

FORWARD IN CHRIST

June 2003

The Word from the WELS

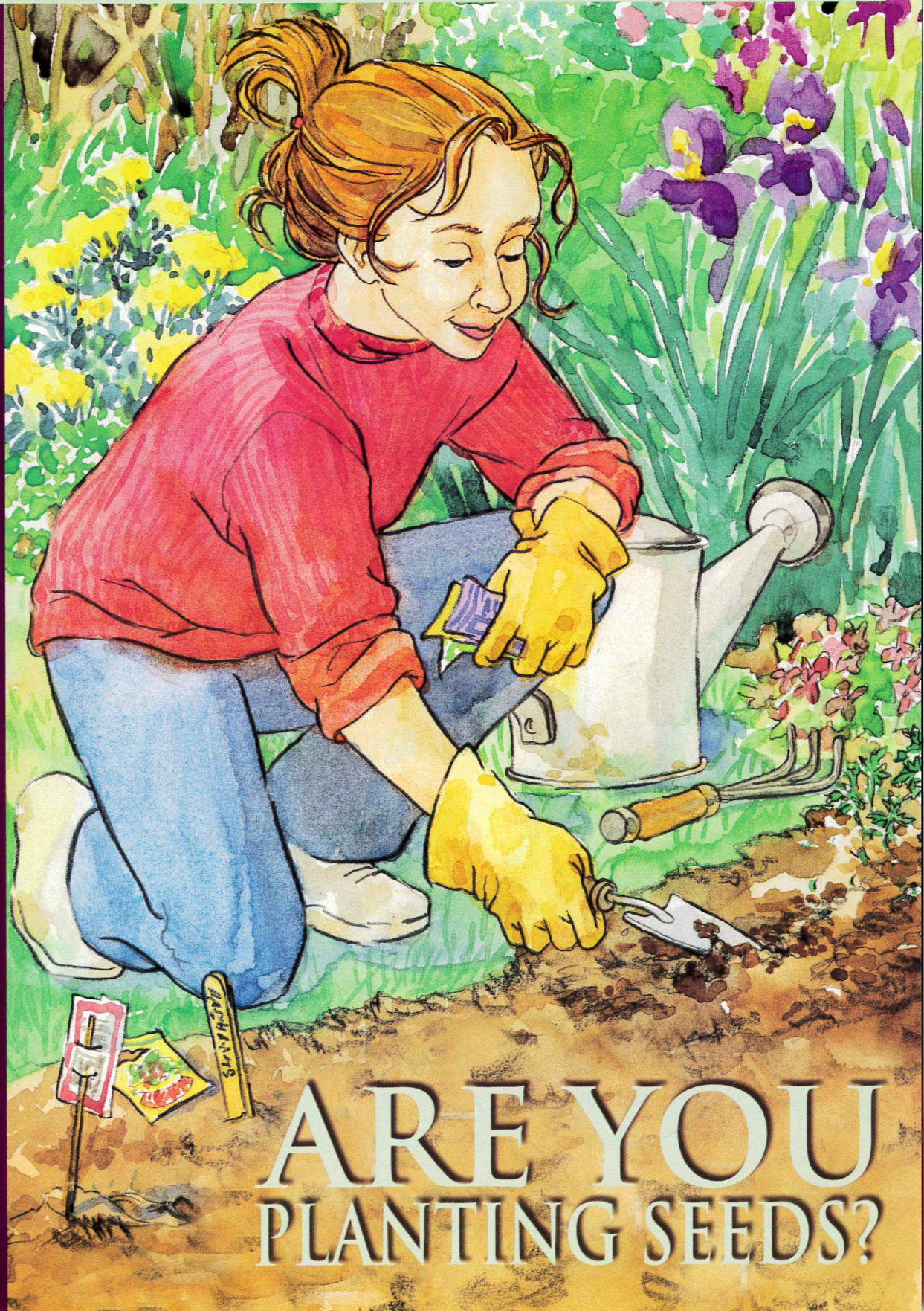
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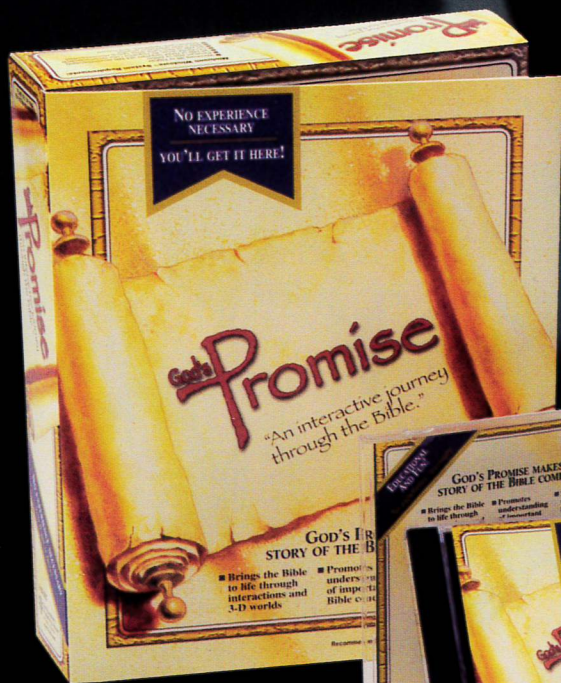
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Stupidity is inexcusable

“Are you so dull?” [Jesus] asked. Mark 7:18

Eric S. Hartzell

Somehow it doesn't seem Christian to even talk about stupidity or use the word. We surely hesitate to say the word when referring to an individual. People start fights that way.

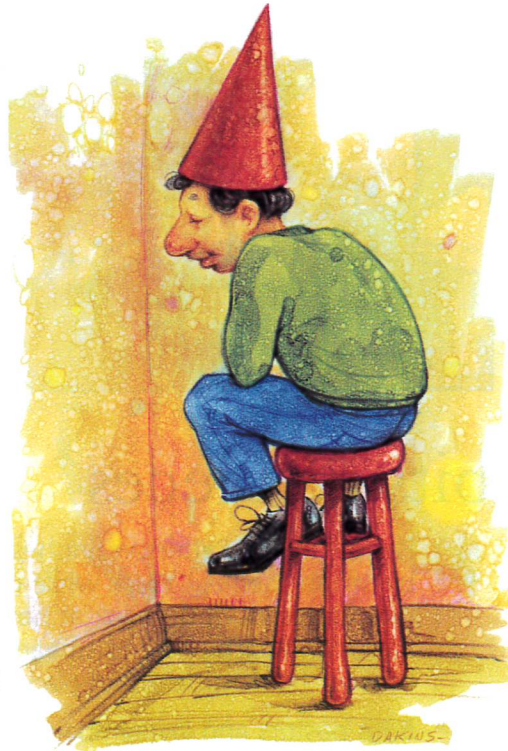
Jesus did ask his disciples one day, “Are you so dull?” For the teacher to ask his students that question says something about the dynamics of the relationship. In Jesus' opinion someone wasn't getting something that they should have been getting. “Are you so senseless? Are you so foolish?”

In this same part of the Gospel of Mark, Jesus gives a long list of sins that come from inside a person and make him unclean. They are big sins, sins like murder and adultery and theft. But at the end of the list, in the same league with these “big” sins, is the sin called folly. Folly comes from men's hearts just like the other sins. Our God isn't happy with us when we give him occasion to ask us, “Are you so dull?”

Don't be a fool

Folly is inexcusable. Call it being dull, call it foolish . . . even call it stupid. Psalm 14:1 says, “The fool says in his heart, ‘There is no God.’” To say that there is no God is very foolish. The smart thing to say is, “There is a God, and I believe in him.”

A foolish thing to say is, “God, I thank you that I am not like other sinners.” The really smart thing to say is, “God be merciful to me, a sinner.”



A foolish and dull thing to say, however you might say it, is, “I am the only one who matters.” The brilliant thing to say (and know) is, “My Savior matters most, then my neighbor, and then, last of all, me.”

Intelligence for us is not just a genetic chance. It would not be fair to call people dull who could do no better. Jesus wasn't just a petulant teacher wrongly frustrated with his slow learners. He calls them dull because they wouldn't have to be dull. They wouldn't have to keep asking him the questions that they were asking him. Jesus didn't call them to be inept. He called them to “get it.” He called them to be enlightened in their minds. He promises still and

commands through the apostle Paul, “Be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will” (Romans 12:2). Jesus also said, “Be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves” (Matthew 10:16).

Strive for wisdom

A mind is truly an awful thing to waste. Jesus died to save our minds too. The heart converted is the mind also converted. Conversion means to think differently. It means to think correctly. Little children exhibit this wonderful right thinking when they sing, “Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so.” Jesus would never call such believing children dull. In fact, he tells adults, “Unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:3).

Solomon asked for wisdom and delighted God. A keen mind is still worth more than the king's gold.

Lord, through your word of teaching make me truly wise to salvation!



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

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There will be
a harvest from
our seeds in
time. Jesus
guarantees it.

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bits & pieces



Pastor Donald Patterson finishes his series on WELS' 2001-03 biennium theme, "Work while it is day," this month. We thank him for his insightful look at how we need to work with our Savior and each other to spread God's Word. Be sure you don't miss his final article about planting the seeds of the gospel (p. 8).



Both pastors and laymembers need to be actively participating in the work of the church. How the pastor and these "priests" interrelate is the topic of Prof. David Valleskey's last article in his series on the ministry (p. 12).



Two new series start this month:

- Last July, Pastor William Carter, who is also an emergency medical technician and a first responder for the Brownsville Fire Company, was involved in battling a blaze that firefighters say happens only once per century. In this six-part series he will share some stories about this fire, adding spiritual lessons he learned from each experience. His first article is on p. 18.

- It's summer—a time for fun in the sun. In a new Bible study, Pastor Jon Buchholz shares what it's like living in the "Sonlight." Check out his first article, "Life in the Sonlight: salvation for all the world" (p. 30). Don't be kept in the dark.



A listing of the 400 delegates who will be attending the WELS 57th biennial convention from July 28-Aug. 1 is included in this issue (p. 22). These pastors, teachers, and laymen represent WELS churches, missions, and schools from around the world. They will help shape the vision and set the direction of our synod. Please keep them in your prayers.

—JKW

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Donald W. Patterson

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Katherine Martin

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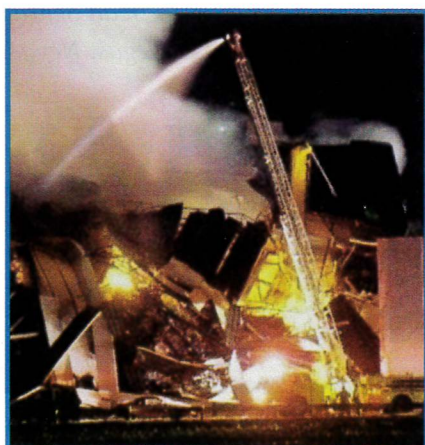
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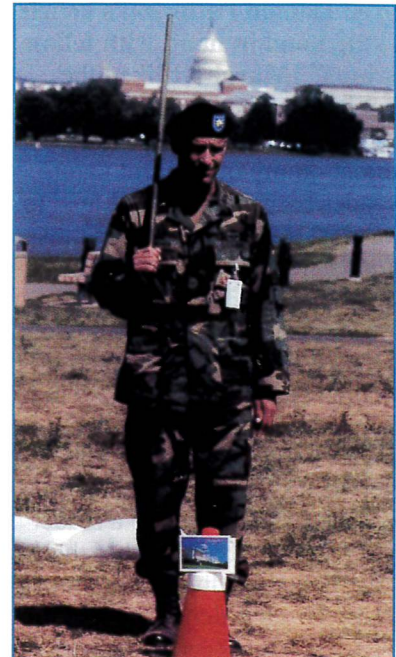
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Shock and awe



I enjoyed Donald Patterson's article "Working hand in hand with fellow Christians" [March].

I liked the analogy he used between a T-ball team and Christianity. It made me stop and reflect on my own sinful nature and wonder how many times I tend to work against my teammates in Christ.

But after my first reading of the article, I was left a bit confused. What is Patterson's understanding of "team"? Is it the invisible Church or a particular denomination? It wasn't until I repeatedly went through the article that I gathered that he was referring to WELS. Is my understanding correct? I can see where a reader might walk away thinking that there is no distinction or division among Christians of other denominations.

 Angie Gabb
Marietta, Ohio

The "team" is the group of Christians that we work with in fellowship.—ed.

I must comment on three wonderful articles that appeared in the March issue.


1. "The earring" by Matthew Eich. This young man has a great insight into life and is wise beyond his years! I hope he contributes again.
2. "Working hand in hand with fellow Christians." Same team. I will remember those two words for a long time—whenever and wherever there may be conflict!
3. "Lessons from an empty nest"—an inspiration to those of us whose loved ones have moved out and on. It's good to know God does not move away. He is always there!

Please inform the authors that they were a special blessing to many of us.

Frieda Miller
Benton Harbor, Michigan

Maybe it was because I read "Oh, no! What next?" [April] late on a Friday night after a hard week, or maybe it was because of all of the problems going on in the world right now, or perhaps it was because


the Holy Spirit always knows the needs of my heart—your article touched my soul deeply. I have read it three or four times, and each time the imagery of the angel saying, "He has risen," and facing life with the light of Jesus right beside me becomes more real.

 Ken Zehm
Tucson, Arizona

As I was reading Pastor Baumler's editorial "Doctrine builds faith" [March], **I found myself saying "Right on!" and "Amen."**

Donald Schmechel
Hatfield, Pennsylvania


I just wanted to tell you that I read the entire *Forward in Christ* magazine every month. **I thought that Gary Baumler's article "Oh, no! What next?" [April] was very good.** It gave me a lot of hope and comfort.

 Ervin E. Bratsch
Danube, Minnesota

Richard Gurgel's "In the cross hairs" article [April] raises a question for me. Aren't "believe" and "decide" both verbs, both "action" words?

When I became a Christian as a child, I "accepted Christ into my heart." It was only through the work of the Holy Spirit that this happened. I can do nothing to secure my own salvation. There may be some who believe what you state in your article, but I grew up in what you call "decision theology," and no one I know believes that they helped secure their own salvation. We have always believed it was a free gift from God through the death and resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.


I am a new Lutheran, and I am beginning to think that Lutherans enjoy "splitting hairs."

 Charlotte Kewish
Fallbrook, California

Richard Gurgel responds: *Although Scripture does indeed speak of those who "accepted the [gospel] message" (Acts 2:41) and those who "received [Christ]" (John 1:12), it clearly teaches that this is still entirely the work of the Holy Spirit's power and nothing we contribute. Thankfully, the letter writer appears to be one whom God granted a "happy inconsistency" in clinging to the simple truth of Scripture that faith is 100 percent a gift of the Holy Spirit.*

That does not change the fact that many who speak about "accepting Christ" into their hearts are taught to believe that what makes the final difference between those who are saved or lost is a human decision in response to the Spirit's work. While the warning about "splitting hairs" is good, lest we go beyond Scripture, our biblical Lutheran theology is not seeking to "split hairs" but rather to safeguard heirs of eternal life from losing the comforting truth that salvation is absolutely and completely by grace alone.

It is hard for me to give a copy of *Forward in Christ* to a new believer or leave it at work or at the doctor's office with a cover like May's. The Wisconsin Synod's organizational structure is not a topic that appeals to the unbeliever or new believer. A cover with the title from one of May's articles such as "The sight is glorious," "God will guide me," or "To every tribe and nation" would have been more appropriate.

 Jean Schram
Las Vegas, Nevada

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A famine of the Word

Armin J. Panning

The prophet Amos worked at about 750 BC, during a period of prosperity in Judah and Israel. He warned his rich and comfortable, but religiously indifferent, countrymen that if they didn't change their ways, disaster awaited them. " 'The days are coming,' declares the Sovereign Lord, 'when I will send a famine through the land—not a famine of food or a thirst for water, but a famine of hearing the words of the Lord' " (Amos 8:11). That prophecy was fulfilled in the coming of the Assyrians.

Luther said much the same thing, though using a different picture. He likened the course of the gospel to a passing thunder-shower that appears in a given place, lasts for a while, and then moves on. As illustration of that, think of the beautiful cathedrals that now stand virtually empty in the lands of the Reformation.

In our day much is made of the United States' dominant role in the world's economy and its vaunted military power. But U.S. citizens need to be on guard against becoming fat and arrogant, dealing heavy-handedly with others, and becoming unmindful of where their gifts are coming from, including the precious gift of having God's Word freely available to them. It can be lost!

The area in the Middle East where the United States is engaged militarily provides a striking example of such a reversal of fortune. The now predominantly Muslim territory of Iraq was once a thriving Christian community during the heyday of the early Armenian Christian Church.

In ancient days Armenia comprised a much larger area than does its small name-sake, today located on the northeastern border of Turkey. According to tradition, the apostles Bartholomew and Thaddaeus worked in Armenia and were martyred there. But the fruit of their labor was that a follow-up missionary, Gregory the Illuminator, converted

King Tiridates III to Christianity. He in turn made it the state religion, the first country in the world to do so. (Incidentally, the Armenian Apostolic Church celebrated its 1,700th anniversary in 2001.)

A significant division within the ranks occurred when the Armenian Church declined to accept the resolutions of the Council of Chalcedon (AD 451). That council correctly asserted the two natures of Christ, the divine and human, united in one person. Their rejection separated the Armenians theologically from the European Church, and over the centuries the Armenian Church suffered politically at the hands of the Persians, the Arabs, the Mongols, and the Turks. During World War I, over a million Armenian Christians were slaughtered by the Ottoman Turk regime. Subsequent to World War II, Armenia became part of the Soviet Union, and Christianity continued to suffer. Only recently has Armenia re-emerged as an independent nation.

Today, the Armenian Apostolic Church numbers about one million members. Some 65 percent of those live in the Western world, with the rest widely scattered in the Middle East. An estimated 20,000 live in Iraq, mostly near Baghdad.

At the time of this writing the Iraqi conflict is virtually resolved, but it's unclear what post-war arrangements will be made. Fortunately, the Lord remains in charge of history. His good and gracious purpose will be served. Hopefully, a new arrangement will allow God's Word to have free course and be preached to the joy and edifying of many people who today are harassed and oppressed. Only then will there be relief from the centuries-long famine of the Word that has beset this part of the world.

Armin Panning, a member at St. Matthew, Port Washington, Wisconsin, is a professor emeritus at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin.

The Lord
remains in
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be served.

WORK TO PLANT GOD'S WORD



The Word is a powerful seed, packed with the potential to produce a full-grown Christian. We plant that Word, and the rest is up to God.

Donald W. Patterson

Have you ever driven by a beautiful field of wildflowers and marveled at how that once-drab field had become exquisitely accessorized?

In central Texas where I live, this happens every spring. Winter browns and yellows are forgotten as bluebonnet blues and Indian paintbrush oranges emerge. These flower-covered fields are breathtaking. After a few years of watching this happen every spring, I decided that I wanted to get in on the action. I wanted some wildflowers to enjoy at my home. When I asked around about when to plant, I was shocked that it was so early. Spring bluebonnets have to be planted in late fall. They need a lot of time to germinate and grow. It takes faith in the almanac to plant that early. But if you believe it and do what it says, you'll get wildflowers.



Plant seeds early and often

There is a spiritual parallel. Have you ever heard someone talking about how a loved one came to faith, and you looked at your family and friends and thought, "I want to get in on that action"? Guess what? You need to plant seeds early because it often takes a long time for them to grow. The Word is a powerful seed,

packed with all the spiritual genetics, energy, and potential to produce a full-grown Christian. But it takes time. By faith we plant the Word, and the rest is God's deal.

Here's how Jesus said it: "This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. All by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come" (Mark 4:26-29). Jesus says, "Trust me on this. Plant the seeds and watch me make them grow." That's pretty simple, isn't it? The promise gets us to plant with confidence and peace.

But when should we plant? There is no set growing season in Christendom. Plant earlier rather than later and often rather than seldom. Let's not waste any time with seeds stored away in barns.

I have a personal experience that illustrates the value of planting seeds early.

There was a little a girl whose parents didn't take her to church all that often. But another church sent a bus to her neighborhood every Sunday to pick her up for Sunday school. That

church planted seeds in her heart for several years. Also, a family in her neighborhood took her to church often. More seeds were planted. When she was 18, a Christian sitting next to her on a plane planted seeds knowing full well that he'd never be around to watch them grow. When she was 20, she fell in love with a man who watched her come to faith. After tons of planting and lots of waiting, that little girl became a beautiful flower in my life. She is my wife, Mary.

I thank God often for all those people who planted seeds in her with faith that God would grow his plant in his own time without their help. There are millions like her. We are all like her. Someone planted seeds in us. God made them grow into a living faith.



Plant seeds individually or by the thousands

Just thinking about it makes us want to get in on the action. Here's what you do: You know that little girl down the street who plays with your daughter? Get your daughter to invite her to Sunday school. That planting strategy created three new flowers at our church. How about that person in the plane next to you? Be friendly. Ask him how things are going. There


might be an open door to plant a seed. Not long ago I got to plant seeds in a retired pro football player who was sitting next to me on a plane.

When you plant the Word you will almost never see an immediate flower. . . . But although the seeds don't grow quickly, they grow.

If sirens scream through your neighborhood and stop in front of the house across the street, go over there a few days later with some cookies and a card with seeds from Jesus and plant them at their doorstep. Do you have a distant relative "wintering" in jail somewhere? Why not see if one of our churches in that area will send the pastor to plant a seed in the heart of your hurting loved one?

Don't forget that you can plant seeds even when you are sitting still. Some convalescing Christians plant wonderful thoughts in those who come to see them. Terminally ill people are among the best seed planters. The people who visit them have their hearts freshly plowed with grief, which often makes them more open to hearing the gospel.

Farmers today don't plant seeds with their own hands. It's too slow. They have machines that plant seeds by the thousands. We do too. Think of all the technology available to the local congregation to plant seeds in rapid succession! Get a Web site for your church and put your pastor's sermons on there in real audio. While you are skiing at the lake or sleeping, you and your pastor will be planting seeds in cyberspace.

 **Plant seeds with an eye to the future**

In our circles we have a lot of terrariums where seed planting happens daily. We call them Christian day schools. They are really little Christian farms. When the little people there seem to be acting like thorns and not flowers, remember, they are just little sprouts. It takes time for what we teach them to grow into a fully developed blossom.

What's true of little people is true of big people too. When you plant the Word you will almost never see an immediate flower. Not in the garden and not in the landscape of humanity. But although the seeds don't grow quickly, they grow. That's what makes spiritual seed planting so exciting. There will be a harvest from our seeds in time. Jesus guarantees it.

What's even more exciting is that seeds planted today will produce seed bearing plants tomorrow.

The very best bluebonnet fields weren't planted by farmers the previous year. They were planted by bluebonnets the year before. In the same way, some of the people in whom you plant will plant thousands more than you some day. Ah, sweet anticipation! The planting/harvest cycle will never end until Jesus sends out his angels to bring all the flowers into God's heavenly home for display. Then and only then will we be able to cease our most important work. Let's go get in on the action!

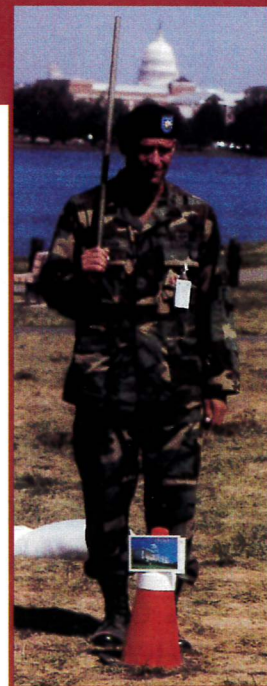
Donald Patterson is pastor at Holy Word, Austin, Texas.



On the EDGE OF OUR SEATS

Katherine Martin

Jamie Fischer, a major in the U.S. Army, shares how his faith helps him cope with the reality of an uncertain future.



Jamie Fischer

There is nothing like a suspenseful movie to get my blood rushing. Recently I was watching a particularly intense movie in which each scene seemed to plunge the characters deeper into danger. As I grew more consumed by the hair-raising plot, I sat on the edge of my seat with heart racing, palms sweating, and eyes covered, afraid to see what would happen next.

Isn't that true of our lives sometimes? We find ourselves sitting on the edge of our seats awaiting, almost agonizing about, what the future holds. Whether we're waiting for medical test results or for a phone call from a loved one who is in danger, life involves a great deal of suspense and uncertainty.

The uncertain future

Here in Killeen, Texas, on the perimeter of the largest military base in the country, uncertainty about the future weighs heavily on the minds of the entire community. What will war with Iraq bring? Will I be called to serve our country? When will I go? How long will I serve? How will my family survive while I am gone? How will my faith survive this turmoil?

Recently I sat down with the Fischer family, members of Abiding Savior, Killeen. Jamie and Christine Fischer have three sons: C.J., Braden, and Samuel. The Fishers face an uncertain future as the United States engages in war with Iraq, because Jamie serves as a major in the United States Army stationed at Fort Hood. His job? Operations officer for a battalion of 520 soldiers. In wartime, Jamie controls the battlefield operations for the unit. Listen to how this family copes with living on the edge of its seat.

The military life

Question: Why did you choose a career in the military?

Answer: It all came down to the best use of my talents. After attending Northwestern Preparatory School, I wanted to choose a career where I could best use my talents to serve the Lord. I was really struggling with whether to enter the public ministry or the military. After receiving advice from my friends and even the president of Northwestern College, I decided it was okay to serve the Lord in the military.

Question:

Describe some of the daily difficulties faced by members of the military.

Answer:

Lack of control over your daily life. At any time, my brother can quit his job, decide to pursue a different career, or change location, but I cannot do that. In the military you relinquish control over the places you live or the schedule you maintain.

Question:

What has been the best part of your military career?

Answer:

1. Sense of purpose. You cannot measure what I do quantitatively, but I have to believe that if I were not where I am now, the security of many people may be at risk. I am charged with defending this country so that we can have the freedom to worship how we choose and to pursue life, liberty, and happiness.
2. Adventure. I have jumped out of airplanes, led men and women driving machines that weigh several tons, shot off really loud ammunition, and lived in many beautiful world-wide locations.
3. People. The people you work with each day are a unique part of

God is the glue that keeps this family together no matter what difficulties may lie ahead.

the military experience. Knowing that your coworkers would do absolutely anything for you is a rewarding part of the job.

Question:

What life lessons have you learned by being in the military?

Answer:

Importance of family and the unimportance of material possessions. Wherever you are transferred (the Fischers have moved seven times in their 13-year marriage), about the only thing you are guaranteed is that your family will be with you. Your possessions may be lost, or you may be staying in substandard quarters while waiting for housing, but your family being together is what counts. I have also learned to prepare for the unexpected by enjoying each moment I have with my family. I don't always know when I might be called out to the field, to a meeting, or to war. I have learned to make the most of every moment.

The certainty that God is in control

Question:

Is there any aspect of serving in the military that has been beneficial to your faith in God?

Answer:

I think the more control you have, or think you have, over your own life, the less you are able to give control to the Lord. With every change and new experience that the military has offered me, I have become more reliant on the Lord. The more you lose control over your life, the more you are able to give it all to God. God is the glue that keeps this family together no matter what difficulties may lie ahead.

Question:

As the war in Iraq progresses, what comfort do you have as you sit and wait to be told when and where you will serve?*

Answer:

God is in control of all things. He will watch over us whether we're here or there. We could get hit by a car today, come down with a debilitating disease, or lose our life at any moment. I am just one of the five billion people that God is in control of right now. I am not sure of his plan, but I recognize that wherever he leads me, I have a part in his plan.

The lessons learned

The Fischer family is one of many who have taught me how military

families cope with the constant feeling of living on the edge of their seats. Their faith in God's promises has strengthened my faith and helped me to better cope with the stress in my life. Their dedication to the security of this country helps me appreciate the freedom that most Americans take for granted every day.

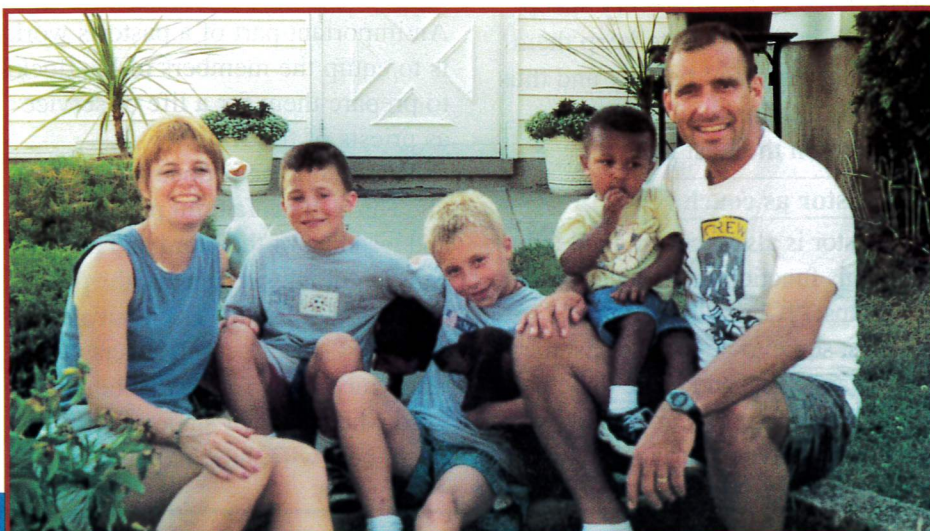
Families like the Fischers have taught me to focus on the known, instead of the unknown. What is known to us as Christians is that, whatever life may throw at us, the Lord will be with us. Isaiah paints a beautiful picture of the Lord's promises: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior" (43:1-3).

As you cope with uncertainties in your life and in the world, reflect on the unchanging grace of our Savior and his promise to walk beside you. May you find the peace in God's Word to sit back, breathe a sigh of relief, and know that we are shielded in the palm of God's almighty hand.



Katherine Martin is a member at Abiding Savior, Killeen, Texas.

*Jamie Fischer's army unit had been in Washington, D.C., protecting the Capitol. When war with Iraq began, Fischer's unit returned to Fort Hood in Texas. They received deployment orders in late March, but those orders have been rescinded.



The Fischer family: (from left) Christine, Braden, C.J., Samuel, and Jamie.

Part 1: What do the terms “minister” and “ministry” mean, and how should they best be used?

Part 2: What is a Christian’s role as a priest of God?

Part 3: What is the public ministry? Who serves in the public ministry?

Part 4: What is the relationship between pastors and “priests”?

Pastor/“priest” relationship

Working together, pastors and “priests” will carry out the Great Commission that Christ has given to his Church.

David J. Valleskey

A number of years ago Prof. Armin Schuetze of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary wrote an editorial for the *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* entitled “A Shepherd or a Coach?” In it he concluded that a pastor is both. In both roles, shepherd and coach, the pastor interrelates with the members of his congregation, each of whom is a priest in the eyes of God.

The pastor as shepherd

A pastor is a shepherd. (The title “pastor,” in fact, means shepherd.) Speaking to the elders (we would say “pastors”) of the church in Ephesus, Paul said, “Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood” (Acts 20:28). Peter writes, “To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder . . . : Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care” (1 Peter 5:1,2).

As a shepherd, the pastor nurtures the flock that has called him to serve in its name and on its behalf. The pastor as shepherd feeds the flock from the “green pastures” (Psalm 23:2) of Word and sacrament. He guards the flock against “savage wolves” (Acts

20:29), using the “rod and staff” (Psalm 23:4) of God’s Word to ward off false teachers who would seek to destroy the flock. He guides the flock in “paths of righteousness” (Psalm 23:3) as he seeks to teach every member of the congregation “the whole will of God” (Acts 20:27).

A pastor shepherds his flock through his public preaching and teaching of the Word and administration of the sacraments. He does this also through his private use of the Word in counseling, visiting the sick and dying, and the like.

That is one way a pastor interrelates with congregation members. He is called to nurture every sheep and lamb in the flock, to keep them spiritually alive and healthy and thus ready for the final coming of the Shepherd on the Last Day.

The pastor as coach

A pastor is also a coach. Paul talks about this function in his letter to the Ephesians: “[Christ] gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that

the body of Christ may be built up” (Ephesians 4:11,12). The word translated “to prepare” is from a Greek word that has in it the idea of making something or someone completely adequate, fully qualified, totally prepared for something. A form of this same word is used in Matthew 4:21, which says that James and John were “preparing their nets” for fishing. They were getting their nets ready for action. Likewise, a role of a pastor is to prepare the priests in his congregation, that is every believer, for action.

For what action? “For works of service,” says Paul. Paul is talking here about service (he uses the Greek word *diakonia*) of the Lord. An important part of a pastor’s work is to equip the members of his flock, to prepare them for a life of service as priests of the King.

This equipping is done on two levels. Through his faithful preaching and teaching of the Word and administration of the sacraments, the pastor not only nurtures the flock but also prepares God’s priests. He gets them ready for action, for service to their Lord whatever their station in life might be—wife, husband, parent,

child, employer, employee, teacher, student—and wherever they might be—at home, church, school, or place of employment. The pastor does this week in and week out for all of the members of his congregation.

A second level of preparing God's priests involves only some congregation members. This is the pastor's role of training members for assisting in some portion of the public ministry of the congregation. Commenting on the Ephesians 4 passage, one Bible commentator writes, "The New Testament concept of the pastor is not of a person who jealously guards all ministry in his own hands, . . . but of one who helps and encourages all God's people to discover, develop, and exercise their gifts. . . . Thus, instead of monopolizing all ministry to himself, he actually multiplies ministries" (John R.W. Stott, *God's New Society: The Message of Ephesians*).

Some have taken this role of the pastor too far, asserting that the pastor's job is to work himself out of a job. Some say that when all members are properly using their gifts, a professional minister is simply "excess baggage." Such is not the case. Flocks need shepherds, and they will need shepherds until the end of time. Until that day, no pastor will be able to say or should say, "I am no longer needed here because this flock no longer needs a shepherd." Since in this life God's people remain sinners as well as saints, they will always need the public proclamation of law and gospel and the administration of the sacraments, which the pastor is called to do in the congregation's name and on its behalf.

On the other hand, a great disservice is done to a congregation if the pastor does not see getting other people involved in and training them for "works of service" as an integral part of his

ministry. The principle of multiplication is important. Congregations recognize that it is better for a pastor to train people to teach Sunday school and vacation Bible school than to try to teach all of the children in the congregation himself. The same principle applies to training elders to call on the congregation's straying sheep or training members to call on the unchurched or to help with visitation of the sick and shut-in or to work with the youth. Mature Christians with the ability to teach can be trained to lead Bible classes. The possibilities are numerous. The blessings are abundant. Paul speaks of this at the conclusion of the Ephesians 4 passage: "Christ gave . . . pastors and teachers to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up"—both internally and externally.

A healthy relationship

Key ingredients in a healthy pastor/congregation relationship are:

- a pastoral attitude that values the members of the congregation both as those whom he shepherds with Word and sacrament and as those whom he equips to serve with him as valued partners in bringing the Word to the world; and

- a congregational attitude that both cherishes and respects the work of its pastor and that sees itself not just as a passive receiver but as an active doer, nurtured and equipped to work with its pastor as God's priests and, in some cases, partners with its pastor in public ministry of the gospel.

In that way, working together, pastors and "priests" will carry out the Great Commission that Christ has given to his Church.

David Valleskey is president of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin.

Important terms

Minister: one who serves God (broad definition); one who is authorized [called] to perform religious functions in a church (common definition).

Ministry: service to God (broad definition); the profession, services, and duties of a minister of religion (common definition).

Personal ministry: the service that every Christian renders to God in response to God's love and mercy in Christ.

Public ministry: ministry performed in the name of and on behalf of a body of believers (broad definition); ministry that has to do with the proclamation of the gospel (preaching and teaching the Word and administering the sacraments) performed in the name of and on behalf of a body of believers (narrow definition).

Member ministry: a type of public ministry of the gospel carried out on a part-time basis by a congregation member.

Priest: every Christian (also referred to as the "universal priesthood" and "priesthood of all believers").

Pastor: a public minister of the gospel who oversees the entire ministry of the church.

Immediate (direct) call: a call that doesn't involve an intervening agency.

Mediate (indirect) call: a call that involves an intervening agency (such as a congregation).

Mission of the missions— REACHING LOST SOULS

Commissioned to search out lost souls here and throughout the world, World and Home Missions work to get the job done.

Diane Behm

Through our churches, we enjoy fellowship, join in worship, and support each other in the faith. However, many here and around the world do not have churches or have never heard God's precious Word.

When it comes to reaching those lost souls, it takes a volunteer spirit, training, willingness, hard work, and money to get started. How does WELS realize the needs in our world, and who decides how these needs will be met?

Building a world mission

The Lord has blessed World Missions with 494 congregations in 22 countries and with 62 missionaries (down from 72). Since we can't all go to Africa or Japan to carry out the God-given purpose to preach and to teach the gospel, we trust World Missions to help us carry out the Great Commission throughout the world.

The funds we give for world missionaries are entrusted to many levels of administration. The Board for World Missions (BWM) makes the final decisions and presents them to the Synodical Council.

Administrator Dan Koelpin keeps everything connected by visiting

mission fields and informing the Synodical Council of the fields' needs. Associate administrator Walter Westphal organizes and orients the missionaries.

Five administrative committees, each overseeing a geographical area, monitor the mission work worldwide. Each committee manages the finances of its area and looks out for the welfare of that area's missionaries and their families, but the BWM makes all the final decisions based on information given to them by each area's administrative committee.

To ensure an objective voice in decision making, the Committee for Mission Expansion was created. This committee is made up of five members elected by the Board for World Missions from outside its membership. These men have experience in world missions but are not attached to a specific area.

Before a mission starts and money moves, there are two evaluations of

WORLD MISSIONS

13 members on the Board for World Missions:

- one chairman
- two representatives from each administrative committee
- two laymen elected at large

Five members on the Committee for Mission Expansion

Five administrative committees, each with two pastors, two laymen, one teacher: Africa, Latin America, Japan Europe Asia, Native American, Southeast Asia

HOME MISSIONS

29 members on the Board for Home Missions:

- one chairman elected at large
- two representatives from 14 district mission boards (one pastor, one layman)

Four mission counselors

Two ethnic consultants (one for Asian ministry, one for Hispanic ministry)

86 total district mission board members from 14 mission districts:

Arizona, California, Colorado, Dakota-Montana, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Atlantic, Northern Wisconsin, Pacific Northwest, South Atlantic, South Central, Southeastern Wisconsin, Western Wisconsin



The ladies choir of Christ the King Lutheran Church in Calabar, Nigeria, praises God through song, which often leads to joyful dancing.

the area. The administrative committee conducts the first, the Committee for Mission Expansion the second. They use a series of 20 questions, addressing issues of education, safety, and politics, to aid decision-making. The committees work hand-in-hand to approve the expansion, recommend special funding for the area, and keep projects running smoothly through monitoring, constant evaluations, and recommending policies.

“The Committee for Mission Expansion is the one objective group that wants to tie phasing out the missionaries into expansion and the ultimate redeployment into new fields,” Koelpin says. “Our goal is church planting. Progress is not only measured by getting into fields, but it is also measured by getting out of fields after successfully giving the national church a foundation.”



As the United States becomes more diverse, so does the work of Home Missions. A large Hmong population in the Appleton, Wis., area prompted a ministry to Hmong that is centered at St. Paul, Appleton. On March 15, three Hmong families, totaling 20 people, were baptized at St. Paul. The first Hmong evangelist in the Appleton area, Paul Thao, was also installed. Thao is shown here with his wife and son after his installation service.

Building a mission at home

Crossing cultural lines does not stop with World Missions. Here in North America, the area with the third largest population for missions, WELS Home Missions has extended its planning to include a multi-cultural ministry, primarily working with Asian, Hispanic, and African-American cultures.

In always striving to reach more lost souls with the gospel, the Board for Home Missions (BHM) helps congregations through the initial stages of growth. Often a congregation develops before a pastor is even called to the area. As planning, outreach, and research begin, a congregation is established with the help of Home Missions. This help comes in many forms, including money and manpower. When a congregation becomes self-supporting, Home Missions can step aside and put its money toward developing other new missions.

Representatives from 14 geographical districts meet as the BHM two to three times a year to enact plans and policies and allocate funds for the local level. Representatives look at the needs of the schools and churches in an area and work to get funding for their congregations. Administrator Harold Hagedorn and Associate administrator Mel Schuler facilitate and organize the planning, while the board chairman oversees BHM meetings and represents the board to the Synodical Council.

The BHM prayerfully considers prospective areas

before beginning a mission congregation by looking at how the Lord has used other WELS churches in the area as well as the economics, ethnic make-up, and demographics of the area. For example, if many children are in the area, the establishing mission might set up after-school programs or an early childhood center.

Worship services start as soon as possible. “Our goal is to drive the ministry. Some type of worship format is important. People want something that involves singin’ and prayin’ and preachin’,” Hagedorn says. Recently the BHM has adjusted its philosophy so that a mission congregation starts with a building and then puts in a ministry staff.

When a mission church is ready to build or a developing church needs more space, the WELS Church Extension Fund often assists. The WELS Church Extension Fund is an independent WELS organization that, because of member gifts and investments, can partner with mission congregations to construct ministry facilities and purchase parsonages and land. Both low-interest loans and matching grants are available to help a mission congregation pay for these capital expansion costs.

The Lord has blessed our World and Home Missions with many gifts. Our personal travels may not take us to Antigua or Indonesia, but the silent witness of our gifts will not go unheard as we continue to do the Lord’s work here and across the world.



Diane Behm is a member at Grace, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.



Luther the minister

Luther's preparation for the priesthood and his continuing theological studies revealed a gracious God to him. Luther then revealed that gracious God to others.

Richard D. Balge

Brother Martin was ordained Father Luther on April 4, 1507. Saying his first Mass, the new priest almost ran away from the altar without finishing the service. Years later Luther explained his terror: "As I read the words, 'I offer Thee, the living, only God' . . . I thought: Who is it to whom I am speaking?"

Finding a gracious God

The monastic life had not given Luther an answer to the question, "How can I find a gracious God?" Troubled in his conscience and insecure in his faith, he was reluctant when John Staupitz directed him to prepare for the priesthood. How could he care for the souls of others when his own soul was so sick? Under his vow of obedience, however, he could only submit and begin his studies.

In God's providence, Luther's preparation for the priesthood and his continuing theological studies revealed a gracious God to him. He studied the standard theological writings, but he was able to focus especially on the Bible and Saint Augustine. The latter helped him understand that the "righteousness of God" revealed in the gospel is not a righteousness that God has or that he demands of us, but "the righteousness that counts with God." It is a righteousness that God gives and that is ours through faith. Preparing to lecture on Paul's epistles to the Romans and the Galatians confirmed and deepened Luther's grasp of the

Bible's "grace alone, faith alone" teaching.

Proclaiming God's truth

Staupitz now directed his gifted friar to become a Doctor of Biblical Theology. Offering many reasons why that was not a good idea, the obedient monk nevertheless began and completed the program. One month shy of his 29th birthday, he swore to teach the Bible faithfully and to remain at Wittenberg University for life. In later life, when asked why he publicly opposed the teachings of the Roman Church, not only in Wittenberg but throughout the world, he could respond: "As a doctor in a general free university, I began, at the command of the pope and the emperor, to do what such a doctor is sworn to do, expounding the Scriptures for all the world and teaching everybody."*

One month shy of his 29th birthday, [Luther] swore to teach the Bible faithfully and to remain at Wittenberg University for life.

As a professor, Luther delivered a one-hour lecture four days a week. Students liked the way "he put every Latin word into such stout German." His teaching load might seem light, if we did not know that he was the leader of the cloister in Wittenberg,

supervised 11 other cloisters, taught fellow monks in the Black Cloister, carried on heavy correspondence, preached almost daily (often more than once), and served from 1515 to 1521 as the dean of the university's theological faculty.

Luther began preaching at St. Mary's (the "City Church") in 1514, when the pastor was suffering from a throat ailment. For the rest of his life, he averaged more than 70 sermons a year. In 1519, to help other preachers improve, he began to publish series of sermons on the gospels and epistles for each Sunday of the Christian Year.

The professor also assisted with pastoral work at the City Church. He heard confessions, visited the sick, and counseled the troubled. In this work, he learned that people who were not truly penitent were basking in a false security by buying indulgences. Out of concern for their spiritual welfare, Luther wrote the Ninety-five Theses.

The Roman Church no longer considered Luther a pastor, preacher, or professor after his excommunication in 1520. But in his work of proclaiming God's truth in lecture hall, parish, and publications, Luther was a lifelong minister of the gospel.

Richard Balge, a member of Calvary, Thiensville, Wisconsin, is a professor emeritus at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin.

*This quote is from Luther's lecture on Psalm 85. The other quotations are from *Table Talk*.

How to grow fruit

David D. Sellnow

We were meeting to discuss the financial dilemma facing our synod. Our schools and missions are making deep cuts in their ministries. We wondered aloud about what might be done. One suggestion kept surfacing: the synod's members must be made more aware of the shortfalls we are facing. The thought was this: If only people knew the full magnitude of the situation, they would respond with an outpouring of gifts that would offset the deficit.

It's a fine sentiment and has been supported by some experience. Over a million dollars has been given in response to this current crisis. God's people do rally in time of emergency.

However, we dare not think of special appeals as the best means for averting church money problems. That would assume hearts are already primed to give generous gifts, but are holding back until somebody holds out a specific request. Theologically, that theory doesn't work well. Hearts that are genuinely warmed by the gospel are already giving generously, often to the limit of their means. Hearts that are not so moved need more than a plea for more giving; they need more gospel to move them to give.

The giving of offerings is a fruit of faith. Fruits grow when faith grows. The one who "meditates day and night" on the Word of the Lord is "like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season" (Psalm 1:2,3). The person who is connected to Jesus like a branch to the vine "will bear much fruit" (John 15:5). If a greater measure of fruit from faith is desired, a greater measure of what nourishes faith is what will make it happen. Nothing but the gospel can produce God-pleasing gifts.

Let's carry the fruit-bearing analogy a bit further. Let's say you had a grove of fruit

trees. You fell on hard times, and you needed more fruit from those trees if you were going to feed your family. If your trees knew the urgency of your hunger, would they produce more fruit for you? Of course not. If trees are to produce more abundantly, they will need more fertilizing, watering, tending, pruning. Trees bear fruit in proportion to the nurture they are given, not in response to announcements that greater harvests are desirable.

Now, granted, human beings are not inanimate objects. We can respond to announcements and appeals. But there remains in our human nature something worse than inanimate: the intentional selfishness of sin. How do we become less self-concerned and more concerned about God and his kingdom? When the law of God exposes our sinfulness and the gospel of Christ enlarges our faith and spurs us to godly activity.

This monetary mess in which we find ourselves as a synod should not send us scurrying to find more effective techniques for asking for money. What we need is not a greater appreciation of the fiscal crisis. What is needed most is a greater appreciation of the good news of Jesus. The way of life handed down to us by our forefathers—this worldly life—is empty, bankrupt. Jesus has redeemed us for a full and eternal life, "not with perishable things such as silver and gold" (1 Peter 1:18), but with his very own lifeblood. That message is what motivates our living and giving.

Law and gospel, preaching and teaching—that's what we need more of. The rest will follow . . . like the fruit that blossoms and grows after spring rains.

David Sellnow is a professor at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota.

If a greater measure of fruit from faith is desired, a greater measure of what nourishes faith is what will make it happen.



A s a licensed emergency medical technician and a first responder for a volunteer fire department, I helped deal with the huge Quad/Graphics fire on July 12, 2002. Each article in this series will focus on a phrase or two that sticks in my mind as I recall what happened.

Big fire, serious reflections

Why does it often take a crisis for us to remember the power of prayer?

William R. Carter

It's the kind of thing that just doesn't happen to a small-town fire department—but it happened to ours. I am a licensed emergency medical technician and serve as a first responder for the Brownsville Fire Company. At 9:30 PM, July 12, 2002, a huge section of a paper storage facility at the Quad/Graphics printing plant in our territory collapsed and started to burn.

More than 200 personnel from 22 mostly volunteer fire departments and about a dozen other agencies were on scene at the height of the blaze. More than 200 more people would help during the 10 days that firefighters remained at the scene.

Milwaukee TV stations maintained continuous live coverage for more than three hours. It was still front-page news and the lead story on TV news four days later. Firefighters have been calling it a “hundred-year-fire,” the kind that only happens once every century.

A story worth telling

That means it's also the kind of fire that firefighters tell stories about for 100 years. There will be stories about what they saw that night when

they were manning a hose or climbing an aerial ladder, stories about what they did to contain the fire to the collapsed storage facility and prevent its spread to the rest of the two-million-square-foot facility. There will also be stories about what each of us learned about ourselves and our fellow firefighters in the week we spent together monitoring the fire.

Did your prayers [today] include blessings for others? They don't need to be facing a crisis before they earn a spot on your prayer list.

These are all stories that are begging to be told. Because I was appointed media officer shortly after the fire started, I had the privilege of telling some of the stories to the media. But there's so much more to tell. I wish the world could hear the stories about how our small-town vol-

unteer fire company worked together with the other departments in our area to fight—and contain—a very big fire.

That's partly what this series of articles is about, a chance for me to tell the kinds of stories I will tell my children and grandchildren about what I saw and what I did when I was at the Quad fire. But I hope it will be much more. I hope that by the time the series is through, you'll not only have an understanding of what these firefighters did that night, but also a new appreciation for everything that every fire department does to protect its community. I especially hope that, when I talk about what I learned from this experience, you can learn about yourself and how you can better serve your Savior.

Prayers during a difficult time

You hear quite a few interjections when riding in an emergency vehicle, especially when the crew gets its first glimpse of the smoke rolling from a structure fire or the damage to the vehicles involved in a collision.

I don't remember every interjection I heard in Engine 1465 when we first



Quad/Graphics, the world's largest privately held printer, produces a variety of print materials, including *Newsweek* and *Sports Illustrated* magazines. A paper storage facility in Quad/Graphics' Lomira, Wis., plant collapsed and started to burn on July 12, 2002.

saw the damage at Quad/Graphics that night. They might not all have been printable anyway. I do remember, though, one quiet voice murmuring, "Oh, Lord!" Those words were different than the others, spoken less like an interjection and more like the beginning of a prayer. There was much to pray about that night.

It looked bad. A huge section (about 350-feet long and 100-feet high) of a new paper storage facility had collapsed and was starting to burn. Because it was automated, we knew few people would have been inside, but we couldn't see what had happened to any of the adjacent buildings, which were usually full of employees. If any of those buildings had also collapsed, many victims could have been trapped inside.

You learn to prepare for the worst when you arrive at any scene. That night preparing for the worst meant getting ready for the grim task of removing badly crushed victims from the rubble. It also included a silent prayer that started, "Oh, Lord . . . help me do what I have to do tonight."

The first reports we heard from employees also sounded bad—one possible DOA and reports of up to nine people missing. My first assign-

ment was to see if anything could be done for the possible DOA. To get to where he was, I had to walk past the 100-foot section of collapsed building. As I walked past that huge pile of paper and steel, I thought about the other people we might find there.

I also thought about the possibility that those people could have been friends or family of some of the members of the fire company or my congregation. I thought about the way some of them would react when they found out that someone they knew was among the victims. Another silent prayer: "Oh, Lord, help all those affected by what we find tonight."

We soon learned that nothing could be done for our first victim. A section of Spancrete wall had fallen on the car in which he was sitting. The first of many, we thought.

Soon afterward, though, we got official word that the 300 other employees in the plant that night had all been accounted for. Miraculously, no one else was even hurt. Definitely time for another prayer: "Oh, Lord, thank you for sparing so many people from potential disaster."

Prayers for today

You probably would have prayed those same prayers that night. But did you pray them this morning, too?

Did you ask the Lord to help you with what you had to do today? Or did you begin your day with one of those unprintable interjections? Each day, each task, no matter how exciting, boring, or even unpleasant, is really just another opportunity to serve the Savior. Ask him to help you do that.

Did your prayers include blessings for others? They don't need to be facing a crisis before they earn a spot on your prayer list. One of the best ways you can show God's love to people is to pray for them. We remember to say thanks when we see how close we might have been to a potential disaster. But did your prayers today include thanks for all the close calls you didn't see or for all the danger the Lord kept completely away? And did you thank him for sparing you from the worst potential disaster of all when he sent his Son to the cross?

There was a lot to pray about that night. The Lord heard and answered every prayer. There will be a lot to pray about tomorrow, too. You can start quietly, "Oh, Lord . . ."



Billy Carter is pastor at St. Paul, Brownsville, Wisconsin.

WHATEVER

I want to be beautiful

God and the world have different standards for beauty. Whose opinion is more important to you?

Stephanie Hanneman

I tried to run today, tried being the operative word. I didn't get very far before I had to slow to a walk. I was running with my dad, and he was actually the one who had to stop, but if he hadn't been there, I still would've stopped. I realized then and there, I was out of shape. I've tried other ways to get into shape, but nothing works quite as well as running. The only trouble is that running is so much harder.

So why do I even try to run? Why do I have to work so hard to do something if I could just do easier forms of exercise, which actually make me look okay?

The answer is: because I'm sick of looking okay. Everywhere I look there are beautiful people. I'm not talking about the supermodels in magazines or the size zero actresses on TV. They have people to get them up at the crack of dawn and make them work out and eat what they need to eat. I don't have that, so I won't ever look like them. The beautiful people I am talking about are the girls I see every day. The people who were born beautiful. They all look good no matter what. That is why I run—so I, too, can be a beautiful person.

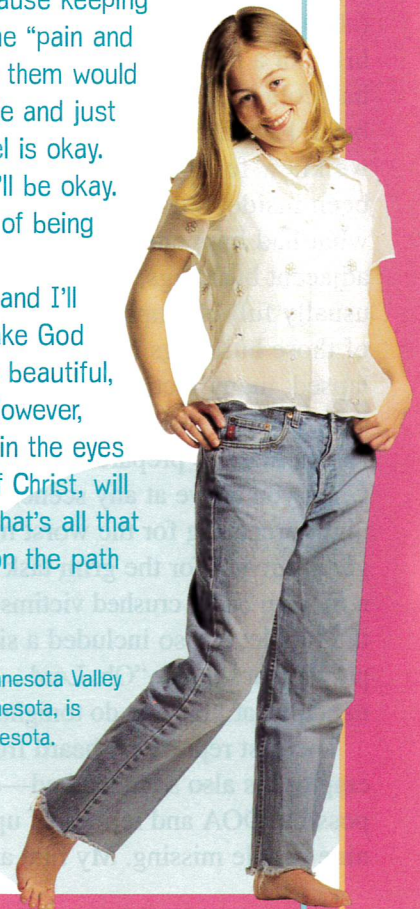
I don't know if I will ever reach beautiful status in the eyes of this world. Even if I don't, I have one compensation: God will always see me as beautiful. Jesus did for me in God's eyes what running has the potential to do for me in the world's eyes. He made me beautiful. He washed away all of my sins and replaced my dirty garments with his own clean, white ones. Now, even though I still get dirty and ruin the beauty, Jesus washes me clean again.

The beautiful people whom I see every day may be naturally beautiful. However, they still have to do things to maintain their beauty. Some, as I try to do, run. To maintain my beauty before God, I try to keep my white clothes clean. God told me to, but that's not really the reason I do it. I'm just thankful for the beauty that he has given me.

Sometimes, I don't remember that—like when I'm running, and I forget why I'm out there and wonder if being beautiful is worth all that effort. Sometimes, when my friends are all doing something I know is wrong, I just let them, because keeping a clean garment isn't worth the "pain and suffering" that standing up to them would bring me. I let my morals slide and just let them do whatever they feel is okay. As long as I'm not doing it, I'll be okay. The only problem is, I'm sick of being okay. I want to be beautiful.

But I'll try to keep running, and I'll try to do what I know will make God happy. Maybe someday I'll be beautiful, in every sense of the word. However, even if I don't look beautiful in the eyes of the world, God, because of Christ, will still think that I'm beautiful. That's all that I need to keep me running on the path of life.

Stephanie Hanneman, a senior at Minnesota Valley Lutheran High School, New Ulm, Minnesota, is a member at St. Paul, Arlington, Minnesota.



God's eyes

Getting to know God's story

Randy K. Hunter

*There was a little girl who had a little curl
Right in the middle of her forehead.
When she was good she was very, very good,
But when she was bad she was horrid.*

There was a little king . . .

We don't know if David was little, and we don't know if he had curls. We do know that he was at times very, very good and he was at other times horrid. Such is the life of a child of God: sinner and saint, horns and haloes.

The Lord had warned the people about their insistence on a king. They already had the only perfect King: the Lord himself. Now they would settle for less. Israel's human monarchy began with a succession of three men ruling a united kingdom: Saul, David, and Solomon. Following them came a civil war, a divided country, and a series of kings—some very good and some horrid.

- The story of Israel's kings begins with the Lord's ominous instructions to the prophet Samuel: "Listen to them and give them a king." Samuel gave them Saul. Put into your own words the description of Saul in 1 Samuel 9:2.
- Saul was a reluctant king, an impressive king, and an unsatisfactory king. Match each passage to one of those descriptions: 1 Samuel 10:20-22; 1 Samuel 10:23,24; and 1 Samuel 13:10-13.
- The Lord chose Saul's successor. From 1 Samuel 16, make two lists: reasons the Lord chose David and things that apparently didn't matter.
- David didn't take over the reigns of leadership until King Saul and his son, Jonathan, were killed in a battle with the Philistines. David's first official act was writing a tribute song to Saul and Jonathan. Read 2 Samuel 1:17-27 and identify characteristics of David revealed in his song.
- List what you learn about David in 1 Samuel 17.
- Repentance means sorrow over sin, trust in God's forgiveness, and a desire to turn away from sin. Underline each word or two-word phrase in Psalm 51 that captures the meaning of repentance.
- David dreamed of building a magnificent house for God. But God said, "No, David, you've been a man of war. I'll let your son, Solomon (the name comes from *shalom*, peace), build it." Instead of pouting, David chose to give thanks for all that the Lord had allowed him to do, and he blessed his successor, Solomon. David laid out his succession plan in 1 Kings 2:1-3. What can Christian parents do today to pass the mantle of faith and leadership on to their children?
- Describe the vision David cast for his son in 1 Chronicles 28:9,10.
- Read 1 Kings 3:5-14, Solomon's prayer for wisdom as he began as king. Tell of an event that led you to pray for wisdom.
- Solomon's son, Rehoboam, received advice from two different camps (1 Kings 12). The advice he followed led to civil war and the break-up of Israel into two kingdoms: the northern tribes (Israel) and the southern tribes (Judah). Why did Rehoboam choose to follow the advice he did?

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

Find this article and possible answers on-line. Go to <www.wels.net/sab/frm-nl.html> and click on "current issue." Then click on "Getting to know God's story." Answers will be available after June 5.

Creation &
promise

Patriarchs

Freedom
from
captivity

Wandering

Promised
Land

Kings

Major
prophets 1

Major
prophets 2

Minor
prophets

Returning
home

Wisdom
books

Preparation
for the
coming
Messiah

Delegates for the 57th biennial convention of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis.—July 28-Aug. 1, 2003

Arizona-California

Conference	Lay delegates	Teachers	Pastors
Apache	Mr. Morris Ashkie, Grace, San Carlos, Ariz.	Mr. Karl Bauer Mr. Paul Haag Mr. Daniel Johnson Mr. Andrew Plocher Mr. Larry Zarnstorff	Rev. Thomas Franzmann Rev. Paul Hartman Rev. Daniel Hennig Rev. Timothy Henning Rev. Ricky Himm Rev. Timothy Poetter Rev. Joel Prange Rev. David Rosenau Rev. Paul Siegler
Black Canyon	Mr. Lon Meyer, Emmanuel, Tempe, Ariz. Mr. James Schroeder, Calvary, Chandler, Ariz. Mr. Roger Wendt, Deer Valley, Phoenix, Ariz. Mr. David Williams, Mt. Calvary, Flagstaff, Ariz.		
California North	Mr. Roger Cross, Peace, Santa Clara, Calif. Mr. Kenneth Field, Mt. Calvary, Redding, Calif. Mr. Kim Winsor, St. Peter, Modesto, Calif.		
California South	Mr. Louis Belz, Ascension, Escondido, Calif. Dr. Steven Daugherty, Star of Bethlehem, Santa Maria, Calif. Mr. David Heyn, Prince of Peace, Thousand Oaks, Calif. Mr. James Ringstrom, Beautiful Saviour, Carlsbad, Calif.		
Gadsden	Mr. Emil Beimborn, Trinity, El Paso, Texas Mr. Gary Rasmussen, Grace, Safford, Ariz. Mr. Craig Rendahl, Redeemer, Tucson, Ariz.		

Dakota-Montana

Conference	Lay delegates	Teachers	Pastors
Eastern	Mr. John Seidl, Our Savior, Brookings, S.D. Mr. Orville Taecker, Bethlehem, Watertown, S.D. Mr. Aaron Trimmer, St. Paul's, Valley City, N.D.	Mr. Stephen Fritze	Rev. John Carter Rev. Steve Nuss Rev. Lloyd Schlomer Rev. John Schroeder
Rocky Mountain	Mr. Ed Giesbrecht, Abundant Life, Saskatoon, SK, Canada Mr. George Pieper, Morning Star, Carstairs, AB, Canada		
Western	Mr. Todd Fink, Christ, Bison, S.D. Mr. Terry Kemmet, St. John, Tappen, N.D. Mr. Gary Kruse, Grace, Hot Springs, S.D.		

Michigan

Conference	Lay delegates	Teachers	Pastors
Northern	Mr. Harold Benecke, Mt. Olive, Bay City, Mich. Mr. Dale Greal, Prince of Peace, Howell, Mich. Mr. Richard Kohn, Emanuel, Tawas City, Mich. Mr. Gerald Kolb, St. John, Bay City, Mich. Mr. Robert Nelson, Gloria Dei, Grand Blanc, Mich. Mr. David Schroeder, Prince of Peace, Traverse City, Mich. Mr. Ron Sieggreen, St. John, Saginaw, Mich. Mr. Art Wicke, Hope, Saint Charles, Mich.	Mr. Charles Buege Mr. John Eggert Mr. Philip Glende Mr. William Kruck Mr. Alan Schaffer Mr. Daniel Schultz Mr. Jeffrey Schultz Prof. Terry Vasold	Rev. Fred Adrian Rev. Joel Ehler Rev. Kenneth Engdahl Rev. Gregory Ewald Rev. Mark Kipfmiller Rev. Guy Purdue Rev. Duane Rodewald Rev. Mark Rosenberg Rev. James Schmeling Rev. Thomas Schneider Rev. Gary Tryggstad Rev. Thomas Westra
Ohio	Mr. Jack Cunningham, Faith, West Newton, Pa. Mr. Fred Lemke, Crown of Life, Marietta, Ohio		
Southeastern	Mr. Elton Braun, Our Saviour, Westland, Mich. Mr. Dale Cole, Emanuel Redeemer, Yale, Mich. Mr. George Kempf, St. John, Ann Arbor, Mich. Mr. James Rathje, Holy Redeemer, Port Huron, Mich. Mr. Nathan Walworth, Hope, Portland, Mich.		
Southwestern	Mr. Bill Mashke, Grace, Saint Joseph, Mich. Dr. Mel Ott, St. John, Dowagiac, Mich.		

Minnesota

Conference	Lay delegates	Teachers	Pastors
Crow River	Mr. Phillip Duesterhoeft, Zion, Hutchinson, Minn. Mr. Floyd Kastens, Immanuel, Hutchinson, Minn. Mr. Donley Pansch, Mt. Olive, Graceville, Minn.	Mr. Christopher J. Avery Mr. Benjamin Bain Mr. James Bakken Mr. Scott Beyersdorf Prof. Thomas N. Hunter Prof. Jack Minch Mr. Christopher J. Olson Prof. Alan Spurgin Mr. James Stueber Mr. Paul A. Wendland Mr. Keith Wordell	Rev. Mike Barlow Rev. Jon Bitter Rev. Brian Dose Rev. Ellery Groth Rev. Paul Henning Rev. Wayne Hilgendorf Rev. Shawn Kauffeld Rev. Brian Koff Rev. Martin Lopahs Rev. Philip Mischke Prof. John Schmidt Rev. Daniel Schumann Prof. David D. Sellnow Rev. Keith Siverly Rev. Richard Tragasz
Mankato	Mr. Lowell Hoffman, St. Paul, Jordan, Mi Mr. Wes Steinborn, Grace, Le Sueur, Minn.		
Red Wing	Mr. Daniel Dirksen, Cross, Charles City, Iowa Mr. Richard Reese, St. John, Goodhue, Minn. Mr. Frederick Schulz, Mt. Peter, Goodhue, Minn.		
Redwood Falls	Mr. Alton Beadell, St. Paul, Seaforth, Minn.		
Saint Croix	Mr. Joe Broker, St. Katherine, Elk Mound, Wis. Mr. Darrek Carstensen, Brooklyn, Brooklyn Park, Minn. Mr. Ed Collyard, St. John, Saint Paul, Minn. Mr. Jon Enstad, Cross of Christ, Coon Rapids, Minn. Mr. Robert Freiberg, St. John, Spring Valley, Wis. Mr. Charles Larkin, Mt. Olive, Saint Paul, Minn. Mr. Ottomar Lemke, Holy Trinity, New Hope, Minn. Mr. Steve Schuppenhauer, Bloomington, Bloomington, Minn.		
Southern	Mr. Kurt Nitz, Good Shepherd, Saint Peters, Mo.		

Nebraska

Conference	Lay delegates	Teachers	Pastors
Colorado	Mr. Harry Appel, St. Paul, Las Animas, Colo. Mr. John Douglass, Living Word, Montrose, Colo. Mr. William Lipke, Our Savior, Monte Vista, Colo. Mr. Harold Schmidt, St. John, Platteville, Colo. Mr. Tom Smith, Abiding Love, Loveland, Colo.	Mr. Tom Plitzuweit Mr. Tim Schubkegel	Rev. Jeff Heitsch Rev. Philip Hirsch Rev. Brent Merten Rev. Rodney Rixe Rev. Jonathan Rockhoff Rev. Paul White
Rosebud	Mr. Orville Broekemeier, Trinity, Hoskins, Neb. Mr. Darrel Pochop, Zion, Colome, S.D. Mr. Jeff Schramm, Trinity, Winner, S.D.		
Southern	Mr. Melvin Bowman, St. John, Cortland, Neb. Mr. Dallas Christ, St. Paul, Plymouth, Neb.		
Three River	Mr. Dan Stein, Grace, Sioux City, Iowa		

North Atlantic

Conference	Lay delegates	Teachers	Pastors
		Mr. Eric Lange	Rev. John Huebner Rev. John Mittelstaedt Rev. Joel Petermann Rev. Kevin Schultz

Northern Wisconsin

Conference	Lay delegates	Teachers	Pastors
		Mr. Robert C. Becker Mr. Timothy Bentz Mr. Steven Dankert Mr. Donald Gurgel Mr. Paul Hartwig Mr. Tod Hauf Mr. James Kaniess Mr. Kenneth Kasten Mr. Michael Mathwig Mr. Jeffrey Miller Mr. Richard Slattery Mr. Dennis Steinbrenner Mr. Gary Thoma Mr. Robert Weimer	Rev. David Arndt Rev. David Haag Rev. Daniel Helwig Rev. Charles Heup Rev. Thomas Klusmeyer Rev. Timothy Lindloff Rev. Lyle Luchterhand Rev. Timothy Nommensen Rev. John Parlow Rev. Jon Tesch Rev. David Wenzel Rev. Mark Wenzel Rev. Richard Winters Rev. Steven Witte

Pacific Northwest

Conference	Lay delegates	Teachers	Pastors
Alaska	Mr. Dean Dawson, Christ, Juneau, Alaska Mr. Mark Keller, Peace, Eagle River, Alaska Mr. Gerald Zoldan, Faith, Anchorage, Alaska	Mr. David Habeck Mr. John Sebald	Rev. David Leistikow Rev. James Ruppel Rev. Douglas Weiser
Cascades	Mr. Merle Blum, Trinity, Eugene, Ore. Mr. Don Butler, Redeemer, Yakima, Wash. Mr. Doug Guenther, Divine Peace, Renton, Wash. Mr. Delbert Heins, Grace, Seattle, Wash. Mr. John Pietrusiewicz, King of Kings, Kennewick, Wash.		

South Atlantic

Conference	Lay delegates	Teachers	Pastors
Cottonbelt	Mr. Danny Bednar, Shepherd of the Hills, Knoxville, Tenn. Mr. Gary Frey, Gloria Dei, Memphis, Tenn. Mr. Ken Morris, Rock of Ages, Madison, Tenn.	Mr. Mark Boehme	Rev. Henry Koch Rev. Robert M. Krueger Rev. Carl Leyrer Rev. John Maasch Rev. Roger Rockhoff Rev. Michael Schultz
Cypress	Mr. Richard Fischer, Abiding Hope, Ocala, Fla. Mr. Jay White, King of Kings, Maitland, Fla.		
Everglades	Mr. Dick Krueger, Abiding Love, Cape Coral, Fla. Mr. Robert Strane, Shepherd of the Palms, Jupiter, Fla. Mr. Duane Timm, Ocean Drive, Pompano Beach, Fla.		

South Central

Conference	Lay delegates	Teachers	Pastors
South Central	Mr. Frank Burton, Abiding Faith, Pinehurst, Texas Mr. Leo Frese, Calvary, Dallas, Texas Mr. Marc L. Frey, Our Savior, San Antonio, Texas Mr. Harold Griepentrog, St. Mark, Duncanville, Texas Mr. Roger Hinz, Living Water, Hot Springs Village, Ark. Mr. John Tappen, Trinity, Mountain Home, Ark. Mr. Robert Timmerman, Holy Word, Austin, Texas	Mr. Steven Witt	Rev. John Hering Rev. Stephen Valleskey Rev. Marc VonDeylen

Southeastern Wisconsin

Conference	Lay delegates	Teachers	Pastors
Chicago	Mr. Joe Cioe, Our Shepherd, Crown Point, Ind. Mr. Stanley Crum, Holy Scripture, Fort Wayne, Ind. Mr. Daniel Graham, Heritage, Lindenhurst, Ill. Mr. Walter Guetschow, St. Paul, Round Lake Park, Ill. Mr. Ken Schaefer, New Life, Lake Zurich, Ill. Mr. John Smith, St. John, Libertyville, Ill.	Mr. Michael Albrecht Mr. David Allerheiligen Mr. Joe Archer Dr. John Bauer Dr. Paul Beck Mr. Keith Bowe Mr. Wade Cohoon II Mr. Cary Haakenson Mr. John Helke Mr. Tom Hering Mr. Frederick Horn Mr. Robert Lehninger Mr. James E. Martens Prof. Joel Mischke Mr. Carl Natzke Mr. Edward Noon Mr. George Povich Mr. James Raddatz Mr. Duane Schlomer Mr. Steven Strassburg Mr. Leroy Westphal Mr. Jonathan Winkel Mr. Jeffrey Zilisch	Rev. Mark Anderson Rev. Dale Baumber Prof. Forrest Bivens Prof. John M. Brenner Rev. Larry Ellenberger Rev. Lawrence Gates Rev. Randall Hughes Rev. Paul Kelm Rev. Gary Koschnitzke Rev. Harlyn J. Kuschel Rev. Bruce Marggraf Rev. Steven O. Olson Rev. John Roekle Dr. Gregory Schulz Rev. Douglas Semenske Rev. David Wierschke Rev. Martin Wildauer
Kettle Moraine	Mr. Walter Anderson, Zion, Theresa, Wis. Mr. Glenn Blank, St. Paul, Slinger, Wis. Mr. Carl Reible III, St. Luke, Lomira, Wis. Mr. Doug Schultz, St. Matthew, Iron Ridge, Wis. Mr. Ed Wilger, St. John, Newburg, Wis.		
Milwaukee Metro	Mr. Mark Brandon, St. Matthew, Milwaukee, Wis. Mr. Terry Herbst, St. Paul, Cudahy, Wis. Mr. Robert Hirschmann, St. Lucas, Milwaukee, Wis. Mr. Jack Kollath, Woodlawn, West Allis, Wis.		
Milwaukee Urban	Mr. Ron Metoxen, St. Peter, Milwaukee, Wis. Mr. David Yets, Christ, Milwaukee, Wis.		
Shoreland	Mr. Roger Borchardt, St. John, Burlington, Wis. Mr. Dan Krueger, Mt. Zion, Kenosha, Wis. Mr. Lorn Matelski, First, Elkhorn, Wis.		
Western Lakes	Mr. Daniel Connolly, Zion, Hartland, Wis. Mr. Thomas Gentz, Faith, Sussex, Wis. Mr. Elmer Wohlers, Christ the Lord, Brookfield, Wis.		

Western Wisconsin

Conference	Lay delegates	Teachers	Pastors
Central	Mr. Del Contreras, St. John, Juneau, Wis. Mr. Douglas Daron, Christus, Delavan, Wis. Mr. Tom Dixon, St. Paul, Fort Atkinson, Wis. Mr. Roger Dohholz, St. Peter, Juneau, Wis. Mr. Bernard Hookstead, St. John, Milton, Wis. Mr. David Luisier, Bethany, Fort Atkinson, Wis. Mr. Robert Mateske, St. John, Newville, Wis. Mr. Roger Preuss, St. Matthew, Oconomowoc, Wis. Mr. Tim Probst, St. Luke, Watertown, Wis.	Mr. Gregg Birkholz Mr. Bruce Fehlauer Mr. Daniel Fenske Mr. Rick Grundman Mr. Mark Holcomb Prof. Nathan Kieselhorst Mr. Scott Monroe Mr. Randall Pahl Mr. Matthew Prost Mr. Steven Remmele Mr. Mitchel Salzwedel Mr. Craig Sonntag Mr. Michael Wilde Mr. Marvin Wittig	Rev. Norris Baumann Rev. Martin Baur Rev. Thomas Biedenbender Rev. John Boehringer Rev. Michael Duncan Rev. Fred Fedke III Rev. Tim H. Gumm Rev. Randy Hunter Rev. Paul Kante Rev. Robert H. Krueger Rev. Robert J. Krueger Rev. Michael Lindemann Rev. Steve Schmeling Rev. Myron Schwanke Rev. Anthony Strasske Rev. Martin Stuebs Rev. Roger Wahl
Mississippi River Valley	Mr. Elmer Simon, Jehovah, Altura, Minn.		
Southwestern	Mr. David Baumgarten, St. John, Rock Springs, Wis. Mr. Sidney Kopp, St. Paul, Bangor, Wis.		
Wisconsin River Valley	Mr. John Luetschwager, Redeemer, Weston, Wis.		
Wisillowa	Mr. Thad Crass, St. Paul, Moline, Ill. Mr. Charles Zahn, Grace, Prairie du Chien, Wis.		

World missionaries

Rev. John Gierach
Rev. Michael Hartman
Rev. Paul Nitz
Rev. John Vogt
Rev. Brad Wordell

Note: Some lay delegates were not yet identified when this went to print.

Faith-filled tears

"Be faithful to the point of death," said Pastor Scott Oelhafen as he overlooked the casket where 24-year old Brigette Zoeller lay with her day-old son, Dakota, in her arms. Brian Zoeller stood next to the casket as a husband, father, and new confirmand. Reassuring Brian that his wife and son were in heaven and that he would someday join them, Oelhafen completed Brian's confirmation verse: "And I will give you the crown of life."

Unlike Brigette, Brian was not raised in a strong Christian household. That is why Brigette was such a blessing to him when they started dating. Her faith in Jesus as her Savior impacted Brian and all those around her. The couple came to church at Trinity, Waukesha, Wis., together, and Brian completed Trinity's Bible information class during the summer of their 2001 wedding.

A month before their first child was due, Brian announced to Oelhafen that he would join the church the day his unborn son, Dakota, was baptized. Only God knew that before that day would come, he would take Brigette and Dakota home to heaven.

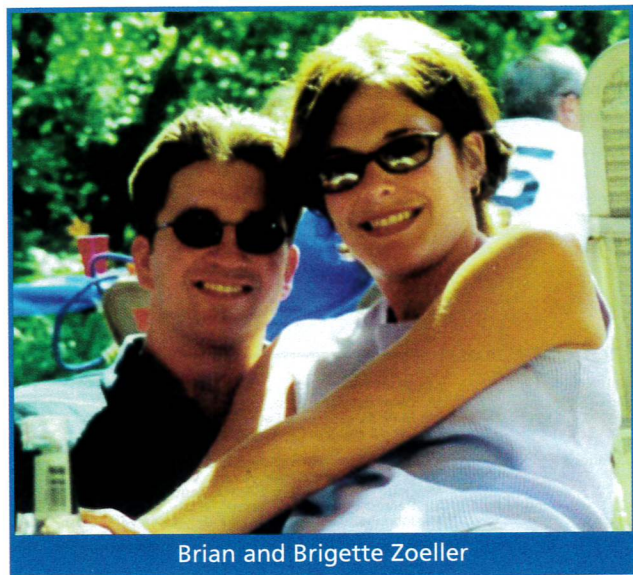
On Jan. 8, Brigette suffered a heart attack at home. Brian found her and performed CPR until the paramedics

arrived. On the way to the hospital he grabbed a cross off their wall. What else could he cling to at a time like this?

Just minutes after Dakota was delivered by C-section, doctors announced that Brigette was dead. In the heartbreak of this moment, Brian's response was, "Then we need to baptize my son." Just hours later, Dakota joined his mother in heaven.

Oelhafen says he has never seen so many young people in one service as at Brigette and Dakota's funeral. They heard through Oelhafen's sermon that "Brigette is in heaven, and she wants you to be there with her." They witnessed through Brian joining the church that his only hope is Jesus.

God promises to use even tragedy for the good of those who love him. Brigette and Dakota's deaths have served as a wake-up call to the young. Friends of the family are coming back to church. Community members are inquiring about the tragedy and the church. Former neighbors of Brigette's



Brian and Brigette Zoeller

family realized the importance of baptism and had their baby baptized.

In faith Brian can say, "I don't ask for Brigette back. I know where she is, and I'm glad she's there." But that does not eliminate the tears. Jesus wept at Lazarus' death even though he would raise him moments later. Amidst such heartbreak, Christians find comfort knowing that Jesus saves. Brigette and Dakota are safe in heaven with Jesus, and Brian, too, is safe because God's strong arm is guiding him.

Laura Warmuth

New president leads Wisconsin Lutheran College

The first and only president to lead Wisconsin Lutheran College (WLC), Milwaukee, is retiring on June 30. Since 1975, Dr. Gary Greenfield has been the visionary for this small liberal arts school, and now he is sharing his expertise with Dr. Timothy Kriewall.

Kriewall accepted the call to be WLC's second president in March, and he is spending May and June at WLC so that he can see the campus in session. Kriewall is no stranger to academia, though. For 11 years he served as a medical school professor. More recently, Kriewall has used his Ph.D. in biomedical engineering to develop cutting edge

medical products. However, he always imagined that he would



Dr. Timothy Kriewall and his wife, Sally, moved from Florida to Wisconsin in late April. Dr. Kriewall will take over as the second president of Wisconsin Lutheran College on July 1.

return to teaching someday. He just never thought it would be as a college president.

Says Kriewall: "There is so much to look forward to—working with the faculty, continuing to develop financial support for the college, helping prepare students for the secular world, and participating with the students. I want to be part of this young, vibrant organization."

Kriewall's emotions about this call have ranged from disbelief and terror to excitement and joy. "The joy is what has settled in," he explains. "And because I know that the hand of the Lord was involved, I'm humbled."

Obituary

Emanuel S. Arndt 1912-2003

Emanuel Arndt was born Jan. 24, 1912. He died April 2, 2003, in Muskego, Wis.

A 1932 graduate of Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., he served at St. Paul, North Fond du Lac, Wis.; Christ, Milwaukee, Wis.; and Wisconsin Lutheran High School, Milwaukee.

He was preceded in death by one son. He is survived by his wife, Ruth; one daughter; one son; eight grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren.

Walter L. Henning 1923-2003

Walter Henning was born Dec. 25, 1923, in Peshtigo, Wis. He died March 31, 2003, in Ann Arbor, Mich.

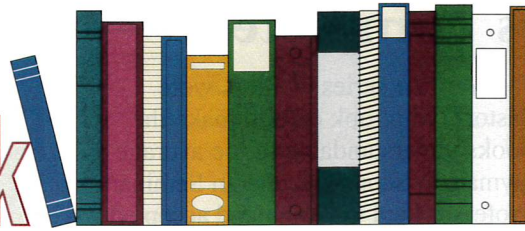
A 1952 graduate of Concordia Seminary, Springfield, Ill., he served St. Paul, Hyde, Mich.; Ascension, then in Detroit, Mich.; and St. Paul, Belleville, Mich.

He was preceded in death by five brothers and sisters. He is survived by his wife, Gwen; two daughters; one son; six grandchildren; a brother; and five sisters.

THROUGH MY BIBLE IN 3 YEARS
JULY 2003

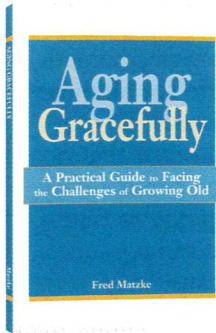
1. 1 Samuel 4:1b-22	15. 1 Sam. 23, 24
2. 1 Sam. 5:1-7:2	16. 1 Sam. 25, 26
3. 1 Sam. 7:3-8:22	17. 1 Sam. 27, 28
4. 1 Sam. 9:1-10:16	18. 1 Sam. 29, 30
5. 1 Sam. 10:17-11:15	19. 1 Sam. 31
6. 1 Sam. 12	20. Ephesians 1:1-14
7. 1 Sam. 13	21. Eph. 1:15-23
8. 1 Sam. 14	22. Eph. 2
9. 1 Sam. 15	23. Eph. 3
10. 1 Sam. 16	24. Eph. 4:1-5:2
11. 1 Sam. 17:1-54	25. Eph. 5:3-6:9
12. 1 Sam. 17:55-19:24	26. Eph. 6:10-24
13. 1 Sam. 20:1-21:9	27. Job 1-3
14. 1 Sam. 21:10-22:23	28. Job 4, 5
	29. Job 6, 7
	30. Job 8:1-9:24
	31. Job 9:25-10:22

Booknook



A look at new books published by Northwestern Publishing House. For more information, visit <www.nph.net> or call 1-800-662-6022.

Aging gracefully



\$11.99

We're all aging, but are we also growing old? Are persons near and dear to us growing old?

If you can answer "yes" to either of those questions, you face new, sometimes unsettling, challenges. Here is a book that can help you.

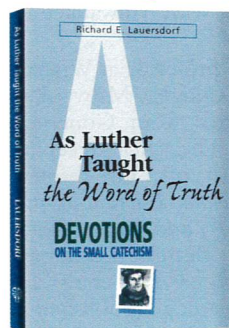
Through a series of real-life narratives, author Fred Matzke shows you practical ways to deal with the challenges in *Aging Gracefully: A Practical Guide to Facing the Challenges of Growing Old*. Matzke draws on his 33 years as a Christian therapist and educator to address such subjects as caring for aging parents, dealing with the loss of a spouse, handling setbacks, and facing

serious disease. His brief stories make for easy reading and help the reader to identify with the issues. His Christian perspective shines the light of God's grace on aging issues.

Is it time for you to think about the aging process? Start with this book.

Gary P. Baumler, St. Paul, Muskego, Wisconsin

Revisiting Scriptural truths



\$10.39

As Luther Taught the Word of Truth—Devotions on the Small Catechism is a wonderful devotional collection by Richard E. Lauersdorf. It is a welcome opportunity to revisit Scriptural truths so clearly and concisely presented by Luther in the Small Catechism.

The book contains 58 devotions separated into seven sections. The first three sections are dedicated to the articles of the Apostles' Creed, the fourth to the Ten Commandments, the fifth to the Lord's Prayer, and the final sections to the sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion. Each devotion in turn is divided into three parts and a final short prayer, making

it easier for the reader to digest and understand each idea. Information is organized clearly, sentences are easy to read, and wording is precise. Moreover, Lauersdorf's use of life experiences allows the reader to see and know God's truth more distinctly as it unfolds in our lives daily. Ultimately, however, it is the gospel message, so full of hope and comfort, lying at the heart of each devotion, that makes this 198-page book such a devotional gem.

Many of us may have set aside our Small Catechism as a worship resource. However, Richard Lauersdorf's collection of devotions will help refocus our hearts and thoughts on God's amazing love and grace for all people.

David Deibert, Salem, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

People's Bible series complete

Turning 66 books into 41 is not an editing job—it is an expansion project. But after a 20-year wait, an easy-to-read commentary on the Bible is complete.

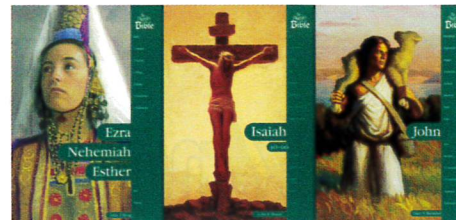
In 1981 the Committee for Christian Literature decided to produce a series called the People's Bible that targeted the average layman. The series includes the entire text of each book of the Bible and is accompanied by commentary, maps, archaeological information, histories, and illustrations.

Northwestern Publishing House published the first book in the People's Bible series in 1983 and brought the last to the shelves in January 2003.

The timeline was initially to print four books per year. The first three years went smoothly, but after that production became more sporadic.

All of the series' authors were pastors, who took care to make the books understandable to the average layman. Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Professor Paul O. Wendland accepted the assignment to write on Chronicles. "In explaining the Chronicler, I liked to think of what I was doing as a sort of confession of faith. At the same time, I would usually be troubled by some personal struggle, or a struggle someone else was going through that they'd shared with me, and it would all get worked into the book somehow," Wendland says.

The series carried the same format throughout the first 17 years of printing but was given a new look in 2000. "We felt we needed to reformat the inside to make it easier for the reader," explains Jerry Loeffel, NPH president.



Both the writing and the layout made NPH's goal of reaching laypeople with the Word a success.

Says Wendland, "I can't tell you how many members told me how much a book in the series helped them. It's such a joy to see all these different author's names on the People's Bibles and know that no matter who wrote the commentary, when I open it I'm going to find a song of praise to the same good God who gave us Jesus."

Diane Behm

District news

Dakota-Montana

Grace, Hot Springs, S.D., held a mortgage burning service in May to celebrate paying off its debt.

Western Wisconsin

The **Lutheran Pioneers National Convention** was held at St. Matthew, Janesville, Wis., on April 26.

In May, St. John, Ixonia, Wis., honored **Merlin Krause** for the 50 continuous years that he has taught Sunday school at St. John.

Minnesota

On May 11, **Trinity, St. Paul, Minn.**, held its closing service. The congregation is merging with Emanuel, St. Paul, to form a new congregation, Crown of Life. Trinity, dating back to 1855, is the congregation at which delegates met and founded the Minnesota Synod, which became WELS' Minnesota District.

Southeastern Wisconsin

St. Marcus Lutheran School, Milwaukee, declared March 19 "Tom Hall Day." **Tom Hall**, the school's maintenance chief, leads devotions, helps with disci-

Arizona



All three principals from Arizona Lutheran Academy's history were able to attend the school's 25th anniversary celebration on March 23. From left: Robert Adickes, Daniel Johnson, and James Plitzuweit.

pline and transportation, and teaches martial arts. He's also a leader in St. Marcus's after-school ministry program to neighborhood children. On March 19, Hall, a former United States and European Full Contact Karate/Kick-

boxing champion, was inducted to the Martial Arts Hall of Fame, so St. Marcus chose to honor his gifts and the way that he has shared them with Milwaukee for more than 25 years.

Dr. Mark Braun, a professor at Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee, received two awards from Concordia Historical Institute. The articles receiving awards were "Faith of Our Fathers" (published in *Concordia Historical Institute Journal*, Winter 2001) and "Being Good Americans and Better Lutherans: Synodical Conference Lutherans and the Military Chaplaincy" (published in *WELS Historical Institute Journal*, April 2001).

Happy Anniversary!

WW—On May 4, Luther High School, Onalaska, Wis., honored **Roland Helmreich** for his 40 years of faithful service in the teaching ministry.

In 2003, members of **St. John, Ixonia, Wis.**, are celebrating the church's 125th anniversary.

These pastors are the reporters for the districts featured this month: AZ—Kenneth Pasch; DM—Wayne Rouse; MN—Jeffrey Bovee; SEW—Scott Oelhafen; WW—Martin Baur.

WELS' financial challenge greater than thought

Even as cost cutting measures were moving WELS toward a balanced budget and the synod was breathing a bit easier, it was revealed that as much as \$9.6 million of internally borrowed funds also need to be repaid.

First Vice President Wayne Mueller explains: "What happened is that our financial accountants borrowed money from our savings accounts (revolving funds) in order to keep our checking account (operational budget) balanced. This internal borrowing is a legitimate accounting procedure in public and private corporations and has always been approved by our independent auditors.

"The problem arose because this procedure was not clearly reported to our Synodical Council or to our administration. Although the numbers were always there on our financial reports, they were on separate pages and were not correlated with comparable wording in account names. Our operational budget regularly showed a balance, and the internal borrowing to create that balance was not reported on the same page."

The impact of this news

Mueller continues: "We have taken decisive measures to correct the less than clear financial reports to administration and our Synodical Council. The council has also come up with a plan of action that will resolve our internal borrowing debt with minimum damage to our current or future ministry, dependent on a convention resolution calling for a new debt ceiling.

"The Synodical Council also passed a resolution to engage an outside financial consulting firm to assess the whole situation and how it arose and recommend action for changes. This report should be

available at the synod convention this summer.

"In the meantime, it is important to note the following: Not a penny of our donors' money was lost. There were no illegalities. All of our donors' gifts were spent on the ministries for which they were designated. We have just received a certified independent audit of all our finances, which confirms that everything is in order."

A word from President Gurgel

President Karl Gurgel, in reporting this news to the called workers in the synod, has apologized "to every member of the synod for allowing this to happen on our watch. We ask for your forgiveness."

Gurgel also points out that, "thanks to God's grace," some things are going well. "God's people, moved by his redeeming love for them, are being very generous. The special offering stands at about \$1.2 million. Congregational commitments for 2003, on average, have risen five percent. All areas of ministry, for the fiscal year ending June 30, are at or below their targeted reductions. And, for the next fiscal year, all areas have budgeted for about 20 percent less."

Gurgel turns our attention once more to the cross and the empty tomb and exhorts us with Paul: "Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain" (1 Corinthians 15:58).

Find out the latest about the WELS budget at <www.wels.net>, jump word "budget." If you have a question about the budget, e-mail <budget@wels.net>. Answers will be posted at <www.wels.net>.

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.

Board for Home Missions

414/256-3284

At its February meeting, the Board for Home Missions authorized the **continuation of eight mission efforts that are in the establishing phase.**

The **move to the development phase was granted** to Apostles, O'Fallon, Mo.; Living Word, Montrose, Colo.; and Word of Life, Appleton, Wis.

Land Search Authority was granted to Montrose, Colo., and Spirit Lake, Iowa.

Facility Planning Authority was granted to Lord of Lords, Casper, Wyo.; Apostles, O'Fallon, Mo.; and Living Water, Oshkosh, Wis.

The board also ratified the decision by the District Mission Board to **discontinue the effort** in Clifton, Colo.

Thirty-two missions are in the establishing phase, 92 are in the development phase, and 110 receive indirect subsidy through the WELS Church Extension Fund (WELS CEF).

Board for World Missions

414/256-3233



On March 21, Mitsuo Haga graduated from the seminary in Japan. Here he shows off his diplomas. Mitsuo Haga will now serve at Peace, Ashikaga.



Perusing WELS publications

Need some good reading material? Why not check out WELS publications. There's something for everyone. This series will introduce you to the various publications so you can discover which ones will benefit you.

Mission Connection

Although the mission field is always growing, this WELS publication reminds us that the field will never grow out of the gospel's reach. "Mission Connection brings the missions and missionaries home," says Marilyn Ewart, president of the Lutheran Women's Missionary Society. Through this eight-page, quarterly publication, people get a chance to share in the joys, triumphs, and challenges of our missions and to learn ways to involve themselves through prayer, volunteerism, and financial support.

In its eighth year of production, *Mission Connection* is satisfying WELS people's longing for information about the missions they support. "We had newsletters from several

mission fields reaching hundreds of WELS people," says Gary Baumler, director of WELS Communication Services. "It made more sense to have one magazine representing all the mission fields that would reach over 150,000 people. So we consolidated our efforts and developed *Mission Connection*, sent in bulk to every WELS congregation."

The Boards for Home and World Missions, Lutheran Women's Missionary Society, and WELS Kingdom Workers work together to provide this newsletter's content.

"Lost souls are being brought into the kingdom of God through baptism, God's Word is being proclaimed in a variety of languages, young men and women from cultures far different than our own are being trained in ministry of different forms," says World Missions administrator Dan Koelpin. *In Mission Connection*, missionaries, teachers, layworkers, and administrators bring their firsthand mission experiences



to life for those of us serving in other capacities.

The Great Commission is for all believers. "Losing sight of our mission [to make disciples of all nations] can make people as well as church bodies very introspective, even self-centered," says Koelpin. Although not everyone can travel to Africa or preach in Spanish, we can all support the Lord's work through our prayers, dollars, and volunteer time. *Mission Connection* is a link between these supporters and those in the mission spotlight.

Laura Warmuth

World news

By the numbers

- The total number of baptized Catholics worldwide rose to 1.061 billion by the end of 2001, according to the Pontifical Yearbook for 2003. This included a 148 percent increase in Africa as well as growth in Asia, America, and Oceania. Membership in Europe remained stable.
- According to a 2001 census, 71.6 percent of people in the United Kingdom (which includes England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland) describe themselves as Christian. The census also showed that 2.7 percent were non-Christian (Muslim, Hindu, Jewish, Sikh, or Buddhist), 15.5 percent said they had no religion, and 7.3 percent didn't answer the question. Other religions made up .3 percent of the population.

- The total membership of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints grew to more than 11.7 million people by the end of 2002. That's a 2.9 percent increase over the 2001 worldwide membership.

House of Representatives honors

Lutheran schools—By a unanimous vote, the U.S. House of Representatives approved a resolution in March that "supports the goals of National Lutheran Schools Week" and "congratulates Lutheran schools, students, parents, teachers, administrators, and congregations across the nation for their ongoing contributions to education."

This resolution, introduced by Rep. Doug Bereuter, R-Neb., a Missouri Synod Lutheran, noted that there were 4,841 Lutheran early-childhood

centers, elementary schools, and secondary schools in the United States with 572,877 students and 40,076 teachers. (WELS has 726 schools, 40,403 students, and 3,046 teachers.)

Teacher Jason Nelson, administrator for WELS Commission on Parish Schools, says, "This resolution, especially in these trying times, helps our teachers know that they are appreciated. It also makes policymakers in Washington aware that there are many players in American education, and Lutheran schools are one of those players."

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

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

Begalka, Delbert L., to retirement
Butler, Heath D., to Bethlehem, Manassas, Va.
Gerbing, Timothy R., to Christ, Pewaukee, Wis.
Golisch, Benjamin R., to King of Kings, Maitland, Fla.
Haberkorn, David M., to St. Paul, Grand Junction, Colo.
Kessel, William B., to Bethany Lutheran College (ELS), Mankato, Minn.
Kuske, John D., to Nathanael, Milwaukee/Apostles of Christ, Wauwatosa, Wis.
Plitzuweit, Jerald J., to retirement
Robinson, Aaron T., to St. Croix LHS, West St. Paul, Minn.
Schroeder, Joel B., to Mt. Olive, Overland Park, Kan.
Schroer, Andrew C., to Redeemer, Edna, Texas
Schultz, Roger W., to Calvary Academy, South Milwaukee, Wis.
Siirila, Robert A., to Hong Kong mission
Vertein, Eric D., to St. Paul, Crandon/Christ, Hiles, Wis.

Teachers

Anthony, Scott L., to retirement
Balza, Ruth E., to Hope Christian School, Milwaukee
Boniek, Laura, to Our Savior, Longmont, Colo.
Borree, Cheryl L., to retirement
Brushaber, Gail D., to retirement
Buege, Peter C., to King of Kings, Garden Grove, Calif.
Bumhoffer, Dolores, to St. John, Pigeon, Mich.
Cook, Erica B., to St. Paul, South Haven, Mich.
Deck, Nichole, to Trinity, Hoskins, Neb.
DuFore, Ruth A., to retirement
Dusseau, Robert R., to St. John, Burlington, Wis.
Falck, Jeffrey K., to St. Paul, Bloomer, Wis.
Feiock, Bette M., to retirement
Fuhrmann, Kathleen A., to retirement
Golm, Janet L., to Holy Scripture, Fort Wayne, Ind.
Grasby, James C., to Lakeside LHS, Lake Mills, Wis.
Greenfield, Gary, to retirement
Hahm, Delores A., to retirement
Harris, Nadine E., to retirement
Heup, Howard F., to Wisconsin Lutheran Institutional Ministries, Milwaukee
Humann, Amanda M., to Zion, Greenleaf, Wis.
Hutchinson, Karla M., to retirement
Johnson, Sandra L., to St. Jacobi, Greenfield, Wis.
Keller, Shelly J., to St. Stephen, Adrian, Mich.
Koch, Patricia M., to retirement
Kresnicka, Judith, to retirement
Kriewall, Timothy J., to Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee
Krueger, Connie M., to Gethsemane, Davenport, Iowa
Kuehl, Daniel J., to Lakeside LHS, Lake Mills, Wis.
Kuether, Bertha A., to retirement
Learman, Rebekah A., to Mt. Olive, Overland Park, Kan.
Levorson, LeRoy N., to retirement
Lewis, Jennifer L., to St. Mark, Citrus Heights, Calif.
Marquardt, Michael A., to Peace, Hartford, Wis.
Meier, Holly K., to Emanuel, New London, Wis.
Meihack, Marvin L., to retirement
Mey, LaVonne R., to retirement
Monday, Earl W., to retirement
Mose, Kelly A., to Zion, Chesaning, Mich.

Mueller, Joan E., to Mt. Calvary, Kimberly, Wis.
Nelson, Erik J., to St. Paul, North Mankato, Minn.
Noon, Barbara J., to Waucousta, Campbellsport, Wis.
Paap, Marietta M., to retirement
Petersen, Sally J., to Pilgrim, Menomonee Falls, Wis.
Plath, LeDell D., to retirement
Plath, Lisa K., to St. John, Burlington, Wis.
Raasch, Kathryn M., to Morning Star, Jackson, Wis.
Radue, William E., to retirement
Retzlaff, Shana T., to Siloah, Milwaukee
Rimmert, Jason M., to Divine Savior, Indianapolis, Ind.
Rittmeyer, Joy, to Holy Scripture, Fort Wayne, Ind.
Robbert, LeRoy A., to retirement
Robbert, Lois M., to retirement
Roekle, Betty J., to retirement
Ryder, Sandy S., to Little Lambs, Deltona, Fla.
Schaewe, Elaine M., to retirement
Schultz, Christopher R., to Faith, Fond du Lac, Wis.
Schultz, Karen M., to Sola Fide, Lawrenceville, Ga.
Schultz, Monica A., to Peace, Livonia, Mich.
Sielaff, Andrew C., to St. John, Libertyville, Ill.
Tillman, Karl R., to St. Paul, Saginaw, Mich.
Toepel, Marjorie E., to retirement
Traudt, Deborah R., to Our Savior, Longmont, Colo.
Vierck, Veronica L., to St. Paul, Cudahy, Wis.
Vlieger, Michael T., to St. John, Fairfax, Minn.
Vogel, Daniel M., to Fox Valley LHS, Appleton, Wis.
Wallace, Elizabeth D., to Christ-St. Peter, Milwaukee
Walz, Ryan K., to Wisconsin LHS, Milwaukee
Wright, Beverly J., to Risen Savior, Milwaukee

ANNIVERSARIES

Rib Falls, Wis.—St. John (125). June 8. Service, 11 AM. Picnic to follow. Terry Reich, 715/443-2119.
Bonduel, Wis.—Friedens (125). June 8. Service, 9:45 AM. Potluck to follow. Beverly Fink, 715/758-8017.
Pigeon, Mich.—St. John's (125). July 4. 11 AM. Annual picnic for past pastors, teachers, and confirmands. July 6. Outdoor service, 10 AM.
Manitowoc, Wis.—Trinity (150). July 12. Service, 7 PM. July 13. Services, 9:30 AM & 1:30 PM. Catered meal on July 13. Adults 12 and up, \$10; children 2-11, \$5; children under 2, free. RSVP to Carol Kasten, 920/758-2507.
Yakima, Wash.—Grace Lutheran School (50). July 13. Service, 9:30 AM. Meal and program to follow. School office, 509/457-6611.
Chippewa Falls, Wis.—Our Hope (20). Aug. 17. Service, 9 AM. Dinner to follow. Melanie Schaller, 715/723-9613.

COMING EVENTS

Michigan district convention—June 10 & 11. Registration, 8:15 AM. Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw.
Northwestern Publishing House Music Reading Workshops—
 June 21, Mount Olive, Appleton, Wis.
 June 28, Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn.
 June 29, Bloomington, Bloomington, Minn.
 July 12, Emmanuel, Lansing, Mich.
 July 19, Resurrection, Milwaukee
 Carl Nolte, 414/454-2105 or <www.nph.net>.
Mission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing conference—July 11-13. Holiday Inn East, Madison, Wis. Registration fee, \$70. Make room reservation directly with hotel. 414/259-0292 or <hrjimp@aol.com>.

Operation Science training session—July 30 & 31. Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee. Sandra Roebke, <sroebke@excel.net>.

Dr. Martin Luther College alumni & friends get together—Aug. 14. Fox Valley LHS. Opening devotion, 11:45 AM. Followed by lunch. Food and table service provided. Freewill offering. RSVP, Norma Korhals Ring, 920/766-9869.

WELS North Atlantic District Annual Labor Day Retreat—Aug. 30-Sept. 1. Camp Taconic, Hinsdale, Mass. Program, recreation, and worship for all ages. Includes meals. Judy Becker, 518/210-5590.

AVAILABLE

Pews—30 pews, 10' long; 10 pews, 10' long (different styles). Free for the cost of shipping or pick up from Star of Bethlehem, New Berlin, Wis. Jonathan Nitz, 262/786-2900.

Sanctuary lamps—Six lamps with 6' hanging rods and two lamps with 2' hanging rods. Free for the cost of shipping or pick up from Divine Word, Plover, Wis. Neil Parker, 715/677-4837.

Small, two manual organ with pedals—free for the cost of shipping or pick up from Christ, Oakley, Mich. Cordia, 989/366-6604.

NEEDED

Vacation preachers—

- **St. Paul, Amherst, N.H.**, June 22, 29, & July 6. Joel Petermann, <revjpete@empire.net>.
- **St. Peter, St. Albert, Alberta, Canada**, June 22, 29, & July 6. Daniel Habben, <stpeter@interbaun.com>.
- **Messiah, Olympia, Washington**, July 27, Aug. 3, & 10. Joel Nitz, 360/923-1961.
- **Beautiful Savior, Bella Vista, Ark.**, two to three Sundays (dates are negotiable) between July 27-September. Russel Kobs, 479/876-2155.

Church beautification ideas—original examples of non-traditional displays of florals, banners, seasonal ideas, lighting, etc. Elizabeth Kujath, 2657 North St, East Troy WI 53120. Include self-addressed, stamped envelope if you want information returned.

Outdoor lighted sign—with glass sides. Amazing Grace, Milwaukee, Ore. Roy Ryan, <janroyryan@aol.com>.

Altar paraments—for Trinity, Coos Bay, Ore. Gordon Janes, 541/759-2306.

NAMES WANTED

University of Wisconsin-Madison alumni—Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel is looking for alumni from 1964-present and alumni from Calvary Lutheran Chapel from 1920-1964. Contact the campus ministry with your name, address, phone number, and years that you attended. 220 W Gilman St, Madison WI 53703; <wlchapel@wlchapel.org>; 608/257-1969.

Milwaukee-area college alumni—The WELS Campus Ministry in Milwaukee is looking for area alumni who were active at the Campus House on Kenwood Blvd. An alumni reunion is being planned. Send contact information and special memories to Wisconsin Lutheran Student Center, 2215 E Kenwood Blvd, Milwaukee WI 53211 or <wlsc@execpc.com>.

South Waukesha County—John Borgwardt, 262/547-9920.

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

LIFE IN THE SONLIGHT: salvation for all the world

“It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth.”

Jon D. Buchholz

Welcome to a place of peace, joy, and confident hope! You’ve discovered the brilliance of God’s grace. It’s a place where believers bask in forgiveness and freedom, a place where sadness yields to joy. Here the brightness of God’s Spirit illuminates the deepest recesses of the human heart. In this place, sorrow and sighing must flee away. This is life in the Sonlight—and it’s a wonderful place to be!

The Bible frequently uses the contrast between light and darkness to describe the difference between believers and unbelievers. Jesus says, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (John 8:12). Elsewhere the Savior says, “Whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God” (John 3:21).

Our Bible study in the coming months will take us down the path of light, to celebrate the glorious light of God’s Son, our Savior Jesus.

Surrounded and consumed by darkness

Isaiah’s beacon of hope pierced the gloom of a nation plunged into darkness. Judah’s relationship with God was broken. The people of

Judah mocked God with their openly disobedient lives. They said, “We’re God’s chosen people,” but didn’t act like it. They were selfish, immoral, unjust, greedy, and idolatrous. They slapped God in the face again and again. Their shattered relationship with God needed fixing.

But if things were bad among the Jews in the days of Isaiah, imagine the darkness of the Gentiles. Smut, immorality, injustice, and materialism are nothing new. The pagan nations surrounding Judah engaged in some of the most abominable, filthy, despicable behavior ever invented by darkened human minds.

Called to the light

That is the world of sinners whom God loves. It is a world of human souls who are steeped in darkness, wallowing in sin, and covered with filth—and God loves every single one!

Look again at Isaiah: “I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth.” Wrapped up in those few words is something that goes deeper than human imagination. It tells us why God sent his only Son.

God the Father is speaking to his Christ. He’s telling Jesus of his intense passion that every human soul, whom God himself created,



might spend eternity with him. God speaks of his burning desire that every human soul who is groping around in darkness and headed for the eternal night of hell, should see the light, know the truth, and be saved from the coming wrath.

What does it take to rescue the world from darkness? It took the life and sacrifice of Jesus. God’s only-begotten Son came into our world that was imprisoned in darkness and condemned to death. Jesus removed the verdict of endless suffering, eternal darkness, and never-ending despair. On the cross he endured the pit of God’s darkest wrath, to bring the light of salvation to the entire world.

Now God has one way of shining the light of truth into the darkest corners of our world. He uses you as his shining beacon. He says, “You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:14,16).

That’s life in the Sonlight!



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

New beginnings

June is a time for new beginnings. Newlyweds start their lives together. Recent graduates begin their careers. Prayer and hope lead the way. Similarly, recent graduates from Martin Luther College and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, God willing, are beginning their service in the public ministry. They hope and pray.

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary presented 37 seniors to the Assignment Committee, plus five others from former graduating classes and 53 vicars. Martin Luther College presented 201 candidates, a number of whom deferred assignment because of marriage, continuing education, or other reasons.

We're grateful so many chose to prepare themselves for full-time service in the Lord's kingdom. We all need to understand, though, that full-time service in the public ministry, unlike secular employment, is not self-chosen. Through a Divine Call, the Lord chooses when and where any of us will serve him in the public ministry.

In April, the Conference of Presidents took a poll of vacant called-worker positions and how many of them were likely to be presented to the Assignment Committee. In every category—pastors, teachers, and staff ministers—the requests were fewer than the candidates available.*

Jason Nelson, the Parish Schools administrator, reported that teacher call-list requests were down by about 100, nearly 30 percent less than last year. A number of schools downsized. At the beginning of April, 34 teacher positions had been terminated by congregations, Lutheran high schools, and the synod.

What all of this means is rather obvious. Not all of the candidates could be assigned. After years of preparation for the single purpose of serving the Lord full time, not receiving a Divine Call isn't just disappointing, it's traumatic. All of us, especially students, parents, and relatives, feel the hurt.

All our candidates for the public ministry are gifts from God. We pray that more opportunities will be found for them to serve their Lord. Together we need to strive to find every possible way for them to serve.

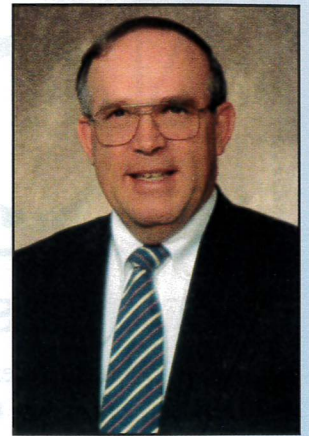
But remember that the Lord, ultimately, is the one who calls people into the public ministry. Prompted by his Spirit, we may desire to do the work of the public ministry. Motivated by his Spirit, we prepare to use the talents God has given us for service in the church. But only God's Spirit presents to us, through the members of his Church on earth, the call into the public ministry. That's why it's called a Divine Call.

That's our comfort when we've received a call, knowing that the Lord stands behind it. He chooses the time and the place for our service in the public ministry. So, too, in the absence of a call into the public ministry, we live confident that our great and gracious Savior in his good will for us will remember our needs and tailor-make what is best for us. We pray that one day soon all those who desire to serve in the public ministry will receive a Divine Call.

With prayer and hope, we all desire new beginnings. God alone, in his mercy, makes them possible. It's a humbling experience to be at the mercy of God. All our weaknesses and shortcomings combine to make us worthy of God's judgment. Yet because of his great mercy, rather than being consumed, we're forgiven.

God makes new beginnings possible. So we ask him to make it possible for us to find resolutions for the challenges currently confronting our synod. May he grant us more opportunities to serve him as well as a greater resolve to support those efforts, permitting us to call even more people to serve him, full time, in the public ministry.

* At print time, the number of calls for pastors and vicars looked more favorable. We were still short of teacher and staff minister calls.



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

God makes new beginnings possible.

IN THE CROSS HAIRS

Richard L. Gurgel

TOPIC: THE SABBATH DAY

Question: Why and where was the seventh day for rest and worship changed to the first day?

Answer: In his sermon, "How Christians Should Regard Moses," Luther states a principle of biblical interpretation: "It is not enough simply to look and see whether this is God's Word . . . rather we must . . . see to whom it has been spoken." Even though the Third Commandment explicitly commands, "Remember the Sabbath Day by keeping it holy" (Exodus 20:8), and even though that Sabbath was clearly Saturday, yet as New Testament believers we are neither bound by a Saturday Sabbath, nor is Sunday its New Testament replacement.

Let me explain. The Ten Commandments offer us a summary of God's unchangeable will, which he also wrote on everyone's heart. These commandments show what it means to love God with all our heart and our neighbors as ourselves.

However, remember also that the Ten Commandments were spoken to Israel as God led them from Egypt to Canaan. In several places the commandments' outward form had specific application only for Israel until Christ came.

Look at the Fourth Commandment. Those who obeyed parents were promised long life in Canaan. Notice how Paul omits any reference to Canaan when he repeats that commandment in Ephesians 6:2.

So also, in the Third Commandment, the outward form, a day of rest with all its corresponding laws, was meant for Israel until Jesus' day. Paul shows that clearly in Colossians 2:16,17, "Do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ." The Sabbath's physical rest was primarily a picture of spiritual rest to be won by Jesus. That is reflected in Christ's words in Matthew 11:28, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give your rest."

Saturday is no longer a Sabbath commanded by God, nor is Sunday its replacement.


Therefore, Saturday is no longer a Sabbath commanded by God, nor is Sunday its replacement. Although Christians could have chosen to gather on any day (or every day!), in perfect gospel freedom Christians typically gather on Sunday for worship. We do this not to establish a new required Sabbath. Rather, Sunday reminds us of the day our Lord stepped victoriously from the grave.

But that leaves an unanswered question. If the outward form of this commandment was binding only on Israel, where does it reflect God's unchanging will? Luther taught that beautifully in the catechism, reminding us that we should not "despise preaching and his Word, but regard it

as holy and gladly hear and learn it." Even for Israel the heart of the Sabbath wasn't merely to sit idly for 24 hours. Through that day's sacrifices they contemplated their need for a Savior and God's answer in the seed of Abraham.

The heart of this commandment still speaks of our attitude toward God's Word. The Third Commandment reminds us that love for God

also means loving his revelation of law and gospel, which convicts and comforts hearts.

Thankfully, convicted of our failure to "gladly hear and learn" the Word, we remember that he who was found enraptured by his Father's Word in his Father's house perfectly fulfilled this commandment. What is more, he died and rose to free us from our guilt of neglecting God's saving Word. Isn't that all the more reason to "remember the Sabbath Day" as we "regard as holy" the Word of such a Savior? 

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>. Look on-line at <www.wels.net/sab/qa.html> for more questions and answers.

LISTEN TO GOD'S VOICE

YOU SAY: "It's impossible."
GOD SAYS: "What is impossible with man is possible with God" (Luke 18:27).

YOU SAY: "I'm too tired."
GOD SAYS: "I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

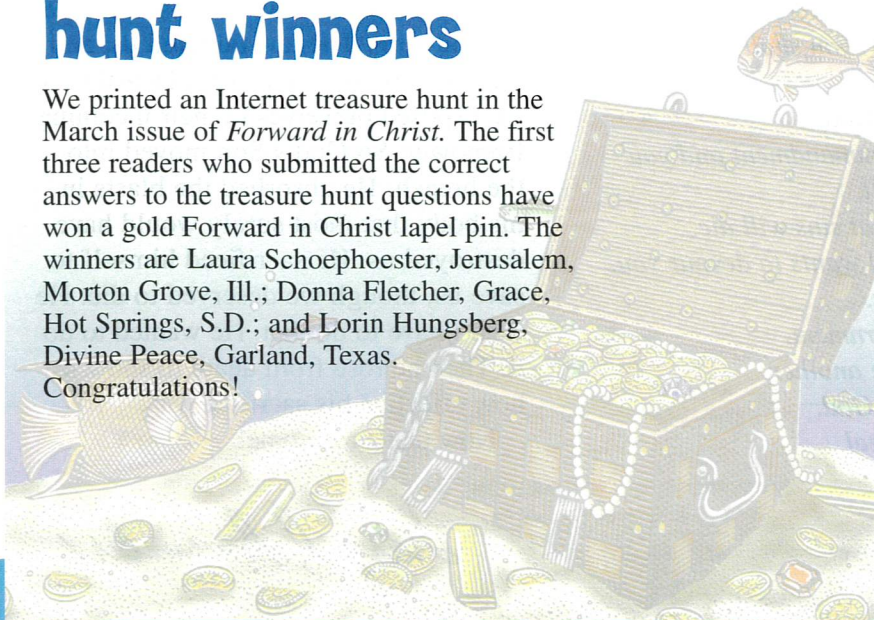
YOU SAY: "I can't go on."
GOD SAYS: "My grace is sufficient for you, my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9).

YOU SAY: "I can't forgive myself."
GOD SAYS: "There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1).

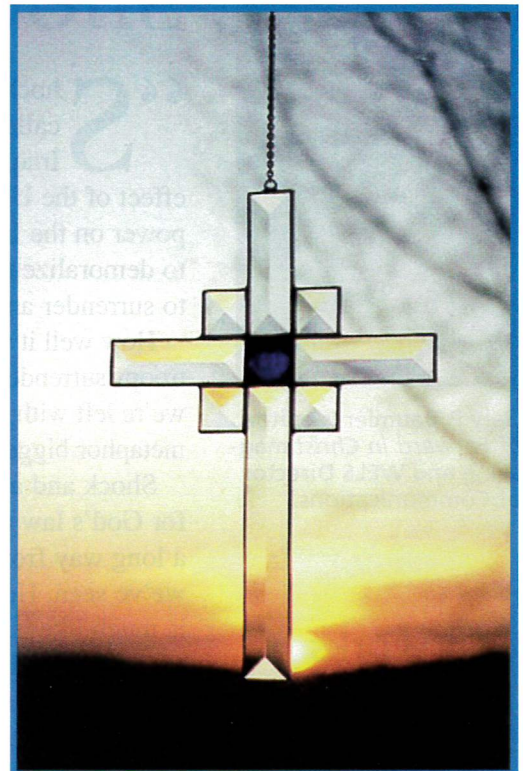
YOU SAY: "I feel all alone."
GOD SAYS: "Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5).

WELS treasure hunt winners

We printed an Internet treasure hunt in the March issue of *Forward in Christ*. The first three readers who submitted the correct answers to the treasure hunt questions have won a gold *Forward in Christ* lapel pin. The winners are Laura Schoephoester, Jerusalem, Morton Grove, Ill.; Donna Fletcher, Grace, Hot Springs, S.D.; and Lorin Hungsberg, Divine Peace, Garland, Texas. Congratulations!



Picture this



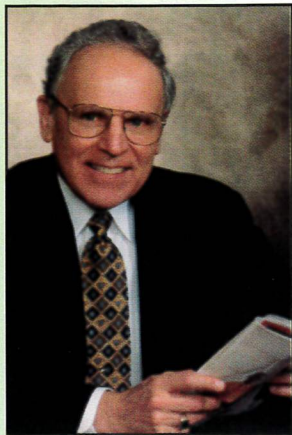
Although she did not actually operate the camera, our family credits this picture to my wife, Ruth O. Feld, a devoted mother, a devout Christian, and an accomplished photographer, who saw God's handiwork wherever she looked. We consider this the last picture she took before departing life on earth.

She had, a few weeks before this sunrise, suffered a stroke and was now in her hospital bed in our living room, where she could enjoy God's beautiful scenery through the windows. After having spent a particularly painful night, she saw the sun come up, the rays shining through the crystal cross hung in the window. She summoned my daughter, had her get the camera, and told her just how to line up the picture. The result is printed here.

My children like to say that despite her great pain, Mom could still see the Son shining through the cross.

Submitted by Reuben Feld

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.

God works
faith in us to
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Shock and awe

“Shock and awe” the U.S. military called it at the start of the war in Iraq. It described the anticipated effect of the United States’ superior firepower on the Iraqi army. It was intended to demoralize their troops and get them to surrender and be saved, or die.

How well it worked is debatable. Some troops surrendered. Even more did not. Now we’re left with unforgettable images and a metaphor bigger than missiles and bombs.

Shock and awe is a striking metaphor for God’s law and gospel. That may seem a long way from the horrific bombing we’ve seen. However, the spiritual reality is much like it. Just as the Iraqis needed to recognize the hopelessness of their cause, so we need to see our hopeless condition because of sin.

Sin left unchecked leads only to tragedy—to death and destruction. However, although the signs are everywhere, we easily ignore them. Many think we take the threats too seriously. Others say we should not meddle with people’s lives. “Just get along” is the mantra of the mollified. An age-old question rises from the ashes of time: “Why do the wicked prosper?”

Ever so gradually we, too, become callous to sin and indifferent to its threat.

Enter God’s law: *You shall not!*
You shall not!

Be perfect, like God.

Break one commandment and you break them all.

The soul that sins will die.

The devil wants to devour you.

Obey your parents.

Obey your government.

Submit to one another.

Obey your God.

Don’t steal.

Don’t hate.

Don’t covet.

Live only in love.

Do you hear the blasts? Do you feel the shock waves? Do you see the flames? These are blockbuster, bunker-penetrating bombs. They are precision bombs. They find you personally, and they penetrate your heart. You cannot hide from them. They will destroy you. They threaten you with the very fires of hell.

Surrender or die. Better put, in Christ’s own words: “Repent!”

That’s the shock. Sad to say, many still ignore it. Even some who know the threats are real will ignore them and speed toward perdition. Others see them as if broadcast over television where they can do no real harm. Just turn off the set and go your way.

But some of us, too, will see them in all their shocking reality and will look for our salvation. Awestruck by the firepower that destroys, we grow in greater awe at the God who saves.

God works faith in us to trust in him even as the shocks can still be felt about us. In that trust, he shields us from the terrible blasts of the law with the cloak of Christ’s righteousness. His perfect goodness counts for all that the law demands of us, and we are safe from its charges.

Still, it has taken more to save us. In our sinful state, we were standing at ground zero. The law targeted us, and the missiles were launched. In real time, we exposed ourselves to their incoming firepower. So God’s Son moved into the breach. He absorbed the blasts in his body that most surely would have destroyed us. He sacrificed himself to save us, though we deserved to die. He didn’t have to do that. He wanted to do it. Then he rose from death to show us how effective his sacrifice was.

Now that’s awesome!

Gary P. Baumler

C
see.....

Y
why.....

D
discipleship.....

works!

The Commission on Youth Discipleship is *working for you* to provide:

Consultation and resources...

- Christian Parenting
- Sunday School
- Teen Ministry
- Vacation Bible School
- Youth Bible Classes
- Confirmation
- Service Learning

National, district, and local training...

- Sunday School Teachers' Conferences
- Youth Counselors' Workshops
- YME (Youth Ministry Enhancement) Academies
- *Partners* and *REACH!* Newsletters

And More!

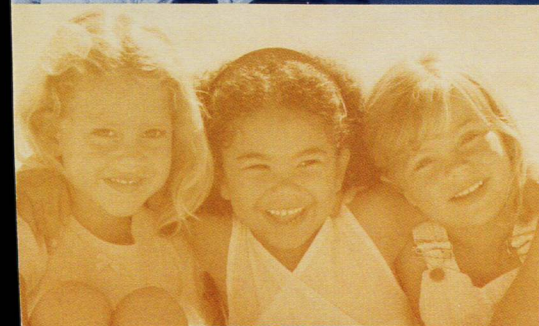
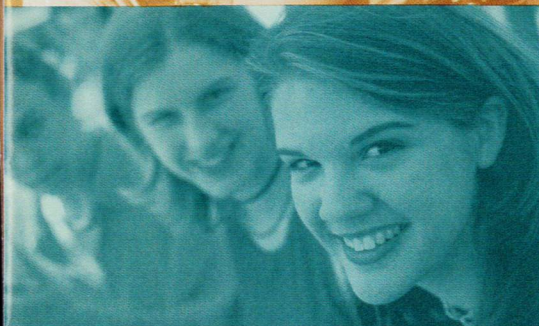
- *Parent Partners* Website
- WELS Kids' Connection Videos
- *LivingBold* e-zine for Teens
- International Youth Rally

cyd@sab.wels.net

MISSION STATEMENT

The Commission on Youth Discipleship (CYD) is a unit of the WELS Board for Parish Services and as such, exists to encourage and assist WELS congregations and parents as they nurture youth in the Word from birth through high school.

Joel A. Nelson, *Administrator*
Robert Mateske, *Administrative Assistant*



To my husband on Father's Day

Permit me a little thank-you letter, a private correspondence between my husband and me—and the 60,000 other subscribers of this magazine.

Laurie Biedenbender

In a world that brushes off children like pesky flies, thank you for accepting a call to a grade school so you could spend all day with yours. They may not mention it, but I know they take that as a compliment.

In a world tottering on the edge of spiritual bankruptcy, thank you for reaching deeply into the pocket of faith and making regular investments in our children: the Sunday morning routines, unspoken, unbroken; prayers and proverbs at bedtime; devotions after dinner; a steady and unabashed use of Jesus' name in our daily affairs.

In a world that nudges men up the ladder—to powerful positions, shinier shoes, roomier vans and sedans—thank you for looking down to the kids who are reaching for you.

In a world of feckless permissiveness, thank you for confronting sin without flinching and offering forgiveness without condition, for calling the kids back from raging traffic and showing them safer and ultimately more satisfying paths.

In a world bent on flawless images, thank you for admitting your errors and flaunting your imperfections, thereby lightening the burden on our kids and tugging them toward more ready confession.

In a world enamored of sports celebs, thank you for instilling an interest in music, art, and literature—without ditching ESPN completely, of course.

In a world that measures a man by his burps and bruises, thank you for being a gentleman—kind, strong, and unapologetically well mannered.

In a world that prizes dollars more than hours, thank you for giving precious minutes to such holy things as changing diapers, singing nonsense songs, wrestling in the living room, saying “Who’s there?” to endless experimental knock-knock jokes, coaching summer baseball, giving piano

lessons, shooting hoops in the alley, searching out science projects, weighing pine cars, and listening to the state capitals while administering father-son buzzcuts—not to mention bringing home the bacon, and, if push comes to shove, frying it up in the pan.

In a world—and sometimes a church—that requests more meetings and reams of reports, thank you for finding the balance between service abroad and service at home—for realizing you’re the only father your children have and in the daily record they must count more than friends and strangers.

Finally, in a world crippled by father-need, thank you for showing our son how a good dad carries himself. Thank you for showing our daughter what kind of man to marry. Thank you for giving the kids a picture, an idea, an icon of their other father, the heavenly Father, who waits to welcome all of us home.

There. I hope you're not too embarrassed now to leave the house and grab some milk at the gas station. And by the way, this is your present, so don't be looking for golf balls. Happy Father's Day.

Laurie Biedenbender is a member at St. Paul, New Ulm, Minnesota.

