

# FORWARD IN CHRIST

August 2000

Northwestern Lutheran • The Word from the WELS

“Rest” in  
ministry

A decade of  
deepening  
darkness

The gospel  
out West



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Christian couples  
communicate

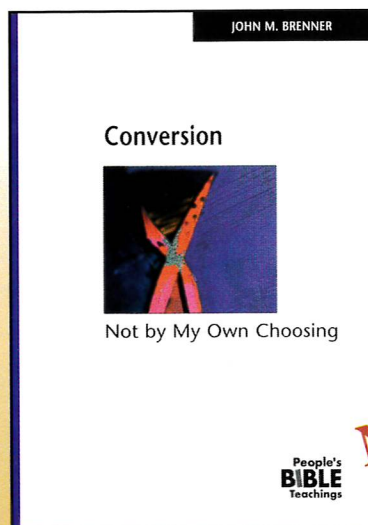
# IT'S A STRUGGLE— FOR SOME THE QUESTION. FOR MANY THE ANSWER!



How does a person become a Christian?

Choose one of the following:

- A. A person must make the decision to turn his or her life over to Jesus.
- B. The Holy Spirit alone brings a person to faith in Jesus through the gospel.
- C. The Holy Spirit helps, but a person must work at it.
- D. A person is born into a church family and is married and buried by the church.



Our gracious God *makes* Christians; he does the work. Man's ideas—that conversion requires a miraculous “experience” or a “decision for Christ”—are wrong. Discover the details of God's answer to the question of salvation in *Conversion* by Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary professor John M. Brenner. Learn more about reaching out to those who have fallen from faith and about restoring them with Christian discipline.

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# Keep focused on the goal

*For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light. Luke 16:8*

Thomas A. Westra

**T**hree men traveling together take seats around me on a morning commuter flight.

One says, "I'm going to sleep. Don't wake me until we get there."

The second scans the sports page, pushes his seat back, and dozes off.

The third one is obviously the boss. Before the plane is off the ground he has his briefcase open and is going through reports. Soon he has his laptop out and is checking figures on his calculator. He shakes his head, hits the guy across the aisle from him, and says, "Wake up, you'll have to redo this before we get to Milwaukee." Then he wakes up the guy behind him, gives him a project, and says, "I need this done by the time we land."

When we touch ground he checks that every hair is in place, straightens his tie, and looks for lint on his navy suit. As he enters the terminal, he greets the man who is there to meet him with a confident smile and a firm handshake.

This man has all his energy focused on his goal. All the powers of his intellect, all the determination of his will, all the resources at his disposal are focused on closing the deal.

## **The dishonest world's focus**

Do you remember Jesus' story of the dishonest manager (Luke 16:1-13)? A rich man has a business and hires a manager to oversee it. It comes to his attention that this



manager is ripping him off. So the rich man tells the manager he's giving him the ax.

At first, the dishonest manager is shook up over his sudden change of fortune, but he comes up with a brilliant plan. He calls in two men who owe a lot of money to the company and tells them to drastically reduce their invoices. If I did the math correctly, the discounts were about \$50,000 each. He is cutting some pretty good deals!

Do you see what he is up to? He's taking the resources at his disposal—never mind that it isn't his money and never mind that he is being dishonest—and using them to win friends and influence people. The result is that when his money runs out, they will owe him a favor.

The surprising twist is the reaction of the rich man. Although this dishonest manager just cheated him out of \$100,000, the rich man says, "Well done! You're a crook, but you're a clever crook."

## **Staying focused on spiritual goals**

Jesus interprets the story by saying, "For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light" (v. 8). In other words, the people who live for the things of this world are more energetic, more focused, and wiser when it comes to achieving their goals than we are in achieving our spiritual goals.

If only we were that focused on the work that Jesus has given us to do. If only you and I were that single-minded in making our investments of time, money, and resources to reach the goals that Jesus puts in front of us.

Forgive us, Lord, for getting so distracted. Forgive us for squandering the resources you entrusted to us. Thank you, Jesus, that you never lose sight of your goal—the goal of having us stand with you one day in glory.

You already invested your life to make it happen!



*Tom Westra is pastor at Beautiful Savior, Cincinnati, Ohio.*

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Cover photo by Masterfile

Gender communication: emphasizing how men and women complement each other rather than compete against each other.

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## bits & pieces



God made man and woman differently—man from the dust of the ground and woman from man's rib. Man and woman also are different in the way they interact with others. Mary Heins, a communication professor at Wisconsin Lutheran College, shares some of these God-given gender differences to help us understand how to better communicate with each other (p. 8).



Why do you go to church? Or why don't you? Three articles this month focus on the importance of going to church.

- "Why don't you go to church?" a survey inquires. Ken Cherney examines these "excuses," but then explores instead why we want to go (p. 40).

- "We miss you." We all feel that way when we don't see our Christian brothers and sisters in church. Christian encouragement and fellowship is a wonderful blessing we receive through attending church. Read more about it in our editor's pen (p. 38).

- Sometimes a sinner, through refusing to repent, removes himself from God's Church. Our visible church recognizes this through excommunication, a final Christian act of love. Wayne Mueller explains more in the final article of his series on church discipline, "The nth degree of love" (p. 12).



President Karl Gurgel takes us behind the scenes of Call Day in "Wish you were here" (p. 35). Then turn to p. 21 and see the Martin Luther College class of 2000 and the calls that the teacher graduates received.

—JKT

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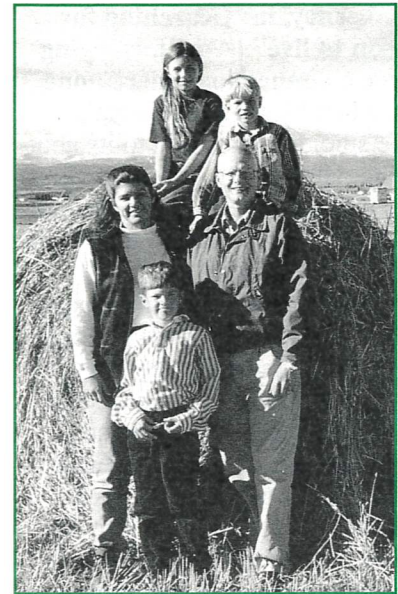
Karl R. Gurgel

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I miss you!




**Ken Cherney, in "Searching for a reason to live" [April], is trying to force a connection where none exists** when he suggests China's female suicide rate is tied to its abortion rate. He says the Chinese culture "loves children deeply," and the one-child policy is a statement that "individuals don't matter."

In reality, it's female individuals that don't matter, and male children that are loved deeply. Baby boys aren't left on hillsides to die. Baby boys aren't given to relatives so a couple can make a second attempt to have a child of the "right" sex.

Cherney says it's hard not to see a connection between suicides and the one-child policy. I find it hard to see any connection. The issue here, in my opinion, is the lack of self-worth felt by women as a result of this culture. Chinese women are not as important as Chinese men, and this attitude begins at birth. Women commit suicide because the culture does not value them as individuals and worthy citizens. These women might have a reason to live if they were treated equally with men.

*Diane J. Diekman*

 *Valencia, California*

**Regarding the Easter WELS television and newspaper spots** that carried the message of forgiveness and salvation in Christ. I found myself longing to hear God's Word spoken following the phrase, "But then I remember . . ."

Perhaps future ads could include a portion of Scripture that reinforces the message like, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:6) or "I am the resurrection and the life . . . whoever lives and believes in me shall never die" (John 11:25,26). In times of stress, God's Word is our ultimate comfort and strength.

*Trudy Madetzke*

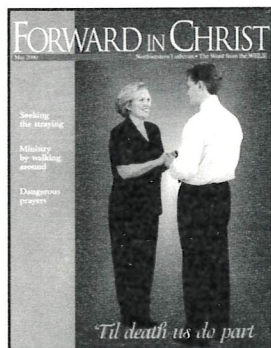
*Marshall, Minnesota*

**In "Center of the universe" [April],** the writer compares those who doubt Christ's resurrection with people who doubted Galileo's telescope evidence that the earth moves around the sun. He argues that in both cases the evidence is clear to all reasonable minds.

I am concerned that this might mislead people into thinking that our faith comes not from the Holy Spirit but rather rests on a reasonable consideration of evidence. But, no evidence can convince anyone to believe in Christ's resurrection because we "cannot by [our] own reason or strength believe in the Lord Jesus or come to him" (Third Article). Let us remember Job, who confidently confessed the Easter message even though all reasonable evidence suggested that the Lord had abandoned him.

*Ryan Cameron MacPherson*

 *Notre Dame, Indiana*



**Re: "Choosing a spouse" [May 2000].**

Regarding marriage a friend once told me: "I would never be able to get involved with a woman who

was attracted to me because I don't want to marry someone with such bad taste." I think Mark Paustian did a much better job with that same subject. It was something I needed to hear, and I was glad to see it in print. Thank you.

*Steve Steiner*

*Hartford, Wisconsin*


**Sincere thanks to Wayne Mueller for his challenging article on "Real church renewal" [May 2000].**

He wrote: "Visiting our members requires a lot of time, patience, and love, but little money." It makes me

sad to hear members say, "Nobody ever came to visit!" That's often just part of the story, but it's real. I would encourage our pastors to take to heart the wisdom of a veteran pastor: "A house-going pastor makes a church-going people."

A concerned WELS member put it this way: "We need more pastors with calluses on their knuckles."

*Raymond G. Cox*

 *Columbia, Tennessee*

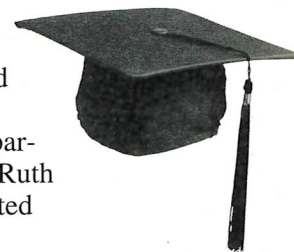


**MLC graduation notes**

Among this year's graduation class was Andy, the youngest of the three Glende brothers. As football coach I was privileged to have

Andy as one of my players for four years. Prior to that I had Andy's brothers, Tim and Tom, as part of my football team at Northwestern College, Watertown, Wis. Timothy is now pastor at Star of Bethlehem, Urbana, Ill, and Thomas is pastor at Light of the Valley, Layton, Utah. Andy has enrolled at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and plans to follow his brothers into the pastoral ministry.

Incidentally, Andy is the third generation to graduate from MLC. His parents, Philip and Kathy (Brug), graduated from DMLC in 1970. His grandparents, Arthur and Ruth (Lorenz), graduated in 1934.



*Dennis Gorsline*

*New Ulm, Minnesota*

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# A true thank offering

Walter F. Beckmann

**W**henever we gather for worship, we follow a definite format. We listen to God's Word, which reminds us of all the blessings he gives us in Jesus. Then, in response to that message of his grace, we lift our voices in joyful hymns of praise. Finally, we bring our offerings of thanksgiving and cheerfully dedicate them to support projects that will proclaim his Word in our midst and spread that saving message to the world.

Our Forward in Christ (FIC) Committee tried to follow the same format when it planned a celebration for WELS' 150th anniversary and the 2000th anniversary of the good news: "... a Savior has been born to you" (Luke 2:11).

By now we've begun to use and enjoy many of the historical publications, timelines, videos, and Bible studies that recount the blessings God has given WELS members and Christians living in the New Testament era. Many have taken part in FIC anniversary services, including celebrations with neighboring WELS congregations, in heartfelt response to God for all his blessings and an unforgettable worship experience.

In a typical worship service, this would be the time to gather our offerings of thanksgiving. Accordingly, we planned a thank offering as part of our anniversary celebration. This offering was encouraged and adopted at our past two synod conventions. The time has come to introduce this plan to every WELS member and invite your participation.

This offering is intended to be a true thank offering, not a special collection for some specific need. Yet, cheerful givers want to know how their gifts will be used. Your committee proposed three categories: outreach projects to share the

Word, a chapel at Martin Luther College where future pastors and teachers can praise God for his blessings, and a heritage project to preserve a record of God's blessings on WELS.

You may designate your gift for one of those three categories. Undesignated gifts will fund projects in all categories according to a priority list agreed upon at the synod convention. If the Lord has given you a special love for some project that is not on our list, we urge you to express that love with a gift for that project.

This list is not a set of goals but an orderly way of using these gifts of thanksgiving. We will neither reach nor fall short of goals, but we will rejoice and praise God for whatever gifts are received.

We want this offering to be gathered in the spirit of 2 Corinthians 9:7. No one should feel that they're being pressured to give. God loves cheerful giving. We pray that we will all find the same joy in participating in this offering that we've just experienced in our anniversary celebrations.

This offering, like our anniversary services, is a fellowship activity. Through it we can do great things for God that we could never do on our own. We won't all be able to give the same size gifts. Some may not be able to participate at all, at least not at this time. If that's true of you, I hope you'll be approached in the gentle spirit of that Old English holiday verse:

"If you haven't got a penny,  
a ha' penny will do,  
If you haven't got a ha' penny,  
may God bless you."

May God bless us all as we joyfully pool our resources and go forward in Christ and for Christ.

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

We will neither reach nor fall short of goals, but we will rejoice and praise God for whatever gifts are received.



# TWO HALVES OF A COMPLEMENTARY WHOLE

What our God-given gender differences are and how understanding them can help you communicate better with the opposite sex.

Mary L. Heins

**W**e don't have to read very far into Genesis before we learn that God created two different genders as part of creation. Genesis 1:27 clearly indicates "male and female he created them."

In the second chapter of Genesis we learn that God gave these creatures very different assignments—assignments that he by creation knew they were suited for.

Adam's assignment? "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it" (Genesis 2:15).

Eve's assignment? "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him" (Genesis 2:18).

God gave each a different focus, a different orientation. Adam was put in charge of the garden—a task to be accomplished. Eve was given the assignment of nurturing and caring for another person.

From the beginning of creation God designed men and women to complete each other, that together we might accomplish his plan for us and all people.

Why is it then that men and women today seem to spend more time competing with each other than in emphasizing the "completeness" that God created? "Just like a

woman!" "He just doesn't get it!" Gender-bashing jokes and comments abound as we live and work together.

Instead of promoting gender war, God's children will want to encourage gender peace and a greater understanding and appreciation of the other gender—be it a spouse, a child, or a co-worker.

## Gender differences

There are many reasons for the communication differences in men and women. Biological variances include hormones, brain functioning, and emotional processing centers in the brain. Cultural differences from the games we play as children to the advice we get from parents ("Big boys don't cry") ("Girls shouldn't climb trees") impact how we view life around us and thus how we interact with those around us.

• **Emotional boundaries in women are much thinner than in men.** Call it "herd mentality" or "restroom togetherness"—women are more prone to do things together, feel responsible for others' situations, neglect their own needs for the needs of others, and are quick to feel abandoned.

Men, on the other hand, with thicker ego-boundaries, make a clear distinction where their person stops and

others begin. They are less likely to become involved in others' problems, tend not to experience others' feelings as their own, and are very quick to feel suffocated when a spouse or someone else pressures or nags them.

## • Men and women approach "talk" from different perspectives.

For a woman, talk is the essence of relationships—talk is used to build rapport. Talk is a banquet to be savored, a journey to be embarked upon. Women view conversation as a collaborative effort where all should be equally involved, working toward a mutually satisfying interaction experience.

Men talk for the purpose of accomplishing tasks—to report on tasks done. The purpose of talk is to exchange information, send a message. Men view conversation as more of an individual effort rather than a give-and-take amongst participants.

One need only compare the describing of a party to understand the differences in talk between husband and wife. The wife will include minute details, people's feelings, attire, home decoration, and menu items. The husband will report he talked shop with two colleagues.

Husbands need to provide opportunities for wives to sit and tell the whole story in every detail, while



wives need to remember that “short and sweet” is appropriate at times.

• **Another gender difference in male/female communication is the area of disclosure.** Women see revealing personal details as important for relationship-building, because disclosure cements relationships.

Men have a much stronger sense of privacy and generally avoid disclosing personal information. They consider disclosure of personal information as risk-taking, because others might perceive them to be weak. For this reason, husbands are concerned about what their wives are sharing with their friends over lunch, and wives ought to be sensitive to their husbands’ concerns.

• **“He never listens” is a common complaint of wives and women in general.** We just listen differently. Women listen by nodding their heads (even if they are not agreeing), saying “um, uh-huh,” and looking the speaker in the eye. Men frequently confuse the head nodding with agree-

ment instead of the woman’s encouragement to keep talking.

Men do not listen as “loudly” as women do. Men listen “silently” and often are looking elsewhere, which women perceive to be disinterest. Because men have a tendency to want to jump to solutions, they struggle with listening more than women do.

• **It is in reacting to problems and showing support that men and women frustrate each other the most.** When a wife shares a problem or concern with her husband, she is looking for someone to listen, someone to identify with her struggle, someone to empathize with her. When a husband hears his wife’s concern, he wants to solve the problem for her and tell her what to do. Men excel in giving advice—even when it’s not sought. “Honey, I can tell you’re upset, what do you see as your options?” is much better than “Honey, this is what you should do!”

Ladies, we automatically show support and pitch in whether we are

asked or not. Men assume if someone needs help they will ask. For many years I carried the groceries in from the car thinking my husband surely could see what I was doing and he didn’t want to help. It never occurred to me that a simple call for help was all I needed to have those bags delivered from the trunk to the kitchen. Wives, if you want help, ask—don’t assume that he doesn’t care. Husbands, be alert to offering your help (not to be confused with advice) before your wife asks.

• **Finally, male and female friendships differ.** Women’s friendships define who they are. A woman’s best friend is usually another woman. Female friends and mothers and daughters need to talk regularly. (Dads, don’t complain about long-distance phone bills.) Talk is the glue that holds relationships together.

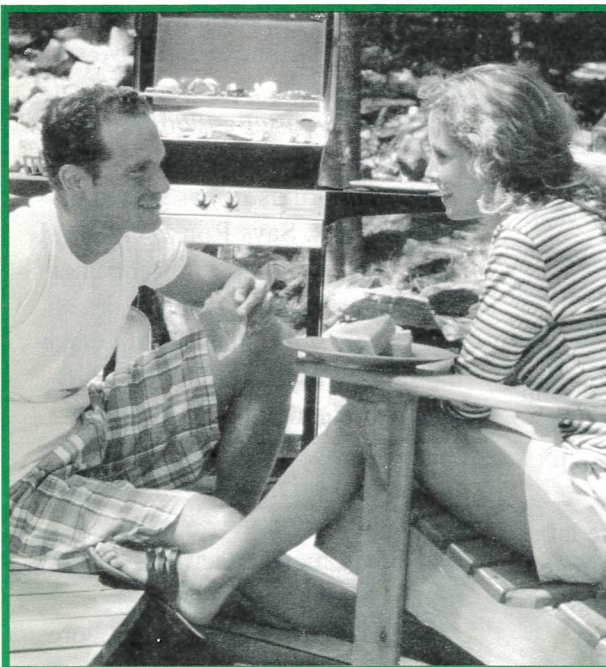
Men’s friendships define what they do. Most men will say their best friend is their wife. Men’s friendships with other men are usually described as task oriented. When men get

together they “do” things—play cards, hunt, fish, go to football games. Women “do lunch” to maintain contact with female friends; men “do lunch” for business purposes.

Isn’t it wonderful that God created male and female! If we view each other as complementary pieces and seek to better understand, appreciate, and celebrate our differences, we can be a greater blessing to all those with whom we communicate.



*Mary Heins is a professor at Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee.*



### ADVANTAGES CHRISTIAN COUPLES HAVE IN GENDER COMMUNICATION

- † Knowing that God is part of your marriage.
- † Understanding God’s forgiveness and applying that forgiveness to your spouse.
- † Building up each other in faith through going to church together, studying God’s Word together, praying together, and having family devotions.
- † Realizing that your spouse is a child of God and treating that person as such.

# Where the West is one

The Dakota-Montana District walks together in the old frontier.

Gary P. Baumler

Years ago the WELS pastor in Mobridge, S.D., took the train each Sunday to Glenham (17 miles roundtrip) to serve both parishes. Today pastors of the Dakota-Montana District commonly serve two or three parishes up to 100 miles apart. Some drive 50,000 miles a year, much of it over rugged roads.

Before you melt with sympathy, however, consider this: the air is clean, the streets are safe, the friendships are real. “The people in these small towns out here watch out for your kids as much as you do,” says Wayne Rouse, district second vice president. “When you meet teenagers on the street, they look you in the eye and talk to you with respect and warmth.” All that and the warmest of Christian fellowship—made dearer by the distances that threaten to separate. (Dare I mention the pastors’ annual trout fishing outing in the Rocky Mountains?)

## Challenges out West

The Dakota-Montana District has a distinctly western flavor. When you visit there, you find wide-open spaces, scenic wonders, rugged individualism, and homespun values. You also find declining rural and small-town populations and struggles to serve all WELS Christians with God’s Word.

To many it seems distant with small, isolated pockets of people, like many a mission field. “The Dakotas used to be the main mission field (or at least training field) for the synod and its new seminary graduates,”



Here the wide-open spaces and scenic wonders of the Dakota-Montana District are demonstrated. Jonathan Schultz, pastor at Mountain View, Calgary, Alberta, Canada, and family are seen with the church and parsonage in the background.

explains Peter Naumann, district president. The new men often went west before their seemingly inevitable move eastward just a few years later.

Challenges continue today. Picture two small churches 50 miles apart served by one pastor. The pastor of another parish 100 miles away leaves. How do you serve the vacancy? What do you do when congregations get so small they can no longer support a full-time pastor? How might you merge small congregations that are far apart? How do you get the people together for joint Sunday school meetings, councilmen conferences, retreats?

The people in the West have an independent spirit. How do you get to know them so you can tell them about Jesus?

A huge field is opening for us to the north in western Canada. How can we tap the potential there?

You want your young people to have the benefit of a Christian secondary education. How can you provide it?

The church leaders of the district wrestle regularly with these questions and more. God is supplying the answers and dedicated pastors and laity to carry them out.

## God’s blessings out West

Through it all a distinct oneness of spirit has prevailed. The many pastors who

have served there share a common bond of fond memories and rich ministry. The people who have seen so many pastors come and go love and respect them all. “The people often consider the pastor as part of their family,” says Rouse.

Member ministry has grown in the churches. Says Rouse, “When I was a vacancy pastor at Redeemer in Mandan, N.D., I had five or six lay readers willing and able to take the service for me anytime.” They also volunteered to travel the 70 miles back to Elgin if Rouse ever needed help. Then, the church relocated and built a new church “so they could more effectively witness to the community.”

The West has become even more

expansive for this district as they carry the gospel north into the ripe fields of Canada. St. Paul, Calgary, Alberta, celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, tells the story. In its 20 years, St. Paul has given up members to four other congregations started in that time. Still God watches over them locally. They have 77 communicants and an average Bible study attendance of 25. Every month they regularly see another five new visitors in their worship.

The Canada churches, building around dedicated nuclei, welcome many first-time and unchurched Christians and families with young children. Jonathan Schultz, who serves Morning Star, Carstairs and Mountain View, Calgary, tells of a woman with almost no Christian influence in her background who came to him with a question about Mormonism. Now, she and her child are baptized, and her husband is a prospect. In another family recently



Special music at Abiding Word, Rapid City, S.D. Abiding Word, an exploratory that started just two years ago, had 70 at worship on Mother's Day.

instructed, the third-grade son wants to be a minister and a pilot. "Why not both?" he asks, already visualizing a specialized ministry to remote areas of Canada.

Wherever the gospel reaches people, it works its wonders by the Spirit. It's not always in remote areas either. In Rapid City, S.D., where 58-year-old St. Paul Church thrives, Abiding Word, started as

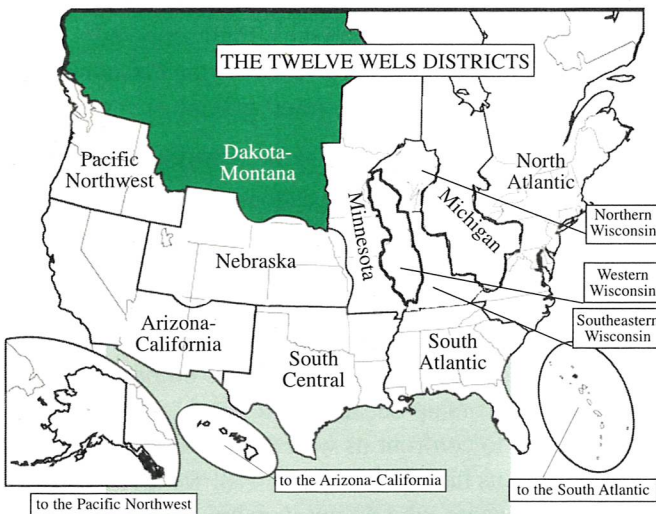
but the perseverance of the group under God's guiding hand in the face of untold obstacles has resulted today in Great Plains Lutheran High School in Watertown, S.D.

### One purpose out West

Not all the questions faced in the district have easy answers, but they all call the members to meaningful ministry. When they can get together, they make the most of it. They share their joys and their frustrations. They comfort and exhort one another. They renew their sense of mission together in Christ. They search the Word, sing God's praises, pray for his strength and guidance, and then go again to the people as he commanded.

They'll travel 1,000 miles for the privilege of getting together. They'll travel another 50,000 miles a year for the Lord.

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



#### ■ Dakota-Montana District

### Stats at a glance Dakota-Montana District

Conferences: 3  
Circuits: 7  
Congregations: 79  
Mission churches: 8  
Exploratory churches: 4

Baptized members: 11,651  
Communicant members: 9,121  
Average attendance: 46.7%  
Pastors: 48

Adult baptisms: 19  
Adult confirmations: 90

Sunday school enrollment: 1,330  
Bible class attendance (teens): 157  
Bible class attendance (adults): 1,241

Early childhood education schools: 4  
Lutheran elementary schools: 6  
Area Lutheran high schools: 1

Statistics taken from the 1999 Statistical Report and the Commission on Parish Schools.

an exploratory just two years ago, counts similar blessings. They have 32 members (21 communicants). In April the average attendance was 45. On Mother's Day, 70 attended worship and 65 the brunch that followed.

Although such expansion in urban areas happens against the backdrop of declining population and membership in many rural areas, God's gospel has instilled the members of the district with a can-do spirit.

When, for example, the synod in 1979 found it necessary to close Northwestern Lutheran Academy in Mobridge, S.D., after 50-plus years of providing secondary Christian education and worker training, the district immediately formed the Dakota-Montana High School Association. It took about 20 years,

# The *nth* degree

Excommunication sends a message to those within and without the church: this congregation cares about its people.

Wayne D. Mueller

“As pastor of this congregation it is my sad duty to announce to you that our fellow member, (name), was under Christian discipline and, although repeatedly admonished from the word of God, has refused to repent. . . . As a final effort to win [him] back to the Lord, in the name of Christ and this congregation, I announce that (name) is excommunicated from the Church until [he] repents.” (From *Christian Worship: Occasional Services*, presently in the development stage).

Many Christians, including many church leaders, are convinced that excommunication is an unloving practice. Excommunication is an acknowledgment by the gathering of believers that an unrepentant sinner is outside the fellowship of the Holy Christian Church. But, many wonder aloud, how can Christians consider a statement like the one above to be an act of love?

## What is love?

The answer depends upon your definition of love. The socially correct climate in the secular world defines love as non-confrontation, or toleration. But that has never been God's way of loving sinful people. God always confronts the sinner with his sin, and God always deals with sin instead of ignoring it.

Think of how God confronted Adam and Eve after the first sin. The lightning and thunder on Mt.

Sinai at the giving of the Ten Commandments were certainly confrontational. In the same way God confronted King David with his sins, John the Baptist confronted sinners in the wilderness, Jesus confronted the Pharisees, and Paul confronted the Judaizers in Galatia.

## God deals with sin

God's motive in confronting the sinner is always love. You see, God has dealt with the sinner's guilt and punishment before he confronts him. So God's purpose in confrontation is to lead the sinner to repentance and trusting acceptance of his forgiveness. God confronts the sinner in order to distribute his forgiveness freely. A holy God cannot tolerate sin. He cannot ignore or overlook what violates his own perfection. But our holy God is also loving, and with love he meets sin and deals with it.

## Confronting sin and dealing with it is God's way to love.

God confronted and dealt with every sinner's sin at the cross of Jesus. He promised this Savior to our parents in the Garden. He announced forgiveness through the prophet Nathan to the adulterous murderer David. He distributed the blessings of the cross through John

the Baptist's baptism. Jesus offered his messianic forgiveness to the self-righteous Pharisees. Paul renewed his offer of forgiveness to the Galatians in the unadulterated gospel of Jesus.

## We love because he first loved us

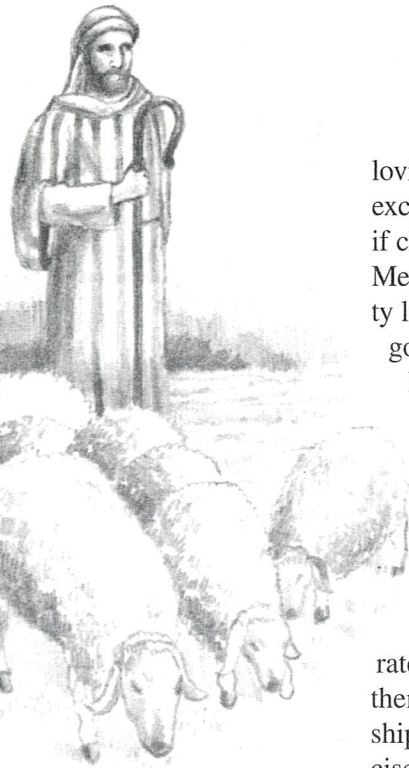
There is no question that confronting sin and dealing with it is God's way to love. The only real question in regard to our sinning brothers and sisters, then, is whether we will love them as much as God first loved us. We come to worship because God loved us enough to confront us with our sin and offer us his solution for it. Will we love those who do not worship with us as God loved us?

The loving concern Christians have for each other is presented in Scripture by the king of love, Jesus. Right after the parable of the lost sheep and the happy shepherd who found it, Jesus showed us how to deal with our sinning brothers. When our Lord urged us to confront sinners directly, he reflected the same motive God has in confronting us with our sin, that is, to win the brother over (Matthew 18:15).

## Love at the crossroads

But what if our brother resents our confrontation and refuses to admit or express sorrow for his sin? That's when our love is tested to the limit. This is the point in Christian discipline where many become squeamish. Excommunication is such a harsh and final sounding term.

# of love



## Excommunication

is an ecclesiastical word. That means the Bible does not use it. Church leaders coined the word excommunication to reflect what the Scripture says about this final act of love toward unrepentant sinners. Jesus said, "If he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector" (Matthew 18:17). Paul uses equally unequivocal words: "Hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed" (1 Corinthians 5:5).

The problem with man-made words is that they do not always communicate precisely. The word excommunication wrongly suggests that congregational action is removing somebody from the communion of saints. But according to the teaching of Jesus and Paul, the members of the Christian congregation neither judge the sinner to hell nor remove him from the Holy Christian Church. Excommunication is the congregation's public acknowledgment that, by his refusal to repent, the sinner has already removed himself from

God's Church. The church's action merely accepts the judgment God has already made on the sinner.

Thus it is a false fear that excommunication is too "judgmental." It is a false fear that carrying out excommunication is taking into our hands a power God has reserved for himself. On our confirmation day, when we confessed the Sixth Chief Part of Luther's Small Catechism, we told God and the world that we accepted God's judgments of law and gospel. We promised God we would love our brothers and sisters enough so that what he bound in heaven we would bind on earth.

## The nth degree

Excommunication, then, is the nth degree of love. It is the highest and best we can do for those who stubbornly persist in their sins. It sounds a final warning for the sinner who wrongly believes he can remain attached to Jesus while holding on to his sin.

The spiritual fiber of a congregation is weakened when it fails to carry out

loving Christian discipline, including excommunication. Attendance wanes if church skippers are not confronted. Members who live in sin with impunity lead others to do the same. The gospel is depreciated whenever the law that points out its need is deemed too "judgmental."

The announcement of an excommunication to the congregation has many positive effects for the members. It reminds them not to associate with someone whose sins have separated him from his Savior. It urges them to consider their own relationship to Jesus through the daily exercise of repentance and new faith. It holds before them the ongoing privilege of being their brother's keeper. It invites their prayers for the excommunicated sinner that he may be brought by a loving Shepherd's love back to the flock. It sends a message to those within and without the church: this congregation cares about its people. We love like God loves.

The sinner whom Paul urged the Corinthians to excommunicate was eventually reinstated (2 Corinthians 2:6-8). It was my privilege to welcome back a number of people who had been excommunicated, including an 84-year-old man who was excommunicated at age 29. There are many other happy endings. But there are no happy endings to the lives of those whose sins have been ignored. There are no souls saved by the worldly idea that love is non-confrontational. God give us grace to love as he has loved us—to the nth degree.

Wayne Mueller is administrator of the Board for Parish Services.

# A TIME TO “REST”

Although sabbatical implies “rest,” WELS pastors and teachers work hard during these breaks from their full-time calls.

Nicole R. Moline

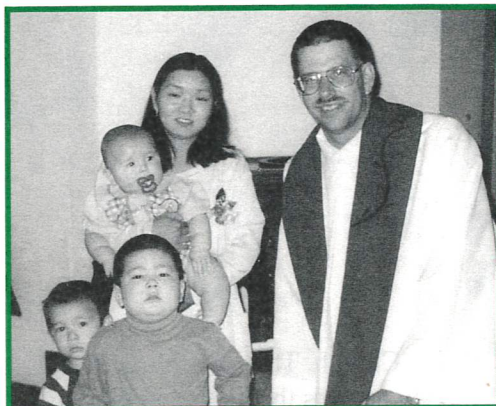
Let's face it. We can all use a break sometimes from our day-to-day jobs. And, that break doesn't necessarily have to be a vacation. Perhaps we just need to do something or go somewhere different for a while. We may have lost our perspective or enthusiasm. Or, we might need to learn some new tricks of the trade. Whatever the reason, a rest from the ordinary can be a positive experience.

With that reasoning in mind and in a desire to improve called worker training, the sabbatical in ministry program was recently developed.

## Vision

The word “sabbatical” comes from the word “sabbath,” which in Hebrew means “rest.” However, it is important to note that the sabbatical in ministry program was designed to be a rest in ministry—not a rest from ministry.

Having professors take sabbaticals is not a new idea, even within WELS. In 1964, President Conrad Frey of Michigan Lutheran Seminary became a friendly counselor to Hong Kong for one year. Various other professors traveled to places like Zambia and Calgary in the 1970s and '80s. All came back and commented on what a wonderful experience it was to get away and gain a new perspective.



Pastor Ken Brokmeier baptized Mariko Alwin and her three sons during his sabbatical at St. Paul, Lake Mills, Wis. Brokmeier served as Luther Preparatory School's recruitment director until his sabbatical. While on sabbatical, he accepted a call to return to parish ministry at Our Savior, Brookings, S.D.

Yet, it was not until 1999 that the Board for Ministerial Education (BME) established a formal program with budgetary support. Dr. John Lawrenz, former BME administrator, explains: “In our synod, our schools exist not just to give education but to prepare students for ministry. The danger we have is that people who are excellent teachers begin to, little by little, get out of touch with the ministry for which they're training people. To rectify that we said, ‘Go out there and work side by side with the people who are doing that work so you can get a sense of their ministry.’”

The BME developed a plan to help professors at WELS preparatory schools, Martin Luther College,

and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary gain that broader sense of ministry by developing the sabbaticals in ministry program. Included in the program is the vision of the synod—that up to five percent of professors would serve in non-academic ministry experiences each year.

## Implementation

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary embraced the sabbaticals in ministry program and implemented a plan to carry it out. The seminary called an additional professor so that at any time, one professor can be on sabbatical. This means that every eight years each professor should serve six months in a parish.

Seminary President David Valleskey served in such a parish sabbatical himself from June through November of 1999. Valleskey and his wife, Janice, moved to Tacoma, Wash., to help Pastor Tom Unke and his congregation at Faith, Tacoma, start a satellite congregation in South Hill, Wash.

Valleskey performed all the traditional duties of a pastor, including preaching, teaching Bible class, and visiting shut-ins. He also canvassed Tacoma and South Hill, and provided, “the right manpower at the right time,” says Unke. “We were able to get at all the canvassing, while still serving the needs of members.”

Unke and his congregation weren't the only ones to benefit, though. Valleskey says, "I have a renewed appreciation for being a parish pastor, and it gives me more current illustrations of pastoral life. Instead of using examples from 15 years ago, I can use examples from just a few months ago."

Valleskey's wife also enjoyed the time at Faith. She often played organ for the congregation and on a return visit observed, "I feel like I'm coming home."

### Participation

Faculty members at the other ministerial education schools also participated in the sabbaticals in ministry program this past year. Ken Brokmeier, Luther Preparatory School recruitment director, served as an associate pastor at St. Paul, Lake Mills, Wis. Beverlee Haar, Martin Luther College education professor, assisted Little Lambs Child Care, Louisville, Ky.

Paul Prange, Michigan Lutheran Seminary president, helped the Apache mission field at East Fork Lutheran High School (EFLHS), Whiteriver, Ariz. His goals were twofold: to help EFLHS change from being dependent on synod mission dollars to being financially independent and to help EFLHS change the method of control from resting with whites to resting with Apaches.

Prange successfully carried out his goals and reports that in the process his three young children "thrived, and grew, and were very happy."

Cultural differences were not a problem for his school-age daughters, even though they were the only white children in their classes. As he explains, "The teacher was white in the first- and second-grade classroom. One morning she was giving a devotion, and she mentioned that God loves people of all races, even white people like her and Anna, my daughter. One little Apache boy turned around and said, 'Anna's white?' He had never even noticed."

### Hesitation

Of course, not all professors can relocate their families for six months, but Lawrenz says, "We are sensitive to the human problems of uprooting a family. We must work through the anxiety to see the benefits." And, taking a sabbatical does not necessarily mean moving hundreds of miles away.

Seminary Professor Forrest Bivens is currently on sabbatical as an associate pastor at Siloah, Milwaukee, Wis. One reason Siloah was chosen



Paul Prange, his wife, and three young children moved to Apacheland while Prange served a one-year sabbatical at East Fork Lutheran High School. His daughter Anna (right) thrived in her all-Apache classroom with help from classmate Alsayah (left) and teacher Cyndi Loewen.

was so Bivens and his family would not have to move.

Although Bivens is not far from home, Siloah has opened up a whole other world for him. Since Siloah is 80-85% African-American, Bivens is learning about a cross-cultural population. He plans on incorporating his new knowledge when he returns to the classroom. He says, "I will weave the information and sensitivities into my lectures, being more sensitive to cross-cultural and Christian home issues. Plus, I have more concrete, modern examples now to share."

Bivens further explains: "While I can't necessarily pin down all the lessons I've learned, I have learned a lot. And, in less noticeable but very real ways, I am changing. I am richer for this experience."

No, Bivens is not on vacation, although he is "resting" from his normal position as a seminary professor. These "rests" benefit the called workers taking the sabbaticals, their families, the institutions they normally serve, and the institutions they serve during their sabbaticals. Most important, these sabbaticals in ministry are designed to improve called worker training so God's Word is spread more efficiently.

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

## FUNDING SABBATICALS

Currently, the sabbaticals in ministry program is funded through the synodical budget and the budgets of the four ministerial education schools. The program has room to grow, though.

The synod in convention approved establishment of a faculty/student development fund as part of the Forward in Christ thank offering. This fund can help ministerial education school faculty members continue their professional growth and keep in touch with modern ministry.

Another mission outreach project that can be funded through the Forward in Christ thank offering is administrative sabbaticals. Depending on the funds received, those in administrative positions of ministry could serve in the congregations and mission fields of WELS for a limited time.

looking back



# HARD TIMES

The synod, as well as the nation, suffered during the Great Depression.

Mark E. Braun

**H**istorian John Gurda called the 1930s “a decade of deepening darkness, a nightmarish descent into a totally unforeseen state of worry and want.”

### Hard times in the States

Americans experienced the hard times of the Great Depression in various ways.

At evening meals, neck bones and spareribs replaced more expensive cuts of meat, and “one meatball casseroles” became a popular staple.

More than 53 percent of Milwaukee’s 1932 property taxes went unpaid. Public works’ crews that paved over 52 miles of city streets in 1929 reduced their output to less than two-thirds of a mile for all of 1933.

There were even suggestions that some of the “heavier eaters” at

Milwaukee’s Washington Park Zoo be slaughtered and fed to the poor, who in some cities were reduced to selling pencils on street corners.

### Hard times in WELS

Churches suffered along with the nation. Only 38 new congregations were organized in the Wisconsin Synod during the 1930s, the lowest total for any decade in the synod’s history. Only half the 1931 seminary graduation class received calls. By 1933 Synod President G. E. Bergemann reported that professors’ salaries had been reduced 36 percent, and pastors’ salaries 28 percent, during the previous two-year period.

What’s more, the synod entered the decade with an “old debt” created in part by building programs at Dr.

Martin Luther College and the seminary. “The debt which should have been paid long ago is still there,” wrote John Brenner in 1930. “Let every one of us ask himself, ‘What is the reason for this failure?’ ”

By 1934, Brenner, now synod president, urged readers to forego personal pleasures to help reduce the deficit. “If all the members of our synod had spent a quiet Fourth of July at home instead of going where they went and had given the money they saved thereby for missions, a surprisingly large sum would have been realized.” Spending a quiet Sunday at home “can hardly be called a hardship,” he added. “It would be beneficial to us in many ways to acquire again the lost habit of the quiet enjoyment of our home.”



**THE NORTHWESTERN LUTHERAN WRITERS EXAMINED  
AND DENOUNCED DECLINING MORALS OF THE 1930s.**

- John Brenner wrote about the theater: “Our Lutheran church would be far better off if this form of amusement or recreation had never been introduced into it. It certainly does not edify, and it is not likely to impress the public that reads the announcement of a play by the young Lutherans of this or that church with the sacredness of the mission to which the Church has been called by its Lord.”
- On the repeal of Prohibition in 1933, Fred Graeber remarked that each person “must decide on the basis of human reason and observation” whether to vote for or against the banning of alcoholic beverages. “There can be an honest difference of opinion among Christian citizens in regard to this, without affecting their religion in the least.” Scripture “speaks of wine as a gift of God which can be received with thanksgiving and can be consumed to the glory of God,” yet “it is very clear in its condemnation of drunkenness and its threats to drunkards.” Drunkenness was “one of the great human vices” under prohibition, “and it will remain so after the abolition of prohibition.”
- August Zich in 1936, on birth control: “Families of seven or eight children are becoming exceedingly rare among us. One or two children used to be the rule some time ago, but now the childless home is becoming a usual thing.” Raising large families may call for more sacrifices than it did years ago, yet, “because our Lord has said, ‘Be fruitful and multiply,’ we should discourage race suicide and birth control.”
- Zich, again in 1936: “False teaching never helps, but ever hinders faith. Constantly listened to, in a church or over the radio, or read in a book or magazine, it will result in bewilderment, doubt, yea even loss of faith.” Zich offered this comparison: “When we see a sign, ‘Beware of the dog,’ we do not enter the premises, stroke the dog, admiring his beautiful barking and thinking that he may bite others, but not us. The safest and sanest thing is to avoid him. Shall we be less cautious about the eternal welfare of our immortal soul?”

**Hard times with fellowship**

On a different subject, *The Northwestern Lutheran* reported that the Ohio, Iowa, and Buffalo synods joined to form the American Lutheran Church (ALC) in 1930. “There has been these late years a strong trend towards merging smaller church bodies to form one large, strong, organization,” Brenner observed. But “the ‘one-ness’ Jesus desires for his Church does not require, and certainly is not affected by, organizing them in one body.” August Zich maintained that the church’s strength “lies not in its numbers, but in its steadfast adherence to the pure gospel and its preaching of the same. If we will remember this, all these efforts to bring all the Lutherans in America

under one hat will not disturb us a great deal.”

It was with some apprehension, then, that Zich noted in October 1938 that “representatives of the American Lutheran Church have met a committee of the Missouri Synod” to discuss church union. The large numbers such a merger would produce “may tempt us to glory in them.”

Two months later Zich reported approvingly that Missouri hoped to unite with the ALC “on the basis of the same confession of faith.” But Zich also reported that the ALC resolved not to give up its connection with the American Lutheran Conference, composed of Lutheran bodies that disagreed with Missouri and Wisconsin on several points of doctrine. The proposed alignment could result in “strange bedfellows”

among midwestern Lutherans.

In 1939 *The Northwestern Lutheran* cited the Norwegian Synod’s evaluation of the Missouri-ALC union talks: “In our judgment this agreement leaves much to be desired as a doctrinal basis for fellowship between synods that have been in serious and mutually-acknowledged disagreements for decades.”

The Wisconsin Synod withstood the hard times of the Great Depression. But the Missouri Synod’s effort to achieve church union with the ALC ultimately led the Wisconsin Synod to sever its fellowship with Missouri and spelled the demise of the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference.

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



# MASKING THE TRUTH

Why some Lutherans and some Catholics signed an agreement in Augsburg is unclear. But if they are true to their own teachings, they still have dramatically opposite views.

John A. Braun



I remember that it was a Saturday. I sat down to watch some TV. I picked up the remote and did my usual spin through the channels. Like many other cable companies, mine has a preview channel, so I tuned in and watched the programming notes scroll up the screen.

## Reported agreement of Lutherans and Catholics

When I first saw it, I was surprised. EWTN was broadcasting a show entitled "Justification Not By Faith Alone" in a half hour. I waited until the program menu scrolled through the list again. Sure enough, the show was called "Justification Not By Faith Alone." I guess I should not have been surprised. After all this was the Roman Catholic television network. Yet, the title was so blatant.

I wondered about the program because Lutherans and Catholics recently signed a joint statement on justification in Augsburg on Reformation Day 1999. The

newspapers heralded the signing as an end to the disagreement on justification that dated back to the 1500s. The world was being told that either Roman Catholics had changed and no longer opposed justification by faith or Lutherans had changed. I thought, at least, that Catholics would keep a low profile with their traditional teachings.

Of course a lot of people, even some Lutherans, don't know what justification means. For me it is the single most important teaching of the entire Bible. Luther fought for the biblical concept of justification. He taught that sinners are declared right, holy, and just because of God's grace alone and that we receive this wonderful gift by faith alone. I'm a Lutheran so I believe, as the Bible says, that I am declared holy and sinless not because of anything I have done but because of what Jesus has done. My faith only receives God's wonderful gift of grace.

### **The Roman Catholic television network's position**

The Roman Catholic television network was airing a program that seemed to suggest something completely different. I had a cup of hot tea and was finished with my project, so I decided to wait for the program.

Before the program began, there was a brief announcement about the Jubilee Year. A Benedictine monk encouraged Catholics to visit the sick and lonely during this year so that they could do an act of indulgence and be free of guilt and sin. That sounded like something I read in a history book. But it was an exhortation given in A.D. 2000, the Year of Jubilee.

Then the program I waited for began. The title of the program was

correct, "Justification Not By Faith Alone." The program offered that it would explain Catholic teaching, so I watched. Robert Sunegin, the president of Catholic Apologetics International, stood at a lectern and explained what Catholics believed.

## **Luther taught that sinners are declared right, holy, and just because of God's grace alone and that we receive this wonderful gift by faith alone.**

He suggested that justification is a progression. Jesus did not pay for the sins of all by his death on the cross, but he opened up the pathway to salvation by his sacrifice. Sunegin repeated his point so I wouldn't miss it. Because of what Jesus did, Sunegin claimed, we can begin the process of justification. We can appease God by our works. Sunegin was articulate and confident. He even quoted Bible passages to prove his points.

But what struck me was the comment that when Christ died he did not pay for our sins. He only opened the pathway to God. From that point, so Sunegin claimed, salvation was up to us.

### **The Bible truth**

That's not the truth I learned from the Bible. In fact, it's exactly the opposite. I remembered the Bible passages I learned from my confirmation that taught me I am saved by grace through faith. One in particular kept popping into my head, "For it

is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast" (Ephesians 2:8,9). Another occurred to me after the program was finished, "But now [Jesus] has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Hebrews 9:26).

I don't know why some Lutherans and some Catholics signed an agreement in Augsburg. I cannot judge hearts. But if they are true to their own teachings, they still have dramatically opposite views.

For my part, I want to be faithful to the Lord Jesus. Therefore I listen to the apostle Paul's advice, "I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them" (Romans 16:17), and worship with those who believe as I do.



*John Braun is vice president of Northwestern Publishing House in Milwaukee.*

### **Luther on justification**

"The article of justification, which is our only protection, not only against all the powers and plottings of men but also against the gates of hell, is this: by faith alone (*sola fide*) in Christ without works, are we declared just (*pronuntiari iustos*) and saved."

"If the article of justification is lost, all Christian doctrine is lost at the same time. . . . There is no middle ground between these two righteousnesses: the active one of the Law and the passive one which comes from Christ."  
[*What Luther Says*, Ewald Press]



# Inter-Act

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

## Introduction

In a couple months, citizens of the United States will go to the polls to cast their votes for a new president. How does this process differ from the election of which the Bible speaks? When did this election take place? Why did it take place? What does it mean to be elected by God? Are there any similarities between elected government officials and elected children of God? Presidents are elected to a four-year term. For how long are children of God elected?

## I. Text

Read 2 Peter 1:10,11.

Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

## II. Questions

1. Who called us to faith in Jesus? How did he do this?
2. What does it mean that God "elected" us (Ephesians 1:11a)? Why did God elect us (Ephesians 1:11b)? For what purposes did God elect us (Ephesians 1:5,6,12; Romans 8:29)?
3. How can we show our eagerness "to make [our] calling and election sure" (2 Peter 1:5-7)? Select one of the fruits of faith mentioned by Peter in the preceding verses and explain how this is an example of a Christian's eagerness. How can producing fruits of faith make our "election sure" (Matthew 7:20)? What do these fruits of faith say about the genuineness of a person's profession of faith (Galatians 5:6 and James 2:18)?
4. When God elects people, it is to obedience and holiness. Find evidence of this in 1 Peter 1:2 and Ephesians 1:3,4.
5. Why will doing "these things" (the fruits of faith mentioned in verses 5-7) mean that a person will never fall?
6. Why will Jesus give us a "rich welcome" into eternal life (Matthew 25:34-36)?
7. Why is it comforting to realize that Jesus is the king in the eternal kingdom?

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

## III. Applications

1. Government officials are elected to serve people. How is this similar to one of the reasons for which God elected us? How is it different?
2. Last month when we studied the word "creation" we learned that the suffix "ion" means "state of being." Therefore, the word election means that we are in a state of being God's chosen ones. Why is this comforting?
3. Think of ways you can show that you are one of God's elect in your daily life.
4. People often ask, "Why are some elected and not others?" The Bible doesn't answer this question. What incorrect answers might some give? What should we do instead of seeking answers to unanswerable questions?
5. What might you say to someone who says that he can't believe God would ever have elected him?
6. Can a person who has been elected by God fall from faith? If a person is concerned about this, what promises of God should he cling to?

## IV. Prayer

Father, for the sake of your beloved Son, my Savior Jesus Christ, you chose me from all eternity to be your own and to live under you in your kingdom. You called me to faith, and you continually strengthen and preserve my faith through your Word and sacrament. Fill me with eagerness to live for you. Cause me to reflect your goodness in my daily life. Give me a genuine reverence toward you that governs my attitude toward every aspect of life. Produce in me a warmhearted affection toward all my brothers and sisters in the family of faith. Make me an outgoing, selfless person who is concerned always for the good of others. You have elected me to be your own forever. Keep me faithful until that day when you welcome me into your eternal kingdom. I come to you in Jesus' name. Amen.

Next month in our study of "-ion" words: redemption.

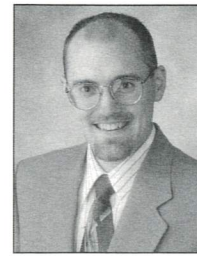


# Martin Luther College

One hundred forty-seven people graduated from Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., on May 20. Those receiving Bachelor of Science degrees were in the teacher track or the staff ministry program. Men who received Bachelor of Arts degrees were in the pastor track.



**Tabitha A. Alliet** ▲  
Appleton, Wis.



**Quin A. L. Anderson** ✕  
Belle Plaine, Minn.



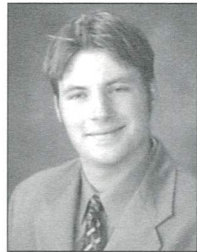
**Emily E. Arndt** ▲  
Watertown, S.D.



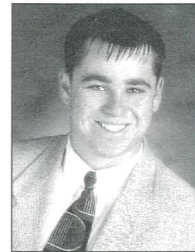
**Megan L. Bauer** ▲  
Belle Plaine, Minn.



**Kristy L. Behm** ▲  
Lomira, Wis.



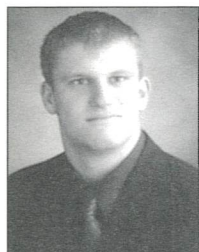
**Michael J. Berg** ◆  
Plymouth, Mich.



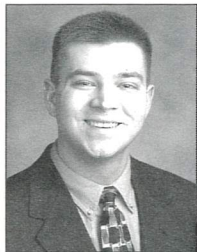
**Nathan H. Berg** ◆  
Fond du Lac, Wis.



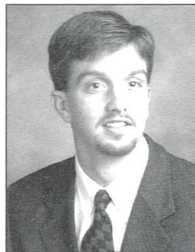
**Jonathon J. Bock** ●  
New Ulm, Minn.



**Aaron D. Boehm** ◆  
Saginaw, Mich.



**Luke J. Boehringer** ◆  
Watertown, Wis.



**Nathanael J. Bourman** ◆  
Houston, Tex.



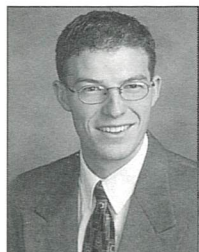
**Rebecca L. Brassfield** ■  
Johnson Creek, Wis.



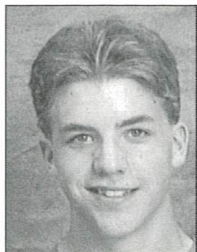
**Kristin S. Buch** ✕  
Waterloo, Wis.



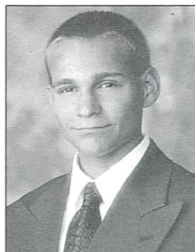
**Nathan M. Buch** ●  
Tomah, Wis.



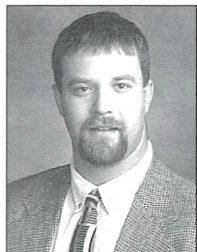
**Peter C. Buege** ▲  
Wauwatosa, Wis.



**Clint A. Burow** ◆  
Milwaukee, Wis.



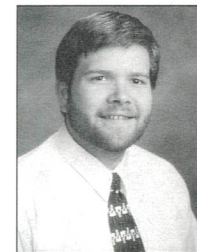
**Daniel J. Carran** ▲  
Beaver Dam, Wis.



**Philip J. Cloute** ●  
Fort Atkinson, Wis.



**Kari L. Cornell** ●  
Stoughton, Wis.



**Joseph D. J. Curia** ◆  
Citrus Heights, Calif.



**Sarah R. Dais** ▲  
Milwaukee, Wis.



**Stephanie L. Diersen** ▲  
Caledonia, Minn.



**Patrick J. Downey Jr.** ●  
San Jose, Calif.



**Heather E. Ebeling** ▲  
Jackson, Wis.



**Erin R. Eckert** ▲  
Tucson, Ariz.



**Kimberly A. Ehlke** ▲  
Watertown, Wis.

- ◆ Bachelor of Arts
- \* Seminary Certification Program
- ▲ Bachelor of Science in Education—Elementary Education
- Bachelor of Science in Education—Secondary Education
- Bachelor of Science in Education—Early Childhood Education
- ✕ Bachelor of Science in Education—Elementary Education and Staff Ministry
- ✦ Bachelor of Science in Staff Ministry

# MLC graduates



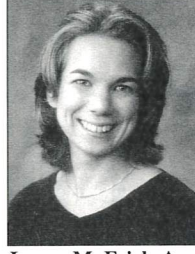
**David M. Endorf** ◆  
Juneau, Alaska



**Jonathan I. Enter** ◆  
Nicollet, Minn.



**Joel S. Ferguson** ●  
Fond du Lac, Wis.



**Laura M. Frick** ▲  
Sun Prairie, Wis.



**Rachel A. Fuerstenau** ●  
Racine, Wis.



**Julie L. Gaertner** ▲  
Oklahoma City, Okla.



**Kristin K. Gerbing** ▲  
Fond du Lac, Wis.



**Andrew J. Glende** ◆  
Columbus, Ohio



**Nicole L. Glodowski** ▲  
Fountain City, Wis.



**Kristin M. Goodger** ▲  
Milwaukee, Wis.



**Kurt E. Granzow** ✖  
San Jose, Calif.



**Rachel K. Grebe** ▲  
North Mankato, Minn.



**Matthew P. Groth** ▲  
Manitowoc, Wis.



**Robert J. Guenther** ◆  
Bellevue, Wash.



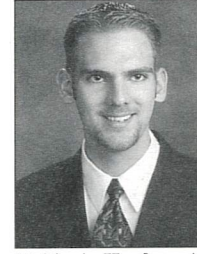
**Sharon J. Gunderson** ▲  
Wood Lake, Minn.



**Kyle P. Gut** ●  
Mosinee, Wis.



**Seth P. Haakenson** ◆  
Sierra Vista, Ariz.



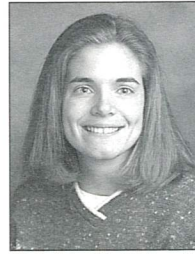
**Philip A. Haefner** ▲  
Decatur, Ga.



**Jason K. Hahn** ▲  
Oak Creek, Wis.



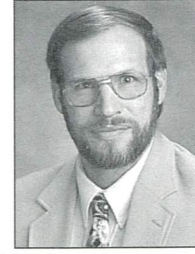
**Sarah B. Heidtke** ▲  
New Ulm, Minn.



**Kristine M. Heins** ▲  
Wauwatosa, Wis.



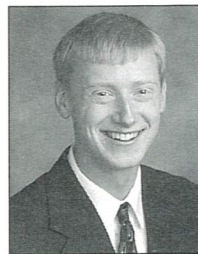
**Rebecca A. Hennig** ▲  
Campbellsport, Wis.



**Rodney R. Herbison** ▲  
Lafayette, Minn.



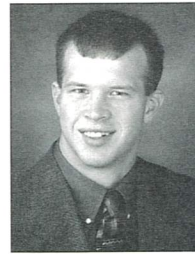
**Christopher M. Hoppe** ◆  
Delano, Minn.



**Paul W. Horn** ◆  
Wauwatosa, Wis.



**Heather L. Hutchinson** ●  
Sterling Heights, Mich.



**Mark R. Jacobson** ◆  
Milwaukee, Wis.



**Daryl R. Johnson** ▲  
Lansing, Mich.



**Joshua A. Johnson** ●  
Oswego, Ill.



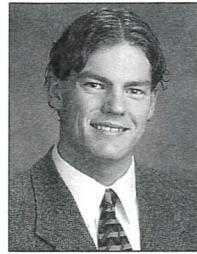
**Wade R. Johnston** ◆  
Livonia, Mich.



**Karen M. Kaiser ▲**  
Waupaca, Wis.



**Kari J. Kemnitz ▲**  
Eldorado, Wis.



**Matthew J. Kiecker ◆**  
Milwaukee, Wis.



**Stephanie M. Kleman ▲**  
West Bend, Wis.



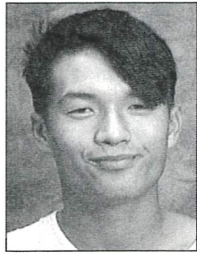
**Amanda M. Klug ■**  
Lake Mills, Wis.



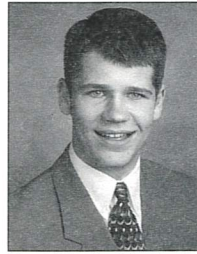
**Jennifer E. Kolb ▲**  
Prairie City, S.D.



**Elizabeth M. Kramer ▲**  
West Salem, Wis.



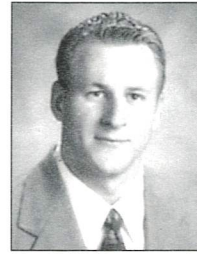
**Paul K. Krause ▲**  
Clear Lake, S.D.



**Paul M. Kuckhahn ◆**  
Gibbon, Minn.



**Todd D. LaPoint ▲**  
Oshkosh, Wis.



**David M. Learman ◆**  
Friendswood, Tex.



**Rebekah A. Learman ▲**  
Peshtigo, Wis.



**Daniel M. Lindner ◆**  
Beaver Dam, Wis.



**Lance R. List ▲**  
Pound, Wis.



**Mark A. Lotito ◆**  
Wrightstown, Wis.



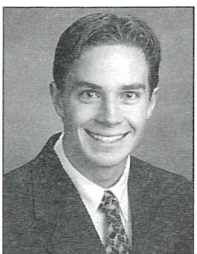
**Jennifer L. Lucht ▲**  
Red Wing, Minn.



**Kari E. Mantey ●**  
Port Orchard, Wash.



**Michael J. Manthei ✕**  
Sacramento, Calif.



**Jeremy J. Mattek ◆**  
Watertown, Wis.



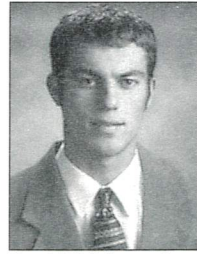
**Holly K. Meier ●**  
Brown Deer, Wis.



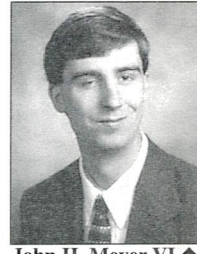
**Jennifer L. Mellon ▲**  
West Bend, Wis.



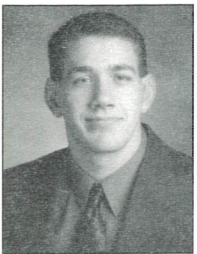
**David K. Merica ▲**  
Wichita, Kan.



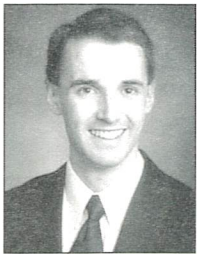
**David J. Meyer ◆**  
Milwaukee, Wis.



**John H. Meyer VI ◆**  
Atlanta, Ga.



**Paul A. Mildebrandt ▲**  
Green Lake, Wis.



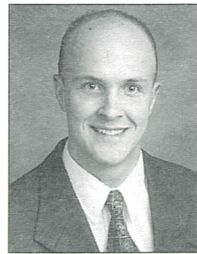
**Aaron M. Moldenhauer ◆**  
New Ulm, Minn.



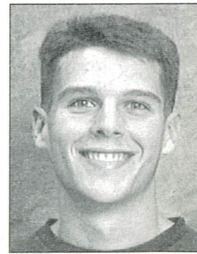
**Daniel E. Moll ◆**  
Milwaukee, Wis.



**Lori A. Monday ▲**  
Houston, Tex.



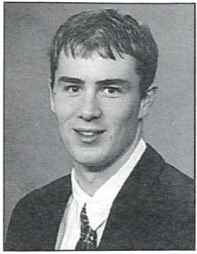
**William A. Monday ◆**  
Cincinnati, Ohio



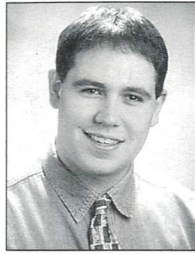
**Andrew M. Neumann ▲**  
Janesville, Wis.

- ◆ Bachelor of Arts
- ▲ Seminary Certification Program
- ▲ Bachelor of Science in Education—Elementary Education
- Bachelor of Science in Education—Secondary Education
- Bachelor of Science in Education—Early Childhood Education
- ✕ Bachelor of Science in Education—Elementary Education and Staff Ministry
- ✕ Bachelor of Science in Staff Ministry

# MLC graduates



**Joel D. Neumann** ◆  
Valentine, Neb.



**Alan J. Nolte** ●  
Milwaukee, Wis.



**Melissa B. Nolte** ✕  
Madison, Wis.



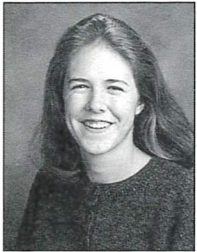
**Kirsten J. Oakes** ▲  
Milwaukee, Wis.



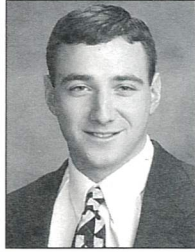
**Jason D. Oakland** ◆  
Winthrop, Minn.



**David S. Olson** ◆  
Cudahy, Wis.



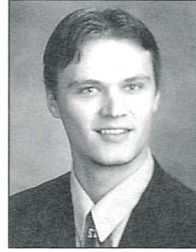
**Laura B. Otto** ▲  
Saginaw, Mich.



**Timothy R. Palm** ◆  
Jefferson, Wis.



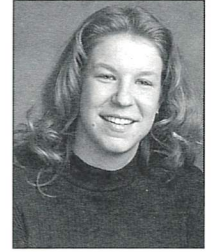
**Christopher A. Patterson** ●  
New Berlin, Wis.



**Corey H. Pederson** ▲  
Zumbrota, Minn.



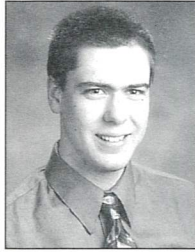
**Brenna M. Perry** ▲  
Chaska, Minn.



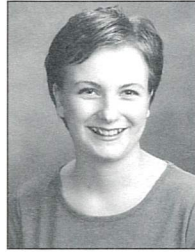
**Jennifer M. Petermann** ▲  
Saukville, Wis.



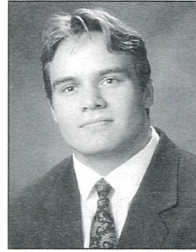
**Michelle M. Piske** ▲  
Yakima, Wash.



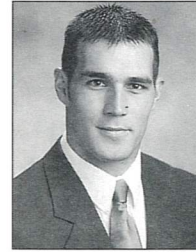
**Joel T. Plocher** ●  
New Ulm, Minn.



**Kelli L. Plocher** ▲  
New Ulm, Minn.



**Gregory J. Pope** ◆  
Racine, Wis.



**Andrew P. Retberg** ◆  
Saginaw, Mich.



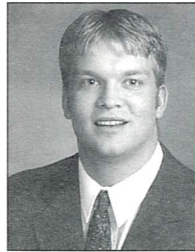
**Monica A. Reyna** ▲  
Lake Mills, Wis.



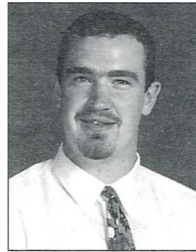
**Valerie L. Riechers** ▲  
Phoenix, Ariz.



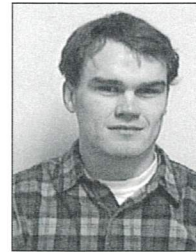
**Stephanie L. Riley** ●  
Toledo, Ohio



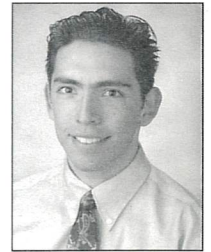
**Jonathan L. Romsdahl** ▲  
St. James, Minn.



**Daniel J. Ross** ●  
Nicollet, Minn.



**Jason R. Rupnow** ▲  
Ixonia, Wis.



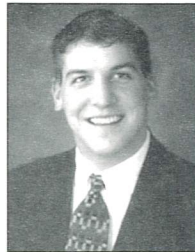
**David J. Salinas** \*  
North Hollywood, Calif.



**Katie K. Salinas** ▲  
Stevensville, Mich.



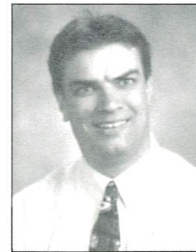
**Shannon M. Sanchez** ▲  
Saginaw, Mich.



**David G. Scharf** ◆  
West Allis, Wis.



**Amy G. Schmidt** ▲  
Saginaw, Mich.



**Timothy A. Schoell** ●  
Libertyville, Ill.



**Amy L. Schroer** ▲  
Saginaw, Mich.





**Robin M. Schuenemann ▲**  
Watertown, Wis.



**Christopher R. Schultz ●**  
Manitowoc, Wis.



**Wendy S. Schultz ▲**  
West St. Paul, Minn.



**Jeremy A. Schulz ◆**  
Cottage Grove, Wis.



**Laura M. Seeger ▲**  
Sioux Falls, S.D.



**Joel C. Seifert ◆**  
Midland, Mich.



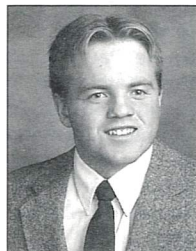
**Martha E. Simdon ▲**  
Fort Atkinson, Wis.



**Sarah R. Staude ▲**  
Onalaska, Wis.



**Joel P. Stuebs ◆**  
Platteville, Wis.



**Peter A. Sulzle ◆**  
Wautoma, Wis.



**Erica M. Thiesfeldt ▲**  
New Ulm, Minn.



**Renae M. Todd ▲**  
New Ulm, Minn.



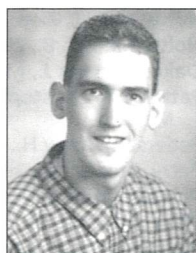
**Gina M. Tolentino ▲**  
New Berlin, Wis.



**Sara N. Tollefson ▲**  
Waukesha, Wis.



**Veronica L. Vierck ▲**  
Milwaukee, Wis.



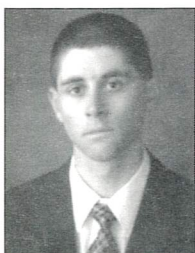
**Steven T. Wall ◆**  
Eagle River, Alaska



**Timothy R. Walter ▲**  
Milwaukee, Wis.



**Wendy S. Weinrich ■**  
Royal, Neb.



**Robert C. Weiss ◆**  
Appleton, Wis.



**Karena S. Wice ▲**  
Lansing, Mich.



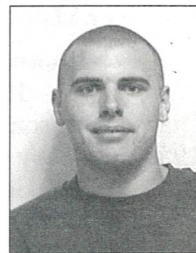
**Adam J. Wiechmann ●**  
New Berlin, Wis.



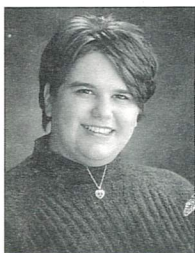
**Emilie I. Williams ●**  
Twin Lakes, Wis.



**Lisa A. Winkelmann ▲**  
Oak Creek, Wis.



**Scott E. Wolfram ◆**  
Watertown, Wis.



**Jennifer L. Zahn ●**  
Indianapolis, Ind.



**Sarah L. Zahn ●**  
Appleton, Wis.



**Michelle Zastrow ■**  
Watertown, Wis.



**Adam E. Zimpelmann ◆**  
Eagle River, Wis.



**Sarah G. Zuberbier ▲**  
Appleton, Wis.

**NOT PICTURED:**

**Kathleen E. Kruse ▲**  
Marshall, Minn.;  
**Mary K. Szalai ▲**  
Lancaster, Calif.

- ◆ Bachelor of Arts
- \* Seminary Certification Program
- ▲ Bachelor of Science in Education—Elementary Education
- Bachelor of Science in Education—Secondary Education
- Bachelor of Science in Education—Early Childhood Education
- ✕ Bachelor of Science in Education—Elementary Education and Staff Ministry
- \* Bachelor of Science in Staff Ministry



## Call assignments

**Adickes, Kollin L.**, St. John, Libertyville, Ill.  
**Alliet, Tabitha A.**, Immanuel, Kewaunee, Wis.  
**Anderson, Quin A. L.**, Salem, Lowell, Wis.  
**Bauer, Megan L.**, Our Redeemer, Santa Barbara, Calif.  
**Bock, Jonathon J.**, St. John, Maribel, Wis.  
**Boese, Sarah J.**, Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Mich.  
**Brandt, Samantha J.**, Emmaus, Phoenix, Ariz.  
**Brassfield, Rebecca L.**, Gethsemane, Omaha, Neb.  
**Buch, Kristin S.**, Jordan, West Allis, Wis.  
**Buch, Nathan M.**, Nebraska LHS, Waco, Neb.  
**Buege, Peter C.**, Zion, Torrance, Calif.  
**Carran, Daniel J.**, Emmanuel, Tempe, Ariz.  
**Cloute, Philip J.**, MLS, Saginaw, Mich.  
**Cornell, Kari L.**, St. Mark, Green Bay, Wis.  
**Dais, Sarah R.**, Zion, Egg Harbor, Wis.  
**Diersen, Stephanie L.**, Ascension, Escondido, Calif.  
**Downey, Patrick J. Jr.**, Trinity Christian Academy, Woodbridge, Va.  
**Eckert, Erin R.**, King of Kings, Maitland, Fla.  
**Ehlke, Kimberly A.**, Abiding Word, Houston, Tex.  
**Enter, Allen**, St. John, Montello, Wis.  
**Frick, Laura M.**, St. Paul, Norfolk, Neb.  
**Fuerstenau, Rachel A.**, Trinity, Aberdeen, S.D.  
**Gaertner, Julie L.**, St. John, Lewiston, Minn.  
**Glodowski, Nicole L.**, Grace, Geneva, Neb.  
**Gorsline, Todd D.**, Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis.  
**Groth, Matthew P.**, Beautiful Savior, Milwaukee  
**Gunderson, Sharon J.**, St. Peter, Ft. Collins, Colo.  
**Gut, Kyle P.**, Great Plains LHS, Watertown, S.D.  
**Haefner, Philip A.**, St. Paul, St. James, Minn.  
**Hahn, Jason K.**, Grace, Yakima, Wash.  
**Heidtke, Sarah B.**, Good Shepherd, Omaha, Neb.  
**Heins, Kristine M.**, Mt. Olive, Las Vegas, Nev.  
**Hennig, Rebecca A.**, Zion, Moberg, S.D.

**Herbison, Rodney R.**, Zion, Denver, Colo.  
**Herrmann, Ruth N.**, Christ, Oakley, Mich.  
**Hutchinson, Heather L.**, Bethlehem, Hortonville, Wis.  
**Johnson, Daryl R.**, Lord of Life, Friendswood, Tex.  
**Johnson, Joshua A.**, St. Mark's, Citrus Heights, Calif.  
**Kaiser, Karen M.**, St. Lucas, Milwaukee  
**Kemnitz, Kari J.**, Trinity, Brillion, Wis.  
**Kleman, Stephanie M.**, Divine Peace, Largo, Md.  
**Klug, Amanda M.**, St. John-St. James, Reedsville, Wis.  
**Koehler, Koreen B.**, Immanuel, Hutchinson, Minn.  
**Korth, Junel A.**, St. Peter, Plymouth, Mich.  
**Krause, Paul K.**, Pilgrim, Mesa, Ariz.  
**Kruse, Kathleen E.**, California LHS, Wildomar, Calif.  
**LaPoint, Todd D.**, Emanuel, Lansing, Mich.  
**Learman, Rebekah A.**, St. Andrew, Chicago, Ill.  
**List, Lance R.**, Emmaus, Phoenix, Ariz.  
**Mantey, Kari E.**, Mt. Calvary, Waukesha, Wis.  
**Marquardt, Michael A.**, St. Paul, Tomah, Wis.  
**Mayer, Collin J.**, Salem, Milwaukee  
**Meier, Holly K.**, Christ, Eagle River, Wis.  
**Mellon, Jennifer L.**, Illinois LHS, Crete, Ill.  
**Merica, David K.**, Beautiful Savior, Grove City, Ohio  
**Mildebrandt, Paul A.**, Zion, Rhinelander, Wis.  
**Nolte, Alan J.**, Zion, Toledo, Ohio  
**Nolte, Melissa B.**, Zion, Toledo, Ohio  
**Oakes, Kirsten J.**, Mt. Olive, Bay City, Mich.  
**Patterson, Christopher A.**, St. John, St. Paul, Minn.  
**Pederson, Corey H.**, Gethsemane, Omaha, Neb.  
**Perry, Brenna M.**, St. John, Minneapolis, Minn.  
**Petermann, Jennifer M.**, Peace, Granger, Ind.  
**Piske, Michelle M.**, Immanuel, Fort Worth, Tex.  
**Plocher, Joel T.**, Martin Luther, Neenah, Wis.  
**Reyna, Monica A.**, Zion, South Milwaukee, Wis.  
**Riechers, Valerie L.**, Bethany, Gibsonia, Penn.

**Riley, Stephanie L.**, Luther HS, Onalaska, Wis.  
**Romsdahl, Jonathan L.**, King of Kings, Garden Grove, Calif.  
**Ross, Daniel J.**, Nebraska LHS, Waco, Neb.  
**Rupnow, Jason R.**, Mt. Olive, Overland Park, Kan.  
**Salinas, Katie K.**, Redemption, Milwaukee  
**Schoell, Timothy A.**, Good Shepherd, Burnsville, Minn.  
**Schuenemann, Robin M.**, Emmanuel, Tempe, Ariz.  
**Schultz, Christopher R.**, Shoreland LHS, Somers, Wis.  
**Schuman, Joni R.**, St. John, Waterloo, Wis.  
**Seeger, Laura M.**, Pilgrim, Minneapolis, Minn.  
**Simdon, Martha E.**, Lakeside LHS, Lake Mills, Wis.  
**Stauder, Sarah R.**, Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis.  
**Teague, Valerie K.**, Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis.  
**Thiesfeldt, Erica M.**, Fox Valley LHS, Appleton, Wis.  
**Todd, Renae M.**, St. Matthew, Niles, Ill.  
**Tollefson, Sara N.**, Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis.  
**Vierck, Veronica L.**, Faith, Anchorage, Alaska  
**Walter, Timothy R.**, Mt. Olive, Delano, Minn.  
**Weinrich, Wendy S.**, St. John, Libertyville, Ill.  
**Wiechmann, Adam J.**, East Fork LHS, Whiteriver, Ariz.  
**Williams, Emilie I.**, Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Mich.  
**Winkelmann, Lisa A.**, Grace, Yakima, Wash.  
**Zahn, Jennifer L.**, Christ, North St. Paul, Minn.  
**Zahn, Sarah L.**, Salem, Milwaukee  
**Zastrow, Michelle L.**, Peace, Sun Prairie, Wis.

### Staff ministers

**Granzow, Kurt E.**, Dourados, Brazil  
**Manthei, Michael J.**, Faith, Antioch, Ill.

## Obituaries

### Dianne M. Aronson 1956-2000

Dianne Aronson was born June 19, 1956, in Sleepy Eye, Minn. She died Apr. 11, 2000, in Waukegan, Ill.

A 1980 graduate of Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., Aronson served at Pilgrim, Menomonee Falls, Wis.

Aronson was preceded in death by her father and an infant nephew. She is survived by her mother; her husband, Mark; one son; two sisters; her father- and mother-in-law; two brothers-in-law; nieces and nephews.

### Esther A. Nommensen 1911-2000

Esther Nommensen was born June 15, 1911, in Milwaukee County. She died May 13, 2000, in Beaver Dam, Wis.

A 1947 graduate of Dr. Martin

Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., Nommensen taught at St. James, Milwaukee, Wis.; St. Paul, Wonewoc, Wis.; and St. John, Juneau, Wis.

She is survived by one son, one daughter, 11 grandchildren, 18 great-grandchildren, and three great-great grandchildren.

### Betty B. Mammel 1930-2000

Betty Mammel was born Oct. 26, 1930, in Milwaukee, Wis. She died May 18, 2000, in Onalaska, Wis.

A 1952 graduate of Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., Mammel taught at Trinity, Caledonia, Wis.; Epiphany, Racine, Wis.; St. Paul, Stevensville, Mich.; and Christ, West Salem, Wis.

She is survived by two daughters, two sons, and 10 grandchildren.

### Wayne E. Schmidt 1927-2000

Wayne Schmidt was born April 10, 1927, in Fond du Lac, Wis. He died June 6, 2000, in St. Louis, Mo.

A 1955 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis., Schmidt served as an instructor at Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn.; pastor at Our Savior, Lena/St. Paul, Oconto Falls, Wis.; principal at Luther High School, Onalaska, Wis.; and campus pastor at UW-La Crosse and UW-Madison, Wis. He also served as a professor at Concordia Seminary (LCMS), St. Louis, Mo.

He is survived by wife, Bonnie; one son, one daughter, his mother, and a sister.

## A church for all nations

Every year since its founding in 1854, St. Mark, Watertown, Wis., has had worship services in German. They still have German services twice a year—Good Friday and Christmas Eve.

But St. Mark doesn't only celebrate its past. It also is looking forward to its future by reaching out to Watertown's changing population—a growing number of Hispanic immigrants who work at the many factories in the Watertown area.

In the past year St. Mark has seen over 100 different Spanish-speaking adults in Spanish worship, as well as 35 elementary school-aged children. The congregation confirmed its first group of Hispanics on May 14. Fifteen Hispanic adults and 15 children joined St. Mark that day.

But this didn't happen overnight. St. Mark's ministry to the Hispanics started in the mid-1990s when the congregation first realized the outreach opportunities and called another full-time pastor, who would serve part-time in evangelism—Pastor Karl Walther.

Walther began Spanish Bible classes in summer 1996. Things moved slowly—sometimes no one would show up.

But things picked up in 1997 when Adela Spaude, a member at St. Mark,

began doing her own evangelizing.

"She just loves people," says Walther. "She doesn't know a lot of Spanish, but she just brought them in." Since then not one week has gone by without the church sharing the Savior in the Spanish language. By fall 1998, weekly worship in Spanish was added.

"Our Spanish language worship services go like those we conduct in English," says Walther, "but they're probably a little simpler. We sing a couple hymns; we confess our sins and our faith; we pray. But mostly we study the Bible." During part of the service, the congregation's children attend Spanish language Sunday school taught by a retired WELS teacher, who taught herself Spanish.

Many more members of St. Mark are involved in the Hispanic outreach. They offer rides to worship, videotape services for broadcast on the local cable channel, transport children to St. Mark's school, and help Hispanic families with day-to-day living, which is made difficult because of language barriers.

"A whole lot of people are marveling at God's widespread grace,"

says Walther. "This ministry really has opened everybody's eyes to the opportunities to share the gospel."

This past summer St. Mark also added a full-time Spanish language deaconess, Becca Thompson, to teach English as a Second Language and serve as a liaison between St. Mark's school and its Spanish-speaking families. A grant from the Siebert Foundation is funding her work.

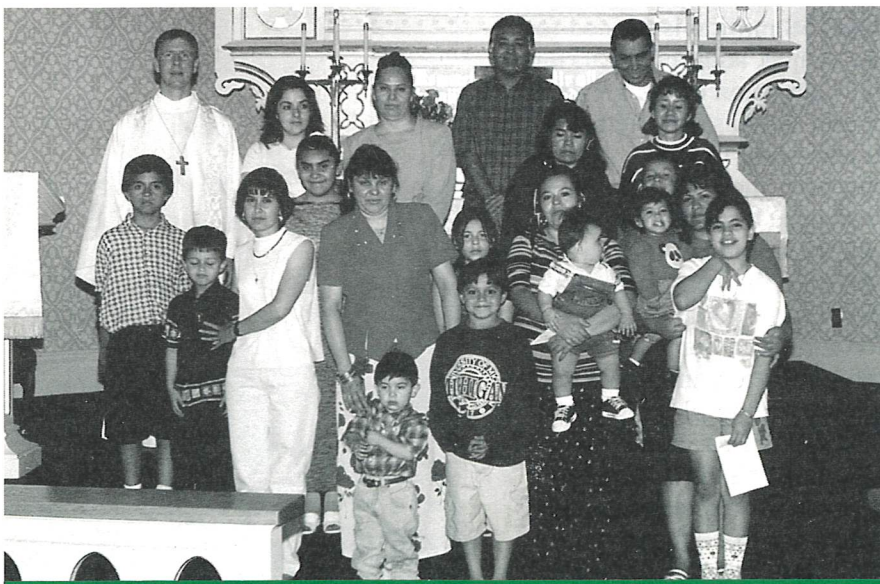
The ministry continues to grow as Hispanic members are starting to share what they hear and bring friends and relatives to St. Mark.

"Right now we're going through Genesis chapter by chapter, and the people are gobbling it up," said Walther. "I don't think they've heard this stuff before. The gospel is doing its work."

An outreach opportunity grant helped St. Mark fund publicity and fellowship for its Hispanic outreach program.

To help congregations become aware of and involved in reaching out to the lost, WELS Synodical Council (SC) gives outreach opportunity grants three times a year. Two hundred thousand dollars is available from July 1, 2000 to June 30, 2001. Since this program started in 1998, the SC has distributed money for 111 grants—a total of \$739,990.

Does your congregation want to apply? Criteria include an outreach focus, innovation, involvement of members, and good planning. Applications are available from Pastor Warren Widmann, 7610 NE Fremont, Portland OR 97213; 503/253-7338; fax, 503/253-4336; <pnwdp@aol.com>. The first deadline for 2000-2001 is Oct. 1.



Pastor Karl Walther (far left back) and some of the new Hispanic members of St. Mark, Watertown. On May 14, 15 Hispanic adults were confirmed.



## A new chapel for our college of ministry

*Information about the upcoming Forward in Christ thank offering was recently distributed to all congregations. The stewardship emphasis of the thank offering is intended to provide needed financial resources for our congregations and also to support the worldwide mission of our synod. Three synodical projects have been approved: Mission projects (and scholarships), a chapel project at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., and the WELS heritage project for an expanded archives. In a series of articles we are explaining more about each of these projects.*

### Mission outreach

\$19.5 to \$31.6 million

### Martin Luther College chapel project

\$8 to \$10 million

### WELS heritage project

\$2.1 to \$4.2 million

Although mission outreach is by far the largest thrust of our Forward in Christ (FIC) thank offering, another FIC project will provide an important commodity for WELS' future pastors and teachers—a place to worship.

Right now students at Martin Luther College (MLC), New Ulm, Minn., can attend chapel twice a day at the MLC auditorium. But students also go to concerts, drama and choir practices, sports rallies, talent shows, and more in that same auditorium.

"If you're going to use the church that you worship in on Sunday morning for anything and everything under the sun, how do you know when you're in church or when you're doing something else?", asks Theodore Olsen, MLC president.

He continues: "That particular

room is being used from 7:30 AM to midnight every day. When we use it for that variety of purposes, it loses respect as a chapel."

By having a separate location for worship, students have a place to concentrate on the one thing needful: the gospel in Word and sacrament.

"A chapel is a powerful visual statement that tells everyone who attends here as well as the world why we're here and what we're doing," says Olsen. "It gets placed in the center of the campus and is the very fiber and culture of everything that goes on in this campus."

The chapel will also serve as a "premiere worship classroom," where students can observe different forms of worship.

The proposed chapel will seat 1,250—900 on the main floor and 350 in the balconies—giving plenty of space for the combined student body and staff of over 1,000. A pipe organ and art glass are also included in the plans.

MLC has two proposed locations for the chapel, depending on how much money is received.

- ◊ In one location—away from the main activity of the campus—\$8 million is needed for the chapel, additional parking, and relocation of the tennis courts and baseball field.
- ◊ If additional funds are available after more mission projects have been funded, the chapel would be located closer to the center of campus. Plans would then call for additional parking and the relocation and renovation of the heating plant, maintenance building, and athletic fields. A fellowship/commons area with a basement would also be added, which would link the chapel with other buildings. The basement space would be used

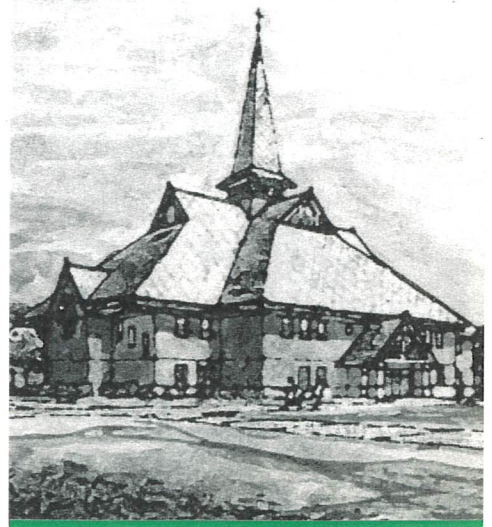
for classrooms, a tiered music practice room, storage, and expanded media and distance learning centers. About \$11.6 million is needed for this option.

WELS members can designate their FIC offering to mission projects, the chapel project, and the WELS heritage project, or give undesignated offerings to the prioritized list of projects. When it is known how much money is available for the chapel project and after the synod in convention approves the building plans, building will begin—most likely in the fall of 2001.

"The whole campus family is eagerly looking forward to a time when we can worship in that special worship center," says Olsen.

*For more information about the FIC offering, contact the Commission for Communication on Financial Support at 800-827-5482; <lyorkey@sab.wels.net>.*

*Read "A true thank offering" (p. 7) for a better understanding of the FIC committee's motivation behind the thank offering.*

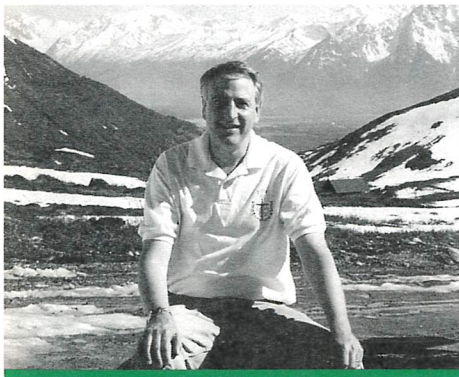


An artist's rendition of the proposed chapel at Martin Luther College.

## A Kruschel moment

As of July 1, Pastor Peter Kruschel replaced Dr. John Lawrenz as administrator of the Board for Ministerial Education (BME). This board oversees the work of the synod's schools of ministry that prepare future pastors and teachers, and Kruschel is helping to set that course for future called workers. He plans on doing this by "helping ministerial education focus on the mission of the church so we can be the best gospel proclaimers we can be in the 21st century."

Kruschel began his ministry at Grace, Milwaukee, and also served Crown of Glory, Orlando, Fla. In Florida Kruschel became chairman of the South Atlantic Mission Board. Since 1988 he has served



Peter Kruschel visited King of Kings, Wasilla, Alaska, in June as the associate administrator of the Board for Home Missions.

as associate administrator of the Board for Home Missions.

Fellow workers at the synod administration building are glad that although Kruschel may be changing offices, he will not be leaving the building. His friendly personality and quick sense of humor are valued. His home missions support staff will miss him and the praise that he so readily bestows, but know that he will use his new position to give God glory.

Kruschel's family is also supportive of his ministry and all serve in their own ways. His wife, Christine, is a fifth-grade teacher at St. Paul, Muskego, Wis. The couple have two sons—Jonathan, a second year student at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and Samuel, a senior at Luther Preparatory School.

As Kruschel begins his new position, he will strive to "maintain the strong theological heritage WELS has enjoyed for the past century and a half and build for the future."

*If you have questions about the BME, contact Peter Kruschel, 414/256-3236 or <peterk@sab.wels.net>.*

## ON THE BRIGHT SIDE

In October 1999 we lost our three-year-old son, Daniel, in a house fire. Afterward a neighbor took a picture of each of our three children and scanned them in the computer and made it look like each was sitting on Jesus lap. I framed the pictures and hung them on the wall.

Later, my four-year-old niece, Racheal, came up to me and put her hands on her hips and said, "Betty, I have a question."

Now when the hands are on the hips, every mother knows it is an important question, so I got down to her level and asked what the question was

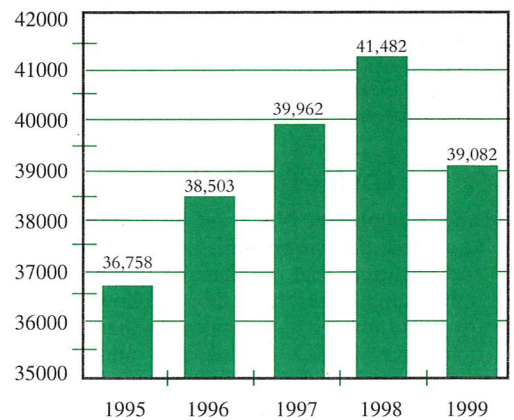
She replied, "I KNOW how you got a picture of Daniel with Jesus, but how did you get one of Elizabeth and Sarah with Jesus? I want my picture taken with Jesus."

In a time of sadness, kids keep us smiling. . . . Thank God for them everyday.

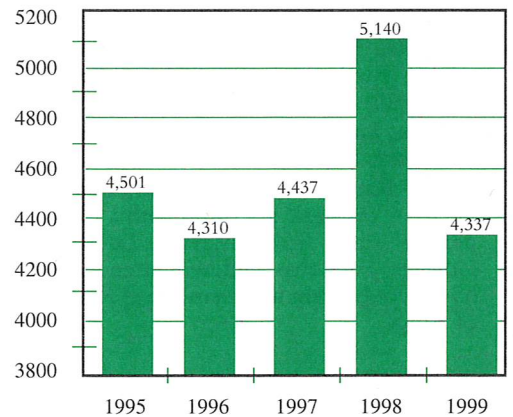
*Betty Pries  
Dakota, Minnesota*

## WELS stats

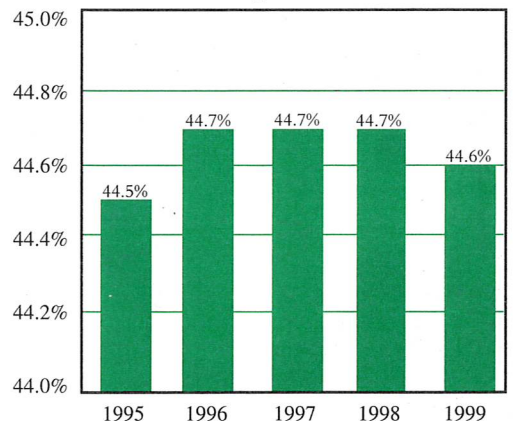
### Adults in Bible class



### Youth in Bible class



### Worship attendance



According to statistics from the 1999 Statistical Report, WELS members' connection to the gospel at church has decreased. There is uncertainty as to why this is happening. WELS Synodical Council appointed a Spiritual Growth Project team in November 1999 to look into this issue. The team consists of seven men, led by Commission on Adult Discipleship administrator Bruce Becker.



## District news

### Minnesota

Minnesota Valley LHS freshman **Travis Iverson** had an article published in *Trapper's World* detailing how to trap beaver. Iverson has trapped several 50 pound beaver.

### North Atlantic

**Grace, Charlotte, N.C.**, set up a booth at a baby exposition with merchandise and resources that emphasized spiritual upbringing. Church members followed up on unchurched prospects by hand-delivering a CD of lullabies and a videotape on caring for babies.

### South Atlantic

**Messiah, Alpharetta, Ga.**, dedicated its new worship sanctuary on May 21.

**Northdale, Tampa, Fla.**, dedicated its school room and installed its first teacher on July 9.

**Sola Fide, Lawrenceville, Ga.**, dedicated its new building in July.

**King of Kings, Maitland, Fla.**, conducted a 10-week day camp with a five person staff from Martin Luther College. Fifty-two children attended, 35 of whom were not members at King of Kings.

### Southeastern Wisconsin

**Power Surge**, Wisconsin Lutheran College's dance team, took first place at the International Cup of the Americas.

### Arizona



Ruth Ferro, Prince of Peace, Yuma, Ariz., has played the organ for worship services since 1936.

The Milwaukee team competed during spring break against teams from Mexico, Guatemala, and Puerto Rico.

### Happy Anniversary!

**MN—Emmanuel, Hudson, Wis.**, observed its 25th anniversary this year.

Members of St. Paul, St. James, Minn., honored **Martin Lopahs** with a special service on the anniversary of his 25th year in the preaching ministry.

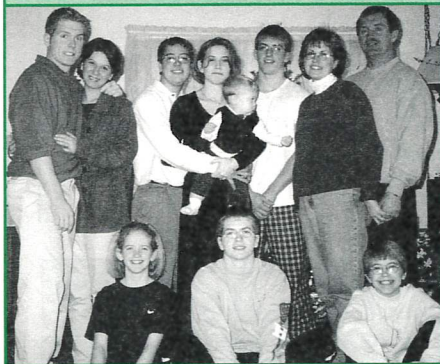
**NA—** On May 7, members of **King of Kings, Suffolk, Va.**, celebrated the 10th anniversary of the church's first worship service.

**SA—** Three called workers at Bay Pines, Seminole, Fla., celebrated anniversaries in February: **David Priebe**, 25 years in the preaching ministry; **Gretchen and Mark Boehme**, 25 years in the teaching ministry.

**WW—St. Matthew's Ladies Aid, Winona, Minn.**, was honored with a 100th anniversary luncheon on March 4.

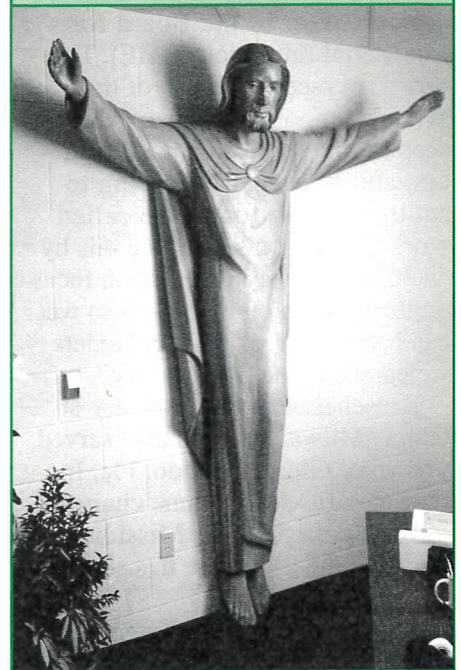
These pastors are the reporters for the districts featured this month: AZ—Kenneth Pasch; MI—Geoff Kieta; MN—Jeffrey Bovee; NA—Kevin Schultz; NW—Joel Lillo; SA—Mark Haefner; SEW—Scott Oelhafen; WW—Elton Stroh.

### Northern Wisconsin



Mari and Dave Lepke (back right, shown with family), members of Emanuel, New London, Wis., were chosen to be the honorary chairmen of the American Cancer Society Relay for Life on June 9-10 in New London. Both Mari and Dave fought cancer, and they use their experiences to witness their faith to the community.

### Michigan



This eight-foot basswood Christus is mounted on the wall above the altar at St. John's new church in Frankenmuth, Mich.

## THROUGH MY BIBLE IN 3 YEARS

### September 2000

- |                        |                        |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. James 1:19-27       | 15. 1 Chron. 21:1-22:1 |
| 2. Jas. 2:1-13         | 16. 1 Chron. 22:2-19   |
| 3. Jas. 2:14-26        | 17. 1 Chron. 23, 24    |
| 4. Jas. 3              | 18. 1 Chron. 25-27     |
| 5. Jas. 4              | 19. 1 Chron. 28        |
| 6. Jas. 5              | 20. 1 Chron. 29        |
| 7. 1 Chronicles 1-9    | 21. Psalm 107:1-32     |
| 8. 1 Chron. 10, 11     | 22. Ps. 107:33-43      |
| 9. 1 Chron. 12         | 23. Ps. 108            |
| 10. 1 Chron. 13, 14    | 24. Ps. 109            |
| 11. 1 Chron. 15:1-16:6 | 25. Ps. 110            |
| 12. 1 Chron. 16:7-43   | 26. Ps. 111, 112       |
| 13. 1 Chron. 17        | 27. Ps. 113, 114       |
| 14. 1 Chron. 18-20     | 28. Ps. 115            |
|                        | 29. Ps. 116            |
|                        | 30. Ps. 117, 118       |

## Fellowship prospects

WELS, through its Committee on Inter-Church Relations, is currently pursuing discussions with two church bodies outside the United States to determine whether the churches hold to the same doctrines and practices as WELS

- For 20 years WELS has worked side by side with Christ the King Lutheran Church of Nigeria, a church body of 22 congregations and 2,500 souls. Now WELS is aware of All Saints Lutheran Church, another church body in Nigeria that shares our commitment to Scripture. All Saints is a church body of 23 congregations and 5,000 souls. Church leaders have engaged in doctrinal discussions for two years and have found our church bodies to be in complete agreement in doctrine and practice.

- On June 8, leaders of the Confessional Lutheran Church in Latvia (CLCL) met with WELS leaders in Milwaukee with a view toward a common declaration of fellowship at the 2001 WELS

synod-wide convention.

The first independent CLCL congregations broke away from the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church in 1997 for doctrinal reasons. The CLCL began with two congregations and fewer than 100 adult members but has grown to nine congregations and more than 300 adult members. The CLCL also runs a publishing house, Augsburg Institute.

The challenge that is facing the CLCL is the unwillingness of the Latvian government to recognize it as a registered church body. The religious law in Latvia favors big churches, granting them exclusive rights to be called the only traditional churches in Latvia. Consequently, every new church body is regarded as an untraditional religious movement. Establishing fellowship with



President Karl Gurgel discusses the status of the Lutheran church in Latvia with Gundars Bakulis and Ugis Sildegs, pastors from the Confessional Lutheran Church in Latvia.

WELS may give this small church body credibility with the government and with Latvian citizens searching for God's truth.

Pending approval at next summer's synod convention, fellowship will be established with both All Saints Lutheran Church in Nigeria and the Confessional Lutheran Church in Latvia.

## Forward in Christ celebration update

✓ Fifth and sixth grade students at Good Shepherd, West Allis, Wis., decided to collect pennies during the second semester to support mission work. In deciding where to apply the money, they read about the Forward in Christ thank offering in the Kids Go Forward in Christ (FIC) brochure



Jessica Riege, Diana Spiegelberg, Megan Georgson, and teacher Ernest Knobloch came to the Synod Administration Building to present their class's contribution to the Forward in Christ thank offering.

produced by the Commission on Youth Discipleship.

The brochure suggests collecting pennies as one way to contribute to this special offering, and the students at Good Shepherd realized this was where their pennies should go. They collected \$154 that will now be used to help fund FIC thank offering projects (see p. 28 for more details on those projects).

To receive a Kids Go Forward in Christ brochure, contact the Commission on Youth Discipleship, 414/256-3274.

✓ The Minnesota District Forward in Christ Anniversary Committee, with help from Martin Luther College (MLC), prepared a resource booklet to assist congregations in their Christmas 2000 celebrations. The booklet, *The Word Became Flesh: Christmas Resources 2000*, emphasizes the gospel for the day, John

1:1-14. The booklet includes:

- An introductory article and Bible study encouraging the celebration of Holy Communion on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day.

- *Forward with the Means of Grace*, a service for Christmas Eve or Christmas Day that includes new music, special prayers, and sermon notes. The service includes communion but can be adapted.

- Music resources for choirs, organists, and other instrumentalists.

The resource booklet will be mailed to all congregations in September. The resources are in a format convenient for photocopying without copyright restrictions. MLC staff members are available to present fall workshops about the materials. For more information, contact Steven Thiesfeldt, 507/354-8221 or <[thiesfsr@mlc-wels.edu](mailto:thiesfsr@mlc-wels.edu)>.



**A call to prayer—**

A new form of calling British Muslims to prayer has been launched.

The new service is for those with cell phones with access to the Internet. The free service offers a text message that appears on the phone screen reminding them when it is time to pray.

Muslims must pray five times a day—at sunrise, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset, and night—and these times vary with the changing seasons and according to location.

Traditionally, British mosques have supplied congregation members with tables showing the varying times of prayer for that location. Muslims have also been able to buy a digital watch which, when set for a particular location, will beep at each of the five times of prayer.

**More Catholics, fewer priests—**

While the number of Roman Catholics in the world is growing, the number of priests is dropping, according to new Vatican statistics.

The Vatican's latest Statistical Yearbook, which contains 1998 figures, put the total number of Catholics at about 1 billion. It said the Catholic population grew at a rate of 1.29 percent, which is just below the 1998 growth rate of 1.3 percent for total world population.

The number of priests worldwide was 404,626, down from 420,971 a decade earlier. There was significant growth in the number of priests in Africa and some growth in Asia and the Americas, but a large drop in Europe.

The Vatican reported growing numbers of candidates for the priesthood, the monastery, and the convent, particularly in Africa, Latin America, and Eastern Europe.

**Pro-gay Protestants plan major convention—**

Pro-gay movements within mainline Protestant churches

will come together for the first time under one umbrella at Witness Our Welcome 2000, a conference that will be held outside Chicago in August.

In an effort to make further inroads into traditional biblical beliefs, the WOW2000 meeting plans to celebrate the progress made by Protestant gays and lesbians as well as map strategy for the future.

Churches to be represented at the conference include the United Church of Canada, Episcopal Church, Presbyterian Church (USA), United Church of Christ, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), United Methodist Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, American Baptists, and Brethren/Mennonite churches.

Three of these churches—The United Methodist Church, Presbyterian Church (USA), and Episcopal Church—are tackling questions surrounding homosexuality at conventions this summer.

The United Methodist Church decided in May not to change bans on gay ordination and same-sex ceremonies and retained a statement calling the practice of homosexuality “incompatible with Christian teaching.”

**How often do you go to church?—**

In a typical week in 1999, 43 percent of adults attended a place of worship, according to an average of two national surveys by Gallup International. This is up three percent from 1998.

A total of 2,000 adults, 18 or older, were asked, “Did you, yourself, happen to attend church or synagogue in the last seven days, or not?”

When the same group was asked, “How often do you attend church or synagogue,” forty percent said they seldom or never attend.

[*Emerging Trends*, March 2000]

**Court throws out “Jesus” lawsuit—**

In May, a German court threw out a lawsuit against the Catholic Church and Protestant churches brought by three theologians on behalf of Jesus.

The theologians, calling themselves “brothers in spirit” of Jesus, sued under a law that allows people to defend their dead relatives from slander. They argued that the churches’ roles in religious fighting, wars, and political intrigue slandered the name of Christ.

The court threw out the case on the grounds that the German constitution guarantees religious freedom and added that since Christ was resurrected, he is not dead and therefore they had no right to bring a case on his behalf.

[*Catholic World News*, <CWNews.com>]

**Presbyterians approve guidelines for ecumenical movement—**

The Presbyterian Church (USA) has come closer to adopting an agreement with other mainline Protestant churches after a majority of its regional presbyteries adopted the basic principles of the Churches Uniting in Christ (CUiC) agreement.

The CUiC agreement would be a network of nine Protestant denominations to share ministries, recognize one another’s churches, and share in communion. Organizers hope to have the movement organized by 2002.

Those votes will become official when the church convenes for its convention this summer.

The nine members of the CUiC movement, with a combined membership of about 17 million, are the Presbyterian Church (USA), the Episcopal Church, the United Methodist Church, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the United Church of Christ, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, and the International Council of Community Churches.

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**

**Boeder, John C.**, to Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn.  
**Brokmeier, Kenneth L.**, to Our Savior, Brookings, S.D.  
**Brooks, Matthew A.**, to Grace, Columbia/Peace (ELS), Jefferson City, Mo.  
**Fischer, Wayne L.**, to Minnesota Valley LHS, New Ulm, Minn.  
**Halldorson, Jeffery J.**, to Shepherd of the Valley, West Fargo, N.D.  
**Knipfel, Robert J.**, to Our Redeemer, Madison, Wis.  
**Kruschel, Peter H.**, to administrator of Board for Ministerial Education, Milwaukee  
**Lehmann, Philipp A.**, to St. Paul, Manistee, Mich.  
**Malchow, Daniel W.**, to retirement  
**Spaude, Timothy J.**, to St. Jacobi, Greenfield, Wis.  
**Unnasch, John F.**, to Trinity, Friesland/Grace, Dalton, Wis.

**Teachers**

**Adams, Holly R.**, to Friedens, Kenosha, Wis.  
**Biesterfeld, Monica**, to Crete, Crete, Ill.  
**Bitter, Alan A.**, to St. John, Manitowoc, Wis.  
**Blauert, Frederick W.**, to retirement  
**Blume, Roberta**, to Zion, Valentine, Neb.  
**Bock, Jeremy D.**, to St. Andrew, Middleton, Wis.  
**Buege, Amy L.**, to Holy Word, Austin, Tex.  
**Eckert, Ruth M.**, to Emanuel, Lansing, Mich.  
**Epple, Leonard D.**, to St. Matthew, Niles, Ill.  
**Freeburn, Sharon C.**, to Reformation, San Diego, Calif.  
**Fritze, Stephen P.**, to St. Martin, Watertown, S.D.  
**Gurgel, Bart**, to Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Mich.  
**Hartzell, Lynn L.**, to East Fork LHS, Whiteriver, Ariz.  
**Hermanson, Lisa J.**, to Good Shepherd, Downers Grove, Ill.  
**Hoffmann, Linda V.**, to Trinity Preschool, Marinette, Wis.  
**Homan, Julie A.**, to Lakeside LHS, Lake Mills, Wis.  
**Johanning, Gerald R.**, to retirement  
**Johnston, Rachel E.**, to St. John, Maribel, Wis.  
**Koepfel, Rendell A.**, to St. Paul First, North Hollywood, Calif.  
**Madson, Margaret R.**, to retirement  
**Mayhew, Sandy L.**, to New Salem, Sebawaing, Mich.  
**Mindock, Karie L.**, to St. Mark, Green Bay, Wis.  
**Moldenhauer, Patricia**, to St. Mark, Green Bay, Wis.  
**Mueller, Lois M.**, to retirement  
**Mumm, Jonathan D.**, to Immanuel, La Crosse, Wis.  
**Pagel, Claire A.**, to retirement  
**Pingel, Kathy R.**, to Holton (ELS), Holton, Mich.  
**Plath, Beth R.**, to Emanuel, West St. Paul, Minn.  
**Richmond, Kenneth G.**, to St. Matthew, Appleton, Wis.  
**Riley, Kimberly**, to Holton (ELS), Holton, Mich.  
**Sackenheim, Iris J.**, to retirement  
**Scharlemann, Melinda**, to St. John, Sleepy Eye, Minn.  
**Schmidt, Marjorie I.**, to retirement  
**Schroeder, Kathleen M.**, to Reformation, San Diego, Calif.  
**Schultz, Annette**, to Trinity, Nicollet, Minn.  
**Schultz, Janette K.**, to Shoreland LHS, Somers, Wis.  
**Schulz, Thomas J.**, to Wisconsin LHS, Milwaukee  
**Schumacher, Beth L.**, to St. Luke, Watertown, Wis.

**Schwartz, Jacqueline**, to St. Paul, Muskego, Wis.  
**Schwefel, Holly**, to St. Paul, North Fond du Lac, Wis.  
**Sievert, Nathan P.**, to California LHS, Wildomar, Calif.  
**Smith, Linda M.**, to Salem, Ann Arbor, Mich.  
**Stein, Mark A.**, to Shoreland LHS, Somers, Wis.  
**Umnus, David L.**, to retirement  
**Voss, John**, to Pilgrim, Minneapolis, Minn.  
**Walz, Ryan K.**, to Lakeside LHS, Lake Mills, Wis.  
**Weimer, Joy E.**, to St. Paul, Muskego, Wis.  
**Zuleger, Elda R.**, to retirement

**Staff Ministers**

**Loewen, Rick**, to counselor at Wis. Lutheran Child and Family Service, Milwaukee

**ANNIVERSARIES**

**Crown Point, Ind.**—Our Shepherd (25). Sept. 10. Service, 9 AM. Picnic, 2 PM. 219/663-5853.  
**Chaseburg, Wis.**—St. Peter (125). Sept. 24. Service, 10:15 AM. Dinner to follow. Nov. 19. Service, 10:15 AM. Paul Schwartz, 608/483-2318.  
**West Allis, Wis.**—Good Shepherd (75). Oct. 1. Services, 7:45, 9:15, & 10:45 AM. Potluck to follow 10:45 service. Oct. 2. Service, 7 PM. RSVP by Sept. 10. 414/774-1184.  
**Sault Ste. Marie, Mich.**—Immanuel (100). Dec. 10. Service, 10:30 AM. Gordon Peters, <clp1984@sault.com>.

**COMING EVENTS**

**Christian Educators for Special Education summer conference 2000**—Aug. 15, 8:30 AM-12:30 PM. Registration, 8 AM. Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee. Kim Warning, 414/423-5769.  
**Martin Luther College extension course**—Religion 6021, New Testament Epistles. Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee. Sept. 6-Dec. 13. Wed., 6-9 PM. Three-credit course may be used for synodical certification for teachers and staff ministers. John Paulsen, 507/354-8221.  
**Lutheran Women's Missionary Society WOW retreats**—Sept. 22-23, Pierre, S.D., area. Charlene Stewart, 605/225-8744. Sept. 22-23, Houston, Tex., area. Marilyn Miller, 281/288-3317. Oct. 13-14, Las Vegas, Nev., area. Ruth Schaller, 520/572-6686.  
**Cross-cultural ministry rally**—Sept. 27, 9:30 AM-2:30 PM. Kewaunee, Wis. Caroline Krahn, 920/864-7721.  
**Women's retreat**—sponsored by St. Mark's, Citrus Heights, Calif. Sept. 29-Oct. 1. Hayes Mansion Conference Center, San Jose, Calif. Kathy Taylor, 916/961-7891.  
**Martin Luther College Auxiliary**—recognizing its fifth anniversary at the annual meeting Oct. 12 at MLC, New Ulm, Minn. All WELS/ELS women invited. 507/354-8221.  
**Christian Growth Seminar**—Oct. 14. Luther High School, Onalaska, Wis. 8 AM-1:30 PM. Registration, \$10. Linda Williams, 888/378-2182.  
**LWMS 2001 WOW retreats**—  
 Jan. 19-21, Winter Park, Fla., area. Jennifer Rosenbaum, 321/453-1000.  
 Mar 2-3, Mishicot, Wis. Kathie Wendland, 920/682-5694.  
 Apr. 27-29, Maryland. Lynnette Hupman, 703/361-1419.  
 May 4-6, Otter Crest, Ore. Char LaForest, 541/388-2405.  
 Sept. 21-22, Escanaba, Mich. Betty Warning, 715/484-4405.

Mid September, Colorado. Tiphonie Figurski, 719/534-9697.

Oct. 5-6, Trego, Wis. Betty Ruffedt, 715/568-1248.  
 Oct. 12-13, Davenport, Iowa. Deonne Titus, 815/273-2780.

Nov. 9-10, Milwaukee, Wis. Sarah Malchow, 414/389-0010.

TBA, Toledo, Ohio. Ruth Kemerley, 419/365-5503.  
 TBA, Atlanta, Ga. Cherry Simpson, 334/607-0296.

**Today's Christian Women's Retreat**—Mar. 30-Apr. 1, 2001. Radisson Hotel, Toledo, Ohio. Brochures available in January. Laurie, 248/391-1133.

**European choral/history study tour II**—Sing the music of the Renaissance and Baroque masters in Italy, Austria, and Germany, June 17-July 6, 2001. Credit available for music or history through MLC. Cost, approximately \$2,975. Roger Hermanson or Mark Lenz, 1-800-686-4142.

**Christian archaeological dig**—Lutherans Integrating the Bible and Related Antiquities (LIBRA). Aug.-Sept. 2001. John Lawrenz, 262/242-8129.

**NEEDED**

**Preacher**—Aug. 6 and 13 (negotiable). Trinity, Mountain Home, Ark. Housing available. Dave Kapler, <tlcvels@mtnhome.com>.

**Preacher**—Aug. 6 and 13. Bethlehem, Manassas, Va. Parsonage available. Jon Kehren, <jykehren@erols.com>.

**Writers**—Jesus Cares Ministries is seeking manuscripts of puppet plays that teach biblical truths and Christian children's books about disabilities. Jesus Cares Ministries, 414-259-0292 or 877-505-3675.

**SERVICE TIMES****Indiana College students**—

Valparaiso University, contact Our Shepherd, Crown Point, Ind., 219/663-5853.

Ball State, contact Divine Savior, Indianapolis, Ind., 317/849-9692.

Purdue University, contact Faith, Kokomo, Ind., 765/457-0578.

Indiana State, Indiana University, or Rose Human, contact Shepherd of the Valley, Terre Haute, Ind., 812/877-4141.

Butler University, contact Bethlehem, Carmel, Ind., 317/571-0204.

**Phillips, Wis.**—Our Savior. 8 AM. Mark Wenzel, <revmarkw@win.bright.net>.

**Mercer, Wis.**—Zion. 10:30 AM. Mark Wenzel, <revmarkw@win.bright.net>.

**NAMES WANTED**

**San Antonio, Tex.**—Living Hope exploratory. Meets for Family Bible Night on Wednesdays, 7 PM. Christopher Goelzer, <cagoelzer@earthlink.net>.

**Smyrna/Murfreesboro/Nashville, Tenn.**—Abiding Faith, Smyrna, Tenn. Mark Kaesmeyer, 615/220-9528; <abifaith@bellsouth.net>.

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

# It's not easy being a Christian

In our persevering and by God's Word, we strengthen one another.

Paul E. Zell

**I**t is not easy to be a Christian. The trials and troubles of God's children are so numerous that sometimes it seems easier to abandon our Lord. On such days, how and why do you and I endure in Christian faith, love, and hope?

**Read 1 Thessalonians 2:13–3:9.**  
 "... Indeed, you are our glory and joy. . . ."

## The challenges of persecution

In Macedonia, Christians suffered the same hardships that Christ, his prophets, his apostles, and his churches in Judea suffered: threats, public floggings, arrest, imprisonment, even death.

We hear of similar persecutions today. They occur in places far from home—in parts of Asia, for instance, where young men with Christian names may be unable to enroll in prominent universities. In certain African nations, Christian missionaries may have to keep a low profile or even evacuate for a time because of mob attacks on believers.

Yet pressure from others does not occur only long ago or far away. It also comes from the relative who criticizes you because he cannot take communion at your church. It comes from the co-worker who scoffs at your "narrow-mindedness" for insisting that Jesus is the only way to heaven, from the classmate who rolls his eyes because you still believe

that "creation nonsense," and from the friend who claims he cannot respect a church that does not allow women to be pastors.

## Enduring persecution

How and why do Christians endure in faith, love, and hope?

We endure because of "**the Word of God, which is at work in [us] who believe**" (2:13). With his Word the Lord warned that in this life we were destined for trials and troubles (3:3), and by the Holy Spirit we believe him. "If they persecuted me," Jesus said, "they will persecute you also" (John 15:20). What an honor, in fact, to suffer even a tiny fraction of what the Lord suffered for us!

"**The word of God, which is at work in [us],**" carries much more clout than the philosophies, opinions, and insults of men. That, too, is why we endure. We recognize that God's Word is always true, holy, and relevant. By it he humbles us, point-

ing out our inborn sinfulness. Above all, though, God's Word saves us. With it the Holy Spirit brings Jesus into our minds and hearts and seals his gracious blessings to us by faith.

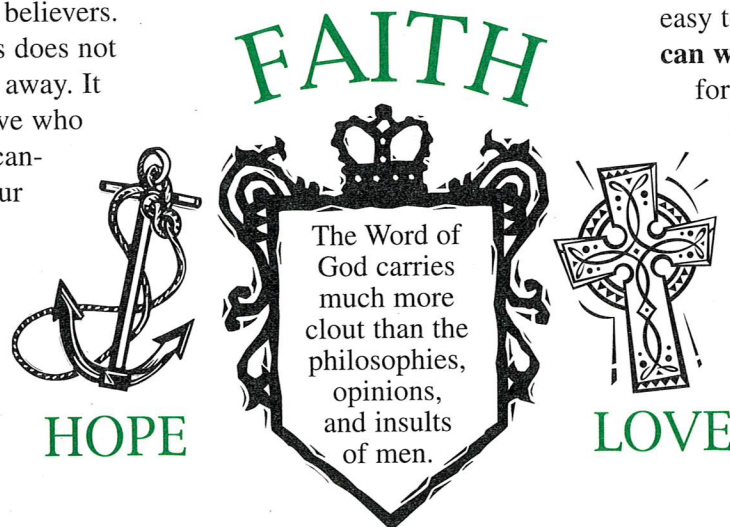
And just think of the blessings that your perseverance brings to others. The faith of the Thessalonians in the face of persecution, Paul wrote, encouraged him in his own trials, and it promised to be "**the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes**" (2:19).

Likewise, nothing means more to those who once shepherded you with the gospel in Word and sacraments. The evidence of your saving faith brings them great joy. Whatever they suffered for him and his kingdom, on the Last Day your love for Christ and his people will be their "**glory and joy**" too (2:20). Whatever you had to endure for your Savior, your hope in his glorious return will bring endless satisfaction to others.

Especially when it has not been easy to stand firm in him. "**How can we thank God enough**" (3:9) for sustaining us in our faith, love, and hope?

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

**For further study:**  
 Read The People's Bible: Thessalonians (p. 26-34).



# Wish you were here

**Y**our relatives are in the sunny, warm South in January. It's 30 degrees below zero up north where you are living. A friend enjoys the refreshing summer breezes, cruising along the coast of Alaska. You're stuck in a hot house in Florida with a broken air conditioner. Then they say to you, "Wish you were here!"

"Wish you were here!" How I wish you could have been in New Ulm, Minn., and Mequon, Wis., where the committee was meeting, assigning our newest staff ministers, teachers, and pastors. Or I wish you could have been present for the Call Day services at both places when the assignments were announced.

The atmosphere is electric. Eager and enthusiastic describe best the attitudes of graduates, relatives, and friends. Hearts beat, palms sweat: "Where will I, where will she or he, serve the Lord?"

You have your answers now. But let's go back to the Assignment Committee room. Let's see what we can hear and learn.

First, we pray for the Holy Spirit to be present. How could we conduct the Spirit's business without him there? All 12 district presidents are present, along with the synod officers. That's the Assignment Committee. Advisors, too, are there from each of the schools that prepare our future workers.

Each person comes prepared. Each one knows best his area of ministry. But each one desires also to hear the needs of others. Which are the urgent appeals, vacancies with no other way to fill them? How many requests would expand WELS' ministry? We can never forget that the Lord's Great Commission is not limited to the part of the world we occupy. But it's still an honest question: "How many new openings can there be with so many established congregations standing in line—waiting?"

A district president raises his hand to express his own heartfelt dilemma. He

needs a new pastoral associate for his congregation. But, if he gets one, it may leave one of his vacancies without an assignment. Another answers him, reminding us all: if pastoral assistance is not offered to the district president, his congregation will be ill served, and he will not be able to serve the district well either.

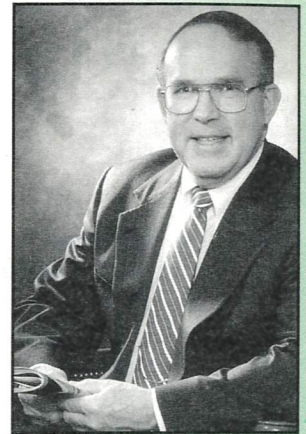
With the questions of "where" beginning to be answered, we turn to "who." Here we count on our advisors. They've prepared profiles of all the graduates. Each one has unique gifts from God. Where can these gifts best be used in God's kingdom?

A district president makes a good suggestion, filling a specific need with a qualified graduate. Another district president speaks up, offering another place where that graduate might serve. The advisors are asked for help. What would they suggest? In the end, all agree on "who" will serve "where," always keeping in mind the best interests of God's kingdom.

Let's not forget that important point. The "who" and the "where" are God's choices. That's the meaning of Paul's words to the pastors at Ephesus: "Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers" (Acts 20:28).

As a graduate, whoever you are, wherever you have been assigned, you ought to feel comfort in knowing that God has chosen where you will serve. It ought to reassure you members, too, that God chose your called workers for you. And if, for the time, the vacancy in your congregation continues, God has something special in mind for you as well.

"Wish you were here!" Ever wish to be somewhere else, someone else? When we are free to choose, that's often the case. But when God makes the choice for us, we can be comfortable with who and where we are.



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

The "who" and the "where" are God's choices.

# The last day is near

John D. Brug

*Every age thinks that the end is near. I have often wondered if the imminence of the last day has more to do with the day of our deaths, which we cannot know, versus only the final judgment day, since at our death our fate is sealed.*

As you said, when people die, they immediately go to heaven or hell (Luke 16:22, 1 Peter 3:19-20). Already at the time of their death God can assign people to heaven or hell without any investigation or trial since he knows the heart of every individual.

In several places the Bible speaks of conscious reactions of souls in hell or heaven. The rich man is afraid that his brothers will join him in hell (Luke 16:22-23). Jesus descended to hell to proclaim his victory to the spirits of those who had died in the flood (1 Peter 3:19-20). Jesus promised the repentant thief that he would be with him in paradise—today (Luke 23:43). The souls of the martyrs live and rule with Christ in heaven (Revelation 20:4) and pray for his justice to come upon the earth (Revelation 6:10). In this sense, “our fate is sealed” at the day of our death.

The Bible, nevertheless, teaches us to look forward to the day of resurrection and judgment. Our goal is not to die and to have our soul go to heaven. Our goal is to have our soul and body joined together again as God created them to be. Our goal is not just to escape the injustice of life on earth through death, but to have injustice on earth come to an end. As we saw above, even the saints in

heaven pray for judgment day.

The passages that refer to the nearness of Christ’s coming (such as James 5:7-9, 1 Peter 4:7, Revelation 1:3, 22:10,12) do not seem to be pointing so much to the day of our death as to the day of Christ’s appearing. If nearly 2,000 years have passed, how could this event be said to be “near” already in the days of the apostles?

**Our goal is to have our soul and body joined together again as God created them to be.**

Certainly, one factor is that God’s way of looking at time is not the same as ours (2 Peter 3:8-9). But a more important factor from our perspective is that the Bible treats everything since Christ’s first coming as “the last days” (Acts 2:17, Hebrews 1:2). To put it another way, we could say “Christ’s return is near” means “everything is ready for Christ’s return.” All of God’s plans for salvation have been completed except for the one event that remains, Christ’s return.

The clearest expression of this is in Hebrews 9:26-28. In saying Christ’s return is near, God is not measuring days on a calendar, but completeness of the preparations. Everything is ready. God’s banquet is ready. He needs no more time to get ready. But in patience he is giv-

ing the people of the world time to get ready.

Yes, for all practical purposes the day of our death is the last day for us. But the Bible teaches us to eagerly await the last day for this earth when Christ’s assignment as Savior is completed and God is all in all (1 Corinthians 15:24-28). That day is near.

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

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

## DEFINING RELIGION

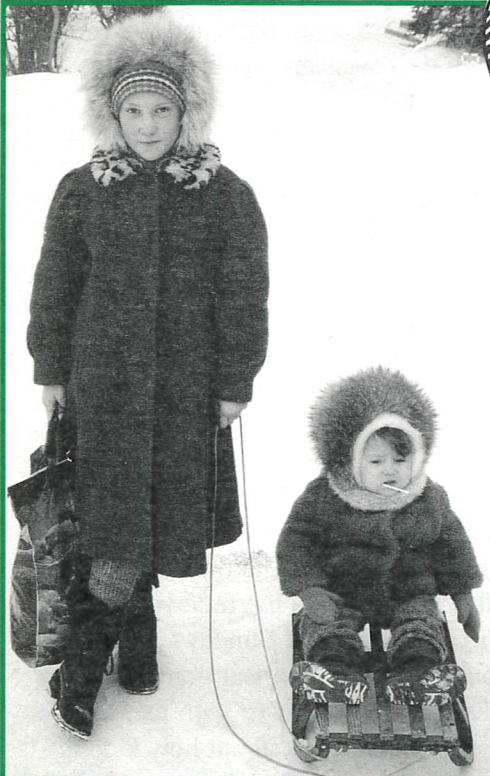
**sabaoth:** a Hebrew word that means “hosts.” The Bible calls God the Lord of sabaoth or the Lord of hosts. This name is used to exalt our God as the all-powerful sovereign or ruler over everything, including all human and superhuman forces.

**infallibility:** The teaching that what the Bible says cannot fail but must come to pass. Since the Bible is God’s Word, all of its prophecies and promises are certain and sure (Psalm 145:13, 2 Corinthians 1:20, Matthew 24:34-35).

## WE NEED YOUR PHOTOS!

We're still looking for photos with spiritual meaning or value—pictures that show Christian fellowship, worship, and faith. Send your photos 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.

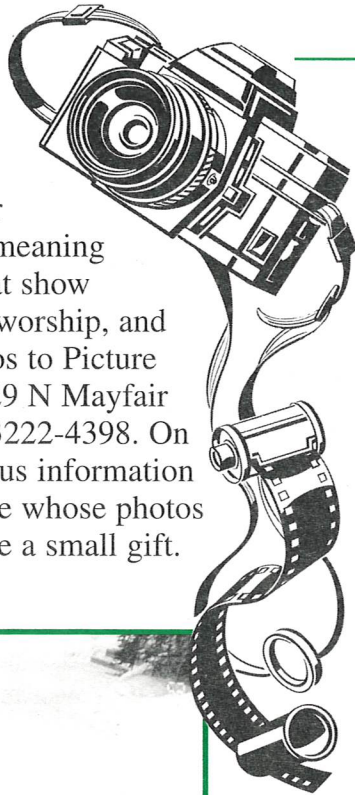
### Picture this



How do you normally get to church? In Siberia, 12-year-old Marina pulls her three-year-old sister Sofia to church for the Sunday morning children's service and Sunday school—in -30 degrees Celsius weather.

Writes Jenny Ewart, wife of Missionary Michael Ewart in Iskitim, Russia: "God has blessed our Bible school program with about 200 children attending at different times throughout the week."

The cold weather isn't just in December, either. Missionary Michael Ewart e-mailed the May 2nd weather report: 31 degrees Fahrenheit with snow! He writes: "It's not the severity of the winter that gets to you . . . it's the length. Our Easter service felt more like Christmas."



## SUNDAY SCHOOL SUGGESTIONS



How can you and your congregation get involved with the church's youth? Help with Sunday school! Divinity, St. Paul, Minn., offers some suggestions:

- ✚ Have a Sunday school kickoff—a family night that includes a meal and an opportunity to visit classrooms and meet teachers.
- ✚ One Sunday a month, have the pastor or superintendent inform the congregation of Sunday school "happenings." Someone could even record two to three minutes of footage and display it (similar to *The WELS Connection*).
- ✚ Develop a "Sunday school support group" to do things like provide treats, put on short plays (or act out stories), wrap Sunday school gifts, do bulletin board displays, and help with art projects.
- ✚ Have a congregation member speak to the Sunday school about his job, his relationship with God, his service to the church.



## Questions Christians would like to ask God

Why are there problems in the world? Why do the innocent suffer? Will I see heaven?

In the *Next American Spirituality*, George Gallup Jr. and Tim Jones asked Christians, "What is the most important question you, as a Christian, would like to ask God about your own life?" Here are the answers they received.

Am I pleasing God? Going in the right direction? Worthy of his love?

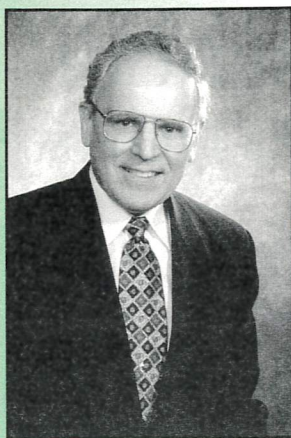
What do I need to do to get to heaven? How can I encourage my children to walk with God? How can I grow in faith?

What will the future be like—will I find happiness? Will my health improve? How long will I live?

What is God's ultimate purpose? What is his plan for my life? Why has he not revealed himself to me sooner?

Check out Scripture for the answers.

[*Emerging Trends*, Dec. 1999]



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

I see you  
seated across  
the aisle, and  
I know that  
you are my  
sister, my  
brother, my  
friend in  
Christ.

## I miss you!

What I have to say today is largely selfish, but not entirely. It has everything to do with you, but it will help me. I miss you when you don't come to church and to Bible class.

Yes, I miss you.

Oh, please don't be too quick to judge me. I know I don't say much to you when you come. You may wonder whether I even know you're there or not.

I do. I'm just not always good at showing it.

Still, I expect I'm much like you. I find it easy to neglect some of the things that are most important for me. I don't always feel like being in church and Bible class. I have my reasons. On top of the list is time. I'm always chasing after more time. At least on Sundays, I can salvage a few hours for myself. Then, at times, I get upset with some of the other people at church. They can be unfriendly, unresponsive, even unruly. I can't imagine at times why they (i.e., the pastor, church leaders, musicians) do things the way they do. The service is too long, too short, too predictable, too contemporary. The hymns are too difficult, too slow, too fast, too new, too old. You get the point.

I can complain with the best of them.

How does this connect with you? Didn't I just help make a case for you not to come? To the contrary, just because of such feelings, I need to know and to feel that there is something about church that transcends all my personal hang-ups and petty gripes.

Your presence helps me see that. When you're there with me, we join our hearts and voices together in praise to God. We come to the Lord's Table together, each carrying our own burden of sins to leave with the Lord Jesus and then communing as one on his very body and blood with the bread and wine. We listen to God's Word together, grasping at the nuggets that fall our way, each helped in our own way, but knowing we've each been helped. I see you seated across the aisle, and I know that you are my sister, my brother, my friend in Christ.

If you are one of the younger members, especially a teenager or early 20-something, I feel a special comfort. I know God is building faith and preserving his Church. I know that when I join the church triumphant in heaven, you young people will still be here to carry on the church's mission on earth.

When I am at my weakest and tempted to miss all this, it helps me to know that you will be there. When you're not there, I miss that encouragement. I worry, too, that you'll miss the Word and the worship, the full life in Christ and the fellowship.

Will I see you next Sunday? I'll make it a point to greet you. But don't wait for me. Let me know you've seen me, too. As time allows, let's talk about how God is blessing your life and mine.

*Gary P. Baumler*

# Equipped to Serve



2 0 0 0

## WELS Youth Counselor Workshop

### A weekend for:

- Addressing current issues in youth ministry
- Gaining new ideas and strategies
- Fellowship with new and experienced youth leaders
- Youth ministry

### Youth Ministry I

Suggested for all first-time attendees

#### Track One

Learn about the basic components of a balanced Christ-centered youth ministry.

- A welcome explanation for leaders new to teen ministry
- A refreshing review for experienced leaders
- Return home with many new, exciting ideas
- Receive a youth ministry handbook
- Participate in a hands-on approach to planning youth ministry
- Develop strategies for involving parents in the lives of teenagers

#### Presenters are:

- Pastor Michael Turriff, Youth Discipleship Coordinator for Southeastern Wisconsin District
- Jeff Scheibe, Member of Southeastern Wisconsin District Youth Discipleship Committee, WELS Commission on Youth Discipleship

### Youth and Family Ministry II

Suggested for previous attendees of a Youth Counselor Workshop

#### Track Two

##### Topics include:

- *Gang Awareness and Prevention*  
Detective Bridget Anderson  
Manitowoc, WI
- *Training and Recruiting Youth Leaders*  
Jeff Scheibe, WELS CYD  
Wauwatosa, WI
- *Youth Ministry in a Small Congregation*  
Pastor Paul Prange, President of  
Michigan Lutheran Seminary  
Saginaw, MI
- *Planning a Curriculum and Teaching  
Teen Bible Study*  
Jerry Kastens, Minister of Discipleship  
Trinity, Watertown, WI
- *Understanding Today's Youth Culture*  
Ruth Peikert, Area Administrator  
for Illinois  
Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family  
Service, Inc.

### For Information

Call: (414) 256-3224  
or (414) 256-3274

E-mail: [mateskeb@sab.wels.net](mailto:mateskeb@sab.wels.net)

Additional information will be available online at [www.wels.net](http://www.wels.net)

# WHY DON'T YOU GO TO CHURCH?

Rather than ask why some people don't go to church, wouldn't it be more helpful to ask why other people do?

Kenneth A. Cherney

**“W**hy don't you go to church?” The Barna Research Group asked that question of thousands of “unchurched” people.

## Why they don't

Only 12 percent said they don't go to church because they don't believe in God or aren't sure he exists. Naturally, that would make church attendance pretty pointless, but it's true of very few people. God strewed this world with evidence of his existence, his power, and his goodness. Thankfully, the people who can't see that are few indeed.

Thirty-six percent said they don't go because church services are “usually boring,” and 34 percent said they were “irrelevant to the way I live.” That seems funny to me. I wonder how people who never attend church know that the services are “usually boring.” If someone sees church as irrelevant, I wonder, too, whether it isn't because in his own life he's made it so. Isn't this person really saying he's decided not to let church influence the way he lives? Many people do that, and it's too bad—but it's hardly the church's fault.

Forty-eight percent said, “I don't have the time.” Again, that's odd. Ultimately, we decide for ourselves about how we'll spend our time. “I don't have time” really means “I choose to spend my time on other things.” In other words, this 48 percent was saying, “I don't take time for church because I'm not a churchgoer”—which doesn't really get us anywhere.

That's the trouble with all these numbers. Research groups do surveys like this to help churches figure out how to get these people to come. But when we analyze the data with that purpose in mind, surveys never get us anywhere.

## Why we do

The whole thing reminds me of a comment someone made about the research to determine why people commit crimes. “Wouldn't it make more sense,” he said, “to study why some people don't?”

Rather than ask why some people don't go to church, wouldn't it be more helpful to ask why other people do?

I can't tell you how every last churchgoer in America would answer that question. But I know what God would say—or did.

Grab a Bible, open it right around the middle, and read Psalm 95.

God's people come to church to worship him. We come because God is “the Lord our Maker,” who holds “the depths of the earth” in his hands. We come because of who we are: “he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care.”

We come because, frankly, we can't help ourselves. What God has done for us in Christ makes us want to “shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation” and “extol him with music and song.” We come to church because most of us would feel pretty silly doing these things at home alone in our living rooms. But singing God's praises with other grateful Christians at church is the most natural thing in the world, and we wouldn't miss a chance to do it.

Not everyone feels that way. Many people find church very miss-able. But if you want an explanation for that that makes good sense, don't ask me.

Don't ask “unchurched” people, either. That's the lesson of the Barna survey.

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