

NORTHWESTERN

May 1998

LUTHERAN

THE WORD FROM THE WELS



To raise a child, it takes a whole village

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For better, for worst

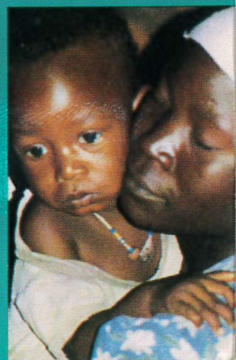
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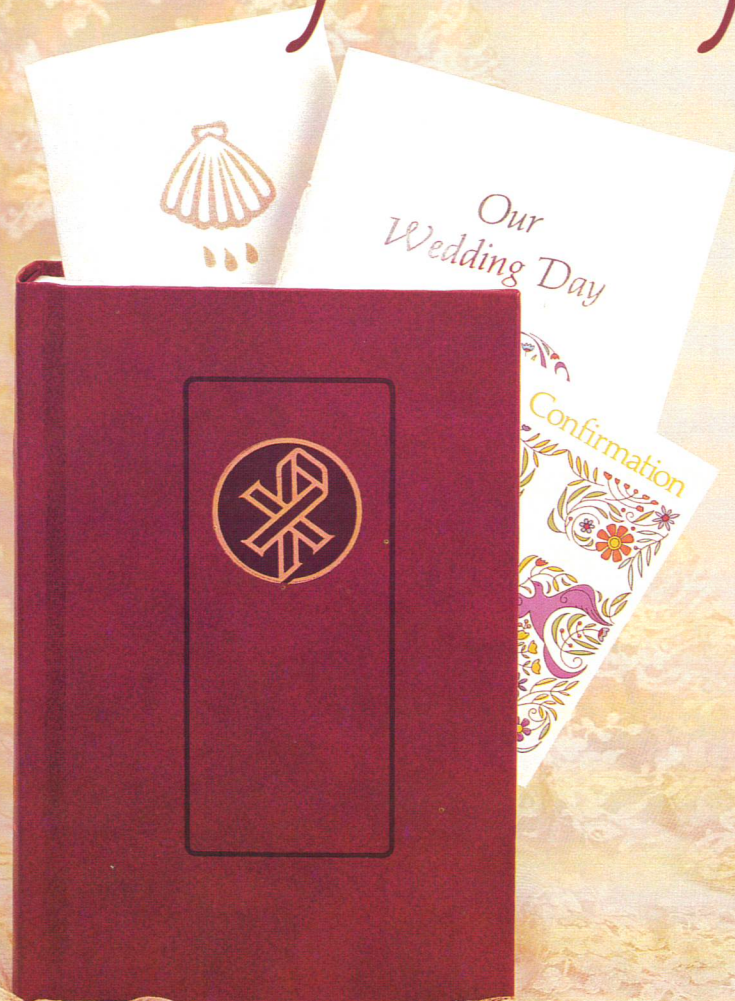
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King of kings and Lord of lords

On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written:

KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. Revelation 19:16

Richard D. Balge

On a Sunday afternoon late in the first century, on an island in the Aegean Sea, the apostle John was permitted to see what mortal eyes usually cannot see. He saw heaven opened. He saw what would happen on Judgment Day. He saw the ascended Savior, who is called "Faithful and True" and "the Word of God." He saw, in plain view, the inscription "King of kings and Lord of lords."

He rules triumphant

Jesus has not retreated from this world, which would not receive him. Rather, he has returned to the Father after redeeming the world. He has not been defeated by the powers of death. Rather, he has ascended to glory. He has not retired to relax forever with the angels. Rather, he rules all things in the interest of his church. He who came in humility, who comes now in grace, will finally come as the triumphant judge.

Christ is our King, ruling in the hearts and lives of all who hear his voice. He is the Lord, the source of everything good. He has no peer. No king or lord compares because he is God from eternity—and because of the way he secured his kingdom.

Satan offered him all the kingdoms of the world—not that they were Satan's to give. Jesus went the way of the cross instead. The mob at Golgotha suggested that if he came down from the cross, they would acknowledge him as king.

He did not come down, and for that reason we call him Lord.

It is not always apparent to us that Jesus is in charge of the universe. We read the world's history since his ascension—or we see today's news reports—and we cannot always see Christ's victory. We study the church's history since the first Pentecost, and we see something frail and torn and sluggish. We are the church, and we seldom feel triumphant.

Nevertheless, it is plain in God's Word and plain in heaven that he rules. Regardless of our forgetfulness and doubts, he is King of kings and Lord of lords. Every new doctrine (read "old heresy"), "ism," unbelief, antichrist, and the devil himself must finally fall before his power.

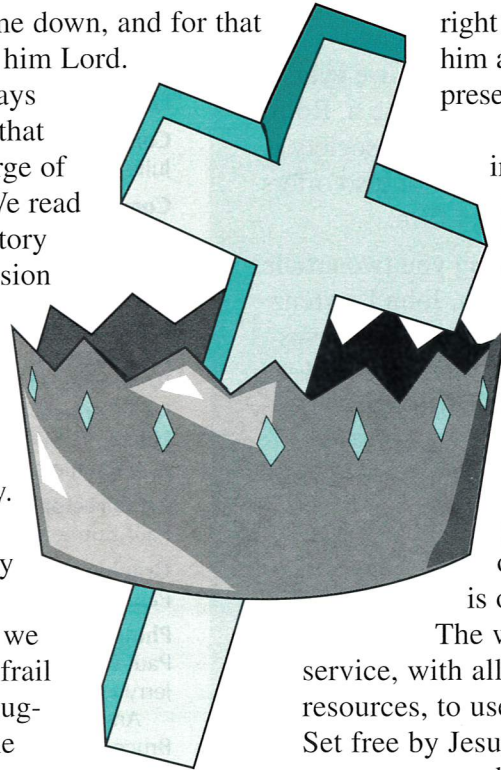
We share in his victory

Through faith in Jesus, we are royal children of God. Chosen by his love, called by the gospel, kept faithful by his Spirit, strengthened by his body and blood under the bread and wine, we already have a part in his kingdom. We will have a place at his

right hand, to be with him and to enjoy his presence forever.

Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 3:21-23 apply to us: "All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours, and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God."

The world is at our service, with all its forces and resources, to use for God's glory. Set free by Jesus' perfect obedience, we serve him by serving one another. All things are ours, and we use them responsibly and urgently. We use them in view of the day when the King of kings and Lord of lords will come to wrap up this present age. We use them in quiet and sober joy, knowing that then his victory and ours will be open and plain to all.



NL

Richard D. Balge is a professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon.



- No one argues that our society is hostile to children. But do we ever stand up against it? On page 6, Rolfe Westendorf shares how our society is assaulting children, but he also offers tips to help you stand firm.
- This month, we bring you two articles on Christ's ascension. John Lawrenz starts with Israel's sacrifices, moves to Christ's final sacrifice, and ends with its meaning for us today. Journey with him on page 8. Richard Balge reminds us that even though Jesus ascended, he is still ruling in our interests today. See page 3.
- We are family under God—that's our synod's two-year theme. At last year's synod convention, David Valleskey, president at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, presented an essay on our status as a family. We've taken that paper and divided it into a five-part series. The first one is on page 16.
- It's Mother's Day—a time when mothers everywhere will be showered with attention. But some days, during the rest of the year, it's hard for stay-at-home moms to feel that love and respect. On page 29, Charlene Lauersdorf reminds stay-at-home moms of their value.
- Our series on Malawi ends this month. We hope you've gained a new perspective of the mission and the lessons you can learn from our brothers and sisters in Africa. Read Joel Spaude's final article on page 10.

—LRB

Cover by Jerry Harders and Anna Biedenbender

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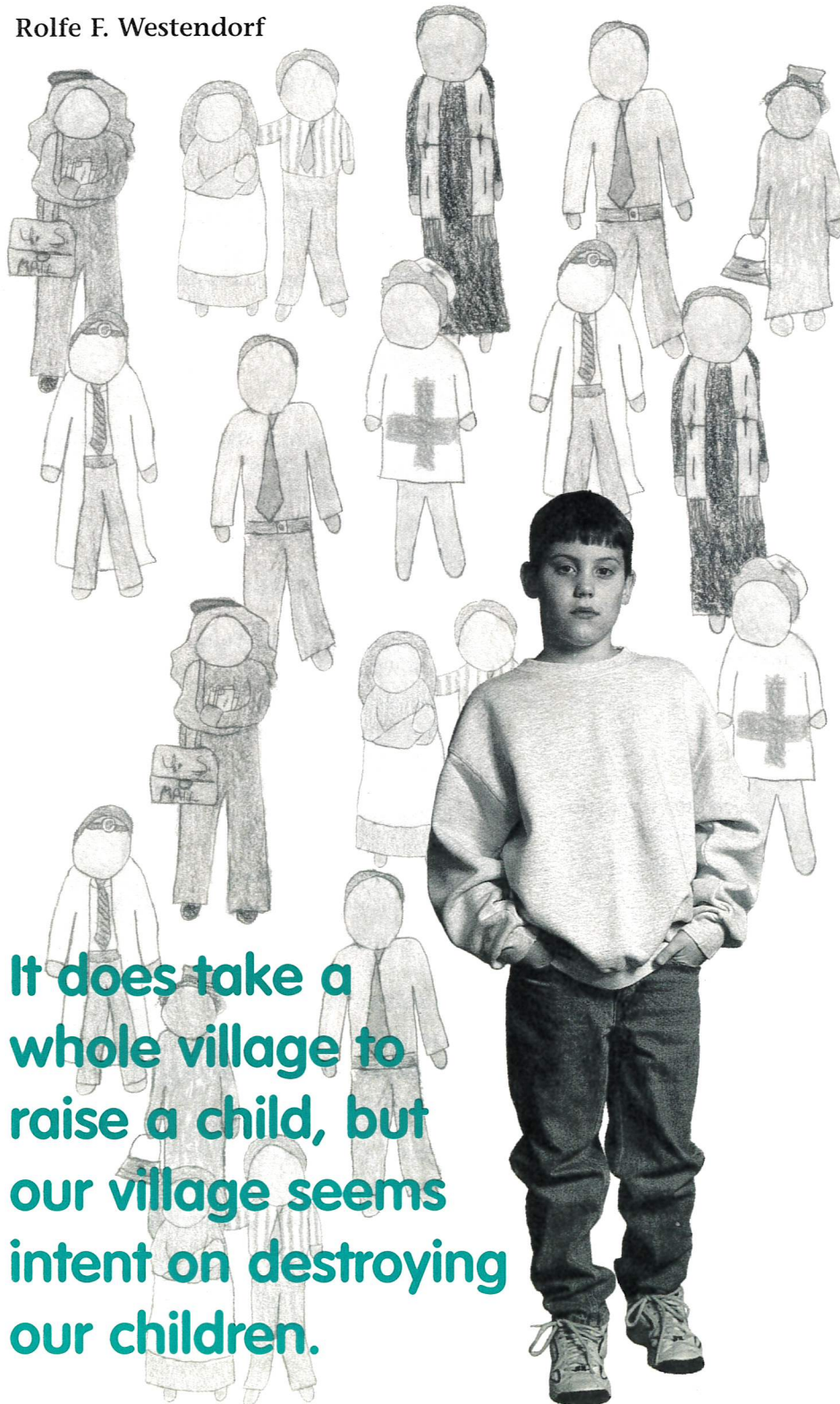
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To raise a child, it takes a whole village

Let's face it! The village in which we live is hostile to families.

Rolfe F. Westendorf



It does take a whole village to raise a child, but our village seems intent on destroying our children.

Ever since America's first lady cited that popular African proverb, "It takes a village," it also has become popular, or unpopular, in the United States.

Among many conservatives, it has fallen into disfavor. There is merit to their complaint. If the proverb means that the community should take over for the parents, or if it means that the community is to blame for the parents' failures, the proverb is deeply flawed and should be criticized, if not condemned, for its misleading assertions.

And if those who quote the proverb intend to minimize parenting and maximize social action, I would also reject much of what they say.

Even so, there is serious wisdom in the proverb, and we ignore it at our peril.

Parents are prime

It is first and foremost the parents' responsibility to raise the child, not just to provide food, shelter, and education, but to surround the child with a protective environment that will suppress the sinful nature and encourage the function of the Holy Spirit in the child's heart.

That means church, Sunday school, and a Lutheran elementary school, if one is available, are an active part of the family life. It means table prayers and bedtime prayers and Bible stories on Mommy's or Daddy's lap.

It means giving love, attention, discipline, and praise in appropriate measure at the appropriate time, all of which happens best if there is a full-time parent to make these things happen. A child who has all of this has most of what he or she needs, no matter what the "village" does.

But not always.

The village is a threat

It is also true that children are affected by forces outside the home. This starts when the child is old enough to play with the neighbor's children, where he sees and hears a lifestyle different from his own. With the growing independence of the teen years, the exposure to the village intensifies, and for a time at least, the village is "cool," no matter what the parents have taught. The influence of the village is expanded by television, which introduces the children to a kind of morality that is usually worse than what is seen in the neighborhood.

Even if the parents do everything right (and no one gets it all right all the time), the negative influences of the village can destroy the best work of the parents, leaving them to grieve for a lifetime over the child they have lost.

Let's face it! The village in which we live is hostile to families. Fornication has become "making love." Adultery has become "having an affair." Divorce is so common that it is no longer condemned, in spite of the obvious damage to children. Consumerism is ramming materialism down our throats, so that even the innocent bystanders feel deprived if they don't have the best of everything, or at least as good as everyone else.

Our village leaves very little time or opportunity for the cheerful

sacrifices needed to make healthy marriages and happy children. And most of the time we are oblivious to the danger.

Family beware

The family today is a ship sailing through waters thick with mines, planted there intentionally by those who profit from promoting behaviors that are destructive to families, whose greed even refuses to recognize the damage they are doing to their own families in the process. These desperate circumstances require drastic remedies:

1. In the first place, slow down. Don't ignore the ships that are sinking all around you. Yours could be next. Slow down so you can spot the mines and change course before the disaster happens.

2. Protect your children from this hostile village. Watch what they're watching on TV. Don't let them see the scenes that easily grab your attention with their violence and sex. Make time for family fun, so that they won't go looking for another kind of fun that someone else may provide.

3. Maximize the resources of your church. This is one part of the village that wants your children safe as much as you do. And the church has the best of resources—the Bible, the Word of God. Unfortunately, the church has often been slow to react to the changing times. The strategies that worked 50 years ago are no longer sufficient. In terms of protecting families, many churches are driving a Model T down 70-mile-per-hour freeways.

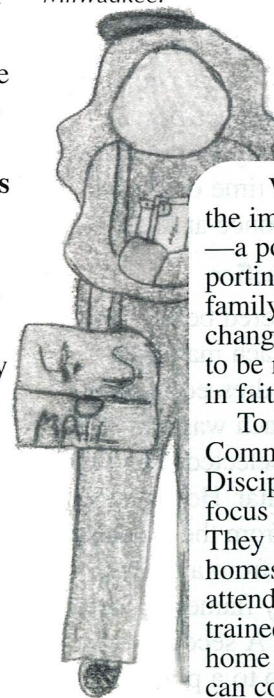
But the church has the tools of Word and sacrament. We only need to find better ways of applying those tools. We need to be on the cutting edge of finding out what works.

It does take a whole village to raise a child, but our village seems intent on destroying our children. That may be changing. There are some hopeful signs. Even the village can see the seeds of self-destruction in the plight of our children. But we can't wait for the village to change. That may help our grandchildren, but not our children. What we need are families and church, applying the wisdom of God's Word as if our future depended on it.

For, in fact, it does.

NL

Rolfe Westendorf is pastor at Siloah, Milwaukee.



WELS recognizes the importance of churches—a positive village—supporting families. Although family structures may be changing, families still need to be nurtured and built up in faith.

To help families, the Commission on Adult Discipleship has renewed its focus on family ministry. They want to reach into all homes—not just those who attend church—by having trained laypeople make home visits. Here laypeople can conduct simple Bible studies, serve as mentors, and work one-on-one with troubled families.

The commission also encourages congregations to conduct marriage enrichment and parenting seminars. These seminars will help WELS members and also serve as outreach tools to area communities. The commission will promote materials already produced by WELS and work to fill in gaps in areas not covered.

Sacrifices sent heavenward

Forty days after Jesus rose from the dead, he was leaving his disciples to sit at his Father's right hand.

John C. Lawrenz

It happened twice a day. Smoke curled upward from the sacred place of the most high God. Each time it rose from an altar. In the morning and the evening, smoke ascended heavenward from a small golden altar, half the height of a standing man, hidden from human sight. In the morning and the evening, smoke also ascended from a huge altar of uncut stones out in the open air for all God's people to see. It was the daily sacrifice. It happened twice a day from the days of Moses until the time of Christ, once at dawn and once at dusk.

The morning sacrifice

The priests gathered before first light to cast lots. Each man had washed. Each was dressed in pure white linen. And each was barefoot. Four priests were selected. The first went to the great altar. He separated the burning coals from the ashes and placed fresh wood from a fig tree over the coals. Tiny flames appeared.

A cock crowed. A second priest led a spotless lamb to a place between the great altar and the veil covering the entrance to the Temple itself. He placed both hands on the wool between the ears. This creature would not be eaten as priestly food, as many of the sacrifices were. The daily sacrifices belonged to the LORD completely.

Dawn's first light split the eastern horizon. Slowly the second priest turned the eyes of the lamb toward the Temple veil behind

which the LORD of heaven and earth had once descended in a pillar of cloud. The knife in the priest's hand found its mark. An artery opened. Blood spilled into a golden bowl. The lamb went limp. The priest made a circle around the great altar of uncut stones. He splashed blood on every side.

**We dare to approach our
all-holy Father unafraid.**

Music filled the air. The Levites were singing alleluias. Experienced hands stripped the dead lamb of its skin and cut the carcass into seven pieces. Reverent hands passed each piece up the steps before the great altar. A third priest, standing tall above the altar, laid down the sacrifice. Flesh met fire. The priest lifted up his hands. Smoke curled heavenward. The choirs sang on.

The fourth priest passed through the veil into the Temple's Holy Place. A low table, overlaid with gold, sat in the gloom to the right. Upon it were two stacks of round bread cakes, six and six, one for each of the tribes of Israel. Soft light cast shadows from the left. There seven oil lamps burned. The lamps perched at the tips of seven golden branches, each branch sprouting from a single golden stem.

Directly ahead was the golden altar. On it were glowing coals

brought in only moments before from the great altar outside. Beyond the golden altar hung another veil. The priest stared at it with fear and awe. This veil separated the priest from the Holy of Holies in which God's ark rested. In that ark were the two tables of stone upon which God had once written his words. In it was a jar of the same manna with which God had once kept Israel alive on their way to the Promised Land. In it was the staff of the high priest Aaron whose family God had appointed to offer sacrifices for sin. Above it was the mercy seat upon which blood was sprinkled by the high priest once each year on the Day of Atonement.

The moment arrived. The priest's eyes moved downward from the curtain. He looked at the burning coals on the golden altar before him. The lot would never again fall on this priest to be in this place at this time. It was a most sacred moment. The priest uncurled his hand slowly and let fall the sacred mixture. Incense met fire. Smoke curled upward. The priest lifted up his hands. Outside in the courtyard, the choirs sang, "Alleluia. Praise the LORD!"

The evening sacrifice

"Sacrifice the other lamb at twilight . . . as in the morning—a pleasing aroma, an offering made to the LORD by fire" (Exodus 29:41). At dusk there were another four priests, another lamb, another seven pieces laid upon the fire of the great

altar, another entrance into the Holy Place but not into the Holy of Holies, another burning of incense upon the golden altar, another chorus of alleluias as the smoke curled heavenward.

God's sweet savor of salvation sent heavenward—once and for all

The blood of Jesus flowed from open wounds on each hand and each foot. Blood oozed from ribbons of flesh laid bare by a whip laid 39 times on the Savior's back. Blood ran down the face of the Son of God

from the crown of thorns crushed to his brow. The Sacrifice spoke. He said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." The words curled heavenward. It was finished. The perfect, never-to-be-repeated sacrifice was complete. God in heaven was pleased. He declared mankind's debt of sin paid in full.

The risen Lord lifted from the ground. Forty days had passed since disciples found the tomb of Jesus of Nazareth empty. He had appeared to them alive. He was now leaving

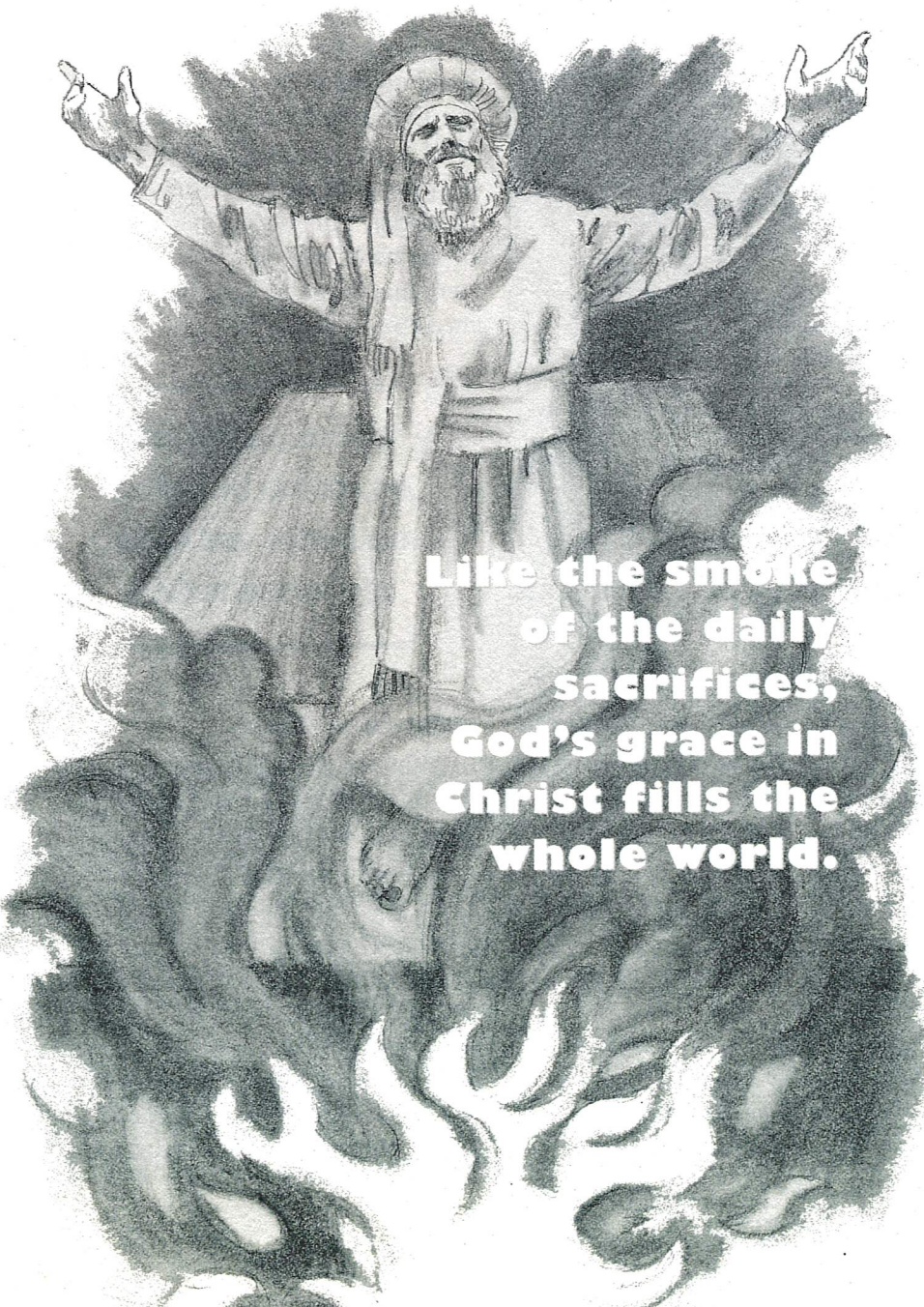
them to sit at the right hand of his Father. Like the priest who entered the Holy Place with the sacred incense, he would no longer be seen. But he would not be gone. Till the end of the age—where two or three gathered in his name—Jesus would be there. He would be there each time a believer's hand poured simple water on an infant's brow "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." He would be there "in, with, and under" bread and wine, each time flickering faith sought the fire of divine reassurance. He would be there each time words of gospel truth fell from a preacher's lips to fan the flame of faith deep in a hearer's heart.

Yes, Jesus is present each time you and I gather our thoughts in prayer. We dare to send our words heavenward, morning and evening, because the Lamb who was slain ascended to the right hand of God the Father Almighty. We dare to approach our all-holy Father unafraid, morning and evening, because the stench of our sin is covered by the sweetness of grace. Like the smoke of the daily sacrifices, God's grace in Christ fills the whole world. It curls heavenward when the gospel is preached and the sacraments are administered rightly in Jesus' name.

"May my prayer be set before you like incense; may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice" (Psalm 141:2).

NL

John Lawrenz is administrator of the Board for Ministerial Education.



Like the smoke of the daily sacrifices, God's grace in Christ fills the whole world.

Serving by faith

The Lutheran Church in Malawi and WELS are identical in this—their purpose is to carry out the mission of Christ.

Joel R. Spaude

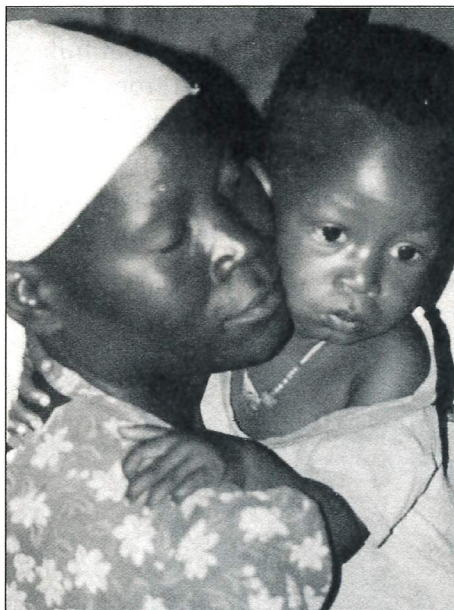
“What did God command Noah to build?” asked Loveness Phiri. “An ark!” came back the excited reply. Loveness continued, “Why did Noah have to build an ark?” The children replied, “Because God was going to cause a big flood to cover the entire earth.”

And so went Loveness Phiri’s Sunday school class that morning. Seated on a mat in front of her were 20 children of Chiyembekezo Lutheran Church. There were no pictures to color or videos to watch, but they listened intently as she told them the story of Noah’s ark.

Same emphasis

I’m sure it is hard to imagine what goes on in one of our churches in Malawi. Separated by thousands of miles and a different culture, it is difficult to see firsthand what these churches and their ministry are like. Are their church services conducted the way yours are? What liturgy do they use? Do they use the same hymnal as you do, only translated into their language? Do they have youth groups, ladies groups, confirmation, and Bible classes? Those questions surely run through your mind as you think about the work in world mission fields.

Perhaps your perception is that what goes on in the congregations in Africa is completely different from what goes on here. It’s to be expected, since they speak a different language (Chichewa in Malawi) and have different customs. Yet what



A mother and her child at a church in Malawi. The child is wearing an amulet. Mothers put amulets or charms around their children’s necks to protect them from evil. The church often faces pressure and persecution because it speaks out against these sinful customs and practices.

goes on in their congregations is not unlike the everyday happenings at your church.

Every congregation has a church council responsible for the affairs of the congregation. A chairman, vice-chairman, secretary, and treasurer make up the executive committee. The elders visit delinquent or sick members. Pastors are trained and called by congregations to serve them. Instruction classes for adult baptism and confirmation train members in the teachings of our Lord. Bible class and Sunday school provide ongoing Christian education. Ladies groups meet once a

week, and choirs practice weekly for Sunday services.

Sounds like what you are used to in your local congregation, doesn’t it? As in WELS, the emphasis in the Lutheran Church of Central Africa is on the Word of God. All the activities in the church are designed to glorify God, teach God’s Word, and build up the body of Christ. Indeed, the Lutheran Church in Malawi and WELS are identical in this—their purpose is to carry out the mission of Christ. This purpose is an attitude of the heart, which crosses any barriers that language, culture, or race might present.

We can put our faith into action by putting our bodies and minds into service to God.

Different methods

Although this emphasis on God’s Word is the same in Malawi and North America, the methods and forms used in Malawi are often vastly different from what you may be used to.

A pastor in North America would be shocked to have the choir suddenly stand up in the middle of his sermon and start singing. Yet this happens in Malawi because such an action is not disorderly but

rather the response to an inspiring point from the sermon. A missionary in Africa quickly learns to sit down and enjoy the music. Equally disturbing would be the clanging of a truck tire rim for bell ringing on Sunday morning. Yet everyone in the village hears it and knows what it means.

You won't find an organization called a "youth group" in the Lutheran church in Malawi. Yet the "youth group" exists—it is the choir. The choir often travels to other churches for all night song festivals. This activity interests many young people.

Unique obstacles

Unique ways of worshiping are not the only aspects of the work in Africa that are different. Our brothers and sisters who serve their Lord in their congregations in Africa face unique obstacles. The traditions passed down from their ancestors are deeply rooted in a spirit world that does not acknowledge the true God. The village chief has approached many a congregation's chairman and demanded that the congregation contribute money to hire a witch doctor to rid the village of evil spirits. Lay preachers and teachers constantly battle the practices and customs involving witchcraft. Regularly they preach and teach against such things as the amulets or charms that mothers put around the necks of their children to protect them from evil. Often lay preachers and teachers face pressure and persecution because they speak out against these sinful customs and practices. Yet they serve because that is how Christians show their faith.

There is a lot to be learned from this example of our brothers and sisters in Malawi. We can learn not to



The church council. Each church is organized like churches in the United States—they have church councils, choirs, elders, Bible class, and Sunday school.

be afraid to witness our faith, no matter what the consequences. We can learn that there are many different ways a Christian can serve the Lord. We can learn not to sit idly by when our congregation sends out the call for someone to serve. We can learn to put our faith into action by putting our bodies and minds into service to God.

God has given his church in Malawi willing Christians to serve him. Without their service, important work in the Lord's harvest fields would remain undone. By his grace they serve, and by his grace God's Word is proclaimed and confessed.

NL

Joel Spaude is a missionary in Malawi.

Facts about the **Malawi** conference of the Lutheran Church of Central Africa

Membership (nationals)

Baptized: 29,240
Communicant: 16,122

Average total attendance:

Weekly worship: 7,876
Sunday school: 1,477

Churches:

Organized congregations: 209
Preaching/teaching stations: 10

Ministers:

Missionaries: 8
National pastors: 19
National evangelists: 5
Bible Institute students: 9

In recent years, the national church has asserted itself, and the missionary's role has changed from that of decision-making to that of advising. In keeping with that change, the last two men called to Malawi were called to role model the pastoral office. The men who accepted those calls, Ronald Uhlhorn of New Ulm, Minn., and Richard Warnke of Kiel, Wis., bring more than 60 years of combined ministerial experience.

Information as of Dec. 31, 1997.

The dark art of fortunetelling

A person who dabbles in fortunetelling expresses a lack of trust in the wisdom of God, who has revealed to us what we need to know.

John M. Parlow

Fortunetelling is the art of discovering information about secret things that are far removed from us in time or space. Bible believing Christians know that the dark art of fortunetelling or divination is not a recent New Age creation.



The Lord once said to Isaiah, “All the counsel you have received has only worn you out! Let your astrologers come forward, those stargazers who make predictions month by month, let them save you from what is coming upon you. Surely they are like stubble; the fire will burn them up. They cannot even save themselves from the power of the flame” (Isaiah 47:13,14).

Today this dark art finds fertile fields in our spiritually hungry society.

Fortunetelling today

Astrology—The basic idea behind astrology is that stars are part of the entire universe. As the stars have an effect upon the universe, so man—a part of that universe—is also influenced. Astrologers tell us the stars both predict the course of

our lives and cause the movement of that course.

Astrology, then, is the ancient religion that claims the stars influence people’s lives. Astrology can be traced to several ancient civilizations. The Chaldeans of Babylonia began to study what influence the sun had upon the earth and the moon had upon the seas. They soon decided the planets were gods, and their movements affected the outcome of wars. As this practice grew through various civilizations like the Greeks and Romans, the fortunetelling related not only to wars and kings but to each individual.

The basis of all astrological prediction is the zodiac, a word derived from the Greek word for “animal.” The zodiac is an imaginary belt in the sky about 15 degrees of arc wide with the path of the sun in the center of the belt.

Palmistry (chiromancy)—Palmistry, or chiromancy, is the art of divination from the shape and markings of the hands and fingers. Just as astrology depends on the position of the sun, moon, and the five planets that bear the name of

old Roman gods, so various areas of the hand are named after the gods Mercury, Apollo, Saturn, and Venus. The shape and length of the fingers, the conformation of various areas of the palms, and the various lines of the hand are examined as a basis for the reading. A proper interpretation of these signs supposedly can be used to forecast the future.

A Bible-believing Christian will not deny that it is possible for evil spirits to establish contact with and to inspire men.

Cartomancy (tarot cards)—Cartomancy forecasts the future by using cards. The Tarot is a deck of cards invented in Italy early in the 14th century. A full deck consists of 78 cards, which are divided into the lesser Arcana (or Trumps Minor) and the Greater Arcana (or Trumps Major). The Lesser Arcana is very similar to a bridge deck except that it has a fourth face card called the page. The Greater Arcana consists of 21 numbered face cards, many of



which depict religious symbolism, and one “fool” or joker card.

The cards are shuffled until the practitioner “feels” intuitively that they have been shuffled enough, after which a number of cards are laid out in one of several patterns. Each card has its own significance, and, as in astrology, the position and combination of the cards has special meaning.

Mirror mantic—Mirror mantic uses crystal balls, mirrors, rock crystals, or still water as “mirrors of the future.” Such a mirror magician with the help of a magic mirror may attempt to heal or to persecute through magic, to treat people at a distance, to use love and defense magic, and so on (*Between Christ and Satan*, Kurt Koch, p. 42). The crystal or mirror supposedly enables the person to peer into a “window on the future.”

A look at the Book

A Bible-believing Christian will not deny that supernatural prediction of future events is possible. The Bible contains many such prophecies echoed through the prophets.

But when one deals with the fortunetelling phenomena, much of it is fraud, clever guesswork, or pure imagination. Many fortunetellers succeed because they say things that people like to hear. In addition, most fortunetelling is so vague and general that it is easy to find something that will seem to fit the prediction.

I remember the cover of a tabloid newspaper displayed the amazing prediction: “There will be unrest in the Middle East this year.” Nothing special about that prediction!

Many fortunetellers will claim that their predictions are accurate 75 percent of the time. That sounds impressive until you realize that they are admitting being wrong 25 percent of the time. As the sainted seminary professor Dr. Siegbert Becker reminded us, even one error would demonstrate that such a fortuneteller does not speak for God and does not receive revelations from God (Isaiah 34:16).

A Bible-believing Christian also will not deny that it is possible for evil spirits to establish contact with and to inspire men. The prophets of Ahab incorrectly foretold his victory at Ramoth-Gilead, but the scriptural account indicates that they were inspired to make this prediction by a “lying spirit” (1 Kings 22:22). The apostle Paul clearly teaches that many false doctrines taught in the church come from “seducing spirits” and that they are, therefore, the “doctrines of demons” (1 Timothy 4:1).

A Bible-believing Christian needs to remember that all fortunetelling is forbidden by God (Deuteronomy 18:10,11; Leviticus 19:26). Whether you consult 1-900 psychics, entertain with a seance, or are involved in any of the aforementioned “arts,” it is a violation of the First Commandment. A person who

dabbles in these dark arts expresses a lack of trust in the wisdom of God who has revealed to us what we need to know and who promises that all things will work together for our good.

In addition to being contrary to God’s Word, a danger of consulting various forms of fortunetelling “for fun” lies in getting hooked on it. You may not take it seriously, but then one day, the prediction comes true. You begin to wonder if . . .

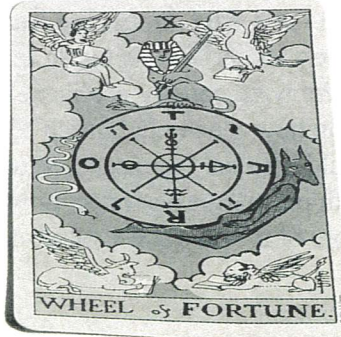
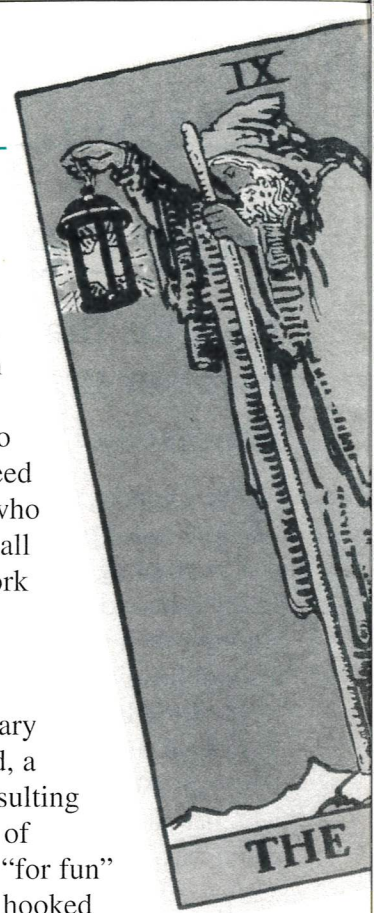
Also to those who argue that such dabbling is just “for fun” or for curiosity’s sake, Koch answers, “Whether it is out of ignorance or curiosity, whether as a joke or in all seriousness, when I release the catch on a hand grenade, the result is always the same.”

In the Lord’s commands against all types of fortunetelling, we have only another evidence of his love. Our Lord doesn’t want his children’s lives ruined here and for eternity by sleight of hand and star gazing. Rather he wants us to trust his truth and rest secure in the nail-pierced

hands of “the bright Morning Star” (Revelation 22:16).

NL

John Parlow is pastor at St. Mark, Green Bay, Wisconsin.



For better, for worst

Love for the Lord and each other can help your marriage weather life's storms.

John Sprecher

The moment will forever be a four-color picture in my mind.

I'm cradling my two-year-old son in my arms, rocking him slowly, staring into a mirror above a sink in a small hospital examination room.

My little boy.

Behind me, in the corner, my wife sits. Above her stands a doctor, who has just uttered the words that we've suspected and feared for almost 10 months.

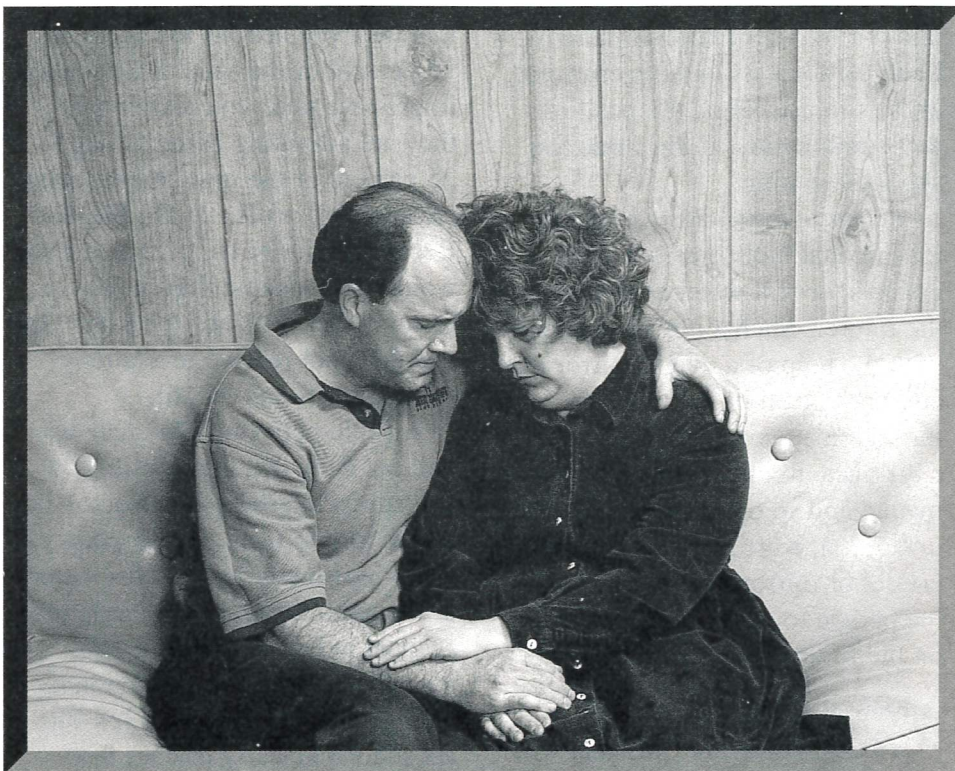
My little boy has autism.

As the doctor drones on, I hear nothing he says, but can only fix on that small wondrous child in my arms—the baby we waited 10 years and suffered one miscarriage for—and fight back tears that I'm unable to.

My God, my precious boy.

Learning that your child has a severe, lifelong developmental disability is one quick and sure way to find your marriage plunged into tremendous crisis. It did ours—generating enough pain, guilt, doubt, anger, fear, and self-incrimination to threaten our bond and (if we admit it) causing us to question the wisdom of God.

Ten years later, today, there's no questioning the infinite wisdom of God. Our faith is much stronger than it was, because of our crisis. Our lives have a deeper, more rewarding, and evangelistic purpose, one not possible without it. Our family has grown in loving and caring and understanding. And our precious little boy, Jeff—make that our



two precious little boys, Jeff and Eric—are what we thank God most for, every night.

The making of a crisis—and the unmaking

Death. Illness. Alcohol. Drugs. Infidelity. Abuse. Unemployment. Neglect. And in our case, disability. In countless ways the sinful nature of our world can invade a marriage and family and send it spiraling into crisis. What should the Christian family do?

1. Turn to the Lord. In 1988, when the diagnosis of autism came into our lives, my wife, Lori, and I weren't as spiritually attuned as now. Instead of seeking the strength of the Lord through Scripture, we sought the worldly advice of family and friends.

Today, we would turn first to the Bible and the example of Job, who—despite the loss of his material goods, the murder of his children, the cajoling of his wife to reject a god who would rain such misery down on him—with great sorrow yet faithful acceptance, proclaimed: “The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away, may the name of the Lord be praised” (Job 1:21). Whatever you may need—comfort in loss, a reminder to forgive, a lesson in patience, or unequivocal love—the Bible holds the truths on which any crisis can begin to turn.

We were equally negligent in realizing how much our church “family” could help us. We discussed our crisis with our pastor just once, in what was more of a “what-did-God-do-to-us?”

type meeting. For the family counseling we needed, we opted instead for a secular therapist.

Now, we would rely on our church's pastors and family resources more, and entrust a marital crisis with no one but a Christ-centered therapist—for who better to walk with you, comfort you, guide you through the darkness than someone who can share the love of Jesus?

2. Trust in the Lord. Although we belonged to the same church since 1982 (and still do), our trust in the Lord and his plan for us in 1988 was weak—befitting our spiritual status then as what I'd call "routine" Christians.

As a result, we refused far too long—a couple of years, at least—to accept God's will in our lives. Though we loved our son dearly and prayed for him daily, we too often literally cried to the Lord: why would you do this to us?

How misguided and of little faith we were.

But the Lord works in mysterious ways, and through the events of our lives we've come to believe—without question—what we once foolishly questioned out loud: "That in all things God works for the good of those who love him . . ." (Romans 8:28).

In our case, the mysterious way was videotape. Autism is a severe communications disorder, and one of its symptoms is an aversion to eye contact. Our son Jeff was unable to look at us, listen to us, learn from us. Yet certain aspects of television would grab his attention.

Then we were inspired: maybe television could teach Jeff. The result was a home videotape of the alphabet that Jeff responded to and quickly learned from. Other tapes followed, including *All About Jesus*.

Jeff isn't the only child with autism, Down Syndrome, or other disabilities able to learn from video modeling. When word spread of our success, letters came to us from around the world—from parents mostly—encouraging us to produce video learning programs for their children, which we have done.

Today, hundreds of families have thanked us for our work. But our thanks go to God.

Though I couldn't see it then, standing in front of that hospital mirror, it was the Lord's plan for this crisis to fall upon our family. Today, children throughout the world are leading better lives—and learning about their Savior—because of our two-year-old boy's ability to learn from a homemade videotape.

The lesson? No matter how tragic or painful or without earthly explanation your crisis may be, trust that the Lord's will is being served and that he loves you: "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you" (Isaiah 41:10).

3. Remember that you're human. Christ's ordeal in Gethsemane reminds us that it's not sinful to experience anguish and sorrow, to pray with all of our soul's might for a burden to be lifted, or to lean on loved ones in our darkest hours. A day doesn't go by that we don't think about what it would be like if a cure for autism were found. But we must also take from Gethsemane the clear and profound lesson: "Yet not as I will, but as you will" (Matthew 26:39), and ultimately accept what the Lord has given us.

Love the Lord—love each other

Life isn't fair.

If it were, if being a good Christian and doing good deeds bought us a life of rewards, justice, and happy endings, then it would be easy to believe in Christ.

Wouldn't it?

And wouldn't everyone?

But life remains a mystery, and every marriage—yes, every human being—will suffer not only one crisis in his or her lifetime, but many.

How we respond to these will largely dictate the course of our life here on earth. As well as our life beyond it.

By loving the Lord in faith, and loving each other, we do our best for both.

NL

John Sprecher is a member at St. Paul, Muskego, Wisconsin.

The people used in the photograph were models, not the author and his wife.

For more information about the Sprechers' tapes, contact Special Kids, PO Box 462, Muskego WI 53150; 1-800-KIDS-153; <www.specialkids1.com>. All proceeds from their tape *All About Jesus* are donated to Jesus Cares, a WELS Bible study program for children and adults with learning disabilities.

Need a Christian shoulder to lean on? For confidential Christian counseling anywhere in the United States, call the WELS CareLine, 1-800-422-7341.

We were not a family

God's design was that we live together as family under God. Instead we were by nature "objects of wrath," sinners controlled by Satan.

David J. Valleskey



“**B**rothers and sisters, go in peace. Live in harmony with one another. Serve the Lord with gladness.”

By now these words are familiar to most of us in WELS. They introduce the benediction in both the Service of Word and Sacrament and

the Service of the Word in *Christian Worship*. These words presuppose something, something we may take for granted, something we may pass by without much thought, something that may fail to register in our minds and hearts as the great and wondrous blessing it is. I am referring to the fact that we can call one another brothers and sisters, that we are family.

With the words “brothers and sisters” I am speaking, of course, not about the physical family, but about the spiritual family, the family in which each of us can call God our dear Father, Jesus Christ our elder brother, and one another beloved brothers and sisters in Christ. As the title for this series suggests, membership in this family comes not from being *born* into it but from being *reborn* into it. And that is what I invite you to ponder with me—the wondrous miracle and tremendous reality of the family of believers into which we have been reborn.

All humans lost membership

Once, we were not a family. I don't have to spend much time talking about how the whole human race lost its membership in the family of God. Nor do I have to elaborate much on the sad and sordid consequences of the loss of what mankind had possessed from creation. Just a brief perusal of Genesis 3-11 tells the story how, following the fall, the perfect unity of the family God created disappeared. Adam, intent on getting off the hook, pins the blame for the fall on the woman, the woman God had given him.

This was just the beginning. Love of brother for brother is replaced by hatred: Cain kills his brother Abel. That was not just an isolated event: “The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time” (Genesis 6:5). Mankind, created to give glory to



God the Father as Creator and to live in harmony with one another as part of the family of God, was now doing just the opposite.

Even the devastating judgment of the flood did not alter that situation. "Let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves" (Genesis 11:4). So did unregenerate man boast after the Flood on the Plain of Shinar, a far cry from fulfilling the purpose of our Creator God and Father. The people whom he had formed for himself that they might in joyful unity of heart and purpose proclaim the Father's praises were instead egotistically intent on proclaiming their own praises.

The result? "The Lord scattered them over the face of the whole earth." God's created children, created to serve the Lord in gladness, in God-pleasing, God-honoring harmony with one another, are now scattered to the four winds—separated by language and, in time, by increasingly different cultures, and especially by sin that affects both the vertical relationship with God and the horizontal relationship with one another.

We were not exempt

This was the world into which each of us—without exception—was

born. As Martin Franzmann put it, "In Adam we have all been one, one huge rebellious man." St. Paul writes:

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath (Ephesians 2:1-3).

As children of the world, we followed the ways of the world. Our head was not the ruler of the kingdom of heaven but "the ruler of the kingdom of the air," Luther's "old evil foe," who "now means deadly woe," whose "deep guile and great might are his dread arms in fight." The old evil foe's spirit, not the Holy Spirit, was at work in us, causing us, as Paul says, to be "gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts."

"At one time" Paul tells Titus, "we too were foolish, disobedient . . . , and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated

[or, perhaps, "hateful"] and hating one another" (Titus 3:3). This was a far cry from the grand design of our Creator that we live together as family under God, loved by and loving one another!

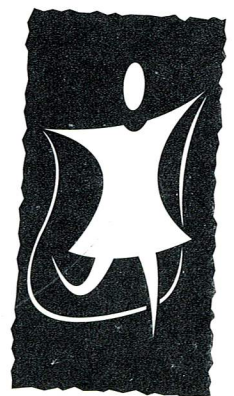
Instead, we—all of us, no exceptions—were by nature "objects of wrath," sinners allied with and controlled by Satan, on our way to hell, and powerless to change our situation. We were not a family. The only togetherness we enjoyed was a common desire to do our own thing at the expense of anyone and everyone else and the prospect of spending eternity together in hell.

That prospect left no hope, no light for our lives. Were that the end of the story, we would feel better not to know about it. But God had a plan, a plan conceived in his great love for the world he had created. That plan restored our family relationship with God as the next part of this series will show.

NL

David Valleskey is the president of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon.

This series is adapted from an essay Valleskey presented at the 1997 synod convention.



It is well with my soul

Even after 125 years, one man's strength during tragedy serves as a witness to people today.

Carl R. Henkel

One song has become extremely important and meaningful to me. It begins:

When peace like a river
attended my way,
When sorrows like sea
billows roll—
Whatever my lot, Thou
hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well
with my soul.

I didn't realize until reading an article in Cameroon that the hymn came about through immense heartache and pain and after a river of bitter tears. Horatio (Horace) Spafford, who enjoyed a happy and peaceful life until his world fell apart, wrote it in 1873.

Spafford, a sincere Christian and father of five, had been a successful Chicago attorney. But then tragedy struck. Not once, but several times. First there was the sudden death of his only son. Soon after, his extensive real estate investments were wiped out in the great fire that destroyed most of Chicago.

Spafford then believed it was the Lord's will that he take his family to Europe, not only to lift their spirits, but also to share God's Word with others. Important business prevented him from leaving with his family, so he sent them ahead. He would join them as soon as he could.

Sadly, the ship carrying his loved ones, the S.S. Ville du Harve, went down in a storm. The vessel sank in 12 minutes. Among the 226 that drowned were Tanetta, Maggie, Annie, and Bessie Spafford, Horatio's four young and beautiful daughters. To lose one child is extremely painful, but to lose them all must be devastating.

As Spafford spent many lonely and tear-filled hours on the deck of the ship carrying him to Wales to join his grieving wife, and as he passed over the spot where his dearly loved daughters had died, he wrote the words of the now famous hymn. "When sorrows like sea billows roll . . . It is well, it is well with my soul."

How is it possible for one to suffer such a tragic loss, yet display such tremendous confidence? Only through a living faith in a living Savior. Spafford knew that because his children believed in their Savior, their souls had gone to heaven to be with Jesus. He knew they were safe in the arms of their loving heavenly Father.

Furthermore, he knew he would see them again. This did not take away the emptiness he felt in his loss. It did not take away the pain or erase the suffering. It did not dry the tears. But it did allow him to put his

loss into a different perspective—it is well, it is well with my soul.

Today, many people like me are comforted by this tender hymn. Isn't it amazing how God can take the immense and almost unbearable heartache of one and turn it into the comfort and peace of another?

Tho Satan should buffer,
tho trials should come,
Let this blest assurance
control,
That Christ hath regarded
my helpless estate
And shed his own blood
for my soul.

And, Lord, haste the day
when my faith shall be sight,
The clouds be rolled back
as a scroll
The trump shall resound
and the Lord shall descend,
"Even so"—it is well with
my soul.

It is well with my soul, it is
well, it is well with my soul.

May the Lord turn all your rivers
of tears into hymns of praises.

NL

Carl Henkel, pastor at Mt. Olive, St. Paul, Minn., spent one year in Cameroon.

INTER-ACT

Randy K. Hunter

"The word of God is living and active." Hebrews 4:12

Introduction

You're sick. Achy. Feverish. Nauseated. Which would you rather hear your doctor say?

A. "Oh, it's just a common flu. It seems like everyone's got it."

B. "Take this antibiotic. It works. You'll feel better soon."

The doctor may be right that it's common, but that isn't much comfort. It may be true, but it's no help. On the other hand, if she can give you a medicine that works, and will work in the future, you feel better right away. You at least know you're on the way to a cure.

Now imagine God is the doctor. The sickness is temptation.

Text

Read 1 Corinthians 10:12,13

¹²So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! ¹³No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

Application

1. What blessings have you received from studying Bible history or remembering the lives of fellow believers now fallen asleep?
2. When you're on a diet, it's a good idea to stay out of a doughnut shop. When you know the danger, you take precautions. How do these verses make you aware of the danger of sin?
3. "When you are tempted, he will also provide a way out." God provides the way out, but we don't always see it. How might these activities be the "way out" God is providing you?
 Studying God's Word
 Worshiping together
 Maintaining Christian relationships
 Taking precautions
 Backing off early
 Counting the consequences of a sin
4. Think of a situation in which one or more of these "ways out" might have helped you stand up under temptation.
5. As a precaution against the danger of sin, Paul reminds us: God is faithful. What reminders do you have in your home, church, workplace, school, etc. that God is faithful?

Questions

1. In the verses just before these (6-10), Paul recalls the idolatry, immorality, and grumbling of the Israelites under Moses' leadership. Then he writes to first century Christians, "So, if *you* think you are standing . . ." For Paul, history wasn't to be forgotten. How did he use Bible history?
2. What one word would you use to describe the warning, "Be careful that you don't fall"?
3. Why is the first sentence in v. 13 not at all comforting?
4. Why is the second sentence in v. 13 one of the most comforting (and strengthening) promises in the Bible?
5. Paul wants to encourage *our* faithfulness—"you can stand up under it." But he begins with a reminder of *God's* faithfulness—"God is faithful." Why?
6. Even when we're unfaithful to God and we fall for the temptation, Jesus' life and death is still our "way out." What does that tell you about God's faithfulness?

Prayer

O God, you are faithful. We see it in the gift of your Son. We feel it in the relief we have because of his life and death. We need it for strength to stand up under the temptations we face. Satan doesn't waste his arrows. He aims at our weaknesses. So, Lord, with each struggle against sin, show us the way out you are providing. And use us to be the way out of temptation for others. In Jesus, the faithful one, Amen.



WELS expands resource ministry

For the third straight year, WELS had a display at the National Religious Broadcasters' convention in Washington D.C., WELS brought new projects, as well as some popular products from previous years.

Among the new projects is "Mr. Whistle's Thistle," a video-based curriculum for witnessing to children, featuring Pastor Tony Schultz as Mr. Whistle.

WELS also offered many tracts, including ones titled, "The Church Is Not About." The tracts begin "The Church Is Not About . . ." They

continue with topics such as: how much money you give; pretending constant happiness; whether you're divorced or not; whether you are better than other people or not; whether you grew up Methodist, Catholic, or Lutheran; arguments between denomination; or whether you drink beer or not.

Each tract concludes: "The Church is about Jesus and what he said and did. He came to share God's love."

Another WELS resource is the book *Speaking The Truth in Love to Mormons* by Mark Cares, pastor at Messiah, Nampa, Idaho, who was at the NRB convention. According to Pastor Don Matzat, host of radio's "Issues, Etc.," "*Speaking the Truth in Love to Mormons* is must reading!"

Call 1-800-884-9312 to order that book and other WELS resources.



Pastor Tony Schultz (right) at the National Religious Broadcasters' convention. Schultz portrays Mr. Whistle, in "Mr. Whistle's Thistle," a video-based curriculum for witnessing to children. At the convention, WELS offered Bible-based materials to help others reach out with the gospel.

More than a class reunion

The class of 1982 from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, renewed friendships with classmates at Parish Ministry Enhancement-15 (PME-15), a pilot program sponsored by the Board for Parish Services.

But this was more than a class reunion.

"The value of this program is to spiritually bolster the ministries of pastors approaching mid-life," said Wayne Mueller, administrator for Parish Services.

Forty-three pastors and their wives attended this two-day conference at Mesquite, Nev. They attended workshops, most of which were conducted by fellow class members; renewed friendships; discussed the practical aspects of their different ministries; and shared their experiences.

"For a group that spent eight years training together, it was so valuable to get together 15 years later and share the ups and downs, the joys and the sorrows," said Dave Kuehl, pastor at St. Paul, Muskego, Wis.

This conference had several objectives. First, it allowed attendees to share ministry experiences and receive direction and support from each other.

"There was an instant camaraderie and openness since these men had shared schooling with each other," said Mueller. "This allowed them to open up about their sins and weaknesses, their frustrations and failings."

The conference also worked to strengthen marriages, with workshops on home and family and personal

spiritual growth. The conference gave the pastors and their wives an opportunity to "get away" for a weekend and to spend quality time together.

Finally, the conference was an opportunity to encourage professional and personal spiritual growth.

Planning for the next PME-15 has already started.

For seven years, the Board for Parish Services also has helped sponsor a parish ministry enhancement for pastors after their first year in a parish.



The seminary class of 1982 and their wives at PME-15. Here the pastors and their wives shared experiences with their classmates and realized they were not alone in their joys and frustrations.

Reaching out to kids

Two congregations in Milwaukee are finding alternative ways to fill neighborhood youth's needs—for companionship and God's Word.

Through midweek programs, St. Marcus, an inner city church, and Salem, on the east side, are reaching out to youth, mostly non-members.

St. Marcus' after-school program, Wandani (Swahili for companions), meets three hours every Wednesday. Five to 10 volunteers offer a hot meal, recreation, Bible study, and companionship to an average of 15 children per week. The children, ranging in age from 8 to 12, also attended Advent and Lenten services at St. Marcus.

"The services were so different to the kids that they paid attention. They were intrigued by worship," said Linda Baacke, program director. "One child enjoyed the singing so much that he kept singing the Benediction over and over."

Although volunteers are unsure about long-range effects of the program, each week Wandani allows them to connect with the children—and, therefore, the community—and to share God's Word.

Salem already offers many youth programs ranging from an after-school program twice a week to a six-week long vacation Bible school in the summer. These programs give neighborhood children, often alone because of parents' work schedules, companionship and a place where they will stay out of trouble.

"We are doing like Jesus did," said James Sonnemann, pastor at Salem. "He provided for people's needs and then introduced himself as the Savior. We are also providing for a need and then using that opportunity to introduce Jesus to them."

Recently Salem has started a "Kids Oasis," an open house for kids and teens on Friday nights. Volunteers watch the younger children, while Sonnemann takes the teenagers—mostly boys—to various activities.

But the program goes beyond companionship. These teenagers are attending services on Sunday and Wednesday and accompanying Sonnemann when he holds services at area colleges. Some don't want to leave after church on Sunday.

"It's hard to say no to a 14- or 15-year-old who wants to hang around church," said Sonnemann, who sometimes takes these teens to lunch after Sunday worship.

Salem is trying to start a program called Christian Brothers and Sisters where Christian adult volunteers mentor children by spending time with them each month and by calling them weekly. They are, however, having difficulty finding volunteers.

The Commission on Youth Discipleship has been working closely with these churches on these new programs. A grant from the Siebert Lutheran Foundation provided funding for the after-school programs.

For more information, contact Linda Baacke, 414/256-3232 for Wandani and Pastor James Sonnemann, 414/964-7036 for Christian Brothers and Sisters.



Kids at an after-school program at St. Marcus, Milwaukee. Here they have their spiritual needs—opportunities to hear God's Word—and their physical needs—food and companionship—fulfilled.



My three-year-old grandson, Lucas Golm (son of Pastor Curtis and Janet

Golm, formerly missionaries in Africa), attended Sunday school for the first time at Holy Scripture, Ft. Wayne, Ind., where his dad is currently serving.

At dinner, his grandpa asked what he learned in Sunday school. Luke replied "Jesus went up to heaven!"—using very vigorous gestures to demonstrate. (It was the Ascension Day story.)

Pastor Golm then asked, "What is Jesus doing up in heaven, Luke?" and Luke very matter of factly responded . . . "He's fixin' things."

We all chuckled, but agreed this was truly a beautiful, simple gospel message from the mouth of a babe!

Mrs. Ronald Mielke

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Tel/Tech task force plans for future

An Information Technology Plan (IT Plan) now guides the strategic development of WELS technology. Gary Baumler, chairman, and Wayne Borgwardt, director of the Tel/Tech Task Force, presented it to the Synodical Council in February. The IT Plan unfolds in three successive phases:

- Internet presence (operational since last spring through the redesigned wels.net site)
- Intranet implementation (internal communications, beginning with home missions)
- Video development (future)

A three-fold application of video is anticipated:

- * Distance education (building on

current work in Latin and Spanish)

- * Broadcast video (e.g. evangelism, conventions)

- * Administrative and training use (e.g., multi-location electronic meetings)

The IT Plan charts the course for the task force in carrying out its five-year assignment to plan and implement a "technological infrastructure." An AAL grant assisted the development of the plan, engaging the services of Evans Associates of Thiensville, Wis., a consulting firm. The Synodical Council authorized the task force to continue its work as outlined, also noting an expected budgetary impact as development continues. It also encouraged input from the many groups served.

The Internet web site and intranet communications are proving to be highly cost effective, according to Borgwardt, with falling costs in video also expected to continue. He cited Jesus' parable about the unfaithful manager as encouragement to apply technology to church life. "Wise use of technology is more than an opportunity," he said. "Good stewardship compels us to use the worldly tools God gives us in advancing Christ's mission."

rē · li · giōn

Defining religion

fornication: Having sexual relations with a person other than one's spouse. Fornication is a sin against the Sixth Commandment and is condemned in the Bible with the strongest of terms (1 Corinthians 6:9). Jesus reveals that this sin begins in the heart with lustful thoughts (Matthew 5:27,28).

Where are they now?



The Seibel quintuplets, their grandpa, and two older brothers. The children were the first surviving quintuplets born in Wisconsin. They attend Faith, Fond du Lac, Wis. Back, from left: Phillip, age 8; Anthony, age 11. Front, from left: Catherine, Alex (seated on Mr. Iding's lap), Olivia, Andrew, and Evan.

In NL, we report the news. But we aren't always able to follow up and let you know what's happening now. We're running this short feature, "Where are they now," to give you updates on news items or inspirational features. —ed.

The news story "Quints born to WELS couple" ran in the Oct. 15, 1992 issue.

Here's a recap:

On Aug. 13, 1992, quintuplets were born to Debbie and Andy Seibel, members of Faith, Fond du Lac, Wis. The babies—two girls and three boys—were the first surviving quintuplets born in Wisconsin.

When asked by a reporter what they expected, Debbie answered, "There will be sacrifices, but what we gain will be worth so much more."

So, where are they now?

The children, now 5 years old, will start kindergarten in the fall.

As Debbie said five years ago, there have been sacrifices.

She worries about making sure that all seven children get enough time and attention, and feel loved and cared for. Also, Andy and Debbie had to sacrifice the time they could spend together. "But, now that everyone goes to bed early, we have time to talk," says

Debbie. "It's wonderful to have the relationship back again."

And Debbie was right. What they gained is worth so much more than the sacrifices. "Now that they're able to do more on their own, there's time to watch them develop," she says. "We see their personalities grow and how they learn things on their own."

Along with watching the children develop and grow, the Seibels have been able to see their own faith grow. "I'm so amazed," she says. "The house is in upheaval, the kids are crying, the laundry's not done, dinner's not ready, and it's 4:55. I used to think, 'Lord, you've given me too much.'"

Then a friend or family member would call and offer to help.

That's a sign to Debbie that God knows when to send help. "I remember that, and things don't seem frustrating," she says. "I realize that God knows exactly what we need."

Majority of *Lutheran Parent* homes hold regular family devotions

Research targeting subscribers of *Lutheran Parent* magazine in November 1997 reveals that 60 percent of individual subscribers surveyed said they regularly hold home devotions. Thirty-seven percent of this group indicated they were involved in some kind of family devotional activity six or more times per week. Even among families that receive *Lutheran Parent* through a bulk program of their local congregation's Lutheran elementary school or Sunday school, or families who are getting the magazine as a gift from a friend or relative, 53 percent said they regularly participate in family devotional activities.

The survey, conducted by Market Probe, Inc. (an independent marketing group), was designed to determine how people are using *Lutheran Parent*, and to see what kind of impact, if any, it was having on the spiritual life of Lutheran families. Of those surveyed, 70 percent were individual subscribers.

The data revealed that *Lutheran Parent* subscribers have a genuine desire for more spiritual activity at home. Of those interviewed, 68 percent said they subscribed to *Lutheran Parent* because they wanted to increase their family's spiritual involvement. Seventy-two percent indicated they were seeking parenting guidance and encouragement from a Lutheran perspective.

An especially significant finding was the implication that families who form a devotional habit when children are still quite young are far more likely to sustain a strong pattern of faith-life activity over the long haul. On the other hand, the evidence also suggests a majority of families wait until children have grown to age eight or nine before they try to establish a devotional pattern. By inference we can conclude that many families are waiting too long to establish a pattern of spiritual activity at home.

Kenneth Kremer



Genesis Foundation: Part I (Code 8333), 1997, 30 min., color, SCA

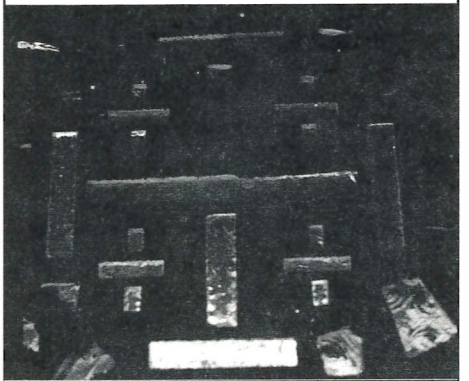
Some Christians believe that they can accept evolution, and reject a six-day creation, without damaging the gospel of redemption through Jesus Christ. Ken Ham demonstrates the fallacy of this opinion. The presenter should be prepared to explain some unfamiliar theology in this presentation. Genesis Foundation: Part II (Code 8334), 1997, 30 min., JSCA

Genesis Foundation: Part III (Code 8335), 1997, 30 min., JSCA

Both of these videos, along with Part I, emphasize that the doctrine of creation is not an isolated teaching of the Bible. The Scriptures closely link creation to law and gospel, so that both are weakened if we try to teach something other than a six-day creation. As always, careful previewing is recommended to correct false impressions that may be left by non-Lutheran presenters.

These videos are available for rental for \$7.50 by congregations, schools, and church groups. Subscribers to the library may order them for the cost of return postage from Audiovisual Library Services, Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 N 113 St, Milwaukee WI 53226-3284; 414/475-6600; 1-800-662-6093.

SYMBOLS *for your life*



Symbol: Jerusalem Cross

Background and meaning:

The five crosses represent Christ's five wounds on the cross. The small crosses signify the four corners of the world to which we are to spread the gospel of Christ (large cross).

Bible gems: Colossians 1:20
". . . and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross."

Matthew 28:19 "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

A symbol for your life: What do we have with God through Christ's blood shed on the cross? What does this mean? Why is this important for your life? How is this symbol a "mission" symbol? What is your Christian responsibility according to Matthew 28:19?



District news

Northern Wisconsin

Fox Valley Lutheran High School, Appleton, Wis., celebrated its 45th anniversary this year.

Arizona

Publications for Latin America (formerly called Mass Communications) will dedicate a new office building this June in El Paso, Texas. The 2,200 sq. ft. building will be on the property of Victory in Christ Lutheran Church, and will share office space with the congregation. Since its beginning in 1985, the program has published Spanish language educational and theological materials for use in WELS Hispanic missions in the United States and Mexico. The team of four full-time workers is directed by Pastor Paul Hartman.

Kenneth Pasch

California

On Feb. 15, Redeemer, Santa Barbara, Calif. celebrated its 25th anniversary and the 30th anniversary of WELS mission work in Santa Barbara. . . . St. Stephen, Fallbrook, Calif., celebrated its 25th anniversary in February. . . . Two exploratories held their opening services on Palm Sunday: St. John, Vacaville, Calif., and Water of Life, SW Las Vegas, Nev. St. John meets in a motel room, and Water of Life is leasing space in a shopping mall. Both missions are doing extensive canvassing to find more prospects. . . . Green Valley, Henderson, Nev., opened a preschool in its newly constructed educational building. . . . A new area of outreach began in March at Hawaii Kai, Oahu, Hawaii. Outreach continues at Foster Village, Oahu, and on Maui.

Hermann John

Dakota-Montana

On June 8, 1997, Hope, Spearfish, S.D., celebrated a milestone—completing their payments on the Church Extension Fund loan that built their church. Robert Kaiser, president of Hope, burned a copy of the mortgage. A stained glass “Good Shepherd” window was also dedicated. . . . Christ, Bison, S.D., celebrated its 60th anniversary in 1997 with three special services.

Jon Hadler

Southeastern Wisconsin

Fifty-three members of Siloah, Milwaukee, Wis., traveled 15 hours to Decatur, Ga., where they presented a concert of gospel music at Sola Scriptura church on Jan. 18. The day before the concert, choir members helped canvass 1,400 homes in an area neighborhood. Many neighbors

responded and increased the congregation’s prospect list. Barry Mimis is the director of Siloah’s Youth Gospel Choir. WELS Kingdom Workers funded this outreach project. . . .

By coincidence, 12 WELS members from St. John, Lannon; St. Paul, Slinger; Woodlawn, West Allis; and St. John, Wauwatosa ended up on the same tour to Malta and Rome in February. But these members did more than sightsee. Reuel Schulz, pastor at Woodlawn, brought along copies of hymns and Acts 27 (which talks about the apostle Paul’s shipwreck on Malta) for Sunday worship. Forty-eight people from the 80-person, two-bus tour, attended the service Schulz put together.

Scott Oelhafen



WELS members who toured in Malta and Rome, standing on the Dingli Cliffs in Malta, overlooking the Mediterranean Sea. Back row: Vernon Lemke, Joyce Ulbricht, Otto Ulbricht, William Wandsnider, Reuel Schulz, Jerry Harders. Front row: June Lemke, Jean Mathiak, Melvin Mathiak, Eileen Wandsnider, Charlotte Schulz, Norbert Sprengeler.

Western Wisconsin



Dora Rupnow, a member of St. John, Jefferson, Wis., had been singing in their senior choir for 70 years. She sang with the choir for the last time on Christmas Day 1997.

District conventions

Arizona/California	June 15-17	Pilgrim, Mesa, Ariz.
Dakota/Montana	June 16-18	St. Martin, Watertown, S.D.
Michigan	June 9-11	Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw
Minnesota	June 16-18	Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn.
Nebraska	June 15-17	Nebraska Lutheran High School, Waco, Neb.
North Atlantic	June 9-10	Elizabethtown College, Elizabethtown, Penn.
Northern Wisconsin	June 15-17	Manitowoc Lutheran High School, Manitowoc, Wis.
Pacific Northwest	June 13-14	Evergreen Lutheran High School, Des Moines, Wash.
South Atlantic	June 8-10	Hilton, St. Petersburg, Fla.
South Central	June 8-9	St. Mark, Duncanville, Tex.
Southeastern Wisconsin	June 9-10	Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon
Western Wisconsin	June 7-9	Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis.

Obituaries

Robert O. Waldschmidt 1920-1997

Robert Waldschmidt was born July 22, 1920, in Milwaukee, Wis. He died Sept. 22, 1997, in Grace Valley, Calif.

A 1945 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Waldschmidt served at Grace, Zillah, Wash.; Crandon/Argonne/Hiles, Wis.; St. Paul, Hortonville-5NE, Wis.; Palos, Palos Heights, Ill.; Gloria Dei, Belmont, Calif.; Prince of Peace, Mason City, Iowa; Shepherd of the Hills, Grass Valley (ELS), and Wayfarers', Fillmore (ELS), both in Calif.

He is survived by wife, Elisabeth; six sons; two daughters; 19 grandchildren; and four great grandchildren.

Otto Engel 1909-1998

Otto Engel was born May 31, 1909, in Wellington Township, Minn. He died Feb. 21, 1998, in New Ulm, Minn.

A 1931 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Engel served at St. Matthew, Stoddard, Wis.; Immanuel, Hutchinson, Minn.; and St. Matthew, Danube, Minn.

He is survived by two daughters, one son, six grandchildren, six great grandchildren, and a sister.

Edgar Adolf Knief 1912-1998

Edgar Knief was born Nov. 13, 1912, in Milwaukee, Wis. He died Feb. 4, 1998, in Rosemount, Minn.

A 1936 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Knief served at St. John, Herrick, S.D.; Lincoln Heights, Des Moines, Iowa; Lutheran High School, Milwaukee, Wis.; Jordan, West Allis, Wis.; and Trinity, St. Paul, Minn.

He is survived by two daughters, four grandchildren, three great grandchildren, and one brother.

Harold Hempel 1917-1998

Harold Hempel was born on Aug. 17, 1917, in Minneapolis, Minn. He died Feb. 17, 1998, in Chandler, Ariz.

A 1942 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Hempel served at Calvary, Glenwood, Minn.; Peace, Clark, and First, Gary, both in S.D.; Grace, Hutchinson, Minn.; Holy Trinity, Wyoming, and Emanuel Redeemer, Yale, both in Mich.; and Pilgrim, Minneapolis, Minn.

He is survived by wife, Betty; two daughters; one son; six grandchildren; and two great grandchildren.



Christ-Light® FAQ

Christ-Light®, the synod's new coordinated religion curriculum for cradle roll through grade 12, will be phased into congregations over four years, starting in 1998. Gerald Kastens, youth discipleship administrator, answers frequently asked questions (FAQ) about Christ-Light.

Will the present materials still be published for those who prefer to continue to use them?

All existing children's and youth curriculum will become obsolete as current stock is depleted and *Christ-Light* is introduced.

Will *Christ-Light* also include catechism?

There are no immediate plans to change the existing catechism. The enchiridion will be updated in the Kuske catechism (available in 1998) to coincide with the 1995 synod convention changes. Once *Christ-Light* is completed, the Fehlauer and Kuske catechisms will be reformatted to include artwork and color. The text will not be changed. A new component will be added to the leader's handbook of the Kuske catechism. This resource will contain lesson outlines and applications for the busy parish pastor.



Most news reported in this section is derived from Religion News Service. Items do not necessarily reflect the views of WELS or *Northwestern Lutheran*.

Resources that have influenced parents the most

Adults listed these as the top five items that influenced them the most in the way they parent their children.

My own parents/ my own upbringing	45%
People I know: relatives, friends, spouse	35%
Books/magazine articles	34%
Church/faith	24%
The Bible	11%

The total percentage for this question equals more than 100 percent because parents were allowed to identify as many influences as came to mind.

Virginia considering state religious freedom law

Since last year's U.S. Supreme Court ruling that scrapped the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA), Virginia legislators are moving to adopt their own measure protecting religious practices from government infringement.

The proposed legislature—the Virginia Religious Freedom Restoration Act—would prohibit local governments from enacting ordinances restricting religious groups from pursuing ministry in their communities.

“We should ensure that all Virginians are able to practice their faith, whether that be feeding the poor or (helping) any other part of their community,” said State Delegate A. Donald McEachin, the measure's chief sponsor.

With this proposed legislation, Virginia joins other states, including Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Rhode Island, Michigan, New Jersey, and California, in not waiting for a national fix of what advocates say is a sharp erosion of religious liberty since the Supreme Court's ruling last June.

That ruling struck down RFRA, enacted in 1993, on the grounds that Congress had exceeded its authority in enacting the legislation. RFRA required that government show a compelling reason before interfering with religious practices and that when it did so, it use the least restrictive means available.

Parents want more help from churches

One of the greatest needs expressed by adults is to have a healthy, happy, and successful family. Millions of adults, however, do not believe that they are as successful in this as they want to be. And even though four out of five Protestant churches (80 percent) offer specific family-oriented ministry, most adults indicate that church programs and ministry efforts achieve only a marginal positive impact among their families.

A study by the Barna Research Group indicates that churches see ministry to families as an emerging priority, but are struggling to offer

valued assistance to parents.

And churches, perhaps more than any other institution in the nation, have parents' attention. Almost nine out of 10 (86 percent) parents say they are Christian, and nearly 62 percent attend Christian church services in a typical month.

Yet, although parents are attending church, it provides a limited influence upon family behavior. When parents named the most important influences on their parenting, only 24 percent identified their church or religion as a significant factor. When all religious influences—Bible, church, religion,

and faith—were combined, only 35 percent mentioned any religious factor as a major influence on their parenting.

Although church and faith have not influenced parents as much as some might have desired, most adults expect churches to take an active position when it comes to helping parents. Nearly two-thirds of parents said their church should take on an increased role in assisting parents—and nearly three out of 10 (28 percent) indicated that their church should be much more involved in providing help for parents.

FCC: Certain religious discrimination acceptable

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) now allows religious broadcasters to use religious affiliation or belief as an employment qualification for employees of a religious radio station.

The proposal overrides other anti-bias rules that forbid discrimination on the basis of religion.

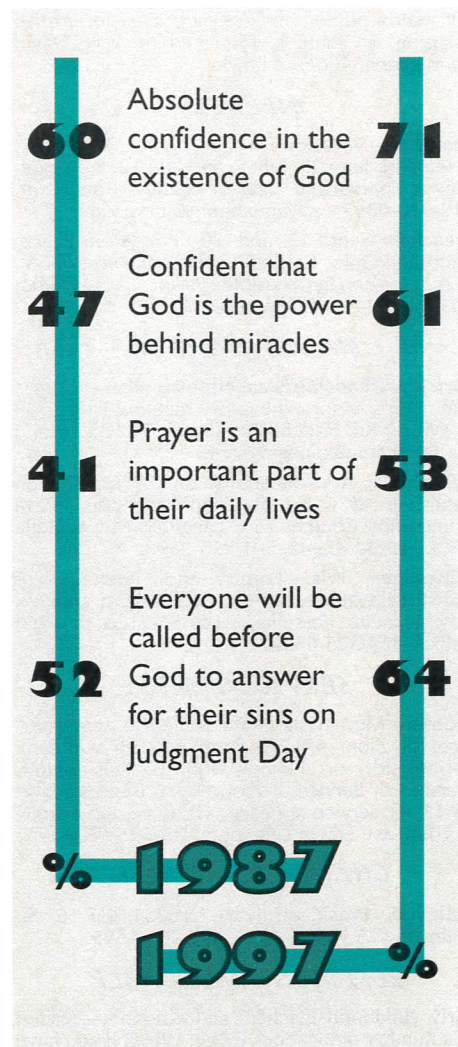
“We believe that it is reasonable to conclude that it may be appropriate for all employees of religious broadcasters to share a common commitment to a licensee's basic religious objective and mission,” the FCC said in an Order and Policy Statement issued in February.

Previously, the FCC, while generally forbidding discrimination based on religion, permitted an exception for religious broadcasters that allowed them to use religious affiliation or belief only as an employment qualification for employees hired to “espouse religious views over the air.”

More Americans voice belief in God, miracles

More Americans are voicing an unshakable belief in God and miracles, according to a poll conducted by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press.

From 1987 to 1997, Americans' belief in God's existence and miracles jumped tremendously. Here is what 1,165 adults said they believe about God.



The poll was taken in a random telephone survey in November 1997 and has a margin of error of plus or minus three percent.

Pope: Mary is not a Co-redemptrix

In the face of increasing international speculation that Pope John Paul II was about to proclaim a new teaching about Mary, his spokesman issued a terse denial.

The Pope will not solemnly proclaim as dogma Mary "Co-redemptrix, Mediatrix of All Graces, and Advocate for the People of God." Joaquin Navarro-Valls, the papal spokesman, told Catholic News Service. "This is crystal clear. This is not under study by the Holy Father nor by any Vatican congregation or commission."

The repudiation came on the heels of reports of a worldwide petition drive by advocates of the new dogma. The drive claims more than five million supporters including 42 cardinals from around the world.

Father Salvatore Perrella, a professor at the Marianum Theological

Faculty in Rome, called the petition "theologically inadequate, historically a mistake, pastorally imprudent, and ecumenically unacceptable."

He told the Italian Catholic newspaper *Avvenire* that such a dogma would cloud belief that Christ is the unique Savior and Redeemer of the world.

Earlier, a Vatican-appointed international theological commission voted 23-0 against the proposed dogma, and a series of high-profile commentaries in the Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*, underlined its undesirability.

In a January address, the Pope warned against "all false exaggeration" in Marian devotion. [*CREDO*, November 1, 1997]

NL ran an editorial in December 1997 about the dangers of Mariolity.—ed.

LCMS: God the Father not our "parent," "mother"

May we address the first person of the Trinity as our "Parent" (or even "Mother"), rather than as our "Father"?

No, says the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod's Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR).

The commission also states that Jesus Christ is to be addressed as the "Son of God," not merely as God's "Child." And the Holy Spirit "is not to be understood as a feminine principle in the Godhead and/or described with feminine pronouns (as 'she' or 'her')." Still, "feminine similes for God occur in the Scriptures, albeit rarely, and may also be used in appropriate ways."

These are among conclusions in the CTCR's latest report, "Biblical Revelation and Inclusive Language." To use inclusive language through removal of "gender specific" language in translating Scripture raises difficulties, says the CTCR, "for the Scriptures are not merely the render-

ing of a culturally based understanding of God. They are to be regarded as revelation whose author is finally God himself.

"Moreover, not only the concepts of Scripture but the very words of Scripture have been given to the biblical authors to write," the report continues. "While the church will certainly wish to accommodate modern sensibilities and translate anew where the language of the Scriptures allows, the church is not free to alter the language of revelation. In considering inclusive language translation of the Bible, therefore, we must be guided by a close faithfulness to the actual text of Scripture through which—and only through which—the written revelation of God has come to us."

This news release is published by the News and Information Division, Board for Communication Services, of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

CHANGE IN MINISTRY

Pastors:

Bein, William O., from Resurrection, Phoenix, to retirement

Fisher, Kenneth J., from World Mission Collection, Milwaukee, to Risen Savior, Milwaukee.

Foley, Michael L., to Beautiful Saviour, Carlsbad, Calif.

Frey, Edward A. Jr., to Immanuel, Findlay, Ohio

Hochmuth, Robert H., to Apostles, San Jose, Calif. (retirement call)

Koch, Henry F., from St. John/St. Peter, Cleveland, Wis., to retirement

Nitz, Marcus C., from King of Kings, Garden Grove, Calif., to retirement

Nottling, David A., from Zion, Chesaning, Mich., to St. John, Fox Lake, Wis.

Sellnow, Donald C., from Our Redeemer, Ladysmith, Wis., to retirement

Warnecke, Rodney W., from Messiah, Shiocan, Wis., to St. John, Watertown, Wis.

Weigand, Cleone H., from Redemption, Milwaukee, to retirement

Correction: In taking a call to Bethany, Kenosha, Wis., Michael Hintz left Peace, Granger, Ind., not Elkhart exp., Elkhart, Ind., as was reported in March.

Teachers

Aden, Karla M., from Immanuel, Hutchinson, Minn., to Divinity, St. Paul, Minn.

Asmus, Gretchen A., from St. Paul, Lake Mills, Wis., to St. Matthew, Oconomowoc, Wis.

Bauer, David T., from St. Paul, Saginaw, Mich., to MLC, New Ulm, Minn.

Bullens, Jennifer L., from Christ, North St. Paul, Minn., to Pilgrim, Mesa, Ariz.

Dahlke, Todd R., from St. Paul, Hopkins, Mich., to Trinity, Marshfield, Wis.

Herrewig, Scott C., from St. Paul, Bangor, Wis., to WLA, Fond du Lac, Wis.

McLean, Irma R., from St. Paul, New Ulm, Minn., to retirement

Mielke, Penny R., from Salem, Owosso, Mich., to St. John, Hemlock, Mich.

Morgan, Jill A., to St. Paul, New Ulm, Minn.

Neuman, Kevin A., from Good Shepherd, Sioux Falls, S.D., to St. John, Fairfax, Minn.

Nommensen, Arnold J., from St. John, Sparta, Wis., to Planned Giving Ministry, Milwaukee

Raasch, Joel E., from Manitowoc LHS, Manitowoc, Wis., to Planned Giving Ministry, Milwaukee

Timm, Rollin J., from Zion, Columbus, Wis., to Minnesota Valley LHS, New Ulm, Minn.

Waegel, Dawn C., from St. John, Victorville, Calif., to St. Paul First, North Hollywood, Calif.

Warning, Kimberly A., to St. Jacobi, Greenfield, Wis.

Wendland, Paul A., from Fox Valley LHS, Appleton, Wis., to MLC, New Ulm, Minn.

Wolfgang, Peter F., from Trinity, Jenera, Ohio, to St. John, Minneapolis, Minn.

Ziesemer, Jon L., from Bloomington, Bloomington, Minn., to Minnesota Valley LHS, New Ulm, Minn.

Staff ministers:

Brands, Leon L., from LACE, Saginaw, Mich., to Planned Giving Ministry, Milwaukee

Cereske, Alfred E., to Planned Giving Ministry, Milwaukee

The synod administration building will close:

May 25—Memorial Day. Callers may leave voice mail messages, 414/256-3888.

Bulletin BOARD & NOTICES

To place an announcement, call 414/256-3231;

FAX, 414/256-3899; <nl@sab.wels.net>

Deadline is six weeks before publication date.

ANNIVERSARIES

Watertown, Wis.—St. Luke (150). May 17 and June 21. Services at 7:45 and 10:15 AM. Dinner, June 21. 1501 S Third St, Watertown WI 53094; 920/261-2120.

Minneapolis—Pilgrim (75). May 2—dinner and program. May 3—services at 8:30 and 11 AM. 3901 1st Ave S, Minneapolis MN 55409; 612/825-5375.

Chesaning, Mich.—Zion (125). May 3—confirmation reunion. 8, 10:30 AM; dinner, noon. 123 Commercial St, Chesaning MI 48616; 517/845-3006.

Williamston, Mich.—Memorial (50). May 17. Services, 8 and 10:30 AM; dinner, noon. 1022 W Grand River Ave, Williamston MI 48895; 517/655-2294.

Clark, S.D.—Peace (75). June 28. Service, 2 PM; meal follows at the Legion Hall. N 3 Ave & Smith. Mailing address: 111 S Idaho St, Clark SD 57225; Jon Hadler, 605/532-3766.

Sheridan Township, Minn.—St. John (110). July 12. Services, 10:30 AM and 2 PM; catered meal, noon. Call for reservations. Box 162, Balaton MN 56115; 507/734-5101.

Goodwin, S.D.—St. Peter (100). July 12. Services, 11 AM and 2:30 PM; catered lunch, noon. RSVP to attend lunch. PO Box 82, Goodwin SD 57238; 605/756-4260.

Jenera, Ohio—Trinity school (50). Aug. 9. Worship; noon meal; open house; program at 2 PM. Former members invited to attend and bring photos, stories, and memorabilia. 105 Allen St, Box 25, Jenera OH 45841; 419/326-4685; FAX, 419/326-9001.

COMING EVENTS

LWMS National Convention—June 26-28 at the Dallas/Ft. Worth Hilton, Grapevine, Tex. For information, call D'Anne Thompson, 254/694-4212 or Fran Pruitt, 972/223-0085. For registration forms, call the LWMS central office, 414/321-6212.

WELS National Teachers Convention—June 30-July 3 at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn. Connie Cortright, 507/359-4347; <welsntc@ic.new-ulm.mn.us>

OWLS convention—July 7-9 at Paper Valley Hotel, Appleton, Wis. OWLS, 6420 W Beloit Rd, West Allis WI 53227; 414/321-9977.

Hostel—Sponsored by OWLS. July 9-15 at Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee. \$240. Commission on Special Ministries, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222; 414/256-3241; <usr10@sab.wels.net>

Special education seminar—Special Ministries in Lutheran Education religious training seminar, July 24-26 at Holiday Inn West, Madison, Wis. Bruce Cuppan, 920/929-4232.

Summer courses—geared toward teacher certification in Wisconsin. Wisconsin Lutheran College, 414/443-8800; <www.wlc.edu>

Summer programs at Martin Luther College—**Midsummer Adventure**—July 5-10. For children ages 10-12. \$150. **Music camp**—July 5-10. For children ages 12-14. Requirement: two years of keyboard lessons. \$190. Special Services, MLC, 1995 Luther Court, New Ulm, MN 56073; 507/354-8221; <www.mlc-wels.edu>

Campout—Aug. 7-9 at Pineridge Campground, Waldo, Wis. Free camping, crafts, and activities. All WELS members welcomed. Pineridge Campground, <ppt.cmp.fritz@juno.com>; 4659 N 38 St, Milwaukee WI 53209; 414/442-1137.

Charitable contribution tax strategy seminars—Sept. 24 in Milwaukee and Sept. 25 in Minneapolis. For attorneys-at-law, CPAs, CFPs, financial planners, and insurance representatives. Sponsored by the WELS Foundation and the gift planning counselors. Educational credits available. Contact Jim Huska, 1-800-827-5482 or your district gift planning counselor.

AVAILABLE

Chancel furniture—96" altar, including retable, 44" wide pulpit, baptismal font, all in oak. Pastor's chair and sectional communion rail. Free to any WELS/ELS congregation. Beautiful Savior, Cincinnati, Ohio. Richard Engelmann, 513-769-7024; <engelmrh@email.uc.edu>.

Video—Renew your subscription to *Kids Connection*, the monthly video magazine dedicated to helping kids stay connected to Jesus. Youth Discipleship, 414/256-3274; <usr62@sab.wels.net>

Pews, computer—Five 20 ft. pews that split in the middle. Also Apple IIGS computer with 1.25 RAM, 3.5" and 5.25" disk drives, color monitor, dot matrix printer, and software. Free for cost of shipping. St. John, North Freedom, Wis. David Baumgarten, 608/522-3661.

NEEDED

Preacher—Vacation in Savannah. Preacher(s) needed for June 28, July 5, and July 12. Free lodging at parsonage. Pastor James Borgwardt, 912/920-0843; <savannahborg@juno.com>

Preacher—Sept. 13 and 20. Prince of Peace, Thousand Oaks, Calif. (50 miles northwest of LA). Use of parsonage possible. Pastor C. D. Found, 805/492-8943; <CDFound@aol.com>

NAMES WANTED

Fort Knox/Radcliff/Elizabethtown, Ken.—Names and addresses for exploratory mission. Faith, 549 N Wilson Rd, Radcliff KY 40160; 502/352-4545; <faithlutheran@bluegrass.net>

Bella Vista, Ark.—Beautiful Savior. Worship on Saturdays at 6 PM at Chapel of Bella Vista Community Church, 75 E Lancashire Blvd, Bella Vista. Harold Krantz, 501/855-2893.

Milwaukee, Wis.—Former choir members of Christ, Milwaukee, for the choir's 75th anniversary. Jeanette Kassulke, 414/645-2126 or Ruth Kallies, 414/325-6599.

SERVICE TIMES

Branson, Mo.—Visitors are invited to attend services at Zion, 4717 S Farm Rd 135 (Golden), Springfield, or Peace, 300 E Washington, Marshfield. Service at Zion, 9 AM, Bible study at 10:15 AM; service at Peace, 11:30 AM, Bible study at 10:30 AM. Edwin Lehmann, 417/725-0836.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Bellevue, Wash.—Calvary, 16231 NE 6 St, Bellevue WA 98008-4331; 425/401-1595.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

Early childhood teachers and directors—desired in a number of locations within WELS. If you have training in early childhood education, would be available for a call, and are willing to pursue synod certification, contact Dr. LeDell Plath, Associate Administrator, Commission on Parish Schools at 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222; 414/256-3221; <cpslee@sab.wels.net>.

It's okay to be a stay-at-home mom

Charlene Lauersdorf

"It's okay," Mom says as the little one spills milk yet again. "We all have accidents once in a while."

"It's okay," she says as Johnny is awakened by thunder and lightning. "God is right here on the bed with us."

"It's okay," are her words when Susie has an accident with her tricycle. "Jesus will make it all better. Just you wait and see."

Now I want to talk to you, Mom. "It's okay!"

Our world lays out the glories of the working world—the business-like suit that makes us the executive, the makeup that takes us through the business day and into the glamorous evening, the hairstyle that won't wear out.

Nothing is said of the clothes that the mother wears to clean up the spills of the little ones; the hairdo that takes her through the laundry, the cooking, the diaper changes, the trips to and from school; or the touch of makeup that will help make her feel good about herself at home.

Why should mothers apologize for their position? How sad to hear a young mother say: "I'm so glad to hear you say it's good to be a full-time mom." "It's so nice to know that someone thinks the way I do." "You don't know how good you made me feel when you spoke of the privilege of being a stay-at-home mom."

We Christian mothers don't need to be afraid of being what the Lord has made us. Talk shows, news specials, and other media tout the importance of the first three years of life and what we can do to help shape children for their whole life. Whom do you want to mold your children?

As they grow, children learn to be polite, helpful, considerate. They learn to know

Jesus as their heavenly Daddy, to hear his Word, and to keep him at their side through all the problems of their world. What better place than under your guidance?

Through the school years, outside influences come into their lives. Early training sets them up for it, but it's nice to be there when their Christian world suddenly becomes threatened. Say nothing of how great it is to be there for kindergarten graduation, to help with the party in school, to chaperone the class trip, to measure eighth-graders for confirmation gowns, to assist the high school band.

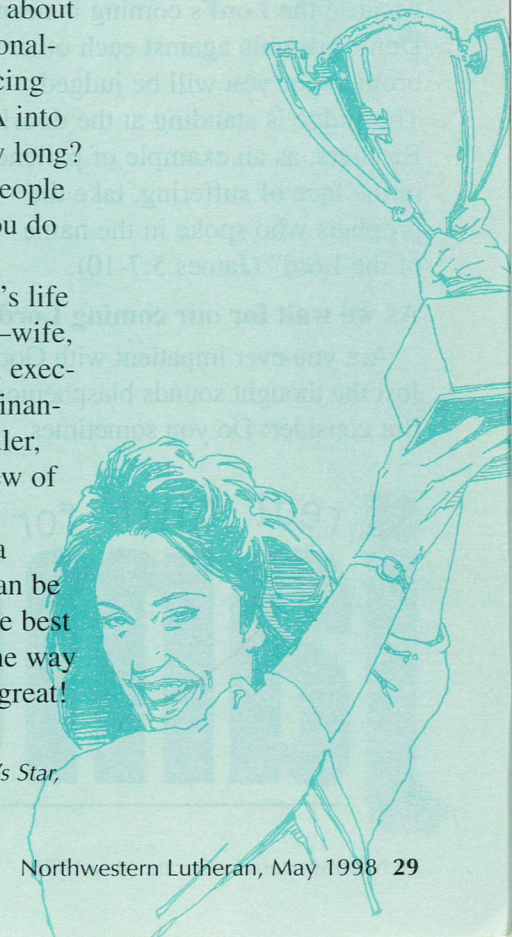
A Christian-life columnist once commented on someone who spoke of the boredom of being at home. The gist of his response was: Yes, it can be boring. But what about sitting at a desk all day punching numbers into a computer? What about commuting with people whose personalities are irritating to you and then facing the same job where you place part A into part B while attaching part C all day long? What about an eating place where people aren't always pleasant and where you do the same thing for hours?

The variety of a Christian mother's life is hard to beat. You fill many roles—wife, mother, teacher, organizer, manager, executive's assistant, purchasing agent, financial assistant, correspondent, scheduler, ruler, and you can probably add a few of your own.

Yes, Mom, it's okay. You can be a full-time, stay-at-home mom. You can be there, with the Lord's help and to the best of your ability, to "train a child in the way he should go." It's okay; in fact it's great!

Charlene Lauersdorf is a member at David's Star, Jackson, Wisconsin.

We Christian mothers don't need to be afraid of being what the Lord has made us.



“Lord, give me patience!”

Impatient with God? Think how patient he's been with us.

Mark E. Braun

We may not all wear our hearts on our sleeves, but a lot of us paste our philosophies on our bumpers. “My kid is an honor student at _____,” says something about what we value. So does, “The one who dies with the most toys wins.”

Sometimes a bumper sticker asks a question, “If a mother’s place is in the home, why am I always in my car?” Or it offers a desperate prayer, “Lord, give me patience, *and give it to me right now!*”

James knew a thing or two about patience. “Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord’s coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains. You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord’s coming is near. Don’t grumble against each other, brothers, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door! Brothers, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord” (James 5:7-10).

As we wait for our coming Lord

Are you ever impatient with God? Just the thought sounds blasphemous. But consider: Do you sometimes

want to shake your fist at the sky and shout, “Are you really running the world or not? Then why don’t you do something about it? What are you waiting for?” Isaiah, seven centuries before James, voiced that very thought at God: “Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains would tremble before you!” (Isaiah 64:1).

**God may not grant us
patience *right now!***

Waiting is part of the lesson.

Impatient with God? Think how patient he’s been with us. What if your dreams for your world had been dashed, as the Creator’s were? What if you’d watched one generation of your children after the next breaking your laws, and—still worse—breaking themselves in the process?

Yet this lifetime is the only opportunity sinners will have to repent and be restored to their Father’s family. What is he waiting for? “The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise,” Peter said. “He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish but

everyone to come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9).

See how patient the farmer is, James said, waiting for his crop. That’s how

God is, and that’s how he wants us to be. He will come back. He delays to allow more people to repent. One of those he allowed to repent is you.

As we live in a corrupted world

As an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets.

Moses wondered how long he must put up with stiff-necked countrymen. Elijah complained, “I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too.” Israel’s leaders dismissed Amos as not worth taking seriously. Tradition says Isaiah was sawed in half. Jeremiah lamented, “I am ridiculed all day long.”

“Was there ever a prophet your fathers did not persecute?” Stephen asked—and his audience promptly stoned him to death.

Yes, it’s hard to be patient. And yes, people around you (even the ones you love!) may give you reasons to grumble. But into this corrupted world came Jesus. When they hurled insults at him, he did not retaliate. When he suffered, he made no threats. He was patient when his first disciples were slow to understand him, and he is patient with us when we find fault so easily in others but not in ourselves.

God may not grant us patience *right now!* Waiting is part of the lesson. Trust him. “The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.”

Mark Braun is a professor at Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee.

real faith for real life
james

The time has come

Walter F. Beckmann

Ask any district president what part of his work he enjoys most, and without hesitation he'll answer: "Serving on the assignment committee for Martin Luther College and the seminary." The thrill of being an instrument of God to assign Christ's gifts to his church never wears off.

Oh, there's been a downside—the times we've had to tell graduates there weren't enough calls. Some had to wait patiently until the Lord provided opportunities. I admired how they handled their disappointment with faith and courage.

The number of calls for teacher candidates is difficult to anticipate. Schools can have last minute changes in enrollment projections, requiring them to either cut back or increase the size of their faculties as late as the week before call day. Then too, congregations may fill vacancies by calling temporarily retired teachers or uncertified teachers who will work toward certification.

The number of vacancies requiring trained pastoral candidates is easier to determine. At present there are almost 100. Not all of those calls will be in the hands of the assignment committee on May 19. Some are for positions that require men with years of pastoral experience. But there will be requests for more than the 46 candidates available for assignment this year. District presidents will have to inform congregations and mission boards that they were unable to fill their calls.

Vacancies will remain, and that number will grow. Judging from the size of the seminary student body and the number of men enrolled in preseminary courses, this pastor shortage will be with us for years.

We're going to hear more stories about congregations that have called a dozen or more times without success. Pastors serving vacancies in addition to their own con-

gregations will continue to do double duty. And when those vacancies are filled, they may be asked to serve others. That nucleus of people trying to start a new mission will struggle with frustration as one call after another is returned. Mission boards may become reluctant to approve new openings.

We are trying to serve as many people as we can with the pastors we have. More retired pastors are being called to serve in "social security calls," or to fill a vacancy for a few months and then move to another. Smaller congregations are encouraged to form multiple parishes that share a pastor.

A few years ago when seminary graduates were waiting for calls, there was little interest in staff ministry. Maybe now? Can we extend the work of our pastors by assigning some duties to staff ministers who can be trained in less than the eight years of college and seminary we require of pastors?

We can do many things to make the best use of our pastors. But the bottom line is that we have to do a better job of encouraging young men to consider preparing for our pastoral ministry. Let's also be ready to share the financial obligations they'll incur.

Are you worried that we could end up with more candidates than we can use? Our Board for World Missions wants to call 20 more missionaries. Our Board for Home Missions wants to approve 300 new missions during the next 10 years.

Jesus told us to pray for workers. When we do that and make recruiting young people for ministry a high priority, he'll provide the candidates we need.

It's time to stop worrying and start recruiting.

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

The bottom line is that we have to do a better job of encouraging young men . . . for our pastoral ministry.

Clearing up a question about communion

John F. Brug

Catholics say we Lutherans misunderstand their practice of re-presenting the sacrifice of Christ. Their practice, rather than “re-sacrifice,” is to “re-present” the once sacrificed Christ to the Father as a reminder to him of his promise of mercy to us through Christ’s sacrifice. I await a Lutheran response.

The new *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Par. 1366-1368) says,

“The Eucharist is thus a sacrifice because it re-presents the sacrifice of the cross. . . . The sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are one single sacrifice. . . . The victim is one and the same: the same now offers through the ministry of priests, who then offered himself on the cross; only the manner is different. . . . The same Christ who offered himself once in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross is now contained and is offered in an unbloody manner. . . . The Church, which is the Body of Christ, participates in the offering of her Head . . . With him she herself is offered whole and entire. . . . In the Eucharist the sacrifice of Christ becomes also the sacrifice of the members of his Body. *The lives of the faithful, their praise, sufferings, prayer and work are united with those of Christ and with his total offering, and so acquire a new value.*” [emphasis added]

This language of “re-presentation” is not new. It was used already by the Council of Trent in the 1500s. Fully aware of this distinction of wording, the Reformers nevertheless rejected the Catholic concept of the sacrifice of the mass because it joins our work into the sacrifice of Christ as the quotations above show. Christ’s sacrifice for sin was completed by him alone. We can receive its benefits but can in no way join in it.

Christ’s sacrifice for sin was completed by him alone. We can receive its benefits but can in no way join in it.

In the same section of decrees of the Council of Trent that uses the language of “re-presentation,” the fathers add, “The holy synod teaches that this sacrifice is truly propitiatory,” that is, in this sacrifice the work of paying for sin continues both for the living and for the dead. “Mary and the saints in heaven join with the church in this sacrifice also for the dead who are not yet purified.” (See Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent, II*, p. 440, 446-452).

It is this joining of our works into Christ’s sacrifice and the offering of sacrifices for the dead that Lutherans reject when rejecting the sacrifice of the mass.

Everyone will be raised and judged on Judgment Day, but when people die their souls already go to heaven or hell. Will we be judged twice, at death and again on Judgment Day?

As you said, when people die, they immediately go to heaven or hell (Luke 16:22; 1 Peter 3:19,20). At the time of their death God can assign people to heaven or hell without any trial since he knows the heart of every individual. Judgment Day, therefore, is not like an earthly trial that God needs in order to determine people’s guilt or innocence.

Judgment Day is more like the day of sentencing. On the day of sentencing, the judge pronounces sentence on the guilty criminals who have been held in prison while awaiting sentence. The judge presents the reasons that justify his sentence. Judgment Day will be similar to such a day. On Judgment Day, God is not determining guilt or innocence, but showing the justice of his sentences to heaven or hell. Judgment Day will display the justice of God’s judgments to all.

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; <nl@sab.wels.net>



From my experience I wish to verify the statement: "It remains true that no one is a better or more influential recruiter of church workers than Mother."

[Mar., p. 31] My mother's humble Lutheran piety coupled with her many evangelical sermons, which were often sprinkled with references to my near death the first week of life, given from her pulpit—the ironing board—is what influenced me the most. Ever since my fourth-grade teacher asked what we wanted to be when we grew up, I knew I wanted to be a pastor.

While I never chose this work because I felt my mother decided 43 years ago to hand me over into the Lord's service, knowing my mom, there were some fervent prayers offered the first week of my life. I love the work of a parish pastor, and thank God for giving me a "Hannah" for a mom. Hopefully Panning's article was read and thoughtfully considered by many young Christian mothers for the welfare of Christ's Holy church.

Glenn Obenberger (ELS)
Tacoma, Washington

I applaud your use of classical art on the cover of the March issue.

Hope to see more of that.

Victor Prange
Janesville, Wisconsin

Re: "German's Lutherans cancel condemnations" [Mar.]. Hopefully this was simply imported text in the second paragraph . . . "with Lutherans emphasizing that justification was earned by faith alone . . ." "Earned by faith" has

to be somebody else's words, not those of one of the NL editors. "Earned" makes faith a work of merit. Better would be "received by faith" This is probably worth correcting and clarifying.

Doug Weiser
Bellevue, Washington

(Yes, it was imported text. But we should have caught it. Thanks for the nudge.—ed.)

The one thing I have heard the professors say most often at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary is, "You have to keep yourself in the Word!" What follows closely after that is, "You have to get your people into the Word!" **I believe that you are helping to accomplish that goal with the Inter-ACT Bible study page.** The format is well laid out and eye-catching, and the Bible studies are interesting and to the point. This is a great asset to NL, and I encourage you to keep it.

David Shilling



I substitute teach in our public schools in Lompoc, Calif.

Recently I was working in a fifth-grade room. In science the lesson covered the solar system, focusing on the sun as our most important star. The last line on the students' worksheet said: "Use an encyclopedia or other reference book to answer this question: How old is the sun?" Ten-year-old Celina Ochoa brought her paper over when she was finished. Her answer to the last question: "A little younger than God!"

Linda Hill
Lompoc, California

Through my Bible in 3 years

June 1998

1. Acts 7:44—8:4
2. Acts 8:5-25
3. Acts 8:26-40
4. Acts 9:1-19a
5. Acts 9:19b-31
6. Acts 9:32-42
7. Acts 9:43—10:33
8. Acts 10:34-48
9. Acts 11:1-18
10. Acts 11:19-30
11. Acts 12:1-24
12. Exodus 1, 2
13. Exodus 3:1—4:17
14. Exodus 4:18—6:9
15. Exodus 6:10—7:25
16. Exodus 8
17. Exodus 9
18. Exodus 10, 11
19. Exodus 12:1-36
20. Exodus 12:37—13:22
21. Exodus 14:1—15:21
22. Exodus 15:22—16:36
23. Exodus 17
24. Exodus 18
25. Exodus 19, 20
26. Acts 12:25—13:12
27. Acts 13:13-43
28. Acts 13:44-52
29. Acts 14:1-12
30. Acts 14:13-28

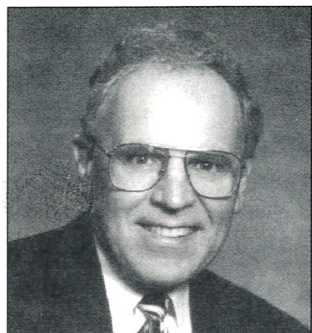
Peter the Barber once asked Martin Luther how he, an ordinary kind of guy, could read the Bible and benefit from it. Luther answered:

Ask yourself:

1. What does God tell me here?
2. What makes me glad?
3. What makes me sad?
4. What do I want to pray for?

Try it in your Bible reading.

What to do about change



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

How we deal
with change will
directly affect the
way we do the
work of the Lord.

I don't like change. There! I've said it. I doubt, too, that you like change. The operative word here is "like." Change interrupts our lives, intrudes on our comfort zones, makes us uncertain, tires us out, and sometimes brings tragedy.

That's not to say some change isn't good. We just changed cars at home. The new one is better and more fun to drive. Anyone who is sick usually welcomes a change to better health. God's message to us is fundamentally one of change. "Repent!" cried John the Baptist. "Repent!" echoed Jesus. "Repent, have a change of mind and heart about your sins." That's a good change.

But, whether we like most change or not, we can't avoid it. I've just returned from a series of seminars on communications. How many times I heard about change! A prevailing theme was "the only thing permanent is change."

So we look around us and see change. Our homes, our neighborhoods, our work places, our churches—all change. Our Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod is in the midst of a major change mandated by the synod's restructuring plan.

So we deal with change. Here the operative term is "deal with." How we deal with change will determine in large part whether we see it as a positive or a negative. How we deal with change will directly affect the way we do the work of the Lord.

Change happens around us. It happens to us. And signs of change forewarn us. How do we deal with it? To do nothing is to risk being victimized by it. To change for the sake of change is to risk chaos and loss of value. To work with change, shape it, use it . . . is to try to make the most of reality and opportunity.

The communications seminars stressed that we need to learn to "facilitate change." They warned, "He who resists change is the architect of decay." They promised, "Change is the stability of the future."

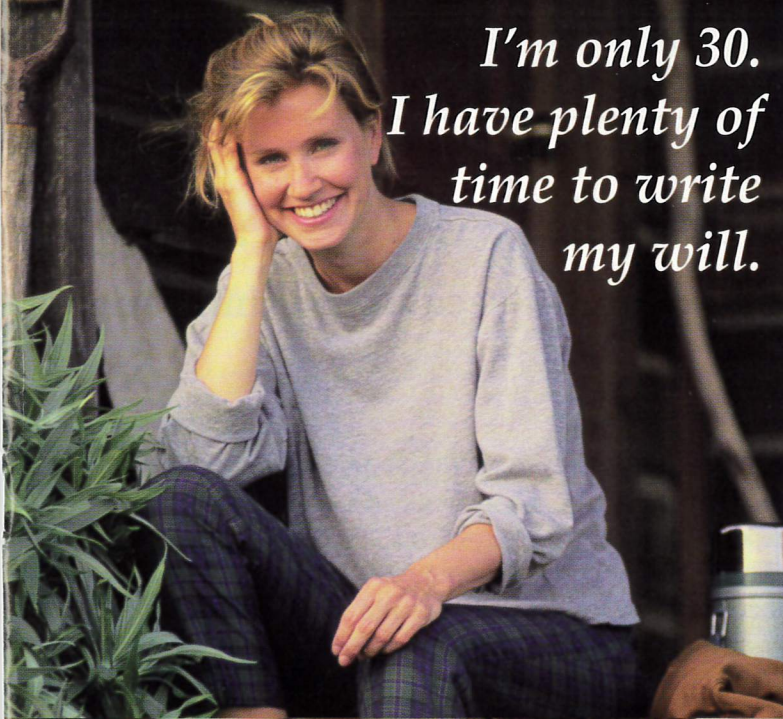
Look at what that can mean for the church just in the area of communications: Because of the computer, we have "real-time" communications all around the globe. We can exchange information with and grow in understanding of a mission in Brazil or Taiwan or Russia in the time it takes to type an e-mail message. Because of the Internet, we reach people in 50 to 60 different countries each month with the message of salvation. Because of technology, we can dream of new and improved ways of educating workers in God's kingdom. We can dream of teaching a Bible class in a church in Minneapolis for a group gathered in Fairbanks, Alaska.

The message of the seminars was targeted for secular corporations. But we make a big mistake if we miss its application in the church and in our lives. Change happens, with or without us. When it happens with us and we work together to harness its energy and direct its potential, it becomes a powerful tool from God to use in his service.

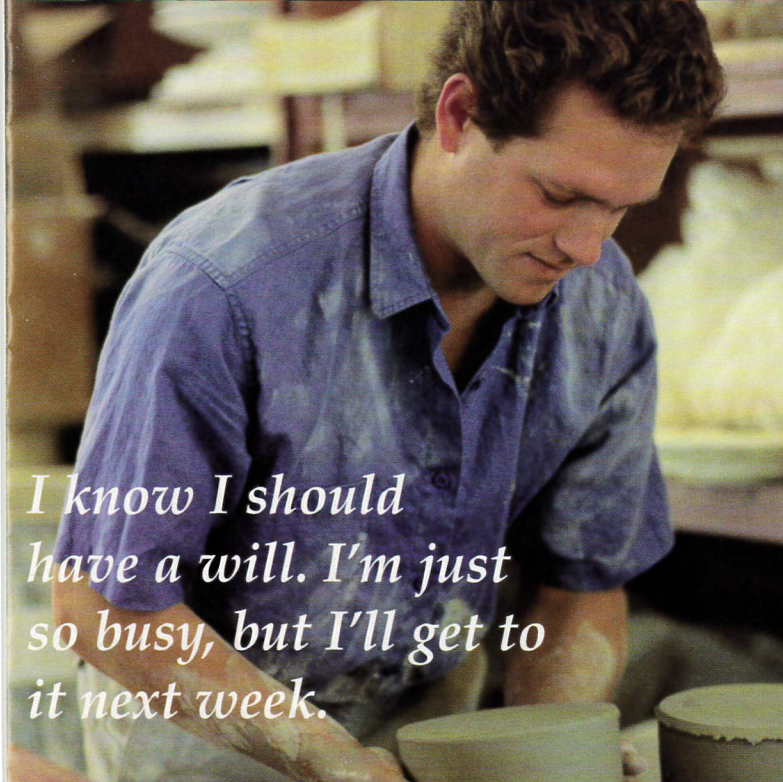
Still, my head spins when I think about the cyclone of change that swirls around us. I'd much rather slow down, rest, and enjoy a happy, predictable sameness, wouldn't you?

We can do that, too, in spite of the change. Just bring Jesus along.

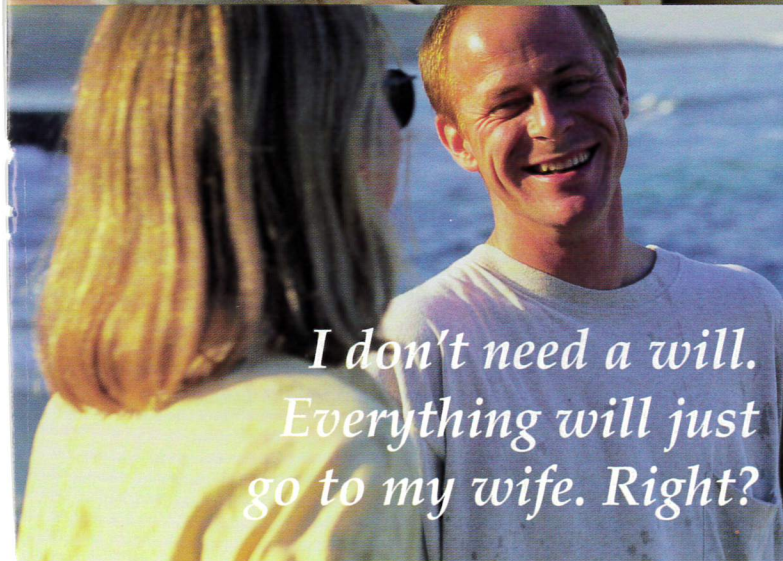
Gary P. Baumler



*I'm only 30.
I have plenty of
time to write
my will.*



*I know I should
have a will. I'm just
so busy, but I'll get to
it next week.*



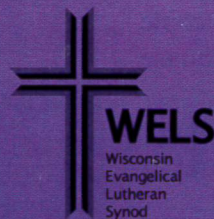
*I don't need a will.
Everything will just
go to my wife. Right?*

The Importance of Your Will

Some things just can't wait!

*By carefully planning
today, you will save your
loved ones unnecessary
anxiety and you'll have
the satisfaction of
knowing your desires
will be carried out.*

Please write or call for
assistance from a WELS
gift planning counselor —
another person just like you —
a fellow Christian.



Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod
Ministry of Planned Giving
2929 N Mayfair Rd ❖ Milwaukee WI 53222-4398
800-827-5482 or 414-256-3881

I really should stop and see . . .

Maybe we put off visiting relatives—and church—because we think the visit will be less than delightful.

Kenneth A. Cherney

Fill in the blank: “I really should stop and see _____. I feel terrible. It’s been such a long time.”

Visiting others

Thinking of a name isn’t hard, is it? Most of us probably have a friend or relative we feel guilty about neglecting.

Maybe he or she is too far away. Maybe we’ve been busy.

Maybe the truth is we’ve been putting it off because recent visits have been something less than delightful. You know what I mean. Deep inside, you aren’t looking forward to sitting on that broken-down sofa (circa 1945), sipping warm Tang, and discussing such topics as 1) what’s wrong with the health of your host, 2) what’s wrong with the world, 3) what’s wrong with everybody in your family (present company excepted, of course), and 4) how long it’s been since you last came. Some visits we make out of a sense of duty—and that’s sad, when you think about it.

Visiting God

You want to know what’s even sadder? It’s when people put their visits to God’s house in this same category.

Some people look at church in exactly this way. Before they come, they’re sure they’ll find the language and

music—the furniture, if you will—to be old and threadbare. They think they know what to expect from the “conversation,” too. There’ll be a sermon, which will add nothing to what every worshiper already knew. The preacher will bemoan the present state of the human family (present company excepted, of course). At some point, he’ll bring up the church’s aches and pains (i.e., the budget). And he’ll be sure to throw in a little jab at all those who haven’t stopped by very often. Who on earth would look forward to an experience like that?

All the same, people feel bad about neglecting their church chores. You’ll hear them say, “I should get to church this week. I really should. . . .”

If they only knew what was waiting for them there!

When we visit the Lord’s house, he shows us in every way how delighted he is that we’ve come. He leads us to a table spread with the “richest of fare” (Isaiah 55:2)—the delicious, soul-nourishing message of pardon and peace through his Son, Jesus Christ.

At church, God has words of comfort and encouragement for us. But he wants to hear our words, too—our unburdening of ourselves through confession, our praises, our prayers to him about whatever’s on our mind. We go home assured that we belong in his family and that, as his children, we receive a rich inheritance. We enjoy this hour with God immensely; and when we leave, we can’t wait to visit him again.

Frankly, it’s an experience nobody should miss.

That’s why we’re delighted when people visit our churches. We’d love to have you visit, too.

But we cringe when people talk about coming and say, “I should, you know. I really should.”

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

