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# WARD IN CHRIST

June 2000

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# Run to win

*Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. 1 Corinthians 9:24*

Eric S. Hartzell

“**S**econd place is the first loser.” Someone who didn’t like to lose said that first.

The apostle Paul expressed similar feelings when he described the Christian race. Run as if second place is the first loser. Run to win. Run to get the prize.

## Who will win the race

The Lord describes this runner who has in his mind and heart to “get the prize.”

This runner perseveres and keeps his eyes on the finish line. “Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith” (Hebrews 12:1,2).

This runner watches his step. “You were running a good race. Who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the truth” (Galatians 5:7)?

He listens to those who are coaching him. “Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account” (Hebrews 13:17).

He forgets the past missteps. “Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:13).

He pays attention to the competition. “Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize” (Colossians 2:18).



Special Olympics runner

## How to win the race

Running is hard. It’s not our natural gait. The one who runs to win the prize knows the challenge of running well. So he trains. He reads his Bible. He jogs spiritually in worship and study with others. He focuses on the finish. He thinks about his race and his running.

He doesn’t psyche himself out thinking that only one will get the prize. He knows that he can win because God promised this. He knows that God makes it possible for every believer to feel the tape break across his chest.

Winning the prize is a twofold miracle. It is a miracle that we can run, and it is a miracle that all who

run to get the prize receive it.

“Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him” (James 1:12). God’s runners persevere in a strength that is not their own.

Does the call to persevere tire you? Consider what the verse says. The prize is for those who love God. “Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing” (2 Timothy 4:8). Do you long to see Jesus? Then you are running to win the prize.

People with disabilities compete in the Special Olympics. They all run to win the prize. And they all win! They win in their own eyes, in the eyes of the officials, and in the eyes of all who watch. People with twisted limbs and bodies grimace and strain . . . and win!

Isn’t that the way we run—to win the prize? “Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us” (Hebrews 12:1).

Loved ones are watching, and we shall win the prize.



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

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### Editorial office

Forward in Christ/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

Julie K. Tessmer, 414/256-3231  
<juliet@sab.wels.net>

### Communications Assistant

Nicole R. Moline, 414/256-3232  
<nicolem@sab.wels.net>

### Seminary Consultant

R. D. Balge

### Contributing Editors

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

### Art Director

Paul Burmeister

### Graphic Designer

Carianne Neu

### Photographs and Illustrations

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Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, p. 8; Jim Jankowski,  
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"A Ford-full  
of s-miles"

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courtesy of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives

## bits & pieces



June 11, 2000, is the official date chosen to celebrate WELS' 150th anniversary—its past, present, and future. To help you remember some of our blessings from the past, we put together two pages filled with historical photos [p. 18]. We hope you enjoy this journey through the past.



June is also the month of newlyweds and new graduates.

- Laurie Biedenbender gives heartfelt and humorous advice on what to look for when searching for Mr. Right [p. 16]. This articles rounds out our series on choosing a spouse.
- Armin Panning reminds us of the importance of God's precious gift of marriage. Read " 'Til death us do part" [p. 7].
- With a new class of seminary graduates, many wonder about the status of our pastor shortage. Are we catching up? Douglas Engelbrecht fills us in and shares the down side and the up side [p. 8]. Look for a teacher-shortage article next month.
- President Karl R. Gurgel reminds us that even if there were enough called workers to go around, we all still have a God-given mission to share the gospel. Read "Mobilizing the troops" [p. 31].



Two new series start this month. Mark Braun begins a look at the history of WELS—especially how it connects to U.S. history. This month learn about WELS in the 1910s [p. 14]. Paul Zell, pastor at Messiah, Alpharetta, Georgia, starts his stint as our new Bible study writer. Be sure to catch the first article in his six-part series on 1 Thessalonians [p. 30].

—JKT

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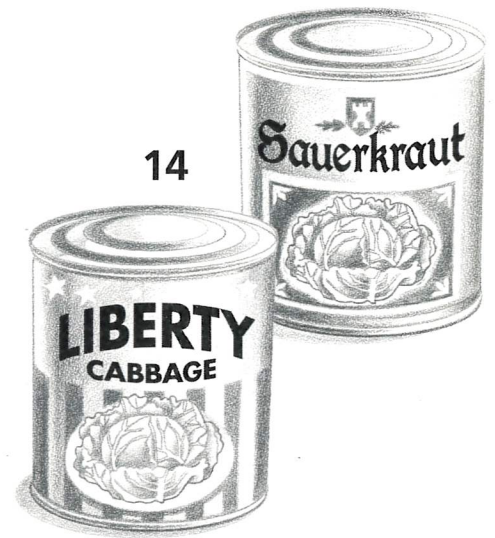
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**Thank you for sending the WELS message across the globe.**

My husband and I look forward to the arrival of *Forward in Christ* each month. It keeps us connected with WELS, and has helped us worship our Lord in many ways over the past seven years while we have been away in the Foreign Service. Back home we are members of Grace, Falls Church, Va.

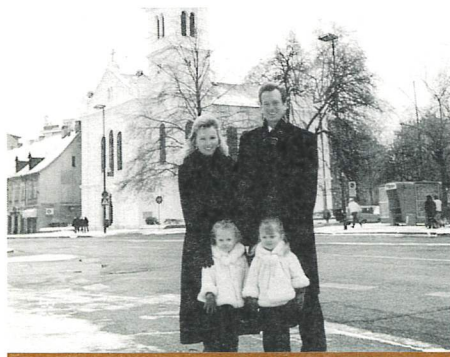
With no Sunday school to attend overseas, our four-year-old twin daughters, Tiffany and Vanessa, enjoy learning God's word from Mr. Whistle's videotapes. The gift came from their grandparents after they read your January 2000 article "New Bible videos for kids available."

Our family tunes into a taped service on Sunday mornings for edification, and we are grateful to the members of the Taped Services Committee for this support. As we now prepare to transfer from Slovenia to Japan, we look forward to attending church with Pastor Kermit Habben. We first learned of his Tokyo LECC congregation through your article on worship in Japan [July 1999].

Being born in Helsinki, I was especially gratified when I read about WELS' support to Pastor Juhanni Viitala and confessional Lutheranism in Finland [July 1999 and February 2000 articles].

As we look forward to the next issue of *Forward in Christ*, we send you our thanks.

Anne M. Luehrs  
Ljubljana, Slovenia



The Luehrs family in Slovenia.

**I found the article "Scientific Difficulties" [April] by Bivens and Schuetze very interesting.** Having just read Philip Johnson's *Darwin on Trial* as well as rereading Morris and Parker's *What is Creation Science?*, I had been thinking about the subject a great deal. People often feel they are not knowledgeable enough about science and, thus, are intimidated by scientists and their pronouncements.

The interesting thing about creation science is that it does not explore creation from the Genesis records, but rather from scientific methods of measurement and observation. It's fairly obvious to everyone that no one can replicate creation, so neither evolutionists nor creationists can test the origin of the universe, life, or man. This fact notwithstanding, evolutionists insist on referring to evolution not just as theory, but as if it were proven. (And, even evolutionary biologists admit in scientific journals that the facts don't fit the model!) The truth is that early evolutionists made natural selection the focal point of a new philosophy, a "religion without revelation," as Julian Huxley later called it. The real significance of Darwinism was religious and philosophic, not scientific; it was an anti-creationist explanation to explain design without creation.

LuAnn Zieman  
Montello, Wisconsin

**Thank you for your series of articles on church musicians [April, May].** I have taught all ages and a variety of instruments and always stressed "sticking with it."

There may be a misunderstanding with the phrase, "A student who begins studying music at the age of 18 or 19 hardly has a chance to develop enough skills by the end of college to be able to serve as a church musician."

In many churches, adults have taken it upon themselves to learn the keyboard (or other instrument) because the need is so great. Please do not create the impression that it is too

late to discover and master music. Older children can move quickly through tough material and do two to three years of work in one. Adults who have a goal in mind can become church musicians in a few years. Resources are abundant, and WELS is more than helpful in encouraging its musicians.

It's never too late!

Rachel Mendell  
Galion, Ohio

**Thank you for the pleasant words about the activity God is doing for Good Shepherd [March WELS News].**

From the feedback I am receiving, some are under the impression that a special program and/or plan [to encourage youth involvement] is being implemented here, and they ask if they can get whatever it is we are using. Nope. It's just the Mighty Savior God working his amazing attitude among us here at Good Shepherd. The Holy Spirit is moving grown-ups to support, encourage, and enjoy the youth.

Jesus is giving youth godly zeal and courage to try new, exciting, fun, and faithful activities for him. All of us—friends, visitors, sheep, and shepherd—go from day to day amazed at the wonderful new life God has so generously given us in his risen Son.

That's the attitude at Good Shepherd. We are all about him, to him, and for him. That's the plan. It's a good one, too, because it's his—from start to finish.

Pastor Paul A. Tullberg  
Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin

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

# 'Til death us do part

Armin J. Panning

The dream of many a young girl is to be a June bride. For reasons not entirely clear, June remains a popular wedding month. A couple's wedding is—and rightly should be—a big day in their lives. It's a day eagerly sought, but often there are also some apprehensions. There's always the dread of a hitch or two in the ceremony.

We may tend to smile a bit if the nervous bride or groom gets tangled up in the somewhat quaint phraseology: " 'til death us do part." A glitch in speaking the vows is harmless enough. What is more serious is misunderstanding or not taking seriously the weighty promise that is made with those words. With the wedding season approaching, we do well to remind ourselves of what those words mean, both in the lives of the wedding couple making the vows, and in the case of our own vows, if we're married.

" 'Til death us do part" reminds us first that marriage is an arrangement only for our life on earth. But even though it's limited in time, marriage brings tremendous blessings. God's observation that it wasn't good for Adam to be alone is still true. In his goodness God has provided a remedy. Woman is the complement of man. The one fulfills and brings what the other is lacking. In marriage the two become one flesh.

Into this close bond between one man and one woman God is pleased to give the gift of children. Although the unbelieving world doubts it, as is evident from the scandal of wholesale abortions, the Scriptures are right when they say that children are a blessing from the Lord.

Marriage is a precious gift from God, but in itself it is not a religious act. Unbelievers too may marry and enjoy God's gifts of family and companionship.

But although marriage is not a means of grace, it is much more than just a social custom. Marriage has been instituted by God, and he continues to regulate it.

Because the giver of marriage set it up as a life-long union of one man and one woman, married people may not lightly set aside the vow that binds them "as long as both shall live." To be sure, divorce was a factor already in biblical times, but it never was God's intent. Jesus gives his evaluation of divorce when he says that Moses allowed it because the Israelites' "hearts were hard" (Mark 10:5).

Equally out of step with God's intent is using the privileges of marriage without entering into the married estate. Publicly and honorably entering into marriage is not just a formality. Getting a marriage license is more than just getting a piece of paper. It's complying with the spirit of him who gave us marriage. Casually entering into a live-in arrangement and then drifting apart when the arrangement no longer pleases one or the other of the partners is not God's intent. Such irresponsibility needs to be warned against before it happens and dealt with when it has occurred.

In our sinful world marriage is a beleaguered institution. But that does not make it any less a precious gift from God. As we attend another round of June weddings, let us encourage and support the young couples promising to be true to each other until death parts them. And as we do so, let us thank God for the gift of our own spouse, if we have been so blessed.

*Armin Panning is a professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin.*

Marriage  
has been  
instituted by  
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# It's not easy being short

The pastor shortage: what it is, why it is, and how you can help.

Douglas J. Engelbrecht

In an old movie, W.C. Fields portrays a ticket taker at a circus. A man who was not given the proper change back says to Fields, "Hey, I seem to be a little short!"

Fields replies, "I wouldn't worry about it, I'm only 5' 8" myself."

The advice to "not worry about being short" may be good when it comes to your height, but not necessarily when it comes to the number of called workers needed to share the message of Christ with a dying world. Better advice in that case would be to be concerned . . . just don't panic.

## The current situation

A shortage of parish pastors isn't news. As of April 1, approximately 90 vacancies in our synod required theologically trained men. At Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary's graduation in May, 41 men were assigned, leaving 50+ vacancies. It concerns us when we know that the fields are ripe for harvest. The situation, however, doesn't call for panic or rash action. A look at the number of vacancies in our synod over the past 12 years shows that, although the number has risen, the percentage has remained constant at around six or seven percent.

It would seem ideal to have every vacancy filled throughout the year, and then to have a place for every

graduating seminary senior. In reality, however, a certain number of empty pulpits is beneficial for our pastors and our congregations. Vacancies allow our pastors to be able to move and accept different challenges as they mature in ministry, and vacancies allow our congregations to experience a refreshing change in pastorate. It has been suggested that between a five and 10 percent vacancy factor is not necessarily desirable, but workable.

## Contributing factors

Even though we have remained in that five to 10 percent "workable" vacancy range, the rising number should concern us. What are the significant factors in the rising vacancy rate? Resignations, retirements, and deaths seem fairly consistent over the last decade.

One factor is the smaller pool from which we can draw. While the number of congregations has grown from 1,200 to 1,239 in the last decade, the number of baptized children has decreased from 102,010 to 94,582.

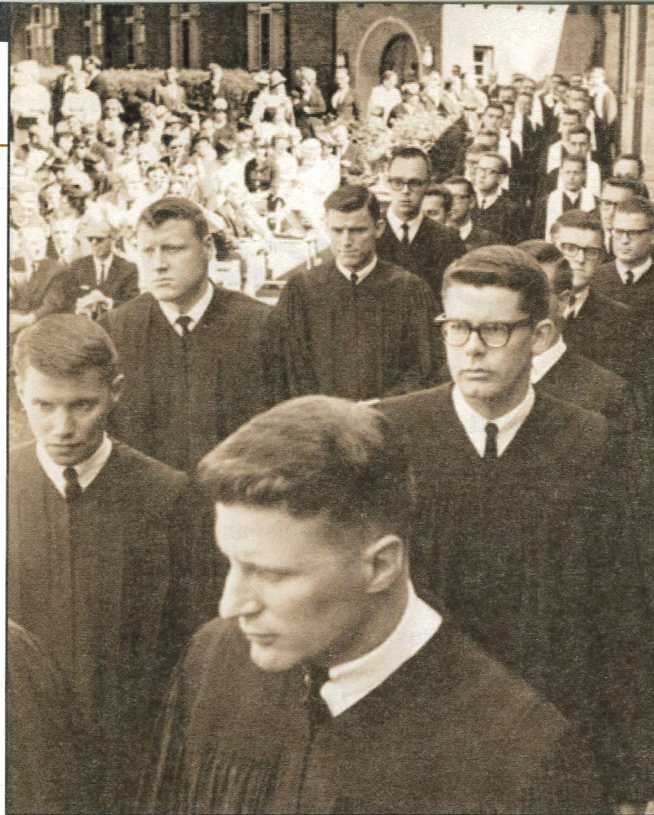
Another factor is world and home mission expansion. By the grace of God, between the years 1989 and 1998, 107 exploratory missions were opened in the United States and Canada, and ordained pastors in our world mission fields increased from 45 to 64. We can only thank and praise God for the opportunities

he has given us to share the gospel with others, opportunities we cannot ignore simply because additional manpower is involved.

A third factor is that the number of baptized members being served by a single pastor has decreased from 390/1 to 310/1 in the last decade. As congregations add a second pastor and as more missions (with modest membership numbers) are opened, more parish pastors are needed to serve fewer numbers of people per congregation.

A fourth factor is the number of theologically trained men serving outside of parish ministry: administrative positions, teachers at synodical schools, teachers at area Lutheran high schools, institutional ministries, mission counselors, and planned giving counselors. It would be wonderful if we could use all our theologically trained men in parish ministry and leave things like administration, institutional work, and teaching to those who don't need a seminary degree. But, although many administrative and teaching positions are filled by other than ordained pastors, in many instances men with full theological training are necessary to carry on that particular work. The growth in the number of congregations and area Lutheran high schools, in the diversity of ministries (cross-cultural ministries, campus ministries, institutional min-





Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary class of 1966. As the Lord provided pastors in the past, so we must trust that he will continue to provide them in the future.

istries, etc.), and in the complexities of the administrative work in operating our synod have resulted in a need for more theologically trained men.

### The down side

The down side is that some congregations must go without a permanent pastor to shepherd them for a longer period of time than usual. Although vacancy pastors from nearby congregations can help, it is just not the same when a congregation doesn't have its own pastor.

Missions can also be adversely affected. Even though the synod's home and world mission divisions continue to explore opportunities that the Lord places before WELS and new exploratory missions are given the go ahead to call, many have to go unmanned due to a lack of pastors.

### The up side

There is an up side, however, to a shortage of pastors.

- Vacancies can allow for a healthy movement of personnel within our synod.

- When a congregation is vacant, it reminds the communicants of the royal priesthood of all believers, and spurs them on to carry out as much of the work of the ministry in that congregation as they are able to do.
- A shortage leads people to a greater appreciation for their pastors. It can illustrate the old adage "you don't know what you've got 'til it's gone."
- A shortage leads pastors, teachers, and congregation members to talk more to young people and encourage them to consider full-time church work.

### The good news

No, "being short isn't easy." But there is good news. Enrollments in our ministerial education schools are showing a healthy increase, due to increased efforts in recruitment and the work of the Holy Spirit, as God responds to our prayers for more workers. Over the last five years the pastor track enrollment at Martin Luther College has increased 26 percent. We thank God for hearing our prayers, and we pray that the trend continues.

### In the meantime

While we rejoice at the enrollment in our ministerial education schools, we realize that those entering our prep schools and colleges will not be ready for assignment for eight or 12 years. What can we do meanwhile?

Once again: be concerned . . . just don't panic. We can't ignore the present vacancy situation, but we should not panic or take irresponsible or drastic action. Here are some things

we can do in the short term to deal with vacancies:

- "Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field" (Matthew 9:38), remembering that finally the Lord is in charge of his church.
- Encourage the consolidation of smaller churches that are relatively close together.
- Encourage larger congregations to consider staff ministry instead of calling a second (or third) pastor to meet their people's spiritual needs.
- Encourage men nearing retirement to remain in full-time ministry for a year or two, if they are able.
- Encourage the use of more laypeople to carry out certain tasks that will alleviate the workload of the pastor.
- Expand mission outreach vigorously, yet wisely, with a view to the manpower that God is graciously granting us.

"I wouldn't worry about being short, I'm only 5' 8" myself!" We can laugh at W.C. Fields' response, but we can't laugh at being short of men who will preach the gospel through pastoral ministry. It is a serious matter, but not one that calls for worry. It calls rather for a prayerful, level-headed, and balanced approach, remembering that God is in charge of his church and will hear our prayers and bless our efforts when they keep with his holy will.

*Douglas Engelbrecht, the president of the Northern Wisconsin District, headed a committee that studied the called worker shortage.*



# Because we care

**Our love for delinquent members grows when we recall how many times God has called us back from our own delinquency.**

Wayne D. Mueller

**M**embers who are delinquent in worship can be easily overlooked for a long time. Then our loving God poses a problem for us that forces us to consider their plight. Sometimes that comes when our congregation's annual report is published. All of a sudden it strikes us. Although our official membership held steady or grew slightly, church attendance and offerings are down. There's only one explanation: more of our members are coming to church less often, and still more are not coming at all.

## Getting noticed

Sometimes straying souls get our notice when a new pastor arrives. Immediately, he sets out to acquaint himself with the members by making every-home visits. He takes the official membership address list and starts going house to house. But he soon learns that many of the addresses are not current. Some of the people on the list thought they lost their membership when they stopped coming to worship. Others inform the new pastor that they joined another church years ago.

Financial shortages and big building pro-

grams can also bring to light the large number of members who no longer worship with us. Stewardship committees plan to hold cottage meetings or make every home visits. But they soon learn that a third of the membership does not respond. They learn quickly that asking for money is not the way to get fallen away members reacquainted with their church.

Yet God does not intend that the means he uses to draw our attention to his straying sheep should become our motive for seeking them out. Poor statistics may make us aware of church skippers, but our reason for calling them back must not be to make our numbers look better. Poor offerings may dramatize one of the results of worship absentees, but improving our finances must not drive our search for lost souls.

## The driving force

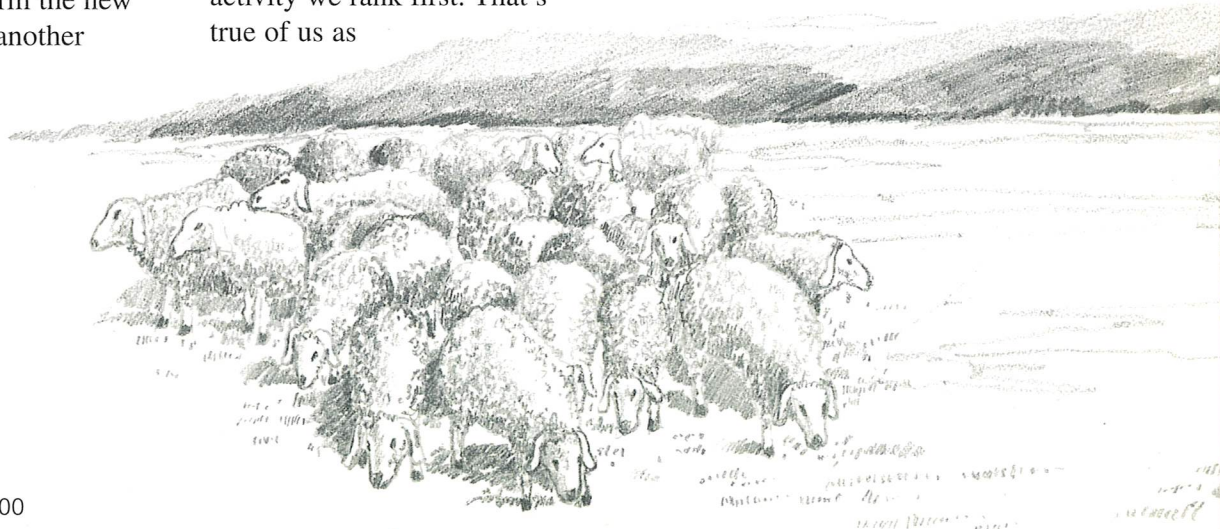
Love sets priorities. What is in our heart becomes evident by the activity we rank first. That's true of us as

individual Christians, and it is true of us as Christians gathered into a local parish.

The love of God that moved Jesus to leave heaven was an outgoing love. It reached beyond itself. That's the kind of love that the Spirit creates in the heart of everyone who believes in Jesus as his Savior. Paul urges the Philippians, "Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others" (Philippians 2:4).

It takes strong, outgoing Christian love to buck the pressure of our sinful natures living in a selfish society. "The church skipper really does not want me to come and talk to him," I reason. "And I don't really want to risk my time to make him feel uncomfortable," my sinful nature argues.

This unspiritual, introverted reasoning pressures congregations to concentrate their ministry on those who want it and appreciate it. Being "positive" and socially pleasing argues against visiting delinquents. But God appeals to our Spirit-created



new man and says, "Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently" (Galatians 6:1).

### Retrospective love

The way God has dealt with us in the past cultivates in our hearts an outgoing love for others. David once prayed, "Remember not the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways; according to your love remember me, for you are good, O Lord" (Psalm 25:7). Isn't this my prayer, and yours too? Our love for delinquent members grows when we recall how many times God has called us back from our own delinquency.

Church leaders may shun ministry to their weak members because of the time needed to visit and revisit straying sheep. But look back at how God has visited and revisited you over the years. God has been persistent in pursuing you. Think of your Christian parents and the many teachers and pastors who taught you about Jesus. Think of the friends and counselors God gave you at just the right time to set you on the right track or keep you from some stupid misstep. Then remember that you are now the persistent counselor God is sending to your fellow members to return them to the right path.

In a world of instantaneous communication and push buttons, patience

has become a lost virtue. Only in the gospel do we find an ideal patience that God calls love. Paul wrote, "Love is patient. . . . Love never fails" (1 Corinthians 13:4,8). God has never given up on us, and we have his promise that he never will. "Though my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will receive me" (Psalm 27:10). We won't be dissuaded from ministering to our straying members because they resent our visits. We won't give up because we don't win them back on the first try. We will not take the straying sheep off our congregation's ministry agendas because they don't produce instant success.

## To shun the work of visiting straying sheep would be to deny our own spiritual birth.

Looking back at God's love for us polishes another facet of our love for straying members. It makes us lovers of the unlovable. We have this natural aversion to reaching out to delinquent members because they are so—well, unlovable. They were instructed and confirmed, but have broken their promises. We consider them worse than the unconverted because they have tasted God's grace, then despised it.

They set a bad example for other members, bring no thank offerings, and make the church look bad to the community. It's hard to love them.

"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). Every day we come to our knees to repent of our sins, we rejoice that the heart of grace is its undeserved nature. "Because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions" (Ephesians 2:4,5). To shun the work of visiting straying sheep would be to deny our own spiritual birth. As we daily exult in God's undeserved grace toward us, we will seek to express it by loving the unlovable.

### The bottom line

We seek the straying because we care. Is God calling the needs of straying sheep to the attention of your congregation? Is attendance down? Do your numbers look bad? Is there a shortage of money? Having trouble finding volunteer workers?

These things are only symptoms of an underlying virus. The real disease is weak and dying faith. Only delivering the word of law and gospel can treat this disease. And only the kind of love that we have all received from God can move us to deliver this word to our delinquent members.

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



# A vast frontier of souls

With all its wide-open spaces, the Nebraska District has plenty of room to grow, and members are excited about that possibility.

Nicole R. Moline

**“I**f I could be anywhere,” stated sainted Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Professor E. Fredrich, “I would want to be placed in the Nebraska District. Look at that vast frontier for the gospel . . . for souls.”

Members of the Nebraska District agree that there is a vast frontier of souls waiting for the gospel in their widespread area. Ministry is being done to reach the diverse, changing population. And, in spite of their diversity, members share a camaraderie and dedication that is rooted in love for Christ.



Jim Fleming, missionary to the Navajo in Farmington, N.M., leads a rocket club for Navajo children such as Fabian and Shaine Yazzie (above). As Fleming says, “I think all kids must love rockets. We get together and build them and then shoot them off. It’s fun and it allows me to interact on a more one-on-one basis with the kids than I can during vacation Bible school or other events.”

## Planting roots

Even before Nebraska became a state, the first congregation in the territory of the Nebraska District was established by WELS members from Ixonia, Wis. Twenty-nine families and six single men set out in prairie schooners and settled in Norfolk, Neb., in 1866. These WELS members planted their roots and their crops, set up a cross and altar, and began worshiping at what is now St. Paul, Norfolk, Neb. Congregations were established from there, following the rail lines.

## Appreciating diversity

Many of those congregations that became a part of the Nebraska District started in neighboring states like Kansas, Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming. The large number of states that now compose the district make it diverse. From the Missouri River to the Rocky Mountains and from the great Salt Lake to downtown Denver, the Nebraska District is a diverse place. And, the people within these places are as diverse as the places themselves.

Second Vice President David Russow comments, “We have such diversity in our district—saints wearing overalls and knowing the price of a bushel of corn on the east end as well as the high tech in casual/corporate dress on the west end. We’ve got outreach to the Lakota on the Rosebud Reservation of South

Dakota, to the Navajo in New Mexico, to the Cora in western Colorado. We have both ends of the spiritual spectrum—many new missions, many longstanding stations of the gospel.”

Reaching those different spectrums of people requires a variety of approaches. Pastor Mike Quandt’s members at Prince of Peace, Salt Lake City, Utah, have found that reaching the Mormons can be as easy as asking a friend to come to church. Of the 70 people who attended Prince of Peace’s most recent basic Christianity class, 44 were non-members, and most came because a friend invited them. As Quandt explains, “Many are yearning for the basics of biblical Christianity so they retake the course two or three times in order to grasp and own Scripture’s good news.”

## Reaching a changing population

Along with the diversity that already exists in this district, the changing population in these states also provides opportunities for outreach. As Nebraska District President Joel Frank observes, “There are no more Germans getting off the boats.” Those who are entering the Nebraska District must be served in ways that complement their own cultures.

Small, established congregations in Nebraska and Kansas are struggling as farming communities become smaller. Young people are fleeing these small farming towns for metro

## Nebraska District news brief

Nebraska Evangelical Lutheran High School in Waco has been the only WELS high school in the Nebraska District since the school's opening in 1979. That is quickly changing.

In April, teacher John Barenz accepted the call to serve as the director of mission and ministry for Rocky Mountain Lutheran High School in Denver, Colo. The work that Barenz does will establish the foundation of the school.

### Capitalizing on dedication

As the called workers of this district share a unique camaraderie, they also share a dedication to spreading God's Word. Being a pastor in the Nebraska District is not always easy. Many times it means being on the road, driving from one end of the district to the other. However, pastors feel it is worth the challenges.

"It is the greatest place in the synod," proclaims Frank.

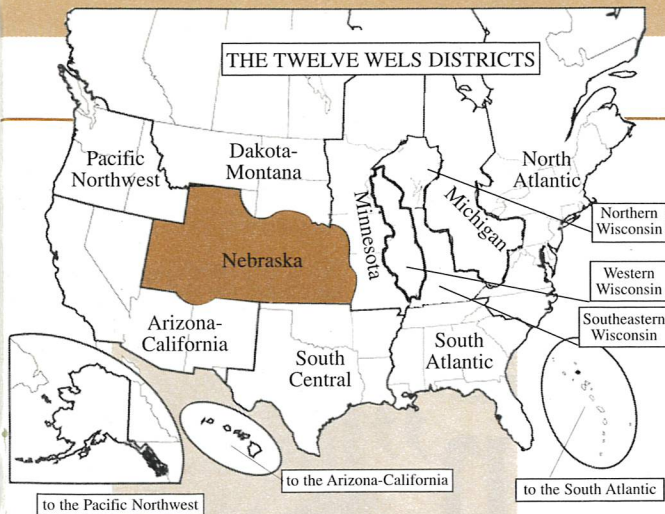
"There is no place I'd rather be," declares Pastor Mark Birkholz, Lord of Life, Thornton, Colo.

The enthusiasm these men show for their ministry is demonstrated throughout the Nebraska District. With its wide-open spaces and diverse, changing population, the district needs enthusiasm like this.

As Prof. Fredrich said, there is a vast frontier of souls in the Nebraska District. With these words he seemed to foresee how the West would expand and how members of the Nebraska District would use this to bring people God's Word.

*Nicole Moline is the communications assistant for Forward/NL and WELS Communication Services.*

### THE TWELVE WELS DISTRICTS



#### ■ Nebraska District

### Stats at a glance Nebraska District

Conferences: 4  
Circuits: 8  
Congregations: 88  
Mission churches: 16  
Exploratory churches: 7

Baptized members: 13,752  
Communicant members: 10,329  
Average attendance: 49.5%  
Pastors: 67

Adult baptisms: 45  
Adult confirmations: 165

Sunday school enrollment: 1,780  
Bible class attendance (teens): 264  
Bible class attendance (adults): 1,923

Early childhood education schools: 10  
Lutheran elementary schools: 21  
Area Lutheran high schools: 2

Statistics taken from the 1998  
*Statistical Report*, Commission  
on Parish Schools, and Board  
for Home Missions.

areas. This creates two challenges. First, members must find ways to keep these small churches from dying out. Then, as Frank says, "We must be in the metro areas because that is where the young people are going."

Another shift in population is occurring with the arrival of Mexican migrant workers and other Latinos. The district is learning how to best serve these people, who are often trying to find the truth of the gospel. Congregations around Denver's inner-city have banded together to offer one-day events that are often

geared toward children and share the gospel's truths in simple ways.

### Cultivating camaraderie

While many might believe that all this diversity would create barriers, it actually creates camaraderie in the Nebraska District. Realizing that

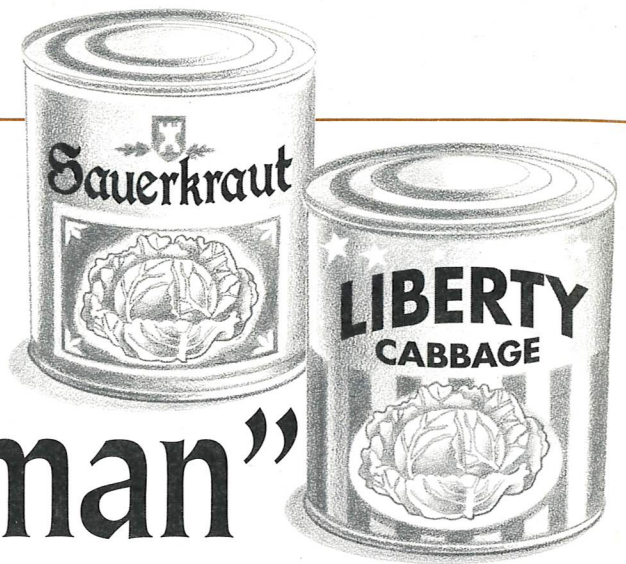
they are far-flung from each other makes district members more aware of the need for fellowship.

Members react to this by diligently attending delegate and district conferences. Each delegate knows that conventions are important opportunities to interact with other district members. In the same way, members drive up to 150 miles to attend joint Reformation services.

Even children want to meet others in their district. Many do so by attending Rocky Mountain Christian Camp, a week-long summer camp in Leadville, Colo. Last year a total of 120 campers and 35 counselors from Utah, Wyoming, New Mexico, and Colorado joined together. Although the camp was not created to bring these young people of different backgrounds together, it naturally evolved out of the need that is felt throughout the district to get to know each other better.

The camaraderie felt among members reflects the closeness of the called workers in the district. Having to drive 500 miles for conferences can become tiresome. Many called workers actually look forward to these conferences, though, because they are a chance to enjoy the company of fellow workers.

Russow says, "Our conferences are truly a joy. We get together, study the Word, share our joys and our concerns, and fellowship—ah, the fellowship!"



# “I want to be saved in German”

Early church leaders struggled to make the transition from German to English. Ultimately, though, they were “bidden to read the signs of the times.”

Mark E. Braun

Change isn't easy. Transitioning from German to English was especially hard for our church forefathers. However, it became wise as Lutherans became established in the United States. After World War I began, it became necessary.

## Change resisted

Our synod and our big sister Missouri never intended to preach and teach only in German. In the 1850s the Missouri Synod founded an English college at Fort Wayne, Ind., and set guidelines for the formation of English congregations. As the inaugural issue of *The Northwestern Lutheran* announced in 1914, an English magazine had been “a long-felt want” in the Wisconsin Synod.

Yet early leaders of both synods worked and thought almost entirely in German. Congregations commonly required the language of worship and instruction to be “German forever,” mainly because some feared a “tricky translation” of their pure Lutheran doctrine.

Even if pastors might have gladly learned English, and sought to win their “American” neighbors, the boatloads of German immigrants arriving weekly left them more than enough to do. In the 1880s

and 1890s, some pastors performed hundreds of baptisms every year.

Not surprisingly, as late as 1911 only three percent of churches in the Missouri and Wisconsin Synods used English in their worship. “German is here still the everyday language,” wrote Missouri Synod President Frederick Pfotenhauer’s brother in 1914.

Though Wisconsin Synod’s Prof. August Pieper admitted that Lutheran teaching could be expressed as well in English, he said, “*Ich will deutsch selig werden*” (“I want to be saved in German”).

And, when pastors sought to initiate the change in the Dakota Montana District, their members objected, “*Der Heilige Geist kann kein Englisch*” (“The Holy Ghost cannot speak English”).

## Change accelerated

The transition would have occurred anyway, but it was greatly—and painfully—accelerated by World War I. German-Americans generally urged American neutrality, though some openly favored the German cause.

Admitting a “lack of enthusiasm” for the war in Europe, Pastor Max Lehninger wrote to the Nebraska Council of Defense, “It is a hard thing for human beings to take up

arms and wage war against their kindred,” which could be said for any ethnic group.

A 1916 editorialist for *The Northwestern Lutheran* pleaded, though, that “When you say ‘German-Americans,’ please put all the stress on the last part of the compound. German-Americans are Americans, first, last, and all the time.”

## Change forced

But loyalty was severely tested following the United States’ entry into the war on Good Friday 1917. Observance of German customs was now considered dangerous, regard for ancestral homelands traitorous, attachment to one’s native tongue subversive.

“If you turn hell upside down,” thundered evangelist Billy Sunday, “you will find ‘Made in Germany’ stamped on the bottom.”

Across the country, hamburger became Salisbury steak. Sauerkraut was renamed liberty cabbage. Schmidts and Schneiders were now Smiths and Taylors. In Milwaukee, the Deutscher Club changed to the Wisconsin Club, and the number of school children enrolled in German classes plummeted from 30,000 in 1916 to 400 in 1918.



*The first nine articles in this series detail major events that occurred during the decades of the 20th century and how WELS' history is intertwined with U.S. history. The last article in the series will address what WELS can expect in the future.*

The more “immigrant” a church was regarded, the more fiercely it was despised. German Lutheran pastors were accused of taking an “oath to the Kaiser,” and sometimes even were attacked and beaten. Parochial school houses were splattered with yellow paint. Congregations proved their good citizenship by selling war bonds, displaying American flags, and hanging patriotic posters in church vestibules and school hallways.

### Change accepted

Still, converting to English “was not what most of the German-speaking members wanted,” a South Dakota pastor recalled. The synod’s German publication, the *Gemeinde-Blatt*, continued to outsell *The Northwestern Lutheran* for more than two decades after the war. It was not until 1940 that subscriptions for the English church paper outnumbered those of the German.

The transition from German to English was hard, but necessary. And, new issues like modernism and liberalism began to overshadow the language change.

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



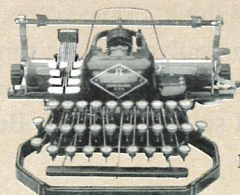
The fledgling English magazine, *The Northwestern Lutheran*, responded to the turbulent times by describing issues of the day in the following ways:

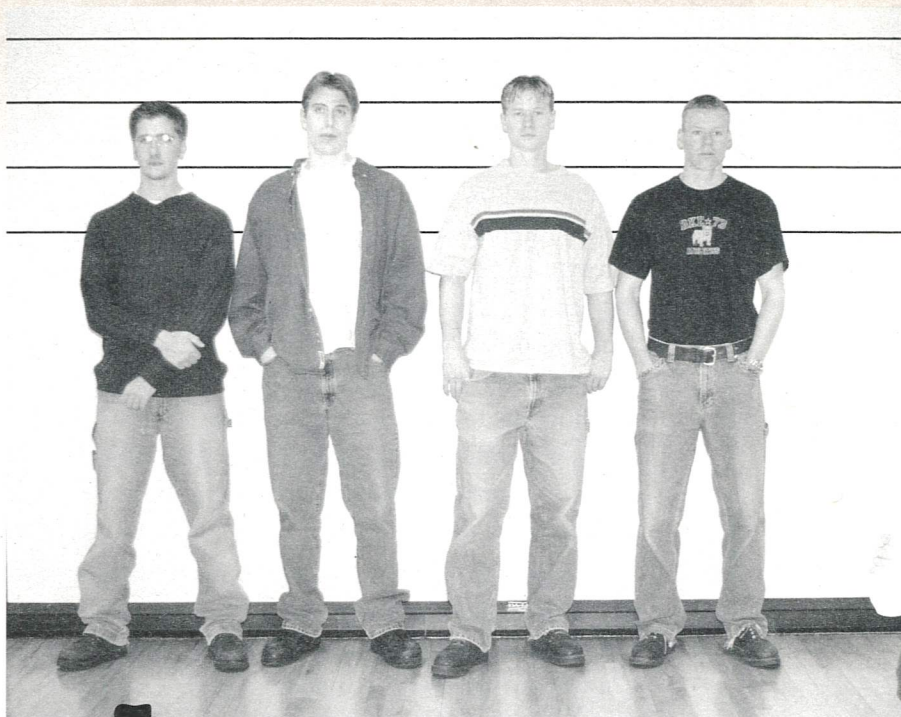
- John Jenny in his introduction on Jan. 7, 1914, commented on the language transition: “Even now our children are daily growing less familiar with the German language, and many of our young people use the English almost exclusively, conversing and thinking in this only, so that if anyone wishes to make himself perfectly understood by them, he must convey his thoughts to them in English. The result is that the rising generation, to a great extent, will ultimately be capable of reading and understanding the Word of God only through the medium of the English language.

“Whether we note this change with or without regret, we fully realize that language, like other externals, can never be an essential factor in the make up of the Church of God. We are bidden to read the signs of the times. There is an urgent demand for an English parish paper in our synod, and the time has come to act.”

- Anna Hoppe insisted in January 1918 that Lutheran schools stood “head and shoulders” over public schools because they instilled in children “a patriotism of so exalted a type as to be impossible for an institution to reach, which has not the Bible.”
- Editorialist Hans Moussa called the accusation that Lutheran pastors were praying for German victory in the war “so utterly ludicrous that it is difficult to grow angry over it.”
- Moussa also conceded that if Lutherans were forced to use English exclusively, it would be a severe loss. But if “with the passing of the foreign tongue the church would close its doors, then our loss would be incalculable.” The one great objective not to be lost was that “the gospel be preached for the salvation of sinful man and for the consolation of the troubled soul.”
- “We cannot ally ourselves with the German element in America,” Pastor John Brenner warned, “nor with the English, or Slavic, or Italian, or any other.” Jesus said his kingdom was not of this world, “thus teaching

the separation of Church and State. The Church cannot find a quicker method of self-destruction than political activity, nor can anything else cause as much harm to the State.”





**Mom gives advice on what to look for when searching for Mr. Right.**

**Laurie Biedenbender**

# Is he “the one”?

Dear daughter,

Since you were a tiny baby, I’ve prayed for you: that you grow in your love for Jesus, that you find your niche in the body of Christ, that you stay healthy, and that you find a good husband.

Now that you’re off to college, it’s that last prayer I want to talk to you about. It’s not that I don’t trust your judgment. It’s just that the stakes are so high. This decision—choosing a husband—could usher in lifetime happiness or bitterness. Or—just as bad—lukewarm resignation and wistful what-iffing.

Now, I’m not all wise and wonderful on the subject, and my advice is completely unsolicited, but that’s never stopped me before! So here it goes.

## **Take your time**

Get to know the guy through and through. Be friends first and be friends long—before you add other dimensions to your relationship. Recognize that he’s putting his best face forward now. It sounds harsh, but only time will show you the everyday face behind the best face. Time will unveil his peculiar habits, the ones that start out cute but end up driving you crazy. Time will reveal how he behaves when he loses, when he’s hurt, angry, bored. Time will show you the real guy so you don’t wake up some morning after the wedding and think, “Who is this person?”

When you’ve given it time and think that he may be “the one,” ask yourself some questions. Be honest,

because cheating now will only hurt you later.

## **Do you love each other?**

Not as simple as it sounds. Love isn’t just a feeling. When you plan a romantic evening and he forgets to tell you that he’s working late, going straight to his game, and won’t be home till 11, you won’t be feeling much of that love thing for him. Twenty years from now when he’s bald, paunchy, and wedged in the cushions of the couch, that love feeling just might overwhelm you.

See, love is more than a feeling. It’s a commitment of the mind, heart, and will. Your love has little to do with each other’s allure. In fact, just as our beauty fades and our charm is fleeting, so your husband’s muscles



may melt and his sweet-nothings become just nothings. After graduation, no one will care that you were Student Council president and he was captain of the football team. Those externals don't matter much, and if your admiration goes no deeper than them, you don't love each other.

This is how we know about love: "This is love: not that we loved God but that he loved us!" Think of God's love for us. It has no strings attached. He loves us even though he knows every stinking thing about us—and there's a lot that stinks. He loves us enough to become our servant and to serve us in the most extravagant way—giving his life for us.

Is this man willing to love you as Christ loves his church—to serve you, to put your interests before his own, to give his life for you?

Are you willing to love him as the church loves Christ—to serve him, to put his interests before your own, and to submit to him?

Which takes me to . . .

### Will he be your spiritual leader?

In one sense, a strong spiritual leader needs to be a weak, desperate man. Even if he's big man on campus, he needs to realize he's a despicable

The confirmation class of Trinity, Watertown, Wis., taught by Pastor James Mattek, describes the ideal spouse:

The ideal spouse . . .

- is God-fearing
- will be a good father
- will be there in good and bad
- is kind, smart, honest
- has the same interests I do
- can take a joke
- doesn't butt in when I talk
- doesn't drive me crazy
- doesn't make fun of my food
- loves me for who I am, not what he wants me to be

sinner who will die without God's grace. Does "I've sinned" come out of his mouth outside of church? Is Jesus' name part of his daily vocabulary? Can he say, "I'm sorry" and "I forgive you" and "Let's pray" without shuffling his feet?

If God gives you children, will he pull them into his lap and tell them about water becoming wine and death becoming life? Will he sing in the pew even if he sounds like a sick frog? Will he refuse the promotion and the church committee assignment if it prohibits him from being an attentive father? Will your kids say, "I want to love Jesus like Daddy does"?

And will he encourage you in your faith? How?

### You too!

Here I am, making all these demands of a future husband, like some impossible entrance exam. We both know you need to consider yourself too. A mature, godly man will be seeking a mature, godly woman. You need to become that. No superficial fixes or holy poses will get you there. It's a Spirit-ual job, accomplished from the inside out, through God's powerful Word.

I think of Ruth, gliding across the dark threshing floor to find Boaz, quietly lifting the corner of his covering, and sleeping at his feet. She didn't "run after the younger men, whether rich or poor." She chose her kinsman-redeemer, the man who greeted his workers with "The Lord be with you!"

And Rebekah! She hadn't even met Isaac, but the name of the Lord and the signs he gave were enough to convince her that Isaac would be her mate for life.

These marriages worked, and yours will too—when God is the third strand that makes the cord

unbreakable. When you regularly meet God in his house and speak his Word in yours, when he clearly rules in your hearts and in your home, he will bless your union.

### A husband is a gift

Don't look for a sign from God—a vision or a dry fleece or something—to see if the man you're considering is "the one." But know that when you marry him, he has now become God's special gift to you. Value him as this present from heaven, yet another channel for the many blessings the Father has for you.

God bless you as you look for this man. I pray that you find him—and that he finds you!

Love, Mom

P.S. Here are a few other gems:

Look for a man . . .

- who will put Christ, not himself, at the center of your home.
- who wants to be your team captain—not your coach, not your water boy.
- who wants to raise a family, not a million.
- who enjoys your ideas, not just your agreement with his.
- who laughs at himself more than at others.
- who sees your weaknesses clearly and forgives them wholeheartedly.
- who wants you to develop your gifts, not just help him develop his.
- who enjoys your company more than anyone else's.
- who treats you as God's woman, not his own.



Laurie Biedenbender is a member at Trinity, Watertown, Wisconsin.

# Picturing the past

June 11, 2000, is the date chosen as the official WELS 150th Anniversary Sunday. As we celebrate the past, thank God for our present blessings, and look forward to spreading God's Word in the future, we stop to enjoy some pictures that have been taken along the way.

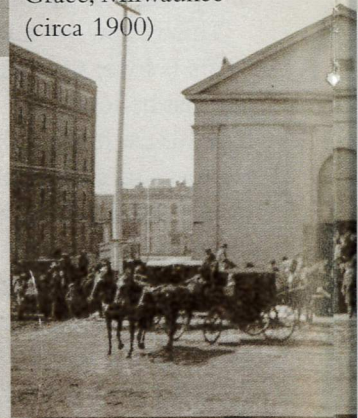
As author John Braun writes in the keepsake history book *Together in Christ*:

The history of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) is a collection of stories about God's work in the hearts of those who have gone before us. Their stories are often much like the stories of our own lives, filled more with struggles than glorious triumphs. Yet, through all the struggles, the Lord of the church watched over the synod's founders and led them forward. It is, therefore, more a story of God's grace and power than of human achievement.

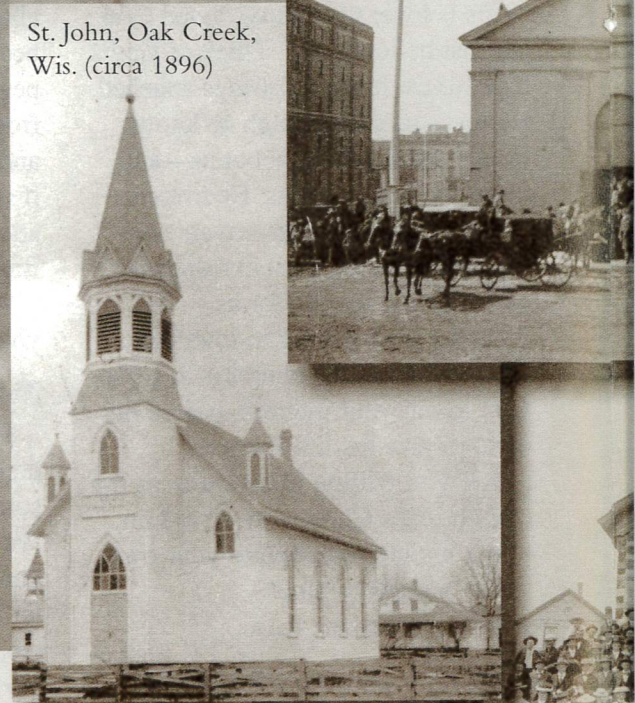
These pictures help tell that story.

*If you recognize any of the people in the photos or have old photos or other materials you would like to donate to the archives, please contact John Hartwig at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, 11831 N Seminary Dr, Mequon WI 53092; 262/242-8113; <library@wls.wels.net>.*

Grace, Milwaukee  
(circa 1900)



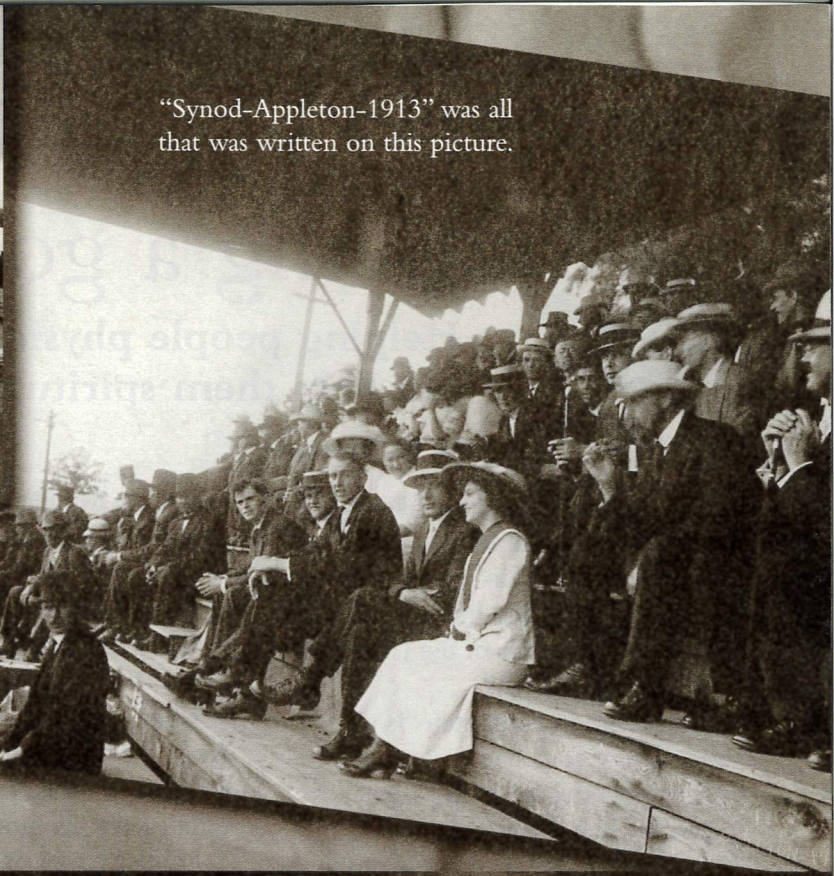
St. John, Oak Creek,  
Wis. (circa 1896)



"A Ford-full of s-miles" at the Lutheran Conference, Medford, Wis., on May 28, 1918.



A drama presentation ironically entitled "Such a Girl" at Northwestern College, Watertown, Wis., Nov. 27-28, 1928.



"Synod-Appleton-1913" was all that was written on this picture.



Gillett, Wis.

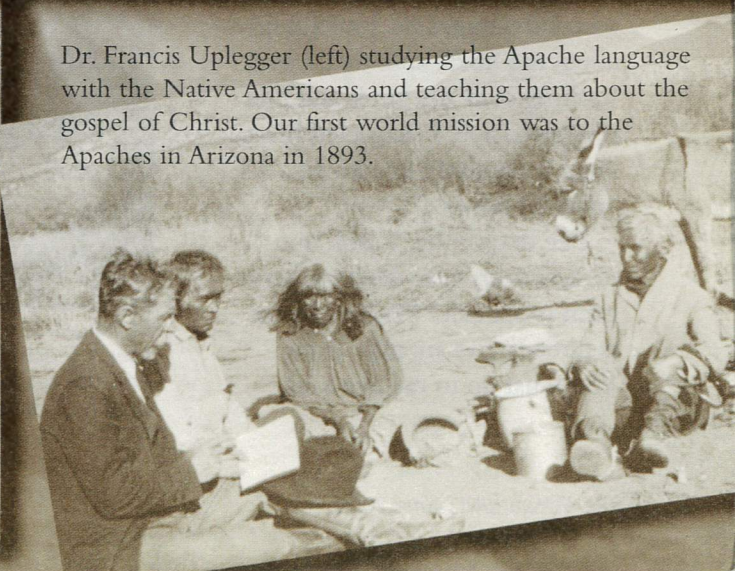


The Northwestern University, Watertown, Wis., band of 1906.



A Western Wisconsin District Convention circa 1918. Group photos of the delegates were often taken at conventions.

Dr. Francis Uplegger (left) studying the Apache language with the Native Americans and teaching them about the gospel of Christ. Our first world mission was to the Apaches in Arizona in 1893.





# Being a good Samaritan

Helping people physically can bridge the gap so we can help them spiritually.

Julie K. Tessmer

**W**hen you see someone in need, do you stop and help, or do you pass by on the other side like the priest and Levite in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10)?

Being a good Samaritan "is all about seeing someone in need and doing something about it," says Raymond Cox, chairman of the Humanitarian Aid committee of the Board for World Missions. This committee, established in 1998, works to help people physically through gifts of food, clothing, and medicine so that our missionaries can help them spiritually through the gift of the gospel.

You too can help the orphans in India, the hungry in Bulgaria, and the sick in Central Africa. Pastor Dan Westendorf, who is serving a year in Cameroon, shares a story of people who need your help:

His name is Muhammet. He's one of our night watchmen, about 25 years old.

One night he pointed to his left eye and anxiously asked whether I might do something about the black spot that was forming over the pupil and blurring his vision. I suspected filaria, more commonly known as "river blindness."

The doctor that I took him to, however, gave Muhammet a grim prognosis. "This problem is already five months along. You must go to the eye clinic

first thing Monday morning and obtain some medication, otherwise that eye will become blind in two month's time!"

When Muhammet came to work Monday night, I asked whether he had gone to the clinic. "No," he replied, "it costs 3,000 francs (\$6), and I didn't have the money."

That's typical of many of the people living here. They have serious problems for which help is available, but they don't have the money. So they become blind at the age of 25, and their lives become harder still.

My wife and I came to Cameroon to help another missionary team combat another kind of blindness—spiritual blindness. But someone has aptly said, "People won't care what you know until they know that you care." In his celebrated chapter on love, Paul bears that out. "If I speak in the tongues of



In Bulgaria, a WELS Medical Mission of Mercy reaches out with food, medicine, and the saving gospel, to orphanages, nursing homes, and small villages.

men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal" (1 Corinthians 13:1). John pricks our conscience, as well, with this question: "If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?" (1 John 3:17).

We strive to do as Jesus did and maintain a God-pleasing balance. The spiritual need of sinners remains our first concern; and whenever possible, we share Christian compassion by caring for their physical needs as well.

You can show that you care for these physically and spiritually needy people by joining the WELS Good Samaritan Society. Through your prayers, support, and encouragement, you can support humanitarian aid and reaffirm the WELS Good Samaritan Society's goal to "show mercy to those in need worldwide, caring for others in their human suffering and sharing the gospel at every opportunity."

Don't pass by on the other side. Stop and help. Show your love so God's love can be shared with all.

For more information, contact the Ministry of Planned Giving, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398; 800-827-5482 or 414/256-3881; <lyorkey@sab.wels.net>.

Julie Tessmer is senior communications assistant for Forward/NL and WELS Communication Services.



# Inter-Act

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

## Introduction

Through the past six Inter-Act Bible studies, we've watched God meet his people "on the way." Those are life-defining moments. We know because he also met us "on the way" and changed us. He changed our hearts in the miracle of baptism. He meets us with the body and blood of Jesus in Holy Communion and mysteriously boosts our confidence in his promises. He opens our eyes to his Word and changes our priorities. We receive all that and more when he meets us on the way.

Now turn the phrase a bit. We're not the only ones "on the way."

## I. Text

Read Isaiah 51:4-5.

"Listen to me, my people; hear me, my nation: The law will go out from me; my justice will become a light to the nations. <sup>5</sup>My righteousness draws near speedily, my salvation is on the way."

## II. Questions

1. The Lord is speaking here. He describes events so close at hand that they're already completed in his mind. List the events.
2. My justice . . . my righteousness . . . my salvation . . . what is the Lord telling you about the source of all spiritual blessings?
3. Righteousness is what you have when a judge delivers the verdict, "you're not guilty." Seven hundred years after Isaiah's day, the apostle Paul described a "righteousness from God through faith in Jesus Christ." Righteousness is what we have because God declares us not guilty for Jesus' sake. Sometimes people assume incorrectly that those who lived before Christ were saved by obeying the commandments. According to this verse, how were they saved?
4. The Lord promised that the one who would accomplish righteousness and salvation was on the way "speedily." About 700 years would pass before Jesus was born in Bethlehem. What does that tell you about the Lord's timing?
5. "Help is on the way. Just hang in there." Imagine the effect such messages have on disaster victims. Help is on the way. Put yourself in the shoes of a rag-tag, declining, vulnerable nation. Then you hear God's promise, "Help is on the way." What's your response?

## III. Applications

1. Now put yourself back in your own shoes. Weak. Fallen. Disappointed in yourself. Sinful. Then you hear God's promise: "God, our heavenly Father, has been merciful to us and has given his only Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." What's your response?
2. Why is it important for us to rehearse how throughout history God took steps to save his fallen creatures, who desperately needed help?
3. How do you review the most important events in history: God's saving work?
4. God called an event 700 years away "imminent." That's the way it is with him. His promises are that sure. Think of a time you've doubted one of God's promises. Was it his promise of forgiveness? Peace? Your every need? Comfort? What does this verse tell you about that promise of God?

## IV. Prayer

Forgive me, Lord, for ever doubting your timing. It's perfect. From the fall into sin, you've been making promises to help us. You've kept every one of them in your time and in your Son. I need what you send me every day. Give me peace through your righteousness. Give me joy and life through your salvation. Help me see the importance of the ways you send such gifts to me: your Word and your sacraments. Amen.

*Randy Hunter is pastor at St. Andrew, Middleton, Wisconsin.*



## Apache mission update

Many exciting things are happening in Apacheland, WELS' oldest world mission field.

- On March 12, Fidel Dazen, a graduate of East Fork Lutheran High School, became the first Apache installed as a WELS evangelist through the Apache Christian Training School. While Dazen continues his studies to be a pastor, he now visits members and preaches sermons written by pastors at three churches—Grace, San Carlos, Ariz.; Peridot, Peridot, Ariz.; and Our Savior's, Bylas, Ariz.

- For the first time in its 89-year history, East Fork Lutheran Grade School has an all-Apache Board of Education. Similarly, East Fork Lutheran High School has its own all-Apache Board of Control for the first time in its 50-year history. Both boards oversee the operation of the schools, including calling teachers and setting budgets. Apache Missionary Kirby Spevacek says, "It is very significant that these boards are now run completely by the Apaches, because that means that they are taking own-

ership of their schools and showing leadership."

- Builders For Christ is remodeling the old boys' dormitory on the East Fork Mission so it can become an Apache Youth and Family Center. Rick Loewen works with Apache youth and their families and is overseeing the operation of this center.

- Eleven members of Martin Luther College's faculty spent their spring break in Apacheland. They interviewed 15 different Apache people in order to gain insight into Apache culture.

Prof. Paul O. Wendland commented: "We were all impressed with the openness of our consultants. We noted the anxiety they expressed over the broken and abusive family life, the teenage pregnancies, the alcoholism and drug use, the lack of respect for authority, and the violence on the modern reservation. We were also deeply moved by the expressions of Christian faith we heard, a faith



Participating in the installation of Apache evangelist Fidel Dazen were (from left) Pastors Martin Hahm, Matt Wobeck, Matt Kuske, Jeff Gunn, Dave Rosenau, and Kirby Spevacek.

that endured despite trials. Clearly the gospel has not been preached in vain. Although there were distinct differences between our culture and theirs, we learned how much we all have in common."

These faculty members will go back to the college with a new appreciation for and understanding of the Apache culture that will benefit the future pastors and teachers with whom they interact.

## Harvest of Joy: a review

*Harvest of Joy*, an 80-minute documentary of the history of WELS, had its premiere in March at Salem, Granville (Milwaukee), Wis. Salem was the church at which three pastors and two laymen met and organized the synod 150 years ago.

*Harvest of Joy* weaves historic photos and dramatic reenactment together to tell its story. From beginning to end, the emphasis is on the increase God provides as his people plant and water the seed of the Word. The producers tell the story like it is, warts and all, reminding viewers that God often advances the cause of his kingdom in spite of us rather than because of us. As the story unfolds, it fosters a sense of

humble gratitude rather than false pride. *Harvest of Joy* could be aptly subtitled *Soli Deo Gloria*.

The history of WELS has been told before, but never in this medium. Familiarity with our history contributes to a healthy appreciation of who and what we are as WELS Lutherans. *Harvest of Joy* will be a valuable tool to promote that familiarity.

To obtain a copy, contact WELS Mass Media Ministry, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222; 1-800-884-9312; <usr14@sab.wels.net>. The video costs \$19.95 plus shipping and handling.

Joel C. Gerlach

## DEFINING RELIGION

Relativism—the false idea that there is no such thing as absolute truth, but that truth depends on one's background and point of view. Relativism rejects the objective nature of the truth of God's Word, dismisses the concept of moral absolutes, and ultimately opposes the biblical teaching that there is no salvation apart from faith in Jesus.

## REAL TIME WITH A MISSIONARY

*In this section, you'll hear news from our missionaries. We hope you enjoy these tidbits from our missions.*

*In May, we wrote about how WELS is serving the people of Grenada [p. 18]. Here Pastor Reuel Schulz, who recently served three months there, gives more insights about the people and the work being done. He writes:*

The words of St. Paul in Acts 17:22—"... Men of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious"—accurately describe the citizens of Grenada. Nearly every mainline denomination, with the exception of the Lutheran Church, is represented on the island, as well as Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Rastafarians, the New Testament Church of God, the Berean Bible Church, etc. When I meet the average Grenadians on my walk-about, most of them are willing, even eager, to discuss spiritual and scriptural issues. . . .

"What is Lutheran?" we're often asked. Like increasing numbers of Americans, Grenadians associate Martin Luther mostly with the late civil rights advocate, Dr. King Jr. But it's thrilling and gratifying to have a Grenadian electrical engineer ask to see our "Martin Luther" video and to explain the

Kids gather three times a week for an after-school Kids' Klub. They learn Bible words, get help with homework (when needed), and get plenty of time to color.

Scripture alone, grace alone, and faith in Christ alone themes set forth by Luther.

Three times a week for an hour or so, four to 12 children come to our apartment for an after-school Kids' Klub. The children color Bible story sheets, learn or review Bible words in alphabetical order: Adam, Abel, Abraham, Aaron, Bethlehem, Bible, Berea, Blood, Christ, Cross, Calvary (you get the idea), and eagerly devour the cookies and Kool-Aid snack. On Saturday afternoons we treat them to an old-fashioned movie matinee. . . . It's gratifying to tutor 12-year-old Rogerson in reading, to see his progress as he sounds out words new to him from the Bible story-book he seems to love.

It would be presumptuous of me, who served most of my ministry at a well-established 70-year-old suburban congregation, Woodlawn, West Allis, Wis., to pretend to be an expert in missions. But after an exhilarating, though brief, period of service in Grenada, it appears to me that our mission in Grenada offers exciting possibilities and deserves a full measure of our WELS' prayers, interest, and financial investment.



## Forward in Christ anniversary news

• As part of the Forward in Christ celebration, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (WLS), Mequon, Wis., is hosting an anniversary symposium on Oct. 30-31 under the theme "Forward in Christ at the Dawn of a New Millennium."

The symposium consists of three presentations, a banquet at the Milwaukee Hilton Hotel, and a special Reformation service. Symposium sessions and the service will be held at WLS.

In the presentations, the essayists will review the cultural setting, the obstacles, the confessional position, the zeal, and the strategy of proclaimers at the turn of the three millennial eras. They also will identify opportunities for the present church to emulate these historic examples.

Through this symposium, the seminary hopes to renew an understanding of God's continuing role in the history of the Church and to strengthen the attendees' resolve as they continue to spread the gospel.

*Registration information was mailed in May to all active and retired WELS pastors, but teachers and laypeople may attend as well. For more information, contact the faculty secretary, 11831 N Seminary Dr, Mequon WI 53092; 262/242-8100; <lindlofe@wls.wels.net>.*

• The WELS Historical Institute is celebrating the synod's 150th anniversary by conducting tours (by appointment) of the Salem Landmark Church, Milwaukee, where the WELS museum is housed. The church, built in 1863, is near the site of our synod's founding in 1850. An open house was held May 21 as a kickoff for a fund-raising drive to restore the Landmark Church.

*For more information, contact James Kiecker, 414/443-8835 or Char Sampe, 414/464-3559.*



## Training congregational evangelists

Although we are all called to be evangelists, WELS recently created a curriculum that churches can follow in order to make the evangelism process more organized.

The 19-course congregational evangelist curriculum is open to men and women who want to assist a congregation and its pastor or a district mission board by spearheading outreach. All courses, except those in the capstone session held at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., are taught by the student's pastor and/or on-site guest teachers. After completing the curriculum, congregations can extend an evangelist call as a full-time salaried, part-time salaried, or volunteer position.

The course was developed mainly

out of the synod's need for trained outreach workers from a variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The congregational evangelist position allows WELS to reach out more effectively to the lost among the diverse ethnic groups in the United States and Canada.

Andy Russel, a member at St. Paul, Calgary, Alberta, Canada, is currently enrolled in the program. He is an elder at St. Paul, is in his thirties, and has a wife and two children. He is in the printing business but would like to spend time as a volunteer evangelist for his congregation.

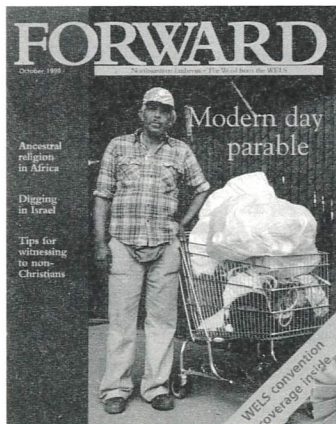
After writing to project director Glen Thompson, Russel received the necessary materials. He meets with his pastor, Douglas Priestap, on a

regular basis and expects to be done with the course in two years. Priestap helps him work through the material and administers his quizzes.

Priestap comments, "I'm glad the synod had the foresight to develop this program, because it will better equip our people for ministry. Other congregations should look into their members enrolling in the evangelist program. I know that it will be a great blessing to our congregation."

*If your congregation is interested in enrolling members in this program, write to WELS Evangelist Program, c/o Glen Thompson, Martin Luther College, 1995 Luther Ct, New Ulm MN 56073.*

## Forward/NL wins awards



*Forward/NL* won three awards at the Associated Church Press convention in March.

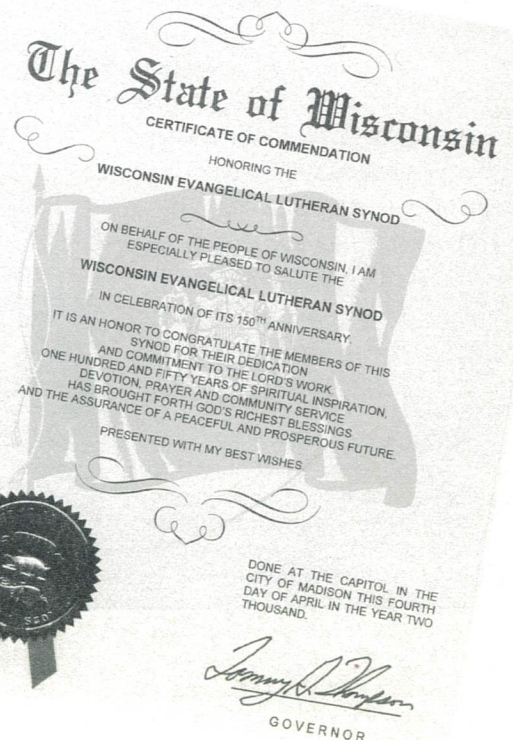
Interact, an interactive Bible study, won an Award of Merit (second place) in the Bible study category. Pastor Randy Hunter wrote the six-part submitted study. The judge commented, "The format of this study is very simple—but because the questions in elements two and three have been carefully crafted, it works!" This monthly Bible study was added to *Forward/NL* in 1998.

"The Samaritan in my house" [October 1999], written by Victor Vieth, received an honorable mention as a feature article for a special interest

magazine. "Excellent contemporary rendering of familiar parable," said the judge.

*Forward/NL* also received an honorable mention for best publication redesign. Paul Ehlke was the magazine's designer at that time.

In April, WELS received a certificate of commendation in celebration of its 150th anniversary from Tommy Thompson, the governor of Wisconsin. Part of it reads: "It is an honor to congratulate the members of this synod for their dedication and commitment to the Lord's work. One hundred and fifty years of spiritual inspiration, devotion, prayer, and community service has brought forth God's richest blessings and the assurance of a peaceful and prosperous future."





## WELS news briefs

These updates are from the offices at the synod administration building. You can contact these offices and administrators at 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398.

### Board for Ministerial Education 414/256-3237

Three initiatives encouraged or approved by the 1999 synod convention are moving forward in our schools with deliberate planning. If all goes well, Martin Luther College (MLC) will qualify to grant licensure through the state of Minnesota, beginning with the class of 2002. MLC will also submit to its board next fall a detailed plan to offer a masters degree in curriculum and instruction. Meanwhile, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary took the first steps to achieve candidate status for accreditation with the Association of Theological Schools.

### Commission on Worship 414/256-3226

**Christian Worship: Altar Book is available from Northwestern Publishing House (NPH).** The book contains the services from *Christian Worship*, 62 Prayers of the Church, 14 other longer prayers, and 78 intercessory prayers. It also contains fuller guidelines for using the services from *Christian Worship*. An organist's accompaniment edition and a CD-ROM with text files for responsive prayers are packaged with *Christian Worship: Altar Book*. Some material from both the altar book and a future book of occasional services is available on the worship Web site, <www.wels.net/sab/cow/cow-home.html>. To order, contact NPH, 1-800-662-6022.

### Commission on Parish Schools 414/256-3223

On March 6 and 7, the Commission

on Parish Schools (CPS) sponsored a symposium to discuss the position of a WELS principal. A cross-section of pastors, teachers, and laypeople discussed the qualifications, roles, and responsibilities of today's WELS principal. Many ideas were generated for how to most effectively prepare and support the WELS principal in his ministry as a mission-focused school leader.

The next **WELS National Teachers' Convention** will be June 26-29, 2001, at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn. The theme will be "The Focus of the Lutheran Family."

CPS produced a **video entitled *Come Meet Our Family***. The seven-minute promotional video tells how a WELS school is really a Christian family that nurtures the whole child—body, mind, and soul. To order the \$10 video, contact CPS, 414/256-3223, <CPS@sab.wels.net>.

### Commission on Youth Discipleship 414/256-3224

Available from Northwestern Publishing House (NPH) are the following **reliable Bible study materials to use with teens:** *Understanding Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs* by Marilyn Bader; *Solid Truth—12 Complete High School Bible Studies; Power Plays*, 12 skit-based Bible studies; *One God many gods—Bible Studies for Post-modern Times; All About Angels, A Biblical Look at God's Messengers* by Jill Hartman; *Lasting Friendship Skills—32 Lessons for Young Christians*. For more information or to order, contact NPH, 1-800-662-6022.

### Board for World Missions 414/256-3239

**Vasil Bunkin** completed the academic program offered by the Lutheran Church in Bulgaria. He is now a candidate for the Holy Ministry. When Bunkin receives his formal call into

the public ministry, he will become the first national pastor in the Lutheran Church in Bulgaria.



World Mission Administrator Dan Koelpin and newly-elected members of the Administrative Committee for Africa, Pastor Pete Zietlow and Principal Jeff Dorn, visited Zambia and Malawi from March 3-20. This trip helped familiarize them with our mission fields there, which are among the largest in our world mission program. These visits are also vital to good communication, understanding, and decision making.

Pictured above are the Malawi missionaries and the Africa Committee visitors. Front row (from left): Joel Spaude, Peter Zietlow, Paul Nitz, Nicholas Laper (Medical Mission administrative coordinator). Back row: Teacher Werner Lemke, Dan Koelpin, Mark Wendland, Jeff Dorn, Paul Wegner, Larry Pontel, John Janosek, Ronald Uhlhorn, Mark Rieke, Richard Warnke.

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## District news

### Minnesota

WLTE-FM honored **Catherine Reich**, member at Salem, Loretto, Minn., with its Mother of the Year award. Reich has five sons and has been a foster mother to 35 teenage boys.

Students, faculty, and staff members at **St. Croix LHS, West St. Paul, Minn.**, conducted a community food drive as part of their Christian service day project in March.

### North Atlantic

Members of **St. Paul, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada**, enjoyed a "Christian Seder" for their worship service on Maundy Thursday, similar to the one that Jesus celebrated with his disciples on the night he was betrayed. The meal included a Passover lamb and other traditional Passover foods and concluded with the distribution of Holy Communion.

### South Atlantic

Eighty students from the seven Lutheran elementary schools in Florida participated in **Sports Fun Weekend** on

Mar. 24-25. The annual event, hosted at Peace, Holiday, Fla., gave the fifth through eighth grade students a weekend of mental and athletic competition, as well as Christian fellowship.

### South Central

**Living Hope Lutheran Exploratory, Northwest San Antonio, Tex.**, officially opened in February.

Members of **Our Savior, Arlington, Tex.**, dedicated their new worship facility on Apr. 2.

### Southeastern Wisconsin

Six Northern Milwaukee County WELS churches participated in a joint song service on Mar. 6 to celebrate WELS' 150th anniversary. Participating churches included **Divinity-Divine Charity, Whitefish Bay; North Trinity, Milwaukee; St. John, Milwaukee; St. Mark, Brown Deer; Risen Savior, Milwaukee; and Salem, Milwaukee.**

**Siloah, Milwaukee**, hosted a steel drum orchestra from Hope, Toronto, Ontario, Canada in February. Members of the community and visitors from as far away as Zambia attended the Black History Sunday service.

### Western Wisconsin

**Jill Darelus**, a junior at Luther High School, Onalaska, Wis., was chosen by audition from over 2,200 applicants to be a member of the Wisconsin State Music Association Honors Choir. The choir is composed of approximately 60 students and will perform in June with a nationally recognized choral conductor.

### Happy Anniversary!

**AZ-CA**—On Feb. 13, members of **Our Shepherd, Lancaster, Calif.**, celebrated 30+ years of the Lord's blessings on their church.

**NW**—**Marge Schroeder**, Immanuel, Oshkosh, Wis., has served the Lord as an organist for 50 years. She says, "I guess I'll keep going until I fall over. After 50 years, it's still fun."

**SA**—On Mar. 19, members of **Abiding Faith, Smyrna, Tenn.**, celebrated their one-year anniversary of holding public worship services.

Members of **Victory, Jacksonville, Fla.**, held a one-year anniversary service on Mar. 19.

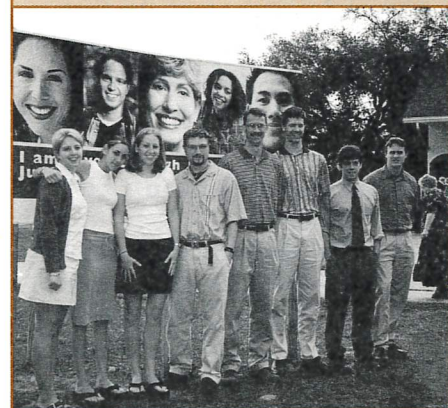
**SEW**—**St. Marcus, Milwaukee**, celebrated its 125th anniversary by unsealing a 106-year old time capsule. The time capsule, retrieved from the cornerstone of the church by Pastor Mark Jeske, contained St. Marcus's charter and constitutional documents handwritten in old-world German script. An array of German and English textbooks, hymnals, doctrinal books, and newspapers were also found within the time capsule.

**St. John, Oak Creek, Wis.**, celebrated its 150th anniversary on Mar. 5 with special services and a banquet.

**St. Peter, Kekoskee, Wis.**, celebrated its 10th anniversary on Mar. 19.

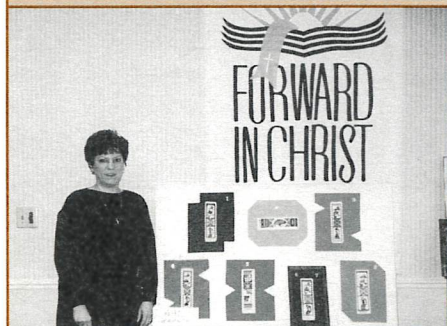
**MI**—On May 7, members of **St. John, Westland, Mich.**, held a service of thanksgiving for the 40 years that **Marie Sazy** served in the teaching ministry.

### South Atlantic



Seven students from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and Campus Pastor Phil Enderle, canvassed for Faith, St. Petersburg, Fla., during the students' spring break. They reached 1,500 homes and were able to identify unchurched souls, distribute Easter invitations, and gauge local interest in an after-school study/recreation center. From left: Dorothy Thompson, Sarah Laux, Jami Plath, Chad Rathsack, Pastor Phillip Enderle, Jonathan Styx, Josh Hoyord, Eric Schoedel.

### Southeastern Wisconsin



Jan Spurlock (above) helped coordinate an African Awareness Day at Epiphany, Racine, Wis., that included a display of items from Africa and a presentation about African mission work. Cross-stitched bookmarks (above) made by wives of the African seminary students were auctioned, and the funds were donated to support the synod's mission work in Africa.

## Obituaries

### Minnesota



A service of thanksgiving was held on Apr. 30 to celebrate the anniversaries of the following Martin Luther College faculty members: (left) Prof. Thomas Hunter, 25 years; Dr. Arthur Schulz, 50 years; Prof. Jack Minch, 25 years.

These pastors are the reporters for the districts featured this month: CA—Hermann John; MN—Jeffrey Bovee; NA—Kevin Schultz; NW—Joel Lillo; SA—Mark Haeffner; SC—Peter Snyder; SEW—Scott Oelhafen; WW—Elton Stroh.

### Alvin G. Werre 1933-2000

Alvin Werre was born April 23, 1933, in Tappen, N.D., and died Jan. 31, 2000, in LaCrescent, Minn.

A 1958 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis., Werre served Nigeria, Africa; Zambia, Africa; Immanuel Lutheran Seminary, Greensboro, N.C.; Our Redeemer, Martin/St. Paul, Batesland, S.D.; Jehovah, Altura/Trinity, Rollingsstone, Minn.; Zion, Clatonia/St. John, Firth, Neb.; Peace, Cataract, Wis.; Grace, Ridgeway, Minn.; and St. Luke, Pickwick, Minn.

He is survived by his wife, Arleen; one daughter, four sons, and 19 grandchildren.

### Doris J. Sauer 1914-1999

Doris Sauer was born May 22, 1914, in Green Lake, Wis., and died Dec. 19, 1999, in Milwaukee, Wis.

A 1935 graduate of Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., Sauer served at St. John, Baraboo, Wis., and Jerusalem, Milwaukee.

Sauer is survived by five sisters and many nieces and nephews.

### Julian G. Anderson 1916-2000

Julian Anderson was born June 11, 1916, in Minneapolis, Minn., and died April 5, 2000, in Lenoir City, Tenn.

A 1947 graduate of Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn., Anderson served Heritage (ELS), Apple Valley, Minn.; St. Phillip (ELS), Minneapolis, Minn.; St. Paul (ELS), Chicago, Ill.; and Faith, St. Petersburg, Fla. He taught at Bethany Lutheran College and Seminary (ELS), Mankato, Minn. He translated the New Testament into an easy-to-understand style, known as the Everyday American English (EAE) version, which is used by Wisconsin Lutheran Institutional Ministries, Inc., and distributed in hundreds of prisons throughout the United States.

Anderson is survived by wife, LaTona; two sons, two daughters, 12 grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren.

## ON THE BRIGHT SIDE

Our church's annual report was a whopping 47 pages long. With such a long report, a few mistakes were inevitable. A member caught the following blooper in the section describing our Mission to the Children Fund. This may help explain a shortage of pastors.

"Mission to the Children is a WELS effort to provide food packages and Christmas gifts to families in poverty stricken northern Mexico. Our congregation sponsors a family with six children in it. For only \$50 per month this family receives four \$20 food packages each month. Each package includes rice, beans, flour, pastor (for soup), milk . . ."

P.S. I meant "pasta" not "pastor" for soup. This makes it sound as though our family in Mexico is of the cannibal variety.

*Paul Vander Galien  
Lowell, Wisconsin*

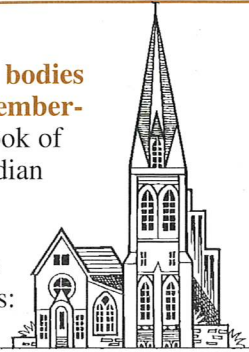
## THROUGH MY BIBLE IN 3 YEARS

July 2000

- |                       |                     |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Ezekiel 42:1-43:12 | 17. Ez. 7           |
| 2. Ezek. 43:13-44:31  | 18. Ez. 8           |
| 3. Ezek. 45, 46       | 19. Ez. 9, 10       |
| 4. Ezek. 47:1-12      | 20. Nehemiah 1      |
| 5. Ezek. 47:13-48:35  | 21. Neh. 2          |
| 6. Colossians 1:1-14  | 22. Neh. 3          |
| 7. Col. 1:15-23       | 23. Neh. 4          |
| 8. Col. 1:24-2:7      | 24. Neh. 5          |
| 9. Col. 2:8-23        | 25. Neh. 6          |
| 10. Col. 3:1-17       | 26. Neh. 7          |
| 11. Col. 3:18-4:18    | 27. Neh. 8          |
| 12. Philemon          | 28. Neh. 9:1-21     |
| 13. Ezra 1, 2         | 29. Neh. 9:22-37    |
| 14. Ez. 3             | 30. Neh. 9:38-10:39 |
| 15. Ez. 4             | 31. Neh. 11         |
| 16. Ez. 5, 6          |                     |



**Which U.S. church bodies have the highest memberships?**—The Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches lists the following 20 church bodies as having the highest memberships:



1. Roman Catholic Church (62,018,436);
2. Southern Baptist Convention (15,729,356);
3. United Methodist Church (8,400,000);
4. National Baptist Convention, USA;
5. Church of God in Christ (5,499,875);
6. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (5,178,225);
7. Latter-day Saints/Mormons (4,923,100);
8. Presbyterian Church, USA (3,574,959);
9. National Baptist Convention of America (3,500,000);
10. Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (2,594,404);
11. Assemblies of God (2,525,812);
12. African Methodist Episcopal Church (2,500,000);
13. National Missionary Baptist Convention of America (2,500,000);
14. Progressive National Baptist Convention (2,500,000);
15. Episcopal Church (2,364,559);
16. Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America (1,954,500);
17. American Baptist Churches USA (1,507,400);
18. Churches of Christ (1,500,000);
19. United Church of Christ (1,421,088);
20. African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (1,252,369).

WELS (410,169) ranked 32nd.

**Cross necklace dispute settled—**

An Alabama school board settled a lawsuit filed by a student who was prevented from displaying a cross necklace.

The American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ), a conservative law firm, filed suit in October on behalf of Kandice Smith, a sixth-grader at Curry Middle School in Jasper, Ala.

In February, a settlement agreement was reached that permits Kandice to wear her cross outside her clothing and requires the Walker County

Public Schools to revise their dress code policy “to mandate religious accommodations in accordance with the Alabama Religious Freedom Amendment.”

Russ Robertson, an attorney for the school board, expects the board will create guidelines to deal with similar situations in the future. The policy, which prohibited the display of any necklace outside clothing, was designed to provide a uniform style of attire.

**The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) keeps name—**The LCMS Board of Directors will not recommend changing the name of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod at the synod’s 2001 convention.

The board decided this in February in keeping with the unanimous recommendation of a 12-member name-change task force.

The task force report lists 20-some reasons for and against a name change. Those in favor argue that the current name is confusing and that a new name would be “more friendly to the unchurched.” Those opposed cited such reasons as a desire to “preserve our doctrinal integrity” and the view that “explaining our name is an opportunity to witness.”

The name-change issue was referred to the board by the 1995 synod convention. In 1998, the board named the task force to study the question. A 1999 synodwide random survey of church workers and layleaders found those who responded were widely divided on the issue.

[LCMSNews]

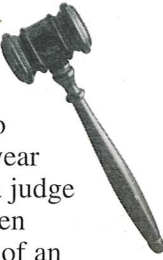
**Serb bishops say no communion for doctors performing abortions—**

Concerned about a declining birthrate among Serbs, the highest body of the Serbian Orthodox Church in the former Yugoslavia issued a letter in March that asked priests to withhold Holy Communion from physicians, midwives, and other medical professionals who perform abortions, the

independent Beta news agency reported. Abortions are legal in Serbia.

“Abortion is a grievous sin before God, condemned by the Scriptures,” said the letter. “As such, it threatens the entire Serbian nation with biological extermination.”

The synod’s letter maintained that Holy Communion should be withheld until the medical professionals perform penance.



**Sentence decision of Bible-quoting judge upheld—**In a unanimous decision, the Ohio Supreme Court upheld a 51-year prison sentence imposed by a judge who quoted a Bible verse when punishing a man for the rape of an eight-year-old girl.

Hamilton County Judge Melba Marsh quoted a Bible verse during her 1998 sentencing of James Arnett that says anyone who offends a child would be better off if “a millstone were hanged around his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.”

Last year an appeals court overturned the sentence, saying the judge acted outside Ohio’s sentencing guidelines. The state Supreme Court disagreed, the Associated Press reported, and decided the judge’s ruling did not violate due process rights.

**Poll: Can religion answer today’s problems?**—Two-thirds (67%) of Americans believe that religion can answer all or most of today’s problems, according to an average of two 1999 Gallup surveys. Twenty percent say that religion is old-fashioned and out-of-date.

The lowest percentage saying that religion can answer all or most problems was 56 percent in 1984, while the highest was 81 percent in 1957.

[Emerging Trends, January 2000]

Most news reported in this section is derived from Religion News Service. Items do not necessarily reflect the views of WELS or Forward/NL.

**CHANGES IN MINISTRY****Pastors**

**Bitter, Jon R.**, to Resurrection, Rochester, Minn.  
**Buelow, Timothy H.**, to Vasteras Lutheran Free Church of Sweden, Vasteras, Sweden  
**Fricke, Joseph J.**, to Grace, Portland, Ore.  
**Henning, Thomas C.**, to St. Paul, New Ulm, Minn. (retirement)  
**Kehl, David A.**, to Good Shepherd, Deltona, Fla.  
**Meyer, Joh P.**, to St. Luke, New Lisbon/St. Paul, Mauston, Wis. (retirement)  
**Myers, Daniel**, to Great Plains LHS, Watertown, S.D.  
**Raddatz, Kevin P.**, to St. John, Libertyville, Ill.  
**Reckzin, Dale M.**, to St. John, Oak Creek, Wis.  
**Rimmert, Jonathan E.**, to Grace, La Crosse, Wis.  
**Schwanke, Larry R.**, to St. John, Milton, Wis.

**Teachers**

**Aswege, Daniel D.**, to Shepherd of the Hills, Greeley, Colo.  
**Banaszak, Thomas J.**, to Morning Star, Jackson, Wis.  
**Barenz, John R.**, to Rocky Mountain LHS, Denver, Colo.  
**Boese, Heather M.**, to Star of Bethlehem, New Berlin, Wis.  
**Boileau, Philip N.**, to Christ Our Savior, Columbia, Tenn.  
**Brich, Steven M.**, to Zion, Rhinelander, Wis.  
**Brickham, Susan J.**, to Beautiful Savior, Cincinnati, Ohio  
**Bruckner, Thomas J.**, to Emanuel, New London, Wis.  
**Christianson, Jan M.**, to Shepherd of the Mountains, Reno, Nev.  
**Dallman, Joyce E.**, to retirement  
**Gentele, Colleen L.**, to Bethlehem, Hortonville, Wis.  
**George, Michael R.**, to St. John, Wauwatosa, Wis. (staff minister)  
**Hartwig, Helen L.**, to Calvary, Thiensville, Wis.  
**Hermanson, Jodi L.**, to Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn.  
**Hoff, Deborah L.**, to Calvary, Thiensville, Wis.  
**Hopp, Amy M.**, to Sola Fide, Lawrenceville, Ga.  
**Humann, Corinne M.**, to Nebraska LHS, Waco, Neb.  
**Jahns, Susan D.**, to Morning Star, Jackson, Wis.  
**Keen, Alice S.**, to retirement  
**Klindworth, Martha J.**, to St. Matthew, Winona, Minn.  
**Koester, Jason A.**, to St. Paul, Ixonia, Wis.  
**Krebs, Michel W.**, to St. Paul, Algoma, Wis.  
**Kuehn, Kerry K.**, to Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee  
**Lippert, Benjamin C.**, to St. James, Milwaukee  
**Lowry, Marcy**, to Christ, Port Saint Lucie, Fla.  
**Maciejczak, Kurt E.**, to Our Savior, San Antonio, Tex.  
**Miller, Anna M.**, to St. John, Watertown, Wis.  
**Monday, Earl W.**, to Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn.  
**Neitzel, Jean K.**, to West LHS, Plymouth, Minn.  
**Olsen, Carol J.**, to Bethany, Port Orchard, Wash.  
**Ott, James M.**, to Huron Valley LHS, Westland, Mich.  
**Pitt, Sharon J.**, to St. Mark, Eau Claire, Wis.  
**Prange, Leanne M.**, to Christ, Saginaw, Mich.  
**Press, Anne L.**, to St. John, Watertown, Wis.  
**Rebers, Lynn M.**, to Grace, Falls Church, Va.

**Rinehart, Lucy D.**, to Bethany, Port Orchard, Wash.  
**Schmidt, Ronald G.**, to St. Paul, New Ulm, Minn.  
**Schubkegel, Timothy P.**, to Immanuel, Hadar, Neb.  
**Schulz, Beth**, to St. Peter, St. Peter, Minn.  
**Sylvester, Steven J.**, to Atonement, Milwaukee  
**Tess, Elizabeth C.**, to St. Mark, Green Bay, Wis.  
**Troge, Eric R.**, to Bethlehem, Hortonville, Wis.  
**Ubl, Kelly B.**, to St. Paul, Cudahy, Wis.

**ANNIVERSARIES**

**Beaver Dam, Wis.**—Good Shepherd (50). June 25. Service, 10:30 AM. Potluck to follow. <leon@centuryinter.net>.  
**Lubbock, Tex.**—Shepherd of the Plains (25). June 25. Services, 10:30 AM and 5 PM. Meal, 6:30 PM. RSVP, 806/794-4203.  
**Johnson, Minn.**—Trinity Lutheran School (75). July 2. Service, 10 AM outdoors at school, weather permitting. Otherwise, at church. Coffee hour, 8:30 AM. Noon meal, followed by games and entertainment. 320/748-7774.  
**Mobridge, S.D.**—Zion Lutheran School (50). July 2. Service, 10 AM. Dinner and program at noon. Reservations, 605/845-3904.  
**Sioux City, Iowa**—Grace (75). July 9. Service, 10 AM. Noon meal. Anniversary service, 2 PM.  
**Sault Ste. Marie, Mich.**—Immanuel (100). July 16. Service, 10:30 AM. Picnic to follow. Gordon Peters, <clp1984@sault.com>.  
**Goodhue, Minn.**—St. John (125). July 16. Services, 10 AM & 2 PM. Noon meal.  
**Chaseburg, Wis.**—St. Peter (125). July 16. Service, 10:15 AM. Potluck to follow. Paul Schwartz, 608/483-2318.  
**Seaforth, Minn.**—St. Paul (100). Aug. 6. Services, 10:30 AM & 1:30 PM. Catered noon meal. RSVP by July 15. Dale Arndt, 507/734-5101.  
**Graceville, Minn.**—Mt. Olive (75). Aug. 6. Service, 3 PM. Dinner, 5 PM. <kbilitz@info-link.net>.  
**Chaseburg, Wis.**—St. Peter (125). Aug. 6. Service, 10:15 AM. Paul Schwartz, 608/483-2318.

**COMING EVENTS**

**OWLS annual convention**—July 11-13. Four Points Sheraton, Milwaukee, Wis. 414/321-9977.  
**DMLC retired alumni get-together**—Aug. 15. Trinity, 310 Fremont St, Kiel, Wis. Devotion at 11:45 AM followed by noon potluck. Contact Delbert Mey, 920/894-3163, or Robert Landvatter, 262/567-0640.  
**Lutheran Women's Missionary Society mini-retreats**—Fall 2000. Sept. 22-23, Pierre, S.D. Sept. 22-23, Houston, Tex. Oct. 13-14, Las Vegas. 414/321-6212, <lwms@execpc.com>.  
**Symposium**—Oct. 30-31 at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon. Theme: "Forward in Christ at the Dawn of a New Millennium." Price: \$50. Elaine, 262/242-8100; <lindlofe@wls.wels.net>.

**NEEDED**

**Original arrangements**—for piano/organ and instrumental parts of familiar hymns or created compositions to be used for CD recording. Elaine Stindt, 763/755-8597.  
**G7 Schulmerich bell**—the next bell in the 3.5 set octave. Melanie Becker, 713/214-7232.  
**Electronic organ**—good condition, two or more full manuals, full pedal board. Speakers desirable but not necessary. Pastor Edgar Herman, 905/294-7573, <nuraded@aol.com>.  
**Luther's Catechism**—small, older version. Also, memory book from 1950s. Mary Lou

Prellwitz, 520/775-5590.

**Bible history books**—1982 edition, green. Also accompanying teacher's notebook and worksheets. Robert Hill, <rhill@sml.cz>.

**Preachers**—July 2, 9, & 16. Prince of Peace, Thousand Oaks, Calif. 50 miles northwest of Los Angeles. Guests may park RVs on church parking lot. Other housing possible. Pastor C. D. Found, 805/492-8943, <CDFound@aol.com>.

**Preachers**—July 2, 9. Prince of Peace, Fairport, N.Y. Stay in parsonage (four bedrooms). Day trips will get you to Niagara Falls, Finger Lakes Region/Wine Country. Within a few hours of Adirondack Mountains. Adam Horneber, 716/381-4670, <Ahorneber@juno.com>.

**SERVICE TIMES**

**Calgary, Alberta, Canada**—Mountain View. Sunday service, 9:30 AM. Bible class, 10:45 AM. Jonathan Schultz, <schuljon@cadvision.com>.

**NAMES WANTED**

**Presenters**—for WELS Tech 2001, a conference on the use of technology in WELS churches and schools. July 15-18, 2001. 414/256-3210; <garyb@sab.wels.net>.

**Land O Lakes, Wis.**—Land O Lakes Lutheran Outreach will hold summer worship at 11 AM from May-September at the Land O Lakes Fire Hall, Hwy B. Philip Gieschen, 715/479-3353; <pgiesch@newnorth.net>.

**NW Wyoming**—Resurrection, Powell, Wyo. Services, 2nd and 4th Sundays. Ken Nelson, 406/222-3372.

**Bella Vista, Ark.**—Beautiful Savior, PO Box 5215, Bella Vista AR 72714. 501/876-2155.

**Fort Riley/Manhattan, Kan.**—Phil Hirsch, 785/770-9656.

**Smyrna, Tenn.**—Abiding Faith. Mark Kaesmeyer, 615/220-9528.

**POSITIONS AVAILABLE**

**Information specialist**—Jesus Cares Ministries, Wisconsin Lutheran Special Needs Resource Center. Full-time, located in Milwaukee area. WELS applicants should possess basic computer skills and two or more years library services or related area. Sara Snyder, 414/259-0292.

**Summer camp**—Killarney Lutheran Summer Camp, Onsted, Mich. Counselors, cook, nurse, lifeguard, and asst. director. Camp dates, July 6-Aug. 5. Required training, June 28-July 1. Julie Pohl, <pohljuli@msu.edu>, 517/467-7603.

**Receptionist and staff assistant**—Christian Life Resources, Inc. Full-time. Must possess communication and computer skills. Contact Mark Bartels, <MBartels@clr.wels.net>.

**CORRECTION**

Jerome H. Braun was incorrectly reported (April 2000) as accepting a call to Shepherd of the Lord, Fredericksburg, Tex. Braun actually accepted a call to serve at Shepherd of the Hills, Fredericksburg, Tex.

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

# Faith, love, and hope

In spite of fierce persecution, the congregation in Thessalonica displayed the three greatest virtues of all—faith, love, and hope.

Paul E. Zell

**A**thletic teams want to be remembered for the championships they win. Business corporations want to be remembered for the products they provide. For what do you want you and your church to be remembered?

**Read 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10.**  
**“... We always thank God for all of you. . . .”**

Paul’s first visit to Thessalonica had been turbulent. The apostle spent just three Sabbath days in their synagogue “explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead” (Acts 17:3). Then his opponents became jealous and instigated a riot. Paul and Silas were forced to flee under cover of darkness.

Yet those left behind continued in “grace and peace” (v. 1). They realized what you realize—that “grace” is the cause of every sinner’s salvation. In his undeserved love, the heavenly Father provided a Savior from sin. They also enjoyed the sweet “peace” with God that is the result of the sinner’s salvation. No longer is there hostility between God and his children.

Your brothers and sisters in Thessalonica were now displaying the three greatest virtues of all. In spite of fierce persecution, their faith, love, and hope were being remembered by others. “We continually remember before our God and Father,” Paul told them, “your work produced by faith, your labor

prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.”

• **Faith stands upon someone or something.** The Holy Spirit worked through Paul’s words, and these people in Thessalonica had come to stand on Jesus and on God’s promise of forgiveness in Jesus. That private miracle led to public works of service.

• **Love moves people to give themselves up for the sake of others.** We might imagine the Thessalonians generously sharing what they had with the needy. Certainly they were telling those in need of a Savior about the redeeming work of Christ.

“The Lord’s message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia—your faith in God has become known everywhere” (v. 8), Paul wrote. Imagine the beautiful sound of a church bell echoing throughout the countryside. In the same way the good news of Jesus was ringing in Thessalonica and for many miles in every direction.

• **Hope is the certainty of things to come.** The Thessalonians were certain they belonged to God and great blessings awaited them “in our Lord Jesus Christ.” They knew that a joyful eternity awaited them in heaven. They would spend their lives waiting for God’s “Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath” (v. 10). Such hope took the sting out of the misery that their Lord’s enemies were still dishing out in their city.

The Holy Spirit promotes faith, love, and hope elsewhere too. Writing to the Colossians, Paul thanks God for “the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven” (Colossians 1:5). These great virtues are precious gifts given by the Spirit to individuals and to congregations so that Christ might be glorified.

You and your congregation could be remembered for many things. Pray for a rich measure of the Holy Spirit so that, above all, you can be remembered for faith, love, and hope—just like the Thessalonians.

In upcoming months we will read more of Paul’s epistle and realize again the priceless value of faith, love, and hope.

*Paul Zell is pastor at Messiah, Alpharetta, Georgia.*

**For further study:**

Read Acts 17:1-9 and  
 The People’s Bible:

*Thessalonians* (p. 1-17).



# Mobilizing the troops

**C**an you fill a vacant pulpit or a teacherless classroom? Are you free to become a full-time staff minister?

Today, April 4, there are approximately 90 pastoral vacancies. Last week the Commission on Parish Schools processed 55 new teacher call requests for a total of about 150.

When you read this, about two weeks after the newest graduates have been assigned, we'll still have vacancies. Forty-one pastoral candidates and around 100 teachers and five staff ministers will be assigned in May. About 50 congregations will still have vacant pulpits, and about 50 classrooms will be empty along with a good number of staff ministry positions.

But there's more to this picture—more even than the good news of increasing enrollments at Martin Luther College. What I really want to address, person to person, is your individual role in your church and synod.

Even if there were enough called workers to go around, you would still have a God-given mission. It's called the priesthood of all believers. Peter says, "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood . . . that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light" (1 Peter 2:9).

Darkness in the church of Luther's day clouded that picture. Laypeople were expected to "pray, pay, and obey." Luther knew that this was wrong. The Word of God calls for every Christian to share the gospel, praising Jesus for calling us into his wonderful, eternal light.

The synod's mission statement reflects this God-pleasing objective: "To mobilize the universal priesthood in ministry using the Word."

A story tells about the devil's attempt to immobilize God's army of believers. He

would convince the soldiers to leave all the combat up to their officers.

How effective would any army be if only the officers fought? If Satan convinces the vast army of Christians to leave all spiritual warfare in the hands of their called leaders, how successful could the church be?

The church's success depends upon the Lord. But he enlists every one of us to speak his Word, through which his Spirit works, granting the success.

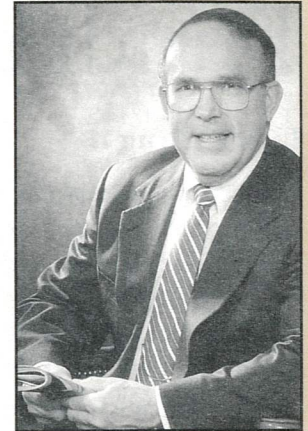
Yes, God blesses his Word proclaimed through his servants—the pastors, teachers, staff ministers whom we have called in his name. Likewise he blesses his army of believers when they wield the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God.

The ways are many, too many for one list. Teaching Sunday school or vacation Bible school, visiting the sick and shut-ins, being active in a congregational organization, doing evangelism. Or, on a more personal level, encouraging, with the Word of God, a member who is lax in church attendance or who is overwhelmed with grief or guilt. You and I serve as royal priests of God when we assist our children with their memory work or give them the example of a Christ-like life to follow.

The list is endless. Whenever each of us serves as a royal priest of God, we are fellow soldiers with our called workers. Just like them, then, we are what God meant for us to be, co-workers with our Savior, Jesus.

No, perhaps we can't fill a pulpit or a classroom, or become a full-time staff minister. But by being active fellow soldiers alongside our full-time, called workers, we can make what the Lord has called them to do easier, more enjoyable. And that brings great joy and fulfillment to our lives as well.

Can you see yourself as a royal priest of God, serving the Lord? The Lord does!



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

The Word  
of God calls  
for every  
Christian to  
share the  
gospel.

# Fundraisers in the church

John F. Brug

***Our church school has many fundraisers. Our pastor feels that having our kids going door to door selling things is an evangelism tool and teaches responsibility. I totally disagree. What can I do?***

Others in WELS share your concern, and fundraising is arousing controversy in some congregations. "Fundraising" here is limited to sales of various kinds, not to the methods a congregation uses to seek offerings, which is a different subject.

Since the Bible does not speak of fundraisers directly, our synod does not have a formal position on them and does not flatly condemn all fundraising. But our teachers consistently warn against the danger of church fundraisers that may undermine the stewardship of the members and may give the impression that church members are seeking the help of outsiders to support church programs that the members themselves should support.

In evaluating fundraising efforts, you need to ask several questions:

1. What does the fundraiser support?  
If the work of the congregation depends on the proceeds to do what the freewill offerings of Christians are to accomplish, will this activity undermine the Christian stewardship of the members?
2. Is the purpose of the fundraiser to seek support of non-members for work given to God's people to do?
3. Are the fundraisers causing offense in the congregation or community?
4. May non-members feel that we are more interested in their money than in their eternal welfare?

5. May an unbeliever be hardened in self-righteousness by thinking he is doing his duty to God by supporting the fundraiser?

Fundraisers by groups within the congregation, such as a youth group earning money for a trip, would be less likely to undermine congregational stewardship than fundraisers intended to raise support for the mission of the church, which should be supported by freewill offerings of its members. But any fundraiser can become offensive if it happens constantly and if members approach people outside the congregation.

Fundraisers that reach outside the church can undercut the church's mission. They can reinforce the impression of many outsiders that the church is a money-making machine. People commonly feel irritation at being solicited by fundraisers. The use of children as "front men" may increase the resentment of some. Door-to-door evangelism faces an increasing backlash because of the zealous practices of some groups. It is hard to imagine how "evangelism" accompanied by fundraising could be positive for the church's image.

Even "successful" fundraising among outsiders may fail the test of question 5. Does it foster a spiritual complacency on the part of the participant because he or she is helping the mission of the church?

If you are convinced that the fundraising in your congregation fails the test of the five questions above, can you present specific evidence to support your point of view?

A recent poll about fundraising practices in one area of our synod

reveals increased pressure in support of all kinds of fundraising programs in our congregations. Most pastors are concerned about this and are resisting the proliferation of such programs. More congregations are restricting fundraising programs by groups within the church. In light of increasing controversy about this matter, congregations ought to take a good look at fundraising practices in their midst to evaluate the effect these programs are having on the stewardship and image of the congregation.

***What about the lottery and raffling in our church? Isn't gambling wrong?***

Your question surprised me, since I have a hard time imagining why a church would use anything that even smacks of gambling as a fundraiser, in light of the current gambling mania that grips our country.

Scripture does not explicitly condemn every form of wager or chance, but it does warn against greed and trying to benefit at the expense of others. In participating in organized gambling, Christians have to also consider the effect it has on society, especially on the weak and those who fall victim to it.

If sales and other fundraising projects carry with them serious possibility of causing offense and harm to the image and mission of the church, anything that smacks of church-sponsored gambling is doubly offensive.

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



# A WEDDING BLESSING



To Cana, simple backwoods town,  
 Came common folk from miles around  
 To join the celebration there  
 Of a newly-wedded pair.

Their family tree and given names  
 Are as elusive as their fame;  
 No other honor would they boast  
 Except to Christ they played the host.

His first disciples joined the throng,  
 Which filled the barley fields with song.  
 All danced and dined and toasted 'til  
 They drained the cup and had their fill.

And when the festal cup was dry  
 The groomsman breathed an anxious sigh;  
 In fevered search his comrades went  
 To spare the two embarrassment.

But nowhere in that rustic town  
 Could sufficient drink be found.  
 Swift rumor round the banquet spread:  
 "They have no wine," Christ's mother said.

Of every noble wedding-prayer  
 That falls upon the Sovereign's ear  
 For long life, children, harmony:  
 More wedding wine seems least of these.

Yet, when his time had fully-come  
 And every human hope clean gone,  
 To this small prayer he gave a nod  
 And proved himself the Son of God.

To our petition, Lord, give ear  
 And bless the couple married here  
 That they seek first the things above  
 And, thus, on earth receive your love.

And when their pilgrimage is o'er  
 Receive your love forevermore:  
 From wedded joy in which they stand  
 To the banquet of the Lamb.

Written for Benji and Emily Pederson  
 by Wayne A. Laitinen

## Picture this



Brett Miller and Jonathan Stahl enjoy Christian fellowship during noon recess at Riverview, Appleton, Wis.

Susan Stahl writes: "Fellowship occurs whenever God's children get together to encourage one another and enjoy each other's company. The smiles on the boys' faces certainly reflect the benefit of Christian fellowship."

Send pictures to Picture this, *Forward/NL*, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398. On a separate sheet, give us information about the photo. Those whose photos are chosen will receive a small gift.

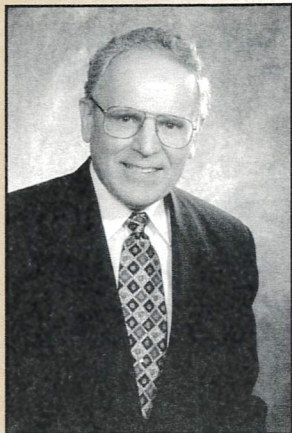
## 24-HOUR SPIRITUAL SNAPSHOT

In the last 24 hours, what religious activities did you do?

Here's how 100 people nationwide responded:

Prayed at a meal.....	55%
Talked to someone about God or some aspect of your faith and spirituality.....	51%
Shared faith.....	44%
Read the Bible.....	36%
Read books or articles with spiritual themes.....	32%
Counseled someone from a spiritual perspective.....	25%
Watched/listened to religious radio/TV.....	24%
Spoke out on a national issue of your religious conviction.....	22%
Attended a prayer service or Bible study or worship group.....	15%
Listened to cassettes/tapes with spiritual themes.....	15%
Called a psychic hotline or read your horoscope.....	5%
Used the Internet to research or explore matter of religious faith.....	3%
Visited computer Web sites related to churches or that contain spiritual themes.....	2%

These are a few key findings from the survey "24 Hours in the Spiritual Life of America" undertaken for a book by George Gallup Jr. and Timothy Jones. It has a margin of error of plus or minus nine percent. (*Emerging Trends*, November 1999)



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

I can publicly  
purge all the  
sins of my  
church in the  
past, . . . but  
it's all for  
naught unless  
I apply the  
lesson to  
myself.

## Forgive him for he has sinned

It is in vogue to ask for forgiveness. Not that asking for forgiveness is at all new. Jesus taught extensively about forgiveness—both seeking it and giving it. His call to repent beckons us to make a full breast of our sins, humbly seeking pardon. His perfect life and voluntary death made sure we would find it.

What's in vogue has to do with who is asking forgiveness for whom and for what. Today we beg for forgiveness for sins of history, sins of institutions, sins of people other than ourselves. Some Lutherans have asked forgiveness for Luther's unacceptable remarks about the Jews. Pope John Paul II prayed for forgiveness for unspecified acts of religious intolerance and injustice toward Jews, women, indigenous peoples, immigrants, the poor, and the unborn.

No one denies that sins were, and are, committed in all the named areas. No one wants to see such sins continued. If *mea culpa* for the church of the past creates less need for *mea culpas* in the future, good will have come from the gestures.

Why, then, the uneasy tension that floats about the magnanimous gestures of repentance? Some, instead of welcoming the open displays of humility, have complained that they didn't go far enough, weren't specific enough. "Mention the holocaust! Mention Hitler! Apologize for the church's part in letting them happen."

While we're at it, why not throw in Eve eating the forbidden fruit? What about the tower of Babel? Don't you see a flaw here? People of God's church throughout history have been a part of atrocities and historic

injustices. To get specific begs to list them all. Certainly the guilty parties have needed forgiveness.

The question we need to ask is "What does it mean for me to ask forgiveness for someone else from another time?" Can I even do that? Does it imply that they never repented? Does it assume burdens of guilt that are unfairly applied?

More to the point, perhaps, does it do any good to apologize for Luther or any past people if my own life is not one of repentance? I can ask for forgiveness for every sin ever committed by a WELS member. But if I won't ask you to forgive me when I hurt you, I may seek pardon for the whole world but lose my own soul—not to mention your good will.

I can ask you to forgive the sins of my brothers or sisters, but if they don't repent of them, or can't, it's an empty sound. I can publicly purge all the sins of my church in the past up to the moment of my confession, but it's all for naught unless I apply the lesson to myself from now on.

Some will observe, however, that you can't build bridges for the future if you don't acknowledge the mistakes of the past. Understandable! But the road to the future is entrusted to us now, and we need to account for our own mistakes, each of us individually, if we want to see any improvement. Yes, learn from the past, but start with yourself at the cross of Christ to ensure the future.

*Gary P. Baumler*

A Video Docudrama on the  
Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod



# HARVEST of JOY

"A triumph for the WELS."

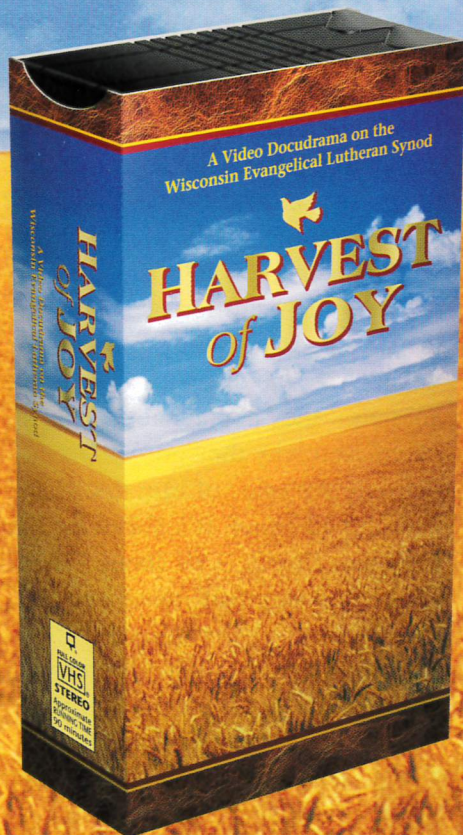
Dr. James G. Kiecker  
President,  
WELS Historical Institute

"Fosters a sense of  
humble gratitude."

Rev. Joel Gerlach  
retired

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God's grace. Harvest of Joy captures that story and presents  
it with honesty and accuracy."

John M. Brenner  
Dean, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary



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Milwaukee, WI 53222



# Is your church a

Mark J. Cares

# ZOO?

**We should appreciate diversity in our churches just like people visiting zoos appreciate the diversity among the animals.**

I like going to the zoo. The wide diversity of animals reminds me of how great our Creator is. The brilliant colors of the tropical birds, the unbelievable variety of sea creatures, the imaginative shapes and sizes of land animals, cause me to shake my head in awe at God's wisdom and power. Sometimes people wonder if God has a sense of humor. I just tell them to look at the platypus.

## God appreciates diversity

Imagine, however, going to the zoo one day and every enclosure contains the same type of bear! You walk from enclosure to enclosure, and there's another bear. It wouldn't take long for that to become old. Instead of running ahead to see what's next, the kids would start dragging us to the nearest exit.

The word diversity is getting big play these days. It has become popular to talk about accepting people in their diversity, and the way it is sometimes used can leave a bad taste in our mouths. Not uncommonly, the diversity we are being urged to accept is sinful diversity such as godless lifestyle and Christless religions.

But let's not disregard the idea of diversity just because so many misuse it. As is so evident from the world of nature, God loves diversity. God also

loves diversity in people. Tall, short, thick, thin, hairy, bald, black, white, red. Some are quiet, while others are boisterous. Some are musical, while others are philosophical. There are the athletes, and then there are the rest of us.

## We should appreciate diversity

Is this diversity something we appreciate in our churches? Or have we unconsciously fallen into a "cookie cutter" mentality? "Everybody will use and appreciate the same style of music for worship." "There is only one proper method for teaching our children God's truth." "Only the pastor (and elders?) should visit straying members."

Or how about when somebody steps out of the mold? How would you react if the man next to you raised his hands in prayer instead of folding them? How would you feel if somebody got emotional in Bible class and with tears of joy gave a testimonial of what God has done for her? How do you respond when somebody comes up with a new way

of doing something—a way that you never have done before?

What type of people is your congregation trying to reach? Are they people "like us" or are they from different backgrounds, whether economic, ethnic, or social? There's a cartoon in which a line of people greet the pastor after services. They look identical. They even dress identically except for a couple in the rear. The caption reads: "Think he'll notice we're visitors?" What would you do if people who were "out of the norm" sat next to you in church? Would you tolerate them? Or would you appreciate them?

There's a big difference between the two. People visiting zoos don't just tolerate the diversity among the animals—they appreciate it. That's one reason why they go. Variety is not only the spice of life; it's what zoos are all about. It's also what the Christian church is all about. "Now the body is not made up of one part but of many" (1 Corinthians 12:14).

Is your church a zoo? In every congregation there are many different gifts and personalities.

That's not a huge negative—it's a wonderful positive. Appreciate our God-given diversity. Enjoy it. Make full use of it.

May your church be a zoo.

Mark Cares is pastor at Messiah, Nampa, Idaho.

