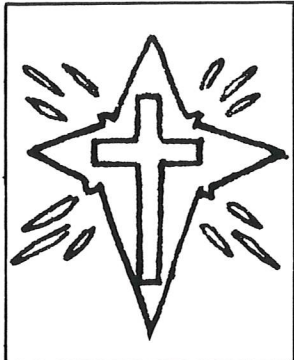


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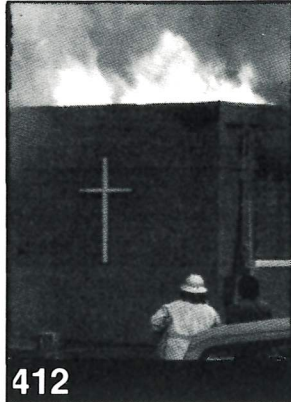
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May the Lord our God be with us
as he was with our fathers;
may he never leave
or forsake us. 1 Kings 8:57

The Northwestern Lutheran

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE
WISCONSIN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD

VOLUME 73 / NUMBER 21
DECEMBER 1986

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Production

Production services of Northwestern Publishing House: Production coordinator, Clifford Koeller; Design and page make-up, Matthew Schaser, Duane Weaver; Subscription manager, Judy Olson.

Subscriber service

For subscription service, write: Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 N. 113th St., P.O. Box 26975, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53226-0975. Phone 414/475-6600. Allow **four weeks** for a new subscription, subscription renewal or change of address.

Subscription rates (payable in advance)

U.S.A. and Canada — **One year, \$7.00; two years, \$13.00; three years, \$18.00.** Twenty-five or more unaddressed copies sent in a bundle to one address at \$4.00 per subscription. Every home mailing plan at \$4.50 per subscription. All prices include postage.

All other countries — Please write for rates.

The Northwestern Lutheran is available on **cassette** for the visually handicapped. For information, write: Workshop for the Visually Handicapped, 559 Humboldt Avenue, St. Paul, Minnesota 55107.

THE NORTHWESTERN LUTHERAN (ISSN 0029-3512) is published *semimonthly, except monthly in July, August and December*, by Northwestern Publishing House, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Second class postage paid at Milwaukee, Wisconsin and additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to THE NORTHWESTERN LUTHERAN, c/o Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 N. 113th St., P.O. Box 26975, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53226-0975. ©1986 by The Northwestern Lutheran, magazine of the Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran Synod.

Christmas:

the mystery, the message, the miracle

The shepherds returned. . . . (Luke 2:20a).

Normally, shepherds do not make good media types. Normally, their lives lack the flash, the glitz, the glamour, the excitement which would qualify them as subject matter for a best seller or an upclose and personal interview by a television anchor. Normally, shepherds and humble seem to go together like peaches and cream, strawberries and schaum torte. That's the way it is with shepherds — normally.

Normally, but not always. On one decidedly non-normal night back in the days when a Caesar was more than a salad or a brand of pizza; back in the days when Rome had an empire and Sunday afternoon's gladiators didn't wear shoulder pads and football cleats; back in the days

*Christmas changes perspectives,
alters moods,
and makes hearts sing.*

when "the fullness of time had come," shepherds, a few Judean shepherds, formed a "congregation" of the first Christmas celebrants.

Ever wonder why? Why shepherds? Why not kings or priests, the rich or the famous, the high or the mighty, the wheeler or the dealer?

But then, that's a part of the mystery of Christmas. We know so much, and we *think* we know so much, but the truth of the matter is that even in items which are so "totally" familiar, we know so little.

Specifically and exactly, when was Jesus born? We don't know. Precisely where was the Savior's birthplace? We don't know. Was Joseph Mary's only attendant or did he seek help from a kindhearted stranger or two? We don't know. What color were the "swaddling clothes" (KJV) or the NIV's "strips of cloth": royal blue, pristine white, or something in between? We don't know.

In most of these and similar speculations it matters not one whit whether we know or don't know. What does

count is that we do know *who* was born and *why* he was born: Jesus, the world's one and only Savior.

Maybe, just maybe, the reason shepherds knew about these major facts first was to insure that none, none should feel *left out* of the miracle of Christmas. Shepherds, for all of our sakes, heard that best preacher ever deliver one of the shortest and best sermons ever; "Unto you is born a Savior which is Christ the Lord." They heard the best choir ever close the sweet service with a superb carol rendition, "Glory to God in the highest. . . ."

If shepherds, why not everyone? The message is intended for everyone of all time: the prince and the pauper, the king and the commoner, the president and the people, the rich and the poor, the educated and the illiterate. The message is universal and timeless.

However, the miracle of Christmas is not only that the Father sent his Son, as magnificent as that truly is. The miracle also revolves about what God does through people who go and see and return. Simple shepherds went to Bethlehem as directed. There they saw the Miracle of Miracles, God made man. They returned "glorifying and praising God."

They went as shepherds and returned as missionaries. "They spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child." They "returned" but from this night on, it was never the same again.

Christmas, the real Christmas, the blessed realization that the Holy Child left the stable, lived a perfect life for us, died as our substitute and rose again as our living Lord, changes people.

It sets prisoners free. It takes people who are destruction bound and places them on the glory road. It changes perspectives, alters moods, and makes hearts sing. It gives meaning, *real* meaning, to "Merry Christmas." □



Kurt Koeplin is pastor of Atonement, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Life is what Christmas brings

Prominent in the pre-holiday countdown to Christmas is the ersatz Santa Claus lifting a wide-eyed child onto his lap and asking, "What do you want for Christmas?" During this same period, the typical adult is likely to ask a related question: "What should I get for . . . ?"

Plenty of help is available to those who have not made up their minds. It ranges from "gift suggestions" aimed at the average shopper to upscale catalogues for customers who are searching for a gift "for the person who has everything."

The reaction of the recipient to the resulting gift does not always reflect the thoughtful care which went into its selection. Many in the throngs which crowd the stores on the day after Christmas are there to return Christmas gifts rather than to make a purchase. The much-maligned Christmas tie may wind up in the Goodwill bag or appear later in a "white elephant" gift exchange or find a new home under the tree in someone else's house next Christmas.

This is not intended to ridicule the practice of Christmas giving. The fact is that most if not all of the Christmas gifts are received in the spirit in which they were given. They are appreciated as gifts of love and treasured for their intrinsic value. Some even later achieve the status of heirlooms.

But even the most welcome of Christmas gifts cannot provide what people want most. What people want most is life. The preservation of one's life is a primary human instinct. People devise elaborate safeguards to protect it. They go to great lengths to prolong it. They are apprehensive of advancing age, which heralds it, and they dread sudden death, which terminates it.

Ask the inmate on death row. Ask the victim of a terminal disease. Ask a relative at the bedside of a loved one. Ask them what they want most. You really know the answer without asking. They want life.

Life is what Christ came to bring. He clarifies the purpose of his coming with the declaration, "I am come that they might have life." And he was not talking about mere existence or the kind of life which desperate people commit suicide to escape or the kind of life which the sick or the aged may pray will soon come to an end. He was talking about life that is "abundant." That is life that is described elsewhere as life which is ideal, life which is not marred by pain or sorrow nor darkened by the prospect of death.

"The wages of sin is death," wrote St. Paul to the Romans. We know about that because we feel the effects of sin already, and we dread its consequences.

"But," Paul added, "the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." That's what we need. That's what we want. That's what we get.

Immanuel G. Frey



*Immanuel Frey
is pastor
of Zion
Phoenix, Arizona.*

Romans 1 — 3:20

The world's greatest problem

If a poll were taken on this question, “What is the world’s greatest problem?” there would be hundreds, perhaps thousands of answers. But we’ll not ask for answers, nor suggest any. Instead, we’ll seek out the one person whom we know can give us the right answer. Yes, we’ll seek God’s answer, and listen as he speaks to us through his apostle Paul in Romans 1 — 3:20.

The clues are all around us

Romans 1:18-32. After Paul’s introduction in verses 1-17, he gives us an amazingly complete description of his world in 56-57 A.D., 1900 years ago. And I urge you to read this section carefully in your Bible. As you can see, it’s a picture of utter godlessness and sinfulness (v. 18).

And one of the most amazing things is the fact that Paul’s description is exactly what we see when we look around us today. Yes, it’s true that the world hasn’t changed one bit in the last 1930 years! And when we read Moses’ brief description in Genesis 6:5,6 of the world in Noah’s time, we find an entirely similar picture — 5000 years ago! And so from these three pictures in 2950 B.C., 57 A.D. and 1986 A.D., we see proof that the world’s one great universal problem is *sin*.

It was a Jewish problem

Romans 2:1 — 3:8. To understand this section we must remember that both the Old and New Testaments were Jewish books. Aside from Luke’s Gospel and Acts, all the other books were written by Jews and addressed to largely Jewish readers. And thus 2:1a is addressed to Jewish readers, and was intended to show them that God’s undeserved love and salvation were intended for *all sinners*.

One of the Jews’ worst sins was self-righteousness — the feeling that because God had chosen them to be his people and given them his law, they and they alone were “righteous” (perfectly holy) in God’s sight, and all other nations were sinners who were condemned to eternal damnation because of their sins.

But God’s righteous anger falls heavily on all such Jews in 2:1-18, where Paul reminds them that “. . . the people of the other nations don’t have the law. But when they do by nature what the law requires, those people who don’t have the law are their own law, . . . and on the last day when they appear before Christ Jesus, God’s appointed judge, their *conscience* will be their witness . . .” (2:14-16a). And the Jews will be judged on the *same principle*.

Then in 2:17-29, God tells the Jews that while they

condemn the Gentiles for breaking God’s law, they themselves are just as guilty of breaking the same laws as the Gentiles are. And therefore being a “Jew” — that is, one of God’s chosen people — has nothing to do with one’s nationality or behavior. And being circumcised (as a sign that a person is one of God’s chosen people) isn’t a physical thing that is done to one’s body. No, being a “Jew” has to do with one’s inner condition, and being circumcised is something that is done to the *heart*. And it’s brought about by the *Spirit*, and not by the writings of the law. So the person who has been truly circumcised receives his praise from God, not from men (2:28,29).

It’s everyone’s problem

Romans 3:9-20. When you read that list of sins in 1:18-32, you should have realized that *you* are a sinner, for that list was describing the kind of sinful thoughts you have, as well as the kind of sinful things you are always saying, thinking or doing.

But the Jews didn’t think the law applied to their thoughts and words, but only to some of their actions. And that’s the way most of the people in our world read the law. But when Jesus explained the law in Matthew 5:21-48, he made it clear that it applied to our words and thoughts as well as our actions. And that’s why God says in Romans 3:9,10, “We have already accused *everyone*, both Jews and Greeks, of being under the power of sin, just as the Bible says, ‘There is *no one* who is *perfect* in God’s sight, not a single one.’” That is, perfectly holy and without sin. Then read the rest of this section — verses 11-18. And so the *whole world* will come under God’s judgment, because *no person* will ever be perfect in God’s sight because of what he or she has done in an effort to keep the law. Yes, the law makes us realize how sinful we are!

And that is *everyone’s* one big problem — *sin*, the fact that we are all sinners. We’re born in sin, we live in sin, and we’ll all die because of sin. But it doesn’t mean that we have to spend eternity in hell. That’s what we’ll talk about in the next issue. □



Julian Anderson is a retired pastor and seminary professor living in Naples, Florida.



Where we stand by Mark E. Braun

How do you choose sponsors?

So this chubby little heathen is about to be adopted in the sacred water as a privileged son or daughter of the King.

Your baby is being baptized.

How do you choose sponsors?

Jesus never said a word about sponsors. The apostles neither required nor recommended them. The practice of having sponsors originated after the age of the apostles. It was associated initially with the baptism of *adult converts*, rather than the children of the church. The Christian faith was once an illegal religion in the Roman empire. Enemies of the faith tried at times to infiltrate the church as spies. They agreed to be instructed and baptized only to learn the names of genuine believers, to reveal them to the executioner. The church came to demand that an acknowledged believer sponsor a prospective convert. The sponsor could vouch for the beginner's sincerity and encourage him in his catechetical instructions.

Sponsors were later assigned to infant baptism as well. Parents wished to be assured that, if they died, their children would be schooled in the faith of their baptism. Such parental concern remains at the heart of the custom of sponsors today. Present baptismal rites address sponsors:

It shall be your privilege and responsibility to remember this child in your prayers, to remind [him] of [his] baptism, and, as far as possible, to give your counsel and aid that [he] may be brought up in the true knowledge and fear of God according to the teachings of the Scriptures as confessed by our Lutheran church.

Back to the question. How do you choose sponsors?

If you want sponsors to promise to raise your child in the faith, *sponsors must have the same faith*. Could you, in good conscience, promise to raise a child of Roman Catholic parents in the teachings of the Roman Catholic church? I couldn't. Would you, in good faith, ask someone who believes Roman Catholic doctrine to raise your child in the Lutheran faith? I wouldn't.

If you want sponsors to exert good spiritual influence, *sponsors must have good spiritual influence to exert*. Being a baptismal sponsor calls for more than a good Joe. If potential sponsors don't worship their Lord or receive holy communion, can we expect them to offer a favorable example of worship and reception to their godchild? If prospective sponsors haven't made Christian education a top priority for their own children, is it reasonable to assume they'll consider it important for yours?

Other tensions may be involved. An uncle or a cousin may expect to be chosen. A family crisis may occur if he isn't. If we take seriously a sponsor's obligation, however, can we entrust it to someone with neither ability nor inclination to carry it out?

A graceful, practical solution is to designate *witnesses* as well as sponsors for the baptism. Witnesses can attest that a valid baptism has been performed. Witnesses may continue to be supportive friends or family members. Yet witnesses would not be asked to make a promise they may well be ill-equipped to fulfill.

Parents may select both witnesses and sponsors for their child's baptism. The baptismal rite could be amended to read:

As *witnesses* you can testify that this child has been baptized with water in the name of the Triune God. As *sponsors* it is your additional privilege and responsibility to remember this child in your prayers, to remind [him] of [his] baptism, and . . . to give your counsel and aid. . .

The church wouldn't compromise its confession, yet parents wouldn't forfeit the assurance that their children will be nurtured in the faith.

Think about it, the next time you choose sponsors. □



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

What I want for Christmas



By Eric S. Hartzell

Children say it all the time these days. "What I want for Christmas is. . . ." Adults don't say it, but they think it. I'm no different either. I have some things on my list that I want. The only trouble is, I won't get them. Here's why.

I would like to forever silence all the senseless jingles and jangles of cheap advertisements that steal the Savior's birthday. I never want to hear again someone trying to sell refrigerators to the tune of "Silent Night" or airplane tickets to "God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen." I wish the grocery store wouldn't bombard me with Christmas carols while I seek Wipe n' Dipes on my wife's grocery list.

I wish "merry Christmas" wouldn't take the place of "goodbye" for these few short weeks. I would like the idea to be entertained at least that a person who doesn't say "merry Christmas" does not have to be a Scrooge. The person may even have a few shreds of real spirit about him that escape tired old "merry Christmas" — whatever that means anyway.

I wish no one would remind me of the number of shopping days until Christmas. What that really tells me is that if I don't get my own life and the lives of my children stuffed full of this earth's things like so many sausages, Christmas is going to be a flop.

*Wouldn't it be good to have
a silent, holy night,
a night set aside
for reflection and prayer,
a night
that would not startle
the newborn into tears?*

I wish Christmas off the streets and in the homes. I would like to see fathers sitting with their children in the kitchen with the Bible open to Luke chapter two rather than lugging them miles to sit on some fat Santa's lap in a department store someplace.

In 1818 Joseph Mohr envisioned it, "Silent Night, Holy Night." Wouldn't it be good to have a silent, holy night, a night set aside for reflection and prayer, a night that would not startle the newborn into tears? Wouldn't it be refreshing to hear the world speak in awed whisper that here we have Baby Jesus, true baby yet true God?

And one last request. I would like this Christmas to grab the speeding hands of the Christmas clock and slow them down. I don't want this Christmas to pass in a blur of activity and noise and red and green wrapping paper. I want to reflect clearly and carefully on what is really happening to me and my family. I want to open carefully this most precious of Christmas presents and savor the excitement and thrill of Baby Jesus once again.

Wanting something at Christmas is not wrong; in fact, it is right. God has many things he wants me to want. He came that the psalm might be fulfilled, "the Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." □

Eric Hartzell is missionary to the Apaches in East Fork, Arizona.

Wonders of Christmas

By Roland Cap Ehlke

The other day I was reading a book about our home, the planet earth. It's an amazing place. Containing just the right combination of gases, water and other materials, our beautiful world teems with life.

Although we don't think about it, the earth is really a giant 6.5 trillion-ton ball which is hurtling through space at the rate of 66,600 miles per hour in its yearly orbit around the sun.

Meanwhile the sun — 93 million miles away — is also hurtling through space, as it sheds its warm and life-giving rays on us. Though a million times the size of earth, the sun is only an average size star. Along with a billion other stars the sun is part of the Milky Way galaxy, a vast collection of stars some 100,000 light-years wide. (One light-year is about 6 trillion miles!)

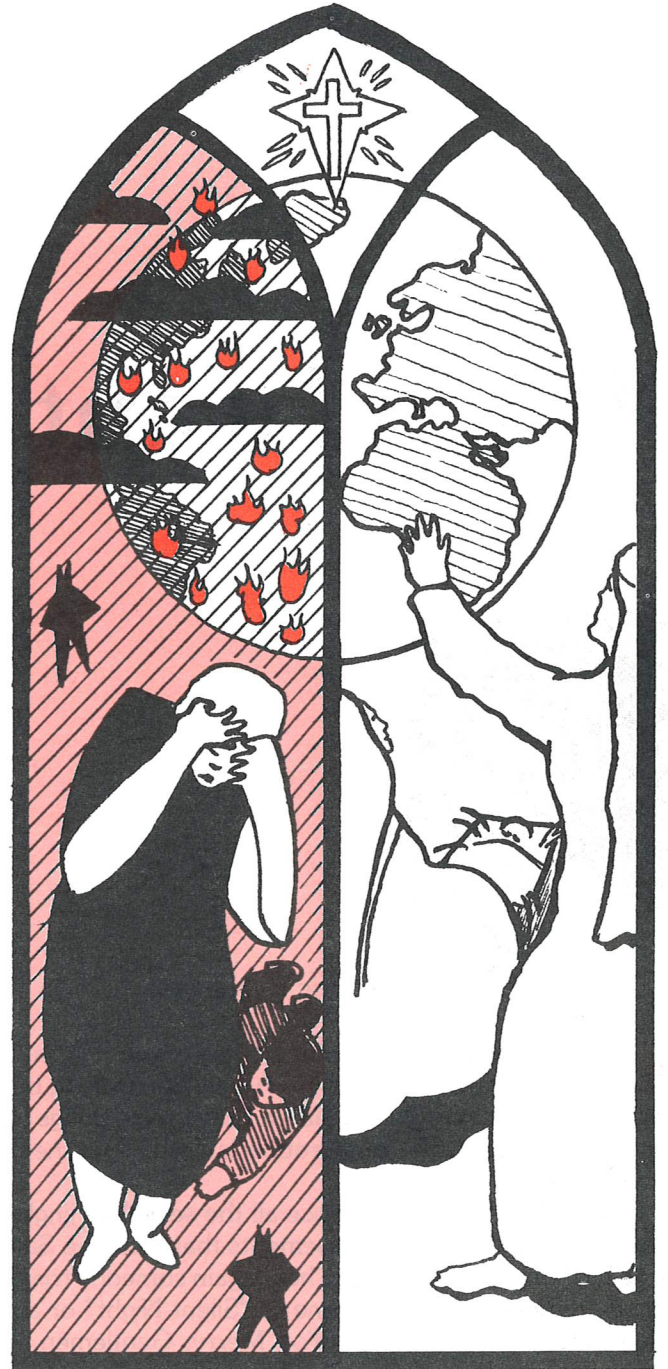
The Milky Way galaxy in turn is but one of billions of other galaxies which make up the universe. Suddenly the earth seems pretty small and insignificant.

The wonder of the incarnation

It's all a bit mind-boggling, isn't it? And then another book, the Book of books, comes along and tells us something even more fantastic.

It tells us that the almighty God who made and rules over this fantastically vast and complex creation has chosen to come and live with us in our world. It's not just that he's watching over this world as it floats in the endless sea of space. That the all-knowing God always does. But the Lord of all — whom "the heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain" — has lived with us as one of us!

God has taken on our flesh and blood. He has become our brother. Theologians call this act of God-becoming-



man the "incarnation." I call it wonderful. It's one of the wonders of Christmas.

... they will call him Immanuel — which means, "God with us" (Matthew 1 :23).

The wonder of the virgin birth

I came across another startling fact. Did you know that there are almost 5 billion people living in the world today? And every day another 200,000 are being born.

Maybe because human life is all around us and because birth is such a common event, we forget the miracle of it all. But when we look more closely at human life we can only exclaim, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made."

*. . . the greatest wonder of all
is not that Immanuel came here
or that he came in such a miraculous way.
Rather, the wonder of wonders is why he came.*

With all the billions of people, no two are alike. Each human being is a unique micro-universe, a special wonder of creation.

Our beginnings are small enough. We start life as the combination of a tiny ovum (1/20th of a millionth of an ounce and about 1/175th of an inch wide) and an even tinier sperm (weighing only about 1/90,000th as much as the ovum). At this point of conception life begins. Present in this new one-celled life (called the zygote) are the unique inherited characteristics of each individual, which to a great degree determine our physical and mental makeup and even influence our tastes, opinions and habits throughout life.

Already during the first month this new life increases its size fortyfold. During that time millions of cells multiply from the zygote, as ears, eyes, nose, mouth, brain, heart and muscles begin to take shape.

By four months this little child is about six inches long. By seven months he weighs about three pounds; his eyes are open and, in many cases, his hair is long enough to cut.

At about nine months he enters the world and takes his first gulps of air. By this time he has increased some six-billionfold in size from when he was first conceived.

So begins an individual's journey through life. A lot more growth, experience and learning lie ahead. But what a miraculous beginning!

As wondrous as each new life is, Christ's conception and birth were even more miraculous. He had no human father. In a supernatural way God the Holy Spirit caused the *virgin* Mary to conceive. This child born to Mary was her physical son and the legal son of Joseph. But he was the eternal Son of God from eternity.

What a special way to begin the most special life ever to live on earth!

The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son (Matthew 1:23).

The wonder of his love

For all the marvels of creation, there is a dark side, too. It haunts us every day. We read it in the daily news; we see it all around.

We've seen it in man's inhumanity to man. The endless warring among nations. The attempts to exterminate entire peoples like the Jews, Ukrainians, Armenians, Cambodians. . . . The slaughter of the unborn children (125,000 abortions every month in our land alone).

We see it in the cruelty among those who should be closest — bitterness between husbands and wives, brothers and sisters. Adultery. Wife abuse. Child abuse.

It's there in the robberies, the drunkenness, the drug abuse, the pornography, lying, backbiting and hard-heartedness that permeate human society.

It's there in our own hearts, too. The jealousy, greed, lust, desire for revenge, deceit. . . . Along with this darker side of creation go all the fears, loneliness and sadness that are so much a part of life on earth. And then there's death, the final horror for a creation shot through with the poison of sin.

It was into such a world that Christ came at Christmas time. The greatest wonder of all is not that Immanuel came here (the incarnation) or that he came in such a miraculous way (the virgin birth). Rather, the wonder of wonders is *why* he came.

The perfect, holy Lord of creation came to die for his fallen creation. He came to suffer for all the evil of the billions of people who have ever lived or ever will. He took that evil and nailed it to the cross with him. Now we are free from sin and death.

Thanks to what Christ has done, someday there will be a new heaven and earth. Someday we will have new and glorified bodies, and we will live with him forever and soar among the distant stars.

Oh, the wonder of his love!

. . . you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins (Matthew 1:21). □



Pastor Ehlike is an associate editor at Northwestern Publishing House.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

All the essentials

“This promises to be my best Christmas ever.” “This Christmas is shaping up like all the rest.” “I’m dreading this Christmas as none before.” You and I will fit into one of these three categories.

Why do I think it will be my best ever? Because this year has marked the realization of some long-awaited goal, the gifts under the tree are stacked higher than ever, I’ve gotten rid of a nagging problem, I’ve never had a better job, I’ve never been in better health?

If this describes my lot in life I would be most ungrateful if I did not praise God from whom all blessings flow. But to make it the basis for my best Christmas ever would put me on shaky ground. What if all this should change during the next twelve months? Conceivably I could go from the best Christmas ever to the worst Christmas ever in a single year.

Or am I in the group for whom this Christmas is shaping up like all the rest? As usual I’ll go along with all the seasonal traditions. I’ll even do a few things I’d just as soon get out of because I don’t want to spoil it for others. But my heart won’t really be in it, and I’ll be glad when it’s over for another year.

Or am I dreading this Christmas as none before? My holiday plans have fallen through. For the first time in my life I’ll be alone. The one with whom I always celebrated is no longer around. It’s getting harder to make ends meet. My health is not what it used to be. I’m having trouble getting around.

Let’s go back for a moment to the first Christmas when there were no other Christmases with which to compare it. There were no wreaths, no garlands, no tinsel, no glitter, no trees, no gifts, no dinners, no holidays. Anything but that! Six simple words of the angel really capture all the essentials of Christmas: Unto you is born a Savior!

And they still do. Those six words still capture all the essentials of Christmas. Nothing that really matters has changed. We’re still sinners in need of a Savior. Christmas is still the assurance that God has met our need: Unto you is born a Savior!

So whether this Christmas promises to be the best ever or threatens to be the worst ever — because I’ve been celebrating for the wrong reason; or whether I annually go through the motions without stopping to appreciate what it’s all about, pray God that I somehow get the message that he is talking to me when the angel says “Unto you is born a Savior!” That’s still the best news I’ll ever hear. That’s God’s solution to my biggest problem, the problem of sin. With that under control I can safely trust God to arrange the rest of my life so that all of the pieces fall into place in his way and his time.

Then this Christmas and every Christmas after, until I join my Savior and the angels in the Christmas that never ends, will have to be the best ever. Because I know that all the essentials of Christmas are still wrapped up in those six words, as relevant today as when the angel first spoke them: Unto you is born a Savior!



Carl H. Mischke

Should a congregation allow its facilities to be used for public concerts (such as an organ concert) which are given by artists not of their fellowship, when no worship is involved? What about the use of church facilities by community groups or individuals?

The fact that we have dedicated our churches to God, to his glory and his work, should not be taken lightly. The New Testament, however, prescribes no "holy place" restricted to sacred ceremony and sanctified participants. "Do all to the glory of God" is a New Testament principle that erases artificial distinctions between the sacred and the secular.

It would be wrong to host any activity that promotes what is theologically or morally contrary to God's word. It would be wrong to foster impressions of false ecumenism or confusion about the church's mission, in the community or among our members, by injudiciously offering the use of the church's facilities. It would be wrong to impede the church's ministry because facilities made available to the community are not available to existing or potential programs of the congregation. It would be wrong to undermine Christian stewardship by making "rent" from use of the church facilities a substitute for cheerful giving by the members. It would be at least inexpedient to host activities that would put the church into a partisan light on issues where Scripture has no position.

With policies such as these a congregation should evaluate suggestions or requests for the use of its facilities. Sensitivities in the community or among the members may lead one congregation to reject a request that another congregation accepts. The exercise of Christian judgment, though sometimes difficult, can facilitate spiritual growth as members together seek to apply God's will to such issues.

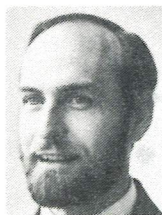
Offering the use of the church's facilities for an organ concert, a polling place, CPR classes, neighborhood recreation and the like can be positive public relations in the community that eliminate barriers to our mission of reaching the lost. People who've been inside our facilities and met our pastor and members may feel more comfortable about accepting our invitation to worship or other programs of ministry. While it is not the church's mission to promote the arts, health, democracy or recreation, these gifts of God are not in themselves incompatible with the church's ministry. It may even be a demonstration of Christian love and stewardship to share the blessings God has given us in our church's facilities.

In our communion service, when does the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ — at the consecration or the distribution? What is the purpose of the consecration? When may we say that Christ's body and blood are truly present?

Scripture doesn't provide the precise answer you seek. Scholarly speculation is no more than that. We can say with assurance that Christ's body and blood are truly present when we do what he urged, namely, to eat and drink the bread and wine which have been consecrated for that sacramental purpose.

The words of consecration are not an incantation to transform bread and wine into body and blood. The fact that Matthew and Luke do not provide a transcript of the institution of the sacrament (their inspired accounts differ slightly in wording, as a complement to each other) and the fact that Jesus spoke the words we use in consecration as he was distributing the elements should keep us from turning the consecration into a mystical ritual. Not *when* bread and wine become body and blood but *that we receive* with bread and wine Christ's body and blood for our forgiveness is what Scripture wants us to know.

The consecration, literally, is the setting apart of physical elements for the sacred purpose of Christ's sacrament. Thereby we are obeying the Savior's words to "do this in remembrance of me." The words of consecration are spoken for communicants, that they be assured of what the sacrament is and be confirmed in their faith to receive the sacrament worthily. We emphasize that purpose by repeating Jesus' words during the distribution. Jesus accomplishes his purpose of giving us the body and blood he offered for our salvation. How he does so and what role the words he has provided to assure us may have in his sacramental presence are simply not spelled out for us. It may be a weakness of theological minds that we deflect our focus from spiritual gifts to the exploration of mysteries. I don't know the precise point in the celebration of the sacrament when Christ's body and blood are truly present. I do know they are. And I also know that apart from communicants' reception of the bread/body and wine/blood, there is no sacrament. □



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.



By Eric S. Hartzell

My school is burning!

“My school is burning!” The words came choked and pinched from the little girl standing under the catalpa tree in the smoke. Her classmates stood in forlorn little groups clutching at each other as if perhaps this would make the flames stop. But the flames were deaf to the entreaties of little boys and girls and one by one the classrooms burned. The glass panes exploded. The windows leered with dull red eyes, and then died. The black plume of smoke reached up to the Rim Rock miles away. After four hours of agony, our East Fork school on the Apache Indian reservation was dead. The date: Monday, November 3, 1986.

Who would have guessed it at eight o’clock? Because of the weather the children would have to stay inside. Could they play in the gym for recess? No, the brand new floor covering provided by the hard work of the ladies’ auxiliary was still in place. It had to be cleaned up and stored because this was the first day of basketball practice. So at 11:15 instead of the gym being full of playing

children, four high school boys were at work cleaning the tarp on the floor.

Teacher Pahl walked to the stairwell to see how the work was progressing. And then because there was a question as to what to do with the duct tape on the floor, he walked to the office. While he was there the explosion occurred. The landing he stood on seconds before was no more. The entire roof of the gym lifted. The walls cracked and shifted but did not fall. A large section of heavy cement blocks was blown up and on top of the roof. The bleachers were ripped away from the walls. But four boys scrambled outside. None of them was hurt. The rest of the children and all of the teachers quickly made for safety and outside.

But where were Mr. Priebe and Mr. Wangerin? They had been working on the heater. This was the day they were going to change some of its filters. Were they in the heater house on top of the school with its doors and windows gaping open and belching ugly grey smoke? There was a frantic search. Mr. Priebe had had to go and get his car worked on. One o'clock was the only time it could be done. He was miles away, in safety, and because he could not work on the filters by himself, Mr. Wangerin was at the dormitory eating an early lunch with his wife.

Every fire truck within fifty miles came, but to no avail. The water just teased the flames. The tribal council meeting in progress in Whiteriver simply disbanded. The chairman and vice chairman and most of their council members stood with the rest of us, the flames red on our faces.

Word of the fire traveled fast. Just hours after the fire an Apache man living in Minneapolis, Minnesota called and said, "I want to do something to help. I went to school at East Fork." Former students living 140 miles away jumped into their cars and drove. They got here before it was all over. A man working three miles away said, "My heart hurt so much I just couldn't work any more. I came here." Another said, "And this was my little girl's birthday." And over and over again the words, "Our school, our school," spoken with a sob, spoken like a prayer, spoken with the eyes. The children cried. Their parents cried. We cried.

When dark night covered what had happened, the fire trucks left. The newspaper people had their stories. They were gone. But the people stayed. They stood in little groups in the dark or pulled up and sat silently in their cars . . . watching the steaming ruins. It was like a wake. And through the night one young voice said softly, "My mother is going to be sad when she sees this. She went to school here." And another answered, "My mother and father went to school here too."

Was it a coincidence that the night before the fire I was reading in the jubilee booklet put out in 1919 at the 25th anniversary of the Apache Mission work? I read to my



wife these words printed on page 34, "If there is any organization in our dear America that really feels the necessity of raising up our young children and youth to be good citizens of the state and of heaven, it is our true Lutheran church. . . . Consequently, the founding of any of our mission stations occurs almost always with the additional founding of a mission school. Our mission schools have from the beginning been our hope in our Indian mission work. We assure ourselves that if we have good mission schools, then we need not look to the future with alarm."

This hope and dream has been realized. We base our statement just in part on the tremendous show of love and support for our school which the fire uncovered. Where there were tears of grief, there are also tears of joy that this school building did not die for nothing. Our people have come to know and believe and treasure what the school labored to teach them.

As I stood watching memories die one by one in the black smoke, an Apache man came up and stood beside me. He doesn't speak often, but he spoke by the fire. "Hartzell, you look okay on the outside, but I know how you look on the inside. Don't worry. God helped us before. He can help us again. Even if he says just one word, it will be enough."

And because of this, won't there be another school? □

(Pastor Duane K. Tomhave, executive secretary of Board for World Missions, adds: *The Reservation staff, the Apache Mission Executive Committee and the Board for World Missions will be planning recommendations concerning replacement. If anyone wishes to make special contributions, they may be given to the "Apache Church Extension Fund" or the synod's operating budget for "Apache Missions" in care of WELS, 2929 N. Mayfair Rd., Milwaukee, WI 53222.*)

Eric Hartzell is missionary to the Apaches in East Fork, Arizona.



Children's ads good. . . . Consumer and children's advocacy organizations have complained for years about the commercialism promoted by children's television advertising. Now, two communications researchers at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, have found that such ads also promote positive values and behavior. Russell H. Mouritsen, assistant professor of broadcasting, and Daniel A. Stout, Jr., assistant professor of advertising, analysed 175 children's TV commercials and found that 76 percent of them depicted such positive values as honesty, sharing, achievement, personal hygiene and friendship. They found that about 32 percent of the commercials contained examples of courtesy, 31 percent showed physical affection, 29 percent kindness, 20 percent sharing and 16 percent good health and nutrition. According to Stout, "The whole theme of children's advertising has changed over the years. Values like honesty, integrity, family concerns and the ability to show affection are now being incorporated. Companies are realizing that they can use positive values in their business and marketing strategies, especially as it relates to children." According to Mouritsen, "this is perhaps a smarter approach to the business of advertising for children."

Too many laypeople . . . In a report on American Catholic seminaries, the Vatican's Congregation for Catholic Education has criticized the rapidly growing presence of laymen and laywomen in programs traditionally designed for the training of future priests. Although describing the American theological schools as "basically good," the Vatican cited what it viewed as problems ranging from "confusion" over official church teachings to the practice of giving laypeople spiritual leadership roles. In its sharpest criticism the report declared that too many laypeople are studying side by side with celibate future priests in the seminaries, reflecting the pope's displeasure with what he regards as a blurring of the roles of laypeople and clergy in recent years. One role which nonordained Catholics have begun to fill is that of spiritual director in seminaries. "We have asked for a realignment of spiritual direction in these seminaries," the report stated. It went on to say that candidates for the priesthood must receive their spiritual counseling from a "priest-director" who can serve as a role model.

"Value vacuum" accounts for sexual activity

. . . A "value vacuum" is the reason 20 percent of the nation's eighth- and ninth-grade students are sexually active, according to two researchers in Minneapolis. There is a need, say Peter Benson and David Schuelke, for churches, schools and youth organizations to redirect sex education for teenagers away from birth control and to encourage them to abstain from sexual intercourse. Benson is president of Search Institute, a national research organization on youth problems. He said most communities have programs in place to disseminate birth-control information to sexually-active young people. "The abstinence approach is less visible, less coordinated and, we would argue, less prevalent in most communities," wrote Benson and Schuelke in an article. "There has been a profound shift in priorities in the last two decades. Twenty years ago, the message about abstinence during adolescent years was clearly communicated by parents, religious institutions and other organizations. And birth control was a subject we would rather not discuss with impressionable youth. Now we seem to have no problem talking about birth control, but have great anxiety about discussing abstinence." The silence of adults, they said, means that teenagers receive little guidance in making decisions about their sexual activity. "In this kind of value vacuum it should come as no surprise that about 20 percent of the nation's eighth and ninth graders are sexually active," they said. In encouraging parents to "break the silence," the authors cite five findings: teenagers want to know adults' values about sexual behavior; teenagers do not resent adults who communicate sexual standards; when parents communicate clear standards and expectations, adolescent sexual activity is reduced; when schools and other institutions help students learn how to say "no" to peer pressure, rates of sexual activity go down. "Ultimately," the researchers concluded, "there would be nothing more powerful in preventing teenage pregnancy than building a community-wide consensus on sexual values and using all available channels to pass these on to our children."

Carbon-14 testing of Shroud of Turin . . . After years of consideration, Pope John Paul II has authorized unprecedented carbon-14 testing of the Shroud of Turin to establish the age of the linen said to be the burial cloth of Jesus Christ. It is said that the test will make it possible to establish the cloth's age within a margin of 250 years. Results of the test will be available for publication in 1988. In 1978 an international team of scholars examined the shroud but was not permitted to carbon date it because the test would have entailed destroying a small piece of the cloth. The test since then has been considerably refined and now little more than a thread of the cloth would be required. □

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.

A tenfold increase

John couldn't pay his bills at one of our synod preparatory schools because his dad couldn't get the crops harvested last fall. John's parents applied for financial aid through his school. They were able to show their need and received a grant of \$500 from our Wisconsin Synod Scholarship Fund. He was also given the assurance that if the need persisted the school would make every effort to help him further. John was able to continue his schooling to prepare for the pastoral ministry.

John was one of 175 students helped through the distribution of \$50,792 in need-based grants from our WELS Scholarship Fund during the 1985-86 school year at all of our synod schools. This money was contributed by WELS members for scholarship grants to pastor-teacher students.

Our worker training students are eligible for other financial aid money. During the 1985-86 school year 1024 students at our worker training schools received financial aid. Most of the financial aid was distributed to students at our colleges, who are eligible for state and federal grants and loans, and to seminary students, who also have more scholarship and grant money available to them.

Because our preparatory school students have no financial aid available to them from state or federal sources, our Wisconsin Synod Scholarship Fund provides three times more aid to our preparatory schools than it provides to our colleges and seminary.

Ten years ago only \$7940 was allocated to our schools for grants to students. In 1986 the WELS Scholarship Committee allocated \$70,950 for distribution to pastor-teacher students at the various synod schools during the 1986-87 school year. This is nearly a tenfold increase over the past ten years. The committee also allocated \$77,000 to the schools for



The centennial of St. John, Brewster, Nebraska is memorialized with a marker on the church property. The memorial was crafted by Carl Schneidereit, president of the congregation. Schneidereit is a rancher and his wife, Roberta, a former Christian day school teacher, teaches Sunday school. A daughter, Reniece, is also a teacher at Zion, Sanborn, Minnesota. Pastor of St. John is Milton F. Weis-hahn.

travel assistance to needy students living over 750 miles from their school.

We are indebted to those who contributed to the Reaching Out offering for much of this increase in the availability of scholarship money. Through the end of September 1986, Reaching Out has benefited the Educational Development Fund by \$4,456,500. At the present time, ten percent of the earnings from the Educational Development Fund flows into the Scholarship Fund.

The Reaching Out offering is nearly completed. Its blessings to the Scholarship Fund will continue. The amount of money distributed to our future pastors and teachers to help them with their education will grow with God's blessings through the loving gifts, offerings and bequests to our Wisconsin Synod Scholarship Endowment Fund. Can we look forward to another tenfold increase during the next ten years?

Our students now at the synod's worker training schools, who will be our pastors and teachers tomorrow, could use your help today. If you can help, please send your contributions to the Wisconsin Synod Scholarship Fund, 2929 North Mayfair Road, Milwaukee, WI 53222. On behalf of all those who might be helped, sincere thanks.

— Alan H. Siggelkow

Seminary Auxiliary meets

Over 425 women attending the 14th annual meeting of the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Auxiliary on October 4 were both thrilled and awed by their first glimpse of the new chapel-gymnasium-auditorium on the seminary grounds in Mequon. Along with "ooohs" and "aaahhs," "Look, no steps to climb," and "We don't have to stand outside to wait for lunch," were the next most frequently heard comments.

On this special day once a year (the first Saturday in October) supporters of our seminary gather for fellowship and food, for learning more about training for the ministry and for contributing to its on going work through auxiliary projects.

The auxiliary annually selects one large and several smaller projects benefiting the seminary. This year's selection included a drink dispenser for the cafeteria and a buffer for maintenance as well as slides of the Holy Land and graphics software for use by seminarians and professors alike.

Officers for the current year are: Mrs. Gladys Stelzel, president; Mrs. Helen Timmerman, first vice president; Mrs. Ann Huebner, second vice president; Mrs. Vera Voigt,

IN THE NEWS

treasurer; Mrs. Leah Leyrer, recording secretary; Mrs. Louise Kante, corresponding secretary; Mrs. Violet Dehring, Mrs. Dorothy Druেকে, Mrs. Frieda Luetzow and Mrs. Helena Buechner, representatives at large; Rev. Jeff Berg, pastoral advisor and Prof. Leroy Dobberstein, faculty advisor.

— Helena Buechner

Southeastern Wisconsin District

The board members, faculty and family of Shoreland Lutheran High School, Somers, on April 18 recognized the years of service given to the school by **Pastor Edgar J. Greve** and **Prof. Gerald P. Mallmann**. After graduating from seminary in 1950, Greve was assigned to the Synodical Conference mission in Nigeria and later accepted a call to Zambia. In 1961 he accepted a call to Fox Valley Lutheran High School. Mallmann had also accepted a call to the same high school to head up the science program. In 1971 both accepted calls to Shoreland and together guided the first classes of students and fostered secondary education in the Kenosha and Racine area. As principal, Greve oversaw the construction of the permanent building. Greve retired from teaching at the end of the 1984-85 school year and Mallmann retired at the end of the 1985-86 school year. . . . On September 7 at Trinity, Waukesha, Wisconsin Lutheran High School celebrated the 25th anniversary in the ministry of **Gerhard Gilbert**, **Gerald Bergemann** and **Pastor Wayne Borgwardt**. **Pastor Wayne Fischer** and **Jason Nelson** were installed in the same service. . . . On September 14 the 25th anniversary in the ministry of **Pastor Robert Michel** was celebrated at Bethlehem, Menomonee Falls. Having served congregations in Iowa and Wisconsin, Michel is now public relations manager at Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Service. . . . On October 19, **St. Paul, Franklin**, dedicated an addition to its school and other capital improvements. . . . **Lakeshore Lutherans for Life** of

the Kenosha-Racine area celebrated its first anniversary of operation. During the year about 100 clients were served in the counseling program. . . . Plans for an **Illinois Lutheran High School** in the Crete, Ill. area are under discussion as well as a **retirement village** adjoining the property of Zion, Crete.

— James Huebner

WITH THE LORD

Gordon Alvin Fuerstenau 1921-1986

Pastor Gordon Alvin Fuerstenau was born May 8, 1921 in Hazel, S. Dak. He died September 14, 1986 in Rapid City, S. Dak.

A 1945 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, he served congregations in Brewster, Nebr.; Rapid City, S. Dak.; Oronoco, Pine Island, Johnson and Town Wilson (rural Winona), Minn.; and Goodrich and rural Rib Lake, Wis. He retired from the active ministry in 1980.

He is survived by his wife, Evelyn; sons, James, Nathan, Mark, Charles, Joel and Goeffrey; daughters, Tamara Koenig and Deanna Pine; stepsons, Kenneth, Charles and Kern Shull; stepdaughters, Connie Hansen and Kathy Mueller; one brother, three sisters, eleven grandchildren and two stepgrandchildren.

Funeral services were held September 19, 1986 at St. Paul, Rapid City, S. Dak.

Cyrill L. Serwe 1926-1986

Pastor Cyrill L. Serwe was born December 3, 1926 in Manitowoc, Wis. He died November 3, 1986 in Shawano, Wis.

He attended the seminary in 1949-1950. From 1952 to 1959 he served as teacher in Peridot, Ariz. In 1959 he returned to the seminary. Following his graduation, he served congregations in Frontenac, West Florence, Eitzen and Town Union, Minnesota.

In 1950 he married Betty Jane Herzog. He is survived by his wife; sons, Paul (Lynn), Peter (Jody) and Mark

(Rheda); daughters, Elizabeth (Mark) Larson, Anne (Tom) Smith, Mary (Pastor Steve) Witte, Linda (Ron) Buchholz, Rachel (Peter) Palmer, Jane and Becky; and mother, Esther Serwe.

Funeral services were held November 8, 1986 at Divine Savior, Shawano, Wis.

Walter W. Kleinke 1903-1986

Pastor Walter W. Kleinke was born June 19, 1903 in Fond du Lac, Wis. He died October 27, 1986 in Milwaukee, Wis.

A 1927 seminary graduate, he served at Northwestern College for two years and then as inspector and coach until he accepted a call in 1935 to St. John, Town Gibson (Mishicot) and Two Creeks, Wis. In May 1941 he accepted a call to Christ Lutheran, Milwaukee, where he served until fall 1942 when he resigned due to speech loss, later diagnosed as Parkinsonism.

Following employment in Fond du Lac, he returned to Milwaukee in 1949 to work at the Northwestern Publishing House and in 1958 accepted the



Kleinke

position of office manager for the Spiritual Welfare Commission (now Special Ministries Board) until his retirement in 1973. In 1957 he was appointed assistant editor of The Northwestern Lutheran, a position he held until his death.

In 1929 he married Loraine Bartell, who preceded him in death. He is survived by daughters, Ruth (Alfons) Woldt and Lois (Harold) Krantz; brothers, Paul and Richard (Verna); six grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Funeral services were held October 31, 1986 at St. Mark, Brown Deer, Wis.

NOTICES

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

SYNOD NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Synod Nominating Committee will meet at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, January 22, 1987 at the Synod Administration Building. The committee is to propose a slate of three candidates for the following 25 offices:

Executive Committees of the Board for World Missions — Apache (layman); Central Africa (pastor); Japan (layman); Latin America (pastor); Southeast Asia (pastor)

Coordinating Council (two laymen)

Board for Evangelism (one pastor and one layman)

Special Ministries Board (two pastors and one teacher)

Board for Parish Education (one pastor, two teachers, one layman)

Board for Worker Training (one teacher)

Northwestern Publishing House Board of Directors (one pastor, one teacher, one layman)

Divisional Board Chairmen — Home Missions, World Missions, Trustees, Worker Training, Parish Services.

The list of candidates nominated will be published in the Northwestern Lutheran in spring, 1987. The synod will elect one of the candidates on each slate at its convention in Watertown, Wisconsin August 3-7, 1987.

Any board, committee or member of the synod is invited to suggest nominations for these offices. Kindly send names with appropriate information to the secretary of the synod, Pastor David Worgull, 1270 N. Dobson Rd., Chandler AZ 85224, by December 31, 1986.

David Worgull, WELS Secretary

WISCONSIN LUTHERAN SEMINARY MISSION SEMINAR

Date: January 28-29, 7:30 a.m. — 12:30 January 28, 7:30 p.m.

Theme: "Share the Word that Burns in the Heart"

- I. The Heart of God
- II. The Heart of the Pastor
- III. The Heart of the World Christian
- IV. The Heart of the Congregation
- V. The Heart of the Community

Seminar booklets may be ordered at \$2.50 (including postage). Please order by sending your payment before January 17, 1987, to: John Liebenow, Mission Seminar Secretary, 6716 W. Wartburg Circle, Mequon, WI 53092.

CHANGES IN MINISTRY

PASTORS:

- Beck, John A.**, from exploratory mission, Anchorage, Alaska, to Divine Savior, Pullman, Wash.
- Laabs, David W.**, from Grace, Sitka, Alaska, to Faith, Tacoma, Wash.
- Palenske, Carlton H.**, from First, Minnesota City, Minn., to retirement from active ministry.
- Spencer, Steven D.**, from St. Peter, Brodhead, Wis., to Beautiful Savior, El Paso, Tex./Emmanuel, Las Cruces, N. Mex.
- Weber, Jeffrey A.**, from Holy Cross, Amarillo, Tex., to St. John, Ann Arbor, Mich.
- Westendorf, John A.**, from Trinity, Saline, Mich., to retirement from active ministry.

DISTRICT NEWS SCHEDULE

December: South Central, Southeastern Wisconsin, Western Wisconsin

January 1: Arizona, California, Dakota-Montana, Michigan

January 15: Minnesota, Nebraska, North Atlantic

February 1: Northern Wisconsin, Pacific Northwest, South Atlantic

If your district does not appear, it is because no news items were reported by your district reporter.

MISSION REQUESTS

Requests for help (books, clothing, money, etc.) from individual foreign nationals to individual WELS members should be forwarded to the Board for World Missions (2929 N. Mayfair Rd., Milwaukee, WI 53222) so that we might keep our relationships orderly. WELS members are encouraged to help wherever possible, but to do it through the responsible boards and committees so as to avoid problems of duplication, etc.

COLLOQUY

Pastor Gregory L. Jackson, Midland, Michigan, of the Lutheran Church of America has requested a colloquy for the purpose of entering the pastoral ministry of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. Correspondence relative to this request should be addressed to the undersigned.

Robert P. Mueller, President
Michigan District

POSITION AVAILABLE

Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee, is seeking applicants for an entry level position in the development office. Responsibilities include assisting the director in implementing annual fund drive, capital campaigns and other fund raising activities of the college. Qualifications include: bachelor's degree, strong organizational skills, excellent verbal and written communication abilities, high energy and creativity. Extensive travel required. Position available immediately and salary commensurate with abilities and experience. Send letter and resumé to: Arthur W. Schaefer, Director of Development, Wisconsin Lutheran College, 8830 W. Bluemound Rd., Milwaukee WI 53226.

NOTICE FOR CONGREGATION TREASURERS

The cutoff date for pre-budget subscription (PBS) receipts in the synod's post office lock box is the last business day of each month. *December 1986* lock box offerings will be credited as 1986 receipts through *January 9, 1987* as long as they are received in the lock box on or before that date and are clearly labeled as "December" offerings on the Form 220.

Norbert M. Manthe
Chief Accounting Officer

ADDRESSES

PASTORS:

- Babinec, David D.**, 102 Dunn St., Fall River, WI 53932; 414/484-3991.
- Gumm, Alan W.**, Rt. 2, Box 75, Mayville, WI 53050; 414/387-4043.
- Hastings, Kevin R.**, 3600 N. 58th Blvd., Milwaukee, WI 53216; 414/449-2314.
- Janisch, Bruce A.**, 13141 S.W. 5th St., Miami, FL 33184; 305/559-0976.
- Pless, Joel L.**, 713 W. Hwy "U", Edgar, WI 54426; 715/443-2119.
- Schult, Gary F.**, Gegerkalong Wetan #17, Bandung, Indonesia; Phone 84794.
- Wendt, Theodore L.**, 1013 Churchill Dr., Norton, KS 67654; 913/877-3824.

TEACHERS:

- Bakken, Richard E.**, 1370 Elizabeth, Crete, IL 60417; 312/672-8931.
- Defrain, Richard A.**, 3123 S. Illinois Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53207; 414/747-1623.
- Faust, Robert A.**, 5312½ Colfax Ave., North Hollywood, CA 91601; 818/980-8281.
- Hahnke, Donald J.**, 1015 E. Capitol Dr., Hartland, WI 53029; 414/367-4453.
- Krueger, Thomas H.**, 5202 Branon Dr., El Paso, TX 79924; 915/751-3536.
- Marquardt, Dale M.**, 3319 Winchell Lane, Billings, MT 59102; 406/652-2606.
- Melso, John M.**, 6933 NE Loop 820 #1624, North Richland Hills, TX 76180; 817/581-1867.
- Nelson, Jason M.**, 503 E. Plainfield Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53207; 414/744-6217.
- Rhode, Steven J.**, 5150 Balboa Arma Dr. #E12, San Diego, CA 92117; 619/278-9835.

STUDENT NAMES REQUESTED

It is a top priority of the Campus Ministry Committee to compile a more complete listing of WELS student names and addresses, and a new computer system is designed for more efficient recording, retention and updating of the information. Once a student's name and address are added to the list, the student is referred to the appropriate WELS congregation and/or WELS campus ministry near his or her campus, and receives ministry by mail through complimentary subscriptions to *Meditations*, *Handout* and (if requested) *The Northwestern Lutheran*. These programs depend upon the submission of names by students and by students' families, friends, pastors and congregations. Please send the name and address (name of school is sufficient if that is all you have) to: WELS Lutheran Campus Ministry, 2929 N. Mayfair Rd., Milwaukee, WI 53222. If in doubt whether a name has already been submitted, please send it again.

CIVILIAN CHAPLAINS

Rev. Joel Jaeger	Rev. Lee Neujahr
Home Address Kastanien Strasse 4 6501 Klein Winterheim West Germany Phone 011-49-6136-8041	Home Address Rennweg 70 8500 Nürnberg 20 West Germany Phone 011-49-911-538563
Mailing Address Same as above	Mailing Address 98th General Hospital PO Box 391 APO NY 09105

Tourists in Europe: For time and place of services call the chaplains or WELS Special Ministries Board, 414/771-9357, USA.

NURSES

"Be all that you can be" in the service of our Lord

Through the African Medical Mission you can serve patients in Malawi or Zambia and work in close support of our missionary program. This is a unique opportunity as well as a challenge, as you develop your nursing skills and experience in countries where the need is so great. Malaria, pneumonia, severe skin infections, snakebite, malnutrition and starvation still plague African countries. Our nurses also give prenatal and postnatal care and in some cases deliver babies when necessary.

The African Medical Mission has two nurses at the Mwebemzhi Lutheran Dispensary in Zambia and two nurses at the Lilongwe Lutheran Mobile Clinic in Malawi. They currently serve approximately 43 months, including preparation time and training, field orientation and service. In preparation for Africa, nurses are currently being sent to Seneca College in Toronto, Canada for a five-month course concentrating on physical diagnosis, tropical medicine, and pediatrics with two weeks "bush" experience. On the field orientation is provided after arrival in Africa.

As you practice your profession in a third world country, what a privilege to demonstrate your Christianity and to grow spiritually in a missionary setting. "Be all that you can be" both spiritually and professionally.

To qualify for this opportunity to nurse in the service of our Lord, you must be a three- or four-year nursing graduate and have two or more years of work experience in nursing. If you are interested in learning more about this or have questions, contact Mrs. Jane Unke, secretary, Medical Mission Committee, N123 W12533 Russet Ct., Germantown, WI 53022; 414/242-3572.

Dr. Jerome C. Brooks
Medical Director

*A refreshing, new
experience in Bible study*

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An electronic Gestetner stencil scanner, model 1103, is available to any congregation for cost of shipping. Contact Christ Lutheran, 111 Prospect Ave., Pewaukee, WI 53072; 414/691-0720.

NEW ELS MISSION

The Evangelical Lutheran Synod has recently organized a mission at Port St. Lucie, Fla., Christ Lutheran, Hellenic Center, 1592 S.W. Floresta Dr. 10:00 a.m. (Bible Study 9:00 a.m.) Contact Pastor Charles J. Keeler, 1782 Mariana Rd., Port St. Lucie, FL 33452.

NEW WELS CHURCHES

Names Requested

In recent months the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod began work in the states and cities listed below. Please send all names of members who moved into the general area of these cities, as well as names of people who may be interested in a Wisconsin Synod mission, to:

WELS MEMBERSHIP CONSERVATION
2929 N. Mayfair Rd., Milwaukee, WI 53222

Names as well as pertinent information regarding members referred will be forwarded to the nearest pastor and/or mission board chairman.

Alaska	Anchorage (South)* Juneau*
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Arkansas	Bakersfield*
California	Pleasanton* Poway
Colorado	Colorado Springs (East)*
Florida	.....	Deltona Jupiter* Miami (Hispanic)* Ocala Panama City*
Georgia	.....	Alpharetta*
Illinois	.....	Buffalo Grove/Wheeling* Streamwood*
Indiana	.....	LaFayette*
Michigan	.....	Houghton/Hancock*
Minnesota	Elk River* Shoreview*
Nebraska	Omaha (Southwest)*
New Mexico	Roswell*
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Ohio	Marietta* Toledo (Northwest)
Pennsylvania	Bucks County*
South Dakota	Custer*
Texas	.....	Abilene* Amarillo* Atascocita* Beaumont* San Antonio (Northeast)* Sherman* Waco*
Washington	.....	Everett* Spokane Valley* Woodinville/Bothell*
West Virginia	.....	Parkersburg*
Wisconsin	.....	Madison (Hispanic)* Portage* Waunakee*
Ontario, Canada	.....	New Market*

*Denotes exploratory services.

NAMES WANTED

Survey work preliminary to conducting exploratory services. People interested in WELS services, contact pastor noted.

TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA — Pastor Lynn Wiedmann, 4618 NW 41st St., Gainesville, FL 32606; 904/372-5509.

EXPLORATORY SERVICES

to determine the potential for establishing a WELS mission in the area. Services are held on Sundays.

FAYETTEVILLE/ROGERS/BELLA VISTA, ARKANSAS — Grace, 700 W. Emma, Springdale, AR 9:30 a.m. Pastor Chuck Huebner, 2723 Dove Dr., Fayetteville, AR 72701; 501/442-4021.

CHANGE OF TIME OR PLACE OF WORSHIP

in the following exploratory areas or mission congregations.

COLUMBUS, OHIO — Lamb of God, 4925 Sunbury Rd., Columbus, 10:30 a.m. Pastor Roger Kovaciny, 4925 Sunbury Rd., Columbus, OH 43230; 614/471-5164.

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FROM THIS CORNER

As the editor of this magazine, one of the things I must do is choose a cover for it. The choice is normally made in consultation with other staff members. Since a variety of factors must be considered, it is not always a simple decision. The Christmas cover is an example. After some debate, a conference reduced the number of choices to six. But this time I assumed responsibility for the final choice. No debate — I just said: this is the one. Having made the selection, I want to say a few words about what it was that attracted me.

The picture is simple, almost stark, a candle with a flame, a very small flame. Compared with the sturdy candle the flame looks so fragile, so frail. As I compared the flame and the candle, I was carried to that night in Bethlehem that was to change the course of earth's history. Out of the darkness of that night came a flickering light. It shone in the most unlikely places. Frail and fragile though it was, it shone on nearby shepherds. Its light in the sky was observed by astronomers in Iraq (Babylonia).

The flickering light, "that was the true light," says John in echoes of Isaiah, "which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." And the frail light said of himself, "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me . . . shall have the light of life."

The light of life? . . . The true light? . . . The light of the world? . . . You can't be serious. Don't let Macy's creches fool you. It was a wretched first night. Out in the cold, the birthing of her first-born by a young teenager, cradled in a filthy barn, born of the poor. Light of the world? There must be some mistake.

There was no mistake. We must all repeat in our own way the vision of Elijah. God is not in the wind. He is not in the earthquake. He is not in the fire. He comes to us in the still small voice. "How faint the whisper we hear of him," mourns suffering Job.

And as I reflected on the candle and the flame, the words of a song by Leland Sateren came to me:

The hands of Christ seem very frail
For they were broken by a nail,
But only they reach heaven at last
Whom these frail, broken hands hold fast.

That was the lesson of the first Christmas and that was the lesson of his life. And every day, please God, we learn it anew.

For reasons I cannot fathom, I felt that I had to share with our readers why I chose the candle and flame. But whatever the reason, our wish and prayer for all of you this Christmastide is that you find at Bethlehem your light and life and peace. And if hope seems far away, you will find that there too.

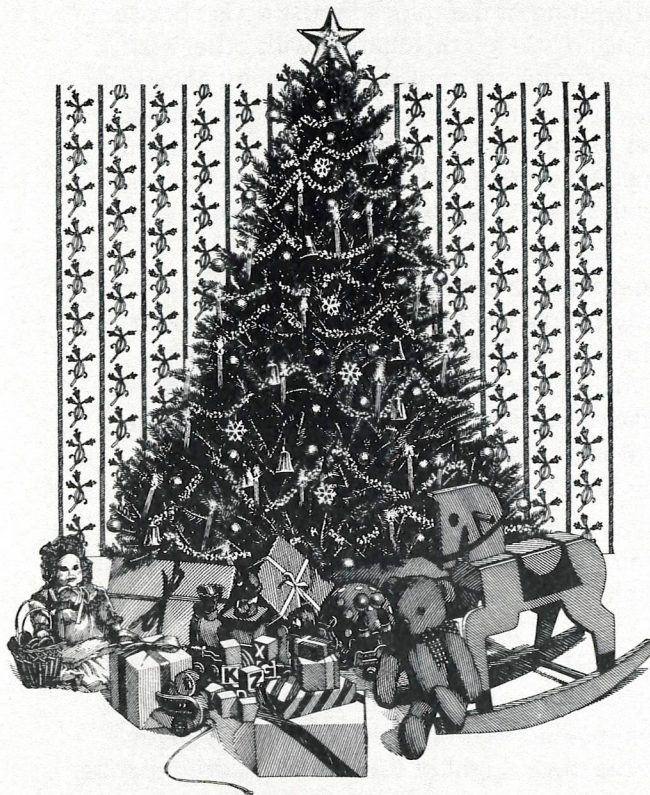
And from our hearts — God bless and keep you!

James P. Schaefer



*Out of
the darkness
of that night
came a
flickering
light.*

A meaningful name



By Mildred O. Meyer

The air was crisp and cold that star-studded Christmas Eve. Ethel and I, as befitted our lesser years, walked several paces behind our older sisters. As usual our superiors were arguing. Each felt she had discovered the *Star of the East*. I detected a star much more brilliant than any chosen by my sisters. I knew that was *the star*, but wisely refrained from venturing an opinion.

The feeling that Annie, our hired girl, had hurried us out of the house much too early was verified when we arrived at our church. The older girls went to the basement where the school children would assemble. Ethel and I were lucky to be so early. This meant we could sit in the very front pew with nothing obstructing our view of the towering tree which reached from floor to ceiling.

"What's the pail of water for?" whispered Ethel.

"To dip the sponges in if the candles start a fire."

It seemed an eternity, but finally the church filled, the bells rang, the organist began playing, and the children marched in singing slightly off key, "Come Hither, Ye Children."

Then followed songs and recitations. I knew I should not have turned around. Mother had a strict rule: eyes to the front. But for some unfathomable reason neither mother nor father were with us this evening. The object

of my scrutiny was one of the older boys. This lad was so taken up with the wonder and beauty of it all that he opened his mouth wider and wider. A strange thing happened. In that mouth there appeared a stable. A man and woman were hovering over a wee baby lying in a manger.

"Wake up, little girl. Time to leave." An usher shook me gently by the shoulder, pressing a paper sack into my hands. Ethel had already opened hers and was gazing with delight at the apple, orange, nuts and candy.

Without bothering to wait for the older girls, Ethel and I hurried home.

Father met us at the door. "Better hurry to bed," he said. "If lights are left on too long, Santa might pass over our place."

That would be catastrophic. Ethel and I hurriedly brushed our teeth and slipped into flannel nighties. All the while father's eyes were shining as though he knew a wonderful secret.

Father tossed Ethel to the ceiling. "You've got a new brother," he said. "Arrived tonight while you were in church."

"You're lying," I said and then clapped my hands over my mouth. You just didn't speak that way to father.

"A brand new one?" asked Ethel.

"Absolutely brand new."

"What's his name?"

"How about Herman?"

"That's your name. You shouldn't give your name away."

"That's what your mother thought, so she named him Emanuel Victor."

"That's a funny name. I don't know any boys named Emanuel."

Father tucked us into bed explaining Emanuel — God-with-us — was another name for Jesus. Since our little brother had arrived on Jesus' birthday, it seemed a fitting name.

I wasn't so sure about that when we were allowed a glimpse of the infant the next morning. He seemed a bit small for such a big name, also somewhat belligerent with tiny hands formed into tight fists.

I didn't think much about the Victor. After all it was only a second name. Several years later when Teacher Homeier was telling the Easter story, I realized the significance of the name. Jesus had risen victoriously from death; therefore, the Victor.

Mother had chosen two very meaningful names for our little, wrinkled, red-faced brother: Emanuel Victor. □



Mildred Meyer is a member of St. John, Jefferson, Wisconsin.