

FORWARD IN CHRIST

August 2002

The Word from the WELS

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**Pregnancy
counseling
“success”
stories**

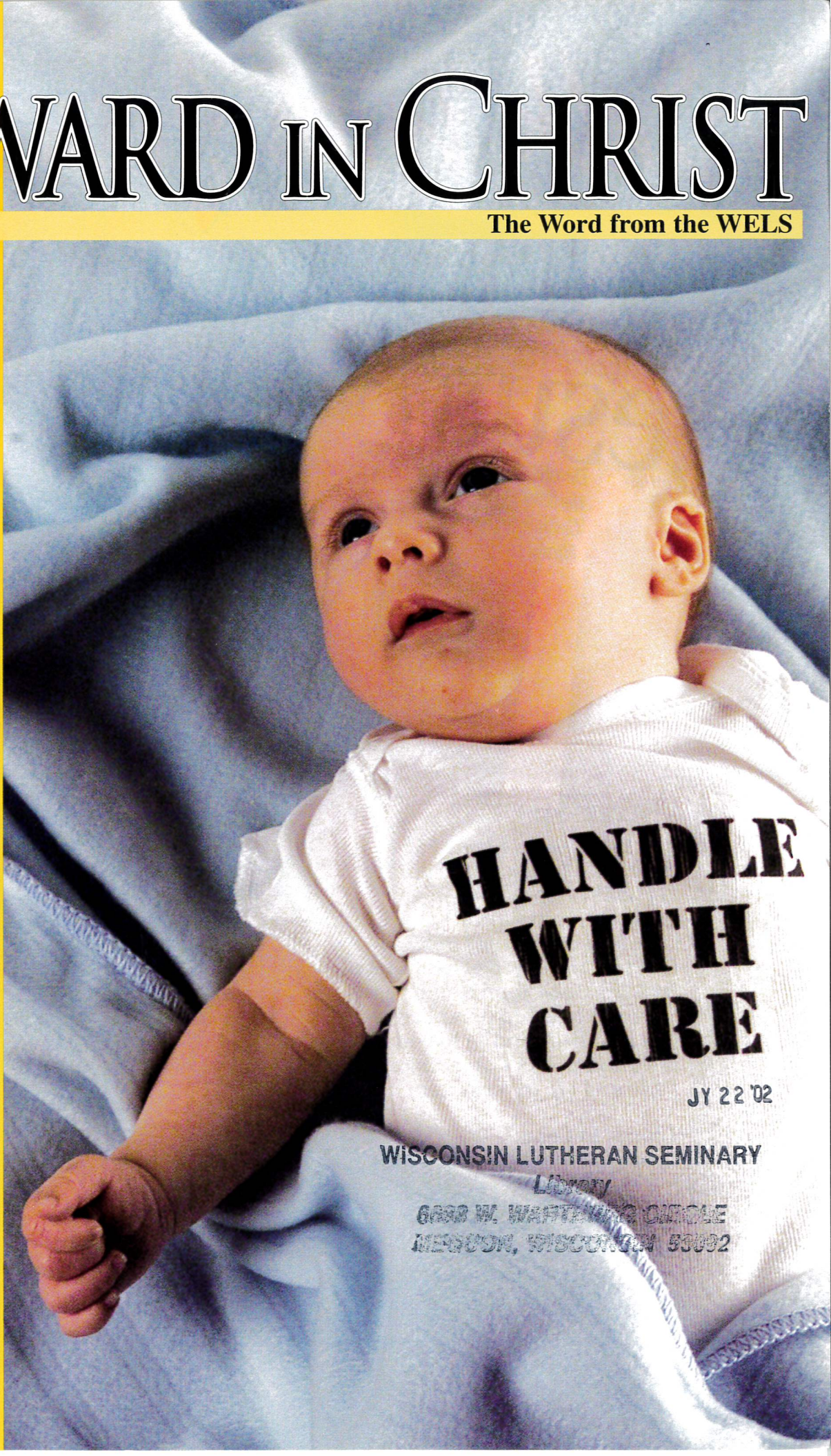
**The real
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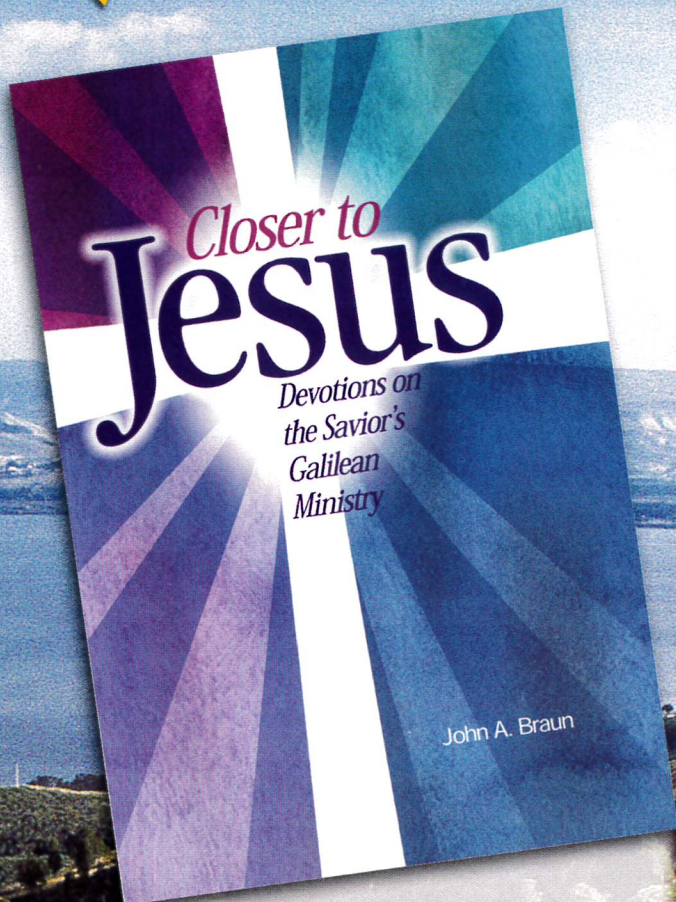
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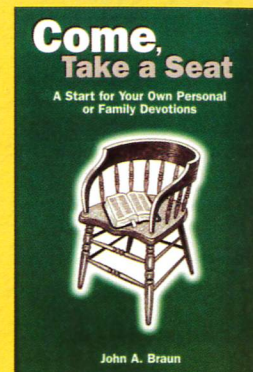
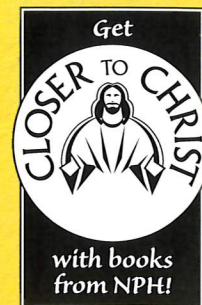
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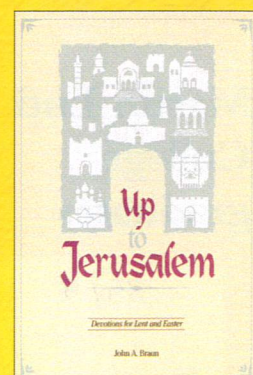
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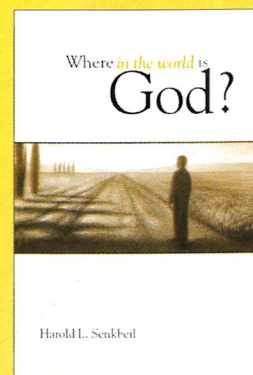
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A knock at the door

Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me. Revelation 3:20

Eric S. Hartzell

Doors are intriguing. They have a unique purpose all their own. They almost live. They blow shut in a breeze. They sometimes lock by themselves. They make noise on their hinges. They open to surprises. In the morning they provide our entrance to a new day. In the evening they get us “back home.” They hold the world outside. They keep enemies and crooks from entering. They keep out cold and heat and dark. They let light in.

Listen for Jesus’ knock

Jesus seeks entrance into our lives, and he enters by a door. He knocks before he enters. He comes in a certain way.

The door by which Jesus comes into our lives is the preaching of his Word and the faithful practice of the Lord’s Supper and baptism. As far as we know, there is no other way and no other door. He says, “If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him and he with me.”

So we wait for his knock. We hear this knocking at the door in devotions and in worship opportunities. In them we hear Jesus’ voice. We hear his knocking when the Lord’s Supper is announced. It is that knocking sound that we listen for and respond to. It is the chance to open something and have God



come into our hearts and lives in his special and wonderful way, like an invited guest to our table. It is a chance for him to come into the place where we do our thinking, where we are who we really are . . . like people are behind the doors of their own homes.

Open the door for Jesus

During wartime, people’s hearts freeze when they hear knocking on the doors of their houses. It could be someone coming to rip them away to dungeons and torture. It could be

someone coming to ransack their homes and lives and tear them from their loved ones.

Jesus does not knock in that way. He knocks on the door of the lonely and oppressed like a loved one returning from a journey. He knocks at the door in the familiar knock of a dear friend coming over for supper. His knocking is the excited knocking of one telling us that we have won the greatest of all sweepstakes. His knock is the neighborly knocking of one who comes to warn us of danger. His knock is the expected knocking of the one bringing us delicious food to eat. His knock is the determined knocking of the one who comes to tell us he has found something important we have lost.

When we hear Jesus’ knock we can open the door, or we can keep it shut. We can even bolt it and barricade it. We can make it God-proof. The catechism says it’s possible to despise preaching and his Word. If we do, the door will stay shut.

But believers happily open the door and see our Savior and Lord standing there.

Many happy things happen at our doors. The happiest of all happens when we hear Jesus knocking there and rise to let him in.



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

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Cover photo by Brice Photography

My wife and I wish that our kids came with instructions. But we parents willingly subject ourselves to the task because children are a blessing from God.

8

bits & pieces



Can you believe it? One more month and school will be starting again. Let us help you get in the mood with a focus on teaching and learning this month:

- Most teachers already have more than a 40-hour-per-week job. Throw on administration duties, and the workload becomes immense. Yet that's what happens to many of our WELS principals. What we can do to help lessen the load is the focus of "Time-out for principals" (p.16).
- Been in a classroom with a bunch of fifth- and sixth-graders lately? Jason Nelson, our new Commission on Parish Schools administrator, relates his experience and reflects on the importance of our Lutheran grade schools (back page).
- Our Martin Luther College graduates are pictured on pp. 22-28. Keep these teachers, staff ministers, and future pastors in your prayers.
- Teaching isn't supposed to be happening only at school and at church. Parents have a huge responsibility to teach their children the ways of the Lord. Read more in "Making little disciples" (p. 8) by John Eich. Also look for "Schooling the home," a new series starting next month that will talk more about the parental duty of sharing the gospel with children.



Our series on Bible translations ends this month with a look at translations (including the TNIV) published since the New International Version in 1978 (p.14). We thank Prof. David Kuske for his historical and educational look at Bible translations and how WELS uses them.

—JKW

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Work While It Is Day begins with each of us, individually, reflecting on the blessings and opportunities God gives us all.

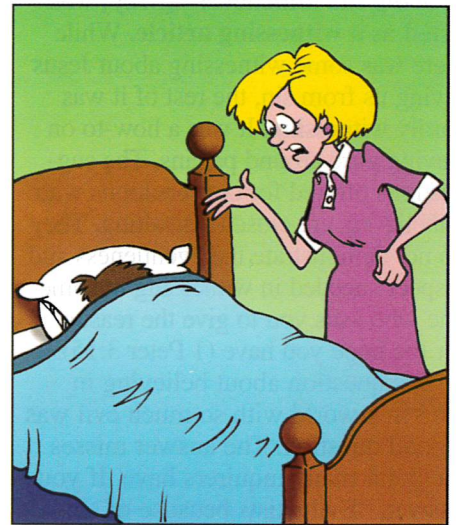
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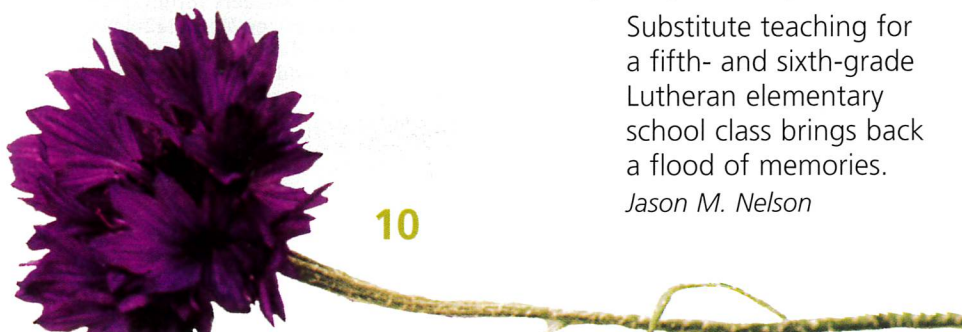
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“Facing the unbeliever” [May] was listed as a witnessing article. While there was some witnessing about Jesus saving us from sin, the rest of it was hardly witnessing. It was a how-to on staying pure around pagans. The suggestions offered for conversations with unbelievers are close to insulting. They do not demonstrate the “gentleness and respect” needed in witnessing to someone who asks you to give the reason for the hope you have (1 Peter 3:15).

The question about believing in God in a world with so much evil was a good question. The answer misses the point many inquirers have. If you answer, “Evil exists because of sin” the inquirer will want to know how and why a good God who is also all-powerful allowed this to happen.

As for proof, do we believe in a historical Savior crucified under Pontius Pilate or not? I thank God that “[he] has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead” (Acts 17:31).

David Schleusener



Raleigh, North Carolina

In an attempt to give advice to the Christian when “Facing the unbeliever” [May], Charles Sonnenburg claims that “the central principle of science is that there is no god.”

No scientist that I know has been forced to adopt this ridiculous principle. If Sonnenburg’s claim were true, then Christians would have no business being scientists. On the contrary, Christians, having knowledge of the Creator, are particularly suited to study what he has created.

Kerry Kuehn

Wauwatosa, Wisconsin

“Facing the unbeliever” [May] addressed an important issue for Christians, but I disagreed with Charles Sonnenburg’s statement that “instead of wasting time attempting to attack scientific theories, we should be using our time and energy to point out the unbeliever’s sinfulness and need for a Savior.”

Often it is not wise to jump right in with the gospel when faced with a challenge to the biblical view of science. Instead, gently begin with the errors in their scientific view and show how a more accurate and honest assessment of scientific evidence is actually consistent with the biblical view. With this foundation established, the unbeliever will be more likely to see that the Christian perspective is credible and not divorced from the “reasonableness” of science.

Responding to a scientific challenge with the doctrine of the moral depravity of man may reap the criticism that we are averting the question. By starting where they are at personally and using their question as an opportunity to open their minds to the truths of the Bible and ultimately to Christ’s salvation for all men, we will be following the words of Paul in 2 Timothy: “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth” (2:15).

Rachel Mueller

St. Paul, Minnesota

Forward in Christ has failed in dealing with a difficult but important topic. The cover of the May issue looked promising, but **I was greatly disappointed after reading “A dirty, not so little secret.”** Although it is great to read about one man’s victory over pornography addiction, the article was vague, uninspiring, and offered little help to others struggling with the same sin.

The advice to “keep your eye away from porn and on the prize” is like telling an alcoholic to just not have a drink. If only it were that easy! Temptation is all around us. Furthermore, a man may not feel that he has a problem, or more likely feels he has it under control, and will not seek help from a pastor or counselor until it is too late, already damaging his relationship with his wife or future wife. What men need is help overcoming their daily struggle with sexual impurity.



Name withheld

Thank you for the fine article on the Lutheran approach to the use of reason [“Lutherans are reasonable,” June]. The entire series has been helpful and necessary at a time when so much non-Lutheran theology is popular and easily accessible.

I must, however, take exception to the condescending implication in the opening two paragraphs that those who “ride horse-drawn buggies to church” are lacking in common sense and reasonableness. The reason the Amish (one group I assume the reference applied to) still use horses for farming (their use for transportation being secondary) has to do with their philosophy toward technology in general. When a new “advance” in technology becomes available, they ask themselves a simple question: what will this do to our community?

In choosing to continue to use horses for farming instead of tractors and other mechanized equipment, the Amish tap into free solar energy, which grows the food (fuel) the horses need, which in turn gets recycled into fertilizer for the land. They are not burning fossil fuels with the resultant environmental damage they bring on and thus are not beholden to the merciless whims of the energy market. They do not need to take on the kinds of crushing debts for machinery that have driven so many family farms to financial failure. As a result, they can pass the land on within the family, which means the collective wisdom of generations of responsible land management stays with the land as well.

Rather than being a cause for ridicule, the Amish approach leads to prudent, self-sustaining stewardship of the creation they acknowledge as a gift from God.

Tim Helmen



Minneapolis, Minnesota

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Don't be so surprised!

Douglas J. Engelbrecht

A vicar, who was preaching for the first time, was sitting nervously in the sacristy. He told his supervising pastor that his biggest worry was getting stuck in the middle of the sermon. The veteran preacher told him a trick he used: when he got stuck he would take a step backward, then step up to the microphone again, repeating the last line he had just spoken, and he would remember what came next.

As the young preacher began, sure enough, he got stuck. But he remembered the veteran preacher's trick. He took a step back, stepped forward, and repeated the last words he had spoken . . . Jesus' words from Revelation 3:11 (KJV), "Behold, I come quickly!"

Nothing happened. He still couldn't remember what came next. He stepped back again and stepped up saying, "Behold, I come quickly!"

Still nothing! He stepped back a third time and, being nervous, when he stepped forward saying, "Behold, I come quickly!" he fell over the edge of the pulpit right into the lap of two old ladies sitting in the front pew.

The one looked at the other and said, "Don't look so surprised. He told us more than once that he was coming!"

Although most of us will not stand in front of a crowd in church, we all will one day stand in front of the Lord in judgment. Possibly, we might be surprised, because either we can't believe that Jesus will say to us, "Depart from me, you who are cursed . . ." (Matthew 25:41) or "Come you who are blessed by my father, take your inheritance . . ." (Matthew 25:34). But the Bible tells us, in so many words, what that one lady said to the other: "Don't be so surprised. He told us more than once that he was coming!"

No one should be surprised on judgment day to hear Jesus say, "Depart from me, you

who are cursed," because he told us he was coming, and the warning has been there.

Jesus told the cities of Korazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, "It will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you" (Matthew 11:24). It wasn't that the people of these cities didn't think there would be a judgment day. The problem was that they didn't think it could happen to them. After all, Korazin was the sight of many of Jesus' miracles; Bethsaida, the home of many of his disciples; and Capernaum, the home of the Savior during much of his ministry. But Jesus' words were clear—it doesn't make any difference who you think you are, the wrath of God will be revealed against you unless you repent and believe. So don't be so surprised. Be ready!

Also, nobody should be surprised on judgment day to hear Jesus say to them, "Come . . . take your inheritance," because he told us he was coming, and the promise has been there.

Throughout Scripture God tells us, "Believe in the Lord Christ and you shall be saved." It may sound too easy, too simple, too unbelievable that God would love us enough to send his Son to die for our sins. It may seem too unrealistic that God would forgive terrible sinners and take us to heaven, purely by grace, purely by faith; but the promise is there. Believe, and you shall be with him in paradise! Jesus' words are clear—it doesn't make any difference who you are or how deeply you have sinned, "The blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

So don't be so surprised. Be ready! Be comforted!

Doug Engelbrecht is pastor at Trinity, Neenah, Wisconsin.

It may seem
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Making little disciples

Little disciples aren't born. They're made. Fortunately, God supplied parents with specific instructions on how to make those little disciples.

John L. Eich

A while back, while surfing the Web, I came across an interesting page entitled "Things I've learned from my children." Here is a sampling of what it said:

- When you hear the toilet flush and the words, "Uh-oh," it is already too late.
- A four-year-old's voice is louder than the voices of 200 adults in a crowded restaurant.

- VCRs do not eject peanut butter and jelly sandwiches even though TV commercials show that they do.
- The spin cycle on the washing machine does not make earthworms dizzy. It does, however, make cats very dizzy. Last lesson learned:
- In retrospect, a good sense of humor will get you through most problems in life.

Parents need God's instructions

Every parent knows that raising children is a whole lot easier to talk about than to do. My wife and I wish that our kids came with instructions. But we parents willingly subject ourselves to the task because children are a blessing from God. We are fueled by the hope that one day we will be able to say along with the apostle John, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are

walking in the truth.” Or as a loose paraphrase might read, “Y-E-E-S-S! My kids turned out all right.”

Fortunately, God did not leave us alone, adrift in the ocean of child psychologists. He has supplied parents with specific instructions on how to make little disciples God’s way.

God does not say: “Drag your child to church, send him to Sunday school, and then someday when he is old and decrepit, after he sows his wild oats and has had his flings, he will come back to God.”

God does not say: “Let the Sunday school teacher do it, or the pastor.” We have the children for what—one or two hours a week? We can’t teach a child anything in that hour that can’t be easily erased in the 121 hours parents have them. The church helps parents train a child. The parents lay the foundation. The parents set the direction.

God supplies the training manual

Proverbs 22:6 reads, “Train a child in the way he should go . . .” What do you think of with the word “train?” I think of training a dog—a rolled up newspaper and a box of cookies. That’s what works for my dog. Is that what we are supposed to do with our children?

The original root word for train is said to be the term for “the palate, the roof of the mouth.” The term was used in the days of Solomon to describe the action of the midwife who, soon after helping deliver a child, would dip her finger into the juice of crushed dates and massage the gums and the palate of the baby to create a sensation of sucking, a sense of taste.

That’s what we need to do. We need to create a taste, a thirst, for God within our children! We spend

hours teaching our children to count, but teaching them what counts is best. Every day sin will make them feel worthless, so they need to know that they count to God through Jesus. We spend hours teaching our kids world geography only to have countries come and go faster than maps can be printed. But every day the world and their own sinfulness will destroy the image of God within them, and only Jesus Christ can restore it. We spend so much time teaching them the things of this world, which can get them lost in the maze of conflicting ideologies. Only God’s Word can keep them on the straight road to heaven. If we develop a thirst for God’s Word in them, they won’t depart from it, though they might go through some searching years.

We need to
create a thirst
for God within
our children!

Notice here, too, that it says “train.” That’s an active verb. In other words, parents have to do something so that their children develop this thirst for Jesus. It doesn’t just happen. I get the impression from any number of parents that they think it should. If you just let the kid go for a while, drag him to church once in a while, force him to go to catechism, magically, one day he’ll turn into an active Christian. Wrong! All that does is show our kids that we are hypocrites. We tell them one thing and then do

another. Parenting is active. Christian training is active. It is a constant, regular encouragement to develop this thirst for God.

Parents set a Christian example

Do you remember Harry Chapin’s song “The Cat’s in the Cradle”? It has that haunting refrain that repeats, “I’m gonna be like you, Dad. You know I’m gonna be like you.” That’s how we build up within our children a spiritual thirst for a personal and daily relationship with Jesus Christ. We let them see the evidences of our love for Christ.

- Teach them to be active in their church by being active yourself.
- Teach them to turn to God for direction by letting them hear you pray.
- Show them to actively worship their Savior by guiding them in the service.
- Teach them humble repentance by asking their forgiveness when you wrong them.

Walk in the way of the Lord, and your children will walk that way too. Thirst for that living water yourself, and your children will drink it too. Sit at your Savior’s feet, and your children will sit there too. Instruction doesn’t begin in high school; it begins in the high-chair. Start young, and your job is easier as your children get older.

Little disciples aren’t born. They’re made. They’re made as God recreates them in baptism. They’re made as we teach them what it means to be God’s child.

Then we will be able to say one day: “Y-E-E-S-S! My kids have turned out all right.”

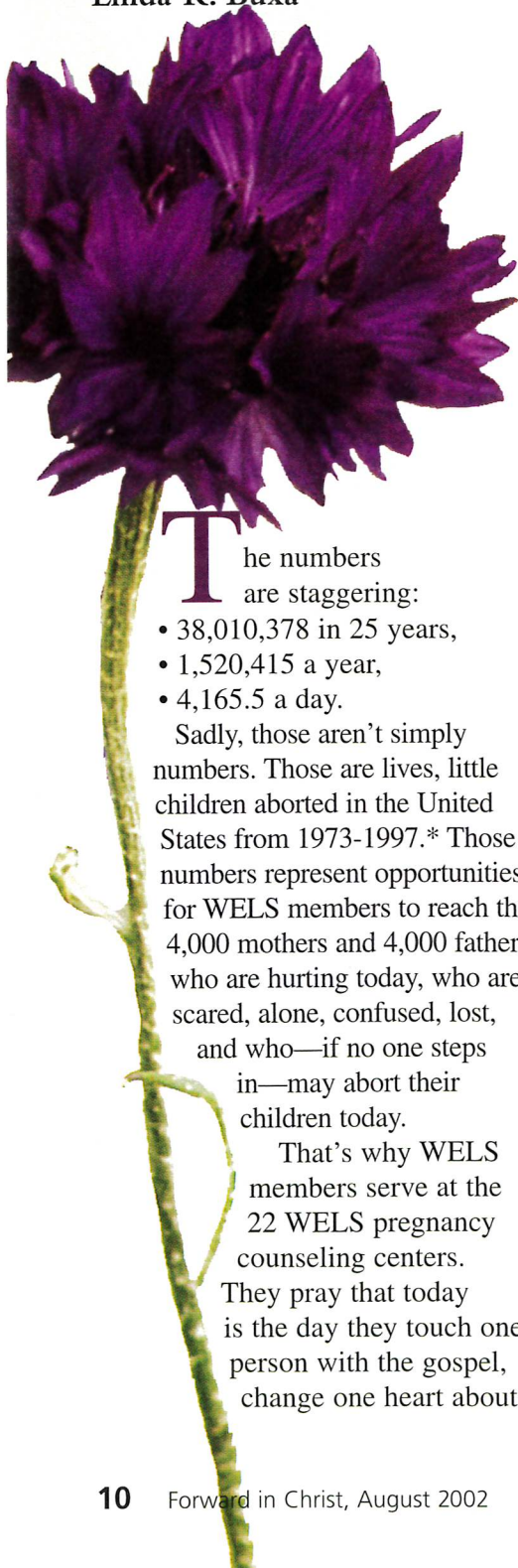


John Eich is pastor at Good Shepherd, Alma/St. Louis, Michigan.

Today is the day

WELS pregnancy counseling volunteers pray that today is the day they will touch one person with the gospel and save one child's life.

Linda R. Buxa



The numbers are staggering:

- 38,010,378 in 25 years,
- 1,520,415 a year,
- 4,165.5 a day.

Sadly, those aren't simply numbers. Those are lives, little children aborted in the United States from 1973-1997.* Those numbers represent opportunities for WELS members to reach the 4,000 mothers and 4,000 fathers who are hurting today, who are scared, alone, confused, lost, and who—if no one steps in—may abort their children today.

That's why WELS members serve at the 22 WELS pregnancy counseling centers. They pray that today is the day they touch one person with the gospel, change one heart about

abortion, save one child's life.

Here are a few "success" stories.

"Oh you of little faith"

At the Livonia, Mich., center, a woman came in for a pregnancy test with friends. The test was positive.

"You could feel in the air which way her 'friends' would encourage her to go," says Ann Warner, a counselor for 18 years. Though the friends were laughing and not paying attention, Warner told the girl what God says about life.

After the girls left and asked not to be contacted, Warner wrote, "She is abortion bound" and closed the file.

Five years later one of the "friends" came for a test of her own. Warner asked, "So how is your friend doing?"

"She is busy with her five-year-old son," the young woman replied.

Thrilled that her analysis was wrong, Warner sent a gift and a note asking her to call. The client called, thanking Warner for her help, but wanting something else—baptism for her son. One of Warner's pastors baptized the child, and the woman worshiped with Warner for a while.

That experience taught Warner a lesson. "Oh you of little faith, Ann Warner!" she exclaims. "I certainly repented of my lack of faith."

"God's Word has the power to turn hearts and not always in our time," she continues. "It is not up to us to have the Word work. That work belongs to the Lord."

"They need someone to listen to them"

Nancy Roeller has also seen the Word work in her clients. As a counselor in Little Canada, Minn., her youngest client was 13, her oldest 42. The hardest cases, however, are working with those who've had challenging lives. Consider Sara**, age 19.

"She was basically out on her own since she was 10," describes Roeller.

Sara would live with her alcoholic mother for a few weeks, then be off to foster homes where she would run away. The cycle never stopped. As a teenager, she had a four-month-old baby when she found out she was pregnant again—with triplets.

"There are so many hurting people out there," Roeller says. "They need someone to listen to them and help them sort out their lives."

Roeller listened to and helped the young mother. "She's married now, and her life is going much better," says Roeller, who attended the four children's baptisms and the triplets' first birthday party.

". . . thank you for inviting me here"

Pregnancy counseling centers also serve women and men who are hurting from previous abortions.

Joe**, by his own admission, didn't have many redeeming qualities. A big, burly truck driver who abused every kind of alcohol and drugs, he financed the abortions of his first three children.

After his fourth child was born, the reality of what he did to his other children hit him. He couldn't take the guilt. "Satan has you at that point where you are nothing. You have nothing to live for," he explains. "It's so much darkness around you; it's like you're smothering."

To end that pain, he took a gun and headed to the river to kill himself. But someone stopped him. Shortly after, Joe walked into the pregnancy counseling center.

Suicidal thoughts still hounded him. Memories still haunted him, including the memory of the third abortion he funded. "She came home, and I was on the couch drinking a six-pack," he remembers. "I said 'How'd it go?' as if she had a tooth pulled. Here she had killed our child."

That woman is now his wife and mother of his little girl. "But when he heard his daughter's laughter, he could hear his other three children's laughter," says Warner.

That led Joe to believe that God might take his little girl away from him to punish him. Warner knew Joe needed God's Word. "God doesn't work that way," she told him. "He doesn't punish you. He punished Jesus. Now he sends angels—legions of angels—to protect your little girl."

Warner continued speaking the Word to him and praying for him. This went on for months before she saw the Word work. "When it did," she says, "Wow!"

Joe joined a church and confessed his sins in front of the congregation. Now he's telling everybody about the Lord—whether he's driving his truck or talking to his neighbors.

Joe e-mailed Warner a while ago to thank her for giving him God's Word, which changed his life forever. "I'm so glad that we're going to be in eternity together," he wrote. "I

hope you don't mind, but be prepared for lots of hugs. Because every time I see you, I'm going to hug you and thank you for inviting me here."

"But we jump in"

Pregnancy counseling centers don't simply serve the clients. They serve the counselors too.

Roeller constantly grows closer to the Lord. "I pray a lot," she says. "And it gives me a good opportunity for the Holy Spirit to work through me."

Warner agrees. "This has been wonderful for me in my walk of faith," she says. By sharing her personal sins with clients, she lets them know she isn't judging them, but is a fellow sinner who also needs forgiveness.

"I want to know every day that I'm forgiven," she says. "So do they. I never, ever will let any of my people walk out without knowing about forgiveness."

Working in this field isn't easy, but Warner has found a motto—borrowed from Martin Luther—to remind herself why she is doing this:

"A truly Christian work is it that we descend and get mixed up in the mire of the sinner as deeply as he sticks there himself, taking his sin upon ourselves and floundering out of it with him, not acting otherwise than as if his sin were our own."

This—to Warner and to all counselors—is what being a Christian is all about.

"Do we want to get dirty? No," she says. "We're dirty enough. But we jump in."

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

*Statistic provided by the Alan Guttmacher Institute.

**Names have been changed.

WELS pregnancy counseling centers

Call a center if you or a friend is in a crisis pregnancy situation and needs someone to talk to. Or call if you are interested in volunteering.

ARIZONA

Phoenix—602/285-0050

CALIFORNIA

San Jose—408/249-6721

COLORADO

Aurora—New Beginnings:
303/364-0890 or 800/720-6667

ILLINOIS

Crete—708/672-3978
Mundelein—847/949-4443

MICHIGAN

Ann Arbor—313/930-0013
Benton Harbor—616/925-2320
Flint—810/767-1579
Livonia—313/522-8484
Madison Heights—810/546-5225
Saginaw—517/752-7664

MINNESOTA

Little Canada—651/649-3538

OHIO

Columbus—614/890-0003

WISCONSIN

Appleton—920/739-0039
Fond du Lac—920/923-5299
Green Bay—920/433-9955
Milwaukee—Southside:
414/384-8086;
Northside: 414/384-2799
La Crosse—608/785-2377
Racine—414/552-9600
Watertown—920/261-9207
Waukesha—414/513-9590



When the bell tolls

Members of Christ the King Lutheran Church of Nigeria and the Lutheran Church of Cameroon know that when the bell tolls, they have an opportunity to worship their gracious God.

Nicole R. Moline

As the tolling bell breaks the silence of the early morning, people in the village of Uruk Uso begin to stir. After rising from bed and dressing, many of these Nigerians enthusiastically head to a local Christian church. Between 75 and 100 people gather at the church that serves as the headquarters for Christ the King Lutheran Church of Nigeria. As they study Scripture, pray, and praise God, their day begins ideally—in God’s Word. Three mornings per week Christ the King’s members start their day this way. Expressing one’s faith is a standard part of life in Uruk Uso.

In the neighboring country of Cameroon, a rusty truck wheel is struck with a twisted piece of steel on the Sabbath to mimic a church bell tolling. Village people slowly gather together. About 30 minutes after the “bell” is rung, the sound of singing and drums drifts out of a congregation of the Lutheran Church of Cameroon.

Members of Christ the King Lutheran Church of Nigeria and the Lutheran Church of Cameroon know that when the bell tolls, they have an opportunity to worship their gracious God. As brothers and sisters in Christ, they are working together with WELS and the other members of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference to spread God’s Word.

Worship

The women, dressed in colorful gowns and head coverings, snake

their way to the front of the church. As they dance, they present their offerings to the Lord, sometimes returning to give thanks more than once.

Choirs and instruments blend their voices together to praise God. There is a heavy emphasis on prayer and praise in the Nigerian church body. Yet, the message that is preached is the same as the message preached in a WELS church. Even the liturgy is a translation of the order of worship found on page five in *The Lutheran Hymnal*. Because of the happy responses sung by the choirs and other congregation members, services often run two hours or more.

In Cameroon, men, women, and children also place their coins in a basket on the altar as choruses are sung. Worshipers are often called on to read Scripture, pray, or lead a chorus. Five-word refrains are sung over and over again in joy. Here, too, the liturgy is a mix of Lutheran tradition and tribal responses, all centered on the Word of God.

Cultural personality

A group of young Christians begins chanting a refrain. Electric guitars chime in, as do drums. Youth Fellowship groups take active roles in worship in congregations of Christ the King. Young people actively share God’s Word with their friends and neighbors, often with music.

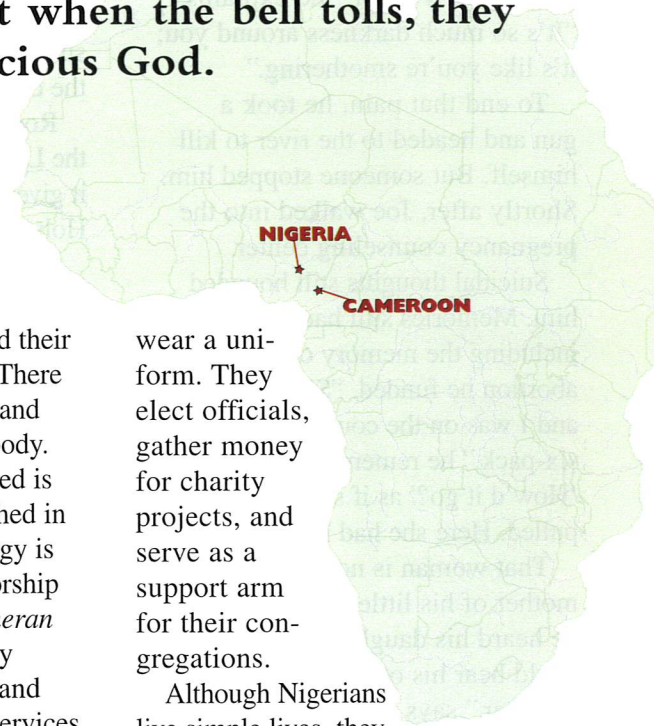
Women’s Fellowship groups are also well organized in these congregations. Members of the groups

wear a uniform. They elect officials, gather money for charity projects, and serve as a support arm for their congregations.

Although Nigerians live simple lives, they are comfortable expressing their Christian beliefs, which is reflected by strong lay participation.

In the neighboring country of Cameroon, life has a different flavor. Excited shouting peppers every meeting. Citizens are so in tune with the chieftain mentality that the chairman at most meetings ends the discussion when it suits him best—which means that his viewpoint prevails. Policy is often set by whoever talks the loudest, the longest.

This carries over into the ministry of the Lutheran Church of Cameroon. Del Kannenberg, a WELS worker in Cameroon from 1997-2001, notes, “I never saw a vote taken at a meeting during the entire time I was there.” Emotions run high. Yet, emotions are beautiful when they express love for our Savior. As members of the Lutheran Church of Cameroon grow





The worship of Christ the King Lutheran Church of Nigeria is as vibrant as its members' clothes.



Depending on where their congregation is located, members of the Lutheran Church of Cameroon may worship in a solid building (such as the one pictured above) or in a bamboo hut. No matter the setting, members joyfully praise the Lord.

The Lutheran Church of Cameroon

Members: 1,541
Established congregations: 26
Mission congregations: 8
National pastors: 16
Certified assistants: 21
Expatriate missionaries: 1

Christ the King Lutheran Church of Nigeria

Members: 2,900
Established congregations: 26
Mission congregations: 3
National pastors: 9
Expatriate missionaries: 0

All Saints Lutheran Church of Nigeria

In 1998, another confessional Lutheran church body in Nigeria was discovered. All Saints Lutheran Church and Christ the King Lutheran Church now joyfully share resources and encourage each other. In 2001, WELS declared fellowship with All Saints. It is anticipated that All Saints will join the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference at its next meeting in 2005.

Three national pastors and two trained evangelists serve the 20 established congregations and four mission congregations run by All Saints. Members from All Saints are attending preseminary and seminary programs with members from Christ the King.

in their faith, they are expressing their emotions in God-pleasing ways. Shouts of "Alleluia!" and "Praise the Lord!" are common during worship services. Men pray unashamedly from their hearts and loudly praise God in song.

Worker training

Dubbed the "Leapfrog Seminary," Christ the King Lutheran Seminary began instructing a new class of seminary students in 2001. The program is likened to leapfrog because half the classes are taught by Nigerian pastors and the other half are taught by WELS pastors from the United States. So, for a few weeks, a Nigerian teaches. Then, when the courses change, WELS pastors teach. Currently 16 students are in the preseminary program, and 10 students are in the seminary program.

WELS helped establish the Lutheran Theological Seminary of the Lutheran Church of Cameroon in 1995. Fifteen men graduated in 1999 and are serving their church body as pastors. Helping them do that became the goal of the WELS workers in Cameroon. Because of a lack of manpower, the seminary could not continue at the same time. Currently, a WELS missionary is working with national pastors

and leaders to develop service and leadership skills.

A group of laymen became certified assistants and are helping pastors by serving as evangelists and Sunday school teachers. As pastors and certified assistants grow in their knowledge of God's Word, the seminary may be reopened with some classes taught by nationals.

Future

Colorfully dressed women, chanting young people, devoted seminary students . . . they all answer the call to worship when the bell tolls. As fellow Christians in Nigeria and Cameroon express their faith in individual ways, they are bonded together by their faith in the God who sent his Son to save the world. May our brothers and sisters around the world continue to answer God's call to worship him and spread his Word.



Nicole Moline is a communications assistant for Forward in Christ magazine and WELS Communication Services.

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EXPLORING NEW TRANSLATIONS

Should we use one of the newer Bible translations that have appeared since the New International Version was completed in 1978?

David P. Kuske

Quite a number of translations have appeared since the New International Version (NIV) was completed in 1978. Are any of these better than the NIV? If so, should we perhaps consider switching to one of these newer translations in our WELS congregations and publications? We should not push aside these questions without giving some thought to them.

Let's examine these newer translations using the following three questions:

- Is the translation faithful to the original languages?
- Does it translate doctrinal passages accurately?
- Is it easy to understand?

Reviewing the new translations

The Message (published in 1993) and the New Living Translation (1996) are easy to understand. However, these translations use paraphrases that at times wander from the original languages and do not always translate doctrinal passages accurately. The Revised English Bible (1989), the New Century Version (1991), and the Contemporary English Version, also called The Promise (1995), are easy to understand and are more faithful to the original languages than The Message and the New Living Translation. But all three fail to translate numerous doctrinal passages accurately.

The same is true of two translations that use shorter sentences and fewer technical terms in their attempt to make the Bible easier to understand. The New International Reader's Version (1995) uses sentences that are seldom more than 10 to 12 words in length. But it becomes doctrinally inaccurate when it changes some of the words of the NIV: "declare righteous" is changed to "make right with God," "old self" to "old way of life," "call sinners to repentance" to "get sinners to turn away from their sins."

God's Word (1995) also uses expressions that are not doctrinally accurate. Some examples include

- "have God's approval" is used for "declare righteous";
- "Moses' Teachings" or "set of standards" instead of "law" when referring to the moral law of God that applies to all people of all time;

- “because of faith” in place of “by faith” (this was later changed in some passages); and

- “old way of life” for “old self” in passages that refer to the sinful nature with which we are born.

Implications of using the new translations

Is it wrong to simplify theological terms? Not at all. Some words like “redeem,” “grace,” and “justify/declare righteous,” probably should be simplified. The meaning these words have in everyday English is not the same as their meaning in the Bible. Unless you grew up in a Christian home, you might have trouble understanding them, especially if you use English as a second language.

A translation can avoid this difficulty by using contemporary English terms: “ransom” instead of “redeem,” “undeserved kindness” for “grace,” “acquit” for “justify/declare righteous.” Changes like these would make the Bible easier to understand for everyone. Using simpler words can be an improvement, but the terms used must say exactly what the original languages meant.

The other change that the recent translations have made—namely, using shorter sentences—is good. One of the rules of modern communication is to use short, direct sentences. But translating the long, involved sentences of the New Testament epistles into short sentences can lead to inaccuracies in translating. As translators seek to find a way to express the relationship one thought has to another as indicated by the Greek conjunctions, the newer translations often change or even lose the exact meaning of the original.

So, now what?

Does this suggest that it would be best not to use a newer translation? Not necessarily. If a person chooses to read one of them because it is easier

to understand than the NIV (especially in the New Testament epistles where the NIV has some long, involved sentences), it might be good to read the NIV alongside the newer translation. Then, the doctrinal accuracy of the NIV will help in passages where the newer translation may not be accurate.

Zondervan says that only seven percent of the NIV has been changed in the TNIV, but that is still a significant amount of change.

A revision of the NIV called Today’s New International Version (TNIV) just became available. The New Testament is in bookstores now; the Old Testament will be ready in 2005. The media has caused a bit of a storm by referring to the TNIV as a “gender accurate” translation. This means that in passages where the Bible refers to everyone, rather than just a male person, the TNIV translates “anyone who believes” instead of “he who believes” (John 11:25). This is not a problem because it makes the meaning of the original language clearer. What is less defensible is the TNIV’s editing out of such words as father, brother, and son. This is not done when these words refer to God the Father and God the Son, but there doesn’t seem to be any greater clarity by eliminating these words in some passages.

Zondervan says that only seven percent of the NIV has been changed in the TNIV, but that is still a significant amount of change. Before our synod could begin to use the TNIV in its publications, we would have to examine it on the basis of the three

questions listed earlier just as we did with the original NIV in the 1970s. One thing revisions such as the TNIV and the continuing publication of new translations impress on us is that the matter of evaluating Bible translations is not going to go away.

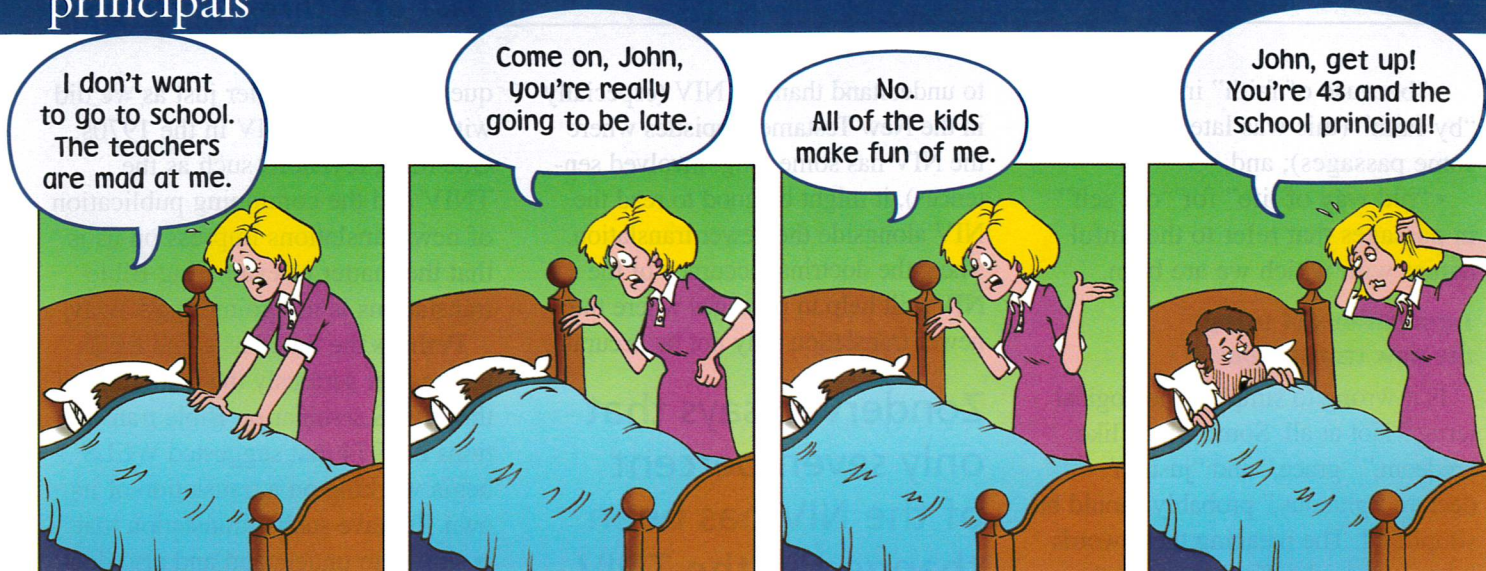
Perhaps the time has come for us to consider seriously the resolution of the WELS seminar on Bible translations in 1974 that suggested WELS begin working on a translation of its own. To have such a translation that is simple to understand and also doctrinally accurate for our people to use alongside another widely used translation such as the NIV would be a blessing. It would give both stability and continuity in a time of change when revisions and new translations are appearing regularly.

To have a Bible that we can become familiar with and memorize passages from is important, which is one reason to not constantly change the translation that we use. But this dare not blind us to other considerations. As the English language changes more rapidly than in years past, it may be necessary to change the translation we use more often. We don’t want the Bible to become hard for the younger generation to read and understand. Our renewed emphasis on outreach, often in cross-cultural situations, also calls for constant and careful consideration of the translation we use in our congregations and publications.

We used the King James Version for about 40 years before it became outdated. We have used the NIV for 25 years. The question, “Should we use one of the newer translations?” is one each succeeding generation will have to answer for itself.



David Kuske is a professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin.



Time-out for principals

Giving our principals time to serve and to lead can strengthen our teachers, our children, and our schools.

Julie K. Wietzke

You may laugh at this cartoon, but the life of a principal is no laughing matter.

Being a principal is not an easy job. It may make a person not want to get out of bed in the morning, either out of sheer exhaustion or out of frustration.

Why? Because what plagues many people is also a constant thorn in a principal's side. It's not a naughty child or a complaining teacher. It's lack of time to help our schools grow in their ministry of nurture and outreach.

Giving our principals that time to serve and to lead can strengthen our teachers, our children, and our schools.

A principal's job is never done

"It's mostly about people. It's not about paperwork."

The "it" that Stephen Granberg, principal and teacher at Apostles, San Jose, Calif., is talking about is

the servant-leadership role of a principal.

That role includes much more than signing the bills. It includes:

- Promoting the school, both within the congregation and within the community.
- Studying the curriculum and making sure it gets updated regularly.
- Leading the faculty Bible study and faculty meetings.
- Supervising, supporting, and visiting teachers in their classrooms.
- Cultivating school prospects and meeting with new families.
- Interacting with the pastor and board of education.
- Carrying out the mission and vision of the school.
- Handling day-to-day issues that develop.

"There is a lot of work to be done that will strengthen the school and really make it do better with nurture

and outreach and in presenting the beautiful Word of God to people," says Granberg.

That work isn't getting easier either. As the times change, the role of a principal evolves—and gets more difficult.

The increase in the number of non-traditional families is one challenge principals and teachers face.

"There's a real need for family ministry in terms of being able to counsel families," says David Neujahr, principal and teacher at St. Stephen, Fallbrook, Calif. "The role of principal is going more and more out of the school and into the families."

Then add on a consumer mentality among some school families. "Rather than viewing it as a partnership to raise our children in the Lord, it's kind of an unspoken mentality that the school provides a service and parents expect results rather than a partnership," says Granberg.

Mentoring new principals

Another way we can help our principals is by providing them with proper training. One way WELS does this is by mentoring new principals in their first two years of service.

"I help them become aware of what their responsibilities as principal are, I help them learn how to do those responsibilities, and I help them see some joy in doing that ministry," says Dr. LeDell Plath, mentor for new principals.

Plath spends at least 25 hours with each individual throughout the year. The things he teaches them vary from practical "nuts and bolts" duties such as ordering books and supplies and preparing agendas for faculty meetings, to counseling them on the importance of spiritual growth and continuing education and discussing their approach to the ministry.

"The better they're prepared, the better their ministry will be and the better the service that they will be able to provide," says Plath.

Plath's main job is working with MLC graduates who are assigned as principals. He also has helped teachers who accepted calls as principals and has worked with women assigned to one-room schools. That averages to about 13 new people each year.

Since Martin Luther College does not have training for elementary school principals, this mentoring program is the only way WELS provides support and training to beginning principals. Yet this program, started first in 1998, will probably not be continued next year because of budget cuts. Plath is working with the Commission on Parish Schools to determine how the program can be adapted for future use so it can continue to help train leaders for our schools.

"A leader is extremely important to effective operation of an organization," says Plath. "We need spiritually sound leaders for our schools, and that's what this program helps us achieve."

Safety issues and staff support also create more work.

But, Granberg says, we shouldn't be surprised by these challenges.

"Satan wants to work really hard where God's Word is taught properly," he says. "We have to be ready with God's Word to repel those attacks and to remain even more grounded in his Word so we can not only withstand these attacks but also continue to grow and improve our schools for the sake of all those whom we serve."

A principal needs time to do ministry

Growing and improving a school takes strong leadership, a quality needed by our principals. It also takes time, something that our principals often don't have.

Many WELS principals teach almost full-time besides carrying out their administrative duties.

Neujahr teaches seventh and eighth grade all day and coaches sports after school. He fits in his principal duties when time permits.

"When principals are also teachers, there's always this tension . . . what do I need to do first," says Neujahr. "Oftentimes it becomes very reactive rather than proactive."

He continues, "One of the things that I have found is almost impossible to do is any kind of advance planning—to be able to look beyond this week or next month or even the end of the school year is really difficult."

For the past few years, Neujahr has had one morning and one afternoon a week free while a congregation member taught in his classroom.

"By having release time, I've had time to think instead of react, to consider options instead of simply making decisions on a course of action," he says.

The WELS Guidelines for Self Study for Lutheran Elementary Schools, developed by the Commission on Parish Schools, calls for two hours of daily release time for administrative duties for every 75 children in a school. This allows the principal to accomplish more of his duties rather than just react to situations. It also gives him time to lead.

"Leadership is something that's been taken for granted," says Neujahr. "Leadership implies that everyone is focused on a goal and that goal is clearly defined. When principals don't have time to do administrative work, those goals aren't set or well defined, and we fall into the habit of simply doing things the way we've always done them."

Although the status quo may work, it doesn't move the school forward and doesn't help the school carry out its mission. Extra time will help a principal make some changes and carry out school goals.

"It's not about wanting less hours and less responsibility. No!" says Granberg. "It's what our schools could be if our leaders had time to lead. We already have effective schools, but think about what we could do if our principals had time to fulfill that servant-leadership role, strengthening our schools so that we're positioned well for a new century of doing nurture and outreach through our Lutheran schools."

Now that's something to get anyone out of bed in the morning.



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

Crisis in the Church

Joel C. Gerlach

A conflagration has erupted in the Catholic Church in the United States, from Boston to Milwaukee to Los Angeles and points in between. Nightly TV news in my hometown features it almost daily under the heading “Crisis in the Church.”

The current crisis is actually only a symptom of a deeper problem in the Catholic Church. The real problem is not priests, bishops, and archbishops who have betrayed their trust by indulging in aberrant sexual behavior. Lutheran clergy have been guilty of the same thing, including the German pastor who led Saxon Lutherans to Missouri in 1847 to establish the Missouri Synod.

The real crisis came to light in the 16th century after Martin Luther posted the Ninety-five Theses. Those theses helped expose the corruption of a falsified gospel. The issue then, as now, had to do with whether a sinner gradually becomes righteous with the help of God’s grace or is declared righteous in Christ by the grace of God. Is Jesus solely responsible for the righteousness that reclaims us for God, or are we partly responsible for it?

Luther said yes to the first question and no to the second. Catholicism says no to the first and yes to the second.

What prompted Luther to post his theses was the distribution of plenary indulgences for sin granted by the pope. John Paul II, in his Jubilee 2000 declaration, included an appendix listing the requirements for obtaining similar plenary indulgences available to faithful Catholics during the jubilee year. Rome is always the same.

Aberrant sexual conduct on the part of priests and bishops is serious. The Lord surely takes a dim view of such misbehavior, though he said that the first stone should be cast by those without sin. But far more

serious as far as the spiritual health of God’s people is concerned is a gospel that detracts from the precious truth that we are saved by grace alone without the deeds of the law.

This current crisis provides unique opportunities to speak the truth in love to disillusioned Catholics. A friend of mine, a lifelong Catholic, confided in me the pain he is experiencing because of what is happening in his church, especially after the news broke that Milwaukee’s archbishop had arranged for a \$450,000 hush money payment to a man with whom he had engaged in inappropriate behavior.

My friend’s pain has given me several opportunities to try to explain that the church’s current crisis is a symptom of a deeper problem and then to point out to him that Christ’s true church is not Roman (or Lutheran). Rather, as the Apostles’ Creed testifies, it is “the holy, catholic [universal] Church, the communion of saints.” Faith makes us members of Christ’s Church—faith that his righteousness is now our righteousness, his death is full payment for the sins of the world, and his resurrection is our guarantee of a new life with God.

I’m not suggesting that the current crisis is an opportune time for proselytizing. But those who are confused and troubled by what is happening in their church need desperately to hear not what a perplexed leadership is offering as a panacea, but what the Good Shepherd has to say to frightened sheep about the way, the truth, and the life.

As your Catholic acquaintances grope for ways to cope, the Holy Spirit is arousing curiosity and opening ears to hear “what the Spirit says to the churches.” Don’t pass up your opportunities to tell them what the Spirit has to say.

Joel Gerlach, a member at St. John, Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, is a retired pastor.

This current crisis provides unique opportunities to speak the truth in love to disillusioned Catholics.



Jesus' miracles: PORTRAITS OF REDEMPTION

Mark J. Lenz

INTRODUCTION

Every minute, 24 people die of starvation. Eighteen of them are children. Jesus is not visibly present to feed the multitudes. Who will feed them?

How many of those who die each minute in the world today are starving spiritually? Jesus is not visibly present to preach the good news of salvation to them. Who will share the gospel with them?

TEXT—MATTHEW 14:13-21

When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

¹⁵As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food."

¹⁶Jesus replied, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat."

¹⁷"We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish," they answered.

¹⁸"Bring them here to me," he said. ¹⁹And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. ²⁰They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. ²¹The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

QUESTIONS

1. What had happened that resulted in Jesus withdrawing to a solitary place (v. 10-12)?
2. Why had the crowds followed Jesus (John 6:2)? Why did Jesus heal the sick in the crowd?
3. What problem did the disciples bring to Jesus' attention? Why did Jesus tell the disciples to give the crowd something to eat (John 6:6)? What does their answer reveal about how they viewed the situation (John 6:7-9)?
4. List the seven things Jesus did after he was told that they had only five loaves of bread and two fish.

QUESTIONS, CONTINUED

5. Discover four reasons why this was a miracle.
6. This is the only miracle that is recorded in each of the four gospels. Why?
7. The evangelist John chose this as one of eight miracles to show that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. In what ways did this miracle serve his purpose?

APPLICATIONS

1. Jesus showed compassion on the crowd. Literally "his heart went out to them." How can you show compassion on the multitudes today that are like sheep without a Shepherd?
2. Why may saying grace at mealtimes be a fading practice? What can be done about this?
3. In what ways did Jesus' feeding of the 5,000 serve as dramatic preparation for his discourse on the Bread of Life (John 6:25-59)?
4. Skeptics try to explain away this miracle by saying that many people had brought food and simply shared it. How does John 6:14,15 refute this?
5. Jesus could have fed the multitudes without using the loaves and fish and without having his disciples distribute the food. Why did Jesus use these means? What spiritual application does this have?
6. Does ministering to the physical needs of others have value in and of itself, or only as a way of gaining an opportunity to share the gospel? Explain.
7. The disciples picked up the leftover food. What applications do you find from this?

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, you are the Bread of Life. In you my soul is satisfied. In you I find all I need to live from day to day. Fill me with your compassion for the lost. Use me as your instrument to reach those who are starving physically and spiritually. Take my hands and let them move at the impulse of your love. Take my voice and let it be filled with messages from you. Hear me for your precious name's sake. Amen.

• WHATEVER

Who am I?

As long as I remember that I am **God's child**, through him I will succeed in everything I do.

Jennifer Reiner

Who am I? That question entered my mind many times during the past six months. I had no clue who I was or what I wanted out of life. I could tell you that my name was Jennifer, that I was 16 years old, a sophomore in high school, one of three children. But I had lost interest in everything. I did not care about basketball or any of the other sports I once loved. My achievements such as student council and lettering in basketball did not seem to matter anymore. I did not care about music, although singing and playing the piano were both things that I used to love.

I hated to be around people and wanted to be off in my own little world where I had control. Everyone made me mad, even the people close to me. I had never felt lonelier. I hated the loneliness with a passion.

My life became worse as I began to worry as much as any adult. I worried about money and grades mainly. I thought I had to be the perfect student and the perfect daughter. Trying to accomplish these goals, I never gave myself time to relax and have fun. At one point I thought having fun was impossible. My worries became the center of my life.

The lowest point came as I dreaded every minute of every hour of every day. Getting out of bed became a major deal. As this struggle increased, a teacher suggested I seek professional help. Taking his advice, I began seeing a psychologist. But the sessions didn't seem to make any progress. I was so afraid because I did not know what was wrong.

After trying to comfort a friend who was going through a difficult time, I began to wonder why I was not taking my own advice about praying to God and trusting in him. That is when it sank in. I was not allowing God in my life. I was not taking prayer, chapel, or religion class seriously.

I didn't trust in God to take care of me. I also didn't trust myself or others. Yet I knew my pastor was the one person who could help me.

My pastor reassured me of God's great love for me. God created me, saved me, and will always take care of me. My pastor reminded me of this Bible verse: "He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear" (1 Corinthians 10:13). He assured me that God will always be there with me through anything.

I became increasingly ashamed of myself and the things I thought about doing. I had let my guard down and did not keep strong in my faith. I remember one day when drinking was all that I had on my mind: "Oh, it'd be so nice just to have a beer right now." Premarital sex also crossed my mind. I thought that by having sex, I could wipe my loneliness away. Obviously these things were never going to answer my problems.

As I go on each day, I will never forget this low time in my life. It has shown me that faith cannot be taken lightly but needs constant attention. I know that God truly blesses me, and I do not deserve anything. One other thing I have learned from all of this answers the question "Who am I?" I am a child of God.

In the future I will certainly be tempted to let my guard down once again, but as long as I remember that I am God's child, through him I will succeed in everything I do.

Jennifer Reiner, a junior at Great Plains Lutheran High School, Watertown, S.D., is a member at St. Paul, Rapid City, South Dakota.



WWIID

Karl R. Gurgel

When you saw WWIID above, what came to mind? At first glance, did it seem to have some connection with World War II? Actually, it's an abbreviation for Work While It Is Day, the current synod theme. It's also being used to designate our synodwide stewardship emphasis.

Maybe WWII would be the right name for it! The mere mention of stewardship often calls to arms the old Adam inside us all. Our sinful old Adam, with greedy eyes, envies what others have. Once the old Adam has what it wants, it clings selfishly to it with an iron fist, not wishing to part with any of it.

Our gracious Lord wants us to have things. Every good gift comes to us from our heavenly Father. "Clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, wife and children, land, cattle and all I own" is how Luther, in the First Article, summarized the completeness of God's gifts to us.

All of it, honestly, is undeserved. Who of us can claim perfection? It's something God expects and finds in none of us. Yet, out of pure grace, God gives us earthly things, often in far greater quantity than we could ever personally use.

That's just where stewardship comes into the picture. A Christian steward recognizes God as the rightful owner of everything. How many of us have often sung, just after giving our offering: "We give thee but thine own, Whate'er the gift may be: All that we have is thine alone, A trust, O Lord, from thee" (*The Lutheran Hymnal* 441:1)?

God trusts all of us to manage, for him, what is his. And you trust your church leaders. Total gifts given for the operating budget for management by the synod in this fiscal year will be about \$55 million.

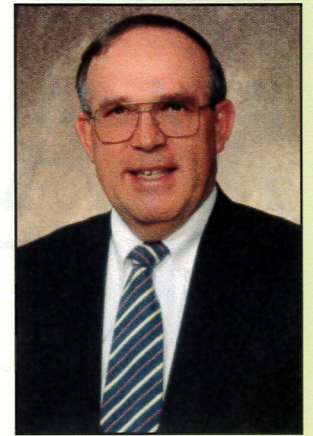
This amount comes from congregational mission offerings, the direct gifts to the synod from individuals, and what was received from memorials and bequests and grants from the Schwan Foundation. Tuition from our schools in ministerial education is also included in the total.

A sizable sum indeed! Yet it appears it will fall about a million dollars short of expenses or, to put it another way, short of seizing opportunities God is giving us. Taking your trust seriously, the Synodical Council asked all WELS departments to see what they could do with 25 percent less, to be prepared as cuts become necessary.

Although we expect God's people, motivated by his love, to freely and generously give more, we are looking to be the best stewards of what the Lord, through WELS members, has already entrusted to our management. We want to be the best managers we can be, even as God, through his faithful people, will entrust us with more.

Work While It Is Day begins with each of us, individually, reflecting on the blessings and opportunities God gives us all. Then, as members of congregations, conscious of God's grace, we share the privilege of planning and providing for God's work locally. Finally, together as members of WELS, we enjoy the privilege of taking a portion of the earthly goods he has entrusted to us and using it to promote the eternal good of people worldwide.

WWIID isn't a war. The battle's already won! Jesus defeated sin, Satan, and hell for us. So, until we live with him in eternity's day—gratefully, with all that he gives us to manage for him—we will work while it is day.



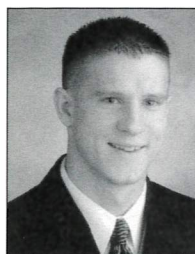
Karl R. Gurgel is the president of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

**Work While
It Is Day
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individually,
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the blessings
and oppor-
tunities God
gives us all.**

MARTIN LUTHER COLLEGE



One hundred eighty-seven people graduated from Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., on May 18. Those receiving Bachelor of Science degrees were in the teacher track or the staff ministry program. Men who received Bachelor of Arts degrees were in the pastor track.



James D. Backus ♦
New Ulm, Minn.



Jessica A. Backus ▲
New Ulm, Minn.



Sarah M. Bahn ▲
Sun City, Calif.



Rebecca M. Bare ▲
Owosso, Mich.



Brian J. Barkow ♦
Green Bay, Wis.



Joshua J. Becker ♦
Milwaukee, Wis.



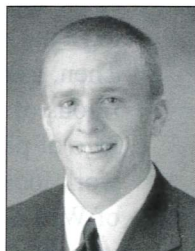
Nathan J. Belongia ●
Park Falls, Wis.



Bradley R. Bendix ▲
Echo, Minn.



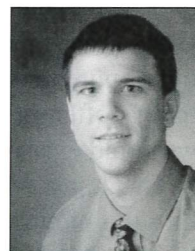
Jana L. Benrud ▲
La Crosse, Wis.



Timothy R. Berg ♦
Oshkosh, Wis.



Hillary Heidi S. Berndt ●
South Haven, Mich.



Chad A. Biesterfeld ●
Crete, Ill.



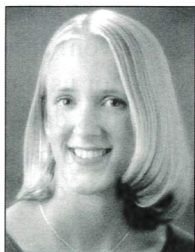
Philip J. Bigelow ♦
Lake Villa, Ill.



Adam M. Bode ♦
Saginaw, Mich.



Anna K. Boehm ▲
Saginaw, Mich.



Elizabeth M. Borgwardt ●
Cedarburg, Wis.



Rebecca L. Brien ▲
Fond du Lac, Wis.



Jenny E. Brooks ▲
Milwaukee, Wis.



Debra L. Brown ■
Dryden, Mich.



Daniel R. Burgess ♦
Anderson, Calif.



Rachel L. Buschkopf ▲
Milwaukee, Wis.



James D. Carlovsky ●
Crystal Lake, Ill.



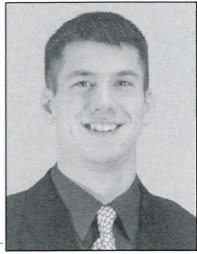
Elliott D. Cloute ♦
Fort Atkinson, Wis.



Erica B. Cook ▲
Milwaukee, Wis.



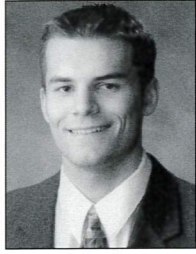
Ami J. Cordes ▲
Portland, Ore.



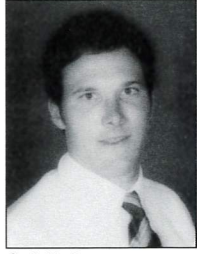
Geoffrey C. Cortright ♦
Van Nuys, Calif.



Tanya M. David ▲
San Antonio, Tex.



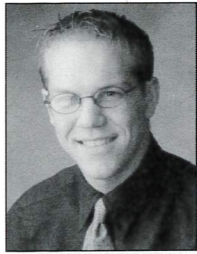
Caleb C. Davison ♦
Belhaven, N.C.



Seth D. Degner ♦
Santa Maria, Calif.



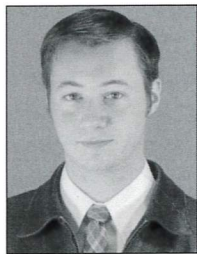
Jeremy L. Dennings ●
Hemlock, Mich.



Nathan K. Dittrich ▲
Phoenix, Ariz.



Erick C. Dohm ▲
Cassopolis, Mich.



Keegan J. Dowling ♦
Benton Harbor, Mich.



Philip J. Dretske ●
New Ulm, Minn.



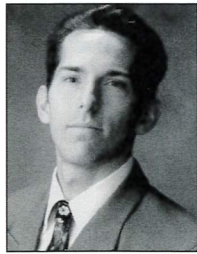
Kristen R. Eckert ▲
Tucson, Ariz.



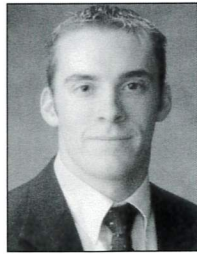
Kevin P. Ehlke ▲
Appleton, Wis.



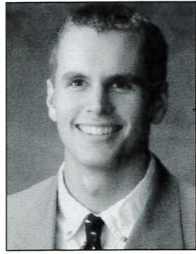
Joel P. Enderle ♦
Dix Hills, N.Y.



John A. Evans II *
Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.



Matthew A. Ewart ♦
Broken Arrow, Okla.



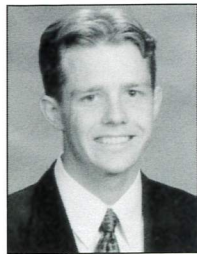
Nathan E. Fager ♦
Fort Atkinson, Wis.



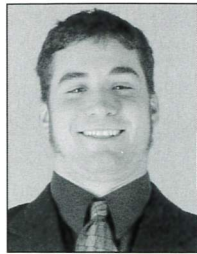
Sarah E. Fein ▲
Saginaw, Mich.



Emily A. Ferch ▲
Carmel, Ind.



John E. Ferguson ●
Fostoria, Mich.



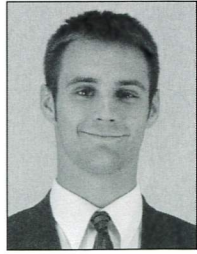
Michael A. Feuerstahler ♦
Menomonee Falls, Wis.



Jonathan D. Fischer ♦
Wilmot, Wis.



Abigail M. Flister ●
Antioch, Ill.



Matthew P. Frey ♦
Seward, Neb.



Joanna C. Geiger ▲
Belmont, Calif.

- ◆ Bachelor of Arts
- * Seminary Certification Program
- ▲ Bachelor of Science in Education—Elementary Education
- Bachelor of Science in Education—Secondary Education

- Bachelor of Science in Education—Early Childhood Education
- ☆ Bachelor of Science in Education—Staff Ministry
- ✕ Bachelor of Science in Education—Elementary Education and Staff Ministry

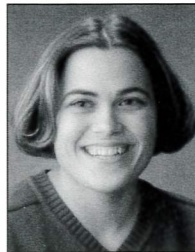
MLC graduates



Jason T. Gibson ▲
New Ulm, Minn.



Sara N. Gibson ▲
Marshall, Minn.



Emily L. Glodowski ▲
Fountain City, Wis.



Kara B. Goodger ▲
Milwaukee, Wis.



Debra A. Gosdeck ▲
New Ulm, Minn.



Alicia L. Greschner ▲
Milwaukee, Wis.



Meggy S. R. Grunst ●
New Ulm, Minn.



Kathryn S. Gut ■
Wausau, Wis.



Lora J. Haakenson ▲
Sierra Vista, Ariz.



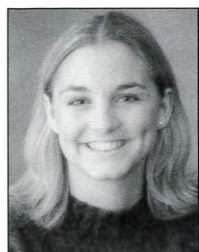
Mary E. Haar ▲
Toronto, Ontario



Jennifer L. Haase ▲
Apache Junction, Ariz.



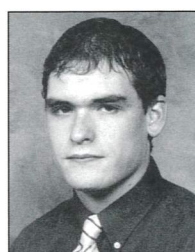
Jason K. Hagenow ●
Greenleaf, Wis.



Emily L. Hahnke ●
Manitowoc, Wis.



Seth M. Hahnke ▲
Manitowoc, Wis.



John M. Harris ▲
Hartland, Wis.



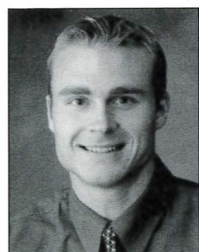
Aaron M. Hartwig ●
Maribel, Wis.



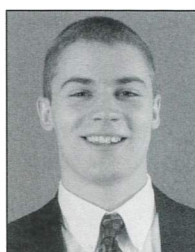
Amanda L. Hassel ☆
Vadnais Heights, Minn.



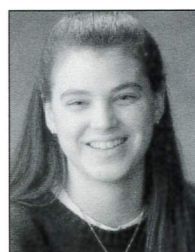
Julie A. Hayes ▲
Watertown, S.D.



William B. Heiges ▲
Watertown, Wis.



Matthew S. Hennig ◆
Campbellsport, Wis.



Christa J. Holub ▲
Brooklyn Park, Minn.



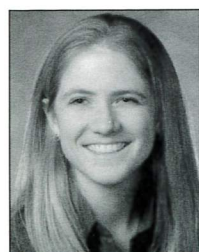
Martin J. Holub ●
Green Bay, Wis.



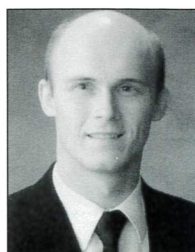
Andrea R. Hosbach ▲
Medford, Wis.



Gretchen M. Hulse ▲
Belleville, Ill.



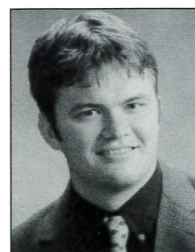
Sarah J. Janke ▲
Iron Ridge, Wis.



Paul D. Jansen ◆
Onalaska, Wis.



Ruth A. Jansen ●
New Ulm, Minn.



Andrew M. Johnston ◆
Spooner, Wis.



Jason W. Kelley ●
Mayville, Mich.



Andrea K. Kendall ▲
Sparta, Wis.



Peter J. Kesting ◆
Boltonville, Wis.



Ryan A. Kirchoff ●
Hustisford, Wis.



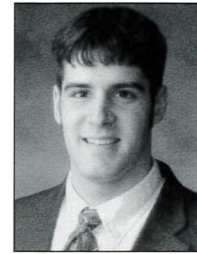
Ruth G. Kirstein ▲
Morton Grove, Ill.



Kathryn E. Knickelbein ▲
West Allis, Wis.



Jeremy M. Koehler ◆
Watertown, Wis.



John R. Koester ◆
West Allis, Wis.



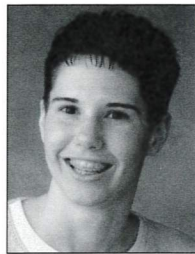
Laura M. Koester ●
West Allis, Wis.



Rachel A. Korthals ▲
Mequon, Wis.



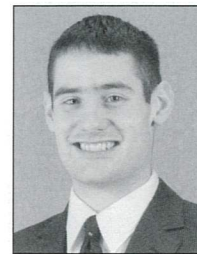
Hortense L. Kraemer ■
Norfolk, Neb.



Rachel G. Kramer ▲
Gibbon, Minn.



Emily B. Kremer ▲
Brookfield, Wis.



Benjamin J. Kuerth ◆
Watertown, Wis.



Emily J. Kuphal ▲
Eagle River, Wis.



Gregory C. Kutz ●
Hudson, Wis.



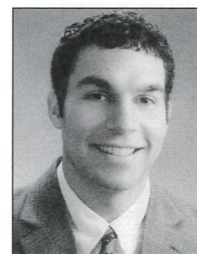
Douglas M. Lange ◆
Fond du Lac, Wis.



Candice L. Laurin ▲
Manitowoc, Wis.



Jennifer L. E. Lewis ▲
Adel, Iowa



Carlos C. Leyrer ◆
Miami, Fla.



Sarah E. Lindke ▲
Montrose, Mich.



Rachel L. Lotito ▲
Wrightstown, Wis.



Kathryn L. Luebke ▲
Bremerton, Wash.



Andrew T. Luehring ◆
Appleton, Wis.



Charity L. Luetke ☆
New Ulm, Minn.



Matthew D. Luetke ◆
New Ulm, Minn.



Valerie R. Macdonald ▲
Mayville, Wis.



Adam S. Manian ◆
Germantown, Wis.



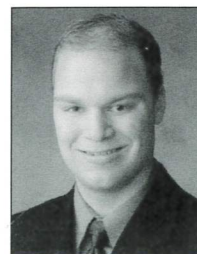
Tiffany L. Maxfeldt X
Loxahatchee, Fla.



Kristal A. Meyer ●
Maribel, Wis.



Sarah L. Micheel ▲
Milwaukee, Wis.



Matthew C. Minzlaff ◆
Pleasant Prairie, Wis.

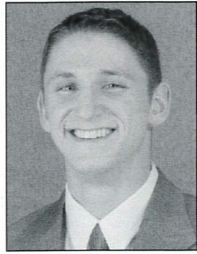
- ◆ Bachelor of Arts
- * Seminary Certification Program
- ▲ Bachelor of Science in Education—Elementary Education
- Bachelor of Science in Education—Secondary Education

- Bachelor of Science in Education—Early Childhood Education
- ☆ Bachelor of Science in Education—Staff Ministry
- X Bachelor of Science in Education—Elementary Education and Staff Ministry

MLC graduates



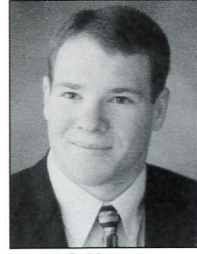
Mark R. Moldenhauer ●
Watertown, Wis.



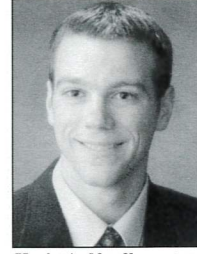
Andrew W. Mueller ◆
Oconomowoc, Wis.



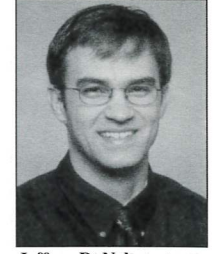
Michael J. Mundstock ☆
Waukegan, Ill.



David C. Naumann ◆
Benton Harbor, Mich.



Kevin A. Needham ▲
Watertown, Wis.



Jeffrey D. Nelson ▲
Red Lake Falls, Minn.



Sarah E. Nelson ▲
Saginaw, Mich.



Jason J. Nickels ●
Manitowoc, Wis.



Lisa M. Oakes ▲
New Berlin, Wis.



Aaron J. Ody ◆
West Allis, Wis.



Steven R. Oldre *
Utica, Minn.



Daniel S. Olson ◆
Cudahy, Wis.



Dam Park ◆
Seoul, Korea



Joshua J. Pederson ●
New Ulm, Minn.



Mandy L. Pederson ▲
Zumbrota, Minn.



Alyssa A. Pelz ▲
New Ulm, Minn.



Rachel L. Perry ■
Houston, Tex.



Kelli R. Pliner ▲
Tomah, Wis.



Jennifer L. Poston ▲
Medford, Wis.



Jennifer L. Pranschke ▲
Ottawa, Ontario



Bryan L. Prell ◆
Hillsboro, Wis.



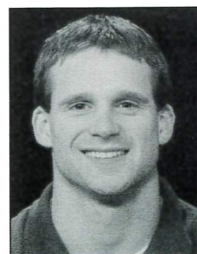
Greg E. Pufahl ◆
Lake Mills, Wis.



Jared J. Rahn ●
Stratford, Wis.



Jennifer M. Rainey ▲
Stevensville, Mich.



Jared E. Rathje ▲
Port Huron, Mich.



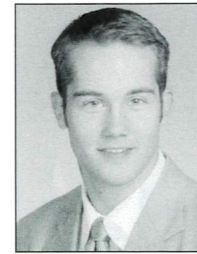
Kristin L. Ross ▲
Milwaukee, Wis.



Joshua M. Roth ✕
Yakima, Wash.



Christopher K. Sand ◆
Sussex, Wis.



Jonathan M. Schaefer ▲
Minneapolis, Minn.



Sarah E. Scharf ▲
New Ulm, Minn.



Sarah A. Scherbarth ▲
Colgate, Wis.



Teresa R. Schleusener ■
Grand Island, Neb.



Benjamin P. Schmeling ♦
River Falls, Wis.



David W. Schmidt ♦
Noblesville, Ind.



Lisa K. Schoell ▲
Libertyville, Ill.



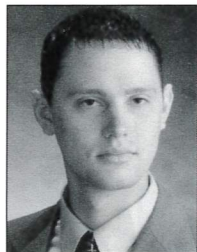
Amy L. Schramm ▲
Redwood Falls, Minn.



Carl J. Schroeder *
Parma, Ohio



Jill M. Schroeder ▲
Parma, Ohio



Aaron C. Schultz ♦
Juneau, Wis.



Melinda C. Schultz ▲
Watertown, Wis.



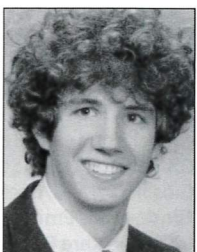
Melissa M. Schultz ▲
Watertown, Wis.



Fred G. Schurman III ♦
Rawlins, Wyo.



Stacy L. Scott ■
Bay City, Mich.



Adam J. Seelow ♦
Saginaw, Mich.



Deborah J. Shaw ▲
Neillsville, Wis.



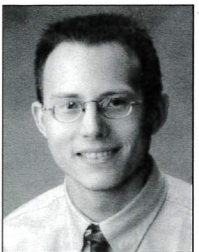
Jana K. Sievert ▲
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Mark P. Snyder *
Sauk City, Wis.



Aaron C. Spike ♦
Swartz Creek, Mich.



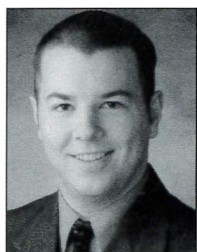
John W. Steljes *
New Ulm, Minn.



Hannah H. Stern ▲
Adrian, Mich.



Mollie L. Stern ▲
Adrian, Mich.



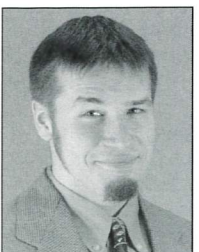
Jeremiah S. Strassburg ▲
Kewaskum, Wis.



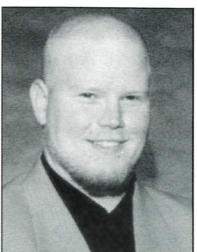
Julie E. Strassburg ▲
Jackson, Wis.



Rachel K. Sulzle ▲
Wautoma, Wis.



Daniel P. Tess ♦
Manitowoc, Wis.



Steven J. Thies ▲
Wausau, Wis.



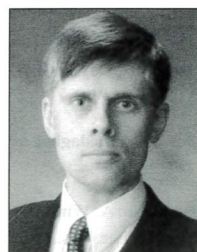
Andrew S. Thiesfeldt ▲
New Ulm, Minn.



Janna L. Thiesfeldt ▲
New Ulm, Minn.



Laura A. Thomas ▲
Fort Collins, Colo.



Gregory A. Tobison *
Coleman, Wis.

- ◆ Bachelor of Arts
- * Seminary Certification Program
- ▲ Bachelor of Science in Education—Elementary Education
- Bachelor of Science in Education—Secondary Education

- Bachelor of Science in Education—Early Childhood Education
- ☆ Bachelor of Science in Education—Staff Ministry
- ✕ Bachelor of Science in Education—Elementary Education and Staff Ministry

MLC graduates



Benjamin J. Tomczak ♦
Monroe, Mich.



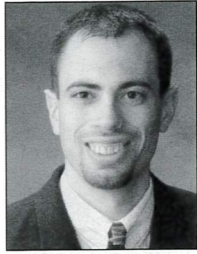
Rachel M. Traudt ▲
Longmont, Colo.



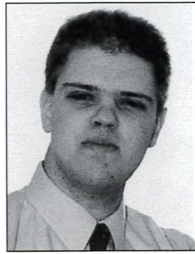
Benjamin K. Troge ●
New Ulm, Minn.



Alissa J. Uecker ▲
Waukesha, Wis.



Steven T. Vasold ●
Saginaw, Mich.



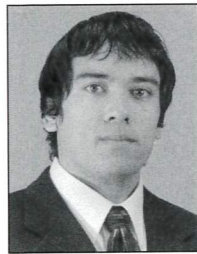
David E. Wahl ♦
Cambria, Wis.



Jamie C. Walta ▲
Bonduel, Wis.



Daniel J. Walters ♦
Savage, Minn.



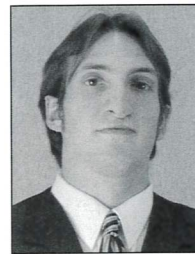
John P. Weitzel ♦
Loveland, Colo.



Jodi L. Wels ▲
Nicollet, Minn.



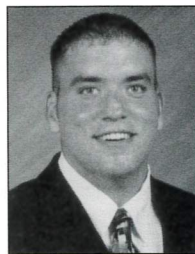
Lisa A. Westendorf ▲
Mequon, Wis.



James S. Wilke ▲
Redwood Falls, Minn.



Minori Yamaki ■
Okinawa, Japan



Benjamin J. Zahn ♦
Maitland, Fla.



Kristina L. Zahn ▲
Maitland, Fla.



Frederick P. Zimmerman III ▲
Kawkawlin, Mich.

Not pictured:

Joseph D. DuFore ▲
Milwaukee, Wis.

Ahmad A. Sedaghat ☆
Tehran, Iran

Benjamin A. Wink ☆
Fond du Lac, Wis.

- ♦ Bachelor of Arts
- * Seminary Certification Program
- ▲ Bachelor of Science in Education—Elementary Education
- Bachelor of Science in Education—Secondary Education
- Bachelor of Science in Education—Early Childhood Education
- ☆ Bachelor of Science in Education—Staff Ministry
- × Bachelor of Science in Education—Elementary Education and Staff Ministry

Call assignments

Teachers

- Bahn, Sarah M.**, St. Martin, Watertown, S.D.
Bare, Rebecca M., Immanuel, Kewaunee, Wis.
Belongia, Nathan J., Faith, Reedsburg, Wis.
Bendix, Bradley R., Peace, Green Lake, Wis.
Benrud, Jana L., St. John, Libertyville, Ill.
Berndt, Hillary Heidi S., St. John, Westland, Mich.
Biesterfeld, Chad A., Divine Savior, Indianapolis, Ind.
Boehm, Anna K., St. Paul, South Haven, Mich.
Borgwardt, Elizabeth M., Jerusalem, Morton Grove, Ill.
Brooks, Jenny E., St. Matthew, Port Washington, Wis.
Brown, Debra L., Trinity, Marinette, Wis.
Carlovsky, James D., St. John, Sparta, Wis.
Cook, Erica B., Bethany, Gibsonia, Pa.
Cordes, Ami J., Zion, Clatonia, Neb.
David, Tanya M., Lord and Savior, Crystal Lake, Ill.
Dennings, Jeremy L., Zion, Denver, Colo.
Dittrich, Nathan K., St. Paul, Cudahy, Wis.
Dretske, Philip J., East Twin, Mishicot, Wis.
Eckert, Kristen R., Grace, Oshkosh, Wis.
Ehlke, Kevin P., Kettle Moraine LHS, Jackson, Wis.
Fein, Sarah E., Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis.
Ferch, Emily A., Emanuel Redeemer, Yale, Mich.
Ferguson, John E., St. John, Dakota, Minn.
Fischer, Richard D., Trinity, Jenera, Ohio
Flister, Abigail M., Zion, Torrance, Calif.
Geiger, Joanna C., Lord of Life, Friendswood, Tex.
Gibson, Jason T., St. Paul, Mount Calvary, Wis.
Gibson, Sara N., Lincoln Heights, Des Moines, Iowa
Glodowski, Emily L., Resurrection, Aurora, Ill.
Goodger, Kara B., Living Word, Mission Viejo, Calif.
Gorsline, Todd D., Atonement, Milwaukee, Wis.
Gosdeck, Debra A., St. Mark, Lincoln, Neb.
Grass, Bradley W., Our Savior, Bylas, Ariz.
Greschner, Alicia L., Eastside, Madison, Wis.
Grunst, Meggy S., Immanuel, La Crosse, Wis.
Gut, Kathryn S., Grace, Charlotte, N.C.
Gut, Kyle P., Zion, Monroe, Mich.
Haakenson, Lora J., St. John, Wrightstown, Wis.
Haar, Mary E., Redeemer, Tucson, Ariz.
Haase, Jennifer L., Cross of Christ, Coon Rapids, Minn.
Hagenow, Jason K., St. Peter, Mayville, Wis.
Hahnke, Emily L., Emanuel, New London, Wis.
Hartwig, Aaron M., St. John, Hemlock, Mich.
Hawley, Jessica L., Riverview, Appleton, Wis.
Hayes, Julie A., St. Lucas, Milwaukee, Wis.
Heyn, Aaron T., St. Mark, Mankato, Minn.
Holub, Heather E., Immanuel, Waukegan, Ill.
Holub, Martin J., Immanuel, Waukegan, Ill.
Hosbach, Andrea R., St. Matthew, Niles, Ill.
Janke, Sarah J., Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis.
Jansen, Ruth A., Siloah, Milwaukee, Wis.
Kelley, Jason W., Our Savior, Longmont, Colo.
Kendall, Andrea K., Trinity, Belle Plaine, Minn.
Kirchoff, Ryan A., California LHS, Wildomar, Calif.
Kolb, Jennifer E., St. Paul, Beverly Hills, Fla.
Kramer, Rachel G., Ascension, Escondido, Calif.
Kremer, Emily B., St. John, Jefferson, Wis.
Kuphal, Emily J., Mt. Olive, Overland Park, Kan.
Kutz, Gregory C., St. Paul, Onalaska, Wis.

<WhatAboutJesus.com> goes live

Laurin, Candice L., Trinity, Brillion, Wis.
Lewis, Jennifer L., Lola Park, Redford, Mich.
Lindke, Sarah E., St. Paul, Norfolk, Neb.
Lotito, Rachel L., Bay Pines, Seminole, Fla.
Meyer, Kristal A., Peace, Granger, Ind.
Moldenhauer, Mark R., Great Plains LHS, Watertown, S.D.
Needham, Kevin A., St. Paul, Saginaw, Mich.
Nelson, Jeffrey D., Grace, Yakima, Wash.
Nickels, Jason J., Lakeside LHS, Lake Mills, Wis.
Nolte, Nathan P., Peace, Bradenton, Fla.
Oakes, Lisa M., Bethany, Manitowoc, Wis.
Pederson, Joshua J., Nebraska LHS, Waco, Neb.
Pederson, Mandy L., St. John, Pigeon, Mich.
Pelzl, Alyssa A., Zion, Toledo, Ohio
Perry, Rachel L., First, LaCrescent, Minn.
Pliner, Kelli R., St. John, Dowagiac, Mich.
Rahn, Jared J., Emanuel, Yale, Mich.
Rainey, Jennifer M., Northland LHS, Mosinee, Wis.
Rathje, Jared E., Redeemer, Tucson, Ariz.
Schaefer, Jonathan M., Siloah, Milwaukee, Wis.
Schliewe, Rebecca R., Winnebago Lutheran Academy, Fond du Lac, Wis.
Schoell, Lisa K., Trinity Christian Academy, Woodbridge, Va.
Schramm, Amy L., St. Paul, Tomah, Wis.
Schroeder, Jill M., Mt. Calvary, Waukesha, Wis.
Schultz, Melissa M., Apostles, San Jose, Calif.
Schulz, David R., St. John, Fremont, Wis.
Scott, Stacy L., Emanuel First, Lansing, Mich.
Sievert, Jana K., California LHS, Wildomar, Calif.
Stern, Hannah H., Bay Pines, Seminole, Fla.
Stern, Mollie L., Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis.
Strassburg, Jeremiah S., Arizona Lutheran Academy, Phoenix, Ariz.
Sulzle, Rachel K., Grace, Yakima, Wash.
Thies, Steven J., Bethel, Bay City, Mich.
Thiesfeldt, Andrew S., Peace, Hartford, Wis.
Thiesfeldt, Janna L., St. Paul, Saginaw, Mich.
Thomas Laura A., Our Savior, Bylas, Ariz.
Traut, Rachel M., Divine Savior, Shawano, Wis.
Troge, Benjamin K., King of Kings, Maitland, Fla.
Vasold, Steven T., Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis.
Vetting, Elizabeth A., St. John, Wrightstown, Wis.
Wels, Jodi L., St. John, Minneapolis, Minn.
Westendorf, Lisa A., Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Mich.
Wilke, James P., Good Shepherd, West Bend, Wis.
Williams, Emilie I., Kettle Moraine LHS, Jackson, Wis.
Yamaki, Minori, St. Matthew, Niles, Ill.
Zahn, Kristina L., Shepherd of the Hills, Greeley, Colo.
Zastrow, Erin J., Zion, Monroe, Mich.
Zimmerman, Frederick, Peridot, Peridot, Ariz.

Staff Ministers

Hassel, Amanda L., St. Thomas, Phoenix, Ariz.
Mundstock, Michael J., Deer Valley, Phoenix, Ariz.
Roth, Joshua M., Petra, Sauk Rapids, Minn.
Wink, Benjamin A., Synodical Council, Milwaukee, Wis.

For those curious about Christianity but hesitant to attend church, a new Web site has been launched by the Commission on Evangelism to inform and educate our unchurched friends, relatives, associates, and neighbors about Jesus.

Targeted to adults ages 20-45, <WhatAboutJesus.com> enables people to learn the basics of Christianity from the comfort of their own home. It's one of just a few Web sites that focuses solely on Christianity, not on a particular denomination or church.

"We want people to know and understand the fundamentals of Christianity," explains Pastor Kenneth Fisher, project director. "Our goal is to introduce visitors to Jesus Christ and what he has to offer them. God-willing, this Web site will serve as their first step in establishing a life-long relationship with him."

Featuring colorful pictures, unique animation, and an easy-to-read format, <WhatAboutJesus.com> is divided into six main sections:

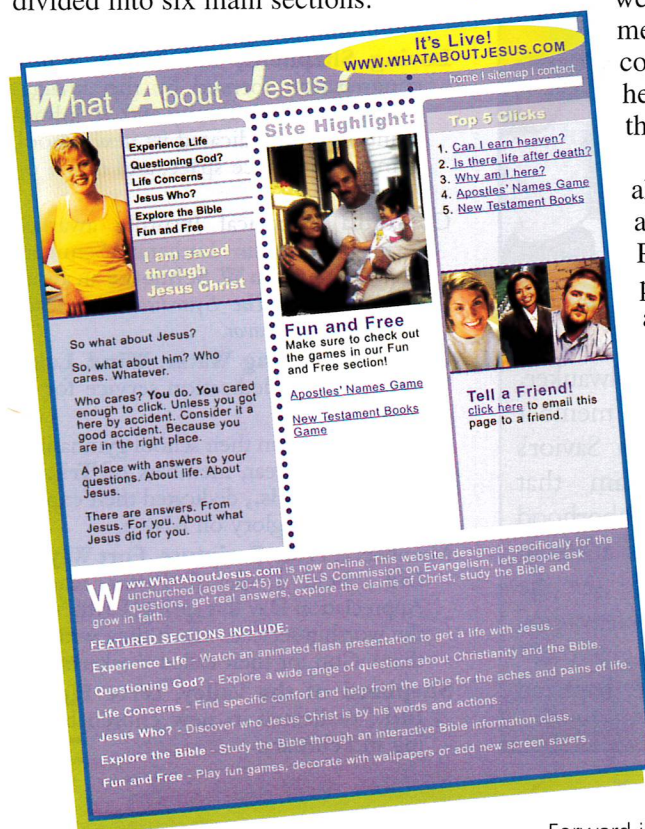
- *Experience Life*: engages the viewer in what life is like with Jesus Christ through an animated presentation.
- *Questioning God*: allows visitors to e-mail questions about Christianity to WELS pastors, who (with the sender's permission) post answers on the site for others to read.
- *Life Concerns*: offers specific comfort and help from God's Word to the emotional and spiritual pains that people often encounter in life.
- *Jesus Who*: divided into two sections. His Life explores Jesus' life here on earth, while His Message explains the meaning behind Jesus' teachings.
- *Explore The Bible*: helps participants learn more about the teachings of the Bible through enjoyable question-and-answer quizzes.
- *Fun & Free*: includes entertaining games, decorative wallpapers, and screen savers.

Visitors can also subscribe at no charge to e-mail devotions, which are delivered a couple of days each week. These quick-read meditations provide a comforting message to help people get through the ups and downs of life.

Plenty of work is still ahead to continually attract an audience. Plans for the second phase of development are underway.

"Christians know firsthand the value of having a loving relationship with Jesus Christ," says Fisher. "All we want to do with this Web site is to share that good news with people who don't know Jesus."

Bruce Tieves





District news

Northern Wisconsin

On Apr. 19-21, 30 recovering alcoholics and their spouses met at the Byron Center near Fond du Lac, Wis., for a **WELS Alcoholism Awareness Retreat**.

North Atlantic

Grace, Charlotte, N.C., held a dedication service for the congregation's new sanctuary and classrooms on Jan. 20. One week after the dedication, Grace opened its full-day child care, Lambs of Grace Child Development Center, in the new facility.

Hope, Toronto, Ontario, has Youth Participation Sundays on a regular basis to keep the congregation's youth involved. Sunday school children and teenagers conduct a major portion of these worship services, from greeting members to ushering, reading the day's lessons, and leading hymns.

On Mar. 17, Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee, joined the steel orchestra at **Hope, Toronto, Ontario**, for a concert of religious music, Caribbean melodies, and patriotic songs.

Southeastern Wisconsin



Eleven children were baptized on May 12 at Risen Savior, Milwaukee. The children are not from member families, but attend Risen Savior's free after-school program that reaches unchurched neighborhood children. Ken Fisher, pastor at Risen Savior, noted, "You could see the smiles on their faces as God washed away their sins. God is so gracious!" Pictured are five of the baptized children who are good friends.

Pacific Northwest



Evergreen Lutheran High School, Des Moines, Wash., won the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association Cup, a new state award that recognizes the top school in the combined areas of sportsmanship and academic and athletic achievement. A special presentation of the award was made on June 5 in Evergreen Lutheran High School's gymnasium. From left: Evergreen's athletic director, Dave Habeck; Cindy Adsit, a WIAA representative; Evergreen's principal, Greg Thiesfeldt.

Southeastern Wisconsin

Loving Shepherd, Milwaukee, a new congregation formed by the amalgamation of North Trinity and St. John's—Clinton Ave., dedicated its new school, gymnasium, office space, and organ on Apr. 28.

Concordia Historical Institute awarded former Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Professor **Armin W. Schuetze** an award for his book, *The Synodical Conference: Ecumenical Endeavor*.

On July 14, **Living Water, Wind Lake, Wis.**, held a dedication service for its new church.

After worshiping in their school gymnasium for almost a year, members of **Trinity, Waukesha, Wis.**, dedicated their expansion to God's glory on May 5.

Members at **Holy Scripture, Fort Wayne, Ind.**, held a special Pastor/Teacher Appreciation Day this spring. Laymen led the worship service, which they wrote to thank God for their called workers.

Shepherd of the Valley, Terre Haute, Ind., dedicated its new church building in February.

Southeastern Wisconsin



Christ, Pewaukee, Wis., honored Allan Hanson for 50 years of service as a Sunday school teacher. From left: Richard Krause, pastor at Christ, Pewaukee; Allan Hanson; and Ron Morrow, Sunday school superintendent.

Happy Anniversary!

MN—On May 19, members of **St. Paul, St. James, Minn.**, observed the congregation's 50th anniversary.

NA—On Jan. 20, **Grace, Charlotte, N.C.**, celebrated its 20th anniversary.

SEW—**Zebaoth, Milwaukee**, celebrated its 85th anniversary on June 2.

In April, 17 former teachers returned to **Mt. Lebanon, Milwaukee**, to help celebrate the congregation's 75th anniversary on a special day that focused on Mt. Lebanon's school and its teachers.

These pastors are the reporters for the districts featured this month: MN—Jeffrey Bovee; NA—Kevin Schultz; NW—Joel Lillo; PNW—David Birsching; SEW—Scott Oelhafen.

DEFINING RELIGION

Premillennialism: the false teaching that Jesus will return before judgment day to set up a visible, political kingdom and reign for 1,000 years on earth.

Postmillennialism: the false teaching that the Christian Church some time in the future will experience a long, indefinite period of unsurpassed peace, prosperity, and success before Jesus returns on judgment day.

WELS news briefs

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

Vice President for Mission and Ministry

414/256-3204

At the May meeting of the Synodical Council, the Seek and Keep Committee granted \$384,000 from more than \$2 million of requests. The Executive Committee announced that Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis., would be the site of the 2003 synod convention.

Board for World Missions

414/256-3233

Two committees have been formed for outreach. A study committee on outreach to the Chinese will explore mission strategies for reaching out to the 1.5 billion Chinese. Another committee will explore ways to reach out to Muslims with the gospel.

The Humanitarian Aid Committee just celebrated its fourth birthday.

Its task is to encourage and promote humanitarian work in our world mission fields, assist with funding approved humanitarian projects, and evaluate humanitarian efforts in our world mission fields. Last year members of the Good Samaritan Society, a group that funds these efforts, gave \$224,000 to fund humanitarian projects in our world missions. Another \$287,000 is promised for 2002 projects.



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Commission on Youth Discipleship

414/256-3224

Watch for information on the following:

- The 2002 National Youth Counselors' Workshop, Sept. 27-29, at Camp Lutherdale, Elkhorn, Wis.
- The 2003 National Sunday

School Teachers Conference, Jan. 18-19, at Antiqua Bay Resort, Wisconsin Dells, Wis.

- The 2003 International Youth Rally, July 9-12, at Estes Park, Colo.

Board for Ministerial Education

414/256-3236

Ten congregational evangelists graduated this year. The 19-course congregational evangelist curriculum is open to men and women who want to assist a congregation and its pastor or a district mission board by spearheading outreach. All courses except those in the capstone session are taught by the student's pastor and/or on-site guest teachers. After completing the curriculum, the new evangelists can receive a call as a full-time salaried, part-time salaried, or volunteer evangelist.



The 2002 graduates of the Congregational Evangelist Program. Back row (from left): Dr. Glen Thompson, former program director; Dick Krueger, Abiding Love, Cape Coral, Fla.; Scott McLean, Redeemer, Yakima, Wash.; Andy Rassel, St. Paul, Calgary, Alberta, Canada. Middle row: Nau Lee, First German, Manitowoc, Wis.; Ellen Krueger, Abiding Love, Cape Coral, Fla.; Suzanne Bahr, Immanuel, Salem, Ore.; Bob Gronlund, Immanuel, Salem, Ore. Front row: Andres Reina, Christ, Milwaukee; Justin Slade, New Hope, West Melbourne, Fla. Not pictured: Al Cargile, Garden Homes, Milwaukee.

Communication Services Commission

414/256-3230

Know where our WELS churches are? **Find out with our new WELS church locator.** This program will help you find area WELS churches

and give you driving directions to these churches. Check it out on the WELS home page, <www.wels.net>.

Commission on Evangelism

414/256-3288

Assimilation: Attention to Retention, a video that highlights the important art of assimilation, has been released. You can order it on-line at <www.shopwels.net> or call Northwestern Publishing House, 1-800-662-6022.

Board for Home Missions

414/256-3284

At the Board for Home Mission meeting in April:

The board resolved to authorize one "pilot program" of frontloading an outreach effort with a team of workers, appropriate facilities, and necessary tools.

Efforts to establish Gospel Outreach Ministries were continued in Miami, Fla. (Hispanic outreach); South Calgary, Alberta, Canada; Myrtle Beach, S.C.; Antigua, West Indies (Hispanic outreach); and Katy, Tex.

Mission status was granted to Michigan City, Ind.; Urbana, Ill.; West Palm Beach, Fla.; Roscoe, Ill.; and Woodbury, Minn.

Land Search Authority was granted to Michigan City, Ind., and Urbana, Ill.

Facility Planning Authority was granted to Christ Our Redeemer, El Paso, Tex. (a combining of San Juan and Victory in Christ); Sharpsburg, Ga.; Peoria, Ariz.; Johnson City, Tenn.; Eagan, Minn.; and Lindenhurst, Ill.

The 2002 National Campus Rally will be held at Michigan State University, East Lansing, Mich., from Dec. 27-30. Students will have the opportunity to share ideas about what works in a campus ministry as well as time for Bible study, discussion, and fellowship. A grant from Aid Association for Lutherans helped make this possible.

New visionary for Parish Schools

Jim Brandt loves downhill skiing, but he is leaving the Sierra Nevada's behind. Brandt comes from St. Mark, Citrus Heights, Calif., to begin his call as associate administrator of the Commission on Parish Schools (CPS).

Even more than the mountains, he will miss the smiles and hugs from his primary grade students, and the humor of the junior high kids that he has worked with since his teaching ministry began in 1985.

Brandt has served as teacher, coach, principal, and administrator from the heartland of WELS to the fringes of the Arizona-California District. He also traveled to India twice as a member of the WELS Committee for India Missions.

Now he will draw from his varied experiences to help fulfill the mission of CPS, which is to provide leadership, influence, consultation, and resources to help WELS congregations advance the gospel of Jesus Christ by starting and strengthening Lutheran schools.

Brandt says that the biggest adjustment comes from the fact that he will no longer be able to see his wife, who is a WELS elementary school teacher, and three sons during the day at school anymore. He is,



Jim Brandt and his wife, Kathy, with their sons—10-year-old Zachary, 12-year-old Samuel, and six-year-old Jacob.

however, looking forward to many aspects of his new position.

In his first year in his new position, Brandt hopes to spend a significant portion of his time listening to the concerns of Lutheran teachers and grasping the issues they face so that he can better plan how to serve them.

"I'm a planner," says Brandt. "I like to envision and analyze new ways of doing things."

Laura Warmuth

Obituaries

Hildegard Hannah Wilhelmine Kell 1908-2002

Hildegard Kell (nee Schuetze) was born Dec. 14, 1908, in Renville, Minn. She died Feb. 22, 2002, in Watertown, S.D.

A 1929 graduate of Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., she taught at Epiphany, Racine, Wis., and Emanuel, St. Paul, Minn.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Arthur. She is survived by one daughter, one son, five grandchildren, and 10 great-grandchildren.

Karl F. Molkentin 1918-2002

Karl Molkentin was born May 6, 1918. He died May 23, 2002.

A 1942 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis., he served at Grace, Casa Grande, Ariz.; Living Word, Montrose, Colo.; Zion, Valentine, Neb.; St. John, Oak Creek, Wis.; and Zion, Van Dyne, Wis.

He is survived by his wife, Irmgard; four children; 12 grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren.



**So, God,
what about ...?**

Want God's advice, but you're not sure where to look? We'll get you started with the basics. Remember these verses—and share them!

The way we treat people reflects who our God is. How does our Father suggest we should treat others?

- Leviticus 19:15,16: "Do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great, but judge your neighbor fairly. Do not go about spreading slander among your people. Do not do anything that endangers your neighbor's life."
- Proverbs 26:18,19: "Like a madman shooting firebrands or deadly arrows is a man who deceives his neighbor and says, 'I was only joking!'"
- Matthew 5:43-45: "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: 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 unrighteous."
- James 4:11,12: "Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it. There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you—who are you to judge your neighbor?"

On your own

God records Jesus giving the command to "love your neighbor as yourself" many times in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Read Matthew 22:34-40, Mark 12:28-34, and Luke 10:25-37.



Evangelical Lutheran Synod elects new president

—Evangelical Lutheran Synod President George Orvick has retired after serving 28 years as president. Prof. John A. Moldstad Jr. was elected as his replacement at the 85th annual convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod in June. Moldstad will begin his duties in August.

Moldstad, a 1980 graduate of Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary, Mankato, Minn., has been a professor at Bethany Lutheran College, Mankato, Minn., and has also served congregations in South Dakota, Arizona, and Wisconsin. He formerly was the ELS vice president.

Pastor Glenn Obenberger, pastor at Parkland, Tacoma, Wash., was elected as vice president.

Abortions outpace adoptions at Planned Parenthood

—Almost 200,000 abortions were performed at Planned Parenthood clinics around the country in 2000, according to statistics on the organization's Web site.

This compares to 2,486 adoption referrals. This number fell from 9,200 referrals in 1997.

That means that Planned Parenthood performed almost 80 abortions for every one adoption referral in 2000.

For information on WELS counseling alternatives to Planned Parenthood, read "Today is the day," an article about WELS pregnancy counseling centers (p. 10).

New Bible translation causing a stir

—Controversy continues over Today's New International Version (TNIV), a new Bible translation.

More than 100 evangelical leaders, including Pat Robertson and James Dobson, have endorsed a statement criticizing the TNIV in May. The critics, organized by the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, are particularly concerned about changes in gender language in the new

translation. The International Bible Society, who has the TNIV copyrighted, claims that the TNIV only changes masculine names and pronouns when they are used generically.

Southern Baptists, in a meeting in June, also passed a resolution saying they could not recommend the TNIV to fellow Christians.

The New Testament version of the TNIV has been available since April. The complete Bible in that translation is expected to be published in 2005.

For more information about this and other newer translations, read "Exploring new translations" (p. 14).

Seventh-day Adventists launch effort to start new congregations

The Global Mission Operations Committee of the Seventh-day Adventist Church has approved spending \$1 million to start new congregations around the world. This will fund 732 projects, with plans coming from local area leaders.

According to the committee's director, most projects will fund lay church members who volunteer to start congregations in new areas within their culture.

The projects will actually cost \$2.5 million. Local church organizations will also supply funding.

Survey: State of the church in 2002

—Twenty-five percent of Americans strongly agreed with the statement that Jesus sinned when he lived on earth, according to a 2002 survey conducted by the Barna Research Group.

In addition, 19 percent somewhat agreed with the statement.

Forty percent strongly disagreed and eight percent somewhat disagreed with that same statement.

Other 2002 statistics from *The State of the Church: 2002* by George Barna include the following:

- 43 percent of all adults attend church in a typical week.
- Less than one out of three adults attend church every week.

- 34 percent of adults are classified as unchurched, meaning they haven't attended a church service in six months, except for special events. This is up 10 percent since 1991.

- Only half of all adults who say they are Christian contend that they are "absolutely committed" to the Christian faith.

This data was taken from telephone interviews with a random sample of adults during Barna's annual tracking of people's attitudes, styles, and beliefs.

[From "New Book describes the state of the church in 2002," Barna Research Group, Ventura, Calif.; <www.barna.org>; June 4, 2002]

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*.

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Slow to anger

God is slow to anger for the sake of his son, Jesus. But don't you, like Jonah, often self-righteously wonder if God should be so slow to anger with the world's wickedness?

Paul E. Zell

Why was Jonah angry? Was he annoyed with himself for attempting to flee from the Lord? Had the Lord given him an impossible assignment? Had the people of rebellious Nineveh snubbed his message? Had they mocked or mistreated him? Not at all! Jonah was angry because God was not.

Revealing self-righteousness

When God saw how the violent citizens of Nineveh “turned from their evil ways” (3:10), he again revealed himself as the Lord who is “slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin” (Exodus 34:6,7). This was just what Jonah had been afraid of.

For the sake of his son, Jesus, God “relents from sending calamity” (v. 2). To desire any outcome except that God should be compassionate toward the wicked makes no sense. It reeks of self-righteousness. In Jonah's case, in fact, it is completely baffling—until we recognize the same wretched tendencies lurking in our own hearts.

“Our synod wants to send missionaries to that country? Isn't that one of those nations that supports terrorists?”

“The evangelism committee wants to hand out vacation Bible school invitations along that street? Isn't that a rundown neighborhood?”

“Tomorrow we are going to cele-

BIBLE READING

Jonah 3:5,10; 4:1-4

⁵The Ninevites believed God. They declared a fast, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth. . . .

¹⁰When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction he had threatened.

^{4:1}But Jonah was greatly displeased and became angry. ²He prayed to the LORD, “O LORD, is this not what I said when I was still at home? That is why I was so quick to flee to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity. ³Now, O LORD, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live.”

⁴But the LORD replied, “Have you any right to be angry?”

brate the baptism of that child? Isn't that the naughty boy whose father is a drunk?”

“The elders invited that fellow to come to the Lord's Supper? Didn't he abandon his wife a few years ago?”

Such inexcusable thoughts! Should

the God who has been so forgiving of my evil ways not grant the same forgiveness to others? Did not Jesus shed his blood for sinners like me as well as for those whose deeds I consider “really bad”?

Sharing forgiveness with all sinners

God is “slow to anger” for the sake of his son, Jesus. “Have you any right to be angry” (v. 4) about that? When Jonah heard the Lord's question, it didn't seem to sink in. Yet that question is a compelling call to confess our own self-righteous leanings. It exposes any inclination to disqualify some sinners from God's generous gift of salvation. It prompts us to plead that, for Jesus' sake, God would not be angry with us for being “exclusive” with the gospel.

Sinner-saints like you and me need the reminder that “God our Savior . . . wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:3,4). Like Jonah and the apostle Paul and you, I frequently must be told that “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst” (1 Timothy 1:15). Then we will only rejoice when the wicked turn to him and when our Lord is “slow to anger,” forgiving them.

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

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

Ahlers, Bruce E., to Albania
Bode, Bradley E., to Arizona Lutheran Academy, Phoenix, Ariz.
Buske, Daniel M., to retirement
LaGrow, George E., to Board for Parish Services Parish Assistance, Milwaukee
Mueller, Stephen T., to Faith, Anchorage, Alaska
Naumann, Thomas S., to Grace, San Carlos, Ariz.
Ponath, David M., to St. John, Stillwater, Minn.
Vaccarella, Lee L., to Wisconsin Lutheran Child & Family Service, Milwaukee
Zahn, Allen A., to St. John, Burlington, Wis.
Zahn, Larry, to Messiah, Alpharetta, Ga.
Zwieg, Larry G., to Ascension, Roseville, Mich.

Teachers

Balza, Jonathan, to St. Croix LHS, West St. Paul, Minn.
Brandt, Kathleen L., to Pilgrim, Menomonee Falls, Wis.
Brightzman, David F., to Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee
Brown, Geron J., to Christ Our Redeemer, Aurora, Colo.
Dorn, John M., to Salem, Stillwater, Minn.
Dunnum, Anita, to retirement
Enger, Patricia, to St. Paul, St. James, Minn.
Frederick, LaVonne, to St. Paul, North Mankato, Minn.
Goede, Jason, to Wisconsin LHS, Milwaukee
Groehler, Barbara A., to Prairie, Gibbon, Minn.
Gurgel, Douglas J., to Immanuel, Medford, Wis.
Hagedorn, Jason T., to Apostles, San Jose, Calif.
Hagen, Jill L., to Immanuel, Greenville, Wis.
Hatzung, Julia M., to Christ the Lord, Brookfield, Wis.
Hinds, Mark A., to St. John-St. James, Reedsville, Wis.
Jaekel, Susan M., to Prairie, Gibbon, Minn.
Jungemann, Amy E., to Hope, Milwaukee
Kannas, LaShawn C., to St. Paul, North Mankato, Minn.
Kiecker, Marjorie L., to retirement
Knepprath, Tracy D., to St. John, Redwood Falls, Minn.
Koester, Nina I., to St. John, Waterloo, Wis.
Kroening, Nicole M., to Trinity, Jenera, Ohio
Kuehl, Susan J., to St. Paul, Muskego, Wis.
Larson, Amy L., to Riverview, Appleton, Wis.
Leathers, Christine M., to Trinity, Kiel, Wis.
Lotito, Lawrence W., to Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn.
Luetzow, Bethel K., to Peace, Hartford, Wis.
Lunde, Carol L., to St. John, Sparta, Wis.
Manke, Gwen M., to St. Paul, Bangor, Wis.
Mantey, Stacey, to Our Saviour, Lake Havasu City, Ariz.
Marowsky, Dawn M., to St. Lucas, Milwaukee
Marshall, Scott R., to Good Shepherd, Burnsville, Minn.
McKenzie, Catherine A., to Martin Luther, Neenah, Wis.
Melso, Carole C., to Memorial, Williamston, Mich.
Nerby, Scott C., to Zion, Hartland, Wis.
Pekrul, William A., to Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn.
Press, Anne L., to Nozomi, Tsuchiura City, Ibarakiken, Japan

Pufahl, Kristine M., to Faith, Milwaukee
Rabe, Jodi L., to Trinity, Caledonia, Wis.
Schultz, Janet C., to retirement
Shoffner, Sharon C., to Hope, Milwaukee
Timm, Lyle W., to St. Paul, Franklin, Wis.
Tomlin, William J., to St. John, Neillsville, Wis.
Voigt, Timothy A., to Bethlehem, Menomonee Falls, Wis.
Waege, Elinor J., Bloomington, Bloomington, Minn.
Walker, LaRita E., to St. Mark, Citrus Heights, Calif.
Walker, Patrick D., to St. Mark, Citrus Heights, Calif.
Woldt, Alfons L., to retirement

Staff ministers

Lange, Paul E., to St. John, Burlington, Wis.
Meyer, Jonathan P., to St. Paul, Lake Mills, Wis.
Probst, Mark G., to St. Paul, North Mankato, Minn.

REQUEST FOR COLLOQUY

Lowell Nader, a recent graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, has requested a colloquy for the purpose of serving in the pastoral ministry in WELS. Correspondence related to this request should be addressed to President Larry Cross, Minnesota District, 4024 Carol Lane NW, Rochester MN 55901-1366.

ANNIVERSARIES

Shakopee, Minn.—Mt. Olive (50). Aug. 25. Services, 9 AM & 2 PM. Catered dinner and program in between services. 952/445-2872.
Manitowoc, Wis.—Immanuel (75). Sept. 8. Services, 8 & 10:30 AM. Reception between services. 920/684-3404.
Milwaukee, Wis.—Mt. Lebanon (75). Sept. 15. Service, 9:30 AM. Lunch to follow. 414/461-1563.
Lawrenceville, Ga.—Sola Fide (25). Oct. 6. Service, 3 PM. Dinner and program to follow. Jon Woldt, 770/972-1771.

COMING EVENTS

Dr. Martin Luther College retired alumni get-together—Aug. 13. Luther Haven, 8949 N 97 St, Milwaukee. Opening devotion, 11:45 AM followed by lunch. All food & table service provided. Freewill offering. RSVP, Donald Zimmerman, 414/355-9595 or Richard Grunze, 414/423-0118.
WELS Labor Day Retreat—Aug. 31-Sept. 2. Berkshire Mountains, Mass. 603/472-5551.
WELS Home Educators Retreat—Sept. 6-8. Camp Phillip, Wautoma, Wis. Debbie Thompson, 920/348-6482.
Life-a-thon run/walk—sponsored by WELS Lutherans for Life, Metro-Milwaukee. Sept. 14. Peter Georgson, 414/933-7322.
Symposium on Holy Baptism—for WELS & ELS pastors. Sept. 23-24. Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis. 262/242-8100.
Enrichment retreat—for pastors and their wives. "Keeping servants healthy," sponsored by Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Service Ministry Support Services and the Marvin M. Schwan Retreat & Conference Center. Sept. 24-26. Trego, Wis. 800/577-4848.
WELS Church Librarians Organization—Trinity, Minocqua, Wis. Sept. 28. Registration, 8:30 AM. Joanne Weber, 414/256-3222; <jaweber@sab.wels.net>.
Christian Life Resources National Convention—Oct. 4-5. KI Center, Green Bay, Wis.

Singles retreat—Oct. 4-6. Camp Philip, Wautoma, Wis. Doris Collins, 262/534-7852.
Capital Area Christian Women's Retreat—Nov. 1-3. Devils Head Resort, Baraboo, Wis. Joy Strutz, 262/898-3244.
WELS National Campus Rally—Dec. 27-30. Michigan State University. 517/336-9293.
WELS/ELS Ladies Retreat—Jan. 10-12, 2003. Woodlands Lutheran Campground, Montverde, Fla. Cost, \$110. Judy Becker, 941/355-6591.

AVAILABLE

Choir robes—Eleven dark brown choir robes and four white collars. Free for the cost of shipping. Jean or Lan Hedtcke, 262/542-2829.
Baldwin organ—two-manual, full pedal. Free for pick-up or shipping from Las Vegas to any WELS church or school. Duane Wendt, 702/645-3623.
Worship Music, a Resource for Lutheran Keyboard Musicians—provided by the Commission on Worship and Northwestern Publishing House. 800/662-6093 ext. 5763.

NEEDED

Used filmstrip projector—Janet Murphy, 734/722-3368.
Catechisms—new (or in good used condition) copies of the light brown, 1956 edition, Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism, edited by C. Gausewitz. Esther Poehler Wiechmann, 414/463-9764.

SERVICE TIMES

Mountain, Wis.—Mountain Ambulance Service Building, 14336 State Hwy 32. May-Sept. Saturday worship, 6:30 PM. Craig Korth, 715/473-5633.
Wausau, Wis.—Salem, 2822 6 St. Sunday worship, 7:30 & 9 AM. Memorial Day through Labor Day. Tim Mandeik, 715/845-2822.
Grass Lake, Mich.—St. Jacob, 12501 Riethmiller Rd. Sunday worship, 9:15 AM until Labor Day. 517/522-4187.

POSITION AVAILABLE

Child care providers—Grace, Charlotte, N.C., is seeking WELS/ELS individuals to work at Lambs of Grace Child Development Center (ages six weeks to five years). Experience a plus but not necessary. Patti Fellers, 704/366-9309.

NAMES WANTED

WLCFS Alcoholism Awareness—Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Service needs your help in updating its mailing list for newsletters and retreat information on alcohol and/or drug recovery. To remain on the list or to be added, send your name, address, and phone number to WLCFS Alcoholism Awareness Program, 1011 North Lynndale Drive, Suite 2-D, Appleton WI 54914.
Marion County, Fla. (Ocala area)—Paul Lemke, 352/694-1861.
Mountain/Suring/Breed/Lakewood, Wis.—Craig Korth, 715/473-5633.

To place an announcement, call
414/256-3210; FAX, 414/256-3862;
<BulletinBoard@sab.wels.net>. Deadline
is eight weeks before publication date.

IN THE CROSS HAIRS

Richard L. Gurgel

TOPIC: TURMOIL IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Question: As a result of turmoil in the Middle East, I've come across statements like this from an Evangelical leader: "For several reasons I've sided with those who are sympathetic to the Jewish struggle for a homeland. . . . We see God's hand in Israel's rebirth and believe it is his purpose to restore Israel in the last days (Isaiah 11:12)."

Also, several Evangelical groups are lobbying our government to support Israel. What should I make of this?

Answer: This common misunderstanding doesn't recognize that God's New Testament Israel is not those who have Abraham's blood in their veins but those who have Abraham's faith in their hearts. "You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:26-29).

What often confuses people are references in Old Testament prophecy to a restoration of Israel in New Testament times. They fail to grasp that God painted glorious New Testament spiritual realities by using familiar Old Testament physical terminology. Scripture clearly proclaims that God's new temple is not a literal building in the literal Jerusalem, rather "You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For in Scripture it says: 'See I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame'" (1 Peter 2:5,6). Notice how Peter uses Old Testament terminology of a temple ("spiritual house") and Zion (Jerusalem) while describing the spiritual building of the holy Christian church.

God's New Testament Israel is not those who have Abraham's blood in their veins but those who have Abraham's faith in their hearts.

Another powerful scriptural proof is found in Hebrews 12:22,23: "But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven."

The author is not describing a physical journey to a Middle Eastern city but rather that the Spirit led us into "the city of the living God" when he brought us to faith in Jesus.

The physical nation of Israel can't continue to claim to be God's special people since many of them have rejected the Messiah that God brought to them and to the world. With tears, Jesus commented on their unbelief: "O Jerusalem,

Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often

I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. Look, your house is left to you desolate" (Luke 13:34,35).

God's judgment on his Old Testament people's unbelief doesn't excuse anti-Semitic prejudice on our part. However, it reminds us that there is no spiritual necessity that the physical nation of Israel, as the special people of God, must continue to occupy the Holy Land. God's promise of the land to Israel should not play any role in our nation's current foreign policy in the Middle East.

Most important, it reminds us that the only way anyone with the red blood of Abraham in his veins can be saved is through faith in the shed blood of the same Savior in whom we Gentile sinners find forgiveness and salvation.

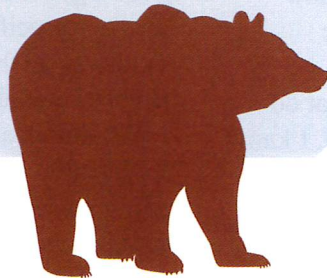
Richard Gurgel is a professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin.

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

“The significant mistake of the traditionalists is they require the people to start where the church is instead of the church starting where the people are. Innovators begin by asking, ‘What do we need to do to reach the people where they are?’ ”
 (Leith Anderson, *Current Thoughts and Trends*, Sept. 2001)

Little-known animal facts

- An ostrich’s eye is bigger than its brain.
- A woodpecker can peck 20 times a second.
- An average cow gives nearly 200,000 glasses of milk in her lifetime.
- The grizzly bear can run as fast as the average horse.



Little-known WELS mission facts

- When WELS missionaries first arrived in Apacheland in 1893, the Apaches called these missionaries “*Inashoods*,” which can be translated, “men in the long black robes,” or simply, “long gown.”
- In 1948, Pastor Venus Winters was called to begin Spanish mission work in Arizona. On Dec. 5, 1948, Winter conducted WELS’ first Spanish service in Phoenix. He soon shifted his work to Tucson, where a greater concentration of Spanish-speaking people lived. It was in Tucson that Winter established *San Pablo* [St. Paul] Spanish mission.
- Paul Ziegler, a layman from Hastings, Neb., worked with the first WELS missionaries in Lusaka, Zambia, in 1953. Ziegler helped build WELS’ first permanent buildings in Zambia.
- A former prince of Bali, Anak Agung Dipa Pandji Tisna, graduated from the WELS seminary in Hong Kong in 1973. Pandji served in Jakarta, Indonesia, until his death in 1991.

(*To Every Nation, Tribe, Language, and People*. Northwestern Publishing House, 1992.)

Picture this

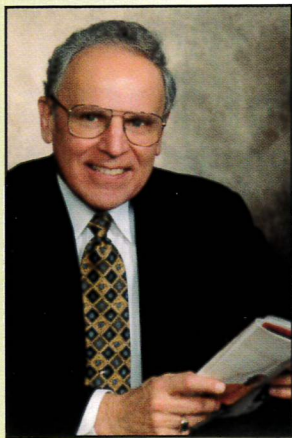
God blessed 16 out of 34 Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary graduates from the class of 2002 with babies during their seminary years. Pictured on May 22, 2002, are all but two families.

Submitted by
Emily Pederson



Back row (from left): Steve and Ben Hillmer, Wayne and Will Halldorson, Darren and Cooper Knoll, Jason and Zachary Thiel, Ben and Isaiah Pederson, Jon and Caleb Leach, Matt and Michael Zimpelmann, John and Sam Seelman, Tim and Tyler Kolb. Front row (from left): Fred, Nathaniel, and Lauren Guldburg; Nate and Abigail Buege; Ryan and Alexander Heiman; Jared and Isabella Oldenburg; Justin, Sophia, and Ethan Cloute. Not pictured: Christian, Samuel, Jonah, and Phoebe Christenson; Joseph and Gloria Christina.

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.



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

The phrase
“under God”
does not make
this nation
any more
Christian or
its citizens
any more
likely to
be saved.

I pledge allegiance

Let it be clear at the outset that I have always and still do take my hat off and place my hand over my heart when the American flag passes on parade. Likewise in public at the playing of the U.S. national anthem. So, too, I’ve always spoken the Pledge of Allegiance with pride—both before and after the phrase “under God” was added in 1954.

That said, I dare to venture into the emotional maelstrom that struck on June 26 when a federal court in California declared the Pledge of Allegiance unconstitutional because of the words “under God.” How are we to react?

Please stay with me because my first reaction is not the popular one. I ask, “Why do we need the words?” I know that I didn’t feel any more patriotic when they were added.

But what I’m getting at is—“What do the words say?” When we say them, I know that we will think of our Savior God, the one true God—but what do the words actually say? Who is the “God” in question?

Significantly, the Justice Department, arguing in favor of the words, claimed that the religious content of the phrase “one nation under God” was minimal. Also, an MSNBC Internet poll showed that 77 percent of those responding did not believe that the phrase endorses a specific religion. In other words, “God” in the pledge might be Allah, Zeus, or Jesus. It is about as specific as “The Unknown God” that the apostle Paul confronted once in Athens (Acts 17:23).

Know, then, that the phrase does not make this nation any more Christian or its citizens any more likely to be saved. That takes the kind of revelation that Paul brought to the Athenians. It takes the gospel.

If the phrase “one nation under God” has any redeeming value, it might be that the natural knowledge of God is still at work in this country and among the majority of its citizens. Whether or not it can identify him, the country collectively sees God’s hand in creation and in the providence that allows this great country to exist. Whether that violates the Establishment of Religion clause in the U.S. Constitution is not mine to judge.

My second reaction to the ruling has less to do with the Constitution and the phrase than with the religious climate in the United States today. That this case even came to court reflects the growing anti-God and anti-Christian sentiments of our society. That some argue that the words “under God” don’t have any specific meaning reflects the growing pluralism that threatens to trample any semblance of absolute truth, of absolute God.

Yes, let us abhor what has happened—not because we’ll miss the words if the ruling stands but because of the spirit that brought about the issue. Let us not doubt that growing numbers would like to silence all witness to God and his Son, our Savior.

Let us, then, who are Americans, continue to say the Pledge of Allegiance in whatever form we will have it. Let us respect our nation, honor its flag, and defend its freedoms. Furthermore, let us thank our God that we are allowed to live in a free country.

Let us also pledge allegiance once again to our God, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Let us hold high the banner of his Word and declare his freedoms far and wide. Let us make known that there is no other God.

Gary P. Baumler

Commission on Parish Schools

**Helping our schools fulfill their
mission to share the Savior!**

Serving the WELS School System

- 4th largest private/parochial school system in the United States
- 329 Early Childhood Ministries (ECM)
- 362 Lutheran Elementary Schools (LES)
- 24 Area Lutheran High Schools (ALHS)

Providing Counsel and Resources

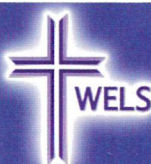
- Facilitating the "Team Ministry Process"
- Mentoring beginning principals and teachers
- Guidelines for self-study for ECM and LES
- School promotion helps like "Come Meet Our Family" and "Preparing Children Now and Forever"
- School administration helps like "Making the Pieces Fit"
- CPS quarterly newsletter "Grow Together"
- National and district-wide seminars, workshops and conferences

Supporting WELS Districts

- Standing committees for special education, early childhood, and school leadership
- Maintaining teacher/principal service information
- Facilitating teacher/principal assessment
- Providing divine call candidate lists for District Presidents
- Directing the WELS national testing program

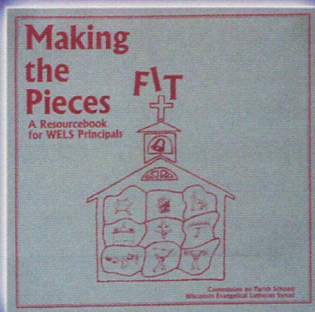
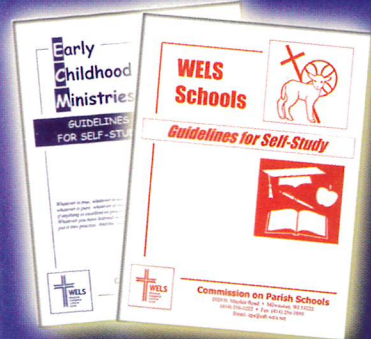
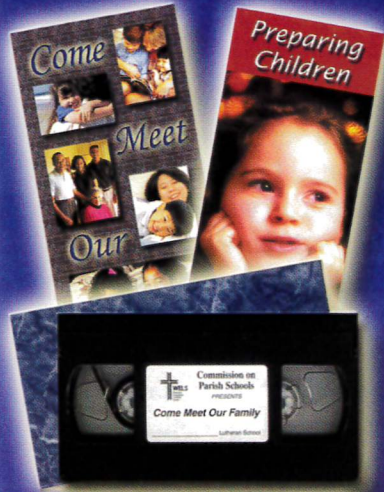
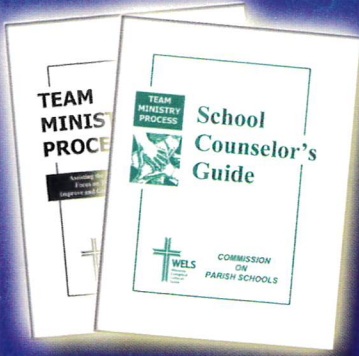
Praying for Success

- Teachers, parents, and students growing in the Word
- Schools reaching out to the lost and strengthening the family
- Ministry teams focusing on their mission
- Educators who are life-long learners
- Wise stewardship of God's gracious gifts



WELS Commission on Parish Schools
2929 North Mayfair Road
Milwaukee, WI 53222-4398

Phone: 414-256-3222 FAX: 414-256-3899 E-mail: cps@sab.wels.net



Now I remember

Substitute teaching for a fifth- and sixth-grade Lutheran elementary school class brings back a flood of memories.

Jason M. Nelson

It had been at least 15 years since I taught fifth and sixth grade in a Lutheran elementary school. Then one day our principal asked me to cover his class while he was away.

I have a son in that class. I help churches start schools. I wasn't on the road. So, I thought I would do it, anticipating that it would be a good experience in many ways. It was so much more, because it helped me remember.

I had forgotten . . .

I had forgotten that bladder control is sympathetic among fifth- and sixth-graders. When one has to go . . . you know. I had forgotten that personal hygiene is in its early stages of development. I had forgotten how competitive little boys can be and how politely bossy little girls can be, especially with a substitute teacher who is unknowingly trampling on classroom protocol. I had forgotten that fairness is the supreme ethic and friendship is spontaneous. I had forgotten that kids have cool names like Tia, Jordan, Jacob, and Marina.

I had forgotten that Jesus really is all over a Lutheran school: in the attitudes, the art, and the actions of everyone. I had forgotten how powerful Lutheran schools are in serving new families and helping new students become part of Jesus' flock. And I had forgotten how hard teachers work. I was exhausted after one day trying to fill in for a man who cheerfully and effectively does this and more day in

and day out. I had forgotten how thankful I really am for Lutheran schools and Lutheran school teachers, because they have been there for the children God entrusted to me.

I remember . . .

Now, I remember why I believe Lutheran schools are so important. I remember why so many of our churches have maintained a commitment to their school. I remember why so many other churches are interested in finding out if a Lutheran school is one of the right ministries for them.

I had forgotten how thankful I really am for Lutheran schools and Lutheran school teachers, because they have been there for the children God entrusted to me.

I remember why it hurts so bad to know that enrollments in our schools are declining, the number of our schools is shrinking, and many that remain are struggling, while across America interest in Christian schools has never been greater.

I remember how frustrated I get because there are so many opportunities

to bring the gospel to people through our schools, and yet it continues to be an uphill battle. I remember how fearful I am deep down that we may lose our schools. I remember that the two years I spent in a Lutheran elementary school were the defining years of my life.

Dear fellow WELS members, please don't forget what Lutheran schools mean to our children, our families, and our church. If you are in danger of forgetting—spend a day with fifth- and sixth-graders. You'll remember.



Jason Nelson, former WELS consultant for new schools, is the Commission on Parish Schools administrator.

