

FORWARD

November 1999

Northwestern Lutheran • The Word from the WELS

Reaching
out on the
reservations

Questions
about the
Bible's
consistency

Breaking
down
communism's
religious wall



Thanks!

NWL 65514 0 1 5/1
NORBERT M MANTHE
300 N 121ST ST UNIT 2
WAUWATOSA WI 53226-3873

Shop from home for the holidays

no traffic
no crowds
no lines
no bad weather
no kids
no stress

and save 15%*

no kidding

online at
www.wels.net/nph

Let us help you enjoy the season. **From now through December 24, 1999, receive 15% off* any online order of \$10.00 or more.** Shopping the NPH *Online Catalog* is quick, easy, and secure, and our Web site is always open. Choose from thousands of quality religious gift items—framed art, afghans, jewelry, clothing, music, videos, books for all ages, and more—without ever leaving your home.



Northwestern
Publishing House
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

* This offer is valid on personal or gift purchases through December 24, 1999. This discount is not to be used in combination with any other offer, subscriptions, or purchases of Christ-Light materials. Orders must be placed by midnight, December 15, 1999, to ensure delivery by December 24, 1999.

Thanks for the company

I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. Philippians 1:3-5

Thomas A. Westra

A conductor from Eastern Europe, who had spent years in prison—in isolation—for his political views was being interviewed. The reporter asked him, “While you were held in isolation, what did you most want to hear? What music would you, at that moment, have thought the most beautiful to hear?”

The maestro perked up: “In the whole world?”

“Yes,” the reporter replied, “in the whole world.”

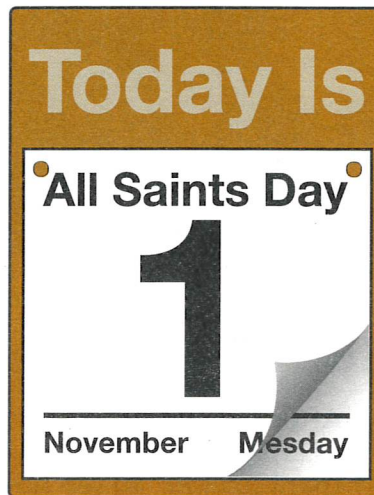
“In all the world,” the conductor said with tears in his eyes, “the most beautiful music is the sound of another voice.”

Fellow pilgrims

The apostle Paul would have understood. From a cold prison cell, cut off from those he loved, he wrote to Timothy: “Do your best to come to me quickly. . . . Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry” (2 Timothy 4:9,11). Paul valued his Christian friends too, as our passage in Philippians shows.

“Life ain’t easy,” goes a song’s refrain. No, life “ain’t easy.” It is difficult. Thank God we don’t have to go alone. “I will be with you always,” he promises. With his Word and sacraments, God sustains us on this life’s journey until we reach our home in glory.

He goes with us, and he gives us other travelers. He gives us other



voices to encourage us (or to rebuke us when necessary), other shoulders to lighten our burdens, other hands to touch us and to hold us.

Give thanks for fellow pilgrims.

Gifts from God

Traditionally, November is a time to remember the saints who have walked this road ahead of us. Nov. 1 is All Saints Day. The second last Sunday in the church year (Nov. 14 this year) is called Saints Triumphant. At this time we thank God for saints in the past like Martin Luther, who stood his ground and clearly taught that we receive forgiveness and eternal life because of Christ’s work, not ours. We thank God for saints more recently: parents, grandparents, and teachers, now in heaven, who taught us to know our Savior.

While we’re at it, let’s thank God for the saints who are still with us—a Christian spouse, believing parents, friends who share our faith, our spiritual brothers and sisters in our local congregation, and the wider fellowship in WELS. What a blessing to have these voices surround us on our journey! What a privilege to walk together, each night pitching our tent one day closer to home.

A man, it’s told, met St. Peter at the pearly gate with something in his hand. Peter asked, “What do you have?”

“It’s a list of people who have helped me,” the man said, “who, when I was down, pointed me to the hope we have in Christ . . . who when I was really troubled by my sins reminded me that Jesus paid for them all . . . who cried with me when my father died and laughed with me when my son was born.

Peter read over it, smiled, and said, “I know these people. They’re all here. I just passed them on the way to the gate. They’re making a big sign with your name on it. It says, ‘Welcome home.’”

This year, as you give thanks in November for the saints who have gone before, remember to thank God for the saints walking at your side. Why not say to them, “Thanks for the company!”?

Thomas Westra is pastor at Beautiful Savior, Cincinnati, Ohio.



FORWARD

Northwestern Lutheran

Official magazine of the
Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

November 1999 / Vol. 86, No. 11

www.wels.net

Editorial office

Forward/Northwestern Lutheran,
WELS, 2929 N Mayfair Rd,
Milwaukee WI 53222-4398

FAX, 414/256-3899

<nl@sab.wels.net>

Editor

Rev. Gary P. Baumler, 414/256-3230

<garyb@sab.wels.net>

Senior Communications Assistant

Linda R. Baacke, 414/256-3232

Communications Assistants

Julie K. Tessmer, 414/256-3231

<juliet@sab.wels.net>

Nicole R. Moline

<nicolem@sab.wels.net>

Seminary Consultant

R. D. Balge

Contributing Editors

J. A. Aderman, W. F. Beckmann, J. F. Brug,
J. D. Buchholz, J. C. Gerlach, E. S. Hartzell,
R. K. Hunter, P. M. Janke, M. J. Lenz,
A. J. Panning, F. E. Piepenbrink, T. A. Westra

Art Director

Paul Burmeister

Graphic Designer

Paul Ehlke

Photographs and Illustrations

Mrs. Kevin Scheibel photography, p. 8, 10

Bill Frauhiger/Illustrations, p. 8

courtesy of John Lawrenz, p. 12

Roger Huffman, p. 14

Bruce Bond, p. 16

Roger Zehms, p. 18

James Fleming, Paul Prange, p. 20

courtesy of Brian Ewerdt, p. 36

Subscription services

1-800-662-6093 ext. 8

Milwaukee area 414/475-6600 ext. 5

Northwestern Publishing House

1250 N 113 Street

Milwaukee WI 53226-3284

USA—\$9. Canada—\$9.63. Large print—\$24. All

other countries—air mail \$40; surface mail \$24.

Write for multi-year, blanket, and bundle rates.

Available on audio cassette

from Mission for the Visually Impaired,

559 Humboldt Avenue, St. Paul MN 55107.

Forward/Northwestern Lutheran

(ISSN 1526-2529) is published monthly

by Northwestern Publishing House,

1250 N 113 St, Milwaukee WI 53226-3284.

Periodical postage paid at Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

POSTMASTER

Send address changes to Forward/Northwestern

Lutheran, c/o Northwestern Publishing House,

1250 N 113 St, Milwaukee WI 53226-3284.

©1999 by Forward/Northwestern Lutheran.

Printed in the USA.



Cover photo by Mrs. Kevin Scheibel Photography

How you
can foster
a thankful
attitude—
year 'round.

8

bits & pieces



After Thanksgiving, our thankful attitude may not even last as long as a New Year's resolution. Turn to "A calendar of thanksgiving" to see how thankfulness to God can last all year. (p. 8)



At times, the Bible may not seem to be consistent. How can we take these seeming contradictions and grow in faith? Seminary professors Forrest Bivens and John Schuetze offer helpful insights in our new seven-part series. (p. 10)



History is not dead. It's an account of life. You can learn more about God's geography in history by reading "In a real way to a real place." This wraps up a two-part series. (p. 12)



Our missionary families in Colombia were brought back to the United States in September. To give us the space we need to run this article, we will not have any world news this month.



Our ultimate goal at *Forward/NL* is to bring you closer to your Lord and Savior. While we pray that all articles do that, we know that not every one accomplishes it to the same extent. That's why we dedicate three articles every month to Bible study and devotion. We believe that every time you open the magazine, the first thing you should do is spend time pondering our great God and his ways. So, our Thought for today devotion is always on page 3. The second feature is a question and answer Bible study called Interact. This month it's on p. 31. Our third feature is a topical Bible study series. This one is on Job (p. 30). Please use these to grow closer to the one who lived and died for you.

—LRB

features

THANKSGIVING

8 A calendar of thanksgiving

For a full 12 months, look for reasons to offer appreciation to your Lord.

David D. Sellnow

ALLEGED BIBLE CONTRADICTIONS

10 When questions come

What seem to be contradictions in the Bible could be stumbling blocks or stepping-stones in our understanding of God's Word.

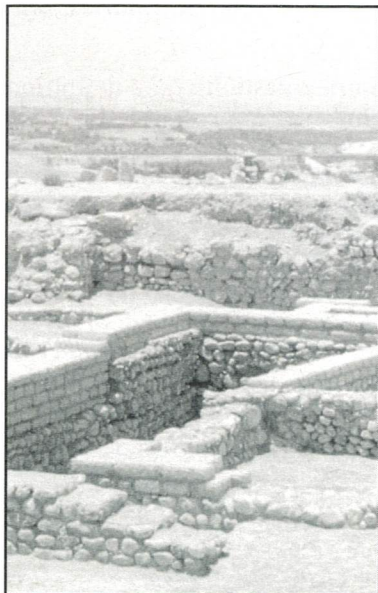
Forrest L. Bivens and John D. Schuetze

GEOGRAPHY

12 In a real way to a real place

Jesus' story and that of the prophets and apostles are illuminated by geography.

John C. Lawrenz



12

WELS IN ACTION

14 Discovering Peace

Peace, King of Prussia, Penn., may be off the beaten path, but the message makes the search worthwhile.

Nicole R. Moline

MEN'S ISSUES— THE HEAD OF MAN IS CHRIST

16 Man and his church: keeping his Head in leadership

As part of the church, every man stays focused on Jesus.

Wayne D. Mueller

ENCOUNTERING OTHER RELIGIONS

18 They've always done it that way

The Russian Orthodox Church relies heavily on tradition to shape beliefs.

Roger R. Zehms

MISSION AND MINISTRY IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM

20 "Rez power!"

Our outreach to Native Americans always needs to reflect the resurrection power.

Terry Deters

PART OF GOD'S FAMILY

36 Don't forget my people

Avinash Sallapudi knew what the people of India need most—the gospel.

Linda R. Baacke



10

departments

3 **THOUGHT FOR TODAY**
Thanks for the company

6 **READERS FORUM**

7 **EDITORIAL COMMENT**
Curbing violence in our world

22 **WELS NEWS**

29 **BULLETIN BOARD**

30 **BIBLE STUDY**
A deal with the devil?

31 **INTERACTIVE BIBLE STUDY**

32 **YOUR QUESTION, PLEASE**
The Bible

33 **PÖTLUCK**

34 **EDITOR'S PEN**
At least get the definition right



Shortage of pastors? Where? After reviewing the assignments for our seminary graduates [July], these questions came to mind.

What about the substantial vacancies in existing WELS congregations? Fact or fiction? Eight graduates were assigned back into the ministerial education system. One graduate was assigned to a district president. I am aware that graduates and assignments are matched, but what about the vacancies in existing congregations? What about the overworked vacancy pastors? What about parishioners who leave simply because no one accepts their call for a spiritual leader?

I see no sense sending a seminary graduate to a high school where an MLC graduate should go. Isn't that what MLC is all about? Teaching? Or assigning a graduate to a district president. Why not assign a vicar?

Administration positions should be filled by college graduates who elect not to teach. Teacher grads should be assigned to all teaching positions. Seminary grads should be assigned to existing vacancies and then to outreach. The Great Commission also applies to existing churches.

*George W. Gast
Bradenton, Florida*

Karl A. Gurgel, assignment committee chairman, replies:

Your concerns are valid. These are questions the Assignment Committee prayerfully wrestles with each year, trying to get the balance right.

High on the list is matching God-given talents with the needs of the church. If all existing vacancies were filled first, there would be no one for further outreach (105 vacancies, 34 candidates). Ordinarily, teachers ought to teach and laymen administer. However, there are some theological courses in our schools that pastors need to teach and some administrative roles where preaching is a requirement. Students need pastors as role models, too. Vicars are still undergraduate students, in need of more instruction. With being a

parent and a husband, a parish pastor, and a district president, too, our presidents don't have much time to be seminary professors as well.

Prayerfully, we'll keep trying to get the balance right. Keep praying that we do. Also keep praying for more called workers and more laypeople assisting them. It will all help to attain the proper balance between nurturing and reaching out to those who are still lost.



Just finished the August issue and have to share a comment.

Acronyms have been around for a long time. Some have become part of our everyday language. But several articles seemed to explode with a sudden rush to use acronyms. "LES" here and "MC2" there along with "WKW" over there and "CPS" plus "ULC" to name a few.

Please let's not start to toss in acronyms at every opportunity. They can be important in a legal document or a computer user manual but can be a negative when excessively used.

*Al Hains
Marina del Rey, California*

Excellent article by Daniel Rebers regarding worship as an evangelism tool [Sept.].

Unfortunately it does not appear to reflect the current practice or spirit of WELS today. I applaud the brave soul who allowed it to be published. Is there still hope for WELS?! I shall continue my prayers that there is!

*John F. Seelow
Farmington Hills, Michigan*

I would like to suggest some cautions with regard to "The role of worship" [Sept.]. The point that worship should not be the primary vehicle for evangelism is well-noted. However, that is not to say that wor-

ship shouldn't have any elements of outreach.

We must be careful not to short-sell the Holy Spirit's power to work in an unbeliever's heart in worship. The author states: "The unbeliever will not likely find a worship setting appealing, 'because he does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God.'" A wise theologian said, "No one comes to church the first time for the right reason." When an unbeliever comes to church it will likely be to "check out the congregation or preacher." However, the Holy Spirit is able to use the Word in that setting to convert that unbeliever.

The author also says that "our personal witness is far more effective than inviting someone to church in the hope that during that service they will receive all the benefits from the Word they need." This comes dangerously close to ignoring God's claim that his Word will not return to him empty (Isaiah 55:11).

The purpose and goals of worship are not restricted to hearing the Word and worshiping God. Many minor goals and blessings come to us through worship. Let's keep the primary focus of worship as the preaching of the Word and our worshipful response to our Savior. But let's never rule out worship's secondary blessings.

*Dan Schoeffel
St. Charles, Michigan*

Some questioned the definition of gluttony in a recent letter [Sept.].

Kevin Schultz responds: "It was not my intent to unnecessarily burden people's consciences by saying that gluttony is 'eating anytime we are not physically hungry.' That definition, admittedly, is an oversimplification. The main point of my letter was to help people remember that nothing should take the place of God in our lives—including food."

Send your letters to Readers forum, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398; FAX, 414/256-3899; <nl@sab.wels.net>. Letters are edited for clarity and conciseness. Writers' views are not necessarily those of WELS or Forward/NL.

Curbing violence in our world

Walter F. Beckmann

After the killings at Columbine High School, a reporter asked a father what he thought caused society to become so evil. He answered that society wasn't evil—just a few evil people in it.

How we wish that were true! But Columbine was not an isolated incident. It was one of many violent acts in schools across our nation.

The situation on our streets is worse. Local news reported that stray bullets in two gunfights killed innocent bystanders: one a woman hanging curtains, another a grandmother shielding children with her body. The same day, two teenage girls dragged a young mother from her car and killed her by smashing her head against the sidewalk. In a grizzly case of domestic violence, a fellow who felt his girlfriend wasn't treating him right took revenge by marrying her, fathering her child, and suffocating him with a plastic bag. That wicked saga never ends.

Just a few evil people? No! The Bible tells us, "The whole world is under the control of the evil one" (1 John 5:19). In Romans 3 we read, "There is no one who does good, not even one," and, "Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and misery mark their ways."

I don't mean to criticize that Colorado father. I think he was trying to say we can't get angry at the whole world when someone harms us. We have to keep calm and do what we can to improve things.

To do that, we not only have to understand the enormity of the problem—the total sinfulness of every person—but we also have to know how sinful natures can be changed.

According to Romans 13, God established civil government to protect those who do what's right and punish those who do evil. As citizens, we must insist that our government pass and enforce laws.

God also gives us our conscience for curbing sin and violence. This is a remnant of our creation in God's image. Though dulled by sin, our conscience tells us it's not right to cause suffering. People have to be taught to listen to this voice instead of being told to do whatever their sinful, selfish nature desires.

Because conscience is not perfect, God has revealed his holy will to us more fully in his Law, the Ten Commandments. He did this not to restrict our freedom but to show us our sin and our need for forgiveness, and to curb outbursts of sin in the world. The more we try to follow his law the better it will be for all. It's time that people were told to stop being afraid of God's commandments and start fearing the sin and violence they were designed to curb.

But government, conscience, and God's law can only begin to curb violence and produce a somewhat safer environment. They can't change a single heart or make a single sinner right with God. Only the gospel can do that.

So the first step we should take to change things is to preach the gospel to everyone. It's the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes. It's also the power to change hearts and make forgiven sinners want to love one another as Christ loved us. Preaching that gospel is still our Great Commission.

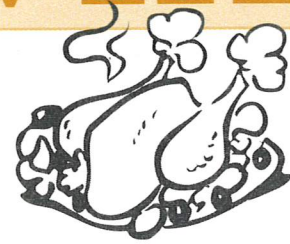
Walter Beckmann is the retirement pastor at Grace, Falls Church, Virginia.


The first step
we should
take to
change
things is
to preach
the gospel
to everyone.


A calendar of thanksgiving


For a full 12 months,
look for reasons to offer
appreciation to your Lord.

David D. Sellnow





 **December 1998**
Miriam was unhappy. No, she was downright miserable. 'Twas the season to be jolly, but she didn't feel that way. The thing that bothered her most was that she could not afford to buy all the things she wanted for her kids for Christmas. She was on an even tighter budget when it came to friends and relatives. Miriam hated having to watch expenses. She wished she could buy whatever she liked and not need to calculate the cost.

 **January 1999**
Miriam was in tears. She had fudged the budget a few times too many. Now she sat with the monthly bills on the table, angry that there wasn't enough in the checkbook to pay for it all. Reluctantly, she filled out an application for another credit card to transfer balances at a lower interest rate.

 **February 1999**
"Flowers. That's it. He got me flowers and a card. Big deal. Another oh-so-romantic Valentine's Day." Miriam muttered to herself as she loaded the dishwasher. "We didn't even go out for dinner. There he sits watching TV. I wish he would listen to me. I wish he would whisk me off my


feet, surprise me with an enchanted evening on the town." Miriam's husband was solid and steady, but not overly passionate. Her strongest passion was how sorry for herself she felt.


 **March 1999**
The dog got sick. Multiple trips to the veterinarian were needed. Miriam got irritated. She questioned the logic of spending so much money on a silly animal. She resented the amount of time and effort she was expending. It was the children's dog, but guess who got to take care of it.


 **April 1999**
Spring cleaning revealed how much work needed to be done on the house. "Why must we live in this run-down old place?" Miriam wondered. She browsed through real estate magazines, picturing her dream home.

 **May 1999**
She should have been excited. She and the family had been invited to a holiday weekend pool party. But Miriam was depressed. Her bathing suit didn't fit. Her weight had gone up over the winter. Miriam was disgusted whenever she looked in a mirror. "I was born with a bad body," she thought, and consoled herself with a bowl of ice cream.

 **June 1999**
The house was a disaster. The kids had barely been out of school a week, but every one of their toys, games, and articles of clothing seemed to be strewn about the floor. Miriam felt frustrated because she never had enough time to clean. Even more so, she felt trapped—she never had enough time for herself.

 **July 1999**
This was vacation? Not really. A cross-country trip to see relatives was hard work. Miriam griped about the journey. Being isolated so far from family was an annoyance. On the road in 100-degree summer heat, it exploded into full-blown anger. Why couldn't her husband get a job in their home state?

 **August 1999**
The children were driving Miriam crazy. School couldn't start soon enough! Did they have to be so noisy?

 **September 1999**
Miriam eyed the other moms in the PTA. They drove better cars. They had nicer wardrobes. They were accessorized perfectly. She didn't rate next to them. They wouldn't give her the time of day. Miriam wanted a makeover.



October 1999

Miriam grumbled about gardening. Her hands were sore from picking, cutting, and canning vegetables. "Why did I ever plant all this in the first place? Why am I always the one doing all the work?" Miriam wasn't particularly hyped about the harvest.



November 1999

It was time to cook Thanksgiving dinner. Miriam began preparations the night before. As she did so, she started thinking. Then she started praying:

"Lord, forgive me for my ungrateful attitude. Thank you for giving me a husband who is a man of faith and is faithful to me. Thank you for my health, and for my healthy, energetic children. Thank you for our home, our belongings; we have as much as we need. Thank you for providing dependable income. We call ourselves 'middle class,' but we are really quite well off by any standard of measurement . . . except in comparison with the Joneses across the street. Keep me from envy, Lord. Fill me with satisfaction, Lord. Give me a spirit of thanksgiving, Lord."

God heard Miriam's prayer. In church on Thursday morning, Miriam sang with faith:

Lord, I will tell, while I am living,
Your love and grace with every breath
And greet each morning with thanksgiving
Until my heart is still in death,
And, when at last my lips grow cold,
Your praise shall in my sighs be told
(*Christian Worship* 242:4).

Thankfulness ought to dominate our calendars more than one month out of the year. We have reason to "rejoice in the Lord always" (Philippians 4:4). A good daily motto is this: "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts . . . and be thankful" (Colossians 3:15). When

Fill me with
satisfaction, Lord.
Give me a spirit of
thanksgiving, Lord.

Christ's calm and comfort are governing our thoughts, complaints and crankiness will cease.

We're all a lot like Israelites on a desert journey. The Lord provides everything we need, but we murmur about the menu. We question the direction in which God is leading us. We say we'd be better off someplace else. Don't let it take 40 years of wandering to realize that God is blessing us! Don't wait 12 months each year before spending a day giving thanks.

Pick up an Advent calendar for next month, with a prayer or Scripture for each day. Then create your own Thanksgiving calendar; the one on your wall will do. For a full 12 months, look for reasons to offer appreciation to your Lord. Write down the spiritual benefits in your life that you often overlook. Repent of whines and complaints you have uttered. Let each day begin with gratitude, not a groan.

The Lord's love surrounds you. He has given you salvation gifts that are worth immeasurably more than any of the earthly things you covet. Turn your attention toward him in praise. "Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18). Life will be better and happier when we approach it with a thankful attitude.



David Sellnow is pastor at Shepherd of the Plains, Lubbock, Texas.



When questions come

What seem to be contradictions in the Bible could be stumbling blocks or steppingstones in our understanding of God's Word.

Forrest L. Bivens and John D. Schuetze

When their son David first told them the Bible contained contradictions, Jim and Joan were angry. David was in his third year of college. He was showing signs of dissatisfaction with the church and now appeared to be attacking the very foundation of the Christian faith. The parents didn't know where their son had gotten this information about Bible discrepancies, but they figured no good could come from it. They were angry.

They were also scared. The whole idea of errors in the Bible terrified them. If the Bible did contain contradictions, how could it be God's Word? A perfect God giving an imperfect Scripture by inspiration was to them the ultimate contradiction. Related thoughts soon surfaced: Maybe the Bible isn't so reliable after all. Maybe even the Bible's main message, the good news about Jesus and his saving work for mankind, is less certain than they had thought. Jim and Joan didn't know how to answer their own questions, much less those of their son.

Fortunately, despite their anger and fear, Jim and Joan did not engage in a shouting match with David. They went to their pastor and explained the situation to him. Then things began to turn around for them. Knowing both the parents and

the son, the pastor declined the suggestion that he contact David and try to "set him straight." This struck him as a good occasion to strengthen everyone's faith and understanding of the Bible. He would help the parents study the issues involved and support them as they discussed the points of contention with their son.

That there are apparent contradictions is in itself evidence that Scripture is not a forgery or the result of some human conspiracy.

So pastor and parents talked, prayed, and then decided on a plan designed to be loving and fair for themselves and David. Instead of dealing with specific issues right away, the pastor first set down general principles. These would prove helpful when the various so-called discrepancies were discussed.

Here are the main points the pastor shared with them. These points would help set a tone of calmness and optimism for the conversations that would follow:

We need not be surprised when the integrity of the Bible is attacked. There is never a shortage of scoffers who delight in finding fault with the Bible. Besides, some Bible passages do seem to contradict each other. Christian scholars have known this for a long time and studied them carefully. Despite the frequent and somewhat arrogant claim that modern discoveries or insights no longer allow us to believe what "simpler" forefathers did, the truth is that adequate responses to the challenges have existed for centuries (2 Peter 3:3ff).

We need not fear that the Bible will fail tests put to it. It's easy to level charges; it's another matter to prove them. Many have tried to prove the Bible wrong but have failed. As promised, God's Word has stood the test of time (1 Peter 1:24,25).

We may rejoice that our Christian faith does not depend on our ability to answer all critics. The Holy Spirit, pointing us to Jesus Christ as Savior and revealing the greatness of his redeeming work, creates and maintains saving faith in the hearts of his people through the Word of God. That same Spirit also creates and maintains a confidence in the entire Bible aside from human

reasoning and manmade conclusions. Our inability to answer all hard questions to everyone's satisfaction does not hinder God's ability to maintain trust in our Savior and his Scriptures. He does not deceive us, nor will he abandon us to the whims of skeptics (Psalm 27 and 37).

We should resolve to discuss the issues with fairness and integrity. We should not give in to the temptation to use superficial reasoning and dismiss the allegations without



honest scrutiny. Those who make the accusations, also in fairness, should not artificially exaggerate seeming differences, but make an honest effort to listen to all efforts to harmonize the passages. Fairness also means that it is enough to point out possible ways of harmonizing alleged contradictory texts. If a possible reasonable explanation is provided for a difficulty, this is sufficient to meet the objection (1 Peter 3:15,16).

If we cannot remove a certain difficulty, it doesn't prove that no one else can or that a solution doesn't exist. Even if we are unsuccessful, we need not conclude that a real contradiction has been found. Our vision is often limited and our knowledge imperfect. More information may surface later. Meanwhile, it is presumptuous to put our intellect or powers of investigation above the promises and wisdom of God (Romans 11:33-36).

We may take a certain comfort when seeming contradictions in the Bible are cited. That there are apparent contradictions is in itself evidence that Scripture is not a forgery or the result of some human conspiracy for fraudulent purposes. If the Bible were merely a human book designed to give the impression it came from God, the writers would have made strong efforts to avoid apparent inconsistencies. Scripture does none of this, giving evidence it did not result from such a fraudulent scheme.

Our main goal is always to proclaim Christ, not to win an argument. Someone may be convinced that the Bible has integrity.

However he will still lack a proper love for it unless there is a change of heart regarding the Savior who reveals himself through that Bible. So in all we say, we want to keep our testimony centered on Christ and the gospel (1 Corinthians 2:1-5).

There is value in facing challenges to the Bible that elicit our thoughtful response. In a sense, these test our character and give opportunities to testify to the truth of the Savior and his Word. To scoffers and skeptics confirmed in their cynicism and unbelief, the apparent contradictions may be stumbling blocks. But to us who have been brought to embrace Christ by faith, they can serve as valuable steppingstones to a better understanding of and appreciation for the Bible. These are invitations to imitate the Bereans (Acts 17:11,12).

Fortified with these summary truths, Jim and Joan headed back home to ponder the possibilities that lay before them. At first they had seen the accusations against Scripture only as stumbling blocks to Christian faith, but now they viewed them as potential steppingstones to a tested faith and expanded knowledge. They resolved to review these basic principles and to approach their son with gentleness to ask for specific examples of the contradictions he had in mind. Then they would ask for the chance to investigate the specific allegations and respond to him in fairness and love.

Next time we'll talk about the series of conversations Jim and Joan would have with their son.



Forrest Bivens and John Schuetze are professors at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon.



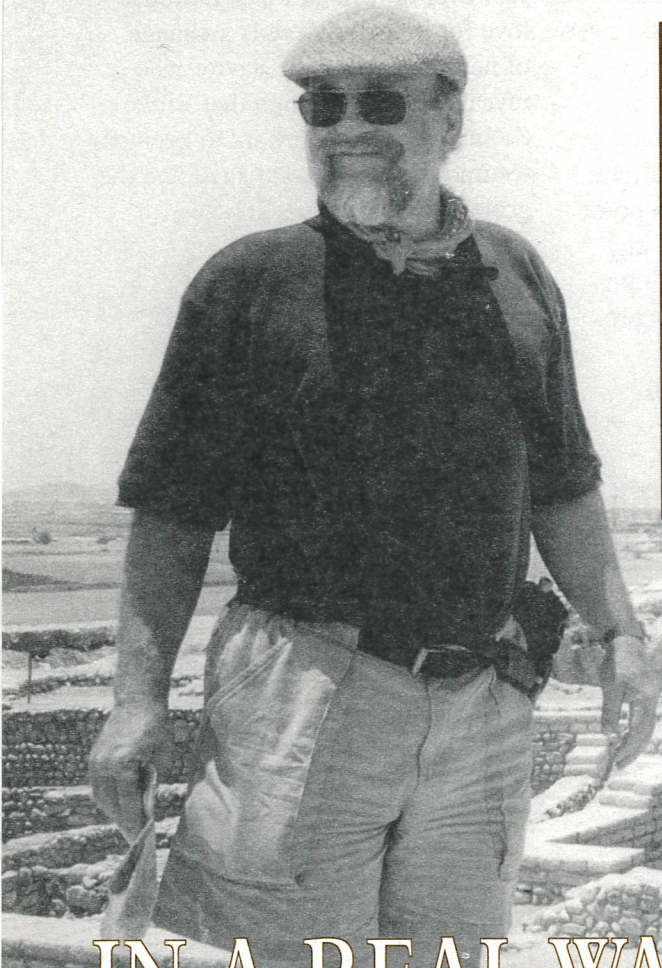
1



2



3



(Above) The 38 members, plus guide, who participated in the last two weeks of LIBRA '99. They stand on the Mount of Olives with the gold Dome of the Rock (the site of the Temple) in the background.
 (Left) Dr. John Lawrenz, one of the leaders of LIBRA '99, explains the archaeology and geography of Beersheba where he dug in 1970 and 1972.

IN A REAL WAY TO A REAL PLACE

Because Jesus was a real person who entered history in a real way, his story and that of the prophets and apostles are illuminated by geography.

John C. Lawrenz

“jē-ōg’rə-fē: the study of the earth and its features and the distribution on the earth of life, including human life and effects of human activity.”

People leave potsherds and buried cities behind for archaeologists to study. Last month we learned how archaeology helps put the Bible in its ancient context, the goal of Lutherans

Integrating the Bible and Related Antiquities (LIBRA).

The what of God’s geography

Geography is different. God formed the hills and valleys of the Promised Land. He called the

springs and seas into being. He shaped the deserts and forests. He clothed them all with things that grow and populated them with creatures of every kind.

Only then did man go to work. The people of ancient Canaan mined the hills for precious metals. They threaded the valleys with roads. Farmers coaxed bread from grain and cloth from flax. Herdsmen milked their goats and sheared their

𐤏𐤏

4

IOPE

5

𐤏𐤏

6

יפו

7

last of a two-part series

1. Egyptian hieroglyphic text “I-pu”
2. Assyrian cuneiform text “Ya-a-pu”
3. Phoenician coffin text “I-pi”
4. Greek mint mark from a coin “Iop”
5. Crusader inscription “Io-pe”
6. Arabic script “Jaf-fa”
7. Modern Hebrew “Ya-fo”

The geography of Yafo, which means “beautiful [harbor],” made it attractive for people throughout biblical history. It was the safest haven for ships between the Nile and the cities of Phoenicia. LIBRA diggers wore t-shirts with seven spellings of Yafo, all taken from coins or inscriptions.

sheep. Settlements grew wherever there was fresh water, abundant food, and a place to defend. In the midst of all this activity, kings ruled, armies marched, fortunes were made and lost, and God’s faithful paused each Sabbath to worship their Creator.

Because God’s son, Jesus, was a real person who entered history in a real way, his story and that of the prophets and apostles are illuminated by geography.

The why of God’s geography

Why did the Hebrew Scriptures arise in Judea, Samaria, Galilee, and Gilead beyond Jordan? The Bible answers this question. God promised these places to Abraham. God kept his promise when Israel received its inheritance in the days of Joshua.

But we can ask the question with geography in mind as well. Did God reveal his wisdom when he set aside these places as Israel’s inheritance? Yes, he did! All four areas share a common soil, the product of broken-down limestone. This fertile *terra rosa* is ideal for producing “wine that gladdens the heart of man, oil to make his face shine, and bread that sustains his heart” (Psalm 104:15). It “makes grass grow for the cattle, and plants for man to cultivate—bringing forth food from the earth” (Psalm 104:14). In these areas and these alone, God gave his people everything they needed, not only to live, but also through sacrifice and

ritual to worship him in a manner that prepared them well for the coming of Jesus.

There is more! The geography of the Promised Land needed water. Unlike the rivers that irrigated the flat countries of Egypt and Mesopotamia, the Jordan lay at the bottom of a deep ditch. Living water to fill the highland springs, backyard cisterns, and farmland terraces had to be a gift from heaven. God said, “. . . love the LORD your God and serve him with all your heart and with all your soul—then I will send rain on your land in its season . . . so that you may gather in your grain, new wine and oil. I will provide grass in the fields for your cattle, and you will eat and be satisfied” (Deuteronomy 11:13-15).

The gifts of God’s geography

The gifts of the special geography of the Promised Land linger in our Christian life even today. The Greek word “Christ” and the Hebrew word “Messiah” both mean “the One anointed with oil,” recalling the way prophets, priests, and kings were set aside for divine service. With bread we receive Christ’s body. With wine we are given his blood. We are baptized with living water into his church in which he is the Vine and we are his branches. He is the Lamb of God slain in our stead. He is the Scapegoat who takes away our sins. His words are a(n oil) lamp to light our path.

Jesus was born in Bethlehem, raised in Nazareth, and heard throughout Galilee. He died and was raised again in Jerusalem. He ascended from a real mountain. We know that he will return as he left—in a real way to a real place. On that real day we will inherit a new geography whose wondrous and diverse reality we can scarcely imagine.



John Lawrenz, administrator of the Board for Ministerial Education, was one of the leaders of the LIBRA trip this past summer.



The 88 who took part in LIBRA 1999 spent 11 days crisscrossing modern Israel to earn three credits in the historical geography that shaped the unfolding of Bible history.

The country is not large. It is only 120 miles from Dan to Beersheba and the distance between the Mediterranean and Jordan valley is no more than 40 miles. Yet, within this small space is a geographical variety that embraces deserts, forests, mountains, plains, steppes, and badlands. It has a lake abundantly alive with fish and one that is absolutely sterile. There are places as balmy as Miami, as temperate as Omaha, as dry as Phoenix, and as woodsy as northern Wisconsin.

It also lies near the nexus of three continents, and because of this, bears the scars of more battles per square inch than anywhere else on earth.

Discovering Peace

Peace, King of Prussia, Penn., may be off the beaten path, but the message found there makes the search worthwhile. **Nicole R. Moline**



Being located just beyond this road to nowhere has challenged Peace, King of Prussia.

What do you do when your church is virtually on a road to nowhere? That challenge has faced Peace, King of Prussia, Penn., during its 32-year history.

In the late 1960s when WELS was deciding where to build Peace's church, King of Prussia was a booming suburb of Philadelphia. The property chosen was right off an expressway that was being built that would make Peace easily accessible to area residents.

Then, the oil embargo of the 1970s hit. Pennsylvania was forced to cancel the project after building a half-mile section of a road to nowhere. Consequently, Peace is located in a low-traffic area, less than a mile from the road to nowhere.

finding peace

That has not stopped people from finding Peace. Yes, it has presented challenges. However, the faithful

members of Peace have found that driving 45 minutes to church is a burden worth bearing when it means the truth of God's Word is being taught.

As Pastor Roger Huffman puts it, "As WELS members, we don't know how good we have it. We eat prime rib every Sunday and take it for granted. We assume other Christians at least get ground chuck. Sadly, many aren't getting anything but filler and dribble."

So, the 136 baptized members at Peace make the drive to the church just beyond the road to nowhere to get the "prime rib" of the Bible. Some have tried other churches closer to home, but have found their appetites for the truth were not being satisfied.

Take, for example, George and Elma, a retired couple who moved to King of Prussia and began searching for a church home. After trying several other churches, George and Elma ended up at Peace. After sitting in Peace's pews for a little over a month, George commented, "Pastor, I've learned more about the Bible in the last six Sundays in your services than I learned in 25 years in my last church."

George and Elma went through instruction class and became members of Peace. Not only that, they went through the class a second time. They found the peace they were seeking.

sharing peace

The challenge the congregation faces is sharing that peace with others. After all, when your church is just beyond a road to nowhere, potential members do not just stumble by and drop in. A certain degree of creativity is necessary to spread the Word.

Peace has met the challenge of outreach by performing the standard actions like taking out newspaper ads and going door to door. They have also tried more creative approaches to spreading the Word. Unfortunately, the results of these outreach attempts have not always yielded as much visible fruit as members hoped.

For 10 years, Peace has participated in King of Prussia's annual community fair. Peace holds drawings in



Member Peter Prellwitz wrote a puppet series about evangelism for Peace's Sunday school children using these puppets. Believer Beaver is shown telling C.B. the alligator about Jesus. The Believer Beaver puppet series is available from the Commission on Youth Discipleship, 414/256-3274.

which religious prizes for children are given away. The registration form helps identify families who do not know Jesus. In all Peace's years of participating, though, not one prospect from the fair has become a member.

Another program that was attempted with little success was Christmas for Kids. On two different occasions, the congregation offered free childcare on a Saturday in December so parents could finish last-minute shopping. Members planned a fun day of baking cookies and making crafts that would teach children about the true meaning of Christmas. The first year, two families dropped off their children. The second year, not one family came.

growing in peace

Members at Peace are not letting these disappointments get them down. Rather, they have decided to try a new idea. Plans for building an all-day childcare center have been approved. If all goes well, it will open in the fall of 2000.

The childcare center will complement Peace's strong educational ministry. That educational ministry was strengthened 11 years ago when Peace began to rethink its ideas about Sunday school. As one mother in the congregation commented, "Is there any reason we can't take the joy and excitement of vacation Bible school and bring it into Sunday school?"

This led to an overall attitude change about the way Sunday school is run. Huffman explains it by saying, "Our goal was to raise everyone's expectations of our Sunday school. To that end we knew we needed to put Sunday school in the eyes of the congregation and the congregation in the eyes of the Sunday school."

A calling system has been developed as a result of these raised expectations. Calls are extended to members who have the gifts that are necessary for each position. Those who accept the call to serve in the Sunday school are then supported through meetings with the rest of the staff.



Peace resolved to hold its Sunday school to a higher standard so younger members like Amanda Dombach, Kirsten Huffman, Jamie Dombach, and Lisa Schmechel could fully benefit from the program.

Because the teachers take their jobs seriously, they expect their students also to take Sunday school seriously. Memorization is required, and diligent students are rewarded with a monthly trip to the "treasure chest." The "treasure chest" is actually a breadbox decorated with rhinestones and filled with inexpensive religious trinkets. As children receive their rewards for successfully memorizing assignments, they are reminded by their teachers that, "these treasures may break, but the real treasure you have learned is in your heart. That can never be broken because the Word of God is eternal."

The Lord has blessed the changes in this ministry. Participation in Sunday school has risen. Catechism knowledge has grown. The number of teenagers who are active in

ministry and continue to worship after confirmation has risen. Teacher turnover has declined because teachers are supported and encouraged.

These results prompted the congregation to rate educational ministry as its number one strength. In addition, other congregations have invited Peace to help them achieve the same positive results.

fighting for peace

Peace, King of Prussia, Penn., may be off the beaten path. However, they are not letting that get in the way of helping them accomplish their overall goal—showing the world that the only way to find lasting peace is by believing in the Prince of Peace.

Though there may be challenges, this congregation has not given up. After all, Peace has to get the message out that the church near the road to nowhere has the message that leads to eternal life in Christ.

Nicole Moline is the communications assistant for Communication Services and Forward/Northwestern Lutheran.

Peace

Founded: 1967

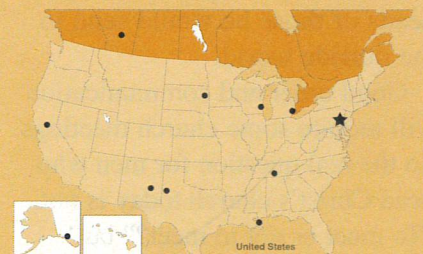
Communicants: 109

Souls: 136

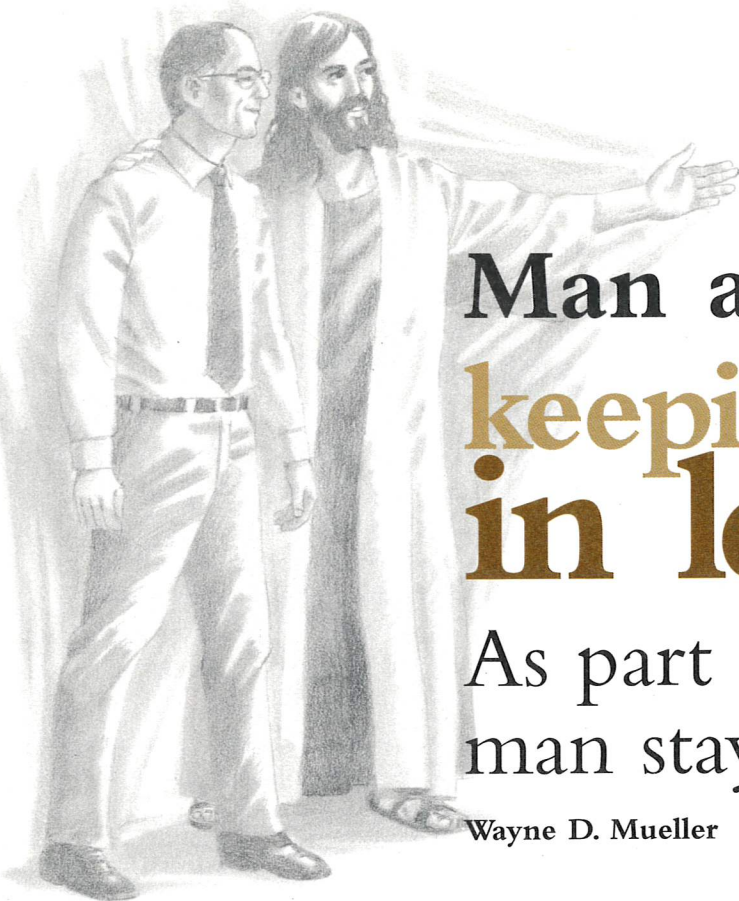
Pastor: Roger Huffman

200 East Beidler Rd, King of Prussia, PA 19406-1767

<www.PeaceWithGod@pond.com>



★ = featured congregation
• = congregations already featured



Man and his church: keeping his Head in leadership

As part of the church, every man stays focused on Jesus.

Wayne D. Mueller

More than a few people have noted that Jesus Christ founded the church and trained his apostles without holding any meetings.

Wearily councilmen coming out of 11 PM meetings may find this interesting. But it isn't exactly true. Jesus did meet with his disciples many times. Only his purpose was not to take minutes, pass resolutions, and hear financial reports. Jesus met with his disciples mostly to teach them, to get inside of the heads of those he would send to the outside world.

Good order and communication will require some church meetings. So the real question for men who head Christ's church today is not, "To meet or not to meet?" but rather, "What is the true nature of church leadership?"

Concentrate on the mission

Our Savior left no doubt about the answer to that question. Good leaders concentrate on their mission. At the end of his earthly ministry, Jesus gave his disciples—and all who would follow their lead—the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). Actually, Jesus told his disciples right from the start what their mission was. When he called Peter and Andrew, he said, "Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19).

A little while later, after a night of prayer, Jesus "called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles" (Luke 6:13). The disciples knew in advance of all their meetings with Jesus what their ultimate mission was. They did not sit at Jesus' feet merely to accumulate knowledge.

When they came to meetings, they were learning not just to know, but to go.

The meetings Jesus held with his future leaders strengthened their sense of mission. Before he sent out the 12 on evangelism calls, he told them, "What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the roofs" (Matthew 10:27). When he sent out the 72, Jesus invited them to pray: "Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves" (Luke 10:2,3). Before he ascended into heaven, every word from the lips of our Head motivated his leaders toward their mission: "Go!" (Mark 16:15). "Therefore go and make disciples!" (Matthew 28:19). "You are witnesses of these things"

(Luke 24:48). "You will be my witnesses . . . to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

Listen to the leader

Jesus commissioned every believer to carry out his mission to reach the lost. Male headship in the church holds out the marching orders and motive for carrying out this mission like a banner for all Christian soldiers. Men in the parish hang on to every word of communication issued by the Commander in Chief. Very simply, male headship in the church derives from the word of Christ.

What military leader would want to be absent when his troops are rallied for battle? So those who serve under the headship of Christ are ever present for worship and Bible study. The rich, indwelling word is the power and content of spiritual leadership. Pagans, atheists, and heretics can make a church run, but only men who listen to their Head can make it run in the right direction.

Jesus told his disciples that "whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant" (Matthew 20:26). He illustrated this headship principle by washing their feet. Male leadership patterned after its Head is devoted to service. The greatest Christ-like leaders are not necessarily the men who talk the loudest or hold elected office. They are those who serve with joy and willingness.

Humble service and staying close to the Word prevent us from letting

the little things get in the way of the big thing. The mission of seeking weak and lost souls is not the same as managing church property and programs. Still today, men in our churches need to sit at the feet of Jesus often enough and long enough to be able to tell the difference.

Stay focused on the Savior

As many present-day congregations do, Martin Luther had to wrestle with men who lost sight of Jesus' mission. Luther said that many church members were

still lusty and childish in their understanding of such faith and the spiritual life, and they must be coaxed like young children, enticed with external concomitant adornment, with reading, praying, fasting, singing, churches, decorations, organs, and all those things commanded and observed in monasteries and church, until such time as they too learn to know the teachings of faith. But still there is great danger here when the rulers (as is now unfortunately the case) busy themselves with these same ceremonies and external works, insist on them as if they were the true works, and neglect faith. They ought always to teach faith along with these works (*Selected Writings of Martin Luther, 1517-1520*, Theodore Tappert).

The mission to build and share faith drives good church leaders. Their personal everyday gospel witness encourages and sets an example for all members. They manage programs and property in a way that serves the mission instead of obscuring it. The schools they conduct submit academic and athletic standards to the higher goal of training children who will be lifelong witnesses to Jesus. They shape adult education to equip members, not just to know Jesus, but to go for him.

Where is the male headship of your congregation heading? Does every man, from the preacher in the pulpit to the greeter in the narthex, hold high the banner of the Great Commission? Or do the details of buildings and budgets sometimes blur the big picture? Do the men sit at Jesus' feet like Mary, or like Martha worry about many things and forget the one thing needful? Do they like James and John jockey for position in the kingdom, or are they washing feet?

"When Christ came into the world, he said: . . . 'I have come to do your will, O God'" (Hebrews 10:5,7). May Jesus' commitment to his Father's mission empower us to carry out the one our Head has given us.

 Wayne Mueller is the administrator of the Board for Parish Services.

For men to better understand their roles, they need to get into the Word and closer to their Head.

A national men's retreat is being planned for Nov. 3-5, 2000, in Milwaukee to help them do that. WELSMEN, an organization of lay leaders from the Milwaukee area, and WELS Kingdom Workers are

sponsoring this retreat.

"We want to celebrate the anniversary of Christianity as a body of men," said David Timm, national director of WELS Kingdom Workers and retreat program director.

The retreat will include fellowship, presentations and workshops, and worship. Wives and families are invited.

"We're being counterproductive if we are promoting men in their roles and then taking them away from their families," said Timm. Separate activities are being planned for women and children.

AAL is helping fund this event.

Look for more information in 2000.

THEY'VE ALWAYS DONE IT THAT WAY

The **RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH**
relies heavily on tradition to shape beliefs.

—+—
Roger R. Zehms

Yelena lives in Akademgorodok, a suburb of Novosibirsk, Siberia, near the geographic center of Russia. She has been a biology teacher at English School #130 for more than 25 years. Her avocation is religious art and religious history. She spent many hours leading us through Russian church history and explaining the meaning of Russian art and icons.

The people of Russia have a religious heritage with beautiful art and deep meaning. A visit to any Russian Orthodox Church is a lesson in history, art, and culture.

TRADITIONS

Yelena emphasized that tradition rules. Many worshipers do not understand why they cross themselves from right to left (opposite from the Roman Catholics) or why they light candles or use incense in the service, but they know it has been done for centuries. Their Bible uses an old Slavonic Russian language that most Russians today do not understand—but they wouldn't think of changing it. They believe strongly in the Trinity and many times during worship cross themselves and bow three times toward the altar, symbolizing that belief.



Yelena describing Russian art to Pastor Roger Zehms.

Worship often lasts several hours and includes a repetitious liturgy that reviews Bible history and God's plan of salvation. All the baptized, including young children, participate in the Lord's Supper. Most worshipers recognize that they are receiving the Lord's body and blood, though some think of it as transubstantiation and others as a real mystical presence.

Because of the emphasis on art, often called icons, Russians see it as a blessing to have an aged icon in their homes. Through icons, the Orthodox Church believes that God lifts a veil between the church militant and the church triumphant, giving believers on earth a foretaste of heaven.

Throughout the 70 years of communism, most Russian churches were closed and religious freedom

was outlawed. History shows that many church leaders during the communist era were agents of the KGB, the Russian secret police. Though atheism was forced on the youth in schools and universities, religion was not annihilated, as communism desired. While the Lord could no longer dwell in the church, he continued to dwell in many homes.

During those years religious icons were present—but not displayed—in many homes. They include pictures and tell Bible stories and give church history lessons without words. When there were threats of search, icons were hidden but not forgotten. I believe God used this to remind them of their faith even when public worship was forbidden.

Today icons are prominently displayed, and even worshiped by some. The church's mysticism has led some to believe that the Lord works through the icons in addition to the Word and the seven sacraments.

On our travels-by-book with Yelena, we visited Russian Orthodox monasteries. Many are open again after being closed during communism's rule. Here people have dedicated their lives to God and to serving the poor. Sadly, many think monastic life will help them earn their way to heaven.

DOCTRINES

The Orthodox Church establishes doctrines by "the uniform consensus of the church" throughout all time. But consensus is difficult to reach. For the Western mind, arguments back and forth lead to consensus, but this kind of debate does not fit the mindset of the people of the East. Therefore, many doctrines of the Orthodox Church

remain undeveloped or underdeveloped. (This difference shows itself in the voters' meetings of our Russian Lutheran Church as well—a cultural difference missionaries must learn.)

The Orthodox Church officially says that it does not follow Scripture alone—it must be interpreted in the light of the church and her living tradition. True authority, we are told, is found in the continuing living presence of the Holy Spirit. In Orthodoxy, the continuing presence of the Holy Spirit in the church may be summarized by one word: tradition.

Orthodoxy views tradition as the one revelation given by Christ to the apostles and passed down.

Tradition includes the doctrine, government, worship, and art of the church. The outward forms of the one tradition include the Bible, the seven ecumenical councils, later local councils, the fathers, the divine liturgy, canon law, and icons.

What about salvation? The most important doctrinal definition is the Nicene Creed, which clearly shows salvation through faith in Christ.

Many of the faithful believe this. Yet

Orthodoxy insists that the entire

process of salvation is begun and furthered by God's grace in us—a grace mixed in with our sinful acts, thoughts, and motives. That isn't enough for us to be in communion with a perfect holy God. One Orthodox teacher said that Christ "could die for the sins of the whole world" and thus provide the "foundation for the forgiveness of sins."

Sadly, that only makes salvation a possibility instead of a reality. Through the Bible we proclaim to the Russians that God has won salvation completely for us through Jesus.

The Orthodox Church officially rejects the infallibility of the Pope and the Virgin Mary's Immaculate Conception. But, in practice, the worship of Mary is equal to that of the Roman Catholic Church in the West. Sadly, the Orthodox Church also practices the sacrifice of the Mass for the living and the dead, and offers prayers for the dead.

LESSONS

Orthodoxy can teach us about the centrality of the church, about respect for godly tradition, and about the importance of being spiritual disciples of our Lord. However, its official view of redemption is little better than that of Islam or any other religion that teaches a person is saved by works.

In spite of communism's attempt to wipe out religion in Russia, those efforts failed.

Although communism is still the preferred form of government for many in Russia, thank God there is religious freedom to proclaim the gospel.

We have a challenge to reach

Yelena and others of the Russian Orthodox background with the pure gospel. We tell them the gospel gently but with sincerity and conviction. It is the powerful Word of God. And we see that gospel bear fruit. Because of family and political considerations, many people who have been without church and willing to learn from us still are not ready to separate from the Orthodox Church. But we tell them the gospel in its truth—and we know God's Word will not return empty.



Roger Zehms is pastor at Risen Savior, Austin, Texas. He served in Russia from 1996-1999.


**Pastor
Tedd Wendt of
Akademgorodok writes
about a recent vacation
Bible school:**



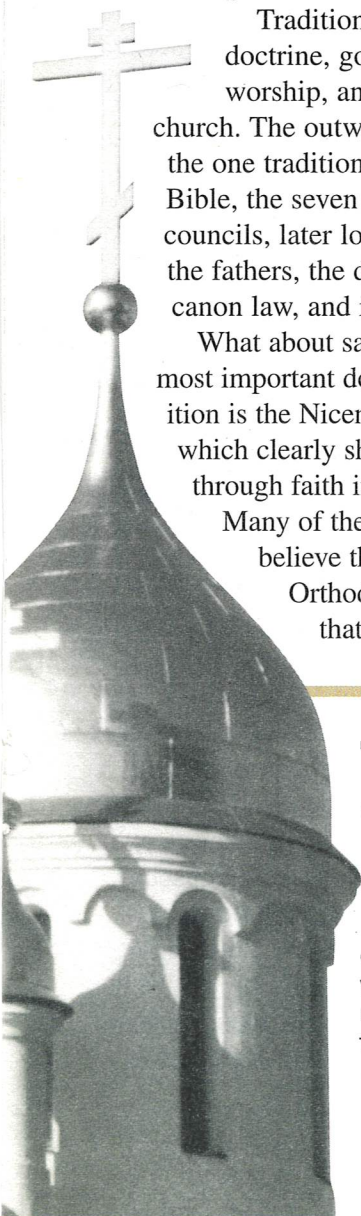
The local leader of a branch of the Communist party brought his granddaughter to VBS every day and stayed for the opening devotions. The last day we had a closing service and invited parents and grandparents. He asked if he could say a few words.

He told them that they were an unfortunate generation because they had grown up without opportunities to study the Bible. He thanked our teachers for taking the time to share God's Word with the children, and encouraged the parents to do the same thing in their homes. He urged the children to study the Bible while they are young and it's easy for them to learn.

It was a moving speech. We hope that parents take it to heart. We also pray that we'll see most of the children in our Sunday school.

 The Russian Orthodox cross on the top of a chapel in Novosibirsk. In the Russian Church, the most common cross is the three-bar cross.

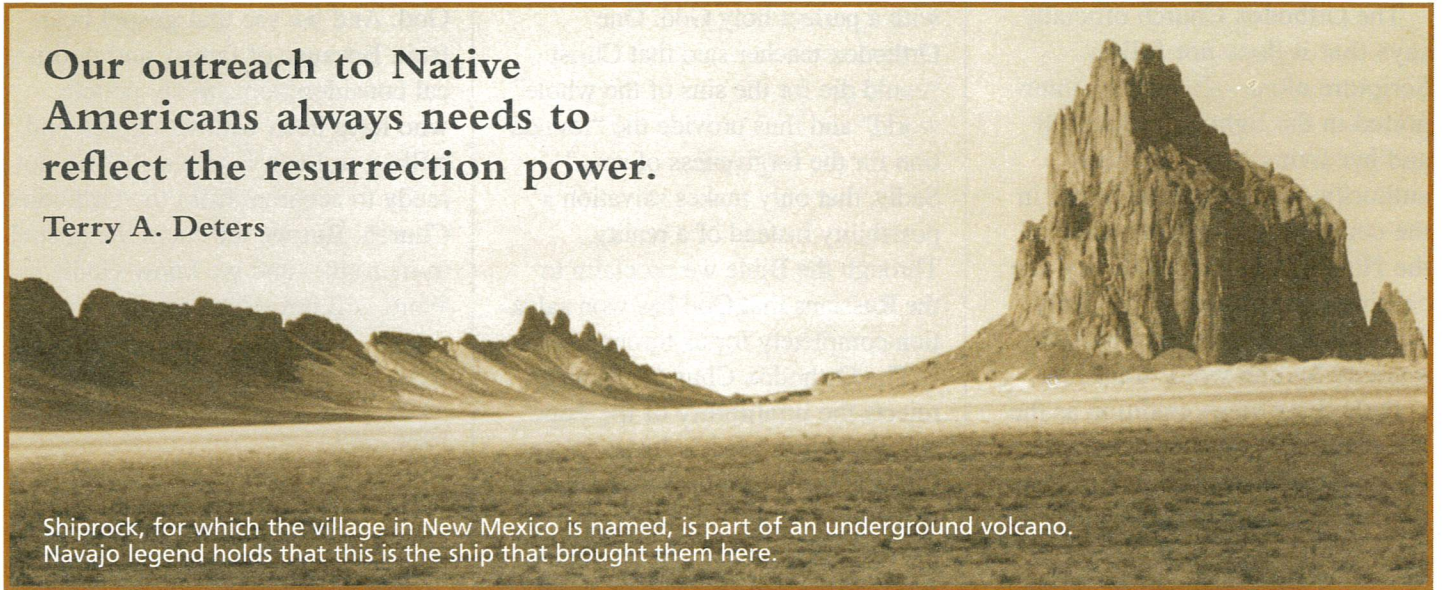
Symbolically, the three bars represent, from the top, the signboard on the top of the cross; the main crossbeam, to which the hands of Jesus were nailed; and the lower portion, to which his feet were nailed.



“REZ POWER!”

Our outreach to Native Americans always needs to reflect the resurrection power.

Terry A. Deters



Shiprock, for which the village in New Mexico is named, is part of an underground volcano. Navajo legend holds that this is the ship that brought them here.

There it was—out in the middle of nowhere in the barren Arizona desert—scrawled in white, spray-painted letters on an old, weathered fence post next to the road that runs through one of the Indian reservations. “Rez power!” the graffiti said. Nothing more . . . just “Rez power!”

Was this written by a member of some Native American youth gang marking his turf? Was it an expression of political dissatisfaction by someone on the “rez” (as the reservations are often called)? Was someone perhaps speaking out against some perceived injustice at the hands of the federal government, demanding more control at the local level? Who knows what it really meant—maybe only the one who wrote it. Yet, there it was . . . “Rez power!”

The most important power

That cryptic message brought to mind another person who also focus-

es on a “rez power,” so to speak, and on the one who gives the power. The apostle Paul referred to him when he wrote, “I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead” (Philippians 3:10,11, emphasis added).

**“Rez power!”—
knowing “Christ
and the power of
his resurrection” . . .
is the purpose of our
gospel outreach to
Native Americans.**

This is the kind of “rez power” that is needed by every human being, including those who comprise our Native American population, wherever they may live. Not

reservation power but resurrection power! It’s the power of the resurrected Jesus living in human hearts by faith and guiding their daily living. It’s the power over sin and Satan, the power over death and hell through faith in Jesus as the Savior. It’s the power that is conveyed to people through the gospel of Christ in Word and sacraments. “Rez power!”—the power of the Savior’s resurrection!

Reaching the Native Americans

For more than 100 years, through missionaries working under the Board for World Missions (BWM), WELS has been proclaiming “Christ and the power of his resurrection” among the Apache people in central Arizona. The Lord continues to bless richly this gospel outreach in eight congregations, three elementary schools, and one Lutheran high school. More recently the BWM has been reaching out with the gospel to the Lakota nation on the Rosebud

Reservation in South Dakota, and is exploring the possibility of an outreach to the Inuit Indians in Alaska.

The Board for Home Missions (BHM) is also active in gospel outreach to Native Americans. Mission work is being done among the Cora Indians near Montrose, Colo., and a partnership was formed with the BWM to share the gospel with the Navajos in the area of Farmington and Shiprock, N.M. Pastor James Fleming, from the Navajo Lutheran Church and Ministry Center in Farmington, observes, "There may be cultural differences between Native Americans, and yet most seem plagued by the same social ills—extremely high unemployment, alcoholism, drug and sexual abuse, and domestic violence."

The other half of the team, Pastor Daniel Jensen, who is ministering on the Navajo reservation around Shiprock and Tees Nos Pos, Ariz., comments, "Many of the Navajo adults I meet are trying desperately to find contentment through materialism, and yet they just aren't at peace." What they really need, Jensen says, "is the peace and contentment that can be found only in our Lord Jesus."

It's obvious, isn't it? The need to truly "know Christ and the power of his resurrection" is indeed great in Navajo land.

Because of economic conditions on the reservation, many Native Americans migrate to urban population centers, where they are often met with a cold shoulder. They are stereotyped; the social ills that plague them are well publicized. Consequently, many become victims of a "one size fits all" prejudice. While in the cities, however, they also become part of the rich metropolitan mission field for our WELS congregations.

Reaching out in your area

Those who are reached with the powerful and saving gospel that is ours to share are truly appreciative. Says Wil Evans, an adult confirmand from the Pima tribe and a member of Good Shepherd, a multi-cultural congregation in central Phoenix, "From the very beginning my family and I felt comfortable and relaxed at Good Shepherd. The messages from God's Word were meaningful to me for the first time in my life. We are very thankful for the good news of Jesus that we hear week after week."

"Rez power!"—knowing "Christ and the power of his resurrection!" This is the most important thing in life, isn't it! And this is also the purpose of our gospel outreach to Native Americans. Please continue to remember this outreach in your prayers. On behalf of all who are involved in these ministries, "Pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ" (Colossians 4:3).

Also consider your community. Is there a reservation near you? Is there a Christian church proclaiming "rez power" to the people who live on that reservation? Could your church bring the gospel of "rez power" to these people?

If you are serving Native Americans with the gospel, contact Pastor Terry Deters, in care of Good Shepherd, 3040 N 7 Ave, Phoenix AZ 85013.

Terry Deters is pastor at Good Shepherd, Phoenix, Arizona.

Rez power in pageants



Kim Guy

Some East Fork Lutheran High School (EFLHS) Apache graduates who know about "Rez power" are spreading the Word to others through pageants.

Kim Guy, a 1997 graduate and a member of Open Bible, Whiteriver, Ariz., was crowned Miss White Mountain Apache for 1999-2000 in August.

Pageant observers agree that Kim won on the strength of her answer to the question: "What's most important to you: tradition, tribe, or spirituality?"

Kim was the only contestant who chose spirituality. She spoke of her faith in Jesus that had been nurtured by her education in Lutheran schools. She spoke of the Christian encouragement of her family, especially her grandmother, who raised Kim when she was little.

Another of the seven finalists, Trish Gooday, performed a traditional Apache war dance. She explained that in Ephesians 6 the sword of the Spirit is the Word of God. She also told the crowd, "The Apache nation will not be successful without the Word of God."

Denise Taylor was Miss Indian Arizona 1998-99. She credits the Christian education that she received at EFLHS as a critical part of her upbringing, making her who she is today.

At the pow-wow of the tribal fair, the tribal chairman introduced Denise and Kim, calling them "role models for all of the Apache girls and the entire Apache tribe."

Paul Prange

Leaving, but not forsaking, the mission field of Colombia

“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!” (Philippians 4:4).

It may seem out of place to issue a call of celebration at the very moment that the threat of violence escalated and made the evacuation of our missionary team in Colombia a necessity. But the apostle Paul understood personal adversity, for he wrote these words to his brothers and sisters in Philippi while he himself was a prisoner.

A volatile struggle between government and guerrilla forces that has simmered in the countryside of Colombia for decades stretched toward the cities of Colombia this past summer. Missionary families, who have always exercised caution, found their travel even more restricted. It was now unsafe for the WELS missionaries to make calls on shut-ins who lived outside the city. Kidnappings increased, and North Americans, wealthy by Colombia standards, were natural targets.

In the final weeks of August, it became clear that it was time for

our three missionaries and their families to leave.

But their departure does not bring an end to the teaching and preaching of the gospel in Colombia. Church leaders from the Colombian National Church will continue to lead services in Medellin and Bogota. For years the philosophy has been to prepare a national church that would not be dependent on North American missionaries. We have seen the primary role of the missionaries as teachers, providing instruction for those Colombians stepping forward for ministry training. To accomplish this, we anticipated staying in Colombia for a number of years. God’s timetable is not always the same as ours. He has accelerated the process.

Early in September the missionaries’ families flew to Wisconsin. In the weeks following the departure of their wives and children, the mission team arranged for the shipment of personal property back to the states. They also attended to the details of transferring the ministry to the leaders of the Colombian church. Then they joined their families in Wisconsin.

The recommendation of the missionaries regarding the future of Colombia is clear. We cannot forsake our brothers and sisters in Colombia. Theology instruction must continue. The Colombian leaders who stand ready to lead should be fully trained for the calling they must fulfill. God-willing, a plan to accomplish this will soon be in place.

Personal setbacks do not diminish the love of God nor the abundance of blessings that our gracious God has showered on the work that has been done in his name. We can rejoice. A door has been closed—for now—for our missionaries, but the Word is still being proclaimed.

The future of the Colombian ministry belongs to God. Instead of worrying about the door that has closed, it is time for us to celebrate what he has already done. It is time to rejoice and look to see which door is open and waiting. It is time for our missionaries and the Word to move on according to the divine plan of our God who will certainly bless us again. Rejoice!

*The Latin American Administrative
Committee of the Board for
World Missions*

A sign for our times—for free!

In the spirit of going Forward in Christ for the WELS 150th anniversary, we want to help direct more people to your church with a free road sign. Look what we have for you:

- One sign FREE—an \$80 value—to the first 815 customers (shipping costs extra). Please allow three weeks for delivery.
- Additional signs half price—originally \$72.95, now \$36.48
- All new, highly visible design
- Size: 24” x 30”
- WELS logo and directions to your church on sign



Act now! This offer is only good during the Forward in Christ celebration (until July 31, 2001) or while supplies last. A gift from Lutheran Brotherhood and the cooperation of Northwestern Publishing House made this possible.

For more information and to order, call Northwestern Publishing House at 1-800-662-6093 ext. 7.

John Richmond (right), a Lutheran Brotherhood representative, presents President Karl Gurgel a \$40,000 check for the Forward In Christ celebration. The money is being used to help provide churches with new road signs.

A hymn for the new millennium

On Jan. 15, a hymn was born when a five-member worship planning committee chose "Father, God of Grace, You Knew Us" as the winner of a WELS anniversary hymn competition. Prof. em. Paul Eickmann of Watertown, Wis., submitted the winning text.

In 1998, a worship subcommittee of the Forward in Christ anniversary committee announced the hymn competition, in celebration of the WELS 150th anniversary and the year 2000. The subcommittee reviewed 44 texts, which were evaluated on the quality of poetry, strength of texts, and the freshness in presenting well-repeated ideas.

Committee members noted that Eickmann's hymn balances and communicates God's sovereignty and God's grace and focuses on the mission of the church to preach the gospel.

The hymn was introduced to WELS at the 1999 synod convention and at the 1999 National Conference on Worship, Music, and the Arts, both held in July. Congregations are encouraged to use the new hymn often during the two-year anniversary celebration.

The hymn, as well as other anniversary worship resources, was distributed as a booklet to all congregations. Additional copies are available from the Commission on Worship, 414/256-3226. See the Commission on Worship's homepage at <www.wels.net/sab/frm-cow.html> for more resources.

David Prillwitz

Father, God of Grace, You Knew Us

Text: Paul E. Eickmann
Tune: "Lauda Anima," Sir John Goss, 1800-1880

Father, God of grace, you knew us,
Chose us, named us as your own,
Through eternal ages planning
To redeem us in your Son.
Praise the Father, God who loved us
E're creation was begun!

We, your creatures, sinned against you,
And our guilt was crimson-red.
Son of God, you came incarnate,
Crushed the crafty serpent's head,
Died our death, now live triumphant:
Praise the First-born from the dead!

Counselor, you bring as promised
From the Father and the Son
Righteousness fulfilled, accomplished,
Free forgiveness, heaven won.
Praise the Spirit! He assures us
Our salvation's work is done!

Lord, your changeless Word has fed us,
Spanning time, transcending space,
Water, bread, and wine sustained us,
When the darkness hid your face.
Keep us with you, faithful Shepherd,
By your saving means of grace!

Forward lead us, Christ, we follow,
Drawn by Word and promise true:
"To all nations preach the gospel;
I am evermore with you."
Keep us faithful! Then, Lord Jesus,
Quickly come! Make all things new!

Praise the Father, great Creator,
Praise the Son, who took our place,
Praise the Spirit, Sanctifier,
God of free and faithful grace!
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Alleluia! Amen.



Czech us out—Pastor Mark and Patti Wenzel at the Phillips Community Czech Fest. Our Savior, Phillips, Wis., focused on the Thoughts of Faith (Evangelical Lutheran Synod) mission in the Czech Republic at the local Czech Fest in June. They set up a display of student pictures, postcards, newsletters, and letters written in the Czech language, showing God's work in Phillips and the Czech Republic.

The booth attracted many visitors, prompted notes and offerings to the Czech students, and increased awareness of the congregation within the community.

TO GET YOUR LOVED

CAN'T DECIDE WHAT

ONES FOR CHRISTMAS?



Try this special 8x10 color print of our March cover.

Other satisfied customers have written:

"My dear Grandma is no longer able to verbally express her faith in Jesus, and I picture him holding her in his baptismal grace now, just as he did when she was a baby, and really all through her life."

A \$10 donation offsets the purchase and all rights of the artwork, as well as printing and mailing costs.

Contact us at *Forward/Northwestern Lutheran*, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222; 414/256-3210; <usr73@sab.wels.net>

Obituary

Lloyd Elmer Thompson 1917-1999

Lloyd Thompson was born Jan. 23, 1917, in Lafayette, Wis. He died Aug. 21, 1999, in Elkhorn, Wis.

Thompson served at Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Mich.; Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee; and Northwestern College, Watertown, Wis.

He is survived by wife, Edith; three daughters, two sons, 15 grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.



Conferences provide inspiration and instruction

Two WELS conferences this past summer inspired and invigorated participants—and gave them resources to put those feelings into action.

Three hundred school leaders attended the WELS School Leadership Conference, held June 29-July 1, in Waukesha, Wis. Keynote speakers spoke on joy-filled leadership, technology in our schools, and leadership and change. Numerous workshops gave practical information on leadership skills. The Commission on Parish Schools sponsored this conference.

“To have a conference that focuses on developing qualities and skills of WELS school leaders is very important,” said Dan Schmeling, parish schools administrator and chairman of the conference committee. “We need strong school leaders to go into the future with strong schools.”

Besides needing strong school leaders, WELS needs strong music and worship leaders. The National Conference of Worship, Music, and the Arts, through worship and recitals, showed the talent already present in WELS.



Colleen O'Connor, director of Emanuel Lutheran Child Care Center, Lansing, Mich., discusses how to start an early childhood ministry with some participants at the School Leadership Conference. The conference theme was “Age to Age,” depicting moving into the next millennium as well as passing the challenges of leadership to the next generation.



A 100-voice youth choir participated in an honors choir concert at the close of the National Conference of Worship, Music, and the Arts. Youth from WELS schools, public schools, and home schools from all over the country rehearsed for about 10 hours during the conference before their performance. Presentations and some recordings will be available in the future on compact disc, audio, and videotape.

One conference highlight was the musical leadership of the youth, according to Bryan Gerlach, worship administrator. These youth participated in a special 100-voice youth choir, in orchestras, and as organists. “There are scads of young people deeply moved and enriched by Lutheran worship,” said Gerlach. “We have so much talent.”

The conference, sponsored by the Commission on Worship, offered

over 50 different workshops to further improve participants’ skills. Besides workshops, participants also could attend seven worship services and several recitals, as well as browse vendor booths.

Over 935 people attended the conference, held July 18-21 at Carthage College, Kenosha, Wis. Over 150 adults sang in a festival adult choir and orchestra for the opening concert and service.

Record number at LWMS convention

A record number gathered in La Crosse, Wis., June 25-27 for the 36th annual Lutheran Women’s Missionary Society Convention. The 1,559 registrants listened to missionaries, sang praises, renewed friendships, and made new friends in Christ.

Workshops covered such topics as witnessing, making banners, using the prayer calendar, doing multicultural outreach, and learning about LWMS.

Missionaries from Japan, the Hmong community, the Navajo, and

inner city Milwaukee were featured speakers. A missionary’s mother also spoke, as did a translator for our Spanish outreach.

Throughout the weekend, the convention provided opportunities to renew self, friendships, and one’s relationship with God. As we heard about the mission work being done, we were encouraged to witness where we are. We truly “soared on his Word.”

Sherry Harlass

Taiwan earthquake update

The Lord protected our missionaries and church members in Taiwan during a strong earthquake on Sept. 21 that may leave an estimated 6,000 people dead.

Missionary Rob Siirila wrote, "It was centered about 30 miles south of Taichung and was the most powerful to hit Taiwan in 100 years. It's certainly the strongest I've felt during 16 years here. Thankfully, all mission personnel and church members are safe."

WELS has three missionary families in Taiwan: the Siirilas and Leyrers in Taipei, and the Stellicks in Taichung. There was no major damage to their homes or the WELS churches in Taiwan. Power was off for a while, and water and electricity are being rationed in Taichung.

Our missionaries immediately began looking for ways to help. Kevin Stellick writes:

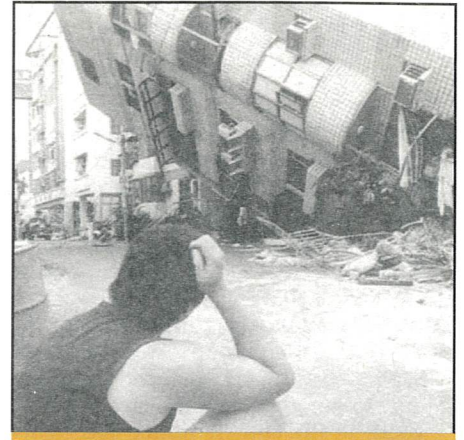
Yesterday (Sept. 23) was "Relief Day" for us. We found a collection point where people were bringing goods that could be transported to the hundreds of

thousands that are now homeless. Sarah and I hauled over a dozen bags of baby clothes, diapers, bottles and formula as well as children's clothing and adult clothing. There is a dire need for tents and sleeping bags, so we donated our tent and sleeping bags. The epicenter is in the mountains, which can become quite cool at night. We added Bibles and gospel tracts in the goods, and we pray that those who find these items will be blessed by them.

At a church barbecue in Taipei, which celebrated a Chinese festival, members donated money and discussed how they could help with disaster relief.

Three and a half days after the earthquake Stellick writes:

We have had five aftershocks this morning so far. A constant reminder of our fragile lives. If we are honest with ourselves we all know that we do not know if our next breath may be our last.



After a major earthquake—and aftershocks—hit Taiwan, a man looks at what used to be his home. The government estimated that 100,000 were left homeless.

We pray that the Lord will move us to serve him and share the good news of life and salvation in Jesus. May the Lord use this tragedy to bring many more to faith in him. God be with you all.

The Committee on Relief has already sent \$40,000 to Taiwan for earthquake relief. Donations may be sent to: The Committee on Relief/Taiwan Earthquake Relief, WELS, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222.

Evangelical Lutheran Synod holds 82nd annual convention

The Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) began its convention week on July 20 with a festival service, building dedication, and seminary graduation for six students.

Convention sessions were conducted under the theme "Our Blessed Fellowship." Guest speakers included WELS president, Karl Gurgel, and

Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference president, Armin Panning. Pastors from church bodies in Latvia, the Czech Republic, and Ukraine were also present.

To celebrate the year 2000, a special observance and offering, "Christ Yesterday, Today and Forever—Celebrating 2,000 Years of Grace,"

was approved, with a goal of \$1,000,000.

Eleven pastors and three congregations were received into ELS membership. The convention featured an essay, "Fellowship Divine," and devotions treating the blessings that fellowship brings to believers.

Neal Schroeder



The Heitsch family at the "Walk to Cure Diabetes" in Cheyenne, Wyo. From left: Jeffrey, Samantha, Stephanie, Mitchell (sitting), Travis (standing). Samantha, six, has Type 1 diabetes. Says her mother, Stephanie: "In the three years that she has dealt with this disease, Samantha has touched the lives and hearts of people needing the help to answer their questions and to assure them that God is in control. She has a purpose and a reason for having diabetes, and she is using it to God's glory."

On May 15, over 700 people participated in the walk. Over 100 of those were on the Sammy's Stroller's team. "The love and support that was shown from our Christian family that day was a miracle from God," says Stephanie.

The family attends Good Shepherd, Cheyenne, where Samantha's father, Jeff, is pastor.

District news

California

Jennifer Dietz, a sophomore who attends King of Kings, Garden Grove, Calif., received third place in the FAA National Art Contest in the computer art category. Fourteen people from California—out of 35,000 California entries—won.

Beautiful Saviour, Carlsbad, Calif., held a discipleship workshop in September. Topics included reaching out to another culture, keeping the youth in the church, justice and righteousness, and other church challenges.

Two vans were stolen, and two were broken into and damaged at **California Lutheran High School (CLHS), Wildomar**. The two damaged vans will be repaired with insurance funds. This year, CLHS has 98 students enrolled and recently finished remodeling its dormitories.

Minnesota

The Lutheran Home: Belle Plaine dedicated a Special Care Residence on Sept. 18.

Dakota-Montana

Apostles, Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada, dedicated a new worship center in a mall on Sept. 19. They had used a smaller space in the mall for two years. Now they moved to a larger facility just as the number of their prospects was expanding.

Southeastern Wisconsin

On Oct. 28, the **Youth Gospel Choir from Siloah, Milwaukee**, traveled to Abiding Word, Orleans, Ontario, Canada, to help the congregation celebrate its 25th anniversary. The teens held several fundraisers, including car washes and ice cream socials, to help meet costs.

Three members of Trinity, Waukesha, Wis., were recognized recently by other organizations: **Melissa Tiarks** won the "Miss Wisconsin Teenager" pageant in April and placed in the top 10 in the essay contest in the national competition in Tennessee. **Julian Swartz** won top honors as basketball player of the year in Wisconsin this past spring. Swartz played basketball for Waukesha South High School. **Kirk DeNoyer** won football coach of the year from the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, after leading Wisconsin Lutheran High School, Milwaukee, to the state title in football in fall 1998.

South Central

Stephanie Hooker, a member at Our Savior, San Angelo, Tex., was a clarinetist in the Honor Band of America and played at the National Concert Band festival in April held in Indianapolis. She was then chosen to

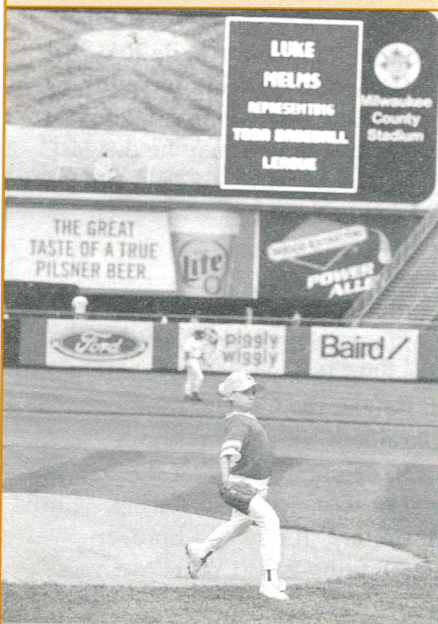
South Atlantic



Christmas songs in the middle of July? Yes! Christmas carols rang out on July 11 at the annual Christmas in July mission meeting at Ocean Drive, Pompano Beach, Fla. Since 1980, "missions reaching out to missions" has been the goal of five Florida congregations from Jupiter to Cutler Ridge. A mountain of gifts were wrapped for WELS missions in Africa, Antigua, and St. Lucia.

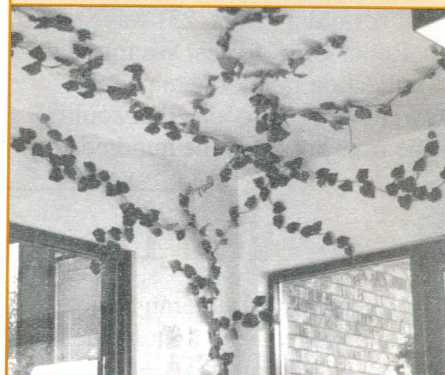
Diane Thiefelder

Southeastern Wisconsin



Luke Melms, a fifth-grader at St. John, Wauwatosa, Wis., threw out the first pitch at a Brewers game at Milwaukee County Stadium in July. Luke represented 1,050 players, parents, and family members on "Tosa Baseball Night."

Western Wisconsin



This past summer, a "vine" sprouted and grew in the entranceway at Peace, Loves Park, Ill. The vine was part of the congregation's "Faith grows by hearing" program in which over half of the members either read or listened to the entire New Testament in 90 days. Each time a member completed a book of the New Testament, a leaf was added to the vine. The vine eventually covered most of the entryway ceiling and walls.

accompany the band to Japan and represent our country at an International Band Fest. Stephanie was one of the 57 musicians from all U.S. high schools to attend.

"When visiting a Shinto Shrine, only she and two others refused to bow at the shrine, and she never felt more confident in all her life. We are quite proud of her," says her pastor, Bob Sawall.

Shepherd of the Plains, Lubbock, Tex., has a new 24-hour daily devotion phone line. It features daily devotions and a chance to leave verbal messages or prayer requests. "Turn to the Word" is accessed by calling 806/794-WORD. Also, the **campus ministry at Texas Tech** hosted a regional rally for college students, Oct. 22-24.

Mt. Olive, Tulsa, Okla., dedicated a new worship facility in September. It was built with the help of Builders For Christ.

Western Wisconsin

St. John, Sparta, Wis., celebrated the 25th anniversary of its church and fellowship hall on Sept. 12. The congregation decided to construct a new school, gymnasium, and administrative unit. It is gathering funds for this project.

St. Paul, Tomah, Wis., installed its first staff minister, Paul Jacobs, on Aug. 1. He will work with family ministry, including visiting families in their homes and developing a series of Bible studies for families with children.

St. Peter, Greenwood, Wis., burned its mortgage and celebrated its 100th anniversary this year.

St. Matthew, Winona, Minn., held an early childhood seminar in August. They also were the site of a pastoral institute in August, where John Brug, professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, presented five lectures on "The Christian's Dual Citizenship."

Camp Whitewater concluded two weeks of Bible camp. Each week the camp was filled with more than 100 campers.

Happy anniversary

MN—Immanuel, Willmar, Minn., celebrated its 35th anniversary on Aug. 29.

Salem, Stillwater, Minn., celebrated the 25th anniversary of its school on Oct. 10.

Northern Wisconsin

Seven members of the "Teens Living for Christ" high school ministry group from St. Mark, Green Bay, Wis., traveled to Jacksonville, Fla., in June. But this wasn't just some pleasure trip to the beach. The purpose was to work with Victory



Lutheran Church, a new mission church in Jacksonville, and its staff minister, Brent Bitter. The mission team stuffed about 2,000 brochures for Victory's first vacation Bible school and then did a door-to-door canvass of about 1,000 homes. Not only has the Lord blessed this mission trip, but because of the positive experience and the enthusiasm for outreach created at St. Mark, plans are already underway for one and possibly two teen mission trips next summer.

Mark Pfeifer

On Aug. 15, **St. Paul, Montrose, Minn.**, celebrated its 90th anniversary.

NW—On Aug. 22, Winnebago Lutheran Academy, Fond du Lac, Wis., celebrated the beginning of its 75th year of operation. Another celebration is planned for Feb. 6, 2000.

SC—These congregations celebrated anniversaries: Abiding Savior exploratory, Killeen, Tex., 5; Trinity, Temple, Tex., 25; Holy Cross, Oklahoma City, Okla., 25; Gethsemane, Oklahoma City, Okla., 30; St. Mark, Duncenville, Tex., 35.

Christ the Lord, Houston, celebrated the 30th anniversary of its chapel's dedication in September. On the same day a new Rodgers organ was dedicated.

SEW—Robert Pasbrig celebrated 25 years in the pastoral ministry at St. John, Milwaukee, on Sept. 19. At the same service he was installed as Director of Ministry Advancement for Wisconsin Lutheran Institutional Ministries, Inc.

Good Shepherd, West Allis, Wis., celebrated the 25th anniversary of **Pastor Thomas Knickelbein** on Sept. 19.

WW—Judy Helmke, a teacher at St. Paul, Tomah, Wis., celebrated her 25th anniversary in the teaching ministry on Aug. 22.

St. Paul, Tomah, Wis., celebrated its 125th anniversary on Sept. 19.

Immanuel, Neillville, Wis., celebrated the 100th anniversary of its church building dedication on Oct. 3.

St. John, Rib Lake, Wis., celebrated the 100th anniversary of its church building on Sept. 5.

Risen Savior exploratory, McFarland, Wis., celebrated its first anniversary on Sept. 12. Sixty attended the service and look forward to the continued blessings of the Lord and mission status in 2000.

Four pastors recently celebrated anniversaries in the ministry. They are: **Steve Staude** (25), pastor at First, La Crosse, Wis.; **Mark Bartling** (35), pastor at Mt. Calvary, La Crosse; **Thomas Hilliard** (25), pastor at Grace, La Crosse; and **Richard Strobel** (40), pastor at St. Paul, Stratford, Wis.

These are the reporters for this month's featured districts: CA—Hermann John; MN—Jeffrey A. Bovee; MI—David M. Zahn; NW—Joel Lillo; SC—Peter Snyder; SEW—Scott Oelhafen; SA—Mark Haefner; WW—Elton Stroh



Beginnings

We usually pinpoint the birth of a mission with the date of its first public worship. The Lord was good to the new beginnings on Sept. 12.

Resurrection, Verona, Wis.:

Attendance at the first service was 70—including four prospect families.

Living Water, Western Oshkosh, Wis.: Over 160 attended. Of this number, 38 were choir members from Winnebago Lutheran Academy. Fifteen prospective families attended. Some saw the huge crowd in the parking lot and did not come in. One prospect family owned a restaurant and could not make it, but sent cakes for the fellowship hour and want to talk!

Vermillion, S.D.: Pastor Stephen Geiger serves this small university town as well as Yankton. Last year, a core group of students from Vermillion drove to Yankton to assist with outreach. Contacts in the community led to the beginning of worship, where 40 attended the first service.

Abiding Word, West Rapid City, S.D.: The exploratory effort on the west side of Rapid City drew 87 people to the first service.

Ascension, Kelowna, British Columbia, Canada: After one and one-half years of outreach in Kelowna, 64 people came to worship. Five flyers were sent to hundreds of prospects. One family said, "We noticed that something special was taking place after we received three cards. But after receiving five we just had to come!"

Victory of the Lamb, Katy, Tex.: Twenty-seven attended its opening service, including 13 visitors. The exploratory, which started in July 1998, advertised by distributing 4,000 flyers, calling several hundred prospects, and putting up signs.

Our Savior, Hays, Kan.: Twenty-one people attended the first service at Our Savior. The majority were visitors. This is a dual parish with Faith, Russell, Kan.

Wayne Schulz

CONGREGATION MISSION SUBSCRIPTION PERFORMANCE

	Six Months Ended June 30, 1999						
	Total Subscription		Offerings Received				Annldz Ave Per
	Communicants 12/31/98	1999	Year to Date Projected	June Offerings	Six Months Offerings	Percent of Sbscrptn	
Arizona-California	17,469	\$1,044,147	\$464,484	\$83,608	\$492,961	106.1%	\$56.44
Dakota-Montana	9,156	440,574	173,191	31,003	178,146	102.9	38.91
Michigan	36,375	2,143,046	923,715	164,826	920,326	99.6	50.60
Minnesota	43,400	2,431,955	1,015,469	194,671	971,729	95.7	44.78
Nebraska	10,329	610,875	255,296	42,263	257,772	101.0	49.91
North Atlantic	4,039	350,734	165,552	46,245	169,021	102.1	83.69
Northern Wisconsin	60,967	2,622,104	1,101,108	172,309	1,158,081	105.2	37.99
Pacific Northwest	5,134	263,368	115,241	18,024	110,234	95.7	42.94
South Atlantic	6,830	494,337	231,976	41,432	230,335	99.3	67.45
South Central	4,585	450,143	204,184	41,053	200,898	98.4	87.63
Southeastern Wisconsin	57,332	3,396,332	1,366,733	278,656	1,372,077	100.4	47.86
Western Wisconsin	59,815	3,141,882	1,338,019	230,009	1,383,459	103.4	46.26
Total - This Year	315,431	17,389,497	7,354,968	1,344,099	7,445,039	101.2	47.21
Total - Last Year	315,355	16,967,923	7,158,985	1,326,135	7,249,240	101.3	45.98

CURRENT BUDGETARY FUND

	Statement of activities		
	1999 Actual	1998 Actual	1999 Budget
Changes in Unrestricted Net Assets			
Revenues:			
Congregational Mission Offerings	\$17,249,146	\$16,831,935	\$16,320,000
Gifts and memorials	5,190,840	3,718,055	7,949,000
Bequest/planned giving	1,450,048	686,276	765,000
Tuition and fees	9,403,311	8,685,630	9,342,080
Other	261,316	285,460	141,000
Satisfaction of restrictions	10,000	2,629,600	-
Transfers-endwmt earnings	307,309	285,366	260,000
Transfers-gift funds	6,695,474	8,969,616	7,831,000
Transfers-continuing programs	4,651,443	3,902,064	5,047,300
Transfers-other	-	20,060	-
Total revenues	45,218,887	46,014,062	47,655,380
Expenditures:			
Home Missions	9,903,968	8,619,492	9,622,100
World Missions	8,924,536	8,236,855	9,161,700
Ministerial Education	20,762,042	19,845,665	20,770,150
Parish Services	1,919,150	1,655,493	2,145,900
Administrative Services	5,907,995	5,387,005	6,446,800
Total expenditures	47,417,691	43,744,510	48,146,650
Changes in unrestricted net assets	(2,198,804)	2,269,552	-
Changes in Temp Restricted Net Assets			
Gifts and memorials	212,000	174,800	-
Bequest/planned giving	5,000	(26,000)	-
Change in value of trust agreements	222,600	240,773	-
Satisfaction of restrictions	(10,000)	(2,629,600)	-
Total revenues	429,600	(2,240,027)	-
Change in temp restricted net assets	429,600	(2,240,027)	-
Net assets - beginning of year	5,939,285	5,909,760	-
Net assets - end of period	4,170,081	5,939,285	-

Statement of Financial Position

	June 30, 1999	June 30, 1998
Assets:		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 657,306	\$ 2,806,263
Due from other funds	44,817	129,194
Accounts receivable-cash adv.	125,250	107,250
Cash advances-schools	188,982	261,955
Other accounts receivable	54,684	101,305
Contributions receivable	3,454,400	3,024,800
Mortgage note receivable	13,895	15,901
Allowance for doubtful accts	(92,000)	(92,000)
Prepaid expenses	50,489	19,972
Total assets	4,497,823	6,374,640
Liabilities and Net Assets:		
Accounts payable	327,742	435,355
Total liabilities	327,742	435,355
Unrestricted	715,681	2,914,485
Temp restricted	3,454,400	3,024,800
Total net assets	4,170,081	5,939,285
Total liab. and net assets	4,497,823	6,374,640

Mark Meissner, director of finance



CHANGES IN MINISTRY

Pastors

- Agenten, Richard A.**, to St. John, Hill Point/Trinity, Lime Ridge, Wis.
- Eickmann, Paul E.**, to retirement
- Glaeske, Vilas R.**, to Grace, Cypress Springs Village, Tex.
- Guthmiller, Mark R.**, to Bethlehem, Raymond/Peace, Clark, S.D.
- Limmer, Wilhelm F.**, to St. Mark, Green Bay, Wis.
- Schleusener, David S.**, to Gethsemane, Raleigh, N.C.
- Schossow, Paul N.**, to Cross of Christ, Portage, Wis.
- Schultz, Thomas J.**, to St. John, Caledonia, Minn.
- Wobeck, Matthew F.**, to Grace, San Carlos, Ariz.

Teachers

- Cohoon, Bethel L.**, to Kettle Moraine LHS, Jackson, Wis.
- Curtis, Rebecca L.**, to Martin Luther, Neenah, Wis.
- Erickson, Marion D.**, to Bethel Little Lamb, Galesville, Wis.
- Geisler, Sharon**, to Grace, St. Joseph, Mich.
- Gephart, Ruth**, to Michigan LHS, St. Joseph, Mich.
- Goodman, Nancy J.**, to Trinity, Neenah, Wis.
- Mau, Rebecca M.**, to St. John, Wrightstown, Wis.
- Paustian, Kristina M.**, to Epiphany, Racine, Wis.
- Peter, Arvon**, to retirement
- Peterson, Carla J.**, to Calvary, Bellevue, Wash.
- Ponto, Mary C.**, to St. John, Mukwonago, Wis.
- Rehberger, Claire L.**, to Mt. Calvary, Redding, Calif.
- Schalow, Mary E.**, to St. Peter, Chaseburg/St. Matthew, Stoddard, Wis.
- Schleef, David E.**, to St. Matthew, Milwaukee
- Schmeling, Beth M.**, to Salem, Stillwater, Minn.
- Stiebohr, Michelle**, to St. Mark, Green Bay, Wis.
- Wiles, Linda**, to Bethany, Saginaw, Mich.
- Zabell, Marilyn R.**, to Zion, Chesaning, Mich.

RESULT OF COLLOQUY

On Aug. 16, 1999, David Lieder, former teacher in the LCMS, successfully completed a colloquy, and upon completion of the requirements outlined by the Staff Ministry Certification Program will be eligible for a call as a certified staff minister.

Jon M. Mahnke, Second VP
Paul M. Janke, District President
James R. Holman

ANNIVERSARIES

Ottawa, Ontario, Canada—St. Paul (125). Oct. 31. Reformation service, 3 PM; reception follows. Nov. 12. Anniversary banquet, 6:30 PM. Tickets available. Nov. 14. Anniversary service, 10:15 AM; lunch follows. Tickets available 613/234-0321.

From the editor/director of communications:

An e-mail message questioned the propriety of including Irish coffee mugs in the WELS memorabilia (the crystal mugs in the Story Book Crystal). Irish coffee mug is a common name given to a crystal mug with a pedestal. The writer pointed out, however, that Irish coffee is known for having alcohol in it. We apologize if anyone has been offended. There was no intent to promote drinking alcohol.

Columbus, Ohio—Lamb of God (30). Nov. 14. Communion service, 10:30 AM. Anniversary service, 4 PM; light meal follows. Mark Kock, 614/471-5164.

Prescott, Wis.—St. Paul (125). Dec. 5. Services, 9 AM & 2 PM; program and dinner follow first service. Reservations required. Richard Durow, 715/262-5645.

Fond du Lac, Wis.—Winnebago Lutheran Academy (75). Feb. 6, 2000. Service, 3:30 PM. 920/921-4930.

COMING EVENTS

Regional campus rallies—

- Dec. 27-29, Baton Rouge, La.
- Mar. 3-5, 2000 Philadelphia, Penn.
- Mar. 17-19, 2000 Columbia, Mo.
- Mar. 24-26, 2000 Stevens Point, Wis.
- Apr. 14-16, 2000 Tempe, Ariz.
- Karen Marshall, 414/256-3279; <usr20@sab.wels.net>.

Handbell services—Nov. 14, 7:45 & 10:30 AM. St. John, Watertown, Wis. Handbell choirs and other instrumentalists enhance worship through the theme "When in our music God is glorified."

Dedication & open house—New Beginnings—A Home for Mothers, Aurora, Colo. Nov. 14, 2-5 PM. Craig or Judy Schwartz, 303/364-0890.

Reunion—of former Evangelical Lutheran Fellowship members. Dec. 5. Tucson, Ariz. RSVP by Nov. 19. Tucson Campus Ministry, 520/623-5088.

Ladies' retreat—WELS/ELS. Jan. 7-9, 2000. Montverde, Fla. Topic: How and why to pray. Cost: \$100. Judy Becker, 941/355-6591.

WELS handbell festivals—

- Northeast region, April 1-2, 2000
- Southeast region, April 1-2, 2000
- Western region, April 8-9, 2000
- Michigan region, April 8-9, 2000
- Contact Cheryl Diener, 715/258-7203.

Christian Women Today retreat—March 24-26, 2000. Olympia Resort & Spa, Oconomowoc, Wis. Kathi, 414/521-1159.

AVAILABLE

Paraments—green, white, and purple for 6 ft. altar. Free for the cost of shipping. St. Jacob, Grass Lake, Mich. 517/522-4187.

Chair lift—covers 16 standard steps, 20 ft. track, in good working order. Free for the cost of shipping. St. Paul, Fort Atkinson, Wis. 920/563-3056.

Organ—Hammond. Free for the cost of shipping. Immanuel, Willmar, Minn. 320/235-5996.

Pews—14 pews: 6 complete, 8 mixed sizes. Padded, dark wood, like new. St. Paul, Muskego, Wis. Bob Garbe, 414/422-0320.

NEEDED

Preachers—for Sunday services in Nov. and Dec. in exchange for use of parsonage. Cross of Christ, Liverpool, N.Y. <rBassett@A-Znet.com>

Books—by Gustav Harders. English translations of *Yaalahn*, *La Paloma*, and *Wille Wider Wille*. G. Pundt, 520/425-5606.

Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly—set of back issues that extends 15 or more years to donate to overseas seminaries. John Brug, 414/242-8139.

Catechisms—Blue, out of print Kuske catechisms. 734/242-2200.

Martin Luther's Small Catechism—new, Gausewitz edition. Will pay for shipping for as many catechisms as you have available. 605/874-2449.

Organ works—by Fritz Reuter. Leon Quimby, 213 Liberty St, Vero Beach FL 32966.

SERVICE TIMES

Rapid City, S.D.—Abiding Word. Sunday, 9 AM. Education hour, 10:15 AM. David Maertz, 605/399-1479.

Benson, Ariz.—Bethlehem. Sunday, 8 AM. Steven Spencer, 520/458-5897.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

Controller—Bethany Lutheran College, Mankato, Minn. Send resume by Dec. 1 to Paul B. Tweit, Administrative Vice President, Bethany Lutheran College, 700 Luther Dr, Mankato MN 56001-6163.

1999 YEARBOOK CORRECTION

Prince of Peace, Salt Lake City, Utah's FAX number is incorrect. The correct FAX number is 801/261-3806.

To place an announcement, call 414/256-3210; FAX, 414/256-3899; <usr73@sab.wels.net> Deadline is eight weeks before publication date.

THROUGH MY BIBLE IN 3 YEARS

December 1999

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1. John 17:1-5 | 19. Is. 13:1- |
| 2. Jn. 17:6-19 | 14:23 |
| 3. Jn. 17:20-26 | 20. Is. 14:24- |
| 4. Jn. 18:1-27 | 16:14 |
| 5. Jn. 18:28- | 21. Is. 17, 18, 19 |
| 19:16 | 22. Is. 20:1- |
| 6. Jn. 19:17-37 | 22:14 |
| 7. Jn. 19:38- | 23. Is. 22:15- |
| 20:10 | 23:18 |
| 8. Jn. 20:11-31 | 24. Is. 24, 25 |
| 9. Jn. 21:1-14 | 25. Is. 26, 27 |
| 10. Jn. 21:15-25 | 26. Is. 28 |
| 11. Isaiah 1 | 27. Is. 29:1- |
| 12. Is. 2, 3, 4 | 30:17 |
| 13. Is. 5 | 28. Is. 30:18- |
| 14. Is. 6 | 32:20 |
| 15. Is. 7:1-8:15 | 29. Is. 33, 34, 35 |
| 16. Is. 8:16-10:4 | 30. Is. 36, 37 |
| 17. Is. 10:5-34 | 31. Is. 38, 39 |
| 18. Is. 11, 12 | |

A deal with the devil?

The story of Job teaches us that God sets the limits for Satan.

Jon D. Buchholz

“Does Job fear God for nothing?” Satan replied. “Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? But stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face.”

The LORD said to Satan, “Very well, then, everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself do not lay a finger” (Job 1:9-12, excerpts).

Then the Lord said to Satan, “And he still maintains his integrity, though you incited me against him to ruin him without any reason.”

“Skin for skin!” Satan replied. “A man will give all he has for his own life. But stretch out your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse you to your face.”

The LORD said to Satan, “Very well, then, he is in your hands; but you must spare his life” (Job 2:3b-6).

Our reasoning

How could a loving God do such a thing? What could provoke God to turn his back on a man whom he hailed as blameless and upright? Why should God enter into a deal with the devil himself to inflict misery upon this Job who had served him so faithfully? Why should God condescend to respond to the defiance of Satan, simply because this haughty spirit dares to throw down the gauntlet of challenge?

It’s enticingly easy to see this heavenly drama only from our human perspective. It might appear to us that God sold out on Job and threw him to the wolves. Let’s remember, however, that as observers we are privy only to part of the story. Behind the scenes there’s something deeper.

God’s reasoning

Directing this interaction between the LORD and Satan is God’s all-embracing love for sinners. No matter how God acts or what God permits, he will do everything in love for his cherished saints. Even Satan himself, with all his ruthless schemes, cannot wedge his way between God’s love and God’s beloved Job.

Volumes have been written on the distinction between what God *wills* and what God *permits*. Simply put, God’s love wills for all people “to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4). According to God’s grace, “He does not willingly bring affliction

or grief to the children of men” (Lamentations 3:33). God’s gracious will is that we and every human being should enjoy the blessings of a restored relationship with him now and for all eternity. To that end, he sent his Son into this world.

At the same time God permits things that go contrary to his will. God permits people to sin, even though he wills otherwise. He permits the effects of sin in the world—illness, pain, loss, death—to strike even the righteous.

God’s reasons may be obscured in a divine mystery and majesty that transcend our human comprehension.

A deal with the devil? Hardly! Our comforting lesson from the book of Job is that God sets the limits for Satan. God draws the line that Satan cannot cross. “On the man himself do not lay a finger,” says the LORD. “You must spare his life,” decrees the Almighty.

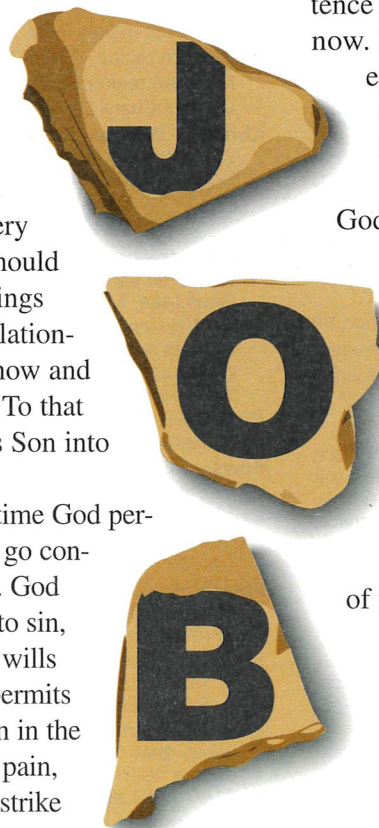
The enemies of God may have their day, and the One enthroned in heaven may permit the forces of evil limited sway in this dark world. The hurt and heartache that God’s people experience may sting. The tragedy and turmoil of this temporal existence may seem overwhelming—for now. But through every experience—painful or pleasant—God works for the good of those who love him.

And in the end, God wins. God wins!

Jon Buchholz is pastor at Holy Trinity, Des Moines, Washington, and teaches at Evergreen Lutheran High School.

For further study:
Read Job 1:6–2:13

Next month: May the name of the Lord be praised





Inter-Act

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

Introduction

Second Street is the most common street name in America. Park Street is in second place. Third Street is third. Fourth is fourth. Fifth is fifth. Main is sixth. First Street? It's seventh.

There may be any number of reasons for this. Humility is probably not one of them. Most people like to be first. Some are even fond of saying (only half in jest), "After me, you come first." Why is this? What does your experience suggest? What do you discover as you look into your own heart?

I. Text

Read Philippians 2:3-8

³Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. ⁴Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: ⁶Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, ⁷but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!

II. Questions

1. Why are selfish ambition and vain conceit the enemies of unity and harmony among Christians? See Philippians 1:17 and Galatians 5:20.
2. Humility does not mean that we are to think of everyone else as superior and more talented than we are. What does it mean? See Romans 12:10, Galatians 5:13, Ephesians 5:21, and 1 Peter 5:5.
3. It is natural for us to look after our own interests. When, however, is this out of place? See Romans 15:1.
4. What attitude did Jesus have? See Philippians 2:1-4, Matthew 11:29, and John 13:12-17. How is it possible for us to have this same attitude?
5. Jesus is fully God and fully human. Why does this Bible teaching call for faith? Why has God revealed this wonderful truth to us?
6. List the phrases in which Paul describes what Jesus did for us. How is humility at the heart of each phrase?

Mark Lenz is a professor at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota.

III. Application

1. Agree/Disagree: True humility is not to think badly of oneself but to think rightly and truthfully.
2. I used to think that God's gifts were on shelves
 - one
 - above
 - another,
 - and the taller we grow the easier we can reach them. Now I find that God's gifts are on shelves
 - one
 - beneath
 - another
 - and the lower we stoop the more we get. Why is this so? Think of an example from your own experience.
3. Have you ever watched the morning star fade away before the rising sun? Does it sometimes seem that your star is fading in a similar way? Do you find that troublesome? Why? Imagine that Jesus is the rising sun. Now, how do you react to that picture?
4. The Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem has an entrance called "The Humility Gate." It is so low that most people have to bend to enter. In what ways do you express your humility before God?
5. The Japanese have the practice of bowing before others. What American customs indicate deference to others?
6. A famous theologian once said, "When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die." How does this play itself out in the life of a believer?

IV. Prayer

Precious Savior, you humbled yourself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! You did that for me, for my sins of selfish ambition and vain conceit, for my sins of pride and self-centeredness. You did that because you had only my interests in mind. Create such a humble attitude of service in me. Help me put the needs and concerns of others before my own. Cause me to die to self and to offer myself as a living sacrifice to you and to my fellow human beings. I come before you, seeking only your grace and blessing. Hear me for your mercy's sake. Amen.

The Bible

John F. Brug

I am a staunch advocate of the truth that the Bible is what God has told us through it. The Bible is spirit-breathed. It is without error. Are all translations reflections of this inerrancy? I personally do not believe they are.

We can correctly say that a Bible translation is the inspired Word of God if it accurately conveys the same meaning as the original text, since the essence of the Word of God is the divinely intended meaning. The original text does, however, have a unique role as the specific language and form that God chose to convey that meaning to us. Every translation must be judged on the basis of the original text.

Although there is no one translation that can be the final, official version in any language, it is beneficial that we adopt one dependable translation.

If a specific translation fails to reflect the meaning of the original text, it is not true to God's Word and must be rejected. Every translation has some specific passages in which we might question whether the translators made the best choice of words. Some modern translations more systematically depart from the original meaning because of biases of the

translators. We should not accept such versions.

Although there is no one translation that can be the final, official version in any language, it is beneficial that we adopt one dependable translation that we will use for our publications, public reading, memorization, etc., so that we avoid confusion as we study and worship together.

How did the books that are contained in our Bible get chosen?

Books became "canonical" because they were inspired by the Holy Spirit. The church did not make them "biblical" but simply recognized them as such.

How do we know that those are the ones and the only ones that God inspired through the Spirit?

Finally, this is a matter of faith that comes from the power these books have displayed in leading us to faith in Christ. We can also note the testimony of the early church and the vast difference that is observable between the canonical books and the apocrypha.

Why are the apocrypha not included among our canonical books?

They were not part of the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. They were used by Jews and by early Christians as useful reading, but were not recognized as biblical. The Catholic Church did not officially declare them to be part of the canon until the 1500s.

Did the Spirit give the authors the exact wording to write, or do the books contain "thoughts," "feelings," and "prejudices"?

The Holy Spirit directed the writers to the exact words they were to use (1 Corinthians 2:13), but not necessarily by a mechanical or audible dictation.

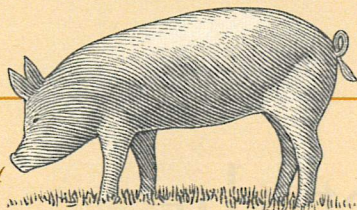
A column in NL about abortion referred to the Bible's prohibition of murder of any human being. Does this relate to the death penalty? What is the WELS stance on the death penalty?

The Bible authorizes capital punishment in both the Old and New Testaments (Genesis 9:6, Exodus 21:12-14, and Romans 13:4). The Old Testament civil law distinguished premeditated murder from negligent homicide. The death penalty applied to the former, not the latter. The death penalty and all other penalties for crime should be applied impartially without bias due to wealth, class, or race.

It is clear that the Fifth Commandment, which is given as moral law in Exodus 20, does not prohibit the death penalty, which was given as part of Israel's civil law in Exodus 21.

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

Send questions to your question, please, Forward/NL, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398; <nl@sab.wels.net>



The hogs don't

A Christian farmer was spending the day in a large city. Entering a restaurant for his noon meal, he found a table near a group of young men. When his meal was served, he quietly bowed his head and offered thanks for the food.

The young men, observing this, thought they would embarrass and ridicule the old man.

One yelled out in a loud voice, "Hey, farmer, does everyone do that where you come from?"

The old man looked at the youth and quietly said, "No, son, the hogs don't."

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING

Come Lord Jesus, be our guest, and let these gifts to us be blessed. Amen.

Oh, give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, and his mercy endures forever. Amen.



Picture this

The "rams" (boys) and the "ewes" (girls) from kindergarten to grade four at Mt. Calvary Lutheran School, Waukesha, Wis., wait for the Good Shepherd during a performance of "We Like Sheep." This children's musical taught them about the love of the Good Shepherd.

Submitted by Caroline Tindall

Send pictures to Picture this, *Forward/Northwestern Lutheran*, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398. Those whose photos are chosen will receive a small gift.

The faith of a child

"I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it" (Luke 18:17).

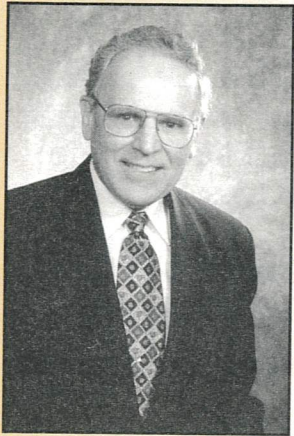


Fifth-grade students from St. Mark's, Citrus Heights, Calif., wrote these prayers:

Dear God, you are so great! You made sunshine, rain, heaven and earth, moon, stars, trees, bushes, forests, and plains. Yes, Lord, you even made us! I'd like to ask you to forgive mine and everybody's sins because we're all sinners. Lord, please strengthen my faith and help my prayers not to become routine. Thank you for my family, friends, pets, your undeserved love, and all my blessings.

Dear Heavenly Father, I know that I am a sinner, and I am not perfect. Help me to do your will. Protect me from Satan's temptations. Forgive my sins, and help me live a good life for you. I can't count the things you did for me. There are too many. For example, you sent your Son into the world to redeem us. You give me everything I need to stay alive. Lord, thank you for food, my health, your love, pets, shelter, Jesus, and, most of all, thank you for eternal life with you in heaven! Thank you for caring for me, a sinner, and loving me so dearly. In Jesus' name I pray.

Dear Lord Jesus, forgive my sins. Help me listen to sermons more often. God, you are so great; you are so good to the world. Strengthen my faith, help me when I pray, help the poor get homes, and can you get a husky mix dog for me? Thank you for my brother, faith, pets, love, friends, heaven, school, and my teacher. Your will be done.



Gary P. Baumler is editor of *Forward/NL* and WELS Director of Communications.

The crucifixion as a means to atone for the sins of the world is foolishness in a world formed by evolutionary processes.

At least get the definition right

I am sorely tempted to quarrel with the scientist about his overblown assessment of what is scientific fact. It's amazing the conclusions you can draw from a few skeletons and, mostly, small parts of skeletons. (See *Time*, Aug. 23 "Up from the Apes" and, particularly, "Dorothy, It's Really Oz" by Stephen Jay Gould.)

But then, in the spirit of the *Time* articles—where one is led to feel patronizingly sorry for those silly ignoramuses in Kansas who voted not to insist on teaching evolution in the state's schools—I should simply be accused and dismissed as someone who does not know much science.

True, science is not my field. But the Christian religion is. Will the proud Prof. Gould admit that the Christian religion is not his field? He declares, "No scientific theory, including evolution, can pose any threat to religion." Science, he insists, is "an inquiry about the factual state of the natural world," and religion is "a search for spiritual meaning and ethical values."

So, the two can peacefully co-exist. And, so they can. But not always! When, for example, a scientist foists on religion such an incomplete definition as Gould's, the two are irrevocably at odds.

It starts with what is missing from the definition of religion. Or had you noticed that he fails to include God? His definition will hold true for some religions—Buddhism comes to mind—but not for Christianity. The Bible is all about God and our salvation through his Son, Jesus Christ.

Yes, consistent with Gould's ideas, God's salvation gives spiritual meaning to our lives and helps form our ethical values. However, it loses all real meaning if God cannot be God, the creator and ruler of the

universe, let alone our Savior.

The false dichotomy of Gould's definition is also evident in how he relegates "the factual state of the natural world" to scientific inquiry. Indeed, if religion does not deal with the factual state of this world, then its comfort and value are mirages and must disappear when needed the most.

Science, we are told, deals with facts. Religion deals with faith. Still, when scientists start espousing theories of evolution to explain our origins, far more is based on faith than on fact. I, for one, cannot muster the faith to believe that the intricate universe and the wonderful human body came to be by natural processes.

"From what?"

"Really?"

"I'll place my faith in God, thank you."

All of this might still amount to little more than an academic exercise were it not for the very essence of Christianity; namely, Jesus Christ and him crucified, in whom we have eternal life.

The crucifixion, however, as a means to atone for the sins of the world is foolishness in a world formed by evolution.

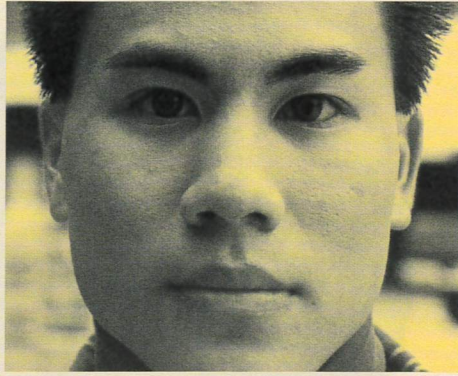
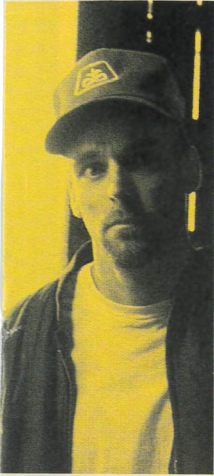
An eternity lived out in God's heaven is foolishness to someone who can never see beyond "the natural world."

Even the idea of sin (making necessary the atonement), a violation of absolute ethical values, has to be foolishness in the relativist world of natural selection.

So, let the Goulds of the world call us foolish and tout their "facts." But let them not say there is no conflict between their position as scientists and ours as Christians. That is ignorance.

Gary P. Baumler

I am dying of cancer.



I am really mad.



I am ready to give up.



I am so confused sometimes

But I am a Christian.



I am forgiven.

**And I am saved through
Jesus Christ. Just like you.**

There's no one in this world who isn't challenged by life. But we have an advantage, Jesus Christ. As Christians, it is our joy to tell others that Jesus loves us, forgives us, and promises us everlasting life. Join us during our Outreach 2000 campaign this Easter, telling an unchurched friend that you're a Christian and extending an invitation to worship the living Savior.

Loved.



WELS

I am with you always.

Don't forget my people

Avinash Sallapudi knew what the people of India need most—the gospel.

Linda R. Baacke



He lay in bed, tumors covering every part of his body. The medicine pump full of morphine could have spared him some pain. But he refused it and instead took a pain killer that would not make him drowsy.

He wanted to stay alert because he had a long list of people he needed to see—each of his Hindu cousins and friends.

Each time someone visited, he had the chair positioned—just so—so that his pain-filled body was as comfortable as possible. He looked straight into each set of eyes that were before him and gave the one-hour law and gospel presentation he prepared. He ended by saying, “Now, if you want to see me again, believe that Jesus died for your sins, too.”

Not long after, on June 29, 1999, Avinash Sallapudi died. He was only 24.

Born in India, Avinash moved to St. Lucia as an adolescent to live with his uncle, a physician. Dr. Fleming, a member of Trinity, the WELS mission in St. Lucia, worked with Missionary Joel Jaeger to enroll Avinash at Michigan Lutheran Seminary (MLS), Saginaw.

John Lawrenz, then MLS president, remembers him well. “His force of personality was clear,” says Lawrenz, now the Board for Ministerial Education administrator. Lawrenz saw

the potential in Avinash—whose combination of charm and street smarts was challenging. “Guided well, by the Lord and others, he could really do something with his life,” says Lawrenz.

To help him develop spiritually, John Brenner, MLS dean of students, conducted confirmation classes. “He had an inquisitive mind about doctrine. He was so interested and so thirsty,” says Brenner, now a professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon.

This hunger for God’s Word was combined with a deep desire to serve the people of India with the gospel. Yet Avinash was torn about how best to do this. He could either study for the public ministry and, hopefully, be called to India, or become a successful businessman and return to support the church with his time and money.

Avinash chose business. From MLS he went to Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee, and then to the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee.

Life was going the way he planned. Then God’s plan became clear.

In November 1996, a doctor’s visit revealed that Avinash’s pain was caused by a melanoma on his leg.

Surgeons operated, but the cancer had spread. Avinash was flown all over the country for the best and latest treatment. Doctors thought they were successful. Then a check up showed

that cancer had spread throughout his body, including his brain.

So, in summer 1999, a constant stream of family and friends gathered at the hospice room in Houston, Tex., to say goodbye. This is how they ended up in what Pastor Vilas Glaeske calls the “hot seat.”

“One childhood friend, Vanu, sat in that seat several times,” says Glaeske, who ministered to Avinash while he was in Houston hospitals. Vanu heard the law and gospel so often that “after a while he wouldn’t sit in the chair anymore.”

Still, Avinash wouldn’t give up.

Though it was obvious he wouldn’t return to India himself, he wanted assurance that someone would go. In late June, the last time he talked to Lawrenz, Avinash pleaded, “Don’t forget my people.”

This was Avinash’s way of carrying out his Savior’s command to “Go and make disciples of all nations,” (Matthew 28:19). This, after all, is another way of saying “Don’t forget my people.”

Avinash couldn’t—wouldn’t—forget his people, Jesus’ people. Neither can we.



Linda Baacke is the senior communications assistant for Communication Services and Forward/Northwestern Lutheran.