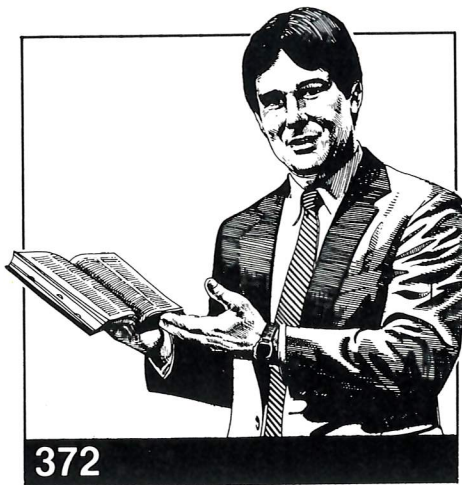


November 1, 1989

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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# Christ has set us free

by Richard D. Balge

*It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. . . . But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love (Galatians 5:1,13).*

One man stood before the powerful representatives of church and state. They demanded that he take back his criticisms of the papal church and withdraw his interpretations of God's word. He replied, "I cannot and I will not recant. Here I stand; I can do no other. God help me." Martin Luther said that and he did not recant.

How could he be so sure and so courageous? He could be that way because he knew that Christ has set us free.

## Free from the yoke of spiritual slavery

The tyranny of the lying, murdering devil is more than any human being can cope with. From bitter experience, which had almost cost him his life, Luther once said: "A troubled soul, one ever conscious of its sins, is a constant hell." He knew, as you and I know, that we can never do enough, feel enough, love enough to satisfy a just and holy God.

What freed him at last? What freed him, what has freed us is not, "The church says, the experts say, the majority says." What has freed us is, "This is what the Bible teaches."

What the Bible teaches is that "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us" (Galatians 3:13). It says that "God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them" (2 Corinthians 5:19). It says that "just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous" (Romans 5:19). This truth frees us from the yoke of spiritual slavery.

A new spiritual tyranny in our day is decision theology which would never think of saying, "You must do penance, make a pilgrimage, light a candle, say a rosary." Yet it says, "There is something you must do." We are told that what we must do is "make a decision for Christ."

That is tyranny because it demands something

from us which we cannot deliver. It points us away from what Christ has done for us to an act of our own will. By nature we do not have the will to make such a decision. Just as human beings cannot create themselves or redeem themselves, so they cannot—we cannot—make believers and loyal disciples of Jesus Christ out of ourselves.

God's word says that God has made a decision to save us. It says that Christ decided to give himself for our salvation. It says that the Holy Spirit decided to make us God's children. That truth frees us from the yoke of decision theology.

## Free to serve one another in love

Wherever the gospel of freedom in Christ is preached, there Satan puts on an extra shift of his best workers to make us think: "I can live as I please as long as I believe right." Luther warned against the false view that "although you do not keep the commandments, do not love God or your neighbor, aye, although you are an adulterer, this does not matter; if you believe you will be saved. No, my good man, this will not do! You will not possess the kingdom of heaven."

Christ has not set us free so that we can live a life of self-indulgence and selfishness. He has not freed me so that I can look out for number one and do my own thing. Christ has freed us to do his thing, and that is to "serve one another in love."

Does God want heroic deeds from us, spectacular works, especially pious undertakings? No, our everyday kindnesses, the way we earn our daily bread, the routine things which parents do for their children and the obedience which children show their parents—these are expressions of Christian faith and love.

The marvelous thing about our freedom in Christ is that what we should do becomes what we want to do

That is the light burden and the easy yoke which he who made us free lays on his disciples. □



*Richard Balge is dean of students and teaches church history and homiletics at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin.*

## Churches in trouble

There was a time when our failure to increase in membership was attributed to our refusal to "let down the bars." It was assumed that the more liberal churches would be the fastest growing ones. The assumption was that the churches which were more "strict" would naturally lag behind in growth. In the long run, that assumption has not been substantiated.

That is the message that comes to us through the decline of the mainline church denominations existing in America at the present time. These include the Episcopal Church, the United Methodist Church, the Congregational Church, the Presbyterian Church, and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). At a time when the population of the U.S. increased by 47 million, these denominations reportedly declined in membership from 18 percent to as much as 43 percent. These denominations have been replaced in rates of growth by conservative churches such as the so-called fundamentalist churches, which tend to be evangelical in nature, and by the charismatics and Pentecostal type churches, all of which are flourishing.

Several reasons have been given for this decline on the part of the mainline churches. Dorothy Bass of the Chicago Theological Seminary cites one of those reasons. She attributes it to "a failure to transmit the meaning and excitement of Christianity from one generation to another." Many of the mainline churches have forgotten — or soft-pedaled — what they once believed. They have little interest in spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ. In their institutions of higher learning, they no longer reflect the beliefs of their founders. They are no longer what they once were.

Instead, mainline churches tend to be concerned with social conditions, political movements, feminism, homosexuality—whatever captures interest at the moment. This caused one critic to describe their faith as having a "veneer of spirituality."

In contrast, the fundamentalists and the Pentecostals and the charismatics know what they believe. So do the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Mormons and the Seventh Day Adventists.

In the end, what is known as "letting down the bars" is sure to lead to the same confusion as that of the churches which are in trouble. People don't know what the church stands for.

Pastors may be reluctant to deny the requests of grieving relatives to conduct the funerals of members of Christless organizations. They may grow weary of saying no to repeated requests to offer the invocations at secular functions. They may feel bad about declining to participate in ecumenical services. Many people may not realize that they are thereby confirming their faith in Jesus Christ as the only Savior. This is a way of enunciating the timeless truth: "I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day."

And people will have no doubt what they stand for.

Immanuel G. Frey



*Immanuel Frey  
is a retired pastor  
living in  
Phoenix, Arizona.*

# Growing in faith

2 Peter 1:1-15

by Julian G. Anderson

**T**his letter, as it has come down to us, lacks the usual greeting found in all ancient letters. The probable reason is that the first few inches of the papyrus roll on which the greeting was written broke off after being rolled and unrolled a few hundred times. But it certainly was written to one or all of the churches named in 1 Peter 1:1, because in chapter 3, verse 1, Peter says, "My dear friends, I'm now writing you this second letter."

So now the letter begins, "I'm writing to people who have been given a faith that is just as valuable as ours, so that they put their trust in all the right and perfect things that Jesus Christ, our God and Savior, did. And now I'm praying that God will keep on giving you more and more of his undeserved love and his peace through the full knowledge about our God and Jesus our Lord."

Peter's use of the term "full knowledge" was almost certainly a reference to a false religion called "gnosticism" which was very popular at that time. This false religion stressed gnosis (Greek for knowledge) as the way of salvation, but it was knowledge connected with the heavenly bodies - stars, planets, etc., much like our modern horoscopes. The Gnostics believed that these heavenly bodies were divine powers which controlled our lives, and that we mortals must try to control these divine powers by reciting certain magic prayers and formulas and following special dietary rules, which were the main parts of their gnosis. It was also a secret religion like the Masonic religion. Notice that Peter is praying here that his readers will grow in the full or complete "knowledge about our God and Jesus our Lord." Then Peter continues by pointing out that

## We must grow in faith and Christian virtues

"God's almighty power has already given us everything we need for eternal life, and also for a godly life on earth, through the full knowledge about the One who called us to share his heavenly glory, honor, and power." This, of course, is the only knowledge which has any eternal value. And note, it's all a gift!

Then Peter tells his readers (including us), that "after you have escaped from the corruption that is in

this world because of people's sinful desires, those gifts will make it possible for you to share God's heavenly nature."

Peter also lists some of these gifts which God has to offer us, so that we will seek them out — a good character, knowledge, the ability to control our sinful desires, the ability to patiently hold on to our faith, godliness, love for our brothers and sisters, and Christian love, which includes loving those who don't love us.

"If you have these qualities," says Peter, "and if they are constantly growing, they will make you active and fruitful as you grow into the full knowledge about our Lord Jesus Christ." This last clause was aimed at the gnostics, of course, but it is something we should all keep in mind — that so far as our eternal future is concerned there is no other knowledge of any value besides the knowledge about our Lord Jesus Christ.

So Peter says to us, "My brothers and sisters, you must try to make sure that you won't lose the blessings God gave you when he chose you and called you (remember that — God chose you, you didn't choose him). And if you keep on doing all these things, you will never stumble and fall. Instead, God will give you a warm welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

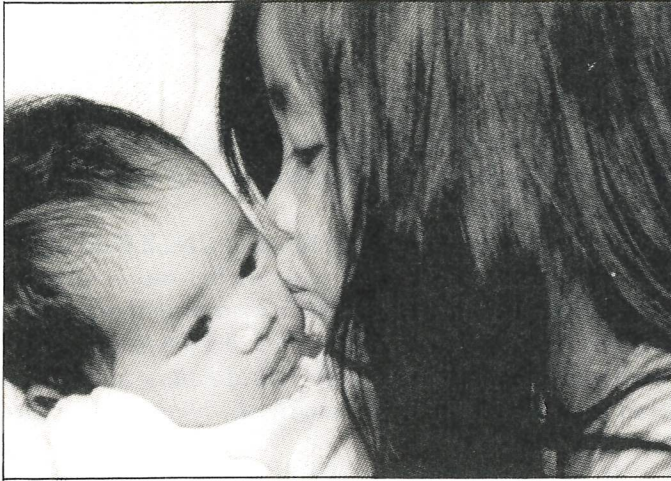
"And for this reason I'm going to keep on reminding you of these things, even though you know them and are standing firmly on the truth you now have. But I think I'm doing the right thing when I keep on waking you up by reminding you of these things. For as our Lord Jesus Christ has plainly told me, I know I'm going to get rid of my present body soon. So I'm anxious to give you something that will help you to remember these things at any time after I'm gone."

Here he is talking about Jesus' conversation with him on the shore of Lake Tiberius, as recorded in John's Gospel, 21:18-19. □



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

# Family planning



by Wayne D. Mueller

**C**hildren seem to be an impediment to happiness these days. They are often the pawns of occupational pursuits. When children don't fit in, they are aborted, abandoned, or divided by divorce. Parents try to prevent their conception, and many with congenital defects become the victims of medical infanticide. Some are abused by impatient mothers and molested by vicious fathers. Irresponsible fathers absent themselves from their homes and single mothers shuffle them off to daycare centers to earn enough money to feed them.

Society's treatment of children does not mean the value of children has changed. Rather, the ungodly have changed their values and placed children near the bottom. Children rank somewhere below job advancement, personal freedom, and financial security. Who of us is bold enough to say he hasn't been affected by the eroded values of the world?

## Children are a blessing

What a different view Scripture offers. After he created Adam and Eve and united them in marriage, "God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number'" (Genesis 1:28). God repeated this blessing to Noah after the flood (Genesis 9:1).

Many years later the psalms reflected the joy of receiving children from God. "Sons are a heritage from the Lord, children a reward from him. . . . Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them" (Psalm 127:3,5). "Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your sons will be like olive shoots

around your table. Thus is the man blessed who fears the Lord" (Psalm 128:3,4).

Notice how often the Old Testament connects the word blessing with children. The New Testament assigns the same high value to children. Jesus took children into his arms and blessed them. To the disciples who seemed to consider little children too big a bother for busy adults our Savior said, "Let the little children come to me" (Mark 10:14). St. Paul's directive that fathers train and instruct their children in the Lord (Ephesians 6:4) takes it for granted that there are children in Christian families.

## Stewardship

When God told the first man and woman how to take care of the earth, he mentioned three things: bear children, subdue the earth, and rule over it. Good stewardship, as God envisioned it, begins with the trust that children are just what he promised them to be: blessings.

Many people today would question that. God said to fill the earth, they argue, and we have already done that. The overpopulated earth and its starving masses prove that we have too many children already.

The Christian must be cautious about accepting this kind of argumentation. God did not give us a way of determining when the world is "full." He only told us to fill it. Good stewardship, of course, asks us not to bear children we cannot provide for (1 Timothy 5:8). But to refuse God's blessing of children for yourself because a child is starving in another part of the world? The motive for that would ring clear only if all one's resources for raising his own children were devoted to alleviating the needs of those who were starving.

## The real question

Chuck and Sandy were going to be married. Chuck said he didn't want any children, not for a while anyway. He wanted to get his feet on the ground where he worked. Sandy agreed. She had some schooling to finish first. And there were a lot of things they wanted around the house before they had a baby.

We can't judge hearts. But judging from the words and actions of society today, the real question about children is often tied to money, professional advancement, or personal freedom — not the starving

children in the third world. Maybe they don't realize it, but if their parents had thought as they do, Chuck and Sandy might not be around to do any thinking at all. God wants us to examine the reason behind our feelings about children. He requires that our hearts be pure. Our motive for doing something must be honest to God.

Jesus said it is impossible to serve God and money (Matthew 6:24). No one has the ability to look ahead ten years to see if he will have the money or health to support children. So the willingness to bear children always involves trust. What moves us is God's promise. Not professional promise, financial security, nor the allure of personal freedom have God's specific assurance of earthly benefit. But children do.

### There are decisions

Of course, every couple makes decisions about bearing children. And God doesn't make those decisions for us. He tells us that children are blessings because he knows we must make decisions, and he wants to influence us with his promise.

Yet beyond his promise of blessing and his warning about the love of money (Luke 12:15) there are other things which Christian couples may and, sometimes, must take into consideration. May we use artificial means to assist us in having a child or in preventing conception? May we resort to surgery to prevent further conception? What about passing on known genetically transmitted diseases?

Many practical decisions about bearing children will be influenced by God's fifth commandment (Exodus 20:13). Luther's explanation of this commandment reflects our Lord's concern for our physical well-being. A believing husband will certainly make the health of his wife a priority in their decision about the frequency and number of pregnancies (Ephesians 5:28,29). A Christian couple would never knowingly transmit disease to their offspring.

The fifth commandment's protection of human life also helps us evaluate artificial means of inducing and preventing conception. Artificial means and medical intervention are not wrong in themselves. But we have to say no to drugs and surgeries that destroy fertilized eggs. Most *in vitro* and frozen embryo procedures involve the destruction of fertilized eggs. Some popular birth control drugs and devices which work as abortifacients must be refused.

### Family planning

Family planning is a misnomer. So is birth control. There is a certain presumption in the popular use of those terms which detracts from God's glory. We have a relatively small part in birth, not control of it. Just ask any couple who dearly wants a child and can't conceive. Or ask the parents who are surprised by a birth they didn't "plan."

Planning can be a good thing. Lack of planning, in fact, can be tempting God. The same thing is true of control. A part of the Christian's life is his self-control and the management of the resources God has given him. As the believer practices them, planning and control can be good stewardship.

Yet the Bible is remarkably silent on some hard questions. Am I refusing a blessing of God if I don't have another child? Don't look for the answer to that question in society's example or in the expectations of others. You may not be able to have as many children as your parents did or as many as you envisioned as the ideal family. On the other hand, time and changing circumstances may allow you to have more.

When you are looking for answers, start with an honest review of all the blessings God gives you. Count your spiritual blessings, your financial resources, your physical and mental health, and the ability of your spouse to help you care for your children. Talk it over with your pastor or a trusted Christian friend. Above all, together with your marriage partner, take it to the Lord in prayer.

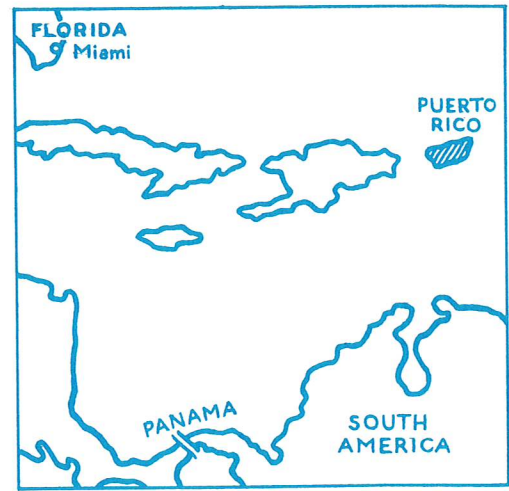
God promises the blessing of children to help us make our own decisions, not to measure others'. The family we think has too many children may have the spiritual resources which make up for financial shortfalls. The couple we might urge to have more children may have made their decision in the fear of the Lord. There is a spiritual dimension to our attitude about children. How we think of children when we are contemplating marriage and afterwards will show we trust that when God says, "Children are a blessing," he speaks the truth. □



Professor Mueller teaches theology and New Testament at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin.



Missioners Baerbock, Martens, and Strackbein



## Firmes y Adelante

by Ralph W. Martens

This year marks the 25th anniversary of our Wisconsin Synod mission effort in Puerto Rico. For the occasion our churches on the island have chosen the words of Isaiah 54:1-5 to inspire and guide them under the theme *Firmes y Adelante*, the first words from the Spanish translation of the hymn "Onward, Christian Soldiers."

Through the prophet Isaiah the Lord urges his church to strengthen her tent stakes and extend her curtains with firm faith in him who will multiply her children. In special Easter services over 140 souls rededicated themselves to the Lord and his mission. Members are celebrating with a special anniversary service in Guayama on October 29, the Reformation festival.

Missioners Rupert Eggert and Roger Sprain arrived in Puerto Rico in the summer of 1964 with a minimum of tools — a Spanish catechism, a pan-Lutheran hymnal, and a Spanish translation of the Bible prepared by the United Bible Society. The missionaries had been commissioned to test and implement the world mission board's recently articulated indigenous church planting principles, at that time called the Christian Missioner Corps policy.

Before much could be done, the men had to learn the Spanish language, Hispanic culture and customs, and then prepare the basic teaching and reaching materials for their work. They were to keep in mind that these materials, principles, and strategies were being field tested for possible use also in other parts of Latin America.

Their labors were not in vain. In 1971 Missioner Eggert was called to El Paso, Texas, to serve as friend-

ly counselor to the Confessional Lutheran Church of Mexico. Missioner Sprain headed our first WELS mission team to Colombia in 1974, and Missioner Charles Flunker, who replaced Sprain in Puerto Rico, now serves on our mission team in Brazil. Today's mission counselor to the church in Mexico, Paul Hartman, also served for five years in Puerto Rico before moving to El Paso.

We might add to this list of servants whom the Lord trained in Puerto Rico Missioners Carl Leyrer, Philip Strackbein, and James Connell, all now serving in Bogota, Colombia. After language training in Mexico all three received their first taste of Hispanic mission work while vicaring in Puerto Rico.

The WELS mission staff in Puerto Rico today includes Missioners Ronald Baerbock, Ralph Martens, and John Strackbein. Seminarian Jon Buchholz recently served his vicarage in Puerto Rico. He is a grandson of our first WELS missionary to Hispanics, Pastor Venus Winter.

For twenty-five years the Lord has prepared expatriate missionaries in and for Puerto Rico, but he has not yet provided native Puerto Rican missionaries or pastors. For this we pray. Several men are receiving pre-theological training which, if successfully completed, will be followed by four years of seminary training.

In January 1976, after more than 11 years of work, there were still fewer than 25 confirmed members in but one organized congregation in Puerto Rico. Today under God the base has broadened to three organized congregations and one preaching station.

Steps are being taken toward organizing a national church to facilitate domestic and foreign mission work. Pray for us as this 25th anniversary year draws to a close, that we may continue *Firmes y Adelante*, forward with conviction, to the glory of Christ and the growth of his body. □

*Ralph Martens is the field counselor for the Christian Missioner Corps in Puerto Rico.*



# Amazing Selsa and Eudalia

by Nicki Klein Parsons

**T**he Bible promises that wherever we gather even a few to study God's word, he will be with us. In Montrose, Colorado, we don't have a large congregation or a modern church building. But Christ still is with us.

Our church has had the opportunity to reach into a community of families of Cuero Indians from Mexico. I first met Eudalia when our sons were in kindergarten together.

Eudalia and Selsa, cousins by marriage, come from a small town called Jesus Maria in Nayarit, Mexico. The nearest big city is Tepic. They call themselves Cuero Indians. They speak some Spanish and several Indian dialects. Even Eudalia and her husband Lupe do not speak the same dialect.

Eudalia lived in the mountains about a day's journey by donkey from Jesus Maria. Today the area has some modern conveniences — electricity two hours each evening and running water. When Eudalia lived there, water was transported six miles round trip by horse, and there was no electricity. The cinderblock homes in the area were built by the Mexican government. There are no roads. To reach the nearest phone in Tepic takes several days by horse.

The economy of the area is based on barter. Rarely do the people have enough extra from their crops to sell at the market in Tepic. One of the main reasons these people left Mexico was to come where money is paid for work, and they have come to Colorado.

Our weekly meeting place for an adult information class is a tiny kitchen, with never enough chairs, in the home of a young couple — Heraclio and Selsa.

Our pastor, Timothy Poetter, speaks only a few words of Spanish, but he doesn't need an interpreter to show his friendliness and concern. As the only member of the congregation who speaks enough Spanish to break the language barrier, it has been my privilege to be the interpreter at our classes.

I rely heavily on a Spanish-English dictionary. However, knowing Spanish does not completely eliminate our communication difficulties because for most of our new friends Spanish is a second language, and their brand is different from my American high school Spanish.

Because of our mutual lack of proficiency in Spanish, we tend to be very patient with each other and speak very slowly. I am especially thankful whenever



Heraclio and Selsa Garcia with daughters Nacionilla (standing) and Demetria.

a member of the group reads well in Spanish. Often we rely on whichever member of the group is the most adept at Spanish to explain what we are trying to teach.

It might seem best to wait for a skilled interpreter before we teach these people about their Savior. But God keeps putting these people in front of us. They come to my house, asking for help filling out papers. The next time they come with another relative or friend. Sometimes they bring entire families. We are beginning a friendship with a number of others.

Meanwhile our amazing Selsa and Eudalia seem to be born missionaries who understand — maybe better than many of us lifelong Christians — that what they are hearing is something they need to tell. Besides the relatives and friends they've already brought, there are another three families that Selsa and Eudalia tell me are interested in our "missa" (church). God seems to expect us to tell these people about their Savior now, not later.

Though the challenge put before our congregation has ups, downs, and uncertainty about how we should proceed, God appears to be blessing our efforts. We have much to learn about how we can best serve these unique, wonderful, sometimes exasperating people.

We pray that God continues to help us feed these spiritually hungry souls. God started us out with friendship evangelism to a family of four a year ago. How our opportunities to share the gospel have grown! □

*Nicki Parsons is a member of St. John, Montrose, Colorado.*

# Woodstock

## a reappraisal

by Joel C. Gerlach

**W**oodstock refuses to die. Its 20th anniversary was celebrated in August with more hoopla than the 200th anniversary of the Constitution. And that in itself may be a significant commentary on our times.

Observers of the social scene sought to assess the impact of Woodstock twenty years after the event. All agree that Woodstock played a key role in the cultural revolution of the 60s, and that it has had a profound influence on the way Americans view things today. Whether that influence was for good or for evil is a subject of continuing debate.

Secular media analysts regard Woodstock as a liberating influence on contemporary society. It provided a necessary escape valve for a society seething with unrest. It gave vent and voice to a protest movement that was overdue. It helped people "get in touch" with their real selves.

So they view Woodstock in a manner similar to the way they view the union movement, the civil rights movement, or the women's liberation movement. America is healthier because of Woodstock, they contend.

Concern for the foundations of a healthy society compels us to disagree. We are convinced that what many people regard simply as a cultural revolution was in fact a cultural disaster with far-reaching consequences.

The validity of the contention that Woodstock helped to liberate society depends on one's definition of liberation. Discarding the restraints of civil behavior is not liberation. It is a return to barbarism. There are signs that Woodstock has us headed in that direction.

1) Woodstock has been one of the contributors to what Allan Bloom's best-selling book called "The Closing of the American Mind." One of the strongest statements made at Woodstock is the proposition that morality is a matter of personal choice. Moral illiteracy now envelops us like a plague.

2) Woodstock proclaimed that drugs are in; straight is out. The emphasis of the intellect on learning, reason, and reflection is discarded in favor of the maxim, "If it feels good, do it!"

3) Woodstock scoffs at the concept of beauty and has immersed us in an environment of cultivated ugliness. It's as though cultural shock is one of the key ingredients of cultural revolution. Music and fashions are two of the victims.

4) Woodstock encouraged contempt for the refinement reflected in good manners. You can supply your own examples.

5) Woodstock contributes to the debasing of language. More than just obscenities and vulgarisms are involved. So are incorrect grammar and inexact meanings.

6) Last but not least Woodstock has debased romantic love, offering brute sex and promiscuity as grotesque imitations.

Many of the youth of the 60s got caught up in a lie. They were led to believe that civilized conduct is the hypocrisy of the older generation. Hypocrisy may have been rampant in the 60s. Hypocrisy is never in short supply in any age. But declaring war on civilized conduct is definitely not the way to deal with it.

The apostle Paul may have had post-Woodstock times in mind when he wrote to Timothy, "But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God" (2 Timothy 3:1-4).

A reappraisal of Woodstock twenty years later underscores the importance of the apostolic injunction: "Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable — if anything is excellent or praiseworthy — think about such things" (Philippians 4:8). The

"beauty of holiness" is still the only answer to the ugliness of hypocrisy. □



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

## *To uphold and testify*



**A**s men, women, and children united in faith and worship by the word of God, the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod exists to make disciples throughout the world for time and for eternity, using the gospel to win the lost for Christ and nurture believers for lives of Christian service, all to the glory of God.

The delegates to the 1989 convention approved the above statement as the mission of our synod. It was not put together hastily. A specially appointed committee saw the document through various revisions, each of which was shared with our divisions, conferences, and circuits for input prior to the convention. Several additional suggestions were still incorporated at the convention.

The statement introduces nothing new. It simply reaffirms what we have always taught. But it sharpens the focus of this generation as we move toward the 21st century. And it is essential that all of us understand and endorse Christ's mission for the church and make it our own.

The statement is followed by five objectives outlining how the mission will be implemented. The objectives, in turn, are expanded in a synodical vision for the year 2000 and beyond. The vision is not an attempt to define for God what he should be doing for us. It is rather a humble effort to sharpen our own focus as a synod and encourage faithfulness to our mission.

Although no attempt is made to rank the five objectives in priority order, there is one that we want to underscore at this point:

*To uphold and testify to the truth of God as fully revealed in the inspired, inerrant, infallible Holy Scriptures and articulated in the Lutheran confessions.*

To uphold and testify! That's our mission in two words. We have an ongoing obligation to uphold, to remain faithful to everything that Scripture teaches. We have a corresponding obligation to testify, to bear witness to those who do not know Christ. The two words do not present an "either-or" but a "both-and" situation. Upholding without testifying will fast reduce us to a society for the preservation of orthodox Lutheranism. Testifying without upholding will fast reduce us to a church that has little to share.

The delegates to the 1989 convention caught the vision by approving a \$16 million special offering for mission expansion and ongoing budget support to sustain that expansion. Unlike most special offerings of the past, the focus will not be on buildings but on people. This decision is in total harmony with our mission of "using the gospel to win the lost for Christ." It was exciting for the delegates who made that decision as our representatives. We pray that it will be just as exciting for each individual congregation and member as the offering plan unfolds.

But this doesn't mean that we're going to put worship and Bible study and education on hold for a while. Quite the contrary. For if we neglect nurturing believers for lives of Christian service, the well from which we reach out to the lost will soon run dry. To uphold is also an integral part of our mission.

*Carl H. Muschke*

# What's wrong with pastors today?

by Paul E. Kelm

*"I just don't understand why we need a second pastor," Mrs. Ederle offered. "Pastor Schultz took care of this congregation well for 24 years, all by himself."*

*"Let's hope the second pastor won't be a replica of the first," her son-in-law responded. "This church needs dynamic leadership, a pastor who'll accomplish the creative changes we need to hold onto our young people and attract new members."*

*"Wait a minute, John," Mr. Ederle interrupted. "There are a lot of us who've been with this church forty years or more; and we're in no hurry to see wholesale changes. In fact, I've been hearing complaints about this new lay ministry emphasis of the pastor. Some folks think he's just trying to get rid of work he doesn't like. Sam Henderson says his wife was upset when a couple of women from the church visited her instead of the pastor coming after she came home from the hospital."*

*"Time out!" came a voice from the kitchen. "We had roast pastor last Sunday. I'm serving ham, and that's what I expect you to chew on."*

What's wrong with pastors today? Are they less capable or are people more critical? Has the caliber of pastors changed or is it the nature of ministry that's changed?

Pastors, like members of the church, are individuals. Each comes with a unique set of abilities and spiritual gifts. Their personalities and perceptions are individual. Congregations, too, are unique. Each has a composite character as well as a particular

blend of needs and blessings. Still, some generalizations may be helpful.

## Two perspectives

The conversation in the Ederle household represents the vastly different perspective of two generations. The so-called "baby boom" generation has fewer loyalties, higher expectations, and less resistance to change typically than any previous generation of Americans.

We've asked our pastors to be conservators of sound doctrine; but when society's negative impact on the church is felt, we want them to be innovators. The two expectations aren't necessarily in conflict, but they are in tension. The inclination and training of most pastors are toward stability in the church—perserving the time-tested and avoiding possible consequences of change. Pastors are by nature peacemakers; and change almost invariably brings some conflict. Those pastors whose inclination is to solve problems by initiating change will experience conflict with people who view their church as a haven from a society in which change is out of control.

## Caught in the middle

There is something especially unsettling when change seems imposed on the church by society. Will we appear to endorse society's values if we accommodate our ministry to the effects of those values? For example, will Christian daycare only encourage less Christian parenting or can it be another opportunity to reach little children with the Savior's love? Will the reverence of worship be lost in the attempt at relevance to a "Now" generation preoccupied with immediate needs? The pastor is caught in the middle of that battleground, frequently drawing fire from both sides.

The conversation at the Ederles demonstrates another contemporary reality. The scope and nature of ministry today are different from that of a previous generation. An increasingly unchurched America calls for more ambitious outreach by church and pastor. Social ills such as devastated marriages, substance abuse, personal stress, and depression generate an increased and complex counseling load, as well as a demand for preventive measures and spiritual support programs. Spiritual illiteracy means more and varied Bible classes for a generation unaccustomed to family altars and nightly Bible reading. The struc-

ture of the church has grown more complex — more organizations, more meetings, more records, more communication.

### Another tension

All of this highlights another tension. The classical definition of a pastor as a shepherd of souls seems a pole apart from today's demand for administrative competence. Most pastors have a heart for one-on-one ministry with the word, and a troubled conscience about the inefficiently managed structure of volunteer ministry they're told is the answer to the church's ills. Some pastors have adapted administrative principles to the church effectively, and paid for it with an inability to spend the time they know they should with the word and hurting members. A few may even be meeting the demands of both shepherding and administration, too often amortizing that achievement in terms of their health and their family.

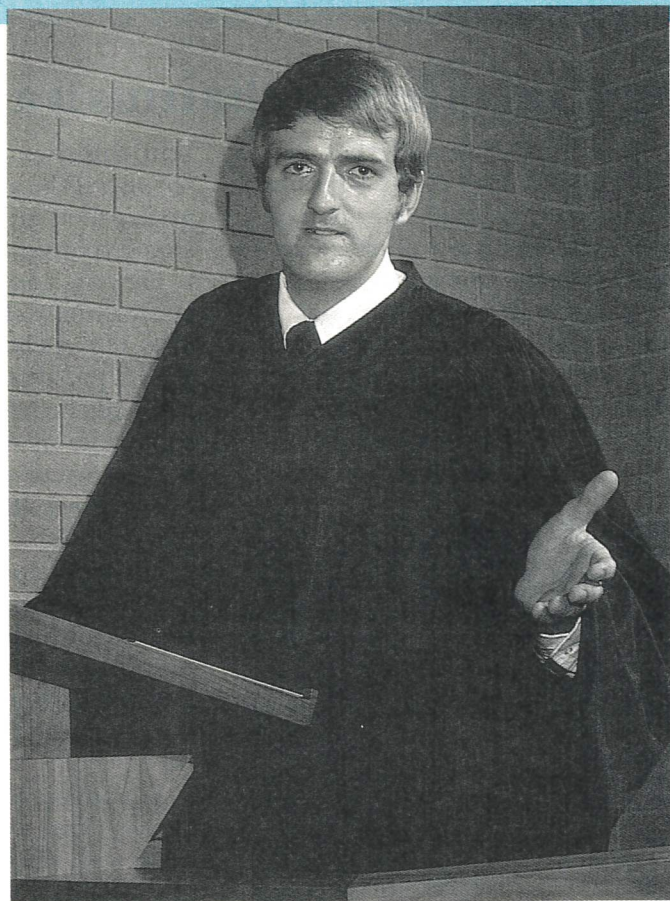
And that's yet another source of tension for today's pastor. He's heard conference essays, cries at home, and warnings from the social scientists about his role as a husband and father. His family is supposed to model Christian family life. And he's affected by the "You owe it to yourself" messages of a stress-filled culture. How many hours should he devote to how many responsibilities? How does he address the urgent without neglecting the important? Whose agenda gets his attention?

There are, no doubt, pastors who aren't faithfully using their time. We owe them loving admonition, personally delivered, not behind-the-back criticism and behind-the-scenes maneuvering to terminate their call.

There are pastors who are not efficient managers of their time. Leaders in the church can assist them in such skills of time management as prioritizing, scheduling, and delegating.

### Helping the pastor

Virtually every pastor has skill deficiencies in some area of contemporary ministry. Congregations can provide their pastors time and resources for growth in ministry, both on their own and in continuing education. We can accentuate our pastors' strengths by letting them work especially in areas of ministry compatible with their gifts and training, while giving God's gifted people opportunities to serve where the pastor is less gifted.



Many congregations are simply understaffed for the ministry needs and expectations of this generation. From secretarial help to another minister, there are options we can consider to increase our congregations' capability of mission and ministry.

What we cannot afford is good men resigning with broken spirits. We cannot afford defensive pastors, withdrawing from the challenges and opportunities of ministry for fear of criticism. We cannot afford guilt-ridden pastors attempting to comfort sinners with an absolution no one speaks to them. We can't afford to see gifted young men dismiss the pastoral ministry as a vocational choice because we've made ministry a heavy burden more than a high calling.

Love your pastor, support his ministry — not even because he deserves it, but because Christ asks it (Hebrews 13:17). □

*(This unconventional answer addresses several questions to the "I would like to know . . ." column.)*



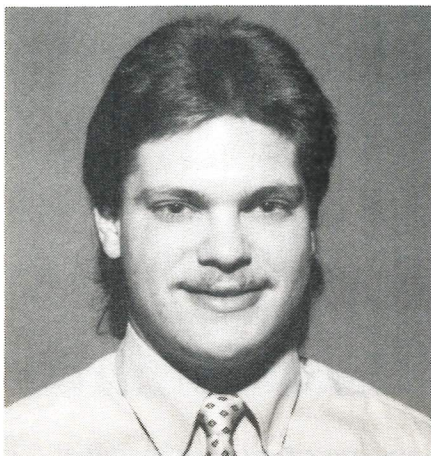
Send your questions to QUESTIONS, The Northwestern Lutheran, 2929 N. Mayfair Road, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53222-4398. Questions of general interest are preferred. Questions will be answered, however, only through this column.

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

## Special offering chairman appointed

President Carl Mischke has appointed Marc Frey of San Antonio, Texas, to be national chairman of the special offering authorized at the 1989 synod convention.

The offering is to seek a minimum of \$16 million dollars for a WELS Trust Fund, 60 percent of which will be used for mission expansion and 40 percent for the ongoing work of the synod. In addition,



Pless

### Intern welcomed

This fall the Northwestern Lutheran has for the first time a student intern. Erik J. Pless, a student at Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee, assists the editorial staff in all phases of the editorial process.

The internship program, initiated at WLC a few years ago, provides the interns with valuable hands-on experience outside the classroom. The program also places students with WELS Mass Media and several local businesses. The interns are not paid, but do receive credit for their work.

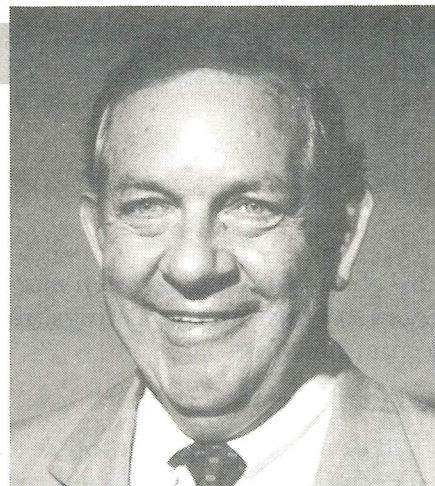
Pless, a senior at WLC, is a member of Christ the Lord in Brookfield. He has a double major in English and communications and is planning to attend University of Wisconsin Law School in the fall of 1990.

contributors to the special offering will be given the option of giving their gifts to a WELS Mission Expansion Endowment Fund.

Frey has a background that equips him well for this important task. He was born and raised in a WELS parsonage. Throughout his adult life he has served in many capacities in WELS congregations and is currently the chairman of his congregation, Our Savior of San Antonio.

His service on the synodical level includes membership on the Board of Trustees and stewardship coordinator for the South Central District. Currently he is on the Coordinating Council of the synod.

A graduate of the University of Denver, Frey was a corporate executive with Hallmark Cards for 27 years and is now the owner and president of M. Frey Inc. which operates a chain of card and gift shops in the San Antonio and Corpus Christi areas. On various occasions he has taught marketing and management at the University of Texas-San Antonio. Presently he is a member of the board of di-



Frey

rectors of Church Mutual Insurance Co.

His wife is Neva nee Kattke. They are the parents of Marc, Lindsay, and Miriam.

"Moe," as he is called by friends, will help supervise the activities of the special offering, together with the director of the offering, Pastor Ronald Roth. His strong commitment to help the WELS enlarge its mission outreach is reflected in his view that this offering is an absolute necessity for the well-being of our synod. "That's why the Lord put us here," he said. "We're to serve and reach out. This offering is an opportunity for us to do that and to work with people who share this commitment."

## Steering committee selected

To supervise the \$16 million special offering authorized by the 1989 convention a steering committee has been appointed consisting of 12 district chairmen who will also direct the offering in their district.

Serving are Kenneth Johnson, Arizona-California; Alvin Neujahr, Dakota-Montana; George Wadeberg, Michigan; Thomas Walters, Minnesota; Philip Frey, Nebraska; Herbert Krueger, Northern Wisconsin; Jerauld Kluckman, North Atlantic; Karl Kuckhahn, Pacific Northwest; Richard Raabe, Southeastern Wisconsin; Carl

Jahnke, South Atlantic; Nerval Sawall, South Central; and Edward Wegner, Western Wisconsin.

Also on the Steering Committee are Prof. Wilbert Gawrisch, Prof. Donald Sellnow, Pastor Lowell Smith, Pastor Jonathan Schultz, Pastor Richard Warnke, and Pastor Roland Zimmermann.

Three synod administrators were also appointed: Calvin Patterson, Pastor Harold Hagedorn, and Pastor Wayne Borgwardt.

At the first meeting on October 6 and 7 the committee reviewed and approved the general plans for the execution of the offering.

## WLC dedicates new organ

On September 10 a crowd of over 500 people was inspired by the joyous sounds of a new pipe organ dedicated at Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee. Pastor Mark Jeske of St. Marcus served as officiant of the service.

The instrument contains 17 stops to vary the musical color and pitch, controlling the 1224 different pipes, ranging in size from 16 feet to six inches. The metal pipes, consisting of tin, zinc, and lead, were hammered in the historic German manner.

The organ case, which helps the sound resonate, is made from a single West Virginia white oak tree, and is handcrafted to match the architectural details of WLC. Except for the reed pipes imported from Germany and the combination action from England, the entire organ was built by the Schlicker company in Buffalo, New York, and installed by Peters, Weiland and Company.

The one hour 45 minute service was highlighted by pieces from such composers as Bach, Handel, Pachelbel, Reger, and a special piece composed for this service by the late Professor James Engel of Dr. Martin Luther College.

Mary Prange of Atonement and Lynn Kozlowski of St. John in Wauwatosa were the organists for the dedicatory service. Accompanying them was Thomas Schlueter, principal trumpet of the Milwaukee Ballet Orchestra and the Waukesha Symphony.

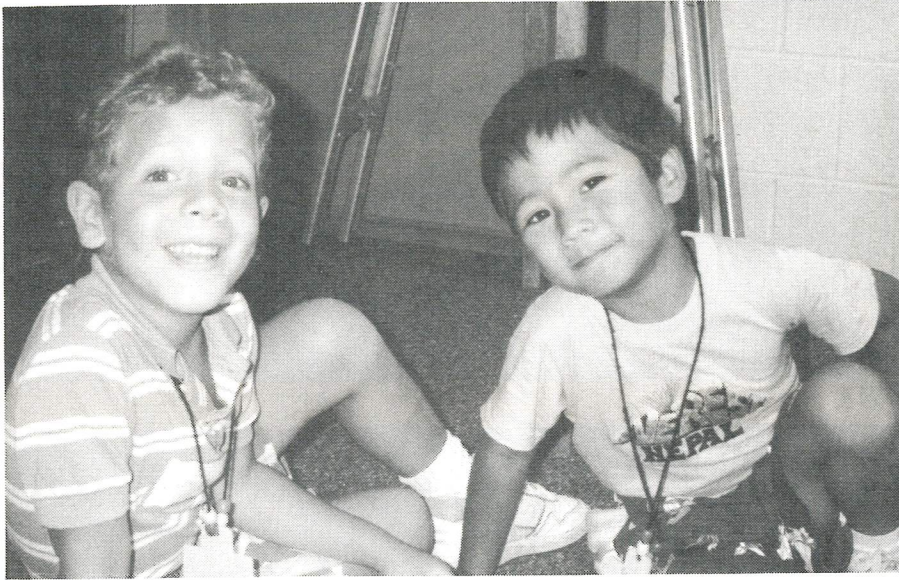
Introduced at the service was the principal donor of the organ, Mrs. JoAnn Simek of Medford, Wisconsin, who said "the performance was beautiful, and the musical selection was perfect . . . I love organ music."

—Erik J. Pless



### Also in the news

For the first time in two years there is a new WELS elementary school. **Divine Grace of Lake Orion, Michigan**, opened with preschool through grade eight. **St. Luke of Kenosha, Wisconsin** reopened its school which had been closed for two years. Four schools were closed at the end of last year: one in Nebraska, one in Michigan, and two in Wisconsin. . . . **Gospel Outreach 89 (GO 89)** is being carried out in Wisconsin. Involved are 153 congregations throughout Wisconsin in this outreach program under the theme, Living Free in Jesus. The outreach effort involves media spots, billboards and lawn signs, culminating in a visit to an estimated 300,000 homes. Closing the effort will be a Reformation Festival "event" service on October 29. . . . The temporary visas for **Missioners Charles Gumm and Kenneth Cherney, Jr.**, were finally granted by the Brazilian government. We now have the full staff of five missionaries on the field. . . . **Pastor Daniel Balge** was commissioned as a civilian chaplain to Europe on October 15. He will replace Pastor Lee A. Neujahr. . . . **Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin**, has been awarded a \$31,000 grant from Aid Association for Lutherans of Appleton, Wisconsin. The grant will provide 50 continuing education scholarships for pastors, enable 16 faculty members to enhance their professional skills, and fund a financial planning workshop for 57 seniors. . . . **Northwestern College, Watertown, Wisconsin** has received a \$2,700 grant from AAL to continue an archival project as part of the college's 125th anniversary in 1990. . . . **Irene Riege** is the new editor for the newly-formatted newsletter, Ephphatha, published in the interest of a ministry for the deaf. Irene, who is deaf, is a member of the synod's Mission for the Hearing Impaired Committee. . . . **Pastor David Waege** of Mishicot, Wisconsin, has been appointed to the Board of Control of Northwestern College and Prep School. . . . **Teacher Kermit Moldenhauer** has been named music editor for the hymnal project. . . . **David Pomeranke** of Bloomington, Minnesota, has been appointed to the Special Ministries Board. . . . **Pastor Michael Hintz** of Granger, Indiana, has been appointed to the Board for Evangelism. . . . **Mark Brunner**, a member of the Board of Directors of Northwestern Publishing House, has resigned from the board to accept the newly created position of product development director.



## International vacation Bible school

Cyril Bajracharya is from Nepal. The highest mountain in the world, Mt. Everest (see Cyril's T-shirt), dominates this small country that borders China and India. Poverty and unbelief also are in abundance in Nepal. Buddhism and Hinduism, along with the worship of local gods and spirits, control the lives of many people. The majority do not know the Messiah's name.

Cyril's preschool companion is Bradley Holland from a place we're more familiar with — the U.S.A. (Wisconsin).

Cyril and Bradley, as well as 81 other children, heard the good news of Jesus at the seventh international vacation Bible school conducted by Wisconsin Lutheran

Chapel, our WELS campus ministry at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Twenty committed Christians from five WELS and ELS Madison-area churches helped the chapel in this July 24-28 world mission outreach. There are one-half million international students (and their families) who reside on our U.S. campuses today.

Our prayers and hearts go out to these international friends and the people of the 13 nations represented at this year's IVBS in Madison: Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Korea, Mexico, Nigeria, Peru, Philippines, Puerto Rico, Tanzania, and the USA.

## Northwestern Publishing House editor retires

A belated note to our readers. Pastor Mentor E. Kujath has retired as editor-in-chief of Northwestern Publishing House. The retirement was effective July 1.

A 1946 graduate of the seminary, he served congregations in Brodhead, Janesville, and South Milwaukee and served on the staffs of Lutheran Children's Friend Soci-

ty and Wisconsin Lutheran Child & Family Service, before coming to the publishing house in 1974.

Kujath has been secretary of the Southeastern Wisconsin District since 1972. He was also a longtime member of the Audio-Visual Aids Committee and served as its chairman for many years.

## Allegations not proved

In the April 1 Northwestern Lutheran a news item, based on a story by the Religious News Service, reported the dismissal of Dr. John Warwick Montgomery from the Simon Greenleaf School of Law in Anaheim, California.

Montgomery is known in the Wisconsin Synod for his "defense of orthodox Lutheran theology" and as author of a book on Luther published by Northwestern Publishing House in 1970. Montgomery has also appeared in a number of public forums held in the synod or the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

According to the news item, the law school's board of directors alleged "moral failures" by Montgomery because he divorced his wife and remarried within eight months and "engaged in unethical financial schemes."

The NL recently contacted Montgomery's pastor, Pomeroy Moore of Trinity, Anaheim, a congregation affiliated with the World Confessional Lutheran Association, formerly Lutherans Alert National. Moore stated that Montgomery's divorce, secured on the grounds of "malicious desertion," was indeed scriptural and that Montgomery is still on the clergy roster of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Moore said that President Loren Kramer of the LCMS Pacific Southwest District concurs with his (Moore's) pastoral judgment concerning the divorce. Moore added that Montgomery did not meet his present wife until *after* his divorce was granted.

Outside the fact that Montgomery may not have been an accountant's accountant, no evidence has surfaced to support the charge of his having engaged in "unethical financial schemes."





Grace of Neenah, Wisconsin

## Northern Wisconsin District

Mt. Olive, Appleton, celebrated forty years in the teaching ministry of **Kenneth P. Kolander**. A 1949 graduate of Dr. Martin Luther College in New Ulm, Minnesota, Kolander was honored by the congregation on August 27. An afternoon worship service was followed by a meal and program. . . . **St. John of Fremont** (East Bloomfield), celebrated 125 years with special services. A German service was held on Sept. 30 with guest speaker Prof. T. W. Zuberbier of Fond du Lac. On Oct. 1 Prof. Mark Braun and Pastor Joel Sauer were guest speakers. Guest speakers on Oct. 8 were Pastor Alvin Aichele and Pastor Richard Maurice. The theme of the celebration was "God's word is our great heritage." Norbert Gieschen currently serves the congregation. . . . **Grace of Neenah** dedicated a new church building and observed their 40th anniversary on June 11. The pastor, Richard Frost, served as liturgist for the services which included guests preachers Alvin Kienetz, Ernst Lehninger, and Dale Zwiieg. Special music was provided by the Valley Lutheran Chorale, a brass quintet from Fox Valley Lutheran High School, and Jon Peterson as guest organist.

—Jan C. Eggert

## Hurricane hits Antigua and Puerto Rico

In Puerto Rico the synod's missionaries' families and their properties received minimal damage from Hurricane Hugo, according to Pastor Duane Tomhave, administrator for world missions. Damage was restricted to windows and trees.

Members of the congregation at San Juan also came through the storm relatively unscathed.

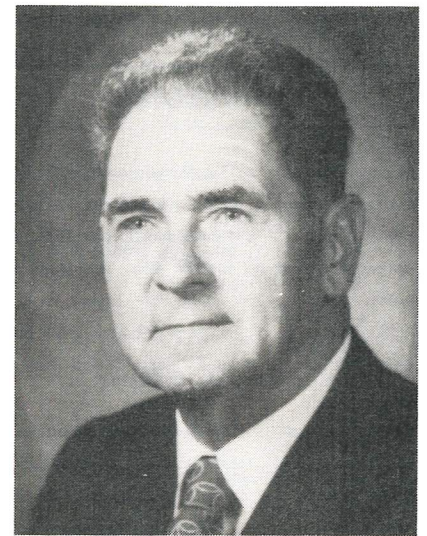
Much greater damage was suffered in St. John congregation in Antigua. According to Pastor Richard Seeger, the school suffered substantial damage in its storage areas

and the roof of the teacherage was partially damaged.

It is anticipated that it will be ten to twelve weeks before electricity and telephone service is restored.

The Committee on Relief has authorized a grant of \$40,000 to aid victims of Hurricane Hugo.

## WITH THE LORD



**Emil E. Kasischke**  
1907-1989

Pastor Emil E. Kasischke was born in Tawas City, Michigan, on Sept. 30, 1907. He died in Tustin, California, on Sept. 3, 1989.

A 1931 seminary graduate, he spent his entire ministry in the Northern Conference of the Michigan District, serving a triple parish in Mayville, Silverwood, and Yale from 1931-38, and in Bay City from 1938 until his retirement in 1976. He also served on the Board of Control of Michigan Lutheran Seminary for 25 years, 24 years as chairman.

He is survived by his wife, Gladys, nee Staudy; a daughter, Doris Mitchell; two sons, Gerald and Louis; two grandchildren; and two brothers, Walter and Martin.

Funeral services were held at Trinity, Bay City.

## Pacific Northwest District

**Holy Trinity of Kent, Washington**, is observing its 25th anniversary during 1989. The previous confirmation classes gathered to welcome the 1989 class into membership on May 21. That served as the kickoff for other events including the anniversary celebration on June 19 and a picnic and carnival on July 30. Holy Trinity has a membership of 335. It has an elementary school and currently houses Evergreen Lutheran High School. The congregation is served by Pastor John Henning. . . . The only WELS congregation in Idaho is **Messiah, Nampa**. Due to the generosity of the WELS Kingdom Workers in providing funds for an assistant, Pastor Mark Franck, Messiah's pastor, Mark Cares, will be able to divide his time between the congregation and outreach among the Mormons in southwest Idaho. . . . **Evergreen Lutheran High School** held its opening service Sept. 4. The high school, with 36 students, is planning for a home of its own. Recently the high school association gave conditional approval for the purchase of an eleven acre site.

—Jay S. Blum

## NOTICES

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

### CHANGES IN MINISTRY

#### PASTORS:

- Hanke, Paul R.**, from the Lutheran Home, Belle Plaine, Minn., to retirement (effective Jan. 1).  
**Henning, Timothy P.**, from Shepherd of the Hills, Knoxville, Tenn., to St. Jacobi, Greenfield, Wis.  
**Notlling, David A.**, from Grace, Bayonet Point, Fla., to Zion, Chesaning, Mich.  
**Rosenaw, David D.**, from Salem (107th St.), Milwaukee, Wis., to Grace, Hutchinson, Minn.  
**Schroeder, Mark G.**, from King of Kings, Maitland, Fla., to President, Northwestern Preparatory School, Wauwatosa, Wis.  
**Sonntag, Lyle F.**, from Cross of Christ, Kingman, Ariz., to Alpine, Alpine, Cal.  
**Spedel, Thomas P.**, from Redeemer, Merritt Island, Fla., to Beautiful Savior, Fort Wayne, Ind.

### ADDRESSES

#### PASTORS:

- Beckman, David J.**, 126 Maple, Sturgeon Bay, WI 54235; 414/743-1800.  
**Clemons, Samuel M.**, 4159 S. Durand Rd., Durand, MI 48429; 517/288-6211.  
**Hering, John R.**, 7-7-303 Saiwaicho 3 Chome, Higashi Kurume Shi, Tokyo 203, Japan; 0424/72-2520.  
**Ochsankel, Mark D.**, 4615 W. Albain Rd., Monroe, MI 48161; 313/242-2200.  
**Raether, Dale L.**, 734 E. Center St., Juneau, WI 53039; 414/386-5560.  
**Runke, William E.**, 522 N. 1st St., Caledonia, MN 55921; 507/724-2714.  
**Unnasch, Peter L.**, Dr. Martin Luther College, 1884 College Heights, New Ulm, MN 56073.

#### TEACHERS:

- Bartsch, Deborah L.**, 313 1/2 Western Ave., Watertown, WI 414/261-0956.  
**Eberhardt, David F.**, N8371 Schulz Dr., Beaver Dam, WI 53916; 414/885-5891.  
**Enter, David R.**, 317 S. Park Ave., Oshkosh, WI 54901; 414/426-2432.  
**Fenske, Daniel J.**, 429 E. Madison St., Waterloo, WI 53594; 414/478-2445.  
**Goessner, Gary**, 2526 S. Bridge St. #37, New Ulm, MN 56073; 507/359-7144.  
**Hauf, Tod A.**, 1525 Sunset, New Ulm, MN 56073; 507/354-3256.  
**Kieselhorst, Nathan J.**, 102 1/2 S. Jefferson St., New Ulm, MN 56073; 507/354-7104.  
**Lagerman, Clifford L.**, 23-27 Komatsu, 3 Chome, Tsuchiura, Ibaraki-Ken, Japan 300; 0298/21-3578.  
**Lemke, Peter J.**, 416 W. Napier Ave., Benton Harbor, MI 49022; 616/925-3026.  
**Ohm, Ronald C.**, 312 Maple St. SE Sleepy Eye, MN 56085; 507/794-6450.  
**Pappentuss, Paul E.**, 1008 Portland Ave., St. Paul Park, MN 55071; 612/458-1646.  
**Pfeifer, Michael J.**, 9000 Nicollet Ave. S. Apt. 115, Bloomington, MN 55420; 612/888-4717.  
**Sandvold, Dwight**, 637 S. Birdsey St., Columbus, WI 53925; 414/623-5516.  
**Schwartz, Thomas R.**, 8181 N. Wayne Rd., M-2122, Westland, MI 48185; 313/422-7492.  
**Thiesfeldt, Jeremy J.**, 737 Hall Ave. Apt. 104, St. Paul, MN 55107; 612/292-8796.  
**Treder, Alan**, 6835 Cleveland Ave., Stevensville, MI 49127; 616/422-2555.  
**Willems, Andrew P.**, 114 Stimpson St. Apt. 15, Watertown, WI 53094; 414/261-1560.  
**Wittig, Marvin S.**, 725 N. Kingston St., Caledonia, MN 55921; 507/724-5469.  
**Zabel, David J.**, 615 S. Washington St., New Ulm, MN 56073; 507/354-7801.

### CHANGE OF TIME OR PLACE OF WORSHIP

in the following exploratory areas or mission congregations.

**MOUNTAIN HOME, ARKANSAS** — Trinity, 711 Hwy. 5 North. Worship, 9 a.m. Bible study/Sunday school, 10:15 a.m. Pastor David A. Kapler, Rt. 9 Box 370, Mountain Home, AR 72653; 501/492-4013 or 501/424-2888.

**PENRYN, CALIFORNIA** — Hope, 7117 Hope Way, Sunday school/Bible class, 8:45 a.m., worship, 10 a.m. Pastor James Behringer; 916/652-4273.

### CALL FOR NOMINATIONS Administrator for Parish Education

Mr. Donald Zimmerman has announced his retirement as Administrator for Parish Education. The BPE is authorized to call a replacement. Nominees for this position should have Lutheran elementary and/or secondary teaching experience, sound theological judgment, empathetic and relational skills, as well as abilities in planning, leadership, administration, and communication.

The parish education administrator will serve to promote Christian education, plan and develop BPE budget, administer the BPE unit of the Division of Parish Services, analyze parish educational needs, initiate new areas of work, and coordinate the production of Christian education publications and materials.

All nominations and pertinent information should be submitted by November 20 to Kenneth Kolander, secretary, WELS Board for Parish Education, 940 East Florida Avenue, Appleton, WI 54911.

### COLLOQUY REQUESTED

Pastor George W. Wagner, formerly a member of the Lutheran Church-Canada while serving in Didsburg, Alberta, Canada, has requested a colloquy for the purpose of entering the pastoral ministry of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. Correspondence relative to this request should be addressed to Pastor Edward J. Werner, President, Dakota-Montana District, Box 68, South Shore, SD 57263.

### NAMES WANTED

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

**MOUNTAIN HOME, ARKANSAS** (Twin Lakes area) — Pastor David A. Kapler, Rt. 9 Box 370, Mountain Home, AR 72653.

**ATLANTA, GEORGIA** — Pastor Eric Steinbrenner, 230 Whitney Way, Fayetteville, GA 30214; 404/460-6450.

**SPRINGFIELD, MISSOURI** (Joplin; Ft. Leonard Wood) — Pastor A. L. Schmeling, 3342 Roxbury St., Springfield, MO 65807.

**AMARILLO, TEXAS** — Pastor Daniel Drews, 5812 73rd St., Lubbock, TX 79424; 806/794-4203.

### CHORAL FESTIVAL

The National Lutheran Choral Festival, with nearly 400 singers from 19 Lutheran high schools and academies, will be held at Winnebago Lutheran Academy, Fond du Lac, Wis. Pops concert will be Nov. 3 at 7:30 p.m.; sacred concert on Nov. 5 at 2 p.m. A free-will offering will be taken. For more information call 414/921-4930.

### BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

The third annual Seminary alumni basketball tournament will be held Nov. 10, 3-7 p.m. followed by fellowship hour and refreshments at a nominal cost. Contact Pastor Thomas Rothe, 1721 Ohio St., Oshkosh, WI 54901; 414/235-0975 before Nov. 10 to find out your game time.

### WELS SPRING BREAKAWAY

Join us for a 4-day cruise April 16-20. \$589 includes air fare from most major cities. Sponsored by, but not limited to, WELS Singles. Call Anne Thurber, Regency Travel, 414/327-7000.

### SUPERVISORY POSITION

Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Service has an immediate opening for an area administrator in its Appleton counseling office. Qualifications: WELS or ELS member; master's degree in counseling or related field; experience in administration and as a family therapist. Contact Joanne Halter, Director of Social Services, WLCFS, 6800 N. 76th St., PO Box 23980, Milwaukee, WI 53223; 414/353-5000.

### WANTED: SAMPLERS

A number of congregations are requesting *Samplers* for trial use. Those who may have copies available, please send them to: Hymnal Project, Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 N. 113th St., P.O. Box 26975, Milwaukee, WI 53226-0975.

### FLAGON NEEDED

If you have a silver flagon of any style to donate to a young mission congregation, we would be most grateful. Shipping can be charged to Christ the Redeemer, RD 3, Box 6668, Barre, VT 05641.

### PEWS AVAILABLE

Sixteen church pews available for cost of shipping. Contact St. Peter Luth. Church, 35 E. Second St., Fond du Lac, WI 54935; 414/922-1160.

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Quite frankly this is going to be a commercial. You may flip the page, but you will be missing a bargain.

The other Sunday the service at Atonement (my home church) stretched ten minutes beyond its normal time. Even though I am always mildly disturbed when my schedule is skewed, the extra time was pleasurable passed. The reason for the extension was to view another segment of "The WELS Connection." The WELS Connection is a video report, produced by the synod's Commission on Communication and Financial Support, featuring some aspect of the synod's mission or ministry. Each report — and there is one every month — runs about eight minutes.

Regular reporting to our congregations in this way — and WELS was among the first to do so — recognizes that television is the most powerful means of mass communication on this green earth and a major part of people's lives — five to seven hours of it each day according to sociometricians.

Nationally these days there is a strong tendency toward anti-institutionalism laced with a generous dose of mistrust. Such national trends tend to seep also into the ways of the church. Our common ministry through the synod is sometimes perceived as a *we/they* relationship, even though the synod is structured to take full advantage of the democratic process. Communication devices such as the WELS Connection are helpful in defusing any adversarial relationship that might exist.

As things like this go, the cost is modest: 12 monthly segments for an annual fee of \$40. The videos are produced professionally and one need not apologize for either video quality or script. Responsible for the final product are Steve Boettcher, a photojournalist producer for the local NBC outlet, and Mike Trinklein, chair of television at Idaho State University, Pocatello, Idaho.

Of our 1204 congregations, 651 have subscribed to the video service. I was told that there is some sharing of the videos with neighboring congregations, but the precise number is not known. I was also told that a drawback to subscribing is the lack of electronic equipment (VCRs and monitors) in some congregations. Investing in a VCR and monitor by a generous family (or two) in the congregation would bear rich dividends in advancing the synod's mission and ministry and in bringing "Milwaukee" closer to the outskirts.

The first segment of the WELS Connection appeared in August 1986. Since then there have been over 60 topics covered in the series. Most of our world missions have been reported. A number of home missions were featured. Special ministries have appeared — to students, to the blind, to the armed forces, to prisoners, to the youth, and to Mormons. There have been moving moments: a pastor's testimony about "Alice and Rudy," and an interview with one of our members who contracted AIDS after a blood transfusion.

It is not known how many congregations subscribing to the service show it to a captive congregation after worship. Some show it only to special groups: voters, councils, and the like. In the latter case I think something is lost. Atonement has seating for about 600, and two monitors are sufficient to reach the full church.

For an annual fee of \$40 the WELS Connection is as great a bargain as you will find today. This old hand at communication urges it upon you.

End of commercial.

*James P. Schaefer*

# One little word

by Rolfe F. Westendorf

There is a little mystery that has puzzled Lutherans for a long time. It's found in the third verse of the battle hymn of the Reformation, "A mighty fortress is our God." Martin Luther, the author of the hymn, concluded that verse with "One little word can fell him" (namely, the devil). What "little word" did Luther have in mind?

As far as I know, there is no definite answer. Apparently Luther's contemporaries knew what he meant, and by the time anyone thought to ask, none was left to answer the question. And so Lutherans from that time on have been left to speculate about the "little word."

Some have guessed that the "little word" is the Bible, the word of God. And that would fit very well with Luther's theology. For the Bible has all the truth we need to resist and overcome Satan's attacks. In the sixth chapter of Ephesians, Paul says that the word of God is the sword of the Spirit. And that sword can certainly fell the devil.

But the Bible is not really a little word. If Luther had been thinking of the Bible here, it is hard to explain why he would call it a little word.

Another reasonable guess is that the little word is the name "Jesus." He is "the valiant one whom God himself elected." In John's gospel he is also called "the word." When we say the word "Jesus" with the faith that he is our Savior, the one who conquered sin, death, and hell for us, that little word can send the devil into headlong retreat. Still it seems strange that Luther would refer to Jesus as a "little word."

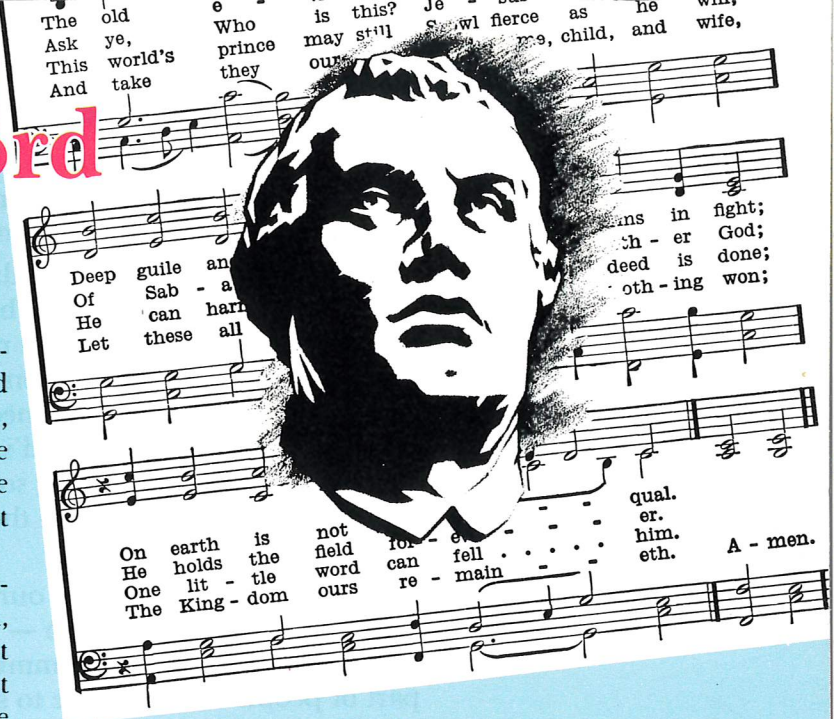
There are other words that Luther may have had in mind, the word "grace," for example. None of these possibilities can be ruled out without fear of contradiction.

But there is another word I would like to suggest, not to solve the mystery, but to provide food for thought when we sing the hymn.

In Revelation 21 I came across the word that Luther may have had in mind. Verse six reads as follows:

He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life."

"It is done." What is done? The work of our salvation is done. And Jesus has done it all. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the "A" and the "Z," the beginning

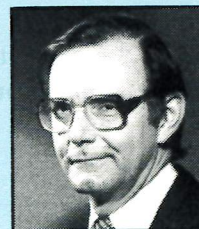


and the end. There are no details for others to complete, no missing letters in the alphabet of salvation. There is no place where Satan can squeeze in a little finger, because Jesus has done it all for us. This is the totally invincible answer to every doubt that the devil may plant in our minds. This is the little word that can fell him.

What's the word? The word is "done," *gegonan* in the Greek. All that is necessary for our salvation has been done. The devil has been judged the loser by that word and Christians can stand secure, because their Mighty Fortress has surrounded them with a wall of forgiveness that Satan can never penetrate. And although I cannot claim to be a Luther scholar, I think that this is exactly the thought he would have wanted to convey in the third stanza of this powerful hymn.

And the same thought fits stanza four, because the devils must let that word remain. They cannot undo what Jesus has done. Luther comments that the devils are not going to give thanks for that word. They hate it, but they can't do anything about it. It's done! Our salvation is so sure and complete that God could even choose us before creation. And Satan has no weapon against such confidence.

Perhaps someday someone will find a letter that Luther wrote in answer to an inquiry about the "little word." Until then, I will sing those words thinking about the complete salvation that Jesus has won for me, a complete salvation that keeps me safe from all the devil's power. I like those words of confidence. Maybe you will too. □



Rolfe Westendorf is pastor of Siloah, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.