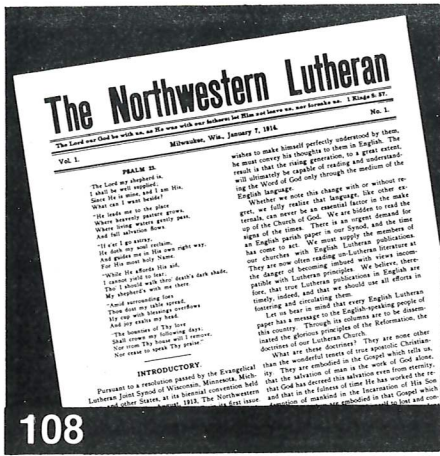


March 15, 1989

the
Northwestern
Lutheran





Celebrating Seventy-Five Years

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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Editorial office

Rev. James P. Schaefer, Editor
The Northwestern Lutheran
2929 N. Mayfair Road
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53222-4398
Phone 414/771-9357

Beverly Brushaber, Assistant Editor

Contributing editors

J. G. Anderson, R. D. Balge, T. B. Franzmann, I. G. Frey, J. C. Gerlach, R. H. Hochmuth, P. E. Kelm, R. E. Lauersdorf, V. H. Prange, C. Toppe.

District reporters

K. Pasch (Arizona), B. Ragner (California), G. Lemke (Dakota-Montana), E. Schaeve (Michigan), R. Edwards (Minnesota), T. Bauer (Nebraska), D. Kehl (North Atlantic), J. Eggert (Northern Wisconsin), J. Oldfield (Pacific Northwest), F. Hemmrich (South Atlantic), C. Learman (South Central), R. Sievert (Southeastern Wisconsin), E. Stroh (Western Wisconsin).

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About Palm Sunday and mules and needs

by Kurt F. Koeplin

"Go to the village . . . you will find a colt tied there. . . . Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' tell him, 'The Lord needs it.' " (Luke 19:30-31).

Tradition, for what it is worth, tells us that Palm Sunday occurred on April 2, 30 A.D. It marks the beginning of what we call Holy Week, the final week of our Savior's life on earth in his state of humiliation.

Does it still have meaning for us some 1959 years later? Is it truly something special? Is there anything in Palm Sunday for us 20th century Christians, some of whom have never seen a burro except in a zoo or in a picture?

It all started with our Savior approaching Jerusalem and telling two of his disciples to go into the village ahead of them where they would find two tethered mules. The younger of the two was to be untied and brought back.

A tiny phrase

In case the owner objects to strangers walking off with his property (which seems normal), the Savior provides them — not with a knife or sword or club — not with advice to push him down and run — but with a tiny phrase, "The Lord needs it."

Let's put ourselves into the disciples' sandals. Our Master, our wonderful Teacher, the one whom we've seen performing mystifying miracles, sends us into a strange village where he positively asserts that we will find a burro and her colt tethered. Without so much as a "by your leave," we are to untie one and bring it back to him.

If someone says anything (Oh, my word), we aren't to say "How much?" or "Can we rent or borrow the beast for a bit?" — only say what he told us to say.

Half fearful of what we'll find, we come to the village and see the animals, just as he said. We approach them, untie the colt and — Oh, oh, trouble. Here comes the owner who looks a wee bit upset. With a tremor in the voice we try the phrase — and it works.

It isn't a miracle on par with raising Lazarus or

calming storms or feeding 5000. The man's objections simply cease and he seems ecstatic that Jesus honors him by using his humble property.

Now, we know what the phrase is that wrought this change of heart, mind and attitude. Is there more to it than meets the eye?

What is our response?

Jesus, our Master, our Savior, our King has a request. That one to whom we owe all; that one who commands our allegiance and loyalty; that one who has made us his followers, his children — has a want about which we can do something. What is our response?

Is it that of this nameless, faceless animal owner who gladly and joyfully put something into the service of Christ?

He could have said, "What! Again! It seems that the Lord is always in need. He's always coming around asking for something. Today it's the colt. Tomorrow, I suppose, he'll be back asking for the mother. I give my share! How about all those people who don't give burros? Why always me?" He could have — but he didn't.

Why not? It seems so common with so many.

Could it be that this person had given the most important thing to Christ first? Could it be that he had been led to give himself to Jesus? Once a person, under the Spirit, is led to give his heart to Jesus, then colts, burros, possessions or whatever — come easily. Then, when the disciples of the King sound the phrase, then gladly does one put that which is necessary into the King's service.

It's an honor and privilege to be able to say, "I answered my King's call when he had a need." □



Kurt Koeplin is pastor of Atonement, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Outreach is hard work

“**W**e do almost nothing for the truly ‘unchurched.’” The speaker was the director of the National Catholic Evangelization Association. He went on to charge that 99 percent of U.S. Catholic parishes consciously choose not to try to reach the average of 4000 unchurched people who live in each parish. “The vast majority of our time, effort and money is spent on maintaining the faith of the active.”

Pollster George Gallup reports that in the last ten years the number of Americans described as “unchurched” has increased from 41 to 44 percent. These unchurched people are all around us: relatives, friends, neighbors, co-workers, chance acquaintances. Are we reaching out to them?

Outreach is hard work. It’s hard because of the sinful nature of those to whom we would bring the gospel of life. Take an extreme example: a 22-year-old drifter cut off his burglary victim’s head on a whim and used the blood to write the word “redrum” on the apartment wall. That’s “murder” spelled backwards. Here is only one of many caught in the web of crime and drugs, one of many with a perverted moral outlook. Yet here is one for whom Christ died, one who needs to be reached with the gospel.

Outreach is hard work because of our own sinful nature. We know our failings and shortcomings. We feel inadequate to be witnesses for Jesus Christ when by word and deed we bring shame to his name. How dare we talk to another person about faith when we are so often weak?

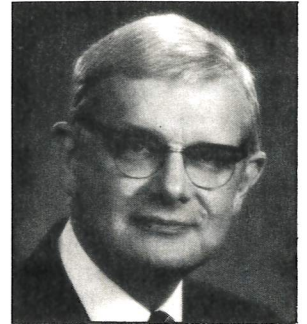
Outreach is hard work because there may be little response (or negative response) to the words we speak. The results seem not to be worth the effort we put forth. Rather than risk being discouraged, we do nothing at all.

Outreach is hard work. But that’s not unique to the 20th century. Consider Jesus and his apostles: they met rejection, persecution and death. Yet they kept at the task of reaching out with the word. The first Lutheran missionaries to India in the early 1700s faced tremendous obstacles. But that did not keep them from pursuing their mission of touching people of another culture with the love of Christ.

Outreach is hard work, but we dare not overlook what we have going for us. We have the freedom to confess our faith without fear of reprisal from our government. We come into contact with people who for the most part speak our own language. And though there are many unchurched people, only four percent of Americans think that religion is unimportant. There are people with spiritual needs just waiting to be satisfied.

We know the good news of Good Friday and Easter Sunday. We have been reclaimed by Christ as his own dear children through baptism. We have been nourished by word and sacrament. The promised help of the Holy Spirit is ours to seize. Outreach is hard work. But we can do it.

Victor H. Prange



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

I am the way and the truth and the life

John 14:1-14

by Fredric E. Piepenbrink

It's tough being a teenager. First, there is the social shock. You go from "top dog" in 8th grade to a peon freshman in high school. You finally make it to a senior in high school after which it is either the reality of the working world or back to low man on the totem pole in college. Secondly, there is the religious shock. It is during this time that one becomes keenly aware that *Luther's Small Catechism* is not the only summary of Christian doctrine on the theological bookshelf.

A young man called me on the phone from his college dorm just recently. We talked for forty-five minutes, with the content of the whole conversation centering on the many discrepancies between his confirmation instruction and what he was now being taught as fact in college, e.g. existentialism, JEDP theory, evolution (and this, supposedly, was a Christian college).

It is in the midst of this religious perplexity in tender youth that some of the religious cults seem to thrive. One such cult is "The Way, International." Originated by Victor Paul Wierwille, The Way reached its peak in the 70s by attracting especially college students. The way for The Way was to study the "pure Word of God" enough to be able to "renew" your mind and "claim" all that's coming to you. Of course, the "pure Word of God" was that as Wierwille had come to know it, and which he was willing to teach you for a not so slight fee.

Listen! College students! High school students! And any inquisitive minds where religious perplexity may at times prevail! Jesus himself has something to say about "the way!"

But first we must ask, "The way to where?" The answer is obvious. The way that every human being wants to know and needs to know, including even the New Agers and Transcendental Meditationists. The way that puts us in touch with our Creator, the one who gave us life and sustains us. The way to the Supreme Being who tells us to call him "Father" because he calls us his children by faith and has an eternal home for us. JESUS SAID, "I AM THE WAY" (John 14:6).

It was the final passover for Jesus. He had just told his disciples that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. The disciples were a bit perplexed. Peter asked, "Lord, where are you going?" (13:36). Jesus answered in effect, "I'm going

where you can't go until you die — heaven." Peter said, "Then I will die with you and we will both go to heaven." Jesus said, "No, your faith won't be up to the challenge of martyrdom now. But don't worry, you will be coming to heaven soon. Because you know the way to the place where I am going." But Thomas, who was still thoroughly perplexed, asked, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" Then Jesus simplified it for him with this astounding statement, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (14:6).

At first glance it may appear that we have three separate and distinct thoughts here — "way," "truth" and "life." But they are linked together. The one figurative term, "way," receives the emphasis by context, with the two terms "truth" and "life" supporting it. This is a Hebraic way of speaking which in our English would be expressed, "I am the true and the living way," or "I am the way because I am the truth and the life." Because Jesus is the source of all spiritual truth, and because he causes that truth to give spiritual life to our souls, it follows quite naturally that he is the way to the spiritual Father.

So the way is not by some secret or mystical knowledge monopolized and then disseminated by any one person, group of people, or cult. The way is not some code of rules or laws, not a document or ethical system. The way is a person, one person. By faith in him alone, by entrusting ourselves completely to him and what he says, by forsaking all other ways for reaching God and heaven, he becomes *the way*.

But how can we be so sure? Very simply — to know Jesus means to know the Father (v. 7). When we entrust ourselves to Jesus we are entrusting ourselves to the Father. You see, Jesus is in the Father and the Father is in him (v. 10). Jesus is the only way to the Father because Jesus and the Father are one (10:30).

Religious truth need not be perplexing. Follow Jesus and his true and living word by faith, and he will lead you by the hand along the way to the Father.



Fredric Piepenbrink is pastor of Atonement, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Ministry within the body of believers

by Mark E. Braun

Four issues ago Editor Schaefer announced that the subject of this six-part series would be "lay ministry."

"Lay ministry," he wrote, "appears to be an idea whose time has come." One of the desired outcomes of our present spiritual renewal effort, Pastor Schaefer commented, is that there will be "greater involvement by members in searching and sharing God's word, followed by a substantially increased lay ministry."

This is the fifth article of the series. The term "lay ministry" has yet to surface. It has been — until now — deliberately avoided.

There's a reason for that. As a synod, I'm not sure we fully agree on what we mean by "lay ministry."

To some, "lay" implies voluntary, non-professional service. A professional is trained for a specific occupation. He or she is familiar with the jargon of the trade. While a lay person may possess an interest in that occupation, even attain a high level of knowledge and involvement, he isn't a professional.

By that definition, our church is composed of pastors, teachers and lay people. Twelve hundred pastors, 2000 teachers, 420,000 lay people.

By another definition, however, there are *lay ministers* in the Wisconsin Synod who do in fact perform professional ministry. They've been called to positions of full-time service and are paid full-time salaries. Even so, the people who hold those positions are often referred to as "lay ministers," because their instruction and experience hasn't led them along the route of parish pastor or Lutheran school teacher.

By that definition, a lay person is anybody who isn't, or hasn't ever been, a pastor or a teacher.

Sad to say, there is also a negative slant that is sometimes attached to the term "lay person." A layman is often seen as one who "can't." I've heard church members say, "What do I know? I'm only a layman." I've heard pastors say, "What can you expect? They're laymen!" Parish pastors are sometimes seen (and sometimes see themselves) as mem-

bers of a quite exclusive fraternity. Such a view might lead people to conclude that there's a caste system in the church, and that "the ministry" belongs only to pastors.

Do we need other forms of public ministry within the body of believers? Do those forms require different training than that given to parish pastors? Do we need Christian psychologists, counselors, musicians, administrators, adult educators? What sort of theological education should they receive to supplement their training? What sort of certification process should be developed to recognize their qualifications for service to the church?

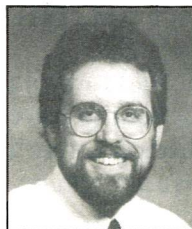
The Wisconsin Synod must answer questions like those as it faces the twenty-first century.

No matter how they are answered, the term "lay ministry" will still primarily mean voluntary non-professional service in the church. What can we do to encourage this kind of lay ministry?

We need to understand that the church is more than an agency to be served; it is an army to be de-

ployed. We need to formulate clear statements of mission for our congregations. We need to rethink, and perhaps rewrite, the working arrangements of our congregations so that they define how lay members can become more actively involved in the church's ministry. We need to help church members identify their spiritual gifts and explore ways for those gifts to be used to carry out the church's task. We need to dislodge the "pay, pray and obey" way of thinking. We need to help people talk about the work of the church as "our ministry."

George Bernard Shaw once remarked, "Every profession is a conspiracy against the laity." Let's not allow his words to be true about the Wisconsin Synod. □



Mark Braun is director of spiritual life programming and instructor of theology at Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

We need to help church members identify their spiritual gifts and explore ways for those gifts to be used to carry out the church's task.

Matt. 16: 18
Sabine Baring-Gould, 1864

1 On - ward, Chris - tian sol - diers, March - ing as to war,
2 Like a might - y army Moves the Church of God;
3 Crowns and thrones may wane
4 On - ward, then, ye

With the cross of Je - s
Broth - ers, we are tread -
But the Church of Je -
Blend with ours your voice

Laity Sunday

by Vernon Gerlach

It was a weekend in one of the larger cities in the Bible Belt — no WELS congregation within driving distance. The concierge at my hotel recommended the service at St. Peter's-by-the-Post Office. He was certain I'd enjoy the well-trained choir and the magnificent four-manual pipe organ.

I started walking but never reached St. Peter's. My journey was aborted at Central Lutheran — rather small, begrimed, wholly unpretentious, except for the huge red and white banner proclaiming "Laity Sunday." Curious, I entered.

The service bulletin told me that one of the pastors would have a (get this) "sermonette," followed by heart-to-heart talks by four members. I inferred that each talk was to be related to, if not based on, the immediately preceding hymn.

After the first three laymen's talks, I regretted not having followed the concierge's advice. St. Peter's couldn't possibly be as bad as this. While the congregation was singing "Onward Christian Soldiers" as a prelude to the fourth talk, I made a quick calculation. No — if I left Central Lutheran immediately, I probably would hear nothing at St. Peter's but the postlude, if that. So I stayed.

I'm so glad I did!

The fourth layman, obviously a veteran of one of the military services, dressed in fatigues and a green beret, approached the lectern. His unobtrusive handling of his crutches almost belied the fact that his left leg was missing.

He reminded the congregation that they had just sung that the church of God moves like a mighty army. And then he began describing that army.

The squads are assembled for drill. The sergeant: "Count fours!" Pvt. Schmidt is missing. "Where's Schmidt?"

A friend answers. "He was out until the wee hours and decided to sleep in this morning. He wanted me to tell you that he's with you in spirit and he'll try to be here next time."

"Fine. Tell him I hope he caught up on his sleep."

Pvt. Olson is missing. "Where's Olson?"

"He had a golf date this morning. He only gets to play one day a week."

"Of course," says the sergeant. "I hope he enjoys the fresh air and exercise."

Pvt. Murphy is absent. "Murph," says one of his buddies, "has out-of-town guests. But he was here for the last two drills."

"Thanks. And tell Murph we're always happy to see him whenever he has the time."

The veteran at the lectern paused for a long time. He'd made his point. He didn't have to tell the good folks at Central that their church might be moving like an army, but that army was totally unlike any army he'd ever seen or heard of.

I had a chance to chat with him after the service. He was a dedicated fellow, excited and enthusiastic about his religion, full of regret that he didn't know how better to share his faith. I observed sympathetically that it was a shame so few had heard him.

"Don't worry. It was recorded. I'm going to ask the pastors to play it next Easter."

As I walked back to the hotel, I wondered whether soldiers like the three in our story might be court-martialed in a real army, that is, in a mighty army. When we sing

*Like a mighty army
Moves the church of God*

what kind of army do we have in mind, one like the veteran described, or one that court-martials slackers?

Fact of the matter is, we've all been court-martialed — and found guilty — and sentenced to eternal death. All have sinned and come short. The soul that sins shall die.

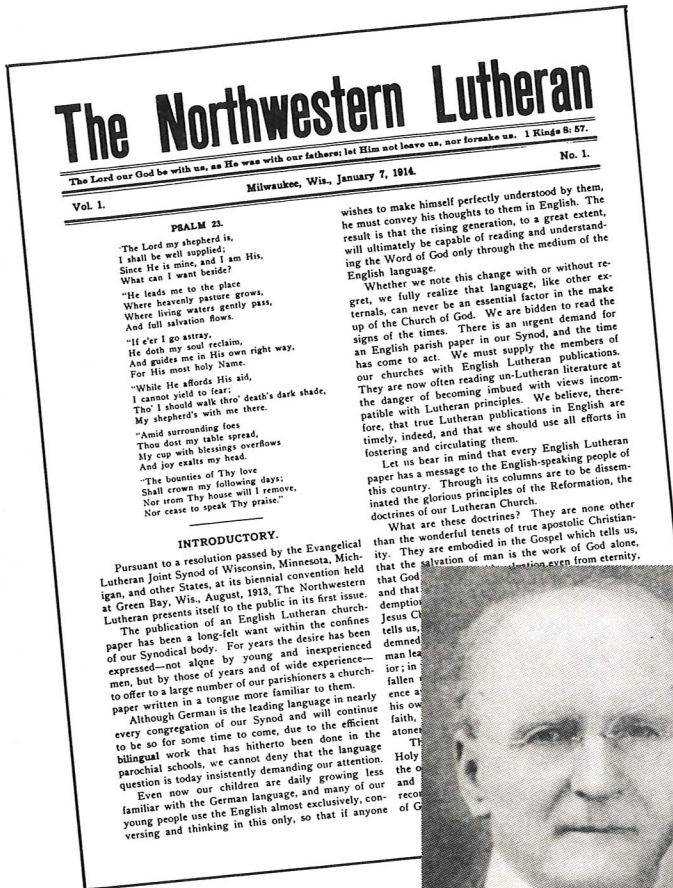
But, unlike a mighty army, the church is made up of folks whose guilty verdict and death sentence have been overturned. If that good news doesn't make a different kind of army out of us, nothing will. So before we hear and sing "Onward Christian Soldiers" again, let's get clear about our orders: is it "Company, halt!" or "Forward, march!"

Let's get together on this —
before next Easter.



Dr. Vernon Gerlach teaches in the school of education at Arizona State University, Tempe and is a member of Emmanuel, Tempe.

The magazine debuts



lessons in what were then called "Christian day schools" were still taught in German. And it is also true, for example, that Dr. Martin Luther College in New Ulm, Minnesota was still a German language school. Faculty and board of control minutes were written in German, the college catalogs were printed in German and classes were taught in German.

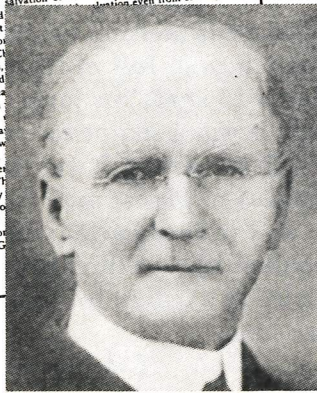
In spite of this, the members of the synod were surely and with increasing speed becoming assimilated into American society. They read English newspapers, magazines and books. The labels on their medicine bottles were written in English and the contracts they signed to buy homes and open and conduct businesses were written in English. The legal documents which authenticated their births, marriages and deaths were written in English. My father, who was born in Germany in 1883 and came to America in 1893, became a citizen upon reaching his majority. His citizenship papers were written in English.

So why not an English language church paper, the people asked.

Pressure for such a paper came not only from the pews; it came also from the pulpits. The Northwestern Lutheran in its very first article reports, "For years the desire has been expressed — not alone by young and inexperienced men, but by those of years and of wide experience — to offer to a large number of our parishioners a churchpaper written in a tongue more familiar to them."

So why not an English language church paper? This time it was the delegates to the 1913 meeting of the Wisconsin Synod held in Green Bay, Wisconsin, who were doing the asking. A committee had recommended the action; the delegates concurred. The Northwestern Lutheran was on its first steps to reality.

Pastor Carl F. W. Gausewitz, who had been president of the synod from 1901 to 1907 and who was reelected in 1913, appointed four pastors to



Pastor John Jenny, listed as the first "editor"

by Morton A. Schroeder

It was an idea whose time had come, and the delegates rose to the occasion. They resolved to take a firm and far-reaching step into their new homeland. They instructed their president to appoint a committee to blaze a path through uncharted paths.

The publication of an English language church paper by the Wisconsin Synod was by no means a new idea in 1913. Each passing year removed the members of the synod farther and farther from their roots in Europe. Each passing year increased the Americanization of these once-upon-a-time immigrants.

It is true that an overwhelming majority of services in Wisconsin Synod churches were still conducted in German. It is true that catechism instruction and



Pastor Hans Kollar Moussa

the editorial committee of the paper-to-be: John Jenny, John Brenner, Fred Graeber and H. K. Moussa. The first three men served congregations in Milwaukee; Moussa, who was only 30 years old at the time of his appointment, was pastor in Jefferson, Wisconsin.

The committee worked quickly and diligently, and within a little more than four months' time the first issue of the *Northwestern Lutheran* appeared. Dated January 7, 1914, it was a far cry from the magazine you are now holding in your hands. The page size was about the same but the pages numbered only eight. The print was of one size and one style and exclusively black on white. Headlines there were; illustrations there were not. There was no color — anywhere.

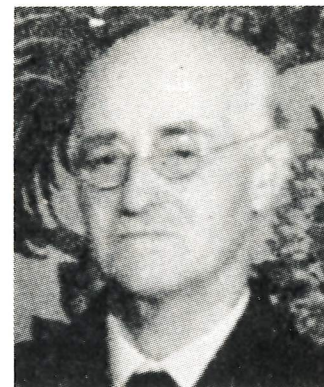
The writing style was ponderous — far different from the casual, chatty, informal style you are used to in today's issues. Consider the first sentence: "Pursuant to a resolution passed by the Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan and Other States, at its biennial convention held at Green Bay, Wis., August, 1913, The *Northwestern Lutheran* presents itself to the public in its first issue." Compare that with the first sentence in "From This Corner" in this issue.

Times have changed. Styles of writing have changed. The magazine has changed. One thing has not changed. The original editorial committee chose 1 Kings 8:57 as its motto or petition or prayer or guiding light and beacon: "The Lord our God be with us, as He was with our fathers; let Him not leave us, nor forsake us." Although now taken from a different translation, these words still grace the masthead of the *Northwestern Lutheran*. They demonstrate an abiding adherence to and reliance upon the grace, mercy and goodness of God.

The first public reports of the acceptance of the new magazine appear in the *Proceedings* of the synod. From January 1, 1914 to May 31, 1914 the magazine had 886 "readers." This number increased to 1009 during the June 1, 1914 to May 31, 1915 period. This number increased in turn to 1346 during the June 1, 1915 to May 31, 1917 period. We are told that people crowded the docks in New York to get the newest Dickens' work when it appeared. They evidently were not doing something similar for the new magazine. Although today's readership is far wider, the magazine — in spite of its many worthy attributes — still fights apathy. A recent issue expressed the wish that the *Northwestern Lutheran* be read "in at least half of the homes in our church." To reach that goal the publishers would have to find a "50 percent increase in subscribers."



Pastor John Brenner



Pastor Fred Graeber

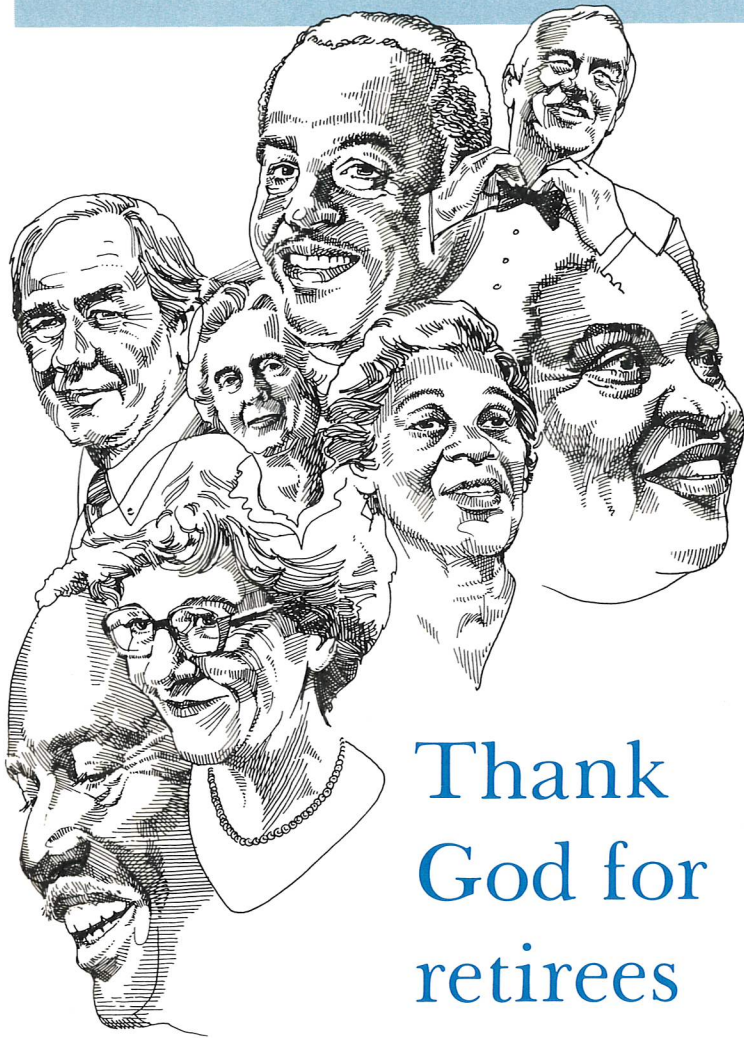
Pastors Jenny, Moussa, Brenner and Graeber — they listed their names in *this* order when they reported to the synod — edited the magazine, except for changes caused by death and synodical circumstances, until the last of them stepped down on May 21, 1939.

Hans Kollar Moussa, one of synod's young, bright lights, was the first to leave. He had been ailing. In a letter to his colleagues he said, "Am sorry I must again beg your indulgence and ask for patience. My health is not what it should be. Have to go to Rochester [Minnesota]. Operation very probable. Perhaps I can make up when I am well again." This was not to be. Moussa died on April 27, 1928. He was not yet 45 years old.

John Brenner served the *Northwestern Lutheran* until 1933. When he was elected president of the synod, he was relieved of his duties as a member of the editorial committee. The names of John Jenny and Fred Graeber appeared either singly or in tandem on the masthead of the magazine until 1939. Readers were instructed to "address all communications concerning the editorial department to Rev. John Jenny" and "all news items to Rev. F. Graeber. . . ." Although neither was given the title of "editor," the picture which accompanies Jenny's obituary carried the underscript, "For 25 Years Editor of the *Northwestern Lutheran*." Regardless of who was or was not "the editor," these two men laid the foundations on which successive and successor editors have built. To them belongs the epigraph, "WELS' English-Language Pioneers." Their departure ended phase one of the development of the *Northwestern Lutheran*. □



Morton Schroeder teaches English at Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota.



Thank God for retirees

by Mark A. Cordes

Let's face it. The increasing pressures of life are yielding a decreasing number of lay Christians who can devote large chunks of time to building the kingdom of our Savior. And it's not entirely due to the fact that we live in those times when the love of most is growing cold (Matthew 24:12).

Young mothers who really would like to volunteer often have their hands full juggling job and family responsibilities. They might not like it that way but it is a fact of life. And a growing number of them are shouldering the burdens of both parents as they seek to instill in those tiny souls the love of the Savior that will carry them through this life into the next.

With industry trying to squeeze more and more out of its workers, a responsible Christian father can't always do everything in the church he would like to either. If he is wise enough to realize that being the head of a Christian household is more a matter of

nurturing and caring for the King's daughter, his wife, and training the King's children, he knows he has to spend plenty of time at home.

Maybe there are more ways for fathers to take their offspring along on tasks at church. But wisdom calls for hard work at home during those precious years that form a window in the life of a child, a window that adolescence and adulthood will close forever.

All this gives young believers increasing cause to say, "Thank you, Lord, for our retirees! Thank you for swelling their numbers." The Lord used their parents and pastors, their teachers and time to instill in them the light of the gospel so that they can see through society's dark lies about "the golden years." These are the mellow believers who know that every age in life is a gift of God.

They know the story of the rich fool who thought he could "take life easy; eat, drink and be merry" only to have his Maker stop the clock that very night (Luke 12:16-21). They know that many battles lie behind them, but the biggest battle with death lies ahead.

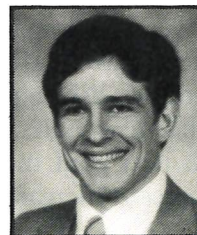
And so they continue to prepare through Bible study and prayer. With dying souls all around them and even in their families, they join the brigades of troops who are willing on the day of battle (Psalm 110:3).

They see the war for souls against the backdrop of eternity and understand very well why the Lord says, "You who call on the Lord, give yourselves no rest, and give him no rest till he establishes Jerusalem and makes her the praise of the earth" (Isaiah 62:6,7).

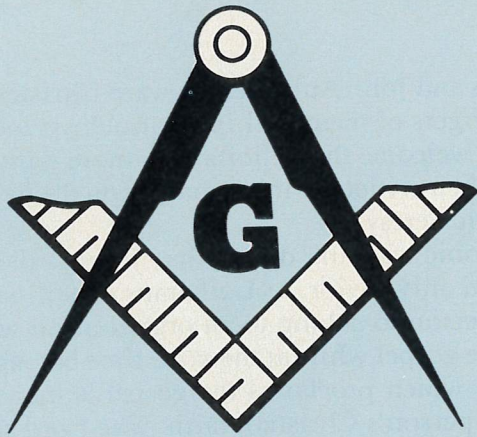
Apparently it is no accident that the divine physician has given medical technology the tools to stretch the lifespan for more "Golden Ages." Thank God for that. And if one even wonders how valuable they really are, just let a few retirees move away from the church for a while. Then it's easy to see how hard it would be to advance the kingdom of Christ without them.

Certainly the Lord could bring "relief and deliverance" from another place. But the words of Mordecai to Esther (4:14) still ring true today for every Christian retiree: "Who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?"

And why should Christians feel bad about growing old, when age brings with it the love and respect of those who need them? □



Mark Cordes is pastor of New Life, an exploratory mission, Shoreview, Minnesota.



Masons draw fire from churches

by Joel C. Gerlach

One thing Roman Catholics and conservative Lutherans have shared in common for many years is an antipathy toward Freemasonry. Other churches for the most part assumed a live-and-let-live attitude toward Masonry. Now Masons have begun to draw fire from other churches as well, and some of that fire has come from unexpected sources.

Several years ago the British Methodist Conference issued a report advising Methodists to "reject Freemasonry as inconsistent with commitment to Christianity." The Methodist report condemned Freemasonry on the grounds that it is discriminatory. The report also condemned the secrecy practiced by Masons, especially in Europe and Britain. The report contends that "the secrecy of Freemasonry poses a problem" because "secrecy of any kind is destructive of fellowship."

Rev. Ronald Gibbins, head pastor of Wesley Chapel in London, the mother church of world Methodism, said that the action of the conference "does not bar members from belonging to Masonic lodges, but advises them to examine their consciences on the question of whether Freemasonry and Christian faith are compatible."

Last year a seven-member panel (including two Masons) appointed by the Church of England reached a similar conclusion. Following a sixteen-month inquiry, the panel issued a 56 page report entitled "Freemasonry and Christianity: Are They Compatible?" The report concludes that they are not.

The Anglican report raises questions about the propriety of Masonic rituals which are disturbing to some and are perceived by others as "positively evil." The most serious theological objection raised by the panel has to do with the use of the term Jahbulon as a

name for the deity in its rituals. That term is formed from Semitic, Hebrew and Egyptian names for God. The report concludes that the term is "blasphemous" because the name of God in Christian theology "must not be taken in vain, nor can it be replaced by an amalgam of the names of the pagan deities."

Both the Anglicans and the Methodists stopped short of citing the chief reason why Freemasonry and Christianity are incompatible. As Lutherans our objection to Freemasonry derives from the fact that Masonic teaching subverts the gospel of salvation by grace. One of the fundamentals of Masonic belief is the notion that "character determines destiny." The rituals and the symbols of Masonry reinforce that notion. Thus in effect Masonry makes God's offer of salvation in Christ superfluous. For that reason it is clearly antichristian.

The antichristian nature of Masonry was exposed recently on "The John Ankerberg Show" on CBN-TV. Ankerberg, a Baptist clergyman, presented the rituals of Masonry in an effort to demonstrate how incompatible Masonry and Christianity actually are.

Apparently Freemasons have been stung by the criticisms they have drawn, especially from churches which peacefully coexisted with Masons for so many years. The Masonic Service Bureau has reacted to critics by placing ads in newspapers. The ads suggest that you are in good company when you are among Masons. Seventeen presidents have been Masons, and nine astronauts, along with Will Rogers, Mark Twain, John Wayne and Norman Vincent Peale.

The ads also contend, "Freemasonry is neither a secret society nor a religion. Names of members and meeting places are published. It does not interfere with any man's religious beliefs, expecting each to

follow his own faith. Men of every race, creed and opinion are Freemasons.”

That is a smoke screen. We contend that Masonic beliefs do interfere with a Christian's beliefs. For example, when the Lambskin (or White Leather Apron) is presented to a candidate, he is told, "You were presented with the Lambskin . . . because the lamb has in all ages been deemed an emblem of innocence. He therefore who wears the Lambskin . . . as a badge of a Mason, is thereby continually reminded of that purity of conduct and life which is so essentially necessary to his gaining admission into the celestial lodge where the supreme Architect of the universe presides."

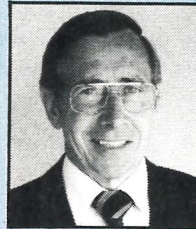
That is the heart of the Masonic blasphemy. That is a denial of Christ's gospel. It makes the sacrifice of the Lamb of God unnecessary to take away the sin of the world.

We applaud the efforts of the Methodists, the An-

glicans and John Ankerberg to warn Christians about the dangers of membership in antichrist lodges. We would welcome their efforts even more if they would focus their criticisms more sharply on the heart of the Masonic heresy.

Masonic teaching denies that Jesus is the world's one and only Savior. As Lutherans we still insist that for a person to belong to an organization which denies the gospel while at the same time belonging to a church which proclaims the gospel is incompatible with a person's Christian faith. The Lord still asks,

"What fellowship can light have with darkness?" (2 Corinthians 6:14). □



Joel Gerlach is pastor of St. John, Wauwatosa, Wisconsin.

LETTERS

A thank you

Last fall we looked up 26 of our WELS congregations in Florida, Alabama and Tennessee. We want to thank the pastors, teachers and church members who visited with us and showed us your churches, chapels and schools. Your enthusiasm gave us a new outlook on mission work in the southeast. There was real peace amid the crowded highways and cities.

Coming back to our large church, school and gym and remembering how the new churches down south are so thankful for what they have made us more appreciative too.

*Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Griepentrog
DePere, Wisconsin*

Lay ministry

I am pleased to see the series "Everyone a minister." God has told us he needs more workers — and he doesn't mean just pastors and teachers. The strength of our churches boils down to each one of us and our personal commitment to share Jesus.

Our churches suffer a shortage of workers and funds. Low attendance at services and Bible studies frustrate

pastors. We "talk people into" serving on boards and committees. Are these all symptoms of a lack of focus on personal evangelism?

If each of us was excited about our faith and sharing it, wouldn't some of these problems improve? Aren't the laymen in a position to share their faith daily? We are the ones in contact with unbelievers. We need strong lay ministries.

Through daily Bible study and prayer, solid training from our pastors and a commitment from each of us, evangelism becomes a way of life.

*Sharon Buck
New Ulm, Minnesota*

Having been a layman for 28 years of my life and a missionary for only two, I do not accept the notion that "only the seminary trained workers may go out to be missionaries and evangelists" is the message we hear from "our pulpits and synod" (Letters, 1/15). Our synod has greatly reduced "unemployment" among our laity in recent years, for example, the mass evangelism efforts in many metro areas. New organizations such as OWLS and WELS Kingdom Workers

are tapping into the vast talents of our members.

Even if Karl Randolph's claims are true, we are not released from the clear statements of God's word to preach the gospel to every creature, and that includes those in our immediate vicinity. The fact that our congregation may not be involved in some evangelism "push" or other programmed lay activity should not inhibit us from reaching out to the store clerk, the boy across the alley or the shut-in down the hall. Our talented men and women will seek to use their gifts in whatever way they can. No synod, congregation or pastor can stop a Christian fueled by God's word and impelled by the Holy Spirit from completing the good works which God himself has prepared for us to do.

*Leroy P. Dux
Chipata, Zambia*

Outstanding issue

I think the articles written in the 75th anniversary issue (January 1) of the Northwestern Lutheran were outstanding!

*Edric Willer
Henning, Minnesota*

Let's vary the liturgy

Recent opinions in these pages have called for variations in the liturgy other than the usual 5-15 or the version found in the Sampler. I agree.

How many congregations ever sing the Matins or Vespers, which are already in the hymnal? These are aesthetically beautiful settings which are also theologically sound.

There does seem to be a feeling that our members are incapable of such worship, but this is an unwarranted self-depreciation. It can be done and done well, with the repetition that is required in the learning of any liturgy.

Let's set our sights high and aim for what we can do — not what we have always done.

*Eric Rachut
Austin, Minnesota*

Inclusive language

Permit me to add my name to the list of those troubled by the Hymn Committee's decision to introduce "inclusive" language into the new WELS hymnal. There is nothing wrong with the use of terms like man, brothers, etc., to represent all humanity. Scripture itself uses these terms in many places with exactly the same meaning.

If we are ashamed to use words as the Bible does, are we truly confessing the verbal inspiration of Holy Scripture? ("Every word of God is flawless," Proverbs 30:5.) This, I submit, is a more serious doctrinal issue than our WELS theologians have heretofore recognized.

*Richard E. Band
Londonderry, New Hampshire*

I was pleased by the special service developed for the evangelism service, "Show and Tell." In particular, I appreciate the author's use of inclusive language. In a recent letter to the editor, however, someone was opposed to the new hymnal being written with special attention to inclusive language. As Christians we are mandated to spread the gospel to the whole world. We must communicate the

gospel in the clearest terms available. Language is not a static symbol system but is dynamic, always changing. One area of our language which is changing is the male bias perceived in words and phrases such as mankind, all men or the generic he.

If our new hymnal is to be a worthwhile investment of time, energy and resources, it must be one that will serve our church for years to come.

*Mary Palmquist
Woodland Hills, California*

What was really disappointing was to see the letter, The Hymnal Committee, by Robert Spry printed in the NL (January 1).

Wasn't it saying a little too much when the writer ascribed motives to our Hymnal Committee deducing that using gender inclusive language in our revised hymnal was done to pacify advocates of feminism?

Wasn't it saying a little too much to say that there is no Christian basis at all for the present day feminist movement? In a movement as diverse as this, you find no element of scriptural sympathy in any area at all? How did you find any in that for racial equality?

Wasn't it saying a little too much to suggest by implication that our Hymnal Committee had strayed beyond its confessional responsibilities? When casting about yourself a confessional mantle, a bit more precision and charity are required.

In short you said too much, Mr. Spry, in presuming to speak for me or my church either in your confessional outline or your accusation. But that's a writer's goof. What concerns me more, Mr. Editor, is that in printing that letter, you said too little. That's an editorial policy gaffe.

*David J. Farley
Bakersfield, California*

Christian rock

Regarding the "Letters" response (February 1) to your coverage of "Malachi," allow this exception.

Music created for the glory of God is pleasing. Christian rock is no ex-

ception. To those enjoying traditional music I would add that we also enjoy your music. Unless I'm sadly mistaken though, the music of King David more closely resembled Christian rock than the music termed "traditional."

Christian rock has proved an aid in my faith in that his praise flows rather than humming or singing the phrases of secular music. It's been an effective tool for evangelism in attracting others to my music and drawing them to ask about my faith.

The time in which we live requires that we reach to the youth in the language they understand (NIV) and in the music they enjoy (Christian rock). To do less would ignore the great commission of our Lord.

As to the emotional response vs. realistic judgment issue I would hope emotion never be lost. Where would our beliefs be if not for the emotion of the Old Testament great people and the apostles. Realists ridiculed their faith, but they held fast to the true faith.

*Clark A. Brown
Plymouth, Michigan*

I am responding in favor of gospel rock and contemporary Christian music. Why all this controversy? If a song is doctrinally correct why the commotion?

The problem is that some people simply don't like certain styles of music. Because of this they condemn its being used for the worship of God.

It is time the WELS gets off the fence and makes a stand. People are making claims that this music is a mockery of God and haven't a scriptural foot to stand on.

*Bill Broring
Houston, Minnesota*

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 53222-4398.

by Paul E. Kelm

Why does our synod remain publicly silent about political positions (and candidates who espouse them) that are in direct opposition to our Christian faith?

Let's distinguish "political" from "social" and "moral." The church has a spiritual mandate, within which Scripture clearly defines God's moral will. The church has a social function, expressed by Scripture in such metaphors as salt, light and yeast. The church has neither political mandate nor political function.

Our synod has clearly and consistently testified to God's *moral* will in such concerns as abortion, pornography and the family. This publication and every congregation's pulpit bear witness.

Moral concerns become *social* issues when God allows society to experience the consequence of rejecting his will. Homosexuality and AIDS, divorce and child neglect, sexual freedom and illegitimacy, chemical abuse and violent crime — society reaps the fruit of its collective morality. When the church addresses moral concerns as social issues, it risks losing moral cause (sin) in social consequence (problem). Worse, it risks losing gospel in law with moralizing.

Moralizing coerces people to "behave" out of self-interest and the threats of moral law, rather than motivating Christians to glorify God in response to his grace. Moralizing misrepresents God as a celestial Monty Hall, making deals with the self-righteous, rather than the forgiving Father who declares sinners righteous for Jesus' sake. Moralizing turns the world's Savior into just another reformer of society. It warps the mission of the church, from making disciples by preaching the gospel to making a moral majority by preaching the law.

Certainly, the church should publicly clarify God's will in issues of social controversy — where Scripture clearly articulates that will of God. But the church's purpose is to call sinners to repentance, not to force its moral law on unregenerate neighbors. It is law in its first use — revealing sin — that serves the gospel message and mission of the church, not law in its second use — curbing the immoral excesses of human nature.

Rarely has the Wisconsin Synod in convention adopted resolutions addressing moral/social issues (such as the resolution in 1979 condemning abortion). This reluctance is not because the synod is unwilling to take a public position on contemporary moral issues, but because the synod already has such a position. It stands on Scripture, proclaims and applies Scripture in its congregations. To vote on a resolution that only confirms what God's word and church already teach is to call that teaching into question. Worse, it may suggest that truth and morality can be decided by vote — precisely the relativistic nightmare of contemporary morality.

Moral concerns that have become social issues turn into *political* positions when parties or candidates dis-

agree on government's response. By choice or by default legislators confirm moral positions, whether godly or ungodly. Christians should measure the moral positions as well as the qualifications of those who shape our society before they vote. And the church should encourage its members to exercise such Christian citizenship. But when the church engages in partisan politics by endorsing candidates, parties or platforms, it is wrong.

On the basis of Romans 13, Lutherans recognize the doctrine of "two kingdoms." God ordained government to bring social order and justice to his world by means of reasonable law. God commissioned the church to bring truth and salvation to his world by means of inspired scripture. The church confuses both roles and means when it becomes political. And it risks the confusion of its mission and message, as both medieval and contemporary history demonstrate.

Identifying the church with a party, platform or candidate implies endorsement of much more than a moral position (for example, a national defense "doctrine" alongside a pro-life "plank"), much more than can be supported by any "thus saith the Lord." Identifying the church with a partisan political position unnecessarily alienates a large block of people for whom Christ sent the church with his gospel. Further, "single-issue blindness" may make us poor citizens as well as poor missionaries.

There are social and political organizations through which Christians can and should express their informed consciences. There are agencies affiliated with the church through which information and persuasion on a specific moral/social issue can be promoted. (WELS Lutherans for Life combines public testimony to moral truth with personal concern for individuals, spiritually and physically.)

An endless array of socio-political issues that are morally rooted confronts us today. Abortion, pornography, homosexuality, substance abuse, illegitimacy, child abuse, battered spouses, white collar crime . . . there is a common denominator to all these problems. Sin, Satan and self have alienated people from God and blinded them to his will. Apart from spiritual rebirth in Jesus they will neither comprehend nor follow God's moral will. Apart from the gospel's justifying decree of forgiveness, they will neither know nor experience the salvation Jesus earned for them at the cross. The church ill serves this nation by dissipating its energy in the socio-political arena of sin's consequences when it has been given *power* to overcome sin. □

Send your questions to QUESTIONS, The Northwestern Lutheran, 2929 N. Mayfair Road, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53222-4398. Questions of general interest are preferred. Questions will be answered, however, only through this column.

Pastor Paul Kelm is director of the synod's spiritual renewal program.

WELS Kingdom Workers' national meeting

A
vision
with
action



Fifty-one people from around the United States gathered in Milwaukee on January 23 for the first national meeting of WELS Kingdom Workers. Lawrence Marquardt of Libertyville, Ill., served as moderator.

National chairman Robert Grebe reflected the excitement and purpose of the meeting. He recounted how the vision for the organization came into focus. His participation, he said, "as a member of the Board for World Missions for the last twenty-two years had helped greatly to develop this 'vision with action.'" More recently that vision came into clearer focus.

For Grebe 1986 was a turning point. His involvement in the Latin American Mission Conference, the opportunity to discuss mission challenges with our missionaries in Hong Kong while on a business trip there and his attendance at the World Seminary Conference in Puerto Rico, all brought the focus to a point. Other laymen at the World Seminary Conference shared the vision. The hard work to establish WELS Kingdom Workers began.

The Board for World Missions and the Board for Home Missions endorsed the concept. The conference of Presidents added its support. The result: the 1987 synod

convention encouraged WELS Kingdom Workers to carry out its purpose to heighten mission awareness in our church body and to involve the organization's membership in special volunteer activities as well as provide support for mission work. The support is to be over and above offerings to the regular mission budget.

The January 23 meeting provided the vehicle to develop substantive plans of action with strong emphasis on our "vision with action." Several committees worked hours at organizing structure and action. Plans now include a national rally on August 5-6 at Martin Luther Preparatory School, Prairie du Chien, Wis. This is just prior to our synod's convention there.

As of February 1 WELS Kingdom Workers has a national office at Jordan Lutheran School, 8420 W. Beloit Road, West Allis, Wisconsin 53227. (This building also houses the offices of OWLS and LWMS.) The office is being equipped through special donations and will serve as a focal point for coordinating all activities and records of the organization. It will also disseminate information to all appropriate offices and groups in the synod.

We are thankful for God's blessing on our efforts so far. He has guided us to commit \$250,000 for support of missionaries over the next three years. In addition, we have funded an issue of a mission periodical and given \$5,000 to offset the cost of the World Missionary Conference in 1988.

On a district level, the Southeastern Wisconsin group has committed itself to support layworkers to help with our Mwembezhi compound in Zambia, Africa. Mr. and Mrs. Herman Koester are now in place there. The pro-

jected annual cost is \$20,000.

This district has also undertaken a home mission project. It is underwriting the Mission to Mormons project, a gospel-focused strategy to win Mormons to Christ. The cost is \$60,000 over the next three years.

The first national meeting laid the groundwork for coordinating the work of the many volunteers who have offered their services to the Lord. Now WELS Kingdom Workers will be better able to respond to these dedicated volunteers in offering them a place to use their talents.

— William F. Bernhardt

WITH THE LORD

Harold H. Eckert 1908-1989

Pastor Harold H. Eckert was born June 24, 1908 in Yale, Michigan. He died January 30, 1989 in Milwaukee, Wis.

A 1933 seminary graduate, he served congregations in Manitowoc and Reedsville, Wis., before accepting a call to St. Jacobi, Milwaukee, where he served until 1961 when he accepted the call to serve full time as the WELS first executive secretary of the Board of Trustees, a position he held until his retirement in 1976. He also served on the Board of Directors of Northwestern Publishing House as secretary-treasurer and finally as chairman from 1949 to 1952.

In 1934 he married Irma Reuschel. He is survived by his wife; son, Frederic (Kaye); three grandchildren and seven great grandchildren.

Funeral services were held February 3, 1989 at St. Jacobi, Greenfield, Wis.

Amazing gifts

Everyone knew there were many, many gifts sent directly to the synod. Every day the mail brought them. But no one ever thought that there were so many and that they amounted to so much.

Early in 1988 a uniform procedure for recording the gifts and thanking the donors was agreed upon. All gifts are centrally recorded and promptly acknowledged with thanks, assuring donors that their gifts are being put to their designated use.

Only then was it realized how amazing the gifts are. Recording was begun on March 15, 1988. After six and one-half months, we ran a report to learn how much had been contributed: the total was just shy of half a million dollars. October and November receipts were each over \$100,000 and December's total was \$158,000.

During this ten-month period

5,300 gifts totaled \$958,000. Many donors were congregational organizations which had taken up a special offering. Other gifts bear the name of a congregation. The large majority, however, are from individuals and families.

Eighteen percent of the gifts were for the budget. That's greatly appreciated because anticipated offerings from congregations in 1988 were about \$500,000 short.

Over 25 percent of the gifts were designated for ministries such as the Committee on Relief, East Fork Lutheran Nursery and the Central Africa Medical Mission. These ministries are entirely outside the synod's budget and are the means of extending mercy to people in need. It is interesting to see how gifts for these areas are given as appeals for support are made or reports of people helped are given through such media as the Northwestern Lutheran.

The majority of gifts go to provide needed support for work which is carried on by synodical programs. Often synod budgets

can provide only the barest essentials. Materials, equipment and training are dependent upon income from special non-budgetary funds.

Annually a projects booklet is produced listing worthy recipients of such gifts. The booklet is supplied to all parish pastors, congregations and Christian day schools. It is apparent that the booklet is diligently used.

The gifts ranged in size from \$30,000 for a designated project to \$3.00. Many were gifts of \$10, \$25 and \$100. Whatever the size, we're confident all come from hearts of faith and love.

All of us have come to appreciate the magnitude of these daily gifts. What they accomplish for the kingdom is significant. We hope that your awareness of this daily influx will give you a true sense of appreciation also and that you will join us in thanking God for these amazing gifts that his amazing grace is providing.

—Ronald D. Roth
Special gifts counselor

Retired trustee executive dies

Pastor Harold H. Eckert, retired executive secretary of the synod's Board of Trustees, died January 30 at the age of 80. He had been in poor health for some time prior to his death and had been hospitalized on a number of occasions.

Eckert served the synod's Board of Trustees for 25 years, from 1951 until his retirement in 1976, first as executive chairman and for 15 years as its executive secretary.

"He was," said President Mischke, "a unique gift for our synod at a time when he was most needed. He presided over the fiscal affairs of the synod during a time of unprecedented expansion — three special capital fund offerings and the opening of new missions at the rate of 20 to 25 each year. His faithful and diligent work will

not be forgotten by those who write our history."

Eckert was a 1933 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, and in the fall was ordained and installed as assistant to the pastor and as teacher at First German Lutheran Church of Manitowoc, Wis. The following fall he was installed by his father, Pastor Otto Eckert, at St. John-St. James Lutheran Church, Reedsville, Wis.

In 1949 he was called to St. Jacobi, Milwaukee, serving it until 1961 when he became full-time executive secretary of the Board of Trustees.

Eckert also served on the Board of Directors of Northwestern Publishing House as secretary-treasurer and finally as chairman from 1949 to 1952. He resigned to



Eckert

become executive chairman of the synod's trustees, a part-time position.

After his retirement, he transferred his membership to Bay Pines, Seminole, Fla. Pastor Raymond Wiechmann, his pastor while in Florida and former president of the South Atlantic District, preached the funeral sermon.

In 1934 Eckert married Irma Reuschel of Dundas, who survives him. The marriage was blessed with one son, Frederic, of Hales Corners, Wis.

NOTICES

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

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS WELS Foundation, Inc.

The Board of Trustees announces a reorganization of the WELS Foundation, Inc. with a new Foundation board of directors to be appointed in April 1989. The board invites the members of the WELS to nominate lay candidates to serve as directors of the WELS Foundation, Inc. Candidates must possess expertise in trust management with backgrounds in trust administration, trust legal, trust financial or marketing charitable trust agreements. Recommendations and pertinent information are to be sent to the administrator for the Board of Trustees no later than March 31, 1989.

Rev. Robert C. Van Norstrand
Administrator, Board of Trustees
Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran Synod
2929 N. Mayfair Rd.
Milwaukee, WI 53222-4398

CHANGES IN MINISTRY

PASTORS:

Bader, Randy D., from Peace, Isabel, S.D., to St. John, Vesta, Minn.
Pingel, Louis E., from Trinity, Lincoln, Mich., to retirement (effective July 31).
Valleskey, Thomas A., from Prince of Peace, Flower Mound, Tex., to Shepherd of the Mountain, Reno, Nev.
Varnum, Neil R., from St. John, Caledonia, Minn., to Salem, Edmonds, Wash.

TEACHERS:

Bartsch, Deborah L., from Peridot Mission, Peridot, Ariz., to Trinity-St. Luke, Watertown, Wis.
Muenkel, Ralph O., from St. James, Milwaukee, Wis., to retirement (effective end of school year).
Wentzel, Peter A., from St. John, Peshtigo, Wis., to Divine Grace, Lake Orion, Mich.
Zunker, Brian, from inactive to St. Paul, Appleton, Wis.

ADDRESSES

PASTORS:

Mueller, Robert P., corrected office number: 517/725-6761.

TEACHERS:

Westendorf, Christina L., 1420 Henry Street, Watertown, WI 53094; 414/261-8628.

CONFERENCES

Michigan District, Southeastern Conference, April 3-4, at Zion, Lansing. Agenda: Large Catechism: Introduction and First Commandment (Jahnke); The New Age Movement (Shuerman); Exegesis of Colossians 1:15-20 (Buelow).

Michigan District, Ohio Conference, April 3-4 at Apostles in Toledo. Agenda: Zephaniah (Schmeling); Exegesis of Acts 18 (Balge); Media's Impact on Our Sensitivity to Sin (Kotlerjahn); A Pastor's Methodology in Christian Counseling (Roehl).

Minnesota District, Spring Conference, April 4-5. Opening service 9 a.m. at Pilgrim, Minneapolis. Skywood Inn in Fridley for balance of sessions. Agenda: The Scope, Limitations, and Termination of the Call (Mischke); The New Age Movement (Schaefer); Exegesis of Titus 2 (Witt).

Pacific Northwest, April 4-5 at Trinity, Eugene, Oregon. Agenda: The Pastoral Epistles (Balge).

ANNIVERSARIES

Burnsville, Minnesota — Good Shepherd (25th), April 9, 8 and 10:30 a.m. Guest speaker: Prof. James Tiefel. Catered meal; reservations required. Contact Kurt Rosenbaum, 612/432-5527.

Hopkins, Minnesota — West Lutheran High School (10th), April 9, 3 p.m. Service held in the school, 1001 Hwy 7, Hopkins, MN 55343; Rev. Carl Mischke, guest speaker. For further information call 612/933-9232.

PARAMENTS AVAILABLE

One set of green paraments available to mission congregation for cost of shipping. Contact Mrs. Paul Stuebs, 2403 Western Ave., Yankton, SD 57078.

Review of study commission report scheduled

The 1990 district conventions of the WELS are the key element in a proposed timetable for considering the recommendations of the Preparatory School Study Commission (Northwestern Lutheran, March 1, From This Corner). Proposals of great magnitude require understanding and input from the grass roots. The district conventions, scheduled for the summer of 1990, are the ideal forum. That schedule will provide the Board for Worker Training a year to evaluate the proposals and provide specific recommendations to a synod convention which alone can authorize the proposed changes.

The BWT intends to pursue vigorously the issues raised in the report. Much work still needs to be done in evaluating the ramifications of combining Northwestern College and Dr. Martin Luther College on the New Ulm campus. This amalgamation was beyond the scope of the commission assigned to study the preparatory schools. Accordingly, the commission's report presents the college amalgamation only in broad strokes.

All in all, the timing of the report of the Preparatory School Study Commission provides an excellent opportunity for the BWT to evaluate the structure of the worker training system, the number and placement of preparatory schools, the role of the area Lutheran high schools and the nature of the college-level programs whether on combined or separate campuses.

The Preparatory School Study Commission presented its report during BWT sessions on January 31. After considering the wide-ranging ramifications of the report, the BWT appointed a steering committee to organize the board's work with the report.

Committee members are Pastor Douglas Engelbrecht, chairman of the Board for Worker Training; Wayne Borgwardt, administrator of the Board for Worker Training; President John Lawrenz of Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw; and President Armin Panning of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary.

— Wayne Borgwardt

Minnesota District

Redeemer of Florissant, Missouri celebrated its 15th anniversary on February 19 with special services in the morning and afternoon. A church councilmen's workshop on planning and goal setting was also conducted in connection with the anniversary weekend. Redeemer is served by Pastor Martin J. Lopahs. . . . **St. Paul of Prescott, Wis.**, dedicated a new Rogers Essex 645 electronic organ on December 4. The organ also has one rank of wind-blown pipes. . . . The annual **Church Leaders' Workshop** was held February 4 in Belle Plaine. Workshops on many areas of ministry were offered to the 275 participants. . . . Funeral services were conducted January 19 for **Mrs. Barbara Klockziem** (nee Seager), wife of Prof. Roger Klockziem. The services were held at St. Paul, New Ulm.

—Robert Edwards

DISTRICT NEWS SCHEDULE

March 15: Minnesota, Nebraska, North Atlantic

April 1: Northern Wisconsin, Pacific Northwest, South Atlantic

April 15: South Central, Southeastern Wisconsin, Western Wisconsin

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

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

LUTHERAN PIONEERS CONVENTION

The Paperland District will host the 23rd national convention of the Lutheran Pioneers, Inc., April 29 at Fox Valley Lutheran High School in Appleton, Wis., with a theme "Centered on the Word of God." Sessions will begin at 7:30 a.m. with registration. An 8:30 a.m. service will officially open the convention. Each congregation in the national organization is entitled to send two voting delegates who have attained the age of 18, although more than two members from each train may attend. Registration forms are available from Lutheran Pioneers, Inc., PO Box 66, Burlington, WI 53105.

LWMS CONVENTION

The Lutheran Women's Missionary Society 25th anniversary convention will be held June 23-25 in the civic center, Bismarck, North Dakota. For registration contact Mrs. Dorothy Laabs, 2 Bowen St., Oshkosh, WI 54901.

ATTENTION, MALE CHOIR DIRECTORS

As director of our Male Chorus, I would be interested in hearing from other directors to share ideas and personal arrangements. Anyone interested, please write to Charlene H. Lauersdorf, 105 Aztalan Ct., Jefferson, WI 53549.

ADDRESSES WANTED

Anyone with information on the present addresses of the following, who were members of Trinity Lutheran Church (LCMS) in Palo Alto during the 1950s, is requested to contact the church at 1295 Middlefield Rd., Palo Alto, CA 94301; 415/853-1295;

Joyce H. Eckhardt, mother of Gary J., Constance J., Marsha J. and William C. Eckhardt; Clara Reck, mother of William H. Reck.

CONFERENCE PAPERS

The following new conference papers are available: No. 75: Our Lutheran Heritage in Worship (Gerlach), 85¢; No. 76: One Body, One Spirit — The Gifts of the Holy Spirit (Franzmann), \$1.05; No. 77: Educating the Congregation for Friendship Evangelism (Festerling), 85¢; No. 78: Alive in Christ, Col. 2:13 (Panning), \$1.80; No. 79: Our World Mission at Home (Steele), \$1.00; No. 80: A Biblical and Contemporary Philosophy of Ministry (Kelm), \$1.40.

The following previously listed conference papers are still available in limited quantities: No. 43: Redeeming the Time — An Essay on the Pastor's Stewardship of Time (Glaeske), 30¢; No. 52: Proselytizing (Fischer), 36¢; No. 53: Martin Luther and Catechetical Instruction at Wittenberg (Bartling), 72¢; No. 54: The Moral and Scriptural Principles Concerning Test-Tube Babies (Gawrisch), 90¢; No. 55: What About Fasting (Schroeder), 48¢; No. 56: Textual Criticism: An Introductory Survey (Naumann), 30¢; No. 57: The Menace of Islam: Its Theology and Practice (Schmeling), 72¢; No. 58: Integrating the New Member (Huebner), 60¢; No. 59: The Preacher and Personal Finances (Braun), 48¢; No. 60: The Reformed View of the Gospel (Huebner), 78¢; No. 61: The Use and Non-Use of Life Support Systems and/or Treatment Termination (Bushaw), 36¢; No. 67: Law and Gospel in the Church Growth Movement (Koester), \$1.00; No. 68: Clergy Stress and Burnout or All Stressed Up and No Place to Blow (Schleicher), 66¢; No. 69: Focus on James Dobson (Hilliard), 48¢; No. 70: Christian Stewardship, Our Part in God's Plan and No. 70A: Addendum (Maulkey), \$1.56; No. 71: Devils and Demons: Their Powers and Limitations (Smith), 60¢; No. 72: Contemporary Humanism and the Moral Life (Borgwardt), 90¢; No. 73: How to Make Sound Doctrine Sound Good to Mission Prospects (Kelm), 54¢; No. 74: An Isagogical Survey of Micah 1 and 2 (Lang), 84¢.

Anyone desiring may be placed on the permanent mailing list to receive each paper as it is printed. Those on the permanent mailing list are asked to submit their new address promptly.

Martin Luther Women's Circle
10151 Sappington Road
St. Louis, MO 63128

1989 OWLS NATIONAL GATHERING

The annual meeting of the OWLS will take place at the Clarion Hotel, Lansing, Michigan, July 18-20.

Anyone age 55 or who is retired is encouraged to attend. This gathering offers spiritual enrichment, Christian fellowship and educational experience. Anyone interested in joining fellow Christians for several exciting days should contact Organization of WELS Lutheran Seniors, 8420 W. Beloit Rd., West Allis, WI 53227; 414/312-9977.

1989 OWLS HOSTEL

The 1989 Owls Hostel will be offered at Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Mich., July 21-26. The hostel offers a week of educational experiences for seniors. Lodging and meals are provided. For further information contact the Special Ministries Board, 2929 N. Mayfair Rd., Milwaukee, WI 53222-4398; 414/771-9357.

W(HOLY) SINGLE II

All WELS singles ages 18 to 98 (including those once married and now single) are invited to attend a one-day seminar at Wisconsin Lutheran College on Saturday, May 6, emphasizing our "completeness" as Christians and as singles. Join other singles for a day of learning and fellowship. Choose from a number of topics of interest that will be presented during the day and then join for an evening of fellowship.

Registration forms will be sent to everyone on our mailing list. If you are not on the list, please write to WINGS, c/o Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Service, Box 23980, Milwaukee, WI 53223.

ALCOHOLISM AWARENESS RETREAT

Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Service will sponsor the sixth annual Alcoholism Awareness Retreat to be held April 28-30, 1989 at the Cousins Retreat Center in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. With the theme, "God Will Carry You," recovering alcoholics and/or family members will have a chance to address specific problems in life experience in recovery. For more information contact John Cook, WLCFS, P.O. Box 23980, Milwaukee WI 53223; 414/353-5000.

CAMP BASIC

Camp Basic (Brothers and Sisters in Christ), a summer camp for the mentally retarded, under the auspices of the Special Ministries of the Western Wisconsin District, will begin its ninth year of operation in the group camp at Wyalusing State Park near Prairie du Chien, Wis., with sessions June 18-23 and June 25-30.

Camper applications from the Western Wisconsin District receive first priority but eligible applications from all the synod's districts will be considered. Scholarships are available for families with special financial needs.

The camp requests names of prospective campers, counselors, as well as donations for the camp sessions or the camp scholarship fund. A slide and tape presentation about the camp and a bulletin board display are available upon request.

For more information direct inquiries to Ken Pahnke, Camp Coordinator, Rt. 7, Box 10, Menomonie, WI 54751; 715/235-3456.

HOT SPRINGS VILLAGE, ARKANSAS

Bible studies and survey work are being conducted in Hot Springs and Hot Springs Village, AR. For times and more information please contact Joe! H. Nitz at 501/525-3559.

NAMES WANTED

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

BULLHEAD CITY, ARIZONA — Pastor Michael K. Smith (Evangelical Lutheran Synod), PO Box 96, Riviera, AZ 86442; 607/758-3438.

CHANGE OF TIME OR PLACE OF WORSHIP

in the following exploratory areas or mission congregations.

PRESCOTT VALLEY, ARIZONA — Christ, 8164 Spouse Dr., Prescott Valley, 9:00 a.m.; SS, 10:00 a.m. Pastor Stephen Hein, 4701 N. Stageway Ln., Prescott Valley, AZ 86314; 602/772-8722.

HONOLULU, HAWAII — St. Paul, East Foster Village Community Center, 4341 Hakupapa, Honolulu, HI 96818.

FLORENCE, WISCONSIN — St. John, 524 Olive Ave., Florence, 10 a.m. Pastor J. S. Hering, 524 Olive Ave., PO Box 81, Florence, WI 54121; 715/528-3337.

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As I write these lines, it is the day after Ash Wednesday. In days gone by, the six-week Lententide was a time of fasting and penitence. Aiding in the penitent mode was Lenten self-denial, not voluntary as today, but required by the church.

We have trouble grappling with the penitential seasons of the old church — Advent and Lent. Advent's penitential purple has changed to blue, the ecclesiastical color for hope. And Lent, well, it's still purple, but the purple is fading. The fading comes about because it is difficult for our society (together with its churches) to pronounce the word *sin*. In a recent statement a Lutheran church body called "promiscuous behavior" (formerly fornication and adultery) together with the practice of homosexuality "inappropriate" patterns of sexual conduct. *Inappropriate?* Whatever happened to that word *sin*? Sin, a deviation from God's holy and immutable will.

Sophisticates scoff at a "primitive" rite which Leviticus prescribed for Israel: the goat ceremony of Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. According to Leviticus, Israel's high priest "is to lay both his hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the wickedness and rebellion of the Israelites — all their sins — and put them on the goat's head. He shall send the goat away into the desert. . . . The goat will carry on itself all their sins to a solitary place." From this symbolism take away the cross and Calvary and Good Friday, and of course, this "scapegoat" episode looks like a high bit of voodoo.

But the medicine men of our society routinely strip the sinners of their "sins" and lay them upon scapegoats. In a book some years ago Dr. Karl Menninger mused about sin disappearing from the mental landscape. He wondered why no one is "guilty" of anything anymore. He proposed that we get back to using the word "sin" and "guilt" as a healthy first step in mending society. The book promptly disappeared in a sea of high priests eagerly volunteering to purge people from their misdeeds and from personal responsibility for their lives with scapegoats ranging from poverty to genetics.

But Paul Gerhardt, the poet laureate of the Lutheran church, confessed before the cross of Christ:

I caused thy grief and sighing
By evils multiplying
As countless as the sands.
I caused the woes unnumbered
With which thy soul is cumbered,
Thy sorrows raised by wicked hands.

And with that cross we have moved from symbolism to reality, from shadow to the body of Christ. Gerhardt — as all of us — escaped his personal debt of sin only in the cross and lived. To strip the sinner of guilt without the cross is to propel the sinner on the path to destruction.

In the church every Sunday is a day to mark sin and grace in our lives, but Lent, Holy Week and Easter bring them to us in a special way. The cross tells us that sin cannot be dismissed with the wave of a magic wand. Not even God's fiat could remove it. It took a titanic struggle with cosmic, demonic forces by Jesus Christ and his death to atone for the world's sin. Lent and Easter remind us that, under God, we dare not diminish the cost of sin, else Easter's hallelujahs are a hollow cry in the naves of our churches.

James P. Schaefer

*The medicine
men of our
society
routinely
strip
the sinners
of their "sins"
and lay them
upon
scapegoats.*

Ever walk through a rural automobile junkyard? There is something fascinating about them. Often the same is true about the colorful men who own them.

Many don't notice country junkyards off the county highways. But pull over for a minute and take a look, won't you? At first glance they seem peaceful and a bit like antique shops. Cars from the 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s. Americana and all that. Now come up close. Flat tires. Scorched paint. Broken glass. Missing chrome. Rotting upholstery (have you ever smelled rotting car upholstery?!). Odometers rolled over or smashed in. Garbage and trash littering the floors and trunks.

"Peaceful?" That's not really the right word. Look again. Chevrolet, DeSoto, Studebaker, LaSalle. Some rusted out. Some burned out. This one right over here looks as if it went out quick . . . a violent screaming smoking end to its career. And some just quit running.

"Peaceful." "Quiet." Yeah, like a graveyard is. The reality is this: Junks, Wrecks, Heaps. Dead, with many missing parts. Blind, with punched-in headlamps. Hostile to anyone who'd dream of fixing one up. Lost . . . off in the trees; cars piled on top of each other. Don't get the wrong idea. These old hulks very definitely belong to someone.

The rural auto junkyard I'm thinking about is owned by an ornery, cantankerous old grouch (and I am being polite). He is honestly content to let his cars go to ruin. Sell them? His terms are criminal. Outrageous! Who'd pay that amount for a piece of scrap iron? His cars are going nowhere.

Junkyard conditions/junkyard owner. Fascinating?



Maybe. A little spooky too . . . lots of history tied up with those countryside graveyards.

But what's it got to do with *Easter*, anyway?

Well, *Easter* is all about *Jesus*. And *Jesus* rescued you from junkyard conditions. From a similar junkyard person who held title to you. Good Friday, remember? *Jesus* had made it his business to find you, like a lonely figure trudging through an auto salvage yard. He found your location and then he paid what it took to tow you out.

"*Jesus Christ* gave himself . . . to redeem you," says your Bible. Yes, *Jesus* rescued you *from* some-

thing. But you know something else? *Jesus* did not go to the trouble only to let you sit in his driveway. You were not rescued for inactivity. You were not salvaged to live again as a museum-piece of faded glory. He paid a bitter price to own you, *Jesus* did. And it is his very intention to restore you. Overhaul you. Discard what needs to be discarded. Turn you back into a showpiece you were designed to be.

Jesus Christ's pride and joy! "*Jesus Christ* gave himself . . . so that you could be his very own," reads the rest of that Bible passage. It's saying that *Jesus* rescued you *for* something. "*Easter . . . so what?*" Not any more. But real *Easter* eagerness only will come by remembering the junkyard. Looking close. Remembering what happened. And

breathing a quick prayer of thanks to your Salvager. □



Thomas Jeske is pastor of Abiding Word, Highlands Ranch, Colorado.