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FORWARD IN CHRIST

September 2000

Northwestern Lutheran • The Word from the WELS

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shining light

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generation”

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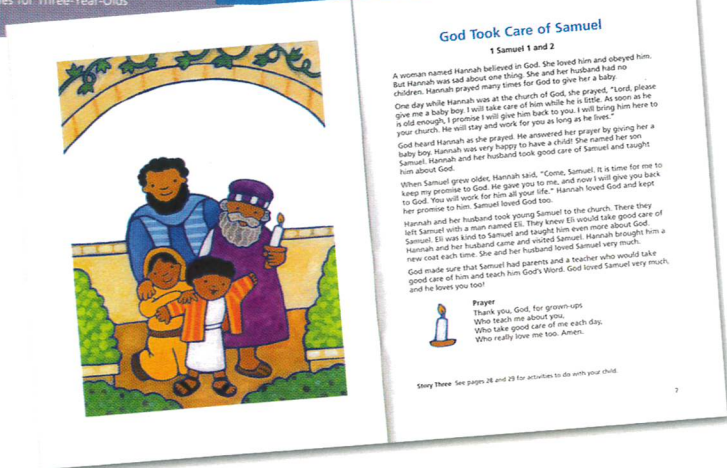
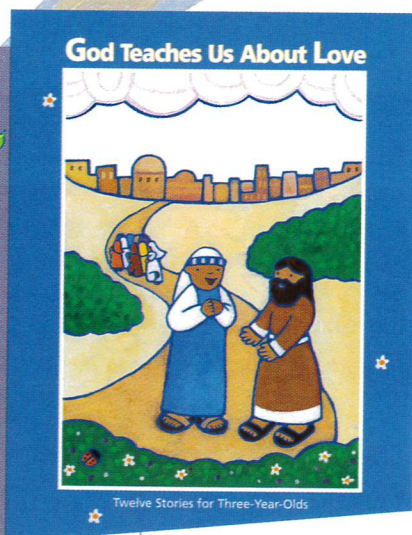
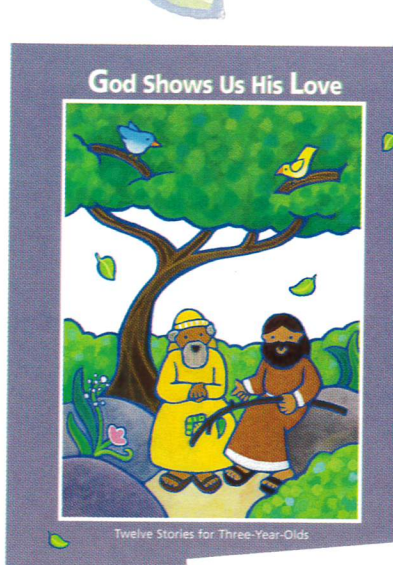
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Believe the incredible

*The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit
that we are God's children. Romans 8:16*

Thomas A. Westra

We believe that God loved us enough to send his own Son to this earth to be spit upon, beaten, and tortured to death and that the Son willingly endured this to earn our eternal freedom from death and hell.

We believe that the almighty King loves us so much that he made his Son guilty of our vile and revolting sin, so we might be made innocent and clean.

We believe that God will one day take us out of this life and give us an immortal and imperishable body and that we will live with him in a place so wonderful that we cannot comprehend it.

The Spirit's testimony of eternity

How could anyone believe something so incredible? Only by the Spirit's power.

All sorts of self-deluded people live out there—people who think they are something that they are not. How do I know that I am not one of those people? How can I be so sure that I am a child of God, forgiven of all my sin, and headed for heaven?

I can be sure because it is not just my opinion. The Spirit told me. He said it at my baptism. He continues to say it in his Word and in Christ's body and blood given to me in the Holy Supper. Listen to Paul: "The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children."

As we read our Bibles, listen to the Word, and take the Scriptures to



A Bible class at St. Andrew, Middleton, Wis. St. Andrew offers a variety of Bible classes on Sunday and throughout the week, many of which are led by laymembers.

heart, the Holy Spirit comes to us. His Word lives in us and testifies with our spirit, convincing us of who we are and where we are headed.

The Spirit's testimony for daily life

In a recent sermon, a pastor asked us to imagine a time when we were terrified. He suggested that we think of being on an airplane that was plummeting to the ground. I thought: "Not that frightening. I'll be in heaven soon."

Next, he suggested we imagine standing helplessly on one side of our vehicle while on the other side one of our children opens the door and steps into the path of an oncoming truck. Now I could imagine terror.

His example also made me realize that it is not dying I'm afraid of. I am more afraid of living and the grief

that life in a sin-cursed world can bring.

I wonder if part of the reason we are not more enthusiastic about personal Bible study is because we think that "the Bible tells me that my sins are forgiven, and I'll go to heaven when I die. I know that, so I don't need Bible study." Have we lost sight that the Bible also helps us with what is often more difficult than dying: living? Is the Bible a source of doctrinal statements to be written down, filed away, and forgotten? Or is it something to be talked about and lived in our daily lives?

Many congregations are starting new programs of adult education. Check out what your church is offering for Bible classes and get involved. If you're not sure how to do home Bible reading, ask your pastor for help.

Let the Spirit testify with your spirit that you are God's child. Let him persuade you that he loved you with an everlasting love. Let him make you certain that one day he will take you home to glory. Let him convince you that in the meantime he is at your side, giving you strength and guidance, and that he holds you tightly in his arms and will never let you go.



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

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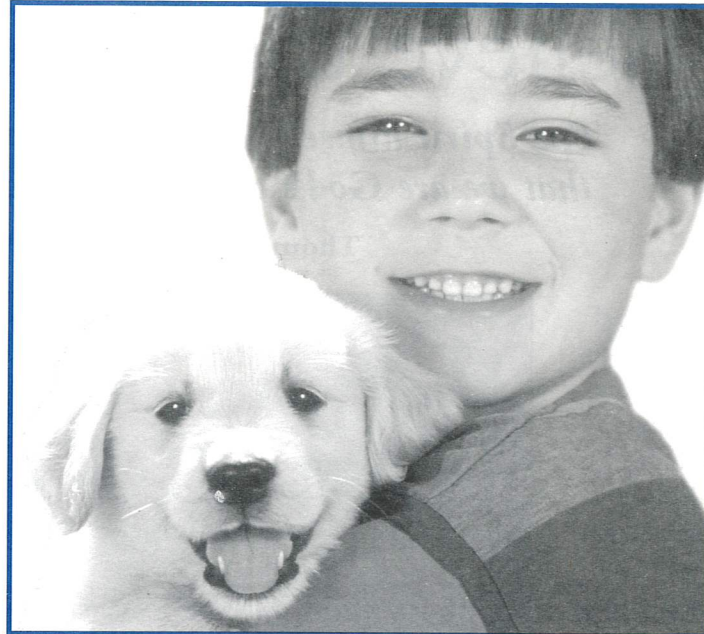
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How are a boy and his dog like the church?

8

Cover photo by COMSTOCK Inc.

bits & pieces



"Jesus loves me, this I know," goes a popular children's hymn. His outstretched arms on the cross show us this love and guarantee us eternal life through faith. But how should we respond in our actions toward others?

- Just as God accepted us as we are, full of sin and deserving of death, so we should accept, love, and forgive others as they are. Read more in "The church is a community of healing" (p. 8).
- If we help fill earthly needs, we may open up doors to share the gospel. Read how Jesus did this with Zacchaeus in "A place to start" (p. 36). Then read how congregations and volunteers are trying to do the same thing through offering English as a Second Language/English as a Foreign Language classes (p. 14).
- We can also show our love by going out and reaching people where they're at. The Arizona/California District congregations are doing just that through varied methods of proclaiming the gospel (p. 10). Also, when WELS members were fighting in WWII, our synod worked hard to make sure all their spiritual needs were met (p. 12).



Experience the faith of a child in a heartwarming and faith-strengthening article written by an eighth-grader who dealt with severe health problems (p. 18).



We start a new series on family devotions this month. Be sure to catch "In defense of ritual" (p. 16).

—JKT

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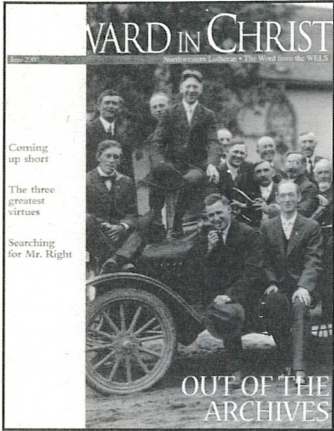
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I received my June copy of *Forward in Christ* yesterday and was immediately struck by the cover picture.

The person in the middle of the front row is my grandfather, Pastor W. Henry Geiger.

As the caption on page 18 says, the photo was taken at a conference in Medford, Wis. It would appear this was taken during his time as pastor at Naugart (rural Merrill).



I look forward to more of these nostalgic photos.

Eldon Karow



Madison, Wisconsin

Could you find the name of this pastor? I think it's Rev. Allbright who served in Fairfax, Minn., for 50 years. He confirmed me in 1935.



I turned 80 on the 1st of July and would like to know if that is him.

Wilburn H. Hage

Baltic, South Dakota

Does anyone know? Write us.—ed.

I recognized my grandfather, William Gottlieb Fischer (1864-1950), on the front cover of the June issue. He came over as a



missionary and originally served in Michigan.

Joan Fischer Whitby

Jefferson, Wisconsin

Yesterday, after preaching on the Old Testament Lesson from Genesis 3, I sat down to read the July issue of *Forward/Northwestern Lutheran*.

How disappointed I was to see in the potluck section [p. 33] a joke about Adam and Eve making cover-

ings out of fig leaves. Is this really appropriate material for jokes?

The late Prof. Carl Lawrenz wrote in his commentary of Genesis, used at the seminary, "We will presently see how reluctant Adam and Eve were as sinners to acknowledge and confess their guilt. Yet quite unwittingly and unintentionally they already confessed their guilt as they sought to cover their nakedness. The seed of death and corruption was now in their hearts, a seed that would ripen and break forth into physical death and eternal death, everlasting separation from God" (p. 133). If we can joke about that, I guess we can joke about anything.

Timothy A. Henning



Kewaskum, Wisconsin

I would like to thank Prof. Theodore Hartwig on his excellent article on the hymn "Sing, My Tongue" [July] from the new *Christian Worship*. I hope that we will see more articles giving the background on some of the hymns included in our new hymnal.

I believe that it is good that our hymnal does have some new, refreshing harmonizations available. But some of the alterations from *The Lutheran Hymnal* come off only as changes and not improvements.

Alan Ross

Manitowoc, Wisconsin

I read a letter in the July/Aug. issue of Lutheran Brotherhood's *Bond* magazine from a woman who lost contact with the church when she went away to college. **She wished that her parents had encouraged her to attend church when she went to college.** She writes, "When they took me to school they should have accompanied me to church the first Sunday. I was just too shy to walk into one by myself."

What a good reminder for parents, especially at this time of year! If

Sunday isn't possible, maybe a quick tour of the church and meeting the pastor for 15 minutes would help.

Sue Rebers

Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin

We picked up our mail. Did a quick sorting—two piles. The important and the throwaway.

Almost—just almost, the July 2000 issue of *Forward in Christ* went into the "throwaway pile."

Why? We glanced at the cover! Cartoons?! We thought it was another cute, glitzy, magazine offer. We (my wife and I) feel that this cover is not dignified or in keeping with the content of our synod's official magazine. The artwork on the cover isn't consistent with the other forms of art used in this issue (example: Christ on the cross and the shepherd/sheep drawings).

The Seminary graduates (pictured in this issue) will soon occupy Lutheran parsonages, and they will take off those jackets and ties. They will be men who can smile and laugh and play. But most of all, I want my pastor to be God's messenger—my spiritual shepherd. I don't envision him as some cartoon character!

We want to read our *Forward/NL* and not have it end up in the "throwaway pile" because of some first impression! We want the entire magazine, including the cover, to point forward to Christ.

Raymond & Lois Cox



Columbia, Tennessee

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



Where's your security?

Armin J. Panning

When the needs of human beings are reduced to the most basic and absolutely essential ones, one that appears on even the shortest list is the need for security. For a comfortable existence, we need to feel secure and not at the mercy of things that could harm us.

We see the need for security at all age levels. Early on, toddlers become attached to their security blankets. Adolescents don't like the insecurity of being alone but seek security by being a part of their peer group. Adults invest heavily in elaborate security systems for their homes or cars. Factories put on night watchmen, and malls contract with security services to head off problems.

In the midst of an election year, there is much talk about another kind of security: Social Security. The program was signed into law in 1935 by Franklin Delano Roosevelt to protect senior citizens against poverty.

In the 65 years of its existence, it has, however, become considerably more. It has expanded to include benefits for disabled workers and families of deceased workers. What's more, it has become a major component in many retirement plans. Hence, the threat of this program becoming insolvent has made fixing it a hot presidential campaign issue.

Because we have the blessing of living in a democracy, we have the privilege of voting for the candidate who, in our opinion, has the best plan for addressing the situation. But with all the hype and campaign rhetoric, it's worth reminding ourselves of the risk attached to trusting the promises of an aspiring political candidate.

Fortunately, we are not dependent on campaign promises. Our security lies in the hands of a far surer source of protection.

We are under the watchful care of our gracious Creator/Redeemer God. Both God's creating and his redeeming activity give us great comfort. In writing to the Romans, Paul poses the challenging question: "He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?" (8:32). Paul's argument goes: If God has done the greater (redeeming us), will he not also do the lesser (give us all the material things we need)?

But the promise of God's protection and providence is not just a logical conclusion. He tells us flat out that he will take care of us. In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says, "Do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. . . . Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no store-room or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! . . . Consider how the lilies grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field . . . how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith" (Luke 12:22-28).

God doesn't, of course, drop food into our mouths from heaven. He works through means and along with people's prudent planning and saving. Social Security may well be a part of God's providing people with material necessities. But even if that program becomes insolvent, it is not a cause for despair. God has other ways of providing for us. After all, he created everything out of nothing.

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

We are not
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THE CHURCH IS A COMMUNITY OF HEALING

Each of us is crippled by sin in more ways than one,
yet we know the grace of God's healing forgiveness.

John L. Eich

A little boy passed the pet store every day on his way home from school. Each time he would stop at that pet store and play with the dozen or so puppies that were kept in the display window. Finally, he got up enough courage to ask the owner of the shop how much one of the puppies would cost. The owner told him the price, and the boy went home and began saving his weekly allowance.

A crippled puppy

He returned a few weeks later with his piggy bank tucked under his arm. Smiling broadly, he lifted his bank onto the counter and said joyfully, "It's all there!" "There's the pen," the owner replied. "Pick your puppy!"

The puppies were yelping, wagging their tails and crawling all over each other—all but one that sat forlornly in the corner of the pen. The boy reached past all the other pup-

pies, picked up the lonely puppy, and brought it to the owner.

"Oh, you don't want that one. He's crippled," said the shopkeeper. "You want a puppy who can run and play with you."

The little boy put the puppy down on the floor and lifted the cuffs of his pants, revealing a set of braces. "Yes, he's crippled. But I'm crippled too. I thought since we're both crippled, we could be better friends."

A crippled people

We are all crippled, aren't we? Even though we have been healed of the terminal disease of sin by God's all-encompassing stroke at the cross of Calvary, all of us still have its crippling effects in our lives. Some of us have bruised memories, others have blighted relationships, and others have fractured personalities. Each of us is crippled by sin in more ways than one, yet we know the grace of God's healing forgiveness.

God's plan for the church was for it to be a place where bruised and broken people could find support and healing from other bruised and broken people. Paul writes, "Praise be to the God . . . who comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God" (2 Corinthians 1:3,4). Because God loves, accepts, and forgives us in our brokenness, we can love, accept, and forgive other broken people—and as a result be better friends.

The world loves and accepts conditionally, doesn't it? Are you smart enough? Rich enough? Thin enough? Do you wear the right clothes? Do you please me enough? No wonder so many people are hurting and lonely!

Jesus loved his followers just as they were. "Come to me all you who are weary and burdened, and I

will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).

Notice Jesus doesn’t tell us to lose our burdens then come to him. Rather, we are to come to him first, and he will help us with our burdens. Certainly Jesus called his followers to repentance. Certainly he encouraged them to a higher level of discipleship. Certainly he urged them to greater faithfulness. But he did this only after he made sure they knew he accepted them, crippled as they were.

Because God loves, accepts, and forgives us in our brokenness, we can love, accept, and forgive other broken people.

In Luke 8 we have Jesus associating with three “crippled” people—a naked madman, a woman with a 12-year hemorrhage, and a corpse. Levitical laws guarded against contagion from contact with a Gentile, blood, or a corpse. But Jesus didn’t require them to become clean before he touched them. He touched them to make them clean. We are called upon to extend that mercy, to be conveyors of grace, to those that might be considered “contagious.”

A healing community

Christians are a community—a fellowship of the forgiven, a community of unity. This glorifies God and demonstrates to the world that Jesus Christ is alive. The late Dr. Francis Schaeffer wrote, “The church today needs not only an orthodoxy of doctrine. It also needs an orthodoxy of community.” We

need to match our orthodoxy of belief with an orthodoxy of unconditional love and acceptance.

Think of ways you can reach out to the unmarried couple next door—not condoning their sin, but showing that you love and accept them as souls for whom Jesus died. How might you show that crabby neighbor, whom everyone else avoids, that you love him despite his crippled personality? How can we show our children that we still love them even though time and time again their actions disappoint or hurt us?

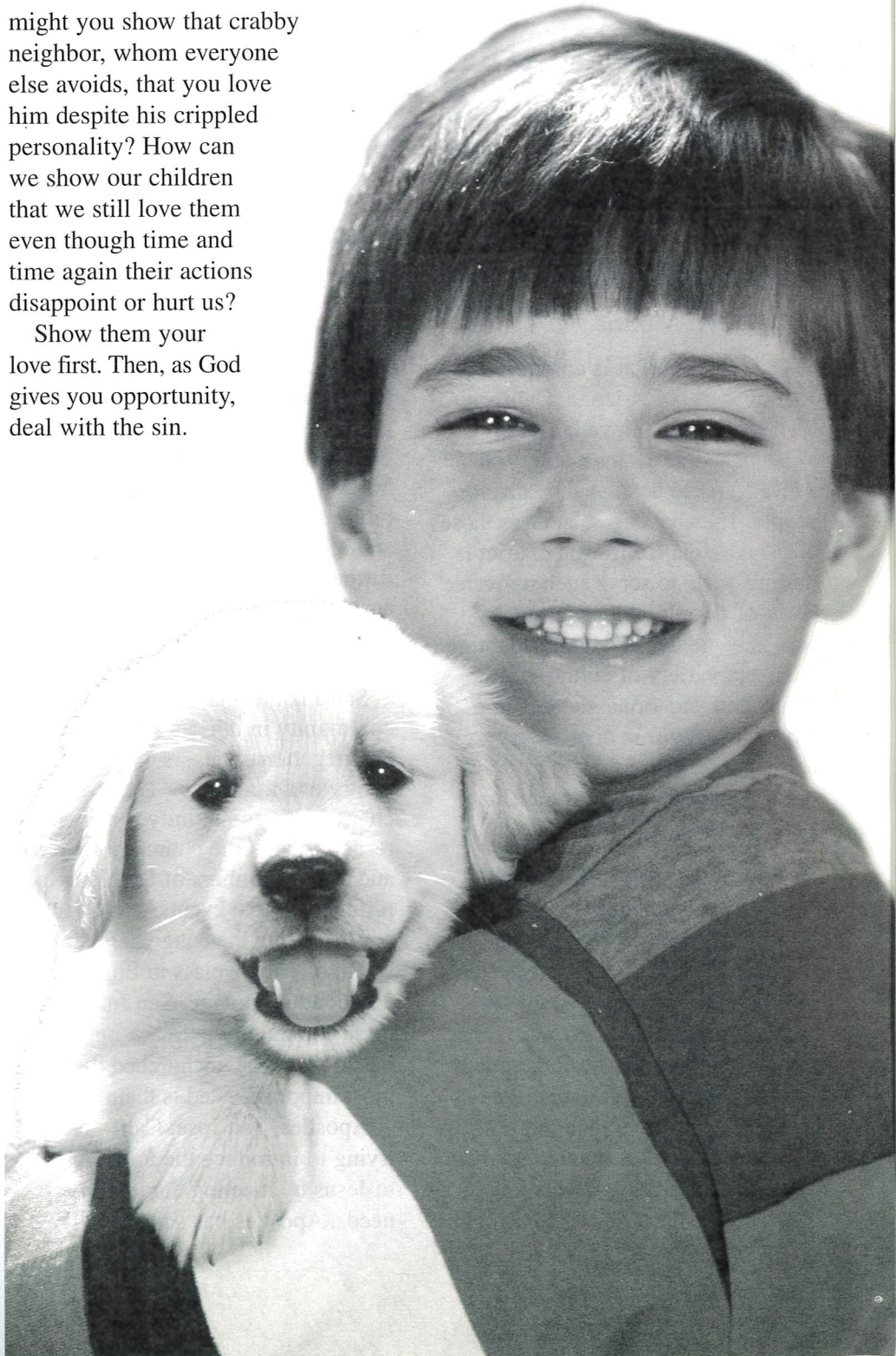
Show them your love first. Then, as God gives you opportunity, deal with the sin.

Forgiveness is not an occasional action. It’s a permanent attitude. It’s a loving, healing acceptance. That’s God’s vision for his church.

It is to be ours, too.



John Eich is pastor at Grace, Alma, Michigan.



Helping people where they're at

Approaches to ministry vary in the Arizona-California District.

Nicole R. Moline

A district that is composed of parts of Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, New Mexico, and Texas must surely be a diverse place populated by diverse people. The challenge that faces those in the Arizona-California district is finding ways to serve such a diverse body of people. Although many would be unable to handle adapting to such a variety of cultures, attitudes, and situations, those in the Arizona-California district “try to help people where they’re at” says James Connell, pastor at San Juan, El Paso, Tex.

Helping meet community needs

San Juan is the only church in WELS that has weekly bilingual services. Most churches have separate services for the different languages within the congregation, but Connell incorporates both languages into one service, alternating the language of the sermon and the liturgy each week. If the sermon is spoken in English, the liturgy is spoken in Spanish and the sermon is printed in

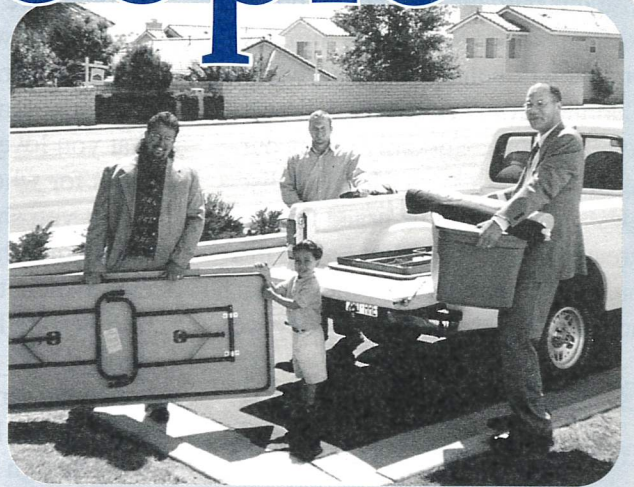
Spanish. The readings are printed in both languages every week in the bulletin.

This approach works well because 50% of San Juan’s members are bilingual, 25% speak only English, and 25% speak only Spanish. Connell further explains that by using this approach, “Families that are bilingual can come to church here and everyone can worship together.”

San Juan meets the needs of the community in other ways, too. The congregation sponsors a small food pantry and thrift shop. These acts of charity give community members a reason to visit the church property and allow members of San Juan to promote church events.

This spring the congregation also began offering a class in English as a Second Language. San Juan uses these community outreach opportunities to show the unchurched that their most important need is their Savior.

Apostles, San Jose, Calif., is also trying to introduce the unchurched to Jesus by meeting community needs. Apostles has successfully



Beautiful Savior Lutheran Exploratory in Las Vegas worships in an elementary school. Worship supplies are stored at Pastor Matthew Guse’s house during the week, and members help carry the supplies into the school and set them up before the worship service.

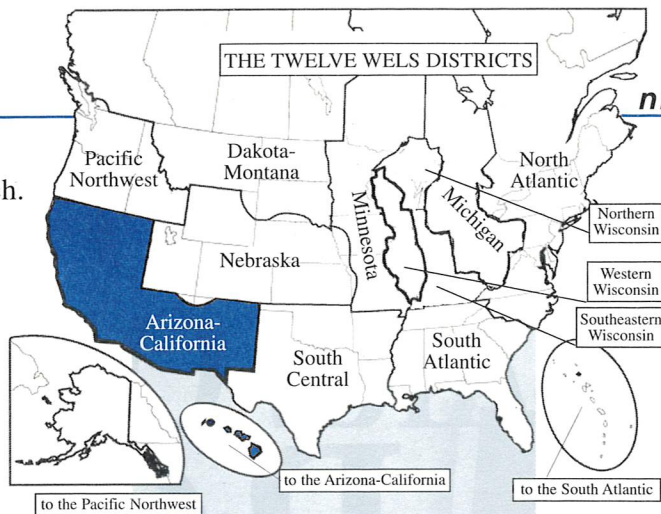
focused on using its school as an outreach arm of the congregation.

Parents are often familiar with Apostles because of its vacation Bible school (VBS), Christmas for kids, or Easter for kids programs. Often more than 400 children attend VBS at Apostles, and more than half of those are not members at Apostles. Many parents then learn of Apostles’ kindergarten and elementary school and want to enroll their children.

These parents are required to attend a Bible information class. This lets them know what their children are being taught and introduces the gospel to them if they are unfamiliar with it. As Bob Hein, pastor at Apostles, says, “If you can get a family when their children are young, the Word has a lot of opportunity to work on their hearts.”

Helping use members’ strengths

The Word is working on hearts in Hawaii through Pastor Walter Elgin



at Community Lutheran Church. Community has locations in Hawaii Kai, Pearl Harbor, and Maui.

Because Elgin must split his time between each of these locations, he depends on “extensive participation by lay ministry” for many tasks that pastors often conduct. Lay leaders conduct all the Bible classes, participate in every service, and are prepared to conduct the entire service if necessary.

Fortunately, many members are used to this type of leadership because they serve in the military and are stationed at the base in Pearl Harbor. The same leadership skills they learn in the military are used in the church to serve their Lord.

Community is “predominantly caucasian but is also an integrated cross-cultural ministry,” says Elgin. “There were four island confirmands this year and they will provide continuity for the church. . . . Yet, every world religion is here. In some ways it is a foreign mission. Many don’t speak English and are wary of the [Lutheran] influence because they are Buddhist, Catholic, or Mormon. This is a wide open marketplace competing for souls.”

Helping answer peoples’ questions

Competition for souls is also taking place in Las Vegas, Nev. In



David Brewster, a member at Community in Hawaii, arranges flowers on the Easter cross at the facility near Pearl Harbor.

Arizona-California District
Stats at a glance
Arizona-California District

- Conferences: 5
 - Circuits: 14
 - Congregations: 104
 - Mission churches: 24
 - Exploratory churches: 11
 - Baptized members: 23,599
 - Communicant members: 17,808
 - Average attendance: 54.1%
 - Pastors: 107
 - Adult baptisms: 122
 - Adult confirmations: 517
 - Sunday school enrollment: 2,565
 - Bible class attendance (teens): 542
 - Bible class attendance (adults): 4,080
 - Early childhood education schools: 12
 - Lutheran elementary schools: 31
 - Area Lutheran high schools: 3
- Statistics taken from the 1999 Statistical Report, Commission on Parish Schools, and Board for Home Missions.*

this city of glitter and glitz, you would imagine that ministry might need to be flashy in order to catch residents’ attention.

Instead, “People have direct questions and want direct answers,” says Matthew Guse, pastor at Beautiful Savior Lutheran Exploratory, Las Vegas. “They are not interested in flashy displays or flowery messages. They would rather know where you stand on the Bible and why. I think this is the strength of our synod’s work in Las Vegas. We

have a clear gospel message to sound, and people are drawn to it.”

Don Pieper, pastor at Green Valley, Henderson, Nev., agrees. “People were originally suspicious of us. So, we just focused on worship and when they came to see us, we stood

out. They heard something they hadn’t heard before.”

Green Valley, located only a few miles from Las Vegas, was organized in 1990. Today, there are 607 baptized members, many of whom apparently did hear “something they hadn’t heard before.”

Churches in the Arizona-California District are using different techniques to spread that “something.” In such a widespread, diverse district, one technique will not appeal to all people. That is why it is so important that the Arizona-California District “try to help people where they’re at” so God’s good news is spread.

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

MORE ABOUT THE DISTRICT

- Apacheland, a world mission field, lies within the district, and its congregations have representation at district and synod conventions.
- “A ‘gentleman’s agreement’ came about due to a chance meeting of a WELS missionary and a Missouri Synod mission official on a train. They agreed that Missouri would work in California and WELS would work in Arizona. As a result, Missouri did not start a congregation in Arizona until 1938—the last of the 48 states it entered,” explains District President Paul Janke. WELS began most of its work in California at an even later date.

OUR SYNOD WILL TAKE CARE OF OUR BOYS



As thousands of WELS soldiers served during World War II, the synod worked hard to provide for them spiritually.

Mark E. Braun

Tom Brokaw calls them “America’s greatest generation.”

They came of age in the Great Depression. They watched their parents lose their businesses, their farms, their jobs, their hopes. Then, just as a glimmer of economic recovery appeared, war erupted across Europe and over the Pacific.

They were summoned to rescue the world from the two most powerful military machines assembled up to that time. They left farms and ranches, resigned office jobs, gave up their places on assembly lines, and quit school or went from graduation directly into uniform.

They fought on bloodied landscapes in France, Belgium, Italy, Austria, and the coral islands of the Pacific. They flew every day into skies filled with terror. They set sail each new morning on hostile waters thousands of miles from home.

They succeeded on every front. They won the war and saved the world.

Serving our boys on the spiritual front

Thousands of them were Wisconsin Synod Lutherans.

“What about the spiritual care of boys who have been or will be called to the colors to receive military training?” asked *The Northwestern Lutheran* editor William Schaefer in 1940. “This, of course, is definite: our synod will take care of the spiritual needs of all our boys.”

By April 1941, Pastor Edward Blakewell, director of the synod’s newly appointed Spiritual Welfare Commission (SWC), addressed a letter to 713 men stationed in the armed forces. “The commission is extremely conscious of its responsibilities,” he wrote. Synod President John Brenner urged readers to “send the names and addresses of all of your members in training to the commission.” By Dec. 7, 1941, as bombs fell over Pearl Harbor, the commission’s list swelled to over 2,000 names.

During 1942 the parish hall of Salem Lutheran Church on East

Thomas Avenue in Milwaukee was transformed into the SWC’s work center. Six full-time employees directed dozens of volunteers—almost all of them women—who answered routine mail, updated address changes, and prepared mailings that went out twice in each three-week period.

“I have been receiving the ‘Daily Devotional’ booklets for some time now,” wrote one serviceman, “and I would like to thank you from the bottom of my heart. They are really the only attachment to the church that I have.”

By 1944, more than 17,000 men and women were listed on the commission’s files, 9,000 of whom were stationed at over a thousand locations in the United States, the rest overseas. While most were Wisconsin Synod members, there were “quite a few young men and women listed who were not communicant members of any church” but were handed SWC materials by other soldiers and sailors. “Your last literature reached me in a

hospital in England after following me all over France,” wrote one serviceman in 1945. “You would be surprised how many of the fellows wanted me to give them the gospel literature after I was through with it.”

By war’s end the list contained more than 22,000 names, including hospitalized servicemen, soldiers honorably discharged, men listed as missing in action, even German and Japanese prisoners of war.

On Aug. 6, 1945, *The Milwaukee Journal* reported that “an atomic bomb, hailed as the most terrible destructive force in history and the greatest achievement of organized science” was loosed by American B-29 bombers. The Japanese city of Hiroshima was covered with “an impenetrable cloud of dust and

smoke” created by a weapon “producing more than 2,000 times the blast of the most powerful bomb” ever previously dropped on any target. Japan soon announced it would surrender, and the *Journal’s* headline of Aug. 14 read simply, “War Ended!”

Anticipating a new front

Aug. 6 was also the closing day of the synod’s biennial convention in New Ulm, Minn. The convention’s floor committee on church union reported that the chief question facing the synod was whether pulpit and altar fellowship between the Missouri Synod and the American Lutheran Church could be established “now or later” without compromising scriptural truth. Matters had grown more uncertain due to

numerous reported incidents that “anticipate a union between the Missouri Synod and the American Lutheran Church which does not yet exist.”

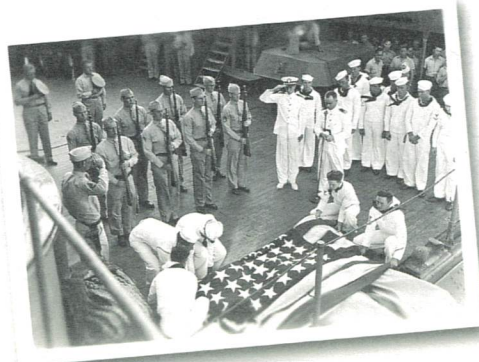
Wisconsin’s standing committee on union assured Missouri: “We sincerely cherish and desire to preserve the fellowship which we enjoy in our Synodical Conference. We are hoping and praying to God that we come to a favorable understanding and agreement.”

America had won the war, but the Wisconsin Synod would soon be engaged in another war—the prospects of which looked far less promising.



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

- In February 1943, a soldier wrote from Africa: “During the past 16 months in which I have seen much of the world, no mail came through as regularly as yours.”
- Said another: “I am a pilot in the Navy Air Corps and there have been times I felt very discouraged. At such times I derive a great deal of comfort from reading your literature and fully entrusting myself to the Lord.”
- Pastor Erwin Scharf, called to be the synod’s first full-time service-pastor, described his work on military bases in Louisiana and Texas: “Were you to attend one of these [camp worship] services, you might want to conclude at first sight that they are held with very little success, for you would find the attendance small when compared with the number of men in this area. But after one learns to know the Army, one is not discouraged by that fact. We have a war to win, and in order to do that it goes without saying that our Army must be well trained. That makes busy men of our soldiers, on Sundays as well as weekdays.”
- Pastor John Raabe, May 1944: “Nothing pleases us more than when we can also reach the unchurched through our material. Many a man has gone forth to battle completely trained in body and mind, has had the finest of weapons, leaders, and strategy, but lacked the one essential, spiritual strength. This is ably expressed by one of them on our list who is not yet a member of any of our churches: ‘Each man is issued a gas mask and is taught to trust his mask completely. If every one of us would compare this mask to God’s Word, and when we went into war would trust it, there would be no fear.’ ”



Building bridges



Bridging a language gap can help us bridge a spiritual gap.

Julie K. Tessmer

Marcie Tillema with one of her English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes. Tillema spent a year in Japan helping a national pastor bridge the gap to the gospel by teaching EFL.

We have something many people want—knowledge of the English language. Immigrants, international students, and visitors to the United States need this knowledge in order to survive and prosper in the United States. Even those in international lands want this skill for business, commerce, or international affairs.

We also have something every person needs—knowledge of the gospel. Without those words of forgiveness through faith in Christ, all are doomed to eternal life in hell.

One can be used to bridge the gap to the other. By teaching English either to those in the United States or to those in their own homelands, we show our Christian love and build relationships that can provide opportunities for us to witness to our faith.

Building relationships away from home

That opportunity was given to Marcie Tillema, now a junior at Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee, through WELS Kingdom

Workers. From May 1998-May 1999, she shared her knowledge of the English language and of her Savior in Japan.

Tillema worked with national pastor Fukuichi Oshino and his wife, Keiko, in Ashikaga. There she helped teach English as a Foreign Language (EFL) to one-year-olds through high school age students in an after-school program and to women in several ladies' classes. She also taught English Bible classes for the church.

"Many had a basic knowledge [of English]," says Tillema. "But their former training was very focused on the written part. They needed practice on conversational English."

She continues: "In addition to the other classes, we would invite our students to Bible classes where they could practice their English, and we could introduce the Bible to them." Tillema would also invite her students to attend church with her.

One woman whom Tillema taught was just baptized on Easter.

"I just cried and cried when I heard," says Tillema. "I was amazed

to see the immediate response to the Holy Spirit's work."

Not all students become involved with the church. But the Holy Spirit works in mysterious ways.

"There are so many opportunities to share your faith while teaching English," says Tillema. "We take our language for granted. It's neat to be able to use the language in this way."

Teaching EFL or English as a Second Language (ESL) has been happening for a long time—both in the world and in WELS. But only recently has a committee been developed to provide information, materials, and training to those in WELS teaching ESL/EFL.

Set up in 1998, the WELS ESL/EFL Steering Committee consists of members from the four areas of ministry—home missions, world missions, parish services, and ministerial education. An interim project director, Lisa Hunter, is making contacts with congregations interested in beginning an ESL program, is maintaining the Web site, and is helping develop an ESL/EFL teacher's con-

ference, which will be held in the summer of 2001.

One facet of this committee is to provide training to people like Tillema. To do that, Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., offers a Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) certificate course during the summer. This intensive three-week course, which prepares students to teach English skills to people whose native language is not English, addresses methodology, classroom theory, cultural awareness, and the English language system. The majority of the 35 students who have taken the course are teaching EFL classes for missions in over 10 foreign countries.

Sharing our love at home

But people in foreign countries aren't the only ones who need English classes—or the gospel. Immigrants and international students who come to the United States also want to learn English. ESL programs in our churches allow us to show our love to these people by helping them in that quest. These programs also could help build a bridge so we can share God's love for them.

Right now, at least 17 ESL programs in WELS are in place. Many more congregations are in the process of starting classes, and over

100 want to know about starting an ESL program.

Those who want to learn more, can—right at their home congregation. The committee offers a series of training seminars funded by WELS Kingdom Workers to help provide necessary information and skills.

Beth Thompson, trainer/facilitator of these seminars, has presented one 15-hour seminar at seven different locations so far. This seminar includes the basics of intercultural communication, teaching materials and methods, and learning how to start an ESL program. Thompson, who has almost completed her Masters in Teaching English to Speakers of other Languages, will conduct two follow-up seminars after congregations have started their ESL programs. These seminars focus on helping congregations fine-tune their programs, including customizing their classes to focus on the language skills students need to improve their lives.

One thing the seminars, and the committee, stress is that the value of ESL outreach is pre-evangelism. No "religion" should be taught in the ESL classroom, only English skills.

Many times, however, this English help leads to questions about the teachers, their church, and where the love they show comes from. Then

the students can be invited to Bible classes that are in simple English. "The students can't help but respond to love with no strings attached," says Thompson. "The real question is 'Will the congregation be ready for the success of the program?'" —because the key to success, according to Thompson, is congregational involvement.

"One of the things that I

An internet discussion group for WELS teachers of ESL/EFL is operated by Martin Luther College to

- promote the use of ESL/EFL as an outreach tool;
- involve ESL/EFL teachers, students, and advocates in discussion about the theories and practices of teaching ESL/EFL;
- create a support system for WELS members involved in teaching ESL/EFL.

To subscribe, send an e-mail to <listerserver@mlc-wels.edu>. Leave the subject line blank. Write "subscribe TeflTalk" and include your name in the body of the message.

ask [in my seminar] is 'How many people does it take in a congregation to make a successful ESL outreach program?'" says Thompson. "The answer is every single one."

Why? Because, says Thompson, even if you have volunteers teaching, providing child care and transportation, and serving as conversation partners, if the students show up at a service and don't feel a part of it, the outreach program isn't successful.

That conflicts with the whole goal of teaching ESL/EFL to create opportunities for the spread of the gospel.

"We expect that the Lord is going to do it in his own good time," says Thompson. "But we need to make a connection."

A connection to the people. And a connection to the gospel.

For more information, contact Lisa Hunter, 404 N State St, New Ulm MN 56074; phone and FAX, 507/354-6985; <lhunter@newulmtel.net>. She and her husband will be working with EFL classes in Japan until December.



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

Thanks to Lisa Hunter for providing information for this article.



Beth Thompson (right) teaching a seminar on setting up an English as a Second Language (ESL) class in a congregation. She has taught seven of these seminars so far, with more in the works.

In defense of ritual

We need to find renewal and refreshment in spiritual rituals that will help us remember God's grace each day.

Kenneth J. Kremer

“**G**ood night stars. Good night air. Good night noises everywhere.” The final lines of the toddler's classic echoed with closure. I punctuated the idea with a heavy sigh: “THE END!”

Kati knew every word by heart, every picture, every detail; but she was not yet finished. “Grandpa, read it again,” came the familiar incantation. I had heard the same plaintive song six times in the last half-hour. Once it was a song a grandpa could love. Now I was forming a second opinion.

“Just one more time. Pleeeeease!”

I proposed other options, but the battle was already over.

What is it about kids that makes them crave repetition? And how can we reclaim that childlike satisfaction that comes from doing the same things again and again?

Divine redundancy

At the dawn of history the Almighty set in motion the countless cycles of nature destined to repeat themselves until the last trumpet sounds. The sun's rising and setting. The waxing and waning of the moon. The rise and fall of the tides. Food chains. Procreation. The oxygen and carbon dioxide exchange between the plant and animal kingdoms. The water cycle. The heavens' predictable

movements. The change of seasons. Look carefully at God's natural world, and you will be awestruck by the number of cycles that surround us. Virtually every aspect of creation makes use of the simple principle that renewal is linked to repetition.

That principle was not lost on God's Old Testament people either. The cycles of religious ritual were inescapable: morning and evening prayers; temple rites and sacrifices; annual festivals like Unleavened Bread, the Day of Atonement, Jubilee years—repeated reminders of God's timeless presence and enduring promises. For many these Levitical rituals were so endearing that life would have been unbearable without them. Yet, some may not have appreciated the significance of returning repeatedly to the same old themes—people who chafed at the monotony of it all.

And what of us—God's people in the 21st century? Few would challenge the notion that we are driven: goal-oriented, linear thinkers, achievers from the day that we could walk, compelled to remain on task, on schedule, and on target. We tend to obsess about the end product and disregard the process. We generally dislike redundancy. Who has the time, the energy, the inclination to do anything over. Is there a point to it?



New every morning

Yes, there is. Some things are worth repeating. At least in spiritual terms we have good reasons for maintaining a regimen of religious ritual. Those reasons have almost nothing to do with our hurried lifestyles, our internal demons relentlessly requiring more, or our perennial search for newness. Instead, our need for ritual has almost everything to do with the unending flow of daily blessings that pour from our loving Father's hand.

The point is this: We forget. When our lives consist only of meeting our daily schedules, we stop taking note of just how fresh and new that never-ending stream of blessings is each day. If that is true of temporal blessings, it is doubly true for spiritual blessings. Jeremiah observed, “Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning” (Lamentations 3:22,23).

SIX WAYS TO RECYCLE YOUR BLESSINGS

- Don't wait. Target a time in your family's daily routine that will work. If no time seems readily available, make time.
- Don't dwell on false starts. Ask God for his help and start again.
- Mealtime and bedtime prayers don't require much time, but they represent more opportunities to remember where your blessings originate.
- Use spontaneous (teachable) moments to talk about God and his never-ending flow of gifts.
- Create ambiance. Make it clear that devotional time is sacred—time dedicated to God. Identify a place in your home that can be thought of as the family altar. Or light a candle wherever you are worshiping. (Some families disconnect the phone for a few minutes.)
- Do something every day. If you are pressed for time, select a psalm or read a hymn verse.

You can find 60 more ideas to enhance your devotional time at <www.wels.net/nph>. Look for the Lutheran Parent toolbox icon.

Whether we are off chasing our latest dream or just drudging our way through another day at the office, when we fail to stop regularly, and often, to consider the unexpected wonder of his grace, we begin taking God for granted. We lose the joy of waiting to see him come through again for yet another day. We start thinking that we deserve this profusion of gifts for all our hard work. We may even begin to believe that these things are not from God, but the fruits of our own accomplishments. The forgetting happens more quickly than we might think.


Consider your life. How have you woven God into the fabric of your day? And if not today, when? Tomorrow? Next Easter? Is Sunday your one day out of seven to squeeze him into an already over-committed agenda? Heady questions! Most of us wince when forced to think about it. Some days—too many days—we barely give God a passing nod.

For many, religious ritual has a negative connotation. We know that some church bodies confuse ritual with faith. Or we see it as a time waster, a boring rut, a relic of the past. Yet daily we follow the same routine to get ourselves ready for the day. We repeat many of the same weekly, monthly, and annual patterns—shopping for groceries, paying the bills, attending church, preparing for Christmas, celebrating birthdays and anniversaries. We find security in doing familiar things over and over. Our rituals re-energize us because in them we experience the joy of remembering what is important and going back to the basics.

Returning to the basics

More than ever we need to find renewal and refreshment in spiritual rituals that help us remember God's grace each day. We need to get back to the basics of our faith. We need to establish a devotional lifestyle in which we stop everything else in our busy lives, if only for a few minutes each day, to hear God tell us about the power of his forgiveness in Jesus. That story is such an astounding surprise it can never become boring or old. We need to devote ourselves to prayer every day, without fail, and then take time to observe and reflect on how the Lord has responded to our petitions. We daily need to articulate our appreciation for our blessings because saying it out loud reinforces what we know by faith in our hearts.

The ritual of a devotional lifestyle is doable, even in our hectic contemporary setting. Sameness and regularity are the keys: same time, same place, same ambiance, same pattern, or some combination of all the above. Of course, Christian rituals are always constructed around the same eternal promises of our Savior-God.

A spiritual regimen requires discipline—especially at first. But your devotional time will be well spent. It will enhance your outlook on life, replacing that driven feeling with contentment and joy. It will strengthen, uplift, encourage, and comfort you. It will prepare you for the challenges that each new day brings. 

Kenn Kremer is the editor of Lutheran Parent magazine and the author of a new book published by Northwestern Publishing House, From the Ground Up: A Plan to Build Your Christian Family.

A child's faith



Laura Ring on her confirmation day, April 9, 2000.

Dale Markgraf, principal of St. Paul Lutheran School, New Ulm, Minn., writes:

“Laura Ring, one of our eighth-graders, had heart and lung problems since birth. She had several major heart surgeries. She developed a form of scoliosis and on Apr. 10 had corrective surgery.

“They found her spine at a 90 degree angle! Two vertebrae were removed, and the surgery was successful. It was anticipated that she should be able to walk upright—something she had not been able to do for several years.

“Because of her weak heart and lungs she remained in intensive care. Her death was not anticipated. She died from an uncontrollable bleeding ulcer in her stomach within an hour or two after the ulcer began bleeding.

“I am writing to share with you the last *Christ-Light* assignment Laura completed. After a study of the booklet ‘God’s Answers to My Questions,’ the children wrote a report summarizing what they learned, with the directive to apply it to their lives. Under the circumstances, Laura’s paper became especially meaningful to all of us here at St. Paul.”

God's answers to my questions

By Laura M. Ring

This booklet was about all the troubles and hardships we face in our lives. We have so many questions about the future, our spiritual attitude, and how to just live a daily life. I know the only way I can be strong and faithful is to believe in Jesus, my loving Savior.

I always ask myself, “Why do I have troubles and my sister doesn’t?” I realize that’s not true, but sometimes I feel very overwhelmed, and my sister has the easy life. I sometimes feel God hasn’t heard me, or my troubles weren’t hard enough for God to pay attention

to them. Then I realize that God does hear me, and I have to pray that he will help me. I have to remember that God doesn’t give me troubles I can’t handle. He gives me troubles to strengthen my faith. He makes me realize I am a sinner and I need a Savior. (Hebrews 12:6—“The Lord disciplines those he loves.”) My troubles will be nothing compared to my glorious future in heaven.

I know I have troubles and I know God strengthens my faith, but God knows I’m a Christian, so why does he trouble me in the first place? God knows I go to church

and a Christian day school. I read the Bible and have loving parents who believe in Christ. Why does he punish me and not some kid in juvenile hall?

It takes a question like this for me to realize that I am not the only one who suffers because of sin. Everyone sins, and we all need forgiveness. We, as Christians, all need to help each other in love and bear with each other whenever someone makes a mistake. We need to spread God's message of forgiveness. We trust God will help us when needed. God uses my troubles to train me to live for him.

I sometimes ask myself, "What's my goal in life?" or "What's my purpose on earth?" I feel awful that I don't know the answer and am ashamed I should know the answer in the first place. My family reminds me whenever I'm down that my troubles help me to focus on heaven. Whenever my back hurts or I get a bad grade on a paper, I think of heaven. In heaven, life will be perfect. (2 Timothy 4:18—"The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom.")

Another question I always ask myself is, "Why doesn't God answer my prayers?" When I get sick, I plead and plead to him to make me feel better, but my sickness likes to run its course. Sometimes I want things I know I shouldn't have, but I want them anyway. Why is it that I never get what I ask for? Most of the time my mother will point out the fact that God might say "no" because I've asked for something that's not good for me. The attitude I should have then is to say "okay" and let it be instead of stomping off mad. God only gives me what I truly need.

One time I lost this precious doll of mine, and I prayed all the time to God to help me find her. I sobbed and fervently prayed. I looked all over my house. A couple of weeks later, my mother found the doll. This all shows that praying does help and God might say "wait" to show us he wants us to show faith in him and pray persistently.

I can also remember a time when my brother really wanted a fire truck. He showed my mother TV ads, dragged her to toy stores, and even cut out catalog pictures. My mother kept saying "no" or "I'll think about it." This drove my brother crazy! Finally, that Christmas, what do you think he found under the Christmas tree?

The point is whenever God says "no" or "wait," we should keep on praying, submit to his will, and trust God will keep his promises. (Ephesians 3:20—"God is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine.")

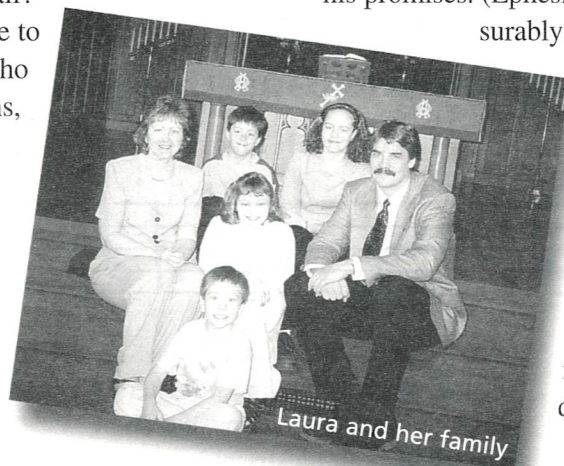
As I'm getting older, I ask myself a lot, "What am I going to do in the future? Will it be scary?" I'm afraid of the big MVL [Minnesota Valley Lutheran High School], my back surgery, and lots of other things. I don't have a clue of what anything will be like. All I have to do, though, is remember God has helped and delivered me in the past.

A lot of the time I get worried about things I shouldn't get worried about, and just go to my room, close the door, and pray to God. I tell him all of my worries, my hopes and dreams. I ask him to help me through all the things I worry about. I should have the attitude to pray to God with confidence and believe that he is present with his love and almighty power. (1 Peter 5:7—"Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.")

People always ask me "What do you want to be when you grow up?" and I respond with an "I don't know yet" or "I'm not sure." I worry that I should know what I want to do with my life by now. Should I be thinking about college or a husband or do I want to have children someday? All these ideas scare me. I am not ready for college, a husband, or children. Whenever I get that feeling I have to trust God's promise to bring me to heaven someday, where there are no worries and everything is perfect.

I learned a lot in this book. I learned I don't have to be afraid of the future. I can look forward to it gladly. I know heaven is part of my future, someday. I also know that God does answer my prayers, and I can thank and praise him for that. I can do whatever I want to do in life with confidence, because I know Jesus is always on my side.

God brought Laura to heaven on Apr. 18. She was 13 years old.



Dies Irae

“Day of Wrath” has been called the most awe-inspiring judgment-day hymn ever written.

Theodore J. Hartwig



Hymns often have stories to tell about their origin. Knowing the story enhances appreciation for the hymn. Some hymns were inspired by memorable experiences in the lives of their authors, others by the tragedy of war or miraculous escape from danger. The reasons go on and on.

Story of the sequence hymn

By the year 1100, Latin had long gone into disuse as the spoken language of most people in the West. Yet it remained the language of worship—hymns had to be in Latin. Not only were they unintelligible to the mass of people, but their musical settings went beyond the ordinary person's competence to sing. Doing a service required the expertise of trained choirs and clergy. Thus the people became passive spectators of performances by professionals. Hymns in the people's language were to be sung outside the church doors.

In the centuries after 1100 a new kind of hymn emerged for church worship. Its birth is connected with the Hallelujah sung just before reading the Gospel. Since this lesson normally included the very words of Jesus, it was treated as the highpoint of the Bible readings by surrounding it with short musical exclamations and by having it read from a place

raised 10 to 20 steps above the chancel floor. While the minister was mounting these steps, the choir bridged the gap by stretching out the last syllable of Hallelujah with a lengthy sequence of musical notes.

To help remember all these notes, someone hit on the expedient of joining to the notes words in poetry or prose that would be appropriate for the particular day in the church calendar. The words could relate to Christmas or Easter, to a saint's day, a church dedication, or an anniversary. Thus was born the sequence hymn.

Story of “Dies Irae”

“Dies Irae” or “Day of Wrath” (*Christian Worship* 209) originated as such a sequence hymn. It has been called the most awe-inspiring judgment-day hymn ever written. Composed by an Italian monk in the 1200s, it became the standard hymn for anniversaries honoring the dead. The hymn won an amazing hold on people's minds as late as the 1800s.

Nowadays, it is seldom heard and has disappeared from most modern hymnals. The more people are preoccupied with the here and now and seduced by material wants, the farther judgment day recedes from their minds. It's so much stronger a reason why “Dies Irae” deserves room in our hymnal as well as more frequent

use. Worship invites time for solemnity as well as for praise and joy.

Solemnity characterizes both the language and tune of “Dies Irae.” Stanzas one and two bring to mind our Lord's prophetic description of the world's end and judgment day. In stanza three the reference to a book from which judgment is made recalls verses in Revelation.

After this opening law message, the hymn's tone shifts to gospel as most grandly announced in stanza five: “King of majesty tremendous, Who does free salvation send us, Fount of pity, then befriend us.” The following stanzas unfold the basis for this cry of faith: Jesus came. Jesus conquered. Jesus robed us in his righteousness. Our hope of eternal joy is assured.

Regrettably, much hymn writing before the Lutheran Reformation was tainted by superstition and Christ-dishonoring saint veneration. Nevertheless, gems of gospel teaching and comfort for the salvation of God's elect continued to flash through the gloom. Our creeds are such gems, as are hymns such as “Dies Irae.”



Theodore Hartwig is a professor at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota.

Forward in Christ celebrations

Many WELS congregations in the United States and Canada celebrated the synod's 150th anniversary on June 11. The celebration, which also observes the 2000th anniversary of Christ's birth, spans a two-year time period that began in July 1999 and runs through July 2001.

June 11, 2000, was chosen by the Forward in Christ (FIC) anniversary committee as the official anniversary Sunday. Members throughout the synod focused on God's present blessings and how they can spread the blessing of God's Word to others.

Each congregation and district is observing the anniversary in its own way. Some chose to celebrate on June 11; others celebrated before that date or are planning events later this year. Here's a glimpse of some of these joyful festivities.

Southeastern Wisconsin District



Star of Bethlehem, New Berlin, Wis., held a special FIC service on Anniversary Sunday. Between services congregation members planted a tree to memorialize the event. Next to the tree sits a rock engraved "June 11, 2000. 150th. Forward in Christ." The rock and the tree serve as reminders that the congregation should keep striving to go forward in Christ.

Minnesota District

The conferences of the Minnesota District each celebrated the anniversary in their own ways. Approximately 1600 worshiped at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., on June 11. A hog

roast and children's carnival followed the service.

Two congregations in southwest Missouri—Zion, Springfield, and Peace, Marshfield—held a joint festival service and dinner on June 11. It was the first opportunity they had to worship together in their seven years as a dual parish.

Northern Wisconsin District



Over 3,500 WELS members traveled to the Brown County Arena in Green Bay, Wis., for a district-wide FIC celebration on July 15. Booths displaying information about WELS organizations and entertainment on three stages captured the interest of attendees before the service. Our Shepherd Child Care Center in Appleton handed out balloons. A 400-member choir helped lead the service.

Pacific Northwest District

On June 17, 700 worshipers gathered for a district-wide celebration in Parkland, Wash. Pastor Gary Kraklow, Peace, Vancouver, Wash., observed, "I know there are a lot of WELS people, and church things can be done in a big way. But most of our people out here have never known what that feeling is like because our biggest churches out here have 300 members, and most have under 100. I wish I could put into words the feelings that were expressed on people's faces as they experienced, for most, the biggest celebration ever by their type of Christians."

Western Wisconsin District

A district-wide celebration is planned for Oct. 29 at the University of Wisconsin—Madison Field House.

North Atlantic District

The New England Circuit held a joint service in Shrewsbury, Mass., on June 10. Special music and fellowship among the 113 attendees were the highlights of the day.

Arizona-California District

Over 750 members of the district met in Mesa, Ariz., on June 11, for a 150th anniversary service led by district officers.

South Central District

On June 4, 500 district members gathered in Dallas, Tex., to hear WELS President Karl Gurgel preach about going forward in Christ. The celebration was held in conjunction with the district convention that began on June 5.

Michigan District



WELS Kingdom Workers wore red caps to the district-wide celebration so the 1,300 attendees could recognize them as ushers. Two services were held on June 10 at Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, Mich. The first was a traditional worship service, and the second was a historical hymnfest.

News from the district conventions

Arizona-California

June 12-14, Mesa, Ariz.

The district passed several resolutions, including

- that the Arizona-California Praesidium appoint a committee to study the pros and cons of dividing the district into two smaller districts and to make recommendations at the 2002 Arizona-California District Convention.
- that at the conclusion of the Forward in Christ (FIC) celebration, the WELS official periodical be once again known as *The Northwestern Lutheran*.
- that for the compensation proposal the Human Resources Committee restudy the years of service compensation ratio, give more precise guidelines for reflecting differing responsibilities, and promote the scriptural principles of accountability so they may be retained but not tied to the compensation package.

The district also encouraged the Synodical Council to authorize the use of external borrowing if and when necessary to meet ministry opportunities.

*Hermann John
Kenneth Pasch*

Dakota-Montana

June 13-15, St. Martin Lutheran School, Watertown, S.D.

Pastor Jonathan Werre, Mighty Fortress, Red Deer, Alberta, Canada, delivered an essay focusing on why we can, and should, celebrate our objective faith in such a subjective world, as well as rejoice in our real mission.

The convention encouraged the Commission on Worship on the synodical and district levels to continue to recommend how to develop a new pool of organists/musicians; to develop programs to train current organists/musicians; and to develop ways to assist congregations that lack organists/musicians.

Delegates supported the regionalization method of providing comparable compensation for its called workers, and encouraged a continuing study and increased awareness of equitable called worker compensation. The Human Resources Committee was encouraged to develop an objective tool to reflect faithfulness, not numbers.

Another item that generated discussion was the surcharge placed on all students to pay for the addition at Luther Preparatory School (LPS). The delegates understood the urgency but asked that it not be done this way again.

A memorial was brought to the convention by a Canadian delegate asking that the Canadian field be converted to an independent, sister synod under the Board for World Missions. The convention referred the matter to the North American Cross-cultural Ministry Administrative Committee.

Mark Wilde, our new worship coordinator, supplied the closing prayer. The prayer addressed all the areas of ministry of the synod and aimed to incorporate the many desires of the convention. The delegates are urged to use it periodically throughout the biennium.

*Peter Naumann
David Wendt*

Michigan

June 13-15, Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Mich.

The Michigan District Convention's theme was "The Lord has done great things for us and we are filled with joy" (Psalm 126:3). The convention addressed major issues that face our church body and gave reactions to reports from all the areas of ministry in our synod.

Special effort was given to considering questions of financing capital improvements in our ministerial education system and compensating called workers in a manner that

reflects God's Word and his people's love for the truth.



Delegates at the Michigan District Convention at Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Mich.

The convention was also a time for deepening our fellowship through worship, the Lord's Supper, and daily applications of God's Word through devotions and papers. Our delegates exercised their fellowship in their work on floor committees and on the convention floor and in informal gatherings when the convention was not in session. Especially important was the time our lay delegates spent with each other and with the called workers of our district. This time enabled both to grow in their appreciation for one another and their ability to serve each other.

Geoffrey Kieta

Minnesota

June 20-22, Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn.

About 350 representatives were present.

Larry Cross, president of the Minnesota District, pointed us forward to the Christmas 2000 celebration, encouraged representatives to move forward in Christ in gospel work, shared the official acts for the past biennium, and shared information regarding the work of the Conference of Presidents.

Each of the six sessions was opened with a devotion based on selected verses from Ephesians. They emphasized the Church's oneness in Christ and the proclamation of the Word of God as it is taught in the Bible.

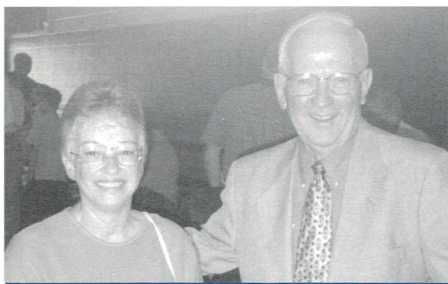
Each essay and presentation at the convention directed WELS members to focus on how the gospel can be spread more effectively and the need that exists to spread the gospel in a world where more people are being born but fewer know the Lord. Better use of technology to enable WELS to reach more people more effectively with the Word was emphasized.

Jeffrey Bovee

Nebraska

June 12-14, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, Colo.

The Nebraska Convention was quite different this year. First, it was held on the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley because of impending construction at Nebraska Lutheran High School, Waco, Neb. Secondly, the format was more of a celebratory nature as it focused on Forward in Christ.



Pastor Gerald and Judith Free. Free was recognized for his service in the Nebraska District and his work with the FIC celebration.

The delegates approved the Central Conference request that its name be changed to the Three Rivers Conference. The delegates also memorialized the synod to study "the entire district alignment of the synod."

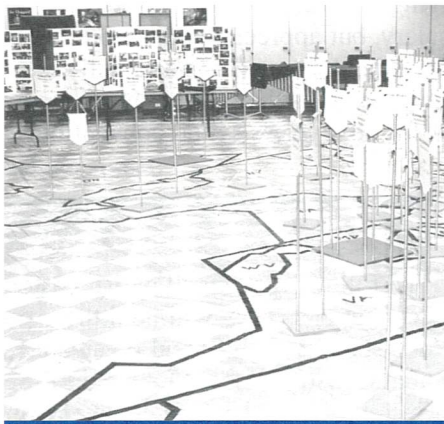
The district presented plaques to Pastor Joel Frank for his 10 years of service as district president; to Mark Kaiser in behalf of his father, former District President Ron Kaiser (who was unable to be present for reasons of health); and to Pastor Gerald Free for his 42 years of service to our district and his work in the Forward in Christ celebration.

Keith Petersen

North Atlantic

June 6-7, Elizabethtown, Penn.

The convention began by thanking and praising God for 150 years of grace on our synod with an opening anniversary worship service. Pastor Gerald Free was the guest preacher.



As part of the FIC celebration, a 30-square foot walk-through map of the district was set up as a visual and three-dimensional reminder of what the Lord has done since 1963 when the synod first arrived in the North Atlantic area of North America. Photo displays of each congregation were also set up for viewing.

During the convention five essays were presented that focused on God's blessings in WELS:

"The Blessings that Attracted Me to the WELS," Pastor Thomas Pfothner;

"The Blessings of Lifelong Service in the WELS," Pastor John Mittelsteadt;

"The Blessings of Lifelong Service in the WELS," Pastor Thomas Zarling;

"The Blessings of Returning to the WELS," Pastor David Schmidt;

"The Blessings of Beginning a Ministry in the WELS," Teacher William Tomlin.

Having scheduled the district convention during the week ever since the first convention in 1983, one resolution adopted by the district was to schedule the 2002 district convention on a weekend. This would make it easier for lay delegates, who might not otherwise be able to attend a convention because of work commitments.

Kevin Schultz

Northern Wisconsin

June 18-20, Fox Hills Resort, Mishicot, Wis.

The resort was beautiful, and many delegates enjoyed the opportunities for fellowship and relaxation that were built into the convention. A highlight was the golf tournament on Monday.

The delegates heard an informative and inspirational paper by Pastor John Jeske, retired professor of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. They heard how the Bible teaching about the nature of Christ is vitally connected to the story of our salvation.

Delegates discussed the special report from the Human Resources Committee on the new compensation plan for called workers. The delegates appreciated the work the committee put in to make the compensation packages for called workers more fair. They suggested that the synod consider eliminating the accountability factor in the package.

Joel Lillo

Pacific Northwest

June 16, Evergreen Lutheran High School, Des Moines, Wash.

We had a one-day convention because the circuits met prior to the convention and did the floor committee work.

Cross-cultural ministries was a main concern. With increasing numbers of Asians and Russians being added to an ever-increasing Hispanic population, opportunities abound to do "world" mission work at home. We urge the synod in convention to devote more resources to this ministry.

The compensation proposal by human resources was highly supported. We hope numerous questions about future details will be answered in future proposals.

The renaming of *Northwestern Lutheran* to *Forward in Christ* was seen as a good idea, although we think that the name *Pacific Northwest Lutheran* might be even better.

Gary Kraklow



South Atlantic

June 12-14, St. Petersburg, Fla.

President John Guse encouraged us to have "open mouths" to share the gospel and to be "open mouthed," amazed at what God has done in us, among us, and through us.



Past, present, and future workers in Antigua relax during a break.

Peter Leyrer, missionary in Taiwan, and his wife demonstrated how difficult cross-cultural communication can be. They showed devastation from the Taiwan earthquake and how it sparked interest in the message of hope we have in God.

The Synodical Council's recommendation regarding compensation brought several resolutions. We encouraged the Human Resources Committee to develop guidelines to "help calling bodies and called workers plan and evaluate the gospel ministry which they do together," and that "calling bodies carefully . . . consider" each of the 13 critical elements of compensation planning, "especially the need for ongoing professional growth and education."

The Southern Lutheran Academy (SLA) Board presented the site plan for SLA's property in Plant City, Fla. The board continues to call for a development director/first president of the school with hopes that it could open in five years.

Mark Haefner

South Central

June 5-6, Calvary, Dallas, Tex.

Craig Parton, a lawyer, lecturer, and member of Our Redeemer, Santa Barbara, Calif., spoke on Lutheran apologetics.

A paper, delivered by Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary President David Valleskey, focused on the strengthening of stakes and lengthening of cords that took place in WELS' history.

The proposed salary structure for called workers received attention. We were concerned over the issue of tying faithfulness to a person's salary, but appreciated the work the Synodical Council has and will continue to do as they refine the proposal for next year's synod convention.

Peter Snyder

Southeastern Wisconsin

June 6-7, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis.

The convention was held under the theme "Forward Together."

The district concurred with most areas of the compensation proposal put together by the Human Resources Committee (HRC). However, though they agreed with the concept of accountability, they did not think it should be tied to the compensation package. They also recommended

District officers

The following men, all parish pastors, were elected at this summer's 12 district conventions. They will hold these positions for two years. The district presidents, along with Synod President Karl R. Gurgel; Vice President of Mission and Ministry Richard Lauersdorf; Second Vice President Jon Mahnke; and Secretary Douglas Bode, make up the Conference of Presidents.

Arizona-California

President: Paul Janke
 First Vice President: Joel Prange
 Second Vice President: Daniel Pautz
 Secretary: Kenneth Pasch

Dakota-Montana

President: Peter Naumann
 First Vice President: Douglas Free
 Second Vice President: Wayne Rouse
 Secretary: Stephen Geiger

Michigan

President: John Seifert
 First Vice President: Paul Naumann
 Second Vice President: Carl Otto
 Secretary: James Seelow

Minnesota

President: Larry Cross
 First Vice President: Charles Degner
 Second Vice President: David Kolander
 Secretary: Michael Hatzung

Nebraska

President: Joel Frank
 First Vice President: Philip Zarling
 Second Vice President: David Russow
 Secretary: Keith Petersen

North Atlantic

President: Walter Beckmann
 First Vice President: Thomas Zarling
 Second Vice President: Donald Tollefson
 Secretary: Brett Voigt

Northern Wisconsin

President: Douglas Engelbrecht
 First Vice President: Bruce McKenney
 Second Vice President: David Sternberg
 Secretary: Ronald Szep

Pacific Northwest

President: Warren Widmann
 First Vice President: Ted Lambert
 Second Vice President: Douglas Weiser
 Secretary: Jon Buchholz

South Atlantic

President: John Guse
 First Vice President: Paul Zell
 Second Vice President: David Priebe
 Secretary: Robert Krueger

South Central

President: Vilas Glaeske
 First Vice President: Donald Patterson
 Second Vice President: Mark Bitter
 Secretary: Chris Goelzer

Southeastern Wisconsin

President: David Rutschow
 First Vice President: James Huebner
 Second Vice President: Mark Jeske
 Secretary: Robert Pasbrig

Western Wisconsin

President: Herbert Prah
 First Vice President: David Fischer
 Second Vice President: Mark Lindner
 Secretary: Mark Johnston

that the HRC reevaluate the categories of the forms of ministry and establish a category for college and seminary professors.

The district reluctantly agreed with the Synodical Council (SC) resolution to fund the Luther Preparatory School dorm addition through a student assessment, a \$110 to \$120 fee per student at all synodical schools over a 20-year time span. They encouraged the SC to pursue other funding options to finance remaining projects.

*Scott Oelhafen
Robert Pasbrig*

Western Wisconsin

June 11-13, Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis.

One hundred eighty-one pastors, 118 teachers, 80 lay delegates, six staff members, five guests, three tutors, and three vicars, for a total of 396 registered for the convention.

In his report, President Prahel commented, "Y2K has come and

gone, and we are still here! Thank God that we have a high and lofty purpose to fulfill as his servant-messengers! While we are still here, let us not be idle. Let us, who are deeply loved by the One who loved us first and gave himself for us, seize the opportunities we have."



All Western Wisconsin District officers were reelected to their respective positions. (L to r): President Herbert Prahel, First Vice President David Fischer, Second Vice President Mark Lindner, Secretary Mark Johnston.

A district-wide Forward in Christ Reformation celebration is planned for October 29 at the University of

Wisconsin Field House in Madison. The new Western Wisconsin Ministerial Scholarship Fund, an FIC anniversary program, was promoted.

President Emeritus Robert Voss presented a summary of his printed History of the Western Wisconsin District, which was distributed to each congregation in the district.

After lengthy debate on the compensation proposal the convention resolved, "That we encourage the Synodical Council to further develop the compensation proposal but eliminate the link between accountability and compensation, and that self-supporting ministries be encouraged to use the compensation proposal as a guideline."

A memorial from the Capitol Circuit to divide into two circuits was presented and approved.

Elton Stroh

Thanks to the district reporters and district secretaries for providing the reports on the district conventions.

WELS news briefs

These updates are from the offices at the synod administration building.

Commission for Communication on Financial Support



Dan Malchow, President Karl Gurgel, and Ruth Malchow at Dan's retirement service at the Synod Administration Building (SAB) on June 30. Malchow headed the Reaching Out program, before becoming the first administrator of CCFs and Planned Giving. He ended his 18 years of service at the SAB as the director of Capital Funding Services.

Mass Media Ministry



John and Lynne Barber at their retirement service at the Synod Administration Building in Milwaukee on June 16. The Barbers served Mass Media Ministry for 18 years. They assisted individual congregations in developing and using media resources in outreach programs. The Barbers also worked on media-assisted outreach campaigns including Come to the WELS, Live Free, Precious is the Child, Share the Promise, and the recent Outreach 2000 campaign. One of John's most recent accomplishments was producing and directing *Harvest of Joy*, a feature-length video on the history of WELS.

THROUGH MY BIBLE IN 3 YEARS

October 2000

1. Psalm 119:1-24	19. 2 Chron.
2. Ps. 119:25-48	3:1-5:1
3. Ps. 119:49-80	20. 2 Chron.
4. Ps. 119:81-104	5:2-6:11
5. Ps. 119:105-128	21. 2 Chron. 6:12-
6. Ps. 119:129-152	42
7. Ps. 119:153-176	22. 2 Chron. 7, 8
8. Ps. 120, 121	23. 2 Chron. 9, 10
9. Ps. 122, 123	24. 2 Chron. 11, 12
10. Ps. 124-126	25. 2 Chron. 13, 14
11. Ps. 127-129	26. 2 Chron. 15, 16
12. Ps. 130, 131	27. 2 Chron. 17, 18
13. Ps. 132	28. 2 Chron. 19, 20
14. Ps. 133, 134	29. 2 Chron.
15. Ps. 135	21:1-22:9
16. Ps. 136	30. 2 Chron.
17. Ps. 137, 138	22:10-23:21
18. 2 Chronicles 1, 2	31. 2 Chron. 24

District news

Arizona-California

The **Arizona-California Commission on Youth Discipleship** hosted a "Teens in Missions" retreat from July 28-30.

Minnesota

Minnesota Valley LHS, New Ulm, Minn., was accepted as a member of the Minnesota Independent School Forum, a collaborative organization that brings schools from across the state together to secure resources and address issues of common importance.

Members of **Christ, Eden Prairie, Minn.**, dedicated their new sanctuary on June 24-25.

The pilot session of **Jesus Cares Ministries' on-line Bible class/confirmation course instructor certification** occurred in June.

Northern Wisconsin

Forgiven, a quartet of recent graduates from Manitowoc LHS, Manitowoc, Wis., sang at WELS congregations across the United States this summer. Matthew Reichardt, Paul Mleziva, Jonathan Martens, and Jonathon Roberts sang both spiritual and secular music. The free will offerings collected at their concerts were split to cover their expenses and to help two world missions.

Michigan



For only the fifth time in the 91-year history of Michigan Lutheran Seminary (MLS), a sports team achieved a Michigan High School Athletic Association State Championship. On June 3, the MLS girls track team emerged as state champion after competing against 180 other schools.

Pacific Northwest

Issues Etc. radio show chose an interview done with **Mark Cares** as one of their best shows and featured the interview on their Web site. Cares, pastor at Messiah, Nampa, Idaho, based interview information on his experiences witnessing to Mormons.

South Atlantic

The **South Atlantic Commission on Youth Discipleship** sponsored Camp S.O.U.T.H. (Sharing Our Unity Through Him) on July 31-Aug. 4.

California



On June 3, Dr. Rayce Meyers, chairman of California LHS's Board of Directors, broke ground for the high school's new education center.

Southeastern Wisconsin

Members of **Bethlehem, Carmel, Ind.**, dedicated their first worship facility on June 18.

Happy Anniversary!

CA—On June 11, Ascension, Escondido, Calif., celebrated **Jan Christianson's** 25th anniversary in the teaching ministry.

MN—**St. John, Vesta, Minn.**, celebrated its 100th anniversary on July 23.

Members of St. Peter, Monticello, Minn., held a praise service to celebrate the 50 years **Arnold Strehler** has served as church organist and choir director.

NW—Members of Eternal Love,

Arizona



Members at Peridot, Peridot, Ariz., improved the basketball court, playground, and softball field used by Peridot Lutheran Elementary School. Peridot's all-Apache school board was recently formed.

Appleton, Wis., celebrated **Robert Balza's** 25th anniversary in the pastoral ministry with a special service of thanksgiving on July 30.

SA—On July 2, **David Sternhagen**, Crown of Life, New Orleans, La., celebrated his 25th anniversary in the pastoral ministry. His son, **Joshua**, a recent Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary graduate, was installed as the pastor of St. John, Antigua, on the same day at Crown of Life.

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

DEFINING RELIGION

catechism: a book for religious instruction consisting of questions and answers. Luther wrote two catechisms to teach and explain the chief parts of Christian doctrine: *Luther's Small Catechism* was intended for students, and his *Large Catechism* was intended to help parents, pastors, and teachers instruct the young.

Collecting more than dust

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

Imagine that your church is observing its 100th anniversary. You are on a committee to put together a history book of your church and you need information and pictures. Where do you go?

The WELS archives is one location you could try. "The archives gathers, organizes, preserves, and provides access to the historical records of the work of WELS, its congregations' histories, and workers' biographies," explains Prof. John Hartwig, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (WLS) library director.

Although it is a synodical program, responsibility for the archives rests with the Board of Control of WLS through the seminary's library director. Materials are stored in two rooms near the seminary library. Each year the archives receives \$9,000 from the

synodical budget. That amount covers materials and supplies but does not provide any significant staffing or leave money for expansion of the program. This is where the WELS Heritage Project comes in.

The WELS Heritage Project is the third arm of the *Forward in Christ* thank offering. The first two, mission outreach programs and the Martin Luther College chapel project, will receive larger portions of the offering, with a special emphasis on mission teams for Christ.

Depending on amounts received, the WELS Heritage Project can take various forms. If \$4.2 million is collected, WLS can build a facility on campus that will house the archives near the library. If the thank offering does not provide sufficient funds to complete the building project, the synod can invest the thank offering funds until enough money is available to build the new archival facility. If more than \$4.2 million is gathered, additional improvements could include better storage, additional manpower to organize materials, and technology to make archival data available worldwide.

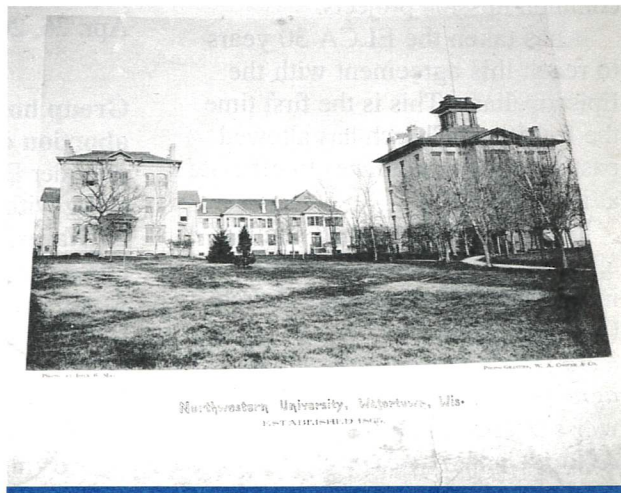
"Important documents are being lost forever without an archival program in place, says Hartwig. "As a church body we need to be aware of and actively study our history in order to not make the same mistakes we have made in the past—in order to understand how God accomplishes his ends. The documentation



Boxes are strewn throughout the archives. According to Hartwig, "The records are to a large degree uncatalogued, making it very difficult to find information. There is no room for expansion, yet . . . things keep pouring in."

of what we do as a church body makes up a large part of that history—and it is being lost and destroyed today."

Perhaps you can help the archives today so that it can help you tomorrow when you need to find that information and those photos for your church anniversary history book. Action needs to be taken now so those records are still intact when you or others need them. While going forward in Christ, remember to also preserve the past.



Exposed heating pipes go through the room that houses the current archives. There is no controlled ventilation. Documents such as this photo of Northwestern University can become yellowed and worn due to inadequate storage facilities and lack of a knowledgeable archival staff.



LCMS cuts budget to pay debt

The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod made some tough budget cuts in June in order to begin paying off a \$47.4 million capital debt that had

accumulated on the books of the national office of the Concordia University System.

Three million dollars in “unrestricted funds”—funds largely from Sunday morning offerings—had to be cut from an already trimmed-down budget. In the end the Board of Directors adopted a balanced operating budget of \$81,981,000, of which \$28,413,000 is in unrestricted funds.

Taking the largest cuts were the Board for Congregational Services, the Board for Higher Education, and the Board for Communication Services. [LCMSNews, June 9, 2000]

ELCA and the Episcopalians in full communion

In July the Episcopal Church’s House of Deputies voted to ratify the “Called to Common Mission” agreement between the Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA).

This agreement allows the churches to exchange preachers and join in common mission projects.

It has taken the ELCA 30 years to reach this agreement with the Episcopalians. This is the first time the Episcopal Church has allowed pastors of other churches to officiate at its services.

The ELCA has reached similar agreements with other churches, including the Presbyterian Church (USA) in 1998.

To clarify our position on this agreement and show the differing views of Lutherans, WELS sent an editorial news release to our churches. To receive a copy, contact WELS Communication Services, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222; 414/256-3210; <stephanien@sab.wels.net>.

What do Americans want out of life?

Of 21 possible goals for the future, 91 percent of adults rated good health as the most coveted future reality, according to a recent Barna survey. Here are some of the other top-rated goals for the future:

- Living with a high degree of integrity 81%
- Having one marriage partner for life 79%
- Having close, personal friendships 75%
- Having a clear purpose for living 75%
- Having a close relationship with God 70%

Teens have a slightly different view. They list having a college degree (88%), having good physical health (87%), having close personal friendships (84%), having a comfortable lifestyle (83%), and having one marriage partner for life (82%) as their top five goals. Having a close relationship with God came in eighth at 66%.

The data was from a nationwide random sample of 1,002 adults in February 2000. The teen statistics were from a 1998 survey of 605 teens, ages 13 to 18. Margin of error is plus or minus three percent at the 95% confidence level.

[Barna Research Group, Ltd., Apr. 26, 2000, news release]

Group hopes to launch floating abortion clinic

Dutch abortion provider Dr. Rebecca Gomperts, along with her organization, Women on Waves, is raising funds to launch a floating abortion clinic. The ship would pick up pregnant women in ports of countries where abortion is outlawed and take them into international waters, where the procedure could be performed legally.

The clinic would also offer contraception, sex education, and training in abortion and contraception for local health care providers.

About 54 countries, primarily located in Africa, Latin America, and Asia, out-

law abortion or allow the procedure only to save a woman’s life.

[LifeWire, 6/13/00, as taken from the *Washington Times*, 6/10/00]

Religious broadcasters protected from FCC limits

The House of Representatives protected religious broadcasters by voting in June to bar the Federal Communications Commission from regulating the content of speech aired by noncommercial educational TV and radio stations.

In January, the FCC commissioners voted to declare that some religious programming aired on noncommercial stations could not be considered educational. The new legislation intends to prevent similar moves in the future.

Now a nonprofit organization is eligible for a noncommercial educational license if it broadcasts material that the organization believes serves an educational, religious, cultural, or instructional purpose.

Law banning a late-term abortion procedure rejected

The U.S. Supreme Court overturned Nebraska’s law banning a late-term abortion procedure in June.

This 1997 law barred doctors from performing a procedure in which doctors “partially deliver vaginally a living unborn child before killing the unborn child and completing delivery.”

The Supreme Court ruled that the statute violates the Constitution because it imposes an “undue burden” on a woman’s constitutional right to terminate a pregnancy.

The court also said that the law neither preserved a woman’s health nor protected the life of the fetus—the two state interests established as the legal standard by the Supreme Court in earlier rulings.

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

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

Bitter, Gregg H., to St. John, Hancock, Minn.
Borgwardt, Michael J., to Living Hope, Savage/Bloomington, Bloomington, Minn.
Heiges, William D., to St. Mark, Watertown, Wis.
Kant, Robert A., to retirement
Kelly, John A., to Our Savior, Zion, Ill.
Kenyon, John R., to Trinity, Bangor, Mich.
Madson, Paul G., to retirement
Marggraf, Bruce J., to Faith, Sussex, Wis.
Mattek, John, to Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn.
Retberg, Lawrence A., to C-Landia
Schallert, Jeffrey L., to St. James, Cambridge, Wis.
Strobel, Richard W., to retirement
Werre, Luke C., to Peace, Sun Prairie, Wis.

Teachers

Backus, Rachel K., to Gloria Dei-Bethesda, Milwaukee
Bartholomew, Lori A., to St. John, Westland, Mich.
Bock, Dawn M., to St. John, Maribel, Wis.
Boileau, Vicki A., to Christ our Savior Preschool, Columbia, Tenn.
Buske, Terry A., to St. Mark, Green Bay, Wis.
Callies, Nancy L., to St. Peter, Appleton, Wis.
Czerwan, Chad M., to St. John, Barre Mills-La Crosse, Wis.
Cortright, Connie J., to St. Paul's First, North Hollywood, Calif.
Darling, Barbara J., to St. Mark, Brown Deer, Wis.
Falk, Vicky, to St. Bartholomew, Kawkawlin, Mich.
George, David B., to St. Paul, Muskego, Wis.
Granberg, Leslie, to Apostles, San Jose, Calif.
Gray, Lisa A., to Zion, Chesaning, Mich.
Green, Carol M., to Salem, Loretto, Minn.
Gresens, Daniel L., to Trinity, Kaukauna, Wis.
Groth, Kristin M., to Redemption, Milwaukee
Haag, Paul A., to Arizona Lutheran Academy, Phoenix, Ariz.
Hagedorn, Elizabeth M., to Mt. Calvary-Grace, La Crosse, Wis.
Hillstrom, Rebecca, to St. Croix LHS, West Saint Paul, Minn.
Kitzura, Laura L., to Good Shepherd, Fond du Lac, Wis.
Knoll, Lori A., to Immanuel, Fort Worth, Tex.
Koepsell, Jeffrey G., to Shepherd of the Mountains, Reno, Nev.
Kohler, Stephanie, to MLS, Saginaw, Mich.
Kratz, Emily E., to St. Mark, Brown Deer, Wis.
Kumbalek, Joanne M., to retirement
Landwehr, Jane E., to Martin Luther, Neenah, Wis.
Layton, Betty M., to Palos, Palos Heights, Ill.
Lippert, Daniel J., to St. Paul, Lake Mills, Wis.
Luehning, Rachel E., to St. Paul, Riverside, Calif.
Mashke, Marla, to Good Shepherd, Benton Harbor, Mich.
Mielke, Timothy, to St. John, Burlington, Wis.
Moll, Philip R., to Michigan LHS, Saint Joseph, Mich.
Monroe, Scott D., to St. John, Baraboo, Wis.
Natwick, Karin, to Apostles, San Jose, Calif.
Nelson, Debra D., to Redeemer, Rice Lake, Wis.
Nolte, Kenneth R., to Grace, Saint Joseph, Mich.
Ollendorf, Nancy M., to First German, Manitowoc, Wis.
Paul, Terry L., St. Peter, Schofield, Wis.
Reckzin, Lisa M., to Centennial, Milwaukee

Retzlaff, Jennifer L., to Mt. Olive, Appleton, Wis.
Richmond, Carol A., to Mt. Olive, Appleton, Wis.
Rust, Anne K., to St. Paul, Livonia, Mich.
Schallert, Kelley M., to St. John, Barre Mills-La Crosse, Wis.
Schossow, Julie A., to St. John's Preschool, Pardeeville, Wis.
Schupmann, Melissa M., to Calvary, Thiensville, Wis.
Schwartz, Nancy E., to St. Paul, Livonia, Mich.
Snyder, David A., to Grace, Saint Joseph, Mich.
Stellick, Diane A., to Crete, Crete, Ill.
Stellick, Karin R., to St. Luke Early Childhood, Saginaw, Mich.
Thoma, Judi M., to St. Peter, Weyauwega, Wis.
Trier, Sharon K., to St. Paul, Moline, Ill.
Vannieuwenhoven, Amy, to St. Paul, New Ulm, Minn.
Weber, Bridget K., to Trinity, Waukesha, Wis.
Wentker, Margaret R., to East Twin, Mishicot, Wis.
Zanto, Stephen P., to Michigan LHS, Saint Joseph, Mich.

Staff ministers

Staab, William E., to Good Shepherd, Burnsville, Minn.

ANNIVERSARIES

Lake Mills, Wis.—St. Paul Lutheran School (100). Sept. 17 & Oct. 29. Services at St. Paul Church, 8 & 10:30 AM. Dec. 17. Children's anniversary Christmas service, 1:30 PM, Lakeside LHS. May 6, 2001. Services at St. Paul Church, 8 and 10:30 AM. Noon meal and program to follow. <thappel@globaldialog.com>.
Medford, Wis.—Immanuel (125). Sept. 24. Worship with communion, 8 & 10:30 AM. Dinner to follow. Jeff Mahnke, <mahnkejeffrey@hotmail.com>.

COMING EVENTS

Martin Luther College Auxiliary—annual meeting Oct. 11 at MLC, New Ulm, Minn. All WELS/ELS women invited. 507/354-8221
WELS Lutherans for Life banquet—Third annual. Waukesha, Wis., chapter. Sept. 17, 1-5 PM. Kathy Gates, 262/513-9590.
Michigan Lutheran Seminary Guild annual meeting—in MLS chapel. Sept. 17, 3 PM. Registration, 2:30 pm. <Gailerin@aol.com>.
Third annual Run for the Prize 5K Run and Walk—Oct. 21. 10 AM. Sponsored by Immanuel, Findlay, Ohio. Dave Braun, 800/688-8151 ext. 210.
Symposium—Oct. 30-31. Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon. Theme: "Forward in Christ at the Dawn of a New Millennium." Price: \$50. Elaine, 262/242-8100, <lindlife@wls.wls.net>.
Lutheran choral festivals—West regional at Great Plains LHS, Watertown, S.D. Pops concert, Nov. 10, 7:30 PM. Sacred concert, Nov. 12, 2 PM. East regional at Kettle Moraine LHS, Jackson, Wis. Pops concert, Nov. 17, 7 PM. Sacred concert, Nov. 19, 2 PM. Jim Grasby, <jgrasby@kml.k12.wi.us>.
WELS Christian couples' retreat—Feb. 2001. Details pending. Pam See, 262/691-1989.
Spiritual Renewal Weekend for Women—March 30-April 1, 2001. Radisson Hotel, Rochester, Minn. Bev, 507/931-1866 (AM only).
Alaskan tour—sponsored by Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Service. July or August 2001. Fred Matzke, 414/353-5005.

AVAILABLE

Organ—1970s vintage Kimball, two registers. Needs some repair. Sound fades in and out with static. <yanke@bnet.org>. Free for cost of shipping.
Organ—suitable for smaller church, school, or home. Includes rhythm package. Juanita Harder, 920/766-1851.
Organ—French provincial-style Hammond Model M-103. Percussion with reverb with drawbars and tone generator. Ideal for small church or classroom. Ann Jansen, 608-783-4793.
Scoreboard—1973 Datronics. 8x4 feet. Runs on 110 volts. Works well. Free for cost of shipping or may be picked up. <revadams@execpc.com>.
Books—*John, Life and Letters*. Written by William Dallmann, published by Concordia. Hardcover Kretzmann Commentaries (green). Laurie, 978/657-4042.

NEEDED

Preachers—now through November 2000. Cross of Christ, Liverpool, N.Y. Furnished parsonage and stipend available. Congregation is without a pastor. Don Barg, <toodes@aol.com>.
Timpani drums—26' and 29' for newly-formed brass ensemble. Elaine Stindt, 763/755-8597.
Religious books—for bookmobile project. Emmanuel, Las Cruces, N.M.; 505/382-0220; <bookmobile@zianet.com>.
Altar paraments—used or new. For two mission congregations in Colombia, South America. Chris Cordes, <capacitacol@home.com>.
Pen pals—for prisoners. You will receive a kit containing a name of a prisoner, stationery, and suggestions of what to write and what not to write. All letters go through a PO Box in Minn. Must be high school senior or older. Harold Runke, c/o WELS Special Ministries, PO Box 452, New Ulm MN 56073; 507/354-1784.

SERVICE TIMES

Wausau, Wis.—Salem. After Sept. 3, Sunday services at 7:30 and 10 AM. Sunday school and Bible class, 8:45 AM. Roy Hoenecke, 715/845-2822.
Milwaukee, Wis.—Grace. Sunday services, 8, 9:30, & 11 AM. Bible classes, 9:30 & 11 AM. Sunday school, 9:15 AM. Fellowship time, 9-9:30, 10:30-11 AM.
Yuma, Ariz.—Winter visitors coming to Prince of Peace, 2500 S 8 Ave. December-March, Sunday worship at 8:15 and 10:45 AM. April-November, Sunday worship at 9 AM. Alan Gumm, 520/726-8716.
Smyrna, Tenn.—Abiding Faith. Sunday service, 10:30 AM. Bible class & Sunday school, 9:15 AM. Mark Kaesmeyer, 615/220-9528.
Bella Vista, Ark.—Beautiful Savior. Now meets at the Wesleyan church, 107 Trafalgar Rd. Sunday service, 8 AM. 501/876-2155.

NAMES WANTED

Myrtle Beach, S.C.—Amazing Grace. James Schumann, 843/236-5674.
Bella Vista, Ark.—Beautiful Savior. Russel Kobs, 501/876-2155.
LaPorte/Michigan City/Chesterton/Porter, Ind.—Beautiful Savior. Don Schultz, 219/874-2465.

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

Standing firm in the Lord

Even faithful members need our prayers and encouragement.

Paul E. Zell

She is at church for every service and is a dedicated Sunday school teacher. He reads his Bible every evening and appreciates the grace of Christ so much that he cannot help but talk to his friends about Christ.

Some people stand firm on the foundation of Jesus and his promises. How do we respond to such gifts to the church besides thanking God for them?

Read 1 Thessalonians 3:10–4:12: “. . . It is God’s will that you should be sanctified. . . .”

Pray for them

The saints in Thessalonica were producing the fruits of the Holy Spirit. Young Timothy had just visited that congregation. When he returned to Paul and Silas at Athens, he “brought good news about [their] faith and love” (1 Thessalonians 3:6). Paul and his missionary partners could not thank God enough. They also prayed for the Thessalonians. “Night and day,” Paul wrote, “we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith” (v. 10).

It’s not that these brothers and sisters relied on a false teaching or a false god. These believers were “standing firm in the Lord” (v. 8) despite intense persecution from Christ’s enemies. Just as for you and me, though, there was plenty of room for the Thessalonians

to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior” (2 Peter 3:18).

Notice what Paul requested of the Lord for the people:

- Good instruction—and who better to provide it than Christ’s apostle himself, if the heavenly Father were willing to make that happen.
- An increase in their love—not just for the Lord but “for each other and for everyone else” (v. 12).
- Hearts made stronger—confident that for Jesus’ sake they would be “blameless and holy” on the day “when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones” (v. 13).

The blessings of Christian faith, love, and hope are poured generously into the lives of some of your acquaintances, are they not? Yet none has reached his limit or exhausted his quota. Pray for them as Paul did for the Thessalonians. Do so regularly and persistently.

Warn and encourage them

Thessalonica was a dangerous place. Extramarital sex was considered normal in that society just as it

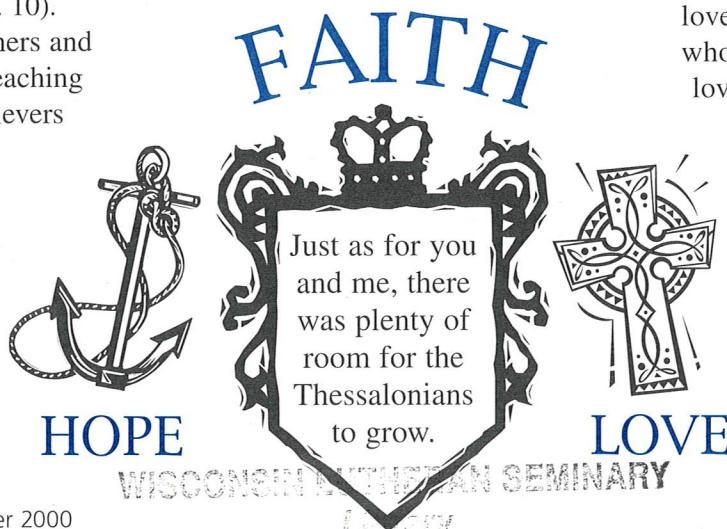
is in ours, and temptations to live “in passionate lust like the heathen” (4:5) were commonplace. Rather than looking the other way, the apostle warned his brothers and sisters: “The Lord will punish men for all such sins” (v. 6). He even specified that his warnings dare not be diminished as if they were manmade rules. “He who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit” (v. 8).

Out of love for souls, we may need to speak against specific sins, warning sinners with the authority of Holy Scripture itself. We will admonish our children, our parents, and our fellow church members, including those who apparently “live in order to please God” (4:1). We will also remind one another of our divine calling “to live a holy life” (v. 7), thus “win[ning] the respect of outsiders” (v. 12) and bringing glory to our Lord.

This is not being “holier than thou.” It is encouraging those who have been justified by Jesus’ blood also to be sanctified by the working of the Holy Spirit. So let us love one another, including those who are standing firm in faith, love, and hope!

Paul Zell is pastor at Messiah, Alpharetta, Georgia.

For further study:
Read The People’s Bible:
Thessalonians (p. 35-45).





Inter-Act

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

Introduction

The business world believes in redemption. Get a card stamped the appropriate number of times and you can redeem it for a free video rental or a free meal.

The sports world believes in redemption. A player who has made a mistake on the field or the court is encouraged to do something to redeem himself.

What do the world's beliefs about redemption have in common?

The Christian world also believes in redemption—but in a far greater and a far different sense.

I. Text

Read Colossians 1:12-14.

"... joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. ¹³For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, ¹⁴in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

II. Questions

1. What reasons do the Colossians have for joyfully giving thanks to the Father?
2. How does Paul make it clear that the Colossians had not qualified themselves by their good works to share in the inheritance? How does the word "inheritance" confirm this? How do people become "saints" (1 Corinthians 1:2, 6:11)?
3. What things does "light" symbolize in Scripture (Matthew 5:14, 2 Corinthians 4:6, 1 John 2:10, 1 Timothy 6:16, John 1:4)? What is the significance of receiving an inheritance in the kingdom of light?
4. From what has the Father rescued us? Why is it referred to as a dominion of darkness (Acts 26:18)?
5. Into what has the Father brought us? To what does this refer (2 Peter 1:11)? What is the significance of Paul saying that the Father has already brought us into this kingdom?
6. In ancient times, slaves were freed by payment of a ransom. What was the ransom price that needed to be paid so that we might be delivered from slavery to sin (Ephesians 1:7)? What do we now have because Christ redeemed us? What is the meaning of Christ's redemption in our daily lives (Titus 2:14)?

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

III. Applications

1. For what reasons will you joyfully give thanks to the Father today?
2. Have you been, or do you expect to be, the recipient of an earthly inheritance? In what ways does it differ from the inheritance we have from our Father in heaven?
3. Agree/disagree: It is proper to refer to certain people as saints.
4. What is the significance of many churches having candles, special windows bringing light to the chancel area, and stained glass windows allowing light to shine into the sanctuary?
5. In the words of our text, what reveals that those who are looking for a visible kingdom of Christ here on earth are misguided?
6. If a loved one was being held for ransom, how much would you pay for that person's release? How does that compare with what God paid for our release?
7. What specific things will you do today to show that you are redeemed? How can you become more eager to do these things?
8. We have now studied three "ion" (state of being) words: creation, election, and redemption. What is the significance of the order in which we have studied these words? What comfort do you find in each "state of being"?

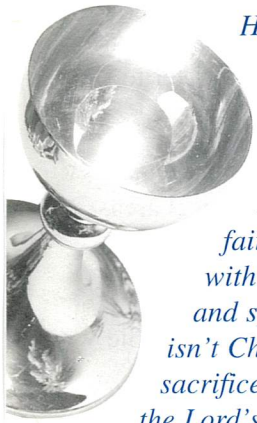
IV. Prayer

Thank you, Father. You have redeemed me with the precious blood of Jesus, my Savior. You have forgiven all my sins because of Christ's death on the cross. You rescued me from the darkness of sin and the power of Satan. You have comforted me with the certainty that I am already in the kingdom of your beloved Son. You have told me that I possess an eternal inheritance and will someday join all the saints in the kingdom of light. Fill me with eagerness to do only what is good in your sight. May my striving after holiness, my seeking always to speak the truth, and my life of sacrificial love reveal that I am a citizen of the kingdom of light. Hear me for the sake of your Son, my Redeemer. Amen.

Next month in our study of "ion" words: justification.

Say it again: you are forgiven

John F. Brug



How is forgiveness transmitted in the Lord's Supper? Is it directly as in baptism or indirectly by strengthening our faith? If it is connected with the words "given and shed for you," then isn't Christ repeating his sacrifice each time we receive the Lord's Supper? Why do we receive absolution at the confession of sins if we receive it in the Lord's Supper? Can we say that what we receive in the Lord's Supper is assurance of forgiveness?

The forgiveness of sins was obtained or won for us by Christ's death on the cross. The "giving and pouring out" through which forgiveness of sins was obtained for us was the giving and pouring out of Christ's lifeblood on the cross. Nothing can be, nor needs to be, added. The Lord's Supper is not a continuing sacrifice for sins. In the Lord's Supper we remember Christ's once-and-for-all payment for sin.

The forgiveness of sins was credited to us when God the Father accepted Christ's payment for sin and declared all the sins of all the world forgiven. This has traditionally been called objective or world justification.

We receive the forgiveness of sins, that is, we apply it to ourselves, when the Holy Spirit through the gospel creates faith in us so that we believe God's declaration of forgiveness. This faith does not earn forgiveness. It simply receives God's gift. This has traditionally been called subjective or personal justification.

Such faith can be created either by baptism or by the bare word of the gospel. Such faith is sustained either by the Lord's Supper or by the bare word of the gospel. It is the same gospel and the same forgiveness that we receive in every case in every form of receiving the gospel.

Forgiveness of sins is not a commodity that God doles out to us in little portions because we have performed certain acts. Complete forgiveness of sins is something a believer has all the time as long as she remains in faith. God's grace is an attitude that he has toward the believer all the time (Romans 5:1-3).

From our subjective viewpoint there is no difference between receiving forgiveness of sins and receiving assurance of forgiveness. We receive forgiveness of sins every time God declares us forgiven. It makes no difference whether we receive this declaration through the spoken Word, through the read Word, through the Word remembered, through absolution from the pastor, through baptism, or through the Lord's Supper. Because God's declaration is true and powerful, every time he declares us forgiven we are assured that we truly are forgiven. We cannot distinguish between God's forgiving us and the pastor's assuring us with the words of absolution or the words of the Lord's Supper.

God gives us forgiveness and assures us of forgiveness through the words of the pastor, just as he does through the words of the gospel in any other form.

Believing recipients of the Lord's Supper receive forgiveness through faith in the gospel that is proclaimed in the sacrament, and they receive special assurance of this forgiveness through the presence of Christ's body and blood in, with, and under the bread and wine.

Forgiveness of sins is not a commodity that God doles out to us in little portions because we have performed certain acts.

Because of our weakness the Lord forgives us and assures us of forgiveness in many ways, just as we can say "I love you" in many ways—by words, by actions, by gifts, by a touch. It is the same love in every case. The love is not there only when we are expressing it, but the expression reminds us and assures us that it is there. God's forgiveness is not there only at the moment that we are hearing it expressed, but every expression of it gives us that forgiveness and assures us of it.



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; <fic@sab.wels.net>.

Picture this



It's never too early to use your talents for the Lord. Three-year-old Kyle Cholewinski helps his family vacuum the Immanuel church sanctuary in Waukegan, Ill. Submitted by Kyle's grandmother, Carol Bandman.

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



A note from Missionary Richard Warnke, Malawi, Africa

A few days ago, my delightful and talented vicar, Daison Phiri, went to make a hospital call in a community about five miles from here. Since there is no safe place there to park his bicycle, he took the minibus. On his return, he felt the swift hand of a skilled pick-pocket slip into and out of his pants quickly. As in most countries, larger denominations of money here are paper and smaller ones coins. The thief got hold of the paper and quickly made his escape. But, alas, for the poor thief, the kwacha-size sheet was not money. It was the slip of paper on which we had written the hymn numbers, liturgy page, and Psalm number for the following Sunday.

Why didn't the thief find any money in Phiri's pocket? The vicar had put all his money between pages of his Bible for safekeeping. It worked. The thief did not steal the Bible.

Repentance

It is impossible to repent too soon, for you know not how soon it may be too late. —Log of the Good Ship Grace

[The Lord] is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief.—2 Peter 3:9,10

Love

There is only one kind of love, but there are a thousand imitations.—Francis de La Rochefoucauld

This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.—1 John 4:10,11

“I WOULD RATHER . . .”

Psalm 84:10. “I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked.”

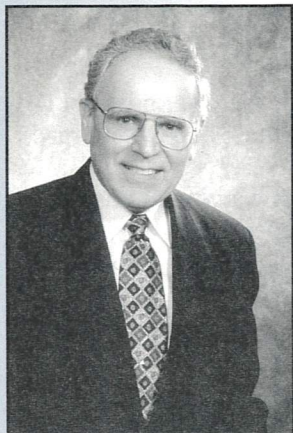
I would rather be the poorest person in the world and be a child of God than be the richest person in the world and be a child of the devil.

I would rather serve in a humble sphere than be honored by evil men.

I would rather have men laugh at me for acknowledging Jesus Christ than hear the Savior say, “I know you not” at judgment day.

I would rather die for a good cause than live for a bad one.

I would rather be considered out-of-date than be out of harmony with God and his unchanging Word.



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

True life,
the full life
in Christ,
makes us all
winners, all
survivors.

Survivors all

“Don’t worry about me. I’m a fighter, a survivor.” So says the breast cancer victim passing between surgery and extensive chemo- and radiation therapy. You believe her—not because of her bravado but because of her faith in our Savior.

My father was a survivor too. A severe heart attack at age 43 and surgery on an aneurysm several years later were the big hurdles. He always bounced back. He always kept his faith in Jesus.

Now we are forced to take a new look at what it takes to be a survivor. You put 16 people on an island and subject them to a series of tests. You film it all and let the whole world look in on TV. We ask, “Who will survive?”

Sounds very much like life itself, doesn’t it? Have you ever felt as if you were on an island and tested repeatedly? Have you wondered whether the struggle is worth it? You hold on. You survive. At times, however, you begin to think that the whole world knows your plight and finds it—finds you—strangely entertaining.

It’s like that in a sin-ravaged world.

In the TV *Survivor* series, there is one particularly unsettling twist. Each week the group decides who will survive another week. They vote someone off the island. “You don’t survive!” they declare.

How cruel! How arbitrary! How true to life! You may ask, “Who are we to decide who survives and who doesn’t?” But we don’t need TV to teach us the game. We do it every day in our society. We decide which babies will live or die. We’re working on the other end now—deciding who of those who escaped the first decision will die later in life.

We play the game also in more subtle ways. Who decides who will survive in our playgrounds, our city streets, our workplaces? In how many ways have we learned to say to others, “You don’t belong. You’re out of here?”

For whatever else you feel about the TV show *Survivor*, you must admit it catches a slice of life. Human beings left to themselves will act much the same way we see the contestants act. “Contestants?” Yes, there’s a key. It’s a contest, and the last one standing on the island wins.

The last one standing wins. Is that what life is all about? It is for those who don’t know the alternative. But true life, the full life in Christ, makes us all winners, all survivors.

Some may find it strange that I called my father a survivor since he died at the relatively young age of 64. And the breast cancer survivor: does she have 10 more years, 20, 30, 50? Will we then say she is a survivor? Does anyone truly survive?

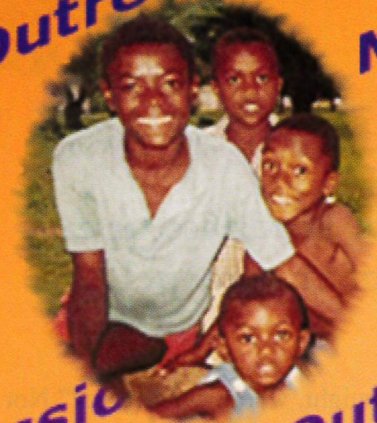
Yes!

How long you stay on the island does not ultimately determine your survival. What happens when you leave the island does. At some point we all leave. One man, born of a virgin, the only Son of God, already survived death itself and guaranteed survival for all who trust in him—his life, his death, and his resurrection sealing the victory. Now, because he lives we live. All who trust in him survive.

And our burden is not to decide whom we will exclude but to find how many we can include.

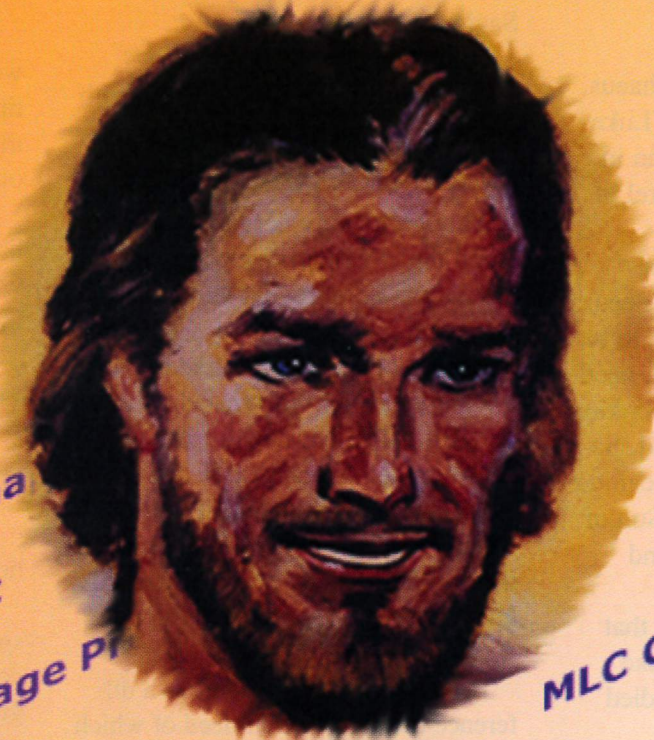
Gary P. Baumler

Outreach Missions Outreach Missions Outreach



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Forward in Christ



Outreach Missions Outreach Missions Outreach Missions Outreach MLC Chapel MLC Chapel MLC Chapel WLS Heritage Project WLS Heritage Project WLS Heritage Project

Thank Offering



**Give thanks to the Lord,
for he is good;
his love endures forever.
(1 Chronicles 16:34)**



Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod Ministry of Planned Giving
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A place to start

Sometimes a little human kindness opens the door to the sharing of the gospel.

Mark A. Paustian

They don't know if there's a heaven. They're a little fuzzy on the subject of God. They do not want to be a notch on some evangelist's belt. But . . . everyone wants to be loved.

Zacchaeus's eternal needs

What did Jesus see in Zacchaeus, the unbelieving tax collector (Luke 19:1-10)? A pathetic small man in the crook of a tree? A scoundrel in a nice pair of shoes? What?

I suppose what he saw was need—raw, desperate, eternal need. A dead-man-walking, needing to be made alive. A hell-bound soul, needing to be rescued. A billion-of-a-kind sinner needing to be absolved. So much need hanging from a sycamore tree—the need that drew the Son of God from eternity into time and toward a tree of his own.

Was Zacchaeus aware of all that need? Probably not. Did he wake up that morning and say, "If I died

tonight, where would I be?" Not likely. For many, such matters are hidden below the waterline of conscious thought. The stuff of dreams . . . bad ones. No, he may not have understood the need that brought the Savior to his town.

And yet . . .

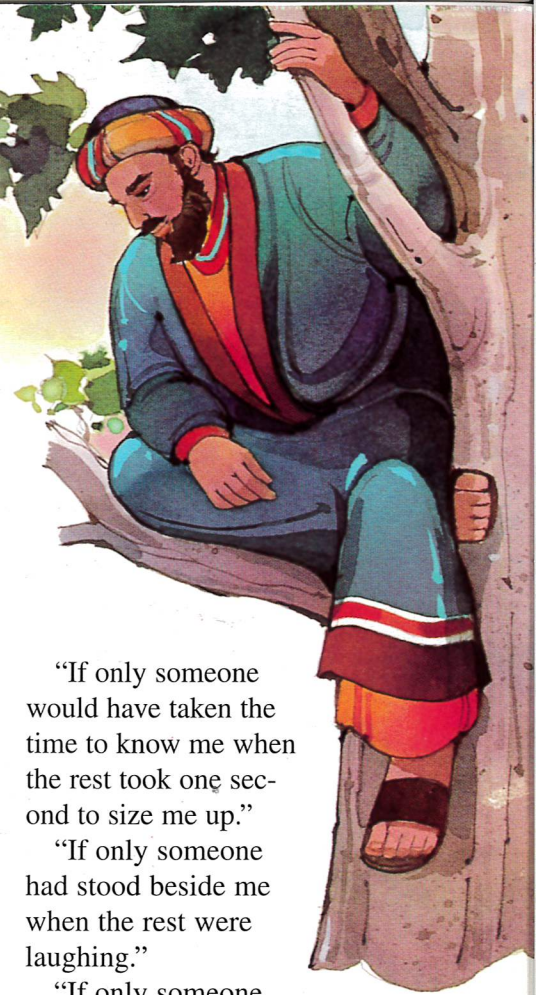
Something made Zacchaeus climb that tree so that he could see Jesus.

Zacchaeus's felt needs

Though he may not have understood the external issues swirling around his booth, what he did know was what it's like to grow up small in a tall world, what it's like to carry the put-down part of him wherever he went. After all, why a tax collector? Was being despised better than being no one at all? And if you don't have love, you can at least have some nice things? At any rate, he certainly knew what it was like to be *persona non grata* in the temple of God.

Let's think about it. There is a difference between eternal need of which a person may be only dimly aware, and something they call "felt need."

What is "felt need"? It's what a man or woman would tell you if they believed you when you asked, "How are you?" It's the main subject of the monologue going on in a person's heart. It's the end of the sentence that starts with, "If only . . ."



"If only someone would have taken the time to know me when the rest took one second to size me up."

"If only someone had stood beside me when the rest were laughing."

"If only someone came after me when I walked wounded away."

What is "felt need"?

It's a place to start.

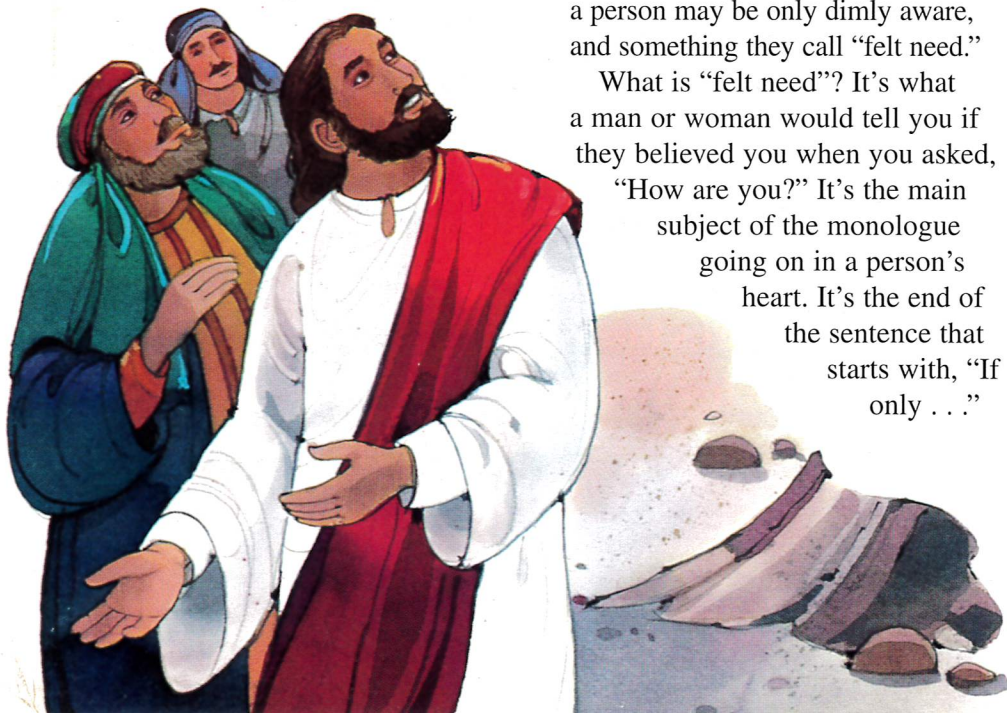
"Zacchaeus, I must stay at your house today."

"You think no one would want to spend time with you? I would. You're convinced no one notices you? Well guess what? I do."

Put yourself in the little shoes of Zacchaeus, watching Jesus over the heads of the suffocating crowd. See the one everyone wants to get close to, wanting to get close to you. Tonight, your house will be a temple. Soon, your Lord will ascend a tree.

And a little human kindness on the part of the Son of God was the key that fit the lock.

Now what does Jesus see? The IRS agent is smiling . . . giving everything . . . confessing all. A newly enlarged man is squeezing through the eye of a needle. Something long lost is suddenly, finally found.



Mark Paustian is pastor at New Life, Rockford, Illinois.

