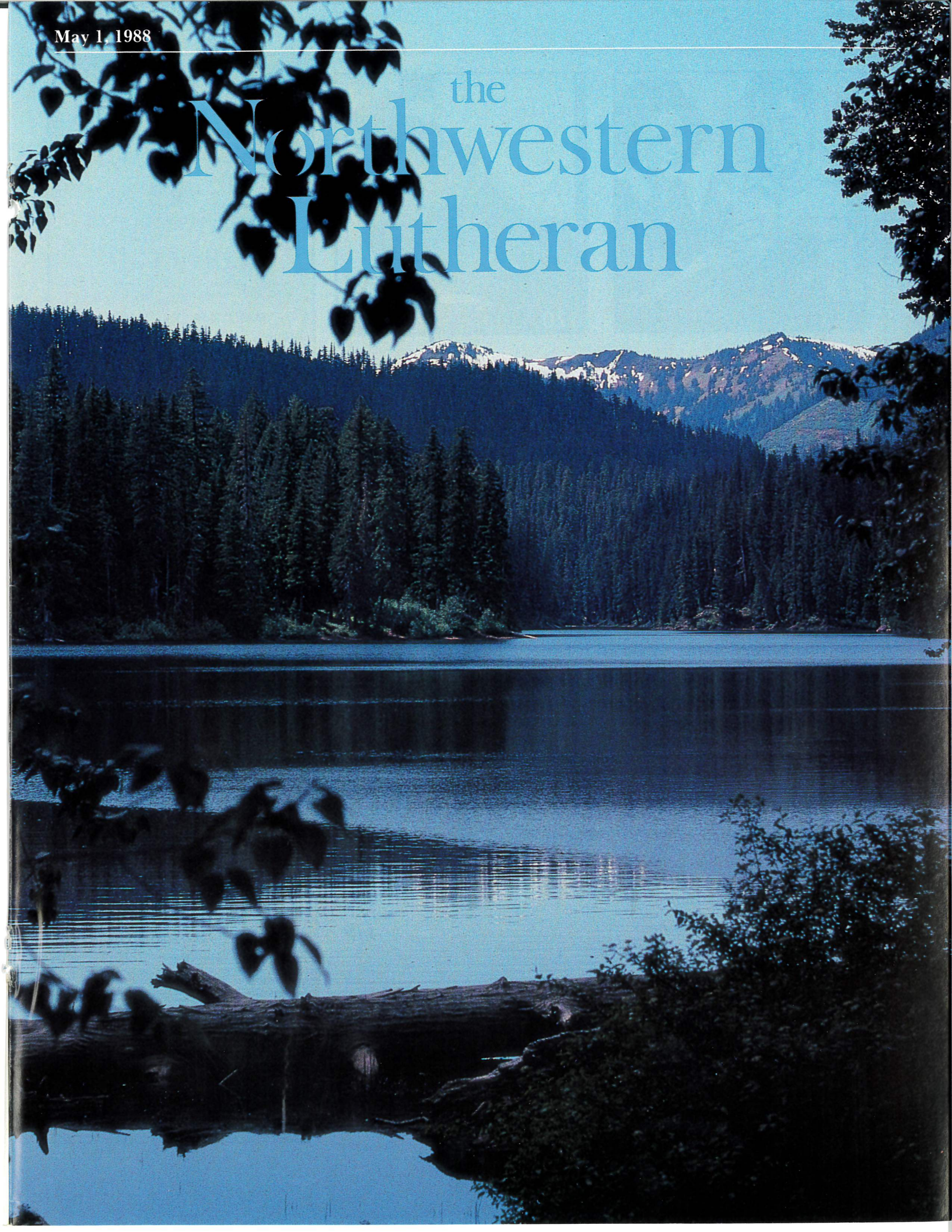
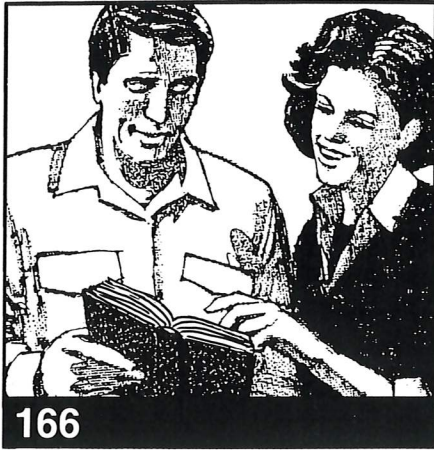


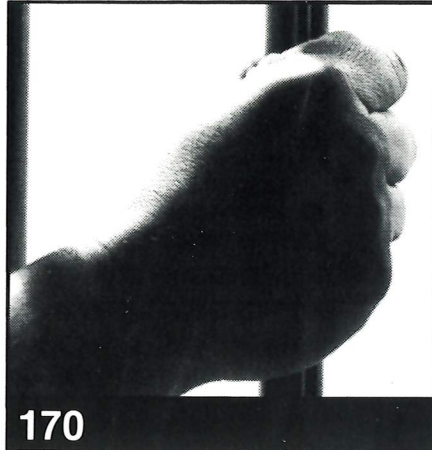
May 1, 1988

the
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Lutheran





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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

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Troubled hearts: The cause and the cure

by Lyle J. Lindloff

Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going (John 14:1-4).

Troubled hearts are hearts that are disturbed, unsettled, confused. Troubled hearts are frightened hearts. Such fear may even reach the point of terror. In varying degrees and during varying periods of life, we all experience troubled hearts.

The cause

Jesus speaks the words of John 14 to his disciples. They are a part of those final talks Jesus had with them in the upper room at the Passover Feast. Jesus had told his disciples some disturbing news. He had said to them, "My children, I will be with you only a little longer. . . . Simon Peter asked him, Lord, where are you going? Jesus replied. Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later."

What troubled hearts the disciples would experience in the events of Maundy Thursday and Good Friday! They were about to be troubled to the point of being terrified. They would fear for their lives. Looking ahead to beyond the ascension of Jesus and their continuing ministry, they would experience many more hours and days of troubled hearts.

The causes of troubled hearts are many and varied. From youth to middle age to older age the causes change. What a long list each of us could write listing the causes of a troubled heart. Troubled hearts began when Adam and Eve sinned. Because of sin we are not always able to put things in their proper perspective; no longer able to look to the future without some anxiety, concern and fear. Like the disciples, we carry our Spirit-given faith in Jesus Christ in the fragile vessel of our human bodies. Like the disciples we need comfort and assurance from our Lord.

The cure

Jesus says that there is more to life than here and

now. We are to see and understand our present moments in terms of future reality. That means placing all trust, confidence, all faith in Jesus Christ. He is true God with the Father. When Thomas questioned Jesus about knowing where Jesus was going and knowing the way, Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6).

Together with the disciples we are to consider the "Father's house" and the purpose of Jesus' going there. The Father's house has many rooms, dwelling places, implying permanence. The reason Jesus would go there, ascend there, was to "prepare a place for you." Our eternal, permanent home prepared by Jesus! Heaven is reality. There our relationship with the God of our creation and salvation will be one of perfection. No more troubled hearts, no more sorrow, pain, death and tears. Following that comfort and assurance Jesus says, "I will come back and take you to be with me." That is the only possible way that anyone will arrive at the Father's house. Jesus Christ is the personal escort.

This was not new, outstanding news for the disciples. Jesus had repeatedly told them the truth about sinful humanity and the truth of himself as the promised Messiah, the Savior. Yet, what great need they had on Maundy Thursday, what need they would have weeks later at the ascension and during their continuing ministry to receive this promise.

Jesus Christ is the answer for troubled hearts. Life situations catch up with us emotionally. Life situations affect us spiritually. Daily we need words of comfort and assurance from our Lord Jesus Christ. Like the disciples we have those words. We haven't heard them personally from our Savior's lips as the disciples did, but they are given us by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in the sacred Scriptures. We do know the way to the place where Jesus has ascended. When our hearts are troubled, disturbed, unsettled, confused, when we are frightened to the point of being terrified and the point of despair, then we must listen again to the words of Jesus, "Let not your hearts be troubled." □

Lyle Lindloff is pastor of Calvary, Thiensville, Wisconsin.

Domestic violence

The reality spawning the name is calculated to send shivers down one's spine: "Shelter for Battered Women." We have such a facility in our town. Last year 93 women and 104 children made use of this refuge from violence.

FBI statistics show that every 18 seconds, somewhere in the United States, a woman is beaten. Twenty-five percent of all reported victims of domestic violence are pregnant women. Fifty percent of all injuries presented by women in emergency rooms are the result of battering. Eighty percent of all men in America's prisons were abused as children. Battered women who finally press charges have been attacked an average of 35 times. It is estimated that 2000 children die each year from abuse.

These are grim statistics and more of the same might be cited numbering the casualties from family battlefields. But the saddest commentary on domestic violence is the recent poll which reports that 20 percent of all Americans approve of hitting a spouse on some occasions.

It is unlikely that domestic violence is on the rise; rather we are becoming more aware of what has been going on for centuries, oftentimes behind closed doors. There was a time when wife-beating was tolerated if not encouraged. The common-law rule of thumb indicated that a husband had the right to whip his wife provided that he used a switch no bigger than his thumb.

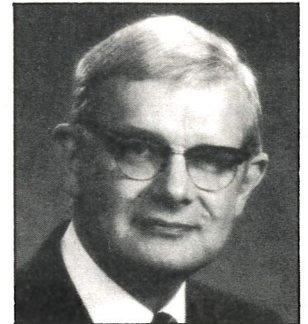
And in 1890 the Supreme Court of North Carolina put legal sanction on wife abuse by acquitting a man of beating his spouse, choosing to ignore the entire episode with the following excuse: "... it is better to draw the curtain, shut out the public gaze, and leave the parties to forget and forgive."

Sometimes a husband will justify the abuse of his wife by suggesting that she had it coming: "She did not obey me." That is to make a travesty of the word which has often been included in the woman's marriage vow. To say the least, it is a word subject to gross misunderstanding when seeking to describe the proper relationship between husband and wife.

A Wisconsin lawyer involved in prosecuting cases of domestic violence makes a startling statement: "Men use prisoner-of-war torture tactics on women as far as I'm concerned. . . . It's real common for men to wake up their wives numerous times during the night and harass them. It disorients them and as the women wear down and make 'mistakes' during the day, the men feel they can justify physical abuse."

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus speaks this beatitude: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God" (Matthew 5:9). Here is a call for every Christian to fit one's feet with the gospel of peace (Ephesians 6:15). Let us root out all shapes of domestic violence from our own homes and reach out with love and concern to the battered of our world.

Victor H. Prange



*Victor Prange
is pastor of Peace,
Janesville, Wisconsin.*

Ephesians 4:25 — 6:24

by Julian G. Anderson

As Paul often does in his letters, in the closing section of this letter he turns his readers' attention to their conduct in their daily lives and activities.

Instructions for the new life (4:25 — 5:7)

This section is an expansion of 4:24, that we all have a new self, created to be like God. Therefore "you must get rid of everything which is false and dishonest," and tell the truth, curb your anger, stop stealing and start working, share what you have with those who need help, let no filthy talk come out of your mouths, speak only good things, try to be kind to one another, forgiving each other, just as God has forgiven you because of what Christ has done.

"Since you are God's dear children, you must try to do everything the way God does. And your lives must be controlled by Christian love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself for us as a sacrifice to God." And Paul reminds us that there is no place in Christ's kingdom for people whose sexual life is immoral, or people who are greedy.

You are now children of light (5:8-21)

In many of his letters Paul used the contrasting thoughts of light and darkness in describing our daily conduct, but this is the longest of such sections. See how skillfully he uses these two concepts.

"There was a time when you were living in the darkness. But now the Lord has brought you into the light, and you must be living like children of the light, always trying to learn the things that please the Lord. Of course, the light brings forth everything that is good and right and true.

"And you must have nothing to do with the things that are done in the darkness, which serve no useful purpose. Instead, you must bring all such things out into the light. The truth is that a person is ashamed to even talk about the things people do in secret. But everything the light shines on is clearly seen.

"Therefore you must be very careful how you live. That is, live like wise people, making good use of every opportunity to do good things, because we're living in evil times. Therefore try to learn what the Lord wants you to do.

"And you must stop drinking so much wine that you get drunk; instead, you must be filled with the

Spirit. And when you're filled with the Spirit, you will always take the lower position of the servant when you're with other believers, because of your reverence for Christ."

Miscellaneous instructions (5:22 — 6:20)

The first part of this section (5:22 — 6:9), is an expanded treatment of Colossians 3:18 — 4:1. The first section regarding husbands and wives repeats Colossians, but expands the relation of husbands and wives in a beautiful section — "You husbands must love your wives in the same way that Christ loved the church. He gave his own life for the church, so that she could be set aside to be his servant, after he had made her clean by washing her with water and his word. And he did all this so that finally the church could live with him in all her glory, holy and spotlessly clean, without a single spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. That's how husbands should love their wives — just as much as they love their own bodies! And the man who loves his wife is loving himself," for when they are married the two become one body. The instructions for children, parents, slaves and masters are the same as set forth in Colossians.

And the last section deals with instructions for the battle against evil. Here he tells us that we must put on the armor God gives us, so that we can repel the devil's clever tricks. Thus we must take our position with the belt of truth around our waist, and a vest of Christ's perfect obedience to God's law, and the good news of peace as our shoes, and carrying the shield of faith, a helmet of our God-given salvation, and the Spirit's sword, which is God's word.

Final remarks (6:21-24)

Note that this letter differs from all of Paul's others in that it has no final greetings. The reason was that this was a circular letter, addressed to the seven churches listed in Revelations 1:11. And all Paul could write here was that "our dear brother Tychicus will tell you everything, so that you will know what has happened to me and what I'm doing. This is why I have sent him to you." Then Paul closes with his usual prayer. □

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

Small town evangelism

A documentary

by Stuart A. Zak



Can a small, rural town with barely one stoplight and nine established churches be a mission field? Can a church that has consisted of the same names for three generations begin to see new faces in the pew? One can't help but think of the question posed by Ezekiel 37:3, " 'Son of man, can these bones live?' I said, 'O Sovereign Lord, you alone know.' " The Lord prepares his harvest field where we might least expect it. Let me share a little of how it happened in one small, rural setting.

It is the annual mission festival. A guest speaker reminds us of Christ's Great Commission. The offering goes to "synod" and a nice dinner is served. There are a few visitors, all from surrounding WELS congregations. Later that week, at a quarterly meeting, just enough voters show up to make a quorum. The agenda is a broken record. Fifty percent of the talk is about the struggling budget. The other fifty percent is how to accomplish some trivial church repairs. Most go home disappointed and unfulfilled again. One outspoken fellow takes his pastor aside after the meeting. "Pastor, you are going to have to try harder to *recruit* some new members. Our church is dying!"

The next week the pastor calls on a couple who recently moved into the area and have been checking out churches. His invitation is met by surprise. "We were told your church didn't allow outsiders!" He assures them they would be welcomed, but wonders if that was an honest promise.

After hours of explanation the elders agree to try a "Greeter" program. The next Sunday there are no visitors. The pastor's special welcome to visitors has members glancing around before giving him a strange look.

Emboldened, the pastor suggests that elder meetings begin with 20 minutes of study on evangelism. After a few meetings an outspoken elder makes it clear: "That's the pastor's job!"

The next Sunday there is a new couple in church. The pastor wonders if they might be angels sent to test the congregation. The "Greeter" approaches the visitors nervously, but warmly. Most of the members just stare at the visitors during and after the service. As the visitors are about to leave, one member rushes over and stops them. "I hope you didn't feel uncomfortable. It is probably hard to visit a strange church. Please come again." The pastor restrains an urge to hug that dear member.

A devout member with cancer spends her last months at the county hospital, the third such member within a year. Their lives were all testimonies of Christian faith. When her pain becomes so intense that the "hypo" doesn't calm her she asks the nurse to call her pastor. After hearing God's word she lays her head back and falls asleep. A week later she falls asleep in the Lord. A number of the hospital staff come to her funeral.

A few months later the hospital staff is presenting a community seminar: "Coping with Cancer." The pastor is asked to present the "religious" side. In the 15 minutes allotted he presents sin and grace, eternal life in Christ and God's all-wise providence. After the seminar many offer thanks and ask questions. A few speak with spite, "That's your opinion." The pastor urges them to "take it up with God," and hands them a copy of the Bible passages used. Someone privately asks about visiting church but confides, "I was always told that your church didn't allow outsiders." "I think you'll find that our members have a deep love for their Savior and want to share him with others," he responds. "All the visitors I have seen were warmly welcomed."

That week a strange voice calls. "I've been having a lot of problems and one of your members told me I should talk to you." Now there are four people enrolled in the "Discipleship Class." One eventually drops out "due to other commitments." Another moves out of town. The two who finish the course join the church. Some members suggest having a "coffee" to welcome them. The chairman asks them to serve on the Christmas committee. They agree and ask what else they can do.

By now an evangelism report is included in the annual meeting. After naming the list of prospects, the pastor asks if anyone would be willing to serve on an evangelism committee. No one responds. He asks if the church would consider an evangelism workshop. They approve! But despite preparation and publicity only three people show up. They share disappointment and then dig into the workshop's video training tapes.

A few weeks later one of the "trained" evangelists brings a friend to church. A member who didn't attend the workshop also brings a friend. Family members of the cancer victims ask if there is anything the church needs. The pastor suggests a memorial that would continue their loved one's testimony to the Savior. The audiovisual evangelism tool *RSVP* is

purchased.

The Rotary Club provides more than one opportunity for testimony. As a new member the pastor is asked to give a presentation on his vocation. He includes the *RSVP* presentation of sin and grace. After some discussion of "religion" in a civic organization, a few mention they would like to see the rest of the *RSVP*.

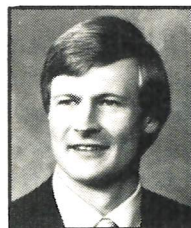
At the next quarterly meeting the chairman *asks* for a report on prospects. The mention of one prospect brings the response: "You ain't ever going to get Bill into a church." "That's not what we're trying to do," is the pastor's reply. Some puzzled looks are balanced by the smiles of a few who understand we have to get the Savior into Bill first. Someone asks about ways to let the community know our doors are open to them. A bulk mailing is suggested. At least 15 members help label and sort. One provides a check to cover the cost of the mailing.

The first adult baptism most have ever seen brings tears to the eyes of many members one Sunday.

Some time thereafter a visit with a new resident brings the comment: "Someone told us we should check out your church. We are Lutheran but haven't really been very active for awhile now."

There is another evangelism workshop. This time 18 members attend. A few long-time members are complaining that the pastor is spending too much time with this evangelism stuff and with new members, not doing "what we called him to do."

One of the new members volunteers to lead the evangelism committee. The pastor provides him materials on organizing and planning for evangelism. The next week he returns with a mission statement and objectives that are better than what the pastor might have written. Another new member uses his talents to start a choir. Many of the newer members and a number of the older members want to start a youth program. The budget for missions is nearly met, and we haven't even had mission festival yet! Some older members have stopped using the word "recruiting," and one even used the word "saved" the other day. Most have stopped underestimating the power of the Holy Spirit . . . including the pastor. □



Stuart Zak is pastor
of St. John, Lake City, Minnesota.



by John A. Braun

Generic kids. They all wore tennis shoes. Most of them were white leather shoes that cost about \$40 a pair. Their legs were covered with the same pair of faded pale blue jeans although there were some variations of color. Some looked like they had been washed 4000 times but I know they were probably bought that way the day before yesterday. A jean jacket which more or less matches the jeans on their legs covers a shirt or blouse.

When they filed past me, they gave the impression of being stamped out of the same mold with minor variations of hair and eye color. The girls dressed as the boys did. The boys had longer hair than a few years ago but it was usually cut in a way that needs no combing and falls down around the ears and forehead naturally. The girls had variations of the same hairdo which is about shoulder length and permed in the back but not on the top.

That was my impression of these young people as they all crowded into the auditorium — generic kids. Maybe you have one of them in your house. Of course, they are not generic at all. It just looks like it. They are individuals in the process of developing into Christian young men and women. In the next few years they will be leaders and followers in our congregations and in our country and bring solutions and problems to the church and nation. Each one is different and special — a fact we sometimes forget as parents.

I had driven a carload of kids to a presentation on drugs at the local Lutheran high school. By my count there were over 500 upper-grade kids from parochial and public elementary and middle schools. What was so interesting besides the kids was the emphasis of the speaker on the most abused drug in the world — alcohol. For 45 minutes he kept the entire group quiet and attentive with his talk. When you realize the age group he was addressing, it was a remarkable presentation.

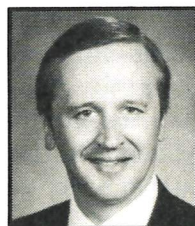
It was also a little frightening to think that these sixth, seventh and eighth grade students were the target of alcohol-abuse prevention. What has happened to make these kids a battleground? Yes, a battleground. As Christian parents and educators, we try to present enough information so they will avoid

alcoholism. While on the other side, others are subtly trying to coax them into trying alcohol and other drugs. Alcohol's effects on growing minds and bodies is more destructive than on mature minds and bodies. If either side wins at this level, the chances of winning an individual for life are much greater.

The generic kid will grow up to be an adult. Alcohol will be a problem for one in ten because one human body out of every ten is unable to handle the effects of alcohol. That means that of the 500 students 50 of them will have a problem with alcohol or other drugs. In the process more than 50 lives will hurt. Alcohol problems will numb parents, wives, husbands, friends, future children, church and society with the pain of destroyed lives and wasted potential. Ask any pastor if it is not so. He won't tell you names or give you specific details, but he knows it is so.

When Christ saw these kids — and he did — he saw 500 precious souls he cared enough about to suffer for and die for. They were and still are anything but generic. Jesus has given me, every parent and every Christian educator the charge to see these kids with love and wisdom. We must see the destructive forces which influence their developing minds and bodies. We cannot excuse those tendencies which our maturity senses will bring them harm even if these kids don't understand yet. And in the sometimes stormy confrontations with them we should reflect the love of Christ. Although we will do it imperfectly as humans infected with sin, seeing them as Christ did can warm our cold fears and cool our anger and frustration.

As imperfect as we are, prayer becomes a vital link with the power and love of God. It is an advantage we have as Christians which others in the war against alcohol and drugs do not have. Praying for the large number of generic kids in our congregations and our country will be helpful. Praying for our own children and their friends — the specific individuals we know — will help them and will give us the power, love and wisdom to deal with them. □



John Braun teaches English at Northwestern College, Watertown, Wisconsin.

Appointed to his service

by Arlyn W. Boll

I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his service (1 Timothy 1:12).

When someone speaks of a person as having a checkered career, it is not usually a compliment. Yet such a term would properly describe the Lord's calls to me in the teaching ministry. I began with three years in grades four to six, moved to six years of high school English, followed with seven years as principal and teacher of seven and eight, went to eleven years of high school English and now to my fourth year as principal again.

Each time I accepted a call it was with the firm belief that the Lord has some specific purpose in mind for my ministry. Though the Lord's purpose was not always evident at first, it is possible to look back now and see some of what the Lord intended with each call I accepted.

An important lesson learned early in the ministry is that everything we do is truly in God's hands. We may have certain ideas about what we ought to do and where we ought to be doing it, but God sometimes has other things planned for us. The entire matter must be left completely in God's control.

While some of what God intended for me with each call is now clear, many of the items in my "checkered" ministry will have to wait for eternity to be explained. I trust that each time God wanted me in a certain place for specific reasons.

Such reasons might well have included the opportunity to comfort a teacher when one of her first-graders was killed by a car as she was walking home from school. In another instance it was the privilege to counsel with a teacher and encourage him in his ministry. In yet another case it was the opportunity to help bring peace and harmony to a strife-torn congregation.

One of my calls brought me close to the synod offices and provided the opportunity to write teaching materials for VBS and Sunday school. At another time it was the privilege to help train student teachers. No matter where my ministry has taken me, I have found ample occasion to encourage, instruct, strengthen, uphold, comfort and serve.

At times there can be frustrations in the ministry too. There were things I wanted to do which I felt would make my work more complete and provide what I thought would be further opportunities to do the Lord's work. In his wisdom, God did not see fit to allow these things. Could this have been his way of keeping me from becoming too satisfied and settled that I wouldn't want to move on to his next call? I am inclined to think so.

My years in the ministry have brought me into contact with those people who think men in the teaching ministry are choosing second best to being pastors. It's even been implied that if a young man can't or won't handle the study of languages, only then should he settle for being a teacher.

I became a teacher by choice. My own limitations would have made me very ineffective at a sickbed or with someone at the time of death. I had no wish to become involved in the immense challenge of counseling today's adults with their problems. My choice had nothing to do with languages. Knowing my own interests and inclinations, I chose to serve God in the way he led me.

Rather than any first- or second-best ministry, it is much more important to be aware that preaching and teaching are two parts of the same gospel ministry, with pastor and teacher working together, each in his area of responsibility.

One pastor I served with gave me this instruction at the start of our ministry together: "I don't expect you to preach in my pulpit, and you can expect that I won't teach in your classroom." Such advice has been valuable in avoiding conflicts. As long as real effort is used to communicate openly and freely between pastor and teacher, the work of the kingdom can go on effectively and efficiently with the Lord's blessing.

Some challenges in the teaching ministry are large; some of the problems are serious. But with the Lord Jesus to give the strength, such work is truly blessed in the salvation of precious souls. □



Arlyn Boll is principal at St. John, Watertown, Wisconsin.

by David J. Farley

I have learned that Jim has passed away. He was living in the state prison at Florence, Arizona when he died. He was an inmate, *resident* is the word they prefer now. I'd like to tell you a little of his story.

There's no mistaking that Jim went wrong. The charge was murder and he did it. There were other things that brought him to it, things which were equally wrong, the kind of smallish things, as it must have seemed to him at first, which caught him up in something he should have stopped but didn't.

I met Jim a couple months before the murder and his arrest. He was an occasional visitor in the home of one of my members. This very courteous and personable man stopped by to visit while I was doing the same and rather than run off, scared away by a clergyman, he visited and gave the noncommittal I'll-see-you-in-church-sometime promise we've heard many times before.

He never made it. The next time I heard his name was while helping his friends, my members, deal with the turmoil of his arrest. They were able to share with Jim my offer to visit with him. The second time Jim and I met was in main jail.

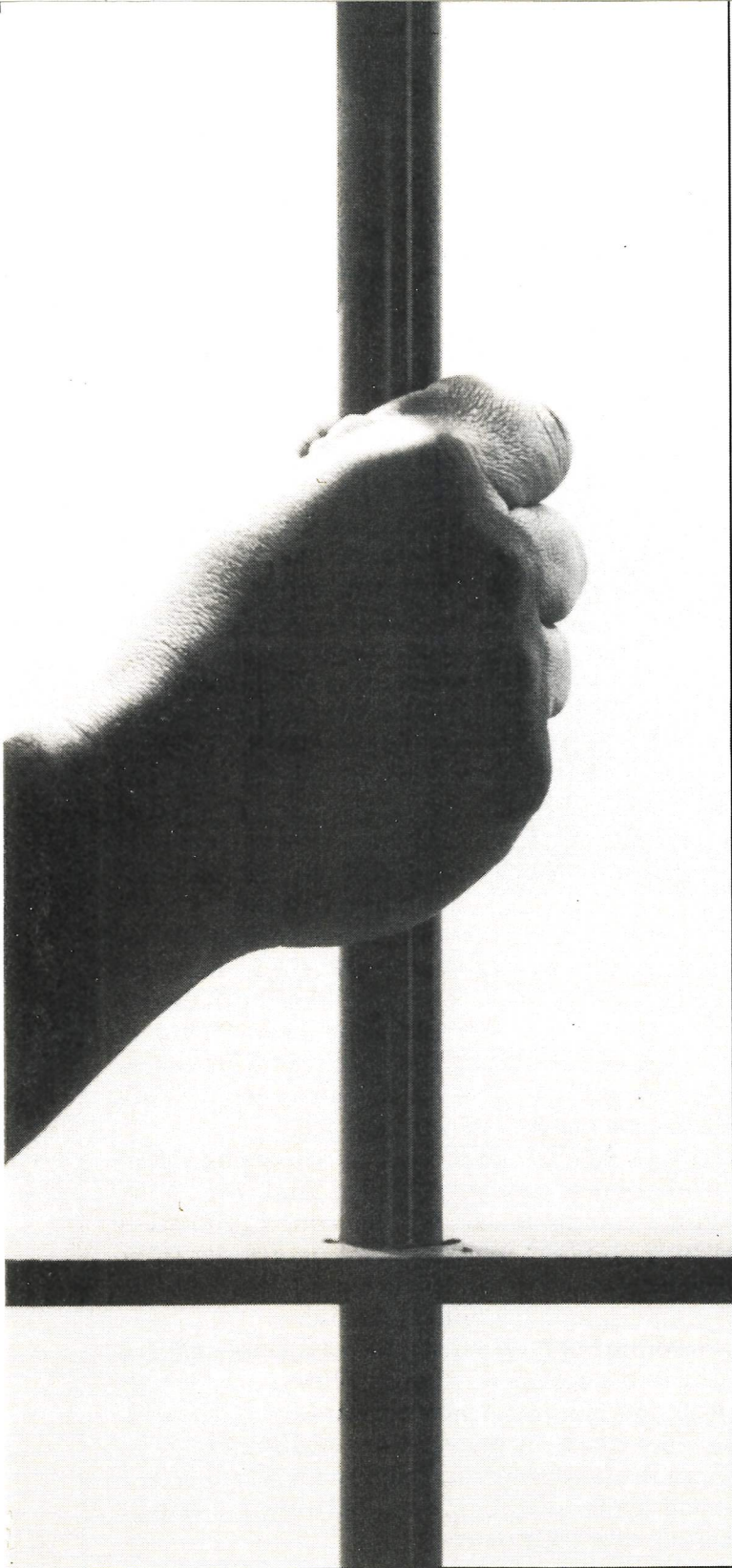
You ought to capitalize that: Main Jail. I've only visited in a couple of them but I bet they don't differ much. Many of us have seen pictures but nothing prepares you for your first visit. Whatever illusion of privacy a photograph suggests by showing separate cells is completely dissolved by the noise of the place. There are no carpets to dampen sound. There are no closed halls to keep you from hearing the slam of every 200-pound cell door on the whole floor, in the whole building for that matter. The solid concrete all around seems to amplify the sound and it's there day and night. Nor is there any reason for silence among those who wait there. (I was going to say *live there*, but that's not right. They're *waiting* in main jail, for trials, for lawyers, for sentencing, maybe sometimes for a chaplain or for me.)

Jim was waiting for me when I arrived. If I were reading this story, I would expect here tales of teary repentance. It wasn't quite like that. It *was* repentance from what I saw and heard. But how quiet Jim was. What he seemed to want most was to hear the Bible read to him. He was reading one of the safe ones the chaplains bring, you know, those case-lot paraphrases in bend-it-to-see-if-it's-OK paperback. He could read it, but Jim wanted what I want so often,

Jim has passed away

though I'm a pastor leading services. He wanted to *hear* someone speak out loud, to and for him, what God did in Jesus to make him clean again.

There's a lot more to the story. No bail. *Jim had been a police officer once and they had to be tough on him in the district attorney's office. Public defender. Why couldn't one stay with the case? Visits. Which*



friends would come, which wouldn't? Chaplains. Why can't I have my own Bible? Threats. Prison is a dangerous place. Despair. It's prison life in a nutshell.

When Jim had finally moved through the system to the state prison ("the walls" they call it in Arizona), it was harder for me to visit. My pass didn't work well there because of the inevitable red tape. But Jim and I

had a couple of opportunities to visit before a call took me to another state.

Leaving Jim, like leaving any church member, was one of the sad parts of taking a call. He craved the visits and when I brought Jim things to read, he seemed almost ravenous for them. But when I left the state and couldn't visit, I had fellow believers in the synod who helped take up the slack. One of our pastors visited regularly and our Special Ministries Board sent him materials which he appreciated more than they will likely ever know.

Jim and I corresponded. Through his letters I heard of the Christian associations he was making in prison, his service work for others of God's children, the prayers he offered for me in my new ministry.

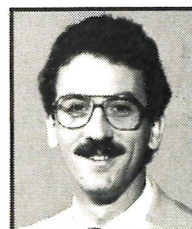
It wasn't easy to get the information, but I heard about his death then too. Jim had been a police officer. And when he was arrested he was working in the department of corrections himself at a youth detention facility. That put him into protective custody (PC) for his processing time. No one knew what pasts would be remembered or what revenge might be attempted. But when he hit "the walls" he wanted to go mainstream. He was going to be there a long time and he knew what PC was like. It's a lonely place to spend 10 to 30.

I haven't been able to find out if it was because he had been a "cop" that he was stabbed one day. It wasn't to matter. While on the operating table he suffered a heart attack and died.

I have no illusions about what was happening in the way Jim was treated by the justice system. Jim deserved to be in jail, his repentance notwithstanding. He had killed a man. Nor would I suggest that the systems under whose jurisdictions Jim fell were any more medieval than an administration of that magnitude will inevitably seem, given the nature of the business and the personalities involved.

But I am sorry that Jim died. And it gives me peace to know that my fellow believers in the WELS served my friend too through our Special Ministries Board.

He's not on their mailing list anymore. But because one family cared enough to remain his friend, because one congregation was willing to share its pastor with him, because a synod worked together in love, he doesn't have to be on that mailing list anymore. Jim's living at home now. □



David Farley is pastor of Peace, Bakersfield, California.

Noise in the back pew

by Bonnie Wasser

“He wouldn't sit still, he wouldn't keep quiet, and he kept asking, 'Go home now?' every two minutes. Finally I took him out front on the church steps and gave him a good swat on the seat — and then looked up to see the policeman sitting in his police car — watching me.”

The above is a story I've often told — about the humbling experience coping with a toddler in church. Parents usually identify with me and then add some humbling stories of their own. Some are funny; a few are sad. The saddest, though, are the ones that end, “Then she told me I shouldn't bring my kids to church because they disrupt the service. What do I do? If we don't bring them, how will they learn? But we don't want them to spoil things for everyone else either.”

This is not a new problem. It's probably been going on as long as there have been kids and worship services. Last Sunday we happened to sit near the back — in the only pew long enough for all of us — and in front of a two-year-old, a four-year-old and their father. Periodically there were rumblings behind us and at one point an obviously exasperated dad said firmly, “No, you'll have to wait.”

I must admit for almost a minute I let my mind imagine what they were waiting for. Yet I also must say that the distraction did not take away from my personal worship. Why? Because I reminded myself that the Lord thought bringing children to him was so important he had the same story appear in the Bible — not just once or twice but three times: Matthew 19, Mark 10 and Luke 18.

“Then little children were brought to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. *But the disciples rebuked those who brought them.*” (My emphasis — because the disciples acted like many of us today.) “Jesus said, ‘Let the little children come to me,



and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.’ ”

Perhaps like the disciples we must learn how to respond to children whose parents bring them to the Lord's house. After all, children have the best kind of faith — like it says in Luke 18:17, “I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.” He says similar things in Matthew 18:3.

Christ also gives us specific instructions about our actions and attitudes toward children. In Matthew 18:10 he says, “See that you do not look down on one of these little ones.” In Mark 9:37 we hear, “Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me.”

Perhaps that is what those of us who no longer sit in the back pew need to remember. And when we're fortunate enough to worship in a congregation that has little children, we have the opportunity to be reminded how we're to approach our Father in heaven — that is, with the faith of a child.

One thing I've noticed over the years — the children sitting in the back pews change. They grow, the parents become braver and move forward and others with little ones take their places. When realizing how important the Lord considers them and how much they can add to our own lives, I can only say: thankfully others do take their places.

No, my child is no longer one of those noisy kids in the back pew. But I am grateful that other parents are bringing theirs so I don't forget. □



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

Medical ethics

I have read with interest three articles on medical ethics by Wayne D. Mueller (January 1, 15, February 1). He described many aspects of the problem, and while I cannot agree with some of his views, I would like to indicate an important good point he has made: that Christian evaluation of ethical problems of modern medicine must be associated with the understanding of the basic medico-biological nature of these problems.

The basic criterion of all discussion is that a human being is integrally created by God, and our technological and scientific efforts must respect the dignity of all aspects of the person as a creature of God, i.e., immortal soul, bodily health and intellectual well-being. The moral estimation of problems with inadequate biological knowledge about them may lead to false ethical conclusions. It is illustrated by Mueller in his valuable comments on some so-called birth control methods. An intrauterine device (IUD), for example, prevents implantation of fertilized egg in uterus, and subsequently the egg (i.e. fetus) dies due to loss of access to nutrients. For Christians, the small fertilized egg is indisputably a small body of a new human being with life granted by God and own soul. The described above "method" is in moral categories indistinguishable from starving to death any adult person. The last is generally accepted as a severe crime.

There are many more problems like this and progress in medicine will bring more questions. If we try to understand the mechanism of biological phenomena and compare them with recommendations from the Scripture it will be easier to build a right attitude to them. We must also remember that we have to reject some of the methods even though they bring benefits to body or intellectual well-being but they interfere with the order created by God.

*Eugene J. Kucharz, M.D.
Milwaukee, Wisconsin*

Christianity in Russia

It was most refreshing and revealing to read Pastor Kastens' March 1 article, 1000 years of Christianity in Russia. He must enjoy Russian culture or diligently researched ancient Russian Christianity. It is surprising to note how many devout Christians are living there today despite the persecution of religion. Russia could be on the verge of an open religious revival since Gorbechev's *glasnost* policy of openness has begun. It may be the Lord's way of reviving open Christianity in Russia and spreading it into China and Japan.

Kastens' article should remind us to work with enthusiasm to spread his word. Now it is ours and it is free. Freely we have received. Let us freely go and tell it to our neighbors.

*G. H. Bunkowske
Norfolk, Nebraska*

Don't be quick to judge

After reading previous articles in The Northwestern Lutheran regarding self-esteem, I thought I should write. After reading the article in the March 15 issue, I know I must write.

As a rape victim, I steadily lost touch with reality as I descended into the pit of depression. This depression was quite different from that experienced from the loss of a loved one or from the blow to one's ego from loss of friendship or job security. This depression was all-consuming, deep, dark, total divorce of mind from reality.

During church services and private talks with my pastor, phrases and words of hope and God's love would permeate my darkness. I can remember thinking how wonderful, how promising it must be for others. But I was not worthy. Those words, those promises, weren't meant for me; for all Christians, but not me. I wasn't worthy.

This is true depression. This is true loss of self-esteem. There is no "but I know it cannot be true since God, who knows so much better than I . . ."

Fortunately, for me, "he reached down from on high and took hold of me; he drew me out of deep waters" (Psalm 18:16).

Please, please, don't be so quick to judge the truly depressed and the loss of self-esteem. They "know," they "realize," they "accept" . . . nothing.

*Peggy L. Jones
Topeka, Kansas*

Luther on gambling

After reading two articles on gambling (January 15, February 15), I'm still looking for what Martin Luther said about gambling. He said: "It's a game of greed. What gambler ever gambled to help or to love his neighbor? None! It's nothing more than an agreement between people to steal each other's money." That's calling a spade a spade and a dog by its name. We need to do the same!

*Thomas R. Schmidt
Tulsa, Oklahoma*

"The New Age movement"

Please re-read Pastor Gerlach's "The New Age movement" in the February 15 issue. Just analyze again how we are being subjected daily in an attempt to draw us away from the faith and love we have in and for our Savior Jesus Christ. Then read Pastor Schaefer's paragraph on page 79 which comes from his heart and in a humble way tries to tell us, "By prayer and supplication" not to give in to "the old evil foe." As in John 14:6: I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

Keep steadfast in your faith; pray, praise and give thanks.

*Eddie Mecus
Brookfield, Wisconsin*

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

Mainline churches below the level of the 60s. . . The percentage of adults who prefer "mainline" Protestant denominations continues to remain below levels recorded in the 1960s and early and mid-1970s, according to an audit conducted by the Gallup Organization during 1987. The percentage of persons stating a preference for Baptist churches showed only a slight drop since the first audit of denominational preference in 1967, falling from 21 percent to 20 percent. Meanwhile, Methodist preference fell from 14 percent to 9 percent, Lutheran from 7 percent to 6 percent and Episcopalian from 3 percent to 2 percent. Hardest hit were the Presbyterians, whose rate of preference was sliced in half, dropping from 6 percent to 3 percent. Nine percent of the respondents indicated no preference; in 1967 only two percent of respondents said they had no faith group preference.

Splinter churches decried . . . *The* **Zambian** government has expressed deep concern about the mushrooming of splinter churches in the country, some of which are operating illegally. It is feared the proliferation of such churches, if left unchecked, might result in confusion that could easily disrupt the country's unity. Zambia's ruling party's secretary general, Grey Zulu, recently told the annual meeting of the Pentecostal Fellowship Association of Zambia that strife in some countries was sparked by religious conflicts and that this should not be allowed to happen in Zambia. Mr. Zulu called upon church organizations to preserve peace, unity and prosperity in the nation. "This is important," he said, "because when there is civil disturbance in the country, no one including church leaders and their members would be able to live in peace, and all human activities would be disturbed."

Communication leader dies . . . Herb W. David, 54, a veteran Lutheran communicator, died in Minneapolis in February after battling cancer for almost two and one-half years. At the time of his death he was assistant to the executive director for communication planning of the ELCA. David joined the ALC communication department in 1974 and since 1985 he had been its director. "He was a professional who had one foot in the media world and one foot in the ecclesiastical world," said Robert E. A. Lee, former director of communications for the Lutheran Council. "He loved and served both with assertive integrity."

Number of children abused by priests growing . . . According to an editorial in the January "National Catholic Reporter," an independent Catholic newspaper, there is a growing problem in the Catholic church with priestly pedophilia. The editorial points out that more and more aggrieved and frustrated parents are going to court with charges that their children have been sexually abused by Catholic priests. The NCR editorial complains of "a pattern of institutional coverup." So far about 140 church-related pedophilia cases have been reported to church officials, with nearly 100 of these cases having entered the legal system; many more are being quietly settled out of court.

No more religious advocacy ads . . . *The* **Toronto Star** announced that it will no longer accept ads that try to persuade readers to change their religion. The decision followed a controversy over an ad by Jews for Jesus published December 19. The ad was criticized by the Canadian Jewish Congress and by a group associated with the Canadian Council of Christians and Jews which said that the organization believes that "any kind of evangelism is not appropriate" if it is aimed at persuading members of one religious group to convert to another. Following the complaints the Star announced that "no advertisement will be accepted that identifies one religious faith and urges its adherents to adopt different views or a different faith."

Noted liberals issue anti-abortion ad . . . In an effort to counter what they regard as "stereotypes" of right-to-lifers, more than 100 noted liberal activists have signed a statement affirming their opposition to abortion. The statement links opposition to abortion with opposition to war and poverty. "We the undersigned," reads the statement, "are committed to the protection of life, which is threatened in today's world by war, abortion, poverty, the arm's race, the death penalty and euthanasia. We believe that these issues are linked under the consistent ethic of life." The 100 belong to the Seamless Garment Network, which gets its name from a phrase used by Cardinal Bernardin of Chicago, who has described concerns such as abortion and nuclear proliferation as constituting a "seamless garment" of human life issues. □

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.

Nebraska District

Members of WELS congregations along Colorado's front range met at Zion in Denver, Colo., for an **evangelism workshop** February 26-27. Sixty-five had registered for the workshop but 105 showed up. Teacher Gary Bain, member of the Nebraska District's evangelism board, led the workshop. . . . Seven Colorado congregations hosted **Martin Luther Preparatory School's touring chorus** during Holy Week. The choir also sang in congregations in South Dakota. . . . **Nebraska Lutheran High School** in Waco is conducting an intensive, district-wide fund raising effort. Its goal is to retire its current \$700,000 debt.

— Timothy Bauer

North Atlantic District

Christ the Redeemer of Barre, Vt., dedicated its new Sunday school/fellowship addition on February 14. The addition can be divided into four classrooms and is supplied with a kitchen area. A special children's service was held at 4:00 p.m. Pastor Dan Myers has served the congregation since its beginning. . . . **Gearing Up** workshops were held during January in various areas throughout the district to help analyze congregation activity and to stimulate even greater outreach efforts to the unchurched. . . . The **Workshop for Equipping Leaders in Stewardship** was held February 3-4 in Orlando, Fla. Pastors from the North and South Atlantic Districts met together for learning to more effectively lead Christ's people toward greater stewardship of their lives.

— David Kehl

THE BIBLE IN 365 READINGS

Concluding our program of reading through the complete Bible in one year, we list the last month of readings beginning May 16 and ending June 15.

May	16	Romans 15:30 — 16:27 / Psalm 18
	17	Ps 36 / 1 Corinthians 1 — 3:23
	18	1 Co 4 — 7:40
	19	1 Co 8 — 10:33
	20	1 Co 11 — 13:13
	21	1 Co 14 — 15:58
	22	1 Co 16 / 2 Corin- thians 1 — 3:18
	23	2 Co 4 — 7:16 / Ps 98
	24	2 Co 8 — 11:15 / Ps 123
	25	2 Co 11:16 — 13:14
	26	1 Timothy 1 — 5:16
	27	1 Tm 5:17 — 6:21 / 2 Timothy 1 — 3:17
	28	Ps 23 / 2 Tm 4 / James 1 — 2:26
	29	Jas 3 — 5:20 / Ps 147, 100
30	John 1 — 2:11 / Ps 20	
31	Ps 132 / Jn 2:12 — 3:36 / Ps 92	
June	1	Jn 4 — 5:47
	2	Jn 6 / Ps 111
	3	Ps 64 / Jn 7 — 8:11 / Ps 61
	4	Jn 8:12 — 9:41
	5	Jn 10 — 11:46
	6	Jn 11:47 — 12:50 / Ps 49
	7	Ps 26 / Jn 13 — 14:31
	8	Jn 15 — 17:26
	9	Jn 18 — 19:30 / Ps 41
	10	Ps 34 / Jn 19:31 — 21:25
	11	Philippians
12	1 Peter 1 — 3:22	
13	Ps 87, 70, 131, 101	
14	1 Pe 4 — 5:14 / 1 John 1 — 2:17	
15	1 Jn 2:18 — 5:21 / Ps 150	

NOTICES

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

CHANGES IN MINISTRY

PASTORS:

Leyrer, Carl W., from Gethsemane, Corpus Christi, Tex., to Missioner to Colombia, S. Amer.
Gawrisch, Daniel M., from St. Peter, Modesto, Calif., to Hope, Hartford, Mich.
Huebner, David L., from Holy Cross, Oklahoma City, Okla., to St. Croix Lutheran High School, West St. Paul, Minn.

TEACHERS:

Clark, Martha, to Mt. Calvary, La Crosse, Wis.
Dorn, Owen A., from St. Paul, Muskego, Wis., to St. Mark, Watertown, Wis.
Herrewig, Scott C., from Immanuel, Medford, Wis., to St. Paul, Bangor, Wis.
Hintz, Laurel A., from St. John, Burlington, Wis., to Shepherd of the Hills, Inver Grove Heights, Minn.
Hummel, Sonja, to St. Croix Lutheran High School, West St. Paul, Minn.
Janke, Richard P., from Immanuel, Willmar, Minn., to Zum Kripplein Christi, Iron Ridge, Wis.
Klockziem, Rebecca L., from St. Paul, Brownsville, Wis., to Salem, Ann Arbor, Mich.
Kuske, Amy, from inactive to St. John, Mukwonago, Wis.
Muenkel, Alice R., from St. James, Milwaukee, Wis., to retirement.
Wichmann, Paul D., from Minnesota Valley Lutheran High School, New Ulm, Minn., to Huron Valley Lutheran High School, Westland, Mich.

ANNIVERSARIES

Marshall, Minnesota — Christ (100th church, 10th school), July 9, 7:30 p.m.; July 10, 8:00 and 10:00 a.m.; 2:00 p.m. (catered dinner). Contact Christ Lutheran, 500 Village Dr., Marshall, MN 56258; 507/532-2162.

West St. Paul, Minnesota — St. James (60th), April 17 and 24; May 1 (Pastor Carl Bolle's 60th anniversary with banquet at 6:30); May 8, 8:00 and 10:30 a.m. Special historical presentations between services each Sunday.

Jamestown, North Dakota — James Valley (10th), May 15, 10:45 a.m. (dinner to follow). Contact Pastor Kenneth H. Engdahl, 650 Fourth St. S.W., Valley City, ND 58072; 701/845-0702.

Bowdle, South Dakota — St. John (100th), June 26, 10:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Dinner at 12:30. Contact Pastor Paul Marggraf, Bowdle, SD 57428; 605/285-6377.

Summit, South Dakota — St. John's, Mazepa Twp. (100th), June 19, 10:15 a.m. (noon dinner) and 2:00 p.m. Contact Pastor Shawn Kauffeld, Box 302, Wilmot SD 57279; 605/938-4509.

Arlington, Wisconsin — Zion (125th), April 17, June 12 (dinner to follow), October 16, 8:00 and 10:30 a.m. For further information contact Pastor Harold Sturm, W6910 County Highway K, Arlington, WI 53911.

Randolph, Wisconsin — Friedens (100th), June 12, July 17, August 28, October 23. For further information contact Pastor Walter Goers, 327 Jones Dr., Randolph, WI 53956; 414/326-5134.

DISTRICT CONVENTIONS

Dakota-Montana District, June 21-23. Opening service 9:00 a.m. at Bethlehem, Watertown, S.D. Sessions at St. Martin School, Watertown.

South Central District, June 13-14 at St. Mark, Duncanville, Tex. Opening service 10:00 a.m.

DISTRICT NEWS SCHEDULE

May 1: Minnesota, Nebraska, North Atlantic

May 15: Northern Wisconsin, Pacific Northwest, South Atlantic

June 1: South Central, Southeastern Wisconsin, Western Wisconsin

June 15: Arizona-California, Dakota-Montana, Michigan

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

LWMS CONVENTION

The 25th annual convention of the Lutheran Women's Missionary Society will be held June 24-26 at Carthage College in Kenosha, Wis. Theme of the convention is "Wafting Winds, Rolling Waters and His Story." The LWMS anniversary will be celebrated at the 26th annual convention. For registration form contact Mrs. Dorothy Laabs, National LWMS Secretary, 2 Bowen St., Oshkosh, WI 54901.

**WISCONSIN LUTHERAN COLLEGE
Summer Session 1988**

The third annual summer session at Wisconsin Lutheran College will be held June 20 through July 29. Classes will be held in the new air-conditioned library and residence hall accommodations are also available. The following courses are planned:

- BUS 360 Production Management
- COM 101 Introduction to Speech Communication
- EDU 301 Education and Society
- EDU 331 Reading Development in the Content Area
- ENG 220 British Literature 1
- ENG 340 Selected Topics/Figures in British Literature
- HIS 101 Survey of American Life
- MAT 100 Fundamentals of Algebra
- MAT 111 College Algebra
- MAT 112 Pre-Calculus Mathematics
- MAT 117 Elementary Statistics
- PHI 101 Introduction to Philosophy
- PHI 101 Logic
- PSY 201 Introduction to Psychology
- THE 203 Old Testament Prophets
- THE 221 Basic Teachings of the Bible 1

Requests for the summer session bulletin, registration materials or further information may be addressed to Dr. John E. Bauer, Academic Dean, Wisconsin Lutheran College, 8830 W. Blue-mound Rd., Milwaukee, WI 53226; 414/774-8620.

**HOUSEMOTHER
DR. MARTIN LUTHER COLLEGE**

The administration of Dr. Martin Luther College is seeking to fill the position of housemother in the women's dormitory on campus. She should possess organizational and communication skills, a sincere interest in young people, ability to relate to and work with college-age girls who are preparing for the teaching ministry, a desire to assist them with their needs and a good understanding of the church and its work. In addition she ought to project an image in character and dress which will contribute to respect for her office and for her service in the church.

Please submit names and addresses of candidates with as much pertinent information as possible to the Office of the President, Dr. Martin Luther College, 1884 College Heights, New Ulm, MN 56073.

OWLS CONVENTION

The 1988 convention of the Organization of WELS Lutheran Seniors will be held July 12-14 at the Red Carpet Hotel, Milwaukee, Wis. An interesting program has been prepared including Bible study, workshops, displays, demonstrations, fellowship, entertainment and pre and post convention tours.

Anyone age 55 or whose spouse is 55 is encouraged to attend. For details on the program, lodging and meal arrangements and costs please contact: OWLS, 8420 W. Beloit Rd., West Allis, WI 53227; or call (on Thursday) 414/321-9977.

PIANO-HYMNALS NEEDED

Our Hope Lutheran of Chippewa Falls, Wis., is in need of hymnals and a piano. If you can help, please contact Warren Stuebs, 5832 Town Hall Rd., Chippewa Falls, WI 54729; 715/723-8479.

VACATION

Visit Florida and stay in a new parsonage (central air, sleeps 9) in exchange for preaching June 26, July 3 or July 10. Fifty miles from Disney World and Kennedy Space Center, 35 miles from Daytona Beach. Open to any pastor or professor in fellowship with WELS. Contact Pastor Mark Johnston in Deltona, FL; 305/321-7510.

DEDICATION

Dedication of East Fork Lutheran High School in East Fork (Whiteriver), Ariz., will be held May 14 beginning at 10:00 a.m. and continuing throughout the day, including tours, special service and noon barbeque. For further information contact Pastor Eric Hartzell, Box 56, Whiteriver, AZ 85941; 602/338-4595.

FOLDING MACHINE WANTED

Wanted for a new mission church: A folding machine in working order. Call collect: New Life Lutheran Church, Buffalo Grove, IL; 312/520-9176.

ADDRESSES

PASTORS:

- Cutter, Randal L., 11220 NW 42nd St., Coral Springs, FL 33065.
- Dorn, John S., 806 Grandview Dr., Hudson, WI 54016-9351.
- Eggert, Jan C., 330 N. Eagle, Oshkosh, WI 54901; 414/231-3579.
- Kempl, Dennis E., 747 N. East Ave., Viroqua, WI 54665; 608/637-3600.
- Petersen, Timothy T., 1004 Longhorn, Plano, TX 75023.
- Ponath, David M., 2008 Mesabi Ave., Maplewood, MN 55109.
- Vogt, Wayne C., 2813 Inspiration Dr., Colorado Springs, CO 80917; 303/596-2222.



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"Excellent approach . . . plan to use it again in an expanded program involving four congregations." Walter Oelthafen, Pastor - Grace, Flint, MI.



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| • Custom radio spot including box and reel \$25.00 | _____ | _____ |
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| <small>(Includes custom imprinted flyer, addressing, labeling, handling, postage and delivery — minimum order 2000)</small> | | |
| • Flyers for direct distribution by you \$6.00 per 100 | _____ | _____ |
| | | Total |

(We will bill you for materials and shipping)

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NAME OF CHURCH
ADDRESS (simple directions please,
i.e. 120 North 4th Street, corner of Oakland and 4th)
CITY, STATE, ZIP

VBS DATES (when through when)
VBS TIMES (i.e. 9 AM to 12:00 noon)
CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBER

IMPORTANT: Allow 4 to 6 weeks delivery for your direct mail and/or the radio spot

SEND ORDER FORM TO:
WELS Evangelism
2929 North Mayfair Road
Milwaukee, WI 53222

Arizona-California District

The **Sasabe Outreach group**, a group of synod members in Arizona, has been doing mission and benevolence work across the border in Mexico, in La Ladrillera and Sasabe. They have brought eight souls to the Lord in 1987; have distributed 50 to 60 New Testaments; and have delivered food, clothing, toys and medicine to needy families in Mexico. . . . **Shepherd and Peace in Albuquerque N. Mex.**, have completed building projects in the last year. Shepherd expanded its balcony to accommodate another classroom and Peace has built a worship/education/fellowship unit and parsonage. . . . **Redeemer in Roswell** has begun renting its own facility to give them better identity and location. . . . **Emmanuel in Las Cruces** received mission status last spring and has built a W/E/F unit. Pastor Steven Spencer serves Emmanuel and **Beautiful Savior in El Paso**, which is also on the move and has dedicated its W/E/F unit and hopes to have its parsonage completed this spring. . . . **Hope in Fremont, Calif.** (Pastor Jonathan Rupprecht) has been working on an addition to its building. . . . **Prince of Peace in Yucaipa** (Pastor Richard Kogler) has added a fellowship/education unit to its sanctuary with ample space for four Sunday school rooms, pastor's office, kitchen and fellowship area. . . . **Pastor William Godfrey** of St. Paul First in North Hollywood suffered a heart attack on January 6. January 11 he underwent quadruple bypass surgery. He has been doing fine. Pastor David Palmquist of St. John, Tarzana, helped out the congregation until Pastor Godfrey regained his usual energy. . . . **Our Redeemer of Santa Barbara**, organized in 1972, became self-supporting on January 1. Pastor Joel Gerlach has served Redeemer since 1985. Joel Nelson

is principal of the school which opened in 1983. . . . **California Lutheran High School in Tustin** is looking for a new home. The school was notified that the city intends to reclaim the school property upon expiration of the lease this June. The high school association has considered either leasing a vacant public junior

high or buying a presently available private high school complex. Other options have been to get civic permission to build in Rancho on undeveloped land which the school owns or to merge with another area Lutheran high school.

— Brad Ragner

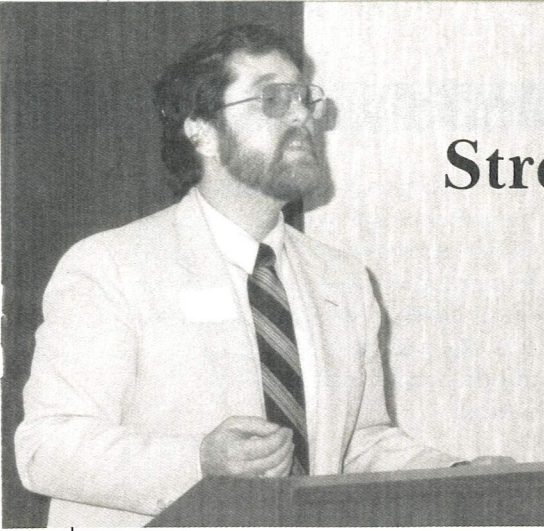


Good Shepherd of Wisconsin Rapids broke ground on March 27 for its chapel. This exploratory mission recently purchased land and a relocatable building. Exploratory work began last summer and the congregation will begin worship services in early June. Pastor is Raymond J. Bell.

Persons, places, etc.

Wisconsin Lutheran Child & Family Service of Milwaukee reports that by mid-March it has received almost \$900,000 in gifts and commitments for its Call to Serve special fund offering. Twenty-eight congregations have made commitments of \$188,000. The goal is an endowment fund of \$2 million. . . . The Metro-Milwaukee chapter of **WELS Lutherans for Life** recently celebrated the 5th anniversary of its organization with a special service at Gloria Dei-Bethesda, Milwaukee. In the five years it has served over 6,000 clients. . . . **Jon Woldt**, who teaches grades 5 and 6 at St. Lucas, Kewaskum, Wis., was named recipient of the 1987-88 Outstanding Young Educator Award by the Kewaskum Jaycees. Woldt is a 1983 graduate of Dr. Martin Luther College. . . . A new **simplified catechism** for the mentally retarded has been published by Northwestern Publishing House. Included are a teacher's guide and a 71-page Bible stories book. . . . **Missionary Elwood Fromm** of Hitachi, Japan is retiring this month, but will continue to live in Japan. . . . The **Organization for WELS Lutheran Seniors (OWLS)** has begun a *Builders for Christ* program. The purpose of the program is to enlist people who will lend workmen's skills to projects in mission fields. . . . **Three elementary schools** will close at the end of the current year. No congregations have reported new school openings for fall. This will reduce the number of our schools, 374, by three.

Strengthening a prison ministry



Presenter Michael Berro,
Michigan parole officer

For three days in January more than 50 WELS pastors and a handful of laymen were reminded why they really ought to be in prison. They participated in a three-day prison ministry seminar, held in Milwaukee, presented by the Institutional Ministries Committee (IMC) of the Special Ministries Board and made possible by a grant from AAL.

The committee wanted to find ways to assist pastors and lay people who are currently involved in serving the incarcerated or who might be considering a prison ministry.

The list of presenters included a seminary professor, a parole officer, a former chaplain of a large correctional facility in Atlanta, a former inmate and two WELS pastors involved in institutional work on a full-time basis.

The presenters urged an active prison ministry. Prisons hold people — people who need to hear the gospel of forgiveness and peace in Christ. Each of the more than 4700 prisons and jails in our land represents a mission field enclosed by walls.

Statistics indicate that one in ten U.S. families has a member who spends time behind bars. Despite the large numbers, opportunities for gospel outreach behind prison walls are easily overlooked. In his opening address Pastor em. Arnold Schroeder, a veteran of institutional work in WELS circles, said that among the law-abiding there is a

tendency to forget those who are imprisoned. He also said that many people are repulsed by the idea of developing a relationship with a convicted criminal.

The difficulties of this special ministry surfaced as the frustrations of a prison ministry were discussed. It's frustrating to deal with all the administrative red tape necessary for entrance into a correctional facility. It's frustrating to work with inmates who are master manipulators. It's frustrating to meet barriers of fear, mistrust and racism within the prison walls.

How to overcome the frustrations can be summed up best in the words of one former inmate whose life was changed through the power of the gospel brought to him by a WELS pastor. "You've gotta' love 'em. I'm sorry, but

there's just no other way. You've gotta' love 'em." Everyone in the room understood what he meant. Sincere Christian love is the indispensable element in a prison ministry.

The committee will use the insights gained at this fact-finding forum to produce useful information and practical suggestions for maintaining a prison ministry.

To complete the record, it should be noted that the idea of taking the gospel within prison walls is neither new to WELS nor a brainchild of the committee members. For years faithful Christian pastors have taken the gospel beyond the bars, visiting with their own members and making use of the opportunities for outreach which the Lord has given them.

— Michael A. Woldt

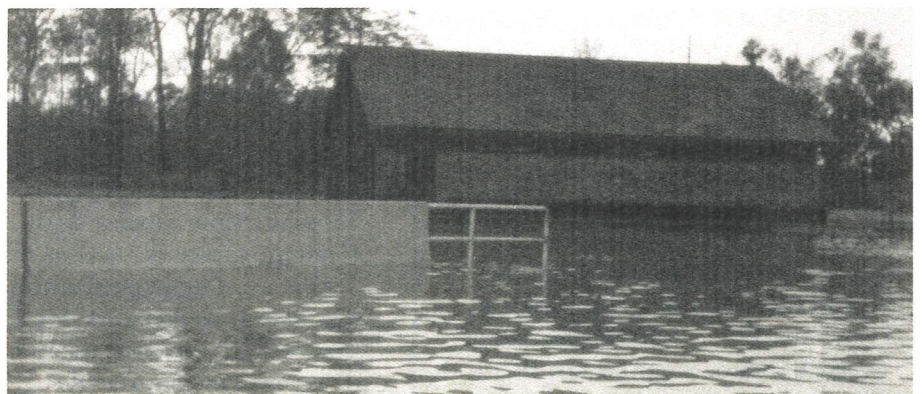
Modest growth in 1987

Pastor David P. Worgull of Chandler, Arizona, the synod's secretary and statistician, reports that the 1987 baptized membership of the synod is 419,806, an increase of about one-half percent. A similar growth was experienced also in the communicant membership to 318,037. The confirmed membership's increase compares with 0.3 percent increase in 1986 and a plateau in 1985.

The lowered birth rate was re-

flected in the continued decrease in child baptisms to 5,378, although adult baptisms increased from 3,156 to 3,419.

The average Sunday attendance decreased slightly from 46.6 percent to 46.3 percent of the baptized membership. Giving for all purposes increased from \$364.17 to \$378.05 per communicant. Offerings for the synod increased to \$48.02 per communicant.



King of Kings at Alexandria, Louisiana was flooded out by the great rain of 1987 (November). Eighteen inches of rain fell in a twenty-four hour period. The parsonage was filled with eighteen inches of flood water, the church with twenty-one inches. "Repairs and regroupment promise to overshadow our plans for much of 1988," reports the pastor, Benjamin Lorenz. "Our congregation sincerely thanks the fellow Christians of the South Central District who shared in our burden with their flood relief contributions."



The assistant editor rushed into my office. "This issue," she pointed out, "is the issue nearest to Mother's Day, and there is not one mention of the day in the issue." Of course, something had to be done about it, if nowhere else at least in my column.

I could not blame my mother for the omission. She was of the best. A shy English, non-Lutheran lass who was thrown amongst a crew of Germans who spoke German as a first language (though later she spoke it like a native). Her widowed mother doted on her, an only child, and my mother passed all that love and affection on to us kids.

If I must blame my forgetfulness on someone, it must be my father. He was not much for Mother's Day. He never departed from the text in the Easter cycle which the church appointed for the second Sunday in May.

His avoidance of the subject in the pulpit was not a putdown for mothers. This son of a German immigrant treated the English lass he married with far more consideration and tenderness than Teutonic custom deemed appropriate. My mother, who had never soiled her hands with the household chores at home, was taught these duties by my father. Till he died, if there was an unpleasant chore in the house, my father took over.

But he was cool toward Mother's Day. As he wrote years later in *The Northwestern Lutheran*, "Every day is Mother's Day. If we have learned aright the fourth commandment and practice it diligently, we give mother more honor and respect than is found in all the sentimental and mawkish words spoken on that day."

But just about the time I was preparing to write my regrets to our readers for missing the day, I was saved by Mrs. Lois Bence of Rochelle, Illinois. She sent to us a brief tribute to her mother, too short to make a feature article, but filled with some sparkling lines.

At the time of her mother's death, a friend wrote a note of condolence. "Anyone who was ever touched by the hand of Gertrude," her friend wrote, "will never forget her." St. John heard heaven's benediction: "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord . . . their works do follow them." To be loved . . . to hear, "We will never forget her." That's a mother's Paradise.

She was a woman of prayer, writes Mrs. Bence, as all good mothers must be. "I can't remember a family occasion, a crisis, or a milestone, that did not include prayers that were appropriate for the event." It was fitting that the prayerbook with its tattered binding, so loved in life, should be her company in the grave.

She was a model for the children, says Mrs. Bence. "A life dedicated to prayer, a spirit filled with love and concern, a well-developed sense of humor, an ability to love the joys of life, and the legacy to her children: Give life the best you can."

On a talk show recently someone asked, "What's the best thing we can do for our children in these terrible times?" The guest didn't miss a beat. "The best thing we can do for our children," he said, "is for father to love their mother." It's an old word of counsel, but still not too shabby.

James P. Schaefer

If parsonages could talk

by Martin J. Lopahs

“**Y**ou have heard the expression, ‘If these walls could talk.’ Well, today I would like to talk to you, and I am a whole house. In fact, I am a parsonage. I am the parsonage for Redeemer Ev. Lutheran Church in Florissant, Mo.

“As a parsonage, I am a dying breed. Parsonages are not as common as they once were. A parsonage is a home which a congregation provides for its pastor and family. In these last years it has become more common for a congregation to give its pastor a housing allowance whereby he can purchase his own home. In the church to which I belong, the Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran Synod, the more common practice is to provide a parsonage.

“I had my beginning on the drawing board of our synodical offices. Since the pastor who would live in me is serving a smaller mission congregation, the congregation received much help in planning me. In other words, the building committee did not have all of the many choices you folks have when building a house. Considering how many folks worked to put me together, I don’t look too bad. In fact, many folks consider me attractive.

“Yes, my residents are pastors and their families, and thus I provide a very special service in the Lord’s work. I hear many devotions and prayers. I hear regular encouragements to the children (they are known as PKs, Preacher’s Kids) to behave, because people will be watching them more closely than others. I hear sermons practiced over and over in preparation for preaching at the church. I hear the phone ring most any hour of the day or night. I hear the joy of worship services that have gone well or were well attended and the disappointments that come to pastors also.

“I am the house where most fixtures and rooms will be white. Why? To symbolize holiness? Not at all. The folks who live in me don’t claim to be holy. No, white is a predominant color in me and in many other parsonages because it is a color that will go with

anything. Even though parsonage families often think they are living in a hospital zone, still they must be reminded that the next pastor and family may not like green or blue or brown, and thus ‘white goes with anything.’

“Would you like to carpet a new room, replace windows or make other changes to your home? You can decide, one way or the other, because it’s your home. Folks who live in parsonages are not that free. You see, a church board, we call it the property committee of the church council, is in

charge of what gets changed or improved (if anything) in me. The parsonage family can make suggestions, but it is the church that decides. On the other hand, being a parsonage does help to get rid of siding and window salesmen. They want to talk to the owner.

“I am more than stone, wood, paint or asphalt. I am a parsonage. I supply a ready place to live for the pastor of Redeemer Lutheran. When a pastor leaves my church, he doesn’t have to worry about selling a home. And when a new pastor comes, he doesn’t have to worry about finding and buying a home. Without this to worry about, he can concentrate all the more on his work of preaching and teaching the good news of forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

“Please wish me a happy anniversary! In November of last year — 10 years ago — I was dedicated to the glory of God as a parsonage for Redeemer Lutheran. And to celebrate that anniversary, the members of my church invited all the community to an open house to visit me and our church building. I want you to know I like my job. . . .

“And thanks for listening to my story.” □



Martin Lopahs is pastor of Redeemer, Florissant, Missouri.