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NORTHWESTERN

September 1993

LUTHERAN



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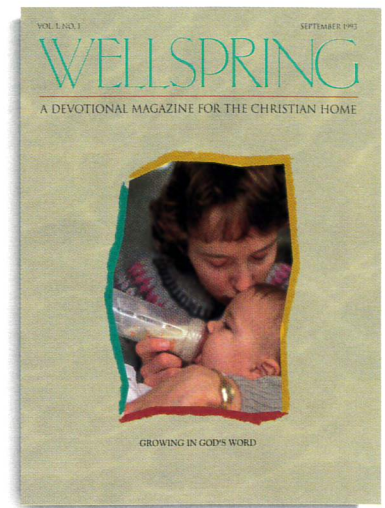
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Adults You have set your glory above the heavens.

Children From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise because of your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger.

All O LORD, our LORD, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

Continued on back

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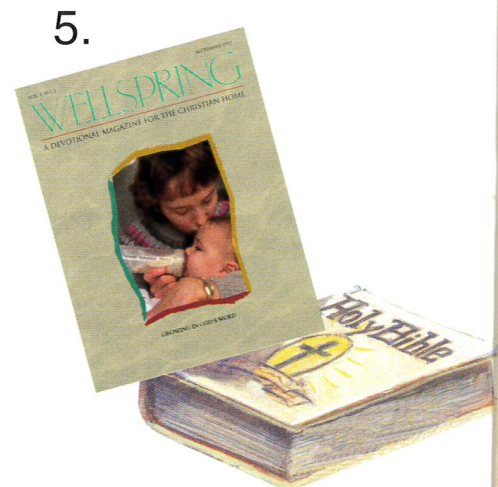
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“I can’t help it; it’s just the way I am,” can be the voice of our sinful nature, inherited from Adam and Eve, excusing or defending self-centered or even spiteful response to unloving attitudes or actions of people around us.

That mindset, focused on self, manifests itself not only in unmistakable egoism and rivalry; it harbors an attitude which measures all experiences by what they do for my feelings. That emotional make-up then spawns less obvious stirrings of destructive pride: resentment, self-pity, blaming others. Even depression can be traced to the old nature not getting its way.

Transformed

When Christ gained for us redemption from the guilt of sin, he also granted us his Spirit to set us free from the domination of our inherited self-centered nature. In Christ we are a “new creation.”

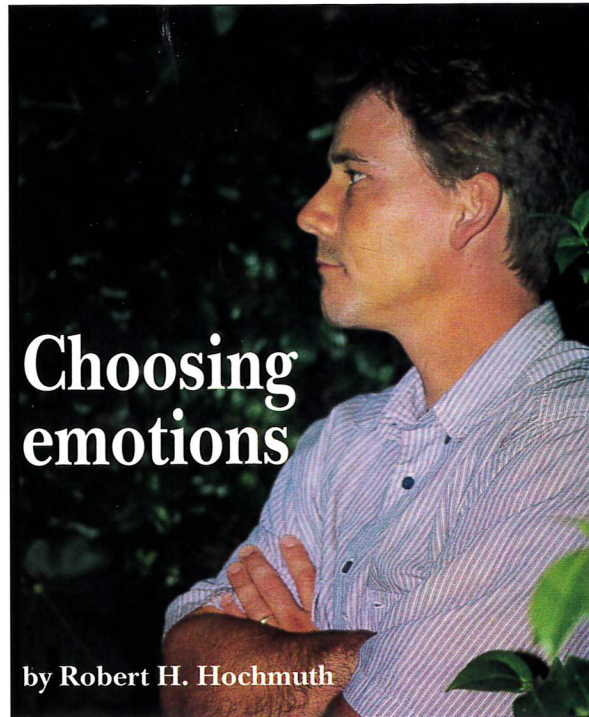
He infuses a new dominant emotion: grateful assurance which comes from realizing I am what I am in relation to my marvelous and forgiving God. It all stems from his undeserved love toward fallen mankind, including me.

I am his creation, and he has a purpose for me; I am ransomed, and I now have high value in his eyes. Yet my mind still flirts with attitudes and actions that displease him. No surprise, then, that in the next verse Paul cautions: “Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought.”

Self-controlled

He is calling on reborn children of God to exercise some responsibility in regard to attitudes they nurture. There are other parallel encouragements, for example: have the same attitude that Jesus Christ had.

The apostles can address us corrupt mortals like this because, as converted children of God, we have been given a new heart, and we have been endowed



MRS. KEVIN SCHEIBEL

Choosing emotions

by Robert H. Hochmuth

*Transformed by the renewing of your mind
(Romans 12:2).*

with the Spirit’s power for crucifying destructive self-regard.

We are not mere passive victims of our emotions; they need not be totally determined by experiences and social environment. The Spirit working in our lives will help us exercise control over ungodly emotions. Whether we let anger, envy, malice, or bitterness, take over in our lives depends to a considerable degree on our own decision. The Spirit dwells in God’s people, enlightening and enabling them for facing just such decisions.

Enabled

Here’s a God-given encouragement for us to call on when we are upset by malicious or loveless treatment at the hands of people close to us. We don’t have to be emo-

tional robots programmed by our natural self-regard. True, it is still with us and still tends to react with expressed whining, blaming, screaming, or unexpressed hurt, anger, grudging. To capitulate under such circumstances with a defeated gasp or a defiant grunt: “I can’t handle this,” may mask immature trust in our Savior’s accomplishment for us, revealing we are still emotionally vulnerable because of the nature of our inherited self-centeredness. Moreover, our predicament can be all the more complicated as a result of suffering abuse or neglect.

But there is another factor, life-giving and life-sustaining. For our eternal benefit, a maligned and persecuted Son of God from heaven emptied himself of self-regard in order to continue on his mission to restore us as God’s people. It’s he who exhorts and enables us now for living as God’s kind of people.

Savior, as my partner help me know your love, joy, peace, and help me choose humility, assurance, kind-heartedness, as you did.



Robert Hochmuth is pastor of St. Andrew, Sacramento, California.

May the Lord our God be with us
as he was with our fathers;
may he never leave us
nor forsake us. 1 Kings 8:57

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FORWARD

■ This is your magazine, published for the people of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. We're sending this issue to every congregation, hoping that many of you who are not familiar with *Northwestern Lutheran* will read it and want to continue reading it.

Except for a special feature that adds four pages, this issue is a sample of what you can expect every month: articles that offer spiritual inspiration and guidance, and news about the religious world. The writers are, almost without exception, WELS members—fellow Christians who share your faith.

The special feature in this issue, "Reflections on ministry in a changing world," is the work of John Barber, director of the synod's mass media ministry, and special projects coordinator Kristin Ellenberger. They developed the concept, planned the artwork, and interviewed the eight pastors who reflect on their experiences in the ministry. One of the eight, Karl R. Gurgel, is the newly elected WELS president.

If you like the magazine, we hope you'll fill out the subscription blank included with this issue. If you don't like it, tell us what you would like to see on these pages. Remember, it's your magazine.

Dorothy Sonntag

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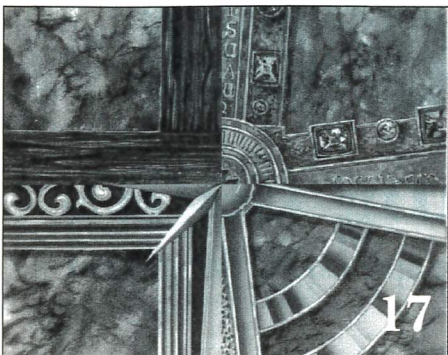
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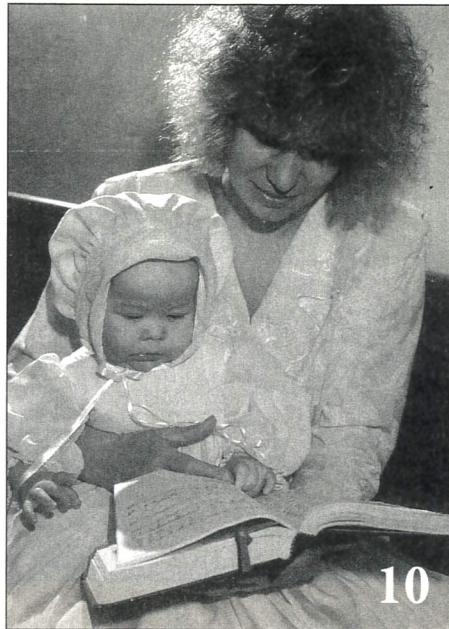
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Doors are opening as the iron curtain falls.



Reflections on ministry.



The hymnal bonds us in fellowship.

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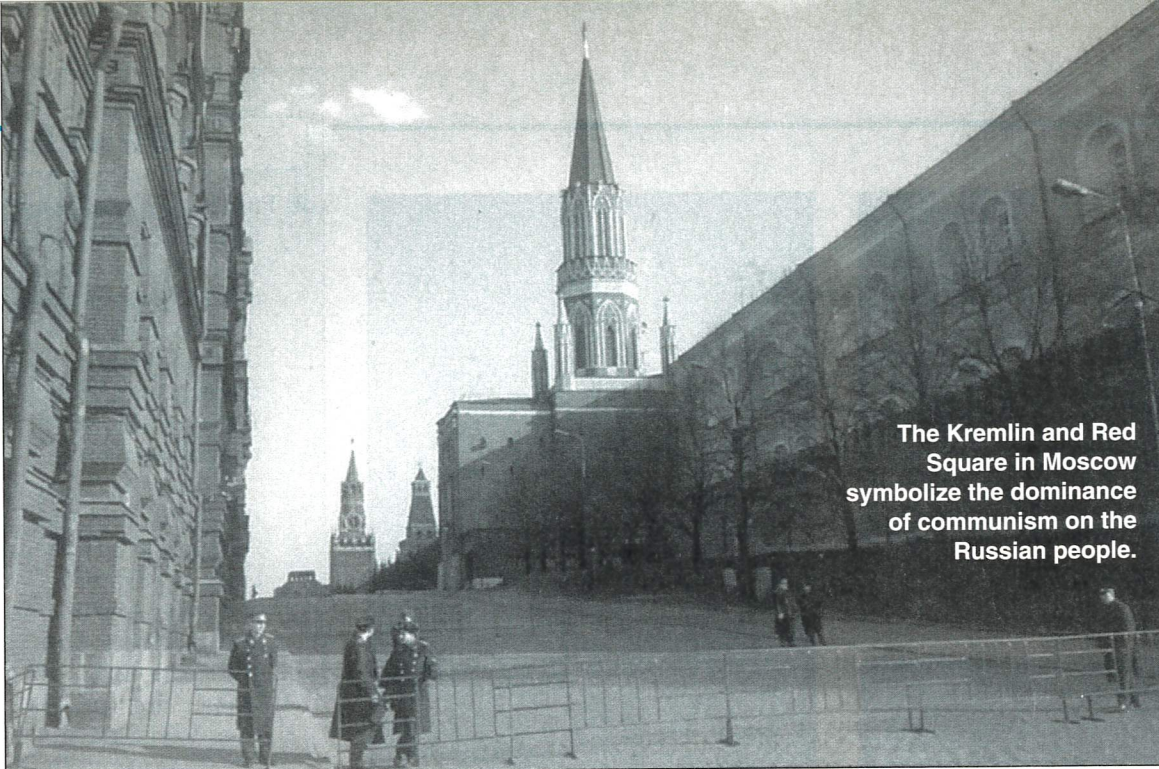
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The Kremlin and Red Square in Moscow symbolize the dominance of communism on the Russian people.

Falling curtains, opening doors

As the iron curtain fell in Russia, doors opened for the spread of the gospel

by Laurie Biedenbender

The baby girl lets out a little wail as the cold hands of the Orthodox priest lower her into the tepid water. At the “amen,” her smiling parents dry her off and wrap her in a tattered shawl, lace yellowed with age.

The shawl, worn by the baby’s great-great-grandmother at her own baptism, is the only link the family has to religion of any kind, and it symbolizes all the ceremonies, celebrations, and songs that accompanied that woman’s faith so many years ago. When she died, the last shred of faith in their family died also.

For many years religious practice was all but dead behind the Iron Curtain in the Soviet Union and eastern Europe. But that curtain has fallen, accompanied by the loud thud of toppled statues of Lenin and Stalin and the softer but longer echoing fall of repressive policies and human rights abuses.

And as that curtain fell, doors opened. Gorbachev began relaxing the government’s grip on the church. In 1987, domed cathedrals that had been converted to warehouses and 400-year-old monasteries that had been used as prisons were returned to the church and her people. The buildings, like the shawl, had long outlived those who had worshipped in them.

Exploring ways to share the gospel

The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod sent

the first missionaries through those open doors in 1992. Now we have an opportunity to augment the word of the missionaries using a variety of people and channels for that unchanging gospel message.

Dr. Daniel Schmeling, administrator for the Commission on Parish Schools, and his wife Ellen, a Lutheran elementary school teacher, traveled to Novosibirsk in Siberia, Russia, and Sofia and Blagoyevgrad, Bulgaria, on behalf of the Board for World Missions’ executive committee for Japan, Europe, and Asia, to explore some of these channels.

“The effects of communism are real,” said Dr. Schmeling. In addition to broken windows, broken machinery, and a broken economy, he found broken souls.

“We asked some English-speaking eleventh graders, ‘What do you think about God?’ and they said, ‘We don’t think about God.’ One looked away for a minute and then said, ‘Sometimes I wonder if there is a God.’ We asked, ‘What do you think will happen when you die?’ They said, ‘We’re too busy thinking about today and tomorrow. We don’t have time to think about what happens after we die.’”

“Marxism has been their religion,” Dr. Schmeling explained. “Now it’s gone and the countries’ leaders want to fill the void.”

WELS representatives met with educators from Novosibirsk State University to discuss student exchange programs and placing WELS teachers in Russian schools. From left are Daniel Schmeling, Olga Ryzhkina, Alexander Faizullin, Natasha Sagaidak, Philip Malchow, Ellen Schmeling, and Kirby Spevacek.



Viktor Pisanov, Kirby Spevacek, Ellen Schmeling, Sarah Malchow, Philip Malchow, and Nina Chernyck discussed education in Russia.

Daniel Schmeling presented Bible Big Books to Tatyana Delfontseva, assistant principal of English School No. 30 in Novosibirsk, Russia.

WELS teachers in eastern Europe

By expanding the mission focus of our WELS high schools and colleges, we can join the current missionaries in filling that void. As Dr. Schmeling explained, one way is through placing teachers in their schools. Under the auspices of the World Mission Board, an experienced teacher would spend one or two years in Russia or Bulgaria, teaching English or other subjects in English.

In addition to teaching, he or she would aid the resident missionaries by developing contacts with the students and local residents, by staffing a Christian Information Center or by organizing a Christian "club."

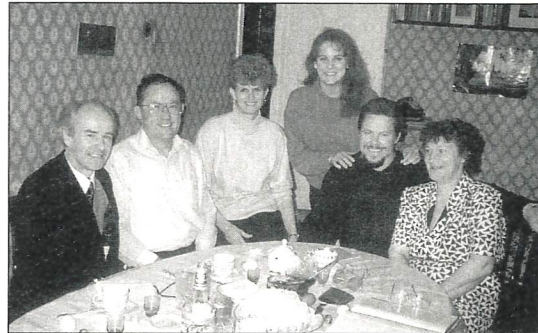
Student exchange programs

Another way our schools could step through those open doors is with a student exchange program. Qualified high school or college students would visit Russia or Bulgaria for about four weeks, attending classes at the English-speaking school, and learning from activities of the family they stay with. More significant would be their experiences with the missionaries there. As the students worship with the growing congregations and observe and assist with the missionaries' work, they would develop a broader understanding of a foreign culture and of the world mission activities of the WELS, an understanding they would then carry back to their families, churches, and schools.

Russian and Bulgarian students would in turn visit WELS families, experience American daily life in a gospel-rich setting, and take back newly planted seeds of faith to their own families at home.

Real people with real needs

Siberia means "sleeping land." But the former com-



unist bloc is waking up and opening its doors to the rest of the world. "Now everybody over there is hungry. They desire things Western and especially American," said Dr. Schmeling. "Those American skills will be provided by someone. If not us, then someone else."

He added, "I was always told that communists were our enemies. We had air raid shelters to protect us from them. But people are people everywhere, and these are people with real needs. They don't even know Jesus Christ as a historical figure, much less God's plan of salvation as given to us in the Bible. Now the door is open. Such moments in history do not come often and provide special opportunities for the church."

Special opportunities: For a high school student to see mission work firsthand in Sofia and then tell his family and friends at home how vital that work is. For a college student to share her faith with other students in the Novosibirsk Christian Club. For a teacher to bring a young couple he's befriended to a missionary who can tell them more about God's eternal plan and then perhaps baptize their newborn little girl.

People are people everywhere. At the "amen," as her parents wrap that baby girl in her brand new lacy-white baptismal shawl, she may be crying a bit too.



Laurie Biedenbender is a member of Epiphany, Racine, Wisconsin.

Hundreds of children attend inner city VBS

Four Milwaukee, Wis., central city congregations—Siloah, St. Marcus, St. Philip, and Zebaoth—collaborated this summer in an outreach program that brought over 400 children to vacation Bible school. The 35 teenage volunteers who assisted by canvassing the neighborhoods and preregistering children also helped in the four churches as teachers and assistants in the classes. Teachers attending summer sessions at Wisconsin Lutheran College also volunteered, as well as members of each congregation.

The children, almost all African Americans, came in response to invitations issued to over 6,000 homes. Over 200 children attended the week-long VBS at Siloah. St. Philip had 110 enrolled. About 80 children came to St. Marcus, and over 60 to Zebaoth.

“One older student,” said Pastor Keith Tullberg of Siloah, “learned how to spell the word Jesus for the first time. But learning about Jesus’ death on the cross mattered more.” Many unchurched children came to the closing services along with their families.

Some of the children, according to Tullberg, will be baptized. “Some adults will attend Bible information class and may become members. All four of the participating churches are again swamped with prospects for their evangelism committees to follow-up.”

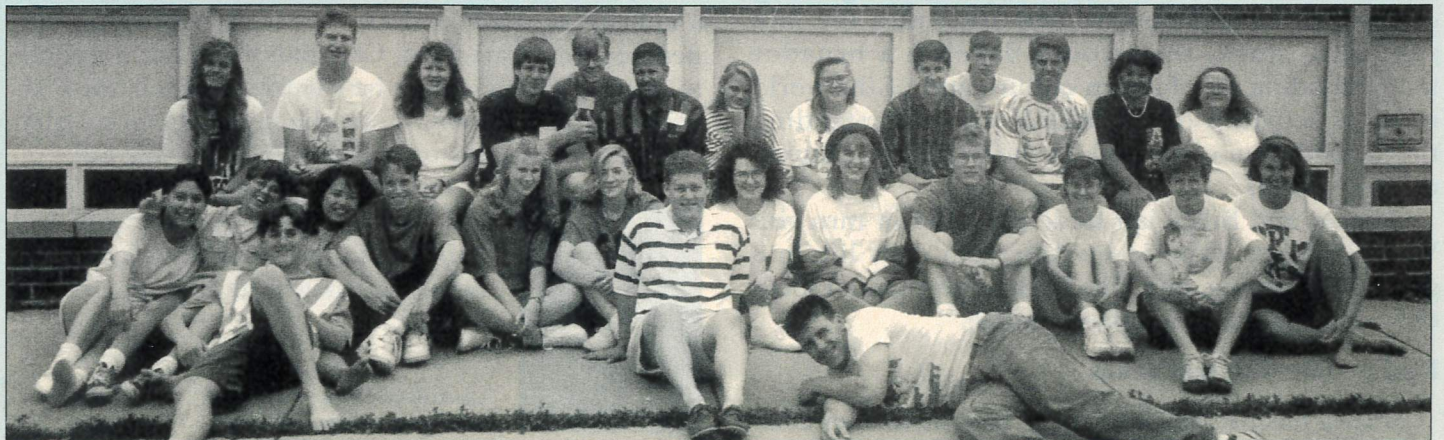


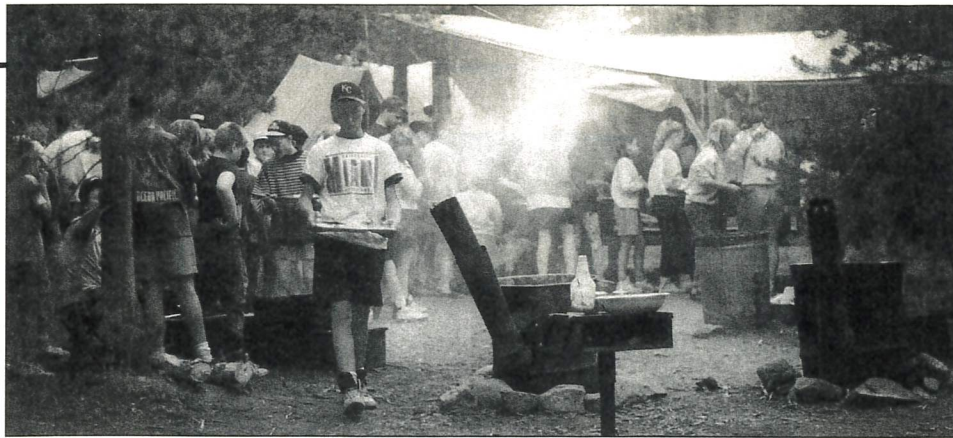
Over 400 children attended one of four central city vacation Bible school programs.



The morning's activities included lessons, projects, and music, centered on the message of God's love.

The 35 volunteers came from 16 WELS schools, one public college, and one public high school.





Confessions of a camp counselor

In spite of cold, dirt, mosquitoes, and homesick kids—put me down for next year

by Robyn Smith

Seven glorious days getting back to nature—surrounded by fellow Christians. Visions of sunrises, rippling brooks, and wildlife filled my mind when I read the poster announcing Rocky Mountain Christian Camp. I was ready to head into the hills, a soldier for Christ.

Announcing to the congregation my intentions to fearlessly shepherd a group of adolescents to Leadville, Col., I began my preparations. Leadville is over 10,000 feet—that means cold at night. Seven days at camp means two pair of sneakers, jeans, and sweatshirts. Maybe the altitude would prevent bugs, but bring the repellent, just in case.

Coffee in hand, kids crammed into the car with camping gear, I felt like a general poised for battle. My “men” and I were ready. After driving nine hours, the “Salt Lake City contingent” reported for duty. Bible in hand, duffel bag on my shoulder, I moved to the assigned area. Pitching the tent without my faithful husband was a challenge; finding a level place was even more so.

After dividing one hundred campers into squads, I encountered our first meal. Army mess trays held the proud results of Squad One’s first dinner. My hunger overcame my curiosity about its contents.

After dinner, two wash tubs simmered over an open fire: one for washing and one for rinsing. The 120th person to wash his tray could expect pork ‘n’ beans floating in the soap film. The rinse water resembled Hershey’s syrup. The towels for drying mopped the forest floor more times than they dried the mess trays.

At the campfire were marshmallows and popcorn for the picky eaters. A closing devotion rounded off the evening. Then we returned to the tents.

I was not prepared for the shriek of “rise and shine.” No leisurely stretching, no sipping coffee, no enjoying

God’s new day. Just a heart-stopping sound as the megaphone shouted orders until every camper was “up and moving.”

The facilities were not plush, the luxury of two flush toilets stymied by a line of 65 females. A trickle of running water was under the camp’s only mirror. Waiting for 60 teenage girls to examine themselves in the little piece of glass and make appropriate adjustments was an exercise in patience, if not futility.

Although I was prepared for the cold, the bathrooms, the bugs (well, not really—you should see those gargantuan mosquitoes), I was not prepared for the camaraderie shared by fellow Christians. Living in Salt Lake City amid many who do not know their Savior causes a hunger for fellowship. We shared ideas about witnessing, encouraged each other, and basked in the comfort of our large group of believers.

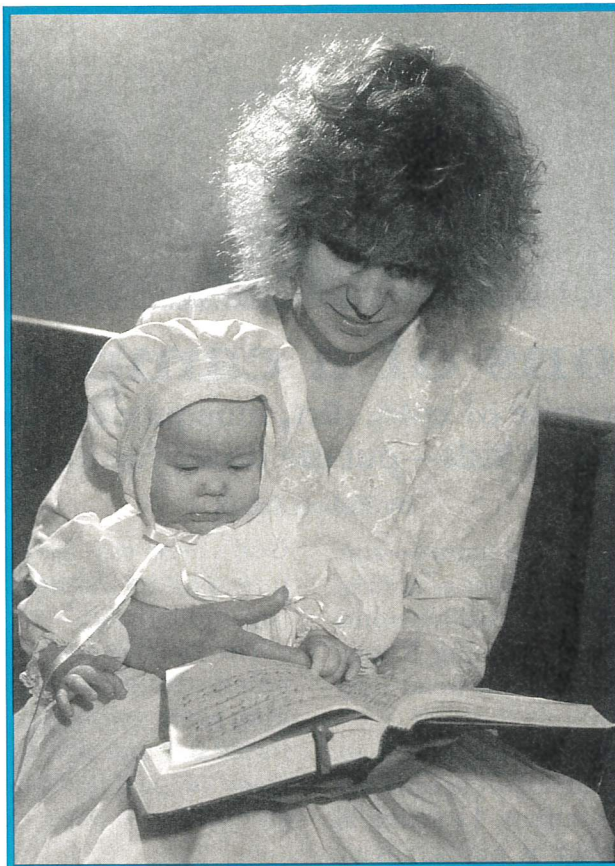
Teaching Bible lessons to 30 teenagers opened my eyes. I learned more than they did and I usually had more questions than I answered. Who was teaching whom?

Would I do it again? If I think about the long drive, hard ground, dirt, dinner trays, tough questions in Bible class, mosquitoes, chapped lips, megaphone, homesick kids, bathrooms—no. But if I think about memories of sitting by the fire with the other counselors in the late evening, devotions held under blue skies while sitting on a carpet of pine needles, laughter, good-bye hugs, “Amazing Grace” strummed on the guitar—put me down for next year.



Robyn Smith is a member of Prince of Peace, Salt Lake City, Utah.

MRS. KEVIN SCHEIBEL



What color is your hymnal— and why does it matter?

by Victor H. Prange

Sunday morning. In a small village in western Pennsylvania, Lutherans are gathering for worship at a white frame church set on a hill. A look at the hymnal being used makes it likely that this congregation belongs to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), for their hymnal has a dark green cover, the color of the *Lutheran Book of Worship*. The hymnal helps to identify these worshipers as members of the ELCA.

Go to Perry County, Missouri, and one will find blue hymnals in the pew racks of many Lutheran churches. This is *Lutheran Worship*, the hymnal authorized by the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

And very shortly you will find in the pew racks of many Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod churches a hymnal with a deep red cover, the color of

Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal. The hymnal is a mark of identification, a sign of the bond of fellowship in worship.

Fellowship—more than the color of a hymnal

Of course the bond of fellowship is much more than the color or name of a hymnal. In fact that word “fellowship” may describe a relationship so extensive, so all-encompassing, that no human eye can comprehend its extent. That spiritual bond of fellowship joins each believer to God and then to every other believer in the Holy Christian Church. That bond of fellowship John describes when he writes: “We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ” (1

John 1:3). That bond of fellowship is color blind. It's a fellowship which no eye can see.

The bond of fellowship in worship is visible. It's something which we experience. The bond of fellowship in worship is certainly also spiritual. For what brings about the bond of fellowship in worship is our use together of God's word and sacraments. And the Spirit of God is very much at work through these means of grace to bond us together in a common faith and confession.

Fellowship in worship

Our hymnal has a lot to do with God's word and sacraments. That's why we need to be certain that our hymnal in its hymns, prayers, and services faithfully speaks the truth of God's word. That means our hymnal must properly distinguish law from gospel: the damning consequences of human sin must be plainly stated and the saving benefits of Christ's work of redemption proclaimed clearly and often.

Congregations of the WELS share a common faith and confession. There is a bond of fellowship which exists among us. Together we praise God for his grace and mercy in Christ. Together we work as partners in the gospel to spread the good news of salvation. We express this bond of fellowship in our worship together.

The hymnal—an outward sign of fellowship

An outward sign of this bond of fellowship in worship is the use of a common hymnal. That's certainly not to say that a WELS congregation which does not choose to use *Christian Worship* as its hymnal has broken the bond of fellowship. Each congregation of the synod is free to make its own decision in the matter of which hymnal to use. The bond of fellowship which WELS congregations enjoy is based on a common faith and confession. The hymnal serves only as an outward sign of that bond of fellowship.

When the 1983 convention of our synod authorized the publication of a new/revised hymnal, the resolution included this provision: "that each congregation, throughout the development of the new/revised hymnal, periodically receive samples of prepared materials—both liturgies and hymns—for their trial use, evaluation, and response."

The Joint Hymnal Committee sought to follow this directive. The responses received from various congregations and individuals were helpful. Sharing in the process of producing the hymnal was an expression of the bond of fellowship we enjoy in the WELS.

Benefits of uniform worship practices

A common hymnal helps to promote unity in worship. Having many different orders of service can cause great confusion among people. This can happen within a congregation and also between congregations of a synod. Martin Luther dealt with this very problem in a letter which he wrote in 1525 to Christians living in the country of Livonia. Luther warns of two extremes. First, "those who devise and ordain universal customs and orders get so wrapped up in them that they make them into dictatorial laws opposed to the freedom of faith." But "those who ordain and establish nothing succeed only in creating as many factions as there are heads, to the detriment of that Christian harmony and unity of which St. Paul and St. Peter so frequently write."

When the bond of fellowship within a congregation is strained because of worship practices, Luther says there is no better way to remedy the situation "than for each not to take himself too seriously and to think little of himself, but very highly of others." He urges the Livonians to "each one surrender his own opinions and get together in a friendly way and come to a common decision about these external matters, so that there will be one uniform practice throughout your district instead of disorder lest the common people get confused and discouraged." Obviously Luther saw benefit in uniform worship practices.

Advantages of using a common hymnal

Using a common hymnal in the churches of our synod will have several advantages. WELS members familiar with the services and hymns of *Christian Worship* will find it much easier to worship when visiting another congregation using the same book. Special services and meetings which bring together members from various WELS congregations will find a bond in worship when all are at home in the same hymnal.

Church buildings of various Christian denominations have many things in common: organs, pews, pulpits, windows, even Bibles. Based on such items it's hard to tell one building from another. But take a look at the hymnals; they are distinctive. *Christian Worship* will help to identify our buildings as WELS churches. The hymnal will serve to express the bond of fellowship in worship.



Victor Prange is pastor of Peace, Janesville, Wisconsin, and was chairman of the Joint Hymnal Committee.

The new home of Good Shepherd, Burnsville, Minn.



Church swapping in Minnesota

When Good Shepherd needed a larger church and another congregation needed a smaller one, they traded buildings

Good Shepherd of Burnsville, Minn., had a problem. How does one fit a 750-baptized member church into a church seating 260? The church had grown so large that they were holding Bible study sessions at the SuperAmerica store next door. “We were at our wits’ end in terms of what we could do with the facility,” said Good Shepherd’s pastor, David Tiarks.

The obvious solution was a new church building large enough to accommodate the membership of a growing congregation in Burnsville, a half-hour commute south of the Twin Cities.

It was an obvious solution, but there was one hitch, not at all unusual: Money. “We were looking at costs of new construction at around \$1 million to \$1.5 million,” said Pastor Tiarks. “That just seemed overwhelming.”

Meanwhile, another church in Burnsville was experiencing a loss of members. Redeemer Lutheran Church of the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod had declined in membership when several families tried to oust its pastor, Ken Kothe, and the congregation split between supporters and opponents. Opponents left the church, and supporters retained the church property.

This loss of members left Redeemer unable to meet the payments on its debt of \$625,000 owed to the Missouri Synod’s church extension fund. The date was fast approaching when the church extension agency would take over the church.

Just at that time Good Shepherd’s facilities planning committee asked Kothe whether it could look at his church for some layout ideas for Good Shepherd’s new church. When they met, “I just threw out the suggestion that they could buy our

church. It was really kind of an accidental thing,” Kothe said. Tiarks found the suggestion “enticing.” The two congregations got together to iron out an exchange of their churches, a task which involved some fancy negotiating.

Under the purchase agreement, Good Shepherd will pay Redeemer \$625,000, enough for them to pay off Redeemer’s mortgage. Redeemer will pay \$200,000 to Good Shepherd for its facility. Good Shepherd will continue to operate its own school for pre-kindergarten through eighth grade at its current location for up to four years since Redeemer’s school, which had been closed, has been leased out to a non-denominational Christian academy for that period of time. At the expiration of the lease, the schools also will be exchanged.

The convenient coincidence of the churches’ needs—and the fact they are exactly one mile part, driveway to driveway—makes Kothe think there was a divine hand guiding the exchange. “I can’t believe it’s an accident,” he said.

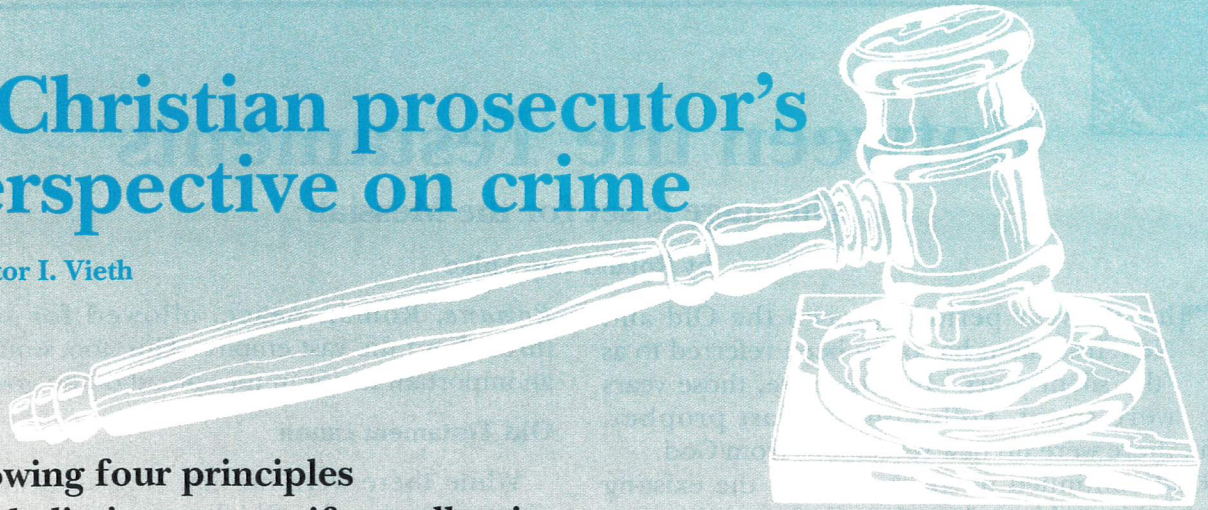
“For this project we have chosen the theme, ‘Let the Spirit Move Us,’” Tiarks said. “We really see this as a wonderful opportunity the Lord has given us to look at who we are as a church.”

On June 27, Good Shepherd held its first service in its new home. Each pastor said the move has brought his congregation closer together and focused attention on the church’s mission.

Pastor John Steinbrenner also serves Good Shepherd, and Steve Wrobel is principal of the 108-pupil, six-teacher school. The congregation was organized as a mission in 1964.

A Christian prosecutor's perspective on crime

by Victor I. Vieth



Following four principles would eliminate most, if not all, crimes

In my six years as assistant county attorney, I have prosecuted crimes ranging from murder to rolling through a stop sign. I have prosecuted children as young as 10 and adults well past retirement age. I believe adherence to four Christian principles would eliminate most, if not all crimes.

Use Christian discipline

First, we need caring Christian discipline. When children convicted of crimes appear in court for sentencing, the judge typically asks parents how they responded to the child's conduct. When a parent says the child has been grounded, had friendships restricted, or received other appropriate measures, it is unlikely the child will return to court. In contrast, parents declining to discipline on the theory that police were picking on the child or that "boys will be boys" guarantee their child's return to court.

Respect the law

Second, we desperately need proper Christian respect for the law and a recognition that the authorities that exist have been established by God. A farmer charged with diverting a public waterway without a permit admitted he intentionally broke the law, but pleaded not guilty because he believed the law was stupid. A car dealer convicted of tax fraud told me his conviction was merely a cost of business. When asked if he felt any remorse, the car dealer explained that everyone defrauds the government. Obviously, he did not take seriously Christ's instruction to give to Caesar what is Caesar's.

Stop misusing Scripture

Third, we need to stop using the name of Christ as a cover for our sins. On more than one occasion,

child abusers have justified a cruel assault by quoting portions of Scripture which authorize physical discipline. These abusers use the Bible as justification to burn, maim, or break the bones of our children.

Scriptural references to the submission of women have also been used as justification to beat wives. I have yet to meet a domestic abuser who recalls the command to love our wives as Christ loved the church.

Even more disturbing, confessed pedophiles have demanded their estranged spouse allow unsupervised visitation with a child victim, saying the wife must submit to the husband's wishes. Like the devil himself, these criminals twist and pervert Scripture.

Love your neighbor

Finally, we must heed Christ's command to love your neighbor as yourself. Martin Luther King once said, "The law can't make a man love me, but it can stop him from hanging me." Minnesota increased penalties for racially motivated crimes. While laws may deter the commission of some atrocities, only God can change hearts. Hatred is the root of racially motivated crimes and nearly every violent crime I have prosecuted. Without Christ actively working in our lives to melt away hatred, crime will remain a part of our society.

My prayer is that the word of the Lord will become so prevalent in our hearts and minds that one day police officers and prosecutors will be a thing of the past.



Victor Vieth, assistant county attorney for Cottonwood County, Minnesota, is a member of St. Paul, St. James, Minnesota.



Between the Testaments

The stage is set for the Messiah

by Roland Cap Ehlke

The 400-year period between the Old and New Testament has often been referred to as “the silent years.” In one sense, those years were silent. Following the last prophet, Malachi, there were no new revelations from God.

Yet God continued to speak through the existing inspired writings. More than that, God used this time to set the stage for the coming of the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

The four kingdoms

The prophet Daniel had described four great kingdoms, which would be superseded by an eternal worldwide kingdom (Daniel 2). The first of those was the brilliant but short-lived Babylonian kingdom. In Daniel’s lifetime, that kingdom was overthrown by the Medo-Persians in 539 B.C.

Persian policy allowed the Jews to return from their Babylonian exile to their homeland. This prepared the way for the promised Messiah to be born in Bethlehem and carry out his ministry in Palestine, as the prophets had foretold.

Many Jews, however, did not return to Palestine. Instead, they settled in towns throughout the Middle East. Because travel to the temple in Jerusalem was difficult, they established local synagogues for worship and reading Scripture. Later, these synagogues would form a point of contact for early Christian missionary work.

The Persian empire met its downfall at the hands of Alexander the Great about 330 B.C. Thanks to Alexander’s conquests, Greek culture spread throughout the Middle East. The spread of Greek culture established Greek as the universal language. This would later become the language of the New Testament—the vehicle for carrying the good news of the Savior throughout the ancient world.

During the period of Greek domination, the Jews managed to gain a century of national independence (167-63 BC). Under the leadership of the Maccabees, they were able to free themselves from pagan worship practices which had been inflicted upon them.

Jewish independence came to an end with the rise of the fourth great empire, Rome. While Greek culture continued, Roman laws prevailed. The *Pax*

Romana, Roman peace, allowed for safe travel throughout the vast empire. This, too, would become an important factor in the spread of the gospel.

Old Testament canon

While there were no new revelations during the silent centuries, the Old Testament canon was taking shape. Canon is a Greek word meaning “straight edge, ruler”; it is related to our word cane. The canonical books are the straight edge against which all teaching and practice must be judged. The canon of Scripture refers to those books which are God’s inspired word.

From the time they were written, the first books of Scripture, the five books of Moses, had been accepted as God’s word and preserved. “After Moses finished writing in a book the words of this law from beginning to end, he gave this command to the Levites who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD: ‘Take this Book of the Law and place it beside the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God. There it will remain as a witness against you’” (Deuteronomy 31:24-26).

Moses’ successor, Joshua, added his own inspired book to the writings of Moses. And so it went through the centuries. God continued to raise up spokesmen and inspired them to record his word. Often the prophets were persecuted and even killed. Yet their books were kept and respected as God’s word.

During the time between the testaments, the Old Testament canon was in place. It was divided into three sections—the Law (Pentateuch), the Prophets, the Writings—and contained the same books we have in our Old Testament. As the people searched the inspired scriptures, they awaited the promised Messiah, just as present-day believers await his return.

It was also during this time that the Hebrew scriptures were translated into Greek. This was the Septuagint translation, which the New Testament writers often used when quoting the Old Testament.

Apocrypha

The Septuagint also contains a number of books not in the Hebrew canon. These books, known as the Apocrypha, were written after the time of the last prophet, Malachi. Apocrypha means “hidden,” a refer-

ence to their being hidden or stored apart from the Scriptures.

The 14 books of the Apocrypha are 1 and 2 Esdras (additions to Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah), Tobit, Judith, additions to the book of Esther, Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus (also known as

the Wisdom of Jesus Son of Sirach), Baruch, additions to Daniel (Song of the Three Children, Susanna, Bel and the Dragon), prayer of Manasseh (an addition to 2 Chronicles), and 1 and 2 Maccabees. Half of the Apocrypha are attached to Old Testament books, and the other half stand by themselves.

Some of the apocryphal books, such as Maccabees and 1 Esdras, are historical. Two of them, Tobit and Judith, are romantic tales. Others are wisdom literature.

These books ought not be considered inspired for three main reasons. First of all, Christ, the Jews, the apostles, and the early Christian church did not accept them as canonical.

Secondly, the Apocrypha make no claim to divine origin. No "thus says the Lord" is found in them.

Thirdly, they contain errors and anti-scriptural teachings. For example, 2 Maccabees speaks approvingly of suicide, and Ecclesiasticus 3:30 teaches that "almsgiving atones for sin." Perhaps the best test of the Apocrypha is to read them. The difference between them and Scripture will be obvious.

In the face of all this, the Roman Catholic church in the Council of Trent (1546) declared that the Bible including the Apocrypha is canonical. The doctrine of purgatory is drawn from an apocryphal book. In 2 Maccabees it is recorded that Judas Maccabaeus prayed for the dead.

The Apocrypha can be interesting reading. Martin Luther even translated them and included them in the German Bible, but not as inspired books.

Jewish groups

During the intertestamental period, a number of Jewish sects arose. Several of them receive attention



An illustration from the apocryphal book of Tobit from a German Bible of 1736. Guided by an angel, Tobit's son Tobias catches a fish and uses some of its entrails to drive away a demon and restore his blind father's eyesight.

on the pages of the New Testament.

The Sadducees were the aristocratic and priestly group. They represented the ruling classes and tried to maintain their power and position. They accepted only the Pentateuch and did not believe in the resurrection and angels.

The largest sect was that of the Pharisees, who represented the Jewish middle class. They accepted the entire Hebrew Bible. They also added many man-made laws to God's word. Jesus often pointed out their hypocrisy and making a show of religion. A number of early Christians, including the apostle Paul, came from among the Pharisees.

The Zealots were political extremists, resisting any foreign oppression. One of Jesus' twelve disciples came from this group—Simon the Zealot.

The Essenes, who are not mentioned in the New Testament, tried to remove themselves from the rest of society. Some withdrew into the desert where they practiced communal living. The Essene community at Qumran has become famous because of the discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls in nearby caves. These scrolls date from before the time of Christ and are the oldest known copies of the Bible.

After four centuries of silence, came the greatest event of all time—the advent of the world's Savior. As Daniel (2:44) had foretold, he came to establish the eternal kingdom "that will never be destroyed."

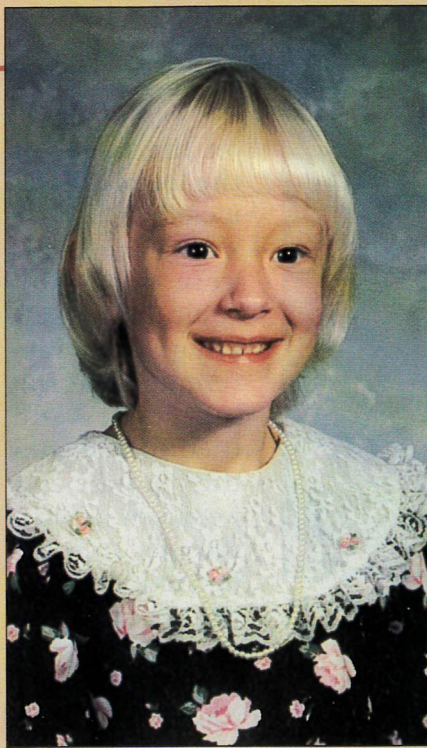
Next: The Gospels and Acts.

(More information is available from Northwestern Publishing House. The Book of Books by John Schaller discusses the Apocrypha as well as a review of Jewish history.

This book may be ordered by calling 1-800-662-6022; in the Milwaukee area call 475-6600. Another book of interest, scheduled to be released by the end of this year, is The Four Centuries Before Christ by Eugene P. Kauffeld.)



Roland Cap Ehlke is an editor at Northwestern Publishing House.



Angie Rabenberg
at age six

Angie's lesson

by Dana Rabenberg

**Angie loved her Savior,
and she was not afraid
to tell others about him**

Angie went to a funeral, the first time she had been to one in her almost six years. Uncle Fred—my mother's uncle, actually—was called to his eternal rest a few weeks before his 85th birthday.

Angie slept for most of the 100-mile drive to Uncle Fred and Aunt Emma's town, waking only when we arrived. It is Angie's nature to be noncommunicative the first few moments after waking from a sound sleep, and the scene that greeted her at Aunt Emma's house intensified her reticence. She had met Aunt Emma once or twice before, but the dozen or so others in the house were all strangers to her. Angie, watching the embraces, the tears, the expressions of sympathy, said not a word to anybody for about twenty minutes.

Suddenly, she stood up, ran to Aunt Emma, took her hands, and asked, "Did your husband believe in God?"

Taken aback by Angie's question, I considered reproving her for impertinence, but I did not. Angie's question was important to her, and Aunt Emma would not be offended by it. Surprised at the little girl's question, Aunt Emma replied, "Why, yes, he did."

"That's good," said Angie, hugging her, "because he's in heaven with Jesus now."

This unexpected expression of Christian faith from a small child brought a fresh flow of tears from the widow's eyes. Angie, apparently feeling a need to comfort her, went on: "Don't worry—you'll see him again, when you go to heaven."

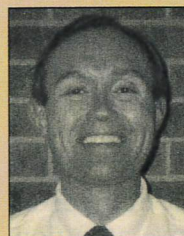
Through her tears, Aunt Emma thanked Angie for her kindness, and then showed her Uncle Fred's Bible, filled with underlining and markings, falling apart from decades of study. "This was Fred's Bible, Angie. Do you see how he wore it out from reading about Jesus?"

It wasn't until the funeral, when the pastor talked about eternal life with Jesus, that I heard an adult offer comfort to Aunt Emma like Angie's.

What do we adults say and do to comfort the bereaved? "He was my brother-in-law and my friend," offered one woman. Several people said his death was a blessing, because Uncle Fred suffered painfully in his last days. Another observed that he was at peace. I got tongue-tied as usual and said almost nothing.

During the drive home after the funeral, I asked myself why I left it to my daughter and the pastor to share the only truly meaningful words of comfort that can be spoken. Why didn't the adults, most of them Christians, speak the gospel? Are we adults ashamed of the gospel?

What a tribute to the blessings and benefits of Christian education this incident was. Angie had just completed kindergarten at our church's elementary school. Not yet six years old, she knew and loved her Savior, and she was not afraid to tell others about him. I pray her faith never leaves her, and that I never forget Angie's lesson in sharing the gospel.



Dana Rabenberg is a member
of Abiding Word, Highland Ranch, Colorado.

A Special Feature of NORTHWESTERN LUTHERAN – September, 1993

REFLECTIONS ON MINISTRY IN A CHANGING WORLD



PREFACE

***I KNOW NOT WHAT
THE DAY MAY
BRING. TOMORROW
WAITS UNKNOWN.
BUT THIS I KNOW,
THE CHANGELESS
CHRIST, MY LORD,
IS ON THE THRONE.***

—Anon

In a *Northwestern Lutheran* staff meeting the question was raised about how WELS pastors view changes they have experienced during their years in the ministry. Without launching a “scientific” survey of WELS pastors, and constrained by a modest budget, we chose to interview eight pastors within a 60-mile radius of Milwaukee. The names were chosen with some care. The eight pastors are experienced in all types of ministry: central city, suburbia, small town, rural, and seminary academic. The youngest was 39 and the oldest 77. They represent a combined ministry of 245 years.

The reflections in this special NL feature are based on 15 hours of recorded interviews. Doing the interviewing were John Barber, director of mass media ministry, and Kristin Ellenberger, mass media special projects coordinator, who also transcribed the interviews. This is the first time, we believe, that so many WELS pastors spoke frankly about changes in the ministry for the public record. How well NL has fulfilled the aim of that staff meeting six months ago, our readers may judge.

The participants

Joel C. Gerlach was born in Minnesota and reared in a teacherage. A 1953 seminary graduate, he has served congregations in Arizona and California and was on our seminary faculty. He is pastor of St. John, Wauwatosa, a Milwaukee suburb.

Karl A. Gurgel was born in Arizona and raised in a teacherage. A 1940 graduate of our seminary, he served congregations in Wisconsin and Minnesota before his retirement in 1984.

Karl R. Gurgel was born in Wisconsin and reared in a parsonage. A 1968 graduate of our seminary, he served a congregation in Connecticut and now serves St. Paul, Lake Mills, Wisconsin.

James R. Huebner was born in South Dakota and grew up in a parsonage. A 1980 graduate of our seminary, he serves Grace, Milwaukee.

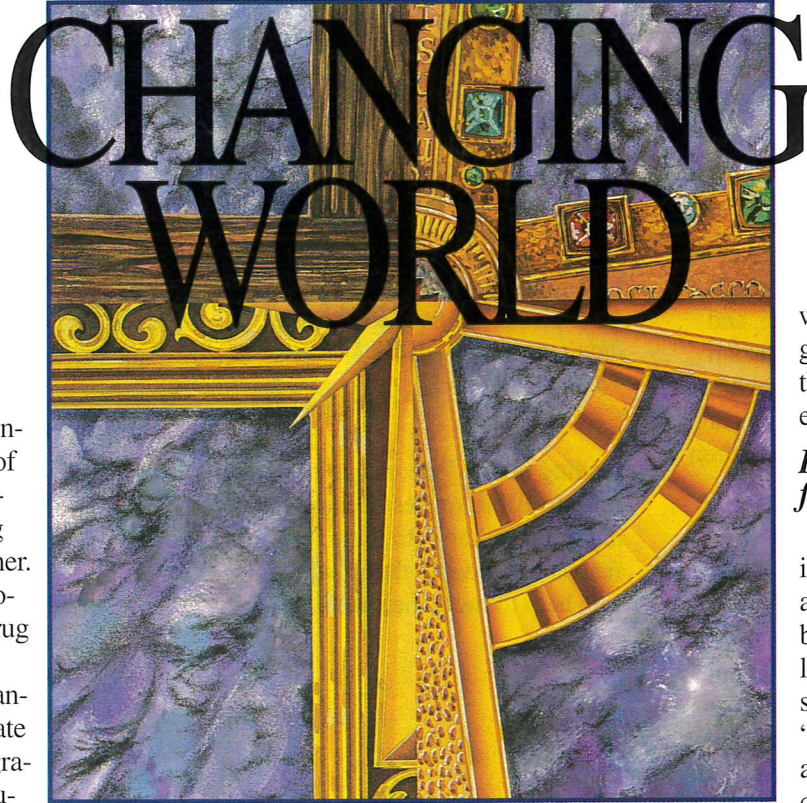
Peter R. Kassulke was born in Milwaukee. After graduating from the seminary in 1978 he served a congregation in Wisconsin and currently serves St. James, Milwaukee.

David R. Seager was born in Missouri and reared in a parsonage. He graduated from the seminary in 1969 and has served parishes in Wisconsin. He is pastor of St. John (Clinton Avenue), Milwaukee.

David J. Valleskey was born in Milwaukee and raised in a parsonage. A 1962 seminary graduate, he served congregations in Michigan and California and is now a member of our seminary faculty.

Alfred M. Walther was born in Wisconsin and reared in a parsonage. A 1945 graduate of our seminary, he served congregations in Montana, Michigan, and Wisconsin before his retirement in 1988. He lives in Sussex, Wisconsin.

REFLECTIONS ON MINISTRY IN A



Changes in society

Sweeping changes in society have perhaps had the greatest impact on ministry. "The rapid growth of evolutionism and humanism has had a devastating effect," said Alfred Walther. "Open advocacy of homosexual practice, AIDS, drug dependency, street violence, pornography, profanity, child abuse, illegitimate births, abortions, disintegration of families, promiscuity, and euthanasia are horrible signs of our times."

Walther believes that Christians also are affected. "I think our members are becoming quite apathetic. The world is melting us down. When you're in that environment constantly, it will rub off."

Joel Gerlach agrees. "There's a lot of talk about family values, but I wonder if people, even Christian people, understand what family values are. Recently a family was upset over a daughter's decision to live with her fiancé. These kinds of situations have changed the pastoral ministry radically."

Karl Gurgel, Jr., suggested that today's social atmosphere is an opportunity for evangelism. "I think the climate for outreach is great.

There are some good and bad aspects to the breakdown of the family. Today there is an openness, a willingness to listen. So many radical ideas are floating in the secular world that people



"The ministry is a challenge, a great opportunity, and a wonderful privilege in spite of the frustrations. And, I guess, that's no different than it's ever been."

— Karl R. Gurgel

will let you talk about religious ideas just as freely. I think people recognize the emptiness in their lives."

Increase in the need for counseling

Another change is an increased need for personal counseling. "When I began serving in a parish, little time was spent counseling," noted Gerlach. "Today, I could devote almost all of my time to counseling. Situations

today are much more serious than when I began. I think this is the result of deterioration of the family and the influence of drugs."

"People are more troubled; they don't have coping skills," James Huebner observed. "Because of that, there are more demands on ministers, especially pastors, to give the kind of nurturing that people would normally get through a family. Because the world is changing so fast in regard to values, morals, and the family unit, those systems which were healthy and which provided spiritual as well as emotional nurturing to people aren't intact anymore."



"I enjoy the counseling aspect of ministry," said Peter Kassulke. "I enjoy leading people in prayer in Scripture. But

today there are more problems with broken families, troubled marriages, societal pressures."

David Valleskey agreed. "Fewer and fewer exist of what we once called the nuclear family – mother, father, and children," he said. "In our Christian day school in California the teachers couldn't talk about loving fathers and mothers, because a lot of the children didn't know what those are."

Changes in the family

Valleskey believes that the breakdown of the nuclear family also means that parents spend less time today teaching their children about God. "With each generation, fewer people are given religious training at home," he noted. "In our country the majority of people still have some kind of religious training, but it decreases every year. More and more purely secular values exist, values that are relative rather than absolute."

"I think families still pray together," said Karl Gurgel, Jr., "but I wonder how much Bible story-telling and



"People—especially those born after 1955 with television as one of their parents—tend to expect higher professionalism, personality, and performance. In the '50s people said, 'Our pastor is faithful to the word.' It didn't matter if he didn't look great or sound good."

— James Huebner

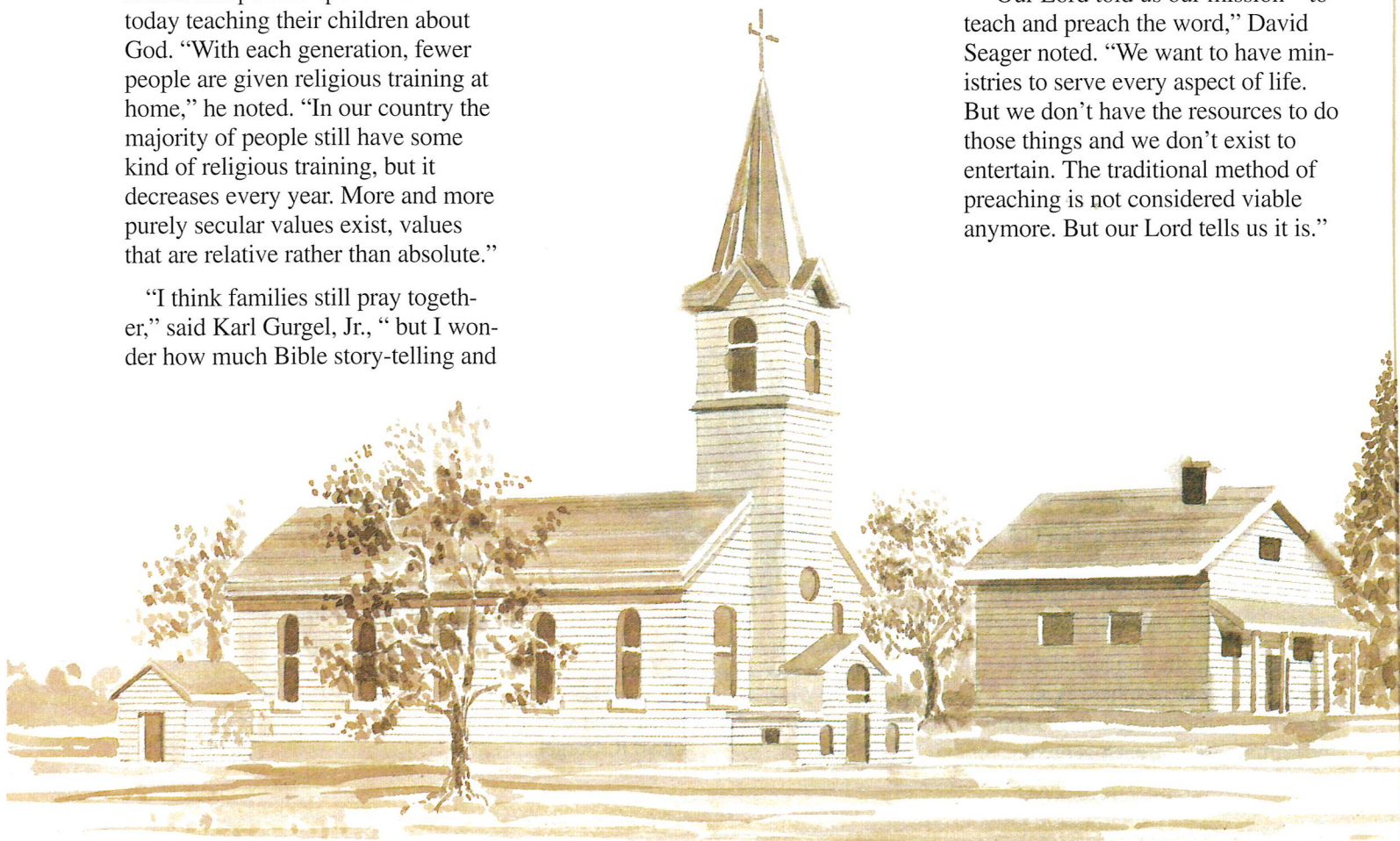
reading occur. Pastors can no longer refer to Bible stories because people are not familiar with them. For that reason too, people don't have the self-help to meet their difficulties."

Changes in the church

One mark of today's society is that people want the church to provide programs and services tailored to their needs. "People have such differing perspectives on the purpose of the church," Peter Kassulke said. "One person looks for 'mega' things – programs for children, teens, college students, and single and married adults. Another looks only for a quiet place to go on Sunday. But the gospel addresses people in all aspects of their lives."

Kassulke has a solution. "To be an effective church body in the 21st century," he said, "we must consider giving up local autonomy of individual congregations. Especially in big cities, we should share the strengths of our public servants. We must meet people's needs – yet each individual congregation cannot possibly do that."

"Our Lord told us our mission – to teach and preach the word," David Seager noted. "We want to have ministries to serve every aspect of life. But we don't have the resources to do those things and we don't exist to entertain. The traditional method of preaching is not considered viable anymore. But our Lord tells us it is."



Changes in worship

Another change in recent years has been in worship style. Churches are experimenting with different kinds of liturgies and with services geared for particular groups.

"I'm not convinced that worship should be geared primarily to the unchurched," David Valleskey said. "A worship service that uplifts and edifies the members could also benefit those who step in off the street. A service should be done very well. There must be life and joy in it. It must always center on the gospel."



"Our Lord told us our mission—to teach and preach the word. We want to have ministries to serve every aspect of life. But we don't have the resources to do those things and we don't exist to entertain."

— David Seager

Valleskey said the synod's recently published hymnal, *Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal* will be a positive change. "The new hymnal will help correct disparity in worship format. There are just two elements in the service — God's approach to us and our response to God. A proper bal-

ance must exist. As long as that balance exists, there can be a wholesome latitude of freedom."

James Huebner is excited about the new hymnal. "It will be superb," he said. "It has historic roots and contemporary relevancy. It includes hymns that have been around for centuries and the best hymns of today."

Alfred Walther believes "an important change is the use of modern English. The switch from the King James to the modern Bible has made Scripture much easier to understand. The pastor can explain the text, rather than trying to explain archaic English."

Changes in evangelism

Walther also notes a difference in evangelism methods today. "Church- and kingdom-building have become more than gathering like-minded people of one ethnic group," he observed. "We have a much more vigorous attempt to reach the lost of all ethnic groups and backgrounds. The growing emphasis on sharing the gospel is a joy to behold."

On the other hand, Joel Gerlach believes that today "there is greater difficulty witnessing. In past years, reaching the unchurched involved contacting people who had convictions about God and some positive thoughts about the Bible. Today, witnessing involves determining first whether a person believes in God."

Personal evangelism is still most effective, according to David Seager. "A great percentage of converts we receive are people whose neighbors and relatives talked openly about their faith," he said. "It is still the most productive form of evangelism."

Valleskey suggested an avenue for outreach. "Day care is a new opportunity for us," he said. "With so many

working mothers, the children have to go somewhere. What better than to set something up at church? The children are there for six hours a day. You can give them Christian training and also reach the family."

Changes in attitudes toward pastors

Most of the pastors agreed that society no longer views clergymen with the degree of esteem seen in the past.



"Our basic ministry is the presentation of the gospel, and that does not change. How that ministry functions in our society certainly changes."

— Peter Kassulke

"I grew up in a small town where the doctor, the bank president, and the pastor were respected by everyone in the community," recalled Joel Gerlach. "That isn't the case anymore."

David Valleskey concurred. "We're living in an age when respect for all kinds of authority, not just pastoral, has diminished."

Valleskey does not concede, however, that pastors receive no respect. "I never had the feeling that people didn't respect the pastoral ministry," he said. "The more members become involved in the work of the congregation, the more they see how much is involved. Then there is more respect."





Several pastors suggested that a more educated laity is one reason for the change in attitude toward ministers. "In my dad's day, the only formally educated people were the pastors and teachers," Karl Gurgel, Jr., said. "That education gave them positions of influence and respect, and people looked to them for answers. Pastors are no longer the only formally educated people; some members in our congregations have more education. So respect has diminished."

"At one time the minister was the best-educated man in the congregation," said David Seager. "He was consulted for leadership and guidance because of his educational background. Now many people have a college education and they feel equal to the minister. His authority is questioned."

Seager believes that "lack of respect may stem from the minister himself. Some want to be buddies with everyone; that knocks down respect. But we should stand on God's word and say, 'This is what the Lord says.'"

Alfred Walther suggested another reason. "The scandals of the electronic and mainline churches have lowered respect. They are a grist for the scoffer's mill. People like to classify all pastors together. It's so important that pastors watch their eating and drinking habits, their recreation and socializing, so scoffers will find no ground for complaint."

Peter Kassulke noted another factor. "Most families are glued to their television sets. The value-shaping that takes place through television is in direct opposition to Scripture. They hear one thing six days a week and another on the seventh. This has influenced their view of the pastor's authority."

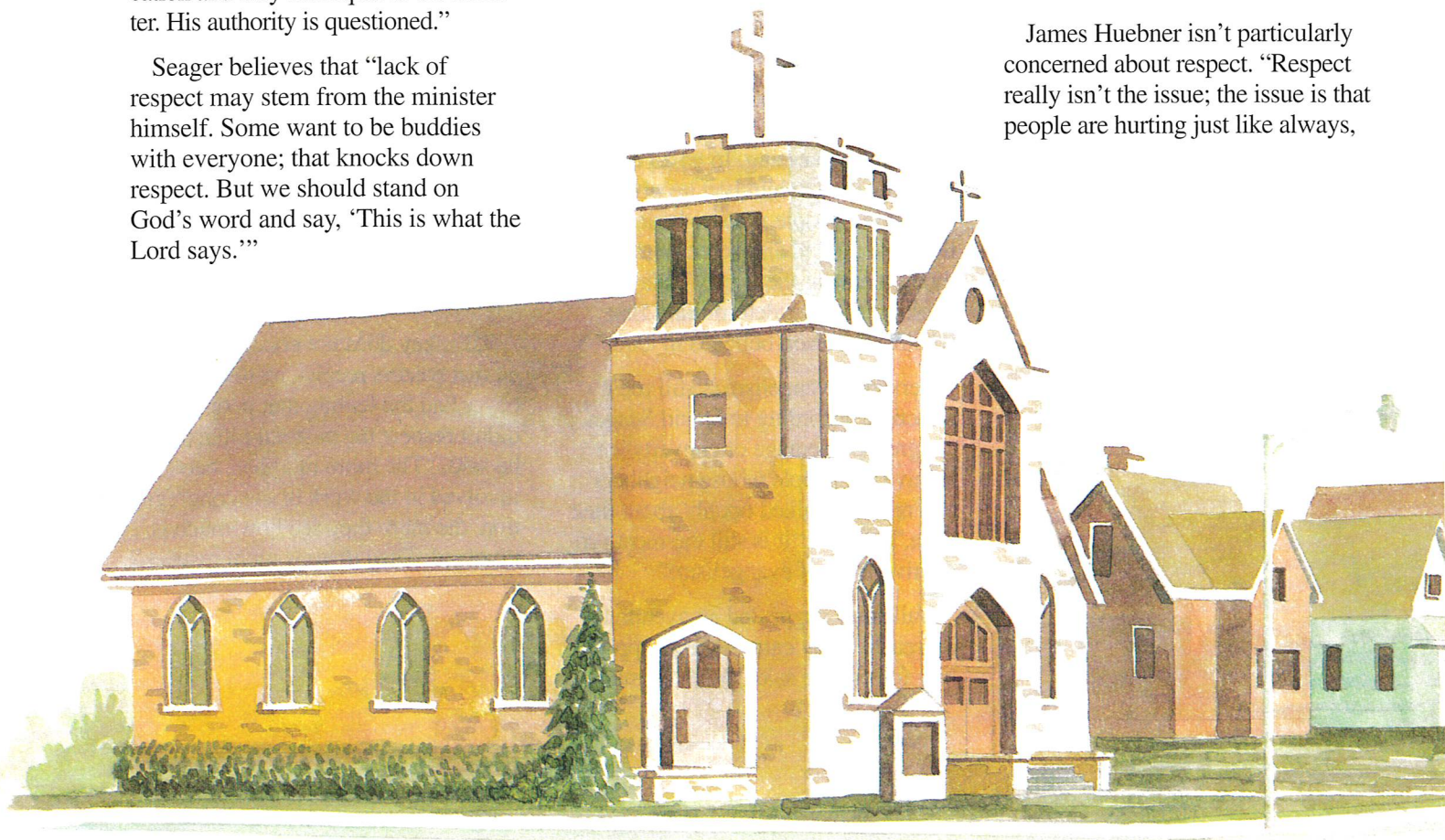
"We need to be very patient with people and not become defensive over a lack of respect, since it's probably not personal," noted Karl Gurgel, Jr. "Their lack of respect isn't a response to our actions but a lack of understanding about God."



"Pastors have the most glorious work there is – getting souls ready for heaven."
– Karl A. Gurgel

Although he agreed that society shows less respect for the ministry, Karl Gurgel, Sr., believes WELS members value their pastors. "There is not a lack of respect in the Wisconsin Synod," he said. "People are very happy they've got a good soul caretaker. Our men are not inclined to have 'glory pictures' of themselves or of the ministry. No, they want to be what God wants them to be – soul caretakers."

James Huebner isn't particularly concerned about respect. "Respect really isn't the issue; the issue is that people are hurting just like always,



maybe more,” he pointed out. “We may be in the last days and people need to hear about the Savior. So how should we get the message to them? How do we reach those people who are really hurting? I’m not sure I have the answer.”

Changes in the pastor’s role

With a changed attitude towards pastors comes a change in the pastor’s role, according to the pastors interviewed.



“Love your people. They’ll overlook a lot of shortcomings in a pastor if they know he loves them.”

– David Valleskey

“In general, people – especially those born after 1955 with television as one of their parents – tend to expect higher professionalism, personality, and performance,” noted Huebner. “People have always liked a good preacher or teacher, but it wasn’t as important. In the ‘50s people said, ‘Our pastor is super. He’s faithful to the word. He’s obedient to the Lord. It didn’t matter if he didn’t look great or sound good.”



“But people who grew up with television have different expectations,” Huebner observed. “They have the communication age in their backgrounds. They’re sinners – they need law and gospel – but they also expect the person in the pulpit to address contemporary and relevant issues.

“We operate by MBO – management by objective,” Seager said. “A lot of businessmen sit on church councils. They want to bring the successful methods of the business world to the church. They say, ‘Let’s set some objectives and meet them.’ This puts pressure on ministers. We have to ask, ‘Is change for the sake of change necessary?’”

“Our basic ministry is the presentation of the gospel, and that does not change,” countered Peter Kassulke. “How that ministry functions in our society certainly changes.”

Changes in how pastors spend their time

Another change in ministry is how pastors spend their time. Karl Gurgel, Sr., said, “Studying the word of God took the most time. I spent many hours a day in basic studying.”

Pastors still find time for studying the word, but they need to sandwich in added responsibilities. “One demand on my time is restructuring our congregation’s administration,” said Peter Kassulke. “People expect programs and planning; these often end up on my desk.”

Joel Gerlach has found a way around the problem. “Many demands on my time are relieved by our minister of administration,” he explained. “I can concentrate on teaching, preaching, and counseling – the things I have been called to do. We have a number of talented lay leaders who serve when asked and take initiative.”

David Seager disputes the idea, however, that pastors can make better use of time by turning over responsibilities to church members. “I’ve often heard that pastors are over-worked because they don’t use lay people. That irritates me. Many of my lay people are busy. I disagree with the notion that there is an endless source of people eager to help. I’m thankful for those that do help.”

Technology can help pastors save time. “Today many pastors consider computers indispensable,” commented Alfred Walther. “When used properly they aid the efficiency of the church. However, computers have limitations. They can’t make evangelism calls.”



“In spite of the ways the ministry has changed since I entered, there is nothing I would rather do.”

– Joel Gerlach

Karl Gurgel, Jr., suggested a solution for one problem often expressed by ministers. “I think the day when pastors felt guilty – and a lot of us did – about taking time with our family could be a thing of the past, if we would have what the synod is recommending: a called worker care committee. We would hear from trusted members of the congregation that they expect that we take time with our family, and they really want us to. We don’t have to feel guilty about it.”



Advice to new pastors

The pastors interviewed had words of advice for seminary students who are

entering the pastoral ministry.

“Go out and love your people,” urged David Valleskey. “If you show that you love them and bring the good news, you will be loved in return. They’ll overlook a lot of shortcomings in a pastor if they know he loves them.”

“Present good sermons,” Joel Gerlach advised. “If you are a good preacher, the congregation will overlook other inadequacies. In spite of the ways the ministry has changed since I entered, there is nothing I would rather do. The ministry is difficult and complicated, but rewarding.”

Peter Kassulke wanted seminary students to know that “there’s no position on earth like that of a parish pastor. But there are disappointments and frustrations. When I graduated, I was prepared to preach sermons, to teach Bible study, and to contribute to

administration. But I was not prepared for the variety and severity of the problems I would face.”

“The ministry is fun,” was James Huebner’s message to future pastors. “Some of the emphases have shifted, but the word still works. Jesus died, he is alive, and he will come again.” One thing to remember, observed Huebner ruefully, is that “because the world is sinful, we’ll never be out of a job.”

David Seager would tell new pastors to “enter the ministry with a great deal of humility. Men studying for the ministry are told they are the cream of the crop. When they graduate from the seminary they are 15 feet above the ground. They will get knocked down immediately, because the ministry is tough. We always must represent our Lord; when we do that people will appreciate us.”

Alfred Walther suggests that “first of all, graduates should realize what a privilege it is to be a pastor and God’s servant. Their business is to preach the gospel and to help turn people to

Christ through the word. It is the highest calling.”

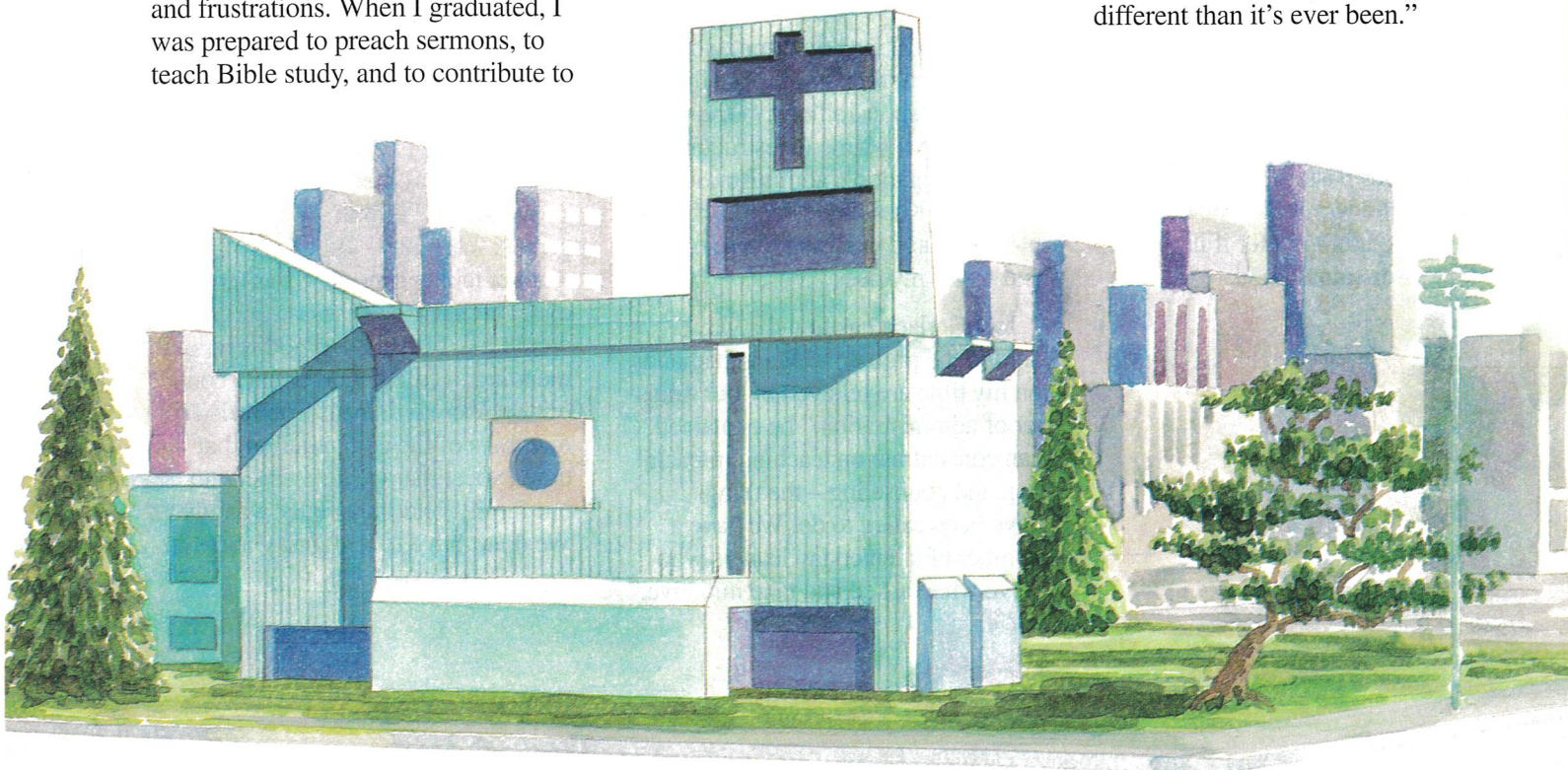


“Today many pastors consider computers indispensable. However, computers have limitations. They can’t make evangelism calls.”

— Alfred Walther

Karl Gurgel, Sr., would like to tell seminarians that “pastors have the most glorious work there is – getting souls ready for heaven. Therefore be sure to spend much time with the Bible because it gives marvelous advice. Then you’ll have Scripture’s answers to questions.”

Adds Karl, Jr., “The ministry is a challenge, a great opportunity, and a wonderful privilege in spite of the frustrations. And, I guess, that’s no different than it’s ever been.”



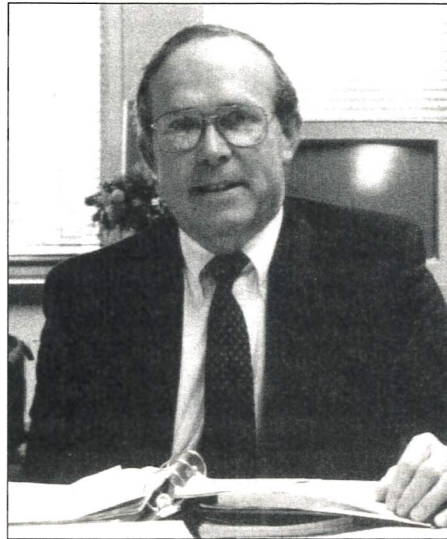
Karl R. Gurgel elected as new WELS president

Delegates to the 52nd biennial Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod convention, held in Saginaw, Mich., Aug. 2-6, elected Karl R. Gurgel as president of the synod. He replaces Carl H. Mischke, who retired after 14 years in the presidency.

Also on the ballot were Richard E. Lauersdorf, Wayne D. Mueller, Carl W. Voss, and Robert J. Zink. Gurgel was elected on the fourth ballot.

After attending Northwestern Preparatory School and Northwestern College, Gurgel graduated from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in 1968. He served Messiah, South Windsor, Conn., from 1968 to 1978. Since 1978 he has been pastor at St. Paul, Lake Mills, Wis.

Gurgel, 51, was the second vice-



President Karl R. Gurgel accepts his new position with "humbleness and confidence."

president of the Western Wisconsin District when he was elected president of the district in 1988. The

office of district president in the WELS is a part-time position.

Gurgel is married to the former Barbara Seefeldt. They are the parents of seven children.

"On behalf of the delegates," said retiring president Mischke, "I promise you our cooperation and prayers."

"With humbleness and confidence I accept," Gurgel told the convention delegates and visitors. "I do not have all the talents and abilities necessary. I pray you will be as forgiving to me as the Savior is to all of us."

More information on the convention, including decisions reached by the delegates on the issue of WELS ministerial education campuses, will be covered in the October issue of *Northwestern Lutheran*.

Retreat offers insight into second-career ministry

"Wonderful. Practical. Straightforward. I hope this program continues regularly in the future. I think there will always be people to whom this would be a great benefit," said a participant at a retreat held June 11-13 at Northwestern College in Watertown, Wis. The retreat, funded by a grant from Aid Association for Lutherans, focused on helping men and their families make the decision whether to embark on a second career by studying for the pastoral ministry.

Forty-six men and many of their wives came from 17 states to consider leaving jobs, homes, friends, and congregations to prepare for the ministry.

The weekend retreat provided information about Northwestern's seminary certification program for older students. Northwestern professors and current second-career stu-

dents presented information ranging from theology to practical concerns about finances, family, and becoming a student again. They stressed that becoming a pastor means study, sacrifice, and perseverance. One segment of the program included a test to help the men decide whether or not they should return to school.

"I liked the emphasis of not cheerleading for potential candidates, but giving the facts and realities of the academics involved," commented a participant. Another described the retreat as "an equal presentation of the harsh realities as well as the joy and blessings that result."

The men talked with the students, professors, and each other. "The thing that really helped the most," said one, "was interacting with all the participants and learn-

ing that everyone has common feelings and concerns."

Retreat speakers repeatedly emphasized that nothing, including preparing for ministry, should jeopardize the family. "I was surprised and delighted," said a woman, "to see how much emphasis, value, and importance was placed on wives."

Some of those who came will, sometime in the future, begin their training as pastors. Others will decide that service to the Lord in local congregations is a better place for them and their families. "This was a wonderful opportunity to learn and meet others," said one participant, "and even if it doesn't lead someone into the ministry, it helps show support for our beliefs and our faith."

—John A. Braun

Graduates assigned to the ministry

On July 14 the Conference of Presidents assigned one graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Theodore Olsen, to Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Mich.

The following Dr. Martin Luther College graduates received calls to the teaching ministry:

Bivens, Krista, to St. Paul Tomah, Wis.
Ehlke, Angeleen, to St. Jacobi, Greenfield, Wis.
Farstad, Jenny, to Zion, Monroe, Mich.
Flunker, Thomas, to Beautiful Savior, Milwaukee, Wis.
Frailing, Mark, to Our Savior, Wausau, Wis.
Gray, Thomas, to St. John, Dakota, Minn.
Holcomb, Mark, to Bethany, Ft. Atkinson, Wis.
Holtz, Carol, to St. Paul, Cudahy, Wis.
Jacob, Becky, to St. John, Libertyville., Ill.
Jungemann, Amy, to St. Peter, Balaton, Minn.
Just, Kirsten, to Minnesota Valley LHS, New Ulm, Minn.
Lange, Sarah, to St. Lucas, Milwaukee, Wis.
Lauber, Stephen, to St. Paul, Cudahy, Wis.
Lenz, Pamela, to Petra, Sauk Rapids, Minn.
Mueller, Heidi, to St. Paul, Brownsville Wis.
Nakamoto, Naoko, to Bethlehem, Menomonee Falls, Wis.
Schachtschneider, Susan, to Buffalo, Cochrane, Wis.
Schalow, Christine, to St. John, Baraboo, Wis.
Schalow, Steven, to Immanuel, Kewaunee, Wis.
Sielaff, Andrew, to Memorial, Williamston, Mich.
Smith, Roberta, to Zion, Crete, Ill.
Stoltz, David, to Grace, Glendale, Ariz.
Sukow, Dennis Jr., to St. Paul, Norfolk, Neb.
Timm, Warren, to St. John, Sparta, Wis.
Wels, Pamela, to St. Paul, Round Lake, Ill.
Yarbrough, Kristine, to Shepherd, Albuquerque, N.M.
Zak, Kelly, to St. Matthew, Oconomowoc, Wis.
Zamenski, Christopher, to St. Paul, Tomah, Wis.



Juneteenth Day—St. Marcus celebrated Juneteenth Day with a church picnic and gospel music jubilee. Juneteenth Day is a national celebration of the Emancipation Proclamation, when President Lincoln announced freedom for slaves in the south. Gospel choirs from three Milwaukee churches, St. Philip, Garden Homes, and St. Marcus, along with students from Lutheran high schools, who helped with inner city vacation Bible school, sang gospel music for the congregation and community.

Artwork displayed at WELS offices

Visitors to the synod's administration building in Milwaukee now can enjoy viewing artwork by WELS artists. The pieces, on loan from the artists, include paintings, sculptures, photographs, and three-dimensional illustrations. Also on display are art work and artifacts from world mission fields. Many of the artists

are members of the WELS Art Guild, according to Jan Fleming, who plans and supervises the displays.

Those who would like to lend artwork or mission artifacts may contact Jan Fleming, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398 or call 414/256-3218.

Touch of laughter

What's wrong with striving for perfection? . . . Think how 99 percent won't cut it: Your home would be without electricity seven hours a month. . . . You would have no phone service for 14 minutes a day. . . . About 35,000 newborns would be dropped by their doctor or nurse each year. . . . Your drinking water would be unsafe to drink 3 1/2 days a year (this would be an improvement in Milwaukee).

*Arizona-California District
parish schools newsletter*

"Most hospitals no longer notify the church when our members are admitted. You need to do that yourself, or have a family member do it for you," said the message in the church newsletter. "When you go to the hospital, the first person who needs to know is your doctor. The second is your pastor. After that you can tell your husband or wife."

*Siloah Lutheran newsletter
Milwaukee, Wisconsin*

Contributions are welcome. Please send them to LAUGHTER, Northwestern Lutheran, 2929 N Mayfair Road, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398.



**Mission
of the
WELS**

As 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 to nurture believers for lives of Christian service, all to the glory of God.

Oldest WELS congregation celebrates anniversary

Salem, Ann Arbor, Mich., the oldest congregation in the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, will celebrate its 160th anniversary September 26.

Friedrich Schmidt, the first

Lutheran pastor in Michigan, conducted a service for Salem's 33 families on Sept. 20, 1833, in a school in Scio Township, about half a mile west of the present church. The group incorporated on October 22,

1834, as the German Evangelical Society of Scio.

Today Salem has 439 baptized members and a school with over 60 students.

WELS capsule news

- Two new items are available from the home missions office. "Child care in the church's future," written by Gerald Kastens, administrator for youth discipleship, is intended for those who are exploring the possibility of **day care** in their congregation. The other item, "Community Profile Form," is helpful to congregations seeking the **demographics** of their neighborhood.

- The synod's Board of Trustees reports that it is taking steps to upgrade what is being done in member investments. The synod's church extension fund has been separately incorporated and the corporation will be called **WELS Church Extension Fund, Inc.** As part of the process, investment instruments and operations are being reviewed to make sure they are consistent with established national and state standards. The board of trustees will continue to have overall responsibility for the church extension fund.

- For some years the Commission for Communication and Financial Support has been producing **The WELS Connection**, a video report of synod's missions and ministries. Each monthly segment is about eight minutes long and is intended for congregational viewing. One of the producers of the report is Steve Boettcher, graduate of Fox Valley Lutheran High School, Appleton, Wis., and Emmy Award-winning photographer at WTMJ-TV, Milwaukee. Subscribing

to the video in 1993 are 710 congregations, an increase of almost 100 over the past two years.

Another 115 congregations view the tapes on a shared basis. The annual cost for the service is \$48.

- The Conference of (District) Presidents has appointed a committee to prepare scriptural principles on the theology of **Christian giving**. Chairman of the committee is Pastor Donald Sutton of Watertown, Wis., a circuit pastor. Other members are Pastors Charles Degner, Carl Voss, and Ronald Roth, Professors Paul E. Kelm and Armin Panning, and lay member Thomas Walters of Eden Prairie, Minn.

- The home mission board has received a grant of \$46,000 from Lutheran Brotherhood which represents one-half of a \$92,000 grant for 1993. The entire grant will be distributed to over 50 mission congregations throughout the United States and Canada to fund **mass media outreach programs** in their communities.

- In a recent letter from Civilian Chaplain Dan Balge, he refers to what he and his fellow chaplain jokingly call the "**Milan to Montrose Muehlhaeuser Memorial Road Rally**," a 16 day auto trip from Italy to Scotland to minister to WELS members scattered between these two cities. Muehlhaeuser was a founding father of the WELS. "All told," Balge writes, "Denny and Deb [Chaplain and Mrs. Dennis Smith] covered 10,500 kilometers in those days, touching eight countries. Said another way, they drove the equiva-

lent of a Berlin-to-Milwaukee beeline."

- In May, **Open Bible Church, Whiteriver, Ariz.**, celebrated a festival service with confirmation, baptisms, and baccalaureate service from East Fork Lutheran High School. The church is as old as the Apache mission which also is celebrating its centennial on October 2 and 3. The church's pastor is Arthur Alchesay Guenther—Alchesay, after the great Apache chief—born 69 years ago on the Apache reservation, speaks Apache fluently, and has served the reservation church for the past 43 years. If you ever get to the reservation, drop in for a chat with Pastor Guenther. He'll leave the light on for you.

- A note from our Malawi Mission Council to the world board: "On May 12, history was made in the **Lutheran Church of Central Africa** by Pastor Boloweza as he crossed the Mozambican border and held a brief worship service with refugees in their home village. These refugees were taught and received into membership by Pastor Boloweza. Most of our members who are in that village were in the Chipso refugee camp, and we expect that within a year or so this entire camp will be shut down as refugees return home. The question now facing us is: How do we continue to serve these refugees? Do we continue to use nationals, or do we call or transfer a missionary to live in Mozambique, perhaps in a town near the border?" World missions is searching for the answer.

Michigan District

• **Michigan Lutheran Seminary** in Saginaw is anticipating a freshman class of over 100 for the second year in a row, with a total enrollment of about 350, near the school's capacity of 365. MLS begins the new school year with remodeled dormitory rooms, equipped with recycled oak furniture from a Dr. Martin Luther College dormitory slated for razing. MLS students also enjoy a new entrance to the dining hall; the addition includes some new meeting rooms and offices.

• **Shepherd of the Hills, Lansing (Grand Ledge)**, dedicated a new church on June 13.

• **Emanuel, Flint**, dedicated a new church on July 17.

• **Grace, Alma**, closed its school on June 4.

• **Zion, Broomfield**, celebrated its 100th anniversary on June 27.

On July 25, **Salem, Owosso**, began a year-long celebration of the 125th anniversary of church, the 100th anniversary of the school, and the 75th anniversary of the church building. The congregation plans special emphasis Sundays each month.

• On June 4, Principal **Philip Kuske** was given a surprise celebration in honor of his 25 years at Trinity Lutheran School in Jenera, Ohio.

• St. Paul of South Haven observed numerous anniversaries in June: **Gertrude Weber** and **Esther Westendorf**, 52 years in the church choir; **Sue Holzhueter**, 25 years in the teaching ministry; **David Brohn**, 25 years as principal; **Celia Brohn**, 25 years as organist; and Pastor **William Balza**, 25 years in the ministry.

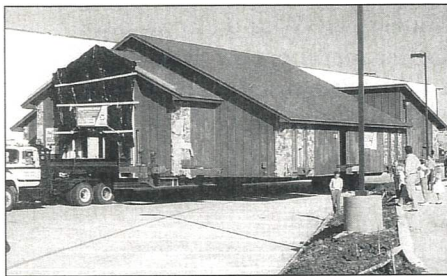
• **Appointments:** Teacher Ronald Brutlag was appointed to the District Committee on Parish Schools. Pastor Jonathan Stern was appointed to the District Care

Committee for Called Workers. Dale Root was appointed cluster communicator for the district CCFS. Pastor Mark Wessel was appointed circuit pastor for the southern circuit of the Southwestern Conference. Michael Dow was appointed to the district Mission Board. Pastor Norman Burger was appointed to the District Commission on Youth Discipleship.

—James L. Langebartels

South Central District

• **Prince of Peace, Flower Mound, Texas**, "elevated recycling to a new high," according to Pastor Robert Sawall, when a church building that was "doomed for the dump" became their new worship facility. The build-



Prince of Peace on its way to a new site.

ing, which was going to be demolished to make room for a new supermarket, was offered to the congregation at no cost—if they would move it within two months. The members managed to find a contractor, raise the money, and get the necessary permits in time to move the building to the site occupied by their too-small church. The recycled building was dedicated December 6.

• **Risen Savior, Austin, Texas**, dedicated its first church building April 18. Funding for the 4300 square foot facility was from the Church Extension Fund, according to Pastor Paul Prange. In its ten years the congregation has had three pastors: Prange, David Clark, and James Radloff.

—Charles L. Learman

• **Wisconsin Lutheran High**

Southeastern Wisconsin District

School, Milwaukee, received a \$15,000 grant for 1993-94 from AAL. The grant will enable 53 teachers to complete graduate courses or attend professional growth workshops and seminars. . . . **Enrollment** at Wisco for '93-94 is over 1,000, the first time since the '78-79 school year.

• Three Wisconsin Lutheran High School students, **Michele Miller, Andrea Binter, and Craig Roder**, winners in the 1993 Wisconsin State Fair art competition, had their works displayed at the state fair in August. Andrea also was awarded a one-week summer studio scholarship at UW—Green Bay.

• Good Shepherd, West Allis, celebrated the 25 years of the teaching ministry of **Lyla Spiegelberg**. All 25 years have been at Good Shepherd.

• Faith, Sussex, observed the 25 years in ministry of teacher **James Schmidt** on June 13.

—Robert A. Sievert

• The 1993 graduating class of

Western Wisconsin District

Martin Luther Preparatory School, Prairie du Chien, numbered 37, representing Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Mexico, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, and Wisconsin. . . . **Alan Jeffers** celebrated his 25th year of ministry this year, the last nine at MLPS. . . . **Herbert Jaster** retired at the end of the '92-93 school year. Since 1979 he has served as librarian at MLPS. . . . **Thelma Kaiser** retired after 24 years as a registered nurse, 10 years at Martin Luther Academy and 14 at MLPS.

—Elton C. Stroh

Obituaries

Oscar J. Siegler 1914-1993

Oscar J. Siegler was born September 28, 1914, in Bangor, Wis. He died May 29, 1993, in La Crosse, Wis.

A 1940 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, he taught at Northwestern Lutheran Academy in Mobridge, S. Dak., and served parishes at Pickett and Forest, Wis. He was the first president of Martin Luther Academy, New Ulm, Minn., and led the school in its relocation as Martin Luther Preparatory School in Prairie du Chien, Wis.

He was president of the Northern Wisconsin District, second vice-president of the synod, a member of the Northwestern College board of control, and secretary of the synod's doctrinal commission.

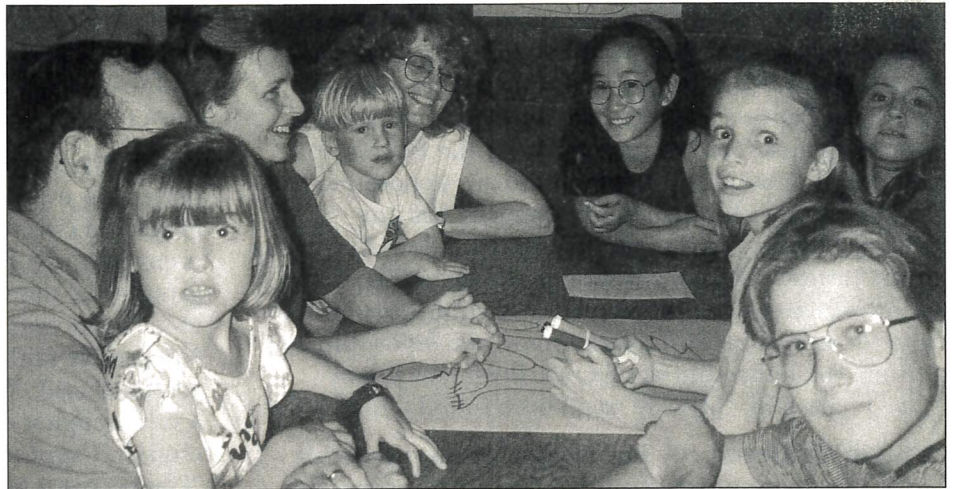
He is survived by his second wife, Myrtle; sons David (Frances), and Martin (Shelly); daughters Elizabeth (Frank) Padjen, Mary (Robert) Hoffmann, and Ann (Timothy) McClaren; two stepchildren, Thomas (Susan) Towner and James Towner; two brothers, Hilbert (Sally), and Reginald (Hildegard); and 16 grandchildren. His first wife, Harriet, preceded him in death.

Eleanor M. Wassman 1906—1993

Eleanor Minnie Wassman was born March 15, 1909, in Ormsby, Minn. She died May 26, 1993, in Mountain Lake, Minn.

A graduate of Dr. Martin Luther College, she taught in Monroe and Owosso, Mich., and in Milwaukee, Wis. She also worked at Northwestern Publishing House, Milwaukee.

She is survived by two sisters, Selma Nibbe and Lucinda (Harry) Piepenbrink.



Families shared Bible studies and projects at St. Paul, Lake Mills, Wisconsin, during family Bible class.

Vacation Bible school— not just for kids anymore

The traditional vacation Bible school of morning lessons for children has given way in many congregations to evening sessions that include adults and children.

St. Paul, Lake Mills, Wis., held family Bible class each evening for a week. Families took turns presenting a Bible lesson for the group before adults and young people split up for separate follow-up activities. "They dressed in costumes or used puppets or acted out the story," said St. Paul member Jerry Kastens. "Even the teenagers got involved."

Pastor Warren Henrich of St. John, Redwood Falls, Minn., says his congregation began having evening VBS a few years ago. "We have family Bible week," he said. "We can involve the entire family." Henrich said the evening schedule makes it easier to find teachers. "Men who couldn't come during the day are also able to help," he said. "That's a plus."

At Gloria Dei-Bethesda, Milwaukee, Wis., adults attended a marriage enrichment seminar while children followed a traditional VBS curriculum. Over 80 children and

50 adults, many of them non-members, attended the program, according to Vicar Gerald Kuhnke.

The last week in July is family Bible week at St. Paul, Muskego, Wis. Adults have a choice of three programs while children attend Bible school. The church also provides a nursery for small children.

"We used to have the traditional morning VBS," said St. Paul family minister Joel Nelson, "but mostly it was kids from the congregation. Not many unchurched children came. And this gets families together."

Resurrection in Milwaukee held evening VBS for the first time this summer, with an adult class held at the same time as the children's lessons. "We didn't get more teachers by having it in the evening," said Pastor Curtis Peterson, "but we did have more in adult Bible class, including some who have never come before."

Peterson thinks Resurrection may hold evening VBS again next year. "I think it works well," he said, "and it's a different situation than 20 years ago. You have to go with the flow."

—Dorothy J. Sonntag

New Baptist fellowship organized . . . In May the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship formally organized in Birmingham, Ala. The group was formed in 1991 by Southern Baptists eager to bypass the denomination's official agencies and programs. So far the fellowship, composed of Southern Baptists who are opposed to their denomination's fundamentalist leaders, has not declared itself to be a separate denomination. According to the terms of the constitution members will be defined as individuals or congregations "who contribute annually to the ministries and operations of the fellowship." Joining the fellowship was former President Jimmy Carter who said, "My wife and I have found a home."

A myth shattered . . . The myth of adults supporting their aging parents was shattered by a recent study. The statistics show that, with the exception of the oldest age groups, parents give more to their adult children than vice-versa. For example, household heads in the 35-to-44 bracket gave gifts valued at \$100 to parents and received \$500. Things finally equaled out in the 55-to-64 age category as adult children continued to contribute \$100 a year to their parents and received the same amount in return. In the oldest category—65 to 75-year-olds whose parents were in their mid-eighties or older—children gave an average of \$25 to their parents and received nothing.

Teens dropping out . . . Young people are leaving the church at an alarming rate, especially at the college level. In the 1970s, studies showed that youth were the age group most likely to be troubled in their faith and least likely to be involved in congregational life. These same youth, now grown, are for the most part still uninvolved in church. These baby boomers' children, now in college, are even less involved in the church than their parents were. Young people appear to have made the

decision to abandon the church even before they arrive at the college campus, and are predisposed to hostility and resistance toward campus ministries and college-town churches that attempt to reach them.

Protect religious freedom . . . "Shocked and saddened" by events near Waco, Texas, this spring, 16 religious and civil rights organizations issued a joint statement warning that government crackdowns on cult groups like the Branch Davidians could have undesirable ramifications. Pointing out that many of today's respectable faiths started out as minority sects, the organizations said, "We oppose any attempt to define what is a valid religion or set the parameters of a proper church." Appealing to the First Amendment, they said, "Government has no business declaring what is orthodox or heretical or what is a true or false religion,"

Some sex surveys unreliable . . . Surveys on sexual behavior run the gamut from mostly reliable to those with bad methodology and even downright fraud. Among the surveys that rate high marks from observers is the recently released study by the Battelle Center and Temple University. From this study newspapers across the country reported that just over one percent of men in the age 20-39 category are homosexual. This differs sharply with the figure of ten percent promoted by the homosexual community. Most other surveys, however, such as mail-in surveys from popular women's magazines and the reports produced by Samuel and Cynthia Janus and by Shere Hite, are essentially worthless, according to Thomas Smith, director of the General Social Survey at the University of Chicago.

News reported in this section is derived principally from Religious News Service, but use is also made of the Ecumenical Press Service, Evangelical Press Service, and Lutheran World Information.

NOTICES

The deadline for submitting notices is six weeks before publication date.

ANNIVERSARIES

GLADWIN (HAMILTON TWP), MICHIGAN—St. John (90th). September 19, 8:30 a.m. worship, noon meal, 3 p.m. anniversary service. For more information contact Elaine Walters, 517/539-1574.

SEBEWAING, MICHIGAN—New Salem (140th). September 26, 9:00 a.m. worship, brunch follows. For more information call 517/883-2062.

SOUTH SHORE, SOUTH DAKOTA—Our Savior (25th). October 24, 11 a.m. mission festival, dinner following, 2:30 p.m. anniversary service. For more information call 605/756-4260.

CHANGE IN TIME OF SERVICE

FREEPORT, ILLINOIS—Our Savior. Sunday services, 10:30 a.m.; 9:30 a.m. from Memorial Day to Labor Day.

PRESCHOOL SEMINAR

Teachers and administrators are invited to a seminar on preschools Sept. 25, 9-3:30, at St. Peter, St. Peter, Minn. For information or registration, write St. Peter Lutheran Church, 427 W Mulberry, St. Peter MN 56082 or call 507/931-1866.

KIDS' PRAYER CALENDAR

The Lutheran Women's Missionary Society has produced a calendar with the emphasis on WELS world missionary families. Each month features pictures and letters from children of world mission families. Birthdays of family members are noted on the appropriate day. A directory of addresses is included. The calendar runs from September '93 to August '94. It is available for \$2.00 from LWMS, 8420 W Beloit Rd, West Allis WI 53227.

REDEDICATION

Miami, Florida—Cutler Ridge. October 23. Rededication of restored worship/educational facility service-3 p.m. Dinner following. For more information contact Pastor Steve Lockman, 20851 Gulfstream Rd, Miami FL; 305/251-1744.

WELS LUTHERANS FOR LIFE CONVENTION

WELS Lutherans for Life celebrates its tenth anniversary Oct. 9 at Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee. Syndicated columnist Cal Thomas will deliver the keynote address. The convention will include worship, workshops, and activities for children. Free babysitting. Call WELS LFL for registration information: 1-800-729-9535.

DR. MARTIN LUTHER COLLEGE MUSICAL COMEDY

The drama club of Dr. Martin Luther College presents a musical comedy, "How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying," Nov. 12 at 7:30 p.m., Nov. 13 at 7:30 p.m., and Nov. 14 at 2 and 7:30 p.m. Reserved ticket sales begin October 1 (\$3.50, \$4.00, & \$4.50). Call 507/359-1671, Mon.-Thurs., 4:30-9:00 p.m.

VACATIONING PREACHER NEEDED

Free lodging in parsonage and use of a vehicle in exchange for conducting a Sunday service and Bible class. January 9 and/or 16, 1994. Caribbean beaches are only a ten minute drive away. Contact Pastor Joel Jaeger, 809/450-1484.

NOTICES

CHURCH LIBRARIANS

WECLO—Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Church Librarians Organization—will meet Oct. 16, 9:30-3:30, at St. Peter, Fond du Lac, Wis. A professional librarian will present a workshop on the Dewey decimal system. The business meeting will include the results of the first mail-in election. The day will include a book exchange, a book display from Northwestern Publishing House, and a question-and-answer period to share ideas with other WELS librarians. Lunch will be provided. For more information, write WECLO, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398 or call 414/256-3222.

CENTRAL AFRICA MEDICAL MISSION CONTRIBUTIONS

Contributions to the African medical mission should be sent through your area contact woman. If there is no contact woman, please send contributions directly to the treasurer, Bea Panke, 6601 N 78th St, Milwaukee WI 53223.

CHANGE OF MINISTRY

PASTORS:

Fischer, James S., from St. Luke, Jackson, Mich., to Peace, Wilmet, Wis.
Huebner, Lloyd O., from Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., to retirement.
Huehn, Burgess A., from Our Savior, Princeton, Minn. (ELS), to First English, Ashland, Wis. (ELS)/St. Paul, Hurley, Wis. (WELS).
Jaster, Herbert A., from Martin Luther Preparatory School, Prairie du Chien, Wis., to retirement.
Mueller, Richard W., from Lord and Savior, Waunakee, Wis., to Abiding Savior, Weslaco, Tex.
Nommensen, Carl R., from Luther HS, Onalaska, Wis., to retirement.
Ruege, John A. Sr., from Our Savior, Bismarck, N.D., to Peace, Isabel/St. Paul, Timber Lake, S.D.
Sauer, Joel Ph., from Immanuel, Kewaunee, Wis., to Trinity, Temple, Tex.
Schleicher, Richard H., from St. Paul, Amherst, N.H., to King of Kings, Clifton Park, N.Y.
Seelhoff, Donald W., from Redeemer, Roswell, N. Mex., to St. Paul, Hopkins, Mich.
Westendorf, Thomas B., from St. Paul, St. James, Minn., to Minnesota Valley LHS, New Ulm, Minn.

TEACHERS:

Bame, Marianne, to St. Peter, Milwaukee, Wis.
Bauer, David T., from Wisconsin LHS, Milwaukee, Wis., to St. Paul, Saginaw, Mich.
Berthall, Rebecca A., from Our Redeemer, Yelm, Wash. (ELS), to Faith, Tacoma, Wash.
Briney, Rebecca, to St. John, Dowagiac, Mich.
Brown, Lisa A., to St. John, Jefferson, Wis.
Dowling, Margie A., from Peace, Otsego, Mich., to St. Paul, South Haven, Mich.
Enter, Christine, to Grace, Oshkosh, Wis.
Eternick, Mark D., from Pilgrim, Menomonee Falls, Wis., to St. John, Waterloo, Wis.
Habeck, David L., from Arizona Lutheran Academy, Phoenix, Ariz., to Evergreen LHS, Kent, Wash.
Hafemeister, Rebecca, from St. Lucas, Milwaukee, Wis., to St. Mark, Watertown, Wis.
Henzi, Carolyn A., to Trinity, Brillion, Wis.
Horn, Katherine L., to Good Shepherd, West Allis, Wis.
Huebner, Cheryl, to Immanuel, Appleton, Wis.
Markgraf, Peter A., from St. Paul, Fort Atkinson, Wis., to Christ the Lord, Clearwater, Fla.
Martz, Heidi M., from St. John, Baraboo, Wis., to St. Paul, Cudahy, Wis.
Plocher, Andrew K., from St. John, Dakota, Minn., to Our Redeemer, Santa Barbara, Cal.
Radichel, Jerald E., from Zion, Greenleaf, Wis., to St. Paul, East Troy, Wis.
Rosenbaum, Steven J., from St. Paul, Fort Atkinson, Wis., to King of Kings, Garden Grove, Cal.
Schmal, Daniel E., from St. Martin, Watertown, S. Dak., to Michigan LHS, St. Joseph, Mich.
Schmidt, Judith A., to Trinity, Hoskins, Neb.
Schuelke, Lois E., to First, Green Bay, Wis.
Schuetz, Delores, to Beautiful Savior, Milwaukee, Wis.
Schwartz, Craig V., from Lakeside LHS, Lake Mills, Wis., to New Beginnings—A Home for Mothers, Denver, Col.
Snamiska, Paul W., from Calvary, Sheboygan, Wis., to Pilgrim, Menomonee Falls, Wis.
Steffen, Kurt J., from Beautiful Savior, Milwaukee, Wis., to St. Paul, Muskego, Wis.
Weber, Daryl, from St. Paul, Norfolk, Neb., to Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Mich.

MICHIGAN LUTHERAN SEMINARY GUILD

The Michigan Lutheran Seminary Guild will meet Sept. 19 at MLS. Registration-2 p.m., opening service-2:30 p.m. Meeting, program, meal, and tours will follow. Call 517/781-3728 for reservations.

WISCONSIN LUTHERAN SEMINARY AUXILIARY

All women of the WELS/ELS are invited to attend the annual WLSA meeting on October 2 in the chapel/auditorium of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin.

Registration and coffee hour will begin at 9 a.m. and the meeting will conclude by 3 p.m. Registration fee is \$7.50 per person, including lunch. Make checks payable to "WLSA" and include your name, address, phone number, congregation, and conference.

Mail registrations by September 20, to: Joanne Hemker, c/o Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 N 113th St, Milwaukee WI 53226-3284.

NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATORY POLICY AS TO STUDENTS

Since God has not restricted the ministry to his church to people of any one race, color, national, or ethnic origin; and since one of the stated purposes of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod is to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with all people; and since the purpose of our synodical schools is to educate students for the preaching and teaching ministry of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, these schools cannot and do not discriminate on the basis of color, national, or ethnic origin in administration of their educational policies, admission policies, scholarship, and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

The schools of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod are Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota; Martin Luther Preparatory School, Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin; Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Michigan; Northwestern College, Watertown, Wisconsin; Northwestern Preparatory School, Watertown, Wisconsin; Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin.

PASTORS INSTITUTE

The 1993 Pastors Institute at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary will be held on five Mondays beginning Sept. 27. Sessions will be in the lower level of the library from 1:30-4:30 p.m. Two lectures will be presented:

Current issues in Christology—Prof. Wilbert Gawrisch. Christianity stands or falls with the doctrine of Christ. In these lectures contemporary views of Christ's person and work are examined, including the denial of his deity, the virgin birth, his miracles, and his bodily resurrection.

Issues in adult Christian education—Prof. David Kuske. The following topics will be presented: Awareness of purpose; Types of content; Methods of learning; Size of the group; Working toward growth.

Registration fee is \$25, payable to Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. Registration may be sent to Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Attn: President Armin Panning, 11831 N Seminary Dr, Mequon WI 53092.

ADDRESSES

PASTORS:

Ahlsweide, Eugene, 3500 E 128 Pl, Thornton CO 80241
Balge, Daniel N., Am Jungstück 17, 55130 Mainz, Germany
Brassow, Roy, 219 Crabapple Rd, Fredericksburg TX 78624
Crawford, Michael, RR3 Box 173, Caledonia MN 55921
Gieschen, Philip D., 111 N 3rd St Box 98, Eagle River WI 54521
Horn, Alan, PO Box 315, Mazeppa MN 53956
Knickelbean, Paul W. em., 7500 W North Ave, Wauwatosa WI 53213
Koehler, Ronald G. III, 2833 E Manchester, Tucson AZ 85716
Lindemann, Daron J., 1639 Jessamine Rd, Lexington SC 29073
Spaude, Philip P., 1514 N 12th St, Beatrice NE 68310
Strawn, Robert A., 642 S 9th Ave, Broken Bow NE 68822
Swanson, George, 5391 Raleigh-LaGrange Rd, Memphis TN 38134

TEACHERS:

Erdmann, Colene, 890 Western Ave, Columbus WI 53925
Strasser, William A. Jr., 211 N Government, Valentine NE 69201.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS Northwestern Preparatory School

Prof. Franklin Zabell announced his retirement effective August, 1993. The Board of Northwestern Preparatory School hereby requests nominations for music professor. The individuals nominated should be qualified to teach music on the secondary level, direct choral groups, and administer all phases of the music program, including academic, choral, instrumental, and keyboard music.

Nominees should have a thorough knowledge of the musical heritage of the Lutheran church and of classical and contemporary music. In addition, nominees should display love for the work of the church, have a firm yet evangelical approach with students, and encourage young people through teaching and example to pursue full time church work.

Nominations with accompanying information should be submitted no later than October 1 to Pastor Kenneth Gawrisch, Northwestern Preparatory School, 1300 Western Ave, Watertown WI 53094.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS CURRICULUM EDITOR FOR NORTHWESTERN PUBLISHING HOUSE

Northwestern Publishing House is extending a call for a curriculum editor and requests the members of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod to nominate candidates for this position. The candidate should be a member of the WELS or in fellowship with it. The nominated person must be theologically trained as a teacher or pastor. The individual should have some journalism and computer education or experience or be willing to obtain this education. The person should be competent in English literature, composition, and grammar, and be able to write clear contemporary English. The position requires someone who is tactful, courteous, dependable, and highly organized.

Nominations including all pertinent information should be received no later than October 8. Send all information to Elwood Lutze, Secretary, NPH Board of Directors, 1250 N 113th St, Milwaukee WI 53226-3284.

CORRESPONDENCE COURSES FOR PRISONERS

An article in the July NL indicated that Bible correspondence courses for prisoners were available from NPH. At this time the courses are available only from the WELS Commission on Special Ministries, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398, or from Pastor Edgar Herman, 25375 E Huron River Dr, Flat Rock MI 48134.

ITEMS AVAILABLE

ALTAR, TWO PULPITS—Free for cost of shipping. Contact Bruce Nording, Our Savior Lutheran Church, 13170-58 Atlantic Blvd, Suite 309, Jacksonville FL 32225; 904/745-5099 or 904/221-1865.

CHOIR MUSIC—Former organist/choir director's collection. Call Louise Schiefelbein, 414/549-5475.

HAMMOND ORGAN—2 manual, 1 octave pedals. Free for cost of shipping. For more information call 608/362-8720, Wed.-Fri. 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Good Shepherd, Beloit, Wis.

NAMES WANTED

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

SPRINGFIELD, BRANSON, MARSHFIELD, MISSOURI—Contact Pastor Edwin Lehmann, 4747 S Golden, Springfield MO 65810; 417/887-0886.

MANUSCRIPTS REQUESTED

Northwestern Lutheran welcomes unsolicited manuscripts. These must be typed and double-spaced. Please send one copy only. Manuscripts not accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope cannot be returned. Although there are exceptions, feature articles should not be less than 500 words or more than 1000 words. Send manuscripts to Northwestern Lutheran, WELS, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398. (NL mail is delayed if it is sent to the publishing house.)

Students in Pastor John Ibsch's religion class at Wisconsin Lutheran High School in Milwaukee read some issues of Northwestern Lutheran. They wrote to tell us what they thought. Here are some excerpts from their letters.

What I like

... I thought it was going to be boring, but it wasn't. It was really interesting.

Jenny Fenske

... Before this, I have not spent much time reading NL. However, now I think it would be a good idea to make a habit of reading it.

Steve Schultz

... Let me commend you on your radical magazine. It is totally awesome. . . .

Matthew Miller

... The articles are interesting and educational. I recommend every teenager read NL. . . .

Marcia Brince

... This is a great magazine and should be read by everyone who can read. And for those who can't, someone should read it to them.

Jason Schmidt

... NL is very easy to read. The articles cover a wide variety of topics. . . . The lessons can be applied in your life.

Paul Schlomer

... I would have done more reading of [NL] in the past. . . . I'll be looking forward to the next issue.

Philip A. Miller

... NL has good articles for high school age kids. . . .

Jennifer Carr

... You write about real life experiences that teenagers can relate to. . . .

Matt Huebner

My favorite features in NL

... I would like to thank you and Paul Kelm for "Life is looking up."

Beth McEachern

... I find especially interesting the real-life stories that give practical applications to a Christian's daily life.

Lisa Tortorice

... I enjoyed the editorials. . . . "News around the WELS" has become my favorite section. . . . Thank you for "Readers forum."

Spencer Matthews

... As strange as this will seem, one of my favorites is "Notices." . . . Another of my favorite sections is "TeenTalk."

Jason E. Goede

... "Thought for today" is a good beginning. . . . "News around the WELS" keeps us up to date. . . . "TeenTalk" is mostly all poems.

Beth Hirschmann

... One of my favorite articles is the editorial.

Cheryl Luedke

... I especially like the news section.

Jennifer Kleist

... Most enjoyable for me is your Bible readings each month. This really works for me. . . .

Angie Roth

... "Your question, please" is one of my favorites.

Laura Braeger

What I don't like

NL doesn't really appeal to me. . . . A better idea would be to have an offshoot of NL for a younger age bracket.

Kim McCormack

... You need more stories about problems we face today and how to deal with them with the Lord's help.

Cassandra White

... There should be more topics for teens. . . . NL shouldn't just be written for grown-ups, it should be for all ages.

Angelica Grisby

... If you want to get more people to read your magazine, put some sports in it.

Jim Dolphin

... The articles seem to avoid the tough issues in life. They seem to only scratch the surface.

Jacki Draeger

... Maybe a question and answer column like a "Dear Abby."

Jennifer Ross

... Start on page one in every issue instead of continuing the page numbers.

Andy Bilda

(Please note, Andy, that we took your advice.)

... Your articles try to preach to us too much. . . .

Matthew R. Goede

... The thing I don't like is that NL is only sold to Christians.

Michael J. Fleischhacker

Young people ages 12-18 are encouraged to send brief articles, artwork, photos, or news on teen activities to *TEENTALK*, Northwestern Lutheran, 2929 N Mayfair Road, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398. Include your name, address, school, church, and a self addressed stamped envelope for return.

Human nature is no excuse

by Paul E. Kelm

In the past few years “dirty old men” have become “sex addicts” and joined the growing list of people whose habitual sin is a disease. We have learned to pity the abusive parent because statistics suggest the abuser was abused as a child. Cold-as-stone juvenile offenders are victims of society. Distributing condoms to adolescents, insisting on abortion “rights,” and defending pornography as free speech are, at least, consistent with the trend.

Don't misunderstand. Psychology and sociology have provided legitimate insights into how sin works in groups of people. Research on addiction and recovery can assist the Christian counselor; and the study of families, gangs, and cults contributes to the resources of a Christian teacher. How sin warps some psyches differently than others and takes fallen nature's inclination toward evil over the edge is a study not incompatible with biblical truth.

The problem is that explanation easily becomes exoneration. Putting a fifty-dollar label on my sin won't justify it. “Predictable” dare not be twisted into “acceptable.”

Explaining or exonerating?

Because secular social science cannot deal with sin and grace, but must address the behavior of sinful beings, explanation and exoneration get blurred. For example, while searching for the cause of homosexuality in parenting patterns and adolescent experience is valid and helpful, it can move this sin along a continuum from understandable to natural and finally to normal. Attempting to explain wrong behavior as a result of low self-image, although demonstrable, quite easily becomes a sophisticated exoneration of sin.

Encouraged to get rid of guilt trips, people have learned how to cancel their own guilt—a rather god-like presumption. In search of freedom, society lost its sense of responsibility. The generic excuse for sin is: “It's nobody's fault. It just is.”

*Explanation of what causes
sin easily becomes exoneration.*

*Rationalizing instead of
repenting is a long-standing
dodge of human nature.*

It's time we said: Human nature is no excuse.

Rationalizing or repenting?

The place to begin saying that is not the editorial page of your local newspaper, however. It's in your heart. You see, rationalizing instead of repenting is a long-standing dodge of human nature. Remember “Boys will be boys?” Christians wrestle with

the urge to excuse their sin, just on a smaller scale.

Our human nature wants to use the rat-race of our work as an excuse for a “good” drunk every so often. We want to appeal to the disparity between what we have and what our employer has to legitimize “petty” theft. We try to excuse our verbal abuse as “healthy” letting off steam. And the way Washington squanders our tax dollars, why, it's almost patriotic to “fudge” on our tax return.

Human nature is no excuse—not what my human nature does or what yours does to me. We are accountable for our sins—the ones we can explain as much as the ones we'd rather not—accountable until we confess them to the Savior who already paid the price for them.

And that is the sad irony about human nature. The rationalizations that get in the way of repentance leave sin dogging us. Instead of getting rid of sin, rationalizing leaves us caught between guilt and go-for-it. Forgiveness, by grace, is the only way to be free.

Let's hold each other accountable for our sins. Don't let me rationalize my lovelessness with excuses like: “I was just too busy to. . . .” Don't let me off the hook. That hook is Jesus' way of getting my attention.

Don't ask your pastor to go easy on you from the pulpit. You need your sins, not society's, exposed, because that's what makes his assurance of God's forgiving love so sweet, so relevant.

Life is looking up!



Paul E. Kelm is campus pastor
at Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee.

Atonement— more than just a church's name

**Before Atonement became a name, it was a word used
to describe the great work that Christ performed**

by Fredric E. Piepenbrink

When I became pastor at Atonement Lutheran Church in Milwaukee in 1984, only five pastors had served the congregation, and four of them were still living, active, and members of the church. That remained true as late as ten months ago. But all that has changed. Now the figures are that, in the 63-year history of Atonement, it has had six pastors, and three have gone on to be with the Lord.

On November 14, 1992, Kurt Koeplin, while still a full-time pastor of Atonement (and frequent contributor to this periodical), went to be with the Lord after a brief illness. Then, on June 22, 1993, Kurt Eggert, a pastor of Atonement for fourteen years and project director for the new hymnal the last nine years, also received his crown of life. They are both still sorely missed by all who knew and loved them.

A topic at the top of the list

For any congregation, the experience of burying its pastor is an emotional one. The memories of their Christ-centered sermons, their loving concern, and their wise personal counsel, are particularly strong at that time. But when two shepherds of the flock are taken from one congregation in so close a time frame, the experience is particularly heart-rending, and impresses upon us again the psalmist's words, "Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom" (Psalm 90:12).

With these thoughts in mind, I have chosen the Bible study topic to present to you in the next six issues. It is a topic that could be considered at the top of the list when it comes to gaining a heart of wisdom. It is timeless and unchangeable, but for those who are unfamiliar or unclear about it, it is a topic that needs to be examined immediately if they are to number their days aright. In fact, I can say

without hesitation, that if I knew I had only six more articles to write for NL, they would definitely be on this topic—the atonement.

"At-one-ment"

Yes, "Atonement" is the name some have given to their churches. But before it became a name it was first a word found in both the Old and New Testaments and used to describe the great work that Christ Jesus performed in making it possible for God and mankind to be "at-one-ment" again. "Atonement" is the one word which answers the entire question, "Why did Jesus have to suffer and die?"

Next time, the Lord willing, I want to simply define the word for you—what does "atonement" mean? Then, in the next issue I will describe the Old Testament "Day of Atonement" that prefaced Christ's great work—I'll warn you right now, it will be a rather bloody picture. Then, the satisfaction of the atonement—we will see what a thorough work Jesus did in being the Savior. Then, the extent of the atonement—we will find that it is universally effective but not universally accepted. Then, the 20th century misunderstandings of the atonement—they are many and completely devilish. Finally, we will connect the atonement and the everyday Christian life.

That is the plan for the next six issues. And one more thing, I wish to dedicate these articles to the memory of Pastors Kurt Koeplin and Kurt Eggert whose faithful ministries to the church and the synod as a whole always centered on "the atonement."



*Fredric Piepenbrink is pastor
of Atonement, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.*

A season of growing discontent

“A season of growing discontent” was the headline on a front page story in our local newspaper. It reported that lawmakers were finding voters in their home districts disappointed and disgusted; their mood was described as “dark.”

Our synod’s Committee on Program Review said in its report to the 1993 convention: “In the institutions of our society, our businesses, and even our churches there is a growing cynicism and loss of confidence. We don’t trust people. Almost every part of the church seems to be suffering the same loss in confidence. Selfishness, disrespect for authority, and finger pointing have infested not only society but also the church. In WELS we have similar problems. The church of today is in a confidence crisis!”

What is the reason for this crisis in confidence? There is no single answer to this question. The causes of discontent are complex. No doubt a contributing factor in both society and the church (including the WELS) is the multitude of problems which confront us, problems which call for hard and sometimes costly decisions.

And once decisions are made, there will be people who find fault with those responsible for the chosen course of action. The vision of critics becomes ever sharper as time elapses. After several years they know perfectly well what should have been done back then. Our English language has several expressions to describe such people: back seat drivers, second guessers equipped with 20/20 hindsight, arm chair strategists.

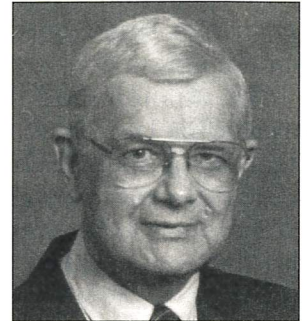
There are always some who imagine that if given the chance, they could fix what ails government and church. Carl Sandburg described the type in a poem, “Under the Capitol Dome.” “There are those who speak of confusion today/as though yesterday there was order/rather than confusion. There are those who point to confusion today/as though if given a chance/they could tomorrow transform it into order.”

People should not be surprised that even respected leaders make errors in judgment. Biographies of famous world figures reveal, more often than one cares to know, that they muddled through critical moments in history. Modern writers on Civil War battles are very good at pointing out where some famous general goofed. Such historians seem not to appreciate what a mess war is. In our personal and community lives, the choice of the best course of action is not always clear.

All of which is likely to be quite disconcerting to anyone who thinks that human beings are in complete control of their lives and fortunes and futures. A society which prides itself in technological advances is especially prone to the heresy that humans can determine precisely what course of action to take in any given situation.

Fortunately there is one who perfectly controls our destiny. To know him and his steadfast love is to enjoy contentment.

Victor H. Prange



Victor Prange is pastor of Peace, Janesville, Wisconsin.

by John F. Brug

It is time for our synod to speak publicly about the Bosnian situation. I am sure you are aware of the facts—the “ethnic cleansing,” the use of rape by the Serbs as a policy of war. Would there be silence if WELS members were raped and slaughtered? The Bosnian Muslims are also God’s creation. Surely we Christians cannot stand idly by while the horror continues.

Your question involves more than the Bosnian situation. The larger question is “How does the church oppose injustice?”

The mission God has given to the church is to preach his law which condemns all sin and to proclaim his gospel which changes the hearts of sinners so that they love God and their fellow human beings.

Too often today even Christians seem to think that the only two options we have when facing evil are resorting to violence or doing nothing. Let us not neglect the third option, the powerful weapon God has given us in prayer.

As preachers of God’s law we certainly can and should condemn the atrocities which you cite. Many practical questions arise, however, if we implement your suggestion that our synod convention issue a resolution condemning the Bosnian Serbs.

To whom do we address it? The Serbs have shown they have no regard for the opinion of the nations of the world. Will a resolution of a small church they have never heard of impress them?

If we address our resolution to our own government or the UN, what do we ask them to do? Bomb the Serbians’ military positions, industries, or civilians? How much violence is appropriate to end the violence?

As citizens of our country we have the right to ask our government to pursue policies which will protect innocent victims throughout the world.

However, the church’s assignment is not to pres-

sure the government to change people’s behavior with bombs and guns. As church members we should make spiritual efforts to oppose evil by preaching and by prayer.

Would our reaction be any different if the victims were fellow Lutherans? When Jesus, the apostles, and the early Christians were persecuted, they used their legal rights, but did not call on others to defend them with violence. At the time of the Reformation when the Catholic church and rulers were using force to suppress the Reformation, Luther was very reluctant to call for military force to protect him from persecution. He accepted the legal argument that Protestant princes and rulers had the duty to confront Catholic force with force, but stated that as a Christian he was ready to suffer persecution rather than call for violent help (Plass, *What Luther Says*, p. 600). If we were in the same circumstances, we should pray for the same strength and courage which he showed.

God placed two servants into the world with the duty of opposing evil on his behalf. One is the government, which opposes force with force. The other is the church, which uses the tool God has given to carry out our duty: changing sinful, hateful hearts with the power of the word. That is more than enough of an assignment to occupy us full time until Christ returns. For this reason the WELS has wisely refrained from trying to influence government actions with its resolutions.



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

John Brug teaches theology and Old Testament at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin.

READERS FORUM

Priority reading

My wife and I fastened our seat belts and settled back for a plane trip from Atlanta to Chicago. The stewardess came down the aisle offering reading material. I asked whether she

had a Bible. “I think I have one,” she said, “and I’ll try to find it.”

We appreciated her endeavor. Twice more she spoke to us about it. “I’m still trying to find one,” she said. And then, “I’m sorry. I can’t find one here.”

The most famous book, Holy Scripture, was not part of the priority list for the flight. Yet we knew that the Word of God Incarnate was on board.

James Albrecht
Wauwatosa, Wisconsin

Sound bites

You ask what I can say about my faith in two minutes (Life is looking up, June).

I can recite the Apostles Creed in about 40 seconds. In the next 70 seconds I would hit the high points of Luther's explanation, and I would close with Philip's invitation in John 1:46, "Come and see."

*Richard Berth
Coleman, Wisconsin*

Membership statistics

In "From this corner" (June) Pastor Schaefer writes about WELS membership statistics. He looks at the number of new congregations and is encouraged. I look at the membership numbers and am appalled. For every person added, we lost three.

Evangelism statistics are the important ones: prospects visited, unchurched who have come to faith in Christ, lay members active in evangelism, etc. Those numbers are a measure of our commitment to Christ's mission for his church. We have the greatest message in the world and are compelled to share it!

The WELS mission as we now practice it is to preserve doctrinal purity, keep separate from anything judged to be impure, educate our children to keep the tradition going, and support collective and institutional (rather than personal) ministry and evangelism.

The membership numbers tell us it is time to change. Our mission should be to develop a personal walk with the Lord and a personal ministry, witnessing the gospel to everyone with whom we come in contact, and ministering to fellow human beings.

Bible study, Christian education, and daily prayer are necessities for fulfilling the mission. The objective is not to increase membership, but to develop committed Christians who are fired up to serve and witness.

*Philip Schwarz
Burnsville, Minnesota*

Pastor Robert Hartman, administrator for Evangelism, replies:

Mr. Schwarz's statistic of three lost for every person added is misleading. He is comparing "back door" losses only to adult confirmations. It is also inappropriate to compare prospects visited to unchurched who have come to faith. One is our assignment; the other the work of God. Nevertheless, as a church body we are not growing in numbers as our total members losses are equal to our total gains.

The mission of the church urges us as members of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod united in faith and worship by the word of God to make disciples throughout the world for time and eternity, using the gospel to win the lost for Christ and to nurture believers for lives of Christian service, all to the glory of God. In this respect Mr. Schwarz is right to encourage us all to be "committed Christians who are fired up to serve and witness."

Choosing a WELS doctor

Regarding Dr. Lindemann's article, "Choosing a doctor who shares your faith" (June). Great! If she is willing to move to Kingman, Arizona, and set up a practice, I will agree to be her first patient. But really, how are people in an area such as this to find a doctor who shares my faith? We were fortunate to have one, but he has now retired.

It is one situation to be in a predominately Lutheran area, but it is entirely different in other areas. What good is that good advice she has given?

Furthermore, how do those of us who prefer a lady doctor find one, let alone have her be a WELS member?

*Robert F. Lindner
Kingman, Arizona*

Dr. Lindemann responds:

Though we may wish to have a physician who belongs to our own church, i.e. WELS, it may need to suffice for him or her to be Christian. Even in Wisconsin there are not many WELS doctors. Medical societies and referral services such as those advertised on television will often provide this information.

In the interest of conciseness, letters are subject to editing. Full name, address and daytime 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 READERS FORUM, Northwestern Lutheran, 2929 N Mayfair Road, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398.

October '93

- 1. 1 Kings 9:1—10:13
- 2. 1 Kgs. 10:14—11:43
- 3. 1 Kgs. 12:1-32
- 4. 1 Kgs. 12:33—13:34
- 5. 1 Kgs. 14
- 6. 1 Kgs. 15:1—16:7
- 7. 1 Kgs. 16:8-34
- 8. 1 Kgs. 17, 18
- 9. 1 Kgs. 19
- 10. 1 Kgs. 20
- 11. 1 Kgs. 21
- 12. 1 Kgs. 22
- 13. John 1:1-18
- 14. Jn. 1:19-34
- 15. Jn. 1:35-51
- 16. Jn. 2:1-22
- 17. Jn. 2:23—3:21
- 18. Jn. 3:22-36
- 19. Jn. 4:1-26
- 20. Jn. 4:27-54
- 21. Jn. 5:1-29
- 22. Jn. 5:30-47
- 23. Jn. 6:1-21
- 24. Jn. 6:22-40
- 25. Jn. 6:41-71
- 26. Jn. 7:1-24
- 27. Jn. 7:25-52
- 28. Jn. 7:53-8:29
- 29. Jn. 8:30-59
- 30. Jn. 9
- 31. Jn. 10:1-21

One of the marks of God's people is their love for his word. Many have said, "I will start at Genesis and read the Bible through to the end." But the project is soon abandoned. These proposed readings—5 to 10 minutes each day—will take you through the entire Bible systematically and with variety. The next month's readings will appear in the next issue.

THROUGH MY BIBLE IN THREE YEARS

This column is devoted to two classmates of days long ago who lived through the times and changes in ministry highlighted in this special edition of *Northwestern Lutheran*. Neither one was much given to looking back to the “good old days.” Living in the present with one eye cocked on the future was their way of doing things.

Kurt John Eggert and Carl Herbert Mischke, the two classmates, have just laid down their ministry after 46 years, Carl by retirement and Kurt by death. Both placed their considerable talents at the disposal of their Lord. My relationship with Kurt and Carl was not casual, nor are the words I write without personal bias. After all, Kurt was my brother-in-law and instrumental in finding me a wife among his three sisters.

Kurt was a talented musician, a virtuoso at the piano, and several music schools in the East beckoned. But the Lord made it clear that he should serve his synod. And so his wonderful musical talents fell to us. Of his 46 years of ministry, only four of them were in academia—as music head at the old Wisconsin Lutheran College. Thirty-two years were spent in the pastoral ministry, the place where musically challenged people of all ages worship their Lord and sing his praises, the place where experimentation is kept to a bare minimum—or else.

He was now ready for his final nine years of service as project director for our new hymnal—just completed—*Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal*. It is a memorial to his pastoral spirit, and to the same spirit which infused his faithful associates in the hymnal task.

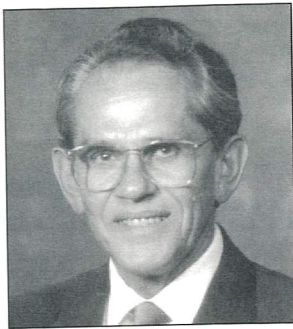
Classmate II was President Mischke. He was an outstanding student—using today’s categories, a summa cum laude graduate. Our paths parted after seminary and 20 years later, as a district president, he headed the committee responsible for the Missio Dei offering of which I was the director. After the lapse of a year, he was chairman of the Conference of Presidents’ finance committee which had responsibility for the stewardship counselor, an office to which I was called in 1967. From that time until his retirement in August 1993 he was my “boss.”

He was good for the synod—and for me. Much change was going on, in our country and in our synod. We had broken out of our midwest home. Only a few years into his presidency we planted a mission in the 50th state. Through the ’70s and into the ’80s, seminary classes reached 50 and then 60 graduates annually. Mission offerings were hard-pressed to keep up with the expansion. Organizational problems arose as a synod in 17 states quickly grew to one in 50 states. Intimacy was replaced by remoteness. Geographic sprawl has a price.

The society around us changed. Through the decade it grew contentious, “sudden and quick in quarrel.” Everybody talked and no one listened. The church is not inoculated against such changes in society. In the midst of the melee it was good to have a president for the time. Gentle, evangelical, ready to listen, firm and unswerving in his devotion to the mission of Jesus Christ with a clear vision of where we ought to be.

I will miss my two classmates. We are all better for it that both, under grace, labored among us.

James P. Schuyfer



Pastor Kurt Eggert (1923-1993) had served the past nine years as project director of *Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal*.



Pastor Carl Mischke has retired after 14 years as president of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

My two classmates lived through the changes in ministry highlighted in this issue. Neither one was much given to looking back to the “good old days.”

You're invited to join our extended family.



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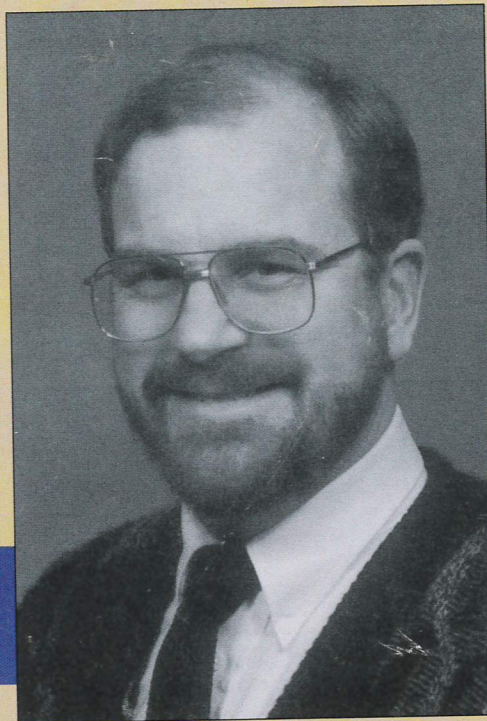
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God has a sense of humor

What kind of message was God sending me?

by David L. Hein



A college professor once told me that the pulpit is no place for humor. That made me question for the first time since I was five whether I should go into the ministry. I had a sense of humor. I must have gotten it from somewhere. I always thought it was a gift from God.

Fortunately, I had other professors who shared both their Christian love and their humor. They encouraged me to continue.

But I've gotten older. And with age one should become serious, right? "Grow up," we're told. Some of us have resisted this for quite a while, but then there are days. . . .

I rose grumpy. It was Monday morning. My schedule was over-full. I looked around my house and saw too many jobs still half-done. Well, they'd just have to stay that way for a while. I was too busy. You know the "why-has-God-dumped-so-much-on-me" feeling.

My wife and children received only a mumbled good-bye as I plodded out the door. I trudged to my office. God wisely put few people in my path. I was grumpy.

Laid out before me were the papers that needed to be worked on before I could visit our new families. Paperwork, bah humbug. I decided to step into the men's room before diving into the work on my desk.

Ready to leave the men's room, I reached for the doorknob and turned, and pulled—and found it was stuck.

I was locked in the men's room.

Trying repeatedly to open the door resulted only in continued failure. The custodian was working in

an area where he'd never be able to hear me. No one else was in at this time of morning.

Over the years I've heard people say things like, "I think the Lord let me have this heart attack as a way of telling me to slow down." And such things might well be true. But what kind of message was God sending by letting me spend half an hour locked in a men's room on a Monday morning?

Perhaps God was merely reminding me that he does have a sense of humor—and so should I.

The Savior who died on the cross to wash my sins away must think it's pretty ridiculous that I can't take a few extra minutes out of my morning to give a hug and kiss to those he gave to be my children and to my wife.

Whether minor aggravations or major problems, when all are taken in perspective of the cross of our Savior and the eternity of joy he has promised his children, our sense of joy ought not be easily lost. The Lord is always at the side of his children, whether they are at home or work, in a hospital bed or an office or school—or even a men's room with a stuck door.

It has been twenty years since that professor made me question God's sense of humor. As I've used that time to further explore his word, God has used that word and those years to teach me more and more about his love, his kindness, his sympathy, his grace, his comfort—and his humor.

David Hein is pastor of St. Matthew, Oconomowoc, Wisconsin.