

FORWARD IN CHRIST

October 2000

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“BACH” TO THE FUTURE

Most Lutherans and Catholics Agree?

Catholic Church and Lutheran Federation Sign Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification

On October 31, 1999, in Augsburg, Germany, the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation took a huge step toward bridging the nearly five hundred-year divide between them. For years these two church bodies have been divided on the central article of faith, justification by faith alone. The document hasn't brought a full agreement in doctrine or practice, but it speaks of a "convergence" in doctrine.

This is how it is recorded in the declaration's preamble #5:

The present Joint Declaration has this intention: namely, to show that on the basis of their dialogue the subscribing Lutheran churches and the Roman Catholic Church . . . are now able to articulate a common understanding of our justification by God's grace through faith in Christ. It does not cover all that either church teaches about justification; it does encompass a consensus on basic truths of the doctrine of justification and shows that the remaining differences in its explication are no longer the occasion for doctrinal condemnations.

What do we believe where this issue is concerned? What do we as Lutherans confess? In a nutshell, to be justified means that God sees (or regards) us as righteous in his eyes. Justification offers believers in Jesus assurance that they will spend eternal life in heaven.

Essentially, there are two aspects of justification, objective and subjective. Objective justification is the teaching of Scripture that when Christ died, he

really did take away all the sin of the world, and that when he rose from the dead, God declared all sinners to be justified, or forgiven, of all their sins. Objective justification holds true whether anyone believes or not. Subjective justification is the act of God using his power, by his grace, to bring faith to our hearts to receive forgiveness of sins.

Faith is the only way we receive justification from God. Our faith itself doesn't make us righteous, but it simply receives God's verdict of righteousness through his Son. Our faith in the message of the gospel allows us to receive this justification.

Rolf Preus, in a recent study on justification, examines why justification is such a dividing issue among churches. He makes clear the differences between what Lutherans and Catholics believe. He explains that Rome has not changed its teaching on justification but that the two church bodies have decided to agree on the words used and that they continue to assign different meanings to those same words. That is why each side could in good faith sign the Declaration, because each was only agreeing on a statement and not on the teaching of justification.

Are you interested in reading more about this subject and the issues surrounding it? Would you like to have an easy resource to refer to when defending your beliefs about justification to your Catholic friends and relatives? Or perhaps you haven't examined confessional Lutheran beliefs since your catechism instruction classes, and you want to review

how you are "good enough" in God's eyes to be justified? If you answered yes to any of these questions, then check out *Justification: Am I Good Enough for God?* This 32-page booklet, written in an easy-to-read, easy-to-understand style, is available from Northwestern Publishing House today.

Justification

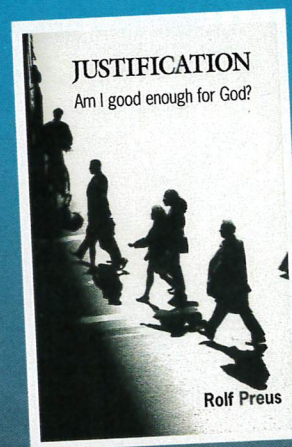
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Those over you in the Lord

Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. 1 Thessalonians 5:12,13

Thomas A. Westra

The pastor was giving the closing blessing: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the . . . and the, uh, . . ." He had a major memory block. Finally, he blurted out, "and the friendship of the Holy Spirit be with you all."

As he walked down the aisle, he was disappointed in himself for closing the service on such an awkward note. But, he consoled himself thinking, "How great is our God that he works all things together for the good of his people, even the foibles of this jar of clay."

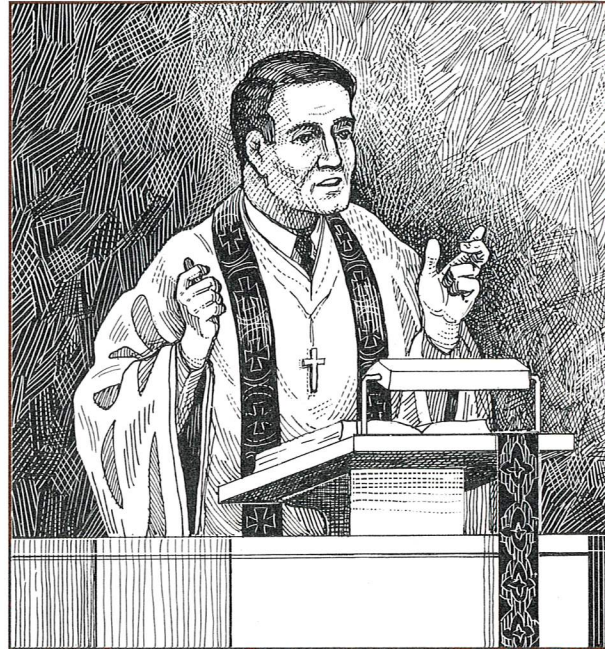
But at the door, a member with a scowl on his face poked his finger in the pastor's chest and said, "You've got all week to practice to get things right for just one hour of work, and still you mess it up!"

What does the pastor do?

The parishioner's unkind comment raises a question. What does the pastor do?

He preaches, proclaiming timeless truths to people who sometimes would rather hear the latest news. He often spends an hour in preparation for every minute in the pulpit. He teaches two to five Bible classes a week. He uses the scalpel of God's law to expose sin and the precious medicine of God's love to heal sin-sick souls.

He prays. He speaks with the heavenly Father about each of the



members, sharing his concerns and his thanks for them.

He leads worship. He does not entertain, but he focuses attention on God, helping people to hear and speak to their Lord, and to speak to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.

He is often a manager, administrator, editor, correspondent, and official record keeper. He seeks to win the lost, regain the straying, visit the sick, and counsel the troubled. He readies people for confirmation, adulthood, parenthood, and old age. Ultimately, he readies them to go home.

He is a shepherd. The apostle Peter writes, "Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care" (1 Peter 5:2).

How can you help him?

But he needs your help and support. The apostle Paul encourages us to respect pastors and "to hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work" (1 Thessalonians 5:12,13).

What are some practical ways you can show support and love to your pastor and his family?

Make sure that his salary is adequate and reflects the high regard you have for the work he does. Encourage him to take time off to be with his family. Offer to pay for his continuing education so that he can sharp-

en his skills. Encourage him to give his time to the ministry of teaching the Word and to his own personal prayer and devotional life, rather than being overburdened with administrative tasks that others could be doing.

Pray for him and his family. Let him know when his work has been especially meaningful to you. Work alongside him in the ministry God has given your congregation.

If you do these things, his work will be a joy, and God will bless you through him.



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

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Editorial office

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

FAX, 414/256-3899

<fic@sab.wels.net>

Editor

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

<garyb@sab.wels.net>

Senior Communications Assistant

Julie K. Tessmer, 414/256-3231

<juliet@sab.wels.net>

Communications Assistant

Nicole R. Moline, 414/256-3232

<nicolem@sab.wels.net>

Seminary Consultant

R. D. Balge

Contributing Editors

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

Art Director

Paul Burmeister

Graphic Designer

Carianne Neu

Photographs and Illustrations

John Boettcher, p. 3; Frank Ordaz, p. 8; Gary Baumler, p. 10; Mrs. Kevin Scheibel Photography, p. 12; Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary archives & Milwaukee Sentinel, p. 14; courtesy of Virginia Hemmrich, p. 16; WEATHERSTOCK, p. 18; Bill Frauhiger/Billustrations, p. 36

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Cover photo by Frank Ordaz

Bach's music still affects musicians and Lutherans.

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bits & pieces



Many articles this month focus on important people and events from long ago that enhanced or affected who we are today.

- Two articles focus on Martin Luther and his important written contributions to Lutheranism. Theodore Hartwig shares the "wonderful" of Luther's hymns (p. 20), and President Karl Gurgel begins a series of articles on the six chief parts of Luther's Small Catechism (p. 31).

- All musicians know and appreciate the music of Johann Sebastian Bach. But we should also remember how he used his music to strengthen people's faith and to glorify God. Read more about Bach's life and legacy (p. 8).

- Mark Braun continues his look back through the decades by examining the split of WELS and the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (p. 14).

- Go back in time with a son who remembers the lessons he learned from his momma during a hurricane (p. 18).

- The Home Missions Conference only happened this past summer, but it has potential to have great impact for the future. Check out "Mobilizing missions for millennium three" (p. 10).



Kenn Kremer ends his two-part series on family devotions with a question—how can your family worship at home (p. 12)?



WELS doesn't have missionaries in Peru, but our sister synod, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, does. Ted Gullixson, editor of *Lutheran Sentinel*, relates how the missionaries and the people of Peru are sharing the gospel (p. 22).

—JKT

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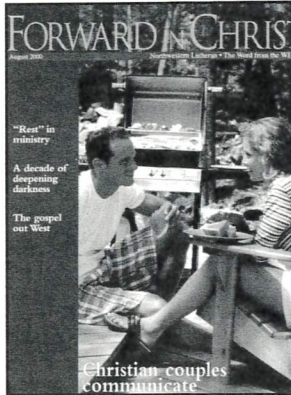
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I fear I'm phobic



I have just read "Two halves of a complementary whole" [Aug.]. This article is riddled with banal generalities presented as absolutes,

all of which I could readily find several exceptions to just among my family and friends. Her introductory paragraphs quickly degenerated into a shopping list of stated comparisons that bear no resemblance to anyone I know. The sidebar "Advantages Christian couples have in gender communication" should have been this writer's theme, not "he does this; she does that."

Janet Schultz

St. Peter, Minnesota

I am responding to the article on the chapel at Martin Luther College [Aug.]. I'm sure that

President Olsen would not deliberately seek to offend. However, in the article there were a couple of troubling quotes from him: "If you're going to use the church that you worship in on Sunday morning for anything and everything under the sun, how do you know when you're in church or when you're doing something else?" "That particular room is being used from 7:30 am to midnight every day. When we use it for that variety of purposes, it loses respect as a chapel."

That is exactly what most of our mission churches do, at least those built in the era of WEF units (worship, education, fellowship), like the one that I served for almost 10 years.

This may not be ideal. But as I stood before those Christians every Sunday, I never felt that they looked upon their worship or their worship place with any less respect. To them it

was God's house and his presence was among them, though they might be worshipping one hour and in the next having a potluck in the same place.

I don't know whether the proposed chapel is something that is necessary or not. If the Lord wills that it be built, to him be the glory. The argument that the current facility is not fit for worship, however, holds no water with me. Where two or three gather together in my name, there am I with them.

Philip Pitt

Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin

In "Making Sunday Schools Stronger" [July], one of the things mentioned is developing more materials. Jerry Kastens is quoted as saying "Christ-Light was written with Sunday school teachers in mind."

While making things convenient for our teachers is a thoughtful thing to do, it seems to me that if stronger Sunday schools are the goal, then the materials should be prepared with the CHILDREN in mind.

Alice Schultz

Bellevue, Washington

Owen Dorn, youth curriculum editor at Northwestern Publishing House, responds:

Jerry Kastens' statement that "Christ-Light was written with Sunday school teachers in mind" means that the Christ-Light team was sensitive to the needs of teachers who have little training in Scripture and pedagogy. The primary goal of Christ-Light is to clearly teach the truths of God's Word to children, and the secondary goal is to apply that truth to their daily lives.

"It's not easy being short" [June] says that "We cannot ignore the present vacancy situation." Then there is a list of what we can do in the short term to deal with vacancies.

I do agree with your suggestions. However, I have a suggestion that would expand on your idea of encouraging men nearing retirement

to remain in the ministry a year or two if they are able. It seems that it is a growing trend in WELS that pastors in their 50s and 60s receive the fewest amount of calls.

Shortages occur in the ministry because a man either resigns or retires or is called home to the Lord. I feel we could slow the number of men retiring if we would give them a chance to invigorate their ministries with a new call.

Steve Krause

Tomah, Wisconsin

THROUGH MY BIBLE IN 3 YEARS

November 2000

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. 2 Chronicles 25 | 17. Ecc. 4:9-6:12 |
| 2. 2 Chron. 26-28 | 18. Ecc. 7, 8 |
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| 5. 2 Chron. 33 | 21. Ecc. 11:9-12:14 |
| 6. 2 Chron. 34, 35 | 22. Song of Solomon 1:1-2:7 |
| 7. 2 Chron. 36 | 23. Sg. Sol. 2:8-3:5 |
| 8. Esther 1 | 24. Sg. Sol. 3:6-5:1 |
| 9. Es. 2:1-18 | 25. Sg. Sol. 5:2-6:3 |
| 10. Es. 2:19-3:15 | 26. Sg. Sol. 6:4-8:4 |
| 11. Es. 4 | 27. Sg. Sol. 8:5-14 |
| 12. Es. 5, 6 | 28. 2 Peter 1:1-11 |
| 13. Es. 7, 8 | 29. 2 Pet. 1:12-21 |
| 14. Es. 9, 10 | 30. 2 Pet. 2 |
| 15. Ecclesiastes 1, 2 | |
| 16. Ecc. 3:1-4:8 | |

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Bobo-watching

Kenneth A. Cherney Jr.

You survived the Hippies. You endured the Yuppies (Young Urban Professionals). You learned about the Dinks (Double Income, No Kids). Are you ready for the Bobos?

“Bobos” stands for “Bourgeoisie Bohemians,” the latest entry on the lengthening list of group labels. The Bobos are the new urban elite. They inhabit the art districts, university communities, and restored downtowns of America’s cities—what David Brooks calls “latte towns.”

Bobos are enthusiastic consumers—that’s the “bourgeoisie” part. But in their personal lives, they enjoy flouting everything their grandparents held dear—that’s the “bohemian” part. Their sexual morals tend to be highly flexible. Many are uninterested in marriage or raising children. Predictably, on weekends, worshiping God is the last thing on their minds.

A lot about the Bobo phenomenon is disturbing, but not much is new—except perhaps for one thing. Recently, one Bobo-watcher pointed out that there have always been wealthy people in America. But in the past, our elite knew they were elite and admitted it. They also admitted, however grudgingly, that positions of privilege came with certain obligations, like the obligation to uphold society’s standards or to help those less fortunate.

Today’s Bobos are different. No matter how much money they earn, no matter how fancy their lifestyle, they refuse to see themselves as privileged. Their arguments are ones you’ve heard: “How can you say I’m wealthy when I’ve got loans to repay? How can you say I’m privileged when there are still things I want and don’t have? And what business is it of yours, anyway?”

The last one is the real issue. Bobos tend to feel little obligation to anybody

but themselves and a select group of peers. Their highest “aspiration is for life to resemble an extended hobby or an unending graduate school” (George Will). They scorn the notion that what a person does with his life could possibly be anybody’s business but his own.

Maybe you think this business of labeling people as Yuppies, Dinks, or Bobos is a little unfair, or even a little silly. If so, I agree with you. It would certainly be unfair to label someone a Bobo just because he or she lives in the city or has a good income. The term isn’t a brush for us to tar people with; it identifies a trend of which we should be aware.

Is there a lesson for the Church in the Bobo phenomenon? Just this. Our culture has been called “post-Christian.” The emergence of the Bobos is one more reason why. More and more, the opinion-makers in our society are people for whom the gospel is a foreign language. God’s law is a dim voice from the past that you can outrun by frantically chasing pleasure and gain, and anyone who thinks differently is a judgmental, hate-mongering bigot.

Don’t be surprised when this is what you hear when you tune in to today’s popular culture. And when you share what you believe with a Bobo, or pretty much anybody else, be ready to start at the beginning.

Ken Cherney is a professor at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota.

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THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF A LUTHERAN FROM LEIPZIG

Bach, committed to using music to proclaim and explain the Scriptures, focused on good theology, not good feelings.

James P. Tiefel

He probably knew the end was near. Johann Bach was 65 and almost blind. He had poured over music scores for too many years. Toward the end, his son-in-law wrote down the notes as the old man dictated. Bach had hoped a traveling eye surgeon might be able to help, but the surgeon failed twice.

Bach was preparing a set of organ preludes for publication and all at once decided to append an organ setting of a familiar hymn tune, "When In the Hour of Utmost Need." Considering his last days, a prelude based on that hymn would have been a fitting signature. But at the last minute he substituted the title of a lesser-known hymn that was also attached to the tune, "Before Your Throne I Now Appear."

He received private communion at his home on July 22. Then came a massive stroke and death. The obituary stated simply, "Herr Johann Sebastian Bach, quietly and peace-

fully, by the merit of his Redeemer, departed this life on July 28." The year was 1750.

Two hundred fifty years have passed since Bach's death, and all year Bach lovers around the world have been playing and listening to the music he composed. There is plenty of it. The official listing of Bach's compositions extends past a thousand titles and includes music for solo violin, cello, and flute, as well as for orchestra; for harpsichord, clavier (piano), and organ; for solo voices and choir.

From the perspective of experts, most of the music is outstanding. Serious musicians in every generation since Bach—including rock musicians—have found the basis for their craft in the manuscripts of Johann Sebastian Bach. One hundred years after Bach's death, the composer Robert Schumann wrote, "Music owes almost as great a debt to [Bach] as religion does to God."



The Lutheran

Schumann's praise would have embarrassed Bach. In his own words, J. S. Bach desired nothing more than to prepare and perform "a regulated church music to the glory of God."

The church in which he sought to achieve that goal was the confessional Lutheran Church, and the force he wanted to "regulate" his music was the Lutheran liturgy—the Scripture readings and Lutheran hymns chosen for Sundays and festivals of the Christian church year. For Bach,

liturgy was the law of church music because liturgy confessed the gospel.

Bach was born on March 21, 1685, in Eisenach. After attending some of the best schools in northern Europe, he gained his first position as organist at St. Boniface Church in Arnstad in 1703. Over the next 20 years, he moved from Arnstad to Weimar, Mühlhausen, Cöthen, and Leipzig, always in pursuit of a church where he could work on the “regulated church music” he wanted to produce.

As Bach began his career, the Lutheran Church in Germany was deeply troubled. The Enlightenment had arrived in Western Europe, and there was an anti-authority wind in the air. The same philosophy that inspired American and French revolutionaries to throw off the rule of their kings was leading Germany’s Lutherans to discard the theology of the Reformation.

Many “enlightened” Lutherans found the Bible’s teachings confining. They felt the same about the liturgy and hymns that confessed those teachings. The people had thoughts and feelings of their own and wanted to explore them without the interference of Bible-loving pastors and Bible-based worship.

Leipzig, located near Luther’s Wittenberg, was one of a handful of cities in Germany that had rejected the new philosophy of the Enlightenment. When Bach arrived in the city in 1723, Leipzig was considered one of the “stoutest strongholds of Lutheran orthodoxy.” This was exactly what Bach was looking for. He was officially installed at St. Thomas Church, but was actually director of music for four flourishing congregations. He selected or composed music for weddings and funerals, for weekday services, for the afternoon and evening services on Sundays, and for the four-hour

Hauptgottesdienst (main service) on Sunday mornings. In the main service, he directed the choir and orchestra from the organ bench.

The evangelist

About a hundred years ago, a Swedish archbishop called Bach “the fifth evangelist.” Bach was not inspired in the way that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were, but his music certainly carries the God-breathed words of the Old and New Testaments.

Serious musicians in every generation since Bach have found the basis for their craft in the manuscripts of Johann Sebastian Bach.

His primary objective was not to set beautiful poetry to music but to use beautiful music to proclaim and explain the Scriptures. Bach knew the Scriptures well. At the time of his death, his library contained 52 titles by orthodox Lutheran authors, and his personal Bible commentary (now in the library of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo.) contains many marginal notes in his handwriting.

Experts consider Bach a musical genius, but in his own mind his genius was a servant of the gospel. His music had no other purpose than to give glory to God and to strengthen the faith of believers. Invariably inscribed at the top of his compositions are the initials “J.J.”—*Jesu, Juva*” (Jesus, save us)—and at the end “S.D.G.—*Soli Deo Gloria* (To God alone the glory).

The legacy

Already in Bach’s day, some Lutherans in Germany considered his music to be outdated. Many

Lutherans today feel the same. At a recent concert in a WELS church, a performance of Bach’s Cantata 4, “Christ Jesus Lay in Death’s Strong Bands,” met with silence, while the contemporary gospel hymn “Worthy to Be Praised” elicited spontaneous and enthusiastic applause.

Johann Sebastian Bach has something to say to all of us, even to those who don’t enjoy the style of his music. Bach could not imagine music that wasn’t written for the glory of God. He added the “S.D.G.” initials to both his sacred and secular music and would have found it perplexing that Lutheran Christians would channel surf to MTV.

Bach wasn’t much interested in freedom of expression. He didn’t hesitate to explore new musical styles, but his priority was composing music to accompany and adorn the Word of God. Although some may find his music to be beautiful, Bach did not write music to beautify but to edify. He would have wondered why today’s Lutherans sometimes seem more interested in music that people like than in music that carries what people need, the solid teachings of the Scriptures.

Bach knew very well that many people in Germany were tired of Lutheran liturgy and Lutheran hymns, but he embraced both because he was committed to the gospel both contained. Bach would encourage this generation of Lutherans to think carefully about worship and to hold to the truth that what builds the Church numerically and spiritually is not good feelings but good theology.



James Tiefel teaches courses in worship and preaching at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin.

Mobilizing missions for millennium three

WELS home missionaries have their day and
prepare for mission outreach for years to come.

Gary P. Baumler

Preacher Robert Raasch asked the question on everyone's mind: "How am I going to do all this?" "This" was the sea of new ideas and inspirational programs along with the mountain of encouragement the men and women of Mobilizing Missions for Millennium Three (3M3) had just experienced. Most of the 700 plus at the July Forward in Christ conference in Chicago were home missionaries and their wives.

Preparing the launching pad

Now, we were in the closing worship service of what one pastor called "the greatest event I ever attended in my life." What next?

Raasch's answer struck a chord: "Peace is yours," he assured us. "You're all right with God because of Jesus. Your guilt [for not doing everything that needs doing] is paid for. God does not hold your unfaithfulness against you." He went on to remind us that now we share God's verdict with others. We forgive sins in Christ.

The message was not lost on the listeners. Why did the other pastor rank the conference so high? "It was the greatest presentation of the gospel," he explained, and then



Registration time. Over 700 home missionaries, their wives, and guests gathered at the Holiday Inn O'Hare in Chicago on July 24-27. Funded primarily by Forward in Christ thank offerings, the conference took aim at mobilizing missions for millennium three. The early enthusiasm never waned in the three days.

summed up his feelings by repeating a single word: "Forgiven! Forgiven!"

We needed to hear that, because without it, all the good ideas, the tips, the advice, and the vision for ministry into the third millennium would be without a launching pad.

So, the launching pad was readied, and the presenters brought in the supplies and charted the journey.

Gathering the supplies and setting the direction

Travel light, suggested keynote speaker Paul Kelm. Bring our theology but don't be weighed down by the institution. Be spiritual, guided by the Spirit to share Jesus with others. Be relational, ready to meet people where they are and learn about them personally. Learn their culture and background. Be flexible to seize opportunities to reach more people for Jesus.

A key to moving forward with missions for Christ is to see an important distinction between outreach and evangelism. Outreach means exactly what it says, reaching out to people. Finding them where they are or bringing them where you are. It is opening doors. Evangelism is telling the good message (evangel), the gospel, once the door is open.

Speaker after speaker, workshop after workshop helped show the way.

- Some edified the missionaries, challenging them to always keep a mission mindset, to set personal and pastoral goals, to keep a positive perspective in Christ, and to build



The conference gave the opportunity to greet old friends and to make new ones. From left, Elisabeth and Aaron Robinson meet Crystal and John Mittelstaedt. The Robinsons recently moved to Queens, New York City, N.Y., to help guide a new mission there. The Mittelstaedts' ministry is at Divine Peace, Largo, Md.

relationships that will reach the unchurched of all cultures.

- Some helped show how small mission congregations, too, can exalt the Lord in worship. Use the MIDI (“computer music”), blend contemporary and other culture with the traditional, and try a variety of preaching styles.

- Some pointed to equipping the saints: activating lay members, offering more Bible studies, developing a “whole life” approach to stewardship, bringing more people of all kinds closer to Christ.

- Some encouraged the missionary’s family. From husband/wife relationships to financial advice, from home devotions to parenting tips, from the wives developing friendships to becoming the “perfect” pastor’s wife, the family was encouraged to share in its unique opportunity for ministry.

- Some allowed the district mission board members, too, to take time to re-evaluate how they operate and how they can meet the challenges of their mission fields.

The key to success, reminded Richard Gurgel, is that God is faithful. He keeps his baptismal promise to you. He puts you where you are to serve and witness. He assures you

that his Word will fulfill his purpose. So when you serve freely and faithfully, applying the Word to yourself and bringing it to others, good things happen.

Moving forward

Maybe now you can see why Raasch asked, “How am I going to do all this?”

Here, a word directly to the missionaries and their wives is in place. Keeping in mind the love of Jesus and his forgiveness, you should know that you can’t do it all. But you can do something. Go back even now to your notes and your memories, and pick one new idea that you will try. If you are still stymied, call a missionary friend. To try to incorporate every good idea coming out of this conference is an invitation to frustration. But to do nothing is to have squandered opportunity.

Those who were there will tell you that the conference achieved what it set out to do. Words of praise have come flooding back: “most inspiring,” “uplifting,” “out-



Laypeople have an important part in mission ministry. These members from St. Andrew, Middleton, Wis., just finished a presentation on Partners in the Gospel—Missionary and Members. From left: Wayne Utke, school board director; Chad Johnstone, youth ministry team leader; Randy Hunter, pastor; Darrell Parrish, worship team leader; Paul Stiteley, former congregation president.

standing,” “exciting,” “a success.”

One missionary perhaps caught the feelings of many:

“For longer than I care to admit, I’ve been running on fumes and really stuck in a rut, and I feel that last week did a lot to get me back on track.

“What I appreciated most of all, I think, was the powerful gospel emphasis. I felt like I was just immersed in grace all week long. And, not only did I come away with lots of encouragement and ideas, but also feeling good about our synod. We surely are blessed with God’s truth and with a lot of folks who are serious about believing it and sharing it.”

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

CONFESSIONS at the family altar

Has your family considered how it can worship at home?

Kenneth J. Kremer

The Bible tells us that Abraham built altars as he moved from place to place. One at Shechem (Genesis 12:7), one at Bethel (Genesis 12:8), and one at Mamre, where he would later bury his wife, Sarah (Genesis 13:18 and 23:19). There may have been others.

In Abraham's day there were no churches, synagogues, or tabernacles. Abraham's altars served as his special places of worship. There he probably offered sacrifices, recited prayers, and recalled from memory the stories of God's love that had not yet been recorded in written form. Perhaps he reviewed the Lord's sacred covenant promise.

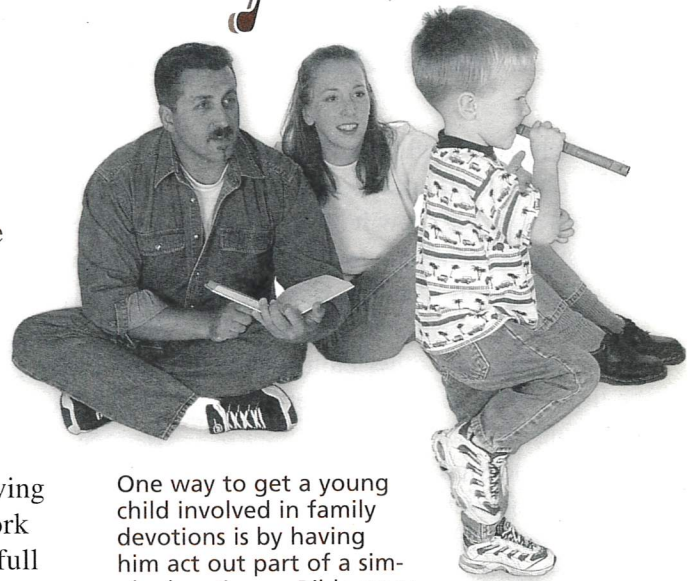
In one description of his worship, we are told that Abraham "called on the name of the Lord" (Genesis 13:4). This phrase suggests that Abraham's worship involved other people. His voice could be heard. In other words, Abraham's faith was a matter of public record. Such a proclamation of God's promises among others is called a confession. He was probably sharing his faith with members of his household—his immediate family, herdsmen, servants, and guests.

A cornucopia of home worship activities

The home is a natural setting for sharing faith. Family worship time provides many opportunities to communicate God's saving love as we see it at work in our lives. It invites full participation from moms, dads, grandpas and grandmas, visitors, and especially children.

In most cases the family setting will be the first place that a Christian child exercises his role in the Great Commission.

The activity at a family altar can involve prayer at mealtime, bedtime, and at rising. It can stimulate family discussions about contemporary issues viewed in the light of Scripture. It can include devotional activities, readings, or the singing of hymns and religious



One way to get a young child involved in family devotions is by having him act out part of a simple devotion or Bible story.

songs. Interactive readings of the psalms work especially well in the household setting.

In homes where there are young children, the family altar represents a time and place for teaching Bible stories and becoming familiar with Bible characters. Teens need time to talk about real-life issues as they search for answers to a growing list of challenges.

When there is a crisis, the devotional home comes together to pray and be comforted with a thought from God's Word. Birthdays, anniversaries, baptisms, weddings, and even Christian funerals are good reasons to bring everyone together to celebrate God's goodness and grace.

An intimate mix

Home worship is different from typical church worship. Basic elements are still the same: coming together, hearing God speak to us in his Word, acknowledging his goodness, and sending one another out into the world as salt and light. But the interaction at home is more personal. Home worship mixes the generations together in a unique way. It brings together the wonder and excitement of childhood, the idealism of youth, the realism of middle age, and the wisdom of old age in an intimate exchange.

Sometimes the family altar needs to be rigidly structured and well organized. But the home setting also needs to have flexibility to allow spontaneous dialogue. Here we feel safe. We can afford to take the risks connected with being more candid and open. We can confess our personal indiscretions. We can admit to weakness. We are among people we love and trust. Our confessions of faith serve to encourage and correct one another. They help us define our teachings and distance ourselves from those who distort God's truth. Such opportunities are often difficult to find at a worship service at church.

At home each individual can shine. Gifts and talents can be offered as part of the living sacrifice of faithful hearts. Adults and children can express their love for the Savior in their own artistic, musical, or literary renderings. Children are freer to "call upon the name of the Lord" in this private forum. Here, in the home, the young can begin formulating their own personal confessions and learn to practice sharing their faith with others. In most cases it will be the first place that a Christian child exercises his role in the Great Commission.

Through the eyes of children

Children make good witnesses because they see things in ways most adults no longer can. They understand their world through an active imagination. In response to a Sunday school teacher who asked her class how Jesus got into their hearts, a four-year-old piped up, "He just walked in on my tongue and slid right down." Not bad. Few adults could do better at explaining the miracle of how we come to faith.

Kids think in pictures. Adults tend to intellectualize. We analyze, synthesize, and construct models to try to make sense of our world. But sometimes we may be better off thinking in pictures.

The Bible helps us by giving us rich and diverse imagery. God uses this imagery to reveal himself and his Son through an innocent lamb, bread, a father and son, a stairway. These are familiar pictures of God's power and grace.

There are pictures of who we are and what we are like, too: clay pots, lost lambs and wandering sheep, and wheat fields. When we look at these pictures in the Bible it helps us see what God accomplishes for us.

God's Word is simple truth. But it always challenges us to grow in our understanding. We need to seek spiritual maturity in our family devotions without letting the truth become cluttered with too much adult thinking.

A daily choice

Worship is a choice—a conscious decision. There was nothing accidental or unintentional about erecting a stone altar out in the middle of the desert, as Abraham did so many times. Going to church is an act of will; so is staying in bed on Sunday morning. Spending five minutes together at home to study God's Word

and share your faith with one another after supper is a choice; but so is running off, helter-skelter, too busy to even recite a prayer of thanks together. None of us is so driven by circumstance that we have lost control over the daily worship choices we make. We owe it to God and to ourselves to at least be honest about that.



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.

When you read the Bible together with your family:

- Remember, Jesus is the Bible's single point of focus. Ask yourself how these words direct your attention to him.
- Ask God to help you accept what the Bible says with a child-like faith.
- Don't be selective. All of the Bible's truth is intended for our instruction.
- Don't look for hidden messages or secret codes. The Bible speaks at many different levels of understanding.
- Note key Bible texts that have special meaning. Memorize them so that they will be available when you need them.
- Ask yourself how these words affect your life.
- Thank God for the special gift of the Bible and its remarkable message.

Lutheran Church Split Indicates Future Shifts

By ROBERT BOUZEK
(State Journal Staff Writer)

'THE SPLIT'

The Wisconsin Synod patiently fellowship with the Missouri Synod loving decision was to sever its

postponed the decision to suspend until it became apparent that the synodical conference relationship.

Mark E. Braun

On the 50th anniversary of the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America in 1922, *The Northwestern Lutheran* writer John Jenny called it "a wonder of God before our eyes" that the Missouri and Wisconsin synods testified to "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth," rejecting any compromise of its teachings to liberalism and "refusing to fraternize with any church body that will not accept our Evangelical Confession."

Thirty-nine years later, 124 of 173 delegates to the Wisconsin Synod's 1961 convention in Milwaukee voted to suspend fellowship with the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS). "We have gone the long mile of Christian love with the Missouri Synod with the course and kind of admonition we have given until now," said Pastor Werner Franzmann, chairman of the convention's floor committee on church union. "Today a sterner kind of admonition and love is required."

What in the world happened between these sister synods during those four decades?

Unity questioned

Disagreements surfaced already in the 1930s. Missouri chose to let its pastors participate in the U.S. military chaplaincy program. Wisconsin feared such participation would compromise the church's freedom to call its own pastors and would violate the separation of church and state. Wisconsin also warned that union discussions between Missouri and the American Lutheran Church threatened the doctrinal harmony Missouri and Wisconsin enjoyed.

In 1944 Missouri made two decisions that proved

disastrous to their relationship with Wisconsin: it discontinued opposition to the Boy and Girl Scout programs, and it granted approval to the practice of offering joint public prayer with church bodies not in doctrinal agreement. Wisconsin could demonstrate that both decisions constituted departures from longstanding synodical conference practice.

Intersynodical disagreements crowded the pages of Wisconsin's quarterly journal for pastors, but *The Northwestern Lutheran* remained relatively silent on these subjects until April 13, 1947. Now had come "a time to speak," wrote seminary professor Edmund Reim. "Issues must eventually be decided." Church members "are surely entitled to know where our Wisconsin Synod stands and why it stands as it does."

Church life went on, of course. *The Northwestern Lutheran* in the 1950s still offered Bible studies, editorial comment, pictures of new pastors, reports of church dedications, and obituaries. But the escalating debate with Missouri moved to the foreground.

It grew clear that the common denominator in Wisconsin's controversy with Missouri was the doctrine of church fellowship. "Should church fellowship be treated as a unit concept," Wisconsin asked, "covering every joint expression, manifestation, and demonstration of a common faith?" Missouri answered no, but Wisconsin said yes. Joint prayer with other Christians was also an expression of fellowship.

Unity shattered

Tensions grew so severe at the 1952 Synodical Conference convention that Wisconsin now declared itself in protesting fellowship [*in statu confessionis*] with Missouri.

Wisconsin's 1955 convention charged the LCMS with creating "divisions and offenses" that demanded separation, yet convention delegates voted to delay the split until Missouri convened the following summer. A special 1956 Wisconsin convention resolved to "hold in abeyance" its decision to sever fellowship.

Debate focused on the word "when." Should a break be declared now, or should Wisconsin exercise more patience? Wisconsin's 1957 convention decided—by a margin of 16 votes—to maintain its "vigorously protesting fellowship" with Missouri. Seminary President Carl Lawrenz repeatedly emphasized the "great debt of love" Wisconsin owed its sister synod.

In May 1960 Wisconsin's Commission on Doctrinal Matters announced that in its efforts to resolve differences with respect to the scriptural principles on church fellowship "an impasse has been reached." Eleventh hour efforts at reconciliation proved fruitless.

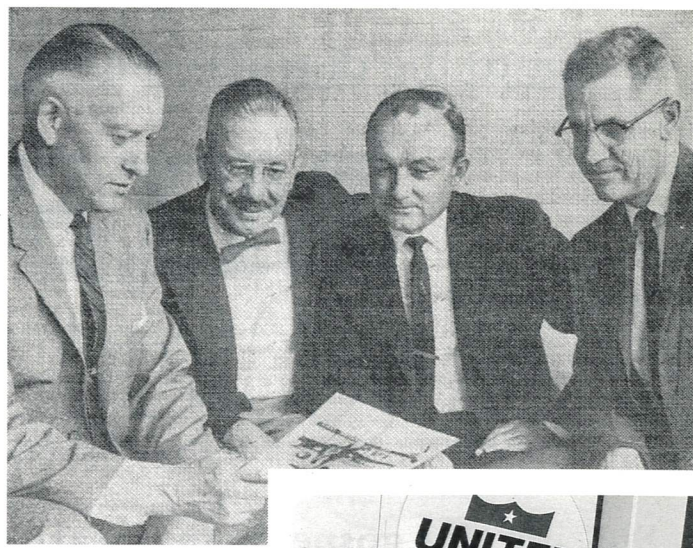
Some convinced of the necessity of the split, however, feared that "little" Wisconsin could never make it on its own. "Small synods can easily develop inferiority complexes," wrote Carleton Toppe. "Our Wisconsin Synod is not a large church body, but it is large enough to move forward. It is large enough to do more and greater things in the kingdom of God than it has done in the past."

An era was coming to an end, leaving many saddened and apprehensive of the future. But Toppe's words proved to be prophetic of the exciting expansion of the Wisconsin Synod that began in the 1960s.



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

This *Milwaukee Sentinel* photo shows (1 to r) President Oscar J. Naumann, First Vice President Irwin J. Habeck, Second Vice President Oscar Siegler, and Secretary Norman Berg reviewing a synod publication during the 1961 synod convention held at Wisconsin Lutheran High School, Milwaukee.



Edmund Reim, 1950, on scouting: "Time was when there was agreement in the synodical conference on this matter." Now, "we have unfortunately come to differ seriously with a sister synod over the question of whether to endorse or not to endorse a system of training which is so foreign to the gospel as scouting. . . . It is not a matter of Wisconsin against some poor little scout. It is Wisconsin standing for a certain principle of Christian education, holding out against a widely held modern opinion, against an almost universal popular trend."

Walter Pankow, 1951, on the chaplaincy: "A young man sent me a copy of the Protestant service they had on their ship. I noticed from the prayers in this bulletin that the chaplain must be a Catholic priest. I wrote my suspicion to the young man, and he answered: 'Yes, our chaplain is a Catholic priest. Our ship is not large enough for two chaplains, so our chaplain conducts the mass for the Roman Catholics and also the Protestant service for Protestants.'"

Edmund Reim, 1954: "The real danger is that we continue to hold our convictions—but only in theory. That we continue to view with alarm, to deplore, to criticize—and let it go at that. That we breathe a sigh of relief over the fact that a decision has been postponed, and refuse to face the other side of it—namely, that it therefore still remains to be made."

Synod President Oscar Naumann, 1956, explaining Wisconsin's delay in separating from Missouri: "We are dealing with those who have been our brethren for many years and whose keeper we must be as they have been ours. We are not dealing with an individual soul but with a large church body. Dealings with an individual can more readily be brought to a definite conclusion. But even there Jesus admonishes us to put forth every effort of love and patience in order to win the brother who has trespassed."



Seminary president Carl Lawrenz and synod president Oscar Naumann agreed that WELS should deal with the Missouri Synod in love.

MISSION POSSIBLE

Sharing the gospel is the heart and soul of the South Atlantic District.

Linda R. Buxa

“**Y**es ma’am” and “yes sir” are common here. So are sunshine and iced tea. And y’all better not forget that renowned Southern hospitality. It’s in this region that members of the South Atlantic District are fixin’ to keep on sharing God’s Word.

Same beginnings

Although only 54 congregations are spread out among seven states and three Caribbean islands, this district has more missions than any other—25 mission congregations and 10 exploratories.

The excited-about-missions attitude began with outreach in the 1950s and hasn’t stopped. Because the district was organized only 27 years ago, “established congregations are not so far removed from their mission roots,” explains John Guse, district president. “Congregations have all been born of the same mission beginnings, gone through many of the same challenges, and are still facing many of the same issues.”

Same challenges

One of these issues is the called worker shortage. A year and a half ago, almost one of every four churches in this district did not have a pastor.

Filling those vacancies was hard. With no prep schools, area Lutheran high schools, colleges, or synodical offices in the area, finding non-parish pastors to pitch in wasn’t easy. Also, many retired pastors don’t live in the South. Some, however, leave the Midwest for three- to five-month stints. Neighboring congregations also offer relief by sharing their pastors.

Such vacancies are occurring when more people than ever are needed to serve, and more service is expected. “A consumer mentality exists among the unchurched—and among the churched at times too,” Guse notes.

People want variety in Bible study

and programs for youth, singles, and couples. If congregations are going to meet those needs, additional staff is needed. Not only teachers and pastors, but also staff ministers, preschool administrators, and lay people.

Needing more staff isn’t the only issue. Finances demand attention. Some congregations are self-supporting but have plateaued. These need to grow again to support a well-rounded ministry. This all comes when costs are rising, so congregations are left to wonder how to pay the bills and still expand the programs.

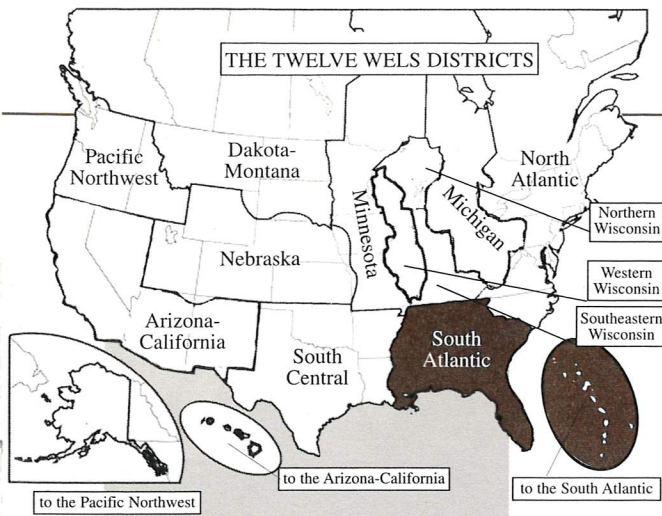
Same purpose

These challenges don’t stop congregations from moving on, however. The district’s oldest congregation is a perfect example. Trinity, Abita Springs, La., is 95 years old and has seen its share of struggles and blessings. Not long ago, the congregation experienced personal troubles and was losing members. In 1992 it could no longer financially support a full-time pastor.

Soon after, Abita Springs started growing, and Trinity reaped the blessings. In 1997 the congregation had a growth spurt, got back on its feet, and has been growing ever since. They were able to afford a full-



Ten years ago, Rock of Ages, Nashville, Tenn., gave up members to start Christ Our Savior, Columbia, Tenn. In 1998, along with the members of Christ Our Savior, they encouraged the start of the church in Smyrna, Tenn. This summer, members helped begin outreach in Clarksville, Tenn. Here children of the congregation show that Rock of Ages is concerned about world missions, too. They dressed in clothing to reflect different countries’ traditions for the 1999 Christmas Eve service, “Christmas for the World.”



■ South Atlantic District

Stats at a glance
South Atlantic District

Conferences: 3
 Circuits: 10
 Congregations: 54
 Mission churches: 25
 Exploratory churches: 10

Baptized members: 9,517
 Communicant members: 7,060
 Average attendance: 58.8%
 Pastors: 60

Adult baptisms: 47
 Adult confirmations: 326

Sunday school enrollment: 1,253
 Bible class attendance (teens): 238
 Bible class attendance (adults): 1,588

Early childhood education schools: 6
 Lutheran elementary schools: 10
 Area Lutheran high schools: 0

Statistics taken from the 1999 Statistical Report, Commission on Parish Schools, and Board for Home Missions.

time pastor again, and Ed Frey arrived last November.

Frey predicts that the city will be a premiere place to live in five years, and members want to be part of that. “We’re trying to be proactive instead of reactive,” says Frey. Being proactive means planning—and lots of it. Everything is considered from getting members more involved in friendship evangelism to witnessing to new people in town.

The congregation also links into existing community activities, instead of thinking of new ideas. Every holiday is advertised as a special worship opportunity. “We

had a Valentine’s Day service, Mother’s Day, and Father’s Day too,” says Frey.

Another opportunity is found on the popular bicycle trail next to the church. “Maybe once or twice a month, we could have group biking,” sug-

gests Frey. “Or maybe we could hand out water bottles to passers-by with our church name on them and have something on it about the Water of Life.”

All these ideas fit into Trinity’s mission: reach people with the gospel.

Though almost 94 years younger than Trinity, the Hispanic ministry in Miami shares Trinity’s goal.

WELS has done Hispanic outreach in Miami before, but it was not doing as well as was hoped. So the Board for Home Missions is trying another approach in a different area of Miami. A team of mission veteran Carlos Leyrer and seminary graduate Andy Schroer was brought together to see what opportunities exist.

For the past six months, the men have been looking for the best place to work. They found the area of Doral. With a population that is 70 percent Hispanic and 20 percent Portuguese, this upper-middle class neighborhood of 15,000 people is the fast-growing area in Miami. Some predict as many as 30,000 residents in five years.

Yet, no churches are in the area. Schroer and Leyrer plan to change that.

Getting the word out is not simple, however. Doral is a gated community, which makes traditional canvassing impossible. So Leyrer and Schroer have to be creative. They use mailings and mass media campaigns and are creating a Web page. Their big dream is to begin childcare and a preschool.

“We also plan to hold seminars on modern issues, such as marriage, raising children, dealing with stress,” says Schroer.

Most of the work will be conducted in English. However, some services and Bible study will be offered in Spanish. “We may have to learn some Portuguese to reach the Brazilians in the community,” Schroer adds.

“This is going to be a lot of fun,” Schroer says. “Lord willing, we’ll keep moving.”

Same excitement

Schroer has the excitement that comes from sharing God’s Word. You’ll find that same excitement throughout this district of cotton fields, peanuts, peaches, magnolias, azaleas, and palm trees, the Old South, the New South, Dixie, and Cajun Country.

Being excited to share the gospel—now that’s true Southern hospitality.

Linda Buxa is a member at Holy Trinity, Kodiak, Alaska.

Work in the Bible belt

Though Lutherans are a minority in the Bible belt, sharing the gospel may be a little easier “because many have a respect for church-going and the Bible,” says John Guse.

Church is a way of life, and some old-time-religion traditions—influenced by Southern Baptist culture—run deep.

“Sunday school and Bible class are as important as going to preachin’,” says Guse. “And prayer meetings and church fellowship are every Wednesday.”

Members at Christ Our Savior, Columbia, Tenn., use this Wednesday-as-church-night tradition in their favor. The pastor and members go door to door that night. If someone is home, they are probably unchurched.

Lessons from Momma

A mother teaches her son that surviving a hurricane involves the same ingredients as surviving life: prayer and trust in God.

Darryl L. Mayfield

It was the beginning of the 1965-'66 school year in New Orleans, La., and my twin sister, my brother, and I had just completed our first day of school. When we arrived home, Momma told us that Hurricane Betsy was headed for New Orleans. Although it had been a long time since my sister and I had been in a hurricane, we knew how important it was to listen to Momma and do everything she said.

Waters rise

Just as in 1958-'59, Daddy was at sea. He was a merchant marine for better than 18 years and had been around the world 13 times but had never gone through a hurricane with his loved ones. So Momma was again facing the loss of all her worldly possessions without her husband, this time with one extra kid, my brother Ike, to be concerned about.

At about 7:30 PM the doorbell rang, and outside stood my cousin, Darryl (from Daddy's side of the family), his father, mother, and two sisters. They had come from "back of town," an area considered to lie lower below sea level than ours, to be with us, since we were considered "uptown." Momma welcomed them in and gave everyone little jobs to do as we prepared to abandon the house for the safety of the garage.

The local televised weather assessed the wind speed at 120 mph,

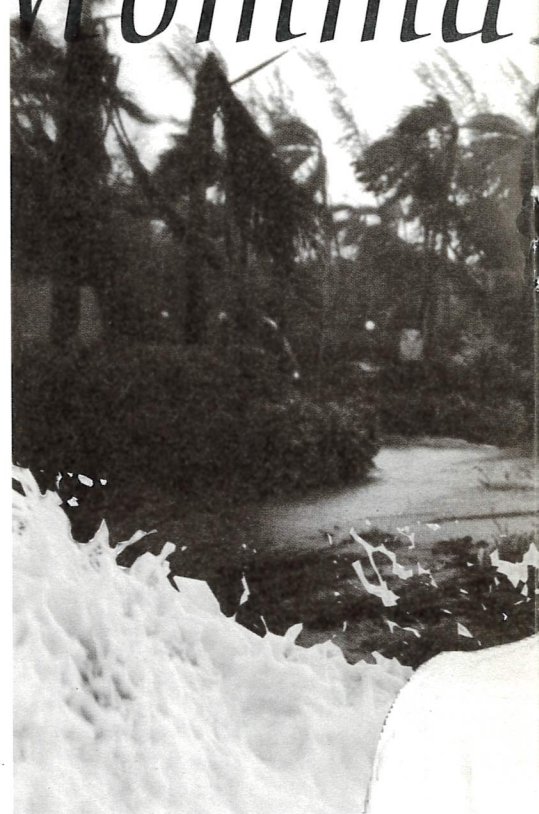
and Momma was concerned that the strong winds would lift the house. The garage, located about 10 to 15 yards from the house, was on a slab and more protected. Momma didn't know it, but wind speed should not have been her first concern.

We gathered up our blankets, throw rugs, pillows, ice chest, water jugs, flashlights, and, of course, our checkers and Milton Bradley's Concentration game. We went to the garage and quickly spread out the sleeping essentials.

We were already using the kerosene lamps since the electricity had gone out at least an hour earlier. Darryl and I began a game of checkers, and Ike curled up next to me to watch.

The plan was to pray and trust our lives to God: "Trust him for one thing, trust him for all things."

I made several horrid moves, and Darryl announced his first "King me!" Suddenly, out of the blue, Darryl asked why Ike was wetting on the floor. I responded that my brother was potty trained, and if he didn't take calling him a bed wetter back, why I might just box his ears. Then I noticed that there was a growing pool of water on the concrete



floor, but it was coming from under the garage door.

Momma stays calm

Momma leaped to her feet, assessed the situation, and ordered everyone to grab what they had brought and move out of the garage and back to the house. By the time we made it to the back porch, the water was about a foot high and coming in waves. I was the last to close the back door to the house after I retrieved our dog, who was now swimming from the garage toward the back porch. As I closed the backdoor, we all heard a sickening, gurgling sound coming from the floor furnace.

Momma ordered me and my sister, Debbie, to take all the clothes out of the closets and put them on the bed and do likewise with the drawers from the dressers. She hoped that the



mattresses would float and that we would at least have clothing to wear later. We were barely finished before there was a foot and a half of water inside our house.

Meanwhile, Momma, Uncle Robert, and Darryl maneuvered the kitchen table out of the kitchen and underneath the attic fan. Momma then knocked the attic fan out of its place and ordered everyone to climb up into the attic. I was the last to step from the table into the attic, and as I did I could see that the water was just across the top of the kitchen table.

Momma had us all bed down on large plywood sheets placed across the joists in the attic. We rode out Hurricane Betsy in our attic. The next day was a beautiful, bright sunshiny day: perfect, except that there were seven feet or so of water outside our house and water had

destroyed everything inside.

I have reflected on several things from that experience:

- how scared my siblings and I were and how we cried,
- how we obeyed Momma when she told us to go to sleep and not worry, and
- how Momma prayed.

I determined that I needed to ask Momma about the experience and specifically about these things on my mind.

Faith prevails

On a visit to see Momma a few weeks before she went to her eternal home, I asked her if she had been afraid, why she hadn't cried, and what the plan was if the water continued to rise or if the roof was blown off. Her reply was that she was afraid, that we were doing enough crying to flood the attic and

she didn't want to help us in that endeavor, and the plan was to pray and trust our lives to God: "Trust him for one thing, trust him for all things." Momma's faith in action, prayer, and trust expressed all that she could say about the experience.

Recently, my strength has come from realizing that Momma and I serve the same risen Lord and from recognizing the deep, spiritual legacy she left me.

The wind blew that horrible night at 120 mph or better, the water rose to three feet inside and nearly seven outside, but Momma prayed. While not unconcerned about the physical elements and the havoc they can create, Momma was focused in prayer to him who calms the sea.

She could be calm and tell us to "go to sleep, everything is gonna be all right" because she experienced the love that drives out fear. She knew she didn't have to worry about the "what if" or "the plan." She and Daddy had lost everything before, but a faithful God restored more than they had lost.

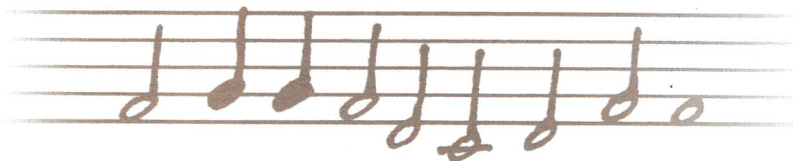
So now, when the winds and waves batter me and mine, I pray and reflect on this spiritual lesson and blessing from the past. The unmanageable winds of physical fortune and the unimaginable devastation of sin cannot and will not separate my family and me "from the love of God found in Christ Jesus." I thank God for his all-sustaining grace, and I thank him for a mom who taught me to pray and to trust in Jesus, a mom who lived a life of faith and prayer.

Darryl L. Mayfield is a member of Good Shepherd, Houston, Texas.

We now implore

Martin Luther's hymns deal with matters we cannot comprehend with reason, yet can grasp with our hearts.

Theodore J. Hartwig



The Lutheran Reformation burst like a blast of fresh wind on a religious environment that had largely become a business transaction between man and God. While God even then had preserved his “7,000 in Israel,” the majority was enmeshed in superstitious fear.

In this setting, the Lutheran Reformation kindled a fire to warm the hearts of friends and enrage opponents. What the opponents feared above all were Luther's hymns. They had become the most effective instrument for planting the gospel into people's hearts.

The “wonderful” of Luther's hymns

Luther's contribution to Christian hymnody was three-sided. First, he restored hymn singing to the congregation. Next, he gifted the church with over 30 high quality hymns. Finally, he gave people something wonderful to sing, a new song to replace the somber hymns of past centuries.

A WELS teacher of two generations ago explained the “wonderful” in Luther's poetry as relating to matters we cannot comprehend with reason, yet can grasp with the heart. Herein lies the “wonderful” in Luther's hymns. They speak to the heart.

With his gospel-born joy, Luther also had a fine sense for gospel-given freedom. He understood that

Christian worship, music, and art need not be bound to traditional forms claimed to be right because they are traditional. He knew that the gospel is mightily active to create its own new forms.

Yet he respected good things inherited from the past. He translated Latin hymns and improved them with additional stanzas. He recast Old Testament psalms into a Christian dress. He fashioned hymns for the Christian festivals and for the chief parts of the catechism. All these hymns focused on God's deeds for us. They move from God to us more than from us to God.

They also are notable for their visual poetry and their childlike quality, both features obvious in the prayer from his Christmas hymn: “Ah, dearest Jesus, holy Child, Prepare a bed, soft, undefiled Within my heart, made clean and new, A quiet chamber kept for you.”

The simplicity of “We now implore”

Among Luther's hymns, “A Mighty Fortress” is most widely known, “Dear Christians, One and All, Rejoice” most epic. But “We Now Implore God the Holy Ghost,” though less popular, is unrivaled for its simplicity and completeness of Christian teaching. It sings of faith, hope, and love, the three primary

virtues of Christian life.

Stanza one highlights faith as the quintessence of Christian life: “We now implore God the Holy Ghost For the true faith that we need the most, That in our last moments he may befriend us And, as homeward we journey, attend us.”

The second stanza enhances the first with a Christ-focused definition of faith: “Shine in our hearts, O most precious Light, That we Jesus Christ may know aright, Clinging to our Savior, whose blood has bought us, Who again to our homeland has brought us.”

Faith must be active in love as indicated in Luther's next stanza: “O sacred Love, grace on us bestow, Set our hearts with heav'nly fire aglow That with hearts united we love each other, Of one mind, in peace with ev'ry brother.”

The hymn fittingly closes with hope, which underpins faith and love: “O highest Comfort in ev'ry need, Grant that neither shame nor death we heed That e'en then our courage may never fail us When the foe shall accuse and assail us.”

Singing this hymn is like eating a good meal. When it is done, one feels completely satisfied.



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



Inter-Act

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

Introduction

Martin Luther once hated the words "the righteousness of God." Maybe we can relate to that. God is righteous. He requires that we be righteous, and he threatens to punish us if we don't measure up. But, try ever so hard, we can't begin to be as holy as he demands. What are we to do?

Later, Luther came to love the words "the righteousness of God." He said these words became the gate to paradise for him. How could he come to love the words he had previously hated? He had come to understand the Bible's wonderful teaching about justification.

I. Text

Read Romans 5:16-18.

The gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. ¹⁷For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. ¹⁸Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men.

II. Questions

1. What is the gift of God (verse 15b)? Why is it called a gift?
2. Who is the one man who sinned (verse 14b)? What followed the one man's sin? What did it bring?
3. In what sense did the gift follow many trespasses? What did the gift bring? What is the meaning of this word (verse 19b)?
4. What has reigned in the world since the trespass of Adam? What will believers experience through the work of Jesus? To what does this refer (Revelation 22:5)? Why does Paul refer to an "abundant provision of grace"? Why is righteousness spoken of as a "gift"?
5. What was the result of Adam's trespass? Why is this (verse 12)?
6. To what does "one act of righteousness" refer? What was the result of this one act of righteousness?
7. For whom does justification bring life? For whom is justification effective (verse 17 and Ephesians 2:8-9)?

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

III. Applications

1. Justification makes us think of a courtroom. If God is the judge, who is the defendant? What are the crimes with which the defendant has been charged? Who is the prosecuting attorney? What is the judge's verdict? What is the punishment the defendant deserves? Who is the defense attorney? What is the outcome of the trial? Why?
2. "To make righteous." "To declare righteous." Which definition of "justify" do you prefer? Why?
3. Agree/disagree: Because of Christ, mankind's status before God has changed.
4. Some say the way to understand "justify" is to think of it as meaning "just as if I never sinned." Do you like this definition? Why or why not?
5. From the Scripture text, show that it is not true that since Jesus died for the sins of all, all will eventually be saved.
6. Paul develops the results of justification in a believer's life in Romans chapters 6 to 8. How are the following topics from these chapters related to what Paul says about justification in chapter 5? Try to think of a practical, everyday example of each.
 - We are dead to sin.
 - We are alive in Christ.
 - We are slaves to righteousness.
 - We daily struggle against sin.
 - We live through the Spirit.
 - We eagerly anticipate future glory.

IV. Prayer

Father, your holy law justly accuses me of many sins. Comfort me with the assurance that you have declared me righteous because of Jesus' perfect life and his innocent death. As Christ was crucified for me, cause me to put to death the sins of the flesh. As Christ was raised to life for my justification, so lead me to live for him alone. In Christ's name I come boldly before your throne of grace. Amen.

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

Sharing the Word in Peru

The Evangelical Lutheran Synod mission to Peru shows how God's Word can be spread by word of mouth and what effects this has.

Thirty years ago, Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) missionaries Ted Kuster, James Olsen, and Robert Moldstad, assisted by many lay volunteers, began work in Peru. One of the first outreach efforts was at Año Nuevo, a dirt road village on the outskirts of Lima. A mothers' club was established, which to this day serves meals to the community and preschool classes to the children.

Through the years, this mothers' club has blessed many. As a young woman, Lydia Soplin came to Lima from the northern Peru town of Tarapoto in search of a better life. In Lima, she found eternal life in her Savior through contacts with our missionaries at the mothers' club. She in turn blessed others when she began teaching children.

Wanting to share this precious gift, Lydia asked the current ELS missionaries to Peru—Tim Erickson, David Haeuser, and Terry Schultz—to bring the message of God's love



Nely Dairla de Gonzales and Ramon Angalo. Nely and her husband, Otto, manage a small restaurant in Tarapoto, Peru, where the gospel is served as well as tasty food. Ramon first met Nely and Otto at this restaurant.



The thatch roof church under construction in Pelejo, Peru. As many as 100 new Christians worship here when the missionaries come to visit.

in Jesus to her hometown. In the summer of 1999, Schultz began the outreach effort in Tarapoto.

Where to start? Lydia's brother, Otto Cardinas Gonzales, and his wife, Nely, are now Christians. They manage a small neighborhood restaurant that is a hub for our mission activity in Tarapoto. Informal worship for up to 40 people, instruction classes, and youth activities for 15 teenagers are conducted there. The customers at Otto and Nely's restaurant are not only treated to tasty food (chicken, pork, fish, rice, and bananas), but they also have the opportunity to hear the gospel.

Neighborhood residents Ramon Rodriquez Angalo and his wife, Socorro, met Otto and Nely while dining at the restaurant. Through Schultz, the Holy Spirit used the gospel to bring Ramon and Socorro to faith. In turn, they wanted the gospel brought to the riverside village of Pelejo, where Socorro's family lives.

To reach Pelejo, Schultz and Vicar Ronal Rivas travel five hours north-east into the upper Amazon basin. Then in a rented boat they float southward three hours on the Huallega

River to the jungle village of Pelejo. There, next to a lagoon where locals fish for piranha, stands a thatch-roof church where as many as 100 new Christians hear the gospel when the missionaries come to visit.

*Theodore G. Gullixson,
Lutheran Sentinel editor*

ON THE BRIGHT SIDE

After the final communion service at the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) convention, two visiting Latvian pastors, Pastor Bakulis and Pastor Sildegs, invited convention attendees to look at the license plate on the rental car they had been given at the Minneapolis airport. It read ELS 640. All were surprised at the ELS letters. Pastor Bakulis said, "Good thing it wasn't ELS 666!"

*Neal Schroeder
Renton, Washington*

Special conference helps special people

“What’s so special about special ministries?” asks Pastor Wayne Mueller in his keynote address at the Special Ministries Conference 2000.

He points out:

- **Special ministries are moved by the special love of the Savior.**

The special ministries conference was filled with worship opportunities so participants could honor and praise the Savior for the love that he has shown us.

One was an adapted worship service, which is a simplified version of our liturgy, using language more understandable for those who are developmentally disabled. A puppet presentation by Shepherd’s Hands Puppeteers showed attendees a different way to explain God’s love.

- **Special ministries are carried out by special people.**

As Mueller noted to conference attendees: “You exemplify the heart and core of what it means to be a minister of Jesus Christ.” All conference participants volunteer time, energy, and love to people who on the outside look like they can’t repay. But those involved in special ministries know this isn’t the case.

Mary Braun, a teacher at St. Paul, Muskego, Wis., spent some of her time at the conference signing for those who are deaf or hard of hearing. She decided to learn sign language almost 20 years ago because she saw a little deaf boy in her congregation who needed to understand God’s Word in Sunday school and confirmation class. She still takes classes in her spare time (which there isn’t much of). “God is letting me do this,” she says.

Another attendee, Phyllis Dumke from Mankato, Minn., has been a pen pal to a female prisoner in Florida for two years. Even though they don’t even know each other’s last names (for safety precautions), a bond connects them. When Phyllis

told her pen pal that she and her husband were planning their 50th wedding anniversary, her pen pal sent a huge cardboard card congratulating them.

Every person at the conference has stories like these. They would all say that they are blessed by their service more than the ones that they serve.

- **Special ministries serve special people.**

Special ministries serve people with special needs—whether deaf or hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired, developmentally disabled, incarcerated, victims of Alzheimer’s, handicapped, overseas or in the military, or in nursing homes or institutions. The conference focused on helping attendees understand more about people with special needs and how to reach out to them. Then we can all better fill everyone’s ultimate need—hearing and understanding the saving love of Jesus.



Duane Anderson and David Nack enjoy the displays set up at the conference. Anderson is head of Project Share, a ministry based out of Bay City, Mich., that serves the poor and the inmates in the Tri-City community. Nack is the first WELS prison ministry administrator. Both presented workshops at the conference.

JUST THE FACTS

- | | |
|-------|--|
| WHO | 225 attendees, including Commission on Special Ministries members and directors, district coordinators, and people concerned about and involved with special ministries. |
| WHAT | Special Ministries Conference under the theme: Strengthening the Ties that Bind |
| WHEN | July 14-16 |
| WHERE | Milwaukee, Wisconsin |
| WHY | In celebration of the synod’s 150th anniversary and to offer support and information to those involved in special ministries. |



Meet the editorial staff—uncut

Ever ask yourself, “Who are these people who write for Forward/NL?” Through this new series you can find out. Read on:

Answering your questions

Each month you see his name as the writer of “your question, please” in this magazine. You have read that he is a Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary professor and realize that he is knowledgeable on a variety of religious topics. Yet, who is John F. Brug?

John Frederick Brug met his wife, Irene, at Doctor Martin Luther College (DMLC) in 1968. He was tutoring and coaching football. She was coaching girls sports. “Her college basketball and volleyball teams were undefeated,” he remarks, “so I convinced her that since she could never do better, she might as well get married and come back to Mequon with me.” The Brugs have one son, Paul, and three grandchildren.

Brug began his pastoral career in Pennsylvania in 1971. In 1978, he and his family moved to New Ulm, Minn., so he could teach at DMLC. He became a professor at WLS in 1983. He teaches the same subjects at the seminary as he did at DMLC: doctrine and Old Testament.

Brug also has authored many books published by Northwestern Publishing House; serves as editor of *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, a journal for WELS pastors; answers theological questions received via e-mail through the WELS Web site; serves on the Commission on Inter-Church Relations; and guest-lectures at seminaries around the world.

The Brugs travel often on synod-related business, including to the plains of Africa, because Irene is the volunteer chairperson for the Central Africa Medical Mission Committee.

Once in Zambia, they were awakened “by the noise of a gigantic



Irene and John Brug overlook the fjords atop a mountain in arctic Norway. As a member of the Commission on Inter-Church Relations, Brug works with Lutheran churches in Scandinavia.

hippo just a couple feet outside our window. After we debated for a while whether we dared take its picture with a flash (Irene was for it, I was against it—my view prevailed), we just watched it until it took a dip in the swimming pool,” said Brug.

So many questions, so little space for all the answers. That is the problem that faces John Brug each month as he writes “your question, please.” Likewise, there is not enough space here to list all of Brug’s accomplishments. It may just have to be enough to know that his middle name is Frederick.

ELS convention celebrates 2,000 years of grace

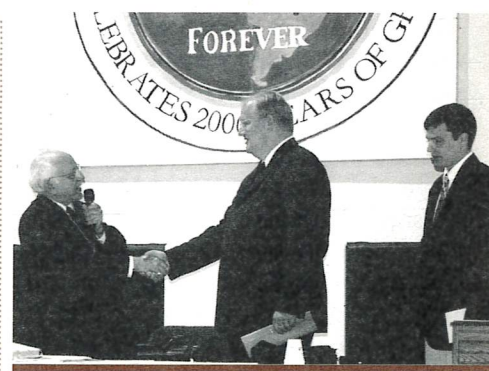
Under the theme “Christ the same yesterday, today, and forever,” the 83rd annual convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) met at Bethany Lutheran College, Mankato, Minn., from June 11-15. The conference, in its major paper and worship services, celebrated “2,000 years of grace.”

The delegates were given an overview of the special offering by which the ELS will celebrate the beginning of the third millennium of the Christian era. That afternoon, through gifts and pledges, they raised \$118,000 of the offering’s \$1,000,000 goal. Most of the proceeds will be used to start new home missions, with \$200,000 slated for two parochial schools in Peru. (See p. 22 for more information on the ELS mission in Peru.)

The Doctrine Committee recommended declaration of fellowship with the Confessional Lutheran Church of Latvia (CLCL). Pastor Neal Schroeder, a representative of WELS and its Commission on Inter-Church Relations, presented the Latvians with a check for \$12,000 to be used in upgrading worship facilities. The funds were raised during May by the 80 souls of Divine Peace (WELS), Renton, Wash., in celebration of WELS’ 150th anniversary.

In the holy communion service, the ELS, the CLCL, and WELS were at the Lord’s table together for the first time. What a special joy that was for all who were privileged to be a part of it.

Neal Schroeder



ELS President George Orvick (left) offers the right hand of fellowship to Pastor Gundars Bakulis, superintendent of the Latvian church body. Ugis Sildegs (right), co-pastor in Riga, and Egons Mudulis, Latvian student at Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary, were also warmly welcomed.

Florida teens experience Africa

“How did you spend your summer vacation?”

When asked this question, three teens from Good Shepherd, Deltona, Fla., can say, “We interviewed a vicar, a seminary president, and a witchdoctor and watched lions in the wild from 10 feet away.”

Where can you do all that? In Africa.

Todd DeNoyer, pastor at Good Shepherd, and two other chaperones, took these teens to Malawi for two weeks to put together a video of WELS’ largest mission field, a mission that serves over 30,000 souls.

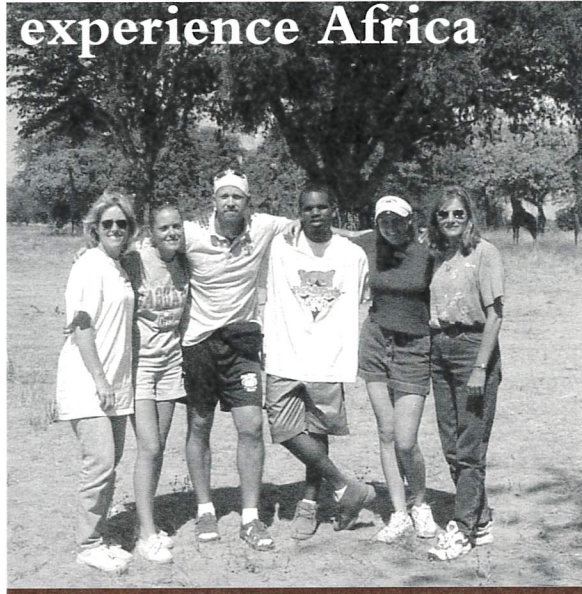
The teens conducted interviews and worked with the sound and lights while DeNoyer did the videotaping. They visited several missionaries, the president of the Lutheran Church of Central Africa, the Lutheran Bible Institute (our seminary in Africa), the reading room in Blantyre, and a game reserve. They also attended and taped worship services at two bush congregations.

“They had 22 baptisms,” says DeNoyer. “And the singing was incredible. The choir wouldn’t let us leave. They surrounded our van and just kept singing the song ‘Farewell My Friend in Jesus.’ ”

Amy Christiansen, one of the teens, also enjoyed the bush congregations’ worship services. “They are so excited about going to church. They just love it.”

She continues: “The people there were so happy. They have nothing, and yet they’re grateful for everything they have.”

Giving teens this wider view—of the world and of WELS—was an important purpose of this trip.



Besides videotaping in Africa, members of Good Shepherd’s active teen group of 30 to 50 people have put together a Bible information class and a monthly church “newsletter” on video. From left: Kim Kiraly, Amy Christiansen, Pastor DeNoyer, Stephawn Coleman, Darby O’Connell, and Beverly O’Connell.

“Most teens do not understand what a district or a synod is all about,” says DeNoyer. “Their only experience with WELS is the church they attend on Sundays. They don’t even realize that there are eight other WELS churches in central Florida much less in Africa. It [the trip] gave them a bigger picture of what we’re doing as a church body.”

Through the video, these teens are trying to share what they learned and experienced. “There’s no way everybody is going to be able to understand what it’s like,” says DeNoyer. “But maybe with the video we can scratch the surface.”

Funding for the trip came from a grant from AAL, donations from other WELS members, and through odd jobs done by the teens.

Plans are already in the works for a trip to the Orient in 2002.

The 35-minute video and discussion questions are designed for a Sunday morning Bible class or teen class. It’s available for sale from Good Shepherd, Deltona, Fla., 407/321-7510.

Obituaries

Lyla M. Spiegelberg 1933-2000

Lyla Spiegelberg was born Oct. 7, 1933, in Beaver Dam, Wis. She died July 22, 2000, in Milwaukee, Wis.

A 1953 graduate of Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., Spiegelberg served at Good Shepherd, West Allis, Wis.

Spiegelberg is survived by her husband, Henry; one son; two daughters; and six granddaughters.

Rue J. Stone 1949-2000

Rue Stone was born July 2, 1949, in Bryan, Ohio. She died June 7, 2000, in Little Rock, Calif.

A 1969 graduate of Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., Stone taught at San Pablo, Tucson, Ariz.; King of Kings, Garden Grove, Calif.; and California Lutheran High School, Wildomar, Calif.

Stone is survived by one sister, one brother, two nephews, and two nieces.

Herbert William Kuehn 1906-2000

Herbert Kuehn was born May 3, 1906, in Clements, Minn. He died July 23, 2000, in Sparta, Wis.

A 1928 graduate of Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., Kuehn taught at St. John, Sparta, Wis.

Kuehn is survived by one daughter, one son, three grandchildren, two great-grandchildren, one brother, and two sisters.

CORRECTION:

In “Masking the Truth” [Aug.], the name of the president of Catholic Apologetics is Robert Sungenis, not Robert Sunegin.



District news

Western Wisconsin

Immanuel, Hubbleton, Wis., dedicated its fellowship/education wing on Aug. 6. The new building is the first addition to the church since its erection in 1897.

On Aug. 27, members of **St. John, Jefferson, Wis.**, dedicated their renovated church building. The renovations made the facility more handicapped accessible.

Luther HS, Onalaska, Wis., dedicated its new Association Center on Aug. 20.

On Aug. 20, members of **New Life, Rockford, Ill.**, dedicated their first church building. New Life became an exploratory in 1988. Congregation members worked with the synod and the Church Extension Fund on a new process that allowed them to design their own building.

Northern Wisconsin

The five WELS churches in Door County celebrated WELS' 150th anniversary on June 1. Participating churches included **Salem, Sturgeon Bay, Wis.**; **St. Peter, Sturgeon Bay**; **St. John, Sturgeon Bay**; **Zion, Egg Harbor, Wis.**; and **Christ, Baileys Harbor, Wis.**

Northern Wisconsin



Supporters of Fox Valley Lutheran High School (FVL), Appleton, Wis., gathered on Sept. 10 to dedicate the school's new campus. The campus, situated on 63 acres, includes a 14-acre nature conservatory, a 900-seat chapel/auditorium, a fitness center, a commons/cafeteria area with seating for 400, a media center, three computer labs, 22 classrooms, four science labs, and two gymnasiums. The facility can accommodate 750 students. FVL's current enrollment is 605.

California

Apostles, San Jose, Calif., dedicated a new educational/administration building on Aug. 6.

Southeastern Wisconsin

Check out **WELS Kingdom Workers** new Web site, <www.wels.net/wkw>.

Minnesota

Minnesota Valley LHS, New Ulm, Minn., hosted a retreat for school faculty, staff, and their spouses. The retreat, funded by Lutheran Brotherhood, focused on improving communication and clarifying roles.

Northern Wisconsin



Robert Wagner (middle) has sung with the choir at Grace, Oshkosh, Wis., for 60 years. From left with Gregg Schoeneck and Daniel Krause, two of Grace's pastors.

South Atlantic

On July 31-Aug. 4, 113 4th-8th graders and teens attended a **joint camp at Camp Lake Geneva, Fruitland Park, Fla.** Under the theme "Nothin' New Under the Sun," campers studied the life of David. Through a WELS Kingdom Workers grant, WELS teachers **Dr. David and Marlene Wendler** taught reading lessons in WELS' St. Lucia study center in June. The couple also gave reading workshops for St. Lucia public school teachers.

Happy Anniversary!

SEW—Members of Palos, Palos, Ill., celebrated **Gene Jahnke's** 25th anniversary in the pastoral ministry on Aug. 6.

NW—**Zion Lutheran School, Egg Harbor, Wis.**, celebrated its 25th anniversary by making a float for the Maifest Parade in Jacksonsport, Wis., on May 27. Zion's float won first place.

Michigan



Jenny Kleinke, Michael Targanski, and Rachel Zahn competed for three scholarships offered by the Detroit Chapter of the American Guild of Organists. These WELS organists received the three scholarships. Each one accompanies church services, school groups, and services at area nursing homes. They also all have the same organ teacher, Joanne Vollendorf Rickards. From left: Jenny Kleinke, Michael Targanski, Joanne Vollendorf Rickards, Rachel Zahn, and two members of the American Guild of Organists.

Southeastern Wisconsin



With the addition of Charles Iles on June 11, an all-time high of seven chaplains are working for Wisconsin Lutheran Institutional Ministries (WLIM), Milwaukee, Wis. Pictured above are Chaplains Charles Iles, David Tetzlaff, and Ken Lenz. WLIM chaplains share God's Word with people who are institutionalized in Wisconsin, northern Michigan, northeast Illinois, Indiana, and one prison in Tennessee.

These pastors are the reporters for the districts featured this month: CA—Hermann John; MI—Geoff Kieta; MN—Jeffrey Bovee; NW—Joel Lillo; SA—Mark Haefner; SEW—Scott Oelhafen; WW—Elton Stroh.

WELS news briefs

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

Board for Ministerial Education 414/256-3237

In January all congregations, area Lutheran high schools, and preparatory schools received a **video describing the work of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon**, together with a poster and brochure. Aid Association for Lutherans helped fund this project. Copies of the video are still available. Contact the WLS office at 262/242-8100.

Mass Media Ministry

The WELS docudrama *Harvest of Joy* received **three TELLY awards** in the 21st annual TELLY Awards Competition. The film was recognized in the categories of History, Religion, and Video Production and Direction.

Harvest of Joy also won an International Television Association Award in Media Excellence, the association's most prestigious award, for best long-form documentary and best audio.

Board for World Missions 414/256-3239

Over 5,500 copies have been distributed of *Bible Stories in Pictures*, a series of seven booklets published by the Multi-Language Publication Program. Three booklets cover Old Testament accounts, four cover the New Testament. Another phase of this project is to translate this material into different languages for our world mission fields.

The Lord took Pastor Bhushana Rao Dasari home on July 20 at the age of 61 years. Dasari, who came into the WELS by colloquy after study at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, was our first missionary to India in 1995.

Although he had been living in the United States for many years, he was eager to return to his home country to share the truth about Jesus with the people there.

He did that faithfully, not only supervising some 20 congregations in the Guntur area and teaching in our seminary but also lending the young mission valuable insight into Indian culture. His knowledge and experience will be sorely missed in that fledgling church.

Dasari is survived by his wife, Devakaruna, and their children, David, Paul, and Esther.

There were 16 confirmations at the remodeled church in Cakung, Indonesia, in July. Six were from the Buddhist family that was baptized about four months ago, six from within the congregation, and four who came from other Christian denominations. The church is now having worship services on Wednesday, Thursday, and Sunday so everyone can come.



Pastor Matthias Chen and his family gave a map of Taiwan (right) to WELS President Karl Gurgel. Chen presented the gift, inscribed with Matthew 28:19-20, on behalf of the Christian Evangelical Lutheran Church of Taiwan's board and members in appreciation of WELS' 33 years of support. Back row (from left): President Karl Gurgel, Pastor Matthias Chen, Eric Chen, Kazuyo Chen, Yueh-Hsin Chen, and missionary to Taiwan Rob Siirila. Front row: Yu-Li Chen, Angela Chen, and Jenny Chen.

Commission on Special Ministries 414/256-3241

WELS members in Europe also celebrated the 150th anniversary of WELS on June 11 at two of the worship locations in Germany. Says Lloyd Huebner, a retired pastor helping in Europe at that time: "This appeared to bring the people in Europe closer to WELS and what God in his love and mercy has done and continues to do for us all."



The European Civilian Chaplaincy program held two retreats over the summer—one in Grindelwald, Switzerland, and one at Conwy, England. Twenty-six came to Switzerland, and 36 came to England—some traveling over 14 hours to get there. The group in Switzerland (above) is preparing to begin a hike near Lauterbrunnen.

Participants at the special ministries conference in July were each given a revised version of a military devotional book first printed in 1951. This pocket companion, *God Our Refuge*, can still be used in the military, but also is a tool for visiting shut-ins, for personal and family devotions, and for outreach. It and the conference (see p. 23) were ways that the Commission on Special Ministries is celebrating WELS' 150th anniversary. To receive a copy, contact your district's Special Ministries coordinator.



What people believe—While people think that they understand what the Bible teaches, many of their beliefs are inconsistent with Bible teachings, according to a recent survey.

Says George Barna, whose firm conducted the research: “In one recent survey we found that almost nine out of 10 adults believe they know all of the basic teachings of Christianity very well. But when you explore what they think the Bible actually teaches . . . many theological inconsistencies and inaccuracies emerge.”

Listed below are some of the statements to which the survey asked people to respond. The percentage indicates how many people agree strongly or agree somewhat with the statement.

- The Bible is totally accurate in all of its teachings—60%
- The devil, or Satan, is not a living being but is a symbol of evil—58%
- If a person is generally good, or does enough good things for others during his life, he will earn a place in heaven—51%
- The Bible teaches that God helps those who help themselves—75%
- The Holy Spirit is a symbol of God’s presence or power, but is not a living entity—61%
- It doesn’t matter what religious faith you follow because they all teach the same lessons—44%
- The universe was originally created by God—87%

The data was from a nationwide random sample of 1,002 adults in February 2000. Margin of error is plus or minus three percent at the 95% confidence level.

[Barna Research Group, Ltd., July 12, 2000, news release]

Supreme Court says Scouts may bar gays—The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in June that the Boy Scouts of America can legally exclude a gay person from holding leadership

positions within the organization.

Justices said that requiring the Scouts to accept gay troop leaders would violate the organization’s First Amendment right of “expressive association”—burdening the group’s “ability to advocate public or private viewpoints” concerning homosexuality.

A decade ago an assistant scoutmaster was expelled from the Boy Scouts after being identified as co-president of a gay and lesbian organization at Rutgers University. He filed a lawsuit against the Boy Scouts in 1992. Though the New Jersey Supreme Court sided with him in 1999, this U.S. Supreme Court decision reversed that ruling.



Heart Association supports stem-cell research—The

American Heart Association’s board agreed in June to support using money from donors and federal funds to further the study of stem cells, the Associated Press reported.

Research on human stem cells, which are the simplest building blocks of human tissue, could lead to treatments for sufferers from strokes, heart disease, and other illnesses. But the main sources for these stem cells include aborted fetuses and discarded human embryos.

An association spokesman said the decision doesn’t necessarily give money to stem-cell research, but makes it a candidate for future funding. No research will be funded until there are strict guidelines to avoid abuses.

Vermont law offers same-sex couples more rights—Vermont has become the first state to offer same-sex couples marriage-like rights.

This civil union law, which went into effect in July, includes things such as property and inheritance benefits for same-sex couples. These couples who have a civil union license, however, will not receive federal

benefits, and their arrangement is not recognized in other states.

At least seven states—including Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, California, New York, Connecticut, and New Jersey—are exploring similar laws and looking to Vermont’s law as their model, according to the Associated Press.

Thirty-two states have passed laws banning same-sex unions.

Ethiopian Lutherans ordain first woman pastor—The Rev. Bekure

Daba of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus became the first ordained woman in the three million-member denomination.

The Ethiopian Lutheran denomination has 750 pastors and is said to be one of the fastest growing churches in Africa.

Christians, the majority of whom are Orthodox, make up about 40 percent of Ethiopia’s population of 70 million. Muslims represent about 43 percent.

Women accepted as clergy—

According to a recent poll by Gallup News Service, 71 percent of the American public were in favor of women acting as pastors, ministers, priests, or rabbis, while 23 percent were opposed. Six percent had no opinion.

Men (70 percent) and women (72 percent) were almost equal in their opinion that women could serve in the clergy.

The question, “Do you favor or oppose having women as pastors, ministers, priests, or rabbis in your own faith or denomination?” was asked of 924 people over 18 who expressed a religious preference out of a group of 1,032 adults.

[*Emerging Trends*, June 2000]

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

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

- Baerbock, Ronald E.**, to Publications for Latin American Missions, El Paso, Tex.
Brandt, John P., to retirement
Haag, Keith, to Cameroon, Africa
Pankow, Joel E., to Beautiful Savior, Topeka, Kan.
Poetter, Timothy, to St. Paul, Douglas/Grace, Warren, Ariz.
Proeber, James, to Our Redeemer, Santa Barbara, Calif.
Russow, David P., to Marvin M. Schwan Retreat Center, Trego, Wis.
Schaewe, Matthew J., to Huron Valley LHS, Westland, Mich.
Strand, James C., to Zion, Morton, Minn.
Zietlow, Peter D., to Sheridan, Wyo., exploratory

Teachers

- Blauert, Kristine D.**, to St. Mark's, Watertown, Wis.
Brohn, Celia, to St. Paul, South Haven, Mich.
Grennan, Linda M., to Resurrection, Aurora, Ill.
Hopkins, Susan L., to St. Lucas, Milwaukee
Hosbach, Daniel J., to Immanuel, Medford, Wis.
Marcis, Sarah, to Trinity, Marshfield, Wis.
Monday, Lori A., to Morning Star, Jackson, Wis.
Nelson, Carol L., to St. John, Milwaukee
Retberg, Daniel J., to Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Mich.
Scharrer, GloryAnn F., to Grace, Durand, Mich.
Unruh, William, to Northland LHS, Mosinee, Wis.
Weber, Carol M., to Shepherd, Albuquerque, N.M.

ANNIVERSARIES

- Wautoma, Wis.**—Peace (100). Oct. 1. Service, 9 PM with catered meal to follow. 920/787-3856.
Milwaukee, Wis.—Centennial (50). Oct. 15. Service, 3 PM with dinner to follow. <deanla@aol.com>.
Springfield, Mo.—Zion (10). Nov. 5. No Sunday service at 9 AM. Joint anniversary/reformation service, 3:30 PM. Dinner to follow. 417/887-0886.
Phoenix, Ariz.—Paradise Valley (25). Nov. 12. Worship services, 9 AM & 4 PM. Catered dinner and program to follow. RSVP to Cathy, 602/992-7209.
Tucson, Ariz.—Grace (50). Dec. 3. Anniversary of dedication. Service, 3:30 PM. Meal to follow. Former members invited. 520/623-6633.
Sault Ste. Marie, Mich.—Immanuel (100). Dec. 10. Service, 10:30 AM. Gordon Peters, <clp1984@sault.com>.

COMING EVENTS

- Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Women's Auxiliary meeting**—28th annual meeting. Oct. 7. Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon. 8 AM-1:30 PM. Luncheon, \$10. For a reservation, contact Sandra Hahn, 262/375-1845.
WELS Historical Institute—annual meeting. Oct. 8, 7 PM. Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary chapel, Mequon, Wis. <James_Kiecker@wlc.edu>.
Christian Growth Seminar—Oct. 14. Luther High School, Onalaska, Wis. 8 AM-1:30 PM. Registration, \$10. Linda Williams, 888/378-2182.
Ladies retreat—WELS South Suburban Ladies Retreat. Oct. 20-21, at Cedar Lake Bible Conference Center, Cedar Lake, Ind. Debi Witte, 708/672-0633.

National Men's Rally—Men of God, Fit for Life. Nov. 3-5. Sheraton, Four Points Hotel, Milwaukee. Also activities for women and children. Carla, 414/256-3278.

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>.

Israel trip—high school students and family members welcome. Dec. 25, 2000-Jan 3, 2001. Cost \$2,050-\$2,500. Led by Pastors David Putz (WLA) and Tom Westendorf (MVLHS). Register by Sept. 16 to avoid late fees. 920/921-4105 or 507/386-0468.

WELS handbell festivals

Northeast region, April 21-22, 2001, Fox Valley LHS, Appleton, Wis.

Southeast region, April 21-22, 2001, Shoreland LHS, Somers, Wis.

Western region, March 31-April 1, 2001, Great Plains LHS, Watertown, S.D.

Michigan region, April 28, 2001, St. Paul Lutheran School, Livonia, Mich.

Cheryl Diener, 715/258-7203.

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

Alaskan tour—sponsored by Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Service. July 27-Aug. 10, 2001. Fred Matzke, 888/685-9522.

AVAILABLE

Church furnishings—free to any congregation. Pick up required. Altar, pulpit, lectern, baptismal font, communion kneelers with rail (portable), guest registration stand, credenza. Martin Scheele, Navarre, Fla., 850/936-1005.

Organ & piano—Thomas electronic organ model 262, 2 keyboards, 13 pedals, matching bench. Cabinet grand piano made by Schilling and Sons, N.Y., with matching bench. Free for anyone in WELS who will pick it up. St. Paul, Monroe, Mich., 734/242-2200.

Chandelier lights—eight light fixtures. Each fixture measures 12" diameter by 30" high. Available for cost of shipping. Immanuel, Sault Ste. Marie, Mich., <clp1984@sault.com>.

Paraments—two altar cloths and pulpit hangings, green and white. For cost of shipping. Mark Panning, 608/372-6956.

Apartments—Arizona Lutheran Retirement Center has openings for one and two bedroom, non-assisted living apartments in the Phoenix area. ALRC is owned and operated by 10 WELS congregations and exists to serve WELS retirees by offering affordable housing. 602/995-2541.

NEEDED

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 P.O. Box in Minn. Must be high school senior or older. Harold Runke, c/o WELS Special Ministries, P.O. Box 452, New Ulm MN 56073 or 507/354-1784.

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>.

Used electronic church organ—two manuals and full pedals. Speakers not needed. St. Paul, Greenleaf, Wis. Wallace Gaulke, 920/864-7652.

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

Books—*John, Life and Letters*. Written by William Dallmann, published by Concordia. Hardcover Kretzmann Commentaries (green). Laurie, 978/657-4042.

SERVICE TIMES

Cottage Grove, Wis.—Abiding Shepherd (ELS). Sunday service, 9 AM. Family Bible study, 10:30 AM. Nathan Krause, 608/839-3770.

Safford, Ariz.—Winter visitors. Two hours from Tucson, three hours to Phoenix. Winter service time is at 10:30 AM. Bible class, 9:45 AM. Grace Lutheran Church, 225 E Main St, Safford AZ 85546. Paul Schulz, 520/428-7620.

Monroe, Mich.—Visitors invited to St. Paul. Saturday service, 6:30 PM. Sunday service, 9:30 AM. Sunday school, 9:30 AM. Bible study, 10:30 AM. Pastor Ochankehl, 734/242-2200.

Mississauga/Toronto/Oakville, Ontario, Canada—Cross of Life. Sunday service, 10:30 AM. Sunday school and Bible class, 9:15 AM. Joel Schulz, 905/785-6765.

NAMES WANTED

Clarksville, Tenn.—Also Fort Campbell and Hopkinsville, Ky., area. Matt Brown, 931/358-5949.

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

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

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.

2000 YEARBOOK**CORRECTIONS**

Some of the Sundays of the 2001 church year (p. 8) are listed incorrectly. The correct list is as follows:

- Jan. 7—Epiphany 1
- Jan. 14—Epiphany 2
- Jan. 21—Epiphany 3
- Jan. 28—Epiphany 4
- Feb. 4—Epiphany 5
- Feb. 11—Epiphany 6
- Feb. 18—Epiphany 7
- Feb. 25—Transfiguration

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

Armed with faith, love, and hope

Paul encourages us to put on “faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.”

Paul E. Zell

Doubt and despair, lies and lusts, anger and apathy: life is an everyday battle against these and a thousand other wicked things. The evil one shoots them like flaming arrows in our direction. Yet since our flesh is too soft to withstand them, it is not enough simply to shout, “Onward, Christian soldiers!” Our Lord graciously supplied us with armor better than any soldier was ever given. Paul encourages us to put on “**faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet**” (1 Thessalonians 5:8).

Read **1 Thessalonians 4:13–5:11**.

Our breastplate of faith and love

The saints at Thessalonica were hit hard with despair. Some of their brothers and sisters had died. As Satan’s lies kept striking their minds and hearts, their grief increased.

This letter handed them a “breastplate” to fend off such blows. It wasn’t manufactured of bronze or chain mail like the ones the Roman soldiers patrolling their city were wearing. Rather, their breastplate consisted of faith in their Lord’s death and resurrection. “**We believe that Jesus died and rose again,**” Paul reminded them, “**and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him**” (4:14).

When one of our loved ones dies, this same faith

remains our breastplate. By dying on the cross for all sins and by departing his grave on the third day, Jesus changed the definition of death. No longer is death an endless, heart-rending separation. It is a type of sleep. Those who die in our Lord are blissfully unaware of what is going on around them. Yet our Lord will wake them to be with him and use all their glorified senses and abilities. “**He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him**” (5:10). This is our faith.

What is remarkable is that Jesus did this despite what we deserved. By rights we sinners receive eternal death as our wages. By rights God inflicts his wrath on those who time and again show no respect for his holy will.

Yet “**God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ**” (5:9). Why? Because he loves the unlovable and gave us the right Savior.

He loves us, and nothing, not even death, can separate us from his love. With “**faith and love as a breastplate,**” nothing the devil slings in our direction can bring us down.

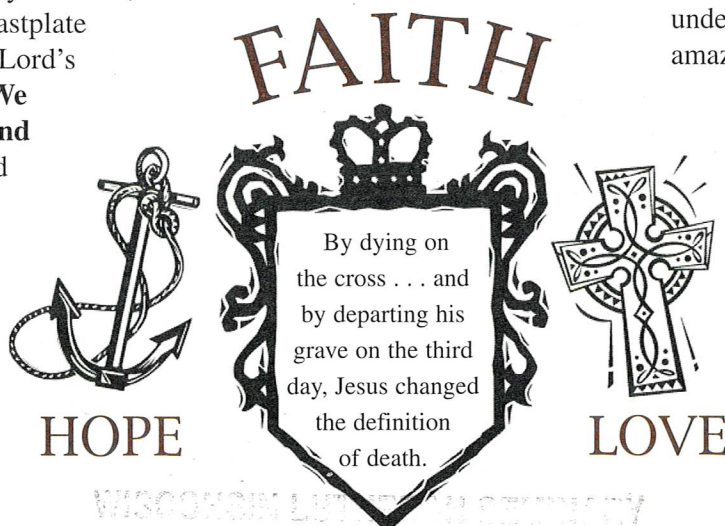
Our helmet of hope

Do you recognize these words of St. Paul? At a Christian funeral the pastor opens the Scriptures and reads this very passage aloud. It shapes the helmet of hope that we wear, spelling out what we are counting on in the face of death. “**For the Lord himself will come down from heaven . . . and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever**” (4:16-17).

Has anything more encouraging ever been shared with God’s people? In 1 Corinthians 13 the Holy Spirit declares that faith, love, and hope are his greatest gifts for our souls. Put them on, dear believer, and never underestimate the durability of this amazing armor.

Paul Zell is pastor at Messiah, Alpharetta, Georgia.

For further study:
Read *The People’s Bible: Thessalonians* (p. 46-56).



Bringing sin to light

Forward in Christ—it's been a glorious year of celebration with more still to come. We've so much for which to be grateful. It's good we are having an extended celebration of our synod's 150th anniversary.

Yet our heritage is much older than that. As Christians who trace our lineage back to Martin Luther, we thankfully recall Oct. 31, 1517, when the 95 Theses were nailed to the door of the Castle Church. Or, gratefully, we remember another of Luther's precious gifts to the church, his *Small Catechism*. It's sometimes called the Jewel of the Reformation.

In the catechism, Luther expounded simply and scripturally on the six chief parts of Christian teaching: the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and the Office of the Keys and Confession. In my next six articles, I will comment on one each time, beginning with the Ten Commandments.

Luther once remarked, "My mother caned me for stealing a nut, until the blood came. Such strict discipline drove me to the monastery, although she meant it well."

If a spanking, until the blood flowed, was the penalty for stealing a nut, what if Luther, George Washington-like, had cut down the tree that bore the fruit? What would the penalty then have been?

Luther, in his early days in the monastery, feared that the penalty for every one of his many sins was death. He sought to eliminate the legitimate threat of God's capital punishment by either avoiding sins in his life or making restitution for them to God.

Nonetheless, Luther wrote: "Fast bound in Satan's chains I lay; Death brooded darkly o'er me. Sin was my torment night and day, in sin my mother bore me. Yet deep and deeper still I fell; life had become

a living hell, so firmly sin possessed me" (*Christian Worship* 377).

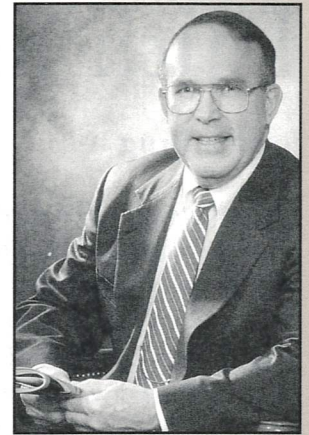
As with us, too, all of Luther's attempts at self-justification or self-purification were futile. Hell, sin's eternal penalty, was staring him in the face. The Ten Commandments, all too clearly, revealed to Luther how real a threat sin and death were. God would have every reason, legitimately, to sentence us to eternal death for our transgressions.

Then, by God's Spirit, Luther began to see that the law's chief purpose was to mirror sin, to bring it to light. To borrow from another hymn verse, "The law is but a mirror bright to bring the inbred sin to light that lurks within our nature" (CW 390). The Ten Commandments, in casting the shadow of death over us because of our sinfulness, leads us to look for the bright sunlight of the forgiving merits of Jesus.

But the law has other effects too. It works on all mortals through the voice of conscience to curb sin. Moreover, it is to be a guide for thankful, Christian living in response to God's pardoning grace. In the Commandments, we have 10 guidelines, with multiple, daily applications, which give us countless ways of saying thanks to God.

Remember, the law primarily, just like any mirror, reflects what is out of place in our lives, our sin. The gospel reflects a father's love. God declares us innocent, thanks to the forgiving merits of Jesus Christ. "So the law," Paul wrote in Galatians 3:24, "was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith."

Luther bled for stealing a nut. Jesus' blood cleansed us from every sin. Thank God, by his law, that he led Luther and us forward to Christ and to his pardoning cross.



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

The Ten Commandments, in casting the shadow of death over us because of our sinfulness, leads us to look for the bright sunlight of the forgiving merits of Jesus.

Faith and repentance

John F. Brug

I'm a lifelong WELS member. I've always believed in justification by faith alone. I have some questions after talking with a Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) friend. He says we are saved not only by faith but "repenting," as well as faith. He quotes Mark 1:15 as well as a comment made in the old LCMS catechism (1941), that says, "Penitent believers are those who feel sorry for sins (repenting) and believe in Jesus as their Savior (faith)." He says you can have faith, but if you don't feel sorry for sins or desire to turn from them then you're not forgiven.

Neither faith nor repentance is a cause of our forgiveness. The cause of forgiveness is the grace of God, who forgives us freely because Christ paid for our sins. Paul says, "We are saved by grace through faith." Forgiveness of sins is a gift from God that he gives to us freely because of Christ. Our faith is Spirit-worked trust in Christ as our Savior. It simply receives the gift. It is not a cause of forgiveness.

How then does repentance fit into this picture? Repentance is a change of mind in which a sinner turns from sin to God.

Article 12 of the Augsburg Confession defines repentance in this way: "Now, repentance consists properly of these two parts: One is contrition, that is, terrors smiting the conscience through the knowledge of sin; the other is faith, which is born of the gospel or of absolution, and believes that for Christ's

sake, sins are forgiven, comforts the conscience, and delivers it from terrors. Then good works are bound to follow, which are the fruits of repentance."

We see from this that faith and repentance are not two different things, but faith is the chief part of repentance. In fact, the *Gausewitz Catechism*, used for many years in WELS, says, "Repentance is the contrite sinner's faith in the forgiveness of sins."

Forgiveness of sins is a gift from God that he gives to us freely because of Christ.

Occasionally, "repentance" is used as a synonym of contrition, which is sorrow for sin. This appears to be the sense in which your friend is using the term. God's law produces in us sorrow over sin and the terrifying awareness that we cannot save ourselves. This awareness that we need a Savior prepares us for hearing the gospel, which reveals the needed Savior to us. "Repentance" in this sense is not something we add on to faith to make it deserving of forgiveness. Contrition is a prelude to faith, not an addition to it.

The condition your friend describes is an impossibility. It is not possible to have saving faith without being sorry for sin. Anyone who is not sorry for sin does not have faith. Saving faith is not just believing a set of facts about Christ. It is trusting in him for forgiveness. Faith pro-

duces in us love for God that wants to obey his commandments.

It is true that indifference to sin will destroy faith and forfeit the forgiveness Christ won for us, but we cannot think of repentance (contrition) as a condition we must meet in order to gain forgiveness. Sorrow over sin never obtains forgiveness for anyone. Faith alone receives forgiveness of sin, but true faith does not exist without sorrow over sin.

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>.

DEFINING RELIGION

Exegesis: the act of explaining or interpreting. Biblical exegesis involves the study of a section of Scripture by examining the vocabulary and grammar of the section in the original language and taking note of the immediate context of the passage, the general context and purpose of the particular book of the Bible in which the passage occurs, and the historical setting. By means of such study the exegete explains the meaning of the passage.

CHURCH BULLETIN BLOOPERS

- Low self-esteem support group will meet Thursday at 7 PM. Please use the back door. Ushers will eat latecomers.
- The eighth graders will be presenting Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in the church basement. The congregation is invited to attend this tragedy.
- The concert held in the fellowship hall was a great success. Special thanks are due to the minister's daughter, who labored the whole evening at the piano, which as usual fell upon her.

"Children are the living messages we send to a time that we will not see." Neil Postman
(*Current Thoughts & Trends*, March 2000)

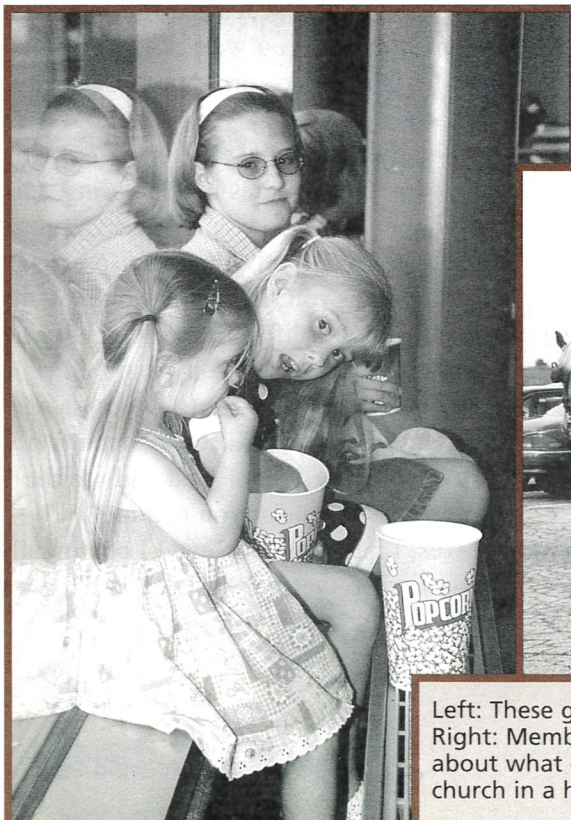
"When I stand before God
at the end of my life,
I would hope
that I would not have
a single bit of talent left
and could say,
'I used everything you gave me.' "

Erma Bombeck

(*The Winner's Circle*, May 2000)

"Dreams come a size too big so that we can grow into them." Josie Bissett
(*The Winner's Circle*, March 2000)

Picture this

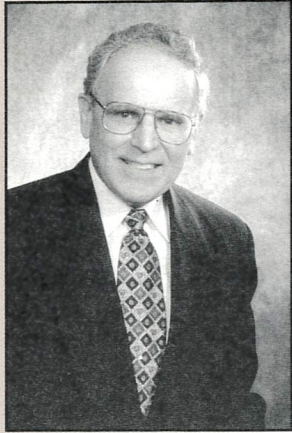


**THERE ARE ALL TYPES OF WAYS TO
CELEBRATE FORWARD IN CHRIST.**



Left: These girls enjoyed the popcorn at the Michigan District celebration. Right: Members of St. Paul, Howards Grove, Wis., went back in time to reminisce about what church was like "way back when." These two couples even rode to church in a horse-drawn wagon! (Sent by Carl Toepel, Sheboygan, Wis.)

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.



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

I fear that in the clamor for tolerance and respectability, the very concept of sin, guilt, and damnation will be lost.

I fear I'm phobic

I fear I'm phobic.

Some people, at least, would say I am. They learn, for example, that I believe homosexuality is a sin, and they say I am homophobic. That's the most common expression. But by their definition, I must also be live-in-phobic, abortionist-phobic, evolutionist-phobic, pagan-phobic. . . .

Oh, that expression "phobic"? It means "to have a fear of." My accusers imply an intense, irrational fear. They use the tag to brand me as ridiculously out-of-date, and they create a caricature of my real fears.

Am I, for example, pagan-phobic? Paganism is among the latest movements begging for acceptance—"coming out of the broom closet," they say. That may sound strange, since paganism until recently was seen as barbaric. But it's true, and avowed pagans are using modern media—Internet, TV, movies, books—to promote the cause. Pagans are on the increase and coming into the open in North America.

I'd lie if I told you that doesn't scare me. How about you?

To calm our fears, however, the new pagans quickly point out that they wouldn't hurt a flea. You could hardly ask for a better neighbor than a dedicated pagan. Good pagans are hard-working, friendly, honest, dependable. They care about quality of life.

Yes, and you might say the same about the others whom I am said to fear.

So, let me clarify my fears. I am not afraid that you, pagan (homosexual, abortionist, etc.), will physically harm me or anyone dear to me. I am not afraid to be in your presence, to talk with you, to work alongside you. I could genuinely like you as a person. Your kindness is not lost on me. I'm not even afraid, in most cases, that you'll try to recruit me into your movement.

So, what do I fear?

I fear that in your clamor for tolerance and respectability, the very concept of sin, guilt, and damnation will be lost. The need to repent of any activity will be considered a novel idea. I fear that such thinking will affect our children adversely, if only because they don't want to be labeled "phobic." I fear that the innocent will unwittingly embrace evil because it will appear good.

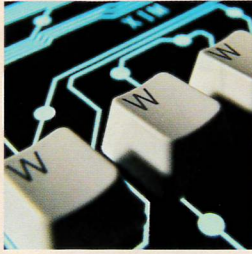
I fear that the Ten Commandments will be seen as relics of a lost morality, a puritanical scolding not to be taken seriously. A plaque to fix to the wall but not real commands from God to be obeyed. "You shall not commit adultery" unless you have bought the line that "Everybody's doing it" is more important than God saying "Don't do it." "You shall have no other gods" unless you feel that the measure of God is limited to your own whims and fancies.

I fear that you will never see the truth of salvation in Christ Jesus. Your paganism seems to serve you well enough in this world, but it holds no hope for eternity. I fear for you.

Finally, if this makes any sense, I fear my own inadequacies in addressing this issue with you. How do I show you that love, not hate, motivates me? How do I avoid giving you the impression that all is right with your lifestyle while getting close enough to you to tell you it isn't all right? How do I help lead you to the cross of Christ where you will see the results of sin destroy the Son of God and see the forgiveness won for you and me?

Yes, I have my fears, and I continually pray to God that he will show me the ways to overcome them.

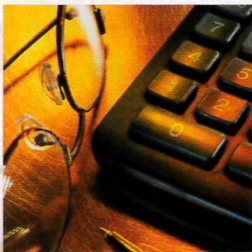
Gary P. Baumler



INTERNET



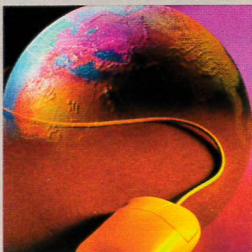
SOFTWARE



RECORD KEEPING

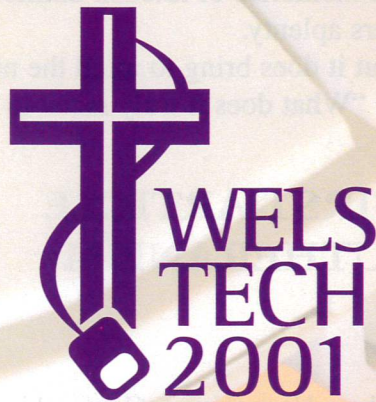


VIDEO



E-MAIL

By all possible means— expanding ministries through technology



July 15-18, 2001

Fox Valley Lutheran High School

Appleton, Wisconsin

WELS Tech 2001 is a comprehensive conference that will help pastors, teachers, and laypeople use the latest technology to enhance their ministries. Sessions will be available for beginning, intermediate, and advanced users.

Sessions will be scheduled on a variety of topics, including:

- Setting up and designing a church/school Web page
- Choosing church office software
- Using computers in the classroom
- Coordinating on-line Bible classes and distance learning
- Researching on the Internet
- Computer networking

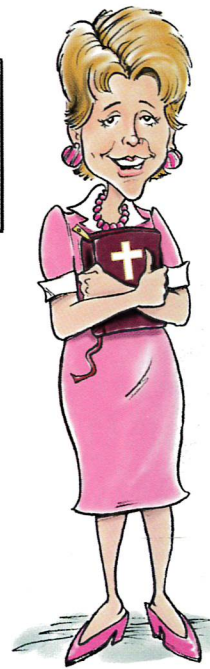
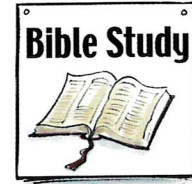
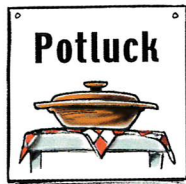
WELS Tech 2001 Web site

A more comprehensive list of session topics is available at <www.wels.net/welstech2001>. While at the Web site, sign up for the WELS Tech listserv, which provides periodic updates on the conference.

To receive future information, contact:
WELS Communication Services • 2929 N Mayfair Rd • Milwaukee WI 53222
414/256-3210 • welstech2001@sab.wels.net

www.wels.net/welstech2001

I AM A LUTHERAN. WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?



David L. Hein

I just saw a book advertised with the title *I'm a Lutheran. What Does This Mean?* According to the promotion, there are funny stories by a Norwegian woman who grew up with fond memories of lutefisk dinners, potluck nightmares, and interesting characters aplenty.

I'm sure the book is great, but it does bring to mind the need for a more serious answer to the question: "What does it truly mean to be a Lutheran?"

THE FIRST ARTICLE OF LUTHERANISM

I am a Lutheran.

What does this mean?

It does not mean that you must have Norwegian or German blood in you. It does not mean that you must belong to a church where your pastor wears only black pants and white shirts and cuts the lawn with a tie on. It does not mean that your church must use only a pipe organ for its music, and all the music must have been written before 1546. And it does not mean that true, proper Lutherans are all white, speak only English or German, and their grandparents all came from a place called Munchenhaus. These are cultural concerns, not doctrinal. True Lutherans focus on doctrine.

What really counts?

What it does mean to be Lutheran is that you see the Bible as God's Word from cover to cover. It means you believe that the faith that resides in you was not manufactured by your logic but was given by your God. It means you believe that everything the Lord has taught you is important, and you refuse to let go of any part of God's Word for the sake of compromising with Satan. It means you're not afraid of changing cultures, languages, or traditions when you stand securely on the pure Word of God and God's promises contained in it.

What does God promise?

Every promise God has given you—including the promise that every single sin of yours has been paid for in full by Jesus—is a promise he keeps. So you know that you have a place in heaven by God's grace alone, and that when you stand before the Lord on judgment day, you can say with confidence: "Heaven is my home. It is my gift from my Savior. Though I was a sinner, by his love and forgiveness, by his perfect life and sacrificial death, I am an eternal child of God."

This is most certainly true!