

FORWARD IN CHRIST

July 2003

The Word from the WELS

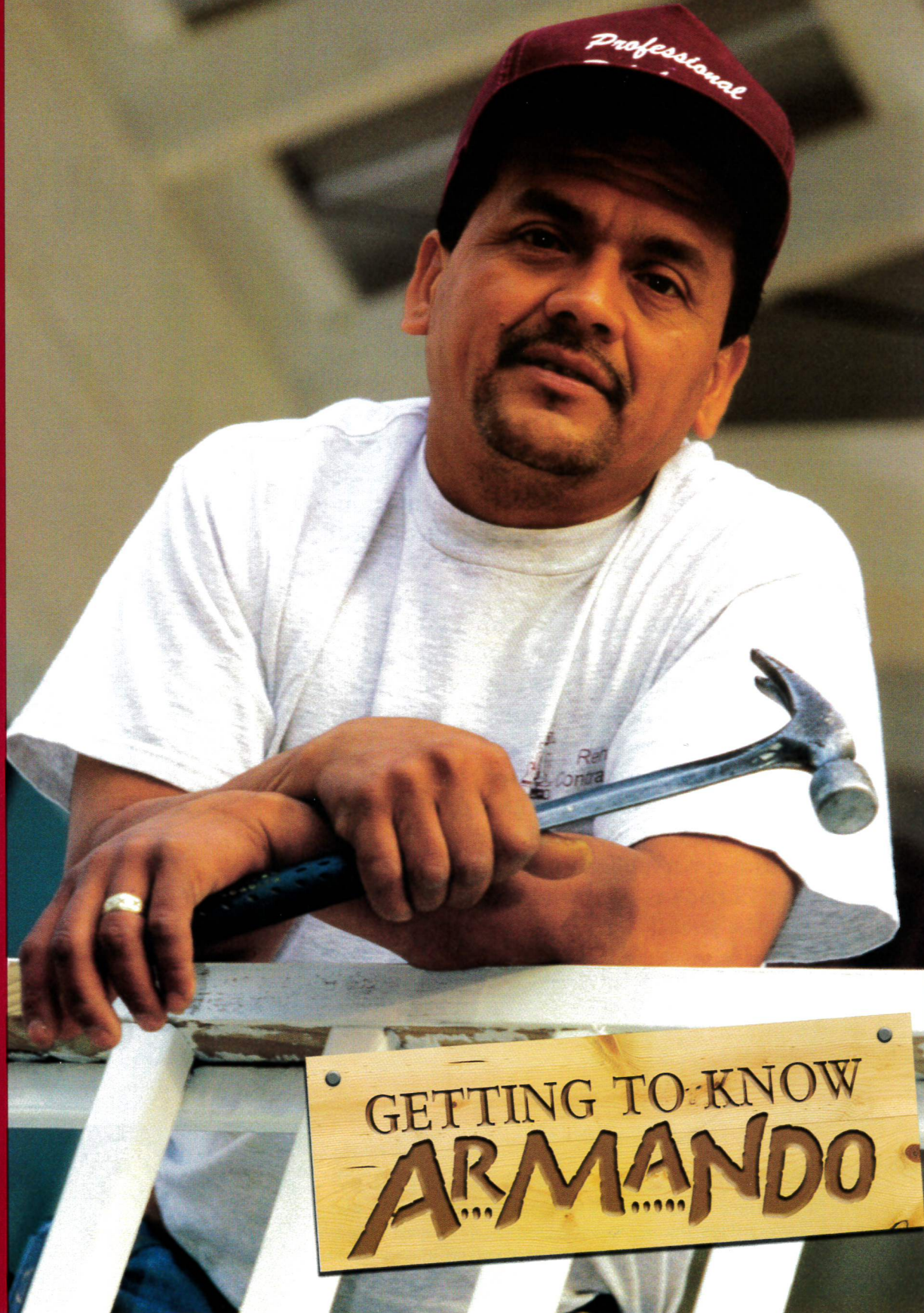
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Hispanic/
Latino
outreach

Teens deal
with divorce

The value
of time

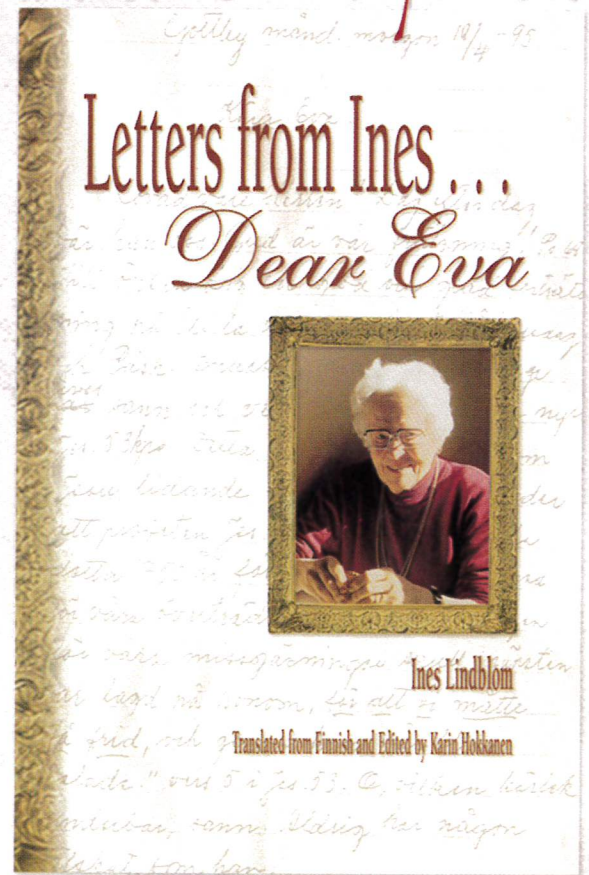
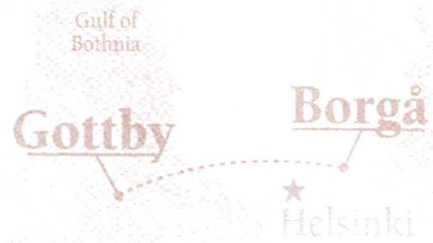




One Thing Connects Christians Everywhere

Ines Lindblom is 90 years old and lives in the village of Gottby on Aland, an island of 26,000 people, where she stands as the lone confessional Lutheran. Eva Soderstrom, also in her 90s, began traveling to Sweden from Finland in 1978 for biblical studies in order to avoid the liberalism of the state church. Her work has resulted in two congregations, three pastors, one theological student, and 38 members.

The two women live more than a hundred miles apart, yet they make sure to encourage each other in the Christian faith. *Letters from Ines . . . Dear Eva* follows this exchange of letters, phone calls, and cassettes from one Christian woman to the other. Through their correspondence, you can share their lives and witness the growth of their faith and friendship. *Letters from Ines* demonstrates down-to-earth biblical truths and celebrates the unity Christians everywhere have through faith in Christ Jesus.



Letters from Ines . . . Dear Eva

by Ines Lindblom

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Misery and compassion

[The Lord replied]: “You have forsaken me and served other gods, so I will no longer save you. Go and cry out to the gods you have chosen. Let them save you when you are in trouble!” . . . Then they got rid of the foreign gods among them and served the Lord. And he could bear Israel’s misery no longer. Judges 10:13,14,16

Eric S. Hartzell

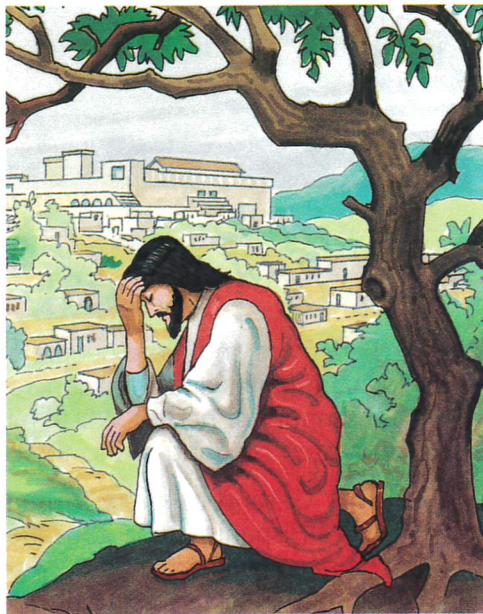
People shy away from relationships that get them emotionally involved. Pain lies down that road. But God gets emotionally involved with us. He dared to get hurt. He saw it coming, but he couldn’t help himself. He established the relationship. He came with his heart in his hands.

And his people took his heart and broke it. You could even say they made God miserable. But God’s pain goes beyond that which he might feel himself. God’s pain is the misery his people feel.

Our compassionate LORD

Exodus 34:6,7 is the classic definition of God by God. There he proclaims his name and into two English sentences packs the words that describe him. He begins, “The LORD, the LORD . . .” The next words in his self-description are “the *compassionate* and gracious God.”

Sympathy and compassion are really one and the same word, one Greek and the other Latin. They both mean “to feel with someone.” God is that close to us. He not only shared our humanity; he shared our nerve endings and our tear ducts. He truly did feel our pain. He still does. What hurts us hurts him. That’s what the writer of the book of Judges observed: “And [God] could bear Israel’s misery no longer.” Our salvation comes because God



can’t stand to see our misery without his help and salvation.

Our misery apart from God

Life without Jesus is miserable. Misery is part of the punishment for going against God and going away from him. People think they are leaving God for fun or advantage or just to be rid of a stodgy God who can’t help much and spoils their fun. But it always happens that they end up in misery. It was so in the time of the Judges. It is so in our time too.

Man’s waywardness also brings misery to God. He who went to the cross bearing our sins can’t bear our misery. He who did not cry at the pain of the cross did weep over

Jerusalem. The people there wouldn’t repent. They wouldn’t be saved. They wouldn’t be rid of their misery and allow him to heal them.

Our misery even affects the angels. Angels see that the unrepentant life is a life of misery. It hurts them when they see sinners who won’t come clean and won’t get close to God. They can see the misery unrepentant lives bring not only to those who continue in that way but also to the Father. They know that when God sees unrepentant sinners become repentant he will be able to bear their misery no longer. He will forgive them!

Someone once quipped that in a time of misery the only place he could find sympathy was in a dictionary. It might seem that way sometimes. But we can never rightfully suppose that this is the case with our God. He is there! He is the definition of compassion, our source of help in trouble. He is the one who encourages us to cast our anxiety and our sin with its resultant misery on him.

He went to the cross with our misery. He could stand it no longer. The time came to forever root out the misery of humans. Our God could bear it no more.



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

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God has brought more than one “Armando” into my life to teach me and bless me.

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bits & pieces



With more and more people of different cultures living in the United States and Canada, cross-cultural outreach has become an important part of WELS' ministry. Two articles this month focus on reaching out to the Hispanic/Latino communities.

- In “Getting to know Armando” (p. 8), Michael Roth, the WELS Hispanic/Latino consultant, shows us an important need—the need to learn from our Spanish-speaking neighbors so we can better serve them with the gospel.

- Many WELS congregations already have outreach programs to the Hispanic/Latino communities. Laura Warmuth explores three innovative methods used by three different congregations in “Spanish outreach—custom-designed by congregation” (p. 10).



The class of 2003 from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, is pictured on p. 24. Calls are listed on p. 23. Please keep these pastors in your prayers as they begin their new ministries.



It's all about feelings nowadays, isn't it? How do you feel about this? How does that make you feel? Yet, in the end, your feelings aren't important, especially when it comes to your salvation. Read more about feelings in two articles this month: “How does that make you feel?” (p. 17) and “Religious teens more likely to . . .” (p. 34).



You may notice that Readers Forum is missing this month. Not many letters have come in recently, so we decided to offer an extra feature instead. Look for the return of Readers Forum next month.

—JKW

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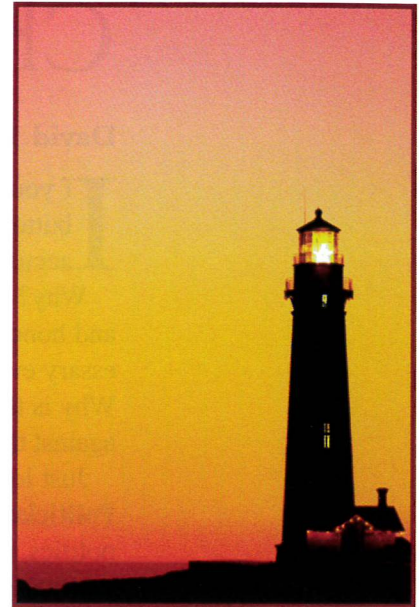
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Church politics or ministry?

David R. Clark

If you want to push a church leader's buttons, all that you have to do is accuse him and his church of politics.

Why? Being a statesman is a necessary and honorable profession. It is not the necessary evil that some in our society suggest. Why is this such a horrible charge to make against the church?

Just look at the word's definition.

Politician: a person actively engaged in politics, esp. party politics, professional or otherwise; often, a person holding or seeking political office; *frequently used in a derogatory sense, with implications of seeking personal or partisan gain, scheming, opportunism, etc.*

We don't appreciate a charge of "politics" because the word is usually used in a derogatory sense. We don't like the partisan part, the self-interest, and the special interest. The politician, in this sense, makes decisions that will benefit him, not necessarily the people he serves.

Contrast that with another word.

Ministry: the act of ministering, or serving, ministration.

It is not obvious in the definition, but it is certainly implied: ministry does not serve the individual carrying it out. Although we all benefit from ministry decisions, they are not made on the basis of self-interest. Ministry is based on the needs of others. Christian ministry is based on serving others in the way that we serve Jesus. There is no self-interest, outside of perhaps the feeling of love and satisfaction we have in serving our Savior. We do not make ministry decisions because we benefit personally. We make decisions on what is best according to Christ to serve his kingdom.

Self-interest has no place in the church, although notable instances of it are in the Bible. Adam and Eve (Genesis 3) had only self-interest as they ate the forbidden fruit.

When Saul sacrificed to the Lord (1 Samuel 13), not waiting for Samuel to do it properly, he exercised self-interest. When Hophni and Phineas (1 Samuel 2) took for themselves portions of sacrifices dedicated only for God, it was self-interest.

Unfortunately, some people like to call politics what is really ministry, because they don't like the ministry decision. It was ministry that led Hezekiah (2 Kings 18) to clean out the high places. It was ministry that publicly led Jeremiah (Jeremiah 28) to reject the message of peace that Hananiah proclaimed. It was ministry that led Jesus (John 2, Matthew 21) to throw the money-changers out of the temple on not one, but two, occasions. None of these individuals benefited personally. Each carried out God's will, unpopular though it might be. In each case people may have charged "politics." But because it was God's will, it was clearly "ministry."

The point of this is not to identify others who are guilty of politics when they should be doing ministry. Plenty of others will stand in line to do that. It is a lesson from which each of us can learn. God has made all of us ministers (servants). We are our brothers' keepers. We are responsible to each other to serve each other. The guidance and motivation for this service is serving Jesus. That affects the way we discipline our children, the way we live in our neighborhoods, the community of faith to which we belong. We carry these things out to serve Christ, not ourselves.

God didn't make us politicians. He made us ministers, servants. He made us to serve him. Faithfully carrying that service out leaves no room for self-interest, keeps the mission of the church pure, and prevents a charge of "politics" from ever being legitimate.



David Clark is pastor of Grace, Glendale, Arizona.

God didn't
make us
politicians.
He made us
ministers,
servants.

Don't *ad hominem* me, and I won't *ad hominem* you

Kenneth A. Cherney Jr.

“**Y**ou only say that because you're _____.”

Fill in the blank with the description that fits your opponent. “You say that because you're not from around here.” “You say that because you've lived here all your life.” “If you weren't so young/old/rich/poor/male/female, you wouldn't think that way.”

It's called an *ad hominem* (Latin for “toward the person”) argument, and it's a dirty trick. Usually it's a desperation ploy—the equivalent of tipping over the chessboard—on the part of someone who's about to lose a debate. He can't honestly find fault with what his discussion partner is saying. So instead he raises questions about why his partner might be saying it.

Ad hominem arguments, when they go undetected, can turn a debate completely around. More than once I've seen them turn a calm, rational discussion of ideas into a food fight about personalities. Suddenly we're no longer talking about what's right, but about who's right. Suddenly it's not your point of view that's on trial. It's you—simply because of who you are.

To be honest I'm still stinging just a little from one occasion many years ago when I was a victim. The topic was abortion. My opponent managed to sweep away my Scripture passages, my arguments from medical science, and my appeals to plain common sense, all in one bold stroke: “You only say that because you're a man.”

Gotcha! Instead of the original topic of discussion, we were now going to talk about the gender of the participants. My opponent didn't need to respond to the evidence against abortion, since any evidence

entered by a man is inadmissible. It was brilliant—and, like all *ad hominem* arguments, completely unfair. I didn't appreciate it. You wouldn't have either.

I wish I could say that this never happens in our circles. But you know better.

“Of course he says that. His mother's maiden name is Spitzenhootermeisterhausen. He's just repeating the family line. What did you expect?”

“Of course she says that. Look at the position she holds in the church. She's protecting her turf. What did you expect?”

Tell the truth. Does this sound at all familiar?

Here's a modest proposal. In all matters not decided by God's Word, let there be plenty of free and open debate among us. But let's remember that in the church, debate is never an end in itself. Unless it aims at uncovering the truth, debate is worse than useless. That means that, instead of speculating about why people are saying what they do, we might be better off considering whether they just might be right.

Above all, let's play fair. “Do to others what you would have them do to you” (Matthew 7:12) surely means, among other things, that God wants us to treat the words and ideas of others as fairly as we want our words and ideas treated. Even when we disagree.

Especially when we disagree.

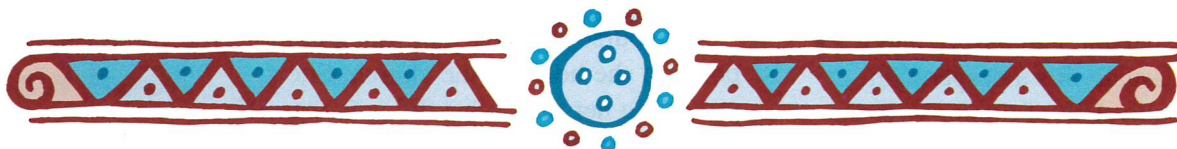
Ken Cherney is a professor at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota.

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to treat the
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GETTING TO KNOW ARMANDO

The new WELS Hispanic/Latino consultant works hard to help you find the Armandos of your neighborhood, so that they can teach you, and so that through your learning, you can proclaim Jesus.

Michael A. Roth



I approached Armando as he was sitting on his porch one summer afternoon. He quickly made the connection that I was “from the church.” Armando was tired of “church peddlers,” as he called them. He told me to get away. “I don’t want anything that you have to give me.”

My next words to him shocked him, and perhaps may even shock you. “That’s good, because I don’t have anything to give you right now. Actually, I was hoping you could give me something.”

What followed was a comfortable, but intense conversation lasting almost two hours, in which Armando helped me understand what it is to be a Puerto Rican “immigrant” to the mainland. He poured out his heart to me. He expressed the joy of seeing his children succeeding in school, but his fear that even this success won’t result in happiness for them.

He expressed his fears about work and paying the rent. He told me about the hurt and shame he feels when he is excluded by the systems of his country. He expressed the loneliness of finding himself not accepted as an American, which he is, and being told by family and friends back in Puerto Rico that he isn’t truly *puertorriqueño*, even though he is.

God didn’t call any of us to faith and to our personal and public ministries with the promise of ease.

Learning from “Armando”

In many ways, it would have been easier just to walk away from that “grumpy” man on the porch and move on to another house. It would have been easier to stay at home and

read a few books about the Hispanic/Latino culture and people. It would have been easier to turn a blind eye to the reality of the other side of life in my neighborhood and go about life as normal. But God didn’t call any of us to faith and to our personal and public ministries with the promise of ease. He calls and sends us with the promises of his presence, his grace, his power made perfect in our weakness, his Word, and his way out of difficult situations. The “easier” options for that summer day were not God’s options.

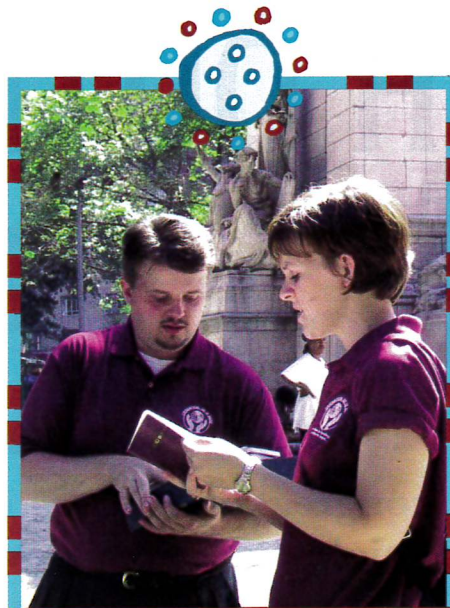
God has brought more than one “Armando” into my life to teach me and bless me. Some have come from Colombia and have taught me the beauty of the Spanish language and a country that is more than drugs and civil war. Others came from Mexico, showing me the joys of *trabajo* (work), *fiesta*, and *familia*. Others from the Dominican Republic taught me about the natural resources

God has given. Those from Panama modeled hospitality in a way I had never known before. Others from the American Southwest told me the centuries-long story of their family lands in New Mexico. Others from throughout Mexico, Central America, South America, and the Caribbean have helped me begin to understand the need for them to express their faith in their forms and in their styles.

And they continue to teach me. The stories are all unique, but they bring out many common threads. They have taught me about the incredible diversity bubbling up under the surface of terms like Hispanic or Latino by which we lump them all together. Yet inside this incredible diversity there exist some common bonds of the journey to the United States and away from their homelands. There are bonds through their Amerindian heritages, their Spanish heritages, and, for some, in their African heritage.

Training congregations to interact with "Armando"

So now I stand before you, my church (WELS), as the Hispanic/Latino consultant. God has called me to this new work through the Multi-Cultural Ministry Committee of the Board for Home Missions. We all hear and/or see the changing demographics of our country. We know that Hispanics and Latinos are the largest minority in our country and are still growing rapidly. We see them in our church neighborhoods, our workplaces, and our favorite res-



Pastor Michael Roth and Sarah Gabb hand out devotion books in Central Park on the year anniversary of Sept. 11. Roth, as the Hispanic/Latino consultant, is based in New York City for two years.

taurants. We hear the *salsa*, *merengüe*, and *norteño* music. And in all of this, we see the gospel opportunity that God is placing before us.

Yet as I stand before you, my church, called by God, I stand here first to tell you not about the need of the Hispanics and Latinos to learn from you, but rather to share with you the stories of my many Armandos and to show you your need to learn from them.

Yes, we are here to do gospel ministry. Yes, we do want to find every way possible to communicate the message of the Savior and the story of God's grace for all people. But to do that, we need to learn first. We need to learn how to communicate these precious truths clearly. We need to learn the appropriate places, times, and ways to do so. We need to learn

what realities inside their culture give us opportunity, permission, and obligation to do so. For that, God has given us many Armandos to talk to and to teach us.

My role as the Hispanic/Latino consultant is to assist WELS congregations, districts, and mission boards in that process. I bring the stories and real lives of many Hispanics and Latinos who are our brothers and sisters in faith. I bring the tools of a process that can help you learn about your community. I can help you find the Armandos of your neighborhood, so that they can teach you, and so that through your learning, you can proclaim Jesus.

Armando opened his heart to me, and even though I told him I didn't have anything to give to him that day, he did permit me to share my hope in Jesus. He did allow me to apply the healing of the gospel to the deep hurts of his heart. He did allow me to celebrate with him in his joys and pray for him regarding his fears. I walked away that afternoon after working very hard. It wasn't the easy way, but it was God's way.



Michael Roth is the WELS Hispanic/Latino consultant.

Pastor Michael Roth will be based in New York City for the next two years, but is available to all of WELS. To contact him, call 917/698-6893 or e-mail <michaelroth@rcn.com>.



SPANISH OUTREACH: CUSTOM-DESIGNED BY CONGREGATION

See how three WELS congregations share the gospel with their Spanish-speaking neighbors in their own distinct ways.

Laura Warmuth

“**W**hat’s up?” one St. Mark, Watertown, Wis., member asked her husband as he leaned back to look up at the altar after church. He replied, “I was just thinking how a year ago I didn’t believe any of this. And look at me now.”

As St. Mark’s pastor, Karl Walther, says, “It’s a miracle a single Spanish-speaking individual has ever crossed the threshold of our church.” Nevertheless, today nearly two percent of St. Mark’s 3,400 members are Spanish-speaking.

St. Mark has become *the* church known to Spanish-speakers in town, largely through the work of Rebecca Palacios, who was called as deaconess of Spanish outreach in 2000. She joined Walther, who had been doing Spanish-language outreach since 1995.

Since the majority of St. Mark’s Spanish-speaking members are Mexicans who are new to the United States, the church befriends them as they make the transition to their new way of life. “My job,” says Palacios, “is to build bridges for the gospel by helping our Spanish-speaking members cope with life in an English-speaking world.”

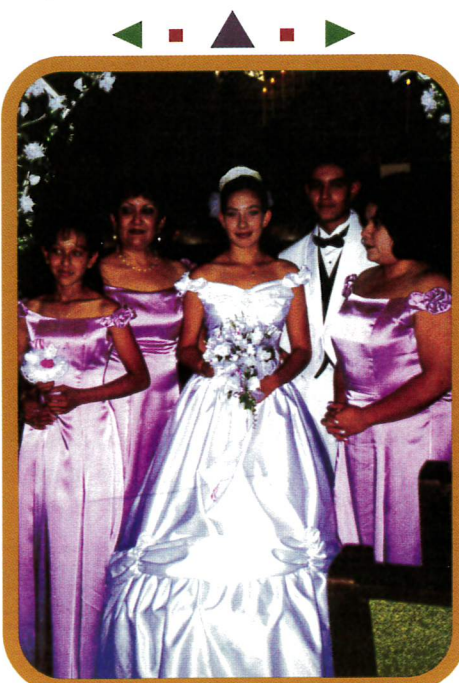
Translating for births at Watertown Memorial Hospital (48, so far, and counting) gives Palacios the chance to talk to new parents about baptism. Through networking with apartment owners, job agencies, and public schools, she is often the first person that community members call when they need a translator. She also assists new families in finding jobs and housing, bringing them to church to offer them furniture and other things they need for their houses. This gives

her the opportunity to invite them back to worship.

St. Mark serves its Spanish-speaking members through Spanish services, festival celebrations, Bible classes, leadership training sessions, and English as a second language classes. Its school has 14 Spanish-speaking students. Palacios says, “At first I was worried over the people using what we were offering without taking advantage of coming to church. But I’ve learned that the Holy Spirit ends up taking care of that.”

One congregation and faith. Two locations and languages.

St. Thomas, or *Santo Tomás*, in Phoenix, Ariz., is not following the path of ordinary church development. Rather, it is modeling adaptation. As God blessed its ministry to new Spanish neighbors, its Anglo membership declined, partially due to members moving to the suburbs. Since there is no WELS church in these suburbs, St. Thomas decided to expand its ministry to a second location, 15 minutes west, in order to retain members and reach out to souls in the new community. A school at the new location is also on the horizon. God’s Word will be preached in both English and



A quinceañera celebration at Santo Tomás in Phoenix, Ariz.

Pastor Lic Canot is a WELS pastor from the Dominican Republic. His path of ministry does not match that of most WELS pastors, though. Here is how Canot is unique:

- Trained at a Lutheran seminary in Puerto Rico, Canot served independent Lutheran churches in the Dominican Republic and New Jersey for 30 years.

- When the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) formed, he did not join them because of doctrinal issues. Rather, he set out to learn about the Missouri and Wisconsin synods.

- After studying with WELS bilingual pastors, Canot became a WELS pastor through colloquy in 2002.

- Canot carries out a small-group ministry in New York City and New Jersey. Rather than inviting people to worship at church, he takes the Word to them. He meets with six- to 10-person groups to study the Word in people's houses and various other locations.

- Modeling and mentoring are the main facets of his ministry. These small groups allow prospects to see how Christians live and interact.

Spanish at both locations. How did it get to this point?

In the late 1980s the Spanish-speaking population in Phoenix was surging (now at 85 percent). When church members realized that they couldn't communicate with more than half the community, they decided it was time to call a Spanish-speaking pastor. In 1997 Pastor Timothy Otto arrived on the scene.

The Spanish-speaking side of the congregation now has 150 souls next to the English-speaking side's 199. Otto draws people to the church by offering baptisms for free. "Many people don't have their kids baptized because the Catholic Church requires so much and charges so much," says Otto. He also offers free *quinceañeras*, which are services held on a girl's 15th birthday to thank God for her



Sunday school children at Divine Savior, Miami, Fla.: Natalie Valesquez (middle) and Seth and Michaela Ruiz.

blessings and rededicate her life to God. Before each of these events, Otto asks that the families attend a church service and two Bible classes.

People have also come to the church through English as a second language classes, vacation Bible school, and preschool programs. "Our biggest form of evangelism is that of members inviting friends and family," says Otto. "I have done very little canvassing for about four years because I have my hands full giving Bible information classes to all the prospects our members bring in."

A new academy

Divine Savior, Miami, Fla., is building a new school. This is a large project for a congregation of only 58 communicants that has been worshipping in a public middle school since its start in 2001. But with members from over 30 different countries attending services (most from Venezuela, Peru, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, and Colombia), Divine Savior felt that this was the best way to reach out to its diverse community.

Divine Savior was the first established church in the fast-growing, upscale, professional Doral community. One of the greatest perceived needs among community members is that of private education. Because of the poor quality of public education in Central and South America,

the Latinos in Doral, who make up 79 percent of the population, are looking for private schools that offer a quality education in a moral environment.

"By meeting their agenda," says Pastor Carl Leyrer of Divine Savior, "we can develop long-range relationships with the parents, through which we hope to share the gospel."

Divine Savior Lutheran Academy—complete with eight classrooms, an administration area, and a parish hall for worship—is scheduled to open for the 2004-05 school year. The congregation expects an initial enrollment of at least 90 students in pre-kindergarten through second grade, 80 percent of whom are likely to be Latino. Adding a grade each year, the school will eventually have eight grades, each with a WELS teacher and a full-time bilingual teacher's aide.

Headmaster James Wade has set high goals for Divine Savior: "We aim to gain a reputation in the community as a solid Christian academy that provides excellence in education; a safe, orderly learning environment; state-of-the-art facilities; and best of all, quality Christian instruction."

With the Lord's help, it is well on its way.

Laura Warmuth is a member at St. John, Jefferson, Wisconsin.

As 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.

Is the scene safe?

The world is full of places that are as dangerous to faith as leaking fuel and downed power lines would be to rescuers at an accident.

William R. Carter

The first chapter of every textbook for emergency personnel includes a big section entitled "Scene Safety." The first question an emergency worker is trained to ask himself when he arrives on the scene is, "Is the scene safe?" Before we even begin our work, it's vitally important to scan the area for any potential hazards that could endanger ourselves, our patients, or anyone else.

When paged to a car accident, we always check for leaking fuel and disconnect the batteries. We also look for downed power lines and for any of those diamond-shaped placards that can alert us to the presence of hazardous chemicals.

At a fire, that mental checklist includes shutting off gas lines and the electrical supply to the building. It also includes thinking about everything that might happen if the fire continues to burn (Will the structure remain stable? Where else could the fire spread?). Sometimes we need to request help from law enforcement personnel, either to diffuse a violent situation where tempers or weapons are involved, to re-route traffic so we

have a safe place to do our work, or to establish a perimeter to keep onlookers away.

Scene safety at Quad/Graphics

Scene safety at the big Quad/Graphics fire included most of the above. Dozens of deputies shut down three highways and kept thousands of onlookers at a safe distance. Quad employees helped us find the fastest ways to shut off gas mains and the power supply to the collapsed building.

The main concern for our commanders, though, from the moment we arrived at the scene, was the instability of the section of the building that hadn't collapsed yet. Scene safety meant fighting the fire from far enough away so that we wouldn't lose any men or equipment if the rest of the building collapsed. We also restricted access to parts of the adjacent buildings for the rest of the week to keep anyone from getting hurt if we had a flare-up in the smoldering pile of paper and steel.

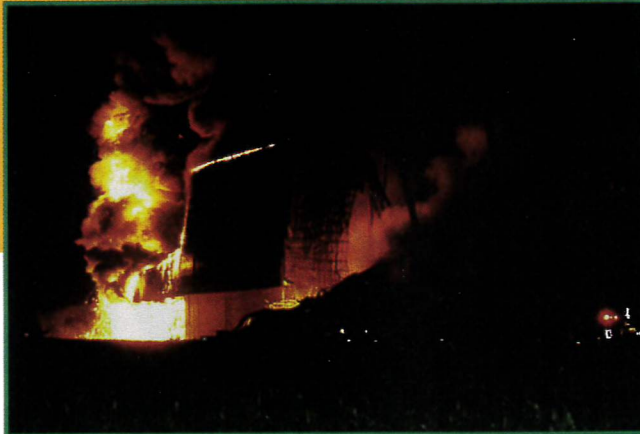
Those precautions paid off. Later that night, when the northern section of the building collapsed in a huge inferno, no one was close enough to get hurt. And the rest of the

week, even though almost 450 personnel would log more than 10,000 man-hours at the scene, the most serious injuries we had were a few foot blisters.

I mention these things not just because I'm really proud of that safety record, but also because I want you to appreciate how concerned every fire department and Emergency Medical Service crew is about their own safety and the safety of the people they serve. That concern sometimes causes inconvenience when traffic is rerouted or homes evacuated, but it also has prevented many needless injuries or loss of life from secondary incidents and has kept many a rescuer alive to rescue another day.

Scene safety for your soul

Now think about how often we might benefit from asking the question, "Is this scene safe for my soul?" The world is full of places that are as dangerous to faith as leaking fuel and downed power lines would be to rescuers at an accident. Every day, each of us is exposed to many materials that have the potential to



The main concern at the Quad/Graphics fire was the instability of the section of the burning building that hadn't collapsed. Because firefighters took scene safety seriously, no one was injured when the building collapsed (shown above).

be hazardous to our own souls and the souls of others whom Christ has redeemed.

God's Word gives us the same kind of instruction about those dangers as you'll find in the emergency textbooks. Think about all the times Jesus says, "Watch out!" or "Be on your guard!" He says it about greed. He says it about temptation. He says it about false teachers. He says it about hypocrisy and self-righteousness.

Remember also the strong pictures the Bible uses to describe the dangers. Jesus calls the false teachers "ferocious wolves" (Matthew 7:15). Paul compares the results of their teachings to the spread of gangrene (2 Timothy 2:17). He calls the temptation to greed "a trap" (1 Timothy 6:9). Paul also points to the sad example of two men who "shipwrecked their faith" (1 Timothy 1:19) because of turning to false teaching.

The Bible says these things this way because God is even more concerned about your spiritual welfare than an emergency crew would be about your physical safety. Jesus loves his sheep so much that he laid down his life for us. He also took it back up again when he rose from

the dead to give us victory over death. Warning us as he does is one way that he makes sure that nothing ever snatches us out of his hands.

God also loves the sheep that are not yet in the pen, the souls of those friends or family members who don't yet know Christ as their Savior or who haven't been born yet. When we heed his warnings, we also keep their potential rescuers alive to rescue another day.

Making scene safety for the soul a top priority starts with recognizing the dangers out there and knowing what God's Word says about how hazardous they are.

Some might suggest that the best way to practice scene safety for the soul would be to establish a perimeter around our homes or churches outside of which we never dare to venture. The trouble with that plan, though, is that God has paged us to be out at the scene where the souls need rescuing. Sheltering ourselves

from the world makes us about as useless as a firefighter who decides to stay holed up at the station.

Making scene safety for the soul a top priority starts with recognizing the dangers out there and knowing what God's Word says about how hazardous they are. It also means that everywhere we go, we scan the scene, always asking ourselves, "Is this scene safe for my soul?", so that we can take the appropriate precautions.

Sometimes those precautions will need to include rerouting or evacuation. The rest of the time, like the firefighter wearing his helmet and turnout gear, we take with us the full armor of God, which includes God's Word and our faith in that Word. Paul tells us that we need God's armor to stand our ground when the day of evil comes (Ephesians 6:13).

The pager is beeping. Souls are in need of rescue. Let's go! But let's be careful out there!

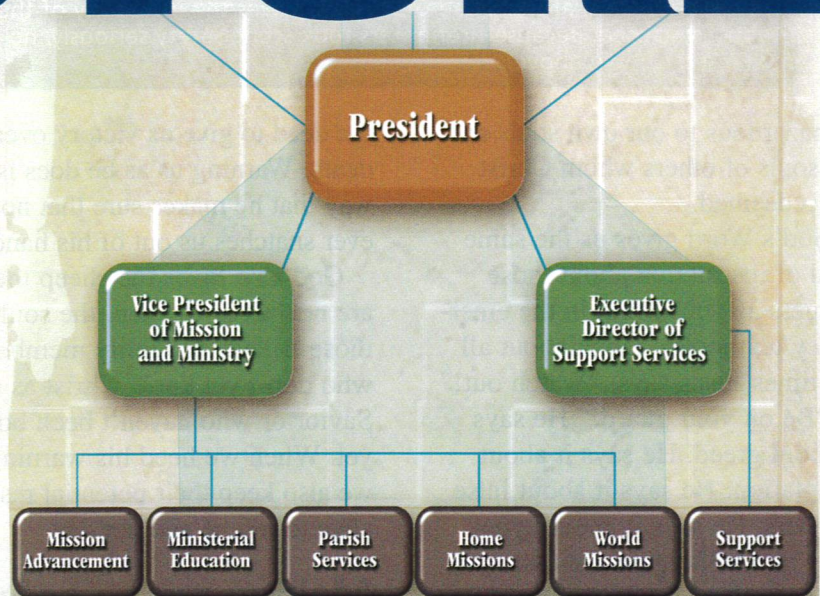


Billy Carter is pastor at St. Paul, Brownsville, Wisconsin.

a clearer PICTURE

See how Ministerial Education, Parish Services, Mission Advancement, and Support Services fit into WELS' organizational structure—and how you fit into these organizations.

Nicole R. Balza



As each piece of a puzzle is added, the picture becomes more and more clear. The same is true of WELS' organizational structure. As each piece of the WELS organization is identified and its function explained, the reasoning behind the structure becomes clearer. The first two articles of this series detailed the functions of the Conference of Presidents, Synodical Council, President, Vice President, Executive Director of Support Services, and Home and World Missions. Here you will see how Ministerial Education, Parish Services, Mission

Advancement, and Support Services fit into WELS' organizational structure, and how adding these pieces to the puzzle reveals a clearer picture of the whole system.

Ministerial Education

If you are a member of a congregation with a pastor, you have benefited from WELS' ministerial education schools, which prepare students to be pastors, teachers, and staff ministers.

WELS operates two preparatory schools for high school students who want to serve in the ministry—Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Mich., and Luther Preparatory

School, Watertown, Wis. Both schools offer a specialized curriculum that prepares students to attend Martin Luther College (MLC), New Ulm, Minn. Students at MLC follow one of five tracks: early childhood education, elementary education, secondary education, staff ministry, or pastoral studies. Those who graduate with a degree in pastoral studies usually continue at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis., where they can complete their master of divinity degree and receive a call as a pastor.

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary recently established a Pastoral

"A clearer picture," from p. 15

so that we can continue to spread God's Word. Parish Services helps to complete the circle of synod activity."

Mission Advancement

Under the direction of the Conference of Presidents, the Commission for Communication on Financial Support (CCFS) and Communication Services are working to advance the synod's mission.

CCFS does this by working to fund the projects that the synod has decided are most important to its mission. Fifteen gift planning counselors, 12 district commissions, and 1,200 congregation representatives form a communications network that works together to educate the synod on financial stewardship and to encourage Christian giving so that WELS projects can move forward.

Meanwhile, a combination of print, Web, and media services work together as Communication Services to

coordinate and implement WELS communications so that congregations, called workers, and individual members are informed about the synod's mission, objectives, and vision.

Developing a technological infrastructure for the synod's communications is the purpose of the Telecommunications/Technology Task Force II (Tel/Tech II). Overseen by the Synodical Council, Tel/Tech II knows that using technology to communicate God's Word and WELS' mission is vitally important in the 21st century. Tel/Tech II is working with districts and congregations to help them implement technology. The task force is also helping to develop a synod intranet, distance learning tools, and Web broadcasting.

Support Services

"Our goal in Support Services," explains Eugene Ludwick, executive director of Support Services, "is to

provide administrative support and service to our congregations and called workers in a timely, efficient, cost-effective manner that reflects good stewardship."

Financial Services manages the WELS operating and revolving funds; building and plant funds; the Church Extension Fund, Inc.; WELS Foundation, Inc.; WELS Investment Funds, Inc.; and Northwestern Publishing House. Each of the funds has a separate purpose. For example, WELS Investment Funds, Inc., manages the synod's long-term investments, such as trust and endowment funds.

Human Resources and the Voluntary Employees' Beneficiary Association (VEBA) handle WELS' worker care programs. Human Resources manages care for synod employees, including synodical compensation. VEBA provides health and death benefits for WELS workers, ensuring that a worker's coverage will not be cancelled because of large claims or illness.

Information Technologies supports the computing and telecommunications infrastructure of the synod administration building. This includes support of hardware, software, the Internet, and the synod database system.

The work of Ministerial Education, Parish Services, Mission Advancement, and Support Services touches every WELS member, but may sometimes seem as confusing as deciding where to start on a 1,000-piece puzzle. Yet, as the work that they do is revealed, a clearer picture develops of how WELS' mission is being carried out, and how each member can play an important role in that mission.

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

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEES

The President and First Vice President oversee these six working committees, which carry out business that is not assigned to any staff member.

Commission on Inter-Church Relations: Represents the synod in doctrinal discussions with other church bodies in order to extend and conserve the true doctrine and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church and to keep informed on doctrinal trends in other church bodies.

Publication Coordinating Commission: Explores WELS' publishing needs and funds necessary projects.

Committee on Constitutional Matters: Recommends amendments to and makes approved changes to the WELS Constitution and Bylaws.

Committee on Relief: Brings physical relief to those who are suffering. Gives cash grants, food, clothing, and medical supplies to victims of natural disasters.

Support Committee: Provides financial help to retired called workers and their surviving spouses when needed.

Historical Institute: Aids the synod's archivist/historian in increasing the number of items in the synod archives; publishes two journals and two newsletters each year dealing with people and events from the synod's past; is working to restore and preserve Salem Lutheran Landmark Church, built in 1863 near the site of the synod's founding.

Studies Institute for non-traditional students who want to study for the pastoral ministry. This includes second-career men and men from various minorities, both of whom may not easily fit into the traditional seminary structure.

The Congregational Evangelist Program is another way for both men and women to train for ministry within their own congregations. By providing a congregation with a comprehensive curriculum, a local pastor can teach his members about evangelism. Guest teachers supplement the curriculum with weekend seminars and a capstone course taught in New Ulm and Milwaukee. When members finish the program, they can be certified by their congregation as evangelists and may receive a part- or full-time call to assist with congregational evangelism.

The Board for Ministerial Education coordinates the synod's entire ministerial school system. Peter Kruschel, administrator for the Board for Ministerial Education, notes: "Far and away, the greatest strength of our ministerial education system is the Word of Christ on which our schools are founded. That Word permeates every aspect of our training. Another strength is the support of WELS members for a system of education that nurtures young men and women for ministry from high school through college and seminary. In that particular respect, we are the envy of many other denominations."

As shrinking budgets challenge every area of WELS, Kruschel says that WELS' ministerial education schools are willing to go "wherever WELS wants us to go. We are entirely dependent on our congregation members to tell us what types of workers are most needed, the number

of workers needed, and the amount of funding that will be available to support their training."

Parish Services

Many pieces fit together to create the picture of what Parish Services is. Parish Services exists to assist your congregation in its gospel ministry so that you and your church's members are strengthened, equipped, and encouraged. Parish Assistance and the Commissions on Evangelism, Worship, Youth Discipleship, Parish Schools, Adult Discipleship, and Special Ministries make up the Board for Parish Services.

Bruce Becker, Parish Services administrator, likens Parish Services to a congregation. Just as an individual congregation has committees and boards that help coordinate ministry such as evangelism and Christian education, so does the synod.

"Parish Services is a reflection of the local congregation," explains Becker. "Although each individual area of Parish Services has a unique focus, it is all one coordinated effort to help congregations."

Helping to coordinate that effort are the 84 district coordinators who volunteer at the grassroots level to connect Parish Services' work to those in local congregations. These district coordinators and their committee members help Parish Services stay in touch with the needs of WELS congregations. The hundreds of people who contact Parish Services for help in any given week also strengthen that connection.

Becker concludes by saying, "Parish Services is the one area of ministry whose focus is back to those who are the synod—those in congregations. We serve congregations, and, as congregations are strengthened and growing, it impacts the synod's ability to send missionaries out into the world

WHAT DOES PARISH SERVICES DO?

Parish Assistance: Works onsite to help members address ministry issues and opportunities. Each year Parish Assistance works with more than 3,000 WELS members.

Evangelism: Provides consultation and materials to help raise community awareness about congregations and conducts Schools of Outreach to help congregation members organize and plan for evangelism. Also manages the Web site <www.WhatAboutJesus.com>, a witnessing site for those who do not have a background in Christianity.

Worship: Helps parishes glorify God and strengthen his people through worship. Holds a national worship conference attended by almost 1,000 WELS members every three years. Publishes worship supplements. Holds Schools of Worship Enrichment to equip members for service.

Youth Discipleship: Encourages and assists congregations and parents as they nurture youth in the Word from birth through high school.

Parish Schools: Oversees the fourth-largest private school system in the United States, including 40,000 children, 726 educational institutions, and over 3,000 educators.

Adult Discipleship: Provides tools for spiritual growth through Bible studies and other resources.

Special Ministries: Offers spiritual care to people whose special needs are not adequately met by the regular ministries of WELS parishes, schools, and agencies. Includes care for those who are serving in the military, living in prisons, developmentally disabled, institutionalized, aging, deaf or hard of hearing, visually impaired, or experiencing mental health needs.

“How does that make you feel?”

What happens when our feelings conflict with God’s facts?

Jon D. Buchholz

Our society values feeling. The human dimension gives pizzazz to news stories. It’s not just what happened; it’s how people feel about what happened.

Recent trends in secular education emphasize feeling. It doesn’t matter how much a student learns or achieves, as long as he feels good about himself and the process. College philosophy professors sweep aside absolute truth; it’s all about how you feel.

The Bible is about feelings, too. It talks about the pain of sin and the joy of forgiveness. It spills over with the excitement of praise and gushes with the exuberance of salvation. God cares how we feel.

Feelings vs. facts

But what happens when our feelings conflict with the facts?

Feelings are subjective. They can be easily influenced. You might feel good or bad, depending upon how well you slept, what you ate, your day at work. Emotions can carry us to the height of ecstasy and the depths of despair.

The devil knows this, and he plays on our emotions. If he can get us to go with our feelings—at the expense of solid facts—he wins.

An unmarried couple might justify having sex outside of marriage, because it makes them feel good. So they feel that God will tolerate their sin. The fact is, their feelings are confused—damnably so.



“Do you think God wants us to feel bad about something that feels so good?”

A frustrated couple decides to break their marriage covenant. They feel unfulfilled, trapped, stifled. They justify their sin by rationalizing, “God wants me to be happy, doesn’t he?” They feel that divorce is the best option. However, God feels differently, and they won’t be feeling good if they come under his wrath.

Well-instructed Christians, seeking a different path, leave their lifelong confessional Lutheran teaching because it’s too objective, too doctrinal, too factual, too . . . boring! They want something with more feeling. Worship that turns up the music and turns down the emphasis on doctrine becomes an appealing alternative. It makes them feel so on fire for the Lord. Sadly, they risk exchanging the facts of God’s truth for empty emotions.

Faith in God’s facts

God is interested in our feelings. He wants us to be happy—obeying his

commandments. He wants us to rejoice—following his truth. He wants us to be fulfilled—in the rock-solid foundation of Christ and his pure teaching.

But ever since Eve looked at the fruit in the Garden of Eden and felt good about the possibility of eating it, the world has been a festival of sin and confused feelings.

Satan messes with conscientious Christians, as well. He might dredge up some sin from our past and bring back feelings of guilt and fear, making us feel unforgiven.

He might lead us to ask, “If God loves me, why don’t I feel loved? Why don’t I feel saved?”

Thankfully, we have something far better to rely upon than empty feelings. We have the facts revealed in God’s Word. No matter how we feel about the truth, the truth doesn’t change.

Deliberate, unrepented sin places the disobedient squarely under the judgment and wrath of God—no matter how he feels about it.

Penitent sinners who find refuge in the cross of Christ are forgiven, declared righteous by God the Father, and have a place in heaven—no matter how Satan tries to get them to feel.

Christians don’t have faith in feeling. We don’t even have faith in faith. We have faith in Christ crucified and in every word that proceeds from the Lord’s mouth. That’s a fact!



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



Luther: man of letters

Luther's books and pamphlets and especially his New Testament translation spread the gospel in the language of the people.

Richard D. Balge

In *A Sermon on Keeping Children in School* (1530), Martin Luther said, "They say of writing that 'it only takes three fingers to do it;' but the whole body and soul work at it too." During most of his working life Luther kept three Wittenberg printers busy. He received no fees or royalties, being satisfied with his university salary.

Broadcasting God's Word in the people's language

Luther's books and pamphlets and especially his translation of the New Testament spread the gospel in the language of the people. Most people could not read German, and even fewer could read Latin. Those who could read, however, shared his message with the illiterate.

For some time before 1521, Luther had worked on a translation of the New Testament. During the 10 months that he was in protective custody at the Wartburg, he completed it. It was published in 1522. After that, he and university colleagues worked together on both the New and Old Testaments. The complete Bible in German was published in 1534. It wasn't the first Bible in German, but it was the first based on the original Hebrew and Greek.

Luther never thought of this translation as a finished product, but as a work in progress. Luther scholars generally regard it as the most important tool and product of the Reformation, broadcasting God's Word in the language of the people.

Luther's adversaries were quick to criticize. They especially criticized his rendering of Romans 3:28, "by faith *alone*." Luther knew that the word "alone" does not appear in the Greek original, but he pointed out that when Paul excludes deeds of the law that leaves faith alone.

Sharing views on the church's problems

During a three-month period in 1521, Luther published three publications, often called Luther's "Reformation Manifesto." In them he set forth his views on what the church's problems were and what ought to be done.

Luther scholars generally regard [the complete Bible in German] as the most important tool and product of the Reformation.

In *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation*, written at the urging of government leaders and university colleagues, Luther spoke his mind on what government could do to improve conditions in church and state. He recommended that the church in Germany be a German (not Roman) church and that a council of the German church be held. He called for school reform, better provisions for the poor, and measures to improve the moral climate.

Next came *On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church*. Luther said that three abuses in connection with the Lord's Supper—withholding the cup from the laity, the doctrine of transubstantiation, and the sacrifice of the mass—had taken the church captive. He also said that Baptism was undervalued because God's forgiveness in Baptism was forgotten, while daily contrition and repentance were neglected.

In *The Freedom of the Christian*, Luther put down in simple terms what it means to be a Christian. The keynote of the writing is:

- A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none.
- A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all.

The paradox paraphrases Paul's words at 1 Corinthians 9:19: "Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible."

Luther's last written words, found in his pocket after his death, were "This is true: We are all beggars." A cast of his hand was made before his body was transported from Eisleben to Wittenberg. His thumb and first two fingers had stiffened into a writing position, as though he held a pen.

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

I belong to God

Christians aren't supposed to be "normal." We are supposed to stand out like lights on a hill, not lamps under a bowl.

Ruth E. Westendorf

Reading through my Bible the other day, I was struck by James 1:26: "If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless," and 2:14: "What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him?"

"Little" sins matter

I know, of course, that cursing, swearing, gossiping, etc., are wrong. Yet, to be honest with myself, I realize that I still do these things. It's not as if I punctuate my sentences with profanity or deliberately say things that will hurt people, but I've caught myself more than a few times letting out a nasty expletive under my breath after, say, slamming my fingers in a car door. And gossip? I try not to, but sometimes a juicy story just seems too good not to pass on.

Somehow I've always thought that these little sins were not so bad. Maybe, in the back of my mind, I think, "Well, nobody's perfect. So what if I sin a little bit? I'm only human—and besides, I don't need to worry about it. I'm forgiven!"

Perhaps my Lutheran upbringing, with all of its stress on "faith alone," left me a little vulnerable to this idea (although I really should know better!). After all, as long as I believe in

Jesus, I'm forgiven, right? So there's no need to feel guilty about something that's already been forgiven. No use dwelling on it. Sure I still sin, but God loves me anyway.

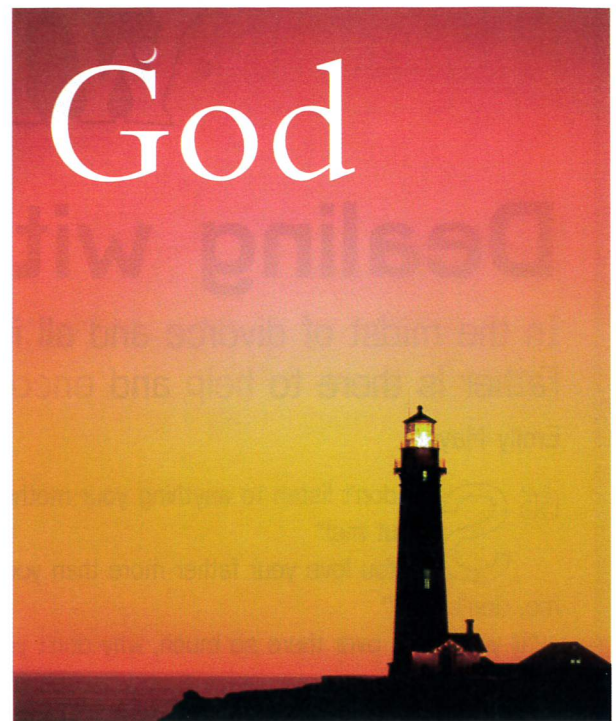
Christian souls should show through

Faith without deeds, James says, is not faith at all. A repentant believer who trusts in Jesus will naturally bring forth fruit that reflects the love of Jesus.

Most of my sins, I've discovered, stem from trying to be comfortable in the world.

Part of being a Christian is recognizing my sins and overcoming them, not just so I'll be a nicer person or to win bonus points with God, but because I realize what an amazing gift Christ's forgiveness is. It is precious and holy, not to be taken for granted and squandered so I can live comfortably in the world. I want to overcome my sin because Christ wants me to. That's how I show my love and thanks to him.

Most of my sins, I've discovered, stem from trying to be comfortable



in the world. Who doesn't want to be "normal" and fit in? But Christians aren't supposed to be "normal." We are supposed to stand out like lights on a hill, not lamps under a bowl. Our Christian souls should show through, which can be hard when we act, talk, or dress in a way that hides our faith.

So starting today, I'm going to work to get myself out from under my bowl of "normalcy," away from worrying if people think I'm strange, uncool, or some kind of Bible freak. I belong to God, not the world. There's only one person whose opinion matters. He doesn't care if I wear the right clothes, have the right friends, make enough money, or have as much stuff as my neighbor. What he cares about is what (and who) is in my heart. Why should I be ashamed to show the world that I am no longer a slave to sin and selfishness? I belong to God. Let the world know it!



Ruth Westendorf is a member at Trinity, Neenah, Wisconsin.

WHATEVER

Dealing with divorce

In the midst of divorce and all its tumultuous effects, our heavenly Father is there to **help** and **encourage**.

Emily Mayer

“**S**on, don’t listen to anything your mother says about me!”
“You love your father more than you love me, don’t you?”

“If you like it over there so much, why don’t you go live with her!”

“You behave for your father. Why can’t you behave for me?”

Unfortunately, half of America’s children hear painful accusations such as these as a result of their parents’ divorce. Research shows that 30 million children in America are currently living with one biological parent and that parent’s current partner. One out of every two marriages ends in divorce, and 60 percent of second marriages are likewise doomed. These are shocking figures, but for those children living with it, divorce isn’t just a statistic; it’s a reality.

Crazy emotions plague any child connected with a divorce. A dependency on a parent who is no longer around results in a sense of having been abandoned. Anger, shame, love, hate, pain, and sorrow need to be sorted through. You must be able to forgive your parent in order to endure life at home. The question becomes: how can love still exist when divorce has crushed the familiar, dependable, and happy home?

In the midst of these challenges, children turn to their friends. Strong friendships do the jobs of what should be strong relationships between parents and their children. Good friends take time to listen, to help, to encourage.

I, personally, have been blessed with two parents who have remained married to each other. However, many of my friends’ parents are divorced. I often receive calls at night from friends who are distressed about a

fight with a parent earlier that day or a stinging remark about the “evils” of their other parent.

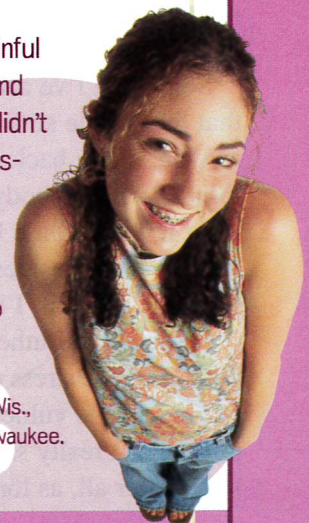
One night, the phone rang after I had gone to bed. I picked it up quickly so that no one else would wake up. A friend whose parents are divorced was on the line. He was worn out from another quarrel with his dad. As usual his dad’s side of the argument consisted mainly of cruel and often false comments about his mom. After my friend finished, both he and I had to break for Kleenex!

As I sat there, a question kept lurking in my mind: what was I to say? I had never had to experience anything as dreadful as what he went through almost daily! What advice could I give? What solutions could I offer? I was terrified of saying the wrong thing or giving bad advice.

Where I failed, the Bible helped me out. I reminded him that Jesus experienced the pain of being separated from his father. On the cross he said, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Jesus knew all about what my friend was suffering. Jesus also, through his death, made all of us God’s children. All of us have a loving heavenly Father who is perfect in every way and will never fail us.

Like my friend’s parents, I am only a sinful being and am prone to failure. But God and Jesus are perfect and all knowing. They didn’t let my friend down. When troubled and distressed we must all turn to our heavenly Father and our best and truest friend, Jesus. In the midst of divorce and all its tumultuous effects, they are there to help and encourage. They are there for you.

Emily Mayer, a member of Mt. Calvary, Waukesha, Wis., is a senior at Wisconsin Lutheran High School, Milwaukee.



Understanding the human element

When Human Resources Director Jon Flanagan became the director of the WELS Benefit Plans Office, Roger Crawford was recruited as the new WELS Director of Personnel and Work Care Programs.

“Human resources is my first love,” says Crawford, who worked for 23 years in benefits and human resources at Mobil Corporation.

Crawford does not think of this position as merely administrative. He has been through many situations that required a personal touch.

“You have to understand the human element, especially for individuals who have been with an organization for a long time,” says Crawford. “I take that

as my responsibility—to minimize the human impact as much as possible, and to do that, especially in this job, not only by understanding the human aspect but the scriptural aspect as well.”

After being moved every three years to all corners of the United States, Crawford has plenty of experience evaluating the internal structure of an organization and making it more efficient and effective. He is excited to be with WELS and to begin what he is commissioned to do.

“I’m always looking at different ways of doing things. Hopefully I’ll bring a new perspective. I love human resources and working with people because it’s about finding



Roger Crawford and his wife, Vickie. Crawford is the new WELS Director of Personnel and Worker Care Programs.

ways to do our jobs better and capturing the need for all of us to be appreciated in our jobs and having that element of fun while we’re doing it.”

Diane Behm

CONGREGATION MISSION SUBSCRIPTION PERFORMANCE

For the four months ending April 30, 2003

	Communicants 12/31/2002	Total Subscription		Offerings Received			
		2003	Year to Date Projected	April Offerings	Four Months’ Offerings	Percent of Sbscrptn	Annld Ave Per Commun
Arizona-California	18,035	\$1,230,577	\$358,197	\$99,443	\$382,926	106.9%	\$63.70
Dakota-Montana	8,855	495,836	126,620	49,720	125,592	99.2	42.55
Michigan	35,868	2,354,761	649,104	214,424	644,332	99.3	53.89
Minnesota	43,062	2,606,233	637,979	301,664	756,112	118.5	52.68
Nebraska	10,706	715,593	196,018	80,646	223,992	114.3	62.77
North Atlantic	4,455	457,709	122,018	35,051	134,313	110.1	90.45
Northern Wisconsin	60,381	2,794,292	777,755	246,180	822,293	105.7	40.86
Pacific Northwest	5,279	362,523	98,239	20,827	124,506	126.7	70.76
South Atlantic	7,710	662,610	190,965	61,126	198,753	104.1	77.34
South Central	5,105	612,017	176,941	63,966	193,958	109.6	113.98
Southeastern Wisconsin	56,961	3,750,533	918,633	311,143	1,015,269	110.5	53.47
Western Wisconsin	58,895	3,386,724	921,378	341,975	972,819	105.6	49.55
Total—This Year	<u>315,312</u>	<u>19,429,408</u>	<u>5,173,847</u>	<u>1,826,165</u>	<u>5,594,865</u>	<u>108.1%</u>	<u>53.23</u>
Total—Last Year	<u>315,847</u>	<u>18,549,235</u>	<u>4,936,608</u>	<u>1,862,299</u>	<u>5,448,230</u>	<u>110.4%</u>	<u>51.75</u>
Percent change	-0.2%	4.7%	4.8%	-1.9%	2.7%	-2.3%	2.9%

Mark Meissner, director of finance

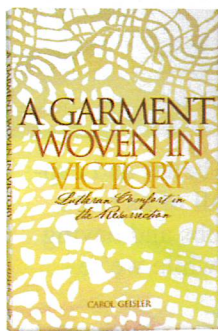
For current, in-depth financial statements, go to <www.wels.net>, jump word “fin.”

Booknook



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

A look at Jesus' resurrection through Luther's eyes



\$11.99

in *Victory*. Born of her own struggle

In a mere 95 pages, Carol Geisler summarizes Luther's thoughts on the resurrection, 243 footnotes worth, organized topically. Using the familiar metaphor of threads woven into a garment, Geisler writes about resur-

rection assurance in *A Garment Woven in Victory*. Born of her own struggle with her mother's death, Geisler's scholarly-like paper is peppered with a few home-grown illustrations and gathered into a book subtitled *Lutheran Comfort in the Resurrection*.

Geisler shows how Luther's thoughts on the resurrection permeate all his work, and as such her work succeeds. However, Geisler, like many preachers who explain the appointed readings before reading them, rehashes Luther's perfectly understandable words, making much of the book repetitive and ho-hum.

Academic in nature, it doesn't challenge. Workmanlike, it doesn't inspire.

Geisler writes competently, but Luther's quotes stun, hitting hard with their vividness. The redeeming value of *A Garment Woven in Victory* is Luther's insight and passion delivered verbatim to readers. Of course, one could simply read Luther. Not a bad idea at all.

Jeanne Lehninger
St. John, Wauwatosa, Wisconsin

District news

Arizona

Members of **First, Prescott, Ariz.**, have intensified their community evangelism efforts. For Easter they presented a joyful symbol of their faith by constructing a wooden cross and adding live flowers to it—symbolizing the transformation from death to life. The colorful cross was displayed outside.

On April 30, the East Fork Lutheran School Board of Directors voted to keep the high school division of **East Fork Lutheran School, Whiteriver, Ariz.**, open. For the 2003-04 school year, the high school will operate with four teachers rather than six. The grade school will continue to operate with five teachers. Only two of the 11 teachers will be supported by WELS World Missions' budget.

Southeastern Wisconsin

On April 12, **Risen Savior, Milwaukee**, hosted an Easter event for the community, including crafts, a lesson about Jesus' resurrection, and an Easter egg hunt. A dozen parents and 84 children attended.

Northern Wisconsin

Brian Butch, a member at St. Paul, Appleton, Wis., was named to McDonald's All-American basketball team and as the 2002

Dakota-Montana



On April 6, the 12 adults pictured became WELS communicant members (Pastor Paul Schuler and daughter also pictured). They are now members of Christ Our King, Lewiston, Mont., a mission of Mountain View, Great Falls, Mont.

Associated Press's Basketball Player of the Year in Wisconsin. Butch, a 6'11" senior, led his team to the state championship game in March and accepted a scholarship to play for the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

These pastors are the reporters for the districts featured this month: AZ—Kenneth Pasch; DM—Wayne Rouse; NW—Joel Lillo; SEW—Scott Oelhafen.

Arizona



It wasn't Pentecost, but people were hearing the gospel in two languages at Christ Our Redeemer/Iglesia Luterana Cristo Nuestro Redentor on April 27. At this dedication service, 260 people celebrated the union of two WELS mission congregations in El Paso, Texas—San Juan and Victory in Christ. The church's logo (visible on the church) tells their story: "The interwoven cross is a symbol of crossroads—the meeting of two cultures, two languages, two congregations—where we all share Christ as our Redeemer."

Assignments

At the call service held at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis., on May 20, 41 men received calls. Thirty-six of these men graduated in 2003. Five were reassigned from the class of 2001. Four from the class of 2002 were reassigned to their present field of labor. One member of the class of 2003 requested and was granted a deferral.

Backus, John D., to St. Paul, Bloomer, Wis.
Bauer, Steven F., to St. Peter, Ft. Collins, Colo.
Bergemann, Jonathan F., to Trinity, Woodbridge, Va.
Bickelhaupt, Jay W., to Apostles, Billings, Mont.
Bivens, David F., to Gravatai, Brazil
Blumer, Benjamin E., to Bethlehem, Lakeville, Minn.
Carr, Michael T., to Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Mich.
Cook, John K. Jr., to Hope, Indian River/Our Savior, Gaylord, Mich.
Cornelius, William L., to St. Mark, Salina/Faith, Russell, Kan.
DeVries, Eugene M., to Hope, Belvidere/Peace, Loves Park, Ill.
Dolan, Timothy D., to Cross of Life, Miami, Fla.
Ernest, David E., to King of Kings, Garden Grove, Calif.
Ewart, Jason W., to Cross of Christ, Boise, Idaho
Gosch, Justin D., to Zion, Bonesteel, S.D./St. Paul, Naper, Neb.
Gunderson, Mark D., to Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn.
Hahn, Steven A., to First German, Manitowoc, Wis.
Hanna, Mark D., to Shepherd of the Hills, Fredericksburg, Texas
Heffner, James J., to St. John, Frankenmuth, Mich.
Koelpin, David A., to St. John, Stanton, Neb.
Korthals, John F., to Bethany, Kenosha, Wis.
Kratz, Benjamin K., to Our Savior, Birmingham, Ala.
Krueger, Brian A., to St. Peter, Larsen, Wis.
Kruschel, Jonathan P., to St. Paul, Stevensville, Mich.
Luetzow, Mark T., to Trinity, Kaukauna, Wis.
Mielke, David C., to Zion, Mt. Pleasant, Mich.
Moldenhauer, Lucas J., to Trinity, Belle Plaine, Minn.
Monday, Shiloh M., to Santiago, Dominican Republic
Pufahl, Gary A., to St. Paul's First, North Hollywood, Calif.
Scharf, Jonathan E., to Abiding Grace, Covington, Ga.
Schaser, Kurt R., to Good Shepherd, Kearney, Neb.
Schoeneck, Caleb C., to Beautiful Savior, College Station, Texas
Schulz, Paul T., to assistant to the Dakota-Montana District President
Seifert, Michael J., to Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis.
Spiegelberg, Timothy J., to St. James, North Branch, Mich.
Swenson, Troy S., to Trinity, Hillrose/Zion, Ft. Morgan, Colo.
Valleskey, Martin E., to Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis.
Walta, Chad G., to St. Matthew, Danube/St. Matthew, Flora Township, Minn.
Welke, Paul F., to St. Matthew, Winona, Minn.
Werner, James M., to Risen Savior, Cedar Grove/Calvary, Sheboygan, Wis.
Westphal, Erich W., to Nebraska Lutheran High School, Waco, Neb.
Winkel, Christian J., to Redemption, Milwaukee, Wis.

California, here I come

It's a good thing that Bette Feiock, the first WELS teacher in California, didn't just turn around and go back home that summer day in 1954.

"I had no idea where to go," says Feiock, when, because of changed travel plans, no one was at the Los Angeles train station to pick her up. "I'm coming from a town of 12,000 [Marshfield, Wis.] to this great big city. . . . I had just enough money to go back home on the train."

But a phone call to the school board chairman and a cab ride brought this scared, but determined, teacher to Gethsemane, Los Angeles, and the first WELS school in California.

Now almost 50 years later, WELS has over 100 teachers and 18 schools in California.

"Isn't that awesome," says Feiock, who retired in June after spending her entire teaching career in California. "What a blessing. When I look back, I never realized that I was a pioneer in all this."

Teaching wasn't always in Feiock's plan. First, she wanted to be a band director. Then she wanted to be a missionary. "I was going to pack up my bags and go to Africa, because I thought you could do that," she says. Her friend convinced her that she could serve her church in a different way—as a teacher.

Feiock had her chance to go to an unknown land when she received the first teacher call to California. "I had a choice if I wanted to go, because it was the first school out here," says Feiock. "Well there was no question in my mind—I knew I wanted to go."

That first year, Feiock taught 12 students from grades one through four at Gethsemane. She had her share of challenges, including having to call the fire department when a student climbed the flagpole and wouldn't come down.

Those challenges have changed throughout the years, most notably



Bette Feiock with her first class.

the difference in how you discipline children—"You were allowed to spank the children then," says Feiock—and the increase in broken homes.

"I teach a lot differently than I did at the beginning," she says. "I'm much more aware of the learning difficulties the children have. I've taken classes and workshops and read many books concerning these difficulties."

Through it all, Feiock gives glory to God. "God gave me a very special experience. This whole story is a story of the grace of God."

THROUGH MY BIBLE IN 3 YEARS

AUGUST 2003

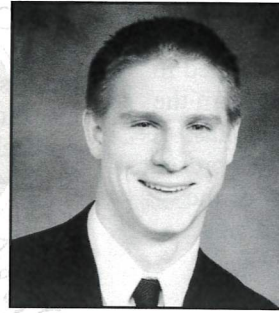
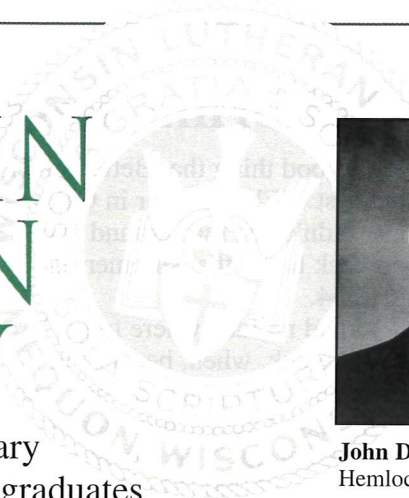
1. Job 11, 12	18. Ps. 45
2. Job 13, 14	19. Ps. 46-48
3. Job 15-17	20. Ps. 49
4. Job 18, 19	21. Ps. 50
5. Job 20, 21	22. Ps. 51
6. Job 22-24	23. 2 Samuel 1
7. Job 25-27	24. 2 Sam. 2, 3
8. Job 28-29	25. 2 Sam. 4:1-5:16
9. Job 30, 31	26. 2 Sam. 5:17-6:23
10. Job 32, 33	27. 2 Sam. 7
11. Job 34, 35	28. 2 Sam. 8, 9
12. Job 36, 37	29. 2 Sam. 10, 11
13. Job 38:1-40:5	30. 2 Sam. 12:1-13:37
14. Job 40:6-42:6	31. 2 Sam. 13:38-14:33
15. Job 42:7-17	
16. Psalm 42, 43	
17. Ps. 44	

2003 graduates

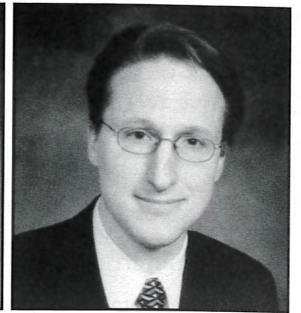
Mequon, Wis.

WISCONSIN LUTHERAN SEMINARY

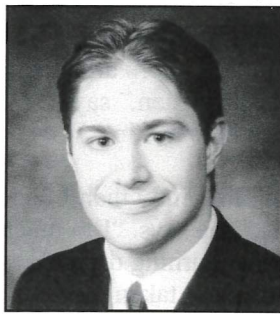
At the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary graduation service on May 21, 37 graduates received their Master of Divinity degrees.



John D. Backus
Hemlock, Mich.



Steven F. Bauer
Great Falls, Mont.



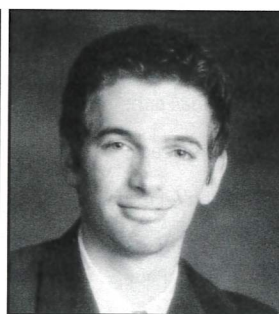
Jonathan F. Bergemann
Wauwatosa, Wis.



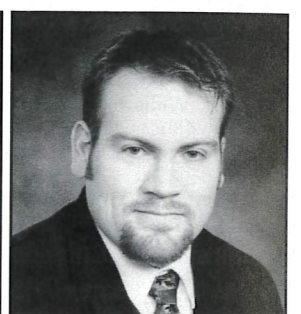
Jay W. Bickelhaupt
Fond du Lac, Wis.



David F. Bivens
Mequon, Wis.



Benjamin E. Blumer
Orlando, Fla.



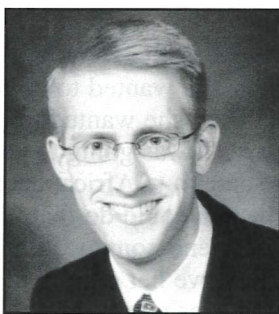
Michael T. Carr
Freeport, Ill.



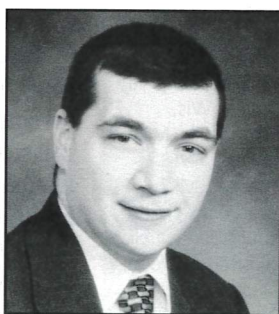
John K. Cook Jr.
Milwaukee, Wis.



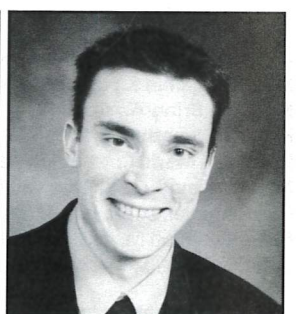
William L. Cornelius
Random Lake, Wis.



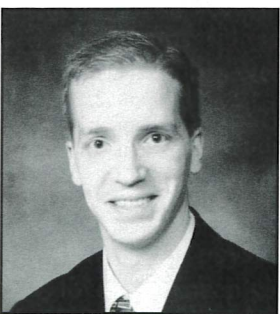
Eugene M. DeVries
Ontario, Calif.



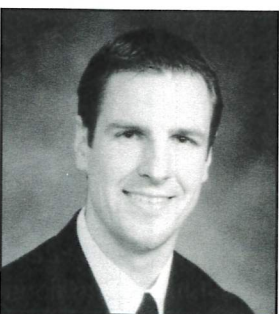
David E. Ernest
Carlisle, Pa.



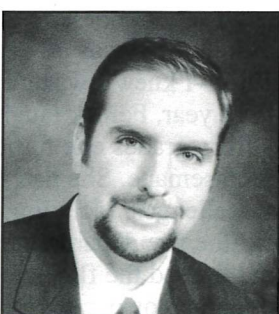
Jason W. Ewart
Broken Arrow, Okla.



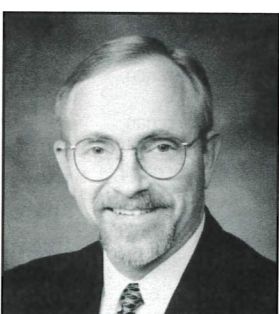
Justin D. Gosch
Aberdeen, S.D.



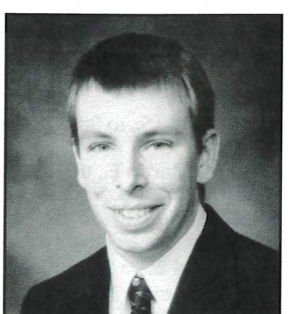
Mark D. Gunderson
Wood Lake, Minn.



Steven A. Hahm
Grafton, Wis.



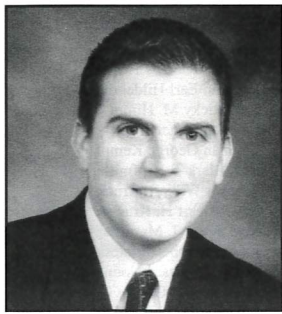
Mark D. Hanna
Juneau, Wis.



James J. Heffner
Brodhead, Wis.



David A. Koelpin
Tucson, Ariz.



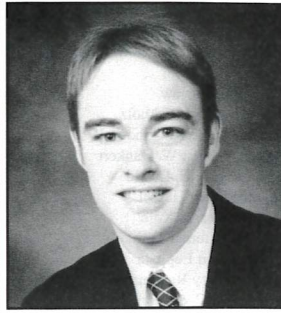
John F. Korthals
Mequon, Wis.



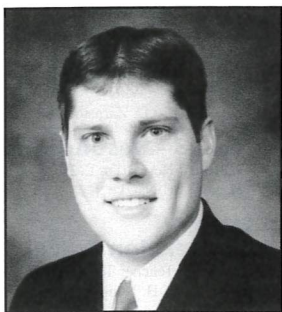
Benjamin K. Kratz
Oak Creek, Wis.



Brian A. Krueger
Hartford, Wis.



Jonathan P. Kruschel
Franklin, Wis.



Mark T. Luetzow
Watertown, Wis.



David C. Mielke
Jackson, Wis.



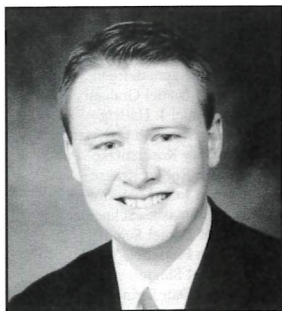
Lucas J. Moldenhauer
Jackson, Wis.



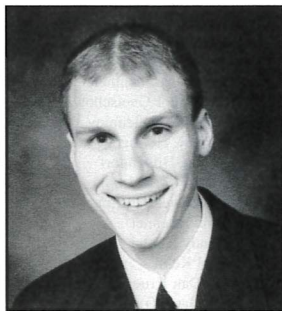
Shiloh M. Monday
New Ulm, Minn.



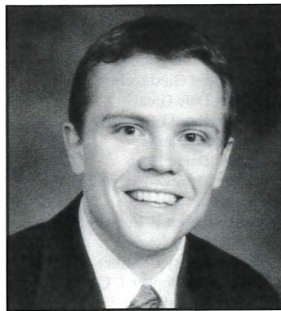
Eric A. Pelzl
New Ulm, Minn.



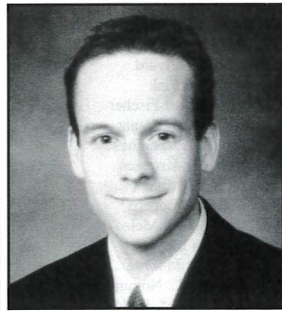
Gary A. Pufahl
Lake Mills, Wis.



Caleb C. Schoeneck
Salem, Ore.



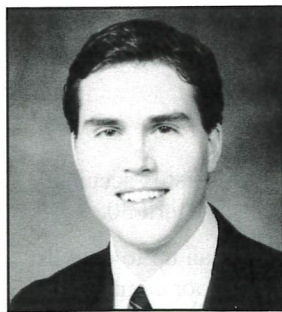
Michael J. Seifert
Midland, Mich.



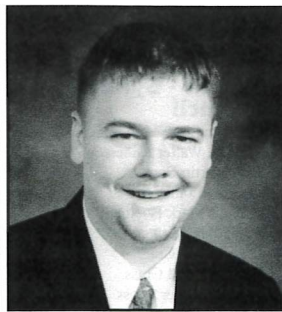
Timothy J. Spiegelberg
Grand Junction, Colo.



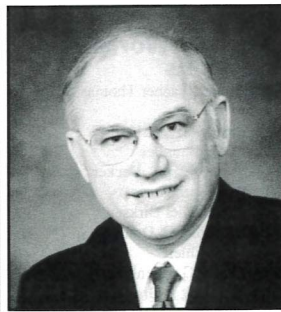
Troy S. Swenson
Neenah, Wis.



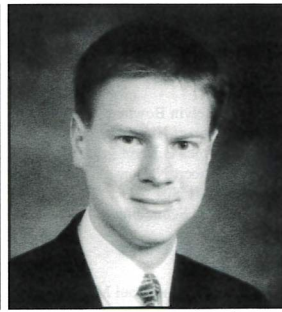
Martin E. Valleskey
Houston, Texas



Chad G. Walta
Lake Mills, Wis.



Paul F. Welke
Watertown, Wis.



Erich W. Westphal
Colgate, Wis.



Christian J. Winkel
Thiensville, Wis.

WELS 57th biennial convention

FLOOR COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

No. 1 - Elections

Chairman: Teacher Tom Plitzuweit
Teacher Ben Bain
Rev. Mike Barlow
Teacher Gregg Birkholz
Teacher Wade R. Cohoon II
Teacher Steven W. Dankert
Rev. Gregory E. Ewald
Layman Terry Herbst
Layman Gerald Kolb
Layman Ottomar Lemke
Layman Ron Leppala
Layman Gary Rasmussen
Rev. Lloyd C. Schlomer
Layman Elmer Simon
Rev. Jon E. Tesch
Layman Jay White

No. 2 - Inter-Church Relations

Chairman: Rev. John F. Vogt
Layman Emil Beimborn
Rev. John F. Boehringer
Rev. Michael Hartman
Layman Floyd Kastens
Rev. Timothy B. Lindloff
Teacher James E. Martens
Teacher Michael J. Mathwig
Rev. Brent Merten
Rev. Philip C. Mischke
Rev. David L. Rosenau
Rev. Daniel L. Schumann
Rev. Douglas M. Semenske
Rev. Gary D. Tryggestad
Teacher Paul A. Wendland
Layman Ed Wilger
Teacher Jeffrey D. Zilisch

No. 3 - Membership

Chairman: Rev. Thomas W. Biedenbender
Layman James Rathje

No. 4 - Conference of Presidents

Chairman: Rev. Thomas Westra
Teacher Scott D. Beyersdorf
Rev. Forrest Bivens
Layman Roger Borchardt
Layman Dale Cole
Layman Tom Dixon
Teacher John Eggert
Rev. Fred Fedke
Layman Robert Freiberg
Layman Leo Frese
Rev. Lawrence R. Gates
Rev. Ellery W. Groth
Layman Mark Keller
Layman Sidney Kopp
Layman Dick Krueger
Rev. Michael Lindemann
Rev. John F. Maasch
Teacher Joel Mischke
Teacher Andrew K. Plocher
Rev. Joel W. Prange
Rev. Duane A. Rodewald
Layman Ken Schaefer
Rev. John H. Schmidt
Layman James Schramm
Layman John Seidl
Layman John Smith
Rev. Thomas Valleskey
Rev. Marc A. VonDeylen
Teacher Dale K. Walz
Teacher Robert E. Weimer
Rev. Mark J. Wenzel
Rev. Paul R. White
Layman Art Wickle
Layman Kim A. Winsor
Layman Wayne Winter
Rev. Richard A. Winters
Teacher Steven C. Witt

No. 5 - Ministerial Education

Chairman: Rev. Brad Wordell
Teacher Christopher J. Avery
Teacher Paul N. Beck
Layman Joe Broker
Layman Dan Connolly
Layman Steven Daugherty
Rev. Michael Duncan
Teacher Stephen Fritze
Layman Mark Gaulke
Teacher Philip Glende
Teacher David L. Habbeck
Rev. Daniel M. Hennig
Layman Bernard Hookstead
Teacher Daniel W. Johnson
Layman Terry Kemmet
Rev. Henry T. Koch
Layman Thomas Laich
Rev. Lyle L. Luchterhand
Layman Bill Mashke
Layman Lorn Matelski
Layman Jeff Nitzke
Rev. Steven O. Olson
Rev. Joel Petermann
Layman James Pflum
Layman John Pietrusiewicz
Layman James Ringstrom
Rev. Mark H. Rosenberg
Rev. James Ruppel
Layman Roger Schipke
Layman Eugene Schultz
Rev. Gregory Schulz
Layman Steve Schuppenhauer
Rev. Keith Siverly
Layman Tom Smith
Rev. Anthony Straseske
Teacher Gary L. Thoma
Layman Duane Timm
Rev. David R. Wenzel

No. 6 - Administrative Services

Chairman: Rev. Harlyn Kuschel
Layman Frank Burton
Layman Ed Collyard
Layman Todd Fink
Layman Richard Fischer
Layman Thomas Gentz
Rev. Randall R. Hughes
Rev. Robert J. Krueger
Teacher Eric Lange
Rev. Martin J. Lopahs
Layman Michael Melso
Layman Lon Meyer
Teacher Scott Monroe
Rev. Timothy L. Nommensen
Teacher James M. Raddatz
Rev. Rodney H. Rixe
Rev. James A. Schmeling
Layman Ron Sieggreen
Teacher Richard T. Slattery
Teacher Craig Sonntag
Layman Darren Vyskocil
Rev. Roger D. Wahl

No. 7 - Credentials and Excuses

Chairman: Teacher Michael P. Albrecht
Layman Melvin Bowman
Layman Robert Hirschmann
Teacher James P. Kaniess
Layman Robert Nelson
Layman Kurt Nitz
Rev. Steve J. Schmeling

No. 8 - Parish Services

Chairman: Teacher Paul M. Hartwig
Rev. Frederick S. Adrian
Rev. Mark W. Anderson

Rev. Norris Baumann
Layman David Baumgarten
Layman Alton Beadell
Layman Merle Blum
Layman Mark Brandau
Layman Darrel Carstensen
Rev. Michael Ewart
Teacher Bruce Fehlauer
Layman Marc L. Frey
Rev. Paul Hartman
Layman John Hay
Teacher John C. Helke
Teacher Frederick J. Horn
Rev. Shawn E. Kauffeld
Rev. Thomas A. Klusmeyer
Layman Richard Kohn
Rev. Robert M. Krueger
Layman William Lipke
Teacher Jack N. Minch
Layman Ken Morris
Layman David Olson
Layman Craig Rendahl
Teacher Alan Schaffer
Rev. Myron Schwanke
Layman Orville Taecker
Layman Victor Voight
Rev. Martin Wildauer
Teacher Michael Wilde
Layman Elmer Wohlers

No. 9 - Home Missions

Chairman: Layman David P. Luisier
Teacher David L. Allerheiligen
Layman Harry Appel
Rev. David P. Arndt
Layman Clifford Bakkom
Layman Glenn Blank
Layman Rodger Bobholz
Layman Elton Braun
Layman Don Butler
Layman Del Contreras
Layman Stanley Crum
Layman Phillip Dueterhoeft
Rev. Kenneth H. Engdahl
Teacher Daniel Fenske
Layman Ed Giesbrecht
Layman Dale Greal
Layman Harold Griepentrog
Rev. Paul Henning
Layman David Heyn
Teacher Mark D. Holcomb
Rev. Paul Kante
Teacher Robert F. Lehninger
Layman Ron Metoxen
Teacher Jeffrey E. Miller
Teacher Christopher J. Olson
Teacher Randall Pahl
Layman Donley Pansch
Rev. Timothy K. Poetter
Teacher George J. Povich
Rev. John D. Roekle
Teacher Jeffrey Schultz
Layman Robert Setum
Layman Paul Wutzke
Layman Gerald Zollidan

No. 10 - World Missions

Chairman: Teacher Thomas N. Hunter
Layman Morris Ashkie
Rev. Dale Baumbler
Teacher Robert C. Becker
Teacher Keith Bowe
Layman Daniel Dirksen
Layman John E. Douglass
Rev. Joel Ehler
Rev. Larry G. Ellenberger
Teacher Rick J. Grundman
Rev. David E. Haag
Teacher Paul A. Haag
Teacher Cary J. Haakenson

Layman Delbert Heins
Rev. Jeff Heitsch
Teacher Thomas P. Hering
Layman Earl Hildebrandt
Rev. Ricky M. Himm
Layman Roger Hinz
Layman George Kempf
Rev. Mark T. Kipfmiller
Teacher William Kruck
Rev. Robert H. Krueger
Rev. Bruce J. Marggraf
Layman Robert Mateske
Teacher Edward Noon
Layman Mel Ott
Layman Richard Reese
Layman Carl Reible III
Teacher Steven Remmle
Teacher Mitchel A. Salzwedel
Layman James Schroeder
Rev. John A. Schroeder
Layman Doug Schultz
Layman John Schumacher
Teacher Alan M. Spurgin
Layman Lloyd Stern
Layman Robert Strane
Rev. Richard P. Tragasz
Layman Aaron J. Trimmer
Teacher Leroy E. Westphal
Layman David Yets
Layman Charlie Zahn

No. 11 - Special Reports

Chairman: Rev. Michael Schultz
Layman James Albertz
Teacher James A. Bakken
Teacher John E. Bauer
Teacher Karl G. Bauer
Layman Danny Bednar
Layman Harold Benecke
Teacher Timothy J. Bentz
Teacher Charles H. Buege
Rev. John C. Carter
Layman Dallas Christ
Layman Jon Enstad
Layman Gary Frank
Rev. John Gierach
Layman Doug Guenther
Layman Walter Guetschow
Rev. Timothy P. Henning
Rev. John R. Hering
Rev. Wayne Hilgendorf
Rev. Philip C. Hirsch
Layman Lowell Hoffman
Rev. John Huebner
Rev. Randy Hunter
Rev. Paul Kelm
Layman Dan Krueger
Layman Gary Kruse
Layman Fred Lemke
Rev. Carl W. Leyrer
Rev. John M. Parlow
Layman Tim Probst
Teacher Matthew Probst
Teacher John A. Sebald
Rev. David D. Sellnow
Layman Robert Timmerman
Layman Roger Wendt
Layman David Williams

No. 12 - Synodical Council

Chairman: Rev. Kevin Schultz
Layman Walter Anderson
Rev. Martin Baur
Layman Louis Belz
Teacher Mark Boehme
Rev. John Brenner
Layman Joe Cioe
Layman Thad Crass
Layman Roger Cross
Layman Dean Dawson
Rev. Thomas Franzmann
Layman Gary Frey

Rev. Tim Gumm
Teacher Donald W. Gurgel
Rev. Brian R. Kom
Layman Charles Larkin
Rev. John Mittelstaedt
Rev. Paul D. Nitz
Rev. R. Stephen Nuss
Layman George Pieper
Layman Roger Preuss
Rev. Guy R. Purdue
Rev. Jonathan Rockhoff
Rev. Roger W. Rockhoff
Layman Carl Rudolph
Teacher Duane R. Schlomer
Layman Harold Schmidt
Layman David Schroeder
Teacher Tim Schubkegel
Layman Wes Steinborn
Teacher James E. Stueber
Layman John Tappen
Rev. Stephen P. Valleskey
Teacher Terry Vasold
Layman Nathan Walworth
Rev. Douglas Weiser
Rev. David D. Wierschke
Teacher Jonathan W. Winkel
Rev. Steven L. Witte
Teacher Larry D. Zarnstorff

No. 13 - Resolutions

Chairman: Rev. Brian L. Dose
Teacher Carl Natzke

No. 14 - Convention Travel

Chairman: Teacher Tod A. Hauf
Rev. Charles H. Heup
Layman Myron Nasgovitz

No. 15 - Constitutional Matters

Chairman: Teacher Dennis L. Steimbrenner
Teacher Joe E. Archer
Rev. Jon R. Bitter
Layman Jack Cunningham
Layman Kenneth Field
Layman Daniel Graham
Rev. Daniel J. Helwig
Teacher Kenneth C. Kasten
Rev. Gary Koschnitzke
Layman Robert Krause
Layman John Luetschwager
Rev. Thomas C. Schneider
Teacher Daniel Schultz
Layman Frederick Schulz
Rev. Paul Siegler
Layman Dan Stein
Rev. Martin Stuebs
Teacher Marvin Wittig
Teacher Keith D. Wordell

No. 16 - Steering

Chairman: Rev. John Guse
Rev. Vilas Glaeske
Rev. Paul Janke

This list is accurate as of April 30.

For an up-to-date list of floor committees, go to <www.wels.net>, jump word "delegate."

ADVISORY DELEGATES

Officers

Rev. Karl Gurgel, president
 Rev. Wayne Mueller, first vice president
 Rev. Jon Mahnke, second vice president
 Mr. Steven Lemke, secretary

District Presidents

Rev. Paul Janke, Arizona-California
 Rev. Peter Naumann, Dakota-Montana
 Rev. John Seifert, Michigan
 Rev. Larry Cross, Minnesota
 Rev. Joel Frank, Nebraska
 Rev. Walter Beckmann, North Atlantic
 Rev. Douglas Engelbrecht, Northern Wisconsin
 Rev. Theodore Lambert, Pacific Northwest
 Rev. John Guse, South Atlantic
 Rev. Vilas Glaeske, South Central
 Rev. David Rutschow, Southeastern Wisconsin
 Rev. Herbert Prah, Western Wisconsin

Synodical Council lay representatives and at-large members

Mr. Tom Schlittenhart, Arizona-California
 Mr. Seth Hansen, Dakota-Montana
 Mr. Mark Bannan, Michigan
 Mr. Arvid Schwartz, Minnesota
 Mr. Kurt Austad, Nebraska
 Mr. Rodger Anderson, North Atlantic

Mr. Ronald Rathke, Northern Wisconsin
 Mr. Peter Dorn, Pacific Northwest
 Mr. Dale Anderson, South Atlantic
 Mr. Marc Frey*, South Central
 Mr. John Oswald, Southeastern Wisconsin
 Mr. David Steinert, Western Wisconsin
 Dr. John Freese, teacher at-large
 Rev. William Gabb, pastor at-large

Ministerial Education

Rev. Donald Sutton, chairman
 Rev. Peter Kruschel, administrator,
 Board for Ministerial Education
 Mr. Merlyn Kruse, area Lutheran
 high school representative
 Rev. Theodore Olsen, president,
 Martin Luther College
 Rev. Paul Prange, president,
 Michigan Lutheran Seminary
 Rev. Mark Schroeder, president,
 Luther Preparatory School
 Rev. David Valleskey, president,
 Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary

Home and World Missions

Rev. Kenneth Gast, chairman,
 Board for Home Missions
 Rev. Harold Hagedorn, administrator,
 Board for Home Missions
 Rev. Philip Koelpin, chairman,
 Board for World Missions

Rev. Daniel Koelpin, administrator
 Board for World Missions

Parish Services

Rev. Thomas Zarling, chairman,
 Board for Parish Services
 Rev. Bruce Becker, administrator,
 Board for Parish Services
 Mr. James Brandt, associate administrator,
 Commission on Parish Schools
 Rev. Carl Ziemer, administrator,
 Commission on Special Ministries

Fiscal Services

Mr. Eugene Ludwick, executive director
 for support services
 Mr. Mark Meissner, director of finance
 and treasurer

Miscellaneous

Rev. Gary Baumber, *Forward in Christ* editor/director of Communication Services
 Rev. Wayne Borgwardt, director,
 Telecommunications/Technology
 Task Force II
 Rev. John Braun, vice president,
 Northwestern Publishing House
 Mr. Roger Crawford, director of personnel
 & worker care programs
 Rev. Vilas Glaeske, opening service preacher
 Rev. Salimo Hachibamba, closing service
 preacher

Prof. Em. John Jeske, Old Testament
 devotion leader
 Rev. Robert Pasbrig, chairman, Committee
 on Constitutional Matters
 Rev. Donald Patterson, Bible study leader
 Mr. John Peterman, chairman, floor com-
 mittee #11, 2001 convention
 Prof. Jerald Plitzuweit, New Testament
 devotion leader
 Rev. Ronald Roth, administrator,
 Commission for Communication
 on Financial Support
 Rev. Warren Widmann, WELS Spiritual
 Growth Project director
 Rev. Thomas Zarling, parliamentarian

*also a voting delegate

NOMINATIONS BY THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

These candidates (listed alphabetically) have been chosen by the Synod Nominating Committee to be presented to the delegates of the 57th WELS convention. The delegates will elect one for each position listed. Each candidate's district is in parentheses, and incumbents are noted by an asterisk (*).

Synodical Council

Pastor-at-large

Jon R. Bitter, Rochester, Minn. (MN)
 Richard A. Krause, Pewaukee, Wis. (SEW)
 Steven M. Mischke, Granger, Ind. (MI)

Northwestern Publishing House

Board of Directors

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary member

Daniel P. Leyrer, Mequon, Wis. (SEW)
 John D. Schuetze, Mequon, Wis. (SEW)
 Paul E. Zell, Mequon, Wis. (SEW)

Layman (1 of 2)

Jonathan P. Behnke, Jackson, Wis. (SEW)
 Jerome Bentz, New Ulm, Minn. (MN)*
 Donley V. Henning, Fort Atkinson, Wis.
 (WW)

Layman (2 of 2)

Harvey Dunn, Southlake, Texas (SC)
 Kenneth J. Hull, Downers Grove, Ill. (SEW)*
 Randall R. Kastner, Milwaukee, Wis. (SEW)

Board for Ministerial Education

Pastor

Richard A. Kogler, Fallbrook, Calif.
 (AZ-CA)*
 E. Allen Sorum, Milwaukee, Wis. (SEW)

Teacher

James V. Henrickson, Dallas, Texas (SC)
 Henry J. Meyer, Milwaukee, Wis. (SEW)
 Stephan L. Rodmyre, Des Moines, Wash.
 (PNW)*

Layman

David S. Bastyr, Rochester, Minn. (MN)*
 Theodore B. Oertel, Waukesha, Wis. (SEW)
 Harold A. Peckham, Watertown, Wis. (WW)

MLC Governing Board

Chairman (Pastor)

James L. Hoff, Livonia, Mich. (MI)
 Charles L. Learman, Peshtigo, Wis. (NW)
 Ralph E. Scharf, Milwaukee, Wis. (SEW)*

Board for Home Missions

Chairman (Pastor)

Mark J. Cares, Nampa, Idaho (D-M)
 Richard H. Schleicher, Flower Mound,
 Texas (SC)
 Norman F. Seeger, Sioux Falls, S.D. (D-M)

Board for World Missions

Chairman (Pastor)

Philip A. Koelpin, Tucson, Ariz. (AZ-CA)*
 David D. Sternhagen, New Orleans, La. (SA)
 Douglas P. Weiser, Bellevue, Wash. (PNW)

Latin America

Administrative Committee

Layman

Peder Dressel, Rochester, Minn. (MN)
 Jack Meyer, Collierville, Tenn. (MI)
 Allen L. Stueck, Mundelein, Ill. (SEW)*

Native American

Administrative Committee

Pastor

Dennis W. Meier, Markesan, Wis. (NW)

Paul W. Schulz, Safford, Ariz. (AZ-CA)

Martin P. Spaude, Chandler, Ariz. (AZ-CA)*

Teacher

Joseph Archer, Beecher, Ill. (SEW)
 Richard Carver, Brown Deer, Wis. (SEW)
 Lynn Kuether, Mesa, Ariz. (AZ-CA)*

Africa Administrative Committee

Layman

Martin Leyrer, Muskegon, Mich. (MI)
 Donald A. Whitlock, Franklin, Wis. (SEW)*

Japan Europe Asia Administrative Committee

Pastor

Daniel N. Balge, New Ulm, Minn. (MN)
 James M. Behringer, Menomonee Falls, Wis.
 (SEW)
 Stephen P. Valleskey, Houston, Texas (SC)*

Layman

James O. Haag, Muskego, Wis. (SEW)
 Kenneth H. Westlund, Lakewood, Colo.
 (D-M)*

Southeast Asian

Administrative Committee

Teacher

James R. Holman, Citrus Heights, Calif.
 (AZ-CA)*
 Thomas J. Schulz, Wauwatosa, Wis. (SEW)
 Richard R. Siegler, Manitowoc, Wis. (NW)

Layman

David P. Habben, Waukesha, Wis. (SEW)*
 Floyd Palmer, St. Clair, Minn. (MN)
 Kent A. Raabe, Brookfield, Wis. (SEW)

Board for Parish Services

Layman

John H. Nass, Watertown, Wis. (WW)
 Mark U. Naumann, Milwaukee, Wis. (SEW)
 David Schultz, Rosemount, Minn. (MN)

Commission on Youth Discipleship

Chairman (Pastor)

Roger W. Huffman, King of Prussia, Penn.
 (NA)

Commission on Adult Discipleship

Chairman (Pastor)

Martin R. Baur, Wisconsin Rapids, Wis.
 (WW)
 Randy K. Hunter, Middleton, Wis. (WW)
 Mark S. Voss, Milwaukee, Wis. (SEW)

Board of Appeals

Pastor

Larry G. Ellenberger, Franklin, Wis. (SEW)
 Jeffrey L. Schone, New Ulm, Minn. (MN)
 Jonathan E. Schultz, Calgary, Alberta,
 Canada (D-M)

Teacher

Alan A. Draeger, Watertown, S.D. (D-M)
 John J. Lau, Onalaska, Wis. (WW)
 James R. Moeller, Watertown, Wis. (WW)

Layman

Peter E. Dorn, Portland, Ore. (PNW)
 Paul T. Hahm, Hilton, N.Y. (NA)

For an up-to-date list of candidates, go to <www.wels.net>, jump word "nominations."

LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE

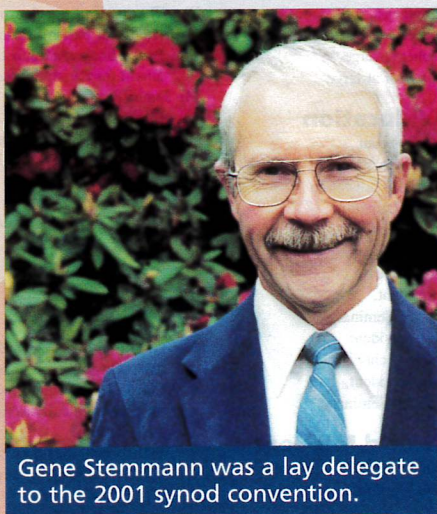
In the spirit of Matthew 5:16, we're sharing examples of people who live their faith. If you have an example to share, send it to us at 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398; <fic@sab.wels.net>.

Gene Stemmann, a lay delegate to the 2001 WELS synod convention, wrote this summary when he arrived home from the convention.

I wish I could convey the WELS synod convention experience to you. You can read the *Book of Reports and Memorials* and the post-convention edition of *Forward in Christ*. You can check out the WELS Web site and watch the upcoming video on *WELS Connection*. Yet, all of these will be so incomplete.

Each attempt at communicating the experience will be silent, where I heard beautiful music in instrument and voice and the spoken witnesses to the Word of the Lord—not to mention the sound of the daily 1:30 AM dumpster unloading below my dorm room window. Each attempt will also be sightless, where I have joyous memories of many new faces and places. It will be odorless, where I have memories of the delicious food—as well as the many odors you might only imagine emanating from a small, humid, non-ventilated room occupied by four men with an open window directly above three dumpsters. Each attempt will also lack the touch of the many handshakes and gestures of affection for our brothers in the faith.

Many of us at the convention shared the sensation that this close fellowship in the Word that literally filled our days and nights was just a hint of the fellowship we anticipate in heaven. That feeling is so spiritual, so personal, so overwhelming. It is impossible to fully express. Now as I reflect on the last four days and my feelings of total inadequacy to



Gene Stemmann was a lay delegate to the 2001 synod convention.

carry back with me, to you, this awesome experience, I am struck by the parallel with Jesus and his overwhelming desire to help us understand his gift to us.

He came in the flesh, and his countrymen saw him, heard him speak, touched him, and smelled him. Many believed. Now, here we are 2,000 years later, without the sight of his face, the sounds of his voice, the touch of his hands, or the smell of his flesh. Yet, we believe. For he has left us with his Word.

It is historical, it is totally accurate, and it is so unbelievable that for many, sadly, it is not believed. Yet, we believe. That is a testimony to the power of God through his Spirit that starts and builds faith in our hearts. It should be a strong reminder for us to stay in that Word, our only lifeline, so that we might stay connected to Jesus and the faith that saves.

Since Jesus ascended, we no longer have the sight, the sound, the smell, or the touch of his presence. All we have left is his Word. It is all we need.

Stay tuned to WELS Web site for convention information

The synod's financial challenges have heightened the anticipation for this summer's synod convention on July 28–Aug. 1. Would you like to be informed of what is happening at the convention as it happens? WELS Communication Services plans to offer a variety of opportunities for you to stay on top of the latest news.

Steve Zambo, WELS media communications director, says, "We will be offering same-day coverage of major speeches and debates on the WELS Web site using both audio and visual technology."

On-line coverage at <www.wels.net> will include reports via video- and audio-streaming, portions of Power-Point presentations, and written news reports. Communication Services will report daily news items such as elections, reports, and resolutions. Also included will be delegate interviews and a photo gallery. The site will be updated multiple times during the day as new information becomes available.

Zambo concludes, "This is only WELS' first step in using media to communicate via the Internet. Stay tuned to the site as we develop new ways to use technology to communicate Christ's message."

For convention coverage, go to <www.wels.net>, jump word "convention." If you don't have Internet access, complete convention cover-

age will be published in the October issue of *Forward in Christ* magazine.



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

Ahlsweide, Eugene F., to Rocky Mountain LHS, Thornton, Colo.
Borgwardt, Wayne M., to retirement
Borgwardt, Wayne M., to director, Tel/Tech Task Force II (retirement call)
Erstad, Duane H., to retirement
Kuske, David P., to retirement
Snyder, Peter J., to St. Peter, Appleton, Wis.
Uhlhorn, Ronald W., to retirement
Wendland, Robert E., to Malawi
Wiedmann, Lynn E., to St. Paul First, North Hollywood, Calif.

Teachers

Anthony, Scott L., to Northland LHS, Mosinee, Wis.
Asmus, Andrew W., to Lakeside LHS, Lake Mills, Wis.
Bubolz, Amy R., to St. Stephen, Beaver Dam, Wis.
Carmichael, Julie M., to St. John, Lake City, Minn.
Cordes, Ami J., to Emmaus, Phoenix, Ariz.
Dub, Nicole A., to Living Hope, Shakopee, Minn.
Dyrssen, Rebecca S., to Beautiful Saviour, Carlsbad, Calif.
Enter, Erin A., to Trinity, West Bend, Wis.
Evers, Marilyn A., to retirement
Fenske, Kim M., to Friedens, Kenosha, Wis.
Gerndt, Dianne M., to retirement
Gurgel, Susan L., to Calvary, Thiensville, Wis.
Haack, Brian K., to King of Kings, Maitland, Fla.
Heiderich, Frederic D., to retirement
Mehlberg, Sarah A., to Good Shepherd, West Bend, Wis.
Miller, Martin M., to Bloomington, Bloomington, Minn.
Pinski, Richard J., to Northland LHS, Mosinee, Wis.
Plocher, Janean M., to Beautiful Saviour, Carlsbad, Calif.
Rosenbaum, Steven J., to Mt. Olive, Las Vegas, Nev.
Schubkegel, Timothy P., to Our Saviour, Lake Havasu City, Ariz.
Schultz, Crystal E., to St. John, Juneau, Wis.
Schwartz, Melvin C., to St. Matthew, Niles, Ill.
Thiesfeldt, Cindy J., to Redeemer, Fond du Lac, Wis.
Valerio, Andrea, to Christ, Pewaukee, Wis.
Wagner, Rebecca L., to St. Paul, Moline, Ill.
Wieting, Michael A., to St. John, Pardeeville, Wis.
Wolle, Rhoda S., to East Fork, Whiteriver, Ariz.

ANNIVERSARIES

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.
Hettinger, N.D.—Redeemer (50). July 27. Service, 10:30 AM. Potluck to follow. Tim Gray, 605/244-5636.
Sebewaing, Mich.—New Salem (150). July 27. Service, 10 AM. Meal and fellowship to follow.
Naper, Neb.—St. Paul (100). Aug. 3. Services, 9 AM & 2 PM. Noon meal. RSVP to Linda Goodman, 402/832-5665 or 832-5461.

Green Bay, Wis.—St. Paul church and school dedication anniversary (50). Aug. 10. Services, 8 & 10 AM; reception between services. All former members invited. Roy Rose, 920/435-8468.

Chippewa Falls, Wis.—Our Hope (20). Aug. 17. Service, 9 AM. Dinner to follow. Melanie Schaller, 715/723-9613.

New Ulm, Minn.—Minnesota Valley LHS (25). Sept. 19-21. 507/354-6855.

- Sept. 19—volleyball games followed by social hour.
- Sept. 20—founders' brunch, all-school tailgate party, football game, banquet, and dance.
- Sept. 21—festival service, 2 PM. Pie and ice cream social to follow.

Smaller celebrations will be held during the year at concerts, the Association banquet, and graduation.

Hadar, Neb.—Immanuel (120). Sept. 21. Service, 2 PM. Refreshments to follow. Karl Schultz, 402/371-6939.

COMING EVENTS

OWLS Annual Convention—July 8-10. Kohler Hotel, Rochester, Minn. Registration, July 7, 5 PM. Tours, July 8. Workshops, July 9 & 10. Les Ring, 507/354-5367.

Northwestern Publishing House Music Reading Workshops—

- 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 convention—July 11-13. Holiday Inn East, Madison, Wis. Registration fee, \$70. Make room reservation directly with hotel. 414/259-0292 or <hrgimp@aol.com>.

Operation Science training session—July 30 & 31. Wisconsin Lutheran College. 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.

Life-a-thon run/walk—sponsored by WELS Lutherans for Life, Metro-Milwaukee. Sept. 13. Begins at Northwestern Publishing House, 10 AM. Individual, \$8; family, \$20. Peter Georgson, 414/933-7322.

Sunday school workshops—Sept. 13, 9-11:45 AM. \$30/congregation. Jerry Kastens, 920/261-3511.

- St. Mark, Eau Claire, Wis. Classroom management skills.
- St. John, Sparta, Wis. Teaching memory work, singing, and missions in a Sunday school.
- Northland LHS, Mosinee, Wis. Assisting families and outreach through Sunday school.
- Trinity, Watertown, Wis. Preparing and teaching a great Sunday school lesson.

S.H.A.R.E. fall retreat for adult singles—Oct. 3-5. Camp Phillip, Wautoma, Wis. Doris Collins, 262/534-7852.

WELS senior rally—Michigan District, Jan. 16 & 17, 2004. Best Western Executive Plaza, Ann Arbor, Mich. Jerome Spaude, 989/799-3202.

Luther tour—sponsored by St. Peter, Appleton, Wis. Apr. 30-May 11, 2004. Ronald Ash, 920/733-7225.

AVAILABLE

Paraments—one set white, one set purple. Free for cost of shipping. Paul Baur, 561/684-0691.

Hammond organ—with double keyboard, one-octave pedals. Free to church or school for pick up from Middleton, Wis. Janet Schinker, 608/233-5213.

Brass candle followers—in assorted sizes. Free for the cost of shipping. Lisa Hunter, 507/354-3715.

NEEDED

Pews—30 11' pews for church that completed building renovation. Craig Engel, 320/235-5996.

Articles—*LivingBold*, the WELS Web site for teens, <www.livingbold.net>, invites WELS teens to submit original stories, poems, art, photography, cartoons, spiritual articles, and streaming video for inclusion on a newly redesigned LB Web site. Submissions must be made electronically to <cyd@sab.wels.net> and include the author's/artist's name, address, phone number, e-mail address, high school name, year in school, and name of WELS congregation attending.

Christian couple—to serve at the Lutheran Mobile Clinic in Malawi. Three-year commitment. One person must be qualified to take care of the medical aspect of the work. The other must be qualified to take care of the administration of the clinic. Kathie Wendland, 920/682-5694.

SERVICE TIMES

Arcadia, Wis.—Bethel. Sunday worship, 9 AM. Sunday school and Bible study, 10 AM. 401 W Main St. Nathan Strutz, 888/428-3566.

Galesville, Wis.—Bethel. Sunday worship, 10:30 AM. Sunday school and Bible study, 9 AM. N16303 Church Ln. Nathan Strutz, 608/582-4329.

Union City/Martin, Tenn., area—Sunday worship is the second Sunday of each month. Call for time and location. Matthew Brown, 931/905-1400.

NAMES WANTED

University of Wisconsin—Madison alumni—Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel is looking for alumni or parents or friends of past students who attended 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. <wlchapel@wlchapel.org>; 608/272-1969.

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 <wlscc@execpc.com>.

The Villages, Fla. (Lady Lake, Lake, Sumter, and Marion County area)—Herb Schaefer, 352/753-7515.

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

Union City/Martin, Tenn., area—Paul Yates, 731/885-2292.

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: we belong to God

“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.”

Jon D. Buchholz

A teen complains to her friends: “My parents are always on me. They’re always trying to run my life.”

A man shares his low opinion of religion: “I used to go to church, but I quit. All they wanted was my money.”

A woman outside the state capitol protests in favor of abortion rights with a sign saying: “Keep your laws off my body!”

Each of these people is confused about the word “my.” The teen says, “It’s my life!” The man says, “It’s my money!” The woman says, “It’s my body!” Each one of them is dead wrong.

Our sinful self screams “mine”

“You are not your own.” Isn’t this a challenging concept to grasp? The word “mine” enters our vocabulary so early in life. We learn very young that our lives, our property, and our bodies don’t belong to a slave owner or to a commune or to the government. What’s harder to learn is that they don’t belong to us either. Living in the Sonlight means that our bodies, our time, our money, our possessions, our entire lives belong to God.

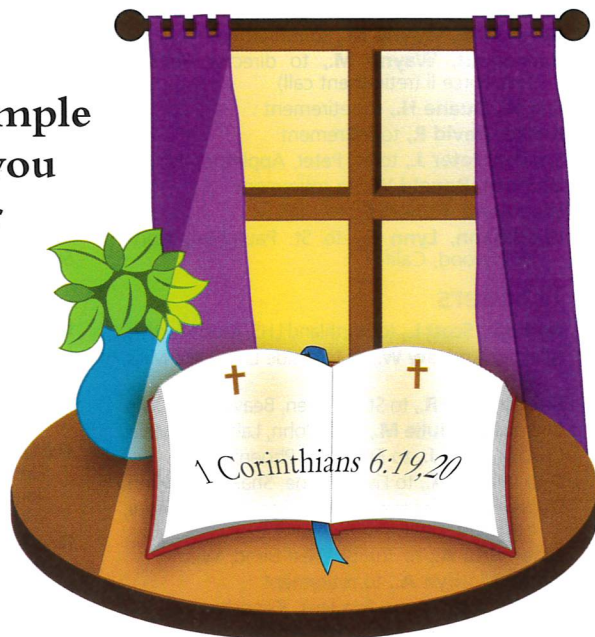
We are God’s because he made us. Isn’t it obvious that if God created us, we belong to him? The Bible puts it so simply when it says,

“Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his” (Psalm 100:3). “The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it” (Psalm 24:1).

For the Christian there’s more. We are God’s because God bought us. He used the holy, precious blood of his only-begotten Son to buy us back from the slavery of our former masters, sin and Satan. God paid the ultimate price to call us his very own.

God says, “You are mine”

God says to you, “Your sinful nature thinks belonging to yourself is so great? Let me show you something infinitely better. I’ve called you to be mine. I have baptized you into my family and placed my holy name upon you. I have called you from the grip of hell, from the depths of despair. I have loved you with an everlasting love. I have predestined you to be conformed to the image of my Son. I have washed you in his blood. I have dressed you in his righteousness. I have made you perfect and beautiful. You belong to me!” God’s Spirit gently laid upon you the yoke of discipleship and chose you to heed the Master’s



call, as he said, “Follow me and walk in the light.”

You are not your own. It’s not “my body,” “my money,” or “my life.” Thank God! What a blessing! We are not the masters of our own existence. If we were, we would still be groping around in blindness, lost in sin and darkness, looking for answers, and coming up short.

Instead, we are children of the light. We have been called to a higher purpose in life: to honor him who died for us. Jesus shed his precious blood for us to make us his own, a people who say “no” to ungodliness and worldly passion, a people who want to live self-controlled, godly, and upright lives devoted to our God, who has lavished us with his love.

That’s life in the Sonlight!

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

Getting to know God's story

Randy K. Hunter

The Greeks were working on a system called democracy. Spoked wheels were beginning to roll in Europe. The Olympics began in Greece, and a little town called Rome was founded in Italy. At the same time, in a tiny nation caught between world super-powers, three prophets demanded attention. Elijah, Isaiah, and Jeremiah were Israel's prophets, spokesmen for the Lord. These three spanned 300 years, from the glory days of a united

Israel under King Solomon through civil war and into a time of outright defeat and humiliation. Their message: "God is talking to you. Listen."

The response wasn't what they hoped for. Prophets were attacked, tortured, given to wild animals, thrown in pits, and sawn in half. Still, they spoke the powerful message of God, calling people to listen, repent, and return to him. Most didn't listen. Some did. Such is the life a prophet.

- Read the final prophecy of the Old Testament in Malachi 4:4-6. Then read Jesus' words in Matthew 11:13,14. Use these two references to explain the importance of Elijah.
- The record of Elijah's ministry, 1 Kings 17-2 Kings 2, illuminates many of his characteristics, especially his courage. But a prophet's job is to teach about God, not himself. From Elijah's encounter with a widow in 1 Kings 17, list characteristics the Lord reveals about himself.
- Elijah thought that the people would listen if he could prove that God was speaking through him. Read about his showdown with the prophets of Baal in 1 Kings 18:16-39. If you have children or grandchildren, teach this story to them in the sandbox. They won't forget it. Use your imagination—God gave it to you! Just be careful with fire.
- In Isaiah 6:9,10, the Lord told Isaiah just how successful he would be. But Isaiah spoke the Word of the Lord anyway. Describe a situation that might be similar today.
- If you're studying in a group, choose two dramatic people to act out Isaiah 61:1-8.
- No prophet is quoted more often in the New Testament than Isaiah. Isaiah gave "advance notice" of the Savior. Set a time limit and page through the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John). Correlate as many passages as you can with Isaiah 53:1-6.
- Imagine someone predicting your country will be overthrown because of sin. That was Jeremiah's job. No wonder he's called the "weeping" prophet. But we also could call him the courageous prophet. Life was hard for Jeremiah, but his message was clear. List the characteristics of Jeremiah you learn in Jeremiah 13:15-17.
- Imagine Jeremiah coming to your town and proclaiming the message he did in Jeremiah 7:1-4. Describe the response he would receive.

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 July 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

IN THE CROSS HAIRS

Richard L. Gurgel

TOPIC: THE RAPTURE

Question: One of the passages used to teach the rapture is Matthew 24:40,41. What actually does Jesus mean with those verses?

Answer: Various versions of the “rapture” have long existed. The *Left Behind* series of books and movies has helped popularize it even further. In the rapture’s most common form, Christ returns secretly to take his believers home before the end of the world. This happens just before the “great tribulation” begins. Those “left behind” have a second chance to believe the gospel.

This false teaching is wholly woven from the fraying fabric of human imagination. There isn’t a thread of biblical support for its fanciful interpretations. However, in the words, “one will be taken and the other left” (Matthew 24:40,41), some feel Jesus is describing the believers’ removal from the earth while unbelievers live on.

That interpretation distorts Jesus’ words. Jesus is comparing the Last Day to what happened in the flood. Noah and his family were taken aboard the ark. But unbelievers weren’t left to continue their existence. They weren’t left to wonder what had become of Noah. Nor was there a second chance to get serious about Noah’s warnings. Those “left behind” were left for swift and immediate judgment.

“So it will be at the coming of the Son of Man” (Matthew 24:37). On the Last Day, God’s angels will “gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other” (Matthew 24:31). That is what it means to be taken. If we want to use the term, the true rapture is the gathering of believers in the clouds on the Last Day to meet the returning Savior (1 Thessalonians 4:17). For those left, the experience will be the exact opposite. They are left to be gathered for judgment. “The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the fiery

furnace where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matthew 13:41,42).

Do you see the dangers for believers and unbelievers in the false teaching about the rapture? The believer may cling to an empty hope that God will “get us out of here” before things get too bad. Such a vain hope doesn’t take seriously the words of Acts 14:22: “We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God.”

Secondly, this false teaching could lull us into a spiritual sleepiness that is doubly dangerous. All Jesus’ teaching about the Last Day serves to keep us awake, watching for him in daily repentance. The “rapture,” however, lulls us to sleep by offering the false hope of another chance after Christ’s surprise visit.

The teaching of a second chance can also lead us to be sluggish in sharing the gospel. It fails to heed Jesus’ urgent plea: “As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work” (John 9:4).

Finally, this false teaching dulls our senses to the wondrous truth that Christ

is in control of his world and always will be. We need fear nothing, even during this world’s final days. The Father has “placed all things under [Jesus’] feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church” (Ephesians 1:22). The church has no need to be raptured ahead of time to be under Christ’s protective care. We are secure right up to the Last Day. Then he will truly “rapture” us home forever!



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.

The true rapture is the gathering of believers in the clouds on the Last Day to meet the returning Savior.

Picture this

Food and water—the staples of life. But what if you don't have access to these all-important elements? Through your generous gifts, the WELS Committee on Relief sent money to Africa to help our sister church bodies provide food and water to their members and their communities.



Last year, the WELS Committee on Relief sent \$30,000 for drought relief in Zambia. The money was used to buy seed for the people. Here, members of the Mululuma congregation show the 79 bags of seed maize they received. Congregations received seed, instead of food, because it was the beginning of the planting season and if it was a good growing season, they could grow more food than could have been distributed. An additional \$10,000 for fertilizer was sent in February 2003.

Submitted by John Gierach



The WELS Committee on Relief granted \$15,000 to All Saints Lutheran Church of Nigeria for the digging of wells. In October 2002, Pastor Douglas Weiser and Pastor Theodore Lambert traveled to Ogaja, Nigeria, to approve the sites. Says Lambert about one well location, "Although this is not a church grounds, this well would certainly fulfill both purposes, providing humanitarian relief while also testifying to the love of Christ. The latter would be done via a sign at the well that tells who provided this well." A couple thousand people will be served by this one well. Here Pastor Benedict Amu (center) and Lambert (right of Amu) point at a location for a new well at Bitiah, Nigeria.

Submitted by Theodore Lambert

Send pictures to *Picture this*, Forward in Christ magazine, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398.



potluck

Out of the MOUTH OF BABES

Our kindergartner Hannah and I enjoy watching Home and Garden television together. We recently noticed a program that we like had a new host. Puzzled by this, I verbally wondered why the former host was replaced. After a few thoughtful moments, Hannah confidently announced, "I know, Mom. I bet he took a call."

*Connie Paustian
New Ulm, Minnesota*

Freedom's

In the United States

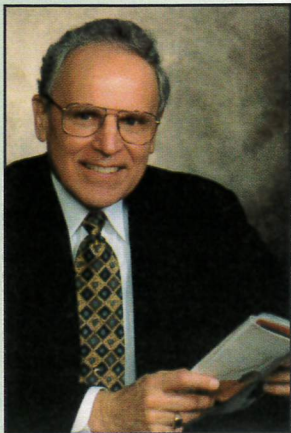
Declaration of Independence—"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

In Christ

Galatians 5:13—"You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love."

1 Corinthians 10:23,24—" 'Everything is permissible'—but not everything is beneficial. 'Everything is permissible'—but not everything is constructive. Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others."





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

My salvation,
thanks to God,
does not
depend on
my feelings.

Religious teens more likely to . . .

What are religious 12th-graders more likely to have than their non-religious peers? Positive attitudes!

The National Study of Youth and Religion at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill did a study on "Religion and the Life Attitudes and Self-Images of American Adolescents." They found that high school seniors who attend religious services weekly or believe religion is very important are more likely "to feel like their lives are useful, feel hopeful about their futures, feel like life is meaningful, and enjoy being in school."

A small minority of religious 12th-graders—one to two in 10—however, still harbors negative attitudes and self-images, feelings of hopelessness and meaninglessness. "Religion is no cure-all for everyone when it comes to these issues," points out Christian Smith, principal investigator for the ongoing study.

I doubt that you see anything unexpected in those findings. Haven't we always known that Christ makes a positive difference in our lives, affecting our whole outlook? Who or what gives us more hope? Who assures the best future? Who makes life more meaningful? In whose service am I most useful?

We know also, however, that our sinful natures, our society (world), and Satan all war against Christ in us. Peer pressures, raging hormones, the gloomy atmosphere of threatened terrorism and war all weigh in. Is it a surprise that some religious 12th-graders struggle with self-image and meaning for their lives? Perhaps we should be surprised that the number is so small.

So, what is missing from this picture?

What is missing is that the Religion News Service report on this study makes nothing of the fact that less than one-third of high school seniors attends religious services weekly or believes religion is very important. The chal-

lenge isn't to confirm that religion has a good sociological or psychological effect on high school seniors. The challenge is to figure out why some seven in 10 of them have so little to do with such a good influence.

Parents, are you paying attention?

Worse yet is that the measure of religion's value is limited in the study to how the teens feel about themselves. It's all about feelings. That probably explains, too, why there is no distinction made between types of religions. The study ignores the core value of the true Christian religion, which is forgiveness of sins and life eternal through faith in Jesus Christ. The value of our religion is how God feels about us and what, therefore, he has done for us: his love, his sacrifice, his promises.

All of what God has done for me, naturally, will make me feel good about myself and my station in life. My future is never more secure than when it includes being in heaven with my Savior. So I will feel good about my future. The study seems to bear that out. However, even those times when my self-image suffers and life doesn't seem very meaningful (have you ever felt like that?), I still know that God loves me, forgives me, and has a place for me in heaven—all secured for me in Christ. My salvation, thanks to God, does not depend on my feelings.

What are religious 12th-graders more likely to have than their non-religious peers? The question is flawed or at least superficial. But we know that all people who actively hear God's Word and gospel are more likely to have the sure hope of eternal life in Christ, and that hope will be reflected in their lives.

Gary P. Baumler

Commission ON Evangelism

Please contact us for more information!
(414) 256-3287
evangelism@sab.wels.net



The Commission on Evangelism exists to assist congregations to seize every opportunity the Lord provides to evangelize lost souls.

School of Outreach

A planning weekend for congregational leaders to organize for outreach with the gospel to the unchurched in their area.

Evangelism Resources

Products to assist congregations with their evangelism program and individuals with their personal witnessing.

Church Identity

Help for congregations to develop distinctive and attractive identity materials to improve their outreach efforts.

Workshops

Conducted locally on practical evangelism subjects:

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- Locating and Nurturing Prospects
- Witnessing with Confidence
- Friendship Evangelism
- Assimilation of New Members

What About Jesus.com

A witness website designed to enhance the evangelism efforts of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod and to connect the world to Jesus Christ.



The Commission on Evangelism
is a unit of WELS Parish Services.

TIME FLIES

Our Lord uses the passing of time, our growing older, and our maturing in the Christian faith to cause us to appreciate the value of time.

Carl R. Henkel

I've heard so many people say it. I've often thought it myself, and maybe you believe it too: "The older one gets, the faster time flies."

The passing of time

I think I know now why that seems to happen. When a child is five years old, one year represents 20 percent of his life. When a person is 20, a year represents five percent of his life. At 50, a year is equal to two percent of a person's life. When one reaches 80, a year is only 1.25 percent of his entire life.

So it is, that as the years go by, each one represents a smaller percentage of our entire life. Therefore, the years seem to pass by faster and faster.

And as time flies by, we cannot help but become aware of how precious it is. Once a year or a day, an hour or a minute, is past, we can never reclaim it. It's gone!

The value of time

Those responsible for selling their products are aware of the value of time. Many were willing to spend \$2.1 million for 30 seconds

of airtime during this year's Super Bowl to advertise their wares. That's \$70,000 per second!

Time is precious. Oh, so very precious! It is a priceless gift from a loving and compassionate God. We call our days here on earth a "time of grace."

**AS TIME
FLIES BY, WE
CANNOT HELP
BUT BECOME
AWARE OF HOW
PRECIOUS IT IS.**

Our merciful Lord uses the passing of time, our growing older, and our maturing in the Christian faith to cause us to become more conscious and appreciative of the value of time. He brings about some rather remarkable changes within us.

Take the apostle John for example. He and his brother were no doubt headstrong, crusty, hot-tempered fishermen when Jesus nicknamed them "Sons of Thunder." On one occasion

(Luke 9:51-56), when a Samaritan village refused to welcome Jesus, the two offered to call down fire from heaven in revenge.

But now fast-forward several decades. John is an old man, and his rough edges have been sanded off. Now he's known as the disciple of love. At every opportunity, he emphasizes the Christian's life as one of love, acceptance, patience, gentleness, and forgiveness. In his first epistle, he writes: "Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. . . . since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us" (1 John 4:7,11,12).

John had learned that our time here on earth is just too short for jealousy, bitterness, anger, and strife. Time is too short to waste in pettiness, nastiness, meanness, and malice.

That's not a bad lesson to learn!

Carl Henkel is pastor at Mount Olive, Saint Paul, Minnesota.

