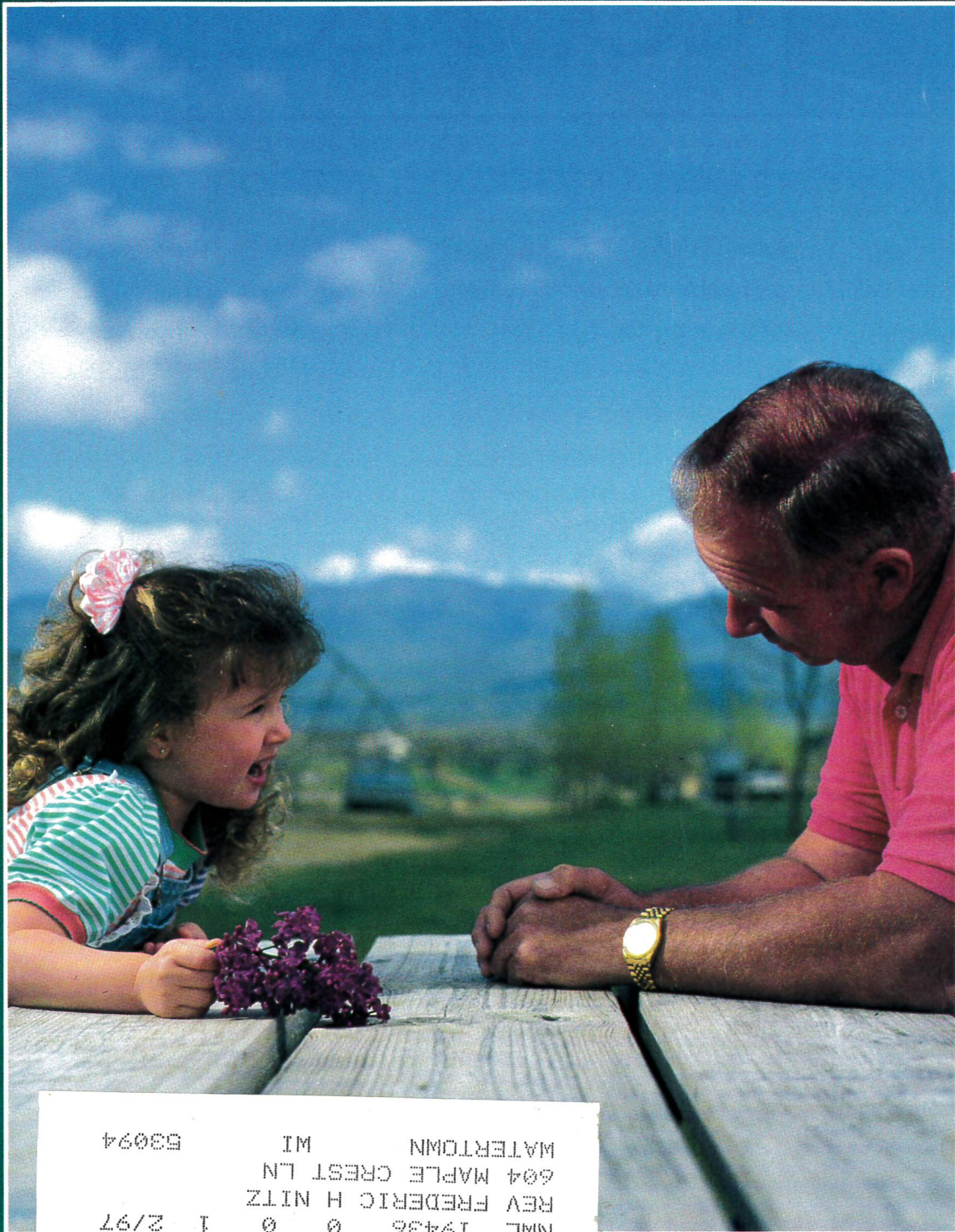


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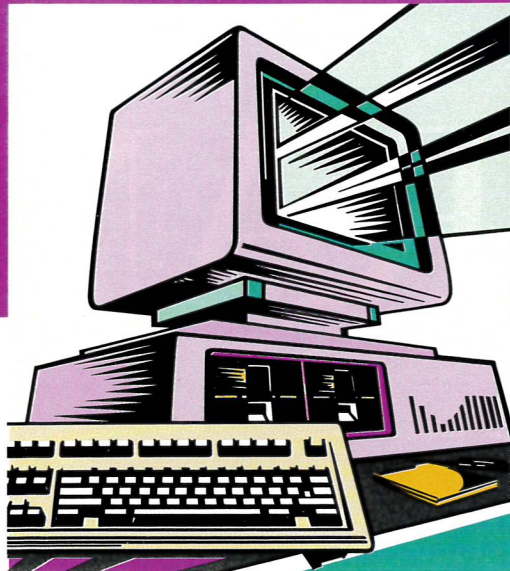


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conversation
I never had
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... my blood
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One language for all people

*Now the whole world had one language and a common speech (Genesis 11:1).
We hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues (Acts 2:11).*

Richard D. Balge

Fifty days after he rose from the dead, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to equip his disciples for the work of preaching his salvation to the nations. On that day, Pentecost, God began to reverse what he had done at Babel.

Confusion of language resulted from unbelief

After the Flood, God promised he would never again judge the world of sinners in that way. With the promise went his command that people spread out in the world and fill the earth.

They were not willing to trust his promise or act according to his command. Instead, they decided to build a tower to heaven, higher than any flood could reach and a marvelous example of what they could do. Their pride in what they could do and their anxiety that God might forget his promise were symptoms of unbelief.

When the people refused to trust God's gracious good will, he had to deal with them in another way. If they all stayed together, they would dismiss him from their lives. There would be no end to their folly and the resulting misery. So the LORD confused their language and scattered them over all the earth.

This is history, but it is also current events. The world's problem today is not that people cannot all speak the same language. Even where

people can understand one another through simultaneous translation, they are not necessarily at peace. The problem is not the many languages. It is what brought about the many languages in the first place: sin.

Who builds to the glory of God today? Modern man says, "Forget it; we will build for the benefit of man." But how does it—how can it—benefit people to ignore God, build for the glory of man, and foster cultures that deny God? Secular humanism, the socialist state, man-centered education—all are attempts to get along without God. The result is confusion in more than language. Criminals become "victims." Pornography and blasphemy are "free expression." Evolutionary speculation is accepted as "scientific fact."

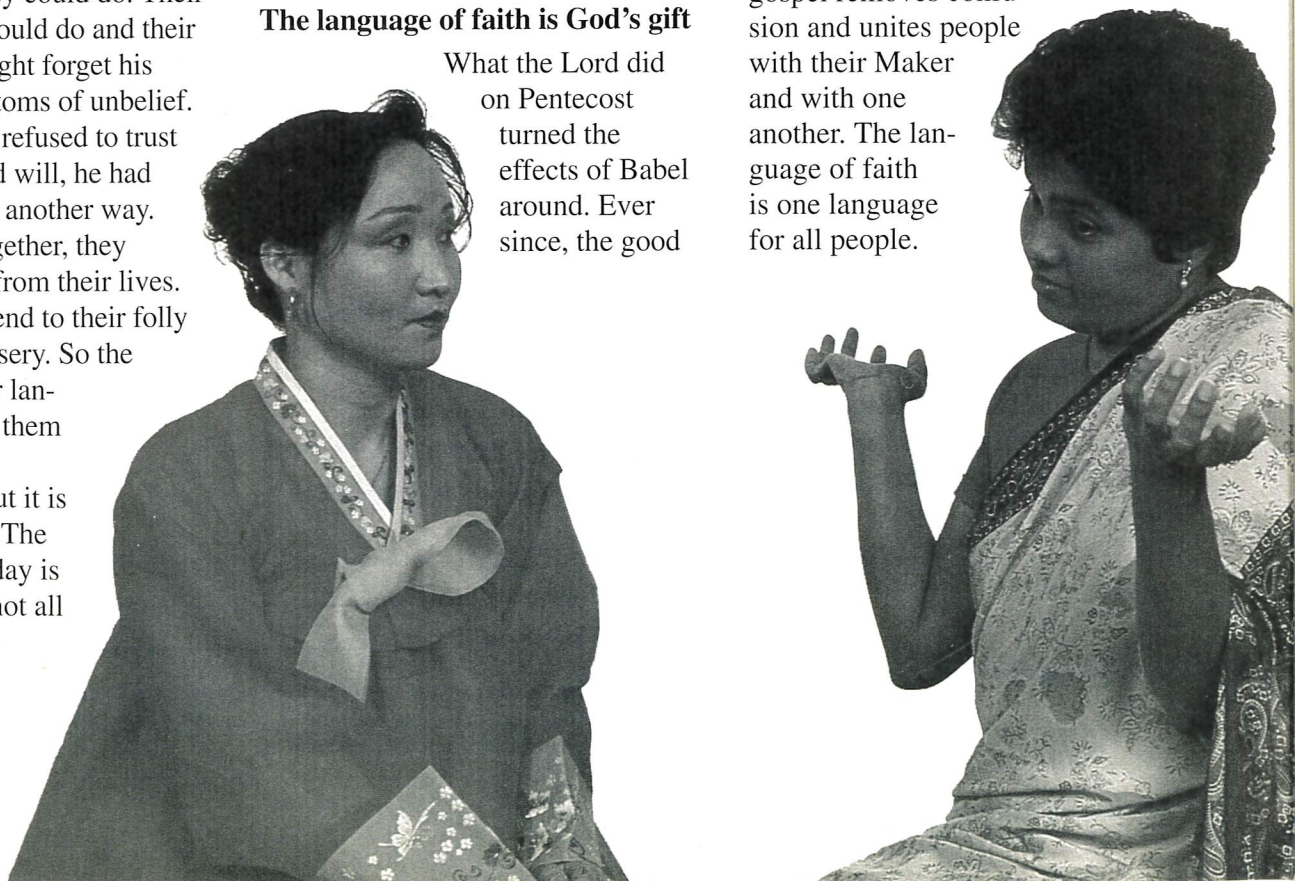
The language of faith is God's gift

What the Lord did on Pentecost turned the effects of Babel around. Ever since, the good

news of forgiveness through the merits of Jesus Christ has been preached in an ever-increasing multitude of languages.

The gospel, which reconciles God and sinners, also brings people together. Today, faithful missionaries learn and use many languages, but they all speak that one language of faith, which is the gift of God's grace. Their message is always the same: full and free forgiveness in Christ Jesus. Pentecost was the beginning of something that will be celebrated forever in heaven, when believers from many lands and languages gather around the throne of God, singing one united hymn of praise.

Our anxieties cannot produce unity. Pride can only undermine whatever unity exists. But the gospel removes confusion and unites people with their Maker and with one another. The language of faith is one language for all people.





- She always meant to talk with her father about his faith, but he died before the conversation ever took place. Karen Zastrow's story (p. 16) is a poignant lesson for all of us who have been putting off a similar talk with a loved one.
- We didn't plan it that way, but this issue turned into one on the family of WELS believers. It includes longer stories about church families:
 - √ In Thiensville, Wis. (p. 17), where a family of believers pitched in to help a fellow church member (and saw some unexpected results),
 - √ In Jackson, Wis., (p. 10), where a long-established parish is helping a daughter congregation start a new family of believers,
 - √ In Mexico (p. 12), where the family of God is growing.
- This issue also includes shorter stories about church families and their members in the news that begins on page 21.
- Even the list of names on pages 19-20 are all in the family. They're the nominees and delegates to the synod convention to be held in Saginaw, Mich., in July, where they'll be taking care of family business—the WELS family, that is.

—Dorothy Sonntag

Cover photo by Mrs. Kevin Scheibel

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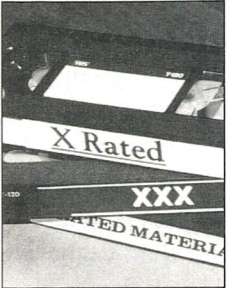
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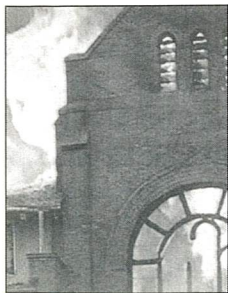
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This is my body. . . . my blood

The words of Jesus supersede reason. How can the bread and wine in communion also be the body and blood of Jesus?

Thomas Trapp



“This is my body given for you . . . my blood, which I poured out for you . . . for the forgiveness of sins.” Luke 22:19,20; Matthew 26:28

It was never intended to be a hard saying. Yet for over 450 years the words of Jesus: “This is my body. . . . this is my blood” have split the Christian church into three parts.

One may ask, “Does it make any difference that Catholics, Lutherans, and Protestants other than Lutheran vary in interpretation on these words of Jesus?”

Scripture gives the answer.

Three teachings

Historic Roman Catholicism teaches transubstantiation: The bread and wine permanently change into the body and blood of Christ, although they appear to remain bread and wine. Mass is seen as a bloodless sacrifice of Jesus, offered up by the priest to God, to appease and satisfy God for the sins of the people.

While Lutherans identify with the Roman Catholic position in the sense that God is active through the bread and wine, Lutherans see the direction of the Lord’s Supper in reverse. It is not something we give God to gain forgiveness, but something God gives us. Jesus says, “This is my body given for you . . . my blood, which I poured out for you . . . for

the forgiveness of sins” (Luke 22:19,20; Matthew 26:28).

We offer nothing to God except our sins. He gives us the perfect life and substitutionary death of his only Son, Jesus Christ.

The Lord’s Supper is not a sacrifice but a sacrament—a gift of God to us. It’s a real gift in which we receive bread, wine, body, and blood. All four elements are miraculously present, offering forgiveness and the power for holiness.

The fourth century AD church father John Chrysostom, bishop of Constantinople, supported the Lord’s real presence and power of the Supper: “If those who touched the hem of Jesus’ garment were properly healed, how much more shall we be strengthened if we have him in us whole? He will quiet in us the savage guilt within our body, He will quench the disturbances of the mind, drive out all sicknesses, raise us up from every fall, and, when the power of the enemy has been overcome, he will incite us to true piety and indeed transform us into his own image.”

Protestants who reject both Catholic and Lutheran positions on the Lord’s Supper maintain that the bread and wine only symbolize the body and blood of Christ. While all three church bodies distribute the Lord’s Supper “in remembrance” of Jesus (1 Corinthians 11:24), those Protestants see communion primarily as a memorial meal. They reject the miracle of the forgiving body and blood of Christ.

Some Protestants come close to the Lutheran position and speak of the “spiritual presence” of Jesus in the Supper. United Methodist Rev. William H. Willimon says in his book *Sunday Dinner*: “We may not believe that Christ is on this table in the sense that a miraculous physical

change has occurred in the composition of the bread and wine. We may not be able to specify the when or the how of this presence. But we certainly believe that Christ is present at this table with his gathered people.”

*We offer nothing to God
except our sins. He gives
us the perfect life and
substitutionary death of
his only Son, Jesus Christ.*

A call to believe

Protestants reject the real presence of the body and blood of Christ at the table because *finitum non capax infiniti*—the finite cannot contain the infinite. Protestant theology asks: “How can the infinite God be contained in the finite bread and wine? How can Jesus be really present in the bread and wine when he is seated at the right hand of God? How can Jesus continue to offer his body and blood for hundreds of years to millions of people? How can God forgive someone through his Supper?”

Lutheran theology responds: “We don’t know.” Lutherans simply believe the direct words of Jesus, “This is my body . . . blood” and take the apostle Paul’s words at face value: “Is not the cup . . . a participation/sharing/partaking/communing (Greek: *koinonia*) in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread . . . a participation in the body of Christ?” (1 Corinthians 10:16).

For Lutherans, the words of Jesus and Paul supersede reason. How can God become man in the person of

Jesus Christ? After being dead for three days, how can Jesus appear behind locked doors and show his hands and feet and side to Thomas? How can Jesus take five loaves and two small fish to feed 5,000 people and still have leftovers? And how, for hundreds of years, can the bread and wine in communion also be the body and blood of Jesus, which offers millions of God’s people forgiveness and grace?

Jesus challenges us beyond our reason and calls us to believe. Then he raises questions for us. “Tired of sinning? Hungry for forgiveness? Desire to live a godly life? Then take and eat, this is my body . . . take and drink, this is my blood, given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.” Believe it.

NL

Three beliefs about the Lord’s Supper

- Roman Catholic—Bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ (Transubstantiation).
- Lutheran—Bread, wine, body, and blood are all miraculously present (Real presence).
- Protestant other than Lutheran—Bread and wine symbolize the body and blood of Christ (Representation).

Tom Trapp is campus pastor for Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel and Student Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Robbing the temple



Our bodies are God's temples.
When we sin sexually, we declare
that God has no right to his own house.

Wayne A. Laitinen

The police reported it as a church robbery. To the members of Arlington Avenue Lutheran Church, it was an outrage.

It was an outrage, not because of the broken stained-glass and twisted lead. It had nothing to do with the splintered office door, the trail of blood, the Sunday school envelopes strewn across the floor, or the microphone dropped in the street during a hasty retreat. The irony was that nothing of real value was missing.

Still, it was worse than a robbery. It was a desecration. After all, this was no ordinary place. It was our Bethel—our house of God. Here God's people rested from their pilgrimage. Here God pitched his ladder between heaven and earth. Here, in the midst of angelic traffic, the supplications of God's people ascended to his throne and his reassuring voice touched their hearts. The wealth distributed in that building was priceless, everlasting, free, and open to the public.

So when someone decided that the building existed for his purpose, not God's, it was more than a robbery. It was a declaration that God no longer had a right to his own house.

Desecrating God's temples

We make the same declaration—that God has no right to his own house—when we sin sexually, because our bodies are the temples of God. Our creator claimed us as “the people I formed for myself that they may proclaim my praise” (Isaiah 43:21).

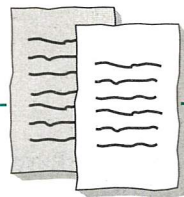
In the perfection of Eden, God made our first parents sexual creatures. The divine plan was to involve husband and wife in ongoing creation of the human race. Since their hearts and minds were

SIXTH COMMANDMENT

You shall not commit adultery.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we lead a pure and decent life in words and actions, and that husband and wife love and honor each other.



perfectly in tune with God's, Adam and Eve found complete joy in marriage and family life. They used God's bodies God's way. Their married life was a proclamation of how marvelously God does things.

Sin ruined God's marvelous plan. Sin leads us to tell God that he no longer has a right to his temple. Sin makes us announce, “This is my body. No one can tell me how to use it.”

Sexual sin hands God his eviction notice.

Wrong. Society tells us how to use our bodies. No man is an island. Actions have consequences. I dare not use my tongue to tell hijacking jokes to flight attendants. I am forbidden to use my hand to write threatening notes to bank tellers.

Using our bodies for promiscuous sexual activity sends into society some of the biggest ripples of all: disease, medical and financial burdens, death, abandoned souls, broken families, loneliness, jealousy, rage, compounded guilt, and spiritual decay. Although sexual sins may be done in private, ultimately there is nothing private about them.

Handing God his eviction notice

But the effects of sexual sin on the world is not the point.

Joseph got to the heart of the matter when he used these words to repel the advances of a seductress: “How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?”

Sexual sin hands God his eviction notice. And that is the point.

The apostle Paul said it clearly: “Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your body” (1 Corinthians 6:18-20).

Since our fall into sin, God has two more claims on our bodies. We were redeemed from “temple robbery” (and every other sin) at a dreadful price: the blood of the innocent Son of God. In that deadly stroke, God's anger against us and our desire to sin against him were quenched. That is why our Lord Jesus says to us, “Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more.”

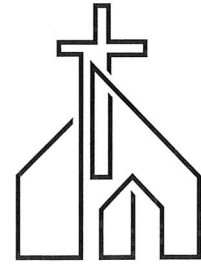
The Sanctifier adds his claim to that of the Creator and the Redeemer. Your body is the “temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God.” By baptism, the Holy Spirit gave us faith in Jesus. Our temples were swept clean and restored to sacred service.

Because we were swept clean, “he who dwells in heav'n above chooses to live with us in love, making our bodies his temple” (CW 529).

NL

Wayne Laitinen is pastor at Gethsemane, Oklahoma City, Okla.

Looking forward while looking back



David's Star, Jackson, Wis., is a mix of those whose families have been members for a century and a half and those whose names never appeared on a church roster before.

Dorothy J. Sonntag

DAVID'S STAR

Jackson, Wisconsin

Organized 1843

1300 souls

950 communicants



WISCONSIN

Pastors:

Richard Gurgel
Martin Janke
James Schulz

Teachers:

Frederick Manthe
Deborah Boeldt
Richard Ebeling
Janet Fenske
Marie Janke
Karen Lindeman
Naomi Mahnke
Darin Menk
Kathryn Smith
Randal Watts

It used to be “the church in the wildwoods.” Now it’s in an area rapidly changing from rural to urban. David’s Star, near Jackson, Wis., is holding onto its roots as it moves into the future.

The second oldest Lutheran congregation in Wisconsin, David’s Star was founded by Prussian Lutherans who came to America in 1843. They settled north of Milwaukee and named their settlement *Kirchhayn*—“the church in the wildwoods.”

Growing

Until recently the area remained rural. “It used to be nothing but farmland,” said school principal Frederick Mahnke. “That’s

changed.” Now new homes and businesses are mushrooming.

“Milwaukee’s moving north,” said Jim Volz, president of David’s Star. “Jackson’s building 60 to 70 new homes a year.”

Many of those homes’ residents are coming to David’s Star. “We’re growing by at least 100 members a year,” said Pastor Richard Gurgel. Some of those new members are transfers from other WELS churches; others are converts.

Blending

The congregation today is “a mix of those whose families have been here for a century and a half and those whose names never appeared on a



Pastor Richard Gurgel welcomes worshippers.

church roster before," Gurgel said.

Karen Tagliente has been a member of David's Star for ten years. "I still feel like a newcomer," she said, "because so many families have been here for generations.

The new members have brought changes, says Darwin Schramm. "For example, everybody wore a tie and coat to church. Newer members don't. They're more relaxed." Another change is the addition of a preschool to the congregation's elementary school.

Although the congregation has adapted to change, says Richard Gurgel, "some traditions have served us well. For instance, we still toll the bell whenever a soul goes to heaven. Those things give us a sense of our history."

The "church in the woods" is also a tie to history. A wooded patch that has been left as it was when the land was settled is the setting for graduations, church picnics, mission festivals, and weddings. "It's a beautiful setting—big trees, a fieldstone altar," said Darwin Schramm.

Teaching

Another tradition is the congregation's emphasis on Christian education. Nearly all children of the congregation attend David's Star's elementary school. "We've always had between 97 and 100 percent in school," said Frederick Mahnke. The school has grown by over 100 students since he came 19 years ago.

"Enrollment picked up after we added a preschool," he said. Another asset, he added, is that Kettle Moraine Lutheran High School is nearby. "We can offer Christian education from preschool through high school."

The school also draws in

unchurched families. "People see our kids are getting a good education," said Richard Gurgel. "They call to ask about membership."

Enlarging

That interest in education also contributes to the congregation's most recent project: a daughter congregation, Morning Star. The fledgling congregation, now worshipping in Jackson's fire hall, plans to build a school before a church.

That school will also draw new members, said Darwin Schramm, one of a number of David Star's members transferring to Morning Star. "We've had inquiries already—'When is your school opening?'"

Gurgel is pleased that his parish has begun a daughter congregation. "We may be 152 years old," he said, "but we're still of child-bearing age."

Changing

The daughter congregation has also benefited David's Star, said Schramm, because newer members are replacing leaders who are joining Morning Star. "We're seeing new members get active and involved. That's a blessing that enlivens both places."

Richard Gurgel noted another blessing. "Some members were attending maybe two out of five services [at David's Star]. At Morning Star they don't feel lost in the woods, and we see them every Sunday."

Feeling "lost in the woods" can be a problem in a congregation the size of David's Star. "I've talked to who I thought were new people and found out they were members for two years," said Jim Volz. "They'd been going to a different service than I had."

"A church with 1300 souls can't be one big family," agreed Richard Gurgel. "But what happens is that choir members get acquainted, or parents of little kids get to know one another. You end up with many little families within a bigger family."

Cindy Ehlke, a lifetime member, says her congregation can remain a family. "David's Star was a warm country church. I'm hoping the warmth will stay," she said. "It can, if we open our arms and hearts to our new members."

NL

Dorothy Sonntag is assistant editor for Northwestern Lutheran.



School children march toward the "church in the woods," where graduation is traditionally held.

Much to do in Mexico

In a country closed to missionaries until 1992, work has prospered—but it's only just begun.

Gary P. Baumler

“So much still needs to be done.”

So spoke Pastor Ernest Zimdars as he surveyed the field of 90 million Mexicans and the five churches of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Church (CELC) in Mexico.

So much, indeed! Yet, look at what the Lord has done in this country that was officially closed to our missionaries until 1992 and didn't even allow the churches to own property.

Since Mexico changed its constitution in 1992, the church has organized and registered with the government, a seminary has begun to train nationals for the ministry, and five congregations from Juarez to Puebla continue faithfully to spread the gospel of Jesus. Zimdars serves as field counselor for the church and Pastor Larry Schlomer as director of theological education.

The story of WELS working with CELC in Mexico is the story

of these five congregations:

- **In Juarez, across the border from El Paso, Texas**, 50 communicants and about 30 children worship under lay leader Mario Dominguez. Mr. Dominguez has been studying theology under Schlomer and others.

- **Five hundred miles south in Torreon**, Pastor Otoniel Rodriguez serves 50 communicants. He also is president of CELC. The church has a kindergarten with two teachers and about 25 children. The seminary, in the church at Torreon, includes two students from the congregation.

- **In Monterrey to the east**, Zimdars is pastor to 115 communicants. The church is located on a downtown park in this industrial city of four million. In January, a new preaching station was opened in a member's home in the suburb of Guadalupe. Six men of the congregation are taking Bible institute

courses. Among their many activities, the youth and ladies groups visit the sick and shut-ins.

- Pastor David Chichia serves about 20 communicants **in Mexico City**. Another young man there is studying theology under Pastor Schlomer.

- **Puebla, about two hours east of Mexico City**, is home to another 25 communicants, who were served for several years by lay leader Carlos Cajas Monzon. In February, Pastor Vicente Guillen, formerly in Juarez, was installed.

Everything is in place for the national church to expand its ministry. Within three years it should have at least one more national pastor and more evangelists. They will be looking into three more cities for possible sites to bring the good news of Christ.

Progress is slow but encouraging. Strong family ties and Roman Catholic influence, often steeped in superstition, make it difficult to get a hearing. Personal relationships must first be developed before bringing the gospel to the people.

God, however, uses the personal relationships and the family ties as the main means of witness. And, by God's grace, the family of God is growing in Mexico.



The children's choir at El Redentor, Torreon, Mexico.

For the history of our work in Mexico, see pp. 230-236 in *To Every Nation, Tribe, Language, and People*, from Northwestern Publishing House.

NL

Publishing for Spanish outreach

If you wanted to provide Spanish materials for our workers in Mexico and elsewhere you would take English materials and translate them into Spanish, wouldn't you? "In a way," replies Pastor Paul Hartman, our missionary for Mass Communications for Latin America, "but you'd better be careful."

Translating takes care

He explains:

"We cannot just take English materials and translate them into Spanish. . . . For example, the WELS *Christ-Light* curriculum was written partly for Lutheran elementary and secondary schools. There are none of our fellowship in Latin America. Nonetheless, . . . we [can] use *Christ-Light* as a basis for . . . an adult discipleship curriculum.

Hartman warns about the dangers of translating English terms into Spanish in a Roman Catholic dominated culture:

"For example, 'grace' can easily be translated as '*gracia*.' But our materials must clarify that we mean God's undeserved love, not God's assistance so that we can cooperate in our salvation. Besides religious context, some words just don't mean the same thing when translated directly into Spanish. For example, if we were to call God gracious (*gracioso*) in Spanish, we would be calling him silly."

Cooperation gets the job done

Mass Communications for Latin America is "to coordinate the development of materials to help our synod to reach out effectively in Latin America." Hartman works with foreign and domestic fields to "determine needs, plan development, and evaluate



A guitar accompanies the choir at Torreon.

the quality of our materials." He also helps compile a listing of all available Lutheran resources in Spanish.

Thomas Brown, a specialist in personal computers, assists Hartman with desktop publishing and as a computer advisor to our missionaries. Translators, men and women who have experience in Latin American outreach, help avoid the pitfalls mentioned above.

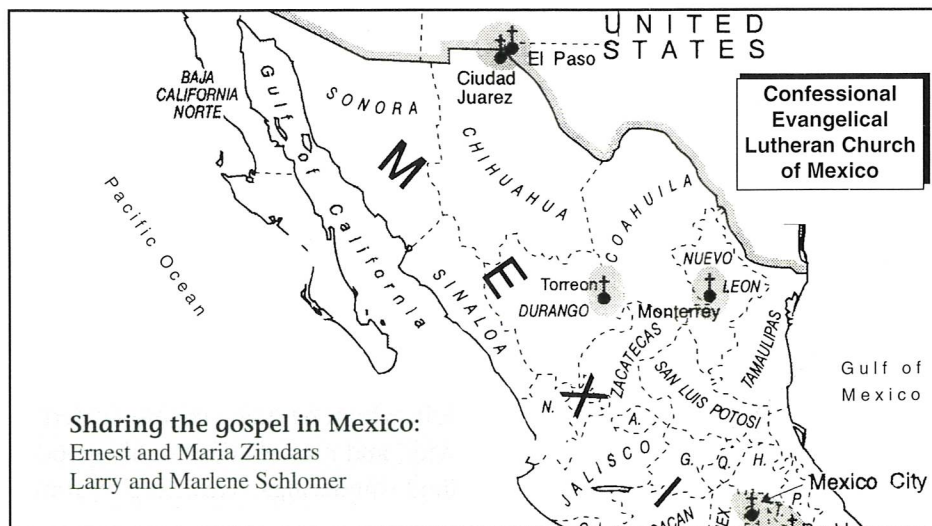
Hartman and Brown live in El Paso, Texas, and have their headquarters in San Juan Lutheran church there.

Materials keep multiplying

The mass communications program is ambitious and, with God's help, will serve countless Latin Americans. It includes

- an adult discipleship curriculum;
- the bimonthly magazine *El Mensajero Luterano*, circulation 600;
- vacation Bible school course;
- Sunday school worksheets;
- People's Bible, the only commentary of its kind in Spanish.

NL



Friedrich Schmid: father of the Michigan Synod

Traveling on foot and on horseback, he crisscrossed Michigan—preaching, teaching, baptizing, communing, founding churches—and inspired formation of two Lutheran synods.

Morton A. Schroeder

Pastor Friedrich Schmid, the father of the Michigan Synod, was a robust energy in the early history of that synod.

Schmid, a graduate of Basel Mission House in Germany, was sent to serve Lutherans from southern Germany who had settled west of Detroit. The first Lutheran pastor in Michigan, he arrived in Ann Arbor on August 20, 1833. No more than a small village of rough-hewn log cabins set on a hill above the Huron River, Ann Arbor was inhabited mainly by English people.

Pastor

The Germans, who preferred the countryside, were scattered over a disconcertingly wide area in the surrounding forests. But only a month after Schmid arrived, he conducted a Lutheran service for families in a school house some four miles west of Ann Arbor, in Scio Township, Washtenaw County, Michigan Territory. The people who came to hear him had been ministered to by sectarian circuit riders—or often by no one. Nor was there agreement among them that they needed or could afford ministering. Under Schmid's prodding, they incorporated on October 22, 1834, as the German Evangelical Society of

Scio. Today, that society's descendant is Salem Lutheran Church, Ann Arbor, the first Lutheran congregation in Michigan and the oldest member congregation of the Wisconsin Synod.

According to a Michigan Synod historian, Schmid was "a dynamo of energy and religious fervor . . . zealous and filled with untiring missionary activity." His first concern was the Scio flock. During lonely forest vigils and trying urban disturbances, he fretted over the members' indifference and fractiousness. In optimistic moments, he praised God for the harmony and truth that lightened his load. The society added to its numbers daily, and in four years it outgrew its original log cabin church, replacing it with a frame building of 1200 square feet that cost \$1,000. Fellow Christians in Stuttgart, Germany, donated \$200 and a set of sacramental vessels.

Missionary

Frenetic activity at home did not keep Schmid from his second concern: spreading God's Word among the burgeoning German population and carrying Jesus to the indigenous folk whom he met, communicated with, and mused about in his woodland wanderings. Traveling on foot

and horseback, he crisscrossed the virgin forests—preaching, teaching, baptizing, communing. He started congregations and supplied them with pastors from Basel Mission House or his own tutorial in Scio. He founded some 20 churches in a triangle of 7,200 square miles that stretched from Detroit and Monroe on the east and southeast, beyond Lansing to Allegan in the west, to Saginaw on the north.

One of Salem's daughter congregations lay some 35 to 40 miles northeast of the northern tip of Schmid's original mission pale. Schmid had encouraged members of the Scio group to build homes in a faraway place: Sebewaing, 105 miles to the north, on the shores of Saginaw Bay. Joined by Germans from Ohio, the Scio emigrants formed a congregation and called it, fittingly, New Salem.

Husband, father, teacher

In spite of a taxing schedule, Schmid found time to woo a maiden and win a wife. When he was in the Scio neighborhood, he lived with a member family. A daughter of the family became his lifelong helpmeet. Louise Mann and he were married September 4, 1834.

The Lord generously blessed

their union. In a September 14, 1853, letter to his Mission House friends, Schmid included greetings from “My dear wife, Louise, as well as our nine children. . . .”

Schmid was a forceful teacher. The lessons he taught his infant congregation became the warp and the woof of its fabric—lasting testimony to his dedication to missions. Two of Salem’s pastors were potent forces in foreign mission fields: William Bodamer became director of the Wisconsin Synod’s mission among Germans living in Poland. Arthur Wacker was granted two leaves of absence to explore and evaluate African mission fields. A son of the congregation, Edward Renz, was the fourth pastor called to Florida’s mission field in the 1950s. Twenty years later Renz became the first civilian chaplain serving American military personnel and their dependents stationed in Germany.

Organizer

Schmid’s third concern was organization. In 1843 he and two other pastors formed the first Lutheran synod in what was by then the state of Michigan. Called Mission Synod, its purpose was to evangelize Indians. But its troubled life was brief; doctrinal problems proved fatal within three years. An early historian wrote, “It disintegrated without song and without sound.”

Schmid, who needed community, was at loose ends. A brief flirtation with the Ohio Synod found the match uncongenial, and he left the group soon after courting it. Disassociated, he confided to Basel Mission House friends: “[I am] thinking of establishing an independent synod for Michigan. . . .”

Schmid’s thoughts became reali-

ty. He, seven other pastors, and three lay delegates met in Detroit, December 10-11, 1860, and organized the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Michigan* and other States. Schmid, who chaired the meeting, was elected president. He held the position for six years.

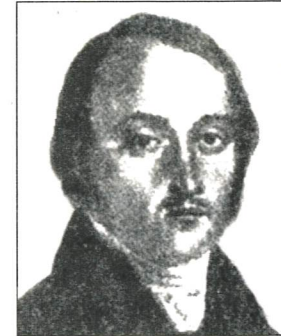
Schmid served his congregation for 34 years, resigning because of advancing years and poor health. After twelve years of what he called “suffering in the flesh,” the deliverance he sought came on August 30, 1883. Funeral services were held four days later with a Pastor Kronenwett officiating. Two now-seasoned Basel graduates who had appeared on Schmid’s Scio doorstep 23 years earlier helped lay their friend, colleague, and mentor to rest. Pastor Stephan Klingmann, who succeeded Schmid at Salem, preached the sermon. Pastor Christoph Eberhardt, the once peripatetic pioneer missionary, officiated at graveside.

Louise Mann Schmid, always referred to most warmly and graciously by her husband, continued his correspondence with Mission House after he was unable to write. She died March 10, 1899.

NL

*In 1892, the Michigan Synod joined a federation of synods with the Wisconsin and Minnesota Synods. In 1917, the federation merged as the Wisconsin Synod.

Morton Schroeder, a retired professor, lives in Appleton, Wisconsin.



Friedrich Schmid

- Born September 6, 1807, in Daldorf, Wuerttemberg (Germany)
- Ordained April 8, 1833, Lorrach, Baden (Germany)
- Arrived in America July 29, 1833—the first Lutheran pastor in Michigan
- Pastor of Salem, Ann Arbor, Mich., 1834-1868
- Founder of some 20 churches
- Founder and first president of the Michigan Synod
- Died Aug. 30, 1883, in Ann Arbor, Mich.

The conversation I never had

I felt sure God would give me the words when the time came.
That time never came.

Karen P. Zastrow

“You’re right.” Those little words can mean so much. As a child, I searched for little bits of wisdom to impart to my parents or siblings just so they would tell me I was correct. It was always a good feeling to hear, “You’re right.”

Except for offering those occasional facts, I kept to myself. As the youngest of six children, I had little chance to speak out on anything. Maybe that’s why I never talked to Dad about his faith.

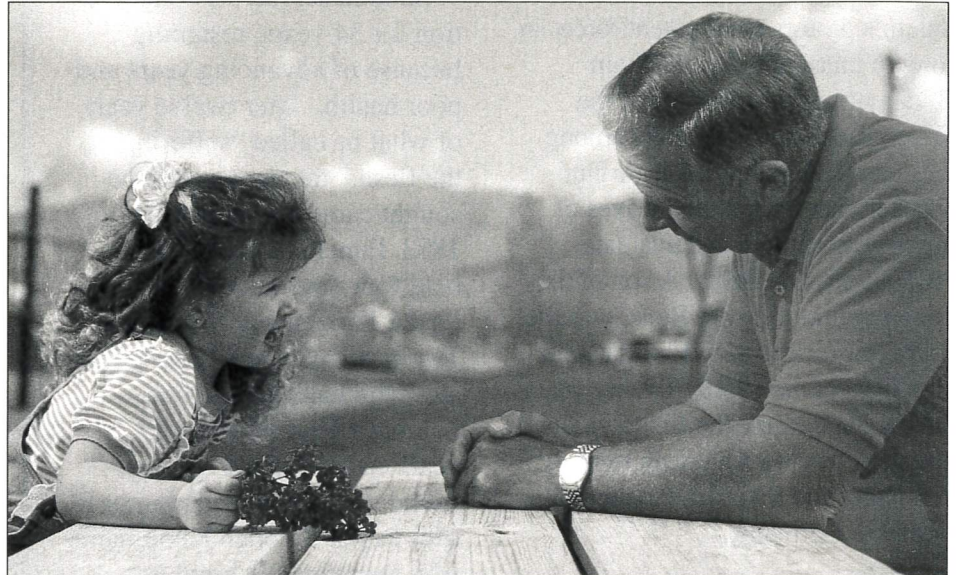
I grew up with a mother who loved and feared God and a father who attended church for our Christmas pageants and confirmations. No one ever talked about why Dad didn’t attend services on Sundays. He simply didn’t.

I always meant to have a conversation with Dad about his beliefs. I was concerned for his soul. I needed to know he would confess love for God and recognize Jesus as his Savior.

But I didn’t know what to say, although I felt sure God would give me the words when the time came.

That time never came. Dad passed away suddenly, before our conversation ever took place.

I find comfort in the memory of the last time Dad visited our home. My daughter Samantha, nearly 4, was climbing up and down on the picnic table where Dad



“Grandpa, do you know who loves me best of all? Jesus!”

and I were sitting.

Samantha, with not a bashful bone in her body, was chattering about who loved her and whom she loved. Grandpa, probably hoping she would run out of things to say, nodded acknowledgment as he tried to carry on a conversation with me.

Samantha wrapped up her speech by pointedly asking, “Grandpa, do you know who loves me best of all?”

She had succeeded in getting his attention, and Grandpa replied, “Who?”

In a voice as commanding as John Wayne’s, Samantha answered, “Jesus!”

Grandpa, without missing a beat, returned a resounding, “You’re right!”

“You’re right.” These are the words I cling to and the memory I cherish. The words I rehearsed over and over in my head will never be spoken.

Even now I’m tempted to make excuses about lack of time and opportunities that never materialized, but in my heart I can only regret that I never talked to my father about God.

My comfort is the memory of Dad’s words: “You’re right.”

Karen Zastrow is a member of Zum Kripplein Christi, Iron Ridge, Wisconsin.

Faith in action helps lead others to faith

When church members offered help, they never imagined the far-reaching effects their faith in action would have.

Dorothy J. Sonntag



During his battle with leukemia Dennis Mastin says he, wife Carla, and their children learned "patience, perseverance, and to establish priorities."

The Lord has used my illness for many good things," says Dennis Mastin of his battle with leukemia.

Among those good things was the help he received from fellow Christians and its effect on those who witnessed faith at work.

When Mastin learned he had cancer in 1992, doctors recommended a bone marrow transplant. He faced four months in the hospital and several more months of recovery at home.

Faith at work

Members of Mastin's church, Calvary, in Thiensville, Wis., sprang into action.

"During the time I was hospitalized," said Mastin, "women from our congregation organized meal service for my family. Every night of the week, church members prepared complete suppers and delivered them to our home."

Delivering meals wasn't all the women did. Because the bone marrow transplant temporarily destroyed his immune system, Mastin was highly susceptible to disease.

"Women from our church virtually sterilized our house, so I could come home to recuperate," he reported.

The men from Calvary were busy, too. "They cared for our property, mowing the grass, cleaning the gutters, doing anything that we needed done," said Mastin. "People I never thought would be involved were helping."

The effect on others

As much as the support helped his family, Mastin said, the effect that faith in action had on others is even more significant.

One was his mother, Phyllis. She was astonished to learn that others brought food daily and did household chores.

Although she had not been attending any church, Phyllis Mastin wanted to know more about a congregation whose members were so willing to help, and she learned about the faith that motivated those members. Now she is an active member at Calvary.

Calvary's faith at work equally impressed the Mastins' neighbor.

"He offered to prepare supper for us one night and was surprised to find there was a waiting list six weeks long," Dennis Mastin said. "He was in awe at seeing men donating their time to mowing our acre and a half, maintaining our lawn equipment, and manicuring our property like it was their own."

As a result, that neighbor—in Mastin's words, "a man who through his own testimony was an agnostic"—is now attending church.

In addition, said Mastin, a coworker who witnessed the unselfish actions of Calvary's members "was also moved to become involved in church and studying the Bible."

His leukemia now in remission, Mastin is back at work. "I am grateful for everything done to support my family and me," he said. "I am even more thankful that the outpouring of Christian love helped bring souls to salvation."

Dorothy Sonntag is assistant editor for Northwestern Lutheran.

Help for our congregations

Wayne Mueller talks about Parish Services.



Parish services staff: Wayne Mueller and Helen Timmerman, who retired at the end of May.

What's the most important service you provide?

Adult spiritual growth is job number one—that's our theme. All our major efforts are aimed at getting people into the Word of God. That's because we want to help congregations distinguish between the symptoms of spiritual weakness and the underlying disease. We have to get at the cause of the problem, not just deal with the effect.

Symptoms, for instance, are poor offerings or lack of church attendance. We can't address those kinds of issues for the long term unless we get at the underlying problem.

The idea isn't just to have bigger Bible classes. Spiritual growth is not an end in itself. It's the means to fight that spiritual virus of lethargy, apathy, complacency. The end is service of God and our fellow man, especially through evangelism.

Since each unit of Parish Services has an administrator, what do you contribute?

I help the departments work together, to have unity and cohesion and clarity of purpose, and I serve as administrator pro tem for any unit that doesn't have an administrator. Right now I'm heading the Commission on Worship, because there is no administrator. For two years I also filled in on adult discipleship

while that position was vacant.

But the number one work I do is with district committees, to make sure we're not just paper-pushers. I spend most of my time on the road, speaking at retreats, conferences, our ministerial schools, and meeting with study groups and church leaders. I meet with called workers and member leaders.

I also chair the media planning committee, which coordinates publishing done by WELS, and I edit *Parish Leadership*.

Parish Leadership—what's that?

It's a magazine for congregation workers—the head of the women's guild, the Sunday school teacher, the church librarian, the hot lunch cook, the janitor, the elder, the usher, the stewardship committee member. It's published three times a year.

Why would I want a magazine with topics that don't apply to me? For example, why should a Sunday school teacher read about stewardship?

First, all member leaders should be aware of the ministry of others, so they can understand and appreciate what others do, and work cooperatively.

Second, in a congregation, people who start with one hat go on to wear others. They may start as

Sunday school teachers. Then they become trained evangelists, then stewardship visitors and counselors. *Parish Leadership* helps mold you for other areas of ministry.

How does the synod's financial shortage affect Parish Services?

To meet the budget crunch, we've had to eliminate 15% of our staff. In most cases, others will pick up the work, so services will not be lost. We view low offerings as just another symptom pointing to the underlying problem, the need for spiritual growth. The new attention many of our churches are giving to growing in the Word makes me very optimistic about the blessings God has in store for WELS.

Parish services include:

- Adult discipleship
- Evangelism
- Mass media ministry
- Parish planning
- Parish schools
- Special ministries
- Stewardship
- Worship
- Youth discipleship

NL

Contact Parish Services at 2929 N. Mayfair Rd., Milwaukee WI 53222; 414/256-3228. *Parish Leadership* is \$7.95 per year (\$19.50 for three years) and is available from Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 N 113 Street, Milwaukee WI 53226-3284; 1-800-662-6093.

The 53rd Biennial Convention—Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod
July 24-28, 1995—Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw

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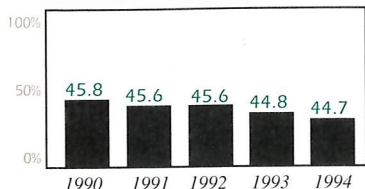
Bible class attendance up, church down

Bible class attendance in WELS churches jumped another 1100 in 1994, continuing a healthy trend since 1990. At the same time, church attendance dipped by 0.1 percent in 1994, and adult confirmations and professions of faith were at a five-year low. All-purpose giving also continued a trend upward.

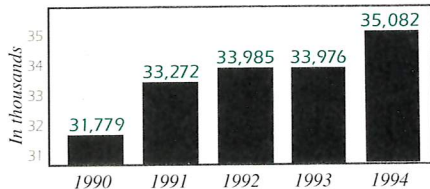
Wayne Mueller, administrator of

Parish Services, feels that church attendance and outreach efforts will follow the increased study of Scripture. "I have full confidence that getting back to the Word was the first step God wanted us to take to seek his renewed blessings on our church," said Mueller. "We should praise God for what he is accomplishing among us."

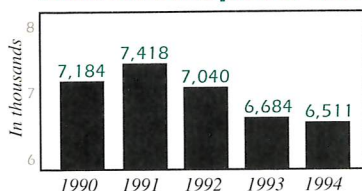
Members at weekly worship



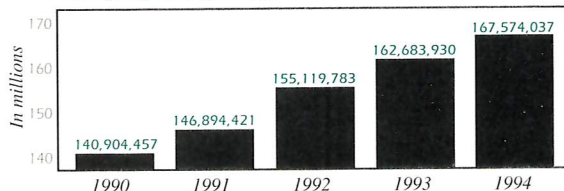
Bible class adults



Adult conf. and prof. of faith



All purpose giving



South Atlantic District

Two exploratory groups held their first services March 19. At **Faith, Tallahassee, Fla.**, 33 visitors joined the nucleus of 19 WELS members. All the visitors had been contacted by a telephone canvass. Student volunteers at Wisconsin Lutheran College (WLC), Milwaukee, made 7000 calls, and members in Tallahassee made another 3500. Twelve students from WLC spent their spring break in Tallahassee visiting prospects to issue invitations.

At **Faith, Atlanta, Ga.**, the nucleus of 25 was joined by 40 prospects. A telephone canvass, again with assistance from WLC, has given the group a prospect mailing list of 800.

Twenty-five-year milestones were marked by **Bethany, North Fort Myers, Fla.**, on Feb. 12 and **Peace School, Bradenton, Fla.**, March 12. Bethany is the mother church, directly or indirectly, of congregations in Engelwood, Fort Myers, Cape Coral, Lehigh Acres, and Port Charlotte. Peace opened with 21 students in grades 5-8 with one teacher. This year a faculty of four serves 73 students in preschool through eighth grade.

—Philip Wilde

“Share the Promise” coming

The theme for the 53rd WELS convention in Saginaw, Mich., July 24-28 will be “Share the Promise.” The theme, however, will not be confined to the convention. It will also be the two-year theme to help focus on the task at hand.

Included in the plans are

- a Bible study series to be presented at the convention and made available for every congregation in September,

- a synodwide banner project for spring 1996,
- a video, “Share the Promise,” introducing the mission of WELS to its members,
- a national evangelism outreach, Share the Promise, for Easter 1997.

Each congregation is to look for its own ways to highlight sharing the promise throughout the next two years.

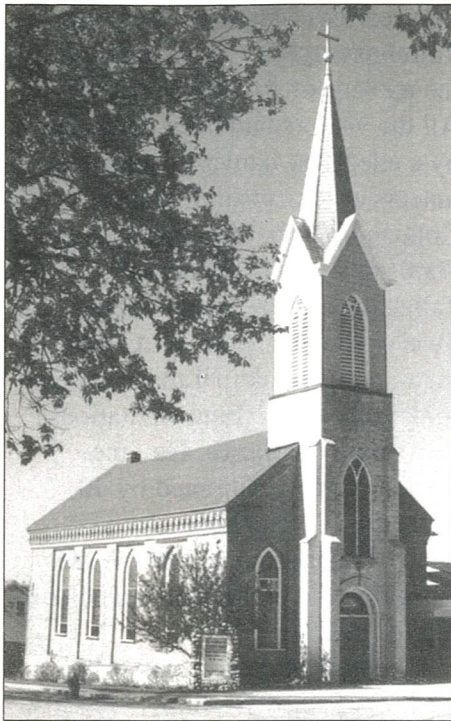
CORRECTION:

The first year of publication for *Christ Light*, the synod’s religion curriculum, will be 1998. A report had said that it might be ready in 1997.

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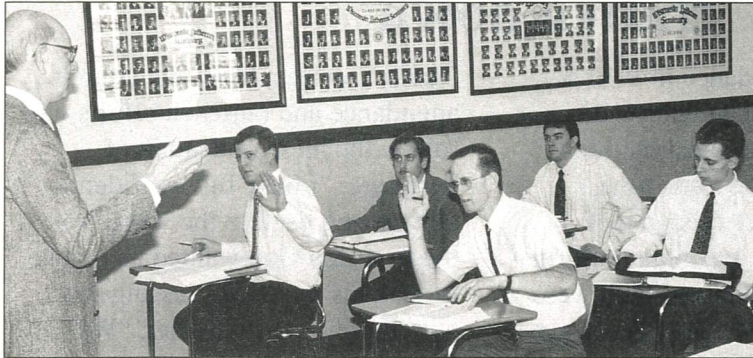


Both the congregation and the church at St. Peter, Theresa, Wis., are 125 years old. The building's cornerstone was laid in 1870. The congregation, formerly part of the American Lutheran Church and then independent, joined WELS in the 1970s.

WELS Kingdom Workers plan convention

The WELS Kingdom Workers convention will be September 29-30 at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon. An informational forum on Friday will be followed by displays and presentations on Saturday. Congressman Mark Neuman will speak at the closing banquet Saturday evening. For more information contact WELS Kingdom Workers 414/771-6848 or 1-800-466-9357.

Special blessings—special thanks



Each year two seminary students receive help with tuition, thanks to one couple's generosity.

About a decade ago a Wisconsin couple found themselves particularly blessed in a business venture. In gratitude to God, they established a student assistance fund.

Each year two Northwestern College graduates enrolling at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary receive tuition assistance for all three years of classroom study.

So far, this couple has helped 22 seminary students. But their gifts will be multiplied many times in the lives these men will touch.

Student assistance is becoming more important each year. Summer

jobs' wages and part-time employment have not kept pace with rising tuition costs.

Your gifts can make a difference for future pastors and teachers. You can make a direct gift now or include student assistance in your estate planning. Our synod's planned giving counselors can help you explore the wide variety of options available.

For more information, contact the WELS Ministry of Planned Giving at 414/771-0697 or 1-800-827-5482.

—John M. Brenner

Trend toward indigenous churches grows in Caribbean

Mission churches in the Caribbean are increasing the number of local members in ministry, according to the *Caribbean Lutheran*.

In Antigua, St. John has called Errol Howe and Emmanuel Gordon as worship assistants and Veronica Abraham as kindergarten teacher. She has been teaching preschool and will be the first Antiguan to teach in the primary school.

In Puerto Rico, where there are three congregations and one preach-

ing station, two nationals help with preaching as they pursue seminary studies. The goal is to turn over full ministry to national leadership in Puerto Rico by 2012.

Besides Antigua and Puerto Rico, WELS missionaries evangelize in the Dominican Republic, St. Lucia, Grenada, and the US Virgin Islands. In addition, Pastor John Strackbein has established ties with 300 Cuban Christians who worship in house churches.

Obituaries

Irma Krause Seegert 1906-1995

Irma Seegert, nee Krause, was born Aug. 16, 1906, in Chaseburg, Wis. She died March 10, 1995, in Saginaw, Mich.

A 1928 graduate of Dr. Martin Luther College, she taught in Lutheran schools in Oak Grove, Montello, and LaCrosse, Wis.

She is survived by a daughter, Elizabeth (Raymond) Pretzer, one sister, Florence Lamke, two grandsons, and one great-grandson.

Siegbert Johann Friedrich Bergemann 1902-1995

Siegbert Bergemann was born Feb. 2, 1902, in Truman, Minn. He died March 10, 1995, in Milwaukee, Wis.

He graduated from Dr. Martin Luther College in 1921 and taught at St. Paul, Wisconsin Rapids; St. Peter, Fond du Lac; Jordan, West Allis; and St. Mark, Watertown, all in Wisconsin.

He is survived by his wife Neva, sons Robert and Gerald (Janet), five grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

Karl G. Bast 1915-1995

Karl G. Bast was born Jan. 26, 1915, in Rockfield, Wis. He died March 11, 1995, in Madison, Wis.

A 1938 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, he served three parishes in South Dakota before coming to Eastside, Madison, Wis., where he served until his retirement in 1980. He also served on the synod's world missions board.

Survived by his wife, Lillian, son, Tom (Maryann), sister, Dora Kuehner, and four grandchildren. A daughter, Karla, preceded him in death.

Fewer future ministers come from prep schools

In the last two years, a smaller percentage of future ministers came from the synod's three preparatory schools and a larger percentage from the 20 WELS-affiliated Lutheran high schools and from public schools, but the synod's ministerial education administrator says it's too soon to make predictions.

"There may be a trend," said Wayne Borgwardt, administrator for ministerial education, "but we're talking about relatively small numbers. We need to see figures for several years."

In 1993 nearly 54 percent of future pastors at Northwestern College (NWC) were prep school graduates; in 1994 the number had dropped to under 47 percent. Over the past 10 years, 57 percent came from prep schools.

Similarly, the number of prep school graduates studying for the teaching ministry at Dr. Martin Luther College (DMLC) has decreased and the number of public schools graduates increased. The

number of area Lutheran schools graduates has remained steady.

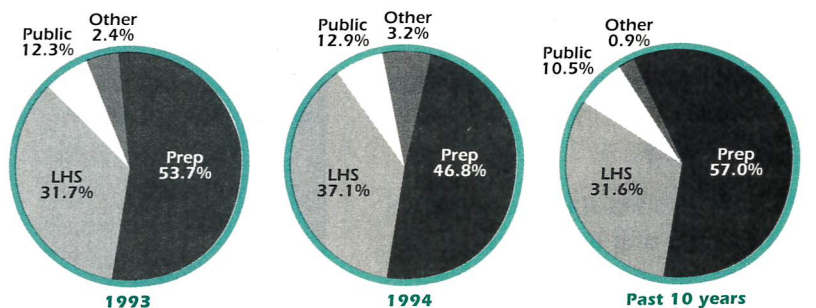
Separating Northwestern Preparatory School from NWC may affect college enrollment, Borgwardt noted. The two schools now share facilities in Watertown, Wis. "NPS is our best feeder into NWC right now, but they're on the same campus," he said. "Whether there will be a difference, I don't know."

This summer NWC will move to New Ulm, Minn., and join with DMLC to become Martin Luther College, which will offer undergraduate education for teaching, staff, or pastoral ministry. Students preparing for the pastoral ministry will continue their education at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in Mequon.

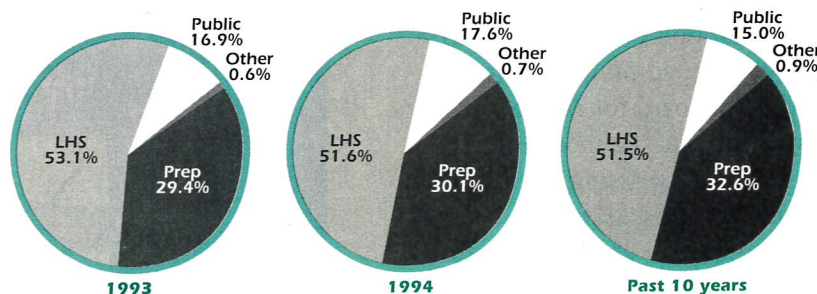
Martin Luther Prep, in Prairie du Chien, Wis., will merge with NPS on the Watertown campus. That new school will be Luther Preparatory School.

The synod's other preparatory school is Michigan Lutheran Seminary in Saginaw.

High schools of future pastors



High schools of future teachers



Kids Connection receives national award

Move over, Columbia Pictures, and make room for WELS. The synod's Kids Connection pilot episode has received a Telly Award as one of the best non-broadcast video/film productions of 1995.

Kids Connection was one of 8,600 entries in the nation-wide competition. Besides Columbia, other Telly winners have been Disney, Paramount, and Turner Broadcasting.

Sponsored by the Commission on Youth Discipleship, the video series introduces children to Christian role models, explores mission and volunteer opportunities, and presents youth-centered Bible messages. The first of nine monthly programs is scheduled to begin in September.

The winning entry was produced by Steve Zambo and Steven Boettcher.

Missions receive grants

Over 80 mission stations in the US and Canada will have funds available for publicity, thanks to a \$92,000 grant from the Lutheran Brotherhood Foundation. Harry Hagedorn, administrator for the synod's Board for Home Missions, reported that the money will be used for advertising, flyers, brochures, letters, telephone canvassing, and other evangelism efforts.

EXPO brings synod to districts



MLC recruitment officer Philip Hirsch was deep in conversation at WELS EXPO. The seminary exhibit was one of 42 displays.

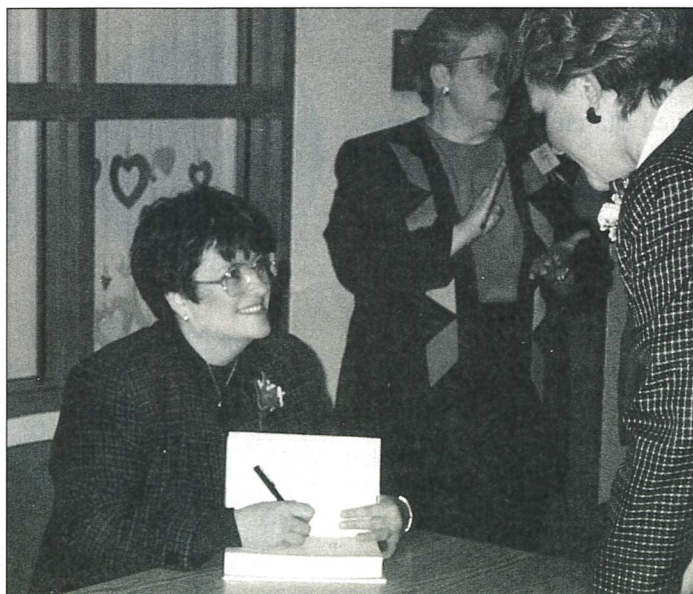
Members of congregations in the synod's Western Wisconsin District learned more about WELS at an exposition in LaCrosse on March 25. The day-long WELS EXPO included displays, presentations, and a "town hall" meeting at which synod representatives answered questions.

About 200 people viewed 42 displays of synodical and parachurch organizations, according to Dale Mueller of WELS Kingdom

Workers, the program's sponsor.

Mueller called the day a success. "I talked to a woman who said, 'I've had a question for years. Today I finally talked to someone who could answer my question.' That's what WELS EXPO is for."

Kingdom Workers plans to present an exposition in each of the synod's 12 districts. The next, in the Southeastern Wisconsin District, will be in Mequon on September 30.



Betty Mahmoody signed copies of her books at a women's conference at Wisconsin Lutheran College. Mahmoody, a WELS member, was the keynote speaker at the March 4 conference. A movie, *Not Without My Daughter*, is based on her book of the same name.

Taped services bring WELS to Swedish home

Bonnie Soderquist didn't expect to have trouble finding a church home when she moved to her husband Roger's home in Amal, Sweden, in 1988. She was dismayed to find that, although Sweden's state church is Lutheran, it did not practice Lutheranism as she knew it.

Although a handful of churches belong to the Lutheran Confessional Church, which is in fellowship with WELS, the nearest LCC church is hours away.

Soderquist wrote to her home congregation, Bethlehem, in Oshkosh, Wis. Her pastors there put her in touch with the synod's taped services committee.

"Within two weeks," she reported, "we were receiving taped church services, *Meditations*, *Northwestern Lutheran*, and study materials for Roger to become a member of our church."

The committee did more than provide tapes. "Roger spent six months studying from the books and Bible to become a member of our

church," said Bonnie. "When something came up that needed clarification, TSC quickly sent an answer."

Pastor Hugo Christer, from the LCC church in Gothenberg, visits the Soderquists about four times a year. In between those visits, the Soderquists use videotapes of WELS churches at worship.

"This has been a real blessing," said Bonnie. "We see the pastor as he gives the sermon and we can see the congregation. We feel like we are actually with the members in church. The pastors and congregations of Trinity in Brillion, Wis., and St. Mark in Watertown, Wis., are now our friends."

It's not necessary to be overseas to receive tapes. Audio or video cassettes are available to anyone who is a distance from a church, said Kenneth Kratz, chairman of the Taped Services Committee. For more information, contact the Division of Home Missions, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398; 414/256-3286.

Names in the news

Pamela Means was named best folk artist by the Wisconsin Area Music Industry. She is a member of St. Marcus, Milwaukee, and a 1986 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran High School. . . . St. Croix Lutheran High seniors **Christopher Rodenbeck** and **Ronald Collier** are National Merit Scholarship finalists, a group representing about half of one percent of US high school seniors. . . . **Chris Rubie** will spend next year in Ireland as an exchange student, and **Aaron Bauer** was chosen for the 1995 Minnesota high school all-star basketball team. Both are students at Minnesota Valley Lutheran High, New Ulm. . . . **Milla Gultcheve** and **Emil Kirilov**, both from Bulgaria, spent the last semester at Shoreland Lutheran High, Somers, Wis. . . . **Shelly Lahti**, a member of St. Mark, Green Bay, Wis., was named Miss Green Bay Area and will compete in the Miss Wisconsin pageant in June. . . . **Andrea Wiechmann** and **Gerald Walta** are winners of the 1995 Herb Kohl Foundation awards. Wiechmann is a student at Wisconsin Lutheran High School, Milwaukee. Walta teaches at Lakeside Lutheran High School, Lake Mills, Wis.

WELS early childhood education classes

Year	With LES*	Without LES*	Enrollment	Teachers
1980-81	22	NA**	245	NA
1985-86	65	NA	798	NA
1990-91	135	NA	1999	NA
1991-92	161	NA	2462	NA
1992-93	179	26	3134	184
1993-94	182	30	3363	210
1994-95	193	28	3756	233

* Lutheran elementary school

** Not available

rē·li·giōn

Defining religion

vespers: A service of thanksgiving usually conducted in the evening. Vespers was originally observed at 6 PM. The two canticles commonly sung in this service are Mary's *Magnificat* and Simeon's *Nunc Dimittis*.



Separating church and state—in Switzerland

A campaign for the separation of church and state in the Swiss canton of Zurich could lead to radical changes in Switzerland's protestant churches.

The campaign, which has a strong chance of succeeding according to an opinion poll, has been launched by right-of-center groups irritated by the Zurich protestant church's stand on controversial political issues.

Supporters of the campaign are also annoyed that churches benefit financially from a state tax on business and industry. The Zurich protestant church stands to lose up to three-quarters of its income if the campaign is successful.

A referendum on the demands is expected either this autumn or by next spring.

rē · li · giōn

Defining religion

universalism: The belief that everyone will ultimately be saved. Universalists deny the existence of eternal torment in hell and see all religions as different paths to the same God. The Bible teaches that salvation comes only through faith in Jesus (John 14:6, Acts 4:12, Mark 16:16).

Euthanasia is gaining favor among Christians in Australia

A survey of Australian Protestants has found that 40 percent of those questioned believe a person should have the right to die rather than suffer the pain of an incurable illness. Thirty percent said they disagreed, and a like number said they were uncertain.

The survey, part of a wide-ranging examination of regular church attenders in 6,500 congregations in 19 Protestant denominations, was conducted in 1991, but the results are being released only now. The Roman Catholic Church, Australia's largest denomination with 27 percent of the population, was not included in the survey.

On the question of euthanasia, older churchgoers were more likely to favor the right to die than younger members, with about 50 percent of those over 60 agreeing they should have the choice available.

According to the survey, people's views on euthanasia divided roughly along the lines of their view of the Bible. Almost 50 percent of those with literal views of Scripture opposed euthanasia, and 54 percent of those with more liberal views of the Bible—who also tended to be older—believed euthanasia should be allowed.

Religion helps prevent depression, study shows

Religion can protect you against depression, according to psychiatrist Harold D. Koenig, who headed the Durham VA Mental Health Survey that explored the methods of coping that a group of 1,000 men age 65 and older found most helpful.

The more survey subjects turned to religion, Koenig reported in *Aging Today* (Feb.), the less likely they were to show signs of depression.

Pastoral counseling may be suffi-

cient to relieve symptoms for patients with minor depression, he said. He recommended that for more serious depression, "professionals may choose to supplement (not replace) traditional treatments with strategies sympathetic to the patient's religious beliefs."

Koenig directs the Program on Religion, Aging, and Health at Duke University Medical Center.

Graham goes global

In what was billed as the "largest evangelistic outreach in the history of the Christian church," evangelist Billy Graham broadcast his message of Christ from San Juan, Puerto Rico, in March to millions of people around the world. Broadcasting from a packed baseball field, three of his meetings were interpreted into 116 languages and extended by satellite to 3,000 mission locations in 185 countries, attended each night by more than 10 million people.

In addition, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association estimated that one billion people heard Mr. Graham's message of the cross of Christ broadcast the week of Easter in prime time on national television networks in 117 countries.

Administration to appeal religious freedom law ruling

The White House has asked the Justice Department to appeal a federal court ruling in Texas that found the 1993 Religious Freedom Restoration Act unconstitutional. RFRA, as the act is known, was meant to reverse a 1990 Supreme Court ruling making it easier for government to restrict religious practice.

In March, US District Court Judge Lucius Bunton ruled the religious freedom law unconstitutional, declaring that Congress did not

have the power to overturn a Supreme Court decision.

The new law said government must show a "compelling" interest in restricting religious freedom and use the least restrictive means available when it does interfere.

The Texas case pits the Archdiocese of San Antonio against the city of Boerne, Texas. The city passed a historic preservation law that blocked the Catholic parish in Boerne from demolishing part of its church for a sanctuary expansion.

In brief

- Although 1994 income from congregations was less than in 1993, **the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) ended fiscal 1994 with a \$3.3 million excess of income over expenses** in operating funds. The church kept expenses almost a million dollars below budget in 1994 and received increased funds from sources other than congregations.
- **Pope John Paul II has rescheduled his postponed trip to the United States** for October 1995. Because of ill health, he canceled plans to visit in October 1994.
- The World Council of Churches says it is looking for **new ways to ensure that its 320 member churches pay their dues**. At least two denominations with more than 30 million members have not been paying. (WELS is not a member of the World Council of Churches.)
- Update on Lutherans in the 104th Congress: US Representatives Sherrod Brown and Paul Gillmor are **Lutherans whose names were omitted in the March issue of *Northwestern Lutheran***. Rep. Douglas K. Bereuter should have been listed as LCMS, and Rep. David McCurdy omitted. The total number of Lutherans in Congress is 22—12 Republicans and 10 Democrats.
- Today **38 percent of all children in the United States live in a home where their biological father is not present** (compared to 17 percent in 1960). Only 51 percent of children today still live with both biological parents. About 46 percent of single-mother families live in poverty, whereas only 8 percent of two-parent families do. (Statistics from *U.S. News & World Report*, Feb. 27, 1995, quoted in *Current Thoughts & Trends*, April 1995.)

rē · li · giōn
Defining religion

hermeneutics: The study of principles for interpreting the Bible. Two basic hermeneutical principles are: let Scripture interpret Scripture, and read every passage in its context.

More religion in the American air

A conservative media watchdog group says network television news and entertainment programs both showed some improvement in their handling of religion news or story lines last year, but still fall far short of adequately reflecting the importance of religion to the American public.

Media Research Center, based in Alexandria, Va., said its review of 1994 prime-time programming showed twice as many references to religion compared to 1993. Moreover, the ratio of descriptions was 2-to-1 positive, compared to 2-to-1 negative in 1993.

However, Center Director L. Brent Bozell III reports that even with the gains, prime-time television entertainment still "marginalizes" religious characters and story lines. "They're offering a blip and a half rather than just a blip," he said. "Religion is still not on the radar screen for the most part."

Bozell said Catholics received the most network news coverage in 1994. He also said New Age movements received more coverage than Protestant denominations, and that news coverage of religion's involvement in social issues "continues to suffer from a bias against traditional values."



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CHANGE IN MINISTRY

Teachers:

Affeldt, Beth E., from Trinity, Bangor, Mich., to Mt. Calvary, Waukesha, Wis.
Bauder, Cynthia L., from St. Andrew, Chicago, Ill., to St. Matthew, Oconomowoc, Wis.
Buchholz, Lisa L., from St. Matthew, Oconomowoc, Wis., to Waucousta, Campbellsport, Wis.
Buege, Charles H., from St. Paul, Stevensville, Mich., to St. John, Wauwatosa, Wis.
Davis, Jeffrey P., from Northland LHS, Wausau, Wis., to Lakeside LHS, Lake Mills, Wis.
Dettmann, Daniel E., from St. John, Wauwatosa, Wis., to Winnebago LA, Fond du Lac, Wis.
Dorn, Howard H., from St. Matthew, Winona, Minn., to retirement
Fickau, Sharon, to Zion, Hartland, Wis.
Freese, John R., from St. Martin, Watertown, S.D., to Wisconsin Luth. College, Milwaukee, Wis.
Grobe, Janet M., to St. John, Minneapolis, Minn.
Grundman, Rick J., from St. John, Libertyville, Ill., to Northland LHS, Wausau, Wis.
Hasselquist, Nancy S., to Salem, Stillwater, Minn.
Hennig, Amy B., from St. Matthew, Niles, Ill., to Trinity, Nicolet, Minn.
Hosbach, Harold A., from Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Mich., to retirement
Howell, Elaine D., from Emanuel, Tawas City, Mich., to retirement
Janke, Peggy J., to Shepherd of the Hills, Inver Grove Heights, Minn.
Jungen, Lynn M., to Trinity, Manitowoc, Wis.
Kaiser, Harold A., from Martin Luther Prep School, Prairie du Chien, Wis., to retirement
Koenig, Brenda L., to Manitowoc LHS, Manitowoc, Wis.
Larson, Mary Ann, to St. Paul, Bangor, Wis.
Lehman, Kenneth A., from Bethlehem, Hortonville, Wis., to First, LaCrosse, Wis.
Lemke, Carl M., from Wisconsin LHS, Milwaukee, to St. Croix LHS, St. Paul, Minn.
Libbert, Gloria R., from Beautiful Savior, Cincinnati, Ohio, to retirement
Luckinbill, Susanne, to Gethsemane, Omaha, Neb.
Maertz, Shirleen A., from St. John, Sparta, Wis., to Zion, Hartland, Wis.
Markgraf, Peter A., from Christ the Lord, Clearwater, Fla., to St. Matthew, Iron Ridge, Wis.
Moldenhauer, Kermit G., from Northwestern Publishing House, Milwaukee, Wis., to Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn.
Morgan, Craig D., from Bloomington, Bloomington, Minn., to Minnesota Valley LHS, New Ulm.
Niemi, David G., from Beautiful Savior, Milwaukee, Wis., to First, LaCrosse, Wis.
Plath, Fern M., from North Trinity, Milwaukee, Wis., to retirement
Reckzin, Lisa M., to Peace, Sun Prairie, Wis.
Renner, Mark A., from St. Paul, Saginaw, Mich., to St. Paul, New Ulm, Minn.
Retzlaff, David N., from Grace, Eau Claire, Mich., to Our Redeemer, Madison, Wis.
Ross, Robin, to Martin Luther, Neenah, Wis.
Rupprecht, James C., to Luther HS, Onalaska, Wis.
Scheitel, Sara, to Lakeside LHS, Lake Mills, Wis.
Schmidt, James P., from St. John, Wood Lake, Minn., to St. John, Libertyville, Ill.

Schmidt, Lynn R., from St. John, Lake City, Minn., to St. John, Sparta, Wis.
Sebald, Walter M., from Wisconsin LHS, Milwaukee, Wis., to retirement
Smith, Kristine A., from Beautiful Savior, Milwaukee, Wis., to Peace, Green Lake, Wis.
Sonnenberg, Jeffrey G., from St. Paul, Algoma, Wis., to Mt. Lebanon, Milwaukee, Wis.
Spangenberg, Jeffrey L., from St. Peter, Fond du Lac, Wis., to St. Paul, Appleton, Wis.
Thompson, Donna, to St. Peter, St. Peter, Minn.
Walther, Bonnie L., to St. John, Burlington, Wis.
Wegner, Joan, to Zion, Greenleaf, Wis.
Wilke, Russell A., from St. Peter, Helenville, Wis., to St. John, Redwood Falls, Minn.

Pastors:

Beck, John A., from King of Kings, Wasilla, Alaska, to Mt. Zion, Kenosha, Wis.
Bitter, Jon R., from Cross of Christ, Liverpool, N.Y., to Our Savior, Zion, Ill.
Frohader, Richard E., from Immanuel, Saulf Ste. Marie, Mich., to retirement
Gieschen, Norbert A., to St. John, Genoa, Wis.
Krueger, Wilbert T., from St. John, Lannon, Wis., to retirement
Lehninger, Paul D., to Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee, Wis.
Pamperin, Richard T., from Trinity, Marinette, Wis., to First, LaCrosse, Wis.
Roth, Ronald D., from WELS Director of Planned Giving, to CCFs administrator
Scheibe, Richard A., from Martin Luther, Neenah, Wis., to Trinity, Brillion, Wis.
Schlawin, Joseph R., from St. John, Boyd, Minn., to St. Paul, Ridgeland, Wis.
Schultz, Roger W., from New Hope, Racine, Wis., to Shoreland LHS, Somers, Wis.
Thrams, James A., from Northwestern Prep School, Watertown, Wis., to retirement
Zickuhr, John G., from Our Redeemer, Grant Park, Ill., to Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Service, Milwaukee, Wis.

AUDIOVISUAL LIBRARY

DANIEL (Code 8232)—1995 25 min. color PIJA (\$10)
The story of Daniel in animated form.
CHILDREN'S HEROES: JEREMIAH (Code 8245)—1995 23 min. color PIJ (\$7.50) This animated video will acquaint children with a lesser-known Old Testament hero.
TAIWAN (Code 5161)—1995 34 min. color PIJSCA (\$7.50) A two-section video shows how the mission in Taiwan has grown.
HONG KONG: PEARL OF THE ORIENT (Code 5160)—1995 37 min. color PIJSCA (\$7.50) This two-part video shows how our Hong Kong mission is preparing for the takeover by Communist China in 1997.
A PLACE TO COME BACK TO (Code 8243)—1995 29 min. color SCA (\$10) The video offers suggestions for reaching out to the mentally ill. Presenter must supply gospel motivation.
 Audiovisual Services, Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 N 113th St, Milwaukee WI 53226-3284; 1-800-662-6093; Milwaukee area, 414/475-6600.

COMING EVENTS

COMMISSION ON WORSHIP MEETING—Public invited. Essays on liturgical worship and baptism. 10 AM-5 PM June 16-17 at Grace, Milwaukee. Bach's

Cantata #7 with orchestra, chorus, and soloists June 16, 7 PM.

SUNDAY SCHOOL CONVENTION—July 7-9. WELS Youth Discipleship, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398; 414/256-3274.

OWLS CONVENTION & HOSTEL—July 11-19. Special Ministries, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222; 414/256-3241.

FAMILY CAMPING—Camp Lor-Ray, western Michigan. Memorial Day-Labor Day. Milt Karnitz, camp—5281 Russell Rd, Twin Lakes MI 49457 (616/766-3152); home—2233 Hudson St, Muskegon MI 49441 (616/755-2004).

POSITION AVAILABLE

ADVERTISING AND DESIGN SERVICES DIRECTOR
Knowledge of Quark Xpress, Adobe Illustrator and Adobe Photoshop. Administrative, organizational, and supervisory skills. Layout, design, art, and advertising directing experience. Excellent communication skills. Degree required; prior experience in a publishing environment preferred. Send resume to Todd Rebillot, Director of Human Resources, Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 N. 113th Street, Milwaukee Wisconsin 53226-3284.

LWMS CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR/MANAGER—For more information call before June 15. Elaine Otterstatter 1-800-358-4467.

MANAGER OF MARKETING SERVICES—Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Service. Member of WELS or ELS church, degree or experience in marketing. Pastor James Berger, WLCFS, 6800 N 76th St, PO Box 23980, Milwaukee WI 53223; 414/353-5000, ext. 21.

AVAILABLE

CANDELABRAS—two, electric, five candles per unit. You pay shipping. Our Redeemer, Ladysmith WI; 715/532-5382.

PIPE ORGAN—very good condition, 4 ranks and chimes. Don, 608/463-7536.

STENCIL MAKER—Gestetner model 1100, stencils, styli, filters, mimeo ink, correction fluid. Also 75 copies of *The Lutheran Hymnal*. Christ, 401 S Main St, PO Box 12, Cochrane WI 54622-0012; 608/248-2970.

NEEDED

GERMAN LANGUAGE THEOLOGICAL BOOKS—for students and teachers at Evangelical Lutheran Free Church, Leipzig, Germany. Send or bring to Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon.

ANNIVERSARIES

PARDEEVILLE, WIS.—St. John (100). Confirmation reunion, for classes 1899-1959, July 9; for classes 1960-95, Aug. 13. Anniversary Sunday, Nov. 5. Meals follow services; 608/429-3636.

RAPID CITY, S.D.—St. Paul School (25). Aug. 27, 8 and 10:30 worship. Pot luck at noon. 605/342-2844.

HASTINGS, NEB.—Redeemer (50). June 4, 10 AM, lunch following; 3 PM, dinner follows. Bruce Hanneman, 402/462-9623.

WINONA, MINN.—St. Matthew School (40). Sept. 10, 8 and 10:30 AM. Brunch and program following.

SANBORN, MINN.—Zion (125). June 11, 10 AM and 2:30 PM. Noon meal. 507/648-3601.

A touch of Christmas and a taste of Easter

Karl R. Gurgel

Everything after Easter seems anticlimactic. The suspense has been building since Christmas. With Mary, astonished by the impending birth of Jesus, we may have wondered out loud, "How can this be?" The miracle of it still astonishes us: the very Son of God took on human flesh and blood!

Throughout Epiphany, the time for Jesus to show us who he really is, we saw new miracles each week. And each one conclusively showed his divine nature as he altered the course of nature. Here, in human flesh and blood, was really and truly the Son of God.

Then came Lent. It emphasized what the Son of God would allow the sons of men to do to him. After the mockery of a trial, unfair beatings, a barbaric crucifixion, almost unbelievably God's Son was dead. Crucified, dead, and buried.

But almost as short-lived as the darkness over all the earth when the Savior died was the darkness of despair that had settled over his doubting disciples. Easter joy, then as well as now, swept the last vestiges of sorrow away. "He is risen!" We, too, shall rise from death, for his death has given us life from death.

How could there be anything more decisive, more final, more reassuring than the message of Easter? The Son of God, the Son of Man, has won for us a permanent victory.

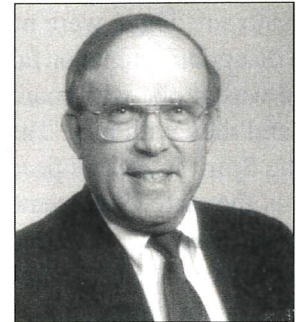
And yet the wonder of it contin-

ues. In each new generation it gets planted and it grows. To that end, our ascended Lord, through the Holy Spirit, calls and equips young men and women to serve him, teaching or preaching, reaching more of the lost with the glorious news that they have been found.

Encouraged by him, we continue to prepare people to seek the lost and strengthen the believers. Our synod, almost from its infancy, has had a ministerial education program. It has not always been in the same place, but it has always had the same purpose.

We thank God for this constancy of purpose—his purpose. We pledge ourselves, as parents, grandparents, concerned fellow Christians, to encourage young men and women to prepare for full-time church work. We are committed, synodically, to provide the resources for their education. And once they become ours—our pastors, teachers, staff ministers—may God help us receive them as his—his gracious gifts to us, his church.

Christmas is past. The celebration of Easter is over. But each Sunday, every Sunday, is a proclamation of the messages of Christmas and Easter. As we together recruit and train candidates qualified for the ministry, seeing to it that God's Word is proclaimed faithfully, we bring our world a touch of Christmas and a taste of Easter year around.



Karl R. Gurgel is president of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

Mission of WELS

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

Objective five

To recruit and train candidates qualified for full-time ministry and provide for their continuing education so that the Word of God is proclaimed faithfully and effectively in accord with the Lutheran Confessions.

The fruit of the Spirit is peace

James A. Aderman

Eden is the fragrance of the fruit of the Spirit. In that idyllic garden, there was no fear because there was no sin. There were no crushing disappointments or failures. God was at one with man and woman, and they with him. The fruit of the Spirit is Eden's peace.

Peace is the state God created and sin destroyed. It's the condition Jesus restored to believers through his death on the cross.

"Peace be with you" takes on extraordinary depth when it's a reminder of the peace the Spirit gives us in Jesus.

The blessings of peace

When the Spirit brought us to faith, he connected us with the peace Jesus won. "Since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1).

Additional blessings attach themselves to that peace. "The peace of God . . . will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7). "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet" (Romans 16:20).

Through the Spirit we are able to "let the peace of Christ rule in [our] hearts" (Colossians 3:15), for "the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace" (Romans 8:6). In gratitude we "make every effort to be found spotless, blameless, and at peace with him" (2 Peter 3:14).

Flowing from Jesus' peace is Eden's security, safety, calmness. What can possibly go wrong when the God of peace is with you? Regardless of circumstances, we can say, "I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety" (Psalm 4:8).

Hope is also ours. "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:13).

And knowing what peace is, we find a much richer meaning in God's promise to Abraham and all believers, "You . . . will go to your fathers in peace" (Genesis 15:15).

Peacemakers

As the Spirit's peace takes over our lives, it reminds us we are called to live in peace. We are

compelled to be those blessed peacemakers who "will be called sons of God" (Matthew 5:9), "peacemakers who sow in peace [and] raise a harvest of righteousness" (James 3:18).

We work for oneness in faith with all Christians, "mak[ing] every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3). Even an ordinary greeting—"Peace be with you"—takes on extraordinary depth when it's a reminder of the peace the Spirit gives us in Jesus.

The sweet fruit of the Spirit is peace. "The Lord bless you and . . . give you peace."

James Aderman is pastor at Fairview, Milwaukee.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

1. Jesus said his peace is not the same as the world's (John 14:27). Describe the difference.
2. Read Romans 5:1-5. As a result of our peace with God, what other blessings do we inherit?
3. Where in your life is God calling you to exercise more fully the peace he's given you?

Next: The virtue of patience

love • joy • **peace** • patience • kindness • goodness • faithfulness • gentleness • self-control



It's the little things that count

Victor H. Prange

“It’s just little things that cause the problems.” How many times have I heard that said by a spouse coming for counseling because of a troubled marriage. Here is confirmation of the old adage, “It’s the little things that count.”

Martin Luther said the same about Christian living. He was critical of those who felt Christian living meant entering a monastery or running away from home on a pilgrimage to some holy site or torturing oneself with self-chosen works of devotion. Luther would say: “It’s the little things that count.”

Bo Giertz, a bishop of the Swedish church, makes that point in “Our Daily Calling,” recently republished in *LOGIA*. Bishop Giertz writes: “It is a wrong conception to think that I really serve God’s cause in the religious activities of my church, or in the societies, and through my prayers. I serve God just as much when for the good of my fellow man I plow a field, or keep the accounts, or wash the breakfast dishes.”

He scores Christians “who are so careful about their ‘absolutes,’ but are careless about their bank loans and neglect their children or their aged parents in order to be out evening after evening at religious meetings. An evangelical Christian life is a matter of simple faithfulness in our calling; such a faithfulness has the greatest blessing to offer, first to our environment, but also to the Christian himself.” It’s the little things that count!

Take such a seemingly little thing as regularly gathering the family around the dinner table to eat together. That hardly

seems to be anything big. Yet you can count blessings from such a little thing.

As evidence I cite an article in the October 1994 *Reader’s Digest*, “What’s Behind Success in School?” One of the major findings of this study was that students who regularly shared mealtimes with their families tested better than those who didn’t. “Sixty percent of students who said their ‘whole family sits around a table together for a meal’ at least four times a week got high scores. Of students in families that ate together three times a week or less often, just 42 percent scored high—a huge 18-point gap.” Why? One educator suggested that “families that eat together are likelier to take an interest in what their kids are doing.” It’s the little things that count.

Almost everyone agrees that the family is very important in transmitting values and behaviors to the next generation. A professor at the University of Chicago has written a book subtitled “Eating and the Perfecting of Our Nature.” He makes the case that table manners help to shape morality. His point is no doubt too narrowly focused, but he is onto something when he suggests that what happens at the family dinner table can do much to shape the kind of persons our children become.

It’s the little things that count—for good or ill.

Victor Prange is pastor at Peace, Janesville, Wisconsin.

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breakfast dishes.”*

I thank Morton Schroeder for "Johannes Bading" (March). I am a fourth generation member of St. John. Bading's church, like his theology, has stood the test of time. We still hear the gospel.

*B. Freundt
Wauwatosa, Wisconsin*

I was happy to read "The hidden majesty" (April). It is true, "Earthly authorities have been established by God." So why do many Christians see nothing wrong with radar detectors?

My nephew will forever walk with a limp because his car was struck by a speeding driver. That driver was able to enjoy his habit of speeding because he owned a radar detector.

No Christian should own a radar detector.

*Donna Ihms
Dallas, Texas*

Prof. Brug (April) noted that questions regarding ethnic diversity offer only speculation where the Bible is silent. But why do theologians never consider that there were four women on Noah's ark? The wives of Noah's sons could have brought with them a diversity of genetic traits.

*Gerhold Lemke
Cedar Rapids, Iowa*

The symbolism of the March cover should be evident in the crown of thorns and the cross that remind us of Christ's sacrifice for our sins. Our old Adam prefers to avoid that reminder. This may explain why some people disliked that picture. On the other hand, I am disappointed in the April cover. The picture is just a face. It lacks all symbolism of Easter. When a picture helps us focus on our living Savior, it truly can be worth a thousand words.

*Dennis Gross
Garland, Texas*

"Public school" (April) was refreshing. Christian schools are certainly a blessing, but public schools hold young people to whom our children could witness. It sometimes seems we are too much concerned with keeping out the evils of the world and too little concerned with sharing the good news of salvation.

*Mary Meiers
Aurora, Colorado*

I was disheartened as I read "Public school." Pastor Peterson writes "to let their light shine. . . young people have to be trained in Christian doctrine, evangelism, and apologetics." Where better to receive that training than at Lutheran high schools? As a graduate of a Lutheran high school, I can attest that there are plenty of opportunities to witness in that setting.

*Timothy J. Hunt
Brillion, Wisconsin*

Although I believe the best place for kids is the Lutheran school, over 80 percent of WELS teens are in public high schools, and over two thirds of our congregations do not operate elementary schools. What's essential is that parishes make provisions for nurturing all youth, whether they attend Lutheran or public school.

*Gerald F. Kastens
WELS administrator for Youth Discipleship*

We thank Curt Peterson for "Public school" (April). It was refreshing and encouraging to read his opinion.

*Dennis and Karen Miller
West Salem, Wis.*

I was delighted to read "Public school—a chance to be salt and light." I have often wondered how we are to spread God's Word if we associate only with those of our own faith.

Public school education gives insight. The views of different faiths and of unbelievers are heard. This has made for better understanding of how people think and how to deal with them when witnessing.

*Marilyn Potratz
Oshkosh, Wisconsin*

Send letters to Readers Forum, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398; FAX 414/256-3899. Include full name, address, and daytime phone number. Letters are edited for clarity and conciseness. Writers' views are not necessarily those of WELS or Northwestern Lutheran.

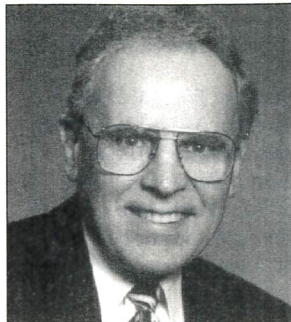
THROUGH MY
BIBLE in 3 YEARS

July 1995



- 1. Acts 15:1-12
- 2. Ac. 15:13-34
- 3. Ac. 15:35-16:5
- 4. Ac. 16:6-15
- 5. Ac. 16:16-40
- 6. Ac. 17:1-15
- 7. Ac. 17:16-34
- 8. Ac. 18:1-17
- 9. Ac. 18:18-28
- 10. Ac. 19:1-20
- 11. Ac. 19:21-41
- 12. Ac. 20:1-16
- 13. Ac. 20:17-38
- 14. Ac. 21:1-16
- 15. Ac. 21:17-36
- 16. Ac. 21:37-22:16
- 17. Ac. 22:17-29
- 18. Ac. 22:30-23:10
- 19. Ac. 23:11-35
- 20. Ac. 24:1-21
- 21. Ac. 24:22-25:12
- 22. Ac. 25:13-27
- 23. Ac. 26:1-18
- 24. Ac. 26:19-32
- 25. Ac. 27:1-20
- 26. Ac. 27:21-44
- 27. Ac. 28:1-16
- 28. Ac. 28:17-31
- 29. Amos 1, 2
- 30. Amos 3, 4
- 31. Amos 5, 6

When tearing down is made to seem like building up



Gary P. Baumler is editor of Northwestern Lutheran and WELS Director of Communications.

To suggest that Paul isn't resting all Christian faith on the physical resurrection of Christ stretches the bounds of reason.

The Jesus Seminar scholars are at it again. They're the ones who "vote" to decide what is true or not in the Bible. Most recently they concluded there is no evidence that the Easter resurrection was a physical reality. They agreed that there probably was no tomb and that Jesus' body was likely disposed by his crucifiers—not his followers.

That conclusion was so predictable as not to be newsworthy or noteworthy. It's what follows that stirs the blood.

"Despite those judgments, however," according to Religion News Service, "the scholars affirmed that the religious significance of the resurrection does not depend on historical fact."

"We wanted to make an affirmative statement to all who think we only care about tearing down the Christian faith," said Robert W. Funk, a co-founder of the seminar.

"'God raised Jesus from the dead' is a statement of faith, not historic fact," said Stephen J. Patterson, another member.

That those men are scholars I accept. But do they think that the rest of us lack so much common sense as to fall for that old line?

It is an old line, you know, used by many before who felt they wanted to use Scripture but not believe what it says. Still, they would be much more honest if they simply admitted they don't believe in the Scriptures or in a Christianity that depends on a risen Savior. Having said so, they have trashed Christianity, despite any affirmations to follow.

One wonders whether they have ever

read 1 Corinthians 15. To suggest that Paul isn't resting all Christian faith on the physical resurrection of Christ stretches the bounds of reason. Listen to some of Paul's words:

"If Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith" (v.14).

"If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins" (v.17).

"If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men" (v.19).

"But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead . . ." (v. 20).

Now I ask you, "Does the religious significance of the resurrection depend on historical fact?" If by religious significance, you mean hope for life beyond this world, there is only one answer possible.

The Jesus Seminar scholars have one thing right. We accept the truth of Scripture on faith. However, accepting it on faith doesn't mean it's not historical fact. It only means that God had to work the faith to believe it because left to our own reason, we couldn't accept it either. Just so, it's also true that to the worldly wise the gospel of Christ has always been foolishness. Let's draw the lines clearly then and take our stands.

Let us stand with the apostles who gave their lives for the risen Savior and made the hallmark of their preaching the historical resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Let us stand with Peter at Pentecost when he said, "God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact" (Acts 2:32).

Gary P. Baumler

Fact or Myth?

Making a will is a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Answer: Myth! Fact: Your will needs to change as your life changes.

And my, how our lives can change!



*Birth of children
or grandchildren*



Change in marital status



Move to a new state

Change in wealth ♡ Change in charitable interests ♡ Change in estate and gift tax laws

Please consider . . .

- ♡ Reviewing your will today.
- ♡ Adding a Christian Preamble (*a special message of comfort for your loved ones*). Your gift planning counselor can help you with the wording.
- ♡ Contacting your gift planning counselor for helpful advice about how to develop a will if you don't already have one.

Depending on state laws, the assets you have in your estate and your desires, a **living trust** may be appropriate for you. Your gift planning counselor can provide valuable information about this too.

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Not just a building

It's natural to become attached to the place where we worship. There God comes to us in his Word, sharing the life-saving and life-giving gospel.

Paul Lidtke

The smoke coming from the First United Methodist Church in downtown Freeport was spotted shortly before 11:00 that Saturday morning. By the time my wife, Stacey, and I joined the crowd in the parking lot across from the church an hour later, the roof had collapsed and the building was all but destroyed.

Watching the grand 90-year-old building on the corner of Stephenson and Cherry Streets burn was an eerie sight. I could only think of how I would feel if it were my church. I tried to imagine what must have been going through the minds of the members of First United Methodist.

Then I heard anguished cries. Turning, I saw a young woman sobbing on the shoulder of a friend. "She must be a member of the church," I said to Stacey.

Others were looking at the young woman, too. Many were pointing. Some were laughing. They could

not understand how attached church members become to a building.

We know the building doesn't make the congregation; the congregation makes the building. However, it's natural to become attached to the place where we worship. There God comes to us in his Word, sharing the life-saving and life-giving gospel. There prayers are spoken on our behalf. There family members are baptized, married, and buried.

The people in the crowd that Saturday afternoon who didn't understand why the young woman was crying probably never had—or didn't care to have—a place where God revealed himself through his Word. The people laughing at the young woman's tears were as big a tragedy as the church that burned to the ground.

It's a tragedy how many people have been blinded by Satan so that they cannot see the light of the

gospel. It's even more tragic to think of where Satan will lead his unsuspecting followers for eternity.

It has been said that a church's steeple points our thoughts heavenward. This may be true of believers. However, unbelievers need more than a steeple's help. Unbelievers need the help of those who worship under a church's steeple.

Perhaps people you know wouldn't miss a burned-down church. If so, help them learn the importance of having a place where God comes to us in his Word. Share the message that we are eternally saved through Jesus' blood.

Then your friends and relatives will join you in saying, "I rejoiced with those who said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord.'" Then they will understand why a young woman was crying over the burning of a church.

Paul Lidtke is pastor of Our Savior, Freeport, Illinois.



Milwaukee Journal photo