6, 7, & 8 (optional) July 9, 16, 23, & 30
Success	Lent 2, 3, 4, & 5 March 12, 19 & 26		

For more information, or to order materials,
please call WELS Adult Discipleship office at 414 • 256-3278 (24-hour voice mail available).

Ethan remembered what I had forgotten. When I should have come to God, I had concentrated on what I could do. My small child told me to place my worries on Jesus.

“Mommy, pray to Jesus”

by Gretchen Schulz

I guess you could say I had a lot on my mind. Frankly, I was nervous. Having two babies in two years, it seemed a lifetime since I had prepared for a job interview. I'd become used to negotiating bedtime, not salary. I'd been reading “Thomas the Tank Engine,” not torts and trusts.

But I had decided to work part time, and in the morning I had an interview with a downtown Denver law firm.

Rushing through bedtime

I still had to update my resume, iron my skirt and blouse, and check the map for the fastest way downtown. With my husband away for the evening, I would have to get our boys to bed. The baby went right to sleep, but I would have to rush through two-year-old Ethan's bedtime routine.

Clad in his blue pajama sleeper, Ethan mounted the step stool in front of the bathroom sink. Quickly I brushed his teeth and ran a wet washcloth across his face. After picking out a book, we climbed into bed. My son listened as I read the story at top speed. With the last word I jumped off the bed to hand him his nightly glass of water and stood waiting for him to finish. “All done,” he said and handed me the empty cup as I leaned over to kiss him goodnight.

At last I would have some time to myself to clear my head and think about the morning. But just as I sat down at my desk, I heard the pitter patter of plastic



feet on the parquet hallway. Ethan was out of bed. My anger mounted. Of all nights—how could he?

Remembering what I forgot

Before I could say a word, I looked up to see him, hands clasped and held straight out. “Mommy, pray to Jesus,” he timidly whispered.

My heart sank. I was so consumed with doing well in my interview the next morning that I had forgotten to say our nightly prayer. How could I have left out the most important part of my son's bedtime routine?

We returned to Ethan's bedroom and I tucked him in again. He eagerly awaited the familiar words: “Now I lay me down to sleep. . . .” In his simple faith, he was glad to thank God for another day of drinking chocolate milk through a straw, teaching his baby brother patty cake, and building a Lego house.

Ethan remembered what I had forgotten. At a time when I should have come to God for strength, I had concentrated on what I could do. My small child told me to place my worries and insecurities on Jesus. From a toddler had come the reminder that God is in charge of my life.



Gretchen Schulz is a member of Christ Our Redeemer, Aurora, Colorado.