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FORWARD IN CHRIST

October 2001

The Word from the WELS

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Lutherans love everybody

A missionary's homecoming

What Jesus means to me



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WELS convention
coverage inside

Do Lutherans and Catholics Really Agree?

Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification May Create Confusion Among Confessional Lutherans

On October 31, 1999, in Augsburg, Germany, the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation took a huge step toward bridging the nearly 500-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 divisive 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.

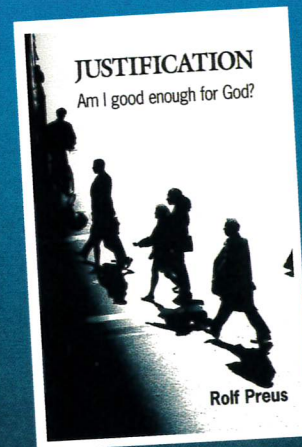
Are you interested in reading more about this subject and the issues surrounding it? Would you like to have an easy resource to refer to when defending your beliefs about justification to your Catholic friends and relatives? Or perhaps you haven't examined confessional Lutheran beliefs since your catechism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

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It's not good to be alone

I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong—that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith. Romans 1:11,12

Paul M. Janke

By long tradition, WELS Lutherans gather with members of other WELS congregations at Reformation time. We come together to give thanks for the blessings God brought to us through the Reformation and to recommit ourselves to teaching his Word faithfully.

An additional benefit is the reminder that our fellowship extends beyond the boundaries of our congregation. As we join in worship with members of neighboring WELS churches, we see and hear that we're not alone in our confession of faith in Jesus. Perhaps this is why in outlying areas people drive over 100 miles to attend an area Reformation service.

The danger of being a loner

Paul had not yet visited Rome when he wrote his epistle to the Romans. His plans to get to Italy hadn't worked out. Still, he longed to see the believers there so that he and the Romans could be "mutually encouraged by each other's faith."

We Christians are not meant for isolation. God sent Jesus to reconcile us to himself and to each other. The Lord designed us to live in fellowship with other believers so that we can encourage, admonish, and help each other on our journey heavenward.

If we become isolated from other believers, we are easy targets for Satan's arrows of discouragement



and despair. Elijah, despondent because he was convinced that he was the last believer in Israel, asked the Lord to take his life. Martin Luther, too, experienced times of despondency when he wondered whether he alone understood the gospel correctly.

It's hard to believe, then, that anyone would intentionally isolate himself from the company of believers. Yet it happens. Misplaced priorities, hurt feelings, and even our jobs can take us away from those who care for us enough to encourage and admonish us with the Word. Reading the Bible at home or listening to religious radio programming doesn't provide the Christian-to-Christian encouragement that Paul considers valuable.

The blessing of mutual encouragement

In what may be the Bible's best-known passage about church attendance, Paul writes, "Let us not give up meeting together . . . but let us encourage one other" (Hebrews 10:25). In speaking of worship

attendance, we often focus on the spiritual benefit we receive from hearing the Word and receiving Holy Communion. That's legitimate. But Hebrews approaches the matter from a different angle and asks us to consider our responsibility to encourage fellow believers. This was why Paul refused to give up on his goal of getting to Rome. He wanted to strengthen the believers

there. He wanted to use the power of the gospel to build them up in their faith—face to face.

But this encouragement wasn't a one-way street. Paul would not just be encouraging the Romans, but they would also be encouraging him. In Rome, Paul would be able to see for himself the people's progress in the faith, their patience in adversity, and their zeal to serve their newfound Savior. It still happens today. Any pastor can tell you of times when he left a visit with a member feeling that he benefited more than the member did.

God has brought us together in families, congregations, and our synod so that we can encourage each other. Reformation observances are a perfect opportunity to extend that encouragement past the walls of our own churches to believers in sister congregations. We were designed to do it.



Paul Janke is pastor at St. Peter, Modesto, California.

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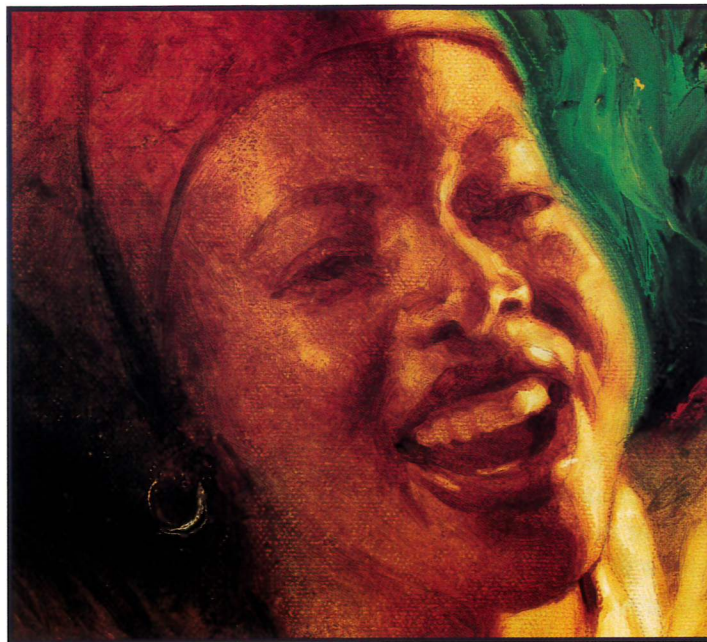
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A Nigerian
witch doctor
helps a WELS
missionary
understand
why his con-
gregation in
Abia Okpo
was lethargic
when studying
God's Word.

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bits & pieces



You'll notice some different "features" this month.

- We've added four pages so that we can give you full coverage of the WELS 56th biennial synod convention, and we've included a readers' survey. Let us know what you think.
- We've tried to add an outreach emphasis to this issue. So don't keep this magazine, but share it with others.
- This month all congregations will receive free copies of the magazine. We welcome our new readers.



Do you like to sing? Why? The late Alvin Werre, missionary to Nigeria in the 1950s, shares why the Nigerians sang at that time and how and why they changed their tune (p. 9).



Reformation deals with the need for change from what was the accepted norm. As you celebrate the Reformation, take to heart the following articles, which deal with the need to sometimes step "out of the box" to get the job done.

- "Eyes and ears open for evangelism" (p. 12).
- "Traditional or scriptural?" (p. 36).

And don't miss "The Spirit of the Reformation" (p. 14), which reminds you that no matter how bad things get, you have no worries if you hold on to what never changes—God's Word.



Daniel Leyrer, professor of New Testament and practical theology at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (WLS), Mequon, is now doing the monthly theological review of the magazine. He replaces Prof. Richard Balge from WLS, who has faithfully filled that role for 10 years. Welcome, Prof. Leyrer. And thanks, Prof. Balge, for all your hard work and kind words.

—JKT

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Thank you for printing the article “Now I see clearly” [Aug.].

As a pastor, I have been in the painful position of having to turn down requests to officiate at funerals of non-members. It was refreshing to hear about the issue from a layperson’s perspective.

Some laypeople and even some of our pastors do not understand the confessional reasons why our churches ordinarily should not hold a funeral for a non-member. I hope this article will stimulate further discussion in WELS about our funeral practices. In this ecumenical age when many churches will provide a funeral for anyone, we confessional Lutherans need to be reminded that a funeral is also a testimony about the faith of the deceased.

Paul Fanning



Kaukauna, Wisconsin

I enjoyed the picture of the Wisconsin Lutheran College Choir performing in the Salzburger Dom [Aug.].

I, for one, was very happy to see the choir give a short public performance in a Roman Catholic place of worship. What a wonderful witness!

Raymond E. Gadke



Chicago, Illinois

In the article entitled “Hands of a hero” by Ashley Biedenbender [Aug.],

the “hero” was Mrs. Min (Ervin) Bilse, who was head of the kitchen at Northwestern College from 1941-1974. Ashley’s article was 10th out of 5,000 entries in a national Farm Bureau competition and won \$500 as a prize.

Gwen Freier



Benton Harbor, Michigan

Re: Ashley Biedenbender, writer of “Hands of a hero” [Aug.]

Wow! This girl has a writing talent! Praise God. FIC should snatch her up so she will continue to use it to his glory.



Laura Pimentel

Re: “There is more” [June].

If that female Jehovah’s Witness claimed her faith taught that there was no afterlife, she was mistaken. I was raised in a Jehovah’s Witness home, but became a Lutheran after I married in 1946. I have been elder, chairman, representative to the Synodical Conference, and have been active most of my life in the Lutheran faith. But I do know much about the Witnesses.

“The dead know nothing” (Ecclesiastes 9:5). Jehovah’s Witnesses say you are dead till the resurrection. Then Christ will rule 1,000 years, and the remnant, 144,000, of which Grandmother thought she was one, would be alive when Christ came again. This “rapture” was explained in this issue also. Armageddon, the final battle between God and Satan, would be over, and there would be no more sin. Alleluia!

The Witnesses have written their own “Bible” and have training sessions on presenting their agenda. Understanding our Bible and reading it is good for our souls, as well as a defense against the Witnesses’ “plausible” arguments.

Keith Humbert

Gladwin, Michigan

As a lay delegate to the synod convention, I was happy to read “A joy to serve” [July].

The article gave some relief from the apprehension I was experiencing: hot, humid Michigan, a lot of people I didn’t know, and the *Book of Reports and Memorials* to digest (especially the portion being addressed by my committee).

Having now returned home, I can only say that the article didn’t go far enough. You cannot compare the convention to a voters’ assembly. It is so much more: the Bible studies, devotions, synodical reports are so much more uplifting, and then the reports from the missionaries—AWESOME! The committee work and then discussion on the convention floor—dynamic.

I can agree with Paul Wirth (whom I met) that “The results of our work will affect lives around the world. . . . What could be more important than the work of the church?” The experience has been humbling and motivating; I have been energized to “WORK while it is day.” I am so thankful for the opportunity to have experienced and participated at this convention.

Robert Gronlund



Keizer, Oregon

After reading the article “Marketing in evangelism” [Aug.], I, for one, totally disagree with the thought content.

Growing a church is based on Word and Sacrament only, not on humanistic business marketing devices. The Great Commission says, “Go into all the world and teach all nations.” It does not say to go into all the world and market the church. If a church uses humanistic business tactics to grow a church, that church is building a foundation on sand. Where is the efficacy of the Word?

Marcel LeRoy

Southbury, Connecticut

Pastor Bob Hartman, administrator of WELS Commission on Evangelism, responds: We fully agree that church growth is solely based on Word and Sacrament, but the term marketing still has a proper place in community identity. For instance, an exterior sign, a yellow pages ad, and a brochure fall under the marketing umbrella, and few churches exist without them. Marketing simply assists churches to gain an additional audience with whom churches can share the good news of Jesus Christ.

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



It's all Hebrew to me

Kenneth A. Cherney Jr.

A good name is better than fine perfume" (Ecclesiastes 7:1). It's a timeless truth but probably not a verse that's on anybody's list of "Bible difficulties." Once you know something about the value of perfume in the ancient Near East, the interpretation is a snap. Solomon is saying that a good reputation is a precious and delightful commodity—but that's about it, right?

Not quite. Consider that Solomon actually said, "*Tov shem m'shemen tov*"—literally, "Good name more than perfume, good." When you read the proverb in Hebrew, the first thing you notice is that it's only four words. It's short and pithy in a way the English version is not. Second, the words for "name" and "perfume"—*shem* and *shemen*—sound alike. It's a pun, the kind of play on words that the Bible loves. Next, notice that these two sound-alike words are placed together in the middle of the proverb, with exactly the same word—*tov* and *tov*—on either end. In Hebrew, in other words, this verse is a gem. It's a snappy little saying that, once an Israelite heard it, would have been very hard to forget.

If, like most people, you can't read the passage in Hebrew, what have you lost? In one sense, nothing. The New International Version's (NIV) translation is accurate. It conveys exactly the point that Solomon—and the Holy Spirit—were trying to make. But it doesn't bring everything that's there in Hebrew over into English, because that would be impossible. To appreciate Solomon's artistry fully, you either have to know Hebrew or know someone who does.

Fortunately, you do: your pastor. We're back at a subject we looked at together a

few months ago—pastors and their training. Over the years, we in WELS have done a pretty good job of training pastors in the Bible's original languages, though we're always working to improve.

In my opinion, though, we could do more to help the people in the pew see why that training is important. Sometimes people ask whether all the time we spend on language study wouldn't be better spent on developing pastors' evangelism or counseling skills. Other people seem to think that pastors study biblical languages mainly so that they can check the NIV for mistakes. These people ask, logically enough, why our synod couldn't simply give the NIV one good going-over and be done with it.

There's no need for anybody to check Ecclesiastes 7:1 in the NIV for "mistakes." There are none. But just think how a pastor who knows Hebrew could make use of the beauty of that proverb in a sermon. He could explain it in a Bible class. He could use it to start a discussion of how proverbs worked in ancient Israel or of how we today could communicate God's Word with the same punch as Solomon did in his day.

A pastor can do all that and more, if he knows the Bible's original languages. I'm grateful that my pastor does.

I'm hopeful that my grandchildren's pastor will, too.

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

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• WHATEVER

What Jesus means to me

My dad's cancer taught me about Jesus' love.

Anna Mastin

As far back as I can remember, Jesus was a part of my life. I was baptized when I was 10 days old. My family went to church almost every Sunday. We prayed and studied the Bible together. Jesus was everywhere I was.

Then I turned six.

I remember Friday, Nov. 2, 1992, well. It wasn't my birthday. It was the day my dad found out that he had leukemia (cancer of the blood). He had gone to the doctor thinking he had an ulcer. The phone rang in the middle of supper. It was the doctor calling. We sat on the bedroom floor and cried.

Paul, my older brother, was nine. Ruth was eight. Daniel was two. My dad said that Jesus would take care of us, so I didn't worry.

Within the hour the oncologist (cancer doctor) called and wanted my dad admitted to the hospital. My life changed. My dad was in the hospital for four months and in the clinic every day, all day, for a year after undergoing a bone marrow transplant. During that time I no longer went home after school. My church adopted my siblings and me.

My mom was at the hospital with my dad. So after school on Monday and Thursday, we went to Grandma's house. On Tuesday and Wednesday, we went to Pastor Scheuerlein's house and ate supper there. On Friday, Mrs. Gengler came to our house to baby-sit. People from church fed our family for four months. Some people that we didn't even know brought meals!

Mr. Netz, a retired grandpa, mowed our yard. He also took us out for pizza, ice cream, and Old Country Buffet. I wondered why he did this. He said it was Jesus' love. Because of what Jesus did for us, people wanted to show that they cared.

My mom told me that my dad was sick because we live in a sinful world. She said that

we were not being punished for our sins, but that our bodies don't always work perfectly because we are not perfect.

I remember going to see my dad in the hospital three times that year. He was bald from the medicine and was thin and tired. He didn't look like my dad.

I asked my mom if he would get better. She said, "God will take good care of him. If he wants Dad in heaven, then Dad will be in a wonderful place. If God still has plans for him here on earth, then we can enjoy having him around longer. God will do what is best."

I knew my dad believed that Jesus died to save him from his sins and that he would go to heaven if he died. My prayers every night included, "Please make Dad better."

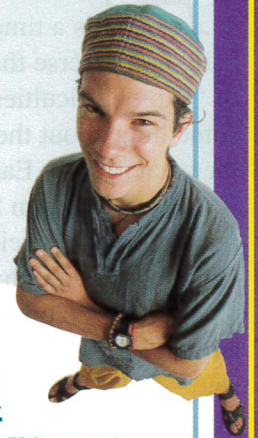
My prayer was answered. My dad's cancer has been gone for seven years.

We didn't go many places or do many things that year, but we were together. Don't ever take family for granted. Sometimes when I get uptight with my dad about something silly, I think of how lucky I am to have a dad.

Four years ago my dad took a job in Washington, D.C. I left behind my friends and relatives and wondered why we moved.

But God has a plan. In Wisconsin, all my friends knew that Jesus was their Savior from sin. In Virginia, I have lots of friends and neighbors who don't know about Jesus' love. Having Jesus in my life helped my family and me through some difficult things. I'm thankful that I have known Jesus my whole life, and I hope to help put Jesus into other people's lives.

Anna Mastin, a member at Trinity, Woodbridge, Virginia, is a freshman at Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wisconsin.



THEY SING BECAUSE THEY ARE AFRAID

Alvin G. Werre

The village and the church in Abia Okpo in the Eastern Region of Nigeria were typical of the 15 villages and churches to which I had been assigned to serve. Perhaps in some ways Abia Okpo was more progressive. The church members had already built their own "permanent" church building of cement blocks. The congregation also was larger than most of the others. And yet it was typical.

It was like the others because in all of them there was something wrong. I couldn't put my finger on the problem. Church attendance was good, in fact, far better than in the United States. Offerings were not outstanding, but they compared well with other churches in this part of Nigeria. Yet, there was a certain deadness, a lethargy. I could feel it whenever we penetrated deeply into a Bible truth or whenever we applied that truth to everyday living.

I had already begun to suspect what was wrong when I decided one Tuesday after Bible class to visit the local witch doctor, or "priest chief." I had longed to add such a man to my list of converts, thinking that would persuade the common people to turn to Christ also. Although we had nearly 300 baptized souls in Abia Okpo, this did not represent even 20 percent of the total population.

As I approached the house of the witch doctor, he came out and greeted me warmly. He asked me to be seated, showing me the customary African hospitality. I do not recall all of that conversation, but the parts I do recall have haunted my memory.

continued on p. 10

Come along on a real-life adventure narrated by a WELS missionary to Nigeria in the 1950s.



part of God's family

They sing . . . continued from p. 9

I asked him if he resented the coming of the Christian church into his community. To my surprise, he said no.

"I welcome the *Afia Owo* (white man). You have been good for us," he said.

Surely that was not the reaction that Paul had received in Ephesus when he cut into the idol-selling business. Apparently, I had not been very effective.

"Just how have we been good for you?" I inquired.

"You have brought us medicine and hospitals, and you have a motor car to carry our sick to these places. You have given us schools, and our young people have learned to read in our language and in yours. Books are a source of much knowledge."

"But," I protested, "you have your own medicine. Do you not believe in the power of your own medicine?"

The priest chief laughed. There was a ring of hopelessness, almost bitterness in that laugh. "I do what my fathers before me taught me to do. How shall I or any of us know if it is true or false, if it helps or does not, or what it even means."

"But hasn't my preaching cut into your business?" I continued. "If the Christians no longer believe that disease is caused by evil spirits, and if they no longer come to you to buy protective charms, nor bring you their eggs and chickens for you to make sacrifice to the spirits of your ancestors, then surely you are not growing as wealthy as you might have."

"But they do come."

"Christians?" I asked, acting more surprised than I really was. "Not all of them." I stated that as a fact.

"Almost all of them," he replied.

"But how can they believe what you tell them and also believe what

I tell them?" I persisted.

"They don't," was his reply. "They believe neither you nor me. Therefore, they try both. They will try anything because they are not sure of anything."

I sat in silence, not knowing how to go on. The chief had a hint of a smile. Finally, as if he wished to clear up the subject, he told a typical African parable that I could never understand, but which they seemed to think should be clear to anyone.

"*Etubom* (Sir)," he said, "when our people are working in the field or mudding a hut, they laugh, they sing. In the evening they beat their drums, they chant, and sing until they are tired and then they sleep."

"I know that," I replied, "but I do not understand your meaning."

"The people sing, the people chant, the people laugh, the people come to me, and they come to you because they are afraid. You and I are making our living," he said, putting me into the same category with him, "because people are afraid. It has been this way always. Do not expect it to be different. If they believed you, they would not come to me. If they believed me, they would not come to you. But they do not know what to believe. They listen to you, but their fears remain. They come to me, and still they are afraid. Does it not seem strange to you that people should sing because they are afraid?"

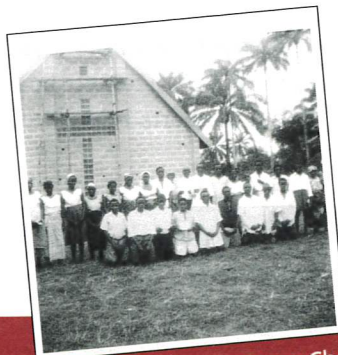
"There is no hope for these people that they will not be afraid?" I asked.

His answer made me feel a bit ashamed. He said, "You are a preacher sent from the most high God. If you say there is no hope, then there is no hope. But you and I can have hope that we will always have work to do." He laughed, but there was no humor in it.

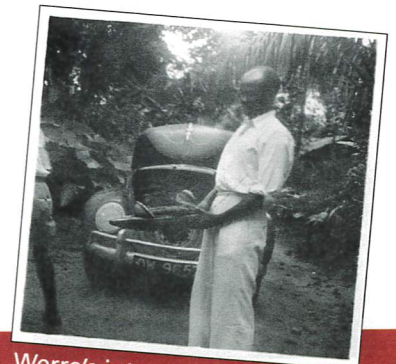
Some time later, my interpreter and I picked 20 of our most trusted souls from the church. We trained them to go from hut to hut to get as many "heathen" people as possible to come to a series of evangelistic services. We set the date for the services and in four successive nights preached to more than 2,000 souls. From those 2,000, we had some 60 inquirers. Of those, we instructed and eventually baptized 47. These newly baptized Christians began spreading the good news of the gospel to others. As a result, something began to happen in the village of Abia Okpo.

There was unrest. Church attendance declined. Many no longer came to communion. Then came the climax, the "little Pentecost."

I was at church having Bible class. My instruction from Isaiah centered on idol worship. I read: "They lavish gold out of the bag, and weigh silver in the balance, and hire a goldsmith; and he maketh it a god; they fall down, yea, they worship. They bear him on the shoulder, they carry him and set him in his place and he



Members of Abia Okpo Church in Nigeria in the 1950s.



Werre's interpreter holding some of the idols (juju) collected to burn at the church.

standeth; yea one shall cry to him, yet he cannot answer nor save him out of his trouble” (46:6-8 KJV). I applied that to the juju (idols) and charms being sold by the priest chief.

Then I skipped to Isaiah 53, “Who hath believed our report?” and applied that to the people. Then finally into the beautiful verses that follow, the description of Christ: “Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. . . . All we as sheep have gone astray. The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all ” (4,6 KJV).

I asked them why they were still trying to atone for their sins when Christ had already done so for them. Why were they still afraid if Christ was guaranteeing them eternal life?

An old man interrupted my lesson. In a typical roundabout way he admitted that he had juju in his home—not his, but he was keeping them for a friend. Yet he said, “I have felt the burden of my self-deceit.” He paused, and then turning to the people said, “Today I am through with deceit. Today I am through with fear. Today I cast myself on the Lord for forgiveness and all things. Today I have learned what it means to be a sinner. And Jesus died for sinners.”

He left. We continued the lesson. Shortly he returned bearing his juju. He laid them on our altar. Another man rose, then another, then women and children. Finally the church was empty. But they all returned.

All day long they came. Old people, young people, church people, heathen people, even people from other vil-

lages, bringing their gods until they lay in heaps around the altar. It was a pile of rubble to my 20th-century American eye, but to them it represented a small fortune.

In the evening, we all met in the church again. It had never been so packed. They came from every direction and perhaps for many reasons. I preached to them, trying to encourage them in this venture. Then the young men gathered up the dead gods, the sticks, feathers, and bones and carried them outside. After dousing them with kerosene we burned them to ashes.

As the flames leaped toward the sky, a silence fell over the crowd. Then they began to sing, spontaneously, lustily, in beautiful harmony.

Thus I left them that night, but I had a stop to make. I stopped at the priest chief’s home. This time he spoke first. “Today, my friend,” he said, “we have come to a parting in our ways.”

“What do you mean?” I asked.

“Remember, I told you our people sing because they are afraid. Tonight they are singing because they are not afraid.”

“But you can join them,” I suggested too hopefully.

“No, not I,” he shook his head sadly. “I know what you tell them is true. I knew it already when we spoke before. There is hope. But it can never be for me. I am a priest chief. I can never be anything else.”

As I sat eating a late supper, my wife handed me the day’s mail. I read

as I ate, and as I read, the words of the priest chief kept coming back to me.

Part of one letter read, “We are supposed to have confirmation in our church next Sunday, but there is a lot of arguing going on about it. Most of the mothers want their daughters to wear white dresses. However, Mrs. _____ and Mrs. _____ want pink. The minister suggested we all get white gowns to solve the problem, but it seems such a shame to spend all that money on pretty dresses that no one will get to see.”

I remembered the words of the priest: “We do what our fathers taught us. How shall we know if it is true or false or what it means?”

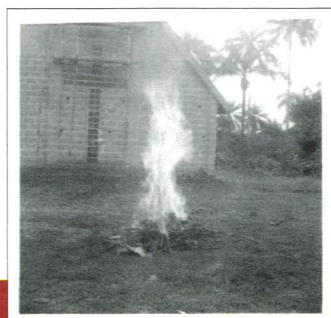
Later as I read newspaper reports sent to us from the States, I noticed item after item that recalled the words of that priest chief. Teenagers caught in dope rings. Respectable churchmen being arrested for intoxication. Gambling and sex. I remembered when I had asked the priest chief, “How can they believe both you and me?” And I remembered his answer: “They don’t. Therefore they will try anything because they are sure of nothing.”

Since then I have had to leave Africa. I am again an American in America. As I see the commotion in our great nation, the new organizations, the new legislation, the slogans, the right wingers and the left wingers, the racists, the mobs on the street, the rioters, the chanters, the singers, I think of the words of that chief, “They sing because they are afraid.”

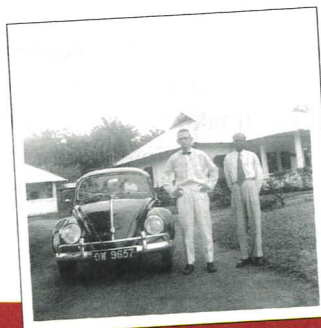
There is no hope for America or for anyone until the day men learn to sing because they are not afraid.



The late Alvin Werre, a WELS missionary in Nigeria from 1958-1961, wrote this article in the late 1960s. It was recently submitted for publication by his son, Luke.



Burning idols at Abia Okpo Church.



Missionary Al Werre and his interpreter on their way to church on a Sunday morning.

Eyes and ears open for evangelism

After worship a faithful member approached his pastor: "Pastor, I was at my brother's church in Ohio last month. A missionary from Africa preached and gave an inspirational presentation on his work. We ought to do something like that so that our people get more excited about supporting mission work."

That same Sunday Maria and her two children showed up for worship. Maria looked a little worn out. She struggled to carry her baby and the diaper bag while coaxing her son to stay next to her. Two people smiled at her in the welcome area, but no one sat with Maria in the back pew. After worship, a long-time member spoke to the pastor: "Did you see that woman in the back of church today? I've noticed that more and more Hispanic Americans have moved into town recently. One works at the bank. Another is a new checkout person at the Piggly Wiggly. I guess times are changing fast in our community."

The mission in our backyard

These observations might be heard in any WELS congregation. One is concerned about awareness and support of missions in the world. Another is seemingly unaware that new people and nationalities, hurting and lonely



A gospel-centered congregation will make evangelism a priority in its activities, budget, and words of encouragement.

Wayne I. Schulz

people, present huge evangelism opportunities for the congregation right at its doorstep and for members where they live and work.

What does it take to instill member awareness that looks intently for the lost and that makes efforts to reach out to them? Jesus said, "Open your eyes and look at the fields" (John 4:35). Are we looking to see

- the rapidly changing world of the new millennium and ways to reach it?
- the emergence of immigrants in small towns and large cities?
- new housing developments and new people in the vicinity of the church or in another part of the city?
- immense housing and care units for the elderly?
- a new generation of young people open to mentors and coaches for life and looking for acceptance in a place that cares?

How many of today's disciples, fed and nourished on a gourmet diet of the Word, imitate Christ by seeking non-churched people? How many look at friends and neighbors with purpose, find and sit with the confused, the lonely, the bored, the lost? How many listen to them intently, speak to them sincerely and honestly, learn with them as they search the Scriptures, and serve as their mentors in their budding Christian lives? How many congregations are willing to use more of their resources and facilities, including spacious gymnasiums, to reach out to neighborhoods and lead people into the life-giving Word of the Savior? How many think of themselves as the workers for whom Christ requested prayers?

Creating member awareness of that mission field

How many? We can't speak for others; we have to look at ourselves and where we are weak.

But guilt trips won't inspire evangelism awareness. Awareness begins with emphasis on and appreciation for the gospel. The news that "God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:19) amazes, reorders, and renews Christian lives. The truth that our salvation is in Christ and that "in him all things hold together" (Colossians 1:17) opens hearts and minds to reality and activity. The cross of Christ energizes and sends Christians to meet the world head on and to carry theology into the highways of human life with the desire to meet human needs. The cross leads to concern and compassion for a world of bruised and beaten people.

A gospel-nourished congregation will work toward a deeper understanding of the Great Commission

The goal of the Christian congregation is to achieve a healthy balance between nurture and outreach in its ministry. In the congregational setting, nurture should automatically occur. Outreach occurs when the congregation gives priority to reaching the unchurched with the gospel.

The "seven pieces of the evangelism pie" represent completeness in evangelism outreach. Ideally, a congregation will have all seven pieces up and running. Realistically, a congregation may be concentrating on one, two, or three pieces of the pie.

Which piece or pieces of the evangelism pie need emphasis in your congregation?

May this series of articles give you encouragement and guidance for personal and congregational outreach.

*Pastor Robert Hartman, administrator
Commission on Evangelism*

passages (Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15, Luke 24:45-48, John 20:21, Acts 1:8). It will ask, "What do these words mean for this congregation at this time and in this place?" A serious look at these passages will move a group to dis-

comfort with the status quo and toward becoming mission-focused and united to reach the lost. A gospel-centered congregation will make evangelism a priority in its activities, budget, and words of encouragement.

Schools of Outreach, workshops that help congregations evaluate and plan how they share the promise in their communities, have helped over 600 congregations plan for greater mission awareness and involvement. Several items receive emphasis.

First, people who are regularly in God's Word grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus. Hearts warmed in worship and Bible study will look for congregational direction and then go out with a message of comfort, hope, and change. This requires a planned curriculum with healthy doses of outreach examples. It also anticipates training so that mission-focused people are enabled to move into the neighborhoods with the joy of new life in Christ.

Second, congregations can look at Acts 2:42-47 and see a model congregation in action with the powerful Word. The early Christians grew up in the Word, had fellowship around that Word, went out with that Word, and gathered people through the proclamation of the Word.

Third, congregations are urged to work on a specific Bible study and develop a mission statement. Later, that mission statement will be publi-



Break and stretch time at a School of Outreach in Universal City, Tex. This group of people is from Abiding Word, Houston, Tex.

cized, emphasized, preached, modeled, reviewed, and renewed regularly. Groups, committees, and task forces will plan in accordance with the mission statement so the congregation becomes a team focused on a common goal. Members will realize that discipleship with Jesus means Christian witness during the week.

Fourth, pastors and lay leaders can plan classes, workshops, and retreats to equip members for friendship witnessing and evangelism. They can model an interest and concern for people that will include outreach and witness. They can refer to stories in *Mission Connection* to show how others share the gospel. They might schedule a special mission week or designate every fifth Sunday in a month as a mission Sunday.

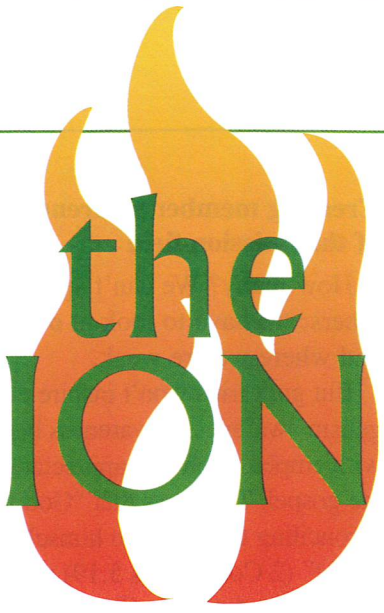
Schools of Outreach emphasize that Word and sacrament congregations need to be bold and on target. We have so much to offer a new millennium of people searching for peace, meaning, and belonging.

Want to have a School of Outreach in your area? Contact the Commission on Evangelism, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222; 414/256-3287; <usr2@sab.wels.net>.



Wayne Schulz lives in Cottage Grove, Wisconsin. He is a mission counselor for four districts and works with the School of Outreach team.

The *Spirit* of the REFORMATION



No word in Scripture better sums up the spirit of the Reformation than what Christ says in the gospel of Mark: “The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!” (Mark 1:15). The Reformation was both an urgent summons to repent and an earnest call to faith.

Paul O. Wendland



Repent . . .

Looking at the church of his day and on fire with the Spirit of Truth, Luther penned The Ninety-five Theses in October 1517. He

thundered against the lies that held his generation captive: When Jesus Christ said, “Repent!” he willed that the whole life of believers should be one of repentance.

Luther went on to demolish the false idea that repentance was a matter of going through the outward motions, or worse, a piece of merchandise to buy and sell. He swept away the pretensions of priest and pope in thinking that they alone could control access to heaven by actions that had their origin on earth. He spoke of true penitence as that which recognized in the secret chamber of the heart the justice of God’s wrath upon sin. He reasserted the true treasure of the church as consisting not in dispen-

sations and indulgences, but in the “most holy gospel of the glory and the grace of God.”

His words are filled with a sense of the “profound seriousness of truth,” as one Reformation scholar put it. Luther understood that we do not live by bread alone, that doctrine is life, and that lies kill. When God speaks, we must listen. What God says, we must embrace and confess. When we read Luther, we hear him speaking earnestly to the church of his day—talking about real things in real ways, calling them what they were without sham, salesmanship, or pretense.

In ancient Greek myth, poets speak of successive ages of man—ages of gold and silver, bronze and iron—in which humans became progressively worse as they fell away from their original, blissful state. We might use this notion to depict the way human societies change from one generation to the next in their attitudes toward truth.

We could say that the age of Adam in the garden was a golden age. Adam walked in truth, in blissful communion with God. God spoke to him, and Adam understood God perfectly. Adam himself spoke the truth every time he opened his mouth.

But now, since we are corrupted with the devil’s lies, the best we can hope for is to live in a silver age, a time when people still long for truth and believe that truth can be discovered and confessed. Yet they also recognize that sin and ignorance darken their minds, so their grasp of truth is never absolute. That’s why they are willing to listen to one another, to be admonished by the Scriptures, and to learn. They are not so arrogant as to believe they know it all.

In a silver age, Christians recognize that every word they speak rings in God’s ears. God is the guarantor of meaning. He stands watch over every “yes” and “no.” Knowing

that their hearts, lives, and actions are utterly transparent to God in heaven, people want to conduct themselves accordingly on earth.

Above all, they know that God has spoken to us through his Son, so they want every word they speak to reflect the wonder and the glory of God's revelation. They want their words to match God's speaking in the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures. Only the Bible can give people the true light that shines from Jesus' face. When human words breathe with Scripture, they warm hearts with the sure and steady fire of God's love.

I believe that Luther lived in such a silver age, when people still thirsted for truth and were willing to hear it proclaimed from the Scriptures. Yes, Luther met with fierce resistance. But people also responded in fervent faith, faith in truths they would rather die for than give up.

In my own dark moments, I think sometimes that we've left that silver age behind. It seems that we live in an age far more fallen, more like the one described by Christ in his plaintive question, "When the Son of Man returns, will he find faith on the earth?"

We live in an age where image trumps substance, personal feelings trump Scripture, and doubt triumphs over faith. The only god people seem to worship is money, and the only damnation they fear is to be without money. Doctrine seems disconnected from life: stain-glassed talk from a stain-glassed world, far removed from the real world of getting and spending. Instead of speaking in a way that shows their consciousness of God's presence, people outdo one another in the cru-

dity of their name-calling and their coarseness of expression.

In such an age, is it possible for us to rekindle the spirit of the Reformation? I hardly think so! But nothing is impossible for God. His urgent summons still carries with it the Spirit's fire. "Repent! Your lies are killing you. Your feelings deceive you. Your worldly wealth is strangling your souls. God is not mocked. He is near! He will be your God, or you will die forever, banished eternally from his loving presence!"

No matter what age it lives in, the church as we see it always stands in need of reformation.

O Spirit, open our eyes every day to the truth of our fallen condition! Help us also so that we . . .



Believe the good news.

Without the gospel, one can't speak of the spirit of the Reformation, because without the gospel, there would have been no Spirit, no life-giving Word. When Luther rediscovered the gospel, it transformed his whole outlook. When he preached it, it changed the world. Here was God's forgiveness offered to humanity without cost, love lavished without prior conditions, full acceptance as God's children with no strings attached.

Where there was forgiveness of sins, there was life, salvation, and freedom. There was certainty, cre-

ativity, and joy. The power of the gospel to transform sinners reshaped the world in which Luther lived. Sermons, treatises, catechisms, hymns, and liturgies flowed forth like a mighty river as God's own little flock learned again to drink in the pure Word, exercise faith, and serve each other in love.

No matter what age it lives in, the church as we see it always stands in need of reformation. Our own church does, too. If God moves us to ask, "Where can we find our life again?" the answer will always be: "In the most holy gospel of the glory and the grace of God." Only the gospel can convince us that we don't have to win a name for ourselves: God has called us by his own name. Only the gospel can free us from the need to evade the truth about our sinful condition.

Why should we try to justify ourselves? We have a complete pardon that covers all our faults. We have the perfect righteousness that makes us shining sons and daughters in God's sight. Only this gospel can free us from mutual suspicion, lies, and mistrust. Only the gospel will open our lips to sing God's praise and to speak the truth to each other with candor and compassion.

No matter how dark our days may seem, so long as we hold fast to this gospel, there is no need for despair. God is still with his Church. With a word he can renew us.

O Holy Spirit, breathe on us this Reformation, and fill us with the fire of Christ's love!



Paul Wendland is a professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin.

Unique, but united

Calvary Academy and East Fork Lutheran High School serve unique sets of students not normally served by other WELS high schools. Yet, all these schools serve the same Lord.

Charlene H. Lauersdorf

“**T**im” was a freshman in high school. He was on a downward spiral from using marijuana and alcohol. His lack of respect for and disobedience to authority no doubt caused much grief to his parents, friends, and neighbors. Within his first days at a Lutheran high school he ran away, was located by police, and brought back to the school. The Lord, in his wisdom, gradually turned that young man around and brought him through his instruction and confirmation. Tim is now a member of WELS and in another Lutheran high school.

“Simon,” born into the Apache Native American culture, attended and graduated from a Lutheran high school. He hadn’t been an ideal student and at times caused real problems, but the Word was always there, and the Lord kept his faith alive.

Following basic training for the Navy, Simon came back and talked to one of his former teachers. He said that what really got him through basic training was what he had learned at the Lutheran high school he attended. He turned to his Lord in prayer when he needed help in difficult times.



East Fork Lutheran High School teaches students like these to place their hope in the Lord. The school serves students on the Apache Indian Reservation.

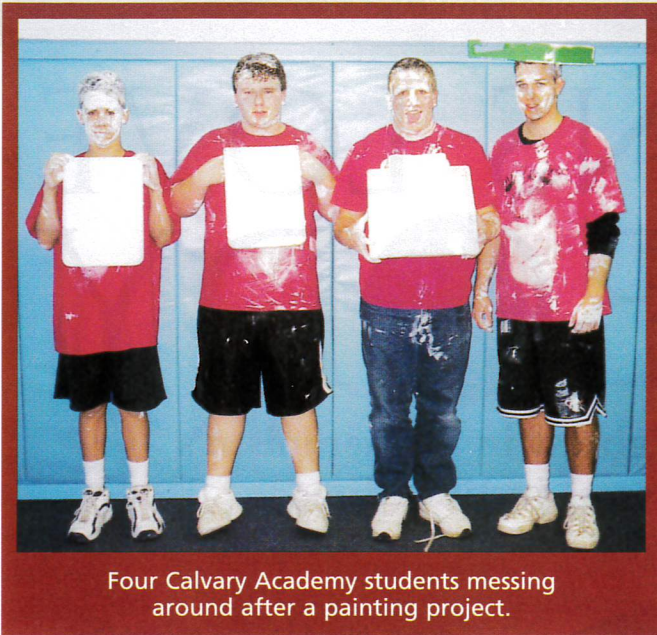
Calvary Academy, the school Tim attended, is located in South Milwaukee, Wis. East Fork Lutheran High School, the school Simon attended, is in Whiteriver, Ariz. These are two of the smallest Lutheran high schools within WELS, but, as do all of our high schools, they both carry a big punch—God’s Word.

Calvary Academy—serving “at risk” young people

Calvary Academy, with its beginnings in January 1997, is unique because its students are “at risk” and “in crisis.” Richard Hennig,

administrator of the academy, says, “Our students, for the most part, have fallen through the cracks of the traditional schools, parochial or public, and have been enrolled at Calvary as a last resort.”

The academy serves people throughout the synod with this unique program. Using a remodeled former Lutheran grade school, this boarding school supplies its students with all the usual needs on a limited budget. Their enrollment this past school year was 19, and presently they have probably reached their maximum student load (20-25).



Four Calvary Academy students messing around after a painting project.

Principal Karl Blauert reports that “since its opening in January of 1997, 67 students were enrolled, 28 girls and 39 boys, ranging in age from 10 to 18, grades 5 to 12, from 15 states.”

Challenges are always there—financial stability; trying to maintain a vision while working within limited means; need for a larger facility where students can continue to be safe, yet not totally isolated; and dealing with government regulations in order to carry out a program unique in WELS and with few of its kind within the public system.

East Fork Lutheran High School—serving Apache young people

East Fork Lutheran High School opened in 1948. It is unique because its students are Apache young people. Working within a different culture requires much understanding of customs and ways of doing things. Also, the Apache nation faces all the social problems of the day—poverty, alcohol, drugs, AIDS, gangs, unemployment, and struggles to survive.

East Fork Lutheran High School prepares Apaches for service in their own congregations as well as in the entire kingdom of God. Their present facility was rebuilt in 1987 following a fire that destroyed the original one. Their enrollment in the 2000-01 school year was 76, including eight non-WELS Christians and eight unchurched students,

with a projected enrollment for this year of 80.

How do you reach students who have their own style of learning and their unique way of doing things? How do you reach the hearts of students for whom English is a second language? These challenges face the faculty and board of East Fork Lutheran High School, along with the usual financial burdens, the need for larger and better facilities, and the curse of social problems on the reservation and in their homes.

The rewards are there, too—listening to the senior class speaker relating how much East Fork Lutheran High School has done for her spiritually, bringing her closer to God.

“It was the best testimonial of faith that I have heard, and it was given by an 18-year-old Apache girl,” says Roger Schultz, principal.

“It is tremendous to see these young people change and get through these problems in a Christian manner and continue in the Lord’s Word.”

adds Ken Borchert, teacher of math, physical education, and health.

United

Although they are each unique, Calvary Academy and East Fork share similar mottoes and goals.

The motto of Calvary Academy is: “Where children in crisis grow in Christ.” East Fork’s motto is: “Those who hope in the Lord . . . will soar on wings like eagles” (Isaiah 40:31).

Did you catch that unifying factor? Christ, the Lord!

Calvary Academy’s goals include reaching troubled students all around the synod and the world with the message of Christ, helping to heal families, and perhaps opening similar schools in many more places.

The goals of East Fork Lutheran High School are to reach Apache youth with the gospel of the Lord, sending them out as eagles to their people and the world.

United, but united. That’s what these two Christ-centered high schools are all about. As we get down on our spiritual knees each day, let us remember in our prayers these two schools, the precious children of God who attend them, and all the talented people who teach and make things happen there.

“ . . . for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28).



Charlene Lauersdorf, author of the book Worth Far More Than Rubies, is a member at David’s Star, Jackson, Wisconsin.

The 12 attributes presented in this series reflect what makes Lutherans unique. Although each attribute on its own may be shared by other religious groups, when all the attributes are studied together, a uniquely Lutheran image emerges.

LUTHERANS LOVE EVERYBODY

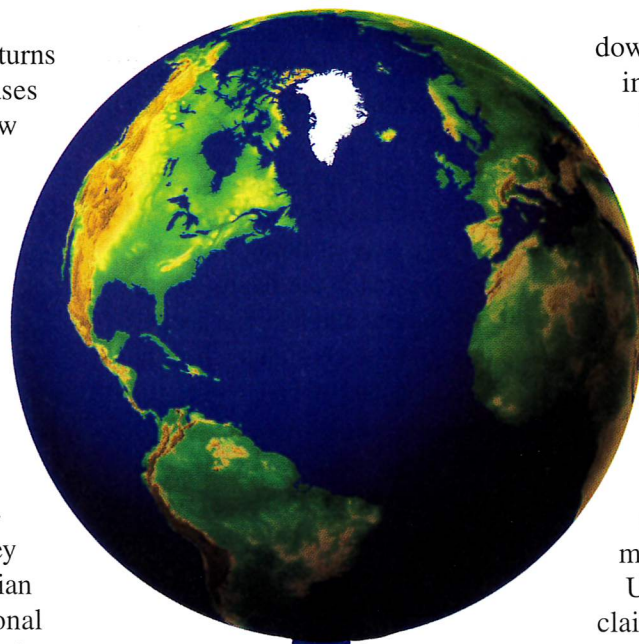
God's universal love shines brightest in Lutheranism's hallmark teaching—universal justification.

Wayne D. Mueller

Politically correct rhetoric turns the air purple. Pet phrases wear thin with overuse. How many more times can you bear to have the culture cops yell at you, "America's melting pot," "acceptance," "multi-cultural sensitivity," "inclusion," "tolerance," "assimilation," and "uni-diversity?" And they say Christians are preachy!

What do these nice sounding terms have in common? All of them can be employed in a positive sense, but more and more they are used to convey an anti-Christian bias. They imply that traditional Christian moral values stand in the way of true unity in the United States.

What is dubbed America's culture war is really a blatant religious battle. Media moguls urge tolerance toward all cultures and minorities—except, of course, conservative Christianity. They know that the Ten Commandments oppose the ugly immorality they have helped popularize. So, they tell Christians to loosen up, melt



John 3:16

down, blend in, and accept the inroads that paganism has made into America's conscience.

Identify your allies

How do you spot a Lutheran in this ethical battle? There are two ways to pursue unity among people who cannot agree on what is right and wrong. One way is to lower the standards of the law. That's what the politically correct do. The cultured elite demand that Christians drop their moral objections to obvious sins. Unfortunately, some churches claiming to be Christian have joined forces with this approach. They have dropped their moral objections to abortion, homosexuality, premarital sex, and easy divorce.

But you can easily spot a Lutheran marching in these culture wars. Lutherans don't battle worldliness by lowering the standards of the law, but by raising the standard of the gospel. They seek unity, not by ignoring their neighbor's sin, but by proclaiming their Savior's forgiveness.

Draw the sword of the Spirit

Lutherans love everybody, but they define love God's way. You've seen the placards with John 3:16 at televised sporting events: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son." God's universal love shines brightest in Lutheranism's hallmark teaching—universal justification.

Justification is the Bible's technical word for how God forgives. This uniquely Lutheran teaching is our endorsement of the full scope of God's forgiving love. In Jesus, God paid the price for everybody's sins. At the cross, God accepted Jesus' sacrifice for all the sins of the whole world. The Lamb of God "takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). "He died for all" (2 Corinthians 5:15). So, we conclude, "He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:2).

But there's more. The Scriptures go beyond saying that God can forgive, does forgive, or will forgive. Universal, or objective, justification assures the sorrow-filled sinner that God has, in fact, already forgiven us. God not only made forgiveness for all people possible by sacrificing his Son, but he also declared the whole world justified, or forgiven. "God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them" (2 Corinthians 5:19). "The result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men" (Romans 5:18).

At the empty tomb, God declared the perfect life of Jesus to be the possession of every sinner. "He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification" (Romans 4:25).

Speak the whole truth in love to all

Lutherans love everybody. We tenaciously uphold God's law, not to coerce society into morality, but out of love to make people conscious of their need for Jesus. We hold the gospel even higher. In that way we echo Paul's witness to the immoral Roman society: "There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:22-24).

Lutherans don't battle worldliness by lowering the standards of the law, but by raising the standard of the gospel.

Unfortunately, not all who display John 3:16 signs practice what they preach. Most non-Lutheran churches teach that there is no forgiveness with God until we ask for it. In other words, God doesn't love you unless you make the first move. Some denominations diminish Jesus' sacrifice by saying that he died only for those who eventually believe in him. And a few churches still teach that God predestined some people for hell. What a treasure we have to belong to a church that teaches us the full meaning of God's universal love!

God's universal love does not, of course, mean that everybody will go to heaven. God in love wants all to be saved and has done everything to win heaven for them. God's "not guilty" verdict for the

world is real, but like every real gift it can be refused. Jesus himself said, "Whoever does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:16). Only those who believe in God's accomplished work enjoy its benefits in this world and the next.

Stand up, stand up

As a church, Lutherans express God's universal love by formally teaching justification. But what about us as individual believers? Are others able to pick us out as universal lovers?

Christian soldiers find themselves on the frontlines of America's culture wars. Our distinctive Christian lifestyle puts us on the defensive against societal forces that drag morality down the slippery slope to hell. But we need to show more than a defensive posture. We want to do more than detest, regret, and gripe about the loss of godly values in our world. We want to stand out as universal lovers with a strong offensive thrust of the gospel.

Like God, we want to win souls. Start at home and move out. Forgive your spouse, your parents, your children from the heart. Be charitable to fellow Christians who offend you. Greet the visitor and stranger at worship. Think of how to talk Jesus to your neighbor and coworker. Pray for the lost and those who deliver the gospel to them.

Lutherans preach that God loves all. We will all be easy to spot if we practice what we preach.



Wayne Mueller is the first vice president of WELS.

Welcome back . . . **REALLY?**

When a missionary and his family return to the United States after serving in a foreign country, they experience mixed feelings about their “homecoming.”

John R. Hering

Perhaps you have heard it said, “The two happiest days for a boat owner are the day he buys a boat and the day he sells it.” Probably true.

Do you think the same could be said for a foreign missionary?

There is no doubt that the day you accept a divine call to serve the Lord in a foreign field is one exhilarating day! But, what about the day you return to the States?

Mixed feelings

The Lord blessed me with the joy of serving his Japan mission field for almost 10 years. My wife, June, and I left the United States a little bit like Jacob leaving Isaac—with a 7-month-old son and a few things from our seminary apartment. We returned to the States with four children and tons of things.

When we left for Japan there was hoopla and fanfare. There were banners and tears. There was excitement and thrill. There was fear of the



“Coach” John Hering (left) baptized first baseman, Jared; his sister, Miranda; and little brother, Jeremy. Their mother, Shelly, is also pictured. Hering learned in Japan that everything we are involved in should be geared toward the goal of winning souls, even coaching a baseball team.

unknown and the adventure.

How about coming back?

It would be easy to say that there was no hoopla, but rather the feeling of letting so many people down. Our dear synod invested so much in our language training and work. Our dear world mission board took such good care of us. Our dear missionaries loved us. Our dear brothers and

sisters in the faith loved us as Timothy loved Paul. We had no “logical” reason for leaving Japan. But, we dare not dwell on these thoughts too long. Too depressing.

Special moments

Living in Japan as an American meant we were special. The people noticed us. They wanted to touch our children’s hair. Curiosity drove them to find out more about us. The opportunities to share the gospel were painted on the faces of everyone we saw.

How about back here? I can’t remember people pointing to our children at Wal-Mart and saying, “Look! How cute!” I can’t remember having a person come up to me in Texas and saying, “Hi, I just wanted to know who you are and where you came from.” But, you know what? The opportunities to share the gospel in Texas are painted on the faces of almost everyone we see here too.

Marriage partnership

Your spouse is supposed to be your best friend. In Japan our survival nearly depended on it. The partnership was intense when trying to read subway signs to get home. The teamwork was real when trying to figure out if we were buying milk or buttermilk.

In the States we are not nearly as dependent on our spouses for survival. Our focus shifts to outside interests and activities. The main focus is still each other, but perhaps we have to work at it a little harder.

Sharing Jesus

As a missionary family every activity we did—soccer, swimming, basketball, and even teaching English as a Second Language—we did to share Jesus. We knew it. Our kids knew it. Our oldest son didn't want to leave Japan because, "Who will tell my basketball team about Jesus?"

And now? Is everything we do geared toward the goal of winning souls? Our experience in Japan has better taught us that we can do this in the States too! We try to have activities and friends outside the realm of WELS. So baseball and hockey teams have come and gone, but God

has worked through us to have children from these teams baptized.

Appreciation

Our experience in Japan taught us to better appreciate things in the United States—worship in English, paper towels, and school activities. Now that we're back, we work at not losing that appreciation.

Homecoming

Welcome back! You bet.

The world mission board sent us Pastor Walter Westphal to make sure we were doing okay. They sent us to Colorado to a retreat with 32 other returned missionaries and their wives to give us "birds of a feather" a chance to share, cry, support, and encourage each other.

Our congregation has supported us with patience, love, and understanding as we went through culture shock. Oh, they may not want to touch our children's blonde hair, but they have touched our hearts. Their continued interest in mission work and our experience in Japan helps us focus on our mutual work here as a congregation.

Sure, there are days . . . for instance, trying to teach the children how Americans expect them

to behave in church. Or being handed the "new" hymnal and having to lead a seasoned congregation in what was a new service and liturgy. Now I know how a visitor feels!

Our fears about having our Japanese go to waste have been met with new experiences. We have joined the Dallas American Japanese society, and this past year June was recognized as a "volunteer of the year." We ministered in Japanese to Mr. Hagiwara, who was undergoing a liver/kidney transplant. We help tutor Makoto and Hikaru Tomizawa at Calvary Lutheran Grade School in Dallas. This has helped our repatriation.

I'm not sure about the happiest days for a boat owner, but every time the Lord gives us the experience of sharing the gospel with Jesus' lambs and sheep, it is a great day for us.

Wisconsin Synod, thank you for sending out missionaries. If there were a way, I would see to it that every WELS pastor had a foreign mission experience.



John Hering was a WELS missionary in Japan from 1989-1998. He presently serves Divine Peace, Garland, Texas.



Repatriated Japan missionaries Harold and Barbara Johne, June and John Hering, and Luther and Valeria Weindorf (seated) at the repatriation seminar in Colorado in 2000.

Every two or three years, the Board for World Missions (BWM) holds a repatriation seminar for returned missionaries and their spouses. The last one, which Pastor Hering attended, was held in Colorado in January 2000.

Seminars include group meetings, breakout sessions, and time for fellowship. Participants are urged to look back at the time in the mission field and share with each other the joys and sorrows of that mission work and how that mission work is helping them in their current ministry.

"We examine ourselves and our relationship with God and with the people around us. We touch on the special issues that children have when they return to the United States. We evaluate where we are now, how we have changed, how we are fitting in, the plans God has for our lives, and the ways we hope to serve his kingdom in the future," says Walter Westphal, BWM associate administrator.

But returning missionaries don't have to wait until the next repatriation seminar to talk about their experiences. Westphal, counselors from Missionary Support Services, and a BWM board member all meet with the missionary and his family upon their return to help with any repatriation issues.



Ideas and issues bombard us constantly. Is it an alternative lifestyle or a sinful lifestyle? Is this my right or selfish greed? Advertising trends, the latest talk-show guru, or “programming” passed down from our parents can affect the way we see the world. So can Jesus. When we run our evaluation of our culture and events through a biblical grid, we see things through Jesus’ eyes. Taking care of our souls means seeing the world through Christ’s eyes.

Health factor—See the world through Christ’s eyes

God’s Word

So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. ¹⁸They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. ¹⁹Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.

²⁰You, however, did not come to know Christ that way. ²¹Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. ²²You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; ²³to be made new in the attitude of your minds; ²⁴and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness (Ephesians 4:17-24).

1. Underline words that describe unbelievers in verses 17-19.
2. Some people just won’t see the good news of Jesus. According to the words you underlined, why not?
3. According to verse 22, even Christians will sometimes look at the world the way unbelievers do. Why?
4. Circle one phrase in each verse of 20-24 that describes a change in believers.
5. “The truth that is in Jesus,” verse 21, includes his years of perfect living and hours of torturous death. By faith, his righteousness and holiness become ours and we get a new mind. Think of two Bible characters who saw the world differently after coming to know Christ.

My soul for personal check-up

1. Paul describes people who have “given themselves over.” We might call that “obsessive.” Obsessive behavior can hurt our jobs, our health, and our relationship with others and with God. Ask God to show you where you might fit in verse 19. Then do what God’s children can always do, admit your sin and trust that Jesus has forgiven you.
2. As you watch the news or read the newspaper, consider: “How does Jesus see this story?”
3. Seeing the world through Christ’s eyes depends on knowing the Scriptures. Commit to one new activity to help you know the Scriptures better.

My church for group check-up

1. Imagine that it’s your first visit to your church. What might you see or hear to convince you that these people see the world differently than you do?
2. Some people consider the church and its message irrelevant. List the reasons you’ve heard for such a conclusion.
3. For each reason, answer two questions, “Is this valid?” and “What can we learn from this for our ministry?”
4. List three contemporary issues you think are important for your church to speak about.
5. How might your church help members and non-members see each issue through Christ’s eyes?

Web-med

Intriguing Web sites to help you continue your check-up.

Read some articles about the relationship between science and religion at <http://www.meta-list.org>.

Evaluate the authors’ viewpoints: through Christ’s eyes or not?

Analyze theologically the comments of centenarians at <http://www.adlercentenarians.com/excerpts2.html>.

Where are they now?

In *Forward in Christ* magazine, we report the news but aren't always able to follow up. "Where are they now?" is our way of giving you the rest of the story.

Cindi Sampe wrote four articles for the Northwestern Lutheran between 1984 and 1987 that discussed her and her husband's experiences with adopting a large number of children.

Here's a recap:

By 1980, Cindi Sampe and her husband, Pete, had two daughters. Because of complications from those pregnancies, the Sampes were concerned about having any more children. They began adopting with the goal of raising children in a solid Christian home. They adopted one by one at first, then sometimes in sibling groups, until the Sampe family had 15 children the last time we heard from them—14 years ago.

So, where are they now?

Another 11 children richer! The Sampes now have a total of 26 children. Although some of the younger and special needs children still live at home, more than half have moved out of the house. However, Cindi is quick to point out that her family is still close. "We keep in touch with a family e-mail system and attempt to get together at Christmas time," she says.

The Sampe's oldest birth daughter, Lisa Sampe-Nyden, graduated from Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee, Wis., and served three years with WELS Kingdom Workers in Novosibirsk, Russia. Lara Beth, the Sampe's youngest birth daughter, graduated from Southeastern Louisiana University and works as the event planner for the pop group NSYNC. Lara Beth also oversees NSYNC's foundation, Challenge for the Children, which donates money to Calvary

Academy, a WELS school for in-crisis children, which her parents helped start (see p. 16). Some of the Sampe's other children have joined the military or worked at Camp Philip, a WELS camp ministry.

Besides taking care of the children at home, the Sampes house foreign exchange students and lead their own personal "Lightshine Ministry," which "helps other adoptive families whose children are demonstrating disruptive behaviors in their home environments," explains Cindi.

The Sampes have extensive experience in this area. All of their adopted children came from troubled backgrounds, and some have severe emotional scars. However, there is a bright side. "All of our children heard the Word, were baptized and counseled, and until they left our home, attended church and Sunday school every week," says Cindi.

For Cindi and Pete Sampe, everything has been done out of love and faith for God, which is why they are open to adopting more children. Cindi says, "There are thousands of children who need a home, and we pray daily that God will continue to direct those to us whom he feels we can serve."

Adam Goede



Cindi and Pete Sampe with some of their children. The Sampes have two birth children and 24 adopted children.

In the cross hairs

When the question and answer column returns next month, you will notice a new title. The title, "In the cross hairs," was not chosen randomly. The danger for any religious question and answer column is to seem to be playing a game of biblical Trivial Pursuit. But any question that Scripture answers always reflects God's grace to us at the cross. As each question takes "aim" at us and requests an answer, the answer given will always strive to take "aim" at the cross of our Savior. With Jesus' cross clearly in our sights, every answer given will be well on its way to hitting the mark!

Do you have a question to ask our "In the cross hairs" writer, Prof. Richard Gurgel? Send it to *Forward in Christ* magazine, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222; <fic@sab.wels.net>. Questions will also be taken from those submitted to our Q & A on the WELS Web site, <www.wels.net>.



FROM BEGINNING TO END
Through the Bible in one year

October 2001

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Psalm 118 | 18. Jer. 37-41:3 |
| • Isaiah 46-48 | 19. Jer. 41:4-45 |
| 2. Is. 49-53 | 20. Jer. 46-48 |
| 3. Ps. 145 | 21. Jer. 49 & 50 |
| • Is. 54-57 | 22. Jer. 51 & 52 |
| 4. Is. 58-62 | 23. Lamentations |
| 5. Is. 63-66 | 1-3:39 |
| 6. Jonah • Nahum | 24. Ps. 79 |
| 7. Obadiah | • Lam. 3:40-5 |
| • Zephaniah | 25. Ps. 25 |
| 8. Jeremiah 1-4:4 | • Ezekiel 1-3 |
| 9. Jer. 4:5-6 | 26. Ps. 88 |
| 10. Jer. 7-9 | • Ezek. 4-7 |
| 11. Jer. 10-13 | 27. Ezek. 8-11 |
| 12. Jer. 14-17 | 28. Ezek. 12-15 |
| 13. Jer. 18-24 | 29. Ezek. 16 & 17 |
| 14. Jer. 25-27 | 30. Ezek. 18-20:44 |
| 15. Jer. 28-31:20 | 31. Ezek. 20:45- |
| 16. Jer. 31:21-33 | 23:10 |
| 17. Jer. 34-36 | |

WELS AT WORK

WELS BULLISH ON OUTREACH

Poised like the stock market about to spiral into a recession, our Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod in convention, buoyed in spirit by God's Spirit, instead turned bullish on ministry. Clearly the convention theme, "Work while it is day," pervaded the assembly.

It started with President Karl R. Gurgel outlining the WELS plan for ministry:

1. Lead people to a passion for ALL the lost and equip them to reach these people.
2. Focus ministerial education on outreach.
3. Individualize spiritual growth and personal witnessing.

Then the assembly took over. In an early vote and without dissent, the delegates set the direction by allocating the remaining \$2.4 million from our WELS Gift Trust Fund for "Seek and Keep Grants" (see p. 30). These grants are intended to assist and encourage WELS congregations, groups of individuals, and other WELS organizations in reaching out to the lost and addressing at the congregational level the problem of "back door losses" (members who leave the church).

After approving budgets of \$55,431,800 and \$57,099,200 for the two fiscal years beginning July 1, 2001, the assembly turned its attention to funding the WELS ministry. It called for the Conference of Presidents to continue to emphasize stewardship education and for congregations to train their members in

Christian stewardship. Responding to the opportunities in ministry and the urgency to seize them, the delegates voted to have the Commission for Communication on Financial Support and its agencies visit each congregation in the next two years, providing educational materials and training in Christian stewardship.

Present and former WELS missionaries brought the spirit of mission outreach from God's Word to the convention in daily worship. As retired missionary Roger Sprain put it in the opening service, the first 150 years of WELS weren't the "good old days." We are living in the good old days now, privileged to work for our God and bring the light of Jesus to the world. World missionaries also spoke to the assembly about their work, and the delegates received them warmly.

In his keynote essay to the convention, Prof. Mark Goeglein, pointing out that our country is more a "salad bowl" today than the traditional "melting pot," identified the prerequisites for cross-cultural work among us as a matter of attitude, aptitude, and action. Goeglein, a professor at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., noted, "It is the attitude of Christian love, the attitude of Christ, that enables us to love people who are not like us (culturally), just as though they were like us, without insisting or even hoping that they will become more like us." As to aptitude, he warned, "The Golden Rule works well if we understand who that person is." Finally, Goeglein reminded

us: "Loving words and actions flow from a heart that has been filled with the love of Christ." And Goeglein called for us to "do **SOMETHING.**"

In connection with ministerial education, wholehearted support and encouragement were given to the continued recruitment and retention of ministerial students, sabbaticals in ministry for professors, the Congregational Evangelism Program, and the Multi-ethnic Preseminary Program. The evangelism program helps congregations train their laity for evangelism. Already, 36 congregations in 18 states have been involved in the program. The preseminary program prepares second-career minority men for entry into Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, allowing them to remain in their home environment while taking the necessary courses.

Delegates threw their enthusiastic support behind the continuing work of home and world missions and called upon all WELS congregations to bring at least 100 percent of their promised Congregation Mission Offerings to support the work so we seize our opportunities while we can. Citing the formation of a task force of the Synodical Council to "create a structure to implement cooperative plans to reach out with the gospel," the voters also called for the synod "to continue to reorganize its outreach in any way necessary to reach people of all cultures and nationalities."

AT WHAT COST?

No one in the convention hall rose to say that our WELS called workers receive too much, or even enough, pay already. No one disputed the stories of pastors, in some cases, qualifying for welfare. No one didn't want to pay our workers more than we do now.

But some still debated the compensation proposal of the Synodical Council that carries a price tag of about an additional \$3 million to the synod's budget. Can we afford it? Can self-supporting congregations afford to follow the same guidelines? What will we have to cut?

In the end, the delegates overwhelmingly voted that "we no longer require our called workers to continue to bear the consequences of any further delay(s) for increased compensation." Then delegates passed the compensation package that was presented to them and that was reported on in the June issue of *Forward in Christ* magazine (p. 27). To allow time to prepare for the budgetary impact, July 1, 2003, was set as the date to implement the new compensation program at the synodical level.



Layman John Peterman, head of the floor committee at synod convention that studied the compensation proposal, led the delegates in prayer after they passed the \$3 million proposal that will begin to give called workers a salary that reflects double honor and high value.

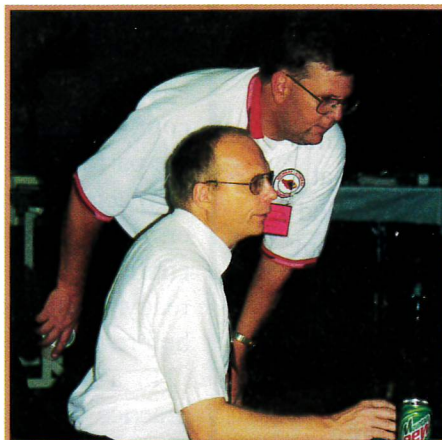
BEHIND THE SCENES

What does the on-site coordinator of the synod convention need after the convention is all over?

Sleep, and plenty of it—because there's not much time for that during the convention.

Marcus Manthey, professor at Michigan Lutheran Seminary and the convention's on-site coordinator, can attest to that. He was at the convention by 8 AM every morning and often didn't get home until 2 AM. "The nights were short on both ends," he says.

But Manthey's work began long before the convention started. Planning for the 2001 convention began right after the 1999 convention. Things really picked up after Jan. 1, 2001, and were at breakneck speed once school let out in June.



James Wooster and Karl Schmugge, faculty members at MLS, volunteered lots of time to the synod convention. So did members of area congregations. Some drove well over an hour to help. "My favorite part of the convention," says Manthey, "was watching the people who had volunteered to come in to work and seeing how excited they were to be a part of it. We received three letters from congregations, thanking us for letting them be involved in the convention. That's just neat."



Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, where the WELS 56th biennial convention was held. An added feature at the convention this year was newly installed air conditioning in the gymnasium, a much-needed relief for delegates during the hot summer days of convention.

Eighteen different subcommittees worked on everything from registration to arranging on- and off-campus housing to dealing with parking and transportation issues. Volunteer coordination was also a big job since over 300 people offered to help, doing everything from serving meals to manning the hospitality tent to being pages on the convention floor.

But things didn't always go as planned. An air-traffic controller stoppage in Detroit on the Sunday before convention was just one example.

"Our carefully designed schedule of shuttle pick-ups pretty much had to be scrapped," says Manthey. "Our drivers were making it up as they went along. Some of them were at the airport as late as 1 AM."

"But that's all part of the fun of hosting the convention," he continues. "You plan as well as you can ahead of time, but you have to be ready to roll as things come up."

That takes a lot of energy. No wonder Manthey spent the time after convention catching up on some well-deserved sleep.

DELEGATE PROFILE



Name: Keith Detro

Wife: Rebecca Levi Detro, raised Mormon

Home: Boise, Idaho

Church: Messiah, Nampa, Idaho

Education: Masters degree in computer science from the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

Occupation: Through a home missions grant, Keith is putting together two Web sites with the help of his wife, Rebecca, and Messiah’s pastor, Mark Cares. The first site, <www.truthinlovetomormons.com> is aimed at teaching Christians how to reach Mormons with God’s Word. The second site, <www.myheavenlyfather.com>, is aimed at witnessing Christianity directly to Mormons.

Keith says, “My wife, Becki, and I are just following doors that God is opening. Becki and I feel this is why we were brought together. Becki has awesome gifts of evangelism. I design the Web sites with a teaching emphasis and create content. Pastor Cares oversees our work. We don’t know where it’s going to go, but we’ve placed ourselves in God’s command, and we trust where he is taking us.”

His thoughts about the convention: “It is incredible! I am impressed by the capability, professionalism, and expression of Christianity in our synod leaders. I experienced two major themes throughout the convention—a focus on our synod reaching out to other cultures and a focus on individualizing spiritual growth.”

For a century and a half, WELS has developed a system of ministerial education that is the envy of many outside of our ranks. Our pastors, for instance, have thoroughly studied the confessional languages of Latin and German (the Lutheran confessions were originally written in those languages) and the biblical languages of Hebrew and Greek. Each step along the way from preparatory school through the seminary has been calculated to prepare students to rightly divide God’s Word and minister with it to God’s people.

Still, times change, and so does the way we train our future called workers. With the most recent changes, then, some delegates challenged whether or not students under today’s system will still be ready.

The changes under scrutiny involved primarily the foreign language requirements for future pastors. New guidelines offer a greater concentration in living languages like Spanish and the possibility of getting by with a minimum of Latin and/or German.

Concerned voices argued that the risk is too great that we will lose our grounding in the confessional languages. Others, although admitting an element of risk, pointed to safeguards and incentives that will keep German and Latin viable and to the benefits of having more living-language study.

Closely related was a debate over the increasing number of courses taught to both pastor-track and teacher-track students at once. It was argued that certain courses, such as English literature, have been taught in a distinctive way in the pastor track. We don’t want to lose a perceived advantage in doing so. However, some 60 percent of courses for the pastor-training students are still unique to the pastor track.

When the debates were over, the wide majority of voters supported the changes and with their vote expressed confidence that our future pastors and teachers will be as ready, perhaps even more ready in today’s world, as those before them to serve in the public ministry.

In a related issue, the assembly revisited the 10-year practice of ordaining both male teachers and pastors. Because our practice has been inconsistent and confusing during that time and no benefits appear to be in jeopardy, the delegates voted to return to the historic Lutheran practice of ordaining only pastors. Teachers and staff ministers will be commissioned as ministers of the gospel.

Finally, to get our workers ready, we need to provide adequate facilities. Two plans in progress to provide extra housing at Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis., and at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., were ratified. However, because of a concern that the cost of paying for those projects has increased the fees to students, the delegates called for a study to be made of future funding for capital projects to be presented to the 2003 synod convention.

First vice president—Pastor Wayne Mueller
Secretary—Teacher Steven Lemke

Board for World Missions

Member at-large, layman—Glenn Wilson

Latin American Missions

Pastor—Jon Buchholz
 Teacher—Ray Dusseau

Native American Missions

Pastor—Snowden Sims
 Layman—Roy Schneider

Africa Missions

Pastor—David Sternhagen
 Layman—Donald Niemann

Japan, Europe, Asia Missions

Pastor—David Beckman
 Teacher—Scott Uecker

Southeast Asian Missions

Pastor—David Priebe

Board for Parish Services

Chairman—Pastor Thomas Zarlring
 Member at-large, teacher—Thomas Koepsell

Commission on Evangelism

Chairman—Pastor James Huebner

Commission on Parish Schools

Chairman—Teacher Daniel Schmal

Board for Ministerial Education

Chairman—Pastor Donald Sutton
 Area Lutheran high school representative—
 Merlyn Kruse
 Layman—R. Bowen Loftin

Luther Preparatory School

Board of Control

Chairman—Pastor Dennis Hayes

Michigan Lutheran Seminary

Board of Control

Chairman—Pastor George Ferch

Synodical Council

Member at-large, teacher—John Freese

Northwestern Publishing House

Board of Directors

Pastor—Kenneth Gawrisch
 Martin Luther College professor—Joel Fredrich
 Layman—William Strutz

Board of Appeals

Chairman—Pastor John Brug
 Pastor (6 years)—David Rosenow
 Pastor (4 years)—Robert Gurgel
 Pastor (2 years)—Edwin Fredrich
 Teacher (6 years)—Philip Leyrer
 Teacher (4 years)—Karl Grebe
 Teacher (2 years)—Alan Draeger
 Layman (6 years)—Kurt Austad
 Layman (4 years)—David Nommenson
 Layman (2 years)—Dale Wierschke

MORE CHALLENGES

Other important decisions of the convention:

- Ask the Commission for Communication on Financial Support to continue to receive gifts previously committed to the FIC thank offering and to seek gifts that will support unfunded projects begun with the offering, even though the Forward in Christ (FIC) anniversary celebration is officially concluded.

- Better facilitate our communication services by “encouraging the Second Level Restructuring Committee to consider consolidating communications under one entity.”

- Do more to promote the charitable work done by the WELS Committee on Relief.

- Encourage called workers to prepare for retirement needs, but make congregations aware that our WELS Support Committee intends “that no called worker’s family who needs our help is overlooked.”

- Encourage congregations to use the media-assisted outreach opportunities now available through the Commission on Evangelism.

- Encourage attempts to get more church musicians.

- Urge congregations to work aggressively in teen ministry, using the help of the Commission on Youth Discipleship.

- Urge congregations to provide continuing education for their called workers.

- Urge congregations to use the materials the Commission on Adult Discipleship makes available for Bible study, senior ministry, family ministry, and stewardship.

- Urge congregations to attend to those in their midst with special needs.



President Karl Gurgel (left) talks to chairmen of the floor committees. Sixteen floor committees, consisting of voting delegates to the convention, studied different sections of the *Book of Reports and Memorials* and recommended courses of action for the synod in convention to vote on.

- Endorse a pilot program of outreach to American civilians living in Europe, subject to prioritization and funding by the Synodical Council.

- Urge congregations to make more use of the *WELS Mission Connection*.

- Continue funding the mentoring ministry to Cameroon beyond 2002.

- Support the Central Africa Medical Mission in its efforts.

- Continue to help guide our world mission fields to become independent church bodies.

- Have the Conference of Presidents study the district boundaries and bring their recommendations to the 2003 synod convention.

- Don’t study a possible name change for our synod, because the present name serves us well.

- Increase offerings to fund the many opportunities for ministry open to us.

- Study the tuition policy at our synod schools and report to the next synod convention.

NEW FIRST V.P. FOCUSES ON GROWTH

Name: Wayne D. Mueller

Wife: Barbara, an occupational health nurse

Children: Adam (29), Melissa (28), Molly (25), Aaron (23), Andrew (21), twins Mara and Megan (11)

Home: Six-acre not-for-profit farm in Oconomowoc, Wis.

Church: St. Paul, Ixonia, Wis.

Most recent synodical position: Board for Parish Services administrator

Job description according to the Constitution: Section 2.10 of the Bylaws, “. . . assist the president, serve on the Conference of Presidents, and serve as the vice president for mission and ministry. . . . serve as vice chairman of the Synodical Council. . . . as acting president whenever the president shall be prevented from discharging his duties, and in case of a vacancy in the presidency, shall serve until the next convention of the

synod. The first vice president shall carry out such assignments the president may assign or are prescribed under these bylaws.”

Job description according to Mueller: “I will help all the areas of ministry work together in unity for the good of the kingdom. . . . It’s not so much what I do, but the support that I provide. I will be a servant to the areas of ministry and the president. The ministry of first vice president is essentially one of humility and service.”

First task as WELS first vice president: “I need to help the president and the areas of ministry carry out the convention resolutions.”

Long-range goals: “I hope my long-range goals are the same as they are in my current administrative position—to grow in faith, to grow in stewardship and Christian life, to grow in the gospel, and to grow in service to God. In order to do that,

God will work on me to grow personally. You can’t hand to others what you don’t have a good hold on yourself. Therefore, I must pray and work for the growth of God in me. The key word is always ‘grow.’”

The words of Scripture Mueller turns to most often: “My wife’s confirmation passage [John 8:31,32], ‘If you continue in my Word, you will be my real disciples. Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.’ It is cross-stitched and framed in my house, and I pass it frequently. It reminds me that there is no growth apart from the power of God. Programs and plans don’t mean much unless they are intimately connected with the Word of God.”

THE CHANGING FACE OF WELS’ ADMINISTRATION

Wayne Mueller is not the only person with a new job at the synod administration building. Gene Ludwick, former Forward in Christ project administrator, was hired as WELS’ executive director of support services on July 16.

Ludwick, a native of Canada, oversees the following synod work: legal, accounting/finance, benefit plans, budgeting, data information services, human resources, lending, planning, real estate, and revenue forecasting.

“My predecessor stressed to staff members that our roles are to support and serve,” says Ludwick. “I will maintain the same emphasis, striving toward ‘seamless ministry.’ Essentially that means trying to eliminate or flatten as many bumps in the road for our ministers as we can.”

Ludwick will work closely with President Karl Gurgel and First Vice President Wayne Mueller.



WELS’ newly-elected secretary and first vice president, Teacher Steven Lemke and Pastor Wayne Mueller, wait to be installed.

FROM MY PERSPECTIVE

One of the “perks” of retirement is time to lean back and reflect. After 34 years of synodical service, allow me to share the following perspectives:

WELS still has the one thing that makes a church body great—God’s Word. His grace deserves the credit. Remembering his pure Word and its central teaching of justification, we’ll ask God to bless our efforts to preach the message of justification in all its fullness.

WELS has a growing sense of its mission. Nurturing the saved and seeking the lost is God’s mission for us. If only we could look within and beyond our own parish boundaries more and see how vast the mission is! If only we could see those souls on foreign shores perishing without the Light of Life and become more serious about reaching the 28.4 million foreign-born people in our country! If only our home and world missions could together do even more in this vast mission field God has placed right in our own backyards!

WELS has a strong ministerial education system with its emphasis on the biblical languages. The synod in convention recognized the need for ongoing curriculum review so that we have workers ready to take the unchanging Word to a rapidly changing world. Preserving the best from the past while making changes necessary for present and future ministry will require much prayer from us and guidance from the Lord. But we dare not stand still.

WELS has a slowly emerging pool of manpower. More and more members are getting involved in evangelism and other efforts in their home congregations. More and more laymen are serving our synod: at the conventions, comprising 50% of the voting delegates, and as a majority on our Synodical Council. But we’ve only begun to mobilize the workforce of believers.

WELS recognizes the need to reemphasize the individual believer’s responsibility for growing in and going with the Word. Nurture and outreach by the congregation and the synod do not replace the individual believer’s responsibility. The



Richard Lauersdorf addresses the convention to announce his decision to retire and not run for re-election as WELS first vice president. Lauersdorf served in the pastoral ministry for 42 years. Twenty of those years were spent in administration in world missions, and 14 of those years were spent as synodical first vice president.

individual needs to grow in faith and knowledge through the Word. Reaching out with the Word requires personal effort along with the work done jointly. Strong Christians make for strong congregations and strong congregations make for a strong synod. God help us emphasize this important truth in the days ahead.

WELS needs to continue growing in biblical stewardship. Who of us would describe overall offerings that barely total 3% of our income as a joyful response to the Lord? This seldom popular, but necessary topic needs ongoing and increased study by every believer in our synod. God help us to bring our offerings to praise and honor him and carry out more of the mission he has given us.

And may God lead us to practice more the freedom we have in Christ. To that end may he help us understand what must never change (his Word), what may change (things not commanded in his Word) and what must change (things that stand in the way of his Word). Such understanding will enable us to discuss and deal lovingly and knowledgeably with future changes in the church.

Whether we look backward or forward, we see our need for God’s grace. Pray that never changes!

Richard E. Lauersdorf

SEEKING AND KEEPING

The goal of the Christian congregation is to achieve a healthy balance between nurture and outreach in its ministry," says Robert Hartman, administrator of the Commission on Evangelism.

In other words, we need to seek and keep.

WELS' new "Seek and Keep" program, recently approved at the synod convention, will provide congregations, individuals, and organizations, grant money to do just that.

"This new program not only addresses outreach, but also inreach. The attempt is to help congregations and other entities close the back door," says Warren Widmann, chairman of the national Seek and Keep Committee.

The Synodical Council earmarked the remaining funds from the WELS Gift Trust Fund—about \$2.4 million—to help congregations in these efforts.

This program replaces the outreach opportunity grant program that was initially funded by the Schwan Foundation. Over \$800,000 was distributed from 1997-2001 for outreach programs of WELS congregations.

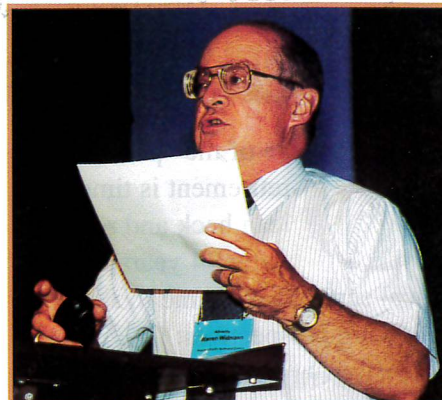
The Seek and Keep program is different, though, in that it stresses assimilation and retention of current members as well as reaching out to nonmembers. This program is also open to WELS individuals, agencies, institutions, or groups.

"Before, we never had more than \$200,000 for a fiscal year," says Widmann. "Now we have this \$2.4 million to work with and really no restrictions."

Each of the 12 districts will have a district-level committee that will publicize the program, supply materials, encourage congregations to participate, receive applications, and present prioritized applications to the national committee.

"The districts are in a much better position to evaluate individual congregations and what their needs are, what they're doing, and how they're doing it," says Widmann. "Plus, part of the philosophy of the Synodical Council is to drive decision-making down to the lowest possible level."

The national committee will take each district's applications, distribute funds, and work to replenish the funds so the program can continue.



Warren Widmann, chairman of the national Seek and Keep Committee, gave a presentation on the program at the synod convention. Delegates wholeheartedly supported the resolution to use the remaining \$2.4 million from the Gift Trust Fund for grants to promote outreach and assimilation/retention.

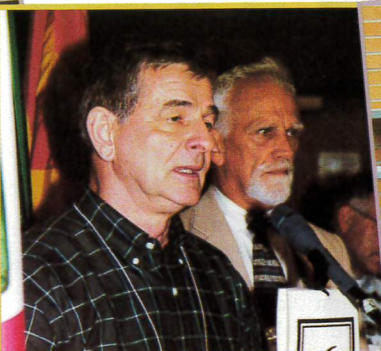
"We are in a time when we're not going to be opening up too many new missions for a while, but that doesn't mean we can't do mission work," says Widmann. "We've got 1,400 congregations, and if each one of them would intensify its outreach efforts, we'd find the Holy Spirit bringing more souls for Christ than 50 new missions would."

Now that's a good goal.

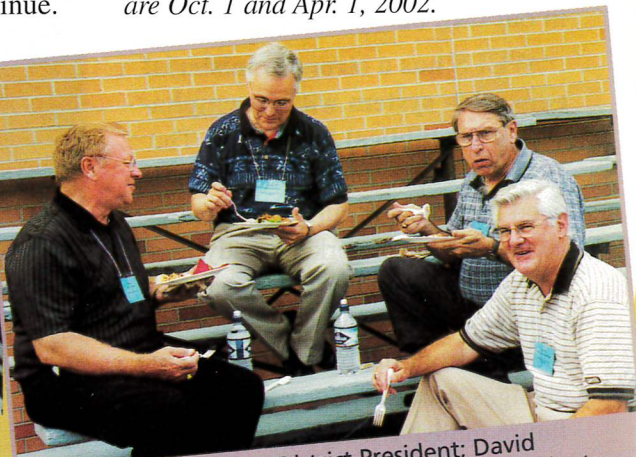
For more information, contact your district president. He will direct you to the chairman of your district's Seek and Keep Committee. Deadlines for applications to the national committee are Oct. 1 and Apr. 1, 2002.



Four hundred twelve men attended the convention—353 voting delegates, 55 advisory delegates, and four special guests. Of the 353 voting delegates, 166 were laymen, 111 were pastors, and 76 were teachers.



A delegate addresses the assembly. Before delegates voted on issues, they had an opportunity to present their concerns to the assembly. Several issues were debated on the floor during this convention including the compensation proposal and foreign language requirements for future pastors.



Larry Cross, Minnesota District President; David Rutschow, Southeastern Wisconsin District President; William Gabb, at-large pastor for the Synodical Council; and Ronald Rathke, Synodical Council lay representative from the Northern Wisconsin District, enjoy a wild game banquet on the convention's final night.

WITH OTHERS, ONE IN MISSION

In the defining moment of the convention, following several standing ovations, the assembly stood to sing “We All Are One in Mission” to recognize the fellowship we enjoy with others around the world in doing the Lord’s work. Delegates had just voted to officially declare fellowship with the Confessional Lutheran Church of Latvia, the Ukrainian Lutheran Church, and All Saints Lutheran Church of Nigeria.

Representatives from Latvia and Ukraine shared stories of their struggles for confessional Lutheranism and the



(From right) WELS President Karl Gurgel presents gifts to WELS’ new brothers in the faith. Gundars Bakulis is the president of the Confessional Lutheran Church of Latvia. Yuriy Fizer represented the Ukrainian Lutheran Church. Fizer brought greetings from the bishop of the Ukrainian Lutheran Church, which began, “Praise the Lord, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name! Wonderful words that reflect today joy of thousands of Ukrainian Lutheran hearts that rejoice on this day of establishing official fellowship between the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod and the Ukrainian Lutheran Church.”

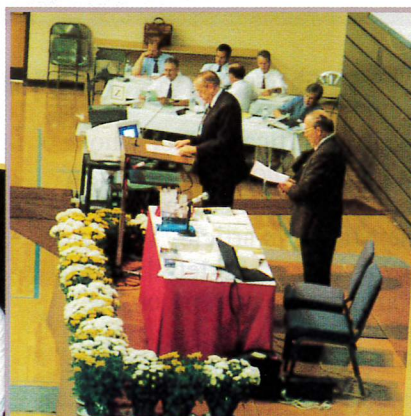


Delegates rose to sing “We All Are One in Mission” after fellowship was officially declared with the Confessional Lutheran Church of Latvia, the Ukrainian Lutheran Church, and All Saints Lutheran Church of Nigeria.

blessings worked by God’s Word in their midst. Gundars Bakulis of Latvia captured the significance of the moment: “You and us, we still live in different worlds and different cultures. Different languages we speak and have different history and different social environment. We have built on one sure foundation that passes all differences: the biblical faith and the Lutheran confessions.”



Three dozen “pages” passed out committee resolutions, handouts, ballots, and other goodies to the delegates during the convention. Here they take a rest from their work.



Douglas Bode, synod secretary for eight years, announced that he would not seek re-election at the 2001 synod convention. At the convention’s closing service, President Gurgel thanked Bode for his faithful service. Here Bode reads the minutes before one of the convention’s general sessions.



Pastor Bruce Becker, Commission on Adult Discipleship administrator, leading a breakout Bible study group. Convention delegates attended an hourlong Bible study every day.

This convention’s Bible study, put together by Becker, was called “Individualizing Spiritual Growth. Turning our perspective upside down.” Copies of the Bible study have been mailed to all churches, parasynodicals, high schools, colleges, and the seminary. It’s also available on the Web site <www.wels.net/sab/frm-cad.html>, under “Adult Spiritual Growth.” For additional copies, contact the Commission on Adult Discipleship, 414/256-3278; <pegr@sab.wels.net>.



The Prayer of Jabez named Christian book of the year—The Evangelical Christian Publishers Association named *The Prayer of Jabez* as the 2001 Charles “Kip” Jordon Christian Book of the Year.

The book, written by Bruce H. Wilkinson, focuses on a prayer in the Old Testament book of 1 Chronicles.

For an explanation of this book, its insights, and its shortcomings, check out the November issue. Richard Gurgel, a professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, will analyze this book in a new department, “In the cross hairs.”

Lutherans meet in convention—

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS); the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA); and our sister synod, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS), met in convention this summer.

Here are some of the highlights:

- By a small margin, the LCMS elected Pastor Gerald B. Kieschnick, current president of the church’s Texas district, as its new president. He replaces Pastor Robert Kuhn,

who became president in March when Pastor Barry died unexpectedly in office.

- The LCMS voted to formalize fellowship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Haiti, the Lanka Lutheran Church of Sri Lanka and with Lutheran church bodies in Lithuania and Latvia. Delegates also allowed Lutheran schools that currently are aligned with both the LCMS and the ELCA to continue this dual alignment.

However, they added that schools will be expected to comply with a set of guidelines prepared to avoid compromising LCMS doctrine.

- According to an LCMS press release, LCMS convention delegates affirmed former President Barry’s judgment that “we cannot consider them [the ELCA] to be an orthodox Lutheran church body.” Delegates recognized that many in the ELCA still remain faithful to the gospel, and they resolved to continue to reach out to them.

- The ELCA voted not to overturn a ban on noncelibate gay clergy but to “create a specific plan and timeline” for a final decision on this issue. They also voted to launch a churchwide study on homosexuality

to study issues such as ordination and blessing same-sex unions.

- Bishop Mark Hanson from Saint Paul, Minn., was elected as the third presiding bishop of the ELCA. He will succeed Presiding Bishop H. George Anderson, who is retiring.

- The ELCA adopted a constitutional bylaw amendment that allows pastors to be ordained without a bishop in “unusual circumstances.” This affects the “Called to Common Mission” statement, a joint communion statement between the ELCA and the Episcopal Church, which states that bishops must ordain new pastors. The Episcopalians will probably discuss the change when they meet in 2003.

- The ELS, which met June 10-14, declared formal fellowship with the Ukrainian Lutheran Church (with whom WELS also declared fellowship this year). The ELS Catechism Review Committee presented an updated version of Luther’s Small Catechism to ELS President George Orvick during the convention.

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

Don't keep this magazine. Give it away!

Found a particularly good article this issue? One that touched your heart? One that helped you understand a particular doctrine just a little bit better? One that motivated you to get involved?

Well, then, get involved. Start by giving away your issue of *Forward in Christ* magazine to someone who isn't WELS—whether it be a relative, friend, neighbor, or acquaintance.

- Use the article “They sing because they are afraid” as a conversation starter. Then share the magazine so they can learn more.

- Know someone who doesn't really understand the doctrine of

“universal justification” or who doesn't really know what it means to be a Lutheran? Let them read Wayne Mueller's article “Lutherans love everybody,” and tell them that more articles are coming on the same subject.

- Fill people in on some of the issues that WELS faces in the future through our synod convention news.

If you're not comfortable with sharing the magazine face-to-face, there are other options. Leave it

- On the plane
- In the doctor's office
- At the laundromat
- At the exercise club
- At a truck stop/wayside

- At the local library
- At a nursing home

And don't forget—we're also online. Tell your friends to check out our Web site. Current issues of the magazine are at <www.wels.net/sab/frm-nl.html>. Past issues are in the works.

Don't keep this magazine a secret. Pass it on.

Write or call to let us know how and, if you want, why you shared your copy. We'll send you another copy free. *Forward in Christ* magazine, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222; 414/256-3231; <fic@sab.wels.net>.

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

Baldwin, Jason E., to Hope, St. Charles, Mich.
Balge, Richard D., to retirement
Doebler, Matthew D., to St. Paul, Wisconsin Rapids, Wis.
Eckert, Paul G., to retirement
Enderle, Phillip M., to St. Paul, Tomah, Wis.
Johne, Harold R., to retirement
Kuske, Matthew D., to Emanuel, Fairfax, Minn.
Pankow, Leonard W., to retirement
Schultz, Clark R., to Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis.
Schuppe, Edward P., to South Atlantic/Southeastern Wisconsin mission counselor
Spaude, Philip P., to Lord of Lords, Casper, Wyo.
Weber, D. Craig, to Holy Cross, Daggett, Mich.
Wildauer, Martin G., to St. Matthew, Port Washington, Wis.

Teachers

Bauer, Barbara, to St. Paul, New Ulm, Minn.
Beyersdorf, Scott D., to St. John, Goodhue, Minn.
Birsching, Sheryl A., to Lakewood, Tacoma, Wash.
Boushek, Rosemarie E., to St. Mark, Citrus Heights, Calif.
Brown, Janell S., to Northdale, Tampa, Fla.
Cochran, Kim I., to St. John, Bay City, Mich.
Ertman, Jennifer, to Tree of Life, Lake Zurich, Ill.
Golm, Janet L., to Beautiful Savior, Fort Wayne, Ind.
Grobe, Jane M., to Salem, Stillwater, Minn.
Grunwald, Karen M., to St. Paul, New Ulm, Minn.
Hopf, Bret, to St. Marcus, Milwaukee
Juergens, Valerie M., to Parkland, Tacoma, Wash.
Lindholm, Dawn M., to Mt. Olive, Delano, Minn.
Marten, Kathleen R., to Christ Our Savior, Rockford, Mich.
Nolte, Jenise E., to Manitowoc LHS, Manitowoc, Wis.
Radsek, Katherine L., to St. John, St. Paul, Minn.
Schleef, Ronald E., to St. Paul, Stevensville, Mich.
Schultz, Carla S., to Peace, Hartford/St. John, Juneau, Wis.
Seafert, Karen S., to Christ, Saginaw, Mich.
Spreeman, Shannon I., to Trinity, Hoskins, Neb.
Staab, John T., to Parkland, Tacoma, Wash.
Welke, Dawn M., to Immanuel, Fort Worth, Tex.

COMING EVENTS

LWMS Women of WELS (WOW) retreats—Nov. 2 & 3, Norcross, Ga. Tiffany Ausdemore, 770/736-4686.
 Nov. 9 & 10, Milwaukee, Wis. Danica Krueger, 414/817-0820.
Michigan Lutheran Seminary Guild—Oct. 7, 2:30 PM. Barbara Manthey, 989/793-1041 ext. 236.
Alaska WELS Women's Bible retreat—Oct. 12-14. Kenai, Alaska. Kim Walker, 907/694-5713.
WELS Historical Institute annual meeting—Oct. 14, 7 PM. Wisconsin Lutheran College Center for Performing Arts, Milwaukee. <James_Kiecker@wlc.edu>.
Fall retreat—Nov. 3, 8:30 AM. Trinity, Minocqua, Wis. Men, women, and teens invited. 715/356-7542.
Sunday school workshop—Jan. 19, 2002. Wisconsin Dells, Wis. 414/256-3274.
Mid-winter teen retreat—Feb. 1-2, 2002. Wisconsin Dells, Wis. 414/256-3274.

Minnesota District Sunday school conference—Feb. 23, 2002, Bloomington, Minn. 414/256-3274.

International Girl Pioneers convention—Apr. 5 & 6, 2002. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn. Diane Jabs, 952/492-2540.

Special Ministries In Lutheran Education (SMILE) conference—June 28-30, 2002. Ramada Inn-Airport, Bloomington, Minn. Goal is to promote and strengthen the partnership of those involved in the spiritual training of people with developmental disabilities. Includes parents, caregivers, teachers, pastors, and volunteers. Bruce Cuppan, 920/922-8672.

2002 Northern Wisconsin District regional youth rally—June 30-July 3, 2002. Chilton, Wis. \$150/person. <Survivor2002@nwdcyd.org>.

"Tap the WELS" music/outreach/spiritual growth family & community event—July 18-20, 2002. Red Wing, Minn. 414/256-3274.

National Conference for Worship, Music, & the Arts—July 21-24, 2002. Carthage College, Kenosha, Wis. Visit <www.wels.net/worship/events> or call 414/256-3226.

2003 WELS international youth rally—July 9-12, 2003. Estes Park, Colo. 414/256-3274.

ANNIVERSARIES

Fort Atkinson, Wis.—St. Paul (140). Oct. 7 & Nov. 4. Services, 8 & 10:30 AM. 920/563-2263.

Menasha, Wis.—Bethel (50). Oct. 7, 14, 21. Services, 8 & 10:30 AM. Nov. 11. Services, 8 & 10:30 AM. Dinner, 12:30 PM. Festival service, 2:30 PM at Fox Valley LHS. RSVP, 920/725-1822.

North Fond du Lac, Wis.—St. Paul (100). Oct. 27. Service, 6:30 PM. Oct. 28. Services, 8 & 10:15 AM. 920/922-1080.

Shiocton, Wis.—Messiah (25). Oct. 28. Service, 9:30 AM. Dinner to follow. 920/986-3603.

Port Huron, Mich.—Holy Redeemer (25). Nov. 4. Service, 4 PM. Dinner to follow. 810/982-7632.

Sun Prairie, Wis.—Peace (100). Nov. 11. Services, 8 & 10:30 AM. Catered dinner to follow. 608/837-5346.

Saginaw, Mich.—St. Paul (150). Nov. 18. Services, 8 & 10:30 AM. 517/799-3271

AVAILABLE

Clergy gowns—two traditional black styles including some stoles. Free for the cost of shipping. John Schroeder, 414/571-9000.

Pews, communion railings, and 6' stone altar—free for the cost of shipping. Gene Leonhardt, 262/246-9665.

Bible history course books—Six blue for grades 5-6, five red for grades 3-4, eight orange memory books for grades 1-2, two yellow memory books for grades 3-4. <mlschool@athenet.net>.

NEEDED

Blue Bible history book teacher's manual—Messiah, Alpharetta, Ga., 770/751-9357.

College-age students—Students (ages 19-26) to go on motivational tour to WELS high schools. Submit video by Nov. 20 to apply. <www.wels.net/sab/cm/tour.html> for more information.

NAMES WANTED

Manistique/Central Upper Peninsula, Mich.—Don Brandt, 906/644-2801.

Puyallup/Tacoma, Wash.—Tom Unke, 253/537-2919.

Commerce Township/Highland/Milford/Wixom, Mich.—Thomas Schroeder, 248/349-0565.

WELS/ELS members stationed at Misawa Air Force Base, Aomori Prefecture, Japan—Jim Sherod, WELS Japan Mission, Ishikawa 1-4022-3, Mito City, Ibaraki 310-0905 Japan; <leccjws@po.net-jbaraki.ne.jp>.

Mountain/Suring/Breed/Lakewood, Wis.—Craig Korth, 715/473-5633.

West Point/Hyde Park, N.Y.—Donald Tollefson, 908/876-5429.

Singers and instrumentalists—for the National Conference for Worship, Music, and the Arts. July 21-24, 2002. Carthage College, Kenosha, Wis.

1. Adult choral singers with advanced ability.
2. 10th-, 11th-, and 12th-grade singers interested in Honor Choir.
3. Instrumentalists (high school and adult) with orchestral experience.

To receive an "Interest Form" contact the Commission on Worship, 414/256-3226; <worship@sab.wels.net>; or visit <www.wels.net/worship/events>.

POSITION AVAILABLE

Wisconsin Lutheran Christian Counseling—Full-time psychologist, MSW, psychiatric nurse, or marriage and family therapist with 4,000 hours of supervised experience and eligible to be licensed/certified in Minnesota to serve at New Ulm, Minn., office. Phil Koestler, 877/855-0936.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

St. John, Vacaville, Calif.—78 Peabody Rd, Vacaville, Calif. Sunday service, 10 AM. 707/455-7575.

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

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We have seen his glory

With every miracle Jesus revealed the glory of God and showed us the tender heart of a Savior.

Jon D. Buchholz

people” (Luke 7:16). But even miracles didn’t convince the skeptics, and the teacher and his miracles aroused a lively debate among the people.

“When the Christ comes, will he do more miraculous signs than this man?” (John 7:31).

As the number of Jesus’ miracles grew, so did the crowds that followed him. But Jesus

wouldn’t perform miraculous signs to entertain the masses. After he fed 5,000 people he had to rebuke the crowds for wanting full bellies instead of the bread of life. “I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill” (John 6:26). As a result, many miracle seekers went away in disgust.

The same thing happened among the people’s spiritual leaders. Even in the face of overwhelming evidence, the Jewish leaders refused to recognize Jesus as the Messiah. Jesus told them, “The miracles I do in my Father’s name speak for me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep” (John 10:25,26). The proof was so clear! But they refused to see God’s glory in their midst.

Jesus loved his people

There was another simple motive behind our Lord’s miracles. Perfect love and infinite compassion compelled our Savior to touch people whose lives had been ravaged by the

effects of sin. “This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: ‘He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases’ ” (Matthew 8:17).

Can you imagine how the sinless Son of God must have cringed to see the pain of sin all around him? We sense his compassion, as he said to the blind man, “Receive your sight; your faith has healed you” (Luke 18:42). Jesus felt the pain of the lepers as he sent them on their way to be healed. He was furious with the demons who possessed their victims, and Jesus forced them to bow to his majesty. He empathized with the lame man at Bethesda who was never quick enough to find healing in the pool. “Get up! Pick up your mat and walk” (John 5:8). The Lord’s heart went out to the widow at Nain who had lost her only son, as he raised the young man back to life. Jesus wept outside the tomb of his friend before he cried, “Lazarus, come out!” (John 11:43).

With every miracle Jesus revealed the glory of God. With each miraculous sign he eased the pain of one more hurting soul and showed the tender heart of a Savior—who came to set his people free.



Jon Buchholz is pastor at Holy Trinity, Des Moines, Washington.

The wedding guests at Cana murmured their approval as they sipped the wine. “Aged to perfection!” thought one. “The best I’ve ever tasted!” remarked another.

Only a few moments earlier, what was now wine had been plain water. In an amazing display of divine power, Jesus transformed the water into the finest wine. It was the first miracle by the rabbi from nearby Nazareth. “He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him” (John 2:11).

Jesus confirmed his identity

Jesus performed miracles for a simple purpose: Through his miracles he confirmed his identity as the Son of God from heaven. He told his disciples, “Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves” (John 14:11).

When Jesus performed a miracle, word spread like wildfire: “A great prophet has appeared among us,” they said, “God has come to help his

Duty or delight?

Have you changed jobs in the last 10 to 20 years? If you haven't, are you still doing the same thing for your employer that you did 10 to 20 years ago?

Chances are good, even if you are at the same job, you've changed how it's done. Not many jobs haven't changed in 10 to 20 years. What about 2,000 years?

You can probably come up with a few. The duties of mom and dad, for example, are much the same. We'll get to them next time as we continue to look at Luther's Table of Duties. Let's begin, though, where Luther did, with pastors. Or, better, let's begin with all called workers.

The reason for broadening the category, Luther would agree, is theological. It's the Office of the Ministry the Lord instituted. Within that ministry, the church is free to create positions such as pastor, teacher, staff minister, professor, administrator.

While outward forms may change, qualifications for called workers remain the same. They are, after all, the characteristics of any Christian. Basically it is to be selfless, as Christ was, not allowing the selfish instincts of our human nature to dominate us.

Specifically, as it relates to called workers, in his Table of Duties, Luther quotes Paul. A called worker is to be "self-controlled, gentle, not quarrelsome, no lover of money."

Do you see Jesus in these characteristics? No one was more self-giving. He gave up his life for us. His gentleness was evident. He's pictured cradling a lamb in his arms, seeking the lost. Even with those who regarded him as an enemy, he was not quarrelsome. He didn't pick fights. Yet he was not a pushover for every bully. He stood firm, as he wants his called workers to do when the Word of God is challenged. It's the only way God's representatives can

encourage God's faithful people and refute those who faithlessly ignore the Word.

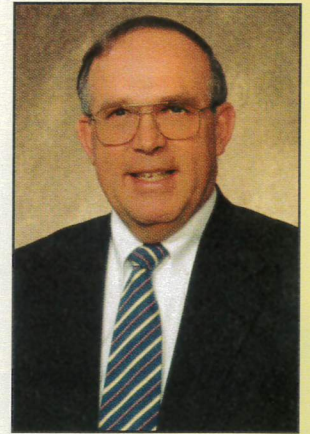
Read more about God's Table of Duties for called workers in 1 Timothy 3. While you're at it, read chapter 5:17,18 as well. It outlines one of our duties toward called workers, physically supporting them.

God wants those who serve him in serving others to be served themselves. The Old Testament tithe, 10 percent, went for the support of the temple as well as for those who served there. While the Old Testament tithe, along with the whole Ceremonial Law, was fulfilled with Christ's coming, Luther was not wrong in including support for called workers in his Table of Duties.

Our physical support for them, first of all, is out of respect for the Word of God they bring us. We're honoring our Savior as we support those who teach us about him. And so, in supporting them, the first question always needs to be, how much respect do we have for God's Word? And then, how will we show it in respecting those who proclaim the Word to us, supporting their labor of love with our own?

Called workers, God inspired Paul to write, are not to be greedy, selfishly seeking to become rich. Those who support called workers are not to selfishly try to keep them poor, either. And so as each, selflessly, serves the other, out of love for Christ, each carries out his own, God-given Table of Duties.

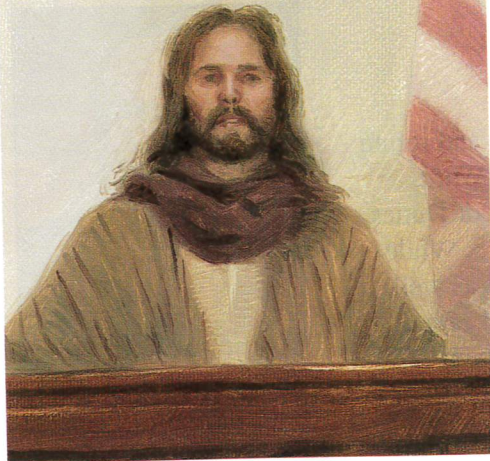
Duties can be burdensome. Duties become delights, however, when love motivates them. Called workers serve us with the Word out of love for their Savior. In keeping with God's Word, we serve them, supporting them, moved by the same love for Jesus. And so duty, for both, becomes delight.



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

Luther was not wrong in including support for called workers in his Table of Duties.

The Table of Duties is a portion of Luther's Small Catechism that contains "certain passages of Scripture for various classes and stations of men, whereby these are to be admonished of their respective offices and duties" (p. 18, Gausewitz edition). As Luther said, "Let each his lesson learn with care, And all the household well shall fare" (Luther's Small Catechism, p. 21, Gausewitz edition).



Traditional or scriptural?

God's bottom line is not what is traditional, but what is scriptural.

Thomas H. Trapp

What is traditional is not necessarily scriptural.

Enforcing man-made laws

People sometimes imply or say: "If you really want to be a Christian, use this liturgy and not that one . . . sing this style of song, not that style . . . play this instrument and not that one."

Similar words of intimidation did not sway Jesus.

"Why don't your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with 'unclean' hands?" the Pharisees asked Jesus (Mark 7:5). The Bible says that the Jews did not eat unless they gave their hands a ceremonial washing, a tradition of the elders.

Although Moses gave the children of Israel specific ceremonial laws from God, the traditions of the elders were not God's laws. They were man-made laws. The problem with these man-made rules was that they were presented as if they were God's rules.

Now what was traditional became scriptural.

Have you ever experienced a time when tradition became "a lamp to my feet" (Psalm 119:105) instead of God's Word?

It is one thing to state that the church has a tradition because it is beneficial or advisable or enjoyable. It is another thing to imply or openly

state that a church tradition is God's holy, immutable will.

As long as God's Word is followed, the Lord's main concern is not whether we praise him with a pipe organ or a Gibson guitar.

I remember the good advice that one of my seminary professors gave our class when he warned, "If you say, 'Thus says the Lord,' you jolly-well better know that the Lord says it!"

For example, the Lord never dictated a specific mode of prayer—whether we should look down like the tax collector did or lift up holy hands in prayer.

God never commanded pastors to wear white robes, which symbolize Christ's white robe of righteousness, or to wear robes at all.

God has not suggested that contemporary music is more meaningful to him than Gregorian chants.

God allows for freedom in matters of adiaphora (matters that have not been commanded or forbidden).

Following God's Word

This, however, does not give a redeemed child of God a license to

push the needle on sin. All things are not beneficial (1 Corinthians 6:12). When it is difficult to determine what glorifies God, we base our decision on biblical principles and our consciences (Romans 14:5).

God's Ten Commandments guide us with specifics of what is right and wrong. Beyond that God does not set down hard and fast rules. He gives us his principles and freedom.

This Christian freedom can create tension between believers. What is needed is a willingness to "live in peace" (2 Corinthians 13:11), to learn to give as well as to take, and to have our eyes open for the needs of others.

As long as God's Word is followed, the Lord's main concern is not whether we praise him with a pipe organ or a Gibson guitar. His main concern is that his message of sin and grace is proclaimed "in spirit and in truth" and that we openly confess, "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did [wrong] . . . this man really is the Savior of the world" (John 4:24-42).

God's bottom line is not what is traditional, but what is scriptural.

It should be our bottom line, too.

Thomas Trapp is full-time campus pastor at Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel & Student Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Picture this



Members of St. Luke, Iskitim, Russia, held two vacation Bible schools this summer. About 150 children heard God's Word over the two weeks. As part of the second session, children learned Russian translations of familiar English children's songs such as "God Loves Me Dearly" and "He's Got The Whole World In His Hands." Here one attendee enjoys his treat after the closing service, which was attended by 120 people.

Submitted by Michael Ewart, WELS missionary to Russia

Send pictures to Picture this, Forward in Christ magazine, 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.

"Jesus loves me this I know" —in Mandarin Chinese

Yea-soo eye woh, woh jer-dau

Jesus loves me this I know,

Ihn-way Shung-jing gau-sau woh

For the Bible tells me so.

Fahn shau hai-dz Jew moo-yang

Little ones to him belong,

Woh sway-ron ruoh, Ta chi-ang jwang

They are weak but he is strong.

Jew Yea-soo eye woh [sung 3 times]

Yes, Jesus loves me.


Ihn Shung-jing gau-sue woh.

The Bible tells me so.

(Taken from WELS brochure about Taiwan produced by Missionary Kevin Stellick)

WELS world mission stats:

74 missionaries
23 teachers
26 countries
97 national pastors
217 assistant pastors
and national evangelists
478 congregations
132 preaching stations
1 gracious God

 potluck

2 Peter 3:18—in Spanish

"Mas creced en la gracia y conocimiento de nuestro Señor y Salvador Jesucristo. A él sea gloria ahora y hasta el día de la eternidad. Amén."

"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen."

John 3:16—in Chichewa,
national language of Malawi

"Pakuti Mulungu anakonda anthu a padziko lonse lapansi kwambiri. Anali naye Mwana mmodzi yekha, komabe anampereka kuti aliyense wokhulupirira Iyeyo asatayike, koma akhale nawo moyo wosatha."

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

Here is a simple dessert recipe common in Mexico.



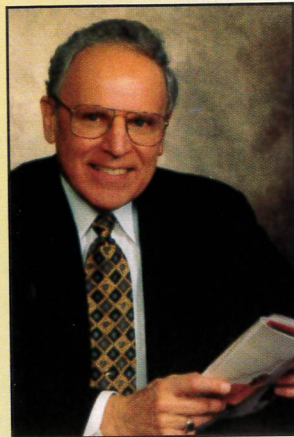
Recipe for: Arroz con Leche
(Rice with milk)

From the kitchen of: Doloeres Vega,
member of a congregation in Torreon

1 cup rice
4 cups water
1 small piece of a cinnamon stick
1 can condensed milk
1/4 cup raisins
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

Boil rice in water until water is absorbed. Add condensed milk and raisins. Mix well. Add cinnamon stick and simmer for 15 minutes. Serve hot or cold, sprinkling with ground cinnamon. Makes 4 portions.

Bible passages and recipe taken from
WELS Web site, <www.wels.net>.



Gary P. Baumler is editor of *Forward in Christ* magazine and WELS Director of Communications.

When you
take God
out of the
equation,
you also
remove any
accountability
to God.

We all stem from cells

It's all so scientific. We're talking about tiny human cells with the remarkable capability of transforming into other cell types.

It sounds so clinical: stem cells, embryonic stem cells, adult stem cells, DNA, therapeutic cloning, stem cell lines, the key to potential cures of major diseases like Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, and juvenile diabetes.

It raises serious ethical questions. We see through a microscope darkly: able to probe parts and pieces and processes but unable to imagine the mystery of life itself.

We develop a psyche that if we can do something in a laboratory, particularly if it might help humankind, we should do it. Some even insist that they will do it even if the rest of the world objects. Many refuse to see any downside in the debate because they won't deliberate on the moral dilemmas.

Why should we worry, if we don't see God as the Creator? Why should anything be considered out of bounds, if we have no real sense of sin in the world? Why should we not manipulate, mutilate, and murder embryos, if we see no need for our Savior.

What is it that scientists see in their microscopes if not a miracle of God's creation? From the moment that God brought Adam and Eve together, new human life would begin always with an embryo formed by the uniting of a male sperm and a female egg (Jesus being the lone exception). Once the embryo has formed, a unique human person (or persons as in the case of identical twins) has begun to grow.

It doesn't matter that we have learned to form embryos through artificial processes, the stuff needed came from God. It doesn't matter that we can maintain the embryos indefinitely in their original state, they are still unique, individual human life forms just waiting for the chance to grow.

Why is it so hard for many scientists to acknowledge the miracle? Maybe they need to look up from their microscopes long enough to contemplate the life process from embryo to bouncing baby.

When you take God out of the equation, you also remove any accountability to God. All ethical considerations attempt to walk over the quicksand of human opinions instead of the solid rock of God's Word. What was not considered ethical yesterday might not seem so bad tomorrow, as years of ignoring God's will causes once-tender consciences to grow hard and brittle.

Now, as a Christian, pause long enough to remember Jesus' telling his disciples to let the little children come to him. Then, when you think of embryos, think of the little children those embryos will grow into if the life process is not interrupted. Think of the Savior's invitation. Think of the reason we exist and the blessings we share by God's grace in Christ.

In the debate over stem-cell research, many will appeal to the greater good for humans. We might find cures for debilitating and deadly diseases. We might help people live longer. (Notice the uncertainty of the promise.)

So we argue, and we ignore the one thing that makes people live forever. We sacrifice human lives to (we hope) improve other human lives, and we ignore the will and the saving plan of him who is the source of life.

Let's not get suckered into the debate on strictly human terms. That's a big black hole. Besides, we already know what it takes to regenerate all the cells of our bodies. It's called the resurrection.

Gary P. Baumler

A Video Docudrama on the
Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod



HARVEST of JOY

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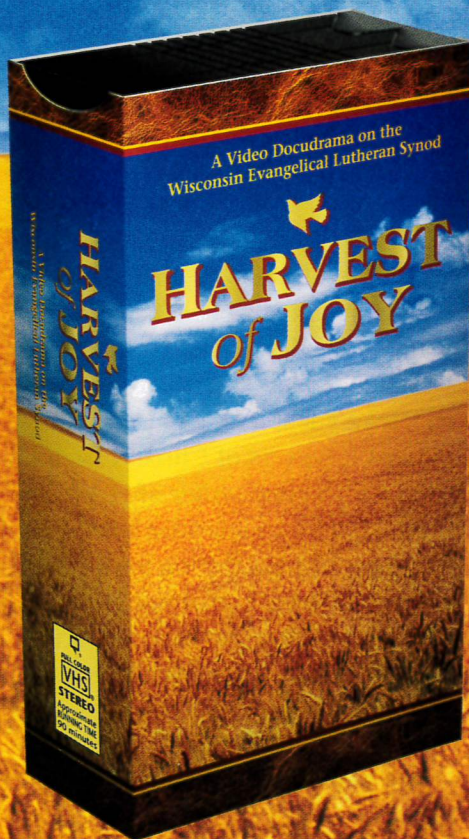
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President,
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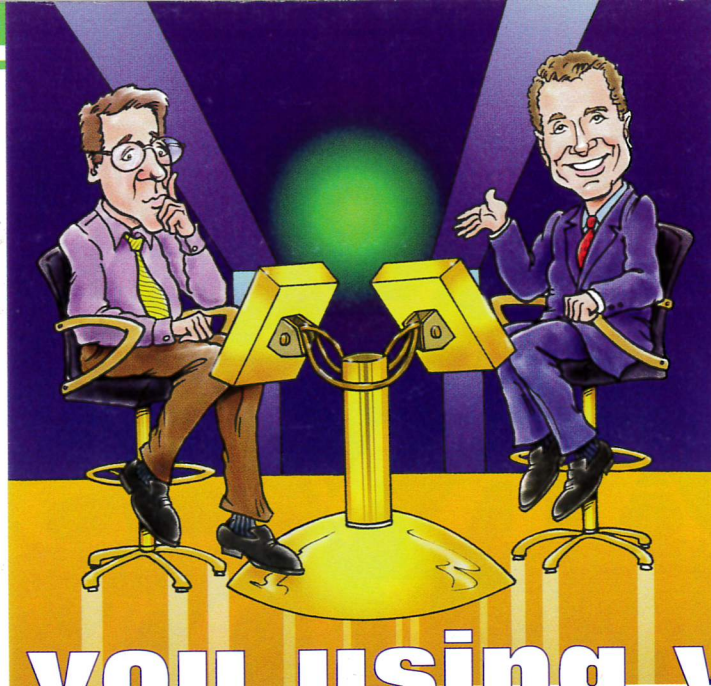
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Are you using your **LIFELINES?**

Don't waste the valuable tools God has given you to strengthen your faith.

Roy H. Rose

Ever watch that popular trivia show, "Who Wants to be a Millionaire"? Ever notice how frustrated Regis gets when someone doesn't bother to use his lifelines, makes a guess, and then loses with a lifeline or two left untouched?

That's how pastors and other concerned Christians often feel when they see people losing their faith, falling away from Christ, and in the end losing much more than a chance at a million dollars. Why didn't they use their lifelines?

How about you? Are you using your lifelines? Consider this:

Lifeline 1: 50/50

Are you attending worship services at least 50 percent of the time?

My school's board of education feels that this is the bare minimum that should be expected from children who attend our school and their families.

Of course, 100 percent would be ideal and most beneficial to all of us. We'd never miss an important thing that God wants to tell us, and we'd

all grow from the Word, the sacraments, and mutual encouragement. But many are not even attending worship 50 percent of the time. Won't you use your lifeline?

Lifeline 2: Phone-a-friend

Is transportation your problem?

Can't get to church because you don't have use of a car? Buses don't run on Sundays, and the connections are harder on Monday nights? Have you tried calling a friend from church for a ride? Don't know a lot of people at church? Try calling one of the elders or ask a pastor.

And then, don't forget to dial up your very best friend through prayer. Ask Jesus to help you find a way to worship with your fellow Christians and to grow in faith through your own Bible reading. What a friend we have in Jesus!

Lifeline 3: Ask the audience

On the "millionaire show," the audience is there to help the contestant. They aren't perfect, they don't always

get it exactly right, but most of the time they really do help the contestant on another step toward his goal.

That should also be a benefit of coming together regularly to worship with your fellow Christians: mutual encouragement and help to remain faithful followers of Christ. Listen to what the inspired writer of Hebrews said: "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching" (10:24,25).

Are you using your lifelines? Remember, the above suggestions have one main goal: to keep you connected with your eternal lifelines—God's Word and sacraments.

Roy Rose is pastor at St. Paul, Green Bay, Wisconsin.