

SEPTEMBER 1, 1986

The Northwestern Lutheran

South of
the border

PAGE 288



Somebody else's child

PAGE 289

The red cross

PAGE 290



288



289



290

May the Lord our God be with us
as he was with our fathers;
may he never leave
or forsake us. 1 Kings 8:57

The Northwestern Lutheran

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FEATURES

-
- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------------|
| Studies in 2 Peter by James A. Aderman | 285 |
| Watch out for false teachers | |
| <hr/> | |
| Where we stand by Mark E. Braun | 286 |
| Have we gone soft on divorce? | |
| <hr/> | |
| South of the border by Paul J. Hartman | 288 |
| <hr/> | |
| Somebody else's child by Bonnie Wasser | 289 |
| <hr/> | |
| The red cross by Eric S. Hartzell | 290 |
| Twenty-five years in Africa | |
| <hr/> | |
| Out of the mouth of babes by Joel C. Gerlach | 300 |
-

COLUMNS

-
- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------|
| The word for today by Armin J. Panning | 283 |
| Boasting about wisdom | |
| Editorial comment by Immanuel G. Frey | 284 |
| A top priority | |
| I would like to know by Paul E. Kelm | 287 |
| Letters | 292 |
| From this corner by the editor | 299 |
-

NEWS

-
- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| Around the world | 293 |
| Lutheran Women's Missionary Society Convention | 294 |
| District conventions | 294 |
-

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COVER — Street scene in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico.

Boasting about wisdom

This is what the Lord says: "Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom . . . but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight" (Jeremiah 9:23,24).

Whether it be our plans for the last major outing of the summer vacation, a perceptible change in the seasons, or the media's barrage of ads for back-to-school sales, all remind us that the opening of another school year is upon us.

It makes no difference whether we ourselves are gaining an education or whether we are parents providing an education for our children, the matter of training the intellect, of having a generation grow up in wisdom and knowledge is of great importance to our nation — important enough to receive a paragraph in the general prayer suggested in our hymnal's Order of Morning Service.

A prayer for schools

Though we perhaps don't hear that prayer as often as we used to, yet there is in it a beautiful petition that asks God: "Bestow Thy grace upon all the nations of the earth. Especially do we entreat Thee to bless our land and all its inhabitants and all who are in authority. Cause Thy glory to dwell among us and let mercy and truth, righteousness and peace, everywhere prevail. To this end we commend to Thy care all our schools and pray Thee to make them nurseries of useful knowledge and Christian virtues, that they may bring forth the wholesome fruits of life" (TLH, p. 13).

In praying this prayer we are undoubtedly inclined to think first of our Christian day schools, our area Lutheran high schools, and our synod's academies, colleges and seminary. And to be sure, Christian schools alone can teach the true "Christian virtues" which the General Prayer speaks of. The special and superior role of these schools dare not blind us, however, to the tremendously important role which secular schools also play in the welfare of our country, for they too are "nurseries of useful knowledge."

We live in a land of unprecedented educational opportunity. Virtually no one is deprived of the opportunity to develop his mind or train his hand so as to enter a trade or a profession. Being trained for work that matters is a key ingredient for a meaningful life.

Sounding a caution

But does that mean there are no cautions to be sounded, that education is an unmixed blessing? By no means! Despite the benefits of education, having knowledge and skill bring with it the strong temptation to trust in these as the solution for all of the world's ills. Sinful and fallen mankind has always been unduly optimistic about solving his problems with skill and ingenuity. That is "humanism" pure and simple — the kind of unfounded confidence Jeremiah warns against when he says, "Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom."

Secular knowledge is good, but it is not the solution to sin and evil. That can be found only in another kind of wisdom, the kind Jeremiah advocates when he continues, "but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth."

God is a God of perfect holiness whose *justice* demands *righteousness* of all men, a righteousness which they cannot render. But in his *kindness* toward weak and unrighteous sinners, God has sent his Son into the world. By his perfect life and innocent death Jesus has provided for us sinners the righteousness we need if we are to stand before God. Knowing that truth, and accepting it in faith, is true wisdom.

Wisdom to boast about

As schools all over the land open once again, let us remember that in our prayers, asking that they be "nurseries of useful knowledge." But let us never forget that those who have only a secular education, no matter how good, still need to learn what is basic in every Christian school, namely, the knowledge of our Savior God who in Christ "exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth." That is wisdom to boast about — and to trust in for time and eternity. □



Professor Panning is president of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin.

A top priority

It is not unusual for floor committees to place before a convention of the synod or of a district a resolution calling for "top priority" for a specified project or proposed undertaking. The committee members have devoted time and thought to the project under consideration. They are deeply impressed with its needs and potential, and they want something done about it.

Since the committee members are human, their proffered resolution may in some instances reflect impatience with the way the project is being handled, or it may carry a veiled accusation that the powers-that-be are incompetent or that ignorance clouds their perception or that they are dragging their feet. In most cases, however, the members of the committee are motivated by a strong desire to see the work expedited. As they see it, translating their enthusiasm into action is a matter of priority.

In this connection there are some things to be taken into consideration. There are a number of undertakings, programs, projects, and proposals which warrant a high priority in our joint work as a synod. If you read the *Report to the Twelve Districts*, which is made up of reports by the officers, boards, and commissions of the synod and provided for each district convention, or if you read the *Book of Reports and Memorials* which is studied at each synod convention, you will find a minimum of trivia in either one of them. What you *will* find is a catalog of critical needs in every department of the synod's work. They will vary from time to time, depending on the year in which the report is made, but they are likely to include such things as the need to begin mission work in a country like Brazil, the need to provide more workers to augment the overburdened staff of an existing mission field, the need for facilities and/ or staff at our pastor and teacher training schools, the need for an expanded ministry on our nation's campuses, the need to intensify our work among the handicapped, and a staggering array of other needs which are vital to the effective execution of our Savior's great commission.

Unfortunately, like even General Motors and the United States government, the church does not have enough money to do all the things it would like to do. When top priority is assigned to one project, another must be assigned a lower priority. This can, and usually does, diminish our efforts in another field.

It is quite obvious, therefore, that shifting priorities is not the complete answer to administering the synod's work more effectively and more efficiently. It is also quite obvious that carrying out a resolution depends more on those who must provide the necessary financial support for the work than on those who assign priorities to the various projects.

If we are looking for a culprit to blame for past failures to carry out important projects, the culprit is not hard to find. As the humorist said, "I have seen the enemy, and he is us." In many cases we have failed to provide the support which is needed to carry on the work that needs to be done. This failure, in turn, results from a failure to set the right priorities in our own personal lives. Setting such priorities should be a top priority with us.



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Immanuel G. Frey

Watch out for false teachers

There will be false teachers among you," Peter warns us last-days Christians as chapter two begins. In these twenty-one verses he describes their characteristics and false teachings. But Peter also reaffirms that our righteous God will punish those who twist or pervert his word and that our Father will rescue his children from the destruction he metes out to false teachers.

Characteristics of false teachers

The alarm is sounded in the very first verse: Expect that there will be "false teachers among you," as part of your fellowship of believers. They'll be hard to identify at first because "they will secretly introduce their destructive heresies" (v. 1). Their teachings will be popular. "Many will follow their shameful ways" (v. 2).

Unlike true shepherds of the Lord's flock, these unscrupulous leaders will not care about the sheep as much as they care about themselves. Peter describes them as "experts in greed" (v. 14, also vv. 5,15,16) and pastors who "exploit" (v. 3), "seduce" (v. 14) and "entice" (v. 18) their followers, rather than lead and feed them.

Their lack of spirituality will be evident in the free play they allow their sensual desires. They "follow the corrupt desire of the sinful nature" (v. 8) and act the part of amoral "brute beasts" (v. 12). These heretics will "carouse in broad daylight" (v. 13), not even hiding their revelry under cover of darkness. "With eyes full of adultery, they never stop sinning" (v. 14).

The doctrines of false teachers

It is not just the lifestyle of false teachers that Christians will view with alarm. The poison of their doctrines will be just as deadly. Peter predicts that these false teachers will go so far as "denying the sovereign Lord who bought them" (v. 1). The basic tenets of Christianity, the faith that Jesus alone is the Savior, will be boldly called a lie by these teachers. In place of the real gospel, they will substitute their own "good news." They will "promise freedom" (v. 19), freedom from problems, fears, pain, heartaches, guilt, but their pernicious promises will only intensify the slavery which entralls them.

While promoting their apostacy, they will "despise authority" (v. 10) and not just the authority of orthodox teachers. They will spurn the one who is absolute authority. "These men blaspheme in matters they do not understand" (v. 12). Among those matters in Peter's day was the role of angels. The apostle warns: "These men are not afraid to slander celestial beings" (v. 10). "Bold and arro-

gant" (v. 10) are terms used to describe these instructors who refuse to submit to God's authority in his word or in his church.

In place of "the word of the prophets made more certain" (1:19), these treacherous tutors will use their own word, "stories they have made up" (v. 3). Promising great spiritual blessings, they will produce nothing: "springs without water and mists driven by a storm" (v. 17). In place of God's living and powerful word, "they mouth empty, boastful words" (v. 18).

The promised end for false teachers

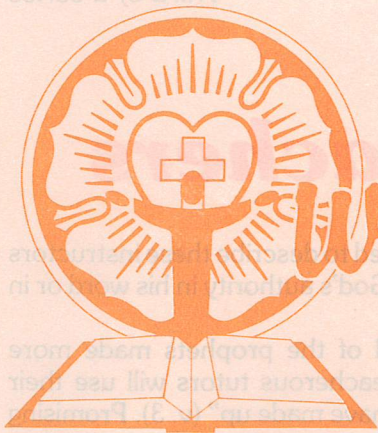
But God is well aware of the deceit of such perverted prophets. "Their condemnation has long been hanging over them and their destruction has not been sleeping" (v. 3, also v. 1). God promises that "they will be paid back with harm for the harm they have done" (v. 13, also vv. 12, 17). Their punishment will be all the greater because they had been exposed to the truth, but rejected it. "It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred commandment that was passed on to them" (v. 21).

Our assurance of God's protection

Although we last-days Christians need constantly to be on our guard against false teachers, we are promised God's protection from the punishment he will mete out against them. Verses 4 through 10 give us three examples of the way God punishes evil: the angels who rebelled shortly after creation, the profligate population of the world at the time of Noah, and the repulsively immoral citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah. But be sure to notice that in spite of the absolute destruction that befell those sin-savoring souls, God still delivered unscathed the righteous people from their midst. Consequently we can be sure, "the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment" (v. 9). It is to that sure promise we cling as we prayerfully await the Savior's return. □



James Aderman is pastor of Siloah, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.



Where we stand

by Mark E. Braun

Have we gone soft on divorce?

The statistics no longer startle. Fifty percent of all first marriages end in divorce. A still greater share of second marriages fail. Divorce litigation now constitutes half of all civil filings in the United States.

This is hardly news to American ears, including ears in the Wisconsin Synod. What might bother loyal Wisconsin Synod Lutherans is that divorce is becoming a part of our trend too. Didn't we always take a strong stand against divorce? Don't we still teach that "except for marital unfaithfulness" and "malicious desertion," divorce is sin? Wasn't there a time when it was all but unthinkable for a divorce to occur in our congregations? If it did, wasn't it routinely assumed that one of the partners in a dissolved marriage was to be excommunicated?

Much of that, it seems, has changed.

Have we gone soft on divorce?

Marriages have always encountered difficulties. A persistent myth has it that in the good old days spouses were happier and families faced fewer troubles. That notion is simply misinformed. The order for the marriage service in the *Lutheran Agenda*, published in the 1940s, said, "By reason of sin, many a cross hath been laid on this estate." That's always how it's been.

But some things have changed. Our society places a high value on *individual* privileges and freedoms — sometimes at the expense of the *family*. People are more likely in the 1980s to insist upon happiness and personal fulfillment as inherent rights. Divorce is easier to obtain. Women still suffer economically after broken marriages, yet women in this generation are far more able to go it alone financially than in the past. Above all, Americans have come to accept divorce. To be divorced no longer carries a stigma. Ronald Reagan, surely a zealous spokesman for strong American families, is himself once divorced.

But, you protest, who cares what society has come to accept? Didn't Paul say, "Do not be conformed to the pattern of this world, but be transformed . . ."? Aren't we

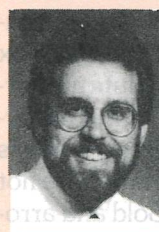
conforming to the world's pattern for divorce? Christians have always faced the danger of adapting to the world's pattern. Believers are influenced by their society. The culture in which God's Old Testament people lived viewed women as property; it considered taking a concubine an acceptable solution when a male heir was not born; it granted kings the right to practice polygamy and to maintain harems. Abraham and Jacob and David and Solomon all were affected by that society.

Have we gone soft on divorce? We continue to *teach* what Scripture says. It is unquestionably more difficult to *practice* what we teach.

What are we to do? *We need to keep on taking a biblical stand on marriage and divorce.* In the last decade, some churches have devised a "liturgy of separation," which in effect speaks the church's blessing on a divorce action. Don't expect the Wisconsin Synod to follow step. *We need strong leaders in our churches*, who will study the Scriptures on this important subject and support their pastor's ministry in difficult or unpopular decisions.

Most of all, *we need to practice preventive medicine.* Seek counseling before separation. Pursue marriage enrichment while there is still a marriage to enrich. Many pastors find that sermons and Bible study about home, family, marriage, children, divorce and remarriage draw the greatest response from their congregations. Continue to speak about those subjects.

Let's not say we're soft on divorce. Let's say we're strong on marriage. □



Mark Braun is pastor of St. John, Sparta, Wisconsin.

Can we, in clear conscience, hold membership at the YMCA?

While the YMCA does have a religious *credo*, it does not require subscription to these articles of faith by those whose membership fee purchases the right to recreational use of the facilities. There may be local issues or circumstances that would make membership in your community's "Y" inexpedient. (1 Corinthians 10:23). Barring this, your Christian conscience ought not be "burdened" by concerns over an athletic membership at the YMCA (Acts 15:28).

After a crucial decision by the voters, the pastor said that God's will had been done. Can we know this for sure? What about when a woman's husband is murdered or a boy's parents are divorced? Can we say that is or is not God's will?

No mortal can comprehend the will of God in its broadest sense, for as St. Paul exclaimed: "How unsearchable his judgment, and his paths beyond tracing out!" (Romans 11:33). Yet God *has* revealed his incontrovertible will in Scripture. God *wills* that people obey his commands — law (e.g., 1 Thessalonians 4:3). And God *wills* that all people be saved through faith in Jesus — gospel (1 Timothy 2:4). Moses summarized these two dimensions of God's will by saying: "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law" (Deuteronomy 29:29).

But people violate God's will with broken commandments and reject his will in unbelief. God's will cannot be simplistically defined as some deterministic computer program that runs the universe. He interacts with human beings as subjects, not objects. He allows people the (limited) freedom to ignore his will and exercise choices. (Scripture makes clear, however, that the fallen will of humankind is incapable of knowing God by faith or conforming itself to God's will. The Holy Spirit must regenerate heart and will by the gospel — John 15:16 and 5; 1 Corinthians 12:3)

To be sure, God can and does act to impose his will or frustrate the designs of perverse human will (Psalm 33:10-11). God may allow human will to express itself in actions that he uses for his purpose (e.g., Genesis 50:20). He may influence and shape human choices to fit his grand scheme for life (God's will in the broad sense). He can blend the choices and actions of mortals, perhaps also with his own interventions, to accomplish his purpose or "will" (Romans 8:28).

As difficult as this may be for finite human beings, we must distinguish between God's foreknowledge and his will. God knows everything that will or could happen, but

he does not *cause* everything that does happen.

One last effort at interpreting God within the limits of his revelation and our comprehension is to distinguish God's *active* will — what he does — from his *passive* will — what he permits — and see both as part of the overarching plan we might call God's *universal* or *eternal* will.

No wonder St. Paul expressed such awe at this whole concept in Romans 11!

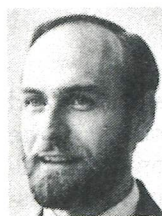
It may properly be said that the voters of your church have enacted God's will when their decision is based on the mission he gave the church, reached only after the careful application of his revealed will in Scripture, and initiated with prayer for his direction. Such passages as Matthew 18:18-20, 1 John 5:14-16 and Ephesians 4:11 ff. *direct* the church to carry out God's will confidently. Understand also that in issues where God has not revealed scriptural specifics (e.g., to open a Christian day school or add a teacher, to remodel the church or implement a particular stewardship program) the question is

God knows everything that will or could happen, but he does not cause everything that does happen.

not one of "right or wrong" decisions. Since God can bless whichever decision we reach in order to best apply his resources to opportunities for ministry, *now*, at most we might speak of "best and second-best" decisions.

Surely, it is not God's will in an "active" sense that a husband be murdered or parents divorced. He has expressly revealed his will against such sins. Yet the Christian can accept these events as falling within the "passive" will of God and *trust* that by ways and means beyond our grasp he is accomplishing his gracious purpose, not merely for the individual, but for his church and in his world (Ephesians 1:22; Romans 8:28).

That's the last word on God's will — *trust* built on the assurance of his love, demonstrated at the cross. □



Send your questions to *Questions, The Northwestern Lutheran, 2929 N. Mayfair Road, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53222*. Questions of general interest are preferred. Questions will be answered, however, only through this column.

Pastor Paul Kelm is the synod's executive secretary of evangelism.



Clothing, much of it from Peace Lutheran in Otsego, Michigan, was taken to Juarez.

South of the border

by Paul J. Hartman

As the news media report the continuing spread of terrorism, revolution and communism in Central and South America, the question arises: Will the upheaval also spread north to Mexico?

Since the currency of Mexico has fallen in value from about 210 to 610 pesos per dollar since January 1985 so that the people face at least 60 percent inflation and growing unemployment, that's a good question. The two major earthquakes that struck Mexico City in September have served only to deteriorate the currency and credibility of the Mexican government. The drop in oil prices has compounded the economic misery.

Congregation spared

Though thankfully no one from the congregation supported by our synod in Mexico City was seriously affected by the earthquake, \$30,000 was donated by the Committee on Relief for earthquake victims in Mexico. Meanwhile concerned members from various congregations have lent a helping hand when opportunities have become known to them. In October Mr. and Mrs. Harley Baumann brought 40 quilts made by ladies of St. John Lutheran Church in Waterloo, Wisconsin for the poor in Ciudad Juarez, just across the Rio Grande from El Paso, Texas. Dozens of boxes of clothing and blankets have also been distributed by our Lutheran church in Juarez to some of the thousands of poor who are fleeing north from the poverty-stricken south.

Another gift

We have something else to offer besides dollars and blankets. We can give the eternal hope and joy of the gospel through our support of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Church in Mexico (CELC) which has pas-

tors, congregations and missions in the country's five largest cities.

Recently Pastors Mark Goeglein, Larry Schlomer and Paul Hartman, who form our synod's advisory missionary team in El Paso, spent six weeks working with Pastor Josue Saucedo in Guadalajara. They presented a full-length movie about Martin Luther in a downtown hotel conference room. Responding to just three ads in a local paper 270 attended and more than 80 percent indicated a desire for additional information. These people are now being visited and home Bible study classes have started. The missionary team is praying that a new emphasis on home Bible study will result in more effective gospel witnessing in Mexico.

Nine confirmed

Meanwhile in Ciudad Juarez six children and three adults confirmed their faith in a service attended by 76 members and friends of the congregation. It is the ongoing household evangelism and Bible study by Pastor Vicente and Susano Guillen that led to these results. One way in which they have found people interested in Bible study is through vacation Bible schools. With volunteer help from Spanish-speaking Lutheran day school teachers Paul Bases and Vickie Bressler, nearly 300 children were taught the essentials of the gospel last summer.

Through our missionary team in El Paso we can stand at the side of our pastors in Mexico. Missionary Larry Schlomer, for example, is conducting seminars with the Mexican pastors in order to help them become more effective evangelists. At the same time efforts are being made to recruit students from the lay membership of the CELC.

The missionary team may also serve the mission in Colombia where several graduates of the preseminary program will be sent north for their seminary education if permission for their temporary residence in El Paso can be obtained from the U.S. immigration authorities. The unstable political climate in Colombia makes this more urgent now.

We don't know what will happen in Mexico. The revolution and turmoil of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries could return. So we work while it's day. And we pray. Pray that the Lord grant continued political stability in Mexico so that our Lutheran brothers there can preach the gospel in peace and freedom. Pray that the pastors of Mexico remain faithful and become more effective evangelists. □



Paul Hartman is field counselor and supervisor in Mexico.

Somebody else's child

by Bonnie Wasser



Back: Craig, Sari, Rob, Steve
Middle: Tanya, Shannon, Tamara, Bryan
Front: Joshua, Heather, Heidi

There are many things in this life that I don't understand. How come the dog only runs away when I'm home alone? How can that person, "I-didn't-do-it," live in so many houses? Why are some Christian families reluctant to care for "somebody else's child"?

The last bothers me most when someone sees our family of eleven (three by birth, five by adoption and three by foster care, soon to be adopted) and asks why we chose to parent "somebody else's children." Well, I've finally written down a few of my personal reasons.

Reason 1. It keeps me humble. I'm the only mother I know to be caught sitting on my son in the snowbank because he was threatening to run away again — and then to have the police stop. (I handled it as any wise mother would; I sent another son to explain.)

Reason 2. It's heightened my sense of humor. I believe the Lord gives us laughter to help keep our daily lives in perspective. (The policeman who stopped still waves at me when he passes.)

Reason 3. I can always tell myself that I'm a "good" mother. With so many children, there's bound to be at least one who's doing what he's supposed to.

Reason 4. I've learned firsthand that when we give it is truly returned tenfold.

Reason 5. I've learned to depend upon the Lord to take care of each child. With eleven, I feel free to remind him that he gave them to me so it's his turn to watch over them when I can't.

Reason 6. It's given me a new perspective on sharing. I grew up in a "normal," stable home sheltered from the fact that not everyone shares. Sometimes when I've been frustrated, I've felt that the Lord seemed to be saying, "Hey, why do you think I gave you the stability of a Christian home if not to share it?"

Reason 7. I've learned what commitment means. For those not sure, it means that even when the kid drops the

pan of lasagna (full, of course) upside down on the carpet, and you suspect it was on purpose, you still keep him. And I remind myself to be grateful that the Lord doesn't give up on me either.

Reason 8. Each child can bring one closer to the Lord. After all, when you're struggling to find ways to help this child he's given you, it's only natural to turn to him for advice — again and again and again. As it says in James 4:8, "Come near to God and he will come near to you."

Reason 9. Occasionally I hear, "I'd take a child but I'm afraid it might hurt the two I already have." I'm convinced that if the Lord chooses to enlarge my family, he's not going to sacrifice one child for another. Thankfully he is in control.

Reason 10. Caring for so many has taught me that not only my children by adoption and foster care, but also those by birth are each really "somebody else's child" — God's. Whether we have them for eighteen years or eight or only one or two, God's instructions are to "train up a child in the way he should go. . . ." My job is to follow his way and trust him to take care of the rest. Remembering to whom each of my children really belongs means that even on their "unlovable days," I'm glad he made me their mother.

So when someone says to me "I would, but . . ." I have to admit, there are some things in this life I just don't understand. □



Bonnie Wasser is a member of
First Lutheran in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin.

Twenty-five years in Africa

THE RED CROSS

by Eric S. Hartzell

From an oxcart by bright moonlight, the red cross looks black. It stands to the left of the door. It isn't the short equal-membered cross that the world knows, the kind painted on the sides of ambulances. This is a long lean cross fashioned by metal and a missionary's hand. To the ones who see this cross by moonlight from ox-carts or make their perspiring way by it on hot sultry afternoons, it is part of the building and the place where they come for help. This red cross is part of the dispensary, the "cibadela." The people pass it every time they come.

Imagine what has happened. Someone had the ambition to carry this red cross deep into the bush country of Zambia 25 years ago. Someone had the inspiration to make its shape and form familiar to people who without words and deeds would remain ignorant of it forever. Someone had — and has — the courage to work in the shadow of this cross. Someone had the conviction to live what they said the cross meant to them, to let its shadow fall freely across their lives.

The young nurses for instance. They live down the gravel road from the dispensary. They are lovingly called "Ba Sisita" by their people. This is the respectful way the Africans say "Sister," the term handed down from the English for nursing sister. The sister will come at any time



An oxcart ambulance



of the night. Simply call into the box with the wire that goes up on poles to her house and before long you will hear the sound of bicycle tires in the gravel or you will see the light bobbing through the dark as she comes on foot. If the need is bad enough she will come with her car, even if it is raining and the roads are bad. She will navigate her careening vehicle through the wild night the 40 miles to the university teaching hospital if necessary.

By this time in the sister's life, the cross has become a cross. The glory of the commissioning service has long since faded into the past. Loneliness has set in, not the kind that makes her go home, but the kind she lives with knowing that she is by herself among people who will never appreciate what home in Midwest U.S.A. means.

And maybe the precious mail bag full of letters from home was stolen from her van as she was getting medicine. She lives with the idea of some thief callously throwing her treasures away after he finds that they contained no money. Maybe love letters from a dear friend have stopped coming, and 10,000 miles is a long way. Maybe she is dead tired. The ox-carts and bicycles and people keep coming. Sometimes two or three times in a single night the bike makes its way down the dark gravel road. The cross standing unseen in the night by the door is felt by the nurse.

"If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." Deny sleep and convenience and self . . . for what? . . . For a little boy with his scalp full of bee stingers. He thought it would be fun to liven up a dull shepherd's day by throwing rocks at the mass of bees hanging from a thorn tree. . . . For a girl of 15 having a baby. The grandmother and mother are there to help. Never mind that the nurse told them all they should



be in town at the hospital there. She suspected trouble with this pregnancy. She was right, and now it is two o'clock in the morning and raining. . . .

For an old man whose body will not fight much longer against the malaria and parasites and abuse of the years. He is too old and weak to care any more. His children have brought him. But at least here clean and gentle hands will do what they can to relieve his suffering. . . . For the young mother whose child is burning up with fever. Her husband pedaled her 30 miles on the back of his bicycle through sand and rivers and rocks. "Ulapya" (he is burning). The language doesn't matter. Anguish doesn't need an interpreter.

The cross is by the door!

Like the cross that saved our souls, this cross too sees life and it sees death. Sometimes the door by the cross bursts open and a grown man runs outside to fall rolling and laughing and crying on the ground. Why the commotion? He doesn't care. He is a father! What a happy day. The people outside join in. "Twalumba Leza" — Thank God! The door opens again. You wouldn't recognize it or believe it. The baby of several weeks ago with his eyes sunken in his head and his belly extended is going home today with his mother. He clings to her back held close to her heart by her chitangi cloth and her love. His black eyes sparkle with life. He's well!

And this time the door doesn't open but the sound comes out, the awful wailing and chant of death. We lost the fight. The nurse, the missionary, the parent stand helplessly by. Did the cross let them down? Did it fail them in their hour of need? The missionary prayed. It looked to him like a perfect chance for our God to dispel

the superstition and fear by making the sick well at his request. But God didn't, the death up close is ugly.

Then the missionary remembers that the cross by the door is not a sign of magic. But it stands there on the wall by the door as proof of the victory over the fiend that stalks the black people of Africa. "He who believes in me will live, even though he dies." Jesus said those words. We would not say that the crying of death at the dispensary is always stilled by these words, but sometimes it is. Sometimes the door by the cross opens quietly to allow the Christian to carry his loved one to rest. And this is the cross's finest hour.

We speak of a cross. We glory in a cross. With a cross standing nearby, we do our work in Africa at our medical dispensaries. What happens in these places of mercy is a direct application of the words that we preach in the churches nearby. How could we preach if it were otherwise? "If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongues but with actions and truth." The cross by the door of the dispensary, where all these good things take place, is proof that we have our hearts and hands involved in what our tongues say.

The way of the cross is not easy. The Savior stumbled and fell while carrying his. We should remember that when we see the cross by the door of our medical work in Africa. It's not easy for the overworked pastor stateside who tries to do the necessary committee work to keep the effort in Africa supported. It isn't easy for the harried superintendent to make the trips through the dust and mud to lend aid and counsel, and this in addition to the 10 or 12 congregations which he tries to serve as pastor.

It isn't easy for the Christian women and housewives to spend the hours necessary in writing and visiting and encouraging others to keep the medical missions afloat financially. It isn't easy for a busy doctor to set time aside from work and family to take on the big responsibility of being the medical father of the operation. Finally, it isn't easy for any of us to help support such a work as this simply because it is so far, far away and there are so many crying mouths close around us demanding some tidbit of time or money.

But who said the cross would be easy? Standing by the door of our dispensary it symbolizes all our work and effort. It is the only thing worth working for. A red cross for black people. They need it. We have it. We must etch its shape and its meaning not only on the wall of their dispensaries but on the wall of their heart and life as well.



Eric Hartzell is missionary to the Apaches in East Fork, Arizona and a former missionary to Africa.

LETTERS

"No sad songs?"

I would like to respond to Pastor Prange's editorial on the topic "No sad songs?" (April 15).

I agree with Pastor Prange that there is a place for sad songs in our worship services. On Good Friday or at a funeral of a relative or friend it is hard to feel anything but sadness.

However, I hope that in our new hymnal we have mostly joyful songs that are easy to sing.

Paul tells us in Romans 5:3 that we should even "rejoice in our suffering" and in 1 Thessalonians 5:16, "Be joyful always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances." What a pleasure it is to sing the hymns that reflect that joy.

*Louis R. Lutz
La Crosse, Wisconsin*

Solution offered

I just read the article on the campus ministry, "Those who were lost" (May 15). Personal knowledge of similar tragedies has prompted me to offer a better solution.

The first and foremost responsibility of the training of a child comes from Christian parents. It involves regular church attendance, Sunday school, table and bedtime prayers and family devotions.

Next, some responsibility comes from Christian teachers. There is a tendency to believe that conservatism, strictness, homework and memorization of Bible passages are outdated methods or techniques. I encourage our teachers to press their students to new limits. Don't be influenced by the students or their parents to let up.

Thirdly, pastors, don't take shortcuts. Have your confirmation students memorize that catechism. You are their drill sergeant. Be tough! You are sending your army onto the worst battlefield.

Lastly, I would like to challenge our synod, our pastors, and especially all the parents to change tradition. How can we require our young people to attend confirmation classes for two or three years and then graduate them into a void?

Times have changed. We have an excellent level I training program and textbook — confirmation and Luther's Small Catechism. It's time our synod gets level II organized. It's time to train our young people to defend the Bible's doctrine against Mormonism or the Jehovah Witnesses.

After confirmation we are failing! Hey! Let's wake up. Souls are being lost long before they reach the college campus.

*Kenneth R. Johnson
Grand Junction, Colorado*

The frustrating wedding

Reading Mark Braun's article on the wedding service (July) was an enjoyable cathartic experience. It was refreshing to read about others with the same crabby outlook on weddings I've come to have.

As the article pointed out, weddings are often basically performances; and not only that, but they're performances put on by the rankest of amateurs — the families of the bridal couple. The result is that tension and stress reach unbearable levels, with everybody in a panic over whether some vital detail has been overlooked which would result in making the entire performance a disaster.

I think if I had the power, I'd pass a decree that all weddings henceforth shall be restricted to a seven-minute ceremony between the gospel reading and the sermon.

Thanks for a fine treatment of a frustrating part of the ministry

*Philip Merten
Milwaukee, Wisconsin*

"America is beautiful"

I would like to make a comment on Holly Beckman's article, "America is beautiful" (July).

It was a real wholesome and uplifting article, one we would do well to read again and again. Truly God has blessed this land as well as the people.

One item, however, needs to be corrected. Many newscasters, newspaper columnists, writers and diplomats make the same mistake not always innocently, as Holly, but often deliberately. And that is the word democracy. Many call our form of government a democracy. But our founding fathers established a republic.

A democracy is government where the majority can do whatever it wishes. And the majority can always get something by taking it from the minority.

A republic provides just laws. It is a government of laws and not of men. It requires that both the people and their leaders obey certain laws. In a republic the individual is protected from the majority, from society, from the government. It is a limited government.

*Robert Neumann
Midwest City, Oklahoma*

Important role of Lutherans

The article "Did you know . . . ?" (July) was most interesting, since it showed what an important role Lutherans have played in United States history. I only wish more information like this would be presented in the history courses taught in our Lutheran schools (I don't recall hearing much about such things in the Lutheran schools I attended). Perhaps Lutheran teachers in our schools could use more such facts about Lutherans' role in American history in the courses they teach. For in this way they could show their students that we Christians, who are "in the world, but not of it," can play a role in the civic and political life of our great nation.

*Ronald Winter
Wausau, Wisconsin*

Column should end

I think that the time has come for The Northwestern Lutheran to put an end to its "Letters" column. I have read these letters since the inception of the column and I have grown increasingly concerned and distressed at what is being printed. I am most unhappy at the continuing series of letters about Christian rock music. Scarcely an issue goes by without another installment in this continuing saga. While the arguments, at first, were innocuous enough, they have now reached the point of being misleading (note the recent letter which states that accepting the possibility of rock music being not sinful is tantamount to saying that membership in a lodge is not sinful).

If the editors of The Northwestern Lutheran keep a file of correspondence it will be noted that I was among those who suggested a "Letters" column some years ago. I regret that my suggestion has not turned out as I had envisioned.

The Northwestern Lutheran can easily be one of the first contacts that persons outside our faith have with what we believe. I question whether we are doing our Lord and the work of spreading his kingdom any good with this "Letters" column.

*Dana Rabenberg
Billings, Montana*

Letters between 100 and 250 words are preferred. In the interest of conciseness, letters are subject to editing. Full name, address and phone number should accompany each letter. Names will be withheld only under unusual circumstances. Letters cannot be acknowledged, nor can all letters be used. Address your letters to *LETTERS, The Northwestern Lutheran, 2929 N. Mayfair Road, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53222.*

NEWS around the world



Missouri Synod president reelected . . . Staving off attempts to unseat him at its July convention in Indianapolis, Dr. Ralph A. Bohlmann, 54, was reelected on the first ballot to his third term as president of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Bohlmann defeated Dr. Robert C. Sauer, current first vice president of the synod and favorite candidate of the opposition. In recent months opponents had waged an unrelenting campaign to defeat Bohlmann. They contended that although doctrinally orthodox himself, Bohlmann had been too tolerant of doctrinal laxity in some quarters of the synod. They also accused him of trying to centralize power in a denomination that prides itself on concentrating decision-making at the grassroots. A second blow was dealt the opposition when Dr. August T. Mennicke of Brainerd, Minn., was elected first vice president, a full-time position. Mennicke had been backed by Bohlmann. A third blow was dealt the opposition when Dr. Jacob A. O. Preus, retired president of the synod, accused the opposition of "absolute lies" and "declarations of war more vindictive than anything I have ever seen." He called upon the convention delegates to pass a resolution urging one of the newspaper publishers behind the campaign, Pastor Herman Otten of New Haven, Mo., to "go out of business and let the elected officials of this church do their job." Otten publishes *Christian News*. The *News* and another independent paper, *Affirm*, promoted the candidacy of Sauer.

Name finally approved . . . At its recent meeting in Seattle, the commission for a New Lutheran Church gave final approval to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as the recommended name for the new church scheduled to begin operations on January 1, 1988. The new church is a merger of the Lutheran Church in America, the American Lutheran Church, and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches. The final approval ended months of uncertainty about the availability of the name because it is the formal name of a two-congregation Lutheran group in Minnesota generally known as the Eielsen Synod. Although the tiny church asked that the new Lutheran church not use ELCA, the commission's legal counsel stated that the Eielsen Synod is not incorporated and that its constitution, written in Norwegian in 1846, does not include the phrase "in America" or "in North America." The commission's legal counsel also

noted that a predecessor body of the ALC, the Evangelical Lutheran Church, used ELC as its name from 1946 to 1960 without objection from the Eielsen Synod.

Over 1 million Lutherans in Russia . . . To this day the exact number of German Lutheran congregations in Russia is unknown according to Superintendent Harald Kalnins of Riga who acts as a spiritual caretaker for these congregations. He said he has been in contact with 490 congregations or groups across Russia. He said that again and again from "the reaches of the colossal country" new congregations are reporting to him. The total membership of these congregations exceeds 1 million, he said. There are some 2.9 million Russian Germans, most of them in the Siberian region and Central Asia. The largest congregation with a membership of roughly 4000 is in Karaganda, Kazakhstan. Many congregations, according to Kalnins, have not seen a pastor for 50 years. The only regular link to each other the congregations have is the newsletter that Kalnins puts out twice a year. What these congregations miss, he said, is theological literature. "But one is thankful that there are Bibles in every congregation which guide an active spiritual life." He did not know of any German Lutherans in prison at the moment — unlike Baptists. The state does not hinder the work Kalnins does for the congregations.

Leighton Ford launches new ministry . . . Leighton Ford, an evangelist with the Billy Graham Association for 31 years, is launching his own evangelistic organization. Ford, a brother-in-law of Graham, announced recently that he is leaving the Graham organization to form Leighton Ford Ministries, a move he said would enable him to do more international work and help develop younger Christian leaders. "The world is increasingly a younger world," he said. Ford, 54, ordained in the Presbyterian Church, said that Graham supported and encouraged the new venture. "I shall be grateful for the experience of working with (Mr. Graham) for 31 years," he said.

L.A. schools drop prayers . . . The Los Angeles Unified School District dropped religious invocations from graduation ceremonies in response to a lawsuit filed by a student's atheist parent. Future invocations will "reflect a kind of humanistic feeling without reference to a supreme being," the school district's attorney said. The school district agreed to the compromise after parent James Brodhead filed suit to stop officials from allowing a prayer at the high school graduation of his son. Brodhead's son Daniel, 17, was a student at Van Nuys High School. The father said he was "just delighted Dan will have a religion-free graduation." Brodhead was represented by the American Civil Liberties Union. He argued in his suit that religious invocations at public school graduation ceremonies are a violation of church-state constitutional separation.

News items appearing in *News Around the World* represent current events of general interest to the readers of *The Northwestern Lutheran* and should not be interpreted as representing the views of the editors.

Lutheran Women's Missionary Society Convention

"Light the World With the Message of Love" was the theme of the 23rd annual convention of the Lutheran Women's Missionary Society held June 27-28 at the Paper Valley Hotel and Conference Center in Appleton, Wis. The Wolf River Circuit was the host for the conference.

More than 1500 members of the Wisconsin Synod and guests attended from 20 states and two foreign countries.

Forty-two mission fields were represented at display tables, arranged by congregations of the Wolf River Circuit. Women from Wautoma and Waupaca constructed the convention banner.

The speakers included Pastor Paul Kelm, executive secretary, Board for Evangelism, Pastor Richard Lauersdorf, chairman of the interim committee for Brazil, and Pastor Norman Berg, executive secretary of home missions.

Other missionaries who addressed the convention were Pastors William Brassow, San Antonio, Tex.; Harold Hagedorn, associate executive secretary of home missions; Charles and Mrs. Flunker, Puerto Rico; and David and Mrs. Haberkorn, Japan. Pastor Duane Tomhave, executive secretary of world missions, presented an overview of world mission fields.

Newly elected officers installed at the convention are Karen Schimming, Beaver Dam, vice president; Dorothy Laabs, Oshkosh, secretary; Pastor Kenneth Bode, Westminster, Colo., pastor advisor; Marjorie Wolf, Crivitz, spiritual growth laywoman; and Pastor Kenneth Kratz, Oak Creek, spiritual growth pastor.

Other officers serving on the 10-member board are Beatrice Punke, Cochrane, president; Ruth Wollenburg, Lake Mills, president-elect; and Beverly Lund, Beckley, W. Va., treasurer.

Marjorie Wolf, Mrs. Gilbert Laabs, Hortonville, and Pastor Terry Deters, Brillion, make up the spiritual growth committee.

The mission box receipts from the



Pastor Arthur Guenther and Apache women at the LWMS Convention.

members of the LWMS for the past year was just under \$40,000. These funds were divided equally between the Home Mission Multi-Cultural Mission Fund and the World Mission Brazil Development Fund. The \$5000 convention offering will be sent to the Language Grant — Brazil Team Fund to help train missionaries and

families in the Portuguese language.

The Handbell Choir of Immanuel, Waupaca, directed by Cheryl Diener; the WELS Singing Hands, a singing/signing group from Milwaukee, directed by Beth Schulz; and the Faculty Choir of Fox Valley Lutheran High School, Appleton, provided inspirational music at the sessions.

Michigan District reelects Mueller

"Ask the Lord of the Harvest" was the theme of the 93rd convention of the Michigan District held at Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, June 17-19. Delegates never lost sight of this theme as morning and afternoon devotions reviewed the Savior's teaching of the plentiful harvest, the need for workers and what we are to do about it.

The four officers of the district were reelected. Pastor Robert P. Mueller of Salem, Owosso, was elected to his second two-year term as president. Mueller, 54, served congregations in Livonia, Flat Rock and Monroe, Mich., before coming to Salem.

Pastor Paul Kuske of Grove City, Ohio was reelected first vice president; Pastor Erhardt Schultz of Durand, Mich., second vice president; and Pastor William Balza of South Haven, secretary.

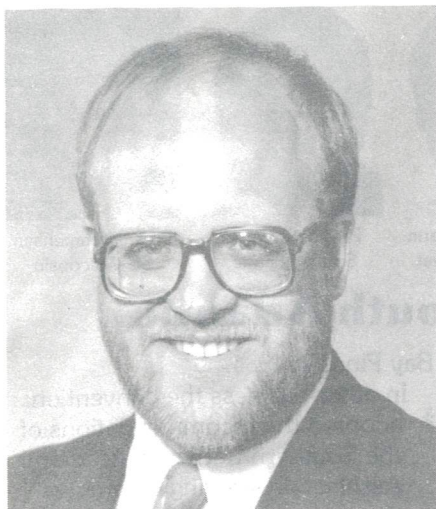
The highlight and climax of the

convention was the moving and inspirational communion service at St. Paul on Wednesday evening. During the service the district officers were installed and the commissioning of Pastor Stephen Lawrenz as missionary to the Lutheran Church in Central Africa took place. Taking part in the commissioning were the missionary's father, Professor Carl Lawrenz and his brother, Dr. John Lawrenz.

Delegates resolved that in the light of the synod's financial problems, Michigan District congregations re-evaluate their 1986 subscriptions and make every effort to reach 100 percent of those subscriptions.

The delegates also resolved to implement the new position of institutional chaplain to be served by a retired WELS pastor. The Ann Arbor area is to be the pilot area for the program which will be reviewed after two years.

— Ed Schaewe



Pastor Stephen Lawrenz of Gibsonia, Penn., was commissioned as missionary to the Lutheran Church in Central Africa on June 18 at the convention of the Michigan District by Pastor Ronald Freier, member of the Board for Home Missions.

Birkholz reelected in Minnesota

The thirty-fifth biennial convention of the Minnesota District was held on the campus of Dr. Martin Luther College in New Ulm, Minn., June 24-26. Pastor Gerhard Birkholz of Litchfield was elected to his fifth two-year term of office as president. Also elected were Pastor David Ponath of North St. Paul, first vice president; Pastor Warren Henrich of Redwood Falls, second vice president; and Pastor James D. Liggett of Sleepy Eye, secretary.

Pastor Mark Liesener, chairman of the Minnesota District Commission for Communication and Financial Support, presented the main essay for the convention on the role of the CCFS in the district.

The Twin Cities' Lutheran Institutional Ministry Association met during the convention and adopted a plan to include the support of a part-time chaplain in Rochester, home of the Mayo Clinic, in addition to the chaplain it supports for the Twin Cities' area.

In his closing remarks, President Birkholz rejoiced that "our convention was not marked by the spirit of controversy that has plagued other Lutheran church bodies in recent

North Atlantic reelects Beckmann

Sixty delegates were present June 10-11 when the three-year-old North Atlantic District met for its convention at the New Windsor Service Center in New Windsor, Maryland.

Reelected president was Pastor Walter Beckmann, who is the "pioneer" of the North Atlantic District. He has served since its beginning at Grace in Falls Church, Va. (outside Washington, D.C.) — the first WELS congregation on the east coast north of Florida. President Beckmann, who had previously served as chairman of the Colonial Conference Mission Board, played an important part in establishing many of the congregations in the North Atlantic District, the district which showed the largest percentage of increase in member-

ship in WELS during 1985.

Also reelected were Pastor Thomas C. Pfothauer of Ottawa, Ontario, first vice president; Pastor John R. Mittlestaedt of Largo, Maryland, second vice president; and Pastor Robert O. Balza of Christiana, Del., secretary.

Featured speaker at the convention was seminary Professor James Tiefel who delivered a paper entitled, "A Look at the Corporate Worship of God's People."

In view of the increasing need to recruit potential synodical workers and the increasing cost of educating them, the district voted to set up a district fund to be disbursed to students from the district who will be attending our synodical pastor and teacher training schools. This new fund will be maintained and administered by the district Special Ministry Committee and funded by the congregations of the district.

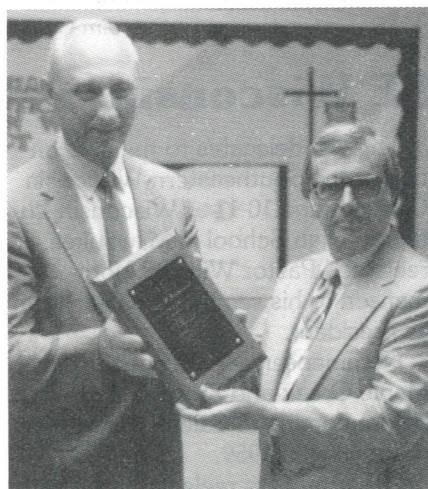
God's directives, our responsibilities and opportunities, plus his blessings in the realm of mission work rang throughout the convention.

— Charles Degner

— David Kehl

Voss reelected in Northern Wisconsin

The 35th biennial convention of the Northern Wisconsin District was held at Manitowoc Lutheran High



Mr. Lindemann, right, receiving plaque from President Voss.

school June 23-25.

The 328 voting delegates came from 150 congregations from northeastern Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. These delegates represent 83,000 baptized souls and 62,000 communicant members. There were two world missionaries present: Richard Poetter of Japan and LeRoy Dux of Zambia, Africa.

President Carl W. Voss was reelected to his seventh successive two-year term as president of the district. Voss began his ministry at Beatrice, Nebr., in 1955. Following five years of service there, he accepted a call to organize a mission congregation on Green Bay's northwest side, which became St. Mark Ev. Lutheran Church. The congregation presently numbers over 850 communicants and 1200 souls. For the first time the



President Mueller
Michigan



President Birkholz
Minnesota



President Beckmann
North Atlantic



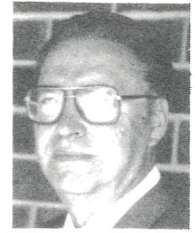
President Voss
Northern Wisconsin



President Widmann
Pacific Northwest



President Guse
South Atlantic



Pres. Nommensen
SE Wisconsin

district is requesting the regular assignment of a graduate assistant to President Voss instead of a vicar.

Pastor Clarence Koepsell of Oshkosh was reelected first vice president; Pastor Douglas Engelbrecht of Neenah was reelected second vice president; and Pastor Paul Kolander of Montello, as secretary.

Due to the restructuring of synod, the district's Board of Support has ceased to exist. The delegates unanimously passed a resolution thanking Mr. Oscar J. Lindemann of Manitowoc for serving faithfully as chairman of that board. President Voss presented him with a plaque recognizing his 13 years of service.

— Jan Eggert

New president for Pacific Northwest

The convention of the Pacific Northwest District was held at Evergreen Lutheran High School in Dupont Wash., June 10-11. While a review of *The Report to the Twelve Districts* occupied much of the delegates' time, the district elections were the focus of considerable interest.

For the first time since 1968, the district has a new president. President George Frey retired from the office after serving as president 18 years. Frey, 70, has served in the district since 1942 when he became pastor at Clarkston, Wash. He continues as pastor of St. Paul, Tacoma, Wash., where he has served since 1959.

The new district president is Warren Widmann. Widmann, 49, has been at Grace, Portland, Ore., since 1973. In his 23 years in the district he served as district missionary seven years and was second vice president for two terms and first vice president

Guse reelected in South Atlantic

Lake Yale Baptist Assembly near Eustis, Fla., was the site for the seventh biennial convention of the South Atlantic District June 9-11. Pastor John R. Guse, 40, of Roswell, Ga., was reelected to his second two-year term as district president. Also reelected were Pastor Keith C. Kruck of Clearwater, first vice president, and Pastor Rodney G. Busch of Fort Meyers, second vice president. Pastor David J. Beckman of Bay Pines, Seminole, was elected to succeed Pastor James L. Vogt as secretary. Beckman, 36, served congregations in Antigua, West Indies and Mobile, Ala., before coming to

Bay Pines in 1984.

- In other business the convention:
- * adopted the recommendations of the Southern Lutheran Academy Association steering committee that an academy association be started when there are at least five congregations of the district ready to join and that this association shall determine the opening date for the academy;
 - * petitioned the Board for Home Missions to give serious consideration to providing the congregation of the district mission board chairman with a vicar or seminary graduate;
 - * asked the Coordinating Council to "disapprove expenditures for new programs until such time as both initial and ongoing financial support for said programs can be reasonably expected"; and
 - * concurred with a recommendation that the Bethany program (preseminary training for married students) be moved to Northwestern College.

— David A. Nottling

for one term. Widmann also spent 13 years on the district mission board and 13 years as circuit pastor.

Pastor Theodore Lambert of Christ the King, Bremerton, Wash., was elected first vice president. Second vice president is Pastor Gerald Ditter of Bethesda, Portland, Ore.

— Jim Oldfield

SE Wisconsin reelects Nommensen

The 495 delegates to the convention of the Southeastern Wisconsin District June 10-11 at Wisconsin Lutheran High School in Milwaukee, reelected Pastor Winfred Nommensen to his second two-year term as president.

Nommensen served parishes in Maple Creek and Sugar Bush, Wis. before coming to Salem, Milwaukee (Granville) in 1959.

Other officers reelected are Pastor Robert Zink, first vice president; Pastor David Rutschow, second vice

president; and Pastor Mentor Kujath, secretary. Elected also were members of the newly-founded Board for Parish Services.

The convention essay on the history of fellowship in the Wisconsin Synod was delivered by Professor Wayne Mueller of the seminary.

Delegates viewed with enthusiasm the new synod video-tape "Walking Together," produced by the Commission for Communication and Financial Support.

NOTICES

The deadline for submitting items is four weeks before the date of issue

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS SPECIAL GIFTS COUNSELOR

The April 15, 1986, issue of *The Northwestern Lutheran* invited applications for the position of special gifts counselor, a position authorized by the 1985 convention of the synod. Because of the nature of the work involved the selection committee has subsequently recommended to the Conference of Presidents that this position be filled initially by a man with pastor training.

The voting membership of the synod is herewith asked to nominate qualified candidates for this position. The special gifts counselor will be responsible for designing, implementing and regularly updating a plan for the WELS special gifts program. This will include identifying potential donors and making personal visits to encourage and receive special or designated gifts. It will also be his responsibility to recruit and train part-time special gift solicitors in various areas of the synod enabling them to also conduct personal visits in a God-pleasing manner.

Nominations, including pertinent information, should be in the hands of the secretary of the synod no later than September 12, 1986.

Rev. David Worgull, Secretary
1270 North Dobson Road
Chandler, Arizona 85224

NOMINATIONS NORTHWESTERN COLLEGE

The following were nominated for the office of the president of Northwestern College:

| | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| Richard Balge | Mequon, WI |
| Gary Baumler | Watertown, WI |
| Wayne Borgwardt | Waukesha, WI |
| John Braun | Watertown, WI |
| Raymond Cox | Blantyre, Malawi |
| Paul Eickmann | Watertown, WI |
| Vilas Glaeske | Houston, TX |
| Robert Hellmann | Montrose, MN |
| Robert Hochmuth | Sacramento, CA |
| Paul Kelm | Brookfield, WI |
| James Korthals | Watertown, WI |
| Silas Krueger | Austin, TX |
| Richard Lauersdorf | Jefferson, WI |
| John Lawrenz | Saginaw, MI |
| Jon Mahnke | San Jose, CA |
| William Meier | Phoenix, AZ |
| Robert Mueller | Owosso, MI |
| Wayne Mueller | Mequon, MI |
| Marcus Nitz | Garden Grove, CA |
| Karl Peterson | Manitowoc, WI |
| David Ponath | North St. Paul, MN |
| David Rutschow | Downers Grove, IL |
| Wayne Schulz | Rapid City, SD |
| Cyril Spaude | Watertown, WI |
| John Trapp | Elm Grove, WI |
| David Valleskey | Mequon, WI |
| Robert Voss | Brookfield, WI |
| Rolf Westendorf | Milwaukee, WI |

Information pertaining to these candidates must be in the hands of the undersigned by September 12, 1986.

Rev. Harold Sturm, Secretary
NWC Board of Control
Route 1, Box 43
Arlington, WI 53911

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS MICHIGAN LUTHERAN SEMINARY

The board of control of Michigan Lutheran Seminary has been authorized by the Board for Pastor and Teacher Education to fill a teaching vacancy caused by the resignation of Prof. Edward Fredrich. The voting membership of the synod is asked to nominate a person to teach English. It would prove helpful if the person were qualified to assist in girls' athletics and/or computers. Professors at MLS must meet the certification requirements of the WELS and of the State of Michigan. The expense of educational preparation, including that for certification, is covered by the school.

Nominations, including pertinent information, should be in the hands of the secretary no later than September 12.

Mr. Jerold Meier, Secretary
MLS Board of Control
625 N. Harvey
Plymouth, MI 48170

CONFERENCES

Dakota-Montana District, Alberta-Montana Conference, September 9-10 at Valley View, Helena, Mont. Agenda: The Sin Against the Holy Ghost (Sullivan); The Art of Communication in Preaching (Bobaum); Exegesis of John 14:15-31 (Rawerts); Study of How Paul Uses Law and Gospel to Encourage Sanctification (Froehlich).

Dakota-Montana District, Western Conference, September 30-October 1 at Grace, Hot Springs, S. Dak. Agenda: Revelation 2:18 — 3:6 (Schuetze); Jonah and Nahum — Oracles to Nineveh (Bader); A History of Doctrine and Practice Among the Followers of Ellen White (Hrobsky); A Comparative Word Study (Rouse); What a Pastor and His Family Can Do to be Healthier and More Efficient (Winkel).

Michigan District, Southeastern Conference, September 15-16 at Faith, Dexter. Partial agenda: Exegesis of Matthew 19:10-12 (Schwab); Guidelines on the Role of a WELS Pastor in a Wedding Ceremony (Strack); Formula of Concord VI (Wilsman).

Minnesota District, Crow River Conference, September 16 at Calvary, Glenwood. Agenda: Isagogical Portion of John (Bauer); Evangelism: Theology and Its Practice (Domson).

Southeastern Wisconsin District, Chicago Conference, September 8-9 at St. John, Libertyville. Agenda: Hebrews 11 (Prange); The Scriptural Implications of the Cup (Bartels); The Letters to the Editor Page (Schaefer); The Mission Counselor (Hartmann).

Southeastern Wisconsin District, Southern Conference, September 9 at St. Luke, Kenosha. Agenda: Exegesis of 1 John 2:1-11 (Lehninger); Clergy Finances (Erdmann).

CHANGES IN MINISTRY

PASTORS:

Deters, Terry A., from Trinity, Brillion, Wis., to Good Shepherd, Phoenix, Ariz.

Funker, Charles H., from Las Piedras, Puerto Rico, to Brazil, S. America.

Goldbeck, Beck H., from Beautiful Savior, El Paso, Tex., to St. John, Peshtigo, Wis.

Hintz, Gerald C., from Our Savior, Clinton, Iowa, to Christus, Richmond, Wis.

Knickelbin, Thomas B., from St. Peter, Mayville, Wis., to Salem, Ann Arbor, Mich.

Mattek, Floyd W., from St. John, Ann Arbor, Mich., to retirement from active ministry.

Meier, Dennis W., from Grace, Casa Grande, Ariz., to St. John, Markesan, Wis.

Siever, Robert A., from St. Croix Lutheran High School, W. St. Paul, Minn., to Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Service, Milwaukee, Wis. (development manager).

Thompson, Donald L., from Our Shepherd, Crown Point, Ind., to Kettle Moraine Lutheran High School, Jackson, Wis.

Tisdale, Robbin G., from colloquy to Bethany, Gibsonia, Penn.

Wendland, Mark T., from inactive to St. John, Clare/Faith, Harrison, Mich.

TEACHERS:

Armstrong, Emily, to Lakeside Lutheran High School, Lake Mills, Wis.

Bahn, Michael, from inactive to Grace, St. Joseph, Mich.

Bode, Jeannette, from inactive to Shepherd of the Valley, Westminster, Colo.

Borchert, Kenneth, to Evergreen Lutheran High School, DuPont Wash.

Enter, David R., from St. Matthew, Stoddard, Wis., to St. Matthew, Janesville Wis.

Grebe, Sarah, to St. John, Dowagiac, Mich.

Greggs, Margaret, from inactive to Beautiful Savior, Milwaukee, Wis.

Hassler, Karl D., from Pilgrim, Minneapolis, Minn., to King of Grace, Golden Valley, Minn.

Hahn, James K., from Christ-St. John, West Salem, Wis., to St. John, Oak Creek, Wis.

Heckman, Gary C., from Grace, St. Joseph, Mich., to St. Paul, Saginaw, Mich.

Jenkins, Ruth, from inactive to Siloah, Milwaukee, Wis.

Kerr, Donald, to West Lutheran High School, Hopkins, Minn.

Landry, Laurie, from inactive to Minnesota Valley Lutheran High School, New Ulm, Minn.

Mantey, Curtis J., from St. John, Antigua, W. Indies, to Trinity, Belle Plaine, Minn.

Mertz, Steven, to Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee, Wis.

Meyer, Mark S., from St. John, St. Paul, Minn., to Goodview Trinity, Winona, Minn.

Nehls, Richard C., from Grace, Yakima, Wash., to St. Paul, Appleton, Wis.

Roeder, Francis, to Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee, Wis.

Ruddy, Marie, from inactive to St. Matthew, Milwaukee, Wis.

Sauer, Sandra, to St. Matthew, Spokane, Wash.

Schultz, Deborah A., from Memorial, Williamston, Mich., to Trinity, Marshall, Wis.

Viner, Virginia, from inactive to St. Paul, Onalaska, Wis.

Wolff, Patricia, from inactive to Bethany, Saginaw, Mich.

Zwick, Beverly, from Beautiful Savior, Carlsbad, Calif., to Pilgrim, Mesa, Ariz.

BUSINESS MANAGER WANTED

Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee, is seeking applicants for the position of business manager. The position requires a college graduate skilled in systems of budgetary review and expenditure control and long-term financial planning. The ability to direct the computerization of business function is essential. Contact President Gary Greenfield, WLC, 8830 W. Bluemound Rd., Milwaukee, WI 53226; 414/774-8620.

DISCONTINUED

Divine Charity of Library, Penn., held its last service June 29. If you wish to worship in the Pittsburgh area, please attend Bethany in Gibsonia or Faith in West Newton.

ADDRESSES

PASTORS:

Baldauf, Paul R., 2515 W. Grand River, Howell, MI 48843; 517/546-5265.

Burger, Norman F., Jr., 8631 Wintergreen, Grand Ledge, MI 48917; 517/627-2532.

Carmichael, Scott M., Rt. 2, Box 54, Renville, MN 56284; 612/329-3180.

Carter, William R., Rt. 1, Box 9A, Coleman, WI 54112; 414/897-3422.

Ewald, Gregory E., 1639 Jessamine Rd., Lesington, SC 29072; 803/356-0471.

Fritz, Lester G., 8626 County D, Forestville, WI 54213; 414/825-1303.

Geiger, Waldemar A., 1563 SE 9th St., Rochester, MN 55904; 507/289-4958.

Headrick, Victor L., 408 E. LaFollette St., P.O. Box 476, Pardeeville, WI 53954; 608/429-2817.

Hieb, Glen R., 23-27 Komatsu 3 chome, Tsuchiura City, Ibaraki-Ken, Japan 300; 0298-21-2868.

Lemke, Oscar A., Deckner Manor Apts., #118, 2021 Deckner Ave., Green Bay, WI 54302.

Marks, Harry W., 4797 Pheasant Dr., Anderson, CA 96007; 916/365-7774.

Marshall, Daniel R., 658 - 12th St. NE, Mason City, IA 50401; 515/424-7246.

Neujahr, Lee A., 98th General Hospital, P.O. Box 391, APO NY 09105.

Pochop, Kelly D., 6253 S. Straits Hwy, Indian River, MI 49749; 616/238-7246.

Pundt, Gerald A., 3451 Eden Dr., Santa Clara, CA 95051; 408/248-7967.

Raasch, Robert F., Fairway Apts., US41, Box 75A, Houghton, MI 49931; 906/482-2509.

Schroeder, John A., 12775 Northland Dr., Big Rapids, MI 49307; 616/796-0227.

Tesch, Jon E., R.R. 4., M347 Elm St., Marshfield, WI 54449; 715/384-3822.

Warnecke, Rodney W., Rt. 1, Box 28A, Shiocton, WI 54170; 414/986-3414.

Wichmann, Donald P., 2214 W. Anna, North Platte, NE 69101; 308/532-7673.

Wilde, Mark H., Lot A216, West Salem, WI 54669; 608/786-2823.

TEACHERS:

Martin, Thomas E., 612 Dorelle St., Kewaunee, WI 54216; 414/388-2636.

Plath, Timothy., 777 E. Napier, Apt. V-5, Benton Harbor, MI 49022.

Scrifer, Paul B., Rt. 2, Greenleaf, WI 54126; 414/864-7527.

Strobel, Kimberly R., 193 S. Main St. #6, Fond du Lac, WI 54935.

ANNIVERSARIES

Tucson, Ariz., Grace (75th), September 26, 7:00 p.m. (ice cream social/talent night); October 5 and 12, 10:00 a.m.; October 17, 5:30 p.m. (dinner); November 9, 3:00 p.m. (tell-a-story); November 6, 4:00 p.m. (supper). Contact Pastor Mark Hallemeier, 830 N. First Ave., Tucson, AZ 85719; 602/623-2613.

Monticello, Minn., St. Peter (75th), September 28, 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. (dinner following). Contact Pastor John Engel, Third and New Sts., Monticello, MN 55362; 612/295-5315.

Houston, Tex., Christ the Lord (20th), September 21, 3:30 p.m. (dinner following). Contact Christ the Lord Lutheran, 4410 S. Kirkwood, Houston, TX 77072; 713/498-2634.

Withrow, Wash., Holy Cross (75th), September 28, 4:00 p.m. (potluck). Contact Pastor Paul C. Fetzer, 560 - 11th St. NE, East Wenatchee, WA 98801; 509/884-6301.

Allenton, Wis., Zion (125th), September 7, 2:00 p.m. (luncheon following). Contact Pastor Dennis Strong, 6438 Co. Hwy D, Allenton, WI 53002; 414/629-5914.

Burlington, Wis., St. John Mission Society (40th), October 26, 8:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. (buffet dinner). Contact Arlene Hoganson, St. John Mission Society, 198 Westridge Ave., Burlington, WI 53105.

Shawano, Wis., Divine Savior (20th), September 21, 9:00 a.m. (noon meal to follow). Contact Pastor James Naumann, 102 Northridge Dr., Shawano, WI 54166; 715/526-6880.

Sturgeon Bay, Wis., St. John (100th), October 5, 12, 19 and 26 at 10:30 a.m. Anniversary dinner following October 26 service. Contact St. John Lutheran, 4911 Brauer Rd., Sturgeon Bay, WI 54235.

CHRISTIAN GROWTH SEMINAR

The La Crosse Area WELS Councilmen's Conference will present its second one-day seminar for adult WELS members on October 11, 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Luther High School, Onalaska, Wis. Participants may choose five of 14 workshops covering such topics as grief, depression, parenting, chemical dependency, retirement, money management, the "Call" system and Christianity in the workplace. Cost is \$7.50 including lunch. For further information write: Christian Growth Seminars, P.O. Box 412, Onalaska, WI 54650.

YOUTH COUNSELORS' WORKSHOP

The 11th annual Youth Counselors' Workshop will be held October 10-12 at Campbellsport, Wis. (50 miles north of Milwaukee). The workshop will begin at 7:00 p.m. Friday and conclude at 3:00 p.m. Sunday.

The workshop focuses on ministry to high school aged youth and two tracks will be offered. The first track, for first-time participants, will consider topics on beginning or reviving a youth program, organizing and planning in youth ministry, and developing a well-rounded, well-balanced program of youth ministry. The second track, for those who have previously attended, will focus on the area of counseling.

The workshop, conducted under the direction of the WELS Commission on Youth Ministry, is intended for pastors, Christian day school teachers and lay counselors. Cost of \$50 per person will cover meals, lodging and materials.

Deadline for registration is September 30. To register or for more information contact Prof. Allen Zahn, 613 S. Twelfth, Watertown, WI 53094; 414/261-0301.

WLS OPENING SERVICE

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary's opening service for the 1986-87 school year will be held Wednesday, September 10, 7:00 p.m. in the auditorium. Harold R. Johne will be installed as professor of New Testament and homiletics. David Valleskey is the preacher and Edward G. Zell liturgist and officiant of the installation. A reception in the dining hall will follow.

DEDICATION

Dedication of the new chapel/auditorium/gymnasium at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis., will take place Sunday, October 5, 2:30 p.m. Rev. Robert J. Zink will be the preacher, President Armin Panning the liturgist and Rev. Edward G. Zell will conduct the rite of dedication.

SEMINARY CONCERTS

The 1986 concert tour of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary male chorus is available in audio cassette for \$5.00 postpaid. Make out checks to Seminary Male Chorus and order from Prof. James P. Tiefel, 11822 N. Seminary Dr., Mequon, WI 53092.

CHURCH ITEMS AVAILABLE

The following items are available for cost of transportation: pulpit, altar, baptismal font, organ and road signs. Contact Pastor Thomas Hilliard, Rt. 2, Box 117D, West Newton, PA 15089; 412/872-9710.

ORGAN

Free to any WELS or ELS congregation: Hammond electric organ with two manuals, full foot pedals, separate speaker cabinet. Contact Pastor Gregory Lenz, 16900 Main St., Eden Prairie, MN 55344; 612/937-1233 or 937-2683.

ALTAR PARAMENTS

Good Shepherd in Burton, Mich. is offering altar paraments for every season of the church year as follows: Lectern — 3 1/2" wide x 34" long; pulpit — 17" wide x 25" long; altar — 13" drop by 37" wide and 84" across; and standard preacher's stole. Contact Pastor Michael Duncan at 313/742-4653.

SCHOOL DESKS

St. Paul, Green Bay, Wis., has a number of school desks available. Contact Mr. Tom Vieth, 414/468-5971, for details.

HYMNALS WANTED

Used hymnals are needed by an exploratory mission. If you can help, please contact Pastor David Cooper, 611 Oak Terrace, Jupiter, FL 33458; 305/744-6197.

WISCONSIN LUTHERAN SEMINARY AUXILIARY Annual Meeting

All women of WELS congregations are invited to the fourteenth annual WLSA meeting to be held October 4 at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis. The meeting will be held for the first time in the new chapel/auditorium/gymnasium. Registration and coffee hour will begin at 9:00 a.m. and the day's activities will conclude at 4:00 p.m.

Reservations preferred by September 25. A \$6.00 fee includes registration and dinner and should be mailed to the WLSA corresponding secretary, Mrs. Louise Kante, N80 W13073 Fond du Lac Ave., Menomonee Falls, WI 53051. Make checks payable to Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Auxiliary. Include your name, address, telephone number, church membership and pastoral conference.

FALL PASTORS' INSTITUTE

The 1986 Pastors' Institute at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary will be held on five Mondays beginning September 29. Sessions will be held in the multi-purpose room in the library basement from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. Program: Elijah, an Old Testament Preacher (Prof. J. Jeske); Problems of Modern Medicine (Prof. W. Mueller). Send registrations to President Armin J. Panning, 11831N Seminary Dr., Mequon, WI 53092. Registration fee is \$10.00.

NOTICE

The next regular plenary session of the Board of Trustees is scheduled for
September 29-30

Business to be acted on is to be submitted to the executive secretary of the board, with copies to be furnished the chairman of the board, no later than ten days prior to the meeting date.

Ralph E. Scharf, Secretary
Board of Trustees

DMLC LADIES AUXILIARY

The 27th annual meeting of the Dr. Martin Luther College Ladies Auxiliary will meet at the college October 8. Registration and coffee hour will begin at 9:00 a.m. Baby-sitting service will be provided and a noon luncheon will be served. The business meeting will conclude at 3:15 p.m. During the business meeting projects to be carried out during the coming year will be selected by the ladies. Gifts to help carry out these projects may be sent to the treasurer, Mrs. Helen Marrier, 8815 Greenway Ave. S., Cottage Grove, MN 55016 (if possible by October 1). Make checks payable to DMLC Ladies Auxiliary. Educational and entertaining programs are also being planned for the day and there will be mini-tours of the campus.

Financial Report Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran Synod

PREBUDGET SUBSCRIPTION PERFORMANCE

Six months ended 30 June 1986

| | Subscription Amount for 1986 | 6/12 of Annual Subscription | Six Months Offerings | Percent of Subscription |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Arizona-California | \$ 853,412 | \$ 426,706 | \$ 356,903 | 83.6 |
| Dakota-Montana | 396,231 | 198,115 | 139,411 | 70.3 |
| Michigan | 1,942,761 | 971,380 | 702,353 | 72.3 |
| Minnesota | 2,274,450 | 1,137,225 | 929,787 | 81.7 |
| Nebraska | 500,562 | 250,281 | 195,260 | 78.0 |
| North Atlantic | 263,226 | 131,613 | 120,656 | 91.6 |
| Northern Wisconsin | 2,265,109 | 1,132,555 | 905,905 | 79.9 |
| Pacific Northwest | 261,654 | 130,827 | 111,585 | 85.2 |
| South Atlantic | 324,770 | 162,385 | 154,849 | 95.3 |
| South Central | 238,889 | 119,445 | 101,831 | 85.2 |
| Southeastern Wisconsin | 2,999,626 | 1,499,813 | 1,108,838 | 73.9 |
| Western Wisconsin | 2,594,075 | 1,297,038 | 1,004,329 | 77.4 |
| Total — 1986 | \$14,914,765 | \$ 7,457,383 | \$ 5,831,707 | 78.2 |
| Total — 1985 | \$14,341,170 | \$ 7,170,585 | \$ 5,682,922 | 79.2 |

CURRENT BUDGETARY FUND

Statement of Receipts and Disbursements

Twelve months ended 30 June 1986 with last year comparisons

| | Twelve months ended 30 June | | Increase or (Decrease) | |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|------------------------|---------|
| | 1986 | 1985 | Amount | Percent |
| Receipts: | | | | |
| Prebudget Subscriptions | \$ 14,249,632 | \$ 13,736,454 | \$ 513,178 | 3.7 |
| Gifts and Memorials | 331,125 | 258,707 | 72,418 | 28.0 |
| Bequests | 200,199 | 217,532 | (17,333) | (7.8) |
| Other Income | 166,689 | 148,051 | 18,638 | 12.6 |
| Transfers from Other Funds | 1,197,033 | 436,162 | 760,871 | 174.4 |
| Total Receipts | \$ 16,144,678 | \$ 14,796,906 | \$ 1,347,772 | 9.1 |
| Disbursements: | | | | |
| Worker-Training | \$ 6,091,134 | \$ 5,720,644 | \$ 370,490 | 6.5 |
| Home Missions | 3,784,252 | 3,659,140 | 125,112 | 3.4 |
| World Missions | 2,964,084 | 2,553,380 | 430,704 | 16.9 |
| Benevolences | 888,518 | 853,119 | 35,399 | 4.1 |
| Administration and Services | 1,768,062 | 1,538,146 | 229,916 | 14.9 |
| Sub-total | \$ 15,516,050 | \$ 14,324,429 | \$ 1,191,621 | 8.3 |
| CEF — Interest Subsidy | 856,629 | 672,826 | 183,803 | 27.3 |
| Transfers to Building Funds | 227,000 | 227,000 | - | - |
| Total Disbursements | \$ 16,599,679 | \$ 15,224,255 | \$ 1,375,424 | 9.0 |
| Twelve Months Increase/(Decrease) | \$ (455,001) | \$ (457,349) | | |
| Fund Balance — Beg. of Period | \$ 3,737 | \$ 431,086 | | |
| Fund Balance — End of Period | \$ (451,264) | \$ 3,737 | | |

Norbert M. Manthe
Chief Accounting Officer

FROM THIS CORNER

The fall months are important months in the life of our 1200 congregations. That is not a trifling thought. In those 1200 congregations the 417,000 baptized members of the synod find the focus of their spiritual life — nourishment for their faith, the celebration of their joys and solace for their sorrows.

Furthermore, the lull of the summer months is over, vacations behind us and with renewed energy the parish plunges into its regular schedule. If new programs are introduced in a congregation, they are usually launched in the fall months: a new service organization, expansion of Bible study, or the opening of a school.

On a more somber note, panic chills congregational treasurers. In spite of fervent appeals, offerings are down in the summer, and yet the bills cease not. September barely stems the red tide. Church councils eagerly await the fourth quarter in which traditionally congregations receive one-third or more of their annual income.

Most congregations have some kind of budget, the annual spending guide. Congregations will be reviewing their performance, under God, both as to program and to its support, and shaping a program for 1987 costing congregations of the synod about \$115 million. They will also invite their members to review their own blessings and develop a family plan for giving. (In some congregations the members have even been persuaded to share this secret plan of giving with the church so that it can estimate program support for the next year.) All this is not to suggest that contemporary management techniques have replaced the gospel as the matrix and fuel of congregational life.

It is in these autumn planning months that I like to make my annual appeal to congregations to consider the possibility of placing *The Northwestern Lutheran* into every home. Twenty-one times a year the magazine will enter such a home with its worldwide kingdom news. Its devotions and Bible studies will nourish the spirit. Its feature articles will inspire and edify. Twenty-one times a year it will lift eyes beyond the parish boundaries to a vision of 1200 congregations carrying on a common ministry vital to the kingdom of God. Other glimpses of the one holy Christian Church at work will occasionally surface.

Although individual subscriptions are most welcome, the greatest good is realized through blanket subscriptions. They come either in bulk form — all subscriptions bundled and sent to one address — or in an every-home mailing plan. There is a substantial reduction in rates for either of these two plans. To further ease the cost, a quarterly billing can be arranged.

A good Christian magazine is hard to find these days. The other kind thrive. I am hoping that good Christian taste will assert itself in the synodical households. We, on our part, pledge to you that we will keep trying to bring you the best in Christian writing this synod can offer and in the most attractive package our skills can provide. And when we stop trying to do that, I will get out of the editing business. And that's a promise!

James P. Schaefer

*A good
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is hard
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Out of the mouth of babes

by Joel C. Gerlach

In her book *Angels in Pinafores*, Alice Humphreys relates her experiences as a first-grade teacher. On a winter day one of her pupils came to school wearing a new white angora beret with white mittens and a matching muff. The picture is charming even in the imagining.

As the little girl came through the door a mischievous little boy grabbed the muff and threw it in the mud. After disciplining the scamp, Ms. Humphreys tried to comfort the little girl. Brushing the mud off her muff, she looked up at her teacher and said with an air of sophistication beyond her years, "Sometime I must take a day off and tell him about God."

"A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver," Solomon mused. There are apples of gold in that little girl's response. Jesus once observed that greater wisdom sometimes issues from the mouth of babes than from the mouth of persons who are old enough to know better.

On occasion we meet scamps too. And they aren't first graders except in their immaturity. How do we handle such situations? Is the first thought that comes to mind that if I could just tell him about God, perhaps things would change for the better? Or do we find ourselves struggling to suppress an irresistible urge to tell him off?

The little girl's response to her teacher reveals some sound theological insights. She recognized the truth that only the power of God can transform a scamp into a saint. She also perceived that God does not empower people apart from his word. That naughty little boy needed to be *told* about God. She also understood that someone needed to do the telling. And she knew who that someone was. She didn't try to pass her responsibility off to her teacher. "I must tell him about God." And finally she understood that there are "in season" times for telling others about God (2 Timothy 4:2). "Sometime." The door of the schoolhouse was neither the time nor the place.

Isaiah may have had someone in mind like this little girl with matching white mittens and muff when he prophesied that in the coming kingdom of God, "a little child will lead them" (Isaiah 11:6). She can lead us to a greater awareness of our reason for being in God's world. God is unfolding "the mystery of his will" to the world. He wants



"Sometime I must take a day off and tell him about God."

to use us to do the unfolding so that God's mystery is no longer a mystery to anyone. That mystery has to do with God's way of turning filthy rags that are red like crimson into garments that are whiter than snow.

We live in a world in which people are constantly throwing the white robe of Christ's righteousness down into the mud. We see it all the time. If we are in tune with the Holy Spirit, then a little voice within us keeps telling us, "Sometime I must take the opportunity to tell them about God." □



Joel Gerlach is pastor of Our Redeemer, Santa Barbara, California.