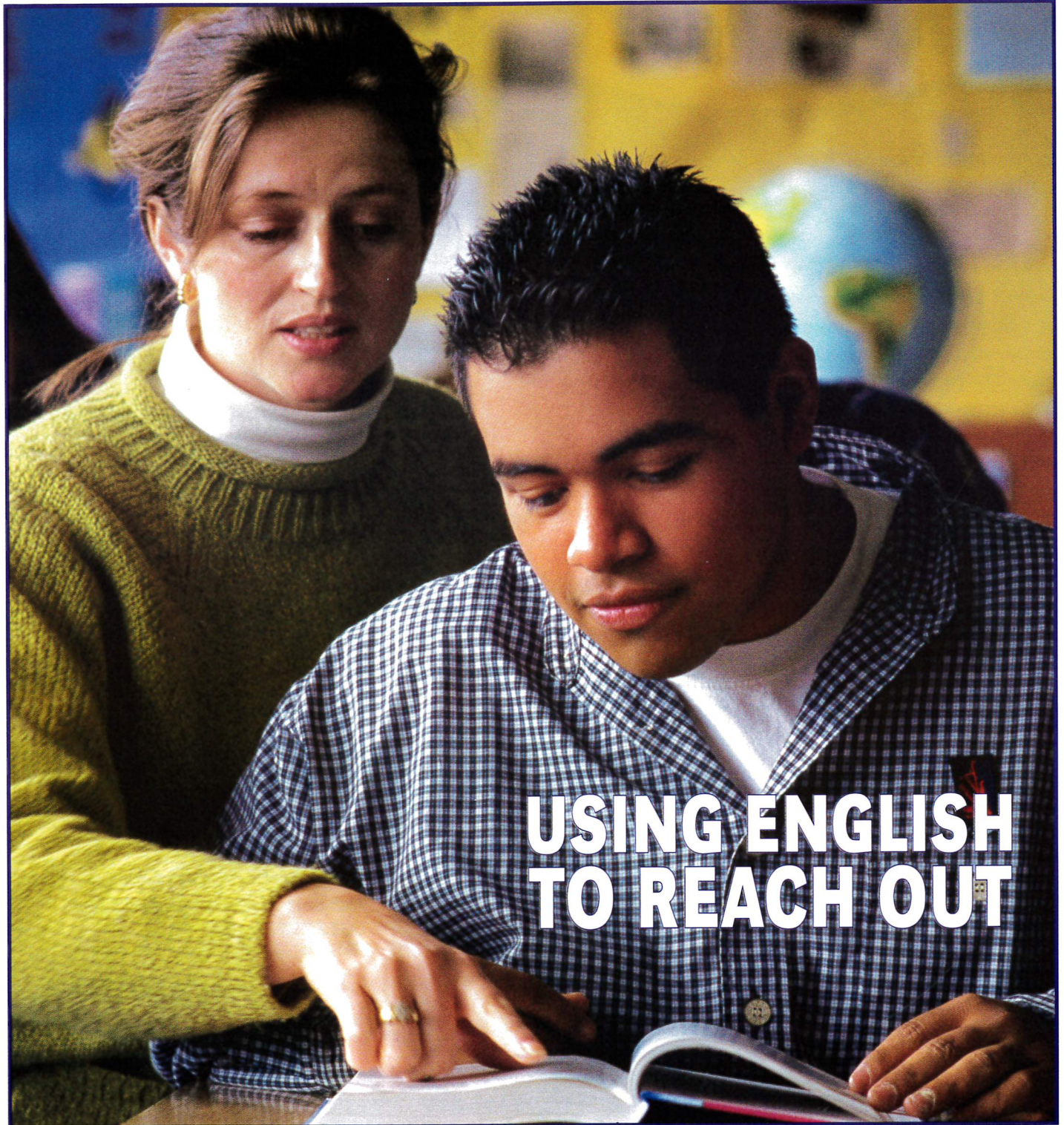


DEALING WITH PANIC • SEMINARY GRADS • UNIVERSALISM

JULY 2005 **Forward in Christ**

God's wisdom, WELS' witness



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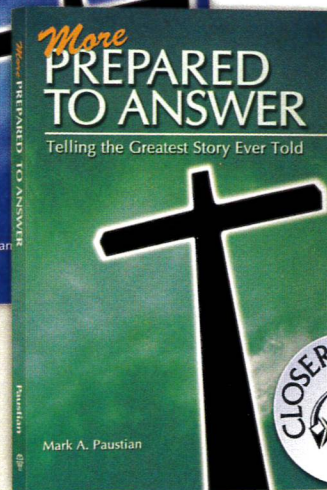
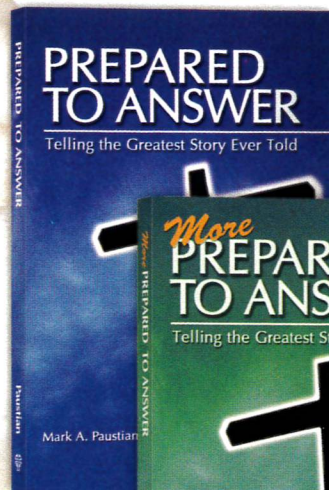


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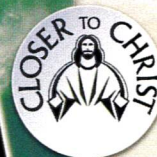


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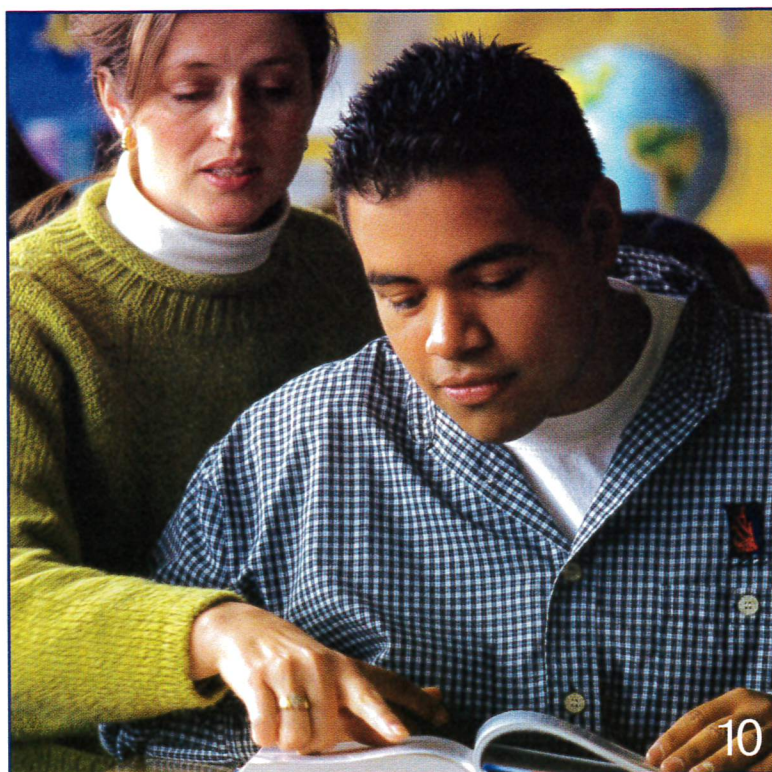


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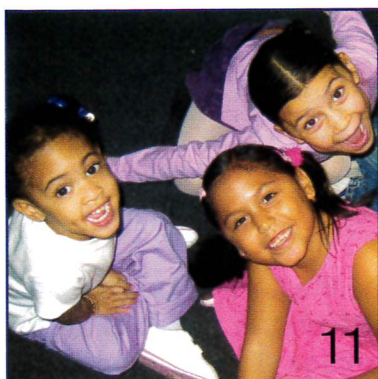
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CORBIS



11



14

## Forward in Christ

† The official magazine of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

### FEATURES

**10 CONNECT AND CONFESS** As the Latino/Hispanic population grows around us, we have open avenues to connect with them.

*Beth Thompson*

**13 BEYOND TECHNOLOGY** The solutions to the deepest problems plaguing the human race are not found at Silicon Valley. They're found at Calvary.

*Jon D. Buchholz*

**14 LUKE: AN INTRODUCTION** Among all the notables of New Testament history, perhaps least known is Luke.

*Theodore J. Hartwig*

**16 WISCONSIN LUTHERAN SEMINARY GRADUATES**

**28 IT'S ALL GOD** A woman shares how God has guided her.

*Julie K. Wietzke*

**29 UNIVERSALISM** Burying the doctrines of sin, judgment, and hell under shovelfuls of "politically correct" love is a page right out of Satan's long-standing playbook.

*John M. Parlow*

**30 PANICKED!** A Christian relates her story to help others deal with anxiety and panic attacks.

*Jennifer N. Heins*

**36 PLEASE DISTURB** God has an open-door policy.

*Daron J. Lindemann*



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## *Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary*

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## *Introducing the Pastoral Studies Institute of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary*

Ethnic populations are exploding in North America. We want to find ways to reach these communities with the gospel of our Savior. Perhaps more importantly, we want to train workers from these communities to become pastors and partners with us in the Great Commission.

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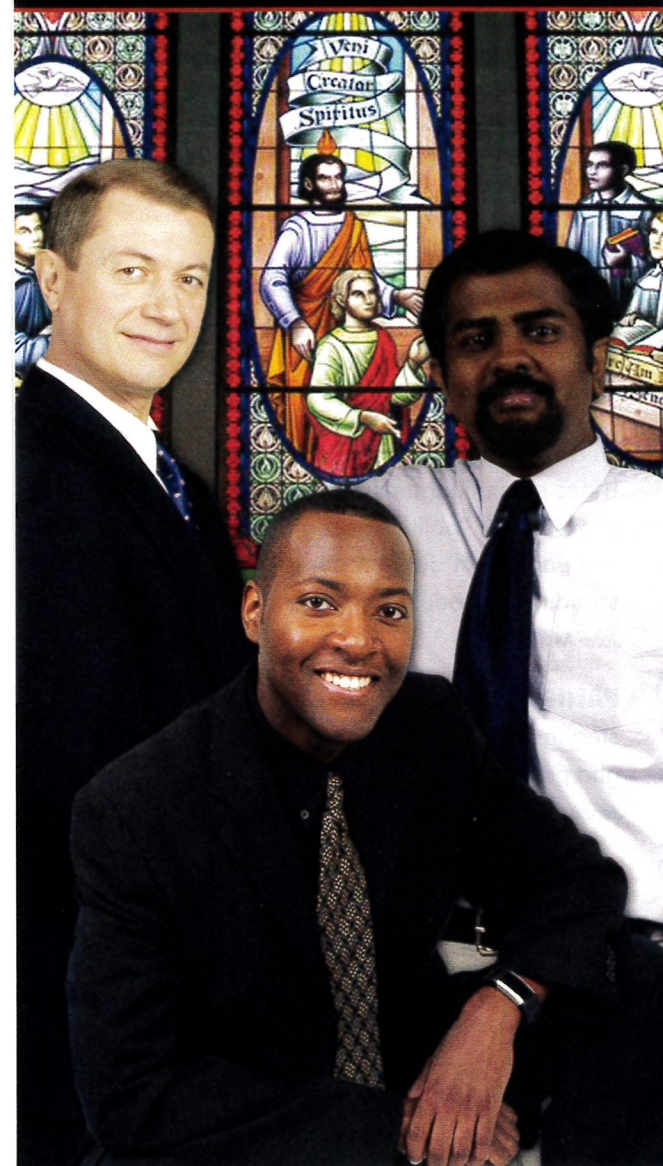
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2. Men from ethnic minority communities
3. Men from other countries with the approval of our Board for World Missions

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The commitment of the Pastoral Studies Institute is to entrust to reliable men the precious truths of our gospel and the heritage of our church to men who will teach the Word to others.

*We are here to "entrust the Word to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others" (2 Timothy 2:2).*





MAY THE LORD OUR GOD  
BE WITH US AS HE WAS  
WITH OUR FATHERS;  
MAY HE NEVER LEAVE US  
NOR FORSAKE US.  
*1 Kings 8:57*

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## WHAT'S INSIDE by Julie Wietzke

As the United States' and Canada's populations become more diverse, WELS continues to look for ways to reach out across cultural lines. English-as-a-second-language classes are one way WELS members can show Christian love to immigrants. Through numerous examples from WELS congregations, Beth Thompson shares how meeting this need can lead to opportunities to share the gospel (p. 10).

Through the Pastoral Studies Institute, WELS is also training men from different cultures to be pastors. One Hmong, one Laotian, one Chinese, and one Apache along with 50 other men graduated from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in May. See who they are (p. 16) and where they went (p. 19) and keep them in your prayers.

Pastors aren't the only ones who can share the gospel. All of us have a part in it. Read how the saving message of the gospel inspired Becki Detro, a former Mormon and now member of Messiah, Nampa, Idaho, to devote time to a ministry that not only shares that message with Mormons but also trains others how to speak the truth in love (p. 28).

# JULY

## DEPARTMENTS



**6 FEEDBACK**

**7 DEVOTION**

A Christian celebrates the Fourth of July *Peter A. Panitzke*

**8 EDITORIAL COMMENT**

Try a little *haplotēs* *Kenneth A. Cherney Jr.*

**9 QUESTION & ANSWER**

Lay-taught Bible classes *Richard L. Gurgel*

**18 WHATEVER**

Invincible *Erin Henzi*

**19 NEWS**

**26 BULLETIN BOARD**

**27 POTLUCK**

**32 FROM THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE**

Promoting peace through Jesus *Karl R. Gurgel*

**33 BIBLE STUDY**

Lessons from the Creed *Charles F. Degner*

**34 EDITOR'S PEN**

Religious expre\$\$ion *Gary P. Baumler*

**35 INTERACTIVE BIBLE STUDY**

Songs for the heart *Donald W. Patterson*



**CALLED WORKERS**

I would like to express my disappointment over some wording in the article "I went to college to help save souls" [April]. The author states, "I did not enroll at Martin Luther College or graduate from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary to be a drain on congregational or synod offerings."

Is that what a pastor, teacher, or missionary is? Is that what a called worker who is supported by his congregation is? A drain?

The Holy Spirit speaks of the ministry as a high calling. He says that "a worker is worthy of his wages" (1 Timothy 5:18) and "anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor" (Galatians 6:6). . . .

Let's not refer to called workers as "drains" but as "wells" of living water.

*John Eich  
Alma, Michigan*

**CALLED WORKERS' WIVES**

Regarding "God bless the pastor's wife" [May]. I would add "Ditto to the called teacher's wife or to the called principal's wife," and maybe even more so!

*Carl Heyer  
Fort Wayne, Indiana*

**SKEPTICISM**

"Skepticism" [May] echoes Church Growth evangelism: meet "felt needs." It ignores things Jesus said happen when you "connect truth to life." While their method "sells," it is powerless to create saving faith.

Reformed theology emphasizes a new life of moral regeneration ("saved from sin now") through obedience ("a faith that works") to Jesus' commands ("to bring truth to life"). Their method is designed to get people to choose Jesus as their Lord. Our goal is to lead people to trust Christ as their Savior. It is dangerous to think we can use their methods without affecting our message. (Sin/grace disappeared in this article.) . . .

While people want "relevant,

practical truth" we are still preaching the "foolishness of the cross." Can we adopt methods developed to teach the theology of glory and not lose the theology of the cross?

*Doris Baglo  
Stillwater, Minnesota*

After reading "Skepticism" by John Parlow, I was very upset. . . . According to Parlow, simple law and gospel preaching isn't effective anymore. Apparently preaching sin and grace to anyone born between 1961 and 2000 will not work. If we can just be relational, authentic, and transparent enough then we will win them for Christ. If we show them how to live a healthy adult life then the kingdom will grow. . . .

The only way to win souls for Christ is to preach the gospel. Remember, it—and not our clever, relational approach to ministry—is the power of God (Romans 1:16). God's Word works (Isaiah 55:10,11). Law and gospel preaching is always relevant to all people (1 Peter 1:25).

*Daniel Sims  
Columbus, Wisconsin*

*Although Parlow's article expresses a questionable attitude of some Gen-Xers, we did not see it saying that simple law and gospel preaching isn't effective or relevant, but that we can help people see how it is relevant.—ed*

No one should argue the point that a pastor must speak clearly and directly to the people and their everyday needs nor should anyone argue that the gospel itself does address these needs. It is, however, belittling the gospel when we let stand a comment that Parlow expresses in his article with these words ". . . Jesus died for you. Okay, but so what?"

If anyone in his wisdom can add to that, then he has to face Paul who tells us, "For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Corin-

thians 2:2). Would we dare want to challenge Paul and say "so what?"

And in the same paragraph the comment: "This guy really makes you think about your relationship with God." We know already what our relationship to God is. Paul writes in Romans 3:21,22: "There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." . . . We are sinful and deserve nothing. . . . The gospel can never be "so what," for if it is, hell will not be so forgiving.

*Ernest Zimdars  
Pomona, California*

This Gen-Xer was not convinced by Pastor John Parlow's "Skepticism." There is no doubt that modern society excels at dismissing the gospel. But I wonder if we are all that different from previous generations because we lived through Nixon, Vietnam, and use the Internet daily.

Think for instance how one paragraph of the article could be rewritten using Old Testament history: "Many people point to King Ahaz (2 Chronicles 28) as a reason you can't trust politics. . . ." Ditto for the Reformation era, WWI, WWII, etc.

A timeless truth comes to mind: "Is there anything of which one can say 'Look! This is something new'? It was here already, long ago; it was here before our time" (Ecclesiastes 1:10).

Also, the caricature of "Stone's" childhood "preacher" really isn't fair to our forefathers. . . . I thank God that he blessed me with a "preacher" who reminded me "over and over again" that "I was a sinner and Jesus died for me." He did his job faithfully. He preached the eternal gospel to me.

*Aaron Christie  
Antioch, Illinois*

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*.



# A Christian celebrates the FOURTH OF JULY

*Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts. The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Psalm 46:6,7*

Peter A. Panitzke

God has blessed our nation. Celebrate with parades, fireworks, and family picnics!

But the news can rob us of that "Fourth of July" joy. There are constant reports of tension between nations or of new rounds of bombings in Iraq. The tally of those killed in action increases daily.

## **The LORD controls the armies of the nations**

Our nation exists in the same dangerous world that is described by the sons of Korah in Psalm 46: "Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall." But the psalm was not written to dishearten us. God need only lift his voice and "the earth melts." All the forces of evil that threaten our existence are powerless to stand against the power of God. Our future depends on this promise: "The LORD Almighty is with us, the God of Jacob is our fortress."

Find comfort in that promise this Fourth of July! The name "the LORD" emphasizes that God is unchanging. In justice he destroyed his enemies in Old Testament times. In love he rescued his people. That justice and love remain the same today and always.

He is the LORD Almighty, literally "the LORD of armies." He controls the armies of the nations. In the Old Testament we have God's view of world events. He explains how he raised up heathen nations to punish his own people, only later to destroy those heathen nations for their own sins.

The LORD Almighty still controls the armies of the nations. From this side of heaven, that is often hard to

see. Why does a vicious, ungodly ruler prosper? Why aren't terrorists struck down immediately? The LORD hasn't explained his decisions. But a look back at the past assures us he is still the unchanging God of armies. In justice he will destroy the wicked at his time and in his way. Until then, he is using them to accomplish his purpose.

## **The LORD is with us**

The key question must be: Is the LORD Almighty with us? We have reason to fear for our nation. God's name is misused on TV and movies and in our homes. For some, life becomes only "a choice." Marriage is dishonored as even Christian couples live together before marriage. The goal of life becomes the glory of the dollar rather than the glory of God. Is the LORD Almighty with us?

Take comfort that the LORD introduces himself as "the God of Jacob." Remember who Jacob was. His name means "deceiver." Jacob deceived his brother. He deceived his father. Yet to this deceiver God made a promise: "All peoples on earth will be blessed through you" (Genesis 28:14). The Savior of humankind would come from "the deceiver's" line. The LORD is the God of sinners like Jacob and sinners like us. As foretold, we are blessed through Jacob's descendant, our Lord Jesus, who died for sinners.

All the money our nation spends on national defense and anti-terrorism



efforts cannot keep our nation safe. God "lifts his voice; the earth melts." All those defenses can become nothing. The only true defense for a nation is this promise: "The LORD Almighty is with us."

This Fourth of July, let's celebrate with parades, fireworks, and picnics. But let us also celebrate all year long by offering our nation what only we as Christians can offer: a warning against opposing God and the promise that the God of Jacob offers. Let us help our fellow countrymen and, God willing, our nation as a whole to find comfort in this promise: "The God of Jacob is our fortress."

*Contributing editor Peter Panitzke is pastor at St. Paul, Muskego, Wisconsin.*



# Try a little *haplotes*

Kenneth A. Cherney Jr.

“If [a man’s gift] is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously,” said the apostle Paul (Romans 12:8).

Only he didn’t say that. At least, not exactly.

“Generously” is the New International Version’s not-very-successful attempt to catch the meaning of the Greek word used by Paul—a word for which we really have no equivalent in English. In Greek, Paul said, “Let him give with *haplotes*,” which means something like “simple goodness” or “naïve sincerity.”

Elsewhere in the New Testament, Paul says that the apostles always tried to conduct themselves with absolute *haplotes* (2 Corinthians 1:12). He worries that Satan may already have spoiled the lovely Christian *haplotes* of the Corinthians the same way he corrupted Eve in the garden (2 Corinthians 11:3). Paul tells both the Ephesians (6:5) and the Colossians (3:22) that slaves should always obey their masters with *haplotes*. Try taking the word *haplotes* out of those passages and plugging the word “generosity” into its place. You’ll see that “generosity” doesn’t quite do the job.

So what does Paul mean? How exactly does a person give to others with “naïve sincerity”? It becomes easier to understand if we consider what a gift would look like if the giver showed no *haplotes* at all. Maybe some examples will help:

- On your 25th wedding anniversary, your husband gives you a beautifully wrapped little box. You gasp and tear it open, and there it is—a brand new Ambassador C3 baitcasting reel, which you no sooner unwrap than he’s asking to borrow.
- To celebrate 10 years on your job, your boss gives you a little present. It’s the latest self-help best-seller. He hopes you like the book. It’s sure to help you with those little flaws in your character that he keeps bringing up.

- There were the gifts of the hypocrites Jesus talked about (Matthew 6:1-4), given on street corners to the sound of blaring trumpets—gifts that were nothing more than investments in public relations.
- There are all those gifts where the giver expects plenty of groveling beforehand and showy displays of gratitude afterward, or nobody’s going to get a thing.

What do all these gifts have in common? Hidden agendas. All these gifts are calculated to pay maximum dividends to the giver, making it questionable whether they’re really “gifts” at all. In other words, all of them are completely lacking in *haplotes*.

Please don’t misunderstand. Paul’s point is not that every time we get a gift, we should pull out a magnifying glass and search it for signs of insincerity. He’d rather have us search the gifts we give for signs of insincerity. When we give, Paul wants us to search our hearts for any secret agendas—any devious plans to make sure that the real

benefits of our gift rebound back to us. When I search my heart that way, I don’t always like what I see. I’ll bet that you don’t, either.

That’s because there is only one Giver whose *haplotes* is perfect and constant. The apostle James is using a form of the same word when he says that God gives “*haplos* (NIV ‘generously’) to all,

without finding fault” (1:5). God’s gifts—above all, his gifts of forgiveness and eternal life—always come with no strings attached. You can take them without worrying about hidden price tags or fine print or what God might demand from you in return. Simple goodness. *Haplotes*.

Enjoy God’s gifts. They’re the best and rarest kind.

**God’s gifts—above all, his gifts of forgiveness and eternal life—always come with no strings attached.**

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





at the foot of the cross. Richard L. Gurgel

## TOPIC: Lay-taught Bible classes

**When our spiritual growth committee surveyed members, responses included comments such as, "Bible study should be done only by a pastor or one who is trained to do so" and "I question the validity of having a layperson 'teach' Bible class." Is it appropriate and/or valid when a layperson leads Bible class?**

This may seem the "long route" in answering, but let's begin with basic principles about teaching God's Word.

The keys of the kingdom—the privilege to speak God's law and gospel—belong to everyone who in faith echoes Peter's confession that Jesus is "the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16). In the New Testament church, no one is ordained a priest—we are baptized into the priesthood whose task it is to declare God's praises (1 Peter 2:9). That is the great and noble calling we all carry out in our personal lives until we blend our voices audibly with the heavenly choir of saints and angels.

But that doesn't mean we set ourselves up as teachers over other priests. We would violate their priesthood—not to mention making a mockery of good order—if we set ourselves up as teachers for gatherings of God's people. For such tasks, God has established the public ministry for which he gives special gifts to some. Where we recognize such gifts in other priests, in Christ's name we call them into the public ministry.

Nowhere in the New Testament, however, has God bound us to any one particular form of the public ministry. In great gospel freedom, he allows his church in every age and in every place to meet the challenge of the Great Commission by designing forms of ministry and by calling people uniquely gifted to function in those various forms.

In Jerusalem the church created the role of deacons to enable the apostles to focus on the specific tasks for which Christ trained them (Acts 6). In Antioch, guided by the Spirit, the congregation essentially created the form we still call "world missionary" (Acts 13). As various forms of ministry have developed,

typically the most comprehensive form of the public ministry is that of the parish pastor.

However, those who function according to the broad scope of that particular call are by no means the only ones the church may call to publicly teach God's Word. When a congregation recognizes those in its midst that have gifts of teaching the Word, the priests of God in that congregation have the right to call that person to teach Bible classes. Though the age group differs, it is essentially no different from what we do when we call some to teach Sunday school. From Christ through his people, Sunday school teachers and those who teach Bible class have received a call to serve in a specific area of that congregation's public ministry.

However, don't overlook the biblical wisdom in your members' concerns. Thorough training is essential—both training before someone is asked to take that role and ongoing training after agreeing to serve. Paul instructed Timothy not to be hasty "in the laying on of hands" (1 Timothy 5:22). The warning of James helps us understand why: "Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly" (James 3:1). So precious are the souls bought with God's own blood (Acts 20:28) that God holds those who teach to the highest expectation of faithfulness. Those who do so must speak as those "speaking the very words of God" (1 Peter 4:11).

So, assure your members that the congregation does indeed have the right in Christ's name to call some from its midst to teach Bible class. Then assure them also that it will be done decently and in order by calling gifted people who are trained to serve well.

*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](http://www.wels.net), jumpword "qa", for more questions and answers.



# Connect and confess

As the Latino/Hispanic population grows around us, we have open avenues to connect with them, leading to opportunities to witness to them of the Savior.

**Beth Thompson**

Intern Joanna Balza at Gethsemane in Milwaukee is helping “Ramona” work through an article on Latinos in America that is written in both Spanish and English. They read a phrase in Spanish, then find the English translation. Ramona practices pronouncing the new English words. She stops to ask Balza, “What do you think of the Latinos who are living here in the United States?”

Balza says that she is happy so many Latinos live here and that they add a lot to the culture.

Ramona answers, “How nice that you think that way, but there are a lot of people who think we don’t have a right to be here.”

She continues sadly, “Mexican people have a hard time here because Americans treat them poorly and don’t want them here.”

Balza assures Ramona that not all Americans feel that way about Hispanics, and that it’s a shame that there are Americans who treat people differently because of their ethnicity.

Ramona demonstrates a deep level of trust to confide in Balza, whose assurances are backed up by a powerful witness—a large group of mainly WELS Christians who share Balza’s view. This conversation takes place in the safe environment of an English-as-a-second-language (ESL) program where, three times a week, 20 to 30 volunteers show Christian love to immigrants by tutoring them in English.

## ESL for Latinos

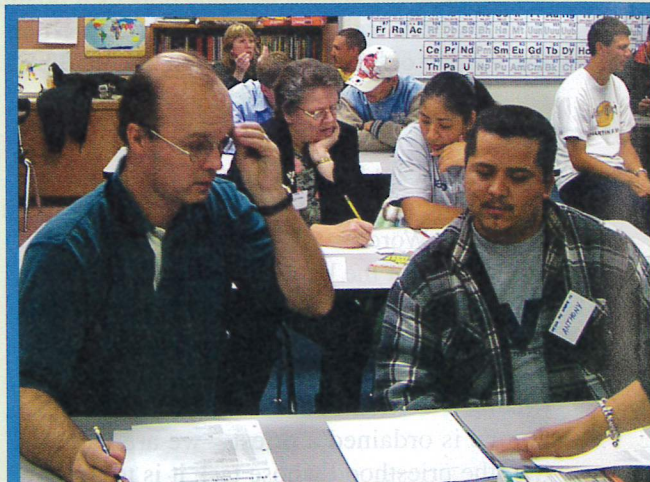
English as a second language has been an outreach tool in the United

States and in WELS world missions since the 1990s. Thanks to a WELS Kingdom Workers’ grant, Beth Thompson gave more than 40 workshops and seminars at WELS churches in the United States, Antigua, and Canada between 1999 and 2003 on how to start ESL outreach programs.

Several congregations have started programs. A few have experienced exceptional success in bringing newcomers from other cultures onto church property and into contact with caring Christians.

At Gethsemane, from February 2004 to April 2005, more than 300 adult immigrants plus their children attended ESL classes. More than 140 volunteers tutored them in English.

St. Mark, Watertown, Wis., has used its ESL outreach program as a public relations arm into the community since January 2001. Half of the Latinos attending Spanish services have not attended ESL classes. They hear about St. Mark by word of mouth. “When new Latino immigrants arrive in Watertown,” says Deaconess Rebecca Palacios, “they hear about the church that gives ESL lessons to Latinos. Even if they don’t go to English classes, they want to belong to a church that shows this kind of Christian love to immigrants.”



Members at Divine Savior, Indianapolis, Ind., volunteered to be conversation partners with Latinos in the Indianapolis area. Many of the people who attend conversation night at Divine Savior also attend worship.

Sure Foundation in New York City has been holding ESL outreach classes since March 2001. An average of 15 students attend three evening ESL classes a week. Attendance at Thursday’s Bible class is 17 to 20. Though all those attending Bible class have taken ESL classes, most no longer go to them. With changing work schedules and life’s pressures, it is hard to find the energy to continue coming to ESL classes several times a week, but they can manage a Bible class once a week.

Sure Foundation sees a rapid turnover in its Latino contacts. A stable ESL program keeps a constant flow of people coming through the mission’s doors while it is building its nucleus. Sure Foundation does little advertising for its program. “Former students tell friends and relatives about our program. With our current square footage, we cannot accommodate a larger class size in this space,”



says Steven Gabb, pastor at Sure Foundation. That will change next year when the mission quadruples its square footage.

At Pan de Vida (Bread of Life), Santa Ana, Calif., more than 700 Latinos have taken ESL classes since the program began in June 2003. Daily class attendance is 55 to 65 students. Thirty to 40 students attend Bible study. One-half to three-quarters of the people now attending church services and Bible class first came to Pan de Vida through its ESL program; however, that ratio is diminishing. While ESL outreach helped the new mission to quickly secure the attention of the Latino community, more people are now brought to the church through friendship evangelism.



The English-as-a-second-language program at Sure Foundation, New York City, has helped the congregation build and promote other ministries, such as a Kids' Program.

**Spiritual care for Latinos**

Through ESL outreach, the Lord has blessed these four churches with great success in bringing large numbers of immigrants into outreach programs. The immigrants have critical human needs, and in these churches, Christians strive to meet those needs. The result is that some immigrants want to find out what is behind this love, and they go to evangelism activities. Few, if any, evangelism programs in WELS churches can match this success with adults. "ESL outreach is a per-

fect example of what WELS wishes to accomplish with its emphasis on North American outreach," says Pastor Harold Hagedorn, administrator of the Board for Home Missions.

Other churches have tried ESL outreach but found it hard to maintain the energy and commitment to establish permanent adult outreach programs that result in increased membership. What do these four churches have in common that can account for their success?

First, the pastors know that the outreach program is going to be successful. The Lord will lead some immigrants to respond to this unconditional Christian love. Pastors and church leaders plan for success by developing a structure for evangelism

activities that are appropriate for newcomers who do not speak English. They provide for the spiritual renewal of current members, leading them to understand how they must prepare themselves to welcome newcomers from a different culture into the fold as equal members

in Christ's kingdom. "There is a misconception that the only thing a congregation needs to do to carry out Hispanic outreach is start an ESL program. It is essential that bridges are thought out in advance between the program and means of grace ministry," says Chris Schroeder, pastor at Pan de Vida.

Planning for success includes providing spiritual care in the immigrant's language. Pan de Vida and St. Mark had Spanish-speaking pastors in place and began offering Spanish-language services before their ESL outreach

Outreach is the effort to connect with people.

- Outreach is always based on a human need or interest.
- If we piously talk about evangelism, but do no outreach, we severely limit the mission of the church. Christian love is its own justification for outreach. Ministering to need is not social gospel.
- An outreach program may be a non-religious activity that brings newcomers onto church premises and into contact with many friendly, caring Christians who are members of your church.

Evangelism is presenting the gospel to people.

- If we have no evangelism to follow our outreach, if taking care of needs replaces proclaiming law and gospel, then we've abandoned Christ's mission.

*Rev. Paul Kelm, 2000*

programs started. Pastor Steven Gabb and wife Sarah of Sure Foundation went to Mexico for Spanish immersion in 2003. Pastor Robert Jensen of Gethsemane has been studying Spanish at a university for two years and will go to Mexico in summer 2005. With the help of Spanish-speaking members or vicars, Gethsemane offered Spanish-language Bible classes soon after ESL classes started.

**Consistent care for Latinos**

Second, the leadership of these four churches understands that a successful program cannot be managed by unpaid volunteers. Paid administrators and teachers can devote the necessary time to properly administer a program that offers ESL classes several times a week, all year long. This stability brings several benefits:

- Students can recommend this program to their friends. They can trust that the church will always be there for them, and not just for English lessons.

*continued on p. 12*



continued from p. 11

- The pastor is free to concentrate on evangelism strategies. He will not have to deal with crises that arise when key volunteers are burnt out.
- Volunteers know that they won't be called upon to help with the complicated and time-consuming administration tasks. Instead, a trained worker is in charge and guiding them in this new, exciting experience. All the volunteers' precious time is spent with the students, giving them a chance to forge friendships, with the hope that they will be able to introduce them to their Savior.

### Model ESL program

It takes a great deal of planning to establish formal ESL outreach programs that offer classes several times a week. Teachers and administrators need training to structure the program, plan the curriculum, find students, and recruit volunteers.

Recognizing that congregations and missions need guidance and advice on how to begin this process, WELS allocated funds from the Thrivent Church-wide Foundation Grant to start a model ESL outreach program at Gethsemane in February 2004. The purpose of this program is two-fold:

- It presents a model of ESL outreach in terms of volunteer and student recruitment.
- It provides a site where future teacher/administrators and ESL outreach volunteers can be trained in ESL outreach teaching techniques and curriculum development while working with immigrants.

Volunteers at this model program have had positive experiences. Half of the 110 volunteers who served during the first year were WELS young people from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Martin Luther College, Wisconsin Lutheran College, and Wisconsin Lutheran High School. One student volunteer is already

teaching English in a foreign mission field. Others have said that their volunteer experience has led them to consider becoming involved in mission work.

Once funding is found, a summer course will be offered to train a group of qualified applicants who can serve as ESL outreach teachers and administrators.

### Talking with Latinos

A formal ESL program may sound overwhelming. However, most congregations should not start out with a full-fledged, formal program. Instead, congregations interested in reaching out to different cultures should consider a once-a-week "conversation night."

In July 2004, 15 members at Divine Savior, Indianapolis, Ind., started volunteering as conversation partners to 15 Mexican migrant workers. Within a few months, 10 of the students were attending English church services to be with their Christian friends. Volunteer Rosie Hoeffner translated the service into Spanish.

One student told the volunteers, "We have never been treated this well by anyone in America." When another student signed the guest register after church services, she wrote in the column for home church, "Divine Savior—*mi familia* (my family)."



The ESL outreach program at St. Mark, Watertown, Wis., uses monthly activities such as carving pumpkins or making tortillas to learn more about different cultures and to prompt conversations.

"In 14 years of ministry, I have never had this level of response," says Bryan Schwarz, pastor at Divine Savior. "After only a few months of conversation night, over 50 percent of the people asked to come to church. We built a bridge through ESL outreach. They responded to our love and walked across that bridge."

*Beth Thompson, director of the WELS Model ESL outreach program, is a member at St. Philip, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.*

*For more information on ESL outreach, contact Beth Thompson, [bthompsn@dias.net](mailto:bthompsn@dias.net) or [bthompsn506@yahoo.com](mailto:bthompsn506@yahoo.com).*

*Remember ESL outreach isn't just for reaching out to Latinos. Discover what ethnic groups are in your neighborhood and tailor your ESL outreach program to fit their needs.*

### BIBLE STUDY IN ENGLISH-AS-A-SECOND-LANGUAGE CLASSES

Although it might seem natural to begin English-as-a-second-language (ESL) classes with a devotion or use Bible stories in the teaching, ESL outreach usually works best when it builds bridges of trust and understanding first. That is why the WELS Model ESL program makes the following points: "The ESL outreach program follows an approach that cannot in any way be considered as coercive or deceptive regarding religious issues. During class time, content for lessons is not Bible-related. . . . The class is a place where students already affiliated with the congregation can bring friends who go to other churches or who are unchurched. They are able to assure them that their attendance at the ESL class does not in any way obligate them to participate in or witness religious activity.

"Appropriate Bible classes, worship services, and other religious instruction are offered at separate times in appropriate formats" (ESL/EFL Steering Committee, 02/23/01).



# Beyond technology

The solutions to the deepest problems plaguing the human race are not found at Silicon Valley. They're found at Calvary.

Jon D. Buchholz

**T**he cabin lights are dimmed. Passengers are sitting quietly in their seats. Some are finishing dinner or enjoying a beverage. Others have their laptops and DVD players open. Still others are seizing the opportunity to catch up on some sleep.

As people chat quietly, we're zooming west through the evening sky at some 500 miles per hour in a pressurized aluminum tube. Between us and the earth are seven miles of thin air. At the conclusion of another safe flight, we'll have covered thousands of miles as if it were nothing.

## **Technology has changed; people haven't**

What a world we live in! We have cell phones, fax machines, Internet, satellite communications, air travel, all the techno-toys that one could ever imagine. How the world has changed in just the last 20 years!

Or has it? Is the world really a different place than it was 20 or 100 or 1,000 years ago?

The nightly news tells me that human beings haven't changed at all. Terrorist attacks, wars and rumors of wars, infidelity, poverty, plague and disease, and violent and natural death have been part of the human experience since the fall into sin.

When I look up and down the rows of airline passengers sitting quietly in their seats, I see the same type of human beings that God saw when he confronted Adam and Eve in the garden.

We're all still sinners; that hasn't changed one bit.

We all still stand naturally condemned under God's justice; there's nothing new there.

We all still need the only solution that can take away our sin and restore our relationship with God—repentance and trust in Jesus Christ our Savior. That simple truth still stands.


Technology may have changed, but people haven't. We're still selfish, greedy, rebellious, and violent—inwardly and outwardly. It's just that now we have better tools to express our sinful selves.

## **Only the changeless message saves**

There is no technology out there that can wrench a human soul out of the grasp of Satan. There is no means of transportation that can enable a person to escape their day of reckoning with God. There is no software that can "delete" our past sins and make our guilt go away. There is no hardware that can free us from death and give us eternal life.

The solutions to the deepest problems plaguing the human race are not found at Silicon Valley. They're found at Calvary. They're found in Jesus Christ. "In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins" (Ephesians 1:7).

Advances in technology offer us some exciting opportunities. We can use all the resources God has given us to communicate the saving truth of Christ crucified to sinners who



**There is no software that can "delete" our past sins and make our guilt go away.**

need a Savior. We can pull out all the stops to use all the tools at our disposal to get the gospel into the ears and hearts of people dying in ignorance and unbelief. But it's still the message alone that saves.

Outside the aircraft, the sunset has painted the western horizon with deepening shades of pink, orange, and purple. It's the close of another day of grace, the end of another day of countless blessings from our heavenly Father, who showers us with his love.

As we speed through the evening sky, I'm reminded that each of us is speeding toward the sunset of our lives and our inevitable encounter with our Maker.

On that great day, no technology will make a difference—only Jesus!

*Jon D. Buchholz is pastor at Emmanuel, Tempe, Arizona.*



AMONG ALL THE NOTABLES OF NEW TESTAMENT HISTORY, PERHAPS LEAST KNOWN IS LUKE, WHOSE LITERARY CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NEW TESTAMENT ARE LONGER THAN ANY OTHER WRITER'S.

# LUKE:

Character portraits of our Lord's friends and followers, being in the Bible, have an indelible quality about them. Impulsive Peter will always remain the rock-man in our memories. John, called a son of thunder for his fiery zeal, is best known as the disciple whom Jesus loved. "Doubting" will forever be attached to Thomas, while an Israelite "in whom there is no deceit" (John 1:47 ESV) will bring Nathanael to mind. Paul was designated by his Master as "my chosen instrument" (Acts 9:15), the Lord's mother as she who is "highly favored" (Luke 1:28). As for Martha's sister Mary, Jesus lauded her devotion of perfuming his feet for burial as a service to be remembered throughout the world.

All these friends of Jesus belong to the circle of our familiars. Less so Barnabas, Paul's companion on history's first Christian venture into a foreign mission field and certainly a pillar of the early church. What a high tribute for him to be described as "a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith" (Acts 11:24) who had "risked [his life] in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 15:26).

## The man Luke

Yet among all these notables of New Testament history, perhaps least known is Luke, whose literary contributions to the New Testament are longer than any other writer's. We meet him personally in his second production, the Acts of the Apostles, and in Paul's letters. But his tracks are covered so well that at only one place do we find a transparent portrait of his vocation and his character. In words of high admiration at the close of the letter to the Colossians, his dear friend and companion Paul describes Luke as the beloved physician.

## The writings of Luke

The five books at the beginning of the New Testament, which include Luke's two contributions, are histories. Readers may have discovered that four of these five are of approximately equal length. Mark is the exception, about half as long as the other four. These five histories as well as all of the letters



"ON BYWAYS WITH THE BELOVED PHYSICIAN"



# AN INTRODUCTION

Theodore J. Hartwig

that follow were first written on a material far less costly than tough parchment, sheets of which, written on both sides, could be sewn together to form books as we know them. The cheaper material, long in use before parchment, was a paper made from the fleshy Egyptian river reed called papyrus. Too flimsy for sewing and too porous for script on both sides, sections of papyrus 10 inches wide were glued together into long sheets and stored on two wooden rollers, one at each end for unwinding and winding. From such a *volumen* or scroll Jesus read the Isaiah text on which he preached in the synagogue at Nazareth (Luke 4:17-21).

For practical reasons dealing with weight and handiness of use, the maximum length of a papyrus sheet on rollers was 40 feet. This constituted a normal sized scroll in antiquity. A 20-foot volume would be a half book. Four of the five New Testament histories are 40-foot scrolls. Mark is a 20-footer. Given these restrictions—you have only 40 feet for your full length *volumen*— we can appreciate why the New Testament

historians had to be highly selective in choosing what to include in their story to keep it at a single volume.

All five wrote their histories with a definite purpose in mind. Therefore, under the Spirit's guidance, they chose only such information as would contribute to their purpose. In Luke's gospel, for example, there are gaps between Jesus' infancy and his twelfth year as well as between his twelfth and thirtieth year. Why? Information about the intervening years did not lend itself to the overall purpose of the gospel.

## His dear friend and companion Paul describes Luke as the beloved physician.

Like the other three, it was written to be a record of things that happened but also, far more than this, to be a testimony that Jesus of Nazareth was the long promised Christ and Savior of the world. This central message and purpose in Luke's gospel, already present in the first two chapters, shifts into high intensity with Jesus' ministry, his death, and his resurrection.

### The "beautiful book" of Luke

Ernest Renan, a French author

of the 1800s who wrote a saccharine life of Jesus, which discarded everything miraculous as beyond his belief, nevertheless pronounced Luke's gospel "the most beautiful book ever written." His appraisal has been seconded by later admirers, one of whom made this description the title for his study of Luke's gospel.

It has been said, and with much truth, that beauty lies in the eye of the beholder. We have our individual personal standards for judging what is beautiful and what is not. One reader may choose John's gospel as most beautiful for its sublimity. Another may choose Mark for its color, its drama. An outstanding feature of Luke's gospel, which may have determined Renan's judgment, is its quality of mercy. This godly virtue shines through the length and breadth of the book to set it apart as beautiful indeed.

In the following studies of Luke as the author of the gospel and the book of Acts, this quality of mercy will come into full view. We shall focus on him as a trustworthy historian, a loyal companion, a conscientious evangelist, a sympathetic physician, a consummate artist, and a premier witness to God's mysteries.

*Theodore Hartwig, a professor emeritus at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota, is a member at St. John, New Ulm.*

*This is the first of an eight-part series on Luke.*



# WISCONSIN LUTHERAN Seminary graduates

At the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary graduation service on May 20, 54 graduates received diplomas for successfully completing their seminary studies. Look for where they were assigned on p. 19.



Shaun M. Arndt  
Watertown, Wis.



David C. Bendix  
Echo, Minn.



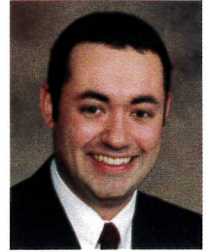
Michael J. Berg  
Plymouth, Mich.



Paul T. Biedenbender  
Juneau, Wis.



David M. Boettcher  
Chester, N.J.



John P. Bortulin  
Saginaw, Mich.



Clint A. Burow  
Milwaukee, Wis.



Johann W. Caauwe  
Bloomington, Minn.



Douglas M. Carter  
East Jordan, Mich.



Tom Chaleunsouk\*  
Lakeville, Minn.



Fidel Dazen  
East Fork, Ariz.



Samuel C. Degner  
St. Peter, Minn.



James E. Douglas  
Grayling, Mich.



Andrew J. Glende  
Columbus, Ohio



Nicholas J. Guillaume  
Sioux City, Iowa



Jeremiah J. Gumm  
Hazelton, N.D.



Jason C. Hacker  
Bay City, Mich.



James R. Hoogervorst  
Neenah, Wis.



Christopher M. Hoppe  
Delano, Minn.



Gerhardt H. Juergens  
Ladysmith, Wis.



Michael L. Kampman  
Rio Rancho, N.M.



Nathan P. Kassulke  
Inver Grove Heights, Minn.

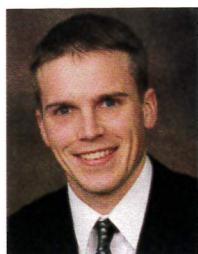


Matthew J. Kiecker  
Milwaukee, Wis.



Michael A. Killinger  
Sebewaing, Mich.





Peter J. Korthals  
Mequon, Wis.



John P. Langebartels  
Imlay City, Mich.



Timothy D. Learman  
Friendswood, Texas



Neng Lor\*  
St. Paul, Minn.



John P. Mattek  
New Ulm, Minn.



David J. Meyer  
Milwaukee, Wis.



Phillip V. Moore  
Milwaukee, Wis.



Brett G. Naumann  
Wauwatosa, Wis.



Tyler R. Peil  
Midland, Mich.



Mathew R. Pfeifer  
Oskaloosa, Iowa



Steven H. Prah  
Eau Claire, Wis.



David G. Scharf  
West Allis, Wis.



Benjamin A. Scherbarth  
Two Rivers, Wis.



Scott M. Scholtz  
West Bend, Wis.



Joel C. Seifert  
Midland, Mich.



Peter D. Sternberg  
Rhineland, Wis.



Korey P. Van Kampen  
Yuma, Ariz.



Collin J. Vanderhoof  
Appleton, Wis.



Joel T. Vogel  
Kennewick, Wash.



Timothy R. Wagner  
Burlington, Wis.



Clayton G. Welch  
Tucson, Ariz.



Christopher D. White  
Saginaw, Mich.



Brandon A. Wigley  
Milwaukee, Wis.



Nathan L. Wilke  
Redwood Falls, Minn.



Aaron R. Winkelman  
Fort Atkinson, Wis.



Ryan C. Wolfe  
Colfax, Wis.



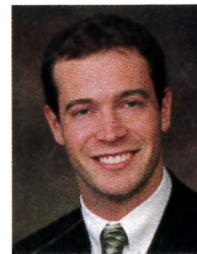
Dustin B. Yahne  
Kendall, Wis.



Gary M. Young  
Milwaukee, Wis.



Joshua Yu\*\*  
Wauwatosa, Wis.



Adam E. Zimpelmann  
Eagle River, Wis.

\*a graduate of the Asian Ministry Training Program, a program that works in harmony with the Pastoral Studies Institute.  
\*\*a graduate of a special ministry program offered under the Pastoral Studies Institute.



# WHATEVER

## Invincible

As hard as it is to realize, I learned that people my age do die.

Erin Henzi

We have a wide range of ages for my cousins on the Voss side of the family. Lisa was the closest to my age—only six months older than I. When Lisa was three months old she got meningitis and encephalitis, which caused a brain injury. She would have seizures quite often as a baby. My family was afraid that Lisa was going to die, but God had different plans. Lisa not only survived but grew up to be a typical teenager.

**Growing up Lisa and I spent a lot of time together.** When we were young, our grandma would buy us matching clothes. Whenever I would sleep over at her house, I would always puff her inhaler for her because I thought that it was cool. Our favorite place on earth was Camp Bird. Whether it was swimming, painting, or going to the campfires together, we would have a blast.

The summer before my freshman year of high school, I only came up to Camp Bird for a couple of days. Before I left, I almost forgot to say good-bye to Lisa. I found her at the mess hall and gave her a huge hug good-bye. I told her that I would see her at the family reunion in November. Little did I know that it was the last time I would ever say good-bye to her.

**Just 14 days after saying good-bye to Lisa, my family was on vacation in Michigan.** We were eating lunch when the phone rang. My uncle picked up the phone and told my dad it was for him. After my dad got off the phone, I knew that something was wrong. He went downstairs and told my mom he had to talk to her. I figured that someone in our church had died, and my dad would need to go home to conduct the funeral. A couple minutes later my dad told me to go downstairs. When I got downstairs, I saw my mother sobbing. I immediately asked her what was wrong. She said, "Lisa had a seizure while swimming. Erin, she drowned."

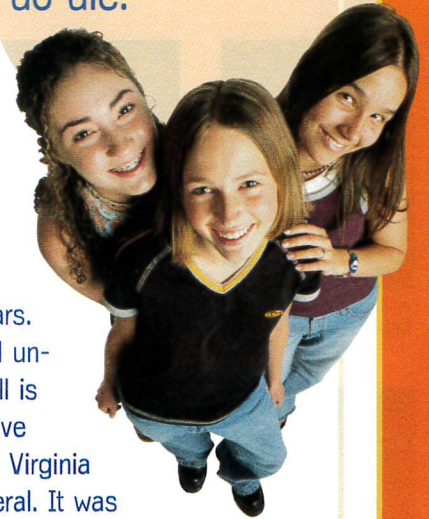
Words cannot express the pain that I felt. My cousin was only 15 years old. People who are 15 are not supposed to die. She was a great swimmer and hadn't had a seizure in years. I fell to the floor and cried uncontrollably. It was and still is the greatest pain that I have ever endured. We drove to Virginia to attend my cousin's funeral. It was the worst couple of days in my entire life.

After the funeral, we had a long drive back to Wisconsin. I had time to recollect my thoughts of what was all going on. As hard as it is to realize, I learned that people my age do die. People my age are going through hardships such as cancer, injuries, or depression. I learned that teenagers are not invincible.

**My family had now become one of the millions of families who lost somebody they loved.** But unlike most families, my family has the assurance that Lisa is in heaven because she believed that Jesus was her Lord and Savior. People would come up to us and ask us how we were able to get through such a loss. The only answer that my family gave is that we know that Lisa is in heaven.

At Camp Bird a tree was planted in memory of Lisa. Every summer at camp I pass that tree and am reminded of my special cousin. I know for a fact that Lisa is in heaven. She may not be with me in person, but my memories of her live on.

Erin Henzi, a member at Trinity, Brillion, Wisconsin, graduated from Fox Valley Lutheran High School, Appleton, Wis., in May.





## Assignments

At the call assignment service held at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis., on May 19, 55 men received assignments. Fifty of these men graduated in 2005. Two were assigned from the class of 2004 and three from the class of 2003. Three from the class of 2004 were reassigned to their present fields.

**Arndt, Shaun M.**, to Good Shepherd, Holmen, Wis.

**Bendix, David C.**, to Shepherd of the Lakes, Fairmont, Minn./Shepherd of the Lakes, Milford, Iowa

**Berg, Michael J.**, to St. John, Wood Lake, Minn.

**Biedenbender, Paul T.**, to Christ, Denver/Lord of Life, Thornton, Colo.

**Boettcher, David M.**, to Cross of Christ, Coon Rapids, Minn.

**Bortulin, John P.**, assistant to the Nebraska District president, Plymouth, Neb.

**Burow, Clint A.**, to St. Mark, Richwood/Immanuel, Hubbleton, Wis.

**Caauwe, Johann W.**, assistant to the Arizona-California District president, Modesto, Calif.

**Carter, Douglas M.**, to St. Martin, Roscommon, Mich.

**Chaleunsouk, Tom**, to Indochina

**Dazen, Fidel**, to East Fork/Canyon Day, Whiteriver, Ariz.

**Degner, Samuel C.**, to Bethel, Menasha, Wis.

**Douglas, James E.**, to Redeemer, Pierre, S.D.

**Glende, Andrew J.**, to Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis.

**Guillaume, Nicholas J.**, to Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis.

**Gumm, Jeremiah J.**, to Cross of Christ, Liverpool, N.Y.

**Gunderson, Mark D.**, to Messiah, Nampa, Idaho

**Hacker, Jason C.**, to Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn.

**Hoogervorst, James R.**, to Crown of Life, Cadillac, Mich.

**Juergens, Gerhardt H.**, to Christ, Bison/Christ, Morristown, S.D.

**Kampman, Michael L.**, to St. Paul, North Fond du Lac, Wis.

**Kassulke, Nathan P.**, to Grace, Tucson, Ariz.

**Kiecker, Matthew J.**, to Beautiful Savior, La Porte, Ind.

**Killinger, Michael A.**, to St. Paul, Batesland, S.D./Rock of Ages, Gordon, Neb./Our Redeemer, Martin, S.D.

**Korthals, Peter J.**, to Zion, Rhinelander, Wis.

**Langebartels, John P.**, to Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Mich.

**Learman, Timothy D.**, to Prince of Peace, Yankton/Christ our Savior, Vermillion, S.D.

**Lor, Neng**, to St. Andrew, Sacramento, Calif.

**Mattek, John P.**, to Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis.

**Meyer, David J.**, to Zion, Denver, Colo.

**Mueller, Aaron T.**, assistant to the Western Wisconsin District president, Eau Claire, Wis.

**Naumann, Brett G.**, to Good Shepherd, Fond du Lac, Wis.

**Peil, Tyler R.**, to Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Mich.

**Pfeifer, Mathew R.**, to Green Valley, Henderson, Nev.

**Prahl, Steven H.**, to Risen Savior, Navarre, Fla.

**Scharf, David G.**, to Immanuel, Greenville, Wis.

**Schultz, Scott M.**, to Cross of Christ, Portage, Wis.

**Seifert, Joel C.**, to Calvary, Thiensville, Wis.

**Seifert, Michael J.**, to Living Hope, Midlothian, Va.

**Sternberg, Peter D.**, to Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn.

**Sutton, Nathan O.**, to King of Kings, Wasilla, Alaska

**Valleskey, Martin E.**, to Milwaukee Hispanic Outreach, Milwaukee

**Van Kampen, Korey P.**, to King of Kings, Kennewick, Wash.

**Vanderhoof, Collin J.**, to St. Paul, Mauston, Wis.

**Vogel, Joel T.**, to Crown of Life, Marietta, Ohio

**Wagner, Timothy R.**, to Our Savior, Port Orange, Fla.

**Welch, Clayton G.**, to St. Thomas, Goodyear, Ariz.

**White, Christopher D.**, to St. Paul, Monroe, Mich.

**Wigley, Brandon A.**, to Garden Homes, Milwaukee

**Winkelman, Aaron R.**, to Immanuel, Waupaca, Wis.

**Wolfe, Ryan C.**, to St. Peter, Schofield, Wis.

**Yahnke, Dustin B.**, to St. Luke, Kenosha, Wis.

**Young, Gary M.**, to Emmaus-St. Mark, Chicago, Ill.

**Yu, Joshua**, to St. John, Wauwatosa, Wis.

**Zimpelmann, Adam E.**, to St. Paul, East Troy, Wis.

## Obituaries

### Lyle E. Albrecht 1933-2005

Lyle Albrecht was born Feb. 15, 1933, in Two Rivers, Wis. He died April 10, 2005, in Milwaukee, Wis.

A 1959 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis., he served Our Shepherd, Warren, Mich.; English, Viroqua, Wis.; Northwestern Publishing House and Wisconsin Lutheran High School, both in Milwaukee, Wis.

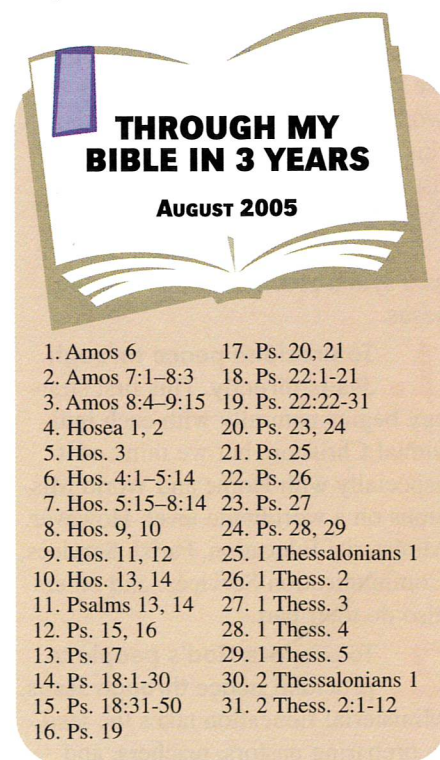
He is survived by his wife, Judy; four sons; and nine grandchildren.

### Lynne L. Neupert 1941-2005

Lynne Neupert was born Sept. 1, 1941, in Algoma, Wis. She died April 13, 2005, in Waterloo, Wis.

A 1965 graduate of Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., she served Zion, Crete, Ill.; Trinity, Nicollet, Minn.; and St. John, Waterloo, Wis.

She is survived by two sons, two grandchildren, and her mother. She was preceded in death by her father and a son.



**THROUGH MY  
BIBLE IN 3 YEARS**

**AUGUST 2005**

|                   |                       |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Amos 6         | 17. Ps. 20, 21        |
| 2. Amos 7:1-8:3   | 18. Ps. 22:1-21       |
| 3. Amos 8:4-9:15  | 19. Ps. 22:22-31      |
| 4. Hosea 1, 2     | 20. Ps. 23, 24        |
| 5. Hos. 3         | 21. Ps. 25            |
| 6. Hos. 4:1-5:14  | 22. Ps. 26            |
| 7. Hos. 5:15-8:14 | 23. Ps. 27            |
| 8. Hos. 9, 10     | 24. Ps. 28, 29        |
| 9. Hos. 11, 12    | 25. 1 Thessalonians 1 |
| 10. Hos. 13, 14   | 26. 1 Thess. 2        |
| 11. Psalms 13, 14 | 27. 1 Thess. 3        |
| 12. Ps. 15, 16    | 28. 1 Thess. 4        |
| 13. Ps. 17        | 29. 1 Thess. 5        |
| 14. Ps. 18:1-30   | 30. 2 Thessalonians 1 |
| 15. Ps. 18:31-50  | 31. 2 Thess. 2:1-12   |
| 16. Ps. 19        |                       |



### WELS gears up for 58th biennial convention

WELS' 58th biennial convention will be held July 25-29 at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn. It is here that about 400 voting delegates, representing WELS congregations, pastors, teachers, and staff ministers, will meet to determine what direction WELS' ministry will take into the future.

All delegates will receive a *Book of Reports and Memorials* before the convention to help them prepare. The *Book of Reports and Memorials*, the primary source of the synod convention's business, reports the last two years of WELS ministry activity and presents the ministry plan for the next biennium. All male called workers and every congregation also receive the *Book of Reports and Memorials*.

Many of the 12 districts meet before the convention to discuss the issues. This way delegates can learn their district's view as they

form their own opinions on the important matters that will be decided at the convention.

While at the convention, delegates will serve on a floor committee. Each committee is assigned a section of the *Book of Reports and Memorials* to evaluate its content and/or recommendations, react to it, and in most cases, present formal resolutions to the convention regarding it.

The articles on the next few pages will tell you more about what will be happening at the synod convention this year. Look for stories on

- the four key strategies on which the convention will be based,
- important issues—such as ministry direction and the Prep School Study report—that the convention will be discussing,
- worship opportunities at the convention,
- memorials that are being presented to the convention, and
- communication tools that will keep you informed about the happenings at the convention and give you an opportunity to get involved.

### Key strategies guide convention business

Our synod is united to "Proclaim Peace through Jesus," and although we have several areas of ministry each working to do that, we are focusing at this convention on the strategies we use to get the job done before identifying the units that will do it.

We have four key strategies as we as a synod proclaim peace through Jesus.

**1. To proclaim peace through Jesus directly.** This first strategy begins naturally with each individual Christian, but we think of it especially with Home and World Missions on a worldwide level. However, Ministerial Education, Parish Services, Communication Services, and others also do their part.

**2. To prepare God's people to proclaim peace through Jesus.** Ministerial Education takes the lead in preparing pastors, teachers, and

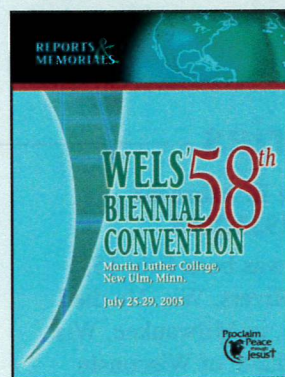
staff ministers, with World Missions, Evangelism, and others playing significant roles. Congregations also train evangelists and all laypeople to proclaim peace through Jesus.

**3. To promote our mission, vision, objectives, strategies, and plans.** Communication Services originates and coordinates much of the promoting as it is shared by all areas of ministry.

**4. To provide support for our efforts to proclaim peace through Jesus.** As we all lend our personal prayer and material support, Financial Services, Christian Giving, the Technology office, and others help keep it all working on the synodical level.

These are the strategies that the delegates in convention will discuss and see to it that plans are in place to fulfill. The strategies, then, will

be only as good as the people God uses to carry them out and the blessings he gives to their efforts.



*You can learn more about how the areas of ministry are involved in the four key strategies in the Book of Reports and Memorials.*

*Each congregation received a copy of the book. It can also be accessed online at [www.wels.net/convention](http://www.wels.net/convention).*



## Worship leaders chosen for 2005 synod convention

Worship has always been an important part of the synod convention. The convention begins and ends with worship, and time is set aside throughout the convention for delegates to study God's Word.

"If we are to make God-pleasing resolutions, maintain godly respect for one another as brothers in Christ, and set a direction for our Church that reflects the guidance of our Good Shepherd, we must immerse ourselves in his Word," says Wayne Mueller, first vice president of WELS. "The more business we have before us and the more serious the matters before the church—the more important it is to have the Word predominate."

Worship leaders have been selected to lead the delegates in devotions, Bible studies, and other doctrinal presentations.



Pastor John Janosek

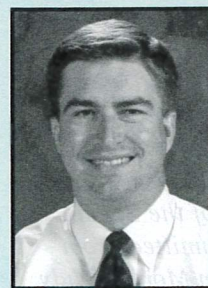
Retired missionary John Janosek will preach at the opening worship service at St. Paul, New Ulm, on July 25. Janosek served in Africa for 40 years. Minnesota District President Larry Cross will preach at the closing service at Martin Luther College on July 28.

Jon Buchholz, pastor at Emmanuel, Tempe, Ariz., will be leading the convention Bible study as well as presenting a paper. "The essay and the Bible studies that flow from it were chosen with the North American Outreach yearly theme, 'Every Soul's A Treasure,' in mind," says WELS President Karl Gurgel. "We will focus on objective justification, God's declaration of the sinner's sainthood through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, our Savior."



Pastor Larry Cross

Tom Nass, professor at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., and Paul Wendland, president at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis., will be presenting "Gospel Gems"—devotions based on gospel texts from the Old and New Testament.



Pastor Jon Buchholz



Pres. Paul Wendland



Prof. Tom Nass

## Viewpoints shared through memorials

Besides studying the key strategies offered in the *Book of Reports and Memorials* and discussing presentations offered at the synod convention, delegates will be voting on resolutions that floor committees bring to the floor regarding memorials.

A memorial is a formal petition to the synod convention that asks consideration for a particular item of business. It may be brought by an individual member or groups of members in the synod. It can be printed in the *Book of Reports and Memorials* or presented in writing to the WELS president at least 60 days before convention.

"Memorials give members of the synod an opportunity to respond to issues in WELS that might otherwise not come before the synod in convention," says Karl Gurgel, WELS president. WELS members may also use memorials to publicly share their perspective on issues coming to the convention.

Twenty-four memorials were printed in the 2005 *Book of Reports and Memorials*. These memorials cover a wide range of topics, including

- priorities in synod budget spending,
- the Spiritual Growth Project,
- the use of money willed to WELS,
- options for the future of our prep schools,
- election of the synodical praesidium,
- convention representation, and
- synod administrative structure and strategy.

You can read the memorials being presented to the synod convention in the 2005 *Book of Reports and Memorials*. Access it online at [www.wels.net/convention](http://www.wels.net/convention).



## {HOT} TOPICS

### Ministry direction

In these times of tight budgets, the Lord has been leading us to re-examine all of the ministry we are doing together as a synod. The hard questions are being asked: What must we do? What can we do without? How do we strike a balance?

The synod convention will be dealing with just such questions in preparation for the next biennium. It will look at a proposed budget that is balanced but falls short of some necessary and desired funding. Missions, for example, although favored, still

endure cuts. Our ministerial education schools need to find new ways to fund their programs (cf. Prep School Study below). Parish Services have absorbed the most severe percentage of cutbacks so far.

In this climate, a number of memorials have come to the synod suggesting various approaches and emphases to guide our ministry decisions. The Synodical Council wrestled with the concept of "core" ministry and thought about alternative proposals to the convention. In the end, however, it stayed with the single budget/ministry proposal outlined in the *Book of Reports and Memorials*, with some minor

updates. What is there represents core ministry in the view of the Synodical Council.

Plans are being put in place by which we ask God to lead us to vigorous new ministry. The time is now for the synod to examine its ministry, pray to God for wisdom and direction, and push forward in his name.

*Do you have questions or comments on ministry direction? An online chat will be held with Pastor Timothy Gauger, chairman of the Ministry Direction Floor Committee, from 12:15-12:45 P.M. on Tuesday, July 26. For more information go to [www.wels.net/jumpword/chat](http://www.wels.net/jumpword/chat).*

### Prep School Study

Delegates at the 2005 synod convention will be asked to study and act on the final report and recommendations of the Prep School Study Committee—2.

The 2003 synod convention authorized the appointment of this 15-person committee "to evaluate the work of the system in relation to the continuing purpose and objectives (a) of the synod, (b) of the Ministerial Education area of ministry, and (c) of the two preparatory schools themselves" (2003 *Proceedings*, pp. 54,55).

After much research, including surveys at the 2004 district conventions, the committee is offering the following recommendations:

- "That synod operating funds for support of Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Mich., be phased out over a 12-year time frame reviewed by the Board for Ministerial Education at four-year intervals. . . ."
- "That the synod budget subsidy

of approximately \$2.5 million per year received by Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis., remain the same through June 30, 2011, subject to the constitutional responsibility for balancing the budget as assigned to the Synodical Council. . . ."

- "That every effort be made by the synod to promote the Endowment Fund to assist the schools as they deal with diminishing synodical support for operating funds. . . ."
- "That the preparatory schools be given permission to seek third-source funding to offset the diminishing synod budgetary subsidy. . . ."

In its report the committee shares statistics it had gathered and trends it had noticed about the synod's ministerial education schools. It also offers suggestions for further study.

The committee concludes its report by saying, "We pray that the Lord guide his church as we discuss this

important issue and then, united, move forward to carry out his ministry."

The Board for Ministerial Education recommended to the 2003 convention that it authorize the study in light of budgetary concerns. It has been more than 15 years since there was a detailed study of the continuing need and role of the synod's preparatory school system.

*The entire report of the Prep School Study Committee—2 is printed in the 2005 Book of Reports and Memorials. You can access the Book of Reports and Memorials online at [www.wels.net/convention](http://www.wels.net/convention). Do you have questions or comments on the Prep School Study report? An online chat will be held with Pastor Charles Westra, chairman of the Special Reports Floor Committee, from 12:15-12:45 P.M., on Monday, July 25. For more information, go to [www.wels.net/jumpword/chat](http://www.wels.net/jumpword/chat).*

## {HOT} TOPICS

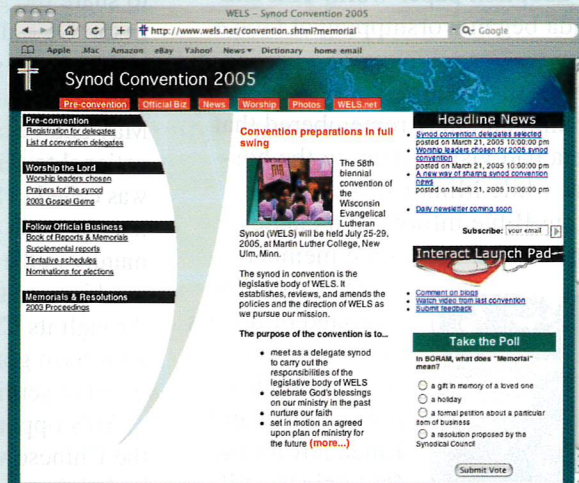


## Convention Web site will keep you up to date

Even if you're not a delegate to the synod convention, you can keep up to date with daily happenings at the convention by going to the official synod convention Web site, [www.wels.net/convention](http://www.wels.net/convention). Here you will be able to access the following:

- **Official information**—Discover schedules, convention minutes, election results, various presentations, and resolutions.
- **Delegate interviews**—Meet several delegates up close and personal and see what they think about the convention and about being a delegate.
- **Worship**—Read the Bible studies, devotions, and the essay presented at the synod convention.
- **Photo gallery**—See the day-to-day activities at the synod convention through photos.
- **Video coverage**—Watch videos on major presentations, worship services, devotions and Bible studies, and other selected events. The Technology office is exploring the possibility of having live Web-streaming coverage.
- **Podcasting**—Listen to audio coverage of presentations, discussion on the floor, and other selected events. Portable mp3s let you listen on the go!
- **Pre-convention information**—Read the *Book of Reports and Memorials* and supplemental reports to understand what will be discussed at convention. Discover who the delegates are and what floor committees they serve on.
- **News**—Subscribe to the convention news service so that you can receive the latest convention news by e-mails or RSS feeds. Two different types of news will be offered. Headline news will include breaking news briefs that give you up-to-the-minute happenings. Daily news will feature a top story and links to other stories. This "newsletter" will go out once a day and provide more in-depth coverage. All the news stories will also be posted directly on the site.

Once the convention is over, delegates will receive a press release covering the decisions made at convention. (You'll also receive this press release if you subscribe to the convention news service.) The October issue of *Forward in Christ* will share important news. *Proceedings*, the official report of convention happenings, will be sent to all delegates, male called workers, and congregations within a few months of convention.



## GET INVOLVED

While you will be on the receiving end of much information and news coming out of the convention, you can also let your voice be heard. Here's how:

### CHATS

Participate in the four online chats that will be held at the convention. Some of these chats will cover important topics being discussed at the convention while others will allow you to interact with interesting people that will be there. Mark your calendar with these dates, times, and topics:

- 7-8 P.M. CST, July 24. Chat with Pastor Karl Gurgel, WELS President.
- 12:15-12:45 P.M. CST, July 25. Chat with Pastor Charles Westra, chairman of the Special Report floor committee, which will be responsible for the Prep School Study report.
- 12:15-12:45 P.M. CST, July 26. Chat with Pastor Timothy Gauger, chairman of the Ministry Direction floor committee.
- 12:15-12:45 P.M. CST, July 27. Chat with world missionaries that are present at the convention.

Go to [www.wels.net/jumpword/chat](http://www.wels.net/jumpword/chat) to learn how to prepare your computer for online chatting.

### BLOGS

Comment on Imprint Web log (blog) postings. Area of ministry administrators and selected delegates will be keeping these online virtual journals during the convention. They will be sharing their thoughts and giving their perspectives on convention events. You can then comment on these entries. The latest blog postings will be displayed on the convention Web site, [www.wels.net/convention](http://www.wels.net/convention). You can read all the blogs at [www.wels.net/imprint](http://www.wels.net/imprint).

### FEEDBACK

Submit feedback. Let us know what you think about the convention Web site and the information being communicated. E-mail [julie.wietzke@sab.wels.net](mailto:julie.wietzke@sab.wels.net) with your thoughts.



## God works in mysterious ways

Tim and Rosalinda Cook of Grace, Muskegon, Mich. always wanted kids and assumed that children would come in due time. After years and many painful and expensive medical procedures, they settled on the idea that children weren't part of the Lord's plans for them. But in September 2001 the Cooks became parents . . . to five children!

"The Lord does indeed work in mysterious ways," Tim reflects. "Trying to understand them is why Linda and I go to church and listen to Pastor Kieta."



Linda and Tim Cook with their adopted nieces and nephews: (l to r) Michelle, John, Memoriano, Mylene, and Nowayme.

The Cooks were not always churchgoers. Tim met Linda while serving as a Marine in the Philippines, and they now live down the street from Tim's brother, Tony. Tony's family started going to church after his children attended an outreach vacation Bible school, but throughout their struggle to have children, Tim and Linda remained unchurched.

Two of Linda's brothers came to the United States to work and lived with the Cooks. When her brother Mimor became ill with a viral infection, Tony asked Grace's pastor, Geoffrey Kieta, to visit him in the hospital. On several occasions, Linda heard Kieta share

the gospel and pray with her brother. Before Mimor died he asked Linda to promise that she would look after his five children back home.

During the months it took to do the adoption paper work, Tim and Linda began worshipping at Grace. They were working with a Christian agency that required church membership, and they remembered that Kieta had visited them in the hospital while Mimor was ill. After taking Bible information classes, they desired to become members.

After spending thousand of dollars and many months on the adoption process, Tim and Linda left for the Philippines, still unsure if the children would return with them. While they were away, the members of Grace did a massive clothing, toy, and diaper drive. Other members helped turn the Cooks' two-bedroom/one-bath house into a six-bedroom/three-

bath house. When Mylene, Michelle, Nowayme, Memoriano, and John arrived, they were welcomed by loving families at home and at church.

While they struggle with learning the English language and missing their grandparents and cousins back home, the children are adjusting to their new life. "God has given them a nice home, new clothes, loving parents, new friends, and the will to learn all there is about him," Tim says. "And God has given us the chance to be parents, something we thought would never happen."

## Chinese national to serve as WELS pastor

He came looking for knowledge.

He left with a diploma and a call to share the gospel with the Chinese in the United States.

Joshua Yu graduated from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis., in May and became the first Chinese national to serve as a WELS pastor. He was called to St. John, Wauwatosa, Wis., to help reach out to the Chinese community in the area. St. John has been reaching out to the Chinese since 1999 through its Chinese Fellowship. Its long-term goal is to start a Chinese worship service.

Yu's opportunities to reach out to the Chinese won't stop there. He will be helping other WELS churches in the Milwaukee area with their cross-cultural outreach to the Chinese. He also will help translate and edit materials into Chinese so that other churches have scripturally sound resources.

Since many Chinese immigrants in the United States have close relationships in China, Yu not only wants to share the gospel but also show them how to share Jesus with others.

"Then, when they return home, instead of disappearing and dropping out, they will become the Lord's strong army to expand his kingdom," says Yu.

Born into a Christian family in China, Yu attended a national seminary in China and served as pastor in churches there from 1990-2002. He came to the United States in 2002 to learn more about the Bible and its teachings. In 2003, he was accepted into Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary.

"Joshua is a rare gift of God. He has modeled a servant's heart and borne crosses that we can't even imagine, all with a cheerful spirit," says Paul Wendland, president at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. "I'm convinced that God will use him to build bridges with a growing Chinese student community here in America."



## District news

### Dakota-Montana

**Redeemer, Mandan, N.D.**, had a mortgage burning for its new church building on April 3—a little more than six years after it began the project.

### North Atlantic

**Cross of Christ, Liverpool, N.Y.**, started a Mommy & Me program in February, bringing it into contact with some families from the community.

### Northern Wisconsin

**Gene Strusz**, athletic director and former varsity football coach of Fox Valley Lutheran High School, Appleton, Wis., was inducted into the Wisconsin Football Coaches Association Hall of Fame in April. Strusz retired from coaching varsity football in 2002 after 21 years at the helm.

On April 10, St. John St. James, Reedsville, Wis., honored **Judy Mangin** for the 40 years she has served as organist for the congregation.

### South Central

**Katrina Luthra** was chosen as first-chair oboe for the 2005 South Carolina Jr. All-State Band. Luthra, an eighth-grader at Mauldin Middle School, Mauldin, S.C., is a member of Abiding Peace, Simpsonville, S.C.

### Happy Anniversary!

**MI**—Huron Valley Lutheran High School, Westland, Mich., celebrated the 25th anniversary of **Tim Plath's** teaching ministry on June 12.

Trinity, Jenera, Ohio, celebrated several anniversaries on April 17: **Julaine Boehm** for 45 years and **Nicole Kroening** for five years in the teaching ministry and **Philip Henning** for 15 years in the preaching ministry.

**MN**—West Lutheran High School, Plymouth, Minn., celebrated anniversaries for three of its called workers:

**Steve Merten**, 25 years in the teaching ministry; **Mark Neitzel**, 25 years in the preaching ministry; and **Brenda Glodowski**, 20 years of teaching at West Lutheran High School.

On April 10, **Mt. Olive, Delano, Minn.**, celebrated its school's 50th anniversary. It also celebrated **Karen Becker's** 20th year and **Roger Klockziem's** (former principal) 40th year in the teaching ministry.

**NW**—**John Roekle** and **Jane Polley** celebrated 25-year anniversaries in the teaching ministry this year. Both have taught at Fox Valley Lutheran High School, Appleton, Wis., for their entire ministries.

**SC**—**Divine Peace, Garland, Texas**, celebrated its 10th anniversary on March 20.

**SEW**—Salem (107th), Milwaukee, Wis., celebrated **Dan Simon's** 25th anniversary in the preaching ministry on June 12.

The **Ladies Aid of St. Peter, Theresa, Wis.**, celebrated its 100th anniversary on May 6.



Members of Apostles, Billings, Mont., held the congregation's first women's retreat on April 13-15. They had this weekend getaway at a log cabin rental home at Red Lodge, Mont.

These pastors are the reporters for the districts featured this month: DM—Wayne Rouse; MI—John Eich; MN—Jeffrey Bovee; NA—Harland Goetzinger; NW—Joel Lillo; SC—William Gabb; SEW—Scott Oelhafen.

## World news

**Poll examines moral values**—A survey conducted by the Gallup Organization examined America's moral values on several issues. Pollsters found record-high levels of moral acceptability on the death penalty (70 percent), medical research using stem cells from human embryos (60 percent), having a baby out of wedlock (54 percent), medical testing on animals (66 percent), and cloning animals (35 percent).

According to the survey, 66 percent of Americans say divorce is morally acceptable, and 64 percent of them say gambling is permissible.

The four issues that Americans are least likely to find acceptable are suicide (13 percent), cloning humans (9 percent), polygamy (6 percent) and adultery (5 percent).

The survey results are based on telephone interviews with 1,005 adults ages 18 and older throughout the United States from May 2-5. It has a margin of error of plus or minus three percentage points.

**News brief**—United Methodist bishops have approved an agreement to share the sacrament of Communion

with Episcopalians and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), the first step in moving the three churches toward "full communion." Church officials expect similar agreements to be approved by the Episcopal Church and the ELCA within a year. The Episcopal Church and the ELCA already have a two-way full communion agreement that was formally launched in 2001.

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



**CHANGES IN MINISTRY**

**Pastors**

**Brauer, Brett A.**, to Trinity, Watertown, Wis.  
**Dolan, Timothy D.**, to Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis.  
**Esmay, Christopher M.**, to King of Kings, Alexandria, La.  
**Liggett, James D. Jr.**, to Director of Christian Giving, Ministry of Planned Giving, Milwaukee  
**Tiefel, George Jr.**, to retirement  
**Widmann, Warren L.**, to retirement

**Teachers**

**Bauer, Joshua J.**, to Garden Homes, Milwaukee  
**Bleick, Dennis E.**, to retirement  
**Carter, Jennifer**, to St. Mark, Eau Claire, Wis.  
**Carver, Richard D.**, to East Fork, Whiteriver, Ariz.  
**Clark, Lisa L.**, to St. Paul, Mount Calvary, Wis.  
**Dahlberg, Leland A.**, to retirement  
**Dahlberg, Ruth A.**, to retirement  
**Diener, Carolyn N.**, to retirement  
**Doberstein, Suzanne M.**, to retirement  
**Eaton, John L.**, to retirement  
**Fenske, James E.**, to retirement  
**Folck, Carol L.**, to retirement  
**Gartner, Daniel R.**, to retirement  
**Gartner, Judith M.**, to retirement  
**Gawrisch, Kelly M.**, to St. John, Wauwatosa, Wis.  
**Gostchock, Shannon**, to Pilgrim, Minneapolis, Minn.  
**Gurgel, Bart R.**, to St. Marcus, Milwaukee  
**Gut, Kathryn S.**, to Abiding Word, Houston, Texas  
**Haar, Beverlee M.**, to retirement  
**Hackmann, Tricia**, to Eternal Love, Appleton, Wis.  
**Hahn, James A.**, to Manitowoc LHS, Manitowoc, Wis.  
**Hawkes, Elizabeth J.**, to retirement  
**Hill, Ryan R.**, to Trinity, Bay City, Mich.  
**Homan, Michael S.**, to Pilgrim, Minneapolis, Minn.  
**Hoover, Lisa R.**, to Divine Savior, Indianapolis, Ind.  
**Hultman, Tracey L.**, to Emmanuel, Tempe, Ariz.  
**Jacobs, Karen A.**, to St. John, Hemlock, Mich.  
**Karnopp, Sandy M.**, to Shepherd, Albuquerque, N.M.  
**Knueppel, Dean Paul F.**, to retirement  
**Kroening, Nicole M.**, to St. John, Newark, Del.  
**Kurtzweg, Connie S.**, to St. John, Manitowoc, Wis.  
**Landwehr, Jane E.**, to retirement  
**Larabell, Judy A.**, to retirement  
**Leerssen, Rosemary C.**, to Our Savior, Longmont, Colo.

**Lemke, Carol J.**, to retirement  
**Lotito, Karen E.**, to Immanuel, Salem, Ore.  
**Marks, Joan D.**, to retirement  
**Menk, Rolland R.**, to retirement  
**Pieper, Ahnsharee**, to Faith, Fond du Lac, Wis.  
**Riesop, Shawn B.**, to Star of Bethlehem, New Berlin, Wis.  
**Roth, Arlene M.**, to retirement  
**Rusert, Judy D.**, to retirement  
**Schmeling, Ann M.**, to Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis.  
**Schmidt, Carolyn R.**, to retirement  
**Schuster, Marilyn A.**, to retirement  
**Smith, Jerilyn S.**, to retirement  
**Smith, Kathryn R.**, to retirement  
**Stein, Danielle D.**, to Friedens, Kenosha, Wis.  
**Strasburg, Carol B.**, to retirement  
**Stratman, Patricia L.**, to retirement  
**Van Stelle, Virginia**, to retirement  
**Voss, Kathie R.**, to retirement  
**Wade, Jane L.**, to Peace, Sun Prairie, Wis.  
**Weeks, Eileen C.**, to retirement  
**Wendland, Paul A.**, to Lakeside LHS, Lake Mills, Wis.  
**Weston, Donald S.**, to Martin Luther, Plzen, Czech Republic  
**Weston, Noelle A.**, to Martin Luther, Plzen, Czech Republic  
**Wilke, Diane G.**, to Martin Luther, Neenah, Wis.  
**Yass, Michelle**, to Star of Bethlehem, New Berlin, Wis.

**Staff Minister**

**Jahns, Thad C.**, to Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Service, Milwaukee

**ANNIVERSARIES**

**Marshfield, Wis.**—St. Peter (125). July 10. Service, 9 A.M. Aug. 14. Services, 9 A.M. & 1:30 P.M. Dinner served between services. 715-384-3822.  
**Maribel, Wis.**—St. John (150). July 24. Service, 10 A.M. Catered meal served at noon. Ticket needed: adults, \$9.50; children 3-10, \$4. RSVP, 920-863-6742.  
**Wonewoc, Wis.**—St. Paul School (125). Aug. 14. Services, 8 & 10:30 A.M. and 7:30 P.M. Dinner and fellowship to follow the 10:30 A.M. service. 608-464-3212.  
**Benton Harbor, Mich.**—Good Shepherd (50). Aug. 28. Organ recital, 3 P.M. Reception to follow.  
**Milwaukee, Wis.**—Atonement (75). Sept. 18. Services, 8:15 & 10:45 A.M. Meal to follow. 414-871-3744.

**COMING EVENTS**

**National OWLS convention**—Organization of WELS Lutheran Seniors. July 12-14. Radisson Paper Valley Hotel, Appleton, Wis. Lester Ring, 507-354-4403.  
**Tree of Life Bible camp**—Capital Mountain

Christian Camp, Weimar, Calif., July 24-30. [www.treeoflifebiblecamp.org](http://www.treeoflifebiblecamp.org).

**Soccer camp**—Schwan Retreat and Conference Center, Trego, Wis., July 31-Aug. 5. 800-577-4848.

**Lutheran Pioneer national trips**—Bike trip, Aug. 7-13. Richard Bartel, 262-694-8939. Canoe trip, Aug. 12-14, Dale Lorfeld, 262-673-3777.

**WELS North Atlantic District Annual Labor Day Retreat**—Sept. 3-5. Camp Taconic, Hinsdale, Ma. Worship, recreation, and program for all ages. Meals included. Judy Becker, 518-210-5590.

**WELS South Atlantic District Annual Labor Day Retreat**—Sept. 3-5. F.D.R. State Park, Pine Mountain, Ga. Tracy Heinitz, 404-680-1723.

**Life-a-thon**—Sept. 10, 9 A.M.-noon. Annual walk-run supporting the pregnancy counseling centers operated by WELS Lutheran for Life, Metro-Milwaukee. Held at NPH Christian Books & Gifts, 1250 N 113th St, Milwaukee. Peter Georgson, 414-727-8176.

**NAMES WANTED**

**Travis Air Force Base, Vacaville, Calif.**—St. John, Vacaville. Sunday worship, 10 A.M. Scott Stone, 707-469-1546.

**The Villages, Fla.**—The Open Bible (The Village Lutherans). Don Meier, 352-728-8492.

**Poughkeepsie, N.Y.**—Paul Meier, 203-378-1270.

**Plainview, Minn.**—Christian Christenson, 507-753-2576.

**GUEST PREACHER NEEDED**

**Olympia, Wash.**—Messiah, July 31, Aug. 7 & 14. Joel Nitz, 360-923-1961.

**Mountain Home, Ark.**—Trinity, Aug. 7 & 28. Dave Kapler, 870-424-2888.

**POSITIONS AVAILABLE**

**Business manager/treasurer**—Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis. Responsibilities include budgets, accounting, treasury, buildings and grounds, information technology, human resources, risk management, and auxiliary. Visit [www.wels.net](http://www.wels.net), jumpword "bulletinboard", for more details. Send resume to David Martin, 11831 N Seminary Dr 65W, Mequon WI 53092; 262-242-8103; [martind@wls.wels.net](mailto:martind@wls.wels.net).

**RV couple**—to live at Camp Shiloh in north-east Texas. Housekeeping, yard work, light maintenance work, and office work. One to six months during all seasons of the year. RV space with full hookups provided. Dan Schmeling, 903-855-1800.

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



**Picture this**



The kindergarten class from Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran School in Westminster, Colo., recently learned about Mexico. Sara Doyle, their teacher, brought her class to Rocky Mountain Lutheran High School in Northglenn, Colo., to meet Ernesto Gutierrez, a sophomore from Mexico. Ernesto spent some time talking with the students about his life in Mexico. He then read "Goldilocks and the Three Bears" to them in Spanish. Pastor Gene Ahlsweide translated while Ernesto read. What a special moment for both the kindergarten class and Ernesto!

*Submitted by John Barez*

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.

# COMMITTED to his COUNTRY and his GOD

The story of the United States' national anthem, *The Star-Spangled Banner*, is well known. During the War of 1812, when the British occupied Washington, D.C., U.S. district attorney Francis Scott Key went aboard a British ship to negotiate the release of a Washington physician who had been taken prisoner. From that ship's deck Key saw "the rockets red glare, the bombs bursting in air," as the British fleet attacked Fort McHenry in Baltimore. At "dawn's early light," he rejoiced that the American "flag was still there," and he began writing *The Star-Spangled Banner* on an envelope on his way to shore.

What you may not know is that Key was a dedicated Christian, committed not only to his country, but also to his God. Though less familiar than the national anthem, he wrote the words to this hymn:

Lord, with glowing heart I'd praise Thee,  
For the bliss Thy love bestows,  
For the pardoning grace that saves me,  
And the peace that from it flows;  
Help O God, my weak endeavor;  
This dull soul to rapture raise;  
Thou must light the flame, or never  
Can my love be warmed to praise.

Praise, my soul, the God that sought thee,  
Wretched wanderer, far astray;  
Found thee lost, and kindly brought thee  
From the paths of death away.  
Praise, with love's devoutest feeling,  
Him who saw thy guilt-born fear,  
And the light of hope revealing,  
Bade the blood-stained cross appear.





# It's all God

A woman shares how God has guided her.

Julie K. Wietzke

The message that God is in control comes out loud and clear when you talk to Becki Detro.

Whether she is talking about her conversion from Mormonism to Christianity or her full-time volunteer work in a ministry that reaches out to Mormons, she shares how God has guided her life.

“That’s what God does. He uses people from where he has brought them,” says Detro. “He has brought me from Mormonism, and now I have this burning desire to witness to my people.”

## God brought her to faith

Detro grew up in a family that dedicated its life to the Mormon church. Her great-great-great-great grandfather was a brother to the first martyr of the church. Her father served in many high positions within the church. Her family members strived to do good works and be worthy enough to go to heaven.

Yet all Detro felt was doubt and fear and guilt. She needed forgiveness. When she asked for it, she was told that she was insincere and therefore couldn’t be forgiven. Detro left the church, moved across the country, and tried several different religions, hoping to find the truth. She finally became an agnostic.

It was nine years later when Detro became a Christian, after a six-year-old neighbor girl invited her to church. Detro began turning to the Bible for healing. “[God’s] miraculous power came over me, and the burdens of sin and guilt I had carried with me all my life were gone in an instant.”

## God led her to share her faith

When Detro moved to Idaho to be near her dying father, she began look-

ing for churches that could teach her how to witness to her family. She found that and much more at Messiah, Nampa, Idaho. Within a year she was a confirmed member.

Messiah not only became her new family but also offered her an opportunity to be involved in a ministry close to her heart—sharing the gospel with Mormons. Messiah’s pastor, Mark Cares, had already written a book and was helping produce videos that showed others how to reach out to Mormons. When Cares asked her to help him develop a Web site, she jumped right in.

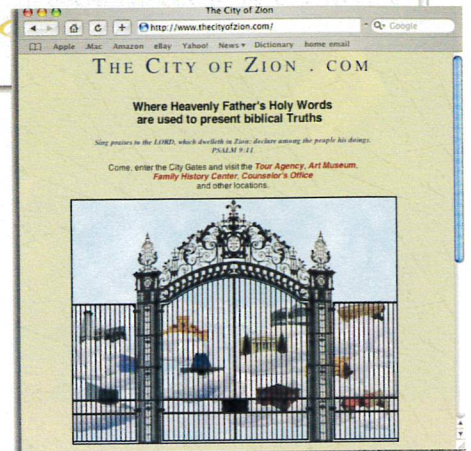
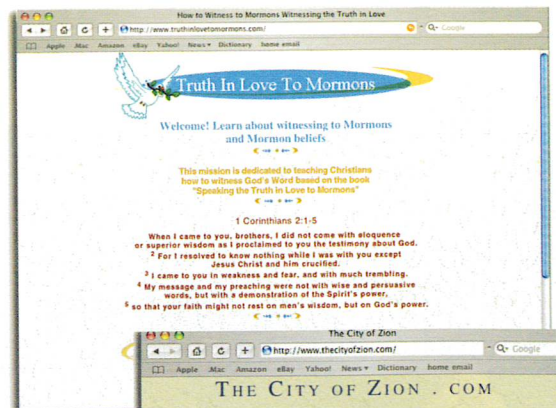
Although Detro’s and Cares’s first attempt at a Web site didn’t work out, God allowed something good to come from it. Detro met her husband, Keith, when he came to help her with her computer. When Cares received a grant a few years later to put together a new site, Keith supplied the missing piece. With Cares’s knowledge, Becki’s Mormon background, and Keith’s engineering, the site was brought to life.

This teaching Web site, [www.truthinlovetomormons.com](http://www.truthinlovetomormons.com), now gets 150,000 hits a month. It has become a prominent source for teaching how to witness to Mormons—and for sharing true Christianity.

“So many people come to the Web site to learn how to witness to Mormons and in the process they learn true Christianity,” says Becki. “It’s so cool because we tell it just like the Bible says it.”

Now the Detros and Cares, along with many other volunteers, are working on a new Web site, [www.thecityofzion.com](http://www.thecityofzion.com), that will witness directly to Mormons.

“That’s one of the beauties of God bringing my husband and me together.



We wake up in the middle of the night with ideas for the Web site, and we have to talk about them,” says Becki.

## God guided her life

As God blessed this ministry, God blessed Becki’s life—even in the hard times.

“A few years ago, I felt like the whole mission was on my shoulders,” says Becki. “I felt like I had to do everything. I wasn’t relaxing or enjoying myself.

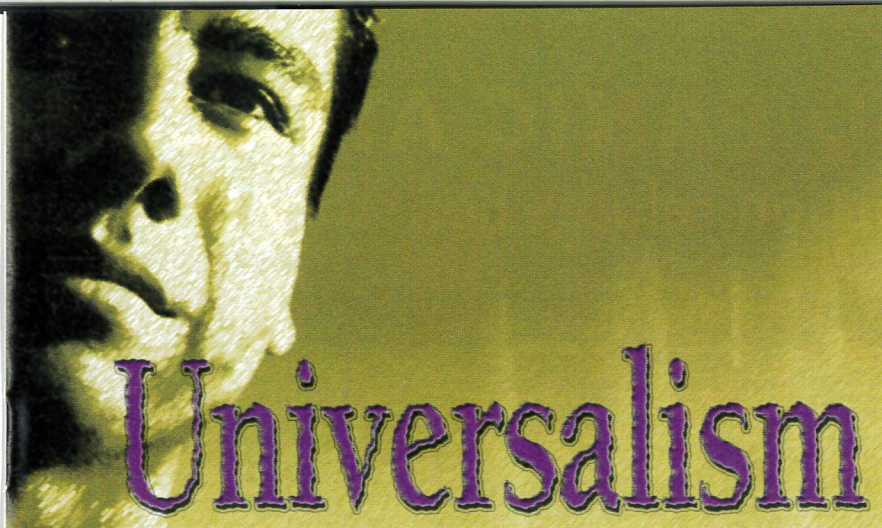
“What happened is that God gave me a brain tumor. He said ‘I’m sorry, but this mission doesn’t depend on you.’ It was pretty cool. It was an awesome experience on how God controls it all.”

Becki has had two surgeries to remove this non-cancerous tumor and has just finished radiation treatments. She is ready to go wherever God leads her.

“The power comes from within you because it’s Christ living in you,” she says. “It’s not something that you do. It’s something that God puts in your heart. You just can’t help it. It’s all God.”

Julie Wietzke is assistant editor for Forward in Christ





# Universalism

Burying the doctrines of sin, judgment, and hell under shovelfuls of “politically correct” love is a page right out of Satan’s longstanding playbook.

John M. Parlow

re: universalism

**RudeDog**

REPLY

QUOTE

There are a lot of good people out there from all walks of life and faiths. Who are we to say, “It’s our way or burn baby, burn!”? How loving is it to shut people out of heaven because they call God by a different name?

re: universalism

**preachinthe1**

REPLY

QUOTE

Sounds politically correct, but there is only one way to heaven . . . through Jesus Christ. None can be saved by any other religion or belief. Hell is real, and it would not be “loving” to let people burn.

re: universalism

**Madison76**

REPLY

QUOTE

I believe in hell. But do you think everyone who disagrees with you is going there? I just can’t believe in a God that would actually send people to a hell just because they don’t “trust in Jesus.” I think all people will end up in heaven some day—except for a few.

From there, the discussion turned to talk of God’s holiness, humanity’s sinfulness, and Jesus’ atoning work.

## Universalism’s appeal

Ancient universalism is a prominent element in postmodern spirituality. Its roots are in the Garden of Eden, where the serpent convinced Adam and Eve not to obey God’s warning of death for disobedience. “Did God really say . . . ?,” the serpent asked (Genesis 3:1). Then in defiance of God’s assertion he said, “You will not surely die” (Genesis 3:4).

In the same way universalism questions, “Has God really said

there is eternal death if you reject his Son? You surely will not die.” That explains why the doctrines of sin, judgment, and hell have all but disappeared from much of postmodern Christian theology.

Universalism has . . . well . . . universal appeal. Will all people ultimately end up in heaven? We desperately want it to be so. Further, it can appear arrogant to preach judgment and intolerant to say that faith in Christ is the only avenue of salvation. But as Christ’s ambassadors we are not authorized to amend Scripture; we are only authorized to proclaim it.

Talking about the realities of sin, judgment, and hell seems beneath many of today’s “positive” preachers. It’s just not cool to tell the unrepentant, unmarried couple next door that they are in peril of being eternally lost.

## Universalism’s problems

But burying the doctrines of sin, judgment, and hell under shovelfuls of “politically correct” love is a page right out of Satan’s long-standing playbook. Universalism is the heresy that says God accepts everybody just as they are. It says that sin is not the barrier that separates us from a holy God but merely a stain on the fabric of life that might make us look bad. Universalism makes gospel outreach unnecessary, even absurd. If sin isn’t a problem, then a Savior isn’t a need.

Love people by telling them the truth about their sin and their Savior. The truth is that the salvific message

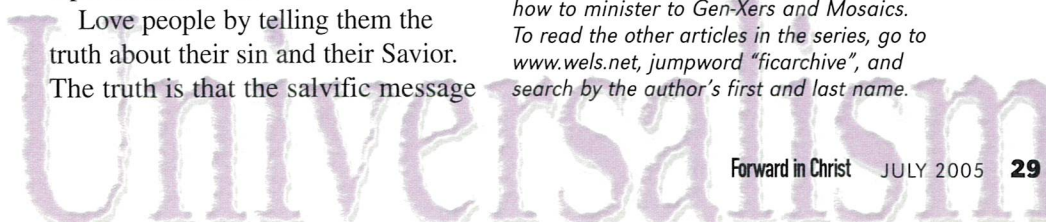
is both inclusive and exclusive, “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). Oh, yes, you will need to be tough-skinned. Some will label you a bigot or a hate-monger. Yet they will claim they are motivated by love.

**As Christ’s ambassadors we are not authorized to amend Scripture; we are only authorized to proclaim it.**

But who is more loving toward a drowning man? The man on the shore who tells the sinking swimmer that he’s not really drowning or the man who jumps in, throws out a life saver, and pleads with the drowning man to stop trying to save himself and grab hold of the one and only life saver?

*John Parlow is pastor at St. Mark, DePere, Wisconsin.*

*This is the third of a four-part series about how to minister to Gen-Xers and Mosaics. To read the other articles in the series, go to [www.wels.net](http://www.wels.net), jumpword “ficarchive”, and search by the author’s first and last name.*





# ANXIETY AND PANIC ATTACKS

One Christian relates her story to help



# PANICKED!

Jennifer N. Heins

**M**y sister entered college in 1997. Soon after orientation was over, my mom called to tell me that Kristin was struggling emotionally and physically. After several weeks of medical checkups and consultations, my mom informed me that Kristin suffered from anxiety or panic attacks. I replied, “Just tell her to read her Bible.”

Three years later, awaiting my college graduation and wedding date, I began to experience the same symptoms my sister had. My friends and I went on a trip to Wisconsin Dells. We had a good time at a water park during the day and went out for supper at night. Back in our hotel room that evening, my friends were falling asleep, but I was wide awake, unable to relax. I suddenly felt I could not get enough air to breathe. My heart raced. I vomited and could not get my muscles to relax. I thought that I was going to die. They rushed me



# AFFECT MILLIONS OF PEOPLE.

others deal with this terrifying experience.

to the emergency room in the middle of the night, and I found out that I was having a panic attack.

We returned home, and I continued to struggle with intense anxiety. The most I could sleep at night was about two hours. I struggled to eat. One morning a friend had to drive me to the emergency room because I was sure I was having a heart attack. After all the tests were run to make sure I was in fine health, the doctors concluded that I was having more panic attacks. Now I am embarrassed by my initial response of ignorance and the simplistic answer I gave to my sister for dealing with a serious medical condition.

According to the Anxiety Disorders Association of America (ADAA) Web site, anxiety disorders are the most common mental illness in the United States with more than 19 million of the adult U.S. population affected.<sup>1</sup> Anxiety disorders range from generalized anxiety to panic disorder to obsessive compulsive behavior, social anxiety, or specific phobias. One-third of American adults will have a panic attack in any given year<sup>2</sup> and approximately 1.7 percent of the population, or 2.4 million Americans, will suffer from what my sister and I had—panic disorder.<sup>1</sup>

## What are the symptoms?

Panic disorder leaves its sufferers with intense mental anguish in the form of repeated panic attacks. Common symptoms are racing pulse, sweating, fear of losing control, chest pressure, and tingling or numbness in the hands or feet. Other indicators of panic include the belief that you are dying as evidenced by routine trips to medical facilities and a fear of losing control or going “crazy.”

Words cannot describe the agony I felt. When I look at the list of symptoms for panic attacks, I can honestly say that I had every one. It

was ex-tremely terrifying, and I felt as though I would never be myself again. For me, panic attacks and the mental torment felt far worse than any physical pain I had ever experienced.

## Why does this happen?

No one knows for sure why people suffer from panic attacks. Doctors often think that it is due to a chemical imbalance in the brain. Dan Loe, a Christian counselor for Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Service, agrees that perhaps panic attacks do come from a chemical imbalance. But where does this chemical imbalance come from? Loe has concluded that panic comes as a reaction to long-term stressors, positive or negative. When a person has much demand or change occurring in his or her life, panic attacks may happen.

Patty Lussky, a health counselor at Bethany Lutheran College, Mankato, Minn., works with students who suffer from panic attacks. She believes that three factors predispose people to panic or anxiety: family life or heredity, the environment we live in, and one's personality. (Often those suffering are the most sensitive people.)

I struggled to understand why the Lord would allow me to suffer this way. I was undergoing much change in my life at the time with college graduation, my wedding, and a move to a new state. But I took comfort in knowing that my Savior was with me when I could not concentrate on a movie and struggled to fall asleep at three in the morning. I now thank him for getting me through the pain and for allowing me to use my experience to relate better to others and even help them through the same occurrence.

## How do we deal with anxiety?

People deal with panic in many different ways. Suggestions for handling worry and anxiety include practicing healthy nutrition, avoiding caffeine (which tends to make symptoms worse),

and getting plenty of sleep and exercise. Medication may also be a viable solution.

Panic attacks are not simply solved by reading your Bible, as I had suggested years before I suffered from them. Well-meaning family and friends offered advice to me when I was experiencing continuous panic attacks. I knew that they truly loved and cared for me, but I did not want to be hugged. I did not want to be told my faith was weak. Reading the Bible was not going to help, since I could not concentrate on any words put in front of me.

After two weeks of sheer misery I visited a therapist with Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Service. That was my turning point. It felt good to have someone listen to me and assure me that this was a common matter seen in her practice. I then went to a psychiatrist who prescribed medication, making me feel like myself again. Prayers by others and with others, including my Christian therapist, also helped immensely, getting me through the worst times.

It has been four years since my experience, and I still think about it daily. I am thankful that the Lord rescued me from this terrifying experience and because of it made childbirth a breeze! I am thankful for the people he put in my life. I am thankful for the invention of Paxil (a prescription medication that treats depression and panic disorder). But mostly, I am thankful that because of my panic attacks I am closer to him today.

Whenever I get anxious or revisit those two weeks in my mind, I hear a friend's words said to me during a particularly horrifying attack: “Surely it is God who saves me; I will trust in him and not be afraid” (“First Song of Isaiah,” c.f. Isaiah 12:2).

*Jennifer Heins is a member at St. Paul, North Mankato, Minnesota.*

<sup>1</sup>[www.adaa.org](http://www.adaa.org)  
<sup>2</sup>[www.anxietypanic.com](http://www.anxietypanic.com)



# Promoting peace through Jesus

**H**ow thick is your Sunday paper? An inch or two? If you remove all the advertising, how thick is it? Very thin! Isn't it true that without the advertising there wouldn't be much to the Sunday paper? But, it's also true that without the advertising, the paper would cost you a great deal more. Without advertising, I'm guessing, newspaper companies couldn't make a profit. Their existence usually depends on promoting products and services.

Now look at the way products and services are promoted. Isn't self-interest an underlying theme? Belonging to the new health club will make you feel good and look great. The new car in your driveway, highlighting your success, will make the neighbors envious. A tropical cruise, a luxurious hotel suite for a weekend, tickets to an NFL game, elegant dining at a five-star restaurant all are made to sound appealing, promoting the good life.

There may be nothing wrong with any of these things, or even the way they are promoted. Yet how different is the way God promotes the things relating to his kingdom. Paul's inspired words reflect on the promotion of God's kingdom: "May our Lord Jesus Christ himself . . . encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word" (2 Thessalonians 2:16,17).

What God does is great. From the creation of the world to the ending of it all and everything in between, God's greatness ought to be evident. But God's greatness, standing alone, could make us self-conscious, even frightened and afraid to be in his presence. Sinful beings, as we are, can't stand naturally before him.

That's why God promotes his grace. Cleansed by the blood of his son, Jesus, we stand pure and innocent in his sight. Pardoned by his grace in Christ we're bound for glory; heaven is ours.

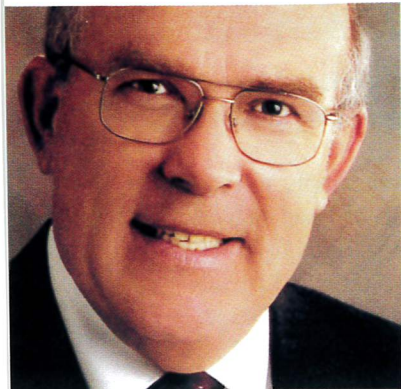
This greatness, grace, and glory of God lead us, in gratitude, to promote God's kingdom. For the benefit of still others, we proclaim peace through Jesus.

Our words promote peace through Jesus. We can share the love of Jesus with family, friends, and anyone who doesn't know where forgiveness can be found. With our daily lives, prompted by his grace, we glorify our heavenly Father, calling attention to the peace through Jesus we've received.

Sometimes we need to hear this promotion ourselves lest we grow weary in doing good, as Paul reminds us in Galatians 6:9. Although our Sunday bulletins are not usually as thick as the Sunday paper, they may have more than one insert, alerting us to some special Christian activity. The information coming from the synod, promoting the work we do together, contains almost endless opportunities for Christian service.

In fact, we have to make choices about what to promote. We can't do it all. How will we even prioritize what can be done? That's one of the important items on the agenda for this summer's synod convention. It's far more than a money question. First of all it's a ministry question. What are our ministry priorities? Do our ministry priorities reflect the Great Commission of our Savior, proclaiming peace through Jesus? How do we carry out the biblical directive to rightly divide the word of truth in the way we prepare future called workers? And after those two large items, how do we prioritize all the other ministry opportunities? The convention will decide.

Until it does and while it does, remember the words of Paul. As we all seek to promote the work of God's kingdom among us, may the Lord Jesus encourage our hearts and strengthen us for every good deed and word.



*Carl R. Lueck*



# Lessons from the Creed

What is it like being God's child?

Charles F. Degner

When I prayed as a child, I tried to imagine God in heaven, listening to my prayers. I often struggled to imagine what God looked like, and this troubled me.

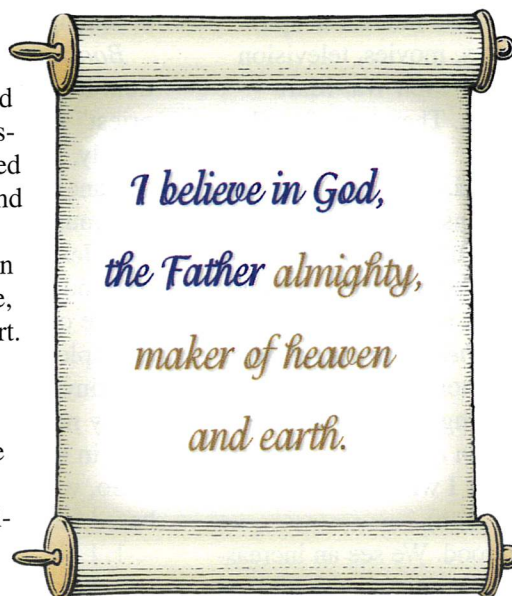
Jesus told the story of the lost son to put a face on God, a father's face, and to give us a window into his heart.

## Our Father forgives us

We can easily identify with the son who squandered his inheritance in wild living (Luke 15:11-16). We have experienced the shame of foolishly pursuing sinful pleasures that separated us from God. If you have never felt such shame, you must be perfect! Or you must be like the older brother (Luke 15:28-30). In that case, you ought to be ashamed of your sinful pride.

Remember that Satan's goal is not just to tempt us to sin. He wants to use our shame to convince us that there is no way that God will take us back. The young man in the parable wanted to go home. He didn't expect that he could return as a son. He only hoped that he could become a slave in his father's house (Luke 15:17-20).

Jesus shows us the heart of our heavenly Father (Luke 15:20-24) in the father's response. The father in the parable never stopped being a father to his son. He saw him when he was a long way off. People who live on farms with long driveways are always glancing up the road to see who is coming. The father watched every day to see if his son was coming home. So our Father in heaven waits anxiously for us to come home to him. If we turn our hearts towards home, he will know it immediately.



Look at the joy in the father's response. He did not put his son through a period of probation before he restored him. He gave him a son's robe, not a servant's clothes. He gave him the family ring, which was like giving him the family credit card. The

## There is room in the Father's heart for everyone who repents.

father restored him fully and gave him full rights in his family. We can almost understand why the older son was jealous. His father treated his wayward brother as if he had done nothing wrong. Isn't this how our Father in heaven treats us? For Jesus' sake, God justifies us. He declares us innocent. He treats us just as if we never did anything wrong!

Our relationship with God as our Father is built entirely on grace. The

parable of the older son teaches us this (Luke 15:25-31). He complained that he had worked like a slave and never got anything in return. The Pharisees in the crowd had to see themselves in the portrait of the older son. They thought that they deserved to be God's children because they worked so hard to keep his commandments. Jesus' story calls the self-righteous to repentance, too. There is room in the Father's heart for everyone who repents.

## Our Father loves us

How can you be sure that your Father in heaven also loves you? "You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ" (Galatians 3:26,27). God has a new robe for you, too. If you believe in Jesus and are baptized into Christ, you are wearing Jesus' righteousness. You have the full rights of being God's son or daughter. The door to your heavenly Father's heart and to his home is always open.

This is why you pray, "Our Father in heaven." You can come home every day, not as a slave, but as God's child.

*Contributing editor Charles Degner is pastor at St. Peter, St. Peter, Minnesota.*

*This is the third of a seven-part series on the First Article of the Apostles' Creed. To read other articles in the series, go to [www.wels.net](http://www.wels.net), jumpword "ficarchive", and search by the author's first and last name—Charles Degner.*



# Religious expre\$\$ion

Reporters call it “faith-based” programming, and it’s on the increase. The entertainment industry is plugging in to society’s electric interest in spiritual matters. Books, movies, television shows, magazines—even Wal-Mart—have found religion. They have found that it sells.

That’s not all bad. *The Passion of the Christ* made millions of dollars, but it also made millions of people think about the sufferings and death of the Lord Jesus Christ—and what it meant. Other productions, such as *Touched by an Angel*, have taught significant moral lessons.

The list is growing: *Left Behind*, *The DaVinci Code*, *Joan of Arcadia*, *Revelations* (in process as I write), *Book of Daniel* (to debut soon).

That’s not all good. We see an increasing amount of fiction mixed with biblical concepts that takes on a life of its own.

People begin to think that *Left Behind* is a picture of biblical truth, although it is a fictional distortion of truth. We think more about planes being left without a pilot than about Jesus the Pilot of our souls.

We begin to believe that some lost code might be found that will, at last, unlock the mysteries of truth. We don’t need a code. God’s truth is clear in Christ through the Word.

We are led to believe that virtually any spiritual theory seriously presented is to be taken as equal to any other spiritual message.

Don’t be misled. Take *Revelations*, named to make you think of the book of Revelation in Scripture. It is not an accurate portrayal of the message of John’s Revelation, even though it invokes the name of Christ frequently. Yes, Christ is coming again, not as a baby but as Judge. Christ is coming again, not to fight Satan for victory but as the heavenly Victor.

Christ is coming again, and we can do nothing to change the appointed time (contrary to *Revelations*’ message). Christ is coming again, and it cannot be too soon.

*Book of Daniel* takes us another direction. It features “a pill-popping Episcopal priest” and his seriously dysfunctional family. It’ll have just about everything deviant in it—embezzlement, illegal drug use, murder, homosexuality. It even will have Jesus, “a hip, modern-day Jesus,” on hand to help counsel the priest.

I’ve only skimmed the surface. Each example I have given begs for closer scrutiny. And it won’t go away—certainly not as long as the cash receipts stay in the black.

So, what can we do with all this faith-based fare? Here’s where to start:

1. Look always to Jesus, and remember that there is but one gospel. Does this program lead you to see Jesus as God’s Son who lived a perfect life for you and died to atone for your sins? Or does it obscure what Jesus has done and emphasize instead what we must do?
2. Dig into God’s Word. Regularly attend Bible classes. Compare the popular messages with what you study in the Scriptures. See whether the messages of the media are so.
3. Prepare yourself to witness to the truth in Christ when others are wondering about the false messages swirling about us.

The ultimate religious expression is the simple gospel truth that will work faith in a child and will resonate with childlike faith. Make that your daily fare.



Gary A. Baumbach



*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

Life on earth is short! Imagine that you will live to be 80. Take the number 80 and subtract your age. Now multiply that number by 52. That number is the probable number of weeks you have left. I'm 42 years old. That means that at most I can expect about 1,976 more weeks, that is, if I outlive my father. He died at 71.

Is it good to number your days this way? It certainly is. When you count them and see that what you have left is limited it makes you think more about how you use them. It makes you live a more purposeful life.

In a psalm he wrote, Moses teaches us to live purposeful lives by numbering our days.

Moses lived 120 years. He spent 40 years growing up in Egypt, the next 40 years raising a family in Midian, and the last 40 years leading Israel out of Egypt to the Promised Land. During his last 40 years he watched as around 1.2 million of his contemporaries died. He knew how short life really was.

With that understanding he wrote a psalm that leads each of us to live more repentant and purposeful lives. We know it as Psalm 90. As an exercise, read the following selected verses from that psalm three times. After reading them several times you will notice that you are forced to admit how short your life really is. You'll also notice that you are led to live more purposefully.

## Featured verses: Psalm 90

<sup>4</sup>For a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night. <sup>5</sup>You sweep men away in the sleep of death; they are like the new grass of the morning—<sup>6</sup>though in the morning it springs up new, by evening it is dry and withered. . . . <sup>10</sup>The length of our days is seventy years—or eighty, if we have the strength; yet their span is but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away. . . . <sup>12</sup>Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom. . . . <sup>14</sup>Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days. . . . <sup>16</sup>May your deeds be shown to your servants, your splendor to their children. <sup>17</sup>May the favor of the Lord our God rest upon us; establish the work of our hands for us—yes, establish the work of our hands.

## Points to ponder

- How do Moses' illustrations in verses 4-6 make us realize how short life really is?
- What wisdom do we get if we number our days the way Moses prays for in verse 12?
- What does verse 14 teach us about the purpose of life?
- In verse 16 Moses prays that God's people would have their faith encouraged. How?
- What does it mean when we pray in verse 17 that God establish the work of our hands?

## Treasures to share

- Get up 15 minutes earlier for the next week and spend those moments reflecting on the many ways Jesus has shown you his love (verse 14).
- Choose seven miracles from the Bible and each day of the next week share one of them with your family. Tell how that miracle strengthens your faith (verse 16).
- Think of the things you do that will have the most impact on this earth spiritually speaking. Now pray specifically that God would establish those things as lasting blessings for others (verse 17).

## Other Scripture verses that give us God's purpose for life

Matthew 28:19,20; 1 Corinthians 15:50-58; Proverbs 3:5,6; Philippians 2:12-16

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Find this article and possible answers online. Go to [www.wels.net](http://www.wels.net), jumpword "fic", and click on "Songs for the heart." Answers will be available after July 5.







**PLEASE  
DISTURB**

Ahhh. Finally a chance to get away from it all. Summer vacation. And this time you're not staying with relatives. You have booked yourself into a full-service hotel. The purpose of your vacation is twofold. Rest and relax.

You check in at the hotel, open the door of your hotel room, and before you plop down on the bed you make sure to hang the little sign on the doorknob facing the hallway. "Please Do Not Disturb." You turn off your cell phone and your pager, and recline for a siesta, taking comfort that your automatic "out of office" e-mail reply is doing its work.

#### **God doesn't take vacations**

Your heavenly Father has never done that. He's never taken a vacation, never napped after an early morning and hefty lunch, never gotten away from it all. If he did, the stars would fall from the sky, the gates of hell would melt all the goodness of the world into a volcano-like flow of putrid evil, and your heart would stop beating. No. He's never taken his eyes off of

God has an open-door policy. He hangs his sign on the doorway side of the open door: "Please Disturb."

**Daron J. Lindemann**

you—ever. He's never stopped listening for you to call him for something—ever. "The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer," says the disciple who started drowning in the storm and was caught by the ever alert love of Jesus (1 Peter 3:12).

That's because, for God, the greatest fulfillment isn't getting away from the buzz of activity but getting right into the middle of it. He's actually more delighted if you ask him to get more involved in more of your activities. He finds satisfaction in listening to you tell him about the pain of your ingrown toenail, seek his guidance about whether or not to accept the invitation to a social event, request his presence when your anxiety starts to unnerve you in situations most others wouldn't begin to worry

accessed by the death and resurrection of his one and only Son. No passwords. No bioscans. No ID cards. He knows who you are.

When you go to him, somehow you're always first in line as if nobody else has discovered this most gracious convenience (but it's just his miraculous ability to treat all his children with first-place love). He does this so that you come back again. Soon. He can hardly wait to hear about everything else going on in your life. It's not that he doesn't know, but when you share it with him, he can delight in the intimacy of your trust and the hope of your expectation.

In Luke 11 Jesus tells us that our heavenly Father is like a man who gets a knock at the door at midnight from his neighbor. At first the man tells his neighbor to

## **God loves being disturbed. Repeatedly. Persistently. Boldly.**

about, plead for his mercy again for the same sin you said you'd never do again, and ask him to give a friend a break.

#### **God wants us to "disturb" him**

God has an open-door policy, and he hangs his sign on the doorway side of the open door: "Please Disturb." The entrance to every blessing he has stored up for you has been unlocked and completely

get a grip and go back to bed. But the needy neighbor doesn't leave, so his friend gives him some help. Why? Because the needy neighbor persisted in disturbing his friend. The message for us: God loves being disturbed. Repeatedly. Persistently. Boldly.

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