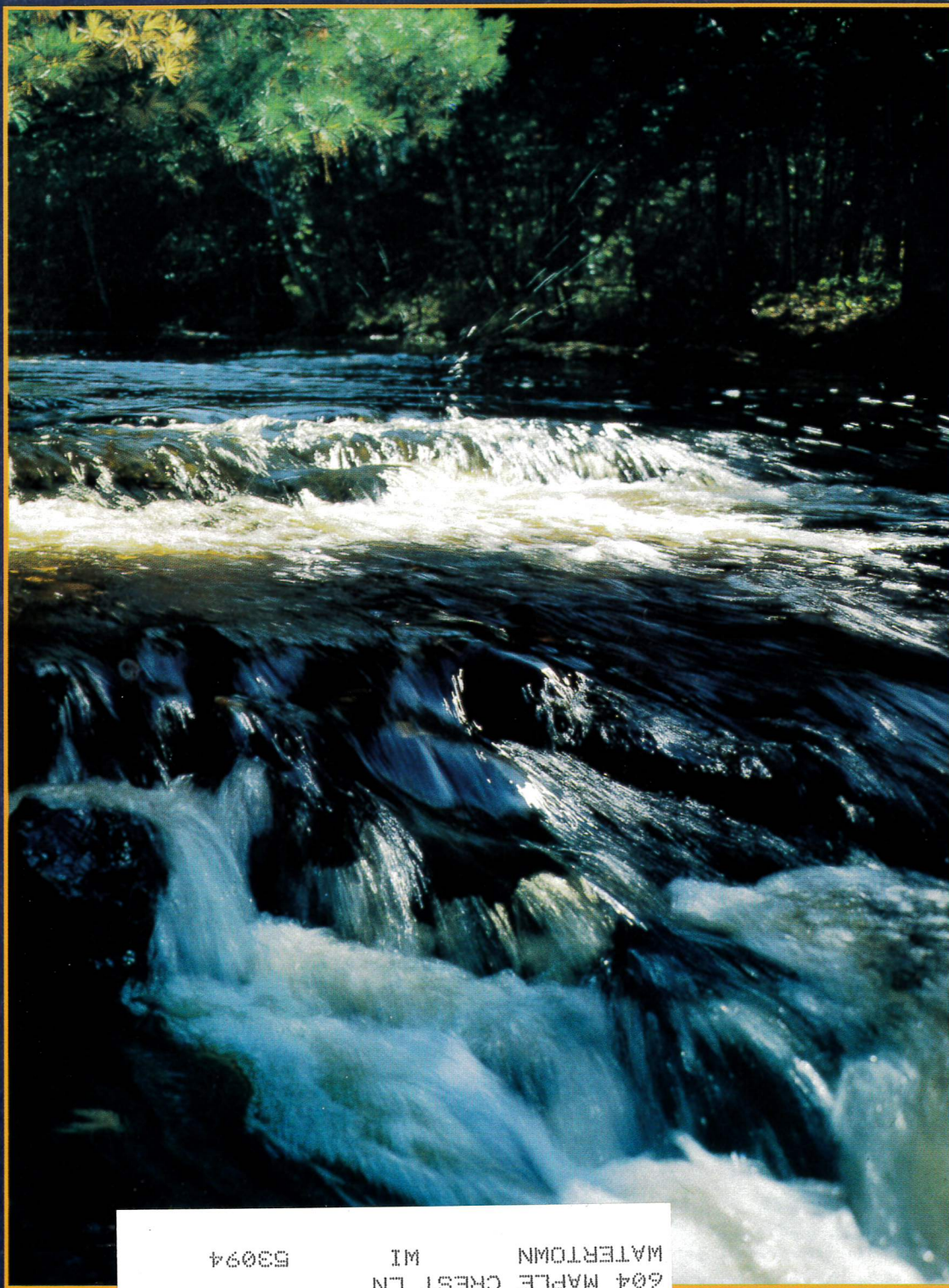


NORTHWESTERN

February 1997

# LUTHERAN



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powerful faith**

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# Every day a Valentine's Day

*This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us.  
And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. 1 John 3:16*

Richard E. Lauersdorf

“Will you be my valentine?” Remember cards like that? Remember when you used to send them? Perhaps you still do to show your love for someone special.

## Every day

Ever stop to think that every day is Valentine's Day with God? He doesn't limit his show of love to one day a year. He loves every day and has been doing so ever since the world began. Notice, too, that his love is active. It doesn't merely say “I love you” or simply send a card. He shows his love in actions.

Noah knew that love as it housed him in the ark's dryness while the flood waters surged. Joseph felt it, too, as it eventually turned his brothers' hatred into good for both him and them. Daniel tasted it in the lions' den as it vise-gripped shut the mouths of hungry beasts. Paul was floated by it safely to Malta's shores when his ship was wrecked in the Adriatic. Mary experienced it daily in the form of John, the foster son whom Jesus commanded to take care of her.

Ready to write our own examples from these past weeks? Did God show his love in the form of family members to laugh with us when we were happy and to cry with us when we were sad? Was it in the form of parents who provided us

clothing and shoes, house and home, and all we needed to keep our body and life? Was it in the form of strength against temptation, healing for a hurting body, success in some venture, guidance for some decision?

How necessary it is to have the eyes of our hearts opened wider so we see God's love flowing down on us constantly. Our God of love sends his valentines to us every day.

## One special way


Best of all, God has shown his love in sending his Son, Jesus, to lay down his life for us. Jesus loved us so much that he was willing to take our place on that cross and in that grave so sin's punishment might be paid and sin's debt erased. Because of this gift, the devil can't harm us, the grave hold us, or eternity harbor any fear for us. Behind this divine gift of salvation stands a love that

is undeserved and indescribable. And that love is real every day.

How necessary it is to have the eyes of our hearts opened wider so we see God's love overflowing to us in this special way. Lent is the time for such eye-opening. At the foot of Jesus' cross, we kneel again this blessed season to drink in the message of God's forgiving love and to thrill anew because of it. Such love, “so amazing, so divine” dare never become “old-hat” or “just routine” for us, but a blessed valentine from our God every day.

God's valentines of love come every day and will continue to do so. Let's imitate him and make every day a Valentine's Day as we show love toward him and toward each other.

*Richard E. Lauersdorf, the synod's first vice president, is pastor at St. John, Jefferson, Wisconsin.*



Every day is Valentine's Day with God. He doesn't limit his show of love to one day a year.



- Carl Henkel, a familiar name to NL readers, took a one-year leave of absence from Mt. Olive, St. Paul, Minn., to teach at the seminary in Cameroon. He will write regular installments on his experiences in Cameroon. Turn to page 8 to read his first impressions of this distant land.
- It's a subject we would rather avoid. But God has told us that in this world we will have troubles. On page 10, read one woman's account of a congregation whose pastor was imprisoned, but also forgiven.
- Valentine's Day—a day to celebrate love. Three authors share how it's also a day to celebrate and reflect on God's love. Read
  - ✓ Every day a Valentine's Day, page 3
  - ✓ Talk about hearts!, page 18
  - ✓ An unforgettable valentine, page 29
- This issue ends our series on the Liturgy. Our thanks to author James Tiefel. You'll find his final article on page 16.

—LRB

Cover photo by Jerry Kiesow

## NORTHWESTERN LUTHERAN

Official magazine of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod  
February 1997 / Vol. 84, No. 2

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### Subscription services

**1-800-662-6093 ext. 8**  
 Milwaukee area 414/475-6600 ext. 5

### Northwestern Publishing House

1250 N 113 St  
 Milwaukee WI 53226-3284

USA and Canada—one year \$9. All other countries—one year, air mail \$40; one year, surface mail \$24. Write for multi-year, blanket, and bundle rates.

Available on audio cassette from Mission for the Visually Impaired, 559 Humboldt Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55107.

NORTHWESTERN LUTHERAN (ISSN 0029-3512) is published monthly by Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 N 113 St, Milwaukee WI 53226-3284. Periodical postage paid at Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

**POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to *Northwestern Lutheran*, c/o Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 N 113 St, Milwaukee WI 53226-3284. ©1996 by *Northwestern Lutheran*. Printed in the USA.

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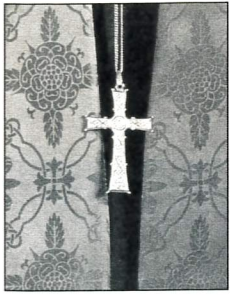
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# Living, busy, powerful faith

Saved by faith, not works, but faith works.

Eric S. Hartzell

When God says we are saved by faith alone and not by works, we might easily misunderstand him. It sounds too easy. Our self-respecting old nature rears up on its haunches and says, “Wait a minute! I don’t take handouts.” But when God talks about being saved by faith and not by works, he is not talking about handouts. When he talks about faith, he is not just talking about a passive activity—something we don’t do. Faith doesn’t just lie there inactive.

## No work, no faith

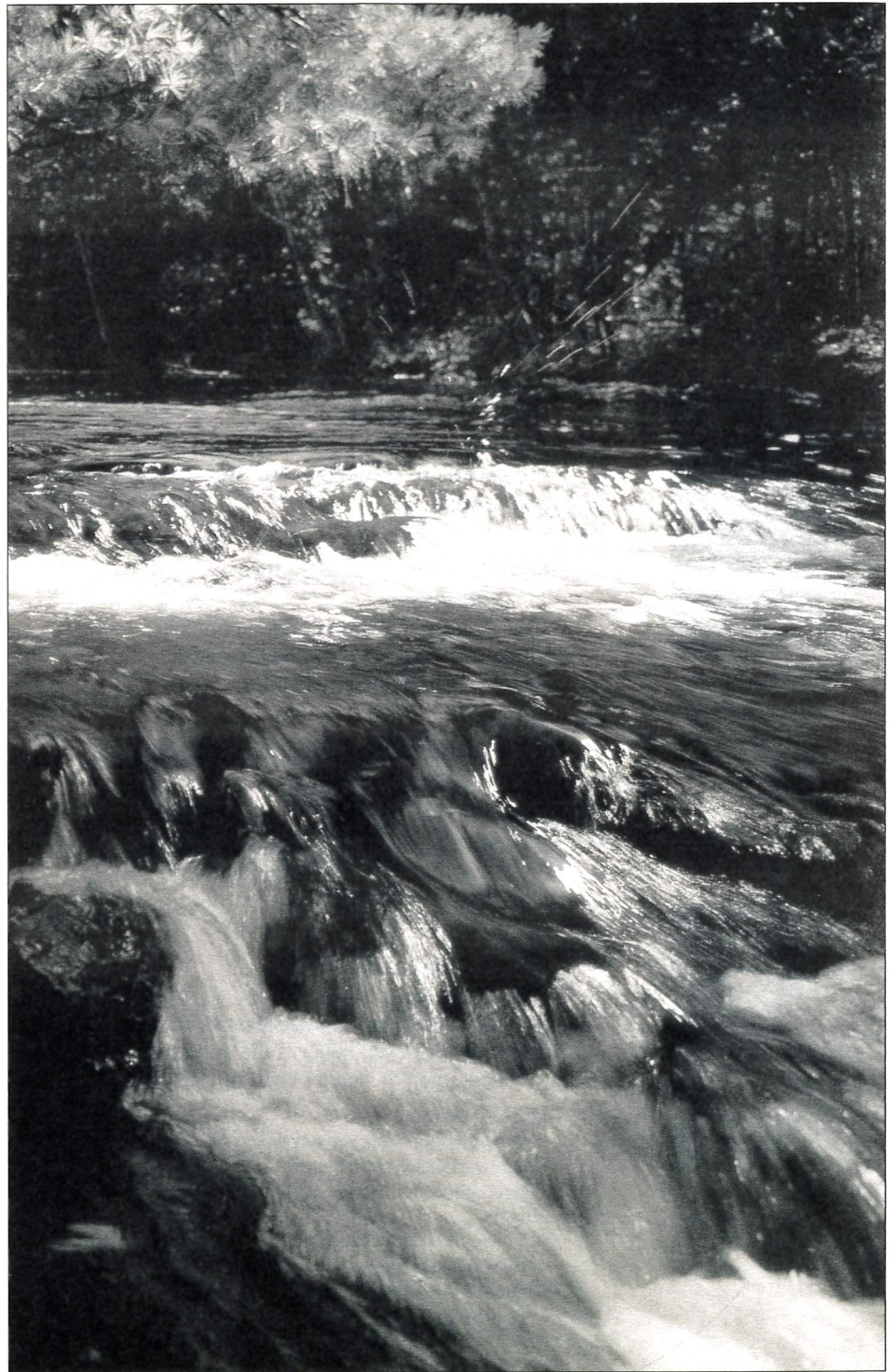
Try this on for size: Faith is something harder than works. Faith is more active than works. Faith works harder than works work. We are not saved by our works, but let that not confuse our understanding of faith. Faith does work! In the Epistle of James we hear that faith that stops working ceases to exist.

---

**Faith works harder  
than works work.**

---

Martin Luther described faith in his Preface to Romans. Through this book of the Bible, Luther learned the correct understanding that God credits righteousness to us through Jesus without the deeds of the law. Luther also saw that faith is not something easy and light—something done while leaning back and doing nothing.





He wrote: "Faith is a divine work in us. It changes us and regenerates us. It mortifies the natural man in us and makes us new men in heart, spirit, mind, and all power, and it cannot be without the Holy Spirit.

"Oh, it is a living, busy, and powerful thing, this faith is. It is impossible that it should not always do good works. It does not stop and ask where good works can be done. Before there can be any asking, it does good works and is always doing them."

### Faith and obedience

One of faith's great works is obedience. The Bible often equates faith with obedience. The book of Romans begins, "Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith" (1:5). Romans also says: "The gospel is made known so "that all nations might believe and obey him" (16:26).

The writer to the Hebrews equates disobedience with unbelief: "And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? So we see that they were not able to enter because of their unbelief" (3:18,19).

John Meyer, a former professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, wrote, "Here is an obedience which begins by submitting to the gracious will of God, accepting the blood-bought pardon which he offers, and then, in the joy and the relief of being free from the condemning debt, produces good and God-pleasing works out of gratitude for the great benefits received."

Obedience does something. In

fact, faith's greatest work comes when God says, "Believe! Just believe!" God directs us to this discovery when he says, "To the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness" (Romans 4:5).

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The real "work" for a Christian  
is not when God tells him  
to do something, but when  
God tells him to do nothing.

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Abraham is our great example of someone who worked so hard to trust God, and not to try to work things out himself. At age 75, he arrived footsore at the great tree of Moreh at Shechem, right in the middle of his "promised" land, and we read, "The Canaanites were then in the land." But he didn't reach for his sword (the same sword that prevailed against the four kings who conquered Sodom). He didn't try to carve out his promise. He waited for it. And when his wife Sarah died, he was still waiting and bought a cave for her burial place.

Meanwhile, as the long, tedious seconds of the century of waiting for his son dragged on, Abraham worked to not work. When he tried to work things out on his own, trouble followed quickly: heartbreak, domestic strife, Hagar, Ishmael.

### The hard work of doing nothing

The real "work" for a Christian is not when God tells him to do something, but when God tells him to do nothing. (In other words, to not do anything is not an easy thing to do.)

In the work of praying, especially those prayers that come under great stress and strain, it would be far easier to do something.

Tell the parents whose child is deathly sick to gather a million dollars or walk a hundred miles, and they will do it. As long as there is breath in their bodies, they will do anything you say if they think it will help their child. But tell them there is nothing they can do but simply let their child's life rest in the hand and the heart of his Maker—ahhhhh! That is the work that is harder than work.

This work of faith is part of the heartbreak of true repentance. "A broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise" (Psalm 51:17).

This was the realization of the Prodigal with the pigs. His greatest work was to throw himself on his father's mercy. No further thrashing would get him out of the sty of his own doing. This heartbreak of true repentance is reflected in the hymn writer's verse, "Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to your cross I cling." It is not easy for self-sufficient people to say that. If I could do something to take the hurt from my heavenly Father's eyes, I would. Gladly. A million dollars worth or a hundred miles of it. But I can't. I can't do anything but ask him to forgive me and know that he will.

It's only by faith that we are saved, but faith is not the easy way out. Faith is work: God's divine work in us. Faith is an activity our new nature delights to do.

NL

*Eric Hartzell is pastor at Cross and Crown, Georgetown, Texas.*



# First impressions

A missionary offers insights on his new home in Cameroon, Africa.

Carl R. Henkel

*I've been in Kumba such a short time I am hardly in a position to present a true picture of life in Cameroon. Future articles will attempt to capture the essence of life, both physical and spiritual, of those who live here and offer a glimpse of the working of the Holy Spirit as seen through my eyes. First impressions, however, are not meant to be exhaustive studies but just that, first impressions. These I gladly share. . . .*

**O**ur plane touched down on African soil at about 9:30 PM on Oct. 3, 1996. At that hour we couldn't see much of Cameroon,

but spent the night in a clean, adequate, and fairly modern hotel. So far, things were not much different than they were back home.

But then came the light of morning. It didn't take us long to see that we had been transported to a different place and time. Shortly after lunch we began the 85 mile trip to Kumba and our new home. I could not believe the hundreds of unpainted, tin-roofed hovels that we were passing. I had seen nothing in America that could even begin to compare. I wanted to take pictures, but our driver, Missionary Norb Meier, a two-year veteran of Cameroon, advised against it. First, he said, many people do not want

their pictures taken; and second, "You haven't seen anything yet."

He was right. As we passed through more villages, the road became even rougher, the jungle more dense, and the shanties more primitive. My wife and I were at a loss for words as we bounced along this red-clay road that would have been declared impassable in the States, and as we viewed the living conditions of the people. Somehow I had in my mind that African towns and villages were little romantic settings of neatly arranged thatched homes—the kind I'd seen on TV. Well, the ones we've seen do not fit that enchanting, picturesque, post-card scene I'd envisioned.

Conditions did not improve as we entered Kumba, a city of over 100,000 people. We saw dirt-floored sheds with doors made of torn cloth, roofs covered with rusted tin, and garbage everywhere along the deeply rutted roads. We were soon learning that words like city, downtown, store, restaurant, bank, and market would take on a whole new meaning for us.

Amazingly, though, in just a matter of days, we began to grow accustomed to the sights and sounds and smells of life in our new city. I suppose this is what they call "culture shock," and time and familiarity tend to soften the blows to one's senses.

**Our first worship experience was in the "suburb" of Toncha.** One of the seminary students taught



A view of the Eboko Bajoh congregation with the church in the background. The church has bamboo walls, thatch roof, and backless benches.



the Sunday school class that preceded the worship service, and his lesson was the Prodigal Son. As he taught, about 45 children of all ages sat quietly and raised their hands to answer questions. After a right answer, the teacher had the rest of the class clap their hands. However, what caused me first to smile, and ever since to ponder, was an analogy the teacher made. In describing the younger son's fascination with sin, he said that he went off to a distant land like America where he squandered his money on riotous living. Think about that awhile.

---

**We longed for the familiar things of home, for family and friends, but God himself was present—right there in our living room.**

---

This is their home, and this is the way they live. While far from ideal, at least from the perspective of one who comes from that distant land of America, who am I to pass judgment? They have been most gracious and warm and welcoming toward us. They need help—a lot of help—in so many areas, and they are looking to those from beyond their borders to provide it.

Their life is certainly less cluttered than ours in the States (most of their earthly belongings they could load onto a pushcart), but it is not simple. They labor long and hard for meager wages, struggle with sin and its ugly consequences, and worry about the future of their children.



*A village house with bamboo fence and shoes drying on the thatch roof.*

They have so very little. Jesus' parable of the lost coin takes on a much richer meaning when viewed through the eyes of a Cameroonian. They see an anxious woman bending over and sweeping her dirt floor (not linoleum or tile) with a hand-made straw broom not more than 24 inches long. She overturns every rock and searches each nook and cranny for that one silver coin because she only had 10 to start with. Most Americans cannot relate to that. The people of Kumba can.

**One Sunday, before going to church in Barombi Kang, the "suburb" in which the Lutheran Church of Cameroon Seminary is located, my wife and I listened to the taped worship services of a stateside congregation.** "God himself is present—let us now adore him," the congregation sang, accompanied by a majestic pipe organ. The pastor greeted the visitors "and also those following on our taped ministry. God bless you wherever

you may be." Those words meant more to us than anyone could know. Tears were rolling down our cheeks as the pastor preached about the joy of gathering in God's house for worship, and we prayed for that joy for our children and congregation back home. What a wonderful and God-blessed worship experience. We longed for the familiar things of home, for family and friends, but God himself was present—right there in our living room.

They say that home is where the heart is, and, at least at this early stage, our heart is still in America 10,000 miles away. But the Lord has brought us here, and by his grace we'll use this time to his glory. Perhaps, in time, this might even become home.

NL

*Carl Henkel is teaching for one year at the seminary for the Lutheran Church of Cameroon.*



# From pulpit to prison

One member shares the hurt a congregation feels when a pastor falls.

**D**evastation. What a strong word. Pictures come to mind: homes torn to shreds from the winds of a tornado; buildings once tall and stately, now a debacle after an earthquake; whole villages caked in mud following a hurricane.

Devastation—a pastor is charged with child molestation.

A week later the associate pastor delivered a beautiful sermon:

*The day of worship is to be a day of joy and praise. Yet, today as we gather for worship, many hearts are full of sorrow.*

The first time I saw my cousin he was only a few weeks old. I asked my mom, "Can we have a little baby just like him?" When he was about five years old, I held tightly to his hand while crossing a busy street. Through the years we eagerly attended each other's graduations. How proud I was at his ordination into the ministry of our conservative church body.

Now, after a family move, he was my pastor. A year later, when I joined the teaching staff, we became co-workers. We often saw each other in the hall. He'd wave as he passed my classroom or sometimes make silly faces that only I could see through the window. I would stop in his office to discuss a concern about a student or to seek his advice on my own family problems.

"What a wonderful sermon, pastor." "Thank you for visiting my mother in the nursing home. She

really perks up after one of your visits." "Pastor, you even make church history enjoyable—sometimes."

Family. Friends. The congregation. Students. Co-workers. Devastation—a pastor admits his guilt. What a profound impact on so many lives.

*This past week you who are members received a letter which may have made you at first feel bewildered . . . then angry . . . then sorrowful . . . and finally filled with a deep sense of loss. Bewildered because you just couldn't believe it could happen . . . angry at the sins which were committed against innocent children . . . sorrowful for the victims and their families, the accused pastor and his family, and for your congregational family . . . and with a feeling of loss: We've lost a shepherd who had taught us the Word of God.*

"How could someone in his position do something like that?" "He must be an animal!" "I hope he gets locked up for a very long time."

I know I have made similar statements, but now the accused man is my pastor, my co-worker, my friend, and my cousin.

*And as Christians, what do we do in such a time of sadness and grief? We turn to our God who makes such comforting promises to us in his Word. Promises to*

*help us, to uphold us, to stand by us, and guide us until he finally makes all things work together for our good . . . even those things which seem so tragic at the time.*

In his letter of resignation he said, "I have sinned against the Lord and against you, the flock that he has put in my care. If I could go back and undo the evil that I have done, I would do it in an instant. The guilt and shame I have struggled with these past years has been unbearable. The harm I have caused the victims and their families fills me with an amount of pain I've never before in my life come close to experiencing. I come with no excuses. I have sinned."

---

**Forgiveness. Love. Kindness.**  
**Prayers. It was almost**  
**unbelievable to see and**  
**feel the support from our**  
**fellow believers.**

---

Victor Vieth, a Minnesota attorney, wrote: "Christ died for child abusers, too. We need to assure them that, when they repent, heaven is their home. Most abusers wrap themselves in a blanket of denial. We must pray for them and let them know that neither God nor we will abandon them for telling the truth."\*

Forgiveness. Love. Kindness.



Prayers. It was almost unbelievable to see and feel the support from our fellow believers.

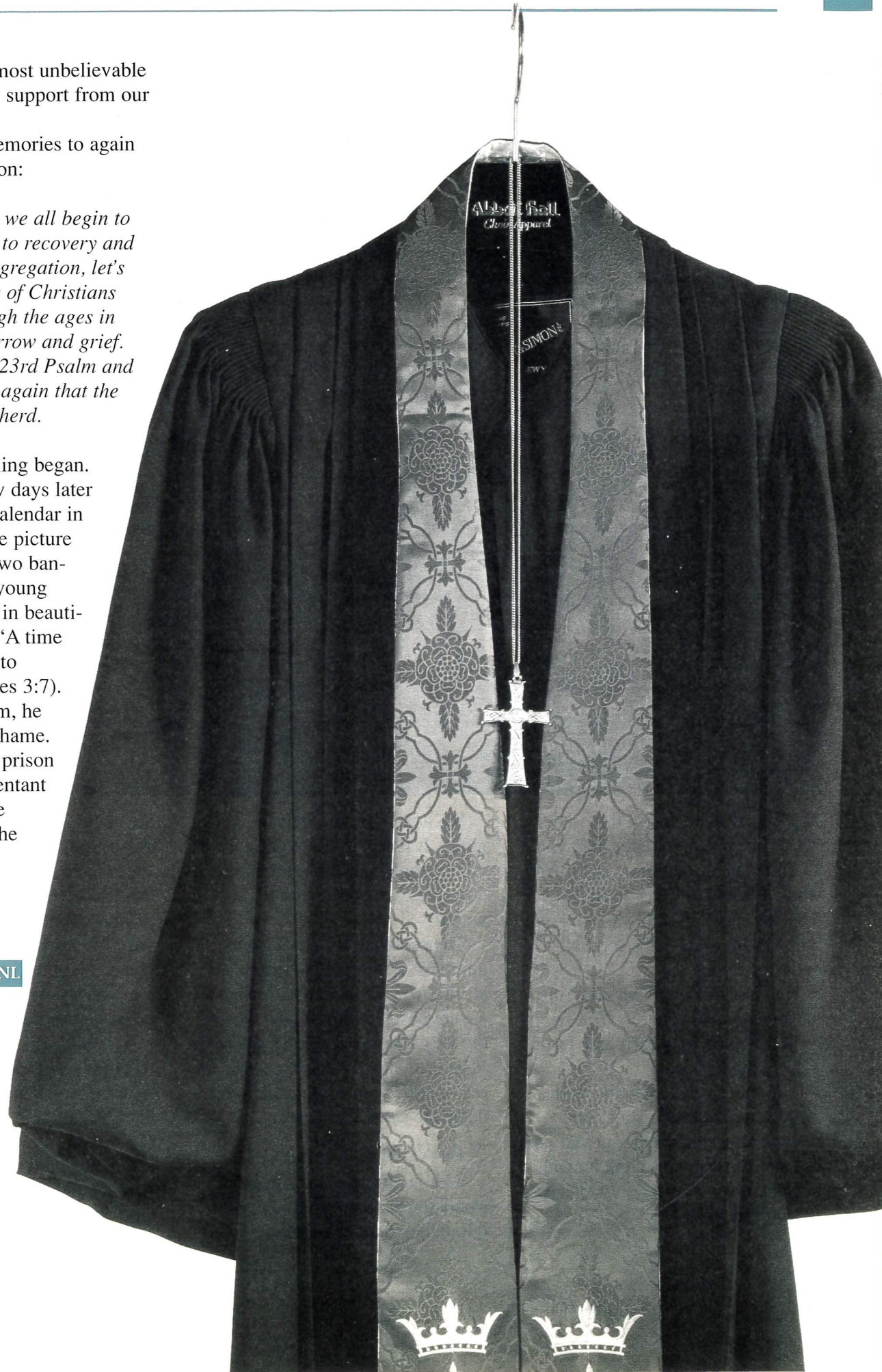
I cleared the memories to again focus on the sermon:

*And so today, as we all begin to travel on a road to recovery and healing as a congregation, let's do what millions of Christians have done through the ages in their times of sorrow and grief. Let's turn to the 23rd Psalm and be assured once again that the Lord is our shepherd.*

And so the healing began. Mine started a few days later as I changed the calendar in my classroom. The picture showed only the two bandaged knees of a young child. On the side in beautiful script, it said, "A time to tear and a time to mend" (Ecclesiastes 3:7).

In the courtroom, he stood filled with shame. The possibility of prison loomed in his repentant thoughts. "You are guilty," declared the judge.

"You are redeemed!" exclaimed Jesus.

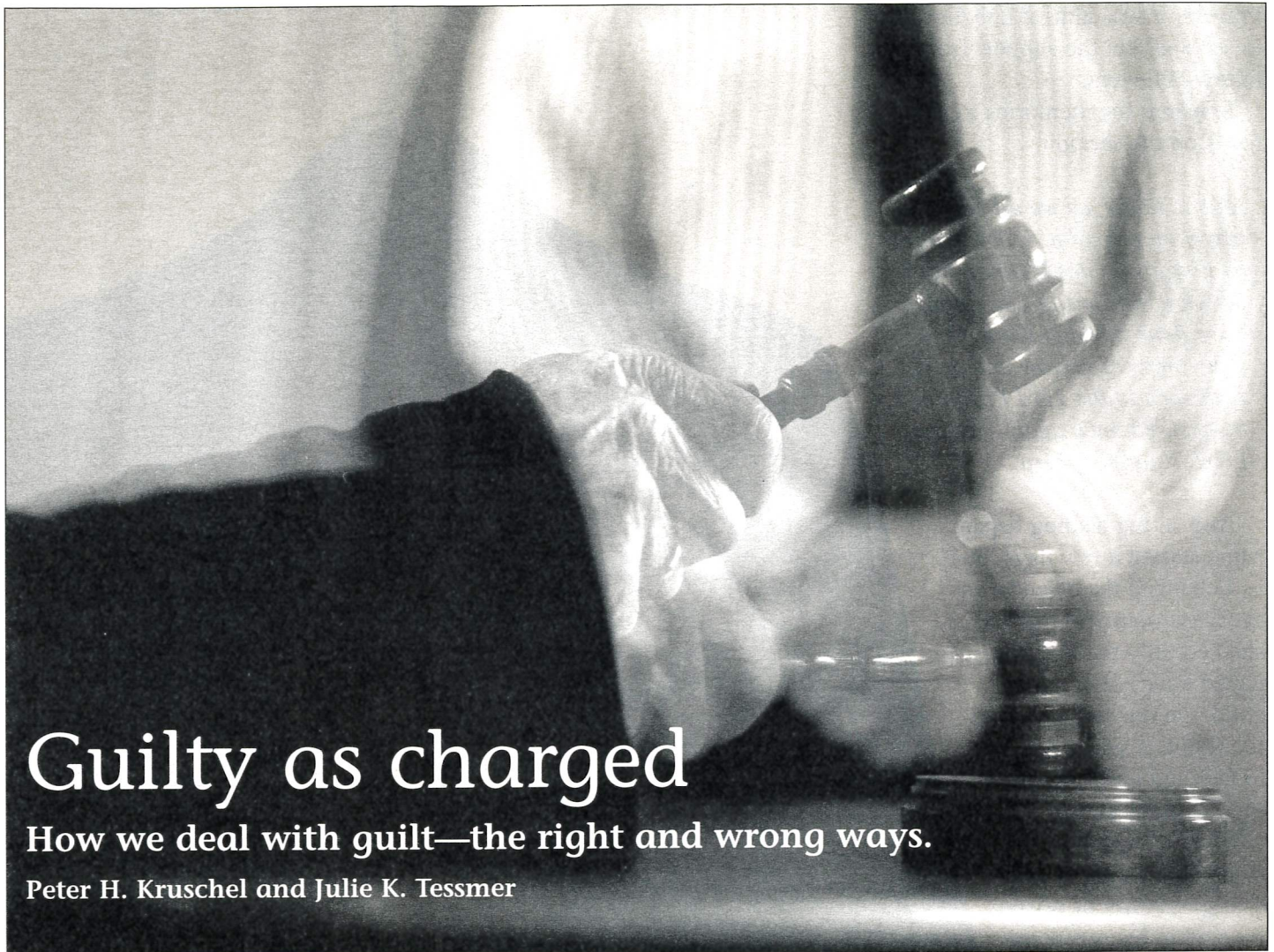


NL

*Because of the sensitive nature of this article, NL has chosen to withhold the author's name.*

\* Victor Vieth, "Drying Their Tears," NL, October 1994.





# Guilty as charged

How we deal with guilt—the right and wrong ways.

Peter H. Kruschel and Julie K. Tessmer

**Y**ou skipped church this week. You stayed out later than you should have on Saturday night. You wanted to run errands on Sunday. Monday night church was out—you didn't want to miss the football game.

But you're a good person. You hardly ever miss church. You're even involved in church activities. What's the big deal?

Yet, there's this gnawing in the pit of your stomach. Your conscience keeps pricking you. All your reasons for skipping seem logical, but you know they're only excuses.

You feel guilty.

We don't like to admit we're guilty. It's easy to point out guilt in other people, but when it comes to ourselves, we don't want to deal with it.

The problem: we can't avoid guilt. We all are guilty because we all sin. Maybe we don't do what we are supposed to do. Maybe we do the very thing God told us not to do. Whatever sins we commit—whether big or small—make us guilty and therefore subject to death.

**“I didn't do anything wrong.”**

So how do we deal with guilt? Many times we try to fool ourselves into believing that we really didn't

do anything wrong. We deny our sin either by lying or making excuses. We behave like the fidgety children in Bill Keane's *Family Circus* cartoons—claiming that it was “not me.” Meanwhile a little ghost named “Not me” runs away laughing—always getting blamed, but never getting caught.

The Bible gives many examples. Adam blamed Eve, and Eve blamed the serpent when God confronted them about their sin. All Cain could say was “Am I my brother's keeper?” when God asked him about Abel's death. The Pharisees denied their sins, pointing instead to their



good deeds. In the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector, the Pharisee declared: "God, I thank you that I am not like other men." They knew they were guilty, yet wouldn't admit it.

The world today also denies guilt. One way the world tells us to deal with our problems is by following our heart. We can then deny guilt by saying our heart told us to sin. The problem: the heart is the seat of the emotions, not the judge of what's right or wrong.

Others say let your conscience be your guide. The conscience, as defined today, is where God wrote his law. It defends as well as condemns our actions. Although we can follow our conscience up to a point, it is imperfect and corrupted by sin. It may not always tell us what is right and wrong. As we grow in faith, our conscience, through the Holy Spirit, will become a better judge of what's right or wrong. But it can never be fully trusted.

We may try to justify our actions by declaring that at least we're not as bad as other people. We even start judging situations instead of actions, believing that what is right for one person may not be right for another.

These methods may ease our guilt for a while, but they won't free us. One day we will stand before God, who will declare us guilty.

### **"I did something wrong, but that's life."**

Another way we try to deal with guilt is by not dealing with it at all. We just live with it. David tried that after committing adultery with Bathsheba. In Psalm 32:3,4, he relates how that guilt ate away at him: "When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning

all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer." The same thing happens to us when we do not resolve our guilt.

It starts with denial: "I didn't do that."

Then we realize we sinned and start making excuses: "I can't help it. You made me this way, God, so accept me for what I am."

Soon we feel sorry for ourselves: "I don't want to be like this, but I can't help it."

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## We continue to live a guilt-free life in Christ by staying close to Jesus and his Word.

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This leads to low self-esteem: "Everyone else is better than I am. God made me this way, he must not like me. Nobody likes me."

We despair: "If nobody likes me, what's the point of living?"

Judas, after he betrayed Jesus, felt this way. But instead of resolving his guilt, he let it take over.

### **"God, forgive me for my wrongdoing."**

We have a far better way of dealing with our guilt. It starts with admitting our guilt and asking God to forgive us, trusting that for Jesus' sake he will.

And God does forgive us. When Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead, he lifted the weight of our guilt from our shoulders and put it on his own. David said it in Psalm 103:12: "As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from

us." And in Psalm 32:1: "Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered."

We continue to live a guilt-free life in Christ by staying close to Jesus and his Word. We privately confess our sins. On Sunday we publicly get rid of our guilt through the Confession and Absolution. We can also receive personal evidence of that forgiveness at the Lord's Supper.

### **"I still feel guilty."**

But sometimes, even though we know our sins are forgiven, we still feel guilty.

That's Satan trying to pull us away from our Savior. Satan wants us to doubt that we have been forgiven. He wants to shift our focus away from the Savior. He wants us to go back to denying or living with our guilt.

If these feelings persist, we should talk to a Christian counselor or a pastor, who can help us work through our guilt. We also need to repent daily and return to God's Word and read the good news—our sins have been forgiven. We are free from guilt through Christ.

If we remember and believe this, we can deal with our guilt instead of denying it. We can resolve those nagging feelings instead of making excuses for them. We can stay close to Christ instead of letting guilt separate us from him.

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*This series is based on a Bible study held in summer 1996 at St. James, Milwaukee. Information was developed and presented by Peter Kruschel, associate administrator of home missions, and reported by Julie Tessmer, communications assistant for Northwestern Lutheran and Communication Services.*



# “Shhh! People are trying to read.”

Church libraries offer Christian books, videos, and tapes to help congregation members strengthen their faith.

Linda R. Baacke

Your laughter breaks the stone-cold silence, the sterile setting punctuated by your outburst.

Suddenly, a stern-faced, gray-haired, bespectacled matron menacingly raps on your shoulder. Raising her finger to her lips she demands, “Shhh! People are trying to read.”

If that’s what you think about libraries, it’s time to change your mind.

Libraries are not only for the “Marian the Librarians” of the world. Libraries, especially church libraries, are for all kinds of people, for all kinds of ages.

## Relevant libraries

Making sure church libraries are for all kinds of people means keeping libraries relevant.

The library at Peace, Sun Prairie, Wis., has a theme of the month. One focused on trouble, featuring books on divorce, anger, cancer, and grief. It was their most popular display.

“It touched a nerve,” says Elton Stroh, pastor at Peace. “Every congregation has people with troubles who are touched by these topics.”

By offering materials on issues people face, “people of all different ages and with different interests are drawn into our library,” says Stroh.

Staying relevant also means keeping current with changing formats.

Books on tape are especially popular to reach working adults during their commutes.

Librarians also find that videos are increasingly used—and make



*Church librarians view a display at the 1996 spring meeting at St. John, Wauwatosa, Wis. Any congregation considering a church library is encouraged to join WELS-CLO to receive help and support from the group.*

going to the library a family event.

“Each week, one couple brings in their young daughter, stands her on the table, and she chooses the video,” says Joanne Weber, librarian at St. Paul, Muskego, Wis. “They use the library as a springboard for part of their weekly family activities.”

St. Matthew, Oconomowoc, Wis., reaches school children with the library.

“We realized there were few Christian books in the classrooms,” says Carol Servais, librarian at St. Matthew.

Servais and Beth Schulz, the other librarian, wondered how they could get more Christian books into Christian schools. St. Matthew’s students are involved in an accelerated reader program, so Servais and Schulz worked with the principal to

integrate books from the church library into the accelerated reader program. Circulation jumped when the two programs worked together.

“The students get credit for reading these books. Plus, they are reading books with values. We want children to know there are lots of good Christian books—and they aren’t boring,” says Servais.

## Christian libraries

The most important feature of church libraries is the emphasis on Christian materials.

“People can’t afford all the wonderful Christian material on the market,” says Weber. “A church library can make it available to members.”

Barb Parmlee, librarian at Cross of Christ, Universal City, Tex., adds: “We stress it has to be Christian. Libraries with more space may add other kinds of books, but our library doesn’t have enough room. Our key factor is the books have to acknowledge the part the Lord plays.”

Yet, a glut of products on the Christian market don’t stand solidly on Scripture. To help congregations choose sound literature and videos, librarians rely on recommendations and reviews from their pastors, and freely use any book published by Northwestern Publishing House (NPH). Also, WELS-CLO (WELS Church Librarians’ Organization) publishes a list of suggested—and rejected—books, reviewed by NPH.





Church librarians—Betty Welke, Trinity, Watertown, Wis.; Charlene Schauwitzer, Jordan, West Allis, Wis.; and Marguerite Griffin, St. Paul, Tomah, Wis.—learn hands-on book repair at a WELS-CLO meeting.

### Assisting the libraries

This kind of help from WELS-CLO is the kind of support church librarians are looking for. “It’s impossible for one person to keep up with everything that’s out there,” says Parmlee.

That’s why WELS-CLO was formed—to offer support, ideas, and encouragement to congregations.

“Small congregations often can’t afford to buy books,” says Joanne Weber, who also serves as WELS-CLO’s president. To help libraries, WELS-CLO offers book and poster exchanges for congregations to share duplicate copies.

Also, says Weber, some librarians don’t feel they have the artistic ability to promote the library well. To help those librarians, NPH has designed poster masters and two different bookmarks promoting Christian reading.

Some librarians feel the best part of WELS-CLO is the exchange of ideas. “It’s a boost to talk to other librarians who struggle with the same challenges we face,” says Servais. “Plus, we get new ideas. It’s exciting to try something differ-

ent to enhance our library.”

With WELS-CLO’s growing membership, there are plenty of ideas to share. As of December 1996, WELS-CLO represented 140 WELS congregations. But there aren’t only 140 libraries in our churches around the nation.

### Where do you go for help?

Is your congregation considering starting a library? Here are a few ideas to get you started.

**Buy Yes, You Can Have a Church Library.** Filled with practical tips, it helps you start and organize a church library. It is available through Northwestern Publishing House.

**Contact WELS-CLO.** They offer an information kit for beginning church libraries.

**Realize you need money to run an effective library.** Church councils should support the library in their annual budget.

**Get the pastor’s support.** “With that, the library can grow

“We know there are congregations with libraries established,” says Weber. “We would like them to become members so they can share their successes with other librarians.”

But WELS-CLO isn’t content to involve only those congregations that already have libraries.

“Our goal is for all 1,200-plus WELS churches to have a Christian resource center,” says Weber.

That’s a pretty big goal.

But when you consider that church libraries offer a relevant, Christian perspective to the harried world around us, that’s a vital goal.

*WELS-CLO’s next meeting will be April 26, at St. Paul, Muskego, Wis. For more information, contact WELS-CLO, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222; 414/256-3222; FAX, 414/256-3899.*

*Linda Baacke is senior communications assistant for Communication Services and Northwestern Lutheran.*

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and become an important part of the church’s ministry,” says Barb Parmlee.

**Finally, relax and enjoy yourself.** “When I started, I didn’t know what I was doing,” says Parmlee. “I went to the main library and asked for help. I’m sure I made many errors along the way.”

She felt better when she heard this advice: “One: No two libraries are the same. So two: Do what works for your congregation.”

As Joanne Weber says, “Church librarians don’t have to be professionally trained. They just need a love for reading and a desire to see Christian books and videos available to their congregations.”



# The Liturgy: encourages us to use God's gifts in worship

As Lutherans think about music and the arts, they don't ask "What works best?" but "What is our best?"

James P. Tiefel

The sights and sounds of worship in the 16th century. Martin Luther saw them and heard them.

The sights? Communion vessels, crosses, and candlesticks of gold inlaid with jewels; pastoral vestments and chancel tapestries of silk embroidered with silver thread; altars, pulpits, and fonts of marble; brilliantly colored stained glass.

The sounds? On some days the delicate, ethereal strains of traditional Gregorian chant. On other days the contemporary rhythms and new-to-the-ear harmonies of five-part motets. On most days organs, lutes, and trumpets playing along in accompaniment.

What did Luther think when he saw and heard such extravagance? He knew the church had purchased much of its gold and granite with money raised by threats of eternal punishment. He understood many of the church's singers sang with the hope that they might be gaining favor with God.

What did Luther do when some of his colleagues decided to sell the gold, destroy the granite, stop the singing, and instantly rid the church of all the abuses? He criticized them so severely that they left Wittenberg.

What did Luther say? He said, "I want all of the arts, especially music, to be used in the service of him who made and gave them."

Martin Luther believed both artists and their art (and especially musicians and their music) were gifts God gave the church for proclaiming the gospel and for praising the Savior.

Of course he condemned using those gifts in an effort to gain merit with God. He knew St. Paul wrote: "We maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law." And he criticized using those gifts as though they increased the efficacy of the Word. St. Paul wrote: "The gospel is the power of God for salvation."

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**The Liturgy has a special place for our offerings of music and art.**

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Though some had misused the arts, that did not keep Luther from using the arts. For Luther, putting the arts and music to work in worship was simply a matter of good stewardship. The arts were a gift from God. St. Paul wrote: "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."

## Using God's gifts in the Liturgy

Luther's proper understanding of music and the arts echoed the example of both Scripture and the early

practice of the church. As God set down Israel's worship rite and designed Solomon's temple, he showed how he intended to use artistic symbolism and beauty to underscore and solidify his message of love.

The early church followed the divine model and composed an order of service—the Liturgy—giving music and art a central place. Since those early centuries, the Liturgy and the church buildings have remained vessels in which the Church has poured its finest offerings of music and art.

Music? The songs of the Ordinary, the musical settings of the Psalm and Verse of the Day, the hymns, the music of the organ and choir, the music of instruments of all shapes and sizes, the music of various styles and eras. Art in language? Well-crafted sentences and well-turned phrases make sermons and prayers memorable. Art in fabrics? Banners, paraments, pastoral vestments. Art in metals? Crosses, candlesticks, communion vessels, organ pipes. Art in glass? Stained glass, faceted glass, etched glass. Art in stonework and woodwork? Mosaics, statues, Christian symbols carved in marble and oak. And don't forget the art of architecture and acoustics that accentuate the Liturgy's sights and sounds.



The Christian order of service always puts Christ in first place: his Word, which offers life and light; his washing with water, offered to all nations; his body and blood offered for the forgiveness of sins. But the Liturgy has a place for our offerings too, offerings that God wants to be the best of what we have received from him, offerings that he graciously accepts and uses to proclaim Christ to others. And the Liturgy has a special place for our offerings of music and art.

### A Lutheran view of the arts

What we Lutherans believe about the way to eternal life determines how we use the arts in worship. We do not believe our activity earns points with God. We do not believe God demands a certain kind of artistic excellence before he will be pleased with us. Nor do we believe our efforts make God's Word more powerful. One style of artistic expression is not necessarily more effective than another. In other words, European art is not more acceptable to God than African art, nor is the art of Africa better than Christian art of China. Contemporary music is not necessarily better than traditional music, nor is traditional music necessarily better than contemporary music.

As Lutherans think about music and the arts, they don't ask "What works best?" but "What is our best?" As they bring their music and art to Christ as an offering of faith, Christians strive to bring the best they have. The Liturgy allows for such gifts, encour-

ages them, and sets the pace for our bringing them.

### An ancient rite for a changing world

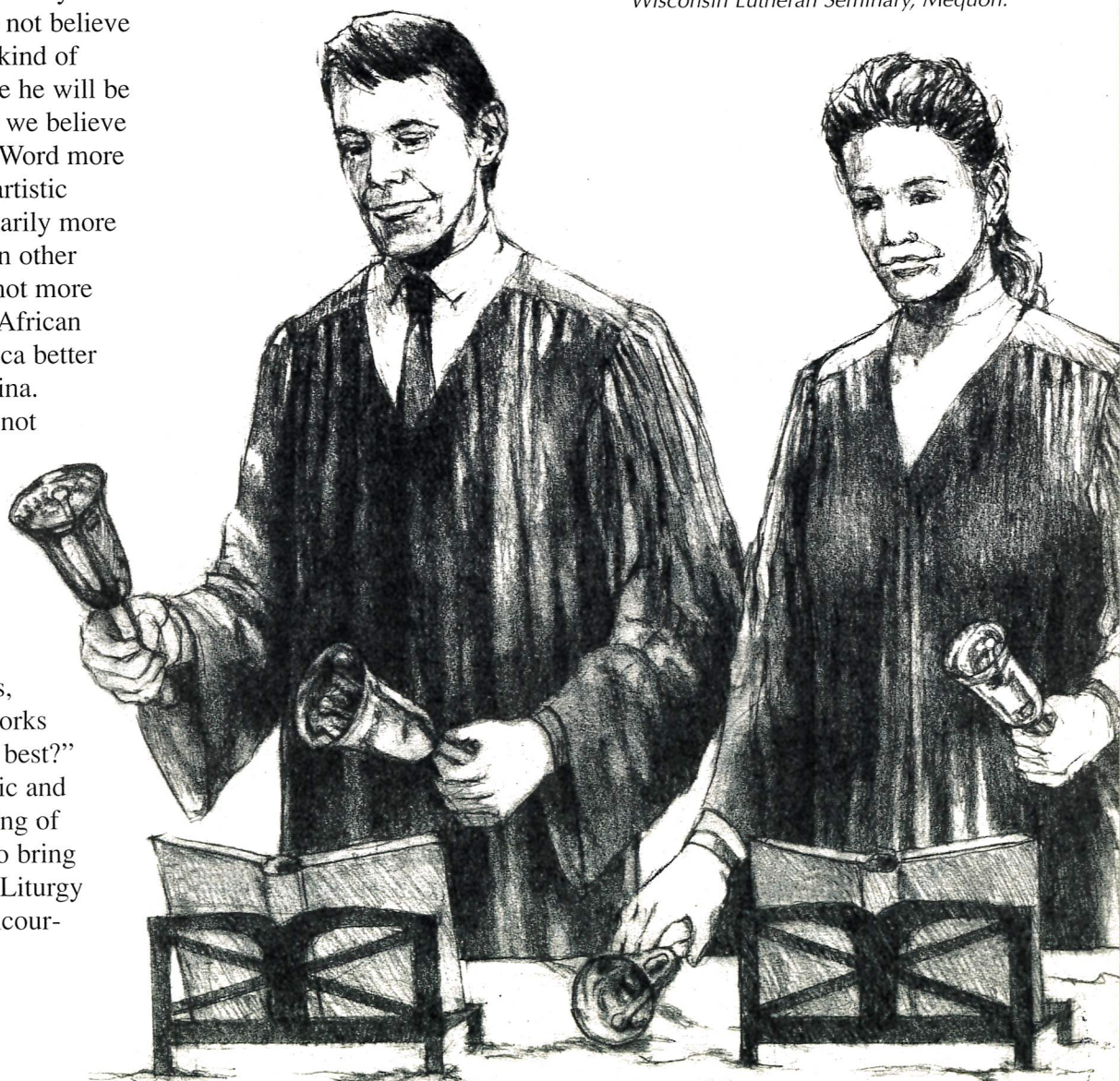
"Come, let us worship the Lord." Worship is the duty and delight of the members of the holy Christian church. But no order of service, not even the Liturgy, can guarantee genuine worship—worship from the heart. Only the Holy Spirit can prompt such worship, and he works through the Means of Grace.

The Liturgy of the Christian church, now some 18 centuries old, has value in our age, as it has had in other ages, because it showcases the Means of Grace. The Liturgy carries

Christians to the Word, to remembering their baptisms, and to the Savior's body and blood. Like the Means of Grace, the Liturgy is not about immediate gratification and spiritual highs. Like the Means of Grace, the Liturgy doesn't often instantly impress or quickly excite. But in an atmosphere of solemn awe, the Liturgy allows people, Christians and non-Christians, to come into contact with the power of God for salvation. And once encountered, this power leads us to join our voices with Christians across time and distance in a united song of praise—the best we can bring.

*James P. Tiefel is a professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon.*

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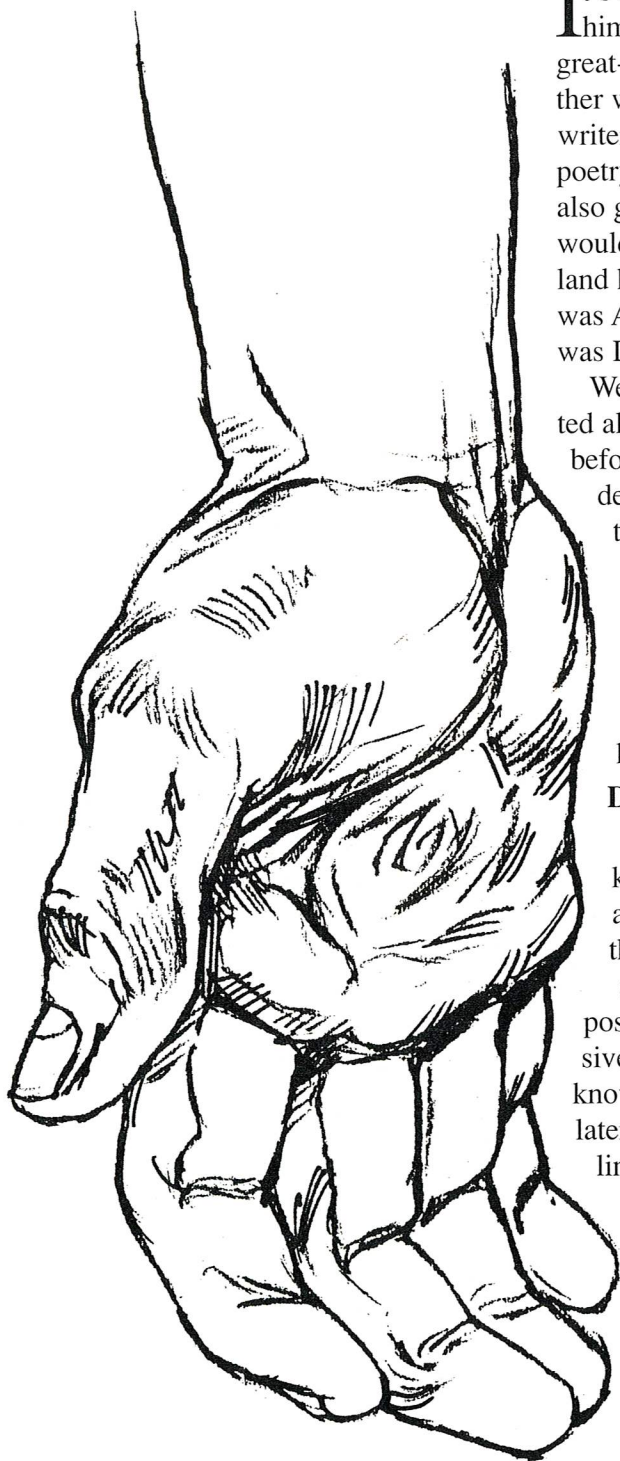




# Talk about hearts!

As Valentine's Day approaches, talk of hearts increases. But even better is the opportunity to reflect upon the tender heart of God.

Carl R. Henkel



It's likely you haven't heard of him, but you know about his great-grandfather. His great-grandfather was a renowned king and a writer of inspiring (and inspired) poetry. His great-grandfather was also guilty of crimes that today would yank him from his throne and land him in prison for life. The man was Abijah. His great-grandfather was David.

We learn of Abijah: "He committed all the sins his father had done before him; his heart was not fully devoted to the Lord his God, as the heart of David his forefather had been" (1 Kings 15:3).

Abijah had gone the way of his father, Rehoboam—the way of idolatry. But I find the last part of the verse amazing, the complimentary reference to David.

## David's sinful heart

Yes, David was honored as king for 40 years. Jerusalem and Bethlehem were both called the "city of David." He served as the Spirit's penman in composing some of the most expressive poetry this world has ever known. And because Jesus was later born from David's ancestral line, he was often referred to as the "son of David."

But David had a closet full of ugly skeletons. He was a less-than-ideal husband and a far-from-perfect father. As a result, one of his sons became a rapist, and another a

murderer. His home was a war zone where peace remained a distant dream. His defiled daughter lived out her days a desolate woman, and his rebellious son brought shame and disgrace. Yet it broke his heart when he learned of his son's violent death.

When we read David's Psalms, the pain in his wounded heart becomes vivid. He struggled. He hurt. He cried. He wrestled with men; he wrestled with his flesh; he wrestled with Satan; he wrestled with God. He was weak and often fell. He broke every commandment. He was just like you and me.

So why the tribute? Why is David called "a man after the Lord's own heart" (1 Samuel 13:14, Acts 13:22)? Others could justifiably find less complimentary terms for this sinful mortal.

The answer has to do with David's heart. David knew his heart—his feelings, attitudes, thoughts, intentions, and motives—was less than pure. He was brutally honest with himself and God. Knowing the corruption of his heart he prayed, "Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10).

## God's forgiving heart

Even more, however, the answer lies in God's heart. The Lord, who looks upon the heart and not the outward appearance, is not offended by our honesty. Quite the contrary. His displeasure comes when he



finds a proud and faithless heart that feels no need for confession and forgiveness.

In the heart of God lies an undying love and unending longing for lost sinners. Lost sinners like David. Lost sinners like you and me. His heart beats with compassion for us. His heart longs for us to come home.

As Valentine's Day approaches, talk of hearts increases. Poetry is exchanged. Tender words are whispered. Hearts are warmed by human love. This is good.

Even better is the opportunity to reflect upon the tender heart of God, to be warmed by his love, and to ponder our relationship with him.

The epistle writer encourages, "Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience . . ." (Hebrews 10:22). Quite an invitation. It comes from an amazing God. A sincere heart is honest and contrite before God and rests, by faith, on Jesus. Such a heart (conscience) is cleansed of all guilt through Jesus' blood that was sprinkled on the altar of the cross.

### God lives in our hearts

Amazingly, God has chosen to live in our hearts. Consider this: While God is on his throne in heaven, he is, at the same time, at home in each believer's heart.

But while my lips sing "To Thee my heart I offer, O Christ child sweet and dear" (CW 43), my heart knows how false and fickle and faithless it really is. It accurately discerns itself to be disloyal, deceitful, and even devious. And, as Jesus reminds us, from a contemptible heart flows contemptible deeds: "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual

immorality, theft, false testimony, slander" (Matthew 15:19).

That Jesus makes his home in my heart is beyond me. It is beyond us all. But God looks for broken hearts crushed by the law. He cherishes battered and bruised hearts that long for rest. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise" (Psalm 51:17).

Though my heart rarely makes a presentable home for Jesus—indeed, it is incapable of doing so—he moves in nonetheless. He remodels and renovates. Each time I fill his home with my garbage, he dumps it at the foot of his cross. At the same time, he creates a longing within me to be more like him. A longing to sin no more.

### Others want to claim our hearts

Not that it's easy. Nor will such a transformation ever be complete this side of eternity. Satan, the allurements of this world, and my own weak and sinful flesh also seek to claim my heart. The battles are long and the fighting fierce. The agony of defeat seems a more regular occurrence than the thrill of victory. Pain, heartache, confusion, doubt, and uncertainty plague life and complicate reality. So it is with all of us who embrace Jesus as Savior.

But, true love will never turn it's back on us though we slip and fall, and slip again. True love will hug us in our weakness and hold us up in our frailty. Jesus is true love. His heart brings hope, help, and healing.

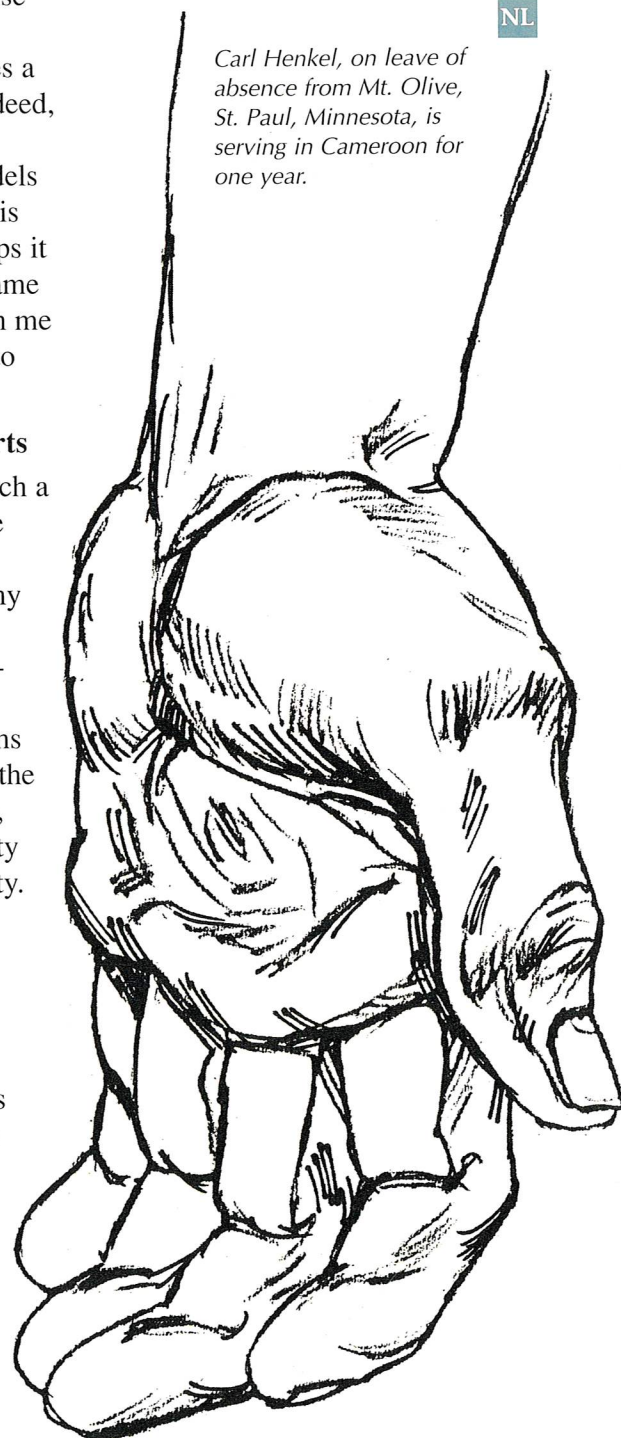
David was, indeed, a man after the Lord's own heart. So am I. So are you. Not because any of us have earned such

distinction, but because—only because—God's heart is big enough to embrace and enfold weak and frail sinners and to welcome all who come humbly into his presence.

Your heart is in good hands. Nail-scarred hands. And he who holds your heart in his hands also holds you in his heart.

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*Carl Henkel, on leave of absence from Mt. Olive, St. Paul, Minnesota, is serving in Cameroon for one year.*







## Home missions: you support their work

Ever wonder how your church offerings are spent?

Here are the home mission projects supported by your gifts during 1995-96.

- 76 congregations with operating subsidies**
- 121 congregations with loan interest subsidies only**
- 32 exploratory fields**
- 13 multi-cultural efforts**
- 6 campus ministries (3 full time; 3 part time)**
- 15 vicars placed in mission settings**
- 11 new fields entered**
- 8 missions to self-supporting**

**6 congregations from exploratory to full mission status**

**36 congregations to interest subsidized only**

Those statistics may seem like just statistics. But they add up to hundreds of people reached with the money you give back to God each week.

John Steinbrenner, pastor at Cross of Christ, an exploratory in Boise, Idaho, says "If it weren't for your offerings, God's Word would not be preached here.

"Offerings are used for our materials for Bible information classes, for our mailings."

But most important is the one-on-one contact your offerings support. "The Holy Spirit chooses to work in people through his Word," says Steinbrenner. "But he can't touch people's lives unless we share that Word. We need missionaries, we need their witness. The work can't be done if people aren't there doing it."

Your money supports those who move to a strange, new city. Those who knock on doors every day. Those who set up folding chairs in storefronts on Sundays. Those who share the gospel with people who need the Word as much as you do.

That's how your church offerings are spent in home missions.

## "Jesus in Jeopardy"

Have you ever tried singing "Jesus Loves Me" to the jingle for Jeopardy? Try it. It works. The members at Woodlawn, West Allis, Wis., found that out last year.

On the Wednesday of Holy Week in Easter 1996, Woodlawn hosted "Jesus in Jeopardy."

"During Lent, we get people in the habit of coming every Wednesday and then we stop during Holy Week," says Reuel Schulz, pastor at Woodlawn. "So we make it a truly Holy Week. We use this Wednesday to keep families involved and make sure the children get more into the Word."

For Lent, confirmation students were assigned to read the last chapters of the gospels. The entire congregation was encouraged to read along.

If the students scored high enough on tests based on the readings, they qualified as contestants on Woodlawn's version of Jeopardy, the television quiz show.

The game was complete with jeopardy and double jeopardy. Some of



the topics covered were Maundy Thursday facts, Jesus' seven words, the ABC's of our Savior's passion, and Easter events.

Jenni Schalk, then an eighth grader, won when she correctly answered "Emmaus" as the village to where two disciples were headed when Jesus appeared to them.

The most important aspect of this "game show" was immersing the students—and congregation—in the Word.

"We deal with teenage pregnancies and drugs by immersing the children and the families of Woodlawn in God's Word," Schulz told the congregation during a break in the action.

"We often expect others to take care of our problems," says Schulz. "But we indeed have the best weapon of all—God's Word."

## IN THE NEWS

**Mark Wilson**, a 1993 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran High School, Milwaukee, is quite the golfer. In 1995 he was named the 1995 Wisconsin Amateur Player of the Year. In 1996 he won the Wisconsin State Amateur Championship. He was also ranked number one in the Rolex Collegiate Rankings. A student at the University of North Carolina, Wilson is reportedly planning on attending the PGA Tour's qualifying school in 1997.

**Craig Campana**, a member at Gloria-Dei Bethesda, Milwaukee, received three national awards for leadership of Business Network Int'l (BNI). The awards were for outstanding performance, goal achievements, and best ideas.



## Eggert collection incorporated into seminary library

The Kurt J. Eggert Memorial Hymnological and Liturgical Collection—consisting of books from Eggert's personal library, the working collection of the Joint Hymnal Committee, and books purchased with memorial gifts and grants—is being integrated with other worship holdings into the library of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis. Book plates, spine labels, and catalog listings will identify volumes in the collection.

Eggert, who died June 1993, was the project director for *Christian Worship—A Lutheran Hymnal*. In

1994, the synod's Commission on Worship appointed a committee to plan a memorial project.

The committee will continue to cultivate interest in the collection, fund additions to the

library, and solicit

both Lutheran and non-Lutheran hymnals and worship materials from synod members. In addition to a \$2,000 grant from Aid Association for Lutherans, memorial gifts have totaled over \$4,500.

*Richard Balge*

*Gifts can be sent to the WELS fiscal office, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222, designated for the Kurt J. Eggert Hymnological and Liturgical Collection. Books may be delivered directly to the seminary library.*

## Teamwork helps church open

It takes teamwork to start a mission.

First, the Colorado District Mission Board noticed that Southwest Denver was growing. They designated an area there as a target area. Then they called Ross Stelljes as missionary to the area. Stelljes gathered a core group to help him in gospel outreach, and members of Zion, Denver, and Abiding Word, Highlands Ranch lent a hand. Also, three groups of people from around WELS made calls to contact the unchurched—a group of

young people from Bloomington, Bloomington, Minn.; a travel-canvas-witness team from synod schools; and OWLS members.

The efforts paid off when 60 people attended the first service at Living Savior, Southwest Denver, on Nov. 17 at Chatfield High School.

But the work isn't over. More teamwork will be needed so this exploratory effort will reach mission status and become self-supporting.

*Eugene Ahlswede*



*Pastor Ross Stelljes conducts the first service for Living Savior, Southwest Denver. The service was held on Nov. 17 at Chatfield High School. Reaching the people of Southwest Denver was a team effort by WELS members across the nation.*

## YOUTH NEWS

**Evergreen LHS's first year soccer teams** were honored by the Washington State Athletic Association at the State Soccer Tournament for the highest grade point average (G.P.A.) in their state athletic classification. The girl's soccer team held the highest of all schools in all classifications with a G.P.A. of 3.68. The boys had a G.P.A. of 3.38.

**Joshua Pederson**, a senior at Minnesota Valley Lutheran High School, attended the National Youth Leaders Conference in Washington, D.C. from Dec. 3-8, 1996. The conference develops leadership skills in high school students who have demonstrated leadership potential and scholastic merit.

Pederson, one of 350 students attending the conference, interacted with key leaders and newsmakers from the government, the media, and the diplomatic corps during the conference. He is a member at St. Paul, New Ulm, Minn.

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





## To every language

WELS Board for World Missions (BWM) is working to get the Word into every language. To do that, BWM has embarked on a multi-language publication program.

BWM will provide a comprehensive listing of confessional Christian literature and mass media in the languages of the countries where WELS is working—and in other areas and languages where WELS may never work.

"We have translated materials all over the world," says Duane Tomhave, BWM administrator. "We need to get them from field to field."

Missionaries often translate materials. This networking will allow them a base of materials to work from so they won't have to start from scratch.

"We also need these translations in the U.S.," says Tomhave. "There are people in the U.S. looking for Bible studies in Chinese."

"We know we have all these materials available. Now they will be accessible to missionaries, and to those who want to reach out in languages other than English."

Although the program is just getting started, it "will never really be completed," says Tomhave. "There will always be the need to reach out to others in their own language."

## School for in-crisis children opens

Calvary Academy, a school for in-crisis children, opened in January.

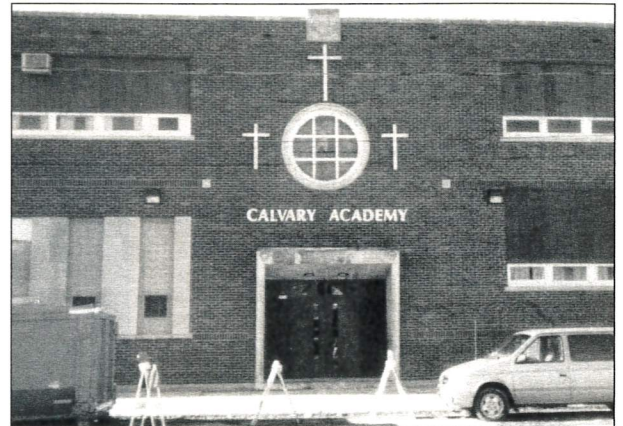
Located in South Milwaukee, Wis., Calvary's goal during the youths' 18-month stay is to keep them close to God and return them—committed to their Savior—to their families.

"We wish there were no need for Calvary Academy. But, youth are not honoring and obeying their parents. With sin and rebellion running rampant, more help is needed for caring Christian parents," said Paul Sharrer, pastor at St. Paul, Fort Atkinson, Wis., and member of Calvary Academy's Board of Directors.

Calvary Academy bought Zion school in

January 1996 when the school moved to a new location. Remodeling was done to accommodate up to 50 or 60 boarding students.

For more information, contact Calvary Academy, 2200 9th Ave, South Milwaukee WI 53172; 414/571-1522; FAX, 414/571-5242; crisis number, 1-800-704-9318.



Calvary Academy, a boarding school for in-crisis children.



Our kindergarten class was reviewing the "Call upon me" passage that we had with the Joseph story. When we were applying the passage to Moses, I asked the children, "What trouble did God's people have?" One little girl raised her hand and said, "They didn't have any bathrooms." You see, we had said that the princess had come down to the river to take a bath.

Erlyne Ernst  
Belmont, California



## Looking for the right Valentine's Day gift?

Give the love of your life *Northwestern Lutheran*. Each issue shares the message of a Savior who loved us so much that he gave up his life.

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## District news

### Dakota-Montana

**Carl Lindemann**, pastor at Our Saviour, Bismarck, N.D., celebrated his 25th anniversary in the ministry on June 23, 1996. . . . On July 11, 1996, Mt. Calvary, Estelline, S.D., celebrated the 25th anniversary of its pastor, **Gail Johnson**. . . . Two pastors from the district celebrated their 10th anniversaries in the ministry this past summer: **Paul VanderGalien**, Emmanuel, Grover/St. Paul, Henry, S.D., on July 20, and **John Carter**, St. Martin, Watertown, S.D., in August. . . . **St. Paul, Mound City, S.D.**, dedicated its new worship facility on Sept. 22, 1996. . . . **Volunteers at the WELS booth at the South Dakota State Fair** helped distribute WELS materials and information to over 3,000 people. Over 100 said they wanted further contact from a WELS congregation.

### Michigan

**Beautiful Savior, Petoskey**, dedicated its worship facility on Nov. 3, 1996. Builders For Christ helped the congregation build its new church home. . . . Trinity, Bay City, celebrated **Ron Muetzel's** 25th anniversary in the ministry on Oct. 20. . . . **Bethel, Bay City**, celebrated its 25th anniversary in its present location and **Keith Schroeder's** 25th anniversary in the ministry. . . . **Holy Cross, Standish**, celebrated the 40th anniversary of its building on Oct. 20. . . . **Faith, West Newburg**, celebrated its 20th anniversary last fall. . . . **Peace, Granger, Ind.**, celebrated its 25th anniversary on Nov. 10. . . . **John Vogt**, pastor at Emanuel First, Lansing, celebrated his 25th anniversary in the ministry.

### North Atlantic

Abiding Word, Orleans, Ontario, hosted the **WELS-Canada annual convention** in October. One item discussed was the possibility of forming a Canadian Mission District of WELS. WELS-Canada is the incorporated body

of all WELS congregations in Canada. . . . A small group of Christians is **interested in starting a WELS-Canada mission in Sudbury, Ontario**. They are considering a telephone canvass of 200 to 300 homes. Douglas Priestap, pastor at Cross of Life, Oakville, Ontario, serves these people. . . . **WELS churches in North Carolina** were hit by two hurricanes—"Bertha" and "Fran"—in a month this past summer. Winds of up to 100 mph tore the siding off a pastor's apartment and sent a tree into the living room of a WELS member's home. No one was hurt. Gethsemane, Raleigh, N.C., went without electricity for a week. Repair work is still being done. . . . In November, **Beautiful Savior, Portland, Maine**, held a fellowship fair to create a greater community awareness of their church. It included food, drinks, holiday crafts, baked goods, games and activities for children, and drawings for door prizes. Registration for door prizes included a survey to help identify unchurched people from the community.

*Kevin Schultz*

### Northern Wisconsin

The **Northern Wisconsin District Commission on Youth Discipleship** has set up a web site which gives information about various areas in youth discipleship. It is still under construction, but check it out at <http://www.dataplusnet.com/stjohns/nwd-cyd.html>

### Pacific Northwest

**Calvary School, Bellevue, Wash.**, celebrated its 25th anniversary and principal **Stanley Cole's** 25th anniversary in the teaching ministry on May 19, 1996. The congregation celebrated again on Aug. 20, this time for **Doug Weiser's** 25th anniversary in the preaching ministry. . . . **St. Matthew school, Spokane, Wash.**, celebrated its 25th anniversary on Aug. 20.

*David Birsching*

### South Atlantic

**Peter Martin** was ordained into the ministry and commissioned as a missionary to Mwembezhi, Africa on Aug. 30, 1996, at Ascension, Sarasota, Fla. Within a few weeks, he and his wife, Lisa, moved to their new home and immersed themselves in the language and culture. . . . On Nov. 3, 1996, **King of Kings, Maitland, Fla.**, broke ground for its expansion program. A new entryway will enable the sanctuary to seat more than 300. Also included is a Family Life Center with a serving room, two classrooms, meeting rooms, and a fellowship hall/gymnasium. The present fellowship hall will be converted to three offices and a meeting room. Dedication will take place on Sept. 7, 1997.

*Philip Wilde*

### Western Wisconsin

**Peace, Loves Park, Ill.**, celebrated its 25th anniversary on Jan. 19. . . . The **Western Wisconsin District Commission on Evangelism** has set up a web site filled with Bible studies, papers, presentations, useful hints, and even interactive sites that present law and gospel. Find it at <http://badger.win.bright.net/~narad/>

*Elton Stroh*

## rē · li · giōn

### Defining religion

**Charismatic movement:** [**Kharis-mat-ic**] A movement arising in the mid 20th century that emphasizes the experience of the so-called Baptism in the Holy Spirit and consequent charismatic gifts like speaking in tongues, faith-healing, and prophesying. This movement is separate from Pentecostalism in that it has arisen in the form of small groups within non-pentecostal churches. (see Pentecostalism, p. 24)





## News briefs

**Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., received \$150,000 from the estate of Grace M. Vogelpohl** to establish a memorial fund. The fund's annual net income will be used for assistance for MLC students. Monies from over 70 such financial aid funds are available to MLC students.

**Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., received a \$39,000 grant** to help produce recruiting materials—both video and print—that will introduce potential students to MLC's campus, purpose, and programs. The grant was made possible by Aid Association for Lutherans.

**One hundred twenty-two WELS elementary schools will receive \$500 grants** to provide in-service training for their faculties. The schools can use the money for consultants, speakers, and resource materials, concentrating on such areas as teaching strategies, classroom management and interpersonal communication. This grant was made possible by the Aid Association for Lutherans Lutheran Elementary School Grant program.

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### Defining religion

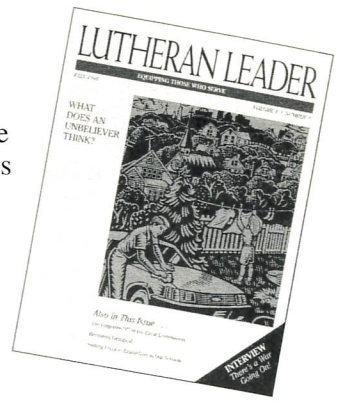
**Pentecostalism:** A movement originating in early 20th century America that emphasizes the so-called Baptism in the Holy Spirit with the consequent charismatic gifts of speaking in tongues, faith-healing, and prophesying. Pentecostal denominations comprise perhaps the fastest growing branch of religion in the world today. (see Charismatic movement, p. 23 )

## Lutheran Leader debuts

A quarterly publication for all congregational leaders, not only pastors and teachers, debuted in November. *Lutheran Leader* helps leaders with a Bible-based approach to ministry. Each issue focuses on a theme: the first on outreach.

Formerly *Parish Leadership Journal*, *Lutheran Leader* is the official publication of WELS Board for

Parish Services. The new format is shorter and more readable. Issues increased from three to four per year.



*Jesus Cares students portrayed Bible characters at a special Christmas service at St. Matthew, Milwaukee, Wis. Over 80 people from Jesus Cares Ministries participated in two special Christmas services on Dec. 8, 1996. The other service was at Trinity, Waukesha, Wis. Jesus Cares Ministries, a Southeastern Wisconsin District program, has five areas of ministry to the developmentally disabled—education, worship, support, fellowship, and evangelism. There are over 50 Jesus Cares programs throughout the U.S. that offer Bible studies.*

# DON'T KEEP THIS MAGAZINE!

**Bryan Plass, a Marine serving in Cameroon, e-mailed this to the NL office:**

"I get a double copy to my NL subscription. Don't get me wrong, this is not bad. I give them to our local guards and to our drivers. They thoroughly enjoy them."

You may not be half a world away, but you too can share NL. How have you shared NL? Call, write, FAX, or e-mail us. We'll replace your copy—**free**. *Northwestern Lutheran*, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398; phone, 414/256-3232; FAX, 414/256-3899; e-mail, [nl@sab.wels.net](mailto:nl@sab.wels.net).





### Jesus and His Times

This series tells the story of Jesus' life without interpretation or application. It would be good for use as Bible background material.

**Jesus, the Story Begins** (Code 8306), 1996. 57 min., color JSCA

**Jesus, Among the People** (Code 8307), 1996. 57 min., color JSCA

**Jesus, the Final Days** (Code 8308), 1996. 57 min., color JSCA

**Zambia: Lutheran Church in Central Africa** (Code 5185), 1996. 35 min., color ALL

This church continues to grow in size and spiritual maturity. This video demonstrates the ministry there in 1996.

**Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference** (Code 5184), 1996. 35 min., color CA

In April 1996, Lutherans from all over the world met in Puerto Rico to strengthen their bonds of love and doctrinal unity. This video gives us a glimpse at what went on there between WELS and its sister churches.

**Let's Make the Dream Come True** (Code 5183), 1996. 17 min., color SCA

WELS churches in Florida are working to establish a Lutheran high school. This video encourages us to make the dream of Southern Lutheran Academy come true.

*These videos are available for rental (\$7.50) by congregations, schools, and church groups. Order from Audiovisual Library Services, Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 N 113 St, Milwaukee WI 53226-3284; 414/475-6600; 1-800-662-6093.*

## Obituaries

### William Louis Mundt 1954-1996

William Mundt was born on March 8, 1954, in Marshfield, Wis. He died Oct. 8, 1996 in Wisconsin Rapids, Wis.

A 1976 graduate of Dr. Martin Luther College, Mundt taught at Grace, Durand, Mich., and Northland Lutheran High School, Wausau, Wis.

He is survived by fiancée, Joelle Hansmann; his mother; one half-brother; and two half-sisters.

### Erwin A. Wilde 1908-1996

Erwin Wilde was born on March 19, 1908 in Amboy, Minn. He died March 3, 1996 in Lewiston, Minn.

A 1928 graduate of Dr. Martin Luther College, Wilde served at St. Paul, Cudahy, Wis., and St. John, Lewiston, Minn.

He is survived by wife, Laverna; three sons; four grandchildren; and a brother.

### Paul Edward Kramer Jr. 1938-1996

Paul Kramer Jr. was born Dec. 29, 1938 in Gibbon, Minn. He died June 15, 1996 in West Salem, Wis.

A 1960 graduate of Dr. Martin Luther College, Kramer served at Immanuel, Medford, Wis., and Christ, West Salem, Wis.

He is survived by his wife, Diana; four daughters; two sons; three grandchildren; four sisters; two brothers; and many nieces and nephews.

### Walter Otto Johnson 1897-1996

Walter Otto Johnson was born May 16, 1897 in Nicolet, Minn. He died Nov. 21, 1996 in Wisconsin Rapids, Wis.

A 1917 graduate of Dr. Martin Luther College, Johnson served at St. Paul, Green Bay, Wis., and St. Paul, Wisconsin Rapids, Wis. He was the oldest living teacher in WELS.

He is survived by two daughters, one son, 17 grandchildren, 33 great-grandchildren, six step great-grandchildren, two step great-great-grandchildren, and one sister.

### Lester F. Groth 1914-1996

Lester Groth was born on June 8, 1914 in La Crosse, Wis. He died Nov. 28, 1996 in Mequon, Wis.

A 1938 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Groth serve as an instructor at Fairview, Milwaukee, and as pastor at Zion/St. Paul, Colome, S.D.; St. John, Stanton, Neb.; St. Paul, Slinger/St. Paul, West Bend, Wis.; and Peace, Wautoma, Wis.

He is survived by his wife, Ruth Ann; two daughters; one son; and 10 grandchildren.

*Through my Bible  
in 3 years*

### March 1997

1.  Matthew 12:22-50
2.  Matt. 13:1-23
3.  Matt. 13:24-52
4.  Matt. 13:53—14:12
5.  Matt. 14:13-36
6.  Matt. 15:1-20
7.  Matt. 15:21-39
8.  Matt. 16:1-20
9.  Matt. 16:21—17:13
10.  Matt. 17:14-27
11.  Matt. 18:1-35
12.  Jeremiah 1
13.  Jer. 2:1—3:5
14.  Jer. 3:6—4:31
15.  Jer. 5, 6
16.  Jer. 7:1—8:3
17.  Jer. 8:4—9:22
18.  Jer. 9:23—10:25
19.  Jer. 11, 12
20.  Jer. 13
21.  Jer. 14, 15
22.  Jer. 16:1—17:18
23.  Jer. 17:19—18:23
24.  Jer. 19, 20
25.  Jer. 21, 22
26.  Jer. 23
27.  Jer. 24, 25
28.  Matthew 19:1-22
29.  Matt. 19:23—20:28
30.  Matt. 20:29—21:22
31.  Matt. 21:23-46





## Lifting high the cross—literally

To help celebrate its 150th anniversary, the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) is going to lift high the cross.

How? By flying two hot-air balloons—one, an immense balloon in the shape of the church body's logo

cross; the other, a standard balloon with the LCMS logo painted on.

The "shape balloon" spans 90 feet by 130 feet—twice the height of the standard balloon. That balloon

could possibly qualify for the *Guinness Book of Records* as the largest movable cross in the world. The standard balloon serves as a "backup" balloon, due to the wind-sensitive nature of the shape balloon.

Plans include flying the balloons over major cities to advertise LCMS during its three-year 150th-anniversary celebration. They could also be used at major gatherings—youth rallies, synod and district conventions, and new congregation openings.

"But, more than that, it will be remembered. It may even make it easier for members to talk about their congregations, their church body, and, most important, the meaning of the cross of Jesus Christ," says James Likens, assistant executive director for special projects of the Board for Congregational Services. [*Reporter*, Nov. 1996]



## Supreme Court to rule on right to die

The U.S. Supreme Court will decide whether states may ban doctor-assisted suicides, potentially setting the stage for a major turn in the national debate over euthanasia and the right to die.

The justices will consider two cases. The first is a 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco ruling that struck down a Washington state law barring doctor-assisted suicide. By an 8-3 vote, the court said the ban was unconstitutional because

it stops doctors from prescribing life-ending medication to competent, terminally ill adults who want to quicken death.

The second is an April decision by the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals striking down two New York state laws barring doctor-assisted suicide on the grounds that they failed to treat people equally.

A ruling is expected sometime before July 1997.

## Parishioners: permit priests to take plunge

Most Roman Catholics in England and Wales want their church to allow priests to marry, according to a poll taken by a weekly newspaper, the *Catholic Herald*.

The poll of 1,000 Catholic parishioners in England and Wales indicated that 69 percent of Catholics think the church should put an end to compulsory celibacy for priests.

Asked if and when they believed the church would change the rule on compulsory celibacy, 21 percent said change would come "soon," 60 percent said "eventually," and 19 percent said "never." Sixty-nine percent said a change in the rule would be good for

parish life, while 31 percent said such a change would be bad.

The *Catholic Herald* published the results of its poll on the day that 10 former Anglican priests were accepted into the Roman Catholic Church. Four of the 10 are married. The willingness of the Catholic Church to suspend the celibacy rule by accepting married priests from the Church of England has deepened criticism over the issue, particularly among Roman Catholic priests who were forced to leave the ministry when they decided to marry. [Ecumenical News International Bulletin, Nov. 6, 1996]

## Religious Americans more charitable than others

Americans with religious affiliations continue to give higher percentages of their incomes to charities and to volunteer larger amounts of time to non-profit causes than do those without such affiliations, according to a Gallup survey released in October.

The study found that 76 percent of members of religious institutions reported making charitable contributions in 1996, compared to 50 percent of nonmembers. Those with religious

affiliation contributed about 2.3 percent of their income, while those who have no affiliation contributed 1.1 percent.

Also, 55 percent of religious members reported doing volunteer work, compared to 34 percent of Americans who had no religious membership.

Respondents who attend services weekly or nearly weekly gave the largest percentages of money and volunteer time.



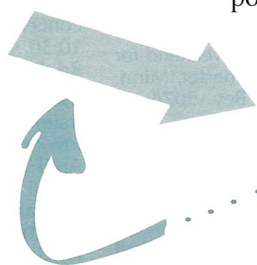
## Dollar giving increases, percentage giving decreases

Denominational data for 1994 indicates church member giving patterns were mixed, according to the authors of *The State of Church Giving through 1994*.

Per member giving to benevolences (denominational, seminary, and local and international missions support) was \$62.53 in 1993 and \$63.11 in 1994. That increase ended a five-year series in which giving to those areas of ministry had declined.

Per member giving in constant dollars to congregational finances (funding for internal operations of the congregation) also increased between 1993 and 1994, from \$304.83 to \$312.34.

However, for the ninth year in a row, these dollars represent a smaller



portion of income. In 1993, church members donated 2.52 percent of their incomes to their churches. In 1994 that amount decreased to 2.48 percent.

Does the increase in dollar giving suggest that patterns may be turning around? Such a conclusion would be premature, according to the study's authors, John and Sylvia Ronsvalle. For example, although giving to benevolences increased between 1993 and 1994 in dollars, the 1994 level of \$63.11 was less than the 1992 amount of \$63.99 and the 1968 amount of \$65.07. [empty tomb, inc., Nov. 8, 1996]

## Religion gets boost in post-Soviet Russia

The number of Russians who identify themselves as religious has grown by almost 72 percent during the five years since the collapse of the Soviet Union, according to a public opinion poll.

Most of the growth is in the Orthodox Church (50 percent of the country's adult population in 1996, compared to 30 percent in 1991).

This does not mean Russians are active members. Analysts say only five to 10 percent of them attend church. The same proportion may be applied to followers of other religions.

Islam, claiming four percent of Russia's 117 million adult citizens, is the country's second-biggest religious community. This is up from one percent in 1991. However, the percent-

age is still far short of the figure of 20 million Muslims often quoted by the Union of Muslims of Russia.

The research, conducted by the All-Russian Public Opinion Research Centre (VTsIOM), is based on a representative sample of 2,460 Russians over 16. Researchers claimed the results were accurate to within three percent. (While Russian polls are generally believed to be highly unreliable, VTsIOM is regarded as the country's most efficient pollster.) Given the three percent margin of error, it is difficult to give accurate estimates of the number of Roman Catholics, Protestants, Jews, and Buddhists. The results for these categories are in tenths of a percent. [Ecumenical News International Bulletin, Nov. 6, 1996]

## In brief

- Gallup researchers found that **religious organizations are the top recipient of charitable giving**—nearly 58 percent. They are followed by human services groups (9.4 percent), education organizations (8.9 percent), and health agencies (8.1 percent)..
- **Lay Catholic women and men could be given the rank of cardinal**, according to Giuseppe Casale, Bishop of Foggia, in Italy. Casale, reports *Agence de Presse internationale catholique*, said that for a long period in the church's history laymen were permitted to become cardinals. At the time, the college of cardinals was not restricted to bishops and priests, as is laid down in current Canon Law. APIC pointed out that a change in the rules would allow women to take part in the election of the Pope. Since 1179 the College of Cardinals has been responsible for papal elections. At present the church has 154 cardinals. [Ecumenical News International Bulletin, Nov. 6, 1996]

- The stereotype of the homeless as old men and women just isn't true anymore. According to a survey of 14,000 homeless men and women at rescue missions, **80 percent of the homeless are under 45 years old and 25 percent are under 25 years old**. It also found 79 percent of the homeless are males and 21 percent females. The survey was conducted by the International Union of Gospel Missions, an association of 250 rescue missions.





# Bulletin BOARD & NOTICES

To place an announcement, call 414/256-3231;  
FAX, 414/256-3899; e-mail, nl@sab.wels.net  
Deadline is six weeks before publication date.

## CHANGE IN MINISTRY

### Pastors:

- Bickel, Elton R.**, to St Andrew, Toledo, Ohio  
**Ellenberger, Larry G.**, to Abiding Faith, Pinehurst, Tex.  
**Heiges, William D.**, from Our Savior, Grafton, Wis., to Lafayette/Louisville (exp.), Colo.  
**Nitz, Paul E.**, from WLS, Mequon, Wis., to retirement  
**Schuetze, John D.**, from St. Matthew, Winona, Minn., to WLS, Mequon, Wis.  
**Silfies, David P.**, from Grace, Columbia, Mo., to St Paul, New Ulm, Minn.  
**Rahn, Kenneth D.**, from Christ/Samuel, Marshall, Minn., to Emmanuel, Stratford 9NW, Wis.  
**Thompson, Glen L.**, from MLS, Saginaw, Mich., to director, Multicultural Preseminary, New Ulm, Minn.  
**Weigand, Martin R.**, from Mt. Zion, Missoula, Mont., to St. John, Riga, Mich.

**Correction:** Richard Mueller went from Abiding Savior, Weslaco, Tex., to retirement, not Abiding Word, as reported in the Oct. '96 issue.

### Tel/Tech Task Force seeks input

The WELS Tel/Tech Task Force (Dec. NL, p. 21) has begun meeting and is looking for input to help meet its objectives. How can we best use technology and telecommunications for worldwide outreach, synodical communications, and education? If you have an idea, a name to contact, or a question to ask, contact Wayne Borgwardt, director, at WELS, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398; FAX, 414/256-3899; e-mail, borgway@aol.com; or Gary Baumler, chairman, e-mail, garyb@sab.wels.net.

## COMING EVENTS

- Mission/ministry seminar**—7:30 AM to 12:30 PM, Feb. 4-6, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon. To register, contact Paul Rutschow, 6717 W Wartburg Cir, Mequon WI 53092; 414/512-0276.  
**Concert**—Contemporary music concert featuring Artesian WELS. 1 PM, Feb. 9, Fairview, 137 N 66 St, Milwaukee, Wis. Sue Hahm, 414/797-0695.  
**Holy Land tour**—Feb. 17-26. Led by Lloyd Huebner, retired president of DMLC, New Ulm, Minn. \$2,279. New Ulm Travel/Travel Fun Tours, 507/359-2051; 1-800-657-0151.  
**Women's retreat**—Christian Woman Today. March 14-16. Holiday Inn SunSpree resort, Oconomowoc, Wis. Jan Kneser, 414/781-1955.  
**Handbell festivals**—Northeast regional handbell festival—April 5-6, Manitowoc LHS, Manitowoc, Wis. Southeast regional—April 19-20, LPS, Watertown, Wis. Western regional—April 19-20, Onalaska LHS, Onalaska, Wis. Cheryl Diener, 223 W Badger St, Waupaca WI 54981; 715/258-7203.

**Women's retreat**—Today's Christian Women's retreat. April 11-13. McCamly Plaza Hotel, Battle Creek, Mich. Laurie, 810/391-1133.

**Women's retreat**—Spiritual renewal weekend for women. April 11-13. Radisson, Rochester, Minn. Registration deadline: March 15. Bev, 507/931-1866 (AM only).

**International youth rally**—June 18-21. Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, Tenn. \$220. Richard Warnecke, Panama City, Fla.; 904/784-1455.

**Convention**—for WELS mission for the deaf and hard of hearing. July 25-27. Radisson Hotel, La Crosse, Wis. Gene Seidel, 414/536-1651.

**Germany Lutherland tour**—July 7-17. Hosted by pastors Richard Starr and Scott Stone. Cost: approx. \$2,300. Scott Stone, 730 Roscommon Dr, Vacaville CA 95688; or Witte Travel, 1-800-469-4883.

**Canoe trip**—July 13-18 into the BWCA/Quetico, Provincial Park. Led by men from Faith, Antioch, Ill. Cost: approx. \$300. For information and application, contact Terry Beguhn, 847/746-1766.

**Retreat**—For congregation leaders who want to know more about studying to be a pastor. June 27-29. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn. Ask your pastor for more information.

**Convention**—Lutheran Pioneers. April 26. St. Peter, Schofield, Wis. To register, contact Lutheran Pioneers, Inc., PO Box 66, Burlington WI 53105; 414/763-6238.

### Martin Luther College 1997 choir tour—

- Contact Martin Luther College, 507/354-8221.  
 March 21—St. Mark, Citrus Heights, Calif.  
 March 22—Apostles, San Jose, Calif.  
 March 23—Hope, Fremont, Calif.; St. Peter, Modesto, Calif.  
 March 24—St. Paul's First, N. Hollywood, Calif.  
 March 25—Living Word, Mission Viejo, Calif.  
 March 26—Beautiful Savior, Carlsbad, Calif.  
 March 27—Reformation, San Diego, Calif.  
 March 28—Risen Savior, Chula Vista, Calif.  
 March 30—King of Kings, Garden Grove, Calif.; Our Savior, Pomona, Calif.; St. John, Victorville, Calif.

## ANNIVERSARIES

- Beloit, Wis.**—Good Shepherd (40). Feb. 2. Service, 10 AM; fellowship and dinner follows. 608/362-8720.  
**Mesa, Ariz.**—Pilgrim school (25). Feb. 9. Service, 4 PM; potluck, 5 PM. All former students invited. 602/830-1724.  
**Livonia, Mich.**—St. Paul church (125) and school (50). March 2—WLS choir concert, 8:30 and 11 AM. Apr. 27—confirmation anniversary service, 8:30 and 11 AM. Aug. 24—outdoor school anniversary service, 10 AM. Oct. 5—mission festival celebration, 8:30 and 11 AM. 17810 Farmington Rd, Livonia, MI 48152; 313/261-1360.

**Fond du Lac, Wis.**—Faith church (50) and school (35). Feb. 6—service, 6:30 PM. Feb. 8—choral concert, 6:30 PM. Feb. 9—services, 7:45 and 10:30 AM; dinner, noon; service, 3 PM. 55 Prairie Rd, Fond du Lac, WI 54935; 414/923-6313.

**Milwaukee, Wis.**—Salem (150). Feb. 16—worker training. March 9—mission Sunday; potluck following services. April 13—Lutheran Chorale. April 27—youth Sunday. May 11—Mother's day. June 1—picnic Sunday, special outdoor service at special time; picnic follows. July 27. Aug. 10—confirmation reunion; ice cream social/light lunch following services. Sept. 14—St. Marcus, Milwaukee, gospel choir. Oct. 12—Christian education Sunday; potluck following services. Nov. 9—Kettle Moraine, Jackson, Wis., adult chorale. Dec. 14—anniversary Sunday; anniversary dinner following services, order tickets through church office. Services at 8 and 10:30 AM. 6814 N 107 St, Milwaukee WI 53224-4306; 414/353-8141.

**Kekoskee, Wis.**—St. Peter (125). May 18—service, 10 AM; potluck follows. Oct. 12—service, 10 AM; catered meal follows. 23 Main St, RR 2, Mayville WI 53050; 414/387-4043.

**Dallas, Tex.**—Calvary school (25). June 14—picnic and fellowship, 4 PM. June 15—service, 4 PM; meal and program follow. 9807 Church Rd, Dallas TX 75238; 214/348-5567 for reservations.

**Weyauwega, Wis.**—St. Peter (125). Oct. 18—service, 4 PM. Oct. 19—services, 8:30 and 10:30 AM; lunch, noon. RSVP for lunch. 312 W Main St, Weyauwega WI 54983; 414/867-3169.

## NAMES WANTED

**Roanoke/Blackburg/Lynchburg, Va.**—Mark Buske, Our Savior, 4656 Lakeview Dr, Roanoke VA 24012; 540/977-4036; e-mail, revmark@bellatlantic.net.

**Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada**—Steve Nuss, Apostles, 1353N Benjamin Cr, Regina SK Canada S4X 4L3; 306/543-9985; FAX, 306/543-0332.

**Vacaville, Calif.**—Scott Stone, 730 Roscommon Dr, Vacaville CA 95688.

## NEEDED

**Baptismal font**—for Living Savior, exp., Littleton, Colo. Ross Stelljes, 303/904-1214.

**Organ music**—*The Lutheran Organist*, Volumes 2 & 3, by Fritz Reuter. Ted Huseby, 507/938-4258.

**Hymnals and prayer books**—for evangelism. Five, *The Lutheran Hymnal*; *The Lutheran Prayer Book* by Concordia and *My Prayer Book* by Concordia. Barbara Welch, RR1, Box 196, Arenzville IL 62611; 217/997-5972.

## SERVICE TIMES

**Daytona Beach, Fla.**—Going to the Daytona 500 on Feb. 16? Join us for church before the race. 7 PM, Feb. 15. Our Savior's, 1715 Taylor Rd, Daytona Beach FL 32124; 904/756-7569.



# An unforgettable valentine

Karl R. Gurgel

Some valentines are really cute. And yet, they may still not have the desired effect.

The little, freckle-faced boy has an obvious crush on his first-grade teacher. With blushing face and slicked-down hair, his shirt almost tucked in and his heart obviously in his hand, he shyly presents her with his valentine. "Won't you be mine," it says.

She pats the little fellow on the head, accepting his valentine. She may smile at him warmly, even let him think he's special to her. But someone else has her heart. And, whether he knows it or not, his love for her will never be returned.

Does our God, like that teacher, patronize us with displays of affection? Will our love for him never be fully acknowledged or accepted?

We might think so, judging by outward appearances—our visible sins of every description. And this does not even include what our heavenly Father knows best: the sinful thoughts and intents of our hearts. Outwardly we can slick down the cowlick and smile prettily. But we cannot conceal an unruly heart or our selfishness from him. Our actual words can charm the unsuspecting. But God, who reads our hearts, is not fooled by appearances.

Still, he loves us. Oh, how he loves us! God's Son died for us when we were still sinners, unworthy of his love. And so what we have done, or not done, what we have spoken, or only thought—all of our sins are covered.

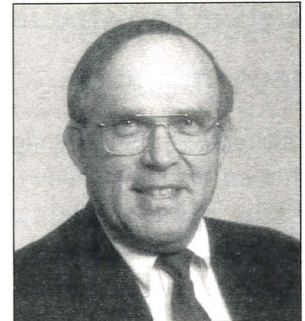
We are forgiven. Jesus is more than a cute valentine from the Father. He is love itself, the gift of the heavenly Father's pardoning love for us.

Because of his love for us, we can love him in return. But, in loving him, what kind of "valentines" shall we give him? Trusting hearts, believing his every word; listening ears and obedient hands and feet, following his every word? Yes, certainly. But there is another valentine he would like to receive from all of us.

We see normally unruly little boys giving valentine to their teachers. It tells us something about those teachers. There must be something about them that stands out for all to see. And when we bring our valentines to God, might it lead to the same conclusion about him? There is something about our God which can stand out for others to see. But only if we tell them, only if we let them see the reason for our valentines, namely, God's undeserved love for us.

That freckle-faced boy, that blushing girl, is you or I. And as we give our valentines to God, by our words and actions, may others be led to see and sense God's love for them.

In fact, one way to remember God is to remember others. Give your friends a very special valentine—share the promise of the Savior with them. It's a promise they can count on. A valentine they may never forget.



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

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# Samuel: called on to say the hard things

His first loyalty—as every Christian’s loyalty—was to the heavenly land.

James A. Aderman

Israel feasted. Sang. Slapped each other on the back. They celebrated their king and newfound strength. They forgot God’s covenant.

## Trusting in a king

The story behind the party in **1 Samuel 11:14,15** stretches back to King Saul’s sputtering start. Little changed after Saul was appointed monarch (10:17-26).



## FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. Samuel was in an uneasy position, and still he spoke God’s Word. How would the truth of 12:22 motivate such faithfulness?
2. What situations do you face where God is calling you to trust him and his grace rather than your position, power, or people? How will “consider[ing] what great things [God] has done for you” increase your trust?

Few followed Saul. Some scoffed. Most just waited.

The king went home to Gibeah. The Philistines had a garrison there. King Saul didn’t threaten them. Nor were the Ammonites threatened. They besieged an Israeli town and dared the nation to rescue it. That provocation became the rallying point for Saul to solidify his right to rule. He gathered an army and defeated the Ammonites (11:1-11).

Israel immediately recognized a new era had dawned. They predicted it: a king would organize them for action and catapult them toward independence. With gainsayers silenced, a worship service reaffirmed Saul as king, then transformed itself into a festival.

But the upside God—who granted those blessings—recognized a downside to the festivities. His people celebrated the monarchy as their salvation rather than the covenant God made with them. It was time Samuel sounded a sobering note.

## Trusting in God

A sour-faced prophet in the middle of a celebration seemed unpatriotic, but Samuel’s first loyalty—as every Christian’s loyalty—was to the heavenly land, not the Holy Land. He began by reestablishing himself as mediator between Israel and the Lord (12:1-5).

That confirmed, Samuel confronted them “with evidence . . . as to all the righteous acts performed

by the Lord” (12:7). He marched them through the history of God’s covenant commitment. He reminded them of their lack of faithfulness—including rejecting God as their king. He pointed them to the Lord’s unflinching faithfulness and urged them to step into the future trusting their God, not their king. “If both you and the king who reigns over you follow the Lord your God—good! If you do not obey the Lord, . . . his hand will be against you” (12:14,15).

To confirm the message’s authenticity, the Lord used a startling object lesson: he rained on their parade. Although it doesn’t rain in Israel during the wheat harvest, it did this day—complete with thunder.

God’s people understood and confessed their unhealthy trust in the king (12:19). Samuel responded, “For the sake of his great name the Lord will not reject his people” (12:22). Neither would his prophet. “Far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by failing to pray for you,” Samuel assured them. “And I will teach you the way that is good and right” (12:23).

Now Israel had more to celebrate. They had a king, but founded their security in God’s covenant of grace. That is where our security is. So Samuel’s advice is also for us, “Consider what great things [God] has done for you” (12:24).

*James Aderman is pastor at Fairview, Milwaukee.*



# A time to celebrate

Walter F. Beckmann

People are becoming more conscious of the approach of the year 2000. For many, that year holds a special fascination. Many wonder if it's when Christ plans to return. The closer we get, the more such speculation will increase, and the more such prophecies will multiply. Jesus told us that people will say, "Look, here is Christ," or "Look, there he is." I have no authority to tell you he won't return in 2000, only that he will return when people least expect it. We should be ready for him at anytime.

The approach of the year 2000 reminds us WELS members that there is something for which we can and should prepare—our 150th anniversary.

I'm the chairman of a committee President Gurgel appointed to make plans for a sesquicentennial celebration. We've met several times and discussed anniversary publications, videos, rallies, and mission opportunities. We're ready to suggest a 150th anniversary building project—a chapel for Martin Luther College. We're also attempting to set up a timetable of events to present to the 1997 synod convention.

In preparation for our first meeting, I asked committee members for their ideas. One pastor encouraged us to emphasize the blessings of membership in our synod. We have many blessings to be thankful for—the Bible and that WELS still regards it as God's divinely inspired and inerrant Word. We still confess the three ecumenical creeds without any reservations. We still subscribe to the Lutheran Confessions as a correct exposition of God's Word. We have churches, schools, mission programs, 150 years of history, and the fellowship of 415,000 members who are one in faith and doctrine.

All this is God's work, not our own. We have no cause for boasting but feel thankful that God has blessed us. Let's be glad for our blessings, eager to celebrate this milestone, and poised to participate in the work and opportunities he sets before us.

Our anniversary committee wants input from fellow WELS members. We're inviting people from various organizations and age groups to our planning meetings to try to get involvement from every corner of our synod. We can't invite all of you, but we want your suggestions. Tell us how you feel we should be thanking and praising God for 150 years of WELS and 2,000 years of the New Testament Christian Church. What should we be doing to promote a positive attitude about our synod in the minds of our members and the world, and to give glory to God?

Time and resources may not permit us to implement every suggestion, but we will consider them all. They'll expand our thinking. Your warnings will keep us on the right track. Suggestions we may not adopt on a synodwide level may adapt well for your local area. By offering your suggestions you'll be taking the first step in getting involved in this celebration, and that, in itself, will be a valuable contribution. We're all in this together. Let's do all we can to celebrate 150 years of God's grace and continue to serve his church together.

*Walter F. Beckmann is pastor at Grace, Falls Church, Virginia.*

*Send ideas to Ron Roth, 150th anniversary committee, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398; FAX, 414/256-3899; e-mail, [usr52@sab.wels.net](mailto:usr52@sab.wels.net).*

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Christian Church.*





# Birth control and God in control

John F. Brug

*I have heard that birth control pills do not prevent conception but really cause early abortions? Is this true?*

The history of the birth control pill has been controversial for several reasons. One point of debate has been whether the pill may induce early abortions. Claims and counter-claims make it difficult to give a definitive answer.

Birth control pills work through three main mechanisms: they suppress ovulation, they impede the movement of sperm, and they restrict implantation of the fertilized egg. This last mechanism would in effect be an early abortion.

Part of the disagreement about the effect of birth control pills results from there being three main types of pills. The combination pill utilizes synthetic forms of the natural hormones estrogen and progesterone. The mini-pill uses a synthetic hormone called progestin. The multi-phasic pill uses different levels of synthetic hormones.

Some studies claim the combination pill is very successful at preventing conception, and there is no scientific evidence that it ever causes an early abortion. Others claim, in a small percentage of cases, the combination pill may fail to prevent conception, and that, in these cases, this pill may induce abortion. For this reason, they would argue that the pill has to be considered an undesirable method of birth control for Christians, even if there is only a slim chance it would induce abortion.

Some studies suggest there is a significantly greater risk that use of the mini-pill may result in an early abortion. The multi-phasic pill is relatively new, and less information is available.

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**One point of debate has been whether the pill may induce early abortions. Claims and counter-claims make it difficult to give a definitive answer.**

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One aim of newer, low-dose pills is to reduce health risks to the woman. Health risks like nausea and mood swings as well as more serious concerns about cancer, bleeding, and heart attacks have been studied over the years. Although there has not been unanimity in the results, and it appears that health risks to the woman have been reduced, there are still concerns any woman needs to consider before adding synthetic hormones to her system.

For more information about this topic and abortion contact WELS Lutherans for Life. For a biblical perspective concerning birth control in general, see the Northwestern Publishing House work *Our Great Heritage*, Vol. 2, p. 106-124.

*I am puzzled about the translation of the Apostles' Creed. Some translations say, "Jesus sits at the right hand of God," but our new hymnal says, "He is seated at the right hand of God." Who seats whom?*

God the Father seated Christ at his right hand, that is, the Father exalted Jesus to a position of power after Jesus had completed his work of redeeming us (Psalm 110:1; Philippians 2:9-11). In our current translation of the creed, however, the verb "is seated" is not a passive verb which emphasizes the action of God the Father in exalting Christ to his right hand. It is a stative verb which describes a state or condition in which Christ remains. Because God the Father seated Christ at his right hand, Jesus is seated and will remain seated at God's right hand, that is, he will continue to rule with his Father until he returns on Judgment Day.

*John Brug is a professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon.*

**Send questions to  
Your question, please,  
Northwestern Lutheran,  
2929 N Mayfair Rd,  
Milwaukee WI 53222-4398;  
FAX, 414/256-3899;  
e-mail, [nl@sab.wels.net](mailto:nl@sab.wels.net).**



The December issue was most welcome, as the focus of many articles drew me away from the harsh jingle-bell sounds all around me. Especially poignant was "The Love of the Father on the face of the Son"—excellent!

One, however, was disappointing. "Max the yapper" seemed to be of a different format right from the beginning. Would I be too harsh with my opinion if I classified it as questionable doctrine? It sounded like decision theology to me with statements like, "When we grab hold of the cross . . ." I understand it is God's grace, not our own efforts, that saves us.

While I appreciate the inclusion of lay person composed articles in NL, these articles should be edited with respect to maintaining doctrinal purity. I doubt the author intended to promote decision theology.



Carol Pratt  
Ann Arbor, Michigan

*Carol Pratt is correct that God's grace, not our own efforts, saves us. NL is sorry if the "Max the yapper" article left an impression otherwise. It may help to see "grab hold of the cross" as figurative for "believe in Christ crucified." Scripture says, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31). This passage, similarly this article, does not intend to say how we are able to believe. Isolated this way, both might be misunderstood to say we do this by our own efforts. Other passages, however, give us the correct understanding.*

*If you think of the words of our article as spoken to believers, it is also correct to say, "Hold onto the cross." Spirit-worked faith enables you to do so. —ed.*

**Although I am continually impressed with the consistent Christian and Lutheran message**

**of Northwestern Lutheran, I am frustrated with the level at which these articles are written.** Most entries are written by pastors, who have attained a vast understanding of the Bible and the commentary surrounding it. I think NL should raise the standards on its articles and increase their reading level.

Articles appeal to those with a sixth grade reading level. I find myself wanting to read them because of the content, yet bored and put off by the style. I feel I can anticipate every word. Nearly every article seems written by the same author. I understand NL wants to appeal to a broad audience, but I think it could incorporate more intense, carefully written articles for those looking for a varied spiritual experience.

Thank you for presenting an honest and steadfast message.



Catherine Borck  
Atlanta, Georgia

**Thank you for the beautiful story of the Dabe family.** It is wonderful to see a positive Christian view of the devastating medical condition hydrocephaly.

As a student in a health related field, I am continually bombarded with the notion that a life is not worth living (or let to live) if the quality of that life is below our standards of acceptance.

As Christians, we know our responsibility is to support and champion those who make the godly choice, however hard it may be.

My prayers are with the Dabes. I thank them for showing that the right choice is the only choice.



Tim Sauer  
Spokane, Washington

**Some time has passed since the National Conference on Worship, Music, and the Arts.** I would like to comment on that event.

Being an instrumentalist in the opening service, I thanked the Lord for giving me a talent to use in his praise that could not be expressed verbally.

As a singer in the choir, I again could say "Bless the Lord" in a way that can be expressed with more than the spoken word. The workshops were enlightening as they gave us tools to use for his glory.

As a participant in the Easter Vigil, I was in awe of God's wondrous gifts to all people through the sacraments of Baptism and Communion, and in his Son's perfect life and resurrection.

I prayed when I returned to my home congregation that I would not lose this enthusiasm. Since that time, whenever I attended worship, I have felt a new inspiration, and I thank the Lord for all blessings with renewed vigor. I thank the synod for providing this opportunity, and pray that in the future, more people will have such an opportunity.

Joseph Titus  
Savanna, Illinois

**Send your letters to Readers forum, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398; FAX, 414/256-3899;**

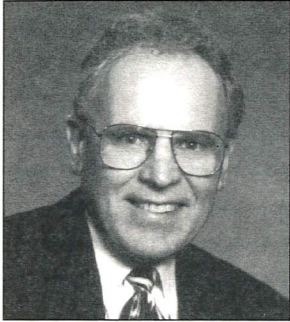
**e-mail, nl@sab.wels.net.**

**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.**

*You can find the "Through my Bible in 3 years" readings on page 25.*



# The trivializing of religion



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

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We live in a society that wants religion but doesn't want religious accountability. So, where are we in the mix?

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The good news: Religion seems to be gaining ground in the U.S.

The bad news: Morality is losing ground.

Pollsters and religious leaders have identified the trends, and their observations are revealing.

George Gallup Jr., for example, points to how professed believers let their religion have little effect on their lives and to how many of them lack even the most basic knowledge of their faith. He concludes that people want the "fruits of faith, but less its obligations."

Princeton Religion Research Center did a qualitative survey of 25 unnamed religious opinion leaders in the country. One seminary president spoke of a "'post-modernism' in which all truth claims are viewed as opinions, and moral claims as personal preferences."

Several leaders identified the deteriorating morality around us. One decried "the lack of understanding among Americans about how damaging relativism is to our national life." Not to mention our spiritual foundations. Another lamented: "My greatest worry is that I am leaving a less hopeful, less moral environment for my grandchildren than I inherited." The leaders see a "pluralism" that makes no significant distinctions between religions and tends to "trivialize religious beliefs."

According to the Center, "The issue for many comes down to the question of who is in charge—God or man?"

Still, observes one: "People are hungering for spirituality."

I'm reminded of Paul's experience in Athens when he told the heathen Athenians, "I see that in every way you are very religious." Yes, "very religious," but they didn't know the only true God and his way of salvation.

The above observations speak volumes and don't need elaboration. In summary, we live in a society that wants religion (the form is not important) but doesn't want religious accountability.

So, where are we in the mix?

Are we hand-wringers? For anyone serious about God's Word, it's hard to watch morality crumbling around us and not fret. Watching "anything-goes, don't-condemn-sin, any-god-will-do" religion prevail can make us feel helpless to make a difference. But don't we have the message that makes the difference?

Are we lukewarm? Do we think, "If society has an I-don't-care attitude about religion, why should we care?" Too often, what troubles society also troubles the church. So we wink at the unthinkable. We forget or ignore what God says about lukewarm Christians and about the consequences for those who don't know him as God. We lose a passion for spreading the good news of Jesus.

Or, are we in place to make a difference? Sure, society is groping about in the darkness of sin. That is hardly unique to us today. If that were reason to wring hands while doing nothing or to turn lukewarm, why did Christ's first disciples ever venture out after his ascension? We alone, as Christians, have the light of the gospel to shine in the darkness.

God is still in charge. Do we show it?

*Gary P. Baumler*

A word of thanks to Pastor Thomas Franzmann who has finished his term as contributing editor for Northwestern Lutheran. Franzmann provided biblical insights for NL readers on such subjects as gambling and the family. We wish him well and hope we will see other writing from him in the future.





**International Youth Rally  
Nashville, Tennessee  
"In Christ, we are free to serve."**

- Dates: June 18-21, 1997
- Location: Middle Tennessee State University  
Murfreesboro, Tennessee
- Information: Call Rev. Richard Warnecke at  
(904)784-1455 or the Commission  
on Youth Discipleship office at  
(414) 256-3274
- Registration: See your Pastor for information.  
Join us in celebrating,

**"In Christ, we are free to serve."**



# Forgiveness is free

If forgiveness must be earned, then it isn't forgiveness.

Kenneth A. Cherney

The talk-radio guest was discussing her new book, which was about how to repair a relationship after a blow-up. Driving down the road, I was listening closely.

After a minute, I was cheering. The author said the most important tool for relationship-repair is *forgiveness*. First, there needs to be a clear admission of guilt on somebody's part—a confession, if you will. Naturally, the confession needs to go beyond, "Okay, so I haven't been the world's greatest husband" or "I never said I didn't have my faults." It needs to be heartfelt, sincere, and pertinent to the misdeed.

Next comes forgiveness from the injured party. But as the author explained what she meant, my cheers turned to groans.

## Forgiveness isn't earned

She didn't mention the joy of hearing or speaking those wonderful words: "I forgive you." She was much more concerned with the offended person's decision about whether to forgive or not. Don't rush into anything, she said. When in doubt, let the offender stew a while. Watch for signs that he or she has really changed. Always remember (and I quote): "Forgiveness must be earned."

I understand what she's concerned about. When you listen to an apology, you watch for signs of remorse. If they're not there, you know something is wrong.

But just a minute. "Forgiveness must be earned"?

Then it isn't forgiveness.

Think about it. What if God "forgave" us that way? Imagine that our confession had to meet rigid standards for accuracy and sincerity. Then, suppose God let us stew a while before he forgave us. Suppose he waited for us to prove we'd really changed, and we had to "earn"

God's forgiveness before we could have it.

This approach doesn't just take Christianity's sweetest word—"forgiveness"—and turn it sour. It drains it of its meaning. If we could "earn" God's friendship, then after we had earned it, God would owe it to us. We'd have kept our part of the bargain. We'd have proven that we were good enough for God, after all.

## Forgiveness is freely given

And if we're good enough before we're forgiven, then exactly what are we being forgiven for?

Also, when God's forgiveness is what really changes people, how could we change before we had it? If we could change without it, why would we need it?

Remember, the word "forgive" means "to give up all claim to punish or exact penalty for [an offense]; to overlook." That's what God did. Our misdeeds had destroyed our relationship with God, but every "penalty" necessary to restore the relationship has already been "exacted."

In other words, Jesus paid your debt. So God forgives it. He doesn't renegotiate it. He doesn't hand you a list of demands and tell you he'll consider forgiving you if you can meet them. And he doesn't want you to "stew" one more minute before you hear the good news.

You don't have to earn forgiveness. It's free.

That's why the word "give" is in the middle.

*Ken Cherney is pastor at Living Hope, Mandeville, Louisiana.*



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