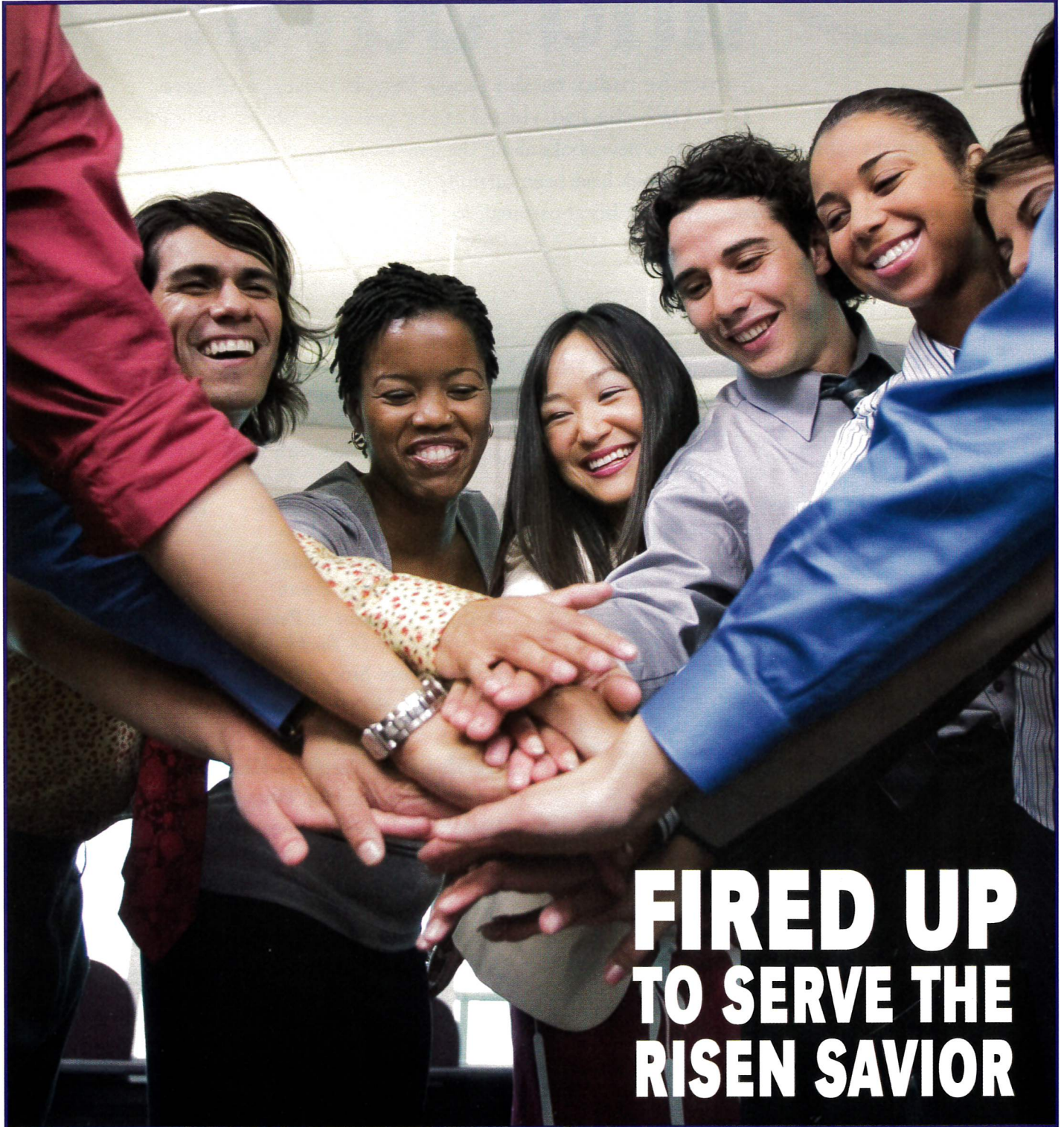


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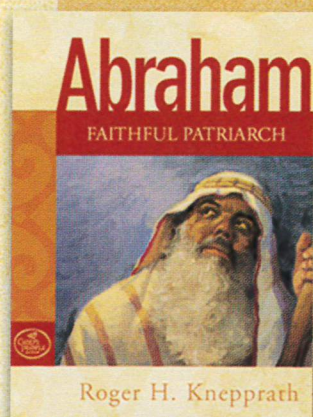
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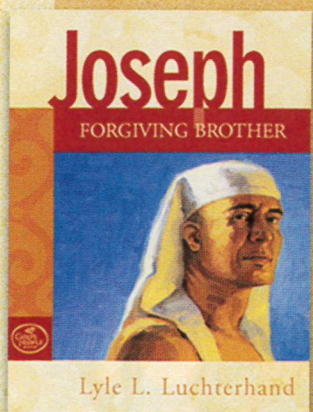
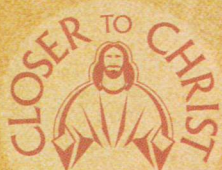
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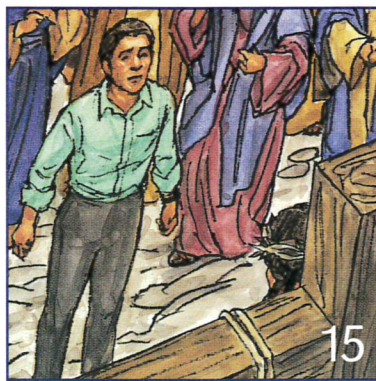
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“Fired up is one way to describe God's Easter people.”



CREATAS



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NOR FORSAKE US.
1 Kings 8:57

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APRIL

WHAT'S INSIDE by Nicole Balza

What a perfect duo our first two features make! In "Fired up for Jesus" (p. 10), Wayne Schulz encourages us to tell our friends and neighbors about Jesus. Then, in "The Pentecost Project" (p. 12), we see a fantastic example of a congregation that is motivated by Jesus to reach out in innovative ways. These two articles highlight what North American outreach is and give ideas about how each of us can be a part of Jesus' Great Commission.

Looking for an example of an individual who takes North American outreach seriously? Meet Bob Steinke, a WELS member from Atlanta, Ga., who uses his business to help spread God's Word (p. 28).

Do you know someone who lives his faith in an extraordinary way? Send us a note that includes your name, address, e-mail, and telephone number; the person's name, address, e-mail, and telephone number; and how this person serves God in extraordinary ways. Make sure that the person you recommend knows that his story may be published in *Forward in Christ* or on the WELS Web site, www.wels.net. Then send the note to *Forward in Christ*, Attn: Stories of faith, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222; fic@sab.wels.net.

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NEW OPPORTUNITY FOR FEEDBACK

Forward in Christ's "Feedback" mailbox only contained one letter this month, so we're going to pre-empt "Feedback" this month to showcase another opportunity for you to give feedback—this time electronically.

Synod leaders have started using online virtual journals—known as Web logs or blogs—to share their thoughts. Imprint, the WELS blogging site, allows synod leaders to post these journal entries. WELS members can then comment online. Here are some entries made in late February.

YOUTH LEAVING CHURCH

In response to a 2003 synod convention resolution (*Proceedings*, p. 64, Res. 4:5b), the WELS Commission on Youth Discipleship is beginning a research project with an outside research firm to determine why teens and young adults are leaving WELS and their local congregations.

While some of our suspicions for the exodus will no doubt be affirmed, we hope to learn some new things that can help us to help congregations stem and maybe even reverse the tide. From where you sit, what would you say are the reasons for the teen/young adult losses? What do you think needs to be done?

*Joel Nelson
Youth Discipleship administrator*

HOW DID I GET HERE?

Some days, as I sit here in the president's office, I wonder how I got here. It's not what I was intending to do with my life. I wanted to be a baseball player, and even "tried out" for the old Milwaukee Braves.

It didn't work out. God had other plans for me. Being a parish pastor was the most enjoyable thing God allowed me to do. Especially it gave me great pleasure to teach the adult information class. Seeing the

Spirit work, using the Word, to bring or nurture someone in the faith, was awe inspiring. I miss that opportunity very much.

But God has given me other opportunities, worldwide, to see his gracious working through the means of grace. God willing, I will be able to share some of those experiences with you here. Time permitting, I want to relate the office of the president to the carrying out of the Great Commission as done by WELS. Thanks for listening! I'm ready to listen too.

*Karl Gurgel
President*

DEMOLITION AND NEW CONSTRUCTION

Recently our family "finished" the basement of our home. If you have been involved with similar projects you know the kind of work and frequent frustrations it can bring. I'm an amateur builder. I often build something and then have to "demolish" it to start over. I guess I'd be a good candidate for one of those "fix it" shows on TV.

Building a strategic technology plan is a lot the same way. You begin to build (or plan) something, bounce it around a bit to other people, step back, and finally decide to tear it down and try it again.

One such "project" I've been trying to plan is a redesign of WELS.NET. Before you go about that kind of effort, however, it's important to know what it should ultimately look like. I don't want to rebuild it, only to tear it down again.

Can I ask you a basic question? In thinking about WELS.NET, why do you think it exists? Is it for WELS members primarily? Or should it exist to attract prospects? It makes a difference in how we redesign and reorganize the site. Thoughts?

*Martin Spriggs
Chief technology officer*

GOD LOVED THE WORLD

I'm truly looking forward to the opportunity provided by Web logging to communicate directly with people interested in the most important work there is, namely that of sharing the saving truth of Jesus with a spiritually lost and dying world. I'm sure there are many people out there with fresh ideas and new ways on how WELS might carry out the Great Commission. We'd love to hear from you!

The urgency of this task has never been greater. This can be said because with each passing day we are moving closer to the year and day when Christ will return. It can also be said because with an estimated world population of 6.4 billion we are confronted with the largest mission field that has ever existed. . . . Each one of those people is a soul for whom Jesus died.

WELS is a small segment of Christendom, but I am thankful that our church body is presently supporting work in 23 mission fields around the world. . . .

God loved the world and every person in it. He proved it by giving his Son in death to save the world. We have the privilege of telling of that love to as many as we can.

*Dan Koelpin
World Missions administrator*

READ MORE BLOGS

To read more blogs from synod leaders and to comment on these and other synod issues, go to www.wels.net/imprint. This page will show the most recently posted entries. To view the blog of a particular area of ministry, click on the corresponding blog category in the left menu bar.

Send your letters to "Feedback," *Forward in Christ*, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222; fic@sab.wels.net. Letters between 100 and 250 words are preferred. Include full name and address. Letters are edited for clarity, conciseness, and relevance. Not all letters received can be acknowledged or used. Writers' views are not necessarily those of WELS or *Forward in Christ*.

From horrible to happy

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die."

John 11:25,26

James A. Mattek

I recall as a young child driving to Two Creeks, Wis., for my grandpa's funeral. I had always admired my grandpa's shotgun and knew where to find it when we arrived. I snuck into my grandparents' bedroom, parted my grandma's hanging clothes, and there it was. Then I heard voices. I recall peeking out from between my grandma's dresses. Grandma was sitting on the edge of the bed . . . her face buried in her hands . . . the arm of a loving relative draped over her shoulders. "It's so terrible!" was all Grandma said.

The horrible

Death is terrible, and it touches us all too often. Like a neighborhood bully, death takes no pity. I've seen this bully in busy emergency rooms and in a quiet living room. I've seen him in intersections as motorists slowly pass by and view the twisted steel.

Usually he waits and watches on the edges of humanity and preys on the elderly and feeble. But there are exceptions. Perhaps the unkindest cut of all is when the bully cuts us off from little people. I remember little Steven . . . my nephew. I recall baby Jill . . . my niece. I remember little Tess from our preschool. She was healthy one day and dead the next . . . the bully's buddy was bacterial meningitis.

Years ago I visited the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. It's the wailing wall of a generation. Visitors are quiet and respectful. Some fight back tears and leave notes or flowers. I just looked. Then I saw him . . . the bully. I noticed him after seeing my own reflection in the wall. It's as if

he was saying, "Someday I'll have you, too." How true. How horrible.

The happy

Martha and Mary had seen the bully four days earlier. Their sick brother had faded fast and was gone. Jesus came too late . . . it seemed. Didn't he care? He did. In this account John twice describes Christ as "deeply moved." Jesus knows how horrible death is. He was "a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering" (Isaiah 53:3). Jesus is not cold and disconnected when we're sad. He sympathizes with us.

Jesus' words to Martha express more than sympathy: "I am the resurrection and the life." He changes the focus from horrible to hope . . . from the bad bully to the beautiful Savior.

Anticipating his own death and return to life, Jesus urges Martha to look to him. In Jesus, death does not win, but only is a doorway to a new and perfect home. He will beat up the bully, making a public spectacle of him with his victory on the cross (Colossians 2:15). His victorious resurrection would guarantee her innocence in God's eyes and safety in God's arms at her death. He's saying, "Martha, trust me . . . and I will someday call you back to life. Your soul will never die. At the moment you die, your soul will be happy . . . happy with me . . . and joyfully waiting for its reunion with your resurrected and perfect body."



Jesus changes the horrible to happy. I'll never forget the scene in my grandparents' bedroom. I'll also never forget the response of the sympathetic relative: "It will all be better someday. Art's in heaven. We'll all be together again when Jesus takes us there."

I'll never forget the horrible loss of little Tess. I'll also never forget what she said to me the day before she died. She hugged my leg and said, "I love you, Pastor Mattek . . . and I love Jesus, too!"

Jesus changes the horrible to happy. His cross and resurrection "shine through the gloom and point [us] to the skies" (*Christian Worship* 588:7).

Contributing editor James Mattek, chief executive officer of Wisconsin Lutheran Child & Family Service, is a member of Trinity, Watertown, Wisconsin.

A peek at the plan

Kenneth A. Cherney Jr.

“**G**od loves you and offers a wonderful plan for your life.”

That’s one of the “Four Spiritual Laws” used by groups like Campus Crusade for Christ. What Christian would disagree? Does God love you? Absolutely. Does he have a plan for your life, and is it wonderful? Count on it.

Does that mean, however, that now it’s your job to figure out God’s plan and follow it? Let’s say that God’s plan for my life is that I move to Michigan and take a job as a welder. How am I supposed to find this out? God isn’t going to write it across the sky, and I’m not going to read it in the Scriptures. I can only hope to discover it in some other way. Should I listen for a voice in the night? If I hear one, how do I know it’s God? How do I know it’s not the devil talking, or my own secret desire, or the bowl of chili I ate before bedtime?

Some people will tell you, “Nobody can explain it—but when it’s God talking, you just know.” Sorry, but in a matter this serious, I need more assurance than that. After all, for me to contravene God’s plan for my life wouldn’t be just a bad career move. It would be a sin. It would put me on a collision course with God’s judgment, and I can’t take that chance.

Others say that God won’t announce his plan for me out loud; he’ll steer me in the right direction in more subtle ways. One by one, he’ll close off other paths to me until I hit the right one. In other words, God will send all kinds of troubles my way until I go to Michigan and start welding. Then the troubles will go away.

There are two problems here. First, this makes us Christians sound like rats in a maze. God becomes the scientist with the stopwatch and clipboard, who gives us little jolts of electricity until we stumble onto the path to the

cheese. Is that how you picture your walk through life with your Savior?

Second, our troubles are not always signs that we’re on the wrong track. Sometimes troubles are signs that we’re on the right track. Scripture calls it “the cross.” Jesus’ enemies pointed to the fact that he was suffering as proof that he was out of sync with God’s will (Matthew 27:41-44), but that wasn’t the case at all. It may not be the case with us, either.

What is God’s plan for my life? If I stick with what Scripture clearly says, I can be absolutely sure. God’s plan is that I be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. It’s that I fear, love, and trust in God above all things. It’s that I love my neighbor as myself. It’s that I join my Savior in heaven some day.

Beyond that, if God doesn’t lay out the whole plan for me in detail, so what? When I was a kid and my family went on vacation, I always knew we were headed for someplace great. I also knew my dad would get us there.

Of course he had a route in mind, but I didn’t need to know what it was. I wouldn’t have understood it anyway. My job was simply to trust my father, to occupy myself with something positive, and

to try and get along with my brother and sister in the backseat.

As we travel through life, isn’t our job pretty much the same?

God’s plan is that I be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.

Contributing editor Ken Cherney is pastor at St. John, St. John, Antigua, West Indies.



at the foot of the cross. Richard L. Gurgel

TOPIC: Unbaptized babies

Do infants that die before being baptized go to heaven or hell?

We know that only faith in Christ saves and unbelief damns (John 3:16-18), but to speak with certainty about where that faith exists requires knowledge of hearts that only God possesses. When God's Word teaches about heaven or hell, it reminds us of a dual urgency: to live in daily repentance and faith so we aren't lost and to share Jesus with a dying world.

However, some basic truths and general applications address your question. Scripture speaks sobering words about all sinners who've entered this world since Adam: "Through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners" (Romans 5:19). In Adam's fall God declared all to be sinners. Ever since, "flesh gives birth to flesh" (John 3:6). Sinful parents bear sinful children who possess both Adam's guilt and a sinful nature that is "hostile to God" (Romans 8:7). Therefore, "we were by nature objects of wrath" (Ephesians 2:3).

"So also through the obedience of the one man," however, "the many will be made righteous" (Romans 5:19). Just as God declared the whole world to be sinners in Adam's disobedience, so also in Jesus' obedience God declares the whole world to be righteous.

To benefit from Jesus' righteousness, sinful rebels must be brought to trust that verdict. The John passage begins to answer how that happens: "Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to Spirit." The Spirit works this rebirth in one way: "Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ" (Romans 10:17). The "word of Christ"—the gospel—works and strengthens faith through the means of grace—the water and Word of Baptism; the bread, wine, and Word of his Supper; and the written and proclaimed Word of Scripture.

Infants aren't an exception to God's twin declaration of "sinner" in Adam and "saint" in Christ. Just as we bring the saving gospel

to others dead in sin and hostile to God, so we bring our infant children to that saving gospel. In Baptism the Spirit connects them to the saving power of Christ's resurrection (1 Peter 3:21).

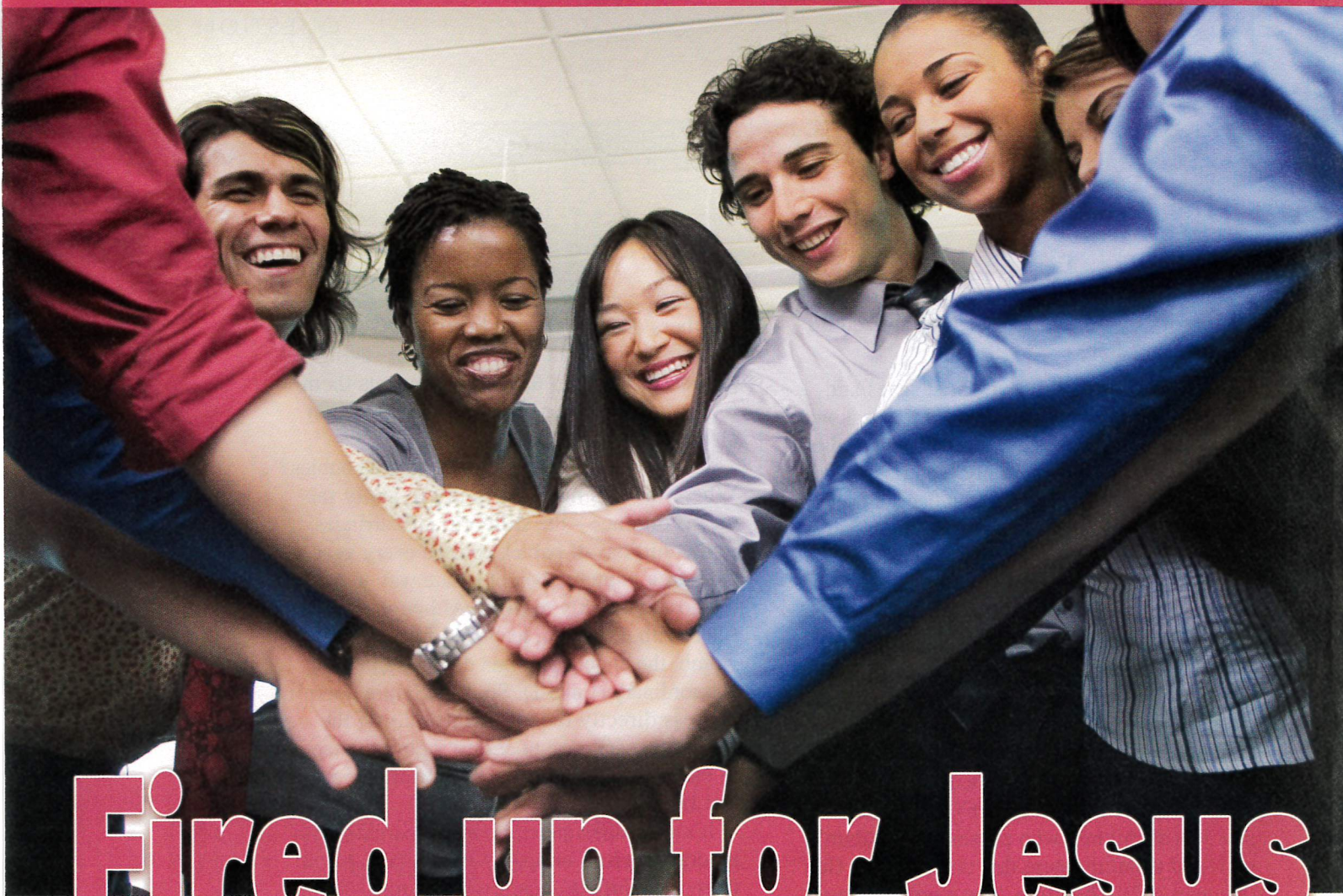
So where does that leave unbaptized babies? Where there is no opportunity to apply the means of grace—the stillborn, miscarriages, or the millions of babies aborted every year—God hasn't supplied an alternate way to apply the gospel directly to them. Although John, filled with the Spirit, leaped in his mother's womb, the angel mentions that as something extraordinary (Luke 1). Since Scripture doesn't address directly the eternal destiny of the unborn, we are wise to entrust their judgment to the perfect wisdom of our merciful and just Lord.

It's a far different story where parents from ignorance, error, or apathy withhold Baptism from their infants. Such withholding of this powerful means of grace hinders God's saving desire to win hearts to himself.

That's why we hasten to bring our infants to the saving waters of Baptism. Now, unless there's a clear medical risk, that doesn't mean we are negligent if we don't have them baptized within hours. Consider that God instructed Israel to wait until the eighth day for circumcision. We don't act in fear as if we're racing against a God who is eagerly hoping to snatch them away to judgment. Rather, we act in faith trusting that God desires their salvation even more eagerly than we. In joyful trust we bring our children to this means of grace where our gracious God claims them as his own.

Contributing editor Richard Gurgel, a professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin, is a member at Calvary, Thiensville.

Have a question? Send it to "Q & A," *Forward in Christ*, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222; fic@sab.wels.net. Look online at www.wels.net, jumpword "qa", for more questions and answers.



Fired up for Jesus

The living Savior's love compels me.

Wayne I. Schulz

“You’re fired!” It’s a stinging sound that the job-seeking *Apprentice* applicants dread to hear. It is also a depressing word to anyone who may not have lived up to a company’s expectations at work. “You’re fired” may lead to shrugging, slumping shoulders that portray deep disappointment.

Alive with the living Lord

How similar and yet how different are the words “fired up.” Think of the excitement in the words of someone who may have observed an energetic you and shouted, “Wow! You are fired up!”

Fired up is one way to describe God’s Easter people as they believe, live, love, model, and share the good news that death could not hold Jesus, that he arose and lives. How do God’s people get fired up for church work? For house work? For their vocations? For marriage enrichment? For parenting? For loving their neighbors and serving the community? For improving relationships? For sharing the message of the peace of Christ?

How did Mary and the other women of Holy Week and the disciples interrupt their lives and their busy schedules to be fired up for the Lord in their work and witness for him? They went to the

grave and witnessed what must have been an eerie emptiness. They saw the folded clothes. They listened to the message from God’s gleaming angels. They saw the risen Lord, and, in a scene that must have been amazing, they ate with him. They believed him. With renewed energy they lived and shared God’s message. Wherever they went, the disciples and early Christians were fired up by the Lord and for the Lord and for people who did not know Jesus. All who saw them noticed how fired up they were to practice their Christian love.

Can people tell that the message of Easter makes a difference in

CAN PEOPLE TELL THAT THE MESSAGE OF

your life, that you are a fired-up and energized child of God? Do they see and hear your joy in the Lord? Hopefully they do not see careless words, loveless acts, purposeless living, or dangerous activities, which might indicate that you think Jesus is still in the grave, that he makes no difference in your life.

“He is risen” makes all the difference in the world. It stimulates you to think and act and influence others in the same way that Christ did. It is the Word that fires us up to say and believe with Saint Paul, “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me” (Galatians 2:20).

Eager to share the good news

The living Savior expects us to communicate his victory and his message as we live in the world. He connects us to his victory for us so that we can actually live in it daily. He did not rise from the dead so that we would hide the story or play it up small. Our whole life and our eternal future centers around the central message of the cross and the resurrection grave.

To be satisfied with a life of mediocrity in following Jesus and serving him and his people is not a choice, because God gave us his excellence in Bethlehem and in his resurrection victory. God’s victory fires up our faith so that we are Christ-lovers, Christ-livers, Christ-shiners, Christ-introducers, Christ-connectors, and Christ-planters in the world of people God has loved and still loves. A big assignment? Yes. But it’s a joyful opportunity to make him known.

Easter glows with the good news of God’s victory, with visible evidence of how much God has loved his world. This fires us up to be people-lovers. When we meet a person, we may not actually say, “I love you. Incidentally,

what is your name?” But God’s people can think that way when they meet others who do not know how much God has loved them. Love in Christ seeks out the other.

The risen Savior fires us up to take a new look at what he meant when he told us to love our neighbor. Personally, we must ask, “Who is my neighbor?” Congregationally, we must ask, “Who are our neighbors in the vicinity of the church? In the community? Who is hurting? How can we meet them and share God’s good news with them?” The more we love our neighbors in response to God’s love to us in Christ, the more opportunities God gives to proclaim his love, to do the work of evangelists, to be priest- and prophet-like people who move among those whom God loves. When Christians are fired up and fed through Word and sacraments, they will shine as lights in the world and tell the story of Jesus. Demonstration of the Christ for us and in us leads to proclamation of the peace of that Christ for others.

In Christ you are meant to shine—to be a light, not a judge; to be a mentor, not a critic; to be a teller, not a traitor; to be a walker and talker, not a balker. Through you—a light-shiner, good news-proclaimer, and people-lover—God meets and welcomes the downcasts and the outcasts and the wayward and the desperate and the lonely and the poor and the wealthy as people in need of his washing and abundant life in Christ.

Alert to tell more people

Although we have many gadgets of instant communications, we still live in a cold and distant world of what someone has termed “crowded loneliness.” We can talk on cell phones to distant people while being totally oblivious to the unknown person sitting or standing next to us at Starbucks or in a church pew.

Take a look at people in a crowded mall and see how disconnected they are from each other. Fired up Christians can make connections in a world that craves community and a sense of belonging. Many desire relationships en route to their discovery of the ultimate relationship with God through Jesus.

Now is the time to meet guests and people we still do not know in our church’s welcome center, where a spirit of being fired up ought to be prevalent, where people expect to find the love of God on display in the lives, conversation, and interest of people whom God has gathered there.

Why not also be fired up for the neighborhood in which you live? Followers of Jesus will become outgoing and open people in the neighborhood, where frequent and spontaneous encounters can create rich and life-changing experiences for others. Dedicate time for relationships (meals, nurture, caring conversation, mentoring, and togetherness) in the area you ought to know the best. Extend common courtesies and caring concern when taking a walk. Plan a block party. Reach out to a needy person. Grill out near the sidewalk instead of behind the house. These can all create opportunities to demonstrate the newness the risen Jesus attaches to your new life that is now interested in loving your neighbor.

Demonstration of life in Christ opens opportunities to proclaim the meaning of life in Christ. Through a Christ-inspired and fired up life, the truth of the empty tomb will be transmitted to others who are still disconnected from Jesus.

Wayne Schulz, a WELS mission counselor, is a member of Eastside, Madison, Wisconsin.

THE Pentecost Project

The same Spirit who lit fires in the hearts of Christ's disciples on the first Pentecost incited the members of Redeemer in Tucson to spread the Word through their own Pentecost project.

With construction, outreach, and mission aspects, the Pentecost Project undertaken by Redeemer, Tucson, Ariz., is ambitious—but the success God has granted Redeemer in the past inspires members and workers to give their full support. The project includes several interrelated parts, including:

1. Establishing a “satellite” congregation and purchasing land as a future worship site in the rapidly growing Dove Mountain, Ariz., area.
2. Calling two pastors as tent ministers to lead the congregation in carrying out this work.
3. Constructing four additional school classrooms to accommodate present enrollment and the predicted growth from Dove Mountain children.
4. Supporting a foreign missionary through the WELS Mission Partners program so that members do not become too absorbed in their local congregation and community.

Back to the beginning

Redeemer recently relocated to a rapidly growing area and established itself in the community before other churches began services. When members saw a similar opportunity eight miles away in Dove Mountain, they determined to “strike while the iron was hot.” With 2,000 homes already built in Dove Mountain, several thousand more in various stages of planning and construction, and no churches in the area, the timing appeared perfect.

Even though Redeemer's present pastoral staff was busy with current demands and Redeemer was not in a position to assume the salaries of two additional pas-



Aaron Boehm (front right) and Mark Jacobson (front left) were installed as tent ministers at Redeemer, Tucson, Ariz., on July 25, 2004.

tors, the congregation felt strongly that it had to seize the opportunity to reach out to Dove Mountain. So, last year it called two tent ministers.

Redeemer was a good candidate to call tent ministers. It was prepared to help its two new pastors find jobs and to provide them with a housing allowance. It had a detailed ministry plan, tremendous support from congregation members, and the goal to bring the two men aboard as full-time, fully-supported pastors in two years.

On May 20, 2004, Mark Jacobson and Aaron Boehm, two new seminary graduates, were called into tent ministry at Redeemer. The uniqueness of their ministry shines through as each one details what a “normal” work day looks like.

More about tent ministers

The expression “tent minister” comes from the life of the apostle Paul. Paul did not want to be accused of being a burden or a mercenary in his mission work, so he supported himself by tent-making. Today anyone serving in the public ministry who supports himself with a secular job is said to be a tent minister.

WELS began discussing tent ministry when it became clear that there would soon be more seminary graduates than congregations to support them.

The “opportunity” to be a tent minister

Aaron Boehm

The alarm goes off. I get up, get dressed, and head to the office. Soon I start to bounce sermon ideas around in my head if I’m up to preach on Sunday. If not, then I can start thinking about putting together the next Bible class. I take the time to brainstorm possible outreach events and programs. I also have opportunities to counsel, as well as evangelize.

Sound like the schedule of an ordinary pastor? It is, with one small exception—the office I am referring to isn’t at church (or at home). In fact, it’s not even my office. Rather, it belongs to OPW Engineering, the civil engineering company where I work full time. The truth is I’m not even in that office for more than 30 minutes a day. After checking in at the office in the morning, I jump in with a work crew and head out to the job site to do land surveying . . . and ministry.

An unrealistic start

I must admit that initially I may have been overly optimistic in setting a goal of getting all my coworkers to church. I soon realized that wasn’t a likely situation, seeing as most of them reside no less than a half hour away from Redeemer. Couple that with the fact that on a religious scale, most of them range anywhere from “really not religious” to “no, seriously, I’m not religious.”

Seminary students suggested that rather than having trained men “standing idle in the marketplace,” the synod should send tent ministry teams into mission fields. These tent ministers would operate with the hope and confidence that if they worked 15 to 20 hours per week on establishing a mission, in a few years their congregation would be capable of totally supporting them, and then they could give themselves full time to the public ministry.

Suddenly my goal seemed completely unattainable.

Sometime later I not only realized how lofty my goal was, but also how misdirected it was. My goal should not have been to get them into the doors of my church, but into the arms of their Savior. The odds of any one of my coworkers becoming a member at Redeemer is about as probable as an ice storm in Tucson. However, the odds of the Holy Spirit planting the seed of faith in their hearts through continued exposure to God’s Word (yes, even if they at times get sick of the “church talk”)—now those are odds I can work with.

Tent ministry is not an obstacle—it’s an opportunity.

A hopeful future

You see, being employed at OPW does not mean eight-and-a-half hours a day that I am deprived of performing my pastoral duties. Rather, it means eight-and-a-half hours a day that I am dedicated to perfecting them. It is a mission field that doubles as a training ground where I can sharpen my skills in evangelism, counseling, and connecting with people.



Gena and Aaron Boehm

These are skills that every pastor needs. These are skills that I have the luxury of developing every day of the week.

Furthermore, putting in a 40-hour work week at a secular job dresses me in the shoes of the majority of my laypeople. I don’t have to dream up or pretend I understand what they go through in a typical work week: tiring overtime, trying coworkers, tedious repetition—I know it all firsthand. It’s no wonder sermon illustrations and applications seem to come a little more naturally. Sharing the same schedule on Monday through Friday makes sharing the same Savior easier on Sunday.

Is tent ministry all sugar and spice and everything nice? Show me a ministry that is. Do realize, though, that as our synod continues to explore the need for and the reality of this type of ministry, that every downside of tent ministry is paralleled by—and yes, oftentimes even overshadowed by—a greater upside. Tent ministry is not an obstacle—it’s an opportunity.

continued on p. 14

I went to college to help save souls

Mark Jacobson

“**A**nd for this I went to college.” As I was waiting for another sluggish Walgreen’s store manager to sign the invoice for the delivery I had made, I couldn’t help but think of that phrase. I first saw the phrase on a wooden plaque in my mother’s kitchen. Next to those words was a portrait of a young mother dressed in an apron, carrying a broom. But even though many mothers can recall the difficult days of rearing children and managing a home, the same number will likely agree that those difficult days were worth it.

“employee of the month” status, I strive to make myself profitable for my employer, create relationships with my coworkers, and keep my eye off the clock.

Long hours and answered prayers get the necessary work done.

When I get home from work there is always family time. Some days family time is cut short, and other days ministry is put on hold. This time of the day is always a juggle. Preparation for sermons, evangelism visits, and Bible classes, not to mention that cooking, cleaning, and childcare all need their time. Long hours and answered prayers get the necessary work done. As the little hand on the clock inches toward the top, it’s time to call it a day so I can do it all over again tomorrow.

A temporary approach

I enjoyed my three years at the seminary, but I wouldn’t want to make a career of it. The same can be said of this form of ministry. It is a difficult approach, but it is not impossible, and it’s not permanent. It’s easier to put in the extra effort when there is an end in sight. It’s more enjoyable when others offer their helpful words and hands towards this calling.

A worthwhile goal

The goal of ministry is to save souls. I did not enroll at Martin Luther College or graduate from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary to be a drain on congregational or synod offerings. Although full-time positions in our synod’s work are in short supply, the work definitely is not. One way or another, those souls need to be reached, or they will be lost. And it is for the goal of saving more souls that I went to college.



Mark and Amy Jacobson with son Eli

A difficult approach

My day traditionally starts around 6 A.M. as my dependable alarm clock cries, “Dada! Dada!” After we warm up a cup of milk, slurp down some Cheerios, and catch the latest episode of *The New Adventures of Winnie the Pooh*, it’s time to get ready for work. Sandwiches for lunch are made in record time. Pants go on two legs at a time. When 7:30 comes, I know it’s time to go.

At Tee Time Printed Apparel I primarily work in sales and deliveries. Although I have yet to achieve



Dove Mountain is a rapidly growing community near Tucson, Ariz. Members of Redeemer, Tucson, are working on establishing a new WELS church there.

A PLACE IN TIME

Have you ever thought about traveling back to the ultimate destination in time?

Reynold Heuer

I have to admit that I have been a fan of science fiction longer than many of you reading this article have been alive. Probably my favorite topic in the realm of sci-fi is time travel. The paradox of time travel has always fascinated me. If you were to travel back in time, would it be possible to do something to change your present? What if you traveled into the future? Would it be possible for you to return with knowledge that would alter the future you just came back from? See what I mean? Fascinating!

Have you ever thought about traveling to somewhere else in time?

Whether you subscribe to the Isaac Asimov “humans only” view of the future or the Gene Roddenberry/ Star Trek tomorrow of thousands of intelligent species, a trip into the future would be full of wonders and surprise.

What about traveling into the past? Could you picture yourself in the crowd at Gettysburg hearing Abraham Lincoln deliver his immortal address? Maybe you see yourself standing on the steps of the Castle Church in Wittenberg handing the nails to Martin Luther! Or maybe you see yourself standing on the shore welcoming Christopher Columbus to the new world.

Allow me to put forth some other possible destinations that you might want to consider. How about Bethlehem over 2,000 years ago? I don't know much about shepherding, but there is a certain manger I would like to visit on a certain clear night.

How about 30-some years later on a certain mount teeming with thousands of people sharing an impromptu lunch of fish and bread?

Or, what must be the ultimate destination in the past, a hill outside the gates of Jerusalem where three enemies of the state are being executed for their crimes.

This is one of the destinations in the past that I have thought about over and over again. What, I always wonder, would be my motivation for making this trip? To see if it really happened? To comfort the mourners and tell them what a wonderful gift this is? To try and make them understand how many millions will be saved through this act? Or just to stand at the foot of the cross and say thank you?

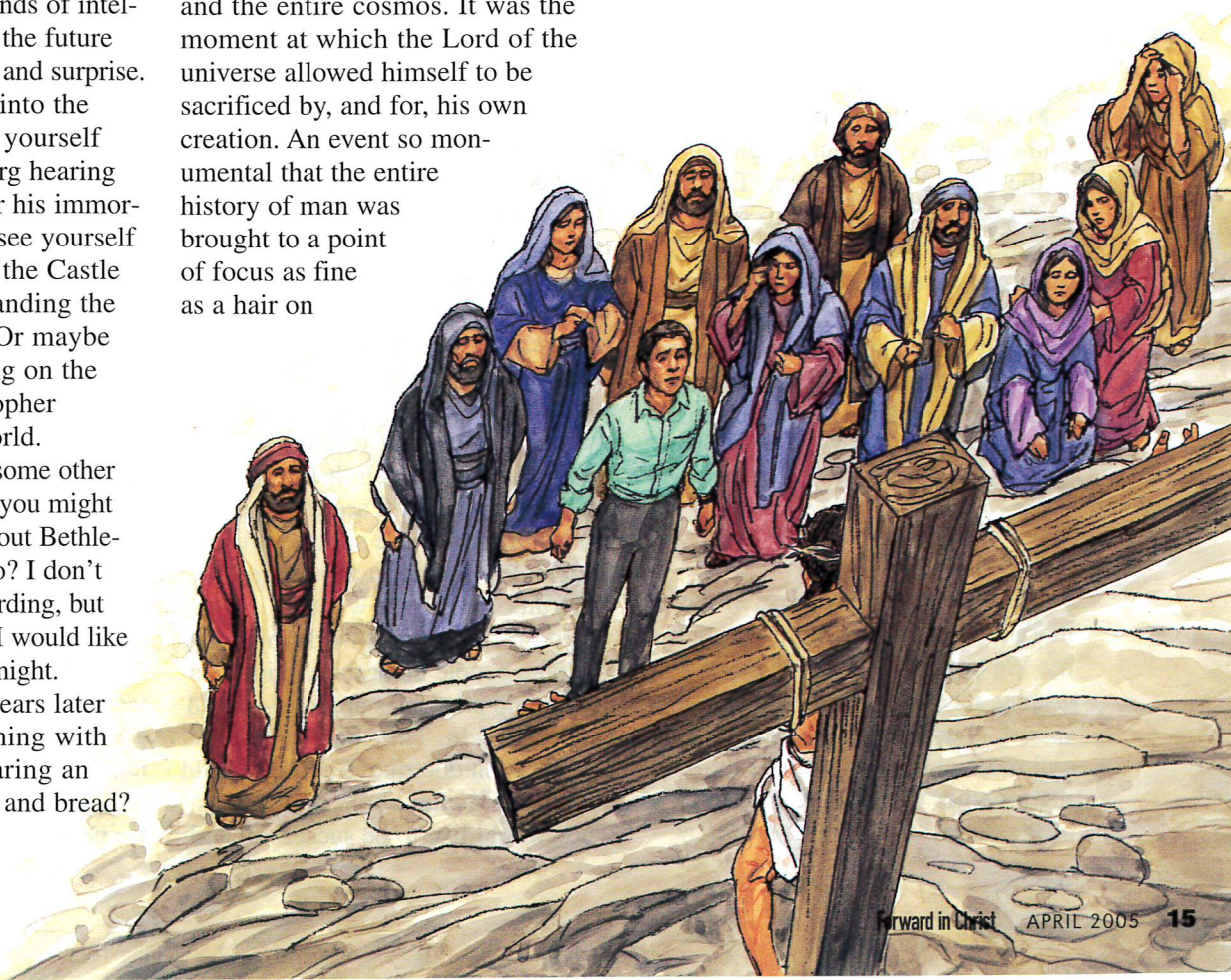
This ultimate destination in time was the turning point for humankind and the entire cosmos. It was the moment at which the Lord of the universe allowed himself to be sacrificed by, and for, his own creation. An event so monumental that the entire history of man was brought to a point of focus as fine as a hair on

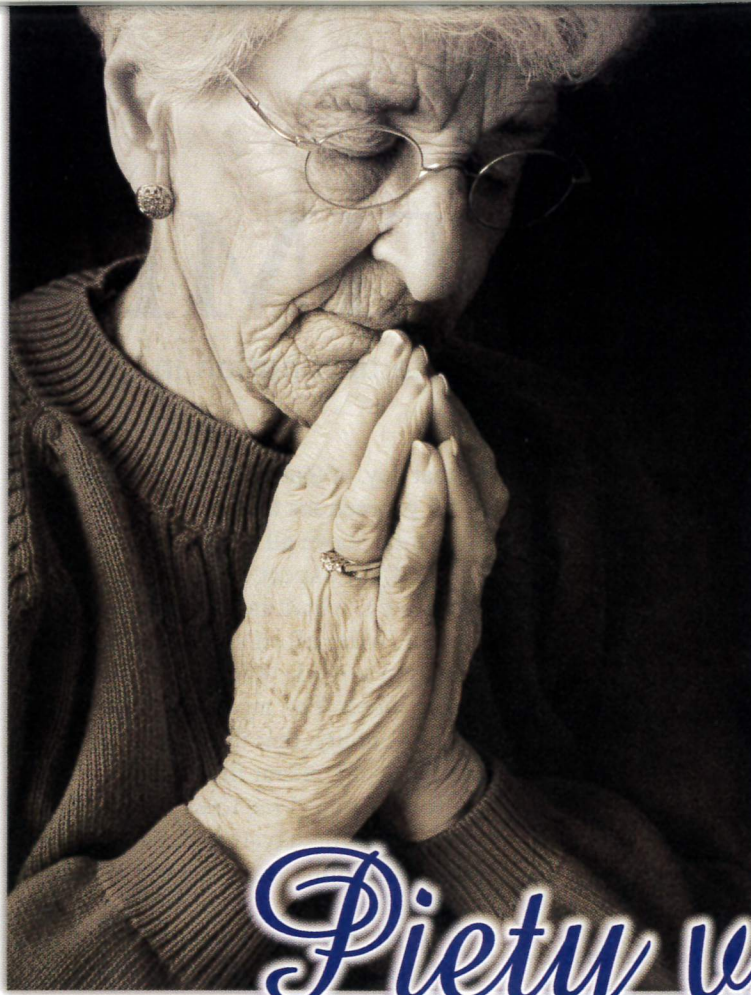
that day, at that place, to echo through all generations to come. A destination in time above all others.

I don't expect to ever make this journey, which is probably just as well. After all, it's not really necessary. I already know that it really happened. The mourners found out soon enough that the death they were witnessing meant life to many. They wouldn't need me to explain to them the need for salvation. Besides, there are still millions for me to tell in my own time.

And, as for standing at the foot of the cross and saying thank you, I do that every day.

Rennie Heuer is a member at Messiah, Nampa, Idaho.





pi·e·ty *n. pl.*

The condition of reverence and devotion to God that comes with faith in Christ.

pi·e·tism *n.*

Making subjective standards of piety and religious experience the essential measure of Christianity or the Christian faith.

Piety vs. Pietism

Frustration and impatience caused the rise of Pietism three centuries ago. Impatience and frustration can also lead to legalism and attempts to force sanctification today.

John M. Brenner

Since the 17th century, Lutherans have struggled with maintaining Lutheran piety without slipping into the extremes of Pietism. There is always the temptation to grow impatient in times of social turmoil, declining moral standards, financial problems, and declining membership and church attendance. Impatient people often lose confidence in the power of the gospel and reach for other means to produce the results they want.

Can Lutherans today slip into Pietism?

We're concerned because of the moral decay so evident in our country. We hear of drug abuse, pornography, incest, abortion, child and spouse abuse, no-fault divorce, and more and more couples living together without the benefit of marriage.

Are we doing something wrong as a church?

There has been a loss of respect for those who serve in the public ministry. Our synod does not seem to be growing. Church and Bible class attendances are not breaking any records. Even though we live in a wealthy nation, our congregations and synod often do not seem to have enough money to do the work we would like to do. We set goals and don't reach them. We work hard, yet don't see the results we hoped for or the success we anticipated. We don't always see the fruits of faith we wanted.

Doesn't the gospel work anymore?

Some people think that Scripture's fellowship principles are loveless and hinder growth. They don't like an emphasis on doctrine. But they would like to feel better about themselves. They would like to be successful and

regain the power that they think the early Christians possessed. They say they don't feel anything when they attend our services.

Are we doing something wrong?

Our problems today really aren't all that different from the problems in Germany in the 17th century. I hope that we can learn from the mistakes of the past. Frustration and impatience caused the rise of Pietism three centuries ago. Impatience and frustration can also lead to legalism and attempts to force sanctification today.

Promoting piety without falling into Pietism

True piety begins with daily contrition and repentance. When we recognize how much God has forgiven us, we are less likely to deal legalistically with others.

All of us are busy. But I hope that we never become so busy that we

cannot take time out every day to study the Bible and gain an ever-deeper appreciation of God's grace. The study of Scripture will help us keep our spiritual balance. We will want to set a good example for our children. We will want to let them see how important the study of the Bible, public worship, and private devotions are to us.

Pietism reacted against apparent dead formalism in worship. How do we keep from merely going through the motions in our services? Variety in worship can help. We can also come to church in time to prepare ourselves for the service. We can read the lessons and hymns before worship begins. We can think about the sermon text and theme. We can read through "Personal Preparation for Holy Communion" (*Christian Worship*, p. 156) before we partake of the sacrament. If we do so, our worship life will be enhanced.

There is an emotional aspect to religion. Human beings have feelings. Christians can be filled with joy or moved to tears by the message of Scripture or a favorite hymn. But we don't make religious feelings or experience the basis of our faith or the proof of our forgiveness. Christianity based on feelings brings joy to the devil, for when a Christian doesn't meet with success or the feelings of being loved by God cease because of a troubled conscience, the individual has nothing left. As Christians we know that God loves us even when we don't feel loved by him. We know because he tells us so in his Word—and he cannot lie!

Pietism saw the study of doctrine as impractical. The Pietists consequently fell into doctrinal indifference. They didn't understand how the Holy Spirit works. He uses sound doctrine to build the church. The devil uses false doctrine and doctrinal indifference to destroy it. The study of doctrine is important

and practical. Review your catechism. Study the other Lutheran Confessions. Help your children with their catechism lessons. Strive to apply those teachings of Scripture to their life and yours.

Pietists tended to view some doctrines as optional and the proper practice of church fellowship as loveless. In practicing church fellowship we will want to guard against a loveless or condescending attitude. Proper fellowship is based on love. We love God's Word too much to compromise it. We love the errorist too much to act as if his error is not harmful. Our hope is to win him over from his error to the truth. It is dishonest and unloving to express unity when it does not exist. We will always want to speak the truth in love.

The study of Scripture will help us keep our spiritual balance.

Pietism was concerned about morality. Pietists, however, often resorted to legalism in an attempt to make people better. They often called things sinful that God has not and made subjective standards for how they thought Christians should live. True piety understands the need to proclaim God's law to expose sin but also recognizes that the law can't change hearts or make people better. Only the gospel can. Once the heart is changed, the law acts as a guide for the Christian life.

But we will want to be realistic. We will remember that everyone has an old Adam and so will fall into sin. We can't expect children or adults to mature spiritually overnight. It takes time and patience. When people learn that in Jesus all of their sins are for-

given, they will bring forth fruits of faith. But everyone is different. The gospel will produce a variety of fruit in their lives. We will want to be careful not to set subjective standards.

In our families, congregations, and communities, we will look for the best ways to serve our Lord and do his will. We will carefully make our plans. We may discover new and better ways to carry out the work he has given us to do.

However, we will remember that the success of everything we do is in God's hands. We can be content and patiently wait for God to accomplish what he wants according to his timetable.

Pietists really don't believe in the efficacy of the sacraments or Scripture. They always want to help God's Word along. Nothing could be more foolish. God's Word has the power to accomplish what he wants in our lives and in the lives of those around us. As the Lord declares, "As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it" (Isaiah 55:10,11).

John Brenner, a professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin, is a member at Calvary, Thiensville.

This is the last of a four-part series that shows historically and biblically the struggle between piety and pietism that regularly troubles the church. To read the first three articles, go to www.wels.net, jumpword "ficarchive", and enter the keyword "piety".

WHATEVER

Dying to be thin

An eating disorder survivor's story.

Brita Schultz

I was about 13 years old, four feet eleven inches tall, and about 65 pounds. I was obsessed with food, but I never consumed it. I suffered from a disorder known as anorexia nervosa. Millions of Americans suffer from this life-draining paranoia of food, which can be deadly if not treated properly.

I was in sixth grade when I started to obsess about my self-image. I looked at myself as an outcast. My sister, Lindsay, was a grade younger than I was and had everything. She was smart, beautiful, fun to be around, loved by everyone, cute, outgoing, and skinny. I looked at her and I looked at myself, and I knew that I had none of these attributes. I wanted to be like her. I wanted to be loved as much as she was, so my solution was to become like her.

As I look back, I realize that I was telling God that he didn't make me good enough. I know now that God doesn't make mistakes and that he made each one of us just the way he wanted us to be, each in our own uniqueness. I was slapping God in the face, telling him that I was in control over myself and it was up to me to fix his mistake. I've learned to accept who I am and give God credit for creating me for who I am.

About six months before my parents noticed something was wrong, I started starving myself to death. On a healthy day, I had about 600 calories and on a bad day, about 200 calories. As the pounds were disappearing, so was my self-esteem. It seemed that as I lost weight, I grew bigger. Because of the lack of food in my system, my brain was shutting down.

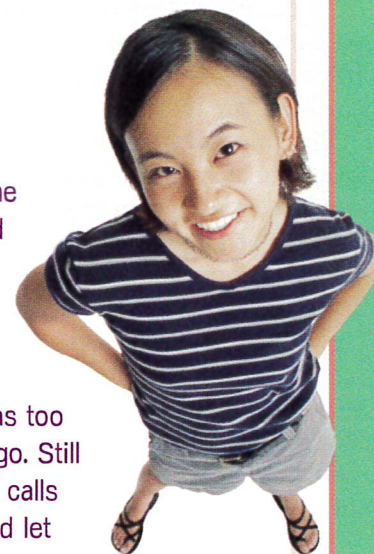
Finally, I was admitted to Fairview Medical Center in Minneapolis. I remained there for six weeks. I received numerous letters, phone calls, and prayer books. My faith grew with each passing day as I relied more and more on God's power rather than on my own willpower.

Though my pastors visited me and encouraged me to let God be in charge, this was easier said than done. About a month after I was released, I was readmitted. This time it was for over eight weeks. I was too weak and too stubborn to let go. Still the letters, prayers, and phone calls kept pushing me to give up and let God take over.

ED blinded me for so long. (ED is what I called my "eating disorder voice" telling me not to eat and constantly showing me how fat I was.) My body was immune to having only little amounts of food each day. My metabolism slowed down, and my body temperature decreased. Finally with God's help through family, friends, and countless devotions, I was strong enough to withstand ED. I was tired of seeing my family suffer, and I was sick of not eating.

Now four years later, I look back and wonder why God would let my family and me endure such pain. We, as Christians, know that God lets troubles and tribulations drift in and out of our lives to strengthen our trust in him and bring us spiritually closer to him. He also says that he will not let us be tempted beyond what we can bear. So, I'm not sure if I know the specific reason why, but I know that it was for the best. I know that I can help others who are going through the same emotionally draining time to realize that God's in charge!

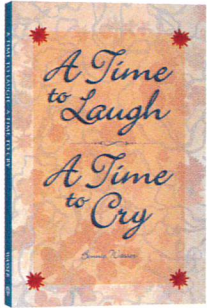
Brita Schultz, a sophomore at Augustana College, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, wrote this article when she was a senior at Minnesota Valley Lutheran High School, New Ulm. Schultz is a member of St. John, Redwood Falls, Minnesota.



Booknook

A look at new books published by Northwestern Publishing House. For more information, visit www.nph.net or call 800-662-6022. Note: These reviews are not meant to represent the opinions of WELS or Forward in Christ.

A woman with a superhuman quality



\$11.99

This slim book by Bonnie Wasser, *A Time to Laugh, A Time to Cry*, surprised me. I expected to hear a heartwarming story of a woman with unbelievable patience and energy, a saint with a dishtowel and a smile. I expected to hear a woman revealing her heart for God and revealing the heart of her supportive and saintly husband as well. I also expected to hear humorous stories intermixed with poignant ones. And I got all that. What I didn't expect to hear was the story of a woman of prayer.

I began the book thinking I'd be amazed by Wasser's chaotic, yet somehow disciplined and organized family life—which I also was—but I expected my amazement would lead me to envy her more than anything else. I wanted to attribute her peaceful, trusting perspective and ability to care for such a large and motley family to some superhuman gift she somehow possessed. And in a way, that's true. Bonnie Wasser does have a superhuman quality bestowed on her at birth—her rebirth in the Lord Jesus Christ.

In fact, the most captivating character I noticed wandering through

this narrative—perhaps arranged so anti-chronologically to highlight his presence in various aspects of her life—was Jesus. Bonnie talks so naturally to him about the smallest things, brings to him the smallest problems, and then, not so surprisingly, when the bigger challenges happen, I not only buy her reliance on her Savior as being sincere, I find myself thinking, "Maybe I should thank God now, too, for some tough times."

Wasser never sets herself up in this collage of everyday musings as being an advice-giver or a guru. Rather, it's as if she's drawing us into her warm kitchen, offering a cup of coffee, and then unburdening her heart and mind to us at the table.

I did find myself frustrated at times that I didn't know more of the factual history of Wasser's gradually built-up and ever-fluctuating family, that I didn't get a better grasp of her life in its full sweep, but maybe she avoided that very thing on purpose. She didn't want to wow me with the history of her complex life. Rather, it seemed as if she wanted me to come close and get to know her, and through her, the Superman who buoys her up every day.

Ramona Czer

St. John, New Ulm, Minnesota

Obituaries

Theda J. Zettler 1931-2005

Theda Zettler was born May 28, 1931, in Rhinelander, Wis. She died Jan. 14, 2005, in Rhinelander.

A 1952 graduate of Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., she served St. Paul, Arlington, Minn., and St. Jacobi, Greenfield, Wis.

She is survived by two brothers, four sisters, and many nieces and nephews.

James R. Ziesemer 1951-2005

James Ziesemer was born Sept. 6, 1951, in Milwaukee, Wis. He died Jan. 27, 2005, in West Bend, Wis.

A 1977 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis., he served King of Kings, Willoughby, Ohio; Hope, West Chicago, Ill.; and Good Shepherd, West Bend, Wis.

He was preceded in death by his father. He is survived by his mother, Beatrice; his wife, Jill; two sons; one daughter; and one grandson.

THROUGH MY BIBLE IN 3 YEARS

MAY 2005

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Luke 21:1-24 | 17. Ps. 6 |
| 2. Lk. 21:25-38 | 18. Ps. 7, 8 |
| 3. Lk. 22:1-13 | 19. Ps. 9, 10 |
| 4. Lk. 22:14-30 | 20. Ps. 11, 12 |
| 5. Lk. 22:31-46 | 21. Acts 1:1-11 |
| 6. Lk. 22:47-62 | 22. Ac. 1:12-26 |
| 7. Lk. 22:63-23:12 | 23. Ac. 2:1-13 |
| 8. Lk. 23:13-25 | 24. Ac. 2:14-36 |
| 9. Lk. 23:26-43 | 25. Ac. 2:37-47 |
| 10. Lk. 23:44-56 | 26. Ac. 3 |
| 11. Lk. 24:1-12 | 27. Ac. 4:1-31 |
| 12. Lk. 24:13-35 | 28. Ac. 4:32-5:16 |
| 13. Lk. 24:36-53 | 29. Ac. 5:17-42 |
| 14. Psalms 1, 2 | 30. Ac. 6 |
| 15. Ps. 3, 4 | 31. Ac. 7:1-43 |
| 16. Ps. 5 | |

Walking together

WELS is pooling its talents and resources to do great things for Jesus—things that each one of us couldn't do alone. That's why we walk together as members of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. On May 1, join your fellow members in "Walking Together Sunday: A Celebration of God's Grace Among Us." For more information, contact the Commission for Communication on Financial Support, 800-827-2237 or joycet@sab.wels.net.



Delegates for the 58th biennial convention of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn.—July 25-29

ARIZONA-CALIFORNIA

Conference

Apache	Lay delegates Mr. Paul Bauer, Emmaus, Phoenix, Ariz. Mr. Hugh Moses, Our Savior, Bylas, Ariz.
Black Canyon	Mr. Joel Leerssen, Salem, Scottsdale, Ariz. Mr. Jim McCawley, St. Peter, Globe, Ariz. Mr. Jerry Schieber, Pilgrim, Mesa, Ariz. Mr. Matt Steger, Grace, Casa Grande, Ariz.
California North	Mr. Chris Bradshaw, Christ, Lodi, Calif. Mr. Richard Zell, Faith, Anderson, Calif.
California South	Mr. Christopher Chase, Calvary, Canyon Country, Calif. Mr. Patrick Miller, Risen Savior, Chula Vista, Calif. Mr. Chad Oppenborn, St. Stephen, Fallbrook, Calif. Mr. Marvin Ryer, Our Savior, Pomona, Calif. Mr. Richard Stueve, St. Paul's First, Van Nuys, Calif.
Gadsden	Mr. Jesse Huggins, Grace, Tucson, Ariz. Mr. Alan Mork, Beautiful Savior, El Paso, Texas

Teachers

Mr. Steven Bremer
Mr. Terrance Greening
Mr. Kurt Mueller
Mr. Douglas Stubalt

Pastors

Rev. Ronald Baerbock
Rev. David Bostedt
Rev. Roger Carter
Rev. Samuel Clemons
Rev. David Gray
Rev. Robert Hein
Rev. Mark Mammel
Rev. Thomas Naumann
Rev. Michael Nitz
Rev. James Panning

DAKOTA-MONTANA

Conference

Eastern	Lay delegates Mr. Bob Bren, St. Peter, Goodwin, S.D. Mr. Don Gillund, Trinity, Hendricks, Minn. Mr. Earl Nelson, Ascension, Moorhead, Minn. Mr. Eldon Redlin, St. Martin, Watertown, S.D. Mr. Aaron Trimmer, James Valley, Jamestown, N.D.
Rocky Mountain	Mr. Norm Charlson, Mt. Zion, Missoula, Mont. Mr. Gerald Pepke, Mountain View, Great Falls, Mont. Mr. Walter Stepper, Trinity, Terry, Mont.
Western	Mr. Alan Kolb, Hope, Spearfish, S.D. Mr. Larry Lutz, Zion, Akaska, S.D. Mr. Hadley Seeklander, St. Paul, Hazelton, N.D. Mr. Arthur Sievert, Redeemer, Mandan, N.D. Mr. Quinten Sulzle, St. Paul, Rapid City, S.D.

Teachers

Mr. Gene Jaeger

Pastors

Rev. Mark Guthmiller
Rev. David Reichel
Rev. Wayne Rouse
Rev. Jonathan Werre

MICHIGAN

Conference

Northern	Lay delegates Mr. James Armbruster, St. John, Pigeon, Mich. Mr. Robert Cook, St. Matthew, Freeland, Mich. Mr. Kenneth Forfinski, St. John, Clare, Mich. Mr. Earl Hagstrom, Hope, Swartz Creek, Mich. Mr. Mark Nitz, Good Shepherd, Beaverton, Mich. Mr. Barry Price, Grace, Durand, Mich. Mr. Cary Reif, Redeemer, Scottville, Mich. Mr. Thomas Schindler, St. Bartholomew, Kawkawlin, Mich. Mr. Raymond Vasold, Bethany, Saginaw, Mich. Mr. James Zessin, Bethel, Bay City, Mich.
Ohio	Mr. Richard Fischer Jr., Beautiful Savior, Grove City, Ohio Mr. Joseph Price, Bethany, Gibsonia, Penn. Mr. Roger Riehl, Arlington Avenue, Toledo, Ohio Mr. Mitch Slater, Our Savior, Strongsville, Ohio
Southeastern	Mr. William Hayes, Lola Park, Redford, Mich. Mr. John Ketola, Grace, Tecumseh, Mich. Mr. John Marr, Redeemer, Ann Arbor, Mich. Mr. Matthew Murphy, St. Paul, Belleville, Mich. Mr. Eugene Olson, St. Mark, Sterling Heights, Mich. Mr. Wilbert Zautner, St. Jacob, Grass Lake, Mich.
Southwestern	Mr. Bradley Clark, Christ Our Savior, Rockford, Mich. Mr. Warren Hartman, Good Shepherd, Benton Harbor, Mich. Mr. David Koester, Peace, Granger, Ind. Mr. Herman Weissmann, St. James, Portage, Mich.

Teachers

Mr. Steven Bunde
Mr. Randy Cochran
Mr. Paul Kaiser
Mr. David Knittel
Mr. David Lecker
Mr. Kenneth Nolte
Mr. Paul Pappenfuss
Mr. Thomas Schwartz

Pastors

Rev. Michael Bater
Rev. Marc Frey
Rev. Timothy Gauger
Rev. Philip Krieger
Rev. Arnold Kunde
Rev. Philipp Lehmann
Rev. Mark Lindloff
Rev. Scott Mosher
Rev. Paul Schaefer
Rev. Gerald Schroer
Rev. Paul Schweppe
Rev. Allen Tetzloff
Rev. Joel Thomford
Rev. Michael Zuberbier

MINNESOTA

Conference

Crow River	Lay delegates Mr. Orville Horsch, St. Paul, Montrose, Minn. Mr. Michael Kettenacker, Cross, Rockford, Minn. Mr. Dennis Krueger, Immanuel, Willmar, Minn. Mr. Harold Rix, St. Paul, Morris, Minn.
Mankato	Mr. Robert Babione, Friedens, New Prague, Minn. Mr. Neil Lillo, St. Mark, Mankato, Minn.
New Ulm	Mr. Arlan Beyer, Zion, Sanborn, Minn. Mr. Mark Santelman, Zion, Winthrop, Minn.
Red Wing	Mr. Daniel Heins, Beautiful Savior, Austin, Minn. Mr. Alvin Resoft, Ascension, Rochester, Minn. Mr. Ardell Tesmer, Trinity, Bremen, Minn.
Redwood Falls	Mr. Kenneth Jesertiz, St. John, Wood Lake, Minn. Mr. Dean Mitzner, St. Peter, Balaton, Minn. Mr. James Penske, St. John, Vesta, Minn.

Teachers

Mr. Steven Biedenbender
Mr. James Dretske
Prof. James Grunwald
Mr. Macord Johnson
Mr. Ronald Martinson
Mr. Merlin Meitner
Mr. Craig Morgan
Prof. Ronald Ohm
Mr. Ronald Schmidt
Dr. David Wendler
Prof. Kurt Wittmershaus
Mr. Philip Zahn

Pastors

Rev. Dean Biebert
Rev. Mark Falck
Rev. Thomas Hartwig
Rev. Robert Hellmann
Rev. Bruce Janisch
Rev. Andrew Krause
Rev. Jonathan Ladner
Dr. Mark Lenz
Rev. Martin Lopahs
Rev. Kurt Lueneburg
Rev. Dallas Miller
Rev. Mark Neitzel
Rev. John Quandt
Rev. Wayne Schoch
Rev. Ronald Siemers
Rev. Richard Tuttle

Southern Mr. Gary Sackett, Good Shepherd, Cedar Rapids, Minn.
Mr. Matthew Whitaker, Beautiful Savior, West Des Moines, Iowa

St. Croix Mr. Matthew Dobberstein, Immanuel, Woodville, Wis.
Mr. Lyle Guggisberg, Redeemer, Saint Croix Falls, Wis.
Mr. Federick Panning, St. Andrew, Saint Paul Park, Minn.
Mr. Brad Schmutge, Shepherd of the Hills, Duluth, Minn.
Mr. Peter Shay, Zion, Osceola, Wis.
Mr. Galen Sommer, Pilgrim, Minneapolis, Minn.
Mr. Ron Sprengeler, Good Shepherd, Burnsville, Minn.

NEBRASKA

Conference

Lay delegates

Teachers

Pastors

Colorado Mr. David Brandt, Prince of Peace, Salt Lake City, Utah
Mr. Andrew Hartmann, Light of the Valley, Layton, Utah
Mr. Milton Hepner, Christ the Rock, Farmington, N.M.
Mr. David Hinrichs, Living Savior, Littleton, Colo.

Mr. John Barenz
Mr. Frederick Lohmiller

Rev. David Haberkorn
Rev. Mark Hoefner
Rev. Steven Kahrs
Rev. John Kurth
Rev. Michael Neumann
Rev. Donald Wichmann

Rosebud Mr. Ivan Schneidereit, St. John, Brewster, Neb.

Southern Mr. Myron Hinrikus, Redeemer, Hastings, Neb.
Mr. Robert Nelson, St. Paul, North Platte, Neb.
Mr. Lyle Ostermeier, Faith, Rising City, Neb.

Three River

NORTH ATLANTIC

Conference

Lay delegates

Teachers

Pastors

Colonial North Mr. Mark Dimke, Our Savior, Springville, N.Y.
Mr. Kent Yunker, Prince of Peace, Fairport, N.Y.

Mr. Robert Rebers

Rev. Adam Horneber
Rev. Kevin Mau
Rev. Thomas Mielke

Colonial South

Southern

NORTHERN WISCONSIN

Conference

Lay delegates

Teachers

Pastors

Fox River Valley Mr. Ron Hillman, Divine Savior, Shawano, Wis.
Mr. Kenneth Maves, Trinity, Neenah, Wis.
Mr. Gene Niesen, St. Peter, Appleton, Wis.
Mr. Marvin Obry, Bethlehem, Hortonville, Wis.
Mr. Harold Rose, First, Green Bay, Wis.
Mr. Peter Sauer, Christ, Baileys Harbor, Wis.
Mr. Lloyd Thede, St. John, Appleton, Wis.

Mr. Steven Gauger
Mr. Donald Gurgel
Mr. Steven Hahnke
Mr. Kenneth Kasten
Mr. Daniel Kell
Mr. Dale Oechler
Mr. David Ring
Mr. John Roekle
Mr. James Schmidt
Mr. Dennis Steinbrenner
Mr. Eric Troge
Mr. Frederick Uttech
Mr. Thomas Welch
Mr. Allan Wrobel

Rev. Matthew Arnold
Rev. Ronald Ash
Rev. Robert Balza
Rev. Robert Bitter
Rev. Paul Cole
Rev. Ronald Gorske
Rev. Robert Hankwitz
Rev. David Haugly
Rev. David Kastenschmidt
Rev. Craig Korth
Rev. David Laabs
Rev. Roy Rose
Rev. Kristian Taves
Rev. Ralph Waack

Lake Superior

Manitowoc Mr. Norman Blattler, St. Peter, Mishicot, Wis.
Mr. Rodney Bubolz, St. John-St. James, Reedsville, Wis.
Mr. John Meiselwitz, Trinity, Kiel, Wis.
Mr. Steven Zeitler, St. John, Maribel, Wis.

Rhineland

Mr. Edwin Schufletowski, Redeemer, Tomahawk, Wis.

Winnebago

Mr. Gregory Lurvey, Peace, Wautoma, Wis.
Mr. Lyle Plagenz, Zion, Kingston, Wis.
Mr. Bryan Purchatzke, Faith, Oshkosh, Wis.

PACIFIC NORTHWEST

Conference

Lay delegates

Teachers

Pastors

Alaska Mr. Albert Hoberg, Trinity, Omak, Wash.

Mr. Chris Poetter

Rev. David Leistekow
Rev. Kenley Mann
Rev. Thomas Schmidt
Rev. Stephen Soukup

Cascades Mr. Dennis Bishop, Christ the King, Bremerton, Wash.
Mr. James Erdmann, Beautiful Savior, Everett, Wash.
Mr. Richard Guthmiller, Cross of Christ, Eagle, Idaho
Mr. Al Miller, St. Matthew, Spokane, Wash.
Mr. Dave Rude, Living Hope, Redmond, Wash.
Mr. Jeff Stellick, Good Hope, Ellensburg, Wash.

SOUTH ATLANTIC

Conference

Lay delegates

Teachers

Pastors

Cottonbelt Mr. Ed Groeschel, Beautiful Savior, Summerville, S.C.
Mr. Robert Kaylor, Saving Grace, Mobile, Ala.
Mr. George Thompson, Abiding Grace, Covington, Ga.

Mr. Kurt Rosenbaum

Rev. Philip Hoyer
Rev. Paul Lindhorst
Rev. David Rosenbaum
Rev. Charles Westra
Rev. Larry Zahn

Cypress Mr. Roy Anderson, Grace, Spring Hill, Fla.
Mr. John Bock, Northdale, Tampa, Fla.
Mr. Charles Ellingboe, Christ the Lord, Clearwater, Fla.

Everglades Mr. Mark Burger, Peace, Bradenton, Fla.
Mr. Craig Halverson, Bethany, North Fort Myers, Fla.

VOTING DELEGATES

SOUTH CENTRAL

Conference

South Central

Lay delegates

Mr. Harvey Dunn, Immanuel, Fort Worth, Texas
 Mr. Dale Foster, Atonement, Plano, Texas
 Mr. Rich Glasser, Gethsemane, Oklahoma City, Okla.
 Mr. Jim Plumlee, Grace, Scroggins, Texas
 Mr. Jim Rupp, Good Shepherd, The Woodlands, Texas
 Mr. John Ward, Prince of Peace, Flower Mound, Texas
 Mr. Robert Wilcott, Lord of Life, Friendswood, Texas

Teachers

Mr. Ryan Hill

Pastors

Rev. William Gobb
 Rev. Jerry Kassebaum
 Rev. Marc VonDeylen

SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN

Conference

Chicago

Lay delegates

Mr. Richard Colton, Grace, Indianapolis, Ind.
 Mr. Steven Danekas, Good Shepherd, Downers Grove, Ill.
 Mr. Clifford Schwartz, Jerusalem, Morton Grove, Ill.

Teachers

Mr. Ned Goede
 Mr. Craig Hirschmann
 Mr. John Kaesmeyer
 Mr. Timothy Kuehl
 Mr. Paul Lange
 Mr. Larry Numerich
 Prof. James Rahn
 Mr. Phillip Rehberger
 Mr. Blair Schaper
 Mr. Robert Sawall
 Mr. Timothy Schneider
 Mr. David Schroeder
 Mr. Jay Schwall
 Mr. John Stark
 Mr. Kurt Steffen
 Mr. Dale Stelter
 Mr. Lyle Timm
 Mr. Steven Toth
 Mr. Scott Uecker
 Mr. Timothy Voigt
 Mr. Daryl Weber
 Mr. John Wesenberg
 Mr. Michael Wiechmann
 Mr. Barry Wierschke

Pastors

Rev. Brian Adams
 Rev. Andrew Bauer
 Rev. David Cooper
 Rev. Bryan Gerlach
 Rev. Kurt Grunewald
 Rev. Richard Gurgel
 Rev. Raymond Kimbrough
 Rev. William Kirchner
 Rev. David Kalandar
 Rev. John Kuske
 Rev. Daniel Marshall
 Rev. John Miller
 Rev. James Phillips
 Rev. John Schroeder
 Rev. Thomas Schultz
 Rev. Randall Siegel
 Rev. James Westendorf
 Rev. John Zickuhr

Kettle Moraine

Mr. Jim Ebert, Our Savior, Grafton, Wis.
 Mr. Ralph Fink, St. Paul, Lamira, Wis.
 Mr. Edwin Gutermann, St. Paul, Brownsville, Wis.
 Mr. Barton Rouse, Calvary, Mequon, Wis.
 Mr. Erv Uhlman, St. Lucas, Kewaskum, Wis.

Milwaukee Metro

Mr. Edward Haffner, Divinity-Divine Charity, Whitefish Bay, Wis.
 Mr. Don Jenders, Messiah, Milwaukee, Wis.
 Mr. Kurt Kopplin, Divine Peace, Milwaukee, Wis.
 Mr. George Schaser, Centennial, Milwaukee, Wis.
 Mr. Brian Treptow, Good Shepherd, West Allis, Wis.

Milwaukee Urban

Mr. Roddy Guyton, Siloah, Milwaukee, Wis.

Shoreland

Mr. Jerome Brooks, First, Racine, Wis.
 Mr. Jim Gaugert, First, Lake Geneva, Wis.
 Mr. William Strutz, Epiphany, Racine, Wis.

Three River

Mr. James Schall, Christ, Pewaukee, Wis.

Western Lakes

Mr. Jim Holm, St. Paul, East Troy, Wis.

WESTERN WISCONSIN

Conference

Central

Lay delegates

Mr. Philip Boll, Eastside, Madison, Wis.
 Mr. James Burmeister, St. John, Pardeeville, Wis.
 Mr. Wayne Kuerschner, St. John, Watertown, Wis.
 Mr. Ronald Manthe, Lord of Love, DeForest, Wis.
 Mr. John Nass, Trinity, Watertown, Wis.

Teachers

Mr. James Brohn
 Mr. Richard Cody
 Mr. Paul Frisque
 Mr. Lance Johnson
 Mr. Russell Klatt
 Mr. John Lau
 Mr. Mark Loersch
 Mr. Jonathan Meyer
 Mr. Patrick Miller

Pastors

Rev. Matthew Cross
 Rev. Roger Grosnick
 Rev. Richard Pamperin
 Rev. Mark Panning
 Rev. Norman Paul
 Rev. Herbert Prah
 Rev. Terry Reich
 Rev. Andrew Schultz
 Rev. Roger Sloan
 Rev. Ethan Steinbrenner
 Rev. Paul Vander Galien
 Rev. Richard Warnecke

Chippewa River Valley

Mississippi River Valley

Mr. Harvey Larsen, Good Shepherd, Holmen, Wis.
 Mr. Fred Lintelmann, Bethel, Galesville, Wis.
 Mr. Larry Tiedemann, St. John, Lewiston, Minn.

Southwestern

Mr. Raymond Marten, St. Peter, Tomah, Wis.
 Mr. Patrick Mulrain, St. Paul, Tomah, Wis.
 Mr. Lee Schnabel, English, Viroqua, Wis.

Wisconsin River Valley

Mr. Harry Channing, St. John, Neillsville, Wis.

Wisillowa

Mr. Mark Gegenbach, Trinity, Mt. Carroll, Ill.
 Mr. Norm Trier, Gethsemane, Davenport, Iowa

WORLD MISSIONARIES

Rev. Jud Krohn
 Rev. Nathan Seiltz
 Rev. Ernst Wendland
 Rev. Robert Wendland

Note: Some delegates were not yet identified when this went to print. For a current list of delegates, go to www.wels.net/convention.

Lent by Candlelight

Looking for a way for women to spend quality time together in God's Word during Lent, the women of Word of Life, Appleton, Wis., hosted Lent by Candlelight for almost 100 women on Feb. 12. Similar to Advent by Candlelight, an evening focusing on the upcoming birth of Jesus, Lent by Candlelight looks to Holy Week.

The evening began with a light supper that had a Jewish/Mediterranean flavor. Then time was spent in God's Word. Through readings, songs, and prayers, the focus was on the cross and the sacrifice of our Savior.

The devotion time was similar to a Tenebrae service. Each table was set with seven candles. The candles were extinguished one by one after each reading. But the evening did not end in the darkness of despair. One candle was relit to remind attendees that the Light of the World would shine again on Easter morning.

One young mom commented, "It was good to take time to just focus on what is really important."

Another echoed her sentiment, noting, "This was just what I needed."

To learn how your congregation can organize a Lent by Candlelight



The women of Word of Life, Appleton, Wis., created an atmosphere of reflection and praise for the Lent by Candlelight that they hosted on Feb. 12.

event, contact Pam Holz, 920-733-8235; four2one@sbcglobal.net.

Pam Holz

Synod faces budget realities

The Synodical Council made some tough decisions at its February meeting, including adopting a newly balanced budget for the current fiscal year (July 1, 2004–June 30, 2005) and a preliminary budget for the upcoming biennium (July 1, 2005–June 30, 2007).

What made these decisions tough was that in the face of ever increasing opportunities for ministry the revenue forecast for the next biennium is several million dollars per year less than this fiscal year. This means that almost all areas of ministry will have smaller budgets in the next biennium and won't be able to maintain current programs.

"There are obstacles, large financial ones," says WELS President Karl Gurgel. "At the same time there are opportunities, many of them to share the Word. While the mood was somber, reflecting our challenging financial condition, necessitating further cuts in mission and ministry, it was at the same time confident. Our gracious Lord, as he always does, will bring good to us and his kingdom through our present trials."

In order to meet the budget, the Synodical Council discussed potential cost-cutting strategies. These strategies include

- cutting administration by \$400,000;
- cutting Parish Services by 20 percent, resulting in less services to our parishes;
- limiting needed improvements in technology and in our financial services;
- reducing travel and meeting costs;
- recalling missionaries from foreign fields;
- reducing home missions ministry initiatives; and
- gradually reducing synod subsidy to our Ministerial Education schools (Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis.; Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Mich.; Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn.; and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis.) and postponing

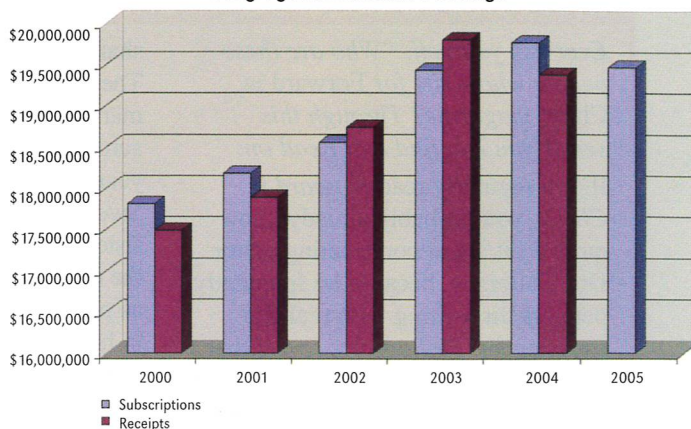
some maintenance at these schools.

The forecast factors in revenue from sources such as Congregation Mission Offerings, tuition and fees from the four ministerial education schools, bequests, individual mission offerings, Mission Partner support, and foundation giving. Congregation Mission Offerings in 2004 totaled \$19,423,074, about \$328,000 (1.7 percent) less than expected and \$376,000 less than 2003 totals. Congregation Mission Offering subscriptions for 2005 are \$19,462,255, a decrease of \$298,806 (1.5 percent) from 2004 subscriptions. (A four to five percent increase is needed just to keep up with cost increases.)

A \$1 million gift to the synod's operating fund from Northwestern Publishing House over the next year and a half will help alleviate budget difficulties. The synod also is working on other ways to enhance revenue.

- The first Walking Together Sunday, an annual celebration of the work that we do together as a synod, is set for May 1. Besides sharing how WELS carries out Christ's saving mission together, it will give members an opportunity to support that work with monetary gifts.
- The Commission for Communication on Financial Support is pairing up with Adult Discipleship to offer schools of stewardship in the districts. These schools will provide stewardship resources to congregations. Look for pilot schools in your district.
- Planned Giving is filling two vacant planned giving counselor positions. These men will work with members on short- and long-term giving.
- The synod will continue to emphasize Mission Partners as a way to give congregations and members

Congregation Mission Offerings



opportunities to share prayers, encouragement, and ministry and to designate offerings to a particular mission or area.

"The Lord has us right where he wants us to be, trusting him and his love for us," says Gurgel.

The Synodical Council will meet again in April to finalize the budget that will go to the synod in convention in July. Before that meeting, a committee of Synodical Council and Ministry Operation Team members will be working to define core (essential) ministry; to supply at least three different scenarios that demonstrate ministry priorities; to show ramifications of each scenario based on the current revenue forecast; and to supply a "what if" positive scenario to raise members' sights of mission and ministry opportunities. The committee will present these recommendations to the Synodical Council in April.

"This is a daunting task that will require the guiding and loving help of our God," says Dr. John Freese, teacher at-large member of the Synodical Council and committee chairman. "Your prayers are necessary and requested."

The Synodical Council will discuss these options in April and present them to the synod in convention. Opportunities will be available on the WELS Web site for WELS members to provide comments and input.

Meet the editorial staff—uncut

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

If you regularly read *Forward in Christ*, you probably already know quite a bit about contributing editor Don Patterson, because he frequently peppers his writing with real-life experiences. Past articles reveal that Patterson has four sons, he once tried riding a bronco at a high school rodeo, playing Candy Land bores him (but he plays it anyway because he loves his sons), he lives in Texas, and he can’t read music.

Meeting Patterson in person reveals more of the same—a friendly man with a southern drawl who loves his family and loves his Lord. Born and raised in Garland, Texas, Patterson now serves as a pastor at Holy Word, Austin. He and his wife, Mary, are both active in

sharing their faith with others. They have presented at many marriage and family retreats across the United States. Last year, they even presented in Sweden to members of our sister church body. In January, the couple helped build houses as part of WELS’ relief efforts in hurricane-ravaged Grenada.

Patterson credits his parents for inspiring him to serve in the public ministry: “Their absolute love for God’s Word and the church taught me that the ministry of Jesus’ gospel to his people is the best way to spend my life.”

Yet Patterson didn’t take the traditional route to the pulpit. First he graduated from East Texas State University with a degree in Agricultural Education. While there, he started thinking about using his life to share the gospel



Don Patterson and his wife, Mary, found a friend as they toured Ludwig’s Castle in Germany last year. Patterson writes interactive Bible studies for *Forward in Christ* (p. 35).

full time. So he then attended Bethany Lutheran College in Mankato, Minn., for two years to prepare him for his studies at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis. In 1992, Patterson graduated from the seminary and was called to serve Holy Word.

Want to know more about Don Patterson? Just keep reading *Forward in Christ*.

North American Outreach: Phase 2

As the second phase of WELS’ North American Outreach emphasis begins, WELS members are being reminded that every soul is a treasure.

To help you on your quest for souls, the WELS Board for Home Missions is encouraging members of local congregations to develop new outreach ministries. As members encounter questions, they should contact their district mission board chairman (see list for contact information).

“Our district mission board members are excited about the opportunity to help mentor, encourage, and pro-

vide direction for new outreach ministries,” says Home Missions administrator Harold Hagedorn. “They want to serve so that by all possible means some might be saved through God’s means of grace.”

The Commission on Evangelism also stands ready to help members who need training and direction in outreach. For 18 years, the commission has coordinated Schools of Outreach for congregational leaders. In three motivational days, Evangelism’s trained presenters lay the groundwork for and educate atten-

dees in the main components of a congregational evangelism program. To learn more about Schools of Outreach, call 414-256-3287 or e-mail evangelism@sab.wels.net.

Learn more about North American Outreach at www.wels.net/nao. While visiting the site, subscribe to a bi-weekly North American Outreach e-mail that will include information about how you can prepare yourself for North American Outreach, how other WELS members are reaching out, and prayer requests on behalf of North American Outreach.

District Mission Board chairmen

Arizona: Pastor Daniel Baumler, 915-857-9152

California: Pastor Robert Hein, 408-225-0107

Colorado: Pastor Mark Birkholz, 303-457-2408

Dakota-Montana: Pastor Lloyd Schlomer, 218-233-5346

Michigan: Pastor Timothy Gauger, 616-866-1881

Minnesota: Pastor Wayne Hilgendorf, 715-698-2500

Nebraska: Pastor Jonathan Rockhoff, 316-722-1771

North Atlantic: Pastor Timothy Wempner, 732-254-1207

Northern Wisconsin: Pastor Mark Gass, 715-453-4814

Pacific Northwest: Pastor Stephen Soukup, 425-337-6006

South Atlantic: Pastor Charles Westra, 931-486-3737

South Central: Pastor Roger Zehms, 512-280-8282

Southeastern Wisconsin: Pastor Thomas Kneser, 414-321-2126

Western Wisconsin: Pastor Keith Free, 715-341-2915

District news

Dakota-Montana

The marching band of Northern State University, Aberdeen, S.D., participated in the President's inaugural parade in Washington, D.C., in January. **Ten WELS members** marched with the band in the parade.

Michigan

Four Michigan congregations hosted a two-day, two-night vacation Bible school on the shores of Lake Michigan during the summer of 2004. Pastors and volunteers from **St. Mark, Wallace; Holy Cross, Daggett; Grace, Powers; and St. Paul, Hyde** worked together to share God's Word with 60 children, many of whom were unchurched.

Minnesota

On Dec. 26, 2004, Christ the Lord, Cottage Grove, Minn., honored **Helen Marrier** for the 15 years she has served as the congregation's organist. Marrier began playing the organ in 1955 at Mt. Zion, Highwood, Minn.

Nebraska

St. Mark, Lincoln, Neb., streams live worship services on the Internet at www.stmarkwels.org every Sunday at 8 and 10:30 A.M. Archived services are found on the same site.

Six new adult members joined **Light of the Valley, Layton, Utah**, on Dec. 26, 2004. Light of the Valley confirmed 20 adults in 2004.

At its winter fellowship meal, Grace, Sioux City, Iowa, honored **Brenda Hunt** for her 40 years of service as a church organist.

South Atlantic

Seventeen **Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary students** took part in a "Practical Experience in Urban Outreach" elective. These men spent two weeks participating in off-campus fieldwork in the greater Fort Lauderdale, Fla., area. Students conducted research, made outreach efforts, and proposed ministry plans for **Ocean Drive Lutheran Church, Pompano Beach**.

Michigan



Each year students at Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Mich., visit the campuses of Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis. This school year, three generations of Michigan Lutheran Seminary graduates were part of the trip. Sophomore Katelyn Majeske was joined by her grandfather, Roy Majeske, and her father, Scott, who served as bus drivers. Katelyn's grandmother, Janet Majeske, served as chaperone.

South Atlantic



On Nov. 6, 2004, Redeemer, Merritt Island, Fla., hosted a block party. About 100 people attended the event. Attendees enjoyed free airplane rides in a member's twin-engine plane and many game booths.

In December 2004, students and staff members of **King of Kings Lutheran School, Maitland, Fla.**, collaborated with their congregation members and members of **Risen Savior, South Orlando**, to collect 80 gift boxes for children in Grenada who are suffering from the effects of Hurricane Ivan.

On Jan. 9, nearly five months after Hurricane Charley, members of **Christ the King, Port Charlotte, Fla.**, held a "Rededication Sunday" to celebrate the church building's reconstruction and the members' rededication to Bible study.

Southeastern Wisconsin

On March 11-13, 110 band students from 21 WELS area Lutheran high schools attended the **WELS national band festival** hosted by Wisconsin Lutheran High School, Milwaukee.

In February, a group of students and teachers from *Le Baronnerie*, a technical high school in Angers, France, visited **Illinois Lutheran High School, Crete, Ill.** The students of the two schools have communicated via e-mail for three years.

Happy Anniversary!

SA—On Jan. 9, members of **Faith, St. Petersburg, Fla.**, celebrated the congregation's 50th anniversary. Faith was the first mission congregation in the South Atlantic District.

Members of **Redeemer, Merritt Island, Fla.**, celebrated the congregation's 40th anniversary on Oct. 17, 2004.

SC—On Feb. 13, members of Calvary, Dallas, Texas, observed **Dawn Aswege's** 25th anniversary in the teaching ministry.

These pastors are the reporters for the districts featured this month: DM—Wayne Rouse; MI—John Eich; MN—Jeffrey Bovee; NE—Donald Wichmann; SA—Christopher Kruschel; SC—William Gabb; SEW—Scott Oelhafen.

CHANGES IN MINISTRY

Pastors

- Buchholz, Jon D.**, to Emmanuel, Tempe, Ariz.
- Geiger, Stephen H.**, to Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis.
- Lange, Douglas F.**, to Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn.
- Micheel, Jonathan A.**, to Prince of Peace, Salt Lake City, Utah
- Waterstradt, David L.**, to Palos, Palos Heights, Ill.

Teachers

- Biedenbender, Jonathan**, to Mt. Calvary, La Crosse, Wis.
- Gostchock, Scott A.**, to Pilgrim, Minneapolis, Minn.
- Herbison, Rodney R.**, to Crown of Life, West Saint Paul, Minn.
- Kelm, Lynne J.**, to Fox Valley LHS, Appleton, Wis.
- Meyer, Heidi B.**, to Salem, Woodbury, Minn.
- Mielke, Penny R.**, to Crown of Life, West Saint Paul, Minn.
- Perry, Pamela L.**, to Salem, Owosso, Mich.
- Schroeder, David A.**, to Trinity, Waukesha, Wis.

Staff minister

- Martens, Eugene G.**, to Wisconsin Lutheran Child & Family Service, Milwaukee

ANNIVERSARIES

- College Station, Texas**—Campus ministry at Texas A&M University (25). April 17. Service, 10:15 A.M. 979-693-4514.
- Newburg, Wis.**—St. John School (100). April 24. Services, 8 & 10:30 A.M. 262-675-6852.
- Belle Plaine, Minn.**—Trinity School (60). April 30. Catered picnic, 5-6:30 P.M. Concert, 6:30-10 P.M. \$10/person. Ticket needed. May 1. Service, 10:30 A.M. Call for times. Laura Hermann, 952-873-4655.
- Montello, Wis.**—St. John School (75). May 1. Service, 10:15 A.M. Potluck to follow. Jennie Birling, 608-297-8275.
- Lansing, Mich.**—Emanuel (150). May 1. Service, 10:30 A.M. 517-485-4118.
- Kiel, Wis.**—Trinity (100). May 1. Service, 10 A.M. Refreshments served before and after service. Audrey, 920-894-3012.
- Winona, Minn.**—St. Matthew school building (50). May 7. Service, 6 P.M. May 8. Services, 8 & 10:30 A.M. Fellowship between services. Catered meal to follow second service. RSVP, 507-452-2085.

COMING EVENTS

- Reach the World choir tour**—WELS contemporary choir comprised of members from congregations around Tucson, Ariz. www.reachtheworldchoir.com.

- April 2-3—Our Savior, Bylas, Ariz., late afternoon
- April 23—California LHS, Wildomar, Calif., 2 P.M.
- April 24—Our Shepherd, Lancaster, Calif., 10 A.M.
- May 1—Redeemer, Tucson, Ariz., 6:30 P.M.
- May 7—Cross of Glory, Peoria, Ariz., 3:30 P.M.
- May 8—First, Prescott, Ariz., 9:30 A.M.
- May 8—Hope, Chino Valley, Ariz., 2 P.M.

Lakeshore Lutheran Chorale concert—Bethany, Manitowoc, Wis. April 10, 7 P.M.

Lutheran Radio Service annual meeting—April 12, 7 P.M. Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee. Lois Brunner, 262-251-7159.

Christian women's retreat—April 15-17. Schwan Retreat & Conference Center, Trego, Wis. 800-577-4848.

Spiritual Renewal Weekend for Women—April 15-17. Kahler Grand Hotel, Rochester, Minn. Bonnie, 507-931-1866.

Cascade Lutheran Chorale concert—Grace, Portland, Ore. April 24, 4 P.M.

Singles seminar, dinner, and dance—April 30. Hosted by S.H.A.R.E.—Singles Helping one Another on the Road to Eternity. Seminar, 8 A.M. St. Paul, Muskego, Wis. Dinner, 5:30 P.M. Dance, 7 P.M. Aud Mar Supper Club, Muskego, Wis. Corinne, 262-637-7643.

WELS (Canada) Women's Day—April 30. Apostles, Regina, Saskatchewan. Robyn Newell, 306-565-2133.

Lutheran Chorale concerts—May 1. Trinity, Waukesha, Wis., 3 P.M. St. John, Wauwatosa, Wis., 7 P.M.

Family Fest—June 17-19, Camp Phillip, Wautoma, Wis. Jason Wiechmann, 920-787-3202.

National Lutheran Women's Missionary Society convention—June 23-26. Bloomington, Minn. Hosted by St. Croix and Minnesota Valley Circuits. 414-321-6212.

Contemporary worship conference—Aug. 5-6. St. Mark, De Pere, Wis. 920-336-2485 or www.stmark-depere.org.

Christian Life Resources national convention—Nov. 5, 8 A.M.-5 P.M. Dinner, 6:30 P.M. Four Points Sheraton, Milwaukee. 800-729-9535 or www.clrevents.com.

Commencement events

Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn.—May 13. Concert, 7:30 P.M. May 14. Concert, 9 A.M. Graduation, 10 A.M. Call service, 2:30 P.M.

Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee, Wis.—May 14. Graduation, 1 P.M.

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis.—April 7. Vicar assignment service, 7 P.M. May 19. Graduate call service, 10 A.M. Concert, 7:30 P.M. May 20. Graduation, 10 A.M.

Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Mich.—May 27. Concert, 7

P.M. May 28. Graduation, 10:30 A.M.

Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis.—May 27. Concert, 7 P.M. May 28. Graduation, 10 A.M.

GUEST PREACHER NEEDED

Missoula, Mont.—Mount Zion, July 10 and 17. Justin Cloute, 406-549-5337.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

Preschool teacher—to assist director. Bethany, North Fort Myers, Fla. Janis Visaggio, 239-995-5437.

Individuals to teach English in a foreign country—one-year commitment. All expenses paid. 651-267-1044 or sbohme@hotmail.com.

Theatre professor—Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee. Teach Principles of theatre design: scenery and lighting, Stagecraft, Theatre management, and Costume history/design. Responsibilities include scenic design and construction, technical aspects of productions, and supervision of the scene shop and student workers. Desired candidate should have a terminal degree. Equivalent professional experience may be considered. Send VITA and letters of reference to Prof. Jan. Nelson, 8800 W Bluemound Rd, Milwaukee WI 53226.

Summer paid staff—Camp Phillip, Wautoma, Wis. June 5-Aug. 17. Counselors, head lifeguard, adventure coordinator, and junior staff director. Jason Wiechmann, 920-787-3202.

Volunteer health care staff—Camp Phillip, Wautoma, Wis. RNs, doctors, or EMTs to work as health care directors for one week or half-week summer camp sessions. Jason Wiechmann, 920-787-3202.

To place an announcement, call 414-256-3210; bulletinboard@sab.wels.net. Deadline is eight weeks before publication date. An updated bulletin board is available at www.wels.net, jumpword "bulletinboard".

Picture this



My wife and I took this picture on the Saturday of Easter weekend in 2004. We were at our Easter retreat in Wuerzburg, Germany. To our surprise, the "cross" came shining through after the somber celebration at our Good Friday service the night before and as we looked forward to Easter Sunday.

Michael Schroeder, WELS European chaplain
Mainz, Germany

World mission fact

In August 2002, WELS' sister church body in Scandinavia, The Lutheran Confessional Church of Sweden and Norway, began its full-time seminary program under the direction of WELS friendly counselor John Vogt. Since that time, 65 different pastors and theological students from 12 countries have attended at least one course at the seminary. The students have come from Sweden, Norway, Finland, Latvia, Ukraine, Czech Republic, Germany, Bulgaria, Russia, Poland, Estonia, and the United States.

Send pictures to "Picture this," *Forward in Christ*, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222; fic@sab.wels.net. On a separate sheet, give us information about the photo. Those whose photos are chosen will receive a small gift.

Potluck poll results

Thank you to the 25 readers who responded to the Potluck poll question: "What is the first page of the magazine you turn to each month when you receive *Forward in Christ*?" The most popular answers were:

- Richard Gurgel's question & answer column—p. 8 (five votes)
- The first page (five votes)
- The back page (four votes)
- Bulletin board—p. 26 (four votes)
- Feedback—p. 6 (three votes)

Some readers shared how they use the magazine to strengthen their spiritual lives:

"When I receive my monthly issue of *Forward in Christ*, I automatically turn to the first page. It is a routine to automatically include an article or two for reading every morning with my meditations. Each issue is read from cover to cover, and beginning with page one ensures that no article will be missed. It is a wonderful way to begin the day. *Forward in Christ* . . . [is] overflowing with good news."—Duane Timm, Pompano Beach, Fla.

"I begin with the first page and read it cover to cover. I don't have a 'favorite' page—I enjoy them all. I'm 83 and use an exercise bike to control diabetes. I read while riding four miles in the A.M. and four in the evening. *Forward in Christ* is exciting, challenging, and comforting as I learn about God's continued blessings on WELS!"—Ruth Knoke, Bradenton, Fla.

Other readers included compliments:

"We love your magazine!"—Jason and Catherine Maas, Millville, Minn.

"*Forward in Christ* is always enjoyable and edifying."—Pastor Oliver Lindholm, McFarland, Wis.

"I really enjoy this great magazine."—Arnold Strehler, Monticello, Minn.

Many encouraged, "Keep up the good work!"

The editorial staff thanks everyone for their comments and encouragement. We are dedicated to producing a monthly magazine that focuses on God's Word in a way that inspires and informs WELS members and nonmembers alike.



Working for the Lord

Bob Steinke combines his two loves—business and sharing the gospel.

Julie K. Wietzke

Bob Steinke loves business. And he's good at it. The troubled business he took over 11 years ago, DVT Corporation, now is debt free with an unbelievable profit margin.

But as much as Steinke loves business, he loves his Lord more. "Business takes second place," says Steinke, a member of Messiah, Alpharetta, Ga. "It's all about witnessing and evangelizing."

What's unique about Steinke is how he combines these two loves. He not only "walks the talk" in his business practices but also openly shares his faith with his employees.

"Everyone at DVT knows that they don't work for Bob Steinke or for DVT," he says. "They work for the Lord."

Walking the talk

DVT manufactures machine vision cameras used for quality control—inspecting products ranging from pharmaceuticals to automobiles to electronics. Headquartered in Duluth, Ga., DVT has 600 companies all over the world that sell and support these sensors. Twenty-five more offices support these companies.

DVT's core value system is based on the concepts of servant leadership and agape (a-gáh-pay—unconditional love) support. "At DVT, we put the needs of our customers and partners ahead of our own needs," says Steinke, DVT's chairman and chief executive officer. To show its dedication to servant leadership, DVT offers free training and software to all its distributors and customers and works

closely with its distributors to make sure they succeed and grow.

Steinke uses a bronze statue of Jesus washing Peter's feet to visually remind DVT employees and customers of this servant leadership. "We have distributed hundreds of these statues to our partners all over the world," says Steinke. "It's a reminder to me on how I must treat my employees. Christ set that example."

Steinke's business card even touts how DVT's agape support is unconditional. Many Christians recognize this biblical term and comment on it. Non-Christians ask for an explanation, giving Steinke and others opportunities to share their faith.

This focus on servant leadership has permeated the company. Even when people at DVT greet each other in the hallway they ask how they can help that day.

"Through our focus on servant leadership and walking the talk, we have changed the culture in every one of our 600 companies around the world," says Steinke.

Sharing his faith

Steinke not only shows his faith in his business practices but also shares it directly in the workplace.

"Every chance I get, I pray that the Lord make divine appointments for me and that he would open my spiritual eyes so that I don't miss them," says Steinke.

Every Friday, Steinke sponsors an hour-long Bible study for anyone who would like to attend. Through video-conferencing, people can participate from anywhere in the world. "You will hear accents online from all over the world," says Steinke. Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, and Christians from

China, Thailand, Mexico, Europe, and the United States attend. Attendance tops out around 50 each week.

Pastor Edward Schuppe, a WELS mission counselor, and Pastor Larry Zahn teach these classes. Schuppe shares how one attendee was affected: "One man from Bangkok, Thailand, who identified himself as being raised Buddhist, asked if he could talk to me after the Bible study. He said, 'I think God is drawing me to him. It's remarkable that I now have this job with DVT. I think that God has given me this job not for employment but for my faith.'" This man continues to tune in for Bible class and has asked the class to pray for him.

Even day-to-day business occurrences incorporate God's Word. Steinke starts all his quarterly meetings with a devotion and prayer. He uses a Leadership Bible to study business activities (such as decision making, leadership development, and long-range planning) through God's eyes. "For most important business decisions, we will open the Bible, study it, pray about it, and then make the decision," says Steinke.

Last fall, Steinke became a member of the Commission on Adult Discipleship. His goal is to better prepare people to share their faith in the workplace.

"The most important thing is that you have to be in the Word daily," says Steinke. "You have to know what his will is and pray about it because he promises that his will will be done. You miss out on tremendous joys that the Lord wants to give you if you don't do this."

Julie Wietzke is assistant editor for Forward in Christ



Eric S. Hartzell

VICTORY CITY

An obscure town from another age illustrates God's hand in our lives.

Most of us don't have any idea where Nicopolis is. Historians aren't absolutely sure, either. But the apostle Paul knew. He wrote to Titus: "As soon as I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, because I have decided to winter there" (Titus 3:12).

A place for Paul to winter

The name Nicopolis means "Victory City." If the Nicopolis Paul is referring to here was the one in western Greece, it was established by Augustus after he won a sea battle nearby. It wasn't Athens or Rome or Jerusalem. You know—big places. It was Nicopolis.

Nicopolis is where the Lord wanted the great apostle Paul to spend the winter. God caused circumstances to happen along the way to make this a necessary stop. Regardless of whether Paul initially planned to spend the winter in Nicopolis, the Lord had planned it. Nicopolis it was.

David believed he could say to the Lord, "Show me the way I should go, for to you I lift up my soul" (Psalm 143:8). Life directed by the Lord consists of all the stops along the way. Even the stops at Nicopolis.

We're going to have some stops like Nicopolis in our lives, too. Places where winter catches up with us, and

we end up being where we are. They might well be places you won't find in travel brochures. It could well be that no one else will ever care to visit the place. Nothing big will ever happen there. The Lord God who made all the congregations and people in places like Rome, Jerusalem, Athens, and Corinth chose to have his number one apostle spend a nautical winter in Nicopolis.

We don't get the luxury of planning our life's itinerary.

A place to touch lives

We don't get the luxury of planning our life's itinerary. Even Paul didn't. Luke, the writer, remarked about Paul and his traveling companions one time, "When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to" (Acts 16:7). The Lord is our travel agent through this world. He has already ordained the stops he intends us to make. There is a good reason for each stop. For

Paul it was (among other things we don't know) to give Titus the chance to come from Crete to be with him. It was also the chance to send either Artemas or Tychicus. Nicopolis was the base from which to touch the lives of these fellow believers.

No place is small or unattractive if God decides that his son or daughter should winter there. Nazareth wasn't the place most people thought Jesus should come from. One person was even heard to snigger, "Can anything good come from there?" (John 1:46). Herod and company weren't really supposing that much of import would come from Bethlehem. Even the prophet Micah said that this was a little place among the villages of Judah.

The Lord legitimizes the little places in our lives. Places like Nicopolis. That's what makes little places big places for us. These places become the very places where we touch a Christian friend or witness the spark of a spiritual connection with someone. Our Nicopolis may simply be the place where we need another Christian to visit us.

God grant us all grace to recognize his appointed wintering places.

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

(FRONT)
Greetings and map from the journeys of Paul

Titus,
As soon as I send
Artemas or Tychicus to
you, do your best
to come to me at
Nicopolis, because I
have decided to
winter there.
Grace & peace,
Paul

Christina Sandusky/Photo by Eric Hartzell, 1/15/07

POSTCARD

Titus
123 Island Rd.
Knossos, Crete



We have no mosquitoes. I'm not sure why. We live on a ridge where the wind almost always blows. Maybe that's the reason. We have lots of bats. They eat mosquitoes. Whatever the reason, we don't have to run inside at dusk swatting at the air the way we did as children in Milwaukee.

Here we often sit outside enjoying the night. Our favorite place is in our backyard at our round picnic table under the big locust tree. Sometimes we'll have a late supper in the dark. We put candles everywhere. A candelabra goes on the table, votive lights with their tiny sparks get scattered along the koi pool and throughout the garage wall gardens, tiki lights mark the doorway, and our homemade Japanese Kasuga lantern shines with a warm glow.


When friends and family come for the night, we head for the picnic table. Some summer nights are pure magic—so little breeze it barely moves the leaves or makes the candelabra drip, so quiet our voices are mingled with a distant owl's or the soft twitterings of the bats. Before we go in for the night we walk out from under the tree to look at the stars, naming the ones we know; straining to see Bernice's Hair; staggered at how large Scorpio is; marveling again at the Milky Way, looking like so much steam pouring out of The Teapot.

Last fall our grown children came home to "see the leaves." They arrived in the evening. We had the picnic table ready. It was a perfect autumn night. Warm and calm. The fall colors were at their dazzling peak. It would be a delightful surprise in the morning. But during the night we sat in the dark around our picnic table with the tiny lights around and above. The table was laden with wine and crackers, cheese and grapes. We all sat late and talked long, so glad to be

THE TABLE UNDER THE TREE

A picnic under a locust tree inspires a look back at Paradise and a new view of Jesus' life-saving meal.

Fred Fedke III



together again, unwilling to go to bed. In the wee hours we got blankets and sat bundled against the damp. Children slept in laps, fall smells were heady, leaves occasionally floated onto our table, and once more our garden was surrounded with soft laughter and glad voices.

It is those cherished times around our table that remind me of Paradise itself. It was a garden-home.

A place of love and contentment. I can just see God “walking in the garden” (Genesis 3:8). Here he is, coming in the cool of the day. You can hear his footfalls. We’ve been waiting. I like to think that he was heading for Adam and Eve’s table under the big tree. What a grand evening that would be—dusk, soft voices, stars, wife embraced by her husband’s strong arm, glad company.

If Adam and Eve had a table, you know that God found it empty. That evening turned into the saddest night there ever was. It ended in lies, shame, blame, and a snake in the grass. It ended with Adam and Eve leaving the garden for good. It ended in a horrible darkness alone outside of the circle of love and happy voices.

On the heels of that disaster, they heard God’s very first promise of help. That power to hurt, to separate, and to destroy would be destroyed. Sometime, someone—one of their own seed—will step on that serpent, will crush his head.

But the stepper will get bit.

How many years was it and then came the world’s greatest surprise. That “seed of the woman” finally came. The big surprise was that the human Seed who walked this sin-blasted earth with us was the same divine presence who once walked with mankind in the garden. This time he came in flesh, our own flesh and blood.

This time he walked on a cursed earth where thistles and thorns hurt

bare feet. Worse. Broken relationships hurt families and friends.

Separation and anger hurts us all. Suffering and blood, hatred and grief, remorse and fear fill this place. And we come to an end fearing even worse.

There at Jesus’ table we find ourselves . . . under the tree of life again.

Thorns hurt more than feet. Jesus carried on his own head that sign of sin’s curse. He bore it to the cross. There he left all that burden of this broken world. The separation from the Father would be finished at last. He promised to the dying a new day, together, in that old, longed-for place. “Today you will be with me in paradise,” he said (Luke 23:43). The garden. Home of welcome. Place of intimacy and glad company.

For us who aren’t there yet, who wait and struggle, there is something. Something more than words. There is a picture from Jesus himself, a picture for us to act out. It’s the picture of the table. Jesus would draw us together again at a table. His table. His supper.

It’s not much of a meal, but enough to get the picture. Bread and wine. Eat, drink. This is me. This is about me. Once it was the glad gathering at the Passover table when everyone remembered that great deliverance from bondage and certain death. In Egypt they sat and ate, safe behind the blood of a lamb, and then were free and on their way home.

Now do it for me. “In remembrance of me,” Jesus said (Luke 22:19). Get the picture. Practice.

The family around the table. You are my family. You are free. Free from bondage and the curse. You are on your way home.

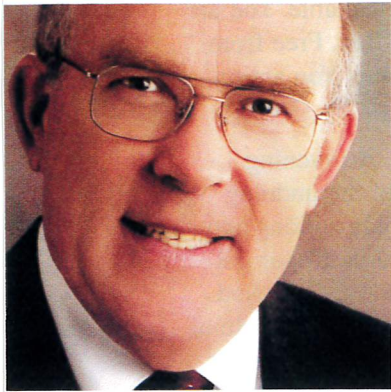
So we find a table. An evening meal to remind us of the undoing of that terrible evening so long ago. The Seed came. The destroyer got destroyed. His head was crushed. Our Lord Jesus did suffer the bite of that old evil serpent. In the process he drained the poison. There is none left to hurt. We are safe. Now he is back from the worst of the curse—he is alive. He will come again. He will take us home.

Meanwhile, get the picture. Come to the table, he tells us. Eat, drink, keep remembering me until that great day when we shall sit together again. At my big table. In paradise.

We do. But sometimes we don’t even realize we are going to a table. We don’t even sit; we kneel or stand, and only briefly. We eat only a bite, a wafer; we drink only a sip, some wine. Enough though, enough to remind us. Body and blood, broken for you, shed for you. On that bad tree. That cross. There his body was given. There his blood was shed. For you. For remission, for canceling, for deleting sins. All of them, once and for all. There at Jesus’ table we find ourselves, can you imagine it, under the tree of life again.

Come to the table. Family is there. Love unimagined is there. Gather together in this still present darkness. The new day is coming. It will be a most delightful surprise in the morning. For now, stay the night.

Fred Fedke is pastor at St. Matthew, Ontario/St. John, Kendall, Wisconsin.



Carl R. Gungl

The Word works

“Rain, rain, go away. Come again some other day.” Did you ever say that as a child? Rain, or so we thought then, dampened our activities, pouring cold water on so much we wanted to do. It shortened, or prevented, baseball games. It washed out picnics. It ended bike rides. Rain often seemed to be such a killjoy.

How shortsighted we were! Rain is necessary. It's essential to the growing process. Without rain almost nothing grows. With rain the fields return seed to the sower and bread to the eater—to you and me and everyone else.

God says through Isaiah, “As the rain and the snow come down from heaven . . . so is my word . . . it will not return to me empty” (Isaiah 55:10,11). If we got the picture with the natural rain, it's just like that with God's supernatural rain, his Word. His Word makes spiritual things, like faith, grow.

Heavenly rain does this because it comes from God's mouth. Though human hands put it down in writing, not one of them was raised without the inspiration of God's Spirit. The inspiration of Scripture teaches us that God more than suggested topics for the sacred writers. The words are exactly his. So Jesus could say of the Bible: “not the smallest letter . . . will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished” (Matthew 5:18). No wonder, then, that the Word of God has such power. It's the breath of God.

Since that is true, it should not surprise us either that God's Word, raining down upon human hearts, is not without effect. It can't be ignored. Either people, in unbelief, harden their hearts against it, or, through the Spirit's further work, people, in faith, accept it. The Word accomplishes God's purpose.

The Scriptures are filled with examples of God's Word accomplishing its purpose. Zacchaeus coming down from a tree, Nicodemus coming to Jesus at night, Saul coming to faith are all telling examples of the Word at work. Each of them, through the Word of God, became a believer. Each one of them, too, as the Spirit continued to work in them by the Word, remained active in their lives of faith. The Word works!

Sometimes the Spirit's working through the Word is as unseen as the wind. Other times it's as visible as the rain, producing outward growth. For example, in 1970 there were 23,000 baptized souls in WELS world mission fields. Today that number is 72,264, more than three times as many. The number of national pastors was 24 in 1990. Today it's five times as many, 121. A dozen years ago, our world mission seminaries had 30 students. Now they have more than twice as many. The Word works!

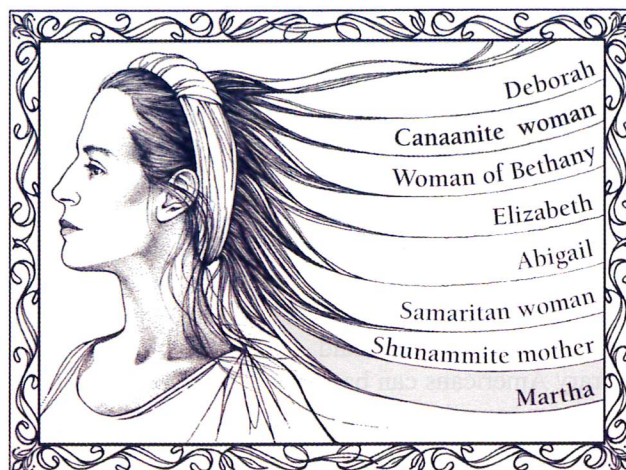
Why shouldn't we expect it to? It's God-breathed and has God's purpose behind it. We can trust, whenever any one of us speaks his Word, that his Spirit is active behind our words. No wonder, as we proclaim peace through Jesus, people believe. God's Spirit is at work. It shouldn't surprise us, either, that Spirit-motivated people present themselves and their God-given possessions to proclaim God's Word. The Word works!

So, this spring as you see the rain falling, think of God's inspired picture of how the Word, like the rain, works: “So is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish . . . the purpose for which I sent it.”

Women of faith: Martha

Faith in the resurrection sees beyond the sadness of today.
It sees the One who makes forever possible.

Philip L. Kieselhorst



Four days. It seemed like forever since her dear brother had fallen ill and she had sent word to Jesus, “Lord, the one you love is sick” (John 11:3). It seemed like forever since she had last talked to him, laughed with him, or served him his favorite meal. It seemed like forever would pass by before she could feel happy again. Four days had passed since her brother’s death. But to Martha, it seemed like forever.

Faith even now

Then Jesus arrived . . . finally. As Martha went out to meet Jesus, she carried a heavy load of grief with her, but she also carried a heavy dose of faith in Jesus. Jesus had brought to life this faith in Martha’s heart through years of sharing the gospel with her. Her present sorrow would not bury her faith in Jesus as her Lord: “Lord,” Martha said to Jesus, “if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask” (John 11:21,22).

Even now—even now that Lazarus was dead and decaying for four days in the grave—Martha believed that Jesus could help! Whatever Jesus wanted to do, it would be possible for him.

Even now, Lord, we believe that you can help us. Even now when

cancer is harming someone we love, you can help. Even now when someone we love dies, you can still help. Even now, sorrow cannot bury the faith you made alive in our hearts as you shared your gospel with us in Word and sacraments. Even now, with Jesus present, we know that all things are possible.

Jesus reintroduced forever into our lives.

Faith in forever

Jesus does indeed help those who mourn. Jesus told Martha, “Your brother will rise again” (John 11:23).

He directed her attention toward forever. This is a perspective only faith can see. Martha saw clearly the resurrection of Lazarus on the last day and the glorious life he would live. “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day” (John 11:24).

Faith in the resurrection sees beyond the troubles and sorrows of today. It even sees beyond the grave

to the life that will last forever. Above all, it sees the One who makes forever possible. “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes

in me will never die. Do you believe this?” (John 11:25,26).

“Yes, Lord,” Martha told him, “I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world” (John 11:27).

Jesus reintroduced forever into our lives. He reintroduced Lazarus to life by his command: “Lazarus, come out!” (John 11:43). He reintroduced himself to life after he had been dead in the grave for three days. He will be the One who reintroduces you and all who believe in him to life forever, even though we may die for now.

Do you believe this?

Yes, Lord, because of you we have faith in forever.

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

This is the last of an eight-part series by Philip Kieselhorst on “Women of faith.” To read the first seven articles, go to www.wels.net, jump-word “ficarchive”, and search by the keyword phrase “women of faith”. Next month look for the debut of a new Bible study series that will focus on the Apostles’ Creed.

This month’s reading: John 11:1-44



Gary S. Baumler

Immaculate conceptions?

It was an anniversary with little fanfare, so you may have missed it altogether. By now it is old news. I'm referring to the 150th anniversary of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. On Dec. 8, 1854, Pope Pius IX declared that Mary, mother of Jesus, was conceived and born "free from all stain of original sin."

But why bring it up now? Because among most people today it's a non-issue! They have no idea what the teaching is supposed to mean. As Rev. Thomas Thompson, director of the University of Dayton's Marion Library, a repository of research and art about Mary, said, "Contemporary Americans can barely conceive of sin as something they do, much less an inherited condition."

So, while we see the teaching of Mary's Immaculate Conception as an aberration contrary to God's Word, others have a much bigger problem. They don't see their own inherent sinfulness, let alone Mary's. And although unnatural veneration of Mary can become idolatrous, losing any sense of our own sinfulness debases the Lord Jesus and his work.

Simply put: no original stain of sin—no need for Jesus to suffer, die, and rise again.

We wonder at times why so many people will listen to New Age spiritualism, Eastern mysticism, even pagan pantheism, and turn deaf ears to the gospel. They do so because they feel they have it in themselves to be everything they need to be spiritually. We wonder why morality keeps eroding around us. It does because people feel that their own thoughts about what's good or bad, right or wrong cannot be inherently tainted. So let them stand, whatever they are.

Jesus? He was a pretty good guy who showed us how we can develop our spiritual lives—a good example.

It's the "I'm okay, you're okay" way of thinking.

But we're not okay on our own. We're terribly flawed—from conception.

Oh, we don't like to face the reality. We look at a newborn baby and declare him "innocent," "as pure as the driven snow." But where does that baby get his temper, his attitude—so soon evident? Why does that baby get sick? Why must he one day inevitably die—sometimes while still a baby?

Because he is born under the curse of sin—tainted in his very being! Everyone from Abel to Abraham, from Miriam to Mary, was conceived and born in that cursed condition. Everyone, that is, but one—the Lord Jesus.

Jesus—a true innocent—was conceived in the virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit. He came, God-in-the-flesh, to live the innocent life God demands of all human beings. He came so that we might find relief from our tainted being in his innocence. His counts as ours.

"But . . ." you might object, "Jesus also died." Precisely! He, untainted by sin in his being and, therefore, not subject to the curse of death, became a curse for us. He assumed our sinfulness and paid the ultimate price for it. His counts as ours.

So now when our very being tells us that we are no good, when the taint of sin in us drives us to despair and depression, when we get that feeling that we are walking in quicksand, we can turn, as Mary did, to Jesus our Savior and find joy, freedom, forgiveness, faith.

"But . . ." our flesh tries one last objection, "we still die." No, this body stops functioning in its present form, but we live forever in glory with our risen and ascended Lord Jesus.

*A song for
the heart
that is . . .*

lonely

*anxious about
finances*

*frustrated with
the wicked*

*anxious about
the future*

feeling guilty

fearful of death

*seeking purpose
in life*

*longing to be
close to Christ*

*seeking Christian
friendship*

peaceful

joyful

*thankful for
God's Word*

Songs for the heart

Donald W. Patterson

Do you ever awaken at three or four in the morning and—before you get yourself back to sleep—you start thinking too much? First you think about the day ahead and all of the things you have to do. Then you think about your relationships that are stressed. You worry about each of your children. You rehash your current financial status. You wonder and even worry about the future. If you are facing a health problem, your concerns over your own welfare probably flood out all the others. Your heart is so weighed down that you exhaust yourself instead of resting.

If you have these kinds of anxieties about the future, God has crafted a song for your heart. It is probably so familiar you could say it to yourself without looking it up. It is “Old Faithful” (Psalm 23). God wants us to get real, durable peace from Psalm 23. The thoughts displayed there can carry us away in God’s arms from our anxieties.

In the psalm, David reminded himself of how God shepherded him through life. As a

shepherd himself, David knew he had plans and thoughts of blessings for his sheep that they weren’t intelligent enough to realize. Using that same scenario, David pondered how God shepherded him through every experience and always brought blessing and peace.

Ancient Hebrew poets often put the most important point of their poem right in the middle of their work. Do you know what the middle line of Psalm 23 is? It is, “You are with me.” Aren’t those the most comforting words when we think about the future? They remind us of Jesus’ words before he ascended: “And surely I am with you always” (Matthew 28:20). No matter what happens in our future, God will be with us and will give us strength, wisdom, protection, and blessing. And at the end of our travels we will “dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” We can’t lose with Jesus as our shepherd.

Look up Psalm 23 now and read through every phrase. Then answer the following questions.

Points to ponder

- What feeling do verses 1 and 2 give you when you think of a sheep lying down in a green pasture or grazing beside quiet streams?
- How does Jesus lead the Christian to green pastures and quiet waters?
- Considering verse 4, what did a shepherd use his rod and staff for?
- What is God’s rod and staff that he uses to comfort us in the valley of the shadow of death?
- How does verse 6 lead you to put your future in God’s hands?

Treasures to share

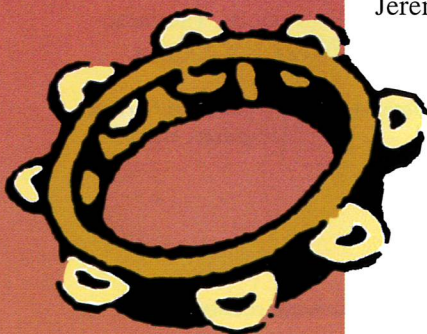
- Type Psalm 23 on your computer and print it on a small sheet of paper in a fancy font. Then take it with you and read it to a friend who is in the hospital. Make comments about how it comforts you, and then leave your copy there.
- Hymn 360 in *Christian Worship* is based on Psalm 23. Memorize this hymn and sing it to your children as a bedtime prayer.

Other Scripture verses where God helps us deal with our anxieties

Jeremiah 29:11; Matthew 28:20b; Philippians 4:4-7; John 10:11-18; Revelation 21:1-5

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

Find this article and possible answers online. Go to www.wels.net, jumpword “fic”, and click on “Songs for the heart.” Answers will be available after April 5.





a be continued

Holy Week is but a pause in the continuing story of God's grace in Christ.

James A. Aderman

For most of us the thought of the proper use of a comma conjures frightening flashbacks—until now deeply repressed—of ninth-grade English and its medieval instruments of torture: apostrophes, parentheses, and hyphens. But hear me out.

A basic grammar lesson

There are a number of ways to set off thoughts in a sentence with punctuation. Here are the basics. The period (full stop in Great Britain) signals that a written thought is complete. When we get to a period, we are assured that everything that sentence intended to say has been said. Period. Full stop.

Exclamation marks, of course, end sentences with a cymbal clash, a warning cry, a siren scream. “HEY, pay attention to this!” is the message.

The tadpole-like comma, however, never marks the end of a sentence. It's a pause, a breath mark, a quiet instant of personal reflection. A comma always promises that there is more to come. The point has not yet been made when we slow for a comma. We're only easing up on the gas to round a corner before zooming down another straightaway.

A Holy Week grammar lesson

That makes a comma the perfect punctuation for Holy Week.

During his final hours with his apostles, Jesus repeated his predictions of his demise. For his disciples

the thought of Jesus' capture, torture, and death shook any hope that Jesus was the Messiah. Death, the disciples assumed, would bring the gospel message to an untimely period, a full stop.

But take another look. Jesus never described his death as an end. A brief break, a short recess, a respite; but never an end. All the gospels quote Jesus on that. For example, page through Matthew's gospel and stop at 16:21, 17:23, 20:19. The Savior told his followers that he would go to Jerusalem and be killed, but quickly added, “on the third day [I will] be raised to life.”

The final period had not been inked when the stone sealed up Jesus' tomb.

Jesus' Good Friday demise was not the end of the story. His death was only a comma. A pause. A break in the action, with the promise of more to come. The final period had not been inked when the stone sealed up Jesus' tomb. “I will rise again,” he said.

In fact, not even Jesus' resurrection with its apparent insistence on

an exclamation mark (“He is risen!”) arrives with final punctuation. Easter cries out to be marked with a comma. Easter promises more action will follow. And it does. An ascension. The induction of the God-man Savior to a position higher than any other in the universe. The day of judgment. An eternal reign.

Of course, it's a comma that also punctuates our lives, including their seemingly final phrase. God's grace never ends with the close of day or at the close of life. Death for us Christians is only a brief break (at least as far as our bodies are concerned) before we rise to meet a returning Savior on judgment day. And after that, the proper punctuation remains a comma, because before us is the never-ending story of God's grace surrounding and blessing us.

When it comes to Holy Week, forget about what your grammar teachers said about run-on sentences. Good Friday and Easter demand an endless sentence glued together by those tiny tadpoles. It's at the cross and the empty tomb that we realize the story of God's grace has only begun. This story is one continuing sentence that goes on for endless pages. The punctuation of Holy Week is a comma,

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