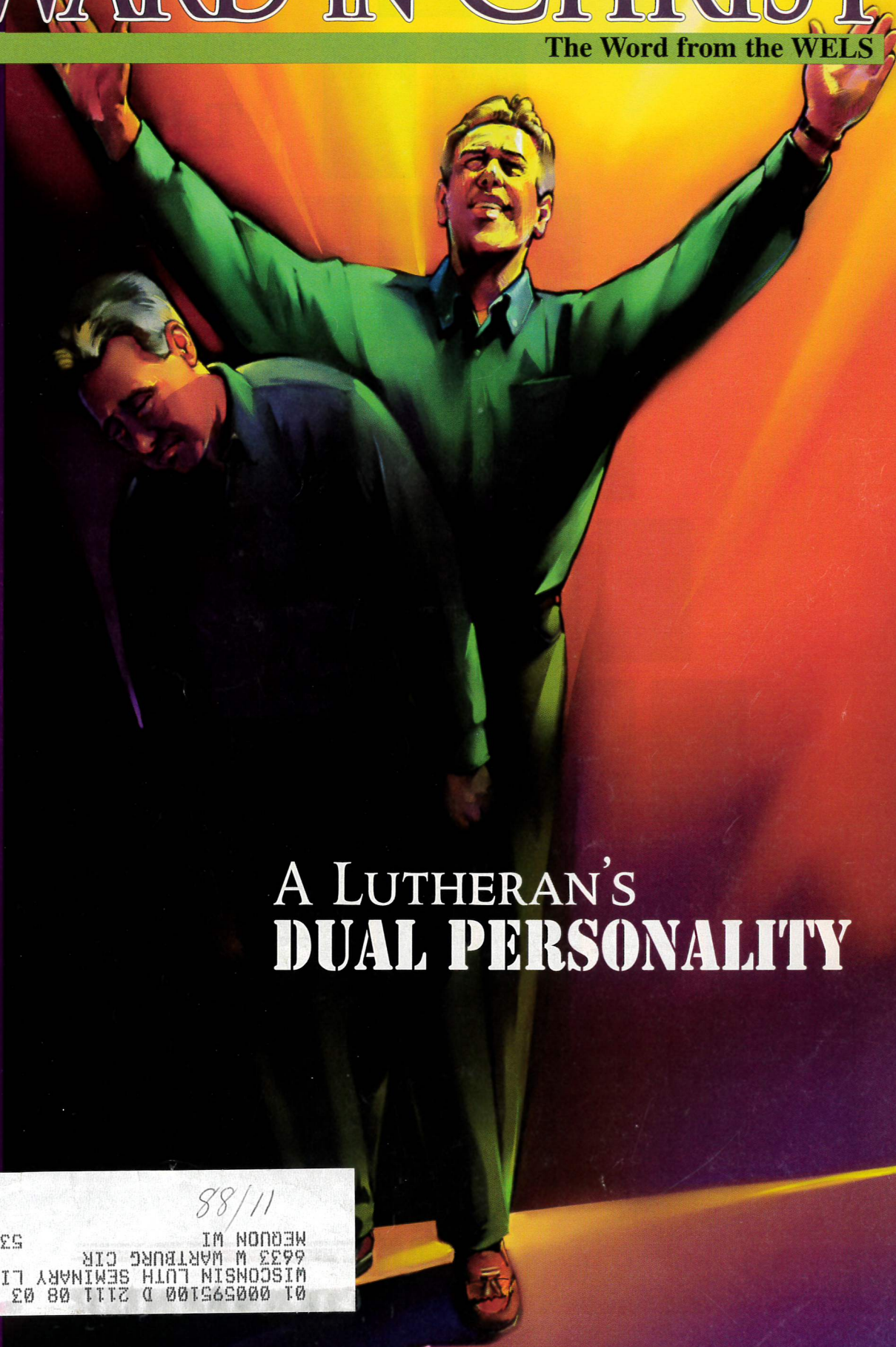


FORWARD IN CHRIST

November 2001

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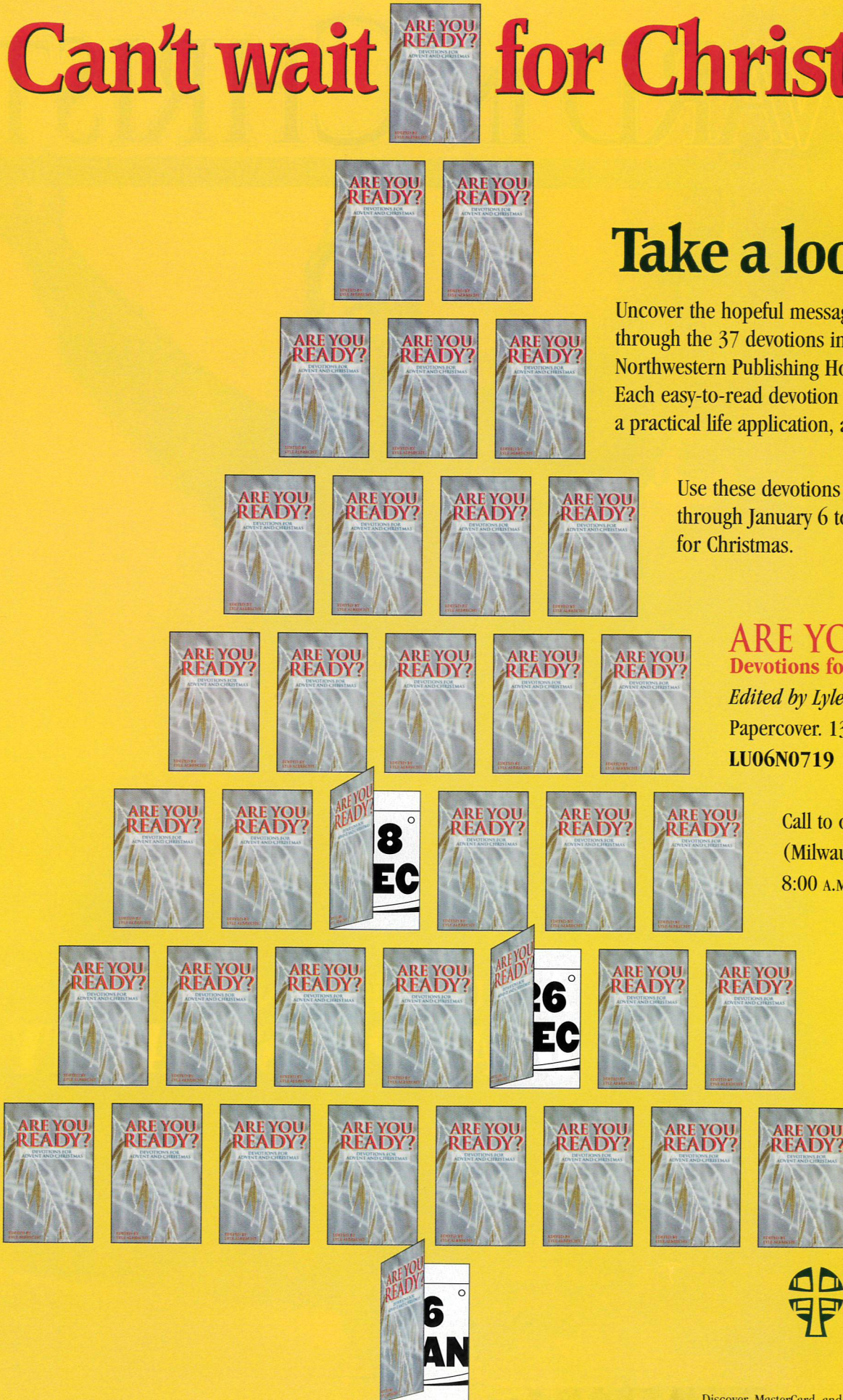
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Yoked with Jesus

*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened,
and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me,
for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.
For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. Matthew 11:28-30*

Eric S. Hartzell

A missionary in Africa got stuck in a mud hole with his pickup, buried up to the sides. He went back to a little village to get help. From the village corral came seven yoke of oxen, chained together, yoke to yoke.

There was no snap of metal as the chain came tight. The snap was absorbed in the massive necks of the oxen. They pulled, and silently and easily the mired truck came out to solid ground.

The yokes that day weren't instruments of torture for the oxen. They were instruments of mercy. The oxen needed to tend to a burden. The wooden yokes around their necks helped them do it easily.

Burdens without Jesus

Since our first parents sinned, we have had burdens in our lives. Then, God said, "In the sweat of your brow . . .". Later, Jesus said, "In this world you will have trouble." The word often translated as "perseverance" in the New Testament literally means "to remain under a burden." So the prospect of work, trouble, and burdens faces all of us.

How do you intend to pull your life's burden?

Consider the team of seven oxen. Discard the yoke. Tie the missionary's truck to them with slipknots around their necks, and see what happens. The harder and heavier the burden, the tighter and more constricting the rope. A burden that



is easy and light with the yoke chokes and strangles without it.

Christian, you too have a yoke, and this yoke is God's instrument of mercy. Without Jesus to aid us in pulling life's burdens we choke. We know the slipknot of hopelessness. Sin is a dense and dead weight. Without Jesus, the more the grief or the greater the monotony of daily life, the tighter the noose and the more labored our breathing. Without the yoke nothing makes the burdens possible or meaningful. Without Jesus and his yoke, we come to the end of our ropes. Without the yoke, the puller pines away, wears out, gives up, and dies.

Burdens with the yoke of Jesus

But this proverb softens the burden: "Commit to the Lord whatever

you do, and your plans will succeed" (16:3). Not every scheme we set our shoulders to will meet with success. But Jesus, whose yoke is easy and burden is light, will be involved in the work we commit to him.

Without heeding Jesus' invitation for the weary to come to him and rest in his easy yoke and light burden, James' optimism wouldn't be possible. He says, "Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance" (1:2,3).

There is in the yoke of Jesus even the prospect of developing some spiritual muscle. There is joy in knowing that the one who asks us to pull the load knows our strength and the temper of his yoke.

Jesus promises that his yoke is easy and his burden is light. But many burdens remain. Without burdens, Jesus' yoke would be meaningless and purposeless.

And the light burden? We are not beasts of burden doomed to carrying heavy loads. We are instead sons and daughters entrusted with carrying out God's good pleasure. We show him love this way. And the burden is not burdensome.



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

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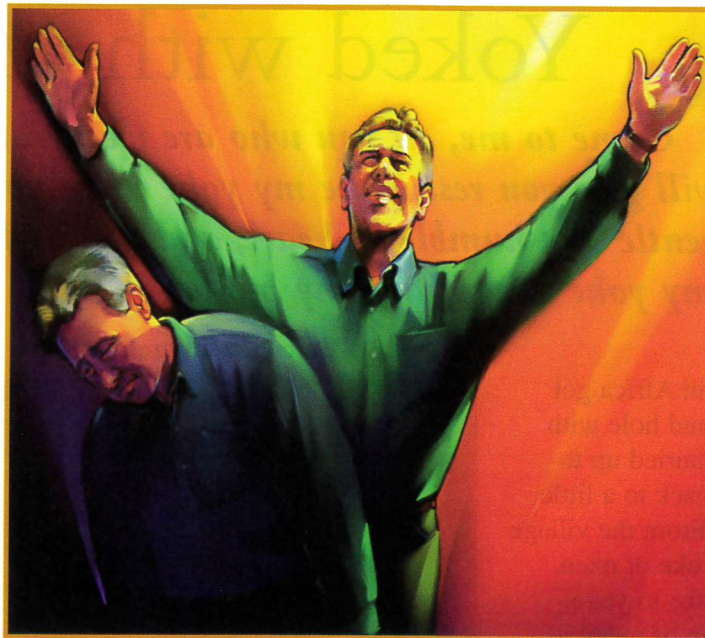
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Cover illustration by Tom Nachreiner

Scripture's divine psychology gives every Lutheran a dual personality because the law reminds us that we are sinners while the gospel assures us that we are saints.

8

bits & pieces

As we were preparing for this issue, four hijacked airplanes crashed, wreaking havoc in New York; Washington, D.C.; and throughout our country. Some quick shifting of articles allowed us to comment on these attacks.

- Make sure to read eye-witness accounts and reflections from pastors and members on the East Coast (p. 18).
- In these attacks, editor Gary Baumler asks each of us to hear God's wake-up call for repentance (p. 34).
- Richard Gurgel discusses how we should deal with our feelings of wanting revenge (p. 32).

Even with all the chaos and destruction, there is much for which to be thankful. Two articles reflect the Thanksgiving theme this month. Philip Kieselhorst reminds us to show our thankfulness in our actions (p. 10). Carl Henkel talks about priorities—what really matters and what doesn't (p. 16).

Coming and goings and name changes are happening in our magazine's staff.

As Richard Gurgel begins his stint on our editorial staff this month, Walter Beckmann wraps up eight years as an editor-in-chief. He shares his prayer for WELS and its future in his final article (p. 7). We thank him for his commentaries.

You may notice some different names listed on the masthead. Both Carianne (Neu) Ciriacks, the magazine's graphic designer, and I, Julie (Tessmer) Wietzke, were recently married. So we're still here, just under new names.

—JKW

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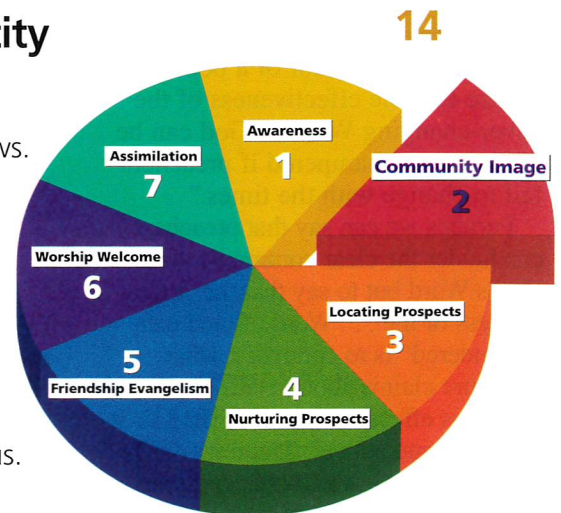
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A wake-up call



I appreciated a number of articles in the August *Forward in Christ*, but I must comment on a statement in Carl Henkel's article, "Changing tastes."

He stated, "The changing listening habits of ever-changing audiences made him [the author of a book] realize that the effectiveness of the never-changing Word of God can be hindered and hampered if preachers fail to change with the times."

Perhaps we can say that preachers can hinder the clear communication of God's Word but to say that the "effectiveness of the . . . Word of God can be hindered" is to contradict what Scripture claims about itself. The Word is always effective (Isaiah 55:10,11). It is "living and active" (Hebrews 4:12).

St. Paul, too, was a changed man, but it was this changed man who wrote, "My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power" (1 Corinthians 2:4,5).

The main point of Henkel's article is certainly valid. May we never allow our own comfort zone to hinder the communication of the gospel. But, to say that the effectiveness of the Word of God can be hindered is to take away from the power God himself ascribes to his Word.

Eric Roecker



Virginia Beach, Virginia

Regarding Prof. Cherney's "People Skills" [July] and a reader's reply [Sept].

Prof. Cherney's article apparently touched a raw nerve. However, his point remains unassailable: The Word of God is efficacious and will accomplish the Lord's purpose, no matter how awkward the messenger.

That having been said, there is little excuse for pastors or for any other Christian to recklessly cultivate a lack of tact in dealing with people. Supreme confidence in the inherent power of the Word of God to achieve the Lord's goals and a humble personal desire to

be all things to all people without, in the process, surrendering a particle of truth need not be adversarial.

A double caution is perhaps in order: First, [in] attributing a lack of "people skills" to slow or, even, negative statistical growth. Second, callous insensitivity to the plight either of the biblically weak and unknowledgeable or the unchurched unbeliever. A loving sense of balance for both Word and soul will point the way.

John A. Schroeder



Gillette, Wyoming

I say AMEN to the editorial comment article entitled "People skills" by Prof. Cherney [July]. Cherney drives home the point that we should continue to keep the course for WELS' well-equipped and well-trained pastors who vehemently preach, teach, and follow God's Word of Truth.

Also, I applaud Gary Baumler for "The conflicted society" [Aug. 2001]. Baumler basically is saying that the media, particularly TV, is sending the wrong messages, standards, values, and morals to our children and us. We, as Christians, should be outraged! The movie and TV industry and ratings have become the product of an evil, liberalized, depraved, compromised, and corrupt society that does not want to adhere to any standards, let alone God's stated standards for us in his Word.

My wife and I recently converted to WELS theology and doctrines. We are ecstatic, excited, and regenerated to have finally found a denominational church body in which the doctrines, policies, standards, and requirements are scripturally well-founded and correct according to God's Word of Truth.

Ronald and Joanne Hoshal

Oakley, Michigan

I have some questions about a statement in "A closer look at close communion" [Aug.].

How should I fulfill my "responsibility to make sure that the people we commune are truly penitent"? Which specific words of Scripture give us this responsibility? Are we saying that

we are sure that all WELS members we commune are always truly penitent? Are we judging other Christians automatically to be impenitent? Might this be offensive to people?

I cannot understand how I can make sure that the people I commune are truly penitent. Evidently I am neglecting an important part of the ministry!

Robert A. Bitter

Oakfield, Wisconsin

Author Walter Beckmann responds: Paul told the elders of Ephesus (Acts 20:28) that they were to keep watch over all the flock of which the Holy Spirit had made them overseers. Luther's explanation of the Office of the Keys tells us that we are to forgive the sins of penitent sinners and to retain the sins of the impenitent. That's what I had in mind when I wrote, "We have a responsibility to make sure . . .".

Since we can't look into the hearts of the members of our flocks I probably should have added a phrase like "try to do our best" to make sure, or I could have said, "properly prepared to receive the sacrament" instead of "truly penitent." Better yet, I could have spoken of our responsibility to deny the sacrament to manifestly impenitent sinners.

As far as "other Christians" are concerned, they would be covered by my statement, "Our participation in the Lord's Supper is an expression of the unity of our faith and not our religious diversity." Before we can express our unity of faith we must determine that such unity exists. The purpose of my editorial was to suggest things we might do to avoid seeming "offensive" to "other Christians" as we work to make this determination.

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.



My prayer for our synod

Walter F. Beckmann

After eight years of sharing my ideas and concerns with you, this will be my last editorial. As I bid you farewell, I'd like to leave you with my prayer for our synod and its future.

I pray that our church body would always remain true to God's Word and to our confession that every word of the Bible is the inspired Word of God, completely free of any mistakes or errors. May we never suggest that Scripture doesn't mean what it clearly says, whether it's speaking about a doctrine like divine creation or on some moral issue like homosexuality.

On the other hand, let's not bind consciences by implying that it says more than it does. May we never become clever and creative in our interpretation, search for loopholes to justify some doctrinal or moral aberration, or twist some obscure passage to prove some personal notion we find appealing. May we continue to study Scripture faithfully so that we can distinguish between truly gray areas and those where God has clearly spoken.

I pray that our synod will never wither and die but will continue to prosper and grow. Not only have I been a WELS member all my life but a fourth-generation member as well. I want WELS to be there for my children to enjoy to the third and fourth generation.

But let's never try to grow just for the sake of growth. May we never consider changing our Scriptural-based doctrines to conform to current public opinion polls, hoping thereby to make our message more marketable. Let's not be taken in by any "Growth Made Easy" gimmicks.

May we strive to build the best worship facilities we can afford, and may we maintain them as attractively as possible. But let's not just sit back and say, "We have built it. Now let them come." The Lord

tells us to go out and compel them to come in. We should always look for ways to find the unchurched and then be ready to reach out to them personally.

When the Lord moves others to accept our invitation, and he will, we must be ready to offer them uplifting worship with good law and gospel preaching and a calendar full of well-prepared activities designed to meet their spiritual needs. For real growth there are no substitutes for teaching God's truth and carrying out Christ's Great Commission.

Finally, my prayer is that we love one another. Our fellowship in WELS is a precious gift from God. Let's always treasure it. If we have to admonish one another, let's do it gently and in love, not exploding in anger. If we have to be admonished, let's accept it graciously and say, "Thanks. I needed that."

Let's encourage each other and give thanks for a job well done. Let's tell each other how much we appreciate the fellowship we share. For the past 18 years, I've greatly appreciated the fellowship I've shared on our Conference of Presidents. We listen to each other and value each other's opinions. May this always be the spirit of our boards and commissions as well as the relationship our pastors and teachers enjoy with each other. May the Lord always give our called workers a great love for the people they serve and our people a great love for the workers who serve them.

On Maundy Thursday Jesus said to his disciples, "This is my command: Love each other (John 15:17)." That command of Jesus is my prayer for our synod.

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

My prayer is
that we love
one another.
Our fellowship
in WELS is a
precious gift
from God.
Let's always
treasure it.

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 HAVE DUAL PERSONALITIES

A Lutheran should know law and gospel, accept both as God's own truth, and be able to communicate both to the world.

Wayne D. Mueller

“How can anybody believe that a loving God will send people to an eternal hell? It doesn't make any sense.”

“My neighbor is one of those Lutherans. She smiles when she talks to me about Jesus, but she is unyielding in her vocal opposition to abortion and homosexuality.”

“He told me that God declared his children righteous in baptism, but those kids are anything but saints!”

We've all heard comments like these about our Lutheran teachings. Our beliefs make some people gape in disbelief. To many, Lutheran preaching and practice seem contradictory. Not only does our Bible teaching fly in the face of their pagan presuppositions, but the Bible itself, as we proclaim it, also seems to be contradictory.

Law and gospel

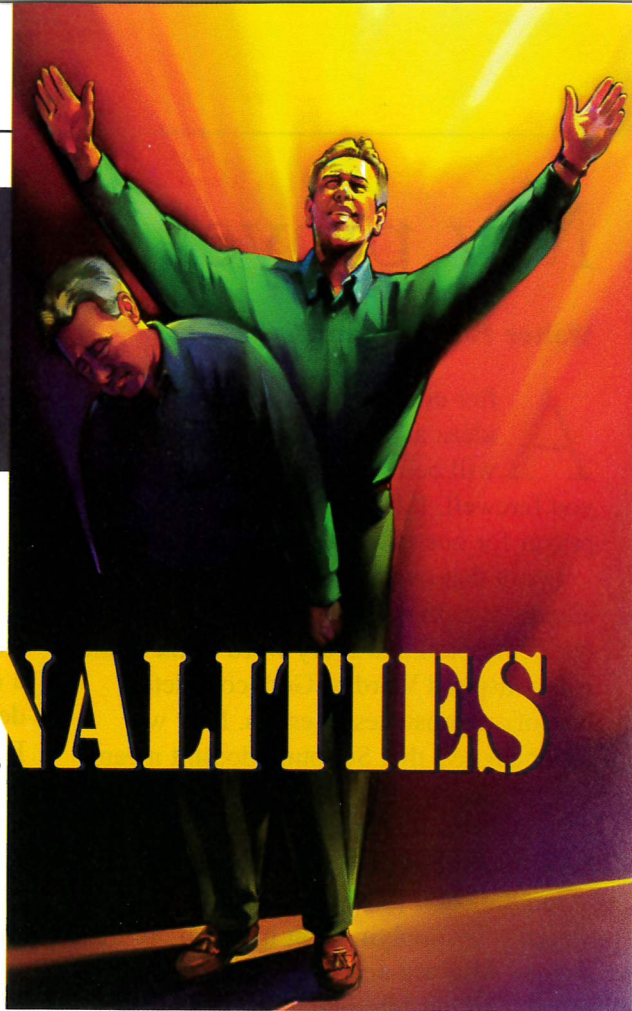
The reason is simple. If you stick to the Bible, you are going to be identified with the apparent contradictions of the Bible, and the most apparent contradiction in Scripture is its two main teachings. Yet Luther did not try to explain away the tension between law and gospel. Instead he upheld the sharp distinction between them. Rooted in these two basic truths, Lutherans ever since are identified by their dual personalities.

But try to share law and gospel with a non-Christian—or even with a non-Lutheran—and you will often draw blank stares. The unconverted heart can't grasp the difference between law and gospel. Even poorly instructed Christians may have trouble comprehending how messages so opposed can come from the same God.

Yet to know law and gospel, to accept both as God's own truth, and to be able to communicate both to the world are things which define a Lutheran. Luther wrote, “This difference between the Law and the Gospel is the height of knowledge in Christendom. Every person and all persons who assume or glory in the name of Christian should be able to state this difference” (*What Luther Says*, p. 2276).

The law

God uses his law to communicate his boiling anger against the sinner. “The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men” (Romans 1:18). By the law God aims to convince us that our sins have fractured our relationship with him. “Your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have



hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear" (Isaiah 59:2).

With equal force God's Word conveys the consequences of our disobedience. "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). His law damns us. It leaves us sinners no recourse. We cannot make up for our sins. Our best efforts cannot save us. "No one will be declared righteous in [God's] sight by observing the law" (Romans 3:20). "The ransom for a life is costly, no payment is ever enough" (Psalm 49:8).

The gospel

Yet the same Scripture that delivers God's wrath and judgment also displays his grace in glowing terms: "God is love" (1 John 4:16). "Because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved" (Ephesians 2:4,5).

The gospel's good news assures us sinners that what was impossible under the law, God has accomplished for us through his Son. "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21). The perfect, righteous life we could never live? Jesus lived it for us. And God credits Jesus' perfection to us through faith. "God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead" (Romans 4:24).

Resolution only at the cross

As diametrically opposed as these two messages seem, they are both true. God is the author of both. On Sinai God gave the commandments

that we find impossible to keep. Then on Calvary, in the person of Jesus, God did the impossible for us. He accepted his Son's holy human life as a substitute for our own. Then God took our deserved punishment and laid it on his Son.

Only at Calvary and only in Jesus comes resolution to the apparent conflict between law and gospel. That's why people who know Jesus by faith see nothing incompatible in the Bible's two main teachings and why those who don't know Jesus can see nothing but contradiction in them.

Those focused on the cross of Christ do not have split personalities. On the contrary, law and gospel help our dual personalities keep it together spiritually.

Dual personalities

Lutherans constantly share both law and gospel from their pulpits and classrooms. At every baptism we hear that babies born in sin have been made children of God. Sunday school lessons point out our sins and then direct us to our Savior from sin. Sunday sermons read us God's riot act to shatter our self-righteousness and then comfort us with God's righteous act of crediting Jesus' perfection to our account.

Scripture's divine psychology gives every Lutheran a dual personality. We rejoice that we have been declared holy through the blood of the Lamb, while we struggle with

our personal imperfections. Not only do Lutherans fail to see any conflict between law and gospel; in the shadow of our Savior's cross, we honor both messages as God's perfect address to the reality of our earthly existence. The law reminds us that we are sinners; the gospel assures us that we are saints.

Not split

Law and gospel keep the sinner-saint on an even keel. The law urges daily, humble repentance. The gospel lifts us from penitent knees to face each day anew with confidence that comes by grace alone. With its inspired wisdom, law and gospel help Lutherans keep their spiritual perspective. Those focused on the cross of Christ do not have split personalities. On the contrary, law and gospel help our dual personalities keep it together spiritually.

Don't be taken aback if others fail to understand our seeming contradictions. Their confusion is our invitation from God to share law and gospel with them. God's law will keep our witness humble to admit that we are sinners like others. His gospel emboldens us to comfort our neighbors with the comfort God has already given us. That's how law-and-gospel Lutherans help others get it together with Jesus.



Wayne Mueller is first vice president of WELS.

Happy THANKS-LIVING

God's display of love toward us should motivate us to display our gratitude in all that we do.

Philip L. Kieselhorst

This Thanksgiving during halftime of the football game, some reporter will do a story on the generosity of an NFL player who is giving back to his community. Many fans view such reports with a skeptical eye. They have heard athletes say all the right words when the camera is focused on them. They have later seen disappointing examples of greed and lewdness displayed by athletes in their lives away from the cameras. It is hard for fans not to view all professional athletes as greedy, immature, and ungrateful.

But some professional athletes let their actions off the field tell a different story. Jerry Wunsch is a professional football player who grew up in Wausau, Wis. During the off-season he brings together children who are diagnosed with cancer. He takes them on fun trips and gives them opportunities to make friends with children facing the same obstacles.



Jerry Wunsch has seen a child dying of cancer. He has attended the funerals of children he has known. He is thankful that he has been blessed to meet these courageous young people and learn about life from them. His gratitude is on display as he continues to show kindness to suffering children. I have not met Jerry Wunsch, but his actions have convinced me that he is

not a greedy, immature, or ungrateful pro athlete.

This Thanksgiving, Christians will be declaring their gratitude to God for the many blessings he has given them. But many in our society view Christians with the same skeptical eye through which some fans view professional athletes. They have seen Christians giving thanks and saying all of the right words when the spotlight is on them in church on Sunday. But they have also seen disturbing examples of sin displayed in the lives of Christians

away from church. We can expect that non-Christians will be skeptical when we tell them how grateful we are to God. They will believe it when they see it.

Jesus once asked, "Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'?" (Matthew 9:5). This Thanksgiving we could ask, "Which is easier: to say, 'I thank

you,' or to get up and show our gratitude in our lives?"

When words are not enough

If you broke your mother's antique vase because you were playing football where you weren't supposed to, saying "I'm sorry" would not be enough to make everything as good as new. And, when your mother holds you in her arms and assures you that she loves you more than a vase and forgives you for what you did, words would not be enough to show her how grateful you are for her forgiving love.

Words are not enough to express our gratitude to God because words are not enough to remove our guilt before God. Simply saying "I'm sorry," to God for the wounds we have inflicted on his reputation by our unkind and greedy actions is not enough. Words will never be enough to repair the damage done to God's name by our sinful actions. Words such as "I'll do better next time," will never be enough to restore our broken relationship with God.

Give thanks that words are not enough for God. "God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). Jesus displayed the full extent of his love for us by sacrificing his life for ours. Words were not enough to restore us to favor with God, so Jesus stepped in and took action.

Words are not enough to express the gratitude that forgiven sinners have for God's undeserved love for them. We want to do more than say the words "thank you" over and over again. In view of God's loving sacrifice, we want to display our gratitude for the whole world to see. We want people to see our gratitude for God's grace displayed whether it is a Friday night or a Sunday morning.

Gratitude is better seen than heard

When Jesus forgave a thief named Zacchaeus his debt to God, Zacchaeus promised: "Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount" (Luke 19:8). We have no doubt that Zacchaeus followed through on his words. When Jesus healed the blind, cured lepers, allowed the lame to walk, and preached good news to the poor, those individuals responded in gratitude by bringing their fellow sufferers to meet Jesus.

Words are not enough to express our gratitude to God, because words are not enough to remove our guilt before God.

Saying "thank you" lasts a few seconds. Displaying our gratitude is a constant expression of love for God. We often hear these words during Thanksgiving: "And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him" (Colossians 3:17).

Paul, then, lists a number of ways in which we can display our thanks to God. Wives, husbands, children, and workers all have special opportunities to show their gratitude to God for his blessings and love. Paul then concludes, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men" (Colossians 3:23).

This Thanksgiving try a little experiment. Attempt to express your gratitude without saying a word. Show your thanks, rather than say thanks, keeping

in mind Jesus' promise, "I tell you the truth, whatever you [do] for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you [do] for me" (Matthew 25:40).

Thank your parents and return the favor for the smiles they generated, the scrapes and bruises they cared for, the hurt feelings they mended, the sacrifices they made, the direction they gave, and the sins they forgave. Express your gratitude for the lifetime of love they have given you by respecting them, caring for them, and making sacrifices for them.

Thank your God with more than words for the happiness he generates, the hurt and pain he comforts, the sacrifice he made on Calvary, and the many sins he forgives. In your worship, work, relationships, and efforts to assist individuals in need of spiritual and physical support, display your gratitude for the eternity of love that God offers you by doing all with a thankful attitude.

Jerry Wunsch is a bright light in the NFL, not because of his athletic abilities, but because his display of gratitude toward children with cancer motivates others to follow his example. God made you to be a bright light in this world. His display of love toward you motivates you to display gratitude in all that you do. Others will witness your display. They will see what thankfulness looks like and want to hear what you have to say. "Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever" (Daniel 12:3).

Happy Thanks-living!



Philip Kieselhorst is pastor at Gethsemane, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

LUTHERAN HIGH SCHOOLS OUT WEST

Three different schools face challenges to accomplish the same mission.

Janet Klann



This Evergreen Lutheran High School cheerleader gets a big hug from Evergreen's eagle mascot.

The majority of WELS' 22 area Lutheran high schools are located in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Michigan, in areas with relatively high concentrations of Lutherans.

Only nine schools are located west of the Mississippi River, and, after East Fork Lutheran High School (see Oct., p. 16), only three are west of the Rocky Mountains. So what's it like, operating a Lutheran high school where Mormons, Baptists, and the unchurched greatly outnumber Lutherans?

Arizona Lutheran Academy (ALA)

Located in: Phoenix, Ariz.

Established: 1978

Size in 2001: 158 students,

12 faculty members

Web site: <www.alacoyotes.org>

When asked to describe the atmosphere of their school, teachers and students alike use phrases such as "family," "genuine caring," and "total team effort." Teacher Robert Gruetzmacher says, "We are all one in Christ, and this is reflected in social situations as well as in academics."

A committed federation of 24 congregations enabled ALA to begin on a solid financial basis. The \$1.8 million campus was built in 1986 and has a capacity for 225 students. "Debt Free in 2003" is a program to wipe out the remaining financial obligation. Committed volunteers run a thrift store in Phoenix that last year contributed \$83,000 to the school's operating budget. Other volunteers landscape the grounds, staff the library, and serve in the lunch program.

Recruitment and retention are two major challenges. ALA draws from five local Lutheran elementary schools, plus Flagstaff and Tucson, each three hours away. Distance and travel time are often cited as factors when students choose to attend near-by public schools instead of ALA.

"We have what everyone needs—the gospel," says teacher Doug Meyer. "We could be growing faster."

Helping each student find his niche in life is part of ALA's mission. Vic Fenske, who has taught at

the school since its beginning, says, "We want each student to find the talents his creator has given him and then develop those talents to serve his fellow man and honor God." This task is difficult, says Fenske, because "so much in our society tries to drag students in the opposite direction."

California Lutheran High School (CLHS)

Located in: Wildomar, Calif.

Established: 1977

Size in 2001: 104 students,
12 faculty members

Web site: <www.clhs-chawks.org>

California Lutheran High School's mission is "to nurture discipleship in teens . . . equipping them for a lifetime of service to their homes, churches, vocations, and communities."

A dedicated and committed faculty and staff work to carry out this mission. History and government teacher Nate Sievert says, "A small school gives a chance for the faculty to come together in a very close relationship." Danielle Raiser, who teaches math and history, adds, "Our students are a joy to teach."

The biggest challenge faced by most faculty members is time management. Teachers generally wear several hats—coaching sports, advising Student Council, or directing choirs, in addition to their classroom duties.

Building an enrollment has been difficult, since the school has moved several times in its 24-year history. Beginning in rented facilities at King of Kings, Garden Grove, CLHS subsequently moved three times within Orange County. In 1993, property was purchased in Wildomar, in Riverside County, but another temporary home at St. Stephens, Fallbrook, was needed until the Wildomar property was ready. The school has been housed in modular buildings at Wildomar since 1994 and construction is underway on the first permanent building.

Currently, 400 individuals and an association of 33 congregations support the school. Some congregations include CLHS as a part of their regular budget; others do not. Enlarging this support base is an important goal for the future. Other goals are expanding the dormitory space and adding more courses to the curriculum, including advanced placement classes.

Evergreen Lutheran High School (ELHS)

Located in: Des Moines, Wash.

Established: 1978

Size in 2001: 137 students,
13 faculty members

Web site: <www.elhs.org>

“Thirty years ago people in the

Pacific Northwest dreamed that sound Lutheran teaching could be provided without sending students to the Midwest,” says Jonathan Schoeneck, who has taught at Evergreen for 10 years. “Against great odds (from an earthly viewpoint), the school opened and has thrived.”

Lack of a permanent facility has been the number one challenge for Evergreen. A site in Gig Harbor, just north of Tacoma, was selected in 1995, but the necessary zoning and use permits were granted only recently. Monies intended for building had to be spent on consultant fees and litigation. Now a relocation committee must formulate plans for a smooth transition to the new property, and a capital funding drive needs to regain momentum.

Expanding its financial support base is another challenge. Development director John Sebald states that most of the school’s support comes from individual contributors. Area churches are part of an association but not all of those churches include the high school as part of their annual budgets.

Challenges for teachers include finding adequate time for multiple class preparations and meeting individual student needs. Students are challenged by the distances and

travel times necessary to attend Evergreen. Students and teachers insist, however, that these difficulties are more than offset by what their school has to offer.

“We have a great message—the gospel. We have wonderful, friendly students, and we are blessed with a talented, dedicated, loving, God-fearing teaching and support staff,” says Principal Greg Thiesfeldt. “These are the things that make Evergreen a special place.”

Making a difference

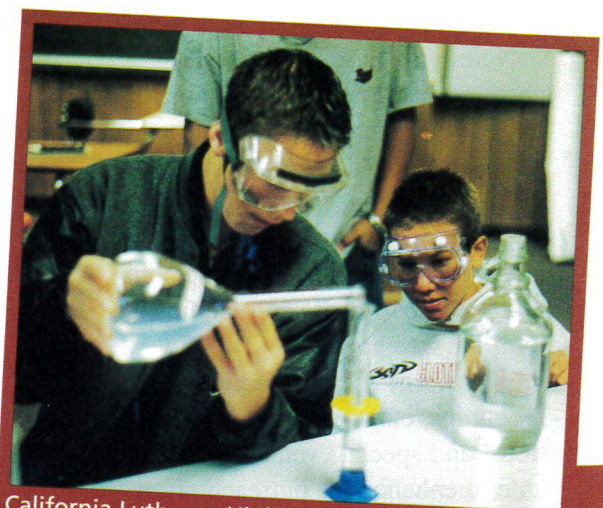
Today’s teens live in a world hostile to Christ and godly living, but dedicated teachers, working with the home and the church, can and do make a difference. You, too, can help. Give thanks to God for the teachers and staff who do this critical work. Pray for their efforts. Encourage your children and grandchildren to attend a Lutheran high school, and support the schools with your offerings. Become a partner in the mission of pointing teens to the cross, helping them identify their talents and teaching them to use those talents in God-pleasing ways.



Janet Klann is a member at Shepherd of the Valley, Surprise, Arizona.



This group photo of Arizona Lutheran Academy’s advanced placement European history class was taken in London in spring 2001.



California Lutheran High School students experiment with acids and bases in physical science class.

Establishing a community IDENTITY

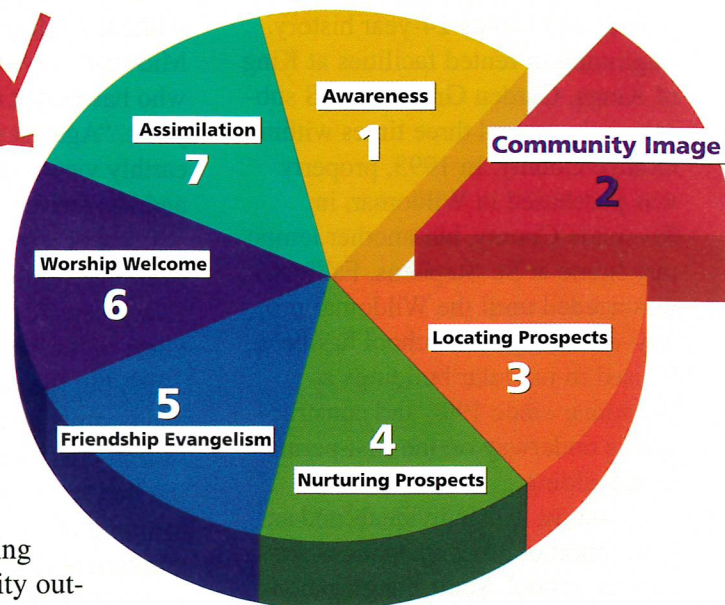
God gave us the gifts of media/
communication to help spread
the good news.

Bruce F. Tieves

Imagine life without communication. Just think about it for a few minutes. No speaking. No writing. No expressions. No gestures. Life would be difficult, and for many it would cease to exist. But, thanks to God, we have the gifts to communicate with others so that we can live meaningful lives.

Now think for a minute if your church was unable to communicate outside its walls. People in your community wouldn't know your church's name, location, programs, and worship times. Worst of all, they may never hear the good news of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It's possible your church might cease to exist. But, again, thanks to God, your church has gifts to communicate with people in your community.

Nothing is more effective than personal witness when it comes to outreach. Be sure to tell your friends, family members, co-workers, and other acquaintances of Jesus, and invite them to church. But turn your attention also to the rest of the community. Other media/communication tools such as advertising, public relations, direct mail, publications, brochures, electronic communications, and special events are available to enhance the outreach effort.



Building a basic identity

Before implementing widespread community outreach efforts, it's important for your church to establish a basic identity. This can be accomplished by developing the following materials:

- **An appealing name/logo for your church.**

Once you've created this look, stick with it so that people can easily identify your church. In other words, don't change the font and graphic. Generate letterhead, envelopes, and business cards incorporating the name/logo. Also make sure to use it on bulletins, postcards, exterior signage, ads, Web sites, etc.

- **A comprehensive, aesthetically pleasing brochure that highlights your church.**

Include brief information on history, pastor(s), beliefs, worship, adult education, youth education, and other opportunities. Use one copy font and one headline font; include pastor, member, and building photographs as graphic elements. Don't forget to add your logo, address, phone numbers, and worship times. The brochure is in effect your church's resumé, so quality content and presentation are necessary to draw people's interest.

- **An easy-to-read church newsletter that is informative, crisp, and clear.**

Use the same or similar fonts from your brochure and insert graphics where appropriate. Similarly, design a prospect newsletter that shares a common look and feel.

- **A yellow page ad that carries the theme of your brochure and newsletters.**

It's important to create a "family look" for all of these items. They should look like they belong together. Developing this foundation of materials is essential to building church identity. To keep it intact, maintain font and logo guidelines for people to follow.

Understanding your community is a key component to effective communications. Conducting a community profile will help you uncover potential opportunities and target audiences. Much of this research is available from government agencies. Information can be obtained through local surveys and focus groups.

Putting together a media/communication plan

After determining your target audience and outreach programs, it's time to write a media/communication plan. Usually, a six-month plan is most effective. It should outline objectives, audiences, communication tools, deadlines, costs, and responsibilities.

A variety of the following communication tools can be used to reach your target audience effectively.

1. Advertising

Advertising is available in various forms, including print, radio, and television. Other forms include newspaper inserts, billboards, and banners. Which media you select will depend on your budget. If enough dollars exist, it's beneficial to use multiple forms of advertising. If not, it's best to choose one medium and use it effectively. In most cases, print, radio, and cable television are the most cost-efficient methods of advertising.

Producing quality, professional ads is extremely important. An ad poorly done will have a negative effect on your target audience.

2. Public relations

Churches often overlook public relations as a method of communication. News releases and letters-to-the-editor can be submitted (at no cost) to local newspapers for publication. Topics might include a Bible class announcement, special worship opportunities, school registration, vacation Bible school, building construction/renovation, new pastor/teacher, or another special event.

Many local newspapers offer pastors a free opportunity to write columns for the weekly religion page. No-cost radio airtime can be sought by submitting 30- or 60-second public service announcements (PSAs) to area

radio stations. Cable-access television stations can be used to broadcast worship services and to include events on the community calendar at no charge.

3. Direct mail

Direct mail enables churches to deliver messages to the doorsteps of area residents. Letters, postcards, newsletters, flyers, and CD-ROMs are just a few items that can be mailed to the homes of community members. As non-profit organizations, churches qualify for reduced postage rates for direct mailings.

4. Electronic communications

Electronic communications have become an important part of outreach efforts among churches today. The Internet has created opportunities to communicate with people at their desks through Web sites and e-mail. Additionally, videos and CD-ROMs can be produced to bring life to the story of your church.

5. Special events

Special events are a great way to get people to visit your facilities. Whether it's Friendship Sunday, vacation Bible school, or some other occasion, special events offer people an opportunity to check out your church beyond the traditional worship service.

When implementing multiple media/communication tools, it's important that a consistent message and look be presented. The last thing you want to do is confuse your target audience. And remember, it will take more than one ad or one postcard to get your audience to react. Plan on presenting the message again and again.

Obviously, God has blessed us with many ways to reach out to our community. It's our job to use these gifts well. Although church growth is solely based on Word and Sacrament, an ongoing media/communication program is helpful to gain an additional audience with whom to share the good news of Jesus Christ.



Bruce Tieves, marketing coordinator for WELS Commission on Evangelism, helps individual congregations develop media/communication plans and materials. If you need assistance in this area, contact Tieves at 414/256-6484; <BruceT@sab.wels.net>.

Did you know?

According to the 2001 Yellow Pages Publishers Association Industry Usage Study, churches are the 26th most frequently referenced heading, with 92.7 million people using those ads.

Findings based on 23,797 telephone interviews evenly spread throughout 1999 and 2000.

SAMPLE YELLOW PAGE AD


Sunday worship—8:00 a.m. and 10:30 A.M.

Bible study—9:15 A.M.

Monday worship—7:00 P.M.

- Elementary school, grades K to 8
- Pre-school
- Nursery available during morning services
- Handicapped-accessible
- Youth group activities

Pastors
Ian Somebody
John Nobody

**Trinity
Lutheran
Church**

A member of WELS

1234 Nowhere Avenue
Across from The Mall
www.trinity.org
555-1111

This sample ad shows what elements may be included in an expanded ad for your local yellow pages. Prices for yellow page ads will vary depending on the size of the ad and on the area in which you live. Call your yellow pages representative for more information.

A MATTER OF PRIORITIES

Absolutely nothing dare become so important to us that we would choose it over Jesus.

Carl R. Henkel



I read the following story: A prosperous, young investment banker was driving a new BMW sedan on a mountain road during a snowstorm. As he veered around one sharp turn, he lost control and began sliding off the road toward a steep cliff. At the last moment he unbuckled his seat belt, flung open his door, and leaped from the car, which then plummeted to the bottom of the ravine and burst into a ball of flames.

Although he had escaped with his life, the man suffered a ghastly injury. Somehow his arm had been caught near the hinge of the door as he jumped and had been torn off.

A passing trucker saw the accident in his rearview mirror, pulled his rig to a halt, and ran back to see if he could help. When he arrived at the scene, he found the banker standing at the roadside, looking down at the BMW burning in the ravine below. Incredibly the banker was oblivious to his injury and moaned, "My BMW! My new BMW!"

The trucker pointed at the banker's shoulder and said, "You have bigger problems than that car. We've got to find your arm. Maybe the surgeons can sew it back on!" The banker looked where his arm had been, paused a moment, and groaned, "Oh no! My Rolex! My new Rolex!"

The most important choice

We smile, maybe even laugh! No one could have such a distorted view of life! This guy has a real problem!

The example is exaggerated, but the situation it describes is real. It's all about priorities, isn't it? It's about what has ultimate value and

what doesn't. What, when all is said and done, really matters, and what doesn't.

Jesus has something to say about this: "Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it" (Matthew 10:37-39). His point is rather obvious, isn't it? Nothing—absolutely nothing—dare become so important to us that we would choose it over Jesus, who himself gave up his life for our sake.

It is in giving that we receive, and it is in losing that we find.

Why do you suppose Jesus would use the example of a child/parent, parent/child relationship? I suspect it's because this relationship is the most precious of all earthly possessions. The love between parents and their children runs as deep as life itself. It's not a matter of choosing an arm over a Rolex; it's a matter of choosing Jesus over all things and all people. It's only when we lose our life; that is, when the things of life lose their control over us, that we finally have life.

This is one of those great paradoxes of the Christian faith. It is in giving that we receive, and it is in losing that we find.

Applying that choice

That's the principle, but don't you agree that properly applying it to the

daily affairs of life can be quite a challenge?

In a short time, we'll be celebrating another Thanksgiving. And what will we do? We'll thank God for family and friends, for health and wealth, for all the things that bless our lives. (Those "things" may not include a BMW and a Rolex, but just a simple Chevrolet and a Timex!) I don't mean to suggest that this kind of thanksgiving is wrong, but what would please God even more is that we give these people and things over to him. That we "lose" them by turning them all over to his care, acknowledging that they belong first to him, and that we are just the stewards, the caretakers, the custodians.

Another thing we must seriously ask ourselves is how much of what God has given to us do we actually give back to him by giving to others? Most Christians return to the Lord only a few percent of their yearly blessings, choosing instead to pursue their own BMW or Rolex dreams, and thus choosing to ignore Jesus' words quoted above. Some, in true thanksgiving for the life they have in Jesus, look for more opportunities to give.

True thanksgiving is found in the heart that thanks God just because he is God, that thanks God because he is our Savior. In such a dedicated heart there is thankfulness even if health is gone and all things have vanished. Here is a person who has truly found life.



Carl Henkel is pastor at Mt. Olive, St. Paul, Minnesota.



In Jesus' arms

WELS members reflect on the Attack on America.

Julie K. Wietzke

People often bring up in conversation, "Where were you when . . . ?" Where were you when JFK was assassinated? Where were you when we first walked on the moon? Where were you when the space shuttle Challenger blew up? So, where were you when the terrorists attacked America? I will let you know, I was right in Jesus' arms.

—Indelethio Nebeker,
Sure Foundation, New York City

Being in Jesus' arms is the safest—and the best—place that we can be. And Jesus' arms were full on Sept. 11, 2001, when terrorists crashed four different planes in New York City; Washington, D.C.; and Pennsylvania.

No WELS members were killed in these attacks, though many were first-hand witnesses. Below are excerpts from stories shared with us from

WELS members—what they saw and how their faith helped them through.

Indelethio Nebeker,
Sure Foundation, New York City, writes:

Tuesday, Sept. 11, 2001, I felt like I was in a huge Domino game, a Domino game in which I was among the living pieces. First the World Trade Centers were hit, then the Pentagon. Next came the imploding of the Trade Centers, then the plane crashed in Pennsylvania. . . .

Did I mention we (Pastor Aaron Robinson, Jon Meier, and I) were moving Pastor Gabb and his wife, Sarah, to their new apartment that morning? Needless to say the move went slow. Pauses for group prayer in the street came in between boxes and couches being carried down stairs. All the while the hymn "I am Trusting Thee Lord Jesus" rang in my mind to offer the support I so desperately needed to get through my feeling of vulnerability.

After the panic of wondering how certain members and contacts of ours who work in and around the Towers were doing, the time came to deal with reality. Phones calls were made, hugs given. A prayer service offered an opportunity to reach out to our community and offer support. Armed with bags that contained *Meditations*, God's Great Exchange, and God's Yellow

Pages, Pastor Gabb and I went to the Armory to give comfort and support. We ran into a girl who was asking for directions to the Armory. I asked her who she was looking for. She said, "My dad." I saw the picture. It was similar to the sea of pictures lined on the Armory fence. I gave her our "comfort package" and my sympathy.

BethAnn Meier,
Sure Foundation, New York City, writes:

So many things have run through my mind since the attacks. Sometimes, I nearly convince myself that it was a dream, that none of this happened. But then I remember that I saw the Trade Center burning as I took the subway to work that morning, saw the smoke and flames from the windows of my office in Times Square. And today, on my way to church, I saw with my own eyes that the two majestic buildings that graced our Manhattan skyline are gone forever. . . .

Some may ask "Why did this happen?" I guess I haven't asked that because I "know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28). God will

turn even this tragedy into good. I believe that he will restore the hearts of many to him as they search for answers. I believe that God is opening the door for Sure Foundation, Queens, to share the gospel of peace with New Yorkers. I believe that the Holy Spirit will work through us to resurrect the hearts of the spiritually dead.

*Pastor Donald Tollefson,
Immanuel, Long Valley, N.J., writes:*

We have a member who worked in the building right next to the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center. When the first airplane hit the Tower, his building evacuated, and he was able to get out safely. He saw the second plane hit and the ensuing fireball. He witnessed people falling from the upper stories. As he and the rest of his group ran south to Battery Park, the first Tower imploded on itself and crumbled to the ground. The smoke, dust, and ash began to spread like an immense cloud, and with difficulty they were able to make their way to the Staten Island Ferry. . . . During all this time his wife was unaware of where he was for approximately three hours. But her faith in Christ sustained her, as did the prayers and encouragement of friends. It was the unseen hand of God's protection that kept her husband safe. Though he was shaken, his trust in God's guiding care in

Christ has also sustained and helped him through this time. . . .

We had another member who was scheduled to have a breakfast meeting at the World Trade Center that morning, but—can you believe this?—her employment was discontinued the previous Friday. The Lord, who watches over the birds and will not allow even a sparrow to fall to the ground apart from his will, certainly watches over us.

*Thomas Baxter,
Our Savior, Sterling, Va., writes:*

I am responsible for most of the television production support at the Defense Department (Pentagon) and am still alive today only by God's grace. I witnessed the orange and black fireball that arose over the fifth-floor roof of the Pentagon from a window on the opposite fifth floor side of the center-court interior. If the aircraft had been just 50 feet higher when it hit the building it would likely have plowed through the outer roofline rings and careened across the center-court area into the inner walls and windows directly in front of my office area.

As we evacuated the building my thoughts flashed from John 14:27, Jesus' promise to give us peace, not as the world gives it, but his abiding peace for eternity, to the ageless comfort he gave to Abraham, saying, "Fear not,

The WELS Committee on Relief is working with WELS pastors in the New York and Washington, D.C., area to bring your gifts of love and concern. As of Oct. 4, \$95,500 had already been contributed to the WELS Committee on Relief for disaster relief in these areas.

To contribute, send gifts of money (checks made payable to WELS Committee on Relief) to 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398. Clearly mark your gifts for the WELS Committee on Relief, c/o Attack on America.

The WELS Careline is available 24 hours a day for those who are in crisis and need to talk. If you are having trouble dealing with the attack on America, call 800/422-7341 for free Christian counseling.

Abram: I am your shield and your exceeding great reward" (Genesis 15:1).

These excerpts make these words ring truer: "Lord Jesus since you love me, Oh, spread your wings above me And shield me from alarm. Though Satan would assail me, Your mercy will not fail me; I rest in your protecting arm" (*Christian Worship* 587:3).

For more reflections and other stories from WELS members, check out the WELS Web site, <www.wels.net>.



Julie Wietzke is senior communications assistant for Forward in Christ magazine and WELS Communication Services.

Following God's plan

Senior helpers at an international vacation Bible school find that there's more to VBS than cookies and punch.

Jan Mosher

We were going to be the "cookies and punch ladies" for the international vacation Bible school (VBS) at Michigan State University, East Lansing. Our seniors at church had been looking for a service project, and Pastor Joe Dietrich had given us this option.

But sometimes God makes other plans. Less than a week before VBS was to begin, Marge Lawson and I found ourselves volunteering to teach instead.

Doubts in us

I had full confidence in Marge. She had recently retired from teaching, and had taught Sunday school forever. I was on the other end of the spectrum, working with the elderly for the last 20 years. But I just knew Marge could do it, and I would help her.

We had no idea what we were getting into. Had we known that 13 to 17 second- and third-graders would be in our class, we might have blanched. Had we known that four of them were born in the United States, two in Kenya, three in China, one in Taiwan (who arrived here only one week earlier), and the rest in Korea, we might have turned the job down. Had we known that they understood our language more or less, we might have felt it was a challenge far too great for the two of us and stuck with the cookie and punch routine.



Marge Lawson (far left) and teenage helper, Laura Richards (right, top row), with the second- and third-graders of the international vacation Bible school at Michigan State University.

But there we were on that first noisy and confusing Monday morning, thinking they'd never learn the songs that were presented to them, having difficulty telling one from the other, and wondering how to get the concept of Savior across to these little people.

Confidence in Jesus

Then reality set in. Although Marge was a great teacher, it was in Jesus, the Great Teacher, that we had to put our trust; and that's just what we did. Without his help we couldn't accomplish anything.

We were able to tell the children apart (although the boys from Kenya were nearly identical twins), and by the end of the week, they were singing all the songs with gusto in varying accents. We found the words to tell them about Jesus.

We thought about why the children came. Perhaps it was a fun thing to do for a change. Maybe the

cookies and punch sounded good. Maybe the parents wanted their children to interact with English-speaking people. In the end, it didn't matter what brought them. It just mattered that the Holy Spirit could take this opportunity to use us to knock on the doors of those little hearts.

We were the only "first-timers," but the other teachers and teenage helpers encouraged us. Our fellow senior group

members as well as WELS members from other churches brought all that we needed and more in the way of treats and help.

And what did God do? He put Yumeng in our class. Yumeng said, "I'm going back to China in six days, and I will tell everyone about Jesus." What do you say to an eight-year-old who doesn't know that Christians are persecuted in her country? What do you say when you know that there will be few people to encourage her and teach her? Well, you put your arms around her, and you tell her that you will pray for her. Later, when you hear the children sing "Jesus I adore you, Lay my life before you, How I love you," you try to get past the big lump in your throat, and you join in the song.

Jan Mosher is a member at Memorial, Williamston, Michigan.

WHATNEVER

Little did I know

Can even the littlest of children understand God's Word? Ask Noah!

Melissa M. Festerling

Melissa Festerling was one of five Martin Luther College students to spend her summer teaching vacation Bible school at churches throughout the United States and Canada as part of a Forward in Christ thank offering project. What gifts do you have that you could use to serve your Lord? Think about it, and then talk to your pastor so that he can help you identify ways in which you can work for the Lord.

Here's Melissa's story:

In Beatrice, Neb., I taught the three- and four-year-olds. Noah, one of the little boys in my class, was actually not even quite three. Noah had a smile that could light up any room. He was a sweet little boy, but, since he was only two, I sometimes wondered amidst his wiggling how much he was actually getting from the story I was teaching. Little did I know!

I taught my six little ones a song called "Oh, You Can't Keep Jesus' Love in a Jar." On the last day of vacation Bible school (VBS), when I asked the children the one place where they could keep Jesus' love, Noah completely surprised me by saying that we could keep it in our hearts.

If that was not enough to remind me just how much those young minds take in, later in the summer Pastor Spaude wrote an e-mail to our Forward in Christ team in which he told an amusing story that Noah's mom shared with him.

The second lesson I taught was the account of the fall into sin and the subsequent promise of a Savior that God made to Adam and Eve. To help my telling of this story, I cut out a simple tree with apples that the children could take on and off so that they could retell how Adam and Eve fell into sin.

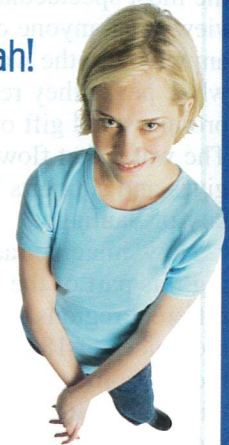
I would let each child pick an apple from the tree and pretend to eat it and then also pretend to offer it to a friend just as Eve had done.

Noah was apparently soaking up every word, because in the weeks following VBS, Noah went crazy when one of the neighborhood boys tried to pick an apple from a tree. Noah tried to explain to the boy that if he took that apple from the tree, he would be in BIG trouble just like Adam and Eve had been.

Though Noah took this story and gave it a little extra meaning, the point is that the age of the children one teaches does not matter. Throughout the summer I taught many three-, four-, and five-year-old children. Though they were often wiggly and lacked the attention of an older group, they, too, needed to hear God's Word and actually retained some of the things I was telling them.

Sometimes it is easy to think that these are just little children so it does not really matter whether they "get it" yet or whether one really prepares to teach the lesson. Quite the opposite is actually true. Jesus says, "Let the little children come to me." It is just as important to prepare for these little ones as it is to prepare for an older group of children. The Holy Spirit's power is not limited to one group of people, but it is present wherever God's Word is preached. He is working and strengthening faith even in these young children's hearts.

Melissa M. Festerling, a member at Christ, Marshall, Minnesota, is a senior at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota.



Good

Jesus loves me, the Bible tells me so!

Pastor Oto Rodríguez, an Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) missionary in Santiago, Chile, shared this story about the ELS mission work in Chile.

The Andes Mountains are one of the most spectacular and awesome views that anyone can encounter anywhere in the world. With their white peaks they remind us of God's promises and gift of abundant life. The water that flows from them gives and supports the life in the city of Santiago.

Now, imagine radio waves reaching this part of the world with its different regions and people. Imagine the voices of 18 children breaking the awesome silence of these mountains, through the radio, every Sunday morning.

These are the voices of Christian children doing what is pleasing to their God and Savior. They are praising him with their whole being and declaring his wonderful acts. These great mountains heard the voice of God at creation, and now their people continue hearing the Word of God.

As in so many other countries of the world, the radio is the only means of communication for many villages and towns. For this reason, our Lutheran Church in Chile decided to use the radio to proclaim the Word of the Savior to these remote towns, where people hunger to hear it. And what better means than to use these children that sing at the top of their lungs with all their hearts and minds, "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so"?

What a precious message! What great news for so many homes where it is being heard and sung. The Lutheran radio programs reach about 9,000 mountain people for whom the radio is the major means of receiving information. We send radio messages to children on Sunday mornings and to adults on Sunday nights every week.

In addition to using the radio to bring the gospel, three missionaries in



These children sing with all their hearts to the people of Chile via the radio.

Santiago, Chile, serve three congregations. Missionary Rodríguez works in Las Vertientes, where a congregation worships in a recently renovated chapel. He is also meeting with Bible study groups in a nearby area on the south side of Santiago, called Puente Alto. Missionary Karl Kuenzel works in La Cisterna, where a large plant with several buildings and a small sports complex serve a congregation and the surrounding community. Missionary Ralph Martens works in San Bernardo, where a congregation meets in a small chapel.

This team of three missionaries is intensely reviewing its work, hoping to reach out to more people in Santiago. More efforts are being made to work with the middle class. Good response from these people has been encouraging.

We ask our friends and supporters everywhere to pray for this work. Yes, "Jesus loves me," and he loves

all people everywhere. For their forgiveness and eternal life he died and rose again.

Evangelical Lutheran Synod news note

Dr. Marvin Meyer, president of Bethany Lutheran College, Mankato, Minn. (ELS), announced in August that he would retire as of Dec. 31, 2002.

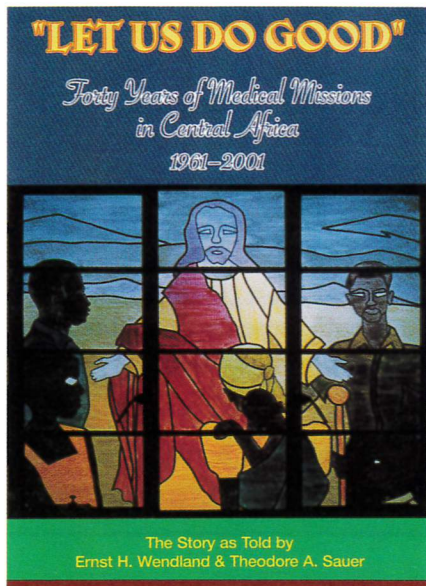
When he retires, Meyer will have served 43 years at Bethany Lutheran College, 20 of them as president.

The college has organized a national search for Meyer's successor but has not established a timeline.

African mission of love celebrates 40th anniversary

The Central Africa Medical Mission (CAMM) celebrates its 40th anniversary this year. We thank God for the rich blessings he showers on its work.

The WELS synod convention in 1957 approved the idea of establishing a medical program for Central Africa. The Lumano Lutheran Dispensary, more recently renamed Mwembezhi Lutheran Rural Health Center, was dedicated Nov. 26, 1961.



A highlight of the Central Africa Medical Mission's anniversary is this 120-page booklet, "Let Us Do Good." Written by Pastors Theodore A. Sauer and Ernst H. Wendland, the booklet tells how this mission of love developed and provides a glimpse into the lives of those who served there.

Ten years later this work expanded into Malawi, where the Lutheran Mobile Clinic is headquartered in the capital city of Lilongwe.

The Central Africa Medical Mission was established as a non-budget mission. The responsibility for the support of this humanitarian effort was given to the women of WELS, presently at a cost of \$200,000 annually. Under the guidance of the Administrative Committee for Africa, a stateside committee of six volunteer women, a medical advisor, and the administrative committee liaison administer the CAMM.

"Serving on the CAMM [committee] gives me a rare opportunity to see the hand of God as he controlled his work over the past 40 years, often in spite of us and not because of us," explains Kathie Wendland, a former CAMM nurse and current committee member. "I have the chance to see the development of the clinic work and to see the fruit of the labors of so many different nurses."

It is a wonderful opportunity to put love into action, touching the lives of up to 60,000 African people annually, helping with their physical needs and working closely with missionaries and national church workers to meet their spiritual needs as well.

In both Zambia and Malawi, the number of deaths caused by AIDS each day is staggering, as well as

the number of orphans left without parents because of AIDS. The new Health Educator/Outreach program in Zambia was developed in part to address this tragedy in close cooperation with the national church.

All who put their hearts into the CAMM consider it a privilege and blessing to be a small part of this work.

Irene Brug

For more information about "Let Us Do Good," contact Heidi Meyer, 262/367-8487; <jmeyer@globaldialog.com>.



On June 17, Rebekah Carey was commissioned to serve as a nurse and administrative coordinator at the Mwembezhi Lutheran Rural Health Center in Zambia, which is part of the Central Africa Medical Mission. On June 21, Carey left for Zambia to develop the new Health Educator program that was established to address the AIDS crisis in Zambia.

WELS CLO celebrates 10th anniversary

It all started with two women talking about books and church libraries at a women's retreat in 1991.

Now, 10 years later, 150 congregations/individuals are involved in the WELS Church Librarians' Organization (WELS CLO), whose mission is expanding the availability of Christian literature and other resources for all ages through the promotion of church libraries.

Besides holding two meetings a year

with book exchanges and presentations, WELS CLO puts out a quarterly newsletter full of book reviews, sells basic library supplies in small quantities, provides a forum for gathering and sharing information, and offers information kits for congregations interested in starting a church library.

"If a church doesn't have a library, we are hopeful that with encouragement and assistance from members we can help more churches see the

need for this ministry," says Joanne Weber, member of WELS CLO.

WELS CLO celebrated its 10-year anniversary in September at its meeting at St. John, Baraboo, Wis.

For more information, contact WELS CLO at 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222; 414/256-3222, <jaweber@sab.wels.net>. Visit <www.wels.net/sab/clo/clo-home.html>. The next meeting is Apr. 13, 2002, at Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee.

Meet the editorial staff—uncut

Ever ask yourself, "Who are these people who write for Forward in Christ magazine?" Through this series you can find out. Read on:

Family ties

Family is important to Richard Gurgel, our new question and answer writer, whether it be his immediate family or his family in Christ.

Gurgel, the youngest of six, grew up in Fond du Lac, Wis. His family was a definite influence in his life.

"Although I am thankful for the influence of all my brothers and my sister," says Gurgel, "the two who entered the ministry blazed a path for me that made it much easier for me to follow."

And follow he did. But sometimes not so gracefully. One time he "made a wrong turn [while helping distribute the Lord's Supper] and ran full speed into my brother who was approaching from the other direction (at full speed as well). Our collision produced a visible mess and an audible gasp from the congregation."

Now Gurgel teaches doctrine, preaching, and education at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon. He also serves on several WELS committees and spent a month last fall teaching in Guntur, India.

One of Gurgel's greatest challenges is striving to balance these commitments and his home life. (He and his wife, Sue, have five boys, ages 17, 16, 14, 11, and 3.) "I can't forget that my first place to share the gospel is with those who share my home."

His hobbies show where his heart is. "Spending time with our children is my #1 hobby," says Gurgel. "Our children enjoy playing on grade school and high school sports teams, and we are often found in the bleachers cheering them on."

But Gurgel's heart is also in his job and with his family in Christ. "My favorite part of being a professor is being privileged to have a small part in proclaiming the gospel



The Gurgel family at Muir Woods in California. Back row (l to r): Brad, Richard, Phil, and Steve. Front row: Ryan, Sue, and Nathan.

all over the world," says Gurgel. "Those whom I have had the opportunity to encourage with the gospel are now encouraging others with the gospel in many more places."

He continues: "The difference is that I have gone from doing the work I love most (sharing the gospel with those inside and outside the kingdom) to training others to do that work."

But that training will help enlarge God's family, our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Conference has one focus—technology

Over 500 people attended WELS' first technology conference on July 15-18 at Fox Valley Lutheran High School, Appleton, Wis. Designed to help pastors, teachers, and laypeople use technology to enhance their ministries, the conference covered many topics, including creating church/school Web sites, using PowerPoint® in worship, effectively using Microsoft Word, incorporating computers in a school's curriculum, and networking computers.

The conference emphasized finding ways to use technology to proclaim the gospel and serve God's kingdom more efficiently. Presenters encouraged attendees to become comfortable with technology because it is rapidly becoming more and more important to be able to use this tool to carry out most types of work.

As attendees learned about the technologies with which God has blessed us, many became both excited and frustrated. Excited because technology can enhance their ministries in so many great ways. Yet frustrated because lack of money may prevent them from being able to implement some of these technologies.

Overall, participants felt that the conference provided a great learning experience in a friendly, Christian environment. One participant noted, "The sessions I attended were interactive and beneficial. [I'm] leaving with a feeling of being 'back in the loop.'"

Which is just where conference planners wanted them to be.

If you weren't able to attend WELS Tech 2001 or you attended but are still eager to learn more, another



Here WELS Tech 2001 attendees benefit from hands-on instruction. Twelve tutorials were offered, which allowed attendees to work on computers as instructors led them through specific computer programs.

technology conference is being planned for summer 2003. Watch for information about WELS Tech 2003.

Something deeper shared

It is a hot afternoon in July. A group of young kids is on a soccer field working on drills. They come from all sorts of backgrounds and have different colors of skin but the same blue T-shirts. Coaches encourage the kids and point out how they could do better.

Then, you hear a long whistle. "Grab a drink," the coaches tell the kids, "It is time to head to the bleachers for the Bible lesson!"

What? Bible lesson? I thought this was a soccer camp! It was. But it was also a Bible camp—Cross of Life's Soccer/Bible Camp, the first ever for this exploratory mission in Mississauga, Ontario.

The idea for a soccer camp hit me as I was jogging past the city soccer fields in the middle of our target area—a densely populated suburban neighborhood with many young families with little children. Soccer is popular among the youth here. Parents are paying \$150 for one-week soccer camps! My wife and I played soccer



Kids line up ready to practice a drill at the soccer/Bible camp at Cross of Life, Mississauga, Ontario. Besides practicing soccer, 84 children also learned about their Savior.

in college. I am even coaching a team now. Why not have a soccer camp where we also teach the children about Jesus?

And that is what we did. WELS Kingdom Workers recruited an eight-person team of coaches and helpers. We advertised with road signs and mailings, clearly indicating that we would be teaching kids about Jesus, but that we would also be practicing soccer skills. We charged \$15 to help cover costs, including T-shirts, water bottles, soccer balls, cones, jerseys, pumps, canopies, and a bunch of other things normally not in church budgets. Finally we spent some late nights preparing drills, game plans, devotions, skits, and lessons.

The Lord certainly blessed this program. Eighty-four children registered. And we averaged 80 kids every day! We had a lot of fun, and we believe that the kids got the messages we shared with them about Jesus.

The motto of the camp was "Soccer skills taught—something deeper shared." We illustrated each message about Jesus by using soccer skills and game situations. Good soccer was played, and good discussions were held about sin and grace and our wonderful Savior.

Through this program, we are getting the opportunity to share Jesus with a larger crowd. You see, none of the 84 children were members of our church. Many of them had never heard of Jesus. We added prospects to our list and got some positive exposure in our community. Most important, we were given an effective way to share the gospel with 80 kids each day. We know God will work through that Word.

Many parents remarked that they got a great deal out of this. We think their kids got a great deal! But the best thing we heard was when we asked an eight-year-old what her favorite part was. Her answer? "The pastor's messages about Jesus."

Joel Schulz

One-stop shopping

Ordering WELS products just became easier.

If you are looking for a book, video, pamphlet, or other WELS product, the place to go is <www.shopWELS.net>. This new on-line "store" displays products from WELS departments and includes a link to Northwestern Publishing House's site.

According to Gary Baumler, director of WELS Communication Services, "The synod has been working toward a central clearinghouse for WELS materials for about five years. After researching the possibilities, the idea for shopWELS.net was born."

WELS' areas of ministry and Northwestern Publishing House made this central clearinghouse a reality by coordinating their efforts. WELS' areas of ministry compiled their materials and created the Web site to display and order them, while Northwestern Publishing House is storing materials and processing orders. WELS Communication Services' staff is maintaining and updating the site and answering any questions that customers may have about products.

Debbie Kamin, shopWELS.net help desk specialist, explains, "It's nice because customers can see what they are ordering on-line. The Web site provides customers with both a short and long description of the product and a picture."

Visit the new site and enjoy the luxury of one-stop shopping for your WELS product needs.

If you prefer ordering over the phone, call Northwestern Publishing House, 800/662-6022. For questions about shopWELS.net products, call Debbie Kamin toll-free at 866/283-5719.

District news

Arizona

On Apr. 27, the National Association of Activity Professionals awarded **William A. Ruechel**, a member at Peace, Cottonwood, Ariz., the Individual Award of Excellence for service to the geriatric population.

California

Students at **California Lutheran High School, Wildomar**, posted the highest average Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) scores in California's Southwest County and easily topped state and national averages.

Michigan

On May 20, members of **Redeemer, Big Rapids, Mich.**, dedicated their new chapel.

Minnesota

On June 24, **Grace, Le Sueur, Minn.**, dedicated its childcare center, **Growing in Grace**.

The **Martin Luther College Ladies Auxiliary** met in October. The auxiliary provides funds for Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., to purchase non-budgetary items, as well as giving financial assistance to four students per year. An endowment fund was recently

established to provide even more possibilities for the auxiliary to serve the college. In the past, women from 147 congregations in the United States and Canada supported the auxiliary.

Northern Wisconsin

Cher Pao "Paul" Thao, a Hmong man interested in pursuing a career in the ministry, has been helping bring God's Word to Hmong people in the Appleton area.

South Atlantic

The district Adult Discipleship Commission sponsored a "**Summer Quarter South**" for pastors who could not attend Summer Quarter classes at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis. Seminary professors Mark Zarling and Armin Panning taught four days of classes at Summer Quarter South in Merritt Island, Fla.

South Central

Jerry Kassebaum, pastor at St. Mark, Duncanville, Tex., left for Nigeria on Aug. 30. He is teaching biblical Greek to students enrolled in the seminary program of Christ the King Lutheran Church of Nigeria and All Saints Lutheran Church of Nigeria, two church bodies with which WELS is in fellowship.

The youth group from **Immanuel, Fort Worth, Tex.**, helped canvass and teach vacation Bible school at **Abiding Savior, Weslaco, Tex.** Over 50 children enrolled in the vacation Bible school, only three of whom were members at Abiding Savior.

Southeastern Wisconsin

After the outdoor service held at **Risen Savior, Milwaukee**, on July 1, children released helium balloons with a gospel message and a postcard attached. Those who found the balloons were to send the postcard back to the church. Responses came from as far away as Pennsylvania.

Mandy Eberle, a member at St. John, Lannon, Wis., **Leanne Felsing**, a member at Christ the Lord, Brookfield, Wis., and **Sheila Shaw**, a member at St. Paul, Muskego, Wis., were named to the All-Tournament Team at the USA Volleyball Junior National Championships in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Earth-moving equipment rumbled across the property of **Kettle Moraine Lutheran High School, Jackson, Wis.**, on June 4 as work began on Kettle Moraine's "WE CARE" (Wetland Education—Changing Attitudes—Recharging Environment) project. The project will make Kettle Moraine the only campus in the state and in the upper Midwest to use a wetland wastewater treatment system.

Pacific Northwest



Fifty-one men gathered Apr. 20-22 at Fort Worden State Park, Port Townsend, Wash., for a men's retreat.

Western Wisconsin



Jim Price (right) demonstrates to President Karl Gurgel (left) how important it is for churches to have handicapped-accessible facilities. Price presented this workshop at the Western Wisconsin District Retreat held at the Schwan Retreat Center, Trego, Wis., June 21-24.

Obituaries

Anita M. Toepel 1914-2001

Anita (nee Weihert) Toepel was born Oct. 27, 1914. She died Aug. 25, 2001.

Toepel taught at David Star, Jackson; St. John, Jackson; and St. John, Sparta, all in Wisconsin.

Toepel was preceded in death by her husband, Eldor; one son; and one grandson. She is survived by her brother, three daughters, seven grandchildren, and 10 great-grandchildren.

John F. Sullivan 1909-2001

John Sullivan was born July 5, 1909, in Brooklyn, N.Y. He died Aug. 16, 2001, in Ontario, Wis.

Colloquized into the Lutheran pastoral ministry in 1942, Sullivan served WELS at Northwestern College, Watertown, Wis.

Sullivan was preceded in death by his wife, Madeleine. He is survived by two daughters, two sons, 18 grandchildren, and 31 great-grandchildren.

Lois G. Meyer 1932-2001

Lois Meyer (nee Meyer) was born Feb. 3, 1932, and died July 4, 2001.

A 1954 graduate of Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., Meyer served at Jordan, West Allis; St. Paul, Franklin; and St. John, Milwaukee, all in Wisconsin.

Meyer is survived by her husband, Arnold; three children; and two sisters.

Rachel Fry 1952-2001

Rachel Fry (nee Inniger) was born Apr. 21, 1952, in Bluffton, Ohio. She died Mar. 11, 2001, in Bloomington, Ill.

A 1974 graduate of Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., Fry served Emanuel, Flint, Mich.

Fry is survived by her husband, Robert; her mother, father, and maternal grandmother; two sons; one daughter; three brothers; and one sister.

Arizona



Twenty youth group volunteers from Messiah, Nampa, Idaho, traveled to Open Bible, Whiteriver, Ariz., to help the church conduct its June vacation Bible school that 150 Apache children attended. Open Bible is part of WELS' Native American mission field.

St. John, Lannon, Wis., dedicated its new worship facility on June 24, 50 years to the day of the dedication of the old church.

Western Wisconsin

Amanda Koepsell, Jackie Horton, Melanie Sosinski, and Joel Stuebs worked for **Bethel, Galesville, Wis.**, this summer as part of a Forward in Christ thank offering project. These college students canvassed in Arcadia, Independence, and Whitehall, Wis., towns that used to have WELS churches. An initial Bible study drew 18 people, and plans are underway to begin worship services in the area.

Trinity, Watertown, Wis., dedicated a \$1.3 million parish and administrative center in May.

Happy Anniversary!

AZ—On Sept. 16, members at Rock of Ages, Payson, Ariz., celebrated the congregation's 21st anniversary and the groundbreaking of their new church.

CA—Members at Christ the Vine, Temecula, Calif., celebrated Curtis Lyon's 30th anniversary in the pastoral ministry on Aug. 12.

Gethsemane, Los Angeles, Calif., was the first WELS congregation organized in California. On Sept. 23 the congregation observed its 50th anniversary.

MN—The year 2001 marks the 80th anniversary of Mt. Olive, St. Paul, Minn.

NE—Christ, Beatrice, Neb., celebrated its 50th anniversary on Oct. 7.

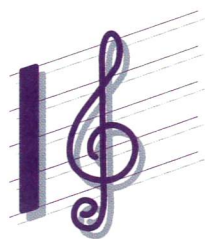
SEW—On Sept. 9, Wisconsin Lutheran High School, Milwaukee, Wis., praised God for the 25th anniversaries of teachers **Mark Ricke, Kurt Seeger, and Gilbert Tatge** and **Pastor James Kleist**, superintendent.

WW—On Sept. 30, special services were held to celebrate the 150th anniversary of **St. John, Jefferson, Wis.**

Members at **St. Paul, Naugart, Wis.**, observed the congregation's 140th anniversary on Aug. 26.

Trinity, Watertown, Wis., celebrated the 25th anniversaries of two teachers, Cheryl Holzhueter and Jim Moeller.

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



Increase in Christian music sales—Christian music sales have gone up 12 percent in the first half of 2001, according to the

Christian Music Trade Association. Contemporary Christian and gospel album sales totaled 19.8 million units from January to July 2001.

During the same time overall album sales have declined by three percent.



Florida judge upholds ban on gays adopting children—

In August, Florida reaffirmed its law banning gays from adopting children when a federal judge ruled against two men wanting to adopt the foster children in their care.

The judge ruled that traditional homes with two heterosexual parents are the most stable environment for children.

Mississippi and Utah are the only other two states that ban adoption by gay parents.

President Bush makes decision on embryonic stem cell funding—

In August President Bush decided to not allow federal money to be used for termination of human lives in their embryonic stage for the purpose of stem cell research. He also allowed for research to be conducted on existing extracted stem cell lines.

Pastor Robert Fleischmann, the national director of Christian Life Resources, stated the following: “When it is all said and done, President Bush made as close a Solomonic decision as can be made under the circumstances. His protection of embryonic life reflects his personal conviction to the fact that

human life is deserving of respect and protection, even at one of its earliest stages. His allowance for continued research on existing embryonic stem cell lines reflects his compassion for the many people who suffer from various maladies and are desperately looking for cures. . . . President Bush rightfully stood for the sanctity of human life by both protecting it and using all possible ethical avenues to improve it.”

He continues, “We applaud President Bush’s decision and encourage aggressive support of research into the potential curative benefits from other stem cell lines. We wholeheartedly support all ethical efforts to alleviate pain and suffering and improve life where possible.”

Christian Life Resources is affiliated with WELS and conducts a broad-based educational ministry on life and family issues.

[LifeWire, Aug. 9, 2001]

House votes to ban human cloning—

The U.S. House of Representatives passed a bill in August that bans all human cloning. This bill makes it a crime to clone humans for research or reproduction and carries with it a punishment of up to 10 years in prison and fines of no less than \$1 million.


“The vote to ban human cloning was the right one,” says Pastor Robert Fleischmann, national director of Christian Life Resources. “Banning human cloning is not a ‘no-confidence’ statement in the scientific community. While there is no denying some scientists out there have questionable ethics, opposition to human cloning is not a condemnation of the entire profession. Likewise, banning human cloning is not a rejection of promising efforts to find cures. Those of us who oppose human cloning vigorously

support the efforts to find cures.”

President Bush made it clear that he supports the bill and praised the House’s action. “Today’s overwhelming and bipartisan House action to prohibit human cloning is a strong ethical statement, which I commend. We must advance the promise and cause of science but must do so in a way that honors and respects life,” Bush stated.

[LifeWire, Aug. 1, 2001]

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.



FROM BEGINNING TO END
Through the Bible in one year

November 2001

1. Ezekiel 23:11–25	15. Ps. 107 • Mk. 4
2. Ezek. 26–28	16. Ps. 142
3. Ezek. 29–32:16	• Mk. 5–6:29
4. Ezek. 32:17–34	17. Mk. 6:30–8:26
5. Ezek. 35–37	18. Mk. 8:27–10:31
6. Psalm 37	19. Mk. 10:32–12:37
• Ezek. 38 & 39	20. Mk. 12:38–14:31
7. Ps. 24	21. Mk. 14:32–15
• Ezek. 40 & 41	22. Ps. 16, 21, 22,
8. Ezek. 42–45:8	67 • Mk. 16
9. Ezek. 45:9–48	23. Ps. 48
10. Esther 1–5	• Ephesians 1–3
11. Es. 6–10	24. Eph. 4–6
• Ps. 83	25. Song of Solomon
12. Ps. 42, 126, 129, & 137	26. Romans 1 & 2
• Malachi	27. Rom. 3–5
13. Ps. 89	28. Rom. 6–8
• Mark 1:1–31	29. Rom. 9–11
14. Ps. 146	30. Rom. 12–15:29
• Mk. 1:32–3	

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

- Cox, Raymond G.**, to Faith, Oshkosh, Wis. (retirement call)
- Eckert, Paul G.**, to St. Jacobi, Greenfield, Wis.
- Henke, Mark P.**, to Bethany, Appleton, Wis.
- Kieselhorst, Philip L.**, to Gethsemane, Oklahoma City, Okla.
- Lauersdorf, Richard E.**, to retirement
- Melso, Stephen C.**, to Bethany, Manitowoc, Wis.
- Peters, Gordon J.**, to St. Paul, Monroe, Mich.
- Reich, Daniel K.**, to Immanuel/Zion, Hutchinson, Minn.
- Richter, Marcus**, to Friedens, New Prague, Minn.
- Roth, Michael A.**, to Hispanic consultant, Board for Home Missions, Milwaukee
- Semro, Ronald A.**, to Christ Our Savior, Angleton, Tex.
- Stade, Steven O.**, to Christ, West Salem, Wis.
- Verbeke, Jeffrey A.**, to St. Matthew, Appleton, Wis.
- Wagner, Wernor E.**, to St. John, Milton, Wis.

Teachers

- Gunderson, Mark D.**, to Wisconsin LHS, Milwaukee
- Henning, Coralee E.**, to St. Lucas, Kewaskum, Wis.
- Hoffman, Karen H.**, to St. Jacobi, Greenfield, Wis.
- Horn, Deborah L.**, to Christ, Zumbrota, Minn.
- Peek, Kara L.**, to Trinity, Kaukauna, Wis.
- Reese, Peter M.**, to Beautiful Savior, Milwaukee
- Seelow, Peggy L.**, to Beautiful Savior, Spooner, Wis.
- Smith, Eileen G.**, to Good Shepherd, Omaha, Neb.
- Stewart, Darin D.**, to St. Mark, Green Bay, Wis.
- Walker, Joel D.**, to Faith, Milwaukee
- Werth, Darla A.**, to Faith, Tacoma, Wash.

ANNIVERSARIES

- De Pere, Wis.**—Immanuel (100). Nov. 11. Service, 9:30 AM. Noon meal. 920/864-7652.
- Saginaw, Mich.**—St. Paul (150). Nov. 18 & Dec. 2. Services, 8 & 10:30 AM. 517/799-3271.
- Grass Lake, Mich.**—St. Jacob (160). Dec. 9. Service, 10:15 AM. Dinner to follow.
- New Hope, Minn.**—Holy Trinity (50). Dec. 16. Service, 10 AM. Refreshments to follow.

COMING EVENTS

- Fall retreat**—Nov. 3, 8:30 AM. Trinity, Minocqua, Wis. Men, women, and teens invited. 715/356-7542.
- Dedication celebration**—Hope, West Chicago, Ill. Nov. 11, 4 PM. Amy Duff, 312/573-3246.
- Sunday school workshop**—Jan. 19, 2002. Wisconsin Dells, Wis. 414/256-3274.
- Minnesota District Sunday school conference**—Feb. 23, 2002, Bloomington, Minn. 414/256-3274.
- Pathways to Christ Women's Retreat**—Mar. 15-17, 2002. Hawthorne Inn, Oshkosh, Wis. Dorothy Laabs, 920/235-6495.
- International Girl Pioneers convention**—Apr. 5-6, 2002. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn. Diane Jabs, 952/492-2540.

Spiritual Renewal Weekend for Women—Apr. 12-14, 2002. Radisson, Rochester, Minn. Bev, 507/931-3945.

WELS Handbell Festival—Apr. 20-21, 2002. Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee. Cheryl Diener, 715/258-7203.

Footsteps of Apostles' tour—Greece, Turkey, Rome, and cruise of Greek Islands. Departs June 15, 2002. Sponsored by Camp Phillip. Hosted by Pastor Kenneth Fisher and Mr. and Mrs. Mark Krueger. Kenneth Fisher, 414/354-7320.

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.

Regional youth rally—Northern Wisconsin District, 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. 414/256-3226; <worship@sab.wels.net>.

Regional youth rally—Western Wisconsin District, July 25-27, 2002. Wisconsin Dells, Wis. 414/256-3274.

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

AVAILABLE

Wurlitzer 805 Centura console organ—free for the cost of shipping. Daniel Koelpin, 414/256-3233.

Lift-top desk units—Thirty-five, free for the cost of shipping. Eric Ziel, 262/567-5396.

NEEDED

1957 WELS annual and Sept. 1957 The Northwestern Lutheran—Lisa Steele, 310/378-9682.

College-aged students (ages 19-26)—to go on motivational tour to WELS high schools. Go to <www.wels.net/sab/cm/tour.html> for a creative opportunity. Submit video by Nov. 20.

SERVICE TIMES

Safford, Ariz.—Grace, 225 E Main St. Worship, 10:30 AM. Bible class, 9:45 AM. Paul Schulz, 928/428-7620.

NAMES WANTED

Greater Dallas, Tex., area—including Allen, McKinney, Frisco, Celina, Denton, Flower Mound, North Richland Hills, Fort Worth, Arlington, Carrollton, Lewisville, Los Colinas, Sherman, Van Alstyne, Little Elm, Plano, Dallas, Duncanville, Richardson, Garland, Rowlett, Rockwall, and Mesquite. Send names and addresses to William Gabb, <pastor@atonement.org>.

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-graders interested in Honors 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>.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

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

Christ Our Rock, Rochester, Minn.—3040 Stonehedge Dr NE, Rochester MN 55906. Sunday service, 10:15 AM; education hour, 9 AM. 507/252-5088.

To place an announcement, call

414/256-3210; FAX, 414/256-3899;

<BulletinBoard@sab.wels.net>. Deadline

is eight weeks before publication date.

Large-print magazine**DISCONTINUED**

The large-print *Forward in Christ* magazine will be discontinued after the December 2001 issue due to lack of subscriptions.

Large-print subscribers will be refunded for issues not received.

Those who cannot read standard-sized magazine print should contact the Mission for the Visually Impaired, 615/291-1536. The Mission for the Visually Impaired will provide copies of the magazine on cassette tape at no cost to those who need them.

The Word among us

Jesus was a powerful teacher who came to proclaim the good news that sets captive sinners free.

Jon D. Buchholz

The waves were lapping at the feet of people in front, but the mass of people pressed forward. Parents held their children up to see. Spectators craned their necks to catch a glimpse of the teacher.

Finally the crush of the crowd was too much. Some quick negotiation with fishermen found Jesus a new pulpit. The fishermen backed a few yards out into the water, and from their boat Jesus continued to preach the Word.

A new teaching with authority

Jesus was a powerful teacher. He didn't shy away from difficult subjects, and he didn't mince words. "When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law" (Matthew 7:28,29).

By the time our Savior entered the world as a man, the Jewish religion had deteriorated into empty ritual and rulemaking. Experts in the law taught the people how to follow their rules, while they themselves looked for loopholes. Hundreds of legal requirements left people spiritually burdened and empty, striving to please God by living up to a man-made moral code.

Jesus condemned their useless religion. "You have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy, and faithfulness. . . . You blind guides! You strain out a

gnat but swallow a camel" (Matthew 23:23,24).

Christ turned the Jewish interpretation of the Torah upside-down. "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. . . . Do to others as you would have them do to you" (Luke 6:27,28,31).

His teaching was down-to-earth, practical. Jesus dealt with issues that people wrestled with in their lives. On marriage and divorce: "I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery" (Matthew 5:32).

On proper speech: "Do not swear at all. . . . Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No,' anything beyond this comes from the evil one" (Matthew 5:34,37).

His investment advice: "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth. . . . But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven. . . . For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:19-21).

But Jesus didn't come to preach a new morality. He came to proclaim the good news and set captive sinners free. "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" (John 3:16).



Relating to the people

Jesus often used parables and picture language to present spiritual truths. "A farmer went out to sow his seed . . .". "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field . . .". "The kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish . . ." (Matthew 13). With simple illustrations he related to every segment of society.

As a result, people came in droves to hear Jesus preach.

Unbelievers found Jesus' teaching offensive. It cut too deeply for people whose hearts were hard and who refused to repent.

But to believing hearts Jesus spoke words of comfort and peace. "Take heart, son, your sins are forgiven" (Matthew 9:2). What greater message could an afflicted soul hear from the mouth of Immanuel himself?

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





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

Are you uncomfortable when your pastor talks about money? If Jesus were your pastor, he'd probably talk about it much more.

Does that surprise you or even upset you? Talk about money in the church seems self-serving to some. Others think church should be a place to escape the material world. Besides, they point out, Jesus chased moneychangers out of the temple. They quote Paul, "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil" (1 Timothy 6:10). And they whisper the name "Judas."

For those reasons a respectful approach to money is a healthy approach. Money isn't to be feared, nor is it all about budgets and needs. Money is a tool for serving people and a way we demonstrate our faith. That makes God's house the perfect place to talk about money.

Health factor—Money

God's Word

And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. ³Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. . . . ⁵And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will.

⁸I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. . . . ¹²For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have (2 Corinthians 8:1-2,5,8,12).

1. Why did Paul tell the Corinthians about the way the Macedonians handled their money?
2. The Macedonian Christians were extremely poor, yet they overflowed with joy. What does that tell you about them?
3. They "gave themselves first to the Lord." What might the Macedonians have done to show that?
4. Paul wrote, "I am not commanding you." But he did challenge them. What's the difference?
5. Some people are afraid to make a financial commitment to a church's ministry because they fear losing a job or some other financial reversal. If you're concerned about that, put verse 12 into your own words.

My soul for personal check-up

1. What's my attitude about money talk in the church? What good or bad experiences have led me to this conclusion?
2. Do I adjust my giving to God's church according to
 - an increase in the budget?
 - an increase in my income?
 - an increase in my trust?
3. Do I spend more time chasing after wealth on earth or pursuing the wealth of heaven?
4. Jesus' generosity is contagious. In what ways am I being generous with money?

My church for group check-up

1. List three ways someone else's generous giving has been a blessing to you.
2. Think of someone you know who is poor and generous. Think of someone you know who is wealthy and stingy. Which one do you admire? Why?
3. How does our church teach people God's view of money?
4. Giving to God is a response of faith. Faith comes from hearing the message of Christ. When the church lacks money, the problem might not be an empty bank account. It might be empty heads and hearts. When your church lacks money, which "empty" thing gets more attention?
5. What ministry would your church take on if someone gave you \$100,000 today?

Web-med

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

Check out stewardship studies and articles at <http://www.wels.net/sab/frm-cad.html>.

You can find information about planned giving at <http://www.wels.net/sab/frm-ccfs.html>.

Listen to a sermon series on money from Feb. 14-Mar. 13, 2000: <http://www.churchflix.net/mm/>.

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

IN THE CROSS HAIRS

Richard L. Gurgel

TOPIC: REVENGE

Question: My religion tells me it's wrong to seek revenge, but my heart is telling me to get the Sept. 11 terrorists, or they might strike again. How should I feel?

Answer: Many conscientious Christians have asked this question since Sept. 11. God's answer comforts our consciences and gives opportunity to witness to unbelievers.

At first, Scripture seems to add to the confusion. Many passages speak to us in words like these from Jesus: "Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Matthew 5:39). Or, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous" (Matthew 5:44,45). Then, perhaps the strongest warning of all: "Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him" (1 John 3:15).

But we also hear, "[The one in authority] is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer" (Romans 13:3,4).

The contradiction disappears when we understand what Lutherans call the "doctrine of the two kingdoms." God has placed us as Christians in two kingdoms.

We are blessed to say with Paul: "Our citizenship is in heaven" (Philippians 4:20). As citizens of heaven, we live by dispensing mercy just as we have received mercy from God. Our first thought is not defending "rights," but forgiving "wrongs." We follow our Father, who sends his rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. To live with a vengeful heart pushes away God's mercy. In this kingdom we have but one weapon to use on enemy or friend, the "sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God" (Ephesians 6:17). With that weapon we lead sinners to repentance and to Jesus' forgiveness.

But we also live under another kingdom as citizens of an earthly state. That, too, is God's gift. Although God didn't establish governments to further the gospel's cause, they are also "God's servants." They "do not bear the sword for nothing." God entrusted them with the sword of threat and punishment to restrain outward evil that threatens its citizens. A government that fails to protect its citizens violates God's established plan.

Therefore, government (elected leaders, police, military) has the right to use the sword against all who threaten its citizens. Although

vengeance is God's, God sometimes executes judgment through his governmental servants.

A Christian in government will pray for God's strength not to harbor personal vengeance toward his nation's enemies. He does that because his real citizenship is in heaven. At the same time, when defending his nation's citizens, he serves in that second kingdom and justly executes judgment.

A Christian citizen not serving in government will also pray to avoid hatred towards his country's enemies. Yet that Christian can pray, too, for wisdom for leaders and success for just attacks that are necessary to protect a country's citizens.

What is our motivation? As Paul says in 1 Timothy 2, the preservation of outward peace provides us with opportunities to spread the gospel of real peace in Jesus.

Richard Gurgel is a professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin.

In October we mentioned that the first "In the cross hairs" would discuss The Prayer of Jabez. That article was moved to the December issue because of the Sept. 11 attacks.

Have a question you want answered? Send it in. 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222; <fic@sab.wels.net>.



Lutheran Pioneers and Girl Pioneers of Mountain Valley, Eagle, Colo., pause to pose while tubing at Vail, Colo. They're at about 10,000 feet up, with the Gore Range of the Rocky Mountains behind them.



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.

Trust Jesus when dark days assail you. Trust him when your faith is small. Trust him when—to simply trust him—is the hardest thing of all. “It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man” (Psalm 118:8).

Without Jesus

To change the world
was my desire,
But love grew cold
and then expired.

To change the world
I must now say,
Was but the dream
of a youthful day.

To change the world
was once my plea,
But I grew old, and
the world changed me.

With Jesus

“You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:14-16).

THIS THANKSGIVING

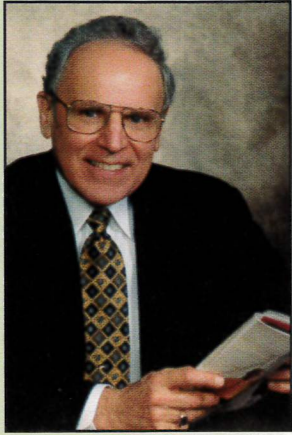
Thank God for the stock market correction. It reminds you to “seek first [the heavenly Father’s] kingdom and his righteousness” (Matthew 6:33).

Thank God for humbling failures in things you have tried. It reminds you how much you need the Lord, with whom all things are possible. “I can do everything through him who gives me strength” (Philippians 4:13).

Thank God for your physical imperfections. They remind you that only in Christ will any perfection be found. “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Thank God for illness. It helps you prepare for the time when he will take you to your eternal home. “The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body” (1 Corinthians 15:43,44).

Thank God for the death of believers. It leads you to praise God for his salvation. “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on” (Revelation 14:13).



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

If we ever thought that this life was all about material things like world trade, now we need to seek first God's kingdom and his righteousness.

A wake-up call

When I was a child, I feared that one day our enemies would bomb our mainland.

On Sept. 11, 2001, they did, using hijacked airplanes as bombs.

A nation cried out: "How?" "Why?" "What next?" There were far more questions than answers.

Prayers flooded God's throne. Special church services were called to comfort the grieving and to enlist God's help. Some didn't voice it, but many wondered, too, "Where is God in all of this?"

That question begs for attention. I'm not in any way suggesting that God somehow prompted the terrorists to act. No, that was the work of the devil. But God, in his providence, allowed the tragedy to play out.

Could it be that he was sending us a wake-up call?

I'm struck by a contrast between my youth and today. In earlier days, few people seriously questioned the assertion that we were a "Christian nation" (not without sin, mind you). Some of us even had the temerity to equate the god of "in God we trust" and "one nation under God" with the triune God. Only atheists, who kept a low profile then, were offended by the phrase.

Still, we boasted that our nation stood for Judeo-Christian values. As a society we held to a strong moral ethic, a sense of right and wrong—buoyed up by the churchgoing public. We hated divorce and rarely spoke the word abortion above a whisper. We cultivated a sense of modesty and experienced shame. The Christian religion had a positive influence on our nation.

But things changed, until now, like ancient Israel as they lost favor in God's eyes, everyone does what is right in his own eyes. Few people would seriously call us a Christian nation today—"Post-Christian"

we call it. Atheists are organized. Pagan cults are growing. Non-Christian religions are flourishing. Immorality parades with pride. We kill unborn babies and call it our right to do so. We look for ever-new ways to challenge old values. We are told again and again that there is no absolute moral standard, there is no "right" or "wrong."

And God? We make God with our own hands and imaginations. He is whatever we want him to be and often nothing of what he reveals himself to be. As a society we have abandoned God. Yet, we wonder today why he has abandoned us.

He hasn't abandoned us, but he has surely given us a nudge.

I am not saying that we can somehow make the United States God's nation and things will be fine. I'm saying that such tragic events remind all of us of how much we need God, whom we often ignore.

If we ever thought we should be more into his Word, now we should act on those thoughts. If we ever thought that real danger was far away, now we need to be reassured that God in his love is always nearby. If we ever thought that this life was all about material things like world trade, now we need to seek first God's kingdom and his righteousness.

God is still the God of heaven and earth. Be still and know that he is God. He is still the God of grace and mercy. He loves the world, terrorists and ordinary sinners (is there such a thing as an "ordinary" sin?) alike, and he gave his Son to save us all. He is still the Savior of the nations who has a message for us all:

"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near" (Matthew 4:17).

Gary P. Baumler

National Conference on
**WORSHIP,
MUSIC** 
& the **ARTS**

July 21-24, 2002

On the campus of Carthage College, located on Lake Michigan between Milwaukee and Chicago in Kenosha, Wisconsin

Conference Activities

- Gather around Word and Sacrament at conference worship
- Attend concerts and recitals presented by talented WELS musicians
- Enroll in practical and interesting workshops
- Find new resources for worship, preaching, choirs, organ, piano, and instruments
- Discover artistic, musical, and worship resources *specially offered at this conference for small congregations.*
- Meet old friends and make new friends
- Grow in knowledge and enthusiasm to participate in Lutheran worship



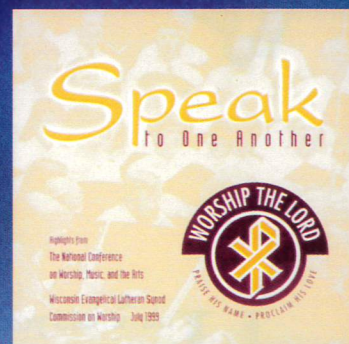
Conference Attendees

- pastors
- worship planners
- artists
- laypeople
- teachers
- musicians
- worship committees
- students (50% registration fee discount for full-time students)

Registration begins in March 2002

For more information about the conference, contact the WELS Commission on Worship, phone 414-256-3226, e-mail at <worship@sab.wels.net> or visit <www.wels.net/worship/events>.

www.wels.net/worship/events



Speak to One Another,
a two CD set of music
recorded at the 1999
National Worship Conference
is available by calling
1-800-662-6022
(Milwaukee: 414-475-6600)
or by visiting
<www.shopWELS.net>.
Ask for Item #388503,
1999 Worship Conference CD.

Conference planners are seeking advanced adult and high school choral singers and orchestral instrumentalists who are interested in participating in the conference. Forms are available at the Commission on Worship addresses above.

Welcome Sinners

God never meant the church to be only for people who think that they are holy. The church is for people who know that they are sinful.

Robert F. Raasch

How would you feel if you came to church and saw a banner over the door that read, “Welcome sinners”?

Our reactions

Maybe you would be offended by those words. Maybe you would think to yourself, “What right does this church have to call me a ‘sinner’? They shouldn’t be judging me like that. Do they think they are better than I am?”

Or, maybe you would question the accuracy of such a sign. “Does this church really open its doors to deviants, criminals, and less-than-perfect people?”

Or maybe you would wonder, “Why would any church put up a special invitation for sinful people? Aren’t churches supposed to be a gathering of good people?”

Frankly, such a sign would probably be offensive to a lot of people today. But such a sign would not be offensive to Jesus. During his earthly ministry, Jesus repeatedly spent time with the tax-collectors and

“sinners.” When the Jewish Pharisees (i.e., the religious elite) criticized Jesus for hanging out with the wrong crowd, Jesus defended his actions with the words, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners” (Mark 2:17).

Jesus’ purpose for the church

With those words, Jesus established the true purpose of the church. Jesus does not intend that the church be a museum for saints. Rather, he intends that it be a hospital for sinners. In other words, God never meant the church to be only for holy people—or for people who think that they are holy. The church is for people who know that they are sinful.

If you can say that you are less than perfect, if you can say that you’ve messed up in life, if you can say that you need some help from God—then you can be sure that Jesus welcomes you with open arms.

If you doubt that, then look at Jesus on the cross. His arms are

spread wide for you. Remember, Jesus did not die for the sinless. He died for the sinful. The Bible says, “Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God” (1 Peter 3:18).

Because Jesus lived his life for all and gave his life for the sins of all mankind, he can now invite you and me to come to God as forgiven, purified, holy people. You might say that Jesus, in effect, has turned sinners into “saints.” Or as Scripture puts it, “We have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Hebrews 10:10).

Is that good news? You bet it is! And it’s also the reason that there is posted over our church door an invisible banner that always reads, “Welcome sinners!”



Robert Raasch is pastor at Mt. Olive, Appleton, Wisconsin.