

DECEMBER 1987

# The Northwestern Lutheran





408



412

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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# Christmas today

by Richard E. Lauersdorf

*And she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in strips of cloth and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn (Luke 2:7).*

**I**t all sounds so modern, doesn't it? The whole Christmas story, though many years past and miles distant, could have happened today. We read that people had to be enrolled for taxation purposes even as we wonder about new tax laws and what they will mean to us. We see Mary and Joseph on the road from Nazareth to Bethlehem even as we observe how extra crowded our highways are this time of the year. We notice that it's all rooms rented and no space left for an expectant mother even as we try to survive in our cash and carry kind of world.

It could have happened today. Between that first one and our Christmas today a number of similarities can be drawn.

## No room?

One of the most striking and most disturbing similarities is that so many people still have so little room in their hearts for the Christ today. Of course they know something about why he came. Certainly they celebrate his birthday and use his name again and again in their holiday greetings. But they have so little room for him in their me-first, care-crowded, thing-concerned hearts.

It can happen to us too! We can become so wrapped up in things like taxes and cash, so involved in the travel of everyday life, so engrossed in making a living and setting some aside for the future that the door of our heart creeps shut little by little. Almost without our realizing it, that sign can show up partially visible through the small window or perhaps even boldly tacked on the front door, the sign that says, "No room"?

This season it's time to listen again. It's time to sit up and listen as our Christmas services announce, "He sent forth Jesus, that true Redeemer, he sent forth Jesus to set me free." Yes, it's time to pray, "Prepare my heart, Lord Jesus, turn not from me aside, and grant that I receive thee this blessed Adventide."

## Always room!

One of the most striking and most comforting similarities is that Christ still has room in his heart for us. Always there is room in his heart of love, in his kingdom of grace, in his Father's house. That's why he came to that Bethlehem crib and that Calvary cross. Nor will this blessed truth ever change. Aren't we glad that there's always room at his manger bed for the sinner to kneel. Aren't we glad that regardless how often we come or with what we come, he's always there to assure the penitent, "Take heart . . . your sins are forgiven" (Matthew 9:2)? Always he has room for me, the sinner!

Aren't we glad too, that he has room for everyone? Not to some queen in a palace, surrounded by servants, but to the virgin wife of a poor carpenter in the squalor of a stable where he was born. So clearly do we see that he is for all. In a world which recognizes only the high and the mighty and values only the rich and the famous, we need to know that Christ is for all. I may be unnoticed and unappreciated in the world; people may pass me by with seldom a sideways glance. But the Savior always has room for me!

And aren't we glad that he always has room for the troubled? For some of us the joy of Christmas may be dulled. Perhaps we have to celebrate without a loved one or with a load of pain. Perhaps our future looms clouded over because of circumstances. But he knows! And he has room, always room for the troubled!

This season it's time to thrill again. It's time, as we kneel at the manger bed, to join Paul in the joyous outburst, "Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift" (2 Corinthians 9:15). Yes, it's time to pray,

"Enter now my waiting heart,  
Glorious King and Lord most holy.  
Dwell in me and ne'er depart,  
Tho' I am but poor and lowly.  
Ah, what riches will be mine  
When thou art my guest divine!"

Then it will be *Christmas today*. □



*Richard Lauersdorf is pastor of St. John, Jefferson, Wisconsin and the synod's first vice-president.*

## Something that lasts

**A** Jewish convert to the Christian faith who had become a missionary among the Jews was lecturing to a group of Lutheran seminary students. In the course of his address he told of another Jew who like himself had been converted to Christianity. The missionary noticed at a later function that the convert declined to eat the pork which was being served. When the missionary reminded his friend that Christians are not bound to the dietary laws given to the Jews in Old Testament times, the convert replied, "I am converted, but my stomach isn't."

The review of a recently published book brought this story back to mind. The title of the book is "Once a Catholic." The title clearly intimates that once the Roman Catholic beliefs have been implanted in a person's mind, they never completely go away. Nationally known writer Jimmy Breslin, a product of the Roman Catholic parochial school system, attests to this. He wrote, "The religious training that the nuns put into you comes back in one instant to everyone who ever had it — no matter how far they get from the church or how much they laugh about it with their friends. Let a guy have one chest pain, one twinge in the chest, and he goes flying back to the things that he was taught in third or fourth grade."

What he wrote applies to the pure truth as well, and Christians who have been familiarized with the teachings of the Bible can attest to it. The same thing has happened time and time again in their own experience, and it makes them grateful for the religious training they had. They have found that once you have learned something from God's word it keeps on coming back. From time to time, especially in times of stress, a Bible verse, like the voice of God, suddenly comes back to mind.

These days, parents, motivated by custom as well as love, are casting about for gifts for their children. The children, caught up in the contemporary spirit of the season, are anticipating the same thing. In most cases, both will settle for something which will eventually wear out or lose its fascination.

Parents should remember that on a daily basis they are in a position to steer them to something that lasts.

Immanuel G. Frey



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

# “Children of God”

by Fredric E. Piepenbrink

**A**ratus (c. 315-245 B.C.) was a Greek poet of Soli in Cilicia, and best remembered for his poem on astronomy, *Phaenomena*. In his opening invocation to the Greek god Zeus he writes:

From Zeus let us begin, whom we mortals never leave unnamed: full of Zeus are all streets and all gathering places of men, and full are the sea and harbors. Everywhere we all have need of Zeus. For we are also his offspring. — *Phaenomena*, sec. I.

Most Christians will recognize the last sentence from this excerpt as quoted by the Apostle Paul when addressing the heathen in Athens. Paul said, “As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring,’ ” Acts 17:28b. Paul agreed with Aratus that all people are offspring (children) of a divine; but he wanted the Athenians to recognize that since his children are living, breathing, acting individuals, then the God from whom they come must have similar characteristics. He, too, must be a “living” God and not the dead gold or silver or stone used in the design of the idols in Athens and elsewhere. His point was simple: the true God must be like the children to whom he gives birth.

## John’s perspective versus Paul’s

John, too, in his Gospel speaks of people as “offspring” or “children” of the real God. He introduces the thought already in his prologue (1:1-18) and repeats it later in the Gospel. But John approaches the idea of “children of God” from a different perspective than Paul. John emphasizes the converse to Paul’s logic, i.e. children must be like the Father (God) who gave them birth.

While this difference in emphasis may seem insignificant, the implications are not. First, with John’s emphasis, the term “children of God” becomes more limited than Paul’s definition. Instead of all people of the world being “children of God” John restricts it to God’s believers, “Yet to all who *received* him, to those who *believed* in his name, he gave the right to become children of God — children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God” (1:12-13). Only those who believe in him can rightfully be called his “children.”

Secondly, with John’s emphasis, the term “children of God” implies more than mere descent, but an acquiescence to character. The thought “chip off the ol’ block,” or “like father like son” is dominant in

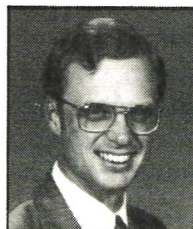
John’s thinking. John would say, “It is one thing to be a physical descendent of parents, but it is the natural tendency for children to act like them. And those who do not, while they are still physical descendants of their parents, have disassociated themselves from them and are no longer their children in spirit.” (When the prodigal son was off in the distant country squandering his wealth he was still the child of his father by Paul’s definition, but when he returned and repented he once again became the child of his father according to John’s definition.)

Yes, John understands “children of God” in a deeper sense. And that is why John says that we have the right to “become” children of God. It is a process, a gradual transformation. We call this process “sanctification,” which is constantly growing in fruits of righteousness as we grow in faith.

## Alive in the word

Read the sections in John’s Gospel where he speaks of the “children of God” in this deeper sense according to the definition given in the prologue.

- 8:31-47** The Jews took great pride in the fact that they were physical descendants of Abraham. Jesus tells them that they are not Abraham’s children because they don’t do what Abraham did.
- 13:1-17** If the master practices humility and service then his servants do the same.
- 13:18-30** Jesus exposes Judas as an illegitimate child based on what he was about to do.
- 13:31-38** Children of God show it by their love. They some day will be with their Father in heaven, but in the meantime they still struggle with sin here on earth.
- 14:15-31** Jesus promises not to leave his children as orphans but will send them the Holy Spirit.
- 15:1-17** Children of God are like branches to a vine.
- 15:18-16:4a** Children of God will be hated, just as Jesus was hated. □  
Next time: “Glory”



Fredric Piepenbrink is pastor of Atonement, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

## The decade of the '20s

by Victor H. Prange

**F**or Lutherans in America the decade known as the roaring '20s was one of intense doctrinal discussion. World War I and the organization of the National Lutheran Council (NL 11/1/87) had raised as never before the question: just what does it mean to be Lutheran? The discussion of this question was carried on with growing awareness of the impact the English language was having on Lutherans in America. Language differences were becoming less and less a factor in separating Lutherans from fellow countrymen who belonged to a variety of other churches. Questions were raised as to how much religious cooperation Lutherans might have with other Christians.

The United Lutheran Church in America (ULCA) was the largest Lutheran body in the United States. It was also the most open to contacts with other Christians. At the beginning of the decade of the '20s the ULCA stated that "it is our earnest desire to cooperate with other church bodies in all such works as can be regarded as works of serving love . . . provided that such cooperation does not involve the surrender of our interpretation of the gospel."

Midwestern Lutherans were not willing to go as far as the ULCA in cooperating with other Protestants. They were concerned that this would infect Lutherans with the indifference to doctrine which was becoming so evident in many church bodies. There was also concern that ULCA pastors and congregations were going beyond the public stance of their church and were fellowshiping with other Christians not only in outward acts of love but also in word and sacrament.

Questions about possible further union of Lutheran synods, relations with other Christians and the resolution of past differences resulted in a number of doctrinal conferences in the 1920s. Representatives of the Buffalo, Iowa, Missouri, Ohio and Wisconsin synods produced a statement called the Intersynodical (Chicago) Theses. However, these theses were not accepted by the individual synods for a variety of reasons and so failed to effect church fellowship.

One reason for the failure of the Intersynodical Theses was a parallel series of discussions which led in 1930 to the formation of the American Lutheran Church and the American Lutheran Conference. The

Lutherans who participated in these discussions generally occupied a middle ground between the ULCA and the Synodical Conference bodies.

The American Lutheran Church was the organizational union of the Ohio, Iowa, Texas and Buffalo synods. This merger nearly floundered on the question of the inerrancy of the Bible. Prof. J. Michael Reu of the Iowa Synod did not believe that the church had the right to make total inerrancy a doctrine of the church or to make acceptance of inerrancy a determinant of church fellowship. Ohio made a statement on inerrancy a condition for the merger, and this view prevailed.

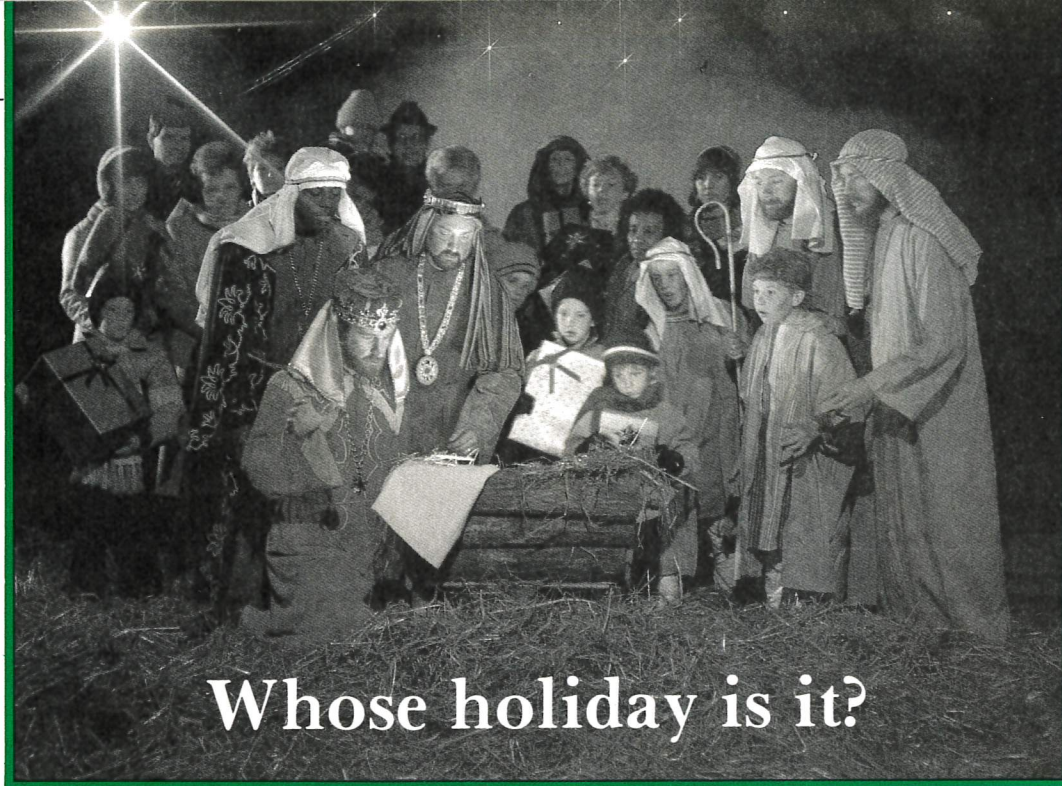
The American Lutheran Conference was a federation which brought together church bodies of various language backgrounds. The Germans were represented by the newly formed American Lutheran Church; the Norwegians by the Lutheran Free Church and the body which came to be named the Evangelical Lutheran Church; the Swedish by the Augustana Synod which had declined membership in the ULCA; and the Danish by the United Evangelical Lutheran Church. In 1930 this conference of Lutherans had a combined membership of 1,384,000, second only in size to the ULCA's 1,520,000 members.

An ALC church historian writes of the American Lutheran Conference: "Against the suspicious and isolationist spirit of the Synodical Conference, the American Lutheran Conference affirmed a sufficient unity of faith, in spite of some differences, for close cooperation in worship and work. Against the ULCA the conference bore witness that on the issues of inspiration of the Scriptures, the Lutheran Confessions, fellowship with other churches and attitude toward secret societies, the ULCA was seriously deficient."

As Lutherans in America closed out the decade of the roaring '20s and faced the depression years which followed, they were grouped in three camps: the ULCA, the American Lutheran Conference and the Synodical Conference. These synodical alignments would hold until after World War II. □



Victor Prange is pastor of Peace, Janesville, Wisconsin.



## Whose holiday is it?

by Carleton Toppe

Christmas seems to be everyone's holiday. Our children sing Christmas carols in church on Christmas eve; Christians join non-Christians in singing them at public high school concerts. The lights of Christmas twinkle and glow from the windows of homes up and down the street. Wherever we go, we hear "Merry Christmas" greetings. America has appropriated a church's worship and has made it a nation's holiday.

The public has seen some of the wonder and the joy of Christmas in the worship and the ways of Christians and has been attracted by their sparkle and glow. It doesn't comprehend the "star of wonder" in Bethlehem's sky, nor does it hear the rapture of heavenly hosts singing Alleluia, but it tries to capture them in plastic stars atop their Christmas trees, and in electronic tapes and discs routinely playing Christmas carols and the Hallelujah Chorus. It sees lights, but its eyes are not open to the miracle of God's Son born; it senses warmth, but it does not know the precious comfort that gladdens a repentant sinner's heart. It can only simulate the wonder and the joy of Christmas.

The truth and the salvation of Christmas — only God's people know that. Christmas is more than sociability and celebration, presents and feasting, or even carols and good will. It is, above all, *truth*. *Truth* is God's answer to the question, "Why was

Jesus born?" Jesus gave that answer to Pontius Pilate, "For this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth." That truth was that he was the promised Savior of mankind.

The truth of Christmas is that God had to intervene wondrously and mightily in human history to save a world that, of itself, was beyond help and without hope. The truth of Christmas is that the malady of universal sin required a miracle cure. It is that only divine grace could offer that miracle of the virgin-born Savior of mankind. It is that only God's Son incarnate could and did die for human sin. The truth of Christmas is that only faith in that miracle of grace can save lost sinners.

Our Christmas and the world's Christmas may look alike and sound alike in many respects, but they are as different from each other as the doll is from the real child. How grateful we should be that this "dearest Jesus, holy child" makes his bed in our hearts! With that gratitude must go the prayer that the wonder and the joy the world finds in Christmas may be translated into the wonder and joy of knowing its truth and salvation. Then Christmas will be ours *and* theirs. □



Carleton Toppe is the retired president of Northwestern College, Watertown, Wisconsin.



## The Spanish connection — today

by Jerome E. Spaude

**I**t was almost midnight before we saw the lights of Guadalajara, Mexico. As the airplane circled the airport waiting to land, I again asked myself some of the same questions: How will these high school students react to the new and foreign culture? Will we reach any of the goals that were carefully set up? Will the experience be safe and God-pleasing? Will the results be only short-lived or will they be longer lasting, even with eternal benefits?

Whatever lay ahead for our group of 12 students and three coordinators — Professor Jerome Braun, Pastor Mark Goeglein and Professor Jerome Spaude — we were embarking upon a new kind of Spanish connection for our Wisconsin Synod. Its official name was Project HOST.

The name stands for Hispanic Outreach for Study and Training. Project HOST was under the sponsorship of the synod's Board for Worker Training and the boards for home and world missions. Much time had been spent choosing the six students from Michi-

gan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, and six from Martin Luther Preparatory School, Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin. The 12 students had already studied Spanish for one year at their schools and had given a commitment to the ministry of the church.

The plan was to spend three weeks in Guadalajara to study Spanish in the North American Mexican Cultural Institute and to come face-to-face with a new culture. A fourth week was to be spent in El Paso, Texas with San Juan Lutheran Church in vacation Bible school canvassing.

From the beginning it was apparent that the Lord was blessing Project HOST. Our first day was a Sunday. The students understood very little of the Spanish used in the church service. But the local world mission parish, Cristo Rey Congregation, and its pastor, Josué Saucedo, had planned a mixer for the afternoon in beautiful Parque Mirador, a scenic spot with a beautiful panoramic view. He and his congregation would get to know these Americans and fellow





The twelve Project HOST students from MLS and MLPS.

Lutherans. Before the afternoon was over the students and their leaders felt at home. A connection had been made.

Every weekday morning was spent studying Spanish at the institute. The students soon noticed, whether at the institute, on the street or at the market, that very little English was being used or heard. Although the students all had learned many basic Spanish phrases, the quickness of native speech and variations in accent and pronunciation struck them. There was some feeling of humbleness. More often there arose the feeling of inadequacy. A few days of this and many longed for American English — speech, food, customs and friends.

But the connection with the Hispanic culture endured and finally there was a bonding. The frequent visits with Mrs. Saucedo and her children strengthened the bond. The Saturday outing with the congregation at beautiful Lake Chapala and an afternoon of bowling with the young people of Cristo Rey Congregation also strengthened the bond. All too fast the three weeks in Guadalajara came to an end. The good-byes were not only heartfelt but tearful for many of us.

Arrival in the far western metropolis of El Paso opened up opportunity for an even more meaningful Spanish connection. The students were going to canvass for the VBS of San Juan Lutheran Church. Pastor Mark Goeglein, mass communications' director for Latin America and also serving San Juan, made the 12 students feel very much at home. Soon the group was preparing for its work among the many Hispanics who lived around the church.

Again the question arose: How can a connection be made with strangers who often speak Spanish or a mixture of Spanish and English? What about the fences that surround many of the homes? In short, how can the invitation to learn about the Savior be brought to total strangers in another language?

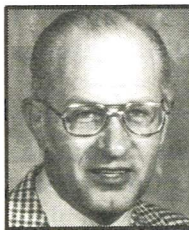
Pastor Goeglein put the students at ease. The twice-a-day canvassing periods — mornings and evenings — quickly proved rewarding. The way into hearts and homes of another culture was by establishing a personal connection. The ability to speak simple Spanish removed many suspicions. And when the new language was spoken with a smile — and maybe a few mistakes — the barriers collapsed.

The first day the students signed up 21 enrollees. The next two days brought in even more names of children. Yes, their parents wanted them to come to VBS. By the end of the week the number of actual enrollees was close to 60. And there were other names, less sure of enrollment, but names to pray over and visit. Again a connection was made.

Goeglein was enthusiastic about the HOST project. "The kids were a great help," he said. "They canvassed over 1000 homes. The last two years we tried doorknob hangers and we were shut out. Not one registration. This year we went from zero to 60." And it was all "because of the personal contact by the kids."

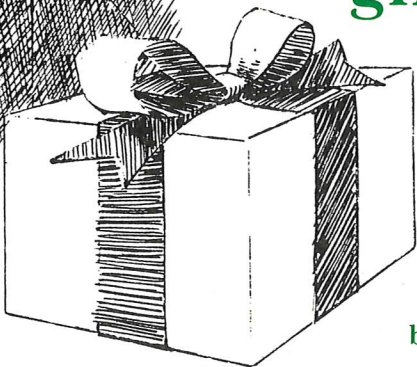
Goeglein said the kids were positively excited about their experiences. "The worst experience we had was when one of the kids was attacked by a goose, roaming an enclosed front yard. . . . We look forward to them returning next summer."

As the four-week project drew to a close, there was a common feeling that it was time to go home, but with a sense of having had an unusual experience. The first fears and anxieties had been replaced with confidence that the Lord had blessed the pilot venture. As one student said, "I will never be the same person I was before." □



Jerome Spaude is director of auxiliary services at Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw.

# Mom, for Christmas gimme!



by Cindi Sampe

Last Christmas I sat on the floor weeping amid piles of torn wrapping paper and crumpled bows. The tree lights flickered eerily, multi-colored shadows on the livingroom wall. The children had long since gone to bed clutching their gifts fearful that "someone else might get 'em while we're sleeping!" The stinging words of my eldest child still echoed in my mind. "Mom, is this it? I'm bored. Christmas is over and I hoped this time it would be really special!"

Really special? Hadn't I bought everyone what they wanted on their gift list? Hadn't I spent most of the day in the kitchen preparing our traditional holiday feast? (Which everyone ate at record speed so they could return to their new gifts.) Hadn't I addressed 100 Christmas cards, written a family Christmas letter, decorated the house, made sure everyone looked their best for the Christmas Eve service, stayed up until 2:00 a.m. to wrap gifts and got up at 6:00 a.m. to prepare the Christmas turkey? I wasn't asking for a medal but I surely didn't expect criticism. "This is the first year anyone has ever complained," I thought to myself.

Then, like a bolt of lightning it hit me. I had complained every year! I complained about the crowds when shopping. I complained when Pete asked me to take it easy on the checkbook. I complained about getting everything done on time. Mostly, I complained about never enjoying Christmas myself because I was too busy. Now here I sat feeling like a failure — an exhausted failure. "O.K. Cindi," I promised myself, "next year, Lord willing, things will be different!"

Christmas is only a few weeks away and, once again, I am besieged with the *gimme* lists. "Mom, do ya think you can gimme a new remote control racing car?" "Mom, can ya gimme a curling iron *and* a blow

dryer this year?" "Mom, is it O.K. if you gimme five gifts instead of just four if the total cost is the same amount?" Zappo! Suddenly I was struck by the absurdity of it all. "All right, everyone into the family room," I yelled. "We are having a talk!" "Oh no," someone mumbled, "here we go again with lecture number 127 — 'It's-more-blessed-to-give-than-it-is-to-receive.' Adios."

"Listen everyone," I began, "whose birthday are we celebrating here anyway? Right, Jesus'. Last year someone thought Christmas should have been more 'special' and I agree. But I can't make it special by myself. I need everyone's help. The Bible says, 'Every good and perfect gift is from above.' How many of you can even remember what you got last year for Christmas?" A few hands slowly went up. "How many of you still have last year's gifts?" Suddenly everyone began sputtering excuses. "Well, mine got lost." "Mine was all used up." "Mine was a ripoff." "Well, John stepped on mine and smashed it flatter than a pancake."

"Exactly," I replied. "So, this year we're going to have a different Christmas — one that's so special it lasts all year." Everyone looked at me like I was from Mars. Finally a voice piped up with, "Yeah. We're all gonna get more expensive toys that'll last longer."

In exasperation I rolled my eyes heavenward. The older kids understood what I meant, however, and decided this year they would give each other gifts of love from their time and talents. The pennies saved would be donated to missions. Everyone would help with the Christmas baking, cleaning and decorating.

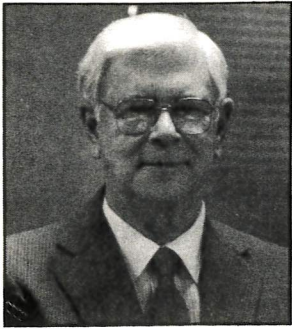
Also we could prepare a Christmas basket for a family less fortunate than ours. Finally, we had realized how commercialized holiday expectations had spoiled the one day for our family to enjoy — Jesus' birthday.

This year I have written our Father a *gimme* list. It reads: "Father, please gimme the courage to say 'no' to my children's requests for gifts that advertisers have successfully brainwashed them into thinking they cannot live without. Please gimme the spirit of joy, peace, love and happiness, so that I may generously share it with my children, my husband and others. Lord, gimme the wisdom to keep my priorities straight. And by the way, thank you for all the *gimmes* that you have blessed me with in the past — my faith, my family and my friends. Happy Birthday!" □



Cindi Sampe is a member of St. Paul, Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin.

## *Listen to the music— and the words*



**I**t's the season for Christmas concerts. In some areas of the synod it is difficult to fit all of them into the schedule. Our seminary in Mequon this year broke with a long-standing tradition when it changed the date of its annual Christmas concert because of, as the announcement stated, "the plethora of concerts in the area on that day."

It's too bad some of them can't be moved to other parts of the synod. Those of us who have such easy access to them often take them for granted and fail to appreciate what is right at our door.

But even those who may not be musically inclined would have come to attention the night the angels sang. Their hymn would have sent chills up and down their spine, not only the music, but also the words.

Look at the first stanza: Glory to God in the highest! Why? Because he is the author of our salvation. We know what happened in Paradise. And because of that transgression the Scriptures declare, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." But what we could not do, God in love and mercy has done for us. Even as our first parents were leaving the Paradise they had forfeited because of sin God promised them a Savior. That promise was gloriously fulfilled when an angel told a group of startled shepherds, "Unto you is born a Savior." And a whole choir of angels undergirded the announcement as it sang, "Glory to God in the highest."

The second stanza: Peace on earth! There must have been strife before. There was! Between God and us — because of sin. But because of this child, the Son of God, our Savior, the hymn writer can now sing, "Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!" That peace is ours right now even in a world where there's everything but peace. And only to the degree that people come under the influence of the Prince of Peace — and what a lot of mission work we have to do — can we hope to see peace between nations and individuals who still live as enemies of God in the slavery of sin because they don't know that Christ has set them free.

Stanza three: Good will to men! If we ever wonder what God thinks of us, that question is effectively answered in Christ. Look at what he did to save us! Look at what he has invested in us! The God who expressed his good will toward us in such an amazing demonstration of love can still be trusted to know what is best for us, no matter what.

I hope we'll have an opportunity to attend a Christmas concert or two this year. I hope we'll use the opportunity to listen to the music — and the words. It will renew our own faith and do much to keep us motivated for a life of service until we hear the angels sing, until we sing along with them, in heaven.

*Carl H. Muschke*

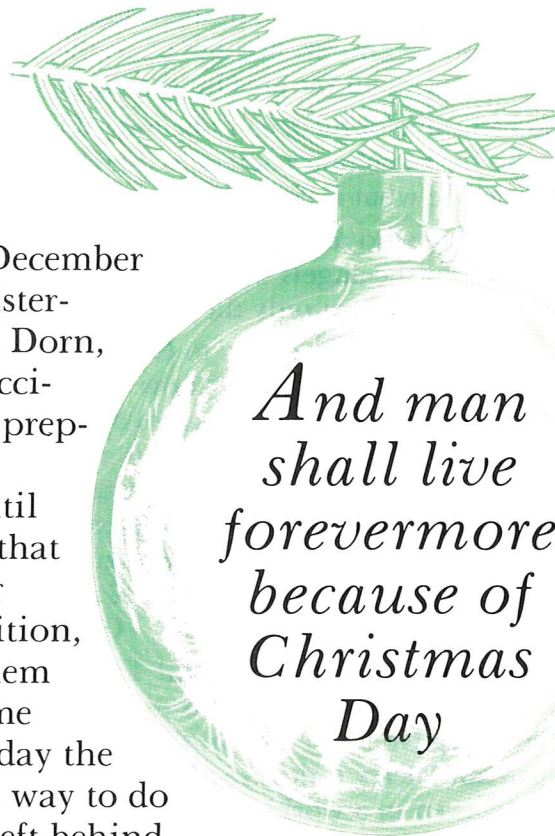
# Because of Christmas Day

by Carol Albrecht

Last year, on December eighth, my sister-in-law, Ruth Dorn, was killed in a car accident. All my frantic preparations, my racing through the days until Christmas, stopped that morning. Ruth's car keys, still in the ignition, had a pendant on them which read, "Slow me down, Lord." That day the Lord found his own way to do that for those of us left behind.

Somehow, after losing Ruth and trying to absorb the shock of what had happened, nothing seemed joyful to me about Christmas. I was definitely "slowed down," but only from a lack of enthusiasm, not from any great inward spiritual motivation. Oh, I heard all the sermons and sang all the hymns. I knew that Ruth was in heaven; I knew that the birth of Jesus was, in spite of our loss, a cause for rejoicing. But, somehow, I couldn't equate the two and Christmas, my very favorite holiday, had lost its flavor. My "slowing down" came near to being a full stop.

And then one afternoon, just a few days before Christmas, my teenage daughter, Kristie, and I were in the department store. She was trying to find an inexpensive gift for her dad (Kristie is *always* broke), when I spied a shelf of Christmas ornaments. The big sign read, "50% off," so we decided



to look. I had rummaged through the santas and elves and was ready to give up when one lone ornament at the back of the shelf caught my eye. On one side it had shepherds gazing into heaven and on the other side a phrase from a well-known calypso Christmas tune: "And man shall live forevermore because of Christmas Day." A light clicked on inside me when I read that one little line. I had been thinking the wrong thing about Christmas — it wasn't about *birth* at all! It was about *death* and, consequently, about resurrection and eternal life. In all the messages, in all the glorious hymns, how had I missed that beautiful truth? I had failed, even though saying all the right words, to get beyond the manger to the cross.

Reflecting on it now, I think that before, in the gaiety of Christmases past, it was always easy to talk glibly and sing the eternal truths I knew so well. But last year I was forced to face all those happy Christmas words with death standing next to me.

I will slow down this Christmas. I will slow down, not out of sorrow, but out of joy. I will slow down to savor the gift of life and to prepare my soul for life everlasting. That special ornament will hang on our tree. My husband thinks it is his, but I know the message on it is for me: "Ruth and I and all those I know and love will live forevermore *because of Christmas Day.*" □



Carol Albrecht and her husband, Pastor Paul Albrecht, reside in Omaha, Nebraska.

by Paul E. Kelm

**M**uch has been written in the media lately about the importance of a good self-image or self-esteem. Is this contradictory to the Bible's doctrine of humility and our sinful nature?

There is empirical evidence to support contemporary psychology's claim that success, happiness and even health are related to positive self-image. Some definitions on both sides of that equation are necessary to any Christian response to the claim.

When secular humanism provides the definitions, the result is what Jesus called the "broad . . . road that leads to destruction" (Matthew 7:13). There is a diabolical power of positive thinking that works on a purely material plane. It builds self-image on the lie of intrinsic human goodness. It reinforces self-image with the lie of self-determination, another name for playing God. It is the psychology of lying to oneself about oneself in order to like oneself. When self-image is a relative term, one need only find some (relatively) positive trait or talent in order to pronounce one's self-worth. To feel even better about self there's always a line of cosmetics, clothes, cars or whatever. In this equation happiness means self-gratification and success becomes self-glorification. The delusion is a nifty bit of circular reasoning. When human beings establish their own values, standards and goals for life, self-esteem is no more than a do-it-yourself project.

Christianity addresses the issue of self-image from a totally opposite direction. Not *intrinsic* worth (an impossibility assured by the biblical truths of original sin and universal condemnation under sin) but *imputed* worth (God's justifying decree that the righteousness of Christ has been exchanged for our sin) establishes the Christian's identity. Self-image becomes "Christ image," for St. Paul says: "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20). The law of God destroys self-pretense so that the gospel can establish objective worth. One who has been made a child of God and an heir of eternal life *has* positive self-image. To seek something more is to have far less.

Christianity recognizes that while sin has morally corrupted human nature, God's creation is not inherently worthless. "I'm OK. God doesn't make junk" expresses a part of Christian self-image. We can appreciate the physical self God created, to his glory. More to the point, God doesn't re-make junk when he gives us new birth in Christ. "We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good

works," St. Paul says immediately after proclaiming our salvation by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:10). The regenerating power of the Holy Spirit *does* sanctify physical talents and personality traits, *does* produce "fruits" of Christian character, *does* add spiritual gifts. Therein lies positive, Christian self-image.

Christianity redefines the other side of the success/happiness and self-image relationship as well. Success is not a relative term defined by self-oriented goals and invidious comparisons. It is realizing and living out the purpose for which we've been (re-)created: glorifying God and serving others. Happiness is not a sensuous response to self-satisfying circumstances. It is rejoicing in the certainty that the Lord who saved us governs all circumstance for good. Christian self-image *is* directly related to Christian success and happiness. To see oneself only as sinner (negative self-image and, in fact, non-Christian) is to be incapable of success and happiness by any definition.

It is not Christianity to live merely under the law and to define oneself merely in terms of the law. Self-deprecation (poor self-image) can be blasphemy — blaming God for what he created and we despise. It can be faithlessness — ignoring the gospel, what it has done for us and with us.

Humility before God is the penitent acknowledgment of our inherent worthlessness and his saving grace. Humility among fellow human beings begins with that honest assessment of what we are by nature, but it must be completed with healthy Christian self-image. In the classic description of humility St. Paul writes: "Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be (jealously) grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant" (Philippians 2:5,6). The Christian arrives at humility, like Christ, not out of a sense of worthlessness but in the secure awareness of worth he doesn't have to prove.

Christians' worth has been established by the price Christ paid for them. Christians refuse to consider any other (d)evaluation. □



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 administrator for evangelism.

# Smalcalden revisited

by Lyle W. Lange

In 1536 Elector John Frederick instructed Martin Luther to prepare a statement for presentation at the council which Pope Paul III was summoning in 1537. A seriously-ill Luther produced a document which the elector then took to Smalcald for presentation on February 8, 1537 to the Smalcald League, a defensive federation of evangelical princes against the ever-growing hostility of the emperor. Although not officially endorsed at that time, the Smalcald Articles were later recognized as a witness to genuine Lutheranism and incorporated into the Book of Concord of 1580.

Luther divided the Smalcald Articles into three parts. First, there were the articles on which Lutherans and Roman Catholics agreed. The second part dealt with redemption in Christ, on which they strongly disagreed. Finally, Luther presented subjects which

learned and sensible theologians on both sides might discuss with each other.

This year marks the 450th anniversary of the Smalcald Articles. To observe the occasion, the Religion-Social Studies division at Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota, conducted a three-day symposium, October 1-3, entitled, "Smalcalden Revisited." About 100 WELS area Lutheran high school religion teachers, local pastors and DMLC seniors participated. The symposium focused on the areas of disagreement between Rome and the Lutherans as outlined by Luther in The Smalcald Articles and assessed those differences as of today.

Dr. Robert Kolb of Concordia Lutheran College, St. Paul, Minnesota, began the symposium by presenting a historical overview of the Smalcald Articles. Dr. Eugene Klug of Concordia Lutheran Seminary, Ft. Wayne, Indiana, presented an evaluation of the current Lutheran-Catholic dialog. On the second day participants attended workshops focusing on doctrinal issues treated by Luther in the

Smalcald Articles. Past and present teachings of the Roman Catholic church were evaluated in the light of Scripture and the Smalcald Articles.

Among the workshop leaders were Professors Armin Schuetze from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, David Gosdeck from Northwestern College and Glenn Reichwald and President Wilhelm Peterson from Bethany Lutheran Seminary in Mankato. DMLC Professors Theodore Hartwig, Arnold Koelpin, Mark Lenz, Darvin Radatz and Thomas Zarling also served as workshop leaders. The final day of the symposium focused on the topic, "What is biblical and what is traditional in the church?"

All participants benefited from the intensive study of these articles called "Luther's deathbed confession." DMLC seniors especially appreciated working together with their future co-workers. The fellowship enjoyed by all was an encouragement for these seniors who look forward to entering the public ministry in the near future.

## National Avenue property sold

September 30, 1987 marked the closing of the sale of synod's National Avenue property in New Berlin, Wis. The 79-acre parcel, originally purchased for a WELS administration complex, was sold to a developer in a \$960,000 cash transaction.

The 1977 convention authorized the relocation of the synod's administration building and Northwestern Publishing House. The 1979 convention further stipulated that, due to budget stringencies, the relocations should take place only when non-budgetary funding became available.

The National Avenue property was acquired for \$1 million in 1981 in anticipation of funding

through the Rehbein estate. The synod planned to use ten acres for relocation and sell the remaining parcel.

In 1983 the decision was made to purchase the current administration offices at the Mayfair Road location. This site offered existing facilities that were immediately available, in a good location and at a reasonable cost which could be amortized by lease income from a second office building on the same site.

This purchase made the entire National Avenue property available for sale. High interest rates and a decline in the building industry, however, inhibited the sale of the property at that time.



**Mrs. Lee Mahnke** was honored recently by the Sunday school staff at Mt. Lebanon, Milwaukee, where she taught both in the school and Sunday school. Mrs. Mahnke was responsible along with her husband, Pastor Jonathan Mahnke who died in 1977, for organizing a Sunday school teachers' training course which is still widely used as a model.

### CORRECTION

In the November 15 issue author Tim Cox was identified as principal of St. Matthew, Iron Ridge, Wis. He is principal of Zum Kripplein Christi in Iron Ridge.

## President installed at NWC

On Tuesday, October 12, President Robert J. Voss was installed as the sixth president of the 122-year-old Northwestern College, Watertown, Wis. Over 750 people crowded the college's music auditorium to participate in the stirring special service.

President Carl H. Mischke exhorted the new president to pursue a "ministry committed to the things that accompany salvation; a ministry committed to helping God's people. When you strip the veneer from everything that you'll be asked to do, that's what it comes down to." He will be accompanied along the way, Mischke said, "by the one who says, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect in weakness.'"

Pastor Alan Siggelkow, newly

elected chairman of the college's Board of Trustees, installed President Voss assisted by the presidents of the three academies, two colleges and seminary of the synod, together with representatives of other educational agencies within the synod and of the family.

After serving 12 years in the parish ministry, Voss was called in 1963 as president of Wisconsin Lutheran College. When the college was closed in 1970 as a teacher training school of the synod, he assumed the position of administrator for the Board for Worker Training. He came to Northwestern July 1 of this year.

A reception followed the service at which the Rev. Conrad Frey, retired president of Dr. Martin Luther College, was the featured speaker.

## Arizona-California District

On May 31 a service of thanksgiving was held for **Pastor and Mrs. David Worgull** on the occasion of their 35th wedding anniversary and the 35th anniversary of the ordination of Pastor Worgull into the ministry. Pastor Worgull serves Calvary in Chandler, Ariz., and also serves the church at large as secretary and statistician of the synod. On October 18 **Calvary** observed its 10th anniversary with a special service at which Pastor Daniel Garbow, first resident pastor of the congregation, served as guest preacher. . . . On September 27 Whiteriver Lutheran Church of the Open Bible in Whiteriver celebrated the 40th anniversary in the ministry of **Pastor Arthur Guenther** who has spent most of his ministry doing mission work among the Apache Indians. . . . **Good Shepherd of Phoenix** celebrated its 40th anniversary on October 11. Former pastors Immanuel G. Frey and David Farley served as guest speakers for the

worship service. Pastor Terry Deters presently serves the 166-member congregation and Joseph Beatrice is principal of the elementary school with an enrollment of 46. . . . **Immanuel of Lakeside** recently dedicated its new church. The congregation was begun in the 1920s in nearby McNary and numbers 36 communicants; yet because of the generosity and support of many people, the 5000 square-foot facility was dedicated debt free. Immanuel is the mother church of a tri-parish which includes the cities of Lakeside, Springerville and Taylor. In 1984 the congregations incorporated as one body under the name Immanuel as a self-supporting congregation, each having its own officers and place of worship. The third congregation in this tri-parish, **Immanuel of Taylor**, begun in 1976, dedicated its new church on October 18. Pastor H. E. Hartzell serves the congregation. . . . **Mt. Calvary of Flagstaff**, served by Pastor Philip Koelplin, having out-



**Mary Edna Hornus** celebrated her 100th birthday on November 17 during an open house at Grace, St. Joseph, Mich., where she worships every Sunday in her wheelchair. She never misses worship or Holy Communion. One time her pastor called her and asked if the choir could sing a few Christmas carols for her. "We loved her response," said Pastor Ronald Freier. "You don't have to come to my house to sing carols. I hear and sing them in church. Go to the sick and shut-ins, to the people who can't come to church and sing to them!" Mrs. Hornus has eight living children and 22 great great grandchildren. She is the oldest member of the church served by Pastors Freier and Hans K. Zietlow.

grown its previous facility, relocated on five acres of land. The first phase of the building program, a 11,500 square foot building, was dedicated on May 17. It serves as a combined worship facility, school complex and fellowship hall. Future building plans call for the construction of a separate church building. . . . **Beautiful Savior of El Paso, Tex.**, served by Pastor Steven Spencer, dedicated its new worship/education/fellowship building on October 18. . . . On November 1, **Peace of Rio Rancho (Albuquerque), New Mex.**, dedicated its new chapel. Pastor Steven Wilkens serves its 45 communicant members. . . . After its meager beginnings in a remodeled milk barn, **Hope of Chino Valley, Ariz.**, dedicated its new chapel on November 8. The church was begun in 1982 as part of a mission outreach program by First of Prescott. Pastor Stephen Hein serves the congregation which numbers 49 communicants.

— Ken Pasch

**Dakota-Montana District**

Mt. Calvary of Estelline, S. Dak., celebrated its 50th anniversary on September 13. Guest speaker was Pastor Dale Neyhart of Gary, S. Dak., who served the congregation from 1971 to 1977. Mt. Calvary is presently served by Pastor Gail Johnson. A special commemorative plaque was presented to Mrs. Mae Begalka, who has played the organ for worship services beginning with the pastorate of Albert Sippert, under whose leadership the congregation was organized in 1937.

— Gerhold Lemke

**Michigan District**

Trinity of Bangor had a reception on October 18 for **Elsa Boreham**, thanking the Lord for her 29 years of Sunday school teaching and her 10 years as Sunday school superintendent. . . . **Bethel of Bay City** celebrated its 135th anniversary on October 25 and **St. John of Bay City** celebrated its 125th anniversary on the same day. . . . A fire, set by an arsonist, caused extensive damage to the interior of **St. Matthew, Benton Harbor**. The fire destroyed the pulpit, pastor's office and sacristy and the intense heat ruined other parts of the building. The total damage is estimated to be \$165,000. During repairs the congregation is worshipping in its Christian day school. The person responsible for the fire was arrested in his apartment where the church's altar cross was found. . . . Michigan Lutheran Seminary recently honored one of its professors, **Gerald Cudworth**, as this year he completes 40 years in the teaching ministry. . . . On November 1 to 5 the MLS senior class made its **annual recruitment tour** of various synod institutions. They visited Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Northwestern College, Dr. Martin

Luther College, the synod headquarters and the Northwestern Publishing House. . . . **Junior Night** was held at MLS on November 6. The annual recruitment event brought the members of the junior class and their parents together for a delicious meal, entertainment and especially to hear words encouraging the juniors to consider full-time work in the church. Representatives from Dr. Martin Luther College and Northwestern College took part in this effort. . . . On September 13 **Marcus Manthey, Lawrence Retberg and Marcus Bode** were installed as professors at MLS. . . . On September 6 **Rick Miller** was installed as instructor at Huron Valley Lutheran High School in Westland. . . . On September 21 **Pastor James Vogt** was installed as institutional chaplain for the Michigan District.

— Edward Schaeewe

**WITH THE LORD**

**Edwin Arthur Breiling  
1916 — 1987**

Pastor Edwin Arthur Breiling was born April 16, 1916 in Kenosha, Wis. He died October 11, 1987 in La Crosse, Wis.

A 1941 seminary graduate, he served congregations in Geneva, Nebr., and Randolph, Two Rivers and West Bend, Wis., before accepting a call to English Lutheran in Viroqua, Wis., in 1971. He also served First Portland, Cashton, Wis. until 1980.

In 1942 he married Irmgard Pape. He is survived by his wife; daughters, Naomi (John) Hardman, Karen (Ronald) Shilling and Janet (Joel) Fredrich; sisters, Ruth (Charles) Van Patten, Eleanore (Robert) Hubbard and Dolores (Robert) Thomas; brothers, Walter and Franklin; and eight grandchildren.

Funeral services were held October 14, 1987 at English Lutheran, Viroqua, Wis..

**NOTICES**

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

**NOMINATIONS  
PROJECT DIRECTOR  
FOR SPIRITUAL RENEWAL**

The following have been nominated for the position of Project Director for Spiritual Renewal:

- |                    |                   |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| Walter Beckmann    | Falls Church, VA  |
| Forrest Bivens     | Saginaw, MI       |
| Donald Buch        | Marshfield, WI    |
| Steven Degner      | Tucson, AZ        |
| Mark Freier        | Plymouth, MI      |
| Joel Gerlach       | Santa Barbara, CA |
| Robert Hochmuth    | Sacramento, CA    |
| Paul Kelm          | Brookfield, WI    |
| Dennis Kleist      | Morton Grove, IL  |
| Richard Lauersdorf | Jefferson, WI     |
| John Lawrenz       | Saginaw, MI       |
| Mark Liesener      | Bloomington, MN   |
| Norbert Meier      | St. Paul, MN      |
| Ronald Muetzel     | Bay City, MI      |
| Karl Peterson      | Manitowoc, WI     |
| Gary Pieper        | Duncanville, TX   |
| Joel Prange        | Redding, CA       |
| Ronald Roth        | Milwaukee, WI     |
| John Schewe        | New London, WI    |
| Wayne Schulz       | Rapid City, SD    |
| Alan Siggelkow     | Milwaukee, WI     |
| Paul Soukup        | Madison, WI       |
| Richard Stadler    | West St. Paul, MN |
| Robert Zink        | Muskego, WI       |

Information pertaining to any of these candidates is solicited from the synod's constituency and should be in the hands of the undersigned by January 16, 1988 for consideration by the Board for Parish Services in its January 21-22 meeting.

Rev. Allen Zahn, Secretary  
613 South Twelfth  
Watertown, WI 53094

**CALL FOR NOMINATIONS  
SPECIAL GIFTS COUNSELOR**

The Conference of Presidents herewith requests additional nominations for the position of special gifts counselor. The original list of nominations appeared in the October 15, 1987 issue. Because of the nature of the work involved this position is to be filled initially by a man with pastor training.

The voting membership of the synod is invited 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 also to 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 January 15, 1988.

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

**DISTRICT NEWS SCHEDULE**

- December 15:** Arizona-California, Dakota-Montana, Michigan
- January 1:** Minnesota, Nebraska, North Atlantic
- January 15:** Northern Wisconsin, Pacific Northwest, South Atlantic
- February 1:** South Central, Southeastern Wisconsin, Western Wisconsin

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



**NOMINATIONS  
MARTIN LUTHER PREPARATORY SCHOOL  
PROFESSORSHIP**

The following were nominated for the professorship of dean of students and Latin I at Martin Luther Preparatory School, Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin:

- |                     |                    |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| Mark Bartsch        | Waco, NE           |
| John Beck           | Pullman, WA        |
| Larry Cross         | Rochester, MN      |
| Steven Degner       | Tucson, AZ         |
| Douglas Engelbrecht | Neeenah, WI        |
| Vilas Glaeske       | Houston, TX        |
| John Guse           | Marietta, GA       |
| Martin Hahm         | Kenosha, WI        |
| James Humann        | Pomona, CA         |
| Roger Kobleske      | Kenosha, WI        |
| Eugene Kock         | Minoqua, WI        |
| David Kolander      | Saginaw, MI        |
| Kenneth Kratz       | Oak Creek, WI      |
| David Kriehn        | Dix Hills, NY      |
| Peter Kruschel      | Orlando, FL        |
| Norman Kuske        | Davenport, IA      |
| James Liggett       | Sleepy Eye, MN     |
| Timothy Lindloff    | Vesta, MN          |
| John Mattek         | Waukesha, WI       |
| Robert Otto         | Somers, WI         |
| David Palmquist     | Woodland Hills, CA |
| Donald Pieper       | Riverside, CA      |
| James Plitzuweit    | Appleton, WI       |
| Herbert Prah        | Eau Claire, WI     |
| David Putz          | Little Rock, AR    |
| Don Scheuerlein     | New Ulm, MN        |
| Thomas Schmidt      | Tulsa, OK          |
| Thomas Schneider    | Winona, MN         |
| Gregg Schoeneck     | Prairie du Sac, WI |
| Jonathan Schultz    | Boulder, CO        |
| Raymond Schumacher  | Tomahawk, WI       |
| Mark Schwertfeger   | Cannon Falls, MN   |
| Jonathan Stern      | Sebewaing, MI      |
| Dennis Smith        | Imlay City, MI     |
| Paul Stuebs         | Yankton, SD        |
| Neil Varnum         | Caledonia, MN      |
| Richard Warnecke    | Panama City, FL    |
| Thomas Westendorf   | St. James, MN      |
| Warren Widmann      | Portland, OR       |
| Richard Zahn,       | Fond du Lac, WI    |

Information pertaining to any of these candidates is solicited from the synod's constituency and should be in the hands of the undersigned by January 11, 1988 for consideration by the MLPS Board of Control at its January 14-15 meeting.  
Dale Markgraf, Secretary  
MLPS Board of Control  
20 S. Jefferson St.  
New Ulm, MN 56073

**POSITION AVAILABLE  
PRODUCER/DIRECTOR OF  
AUDIO AND VISUAL MATERIALS**

The Northwestern Publishing House is expanding its ministry to the audio and visual media and we are searching for a *producer/director* for this new endeavor. Applicants must have expertise and experience in producing and directing in the audio and visual media with a special emphasis on video production. This is a full-time staff position which offers the challenge and opportunity to serve the church in this lay ministry.

Please submit a complete resume including salary requirements, by January 15, 1988 to: Mr. Thomas W. Spaulding, Manager, Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 North 113th Street, PO Box 26975, Milwaukee, WI 53226-0975; 414/475-6600.

**WELS FAMILY RETREAT**

A WELS family retreat will be held July 15-17, 1988 at Chadron State Park, Chadron, Nebr. Clean, modern housekeeping cabins (reservations by January 1), shaded RV and tent sites. Saturday Bible study and Sunday worship. Activities; trail rides, fishing, swimming, crafts, archery, paddle boats, nature films and hiking. One hour from the Black Hills, set in shady pines in the bluffs. For information and cabin reservations contact: Judi Domeier, Rt. 1, Sutton, NE 68979; 402/773-4744.

**CONFERENCES**

**Northwestern Wisconsin District**, Rhinelander Pastor/Teacher Conference, January 25 at Zion, Rhinelander. Agenda: Christian Schools — A Barrier or Help for Church Growth; How Should Our Congregations React to Divorce/No-Fault Divorce?

**CHANGES IN MINISTRY**

**PASTORS:**

- Bater, Michael C.**, from St. Paul, Neosho, Wis., to Zion, Lansing, Mich.  
**Hagedorn, Harold J.**, from associate administrator to administrator of Board for Home Missions, Milwaukee, Wis.  
**Kenyon, John R.**, from exploratory, Bethell, Wash., to Ascension, Moorhead, Minn.  
**Werner, Richard R.**, from St. John, Sturgeon Bay, Wis., to retirement.  
**Winkel, Timothy J.**, from St. Paul, Roscoe, S. Dak., to Good Shepherd, Omaha, Nebr.

**ADDRESSES**

**PASTORS:**

- Baerback, Ronald E.**, Box 334, Guayama, Puerto Rico 00655.  
**Birsching, Paul R.**, 5314 Colfax Ave., North Hollywood, CA 91601; 818/761-6881.  
**Cox, Raymond G.**, Box 488, Mzuzu, Malawi, Africa.  
**Dux, Leroy P.**, Box 511180, Chipata, Zambia, Africa.  
**Flunker, Charles H.**, Caixa Postal 318 94.000, Gravatai, R.S., Brazil, S. Amer.  
**Free, Gerald E.**, 213 N. Nash St., Hortonville, WI 54944; 414/779-6198.  
**Jensen, Robert Q.**, 7510 W. Desert Cove, Peoria, AZ 85345; 602/878-3386.  
**Kanzenbach, Richard N.**, 911 S. Dakota St., Aberdeen, SD 57401; 605/225-6081.  
**Kenyon John R.**, 2816 — 12th Ave. S., Moorhead, MN 56560; 218/233-5346.  
**Kiecker, Peter E.**, 1012 Golf Course Rd., Grand Rapids, MN 55744; 218/326-9345.  
**Kipfmiller, David A.**, 211 Manitowoc St., Box 408, Reedsville, WI 54230; 414/754-4568.  
**Kneser, Thomas W.**, 500 E. Orchard Ln., Rice Lake, WI 54868; 715/234-6031.  
**Kujawski, Robert P.**, 1778 High Lake Rd., Traverse City, MI 49684; 616/941-4975.  
**Marggraf, Bruce J.**, Caixa Postal 318 94.000, Gravatai, R.S., Brazil, S. Amer.  
**Parlow, John M.**, 807 Medary Ave., S., Brookings, SD 57006; 605/692-9249.  
**Schlomer, Lloyd C.**, 5025 N. 1st Ave., #924, Tucson, AZ 85718; 602/888-0835.  
**Starr, Richard D.**, Caixa Postal 318 94.000, Gravatai, R.S., Brazil, S. Amer.  
**Wiederich, Larry L.**, 1665 Shannon Rd., Girard, OH 44420; 216/539-6805.

**TEACHERS:**

- Bauer, Kurt M.**, 1290 Trout Ave., Saginaw, MI 48603; 517/799-5973.  
**Czer, Lawrence J.**, 611 Freeman Ave., Delano, MN 55328; 612/972-6143.  
**Everts, Richard G.**, 2824 Westcliff Dr., Burnsville, MN 55337; 612/435-2817.  
**Foelske, Wayne A.**, 1601 Chestnut St., Saginaw, MI 48602; 517/791-6035.  
**Hohler, Lincoln**, 308 Cass Ave., Dowagiac, MI 49047; 616/782-8202.  
**Krueger, Dale L.**, 3900 — 1st Ave., #203, Minneapolis MN 55409; 612/824-2985.  
**Plath, Daniel L.**, 2132 Central Ave., Billings, MT 59102; 406/652-4563.  
**Schmidt, Brent A.**, 3064 W. Garey Ave., Pomona, CA 91767; 714/593-3646.  
**Sordahl, Peter A.**, 1700 W. Prince Rd., #2082, Tucson, AZ 85705; 602/888-1199.  
**Timm, Lyle W.**, 1304 S. 101st St., West Allis, WI 53214; 414/258-5463.  
**Towne, Steven**, 3521 Cleveland St., Grove City, OH 43123; 614/875-0498.  
**Uher, Alan E.**, 423 - 4th St. NE, #1, Watertown, SD 57201; 605/886-3801.  
**Ulrich, Timothy P.**, 16796 Jonquil Trail, Lakeville, MN 55044; 612/892-1893.

**CIVILIAN CHAPLAINS**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Rev. Joel Jaeger</b><br>Home Address<br>Kastanien Strasse 4<br>6501 Klein Winternheim<br>Federal Republic<br>of Germany<br>Phone 011-49-6136-8041 | <b>Rev. Lee Neujahr</b><br>Home Address<br>Rennweg 70<br>8500 Nürnberg 20<br>Federal Republic<br>of Germany<br>Phone 011-49-911-608824 |
| <b>Mailing Address</b><br>Same as above  | <b>Mailing Address</b><br>98th General Hospital<br>PO Box 391<br>APO NY 09105  |

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

**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 1987* lock box offerings will be credited as 1987 receipts through *January 11, 1988* 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

**FILM PRESENTATIONS**

A family film series, "Turn Your Heart Toward Home" by Christian psychologist, James Dobson, will be shown on six consecutive Sundays, January 10 through February 14, 6:30 p.m. at Trinity, 7936 Nicholson Rd., Caledonia, Wis. (7-Mile Rd. & Nicholson Rd., Racine County). For further information, please call 414/835-4241 or 764-2814.

**NAMES WANTED**

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

**Kalispell-Whitefish-Columbia Falls-Polson-Ronan, Montana** — Pastor Robert Koester, 345 Strand Ave., Missoula, MT 59801.

**CHANGE OF TIME  
OR PLACE OF WORSHIP**

in the following exploratory areas or mission congregations.

**NORMAL, ILLINOIS** — St. Mark, 10:15 a.m.; SS/Bible class 9:00 a.m. Pastor David Ehlers, 1710 W. College Ave., Normal, IL 61761; 309/454-4314.

**ELK RIVER, MINNESOTA** — Abiding Savior, 15413 NE 95th St., Elk River, 10:30 a.m.; SS/Bible class 9:30 a.m. Pastor Dan Schoeffel, 612/441-5250.

**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:

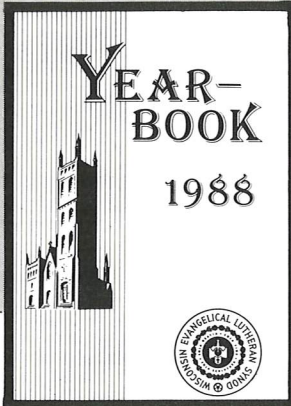
WELS MEMBERSHIP CONSERVATION  
2929 N. Mayfair Rd., Milwaukee, WI 53222

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

- |                 |       |                              |
|-----------------|-------|------------------------------|
| Arizona         | ..... | Gilbert*                     |
|                 |       | Prescott Valley*             |
| California      | ..... | Bakersfield*                 |
|                 |       | Pleasanton                   |
| Colorado        | ..... | Colorado Springs (East)*     |
| Florida         | ..... | Jupiter                      |
|                 |       | Miami (Hispanic)*            |
|                 |       | Panama City*                 |
| Georgia         | ..... | Alpharetta                   |
| Illinois        | ..... | Buffalo Grove/Cherry Valley* |
|                 |       | Lindenhurst/Gurnee*          |
|                 |       | Streamwood*                  |
| Indiana         | ..... | LaFayette*                   |
| Michigan        | ..... | Cadillac*                    |
|                 |       | Houghton/Hancock*            |
| Minnesota       | ..... | Elk River                    |
|                 |       | Shoreview*                   |
| Nebraska        | ..... | Omaha (Southwest)            |
| New Mexico      | ..... | Roswell*                     |
| New York        | ..... | Manhattan*                   |
| Ohio            | ..... | Toledo (Northwest)           |
| Oklahoma        | ..... | Owasso*                      |
| Pennsylvania    | ..... | Bucks County*                |
| South Dakota    | ..... | Custer*                      |
| Texas           | ..... | Abilene*                     |
|                 |       | Atascocita*                  |
|                 |       | Universal City               |
| Virginia        | ..... | Loudon County*               |
| Washington      | ..... | Everett*                     |
|                 |       | Spokane Valley*              |
|                 |       | Woodinville/Bothell*         |
| Wisconsin       | ..... | Green Bay (Southwest)*       |
|                 |       | Madison (Hispanic)*          |
|                 |       | Wauwaukee*                   |
| Ontario, Canada | ..... | New Market*                  |

\*Denotes exploratory services.

# 1988 WELS YEARBOOK



The official directory of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, 6 x 9 inches, 152 pages with handy spiral binding. The *1988 Yearbook* contains a complete listing of the name, location, and time of service of WELS churches; a listing of all WELS Christian day schools, area high schools, and synodical institutions of learning; the name, address and phone number of WELS pastors, professors, missionaries and teachers; and a listing of all WELS organizations, officers, boards, commissions and committees.

**Available January 1st**

To place your order simply complete this order form and mail in your order. Please add 10% of the total dollar amount of the order (\$1.50 minimum — \$3.00 maximum) for handling and transportation costs. Wisconsin residents also add 5% state sales tax to total dollar amount including transportation and handling charges.

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414/475-6600

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## EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

A notice to any WELS persons who are unemployed. Diamond Star Motor Co. is taking applications for assembly line work for its new auto plant beginning the end of November. If you would like an application, contact, Pastor David Ehlers, 1710 W. College Ave., Normal, IL 61761; 309/454-4314.

## ITEMS AVAILABLE

The following items are available for cost of shipping: one pair 4' cast iron bell standards, two amplifier cabinets (old style) and four larger outdoor speakers. Contact Pastor David Priebe, 400 S. Main St., Juneau, WI 53039; 414/386-3313.

## CHURCH FURNISHINGS

A portable pulpit, altar and organ are available to any mission congregation for cost of shipping. Contact Pastor Michael Bartsch, 14343 Sprague Rd., Strongsville, OH 44136; 216/234-6595.

## CHOIR ROBES

Available for cost of shipping: 33 black choir robes. Contact St. John Lutheran, 304 N. 6th St., Watertown, WI 53094; 414/261-5959.

## OFFICE EQUIPMENT

Available to any congregation for cost of shipping: Underwood standard typewriter and Elliott addressograph. Contact Wally Voigt, 466 Decorah, West Bend, WI 53095; 414/377-3997.

## "OUR FAVORITE HYMNS"

These audio-cassettes are again available. The three sets contain 58 hymns sung by mixed and male choirs. Cost for each cassette is \$5.00 postpaid. Send orders to Martin Albrecht, 315 Highland Dr., Grafton, WI 53024.

## WELS FILM/VIDEO RENTAL

### URBAN ALTERNATIVES SERIES

1987 50 min. 1/2" VHS color SCA  
Dr. Tony Evans, the black pastor of Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship in Dallas, Texas, presents a series of Bible studies applied to family living. Although he speaks to a mostly black audience about problems dominant in the black community, those problems are common enough in any culture today. Urban congregations especially could make good use of these videos. Since there are two presentations on

each tape, the rental of \$10.00 for eight days allows for two showings a week apart.

**Tape A — Marriage: God's Style  
Roles in Marriage**

**Tape B — Parenting  
Divorce and Remarriage**

**Tape C — Sex in Marriage  
Successful Singlehood**

### AN INTERVIEW WITH PONTIUS PILATE

1987 35 min. 1/2" VHS color JSCA  
A modern-day commentator interviews Pontius Pilate at his Roman villa and discusses Jesus' trial and crucifixion. Rental fee: \$10.00.

### CHRISTMAS IS

1987 28 min. 1/2" VHS color PI  
In a daydream Benji and his dog Waldo are transported back to the first Christmas and there Benji learns the real meaning of Jesus' birth. Rental fee: \$7.50.

### EASTER IS

1987 28 min. 1/2" VHS color PI  
Benji is having trouble preparing an Easter poster until his father gently explains the meaning of the crucifixion and the resurrection. Rental fee: \$7.50.

### THE LAST RODEO

1987 30 min. 1/2" VHS color CA  
This video deals with some of the problems of aging. A retired cowboy feels unwanted in his daughter's home and decides to return to the rodeo. Rental fee: \$7.50.

### SUMMER SNOW

1987 30 min. 1/2" VHS color SCA  
This video deals with the problems of drug abuse. A businessman finds relief from the pressures of business and family in the "recreational use" of cocaine. Rental fee: \$7.50.

### WELCOME THE STRANGER

1987 20 min. 1/2" VHS color PI  
The puppets Nancy and Isaiah imagine what it would be like to be at the first Christmas and learn a deeper appreciation of the Christmas message. Rental fee: \$5.00.

### CARE OF GOD'S CHILDREN

1987 50 min. 1/2" VHS color PI  
This video shows the puppets, Nanny and Isaiah, helping the poor at an inner-city outreach center. The video is divided into five ten-minute sections with a discussion period at the end of the each section. Rental fee: one week for \$10.00.

Send your order for renting the videos to WELS FILM/VIDEO RENTAL SERVICE, Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 North 113th Street, P.O. Box 26975, Milwaukee, WI 53226-0975. Phone 414/475-6600.

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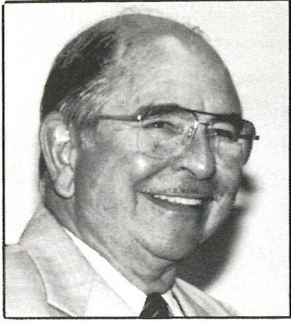
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THE NORTHWESTERN LUTHERAN

ATTACH LABEL HERE



With this December issue the 74th publication year of The Northwestern Lutheran ends. It was a good year. Changes in format and type enhanced the readability of the magazine. We were able to maintain a balanced diet of reading — of good reading — for your homes. Just one disappointment: our list of subscribers plateaued in 1987.

The 1987 publication year could be called “the year of the new hymnal.” Our pages carried on a lively debate about the shape of the new hymnal authorized by the 1983 convention. All that could be said about the proposed hymnal was said by our readers and by the hymnal and liturgy committees which are responsible for the editorial work. As other steps are taken along the way to a new hymnal and are reported on, readers will again have an opportunity to express their preferences.

Several letters to the editor deplored the fact that The Northwestern Lutheran was “propagandizing” on behalf of the new hymnal. It must be understood that this magazine is the official publication of the synod in which it invests considerable money and time. It is, therefore, open to all the official boards, commissions and committees of the synod as a reporting vehicle to the synod’s members. Because of the synod’s stake in its own official periodical, its agencies have territorial rights which cannot and ought not be abridged, apart from whatever contrary opinion the editor might hold.

There was some distress expressed because we halted letters on the hymnal subject in the letter column for the time being. It was our opinion that the subject was running out of steam. Everything had been said even though not everyone had said it.

There was another problem. The basic purpose of a letter corner is to give readers an opportunity to comment on news items, articles, or editorials which appear in a publication. The letter should address the subject as soon as possible after publication and while it is fresh in the readers’ minds. The principal function of letters is not to respond to letters which have appeared in the column, or to respond to letters written in response to letters (around here called “letters to the third degree”).

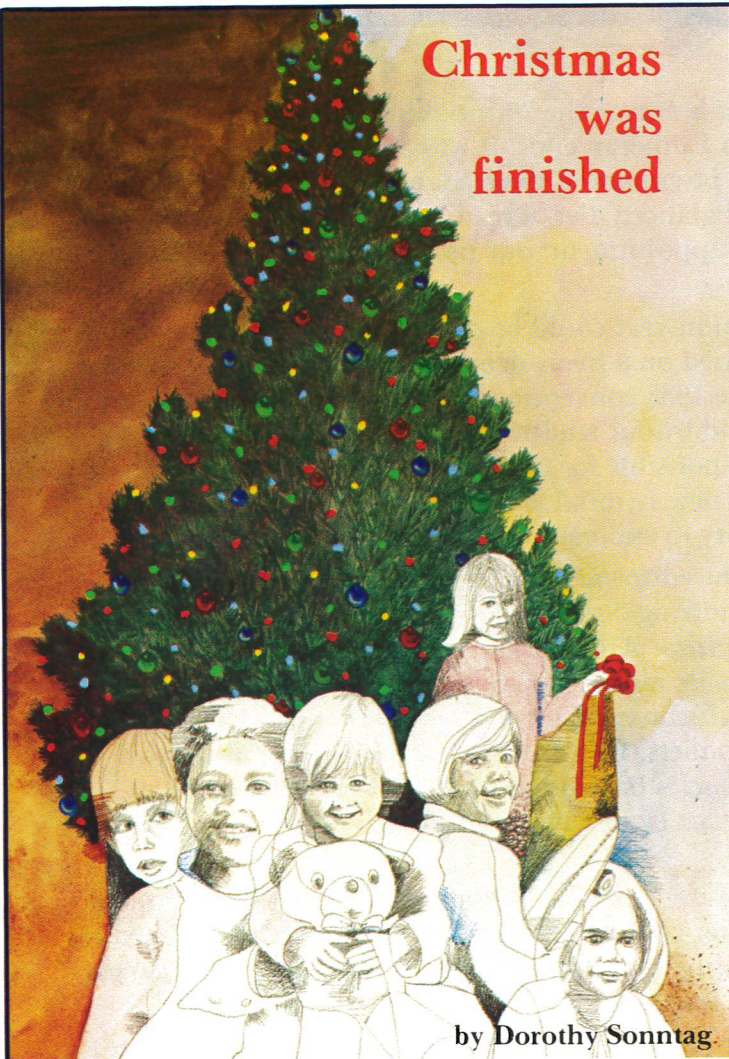
And just to cultivate your curiosity, a look at the new year. We will have a series of three articles on some of the ethical questions posed by medical technology — from test tube babies to organ transplants. The series will be written by Prof. Wayne Mueller of our seminary who has lectured widely on the subject.

A second series, right after the first of the year, will look at gambling, a growth industry in the United States. The series will be written by Pastor Tom Franzmann of Citrus Heights, Calif., who has developed a knack for tackling thorny themes.

Finally, as Christmastide draws near, I wish you, our beloved readers, all the love and joy and peace of Christmas. Many hands unite in making up each issue of The Northwestern Lutheran, and all of them also join in that wish.

*James P. Schaefer*

## Christmas was finished



by Dorothy Sonntag

**C**hristmas was over. I sat dejected among the torn paper and ribbons of unwrapped Christmas gifts. There had been a generous number, but now there were no more to open. Oh, there would be a festive Christmas dinner; the house was decorated with greens and lights; there would be visiting and parties throughout the week. But for me, Christmas was finished. I had opened all my presents. That's all that really mattered.

That is my earliest memory of Christmas as a child. For weeks my sisters and I waited in eager anticipation to see what was in the packages and boxes hidden away in the hall closet. Early on Christmas morning we would rush into the living room to find an abundance of brightly wrapped gifts beneath the tree. We would greedily tear them open to see what was inside, and each year I would give a sigh of selfish disappointment when the last present was unwrapped. Was that all there were?

It was not until I was twelve years old that there was any difference. A casual observer might not have noticed any change even then. The house was again decorated gaily, thanks to my mother's creative touch.

Dad had again stood for hours on the ladder outside to string colored lights along the roof of the house. The kitchen had been a busy place for several weeks, and now plenty of cookies and other treats were ready for the many visitors we would be having. The hall closet was again jammed with packages and boxes which would find their way, gaily wrapped, under the tree on Christmas Eve.

But this Christmas our family interrupted our festivities at home to go to the little white church not too far from our house. We'd never been there at Christmas before, but we'd been spending quite a bit of time there in the past few months.

The church, originally built for other purposes, didn't much resemble the beautiful houses of worship depicted on the front of the Christmas cards we'd been receiving in each day's mail. It had no steeple, no bell, no stained glass windows. It was small and drafty. A handful of children hesitantly told the story of the Savior's birth. It was a new experience for several of us children there, and we'd had only a few hours of practice on Saturday afternoons. We didn't give a polished presentation. We spoke too fast and directed our words to the floor instead of to the small congregation. The church choir, composed of any willing children and adults, including a few monotones, made up in zeal what they lacked in tone quality. The pastor doubled as the choir director. A wheezy organ led the uncertain singing. We thought the service was beautiful, and it was. We had worshiped the newborn Savior.

That Christmas my sisters and I again eagerly awaited the opening of the presents beneath the tree. Our squeals of delight as each new box was opened were just as loud as they had been in previous years. The last package was unwrapped and the ribbons and torn paper were collected and stuffed into the wastebasket. I had received all my presents. I was still a selfish child who would have gladly accepted more, but the feeling of disappointment and disillusionment which I had felt at this moment in former years was not there.

Receiving those presents had not been the most important part of my Christmas. For the first time, I knew that the joy of Christmas does not come from the gifts beneath the tree, but from that most wonderful gift given on the first Christmas. Was Christmas over because there were no more presents to open? Most assuredly not! □



*Dorothy Sonntag is a teacher at St. Lucas Lutheran, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.*