

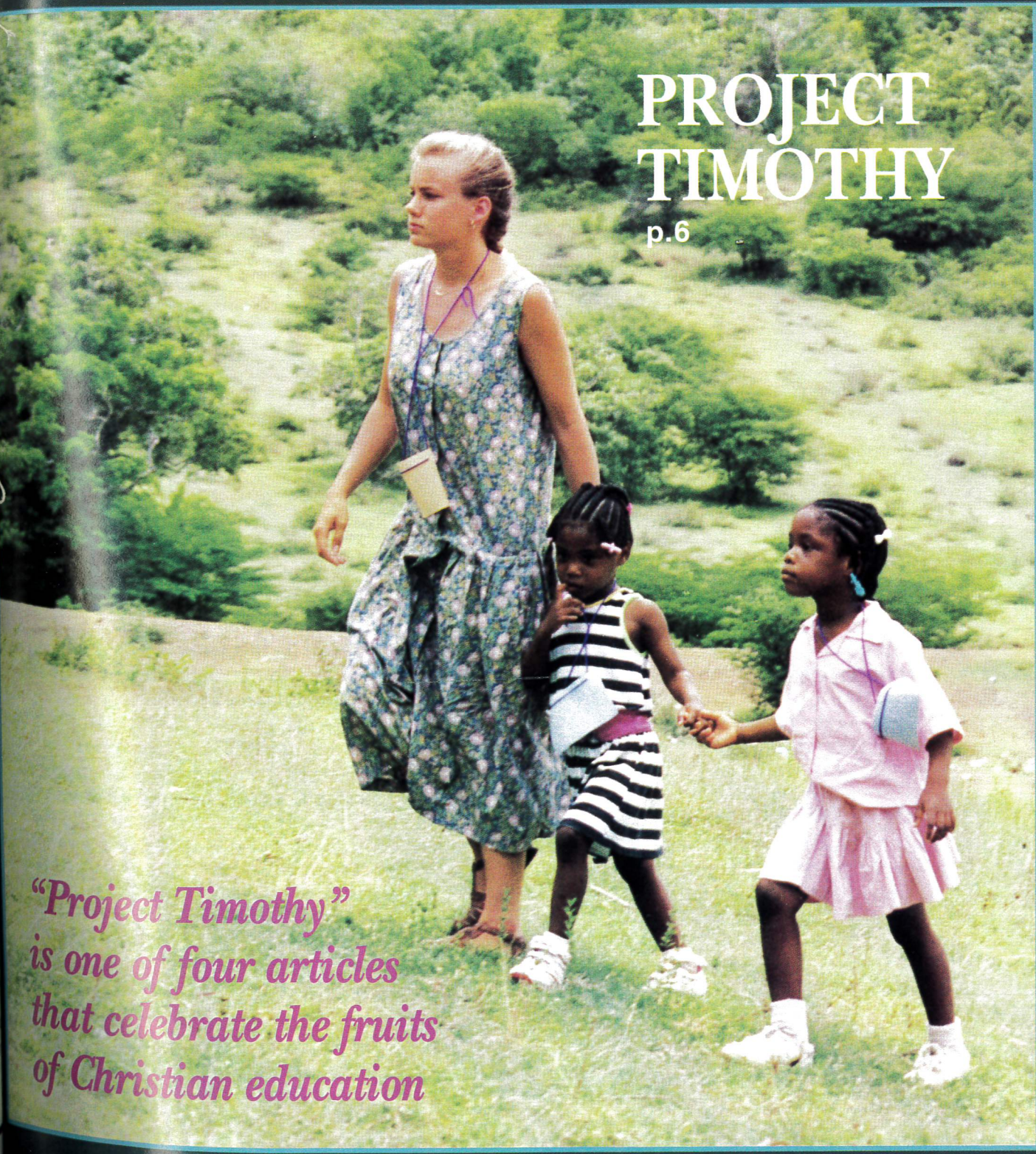
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*“Project Timothy”
is one of four articles
that celebrate the fruits
of Christian education*

INTRODUCING WELLSPRING

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NATIONAL DAY 4, 1993

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May 16-22, 1993

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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!

- 5.



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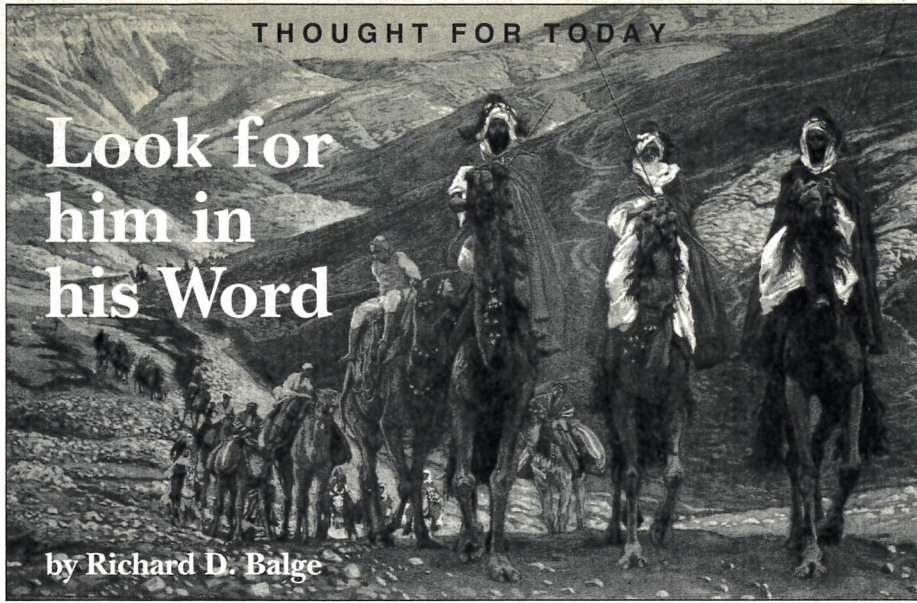
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Look for him in his Word

JAMES L. TISSOT

by Richard D. Balge



*Where is the one who has
been born king of the Jews?
We saw his star in the east
and have come to worship him
(Matthew 2:2).*

and lead God's people Israel was to be born in the hometown of King David, Bethlehem in Judea.

The Magi were the men of science of their time. Men of science can know just so much, however, on the basis

of observation and speculation. Even to those who affirm the existence of God, nature and the study of nature and speculations about nature will never reveal the grace and mercy of God, never reveal the king of the Jews in his full significance.

It was the work of Magi to observe a new astronomical phenomenon, apply their astronomical reckonings to it, and decide what its significance was. How did the Magi who came to worship Jesus connect the appearance of a star with the birth of a Jewish king? Why, with their high culture, their busy careers, their respected status, should they bother to travel a great distance at great expense to pay homage to that king?

How did they know Christ was born?

A guess that gives glory to God is that they connected the appearance of the star with the words of a young Jew who had lived in Babylonia as a captive exile. More than 400 years before, Nebuchadnezzar had placed Daniel in charge of all the wise men in his empire. The teaching of Daniel and continued contact with a large Jewish community in Babylonia may have provided the Magi with certain scriptural knowledge they connected with the appearance of the star.

To be sure, God could have given them a special revelation apart from Scripture. The miracles recorded in Scripture and the sacraments our Lord instituted, however, teach us that his usual way is to combine signs with his Word.

How did they know where to find him?

In any case, the Magi set out for Jerusalem, the place where they might expect a new king of the Jews to be born. They announced their arrival and their mission at the court of King Herod and asked their question: "Where?" Herod asked the Bible experts, and the experts found the answer in the Word of God, in the prophet Micah. The ruler who would feed

How do we know where to find him?

Only the Scriptures can do that, telling us where he is to be found—and much more. Where is the one who is born king of the Jews? He is in the Scriptures, which tell us that he is true God and true man, come to redeem us lost and condemned sinners, purchasing us to be his own. He is in holy baptism, where God makes his natural-born enemies his adopted children and heirs of eternal life. He is found in his Supper, where he gives us his body and blood for forgiveness, life, and salvation. In Bethlehem, in Jerusalem, wherever two or three are gathered in his name, he is there. He is at the right hand of God, making intercession for us. He is in this world, controlling all things in the interest of his church. These things nourish our faith as we look for him, and find him, in his Word.



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

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

■ Thank God for Christian schools! It came about accidentally, but this issue developed into one that celebrates the fruits of Christian education. First we received an article about young people who shared the gospel with the Apaches (p. 8). In the next day's mail came a newsletter telling how students did mission work in the Caribbean (p. 6), and a story of grade schoolers learning about Christian fellowship (p. 7). We already had a piece by Dan Schmeling (p. 10) summing up the blessings of Christian education. Are Lutheran schools worth the time and effort and cost? These stories say they are.

■ You'll notice a new name for the editor's column—"The editor's pen"—to go with the new name—Gary Baumler—at the bottom of the page. (Interestingly, he has been associated with "Northwestern" for a number of years: Northwestern College, then Northwestern Publishing House—and now *Northwestern Lutheran*.) With his editor's pen he brings a love for words and for the Word. We're glad he's here.

Dorothy Sonntag

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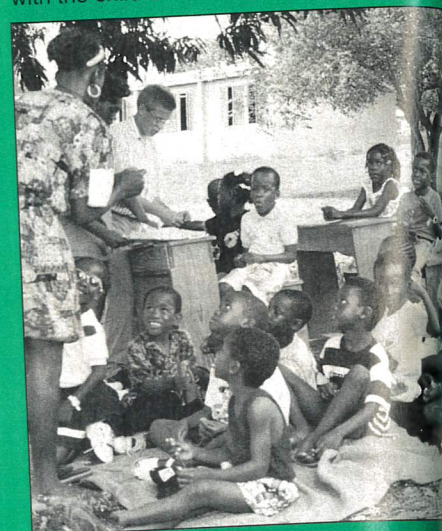
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Northwestern Prep students and youths from St. John, Antigua, worked together to share the good news of Jesus.

Students share the gospel with the children of Antigua.



PROJECT TIMOTHY

A taste of mission work

by Dorothy J. Sonntag

Northwestern Preparatory School, in Watertown, Wisconsin, starts young people on the road toward the ministry. Most of that preparation is academic. But last summer some NPS students had a chance for first-hand experience in ministry.

Eleven young people spent July 14 through August 4 in the Caribbean as part of Project Timothy, a program that gave them a taste of mission work. Together with members of St. John, Antigua, and Trinity, St. Lucia, the teens canvassed neighborhoods and taught vacation Bible school.

Students who went to Antigua were Jay Bickelhaupt, Andrew Jacobson, Jennifer Neuman, Jonathan Scharf, David Sulzle, Nathan Sutton, and Sara Tollefson. At St. Lucia were Ryan Heiman, Mary Koelpin, Rebekah Learman, and Monica Thurow. NPS staff members Ann Sauer and Daniel Voigt accompanied them.

Work and fun

"The Northwestern students worked side by side with their Caribbean counterparts in sharing the good news of Jesus," said the *Caribbean Lutheran*, a newsletter edited by missionaries David Kehl, Mark Henrich, and Joel Jaeger. "They painted signs, they canvassed neighborhoods, they taught vacation Bible school together."

The teens had time for fun, too. They camped on the beach, visited Antigua's annual carnival, and learned about Caribbean cuisine. "Quite a few mem-

bers cooked special meals such as saltfish and fungus, rote, pepperpot, sauce, seasoned rice and ducana, according to the newsletter. "They not only enjoyed preparing some of their favorite dishes for their guests, but also watching their reactions when they gingerly bit into each new food."

Tan, tired, and tested

The visit gave the students an idea of the "joys and privileges as well as the challenges and frustrations of sharing the gospel in a nation and culture far different from their own," said the *Caribbean Lutheran*, as they left "tan, tired, and tested for the Lord."

The trip was the first for Project Timothy and was funded by a grant from the Siebert Foundation. WELS Kingdom Workers will sponsor the project in 1994, according to executive director David Timmer. He noted that Kingdom Workers sponsors a similar program, Project Host, for students from Michigan Lutheran Seminary (another synod preparatory school) who go to Mexico each summer.



Dorothy Sonntag is assistant editor for Northwestern Lutheran.

NPS President Mark Schroeder initiated the program, and he is pleased with Project Timothy's results. "A lot of the students came back saying they'd like to go into missionary work," he said. "It gave them a taste toward entering the ministry."

The fellowship factor

by Vicki E. Schmeling

Grade school students learn about Christian fellowship



The third and fourth grade class of Emanuel, West St., Paul, Minn., during their three-day adventure at the Beaver Creek Reserve.

Fellowship is a hard concept to understand when you're only 8 or 9 years old. The kids in Gene Martens' class learn firsthand just what fellowship means. Every winter, Martens, a teacher at Emanuel Lutheran School, West St. Paul, Minnesota, takes his third and fourth graders and parent-chaperones on a three-day, two-night adventure to the Beaver Creek Reserve, located near Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

Martens stresses that this experience covers many aspects of his curriculum. Students write the devotions they use at Beaver Creek. "The devotions are absolutely remarkable," Martens stated. "Their faith becomes real. It develops into what the child can teach the teacher."

Learning to work together

Martens finds the planning brings the class close together. "There is a strong sense of responsibility on the part of the kids. They really take ownership of this trip. And the trip builds confidence. It is really remarkable to see young children become so self-assured."

Throughout the adventure, there is hands-on participation through craft activities, trust-building exercises, even kitchen chores. "There is a lot of positive peer pressure involved," said Martens. "These guys encourage one another to complete tasks. They learn what give and take is all about. This is a genuine sharing experience."

Bible lessons are incorporated into many aspects of the trip. The morning of the first day everyone goes on a creation walk. The object is to find something that is a part of God's world and relate it to a Bible story. "I want the kids to look for God in everyday

things," Martens remarked. "The Word always governs our experience."

Parents benefit, too

An added benefit is that the parent-chaperones get to know one another. They find out they have many things in common with these other parents, besides their faith.

"I'm glad I went," said Mark Schindeldecker. "I met people I'd previously seen just at church. At Beaver Creek I got to really know them. Spending a couple of days with these people was great. I really felt good about the entire trip."

Positive changes

Martens has seen kids transformed by this trip. "Take the classroom comic, put him in a kitchen, and he is intent and eager to learn. He's overjoyed at being able to flip pancakes. Or the shy little girl opens up and other kids can see the depth of her knowledge. Self confidence grows. Communication skills improve. These positive changes are long lasting, maybe everlasting."

The teacher benefits, too. "You see more facets of a child," Martens said. "I have a much better understanding of the children because this experience rounds out my picture of them."

"Can't we stay longer?" the kids beg as they prepare to leave Beaver Creek. Gene Martens knows this experience bonds the youngsters together. "This is the best picture of Christian fellowship I know."

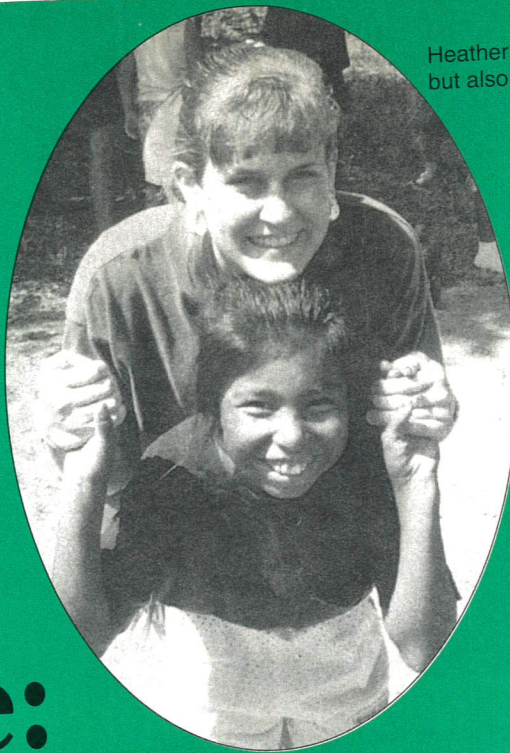


Vicki Schmeling is a member of St. James, West St. Paul, Minnesota.

A lesson in service: teens learn by doing

Students share the gospel with Apaches

by Laurie Biedenbender



Heather Wightman was not only a teacher, but also a friend to this Apache girl.



Students all over the nation are studying quadratic equations, participial phrases, and the periodic table. But students at Lutheran schools learn more than science, sentence structure, and the Civil War. They also learn about service.

Last summer Lakeside Lutheran High School, Lake Mills, Wis., students had the best kind of service: They learned by doing.

Under the guidance of Emily Armstrong, 19 National Honor Society members spent a week of service in Apacheland last July. These juniors and seniors ran a morning vacation Bible school for about 25 young Apaches and a five-day overnight Bible camp for 45 older Apache children.

"Our chance to be missionaries"

"So often we drop money in a collection plate and let someone else do the work," said seniors Judi and Janine Rhodes. "This was our chance to be the missionaries."

Sharing the gospel isn't always the easiest kind of service, but as the Lakeside students began their work, they learned that confidence comes with

patience.

"I had a hard time sharing my faith with children but responsibility changes people," said Chad Walters, who is planning to enter the pastoral ministry. He helped these kids learn that it's okay to be a 'hero of faith' and to let your light shine."

Junior Gary Pufahl added, "I know now that I can tell about Jesus and not feel ashamed."

Service does have its rewards, especially when working with children. At the end of the week senior Heather Wightman said, "It was great listening to the children sing out God's praises. It reminded me how much I can learn from the faith of little children."

Lana Bradley of Good Shepherd, Beaver Dam, added, "To see the sparkle in a child's eye as he speaks of his dear Savior is a feeling that nothing can replace."

And Heather Werner, a Watertown senior, summed it up, "They probably taught me more than I taught them."

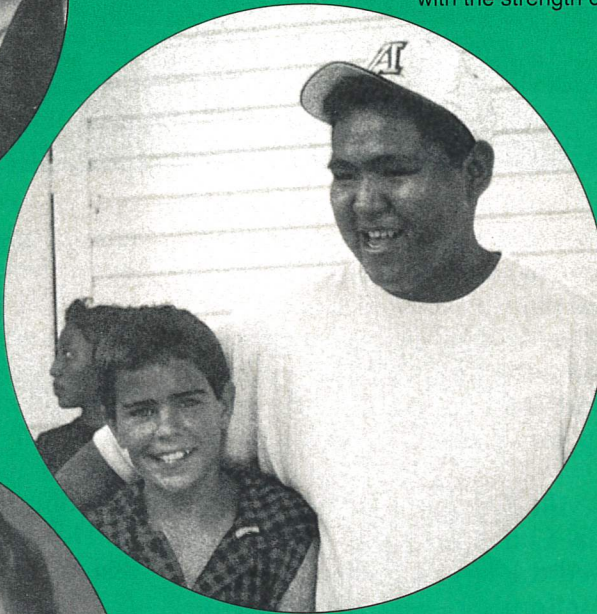
"People are people, and they need Jesus"

Some of the students felt a bit apprehensive about



Janine Rhodes takes advantage of her "chance to be a missionary."

Quintero, an Apache and college junior, profoundly affected the Lakeside students with the strength of his faith.



Kate Lauersdorf poses with part of her "great big family."



Greta Stuebs teaches a craft as part of the vacation Bible school program.

learned from this experience that service truly is a gift of the Spirit, but it is also learned. Raising the awareness of the needs of others and meeting those needs is a matter of conscious effort and preparation."

For the Apache children and the Lakeside students the hours of effort and preparation paid off. The children learned more about their Savior from young missionaries who were not only teachers but friends. And the high school students realized the difficulty of mission work and the great need for willing workers. Many now voice a desire to become ministers. Others mention health care, day care, and other service professions.

Twenty years from now, 19 former Lakeside Honor Society members may forget the Missouri Compromise and $E=MC^2$. But they will not forget the valuable lesson they learned last summer, a lesson they can apply to real life again and again—a lesson in service.



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

"Service is a gift of the Spirit"

As Armstrong reflected on the trip, she said, "I

working with another culture but soon learned, in the words of senior Matthew Munro: "No matter what culture you are in, people are people and they need Jesus just as much as I do."
 "We all belong to God as one great big family, and we'll all be together one day in our heavenly home," added Kate Lauersdorf.
 The students' mission work also included some manual labor. Lakeside's Pastor Martin Stuebs led a work crew that did some maintenance on the East Fork compound. Then the entire school was thoroughly cleaned—an important job since reduced funding to the mission eliminated a janitor.

Ministry in action: nurturing children in the Word

by Daniel M. Schmeling

My visit brought me new appreciation of the ministry of God's people



I came to give and share ideas about Christian early childhood education. I left with a renewed appreciation of the ministry of God's people.

I came to the Seattle-Tacoma area for a workshop on early childhood education. I wanted to listen to Christian early childhood educators share their concerns and to help focus the efforts to support their ministry.

I arrived in time to visit Evergreen Lutheran High School and Holy Trinity Lutheran elementary school. At Evergreen I observed the largest freshman class—31 students—in the school's 14-year history. They came from as far as 100 miles away. They laughed and worked with new Christian friends who were strangers just a few days earlier.

Elementary classrooms abuzz with activity

The classrooms of Holy Trinity were abuzz. First and second graders were doing art projects. Third and fourth graders were talking about Abraham Lincoln—"How tall was he?" A second grader showed me volcanic ash his father had brought home from a business trip to Alaska. A third grader—new to the school—told me of the *osteogenesis imperfecta* which causes her bones to break and restricts her to a wheelchair.

Her mother marveled at a church body maintaining a nationwide system of 365 elementary and 20 secondary schools, and a college to educate its teachers. She was thrilled to have "discovered" this school for her daughter and appreciated the Christian education provided for her.

As I wandered through the school, I found the district president, Pastor Warren Widman, meeting with the circuit pastors of the Pacific Northwest District. They had come many miles to discuss ways in which parishes could be assisted in carrying out their ministry.

High school: busy teachers taking extra time

After school, Evergreen principal Jonathan

Schoeneck told me of the blessings God is showering upon their school—a large freshman class, dedicated Christian teachers, a successful fund drive enabling the purchase of land for the school's future, and a supportive parent-pastor-teacher network.

After waiting until 5 p.m. for student activities to finish, an Evergreen teacher drove a vanload of students to meet their parents at a shopping center pickup point. He had been counseling a troubled teenager. He was a busy teacher taking extra time, providing assurance of God's love.

Teaching young children God's truths

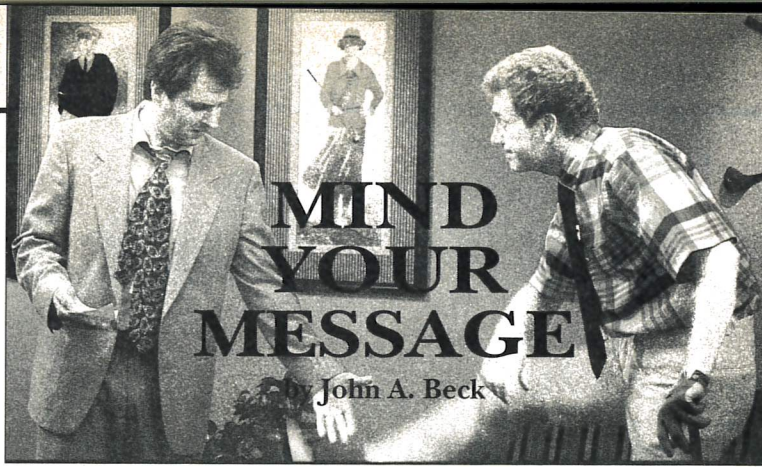
Early childhood education is the fastest growing area of full-time Christian education in WELS. In ten years the number has grown from 57 preschools with 770 children to 161 programs serving 2500 children. In order to support the teachers and schools, the WELS Commission on Parish Schools conducted workshops in each district.

On the second day of my visit, 11 teachers met at Calvary Lutheran School in Bellevue, Wash., to talk about early childhood education. Pastor Douglas Weiser reminded us to teach the children the truth God has taught us. Linda Philip provided an overview of educational practices appropriate for young children. Mary Olson gave examples of integrating God's Word into the early childhood curriculum.

In my two-day visit, God reminded me of the young people he brings to our schools to be nurtured in his Word. He reacquainted me with pastors and teachers dedicated to bringing that Word to life. I introduced me to parents committed to providing the best Christian education for their children. I was reminded of the Pacific Northwest with more than I brought.



Dr. Daniel Schmeling is administrator for the Commission on Parish Schools.



A scene from a video used in the one-day communication skills seminar.

Our message—the love and forgiveness of Jesus Christ—must get out.

“Mind your manners,” Mom used to say. Good advice, Mom. “Mind your own business,” my sister used to say. Again, good advice.

“Mind your message,” I would like to say to you. Keep your eyes open for the communication skills seminar, *Minding the Message*, from the WELS Commission on Evangelism.

Minding the Message encourages us to pay attention to the way we present the gospel. It is designed to develop our interpersonal communication skills in order to bring the message effectively in the worship service, classroom, counseling sessions, small groups, home, office, or wherever we are.

A workshop that works

Does it work? Absolutely! I had the privilege of participating in a workshop and being one of four “guinea pigs” who were videotaped “before” and “after.” Despite a few nervous moments in front of the camera, I am pleased to have video evidence that the manner in which we present our words can be improved by paying attention to important communication skills.

The workshop concentrates on four skills: voice, eye focus, body language, and organizing the message. Though we all communicate, we likely have not given much thought to how we do it. Now is the

time to start.

Ignoring communication skills is like delaying road maintenance. When we fail to maintain our roads, the result is potholes and ruts. They make the ride a whole lot tougher.

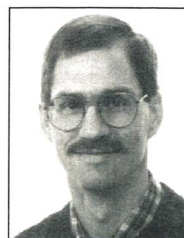
So it is with communication. If our speech is filled with the potholes of wringing hands, shuffling feet, shifty eyes, and hopelessly wandering messages, we make it tough on those with whom we wish to communicate. When we get stuck in the rut of repetitive “ums” and monotone monologues, we risk losing our passengers altogether.

Hard work, but great fun

Sound like hard work? Sure it was. Sound like dull work? No way! It was great fun. More than that, it was a celebration of the gifts God has given his church.

This workshop is not about turning out camera-ready “slicks.” This is about identifying our strengths and building on them.

I’ll leave it to Mom to say, “Mind your manners.” I’ll leave it to your sister to say, “Mind your own business.” As a “graduate” of *Minding the Message*, allow me to say, “Mind your message.”



John Beck is pastor of King of Kings, Wasilla, Alaska.

Minding the Message

How can anyone concentrate when 3000 to 5000 messages bombard us every day through television, radio, and print?

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Changing the way people view the world

To teach others about Jesus,
we need to know what they believe

by Roger J. Sprain

“**A** Hispanic woman wants to take instruction. She doesn't speak much English. What should I do?” How would you answer that question?

You might be tempted to look at the practical aspect of this question and suggest answers for working across the language barrier. But a more important question needs to be answered first: What does she believe? You need to understand the basic beliefs that compose her worldview—the world as she sees it.

Basic beliefs

Every human being has beliefs. This is a tree; that is a house. The tree is living; the house is not. Our basic beliefs are about the fundamental questions of life. Is there a God? How did I get where I am? Why is there evil? What happens when I die? How we answer these questions reveals our worldview.

Our basic beliefs are usually formed by our culture. They affect all other beliefs and values and determine

many of our actions—the way we nurture our children, the way we worship, the reason we are faithful in our work.

Our lifestyles and worldviews usually change very little. Zacchaeus changed his life style when he came to know the Lord Jesus as his Savior. But these changes came after a change of heart. We must be careful not to think that when people change an outward custom or behavior, their views have changed.

Let me give you an example. A Hispanic woman has a home altar with a statue of the virgin Mary as the centerpiece. I work with her to put away the altar. She puts it away to please me, but she continues praying to the virgin. Her basic belief has not changed.

Two world views

We can divide people into two groups: those who trust they are saved by grace through faith in Christ and those who believe they can work out their own



As you study the Word with people of other cultures, put yourself in their shoes. Listen and learn about their beliefs as you tell them about Jesus.

salvation.

Even though the members of the second group all believe they can be saved by works, we cannot trust them all in the same way. Of course we must apply the law and gospel to all. However, this group includes atheists, agnostics, Hindus, animists, Buddhists, Muslims, and others. Some need to hear one emphasis, some another. For instance, if we are teaching a Buddhist, we must clarify the resurrection or he may think we are speaking of reincarnation.

To learn another person's view of the world, we need to know the basic facts of his or her culture, especially the significant teachings of that culture's religion. We also need to learn the person's specific understandings about that culture and its religious beliefs.

Listen while you teach

Finally, we can't transform others' worldviews. The Holy Spirit does that through the Word of God. Our

role is to teach the Word.

As you study the Word with people of other cultures, ask what it means to them. Tell them what it means to you. Keep in mind their worldview. Try to put yourself in their shoes. Listen and learn about their beliefs as you tell them God's history. Keep in mind that the unbelievers' worldview may be built on work righteousness. Apply God's law and gospel. Finally, pray for God's blessings.

Anyone who knows the Bible stories can do this, and all of us—laypersons, pastors, teachers—are going to have the opportunity to share God's Word with those who do not know the Christian religion.

We will need to ask them to teach us about their background and culture so that we can teach them about Jesus. Then the Holy Spirit, working through the Word, can transform their worldview. Then they will come to know the joy that is ours in Christ Jesus.

Roger Sprain teaches Spanish and minority cultures at Northwestern College, Watertown, Wisconsin.

Coming back can b

*WELS has 65 missionaries
stationed in 16 world mission fields.*



by Ernst H. Wendland

Going to serve in a foreign mission field requires social, cultural, and linguistic adjustments. Even after they arrive in the field, missionary families set time aside for language study and orientation. “Culture shock” is a problem.

But coming back can be a problem, too. Missionary returnees also need

be harder than leaving

to make social and cultural adjustments. Those going to the Far East, Africa, or South America will probably not be spending the rest of their lives there.

Calls overseas are sometimes limited to a certain number of years, depending on available funding. Nurses in African medical mission programs are on a time-contract basis. And teenage children of missionaries often return to the US to continue their education.

Readjustment to America

Returning missionaries and their wives will tell you that readjustment to North American ways is often more difficult than leaving for exotic places. Somehow the "first love" gospel experiences are replaced by more organizational requirements than would seem to be necessary. North America has changed far more than had been expected. One often gets to feel like a square peg in a round hole.

Nurses who have served in our African medical mission programs return to a profession that serves under a completely different set of circumstances. Working in a fully staffed and elaborately equipped hospital isn't the same as being in charge of a bush dispensary. They are no longer surrounded by extreme poverty, confronted with problems of tropical medicine, and faced all alone with life and death situations. A primary role has suddenly become secondary. They carry out orders rather than make decisions. Sometimes they wonder if they are really needed.

Missionary kids

Even more acute is a situation referred to in missionary circles as the MK (Missionary Kid) identity gap. The problem arises when teenage children of missionaries need to return to North America to continue their education, since there are no secondary school facilities available in the country of their resi-

dence. For these children the foreign country has actually become their home.

One MK describes his returning experiences this way: "The luster of my arrival in North America soon tarnished as I realized that I did not share much with my peers. They had other agendas. Conversations around me seemed to be in code. I tired quickly of being a foreign novelty. I did not feel understood by anyone. I wondered where I fit in. If I was home, why did I feel like a foreigner?"

One problem connected with MK syndrome is that people are not aware of it. Even parents have difficulty understanding it. What's the problem? Haven't these children had the best of both worlds? Doesn't America extend every possible opportunity? Why these feelings of loneliness and dissatisfaction?

We may fail to recall that home is where one's heart is, and that a stranger in paradise can become the most depressed person in the world.

No easy answers

There are no easy answers to these problems. At least we haven't heard of any. We've heard of assistance coming from various quarters—from a sympathetic family member or friend, from a close Bible study group, from those who have had similar experiences and have formed a sort of "returnees anonymous," from mental therapy organizations. It takes patience, love, and understanding to help close the identity gap.

Most important, of course, is the assurance offered by a loving God in his Word, a God who cares, and who will at his own time and in his own way compensate for whatever trials have been encountered in his service.



Ernst H. Wendland, a retired missionary to Africa, lives in Two Rivers, Wisconsin.



SALLY SCHAEFLER

Revelation: Jesus' last word to his people

The Bible, from beginning to end, is a book about Jesus. The Old Testament, God's first promise, carries the prophetic theme of the coming Messiah. The New Testament begins with the record of how God kept that promise by sending Jesus as the Messiah and ends with the book of Revelation, a new prophetic promise that Jesus will come again.

Revelation shouts a loud "Amen" to everything the Bible says about Jesus. It reinforces God's promises from Genesis to Jude. It is a book of comfort and victory for the New Testament believer. It lifts our eyes from the cares of this life to peer through the windows of heaven. When Dr. Siegbert Becker wrote his professional commentary on Revelation he aptly subtitled it: "The Distant Triumph Song."

The writer

John introduces himself as the writer of Revelation, but only after he identifies Jesus as the real author.

The book takes its full name from John's opening words: "The revelation of Jesus Christ . . ." (1:1). An earlier Bible writer summarized how God communicated his promises through the ages: "In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets in many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son" (Hebrews 1:1-2). Positioned at the end of our New Testament, Revelation is the last written Word of the great prophet, Jesus, to his people.

The writer, John, is the disciple whom Jesus loved (John 19:26). This apostle also wrote the Gospel of John.

the three general letters that bear his name. Toward the end of the first century AD John was serving the Christian congregations in Asia Minor. During that time the Roman emperor, Domitian (81-96 AD), revived the practice of emperor worship and began to enforce it. Christians who refused to acknowledge him as god were persecuted.

As their spiritual leader, John encouraged these believers to remain faithful and to worship only Jesus as Lord. For his efforts he was exiled to Patmos, an island off the mainland of what is now Turkey. He writes that he was banished there "because of the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus" (1:9,10). From there he addressed the seven congregations of Asia Minor with Jesus' message of comfort and final victory.

Seven visions

Jesus' message for these congregations was communicated through John with a series of seven visions. This accounts for the unusual style of writing in this book. Today's readers often share Martin Luther's initial reaction to Revelation: "My spirit cannot adapt itself to this book." But John intended this book to be read in regular worship (1:3), and his original audience evidently did not consider its wording strange. That's because they were students of the Old Testament Scriptures from which Revelation draws heavily. There are more Old Testament quotes and references in Revelation than in any other New Testament book.

John's record of Jesus' visions borrows from the Old Testament prophets, especially Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Joel, and Zechariah. So John's style of writing is not unusual for books of prophecy—and Revelation is the only prophetic book of the New Testament.

The use of visions, startling images, and symbolism is the Lord's way of impressing important truths on the thoughts of the readers: "The Lamb at the center of the throne will be their Shepherd . . . and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes" (7:17); "And the devil who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur" (20:10).

The seven visions Jesus gave to John provide a clear outline for reading and understanding Revelation. Each of the visions—the seven letters, the scroll, the trumpets, the seven visions, the plagues, Christ and antichrist, and the final victory—offers a vivid picture of the end times and the Christian's ultimate triumph, each from a differing perspective.

Misinterpretations

Many false teachings, including the millennium and the rapture, claim Revelation as their source. These misinterpretations come from those who set aside the simple outline Jesus provided for John in the seven visions. They force a progression in time from one vision to the next, rather than seeing each as a snapshot of the same events viewed from a different angle.

Some false doctrines are private interpretations of the symbolic language of Revelation. They contradict what clear passages in other parts of the Bible teach. But we know that Scripture cannot be broken. So we interpret the last book with the trust that it teaches only what the rest of the Bible teaches.

A clear message

Although rich with visions and word pictures, Revelation is a book with a clear message: "Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life" (2:10). Its uplifting message to world-weary Christians will most be appreciated by those who have immersed themselves in the promises of the 65 books which precede it. Even the first-time reader, however, will benefit from its inspired message of victory in Christ. As you read, you will find that some of Revelation's symbolism is explained within the book itself. Some of the imagery will become clear when you explore cross references to other parts of Scripture.

There will be a few beautiful pictures that seem to elude any explanation. But these, too, the Spirit will use to excite our imagination of "what God has prepared for those who love him" (1 Corinthians 3:9). Jesus' last word to his people will hold our attention until we see him face to face. His closing promise produces not fear but anticipation: "Yes, I am coming soon" (22:20). To that the reader of Revelation responds in prayer: "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus."

(More information is available from Northwestern Publishing House. Revelation—The Distant Triumph Song by Siegbert W. Becker is a 371-page commentary. The Revelation of Jesus Christ by John F. Brug is a 37-page Bible class study booklet. These books may be ordered by calling toll-free 1-800-662-6022; in the Milwaukee area call 414/475-6600. Phone between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. on weekdays. In The People's Bible commentary series, published by Northwestern Publishing House, the book on Revelation is not available at this time.)

The poetry in our hymns: ever old, ever new

by Richard E. Buss

Shaving is usually a daily necessity, something to be suffered before one gets on with the new day. Such was not the case, however, one morning when Jaroslof Vajda took razor in hand. While he shaved, he formulated thoughts. Words flowed together, and he produced one of the new hymns now a part of *Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal*.

Vajda had been convinced that believers were not experiencing the full blessings of the worship service because they came with too few and too little expectations. He wanted them to experience the excitement of worship and all its fullness and benefits. To that end he composed "Now the Silence" (CW 231).

Solemnity and excitement in worship

The style of the hymn is new to us: "Now the silence/Now the peace/Now the empty hands uplifted/Now the kneeling/Now the plea/Now the Father's arms in welcome." It is also different from many older hymns because it does not teach the truths of Scripture in the usual manner. It simply presents the solemnity and excitement of our worship.

In a succession of five triads, we move from an opening meditation of silence through confession, absolution, and the reception of word and sacrament. Then we close our hymn with an added triad,

acknowledging the Lord's blessing and making this blessing our very own. The Lord has given himself to us; we have received him. Our worship is indeed exciting—"Now Now Now."

That excitement of worship is magnified when we look at Vajda's sequel in "Then the Glory" (CW 218). In the same poetic form and style—this time with scriptural images of the sights and actions of heaven—the author expresses the real fulfillment of our worship in the heavenly realms, where we shall see our Savior-God face to face.

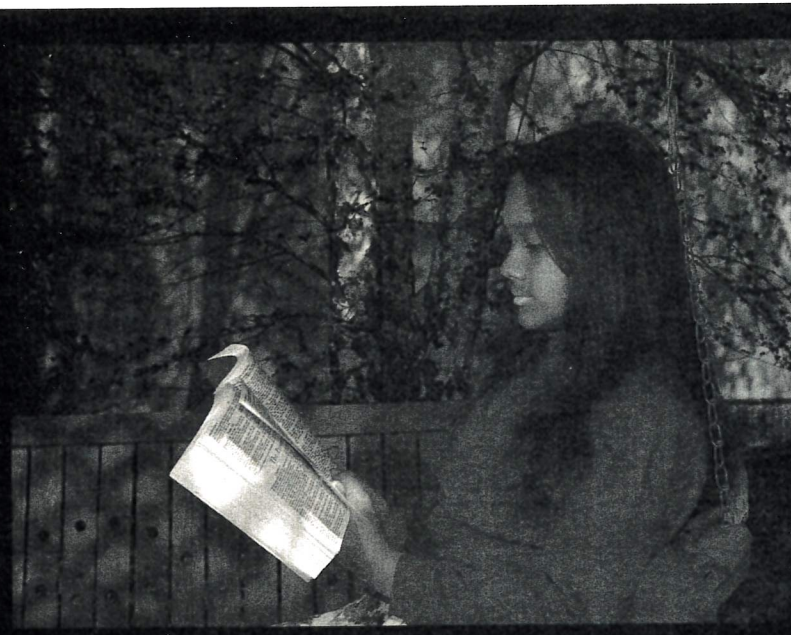
The ultimate adventure, "the feast of joy unending," an unending, perfect worship of the God of our salvation will occur "Then Then Then." Note that in both hymns the threefold blessing is reversed. It suggests that all our worship both "now" and "then" begins by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Repetition and parallelism

Another change in poetic style in some of the new hymns is the lack of rhyme. An example is found in Kurt Eggert's "Not unto Us" (CW 392). "Not unto us be glory, Lord/Not unto us but to your name be praise/Not unto us but to your name be honor be giv'n/For matchless mercy, forgiveness and grace."

If not rhyme, what makes it poetry? The answer

MRS. KEVIN SCHEBEL PHOTOGRAPHY



*“Now the silence/Now the peace/Now the empty hands uplifted/
Now the kneeling/Now the plea/Now the Father’s arms in welcome.”*

repetition and parallelism. In the first stanza: “Not unto us, not unto us be glory, Lord.” By repetition the poet emphasizes the Biblical truth that our salvation is due in no part to us sinners. That truth is reiterated in the fourth stanza: “Not unto us but to your name be glory, Lord.” And in between we hear the echoes of Ephesians 2 with its emphasis on salvation by the gift of God’s grace.

It is in the middle stanzas that the really poetic use of repetition occurs, and there parallelism is added to give emphasis to the thoughts. In the second stanza the phrase “amazing grace” is repeated three times. Each time a different descriptor of that amazing grace is added in parallel structure that sets forth the truths of our election and redemption as one of pure grace—grace that is truly amazing.

In the third stanza the thought turns to love. This time the word “love” is repeated in three successive phrases, but each time it is introduced with a different adjective: faithful, forgiving, unyielding, and then a further descriptive clause is added, again in parallel structure.

When one has sung the hymn several times, the lack of rhyme is not really felt. The repetition of the key words, “grace” and “love,” and the thought content emphasized by means of the parallelism have created a truly poetic style—and, above all, have given

memorable expression to the theme of the hymn: “Not unto us, not unto us be glory, Lord; Not unto us but to your name be praise.”

A universal language

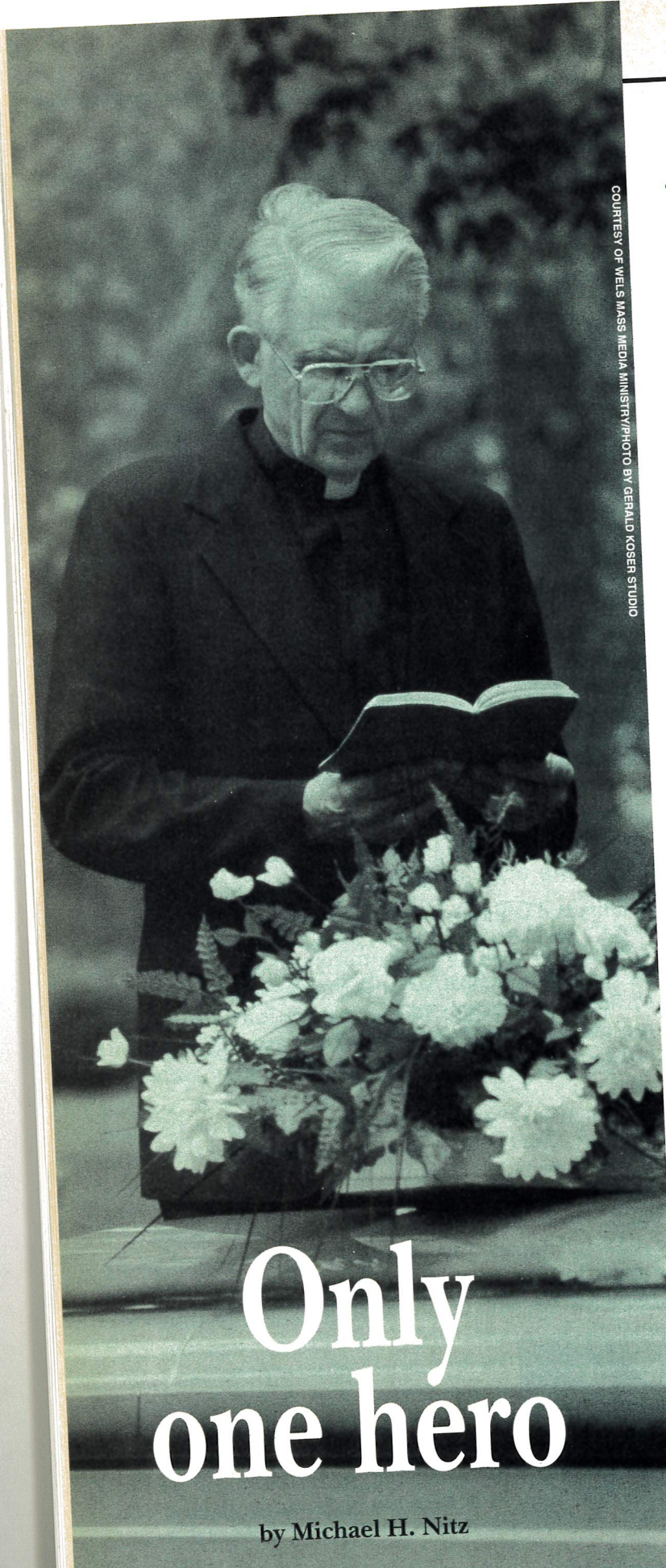
Poetry as a language is universal. It has been used by the most primitive and the most sophisticated throughout the ages to give expression to the innermost thoughts of their hearts. Each age will employ its own poetic forms and styles, whether old or revised or new.

So it is in hymnody in general; so it is in *Christian Worship*. Other styles appear, beyond the few mentioned here. Folk hymns, gospel hymns, spirituals, and hymns in a contemporary idiom have been added. Different images and sounds will be found.

May all forms and styles, old and new, aid us in expressing the excitement of worship. May they all help us to worship our Lord in the beauty of holiness.



Richard Buss teaches English at Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota. He was a member of the Joint Hymnal Committee.



COURTESY OF WELS MASS MEDIA MINISTRY/PHOTO BY GERALD KOSEK STUDIO

Only one hero

by Michael H. Nitz

My chance to be a hero came when a young messenger burst into my church office. "Pastor! A lady's having a heart attack!" I jumped from my seat and sprinted through the building.

The closing event of our vacation Bible school was an evening program of children's recitations, songs, and plays. This woman had come extra early for a good seat. She was young for being a grandmother. Cobalt blue and cold. Dead.

What happened next was a slow-motion blur. I begged, "Jesus, help me!" as my mind grappled to remember CPR instruction filed away years before. And then, as though I was another person watching myself, I began the ABCs of life support. Someone was at my side, a nurse. "I'll breathe. You compress." With each compression I called out the count. "One-and, two-and, three-and. . . ." My voice trembled so much that my counting sounded more like whimpering. Time seemed to stop. My vision came as a stilted series of still pictures.

Finally—sirens. The paramedics began their task. They tried and tried again. But no sustained pulse. Had our efforts been in vain? One last heroic effort. At last, a pulse.

Soon the squad screamed away, leaving a daughter in shock and two young girls sobbing. Together we prayed to the Jesus these girls had learned about in vacation Bible school.

Their grandmother lived. She recovered well enough to walk, feed herself, and talk. And that we did. About the one who took her place at Skull Hill. We stooped together and gazed into Joseph's empty cave. We spoke of the Almighty who has hands with holes in them.

And her lips, once blue and lifeless, expressed God's gift of faith. She confessed herself a sinner and Jesus her Savior. Jesus gave her eleven more days before she suddenly went on to live with him.

At her funeral I was introduced as "the pastor who did CPR and saved her." But in my sermon I set the record straight. And my voice, which had once whimpered over her body, now stated with conviction and joy that there was only one hero—Jesus, who saved her.



Michael Nitz is pastor of St. Paul, Columbus, Ohio.

School amalgamation/merger moves forward

Recognizing that the target date of summer 1995, set by the convention for the merger of two synod preparatory schools and amalgamation of two colleges, will require quick action, the Board for Ministerial Education (BME) has appointed a 12-member Building and Housing Facilitation Committee (BHFC). Martin Luther and Northwestern preparatory schools will become one school, and Dr. Martin Luther and Northwestern colleges will operate on the same campus.

The BHFC will be responsible for the projects at the new school sites at New Ulm, Minn., and Watertown, Wis., authorized by the 1993 convention. The convention set a budget of approximately \$8 million in capital projects. Among the major projects are a student union at the new prep school site and a dormitory at the new college site. Also included in the estimate is remodeling to accommodate a larger student body on each of the two campuses.

Appointed to the BHFC were

Pastor Roland Zimmermann, chairman of the new college board; Pastor Dennis Hayes, chairman of the new prep school board; Martin Sell of the BME; Dr. John Lawrenz and Prof. John Braun, presidents of the amalgamating colleges; Professors Theodore Olsen and Mark Schroeder, presidents of the merging prep schools; Clair Ochs, trustees administrator; Calvin Patterson, director of finance; David Ames, real estate manager; and Douglas Wellumson, program analyst. Named chairman was Dr. Wayne Borgwardt, administrator for the BME.

The BHFC will be mindful, said Borgwardt, of the responsibilities of the boards of control of the new schools, the BME, and the Board of Trustees. He pointed out that "when necessary and appropriate, these boards will be consulted for information and necessary approval."

Borgwardt also pointed out that the financial figures used by the convention regarding cost "are to be respected as benchmarks, and not necessarily limits. They are part of a

dynamic document (not definitive, under continuing development) used by the convention to envision for the constituents the range of costs involved in the amalgamation."

One goal of the committee, according to Borgwardt, is to provide solid, well-constructed, and well-furnished buildings that will enable the schools' programs to function well in the fulfillment of providing needed ministerial candidates for the church.

Another goal, said Borgwardt, is to help insure a smooth transition for personnel affected by the move. Under these unusual circumstances measures will be taken, he said, which have not been taken before, and "which are not precedent setting."

The BHFC selected Zimmerman Design Group, Wauwatosa, Wis., as the architectural firm for construction and renovation on the Watertown campus, and Setter, Leach, and Lindstrom, Minneapolis, Minn., for the New Ulm campus.

Boards appointed for new schools

At its October meeting the Conference of District Presidents appointed the boards of control for the two new schools authorized by the synod's 1993 convention.

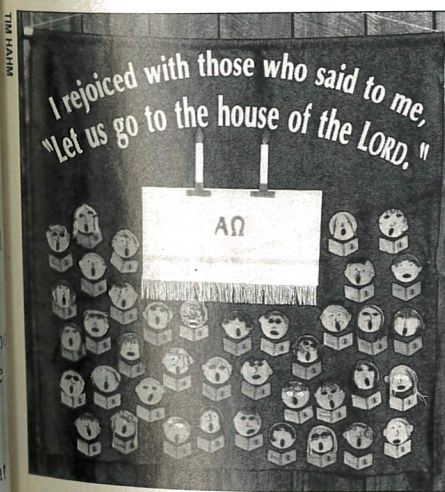
Chairman of the new college board is Pastor Roland Zimmermann, Menomonee Falls, Wis., currently chairman of the board of Martin Luther Preparatory School, Prairie du Chien, Wis.

The remaining members of the college board are pastors David Waegel, Mishicot, Wis.; Robert Bitter, Oakfield, Wis.; Ronald Kaiser, Colorado Springs, Colo.; teachers Kurt Rosenbaum, Lakeville, Minn.; David Sauer, Spokane, Wash.; Philip Leyrer, Middleton, Wis.; and laymen

David Toepel, Saginaw, Mich.; Robert Hinnenthal, New Ulm, Minn.; Steven Danekas, Naperville, Ill.

The presidents appointed Pastor Dennis Hayes, Watertown, S. Dak., as chairman of the new preparatory school board.

The remaining members of the new preparatory school board are pastors Fredric Piepenbrink, Milwaukee, Wis.; Wayne A. Laitinen, Oklahoma City, Okla.; teachers Donald Helwig, Woodruff, Wis.; Daniel Feuerstahler, Lannon, Wis.; Ronald Brutlag, Livonia, Mich.; and laymen Richard Brucker, Boulder, Colo.; Tracy Linn, Dallas, Tex.; William Schmidt, Watertown, Wis.



A banner made at the 1993 Labor Day retreat of the North Atlantic District featured personalized children's faces singing from the new hymnal, *Christian Worship*.

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's statement on sexuality repudiated by WELS

"Lutherans asked to decide on blessing of gay unions" was the headline in *The New York Times* of October 21. Although the lead paragraph qualified "Lutheran" by defining it as "a group from the nation's largest Lutheran body [Evangelical Lutheran Church in America]," for many readers the headline tells the story.

The headline sent Wisconsin Synod pastors and others—including ELCA—scurrying to disassociate their churches from the ELCA four-year study of human sexuality. Not a few objectors claimed the generic use of Lutheran in the headline was poor journalism and ignored that the ELCA is only one of 13 Lutheran church bodies in the country and in no way represents all Lutherans in the United States.

Pastor Norman W. Berg of Grace Lutheran Church, Scroggins, Texas, and former WELS home mission administrator, wrote to the *Dallas Morning News*. He said that its reporting of the Lutheran position on moral issues "perverts the public image of Lutheranism dramatically and totally inaccurately."

Berg suggested to the editor that both "St. Paul and Martin Luther probably are twisting in their graves at the report of a theological study group of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America." "We are not willing," he said, "to be tarred with the same immoral brush of the pseudo-Lutheran theology of this ELCA report, to which the majority

of ELCA lay people also are probably opposed and, we hope, will repudiate."

In an interview with the *Milwaukee Sentinel*, Pastor Gary

The following news release was issued regarding the ELCA's statement on human sexuality.

Re: The Church and Human Sexuality:
A Lutheran Perspective

First Draft of a Social Statement by the Division for Church in Society, Department for Studies of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)

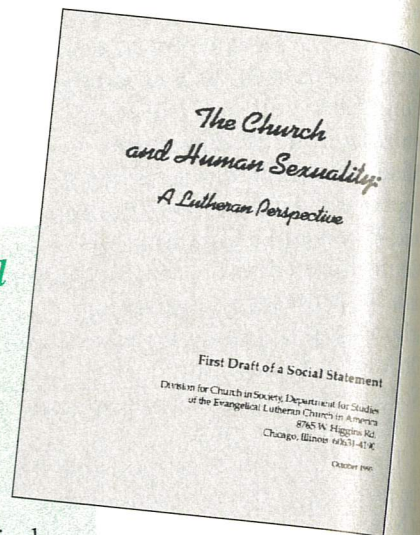
From: Rev. Gary P. Baumler,
Director of Communication of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS)

In respect to the above document released by ELCA, WELS wants people to know that the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America does not include WELS as part of its corporate structure and does not represent the views of WELS.

Specifically, in this instance, WELS does not condone any statement that seeks to rationalize or otherwise approve of sins of sex that are clearly condemned in the Holy Scriptures, such as adultery, sexual immorality, or homosexuality.

We believe that Christ, the Son of God, died to atone for such sins and that those who trust in Christ have forgiveness. Furthermore, when in faith the Christian embraces Christ's forgiveness, that person will also turn away in repentance from the sins that continue to tempt him or her.

Baumler, the synod's director of communication and *Northwestern Lutheran* editor, also was critical of the study. "We could take isolated parts of the report and be very comfortable with them," he said, "but in the totality of the report, sin gets described differently than it does in Scripture. Sin is talked about in the report as destructive to humanity rather than as opposed to God's



immutable will."

Baumler said that WELS does not "write off homosexuals. It's a matter of applying God's laws and then the gospel of forgiveness. We would try to turn them away from sin."

Other differences with the ELCA were cited by Baumler, such as, the ordination of women, abortion, a literal six-day creation and the reality of miracles. "We might like to argue that we're 'more Lutheran,'" he added. "On some issues, they don't seem to be very 'Lutheran' at all."

The ELCA social statement on human sexuality was a first draft derived from a study of the issue by a task force appointed by the Board of the Division for Church in Society. Bishop Herbert W. Chilstrom said the report has generated a "tidal wave" of reaction from pastors and church leaders. The ELCA's Churchwide Assembly is expected to address a final version of the statement in 1995.

1994 regional youth rallies

WELS District Youth Discipleship Committees plan youth gatherings at the following locations. For information, contact the coordinator.

Arizona-California District

Date and location to be announced
Pastor Scott Stone; 619/245-3440

Dakota-Montana and Minnesota Districts

July 11-14
Black Hills State University,
Spearfish, South Dakota
Pastor Tim Johnston; 406/452-1286

Michigan and Southeastern Wisconsin Districts

July 19-21
Central Michigan University,
Mount Pleasant, Michigan
Pastor Jon Bendewald; 616/925-5186

North Atlantic District

July 18-21
Elizabethtown College,
Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania
Pastor Mark Wilde; 207/797-4686

South Atlantic District

July 22-24
Tampa Bay, Florida
Pastor Richard Warnecke; 904/265-1318

South Central District

Date and location to be announced
Pastor David Lau; 903/581-6887

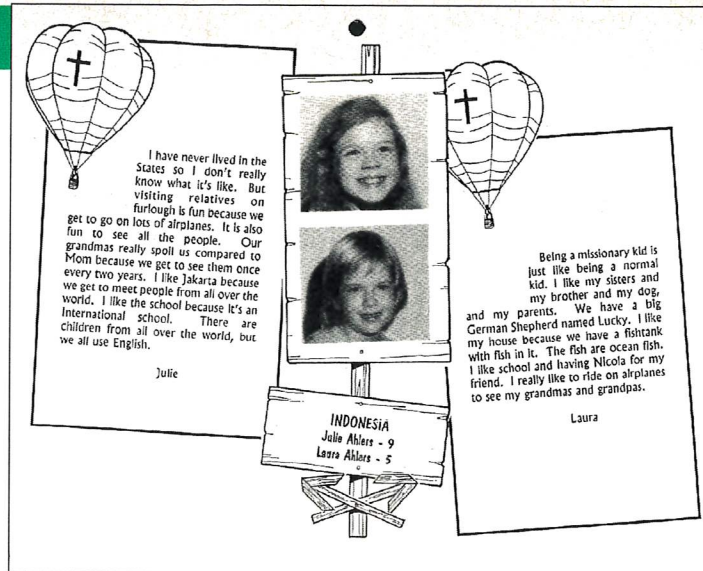
Western and Northern Wisconsin Districts

July 5-7
University of Wisconsin,
Stevens Point, Wisconsin
Pastor Keith Free; 715/341-2915



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.



I have never lived in the States so I don't really know what it's like. But visiting relatives on furlough is fun because we get to go on lots of airplanes. It is also fun to see all the people. Our grandmas really spoil us compared to every two years. I like Jakarta because we get to meet people from all over the world. I like the school because it's an international school. There are children from all over the world, but we all use English.

Julie

Being a missionary kid is just like being a normal kid. I like my sisters and my brother and my dog, and my parents. We have a big German Shepherd named Lucky. I like my house because we have a fish tank with fish in it. The fish are ocean fish. I like school and having Nicola for my friend. I really like to ride on airplanes to see my grandmas and grandpas.

Laura

The Kids' Calendar, produced by the Lutheran Women's Missionary Society, features messages from children of world missionaries. The calendar is available for \$2.00 from LWMS, 8420 W Beloit Rd, West Allis WI 53227.

New editor at Northwestern Lutheran

The observant reader will note the appearance of a new name on the masthead: Rev. Gary P. Baumler, Editor. Baumler assumed the position January 1.

Baumler, 55, is a 1965 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. After graduation he served a congregation in New Jersey for ten years before joining the faculty of Northwestern College, where he taught Greek, English, and speech and was recruitment officer. Since 1989 he served Northwestern Publishing House as vice-president of editorial services.

The new editor has been also assigned the office of "director of communication" and will serve as

administrator for the new Communication Services Commission authorized by the 1993 synod convention. According to its charter, the Communication Services Commission is "to act as a clearinghouse for all synodical communications and publications. In that role they will carry out the overall planning, distribution, and control of all synodical communications."

Baumler and his wife Kathleen are the parents of two sons. One is a pastor in El Paso, Texas, and the other is a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin—Madison. Kathleen is director of customer service at Northwestern Publishing House.

Church honors debt to synod

It has happened before, but not very often. St. John of Sleepy Eye, Minn., over a period of several years had fallen behind in its synod mission offerings to the amount of \$28,835.

"Rather than wiping the slate clean after each year," writes Pastor Joel Leyrer, "we kept track of the amount we fell short, considered it a debt, and carried it into the next year's budget."

"The members of St. John felt that they had given their word,"

Leyrer explained, "and despite budgetary shortfalls in other areas as well, this particular area was not forgotten."

In the spring of 1993, the congregation initiated a program with the intention of making good on its past financial promises. "We rejoice," said Leyrer, "that God moved the hearts of his people and allowed us to honor him by reaching the full amount 'owed.'"

Accompanying the letter was a check for \$28,835.

Church librarians meet

Over 50 church librarians and other interested people met in Fond du Lac, Wis., Oct. 16 at the annual meeting of WECLO, the organization for WELS church librarians.

Professional librarians Paul Koch and Lily Nolan of St. Peter, Fond du Lac, presented workshops. Janie Niedfeldt, author of *Red as in Russian and Measles and Love*, addressed the group and autographed copies of her book. The day's activities included a book exchange and an idea and information session. Northwestern Publishing House also had books



WECLO officers (left to right) Robert Landvatter, Betty Welke, Joanne Weber, Barbara Koch with Martin Westerhaus.

for sale.

Prof. Martin Westerhaus, spiritual advisor, installed the new officers: president Barbara Koch, St. Peter, Fond du Lac, Wis.; vice-president Robert Landvatter, St. Matthew, Oconomowoc, Wis.; secretary Betty Welke, Trinity, Watertown, Wis.;

treasurer, Joanne Weber, St. Paul, Muskego, Wis.

Tapes showing how to repair books are available to WECLO members. For information, write WECLO at 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222 or call 414/256-3222.

Dakota-Montana District

- The members of Prince of Peace in Yankton, S. Dak., honored Pastor Alvin Schulz on his 40th anniversary in the ministry. He and his wife, Jean, also celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary.

- Our Savior, South Shore, S. Dak., celebrated the 25th anniversary of the church dedication Oct. 24. Pastor Raymond Cox, mission coordinator of the Lutheran Apache mission, was the guest speaker.

—Ronald L. Kruse

Michigan District

- The 40th anniversary in the ministry of Pastor Paul Kuske was observed at Beautiful Savior in Grove City, Ohio.

- Amazing Grace, Florence, Ky., dedicated a new church on Sept. 26. On Nov. 21, Emanuel First in Lansing held groundbreaking for

their new school, a \$2.5 million project, in conjunction with a congregational anniversary.

—James L. Langebar tel

Southeastern Wisconsin District

- Lord and Savior Lutheran Church, Crystal Lake, Ill., observed its 20th anniversary on October 10. Thirty-one people attended the first service conducted at the Lake Manor Motel.

- On September 30 the faculty, board, and friends of Kettle Moraine LHS, Jackson, gathered to break ground for the construction of the third addition to its facilities. The 11,000 square foot addition includes seven classrooms, restrooms, and storage area. Construction began October 4 with completion scheduled for next summer. Pastor Randall Hughes was installed as dean of students on September 17.

- Faith, Sussex, celebrated 25 years in the teaching ministry of

James Schmidt, the congregation's teacher at St. John in Lannon.

—Robert A. Sievert

Western Wisconsin District

- St. Paul, Fort Atkinson, observed the retirement of Janet Kroll on Sept. 26. She served as church secretary for 30 years. When she started, Pastor Henry Gieschen told her to bring some socks to darn because there wasn't enough to keep a church secretary busy. She says she never did have time to darn those socks.

- In September, St. Paul School, Fort Atkinson, opened its doors for the 125th school year. For the first eight years, St. Paul's pastors served as teachers. The first full-time teacher was called in 1876.

- St. John, Rib Falls, celebrated the 115th anniversary of its founding, the 75th of its building, and dedicated a parsonage addition Oct. 24.

—Elton C. Strub

Boettcher receives award

Steven J. Boettcher, producer of the videotape "WELS Connection," was honored by the alumni society at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh as a 1993 Outstanding Young Alumni. Boettcher is a 1982 graduate of the university.

His citation notes that he "is a nationally recognized television producer and photographer. . . . He has had his work featured on CBS, NBC, CNN, PBS, and the Discovery channel. He has received almost 100 awards, including four prestigious Emmy awards from the National Association of Television Arts." Among his awards was one from the New York Film Festival for the best documentary.

Boettcher's documentary on the Oregon Trail is scheduled to air nationally on PBS television. The videotape is also sold in western tourist spots.

Boettcher, 33, of Mequon, Wis., is a news photojournalist with WTMJ-TV in Milwaukee. He produces the "WELS Connection" for the synod's Commission on Communication for Financial Support. He has also worked on projects for the Mass Media Ministry. He is a member of Calvary, Thiensville.

WELS Connection videotapes

January topics

- Outreach to economically deprived
- Apache celebrating 100 years

February topics

- A Japanese Lutheran elementary school teacher
- Missionary Tim Soukup in Mozambique

March topics

- Rural churches
- WELS Kingdom Workers

For more information, contact *CCFS, WELS Administration Building, 2929 N Mayfair Road, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398*. Cost of a year's subscription is \$54.



JANIE NIEDFELDT

The Seibel quintuplets celebrated their first birthday in August. "Evan, Andrew, Olivia, Alex, and Catherine are delightful, healthy children," says correspondent Janie Niedfeldt. "They continue to delight their parents, Debbie and Andy Seibel." Anthony and Phillip, big brothers of the quints, were visiting grandparents at the time of the photos. The Seibels are members of Faith, Fond du Lac, Wis.

Assistant editor receives journalism degree

Dorothy Sonntag, assistant editor of *Northwestern Lutheran* has received a master's degree in journalism from Marquette University, Milwaukee.

The subject of her master's thesis was an analysis of the reader survey conducted by the magazine in 1992. It was the first readership survey undertaken of the 80-year-old maga-

zine and was funded by a grant from Aid Association for Lutherans, Appleton, Wis.

She has a BSE degree from Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., and taught in Lutheran schools for 19 years. She also writes a regular column for *LinkAge*, a publication of The Lutheran Home in Belle Plaine, Minn.

Are you thinking of a special mission gift?

A gift for the Lord's work in your will? Need assistance for your will? An experienced WELS gift planning counselor will help you. The service is free, but the decisions are yours.

Arizona-California District

John Coleman
602/598-9003

Dakota-Montana District

Robert Weimer
402/728-5530

Michigan District

Jonathan Scharlemann
517/637-3812

Nebraska District

Robert Weimer
402/728-5530

North Atlantic District

John Graf
1-800-827-5482

Northern Wisconsin District

James Klein
414/432-4434

Pacific Northwest District

Paul Soukup
608/242-1020

South Atlantic District

Lee Vaccarella
1-800-827-5482

South Central District

John Coleman
602/598-9003

Southeastern Wisconsin District

John Graf
Lee Vaccarella
1-800-827-5482

Western Wisconsin District

Gerald Heckmann
Paul Soukup
608/242-1020

Finnish church is smallest sister church

Evankelisluterilainen Tunnustusseurakunta are Finnish for "Evangelical Lutheran Confessional Congregation." The *Evankelisluterilainen Tunnustusseurakunta* (ELTS) is the smallest of our Wisconsin Synod's sister churches. The ELTS has only one pastor, Jukka Soderstrom.

Like the other Scandinavian countries, Finland has been Lutheran since shortly after the Reformation. However, the state churches are departing from God's Word and the Lutheran Confes-

sions. For this reason a small number of Lutherans have established independent confessional churches.

At his home in Lempaala (Moisio) in south central Finland, Pastor Soderstrom conducts a taped service. He also travels to Porvoo, near Helsinki, where he leads services for a small group. Once a month he flies to the island of Aland in the Baltic Sea to hold a service.

On Aland and in Porvoo, work is conducted in Swedish as well as Finnish. Although the Finnish congregation is not a member of the

Swedish Lutheran Confessional Church (LBK), Pastor Soderstrom, who speaks Swedish, regularly attends meetings of the LBK.

The WELS Commission on Interchurch Relations helps and encourages the LBK and the ELTS by sending representatives to visit and by providing training for pastors. These efforts are supported entirely by special gifts to the Scandinavia Fund, WELS, 2929 Mayfair Ave, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398.

—John F. Bru

Bethany College plans building program

Bethany Lutheran College, Mankato, Minn., has begun work on a \$2.45 million physical activities center and an addition to Old Main—the original main building—to serve as a student union. Both buildings are slated for completion in January 1995.

In spring 1994, construction will also begin on the proposed Trinity Chapel, to be completed in September 1995. A bookstore and

dining hall addition will utilize the space in Old Main now used for chapel.

Together, the three building projects will give Bethany's 35-acre hillside campus a whole new look. The projects are possible because a \$13 million development program raised \$10 million in its first 18 months.

Bethany is Minnesota's only private two-year liberal arts college that is coeducational and residential.

More than half its students are Minnesotans, but it currently has students from 18 other states and six foreign countries.

Bethany is maintained by the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, a WELS sister synod.

News reported in this section is about our sister churches in the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference. CELC is an international federation of 13 Lutheran church bodies of which WELS is a member.

NEWS AROUND THE WORLD

England's House of Commons approves women priests . . .

In England the House of Commons has overwhelmingly approved a measure that has opened the priesthood to women in the Church of England. The House of Lords has also recently approved the measure. The Church of England approved the measure a year ago, prompting a great hue and cry from opponents of women priests, some of whom have left the church and joined the Roman Catholic Church, including former Bishop of London Graham Leonard.

Religion not a factor in choice of political party . . .

Religion makes little difference in the choice of political parties. A profile of beliefs in each major party turned up little difference between the two. About an equal number of Republicans (91 percent) and Democrats (89 percent) say they hold Judeo-Christian beliefs. About four in 10 of both Republicans (41 percent) and Democrats (39 percent) say they are "born-again" Christians. Republicans hold a slight edge in claims of church members (79 to 71 percent) and in recent

church attendance (50 to 39 percent). But Democrats (65 percent) are slightly more likely than Republicans (63 percent) to say religion is very important in their lives.

Chilstrom to retire . . . At the August meeting of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Rev. Herbert W. Chilstrom, 62, bishop of the church told the Churchwide Assembly that he will not seek re-election when his current term expires in two years. At the end of term, he said, he would be reaching retirement age.

Do church leaders care for them? Teens divided . . . From a survey by the Princeton Religion Research Center comes the report that 49 percent of the teens in this country feel that church leaders care very much for them, and 19 percent think they care quite a bit. Protestant teens (58 percent) are somewhat more likely than Catholics (41 percent) to believe their church leaders care very much about them. Non-whites, especially African-Americans, far more than whites, feel that their church leaders care for them. The survey also showed that two young people in three said they would like to discuss spiritual, moral, and ethical matters with their church leaders more frequently.

Custodial parent decides child's religion, says court . . .

The Supreme Court of Canada has ruled against a divorced man who sought to indoctrinate his children into the Jehovah's Witness faith against the wishes of his former wife. In a ruling with implications for many Canadian families split by divorce, the court said the non-custodial parent—in this case the father—cannot force children to attend religious services over their objections.

The bottom line of the decision is that the parent with custody has the right to make the major decisions about a child's schooling, health, and religion. While the court said the father could not force his children to go to church with him, it said he is allowed to talk to his children about his faith during visits as long as such talk does not distress the children.

Concordia Publishing House has new logo . . . Concordia Publishing House, the 125-year-old publishing arm of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, has adopted a new corporate logo. The new



logo uses the company's familiar initials, CPH. The stylized cross, according to the news release "symbolizes the light of Jesus Christ,

which shines through everything CPH publishes." John W. Gerber, president of the publishing house said that "as we begin celebrating our 125th year of resourcing churches we look forward into the next century, confident that the Lord will continue to bless CPH with the dedicated men and women who have [made] a difference in the lives of so many of God's people."

Charles Colson: Four myths challenge faith

At a recent religious gathering at the Rockefeller Chapel of the University of Chicago, Charles Colson, winner of the 1993 Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion, drawing on the Four Horsemen of Revelation—pestilence, war, famine, and death—spoke of the four horsemen of the present apocalypse. "Four great myths," he said, "that define our times and pose a challenge to all faith traditions."

A condensed and adapted version of his address appeared in the November 8 issue of *Christianity Today*.

The first myth, he said in his abbreviated address "is *the goodness of humanity*. It deludes people into thinking they are always victims, never villains; always deprived, never depraved. It dismisses responsibility as the teaching of a darker age. It can excuse crime because it can always blame something else—a sickness of society or a sickness of the mind."

The second myth of modernity, he said, "is the *promise of coming utopia*, that human nature can be perfected by government. This horseman arrives with sword and slaughter. From the birth of this century, ruthless ideologies have pledged to move the world, but

could only stain it with blood. We have seen more people killed in this century by their own governments than by all its other wars combined."

The third myth is the *relativity of moral values*. "This horseman hides the dividing line between good and evil, noble and base, sowing chaos and confusion." When a society abandons its transcendent values, "each individual's moral vision becomes purely personal and finally equal." Since no preference is morally preferable, "anything that can be dared will be permitted. This leaves the moral consensus for our laws and manners in tatters."

The final modern myth is *radical individualism*. This myth, Colson told the audience of clergy and laity, "dismisses the importance of family, church, and community, denies the value of sacrifice, and elevates individual rights and pleasures as the ultimate social values."

The complete text is available. Send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Prison Fellowship, PO Box 17500, Washington D.C. 20041-0500. The title is "Making the World Safe for Religion."

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.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS Michigan Lutheran Seminary

Voting members of the synod are invited to submit nominations for a professor of Latin. Candidates should be able to teach elementary and intermediate Latin and will be required to have or attain certification by the WELS and the state of Michigan. A certification program will be funded by the school.

This new position is due to increased enrollment and expansion of the Distance Learning Program that serves three area Lutheran high schools. Calling for the position will follow approval of the Board for Ministerial Education.

Please send nominations and pertinent information by Jan. 31 to Jerold Meier, 397 Auburn, Plymouth MI 48170.

FACULTY POSITIONS Wisconsin Lutheran College

Wisconsin Lutheran College is seeking candidates for these fields: business, computer science, economics, education, German, mathematics, music (instrumental), philosophy, physics, psychology, theatre, or theology.

Candidates should hold a doctorate or equivalent. Doctoral students will be considered. Previous college or university experience preferred. WELS or ELS membership required. Candidates may be required to supply a curriculum vita or resume and transcripts. Please send names to Dr. John Bauer, 8800 W Bluemound Rd, Milwaukee WI 53226; 414/774-8620; fax 414/744-9367.

NURSING HOME ADMINISTRATOR

The Lutheran Home Association of Belle Plaine, Minn., seeks a credentialed individual for the position of nursing home administrator in our Caledonia, Minn., facility.

Applicants must be qualified through training and experience. A degree and a valid Minnesota Nursing Home Administrators License, or the ability to attain a license, is required. The administrator is responsible for planning, organizing, and directing the facility in a way that fulfills the 95-year Christian mission of the association.

Applicants should send a detailed resume or request for additional information to Michael Klatt, The Lutheran Home, 611 W Main St, Belle Plaine MN 56011; 612/873-2215.

MISSION SEMINAR 1994

You are invited to a mission seminar at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Feb. 2-3, 7:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Under the theme, "Make the most of every opportunity," seminary students will present various aspects of mission work. A mission festival service will be held on Feb. 2 at 7 p.m., followed by refreshments. You will find the seminar interesting, informative, and inspirational.

ANNIVERSARY

MANITOWOC, WISCONSIN—Bethany (50). Founders Day, Jan. 16-17. Confirmation reunion, April 16-17, including dinner on Sunday. Christian education, Sept. 16-17. Rededication, Nov. 6-7. Worship services are Saturday, 7 p.m. and Sunday, 8 and 10:45 a.m. Call 414/684-9620 for more information.

CHANGE IN TIME OF SERVICE

CARMEL, INDIANA—Bethlehem. 1055 3rd Ave. SW. Worship, 9:30 a.m. Sunday school and adult Bible study, 11 a.m.

CROWN POINT, INDIANA—Our Shepherd. Sunday service, 9 a.m. Bible study follows.

NAMES WANTED

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

CODY/POWELL/LOVELL/SHERIDAN/GILLETTE, WYOMING—Contact Pastor Alan Gumm, 2113 S Autumn Ct, Gillette WY 82716; 307/686-4080.

CHRISTIAN MEN'S RETREAT

Men age 18 and over: rebuild and restore the relationship between you and your Lord, family, congregation, and community. Enjoy a weekend of music, fellowship, and relaxation at a Christian men's retreat March 4-6 at Camp Philip, Wautoma, Wis. For more information, call Dale Tollefson or Mike Wiechmann, 414/786-2900.

WOMEN'S RETREAT

A spiritual renewal weekend will be held March 18-20 in Rochester, Minn. Approximate cost will be \$90. For more information contact St. Peter Lutheran Church, 427 W Mulberry St, St. Peter MN 56082; 507/931-1866.

1994 OWLS TOUR

The 1994 tour to the scenic and beautiful Canadian Rockies and Pacific northwest is scheduled for July 25-Aug. 9. Please call 1-800-658-2551 or 507/354-6915 for a brochure or information.

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.)

ITEMS AVAILABLE

HYMNALS—200-plus good copies of *The Lutheran Hymnal*. They include hymns from the Sampler II sample packet. Contact Christ Church, 613 11th Ave, Menominee MI 49858; 906/863-2119.

THOMAS FULL PEDAL ORGAN—available for transportation cost. Needs some repair. Contact Norman Berg, 206 King Nicholas, Scroggins TX 75480; 903/860-3749.

ITEMS NEEDED

METAL FOLDING CHAIRS—for a mission congregation. Call Pastor Daron Lindemann, Lexington, S.C.; 803/356-0471.

PRELUDES FOR THE HYMNS OF THE LUTHERAN HYMNAL—VOL. 1 by Karl Haase. Call Larry Kasat; 313/673-7904.

CHANGES IN MINISTRY

PASTORS:

Albrecht, Mark J., from St. Paul, Manchester, Wis., to St. Paul, Winneconne, Wis.

Bartsch, Michael P., from Our Savior, Strongsville, Ohio, to St. John, Doylestown/St. Stephen, Fall River, Wis.

Handorf, Steven P., from St. John, Bowdle, S. Dak., to Zion, Morton, Minn.

Jaster, Herbert A., from Martin Luther Preparatory School, Prairie du Chien, Wis., to retirement.

Keller, Brian R., from King of Kings, Little Rock, Ark., to Our Savior, Strongsville, Ohio

Krenke, David A., from Good Shepherd, Midland, Tex., to St. Mark, Leesburg, Fla.

Lehenbauer, Paul M., from Peace (ELS), Deshler, Oh., to Immanuel, Findlay, Ohio

Mammel, Mark T., from Gloria Dei, Belmont, Cal., to Prince of Peace, Yucaipa, Cal.

Pommeranz, Norman E., from Northdale, Tampa, Fla., to Zion, Chesaning, Mich.

Rakos, Joel K., from Holy Cross, Oklahoma City, Okla., to St. Paul, Amherst, N.H.

Schaefer, James P., from editor of *Northwestern Lutheran* to retirement.

Schoeneck, Mark E., from Beautiful Savior, Fayetteville, N.C., to Ocean Drive, Pompano Beach, Fla.

Toppe, Frederick, J., from Mt. Calvary, Kimberly, Wis., to Redeemer, Fond du Lac, Wis.

Vander Galien, Paul W., from Zion, Zeeland, N. Dak., to St. Paul, Henry/Emmanuel, Grover, S. Dak.

TEACHER:

Dorn, Owen A., from St. Mark, Watertown, Wis., to editor for children's curriculum, Northwestern Publishing House, Milwaukee, Wis.

WRITERS' WORKSHOP PLANNED

A writers' workshop, planned for July 22-24 in Milwaukee, will offer advice and practice in writing magazine articles, Bible studies, non-fiction, and devotional material for the church.

Writers are invited to contact Wisconsin Lutheran College, 8800 W Bluemound Rd, Milwaukee WI 53226; call 414/774-8620 for more information.

LITERACY CONVENTION

A literacy convention sponsored by Dr. Martin Luther College will be held June 28-July 1, in New Ulm, Minn. For more information contact Mae Tacke, 315 S Highland Ave, New Ulm MN 56073; 507/354-2727.

Order the 1994 Yearbook today

The 1994 Yearbook of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod includes the directory of all WELS and ELS congregations including their times of service. The 189-page spiral-bound book also lists the current addresses and phone numbers of active and retired pastors and teachers, all WELS schools and institutions, church related organizations, and charitable organizations. This year FAX numbers are listed. The 1994 and 1995 church calendars are also included.

Order your copy today of the 1994 Yearbook (40N1994) at \$9.50 plus \$3.25 for transportation and handling.* Call toll-free 1-800-662-6022 and in the Milwaukee area call 414/475-6600. Phone weekdays between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Discover Card, MasterCard, and Visa are accepted. You can also order the Yearbook by sending your check to Northwestern Publishing House.

* Wisconsin residents add 5% sales tax as required by law. Milwaukee County residents add an additional .5% county tax.



Northwestern
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1250 North 113th Street
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Why so many unbelievers?

Why is the best news anyone could hear received with indifference or denial?

by Fredric E. Piepenbrink

We are all by nature poor, lost sinners. Jesus Christ, the God-man, atoned for our sins. He became our substitute. He put himself under the law and fulfilled all its obligations. He endured our punishment to make us one with God the Father.

Jesus made the Father one with us by satisfying his holiness, justice, and truth. God's undeserved love for us motivated him to give his Son for that work. That same love led Jesus to do it.

What a beautiful, wonderful, marvelous truth! It is the best news anyone could ever hear. So why aren't people flocking to churches to hear it? Why aren't television hosts clamoring to get clergy on their talk shows to describe and elaborate on it? Why isn't the atonement the hottest, most sought after, popular topic of our day? Why is such a beautiful doctrine received with indifference or outright denial?

"Because so many are unbelievers," we say. Why are they unbelievers? What is it about this glorious message of the atonement that they cannot or will not accept?

One explanation given by some is that God chose certain ones to believe and others not to believe. He either made it so they couldn't believe, or he saw beforehand they wouldn't believe, so he didn't even bother to have Jesus atone for their sins. But nothing could be further from the truth!

Atonement is for everyone

The Bible says Jesus atoned for the whole world and that includes everyone. 1 John 2:2: "He (Jesus) is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world." Hebrews 2:9: "Jesus suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone."

In addition to these direct statements, that Jesus died for the sins of the unbeliever as well as the believer is obvious in passages like 2 Peter 2:1: "But

there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves." The Lord redeemed the false prophets also. But they will end up in destruction because they "denied the sovereign Lord."

Atonement rejected by some

What a tragedy! Christ atoned for the sins of all people. But not all are saved, and the fault lies entirely with them.

For example, the Bible says that some reject Christ's atoning work out of ignorance of what God's Word says (Acts 9:35-41). Some reject it because of stubbornness (Hebrews 7:1-11). Some reject it because of their foolishness (1 Corinthians 1:18-25). For some the atonement is a stumbling stone (Romans 9:30-33), that is, human reasoning prefers a salvation by works and not by faith. Also, there are materialism, the cares of this world, wanting to be like God, and outright disobedience and pride.

There are 1001 reasons why some don't believe, but all are without excuse, for "whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:16). Faith comes as the result of God working faith in us. Unbelief is purely the fault of the unbeliever and, therefore, deserving of condemnation.

Jesus said, "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me" (Revelation 3:20). Jesus did not limit his words in any way. To be "at-one-ment" with God and enjoy his feast is an invitation extended to all.



Fredric Piepenbrink is pastor of Atonement, Milwaukee.

Score one for the pope

Last October Pope John Paul II issued an encyclical, *Veritatis Splendor* (The Splendor of Truth). The 179-page document is a carefully reasoned statement about the nature of morality. The media saw it as a papal clampdown on sexual ethics.

Two weeks after the encyclical appeared, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America issued a 21-page report on "The Church and Human Sexuality: A Lutheran Perspective." Press reports stated that the report breaks some of society's biggest taboos when it says masturbation is healthy, that there is biblical support for homosexual unions, and that teaching teenagers to use condoms to prevent disease is encouraged.

So while the pope issues a document calling for a reaffirmation of the unchanging moral values of Scripture and of natural law, the ELCA follows with a document that in effect abandons biblical moral values as outmoded and scraps them.

In a *Wall Street Journal* editorial, Father Richard John Neuhaus commented on the main themes of the papal encyclical. He called it "an examination of why we moderns no longer make moral sense to one another. Making moral sense assumes there is some truth about the matter in dispute. But when it comes to morality it is widely assumed today that there is no such thing as truth."

People today attach great importance to freedom. But now, the pope observes, "freedom has been untethered from truth, and freedom cannot stand alone without degenerating into license." And license, in turn, is the undoing of freedom.

"Clear thinking about moral truth," Neuhaus notes, "founders on the rocks of relativism and subjectivism. In a radically individualistic culture, we do not discern and obey what is objectively true. Rather each of us decides what is 'true for me.'"

Meanwhile the ELCA report makes a moral imperative out of teaching teenagers how to use condoms to prevent disease and argues that there is biblical support for homosexual unions.

Not all ELCA Lutherans are in agreement with their task force's report. Bishops of the Iowa synods have expressed disagreement with its conclusions. Members of the Great Commission Network want their church to disband the task force that drafted the statement and to issue a public apology for it.

The real problem in the ELCA lies in its official redefinition of the inspiration of the Bible together with its rejection of the inerrancy of Scripture. When the Bible ceases to be an absolute authority and the sole norm and guide for all matters of faith and life, then truth is up for grabs. And morality is left to "founder on the rocks of relativism."

What an embarrassment to Lutheranism! Luther was no friend of the pope. But in this case I think he'd say, "Score one for the pope. The Lutherans fumbled the ball."



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

Joel C. Gerlach

by John F. Brug

Is homosexuality a free choice or an inborn tendency?

Time magazine (7/26/93) reported that some homosexual men share some biological similarities. The researchers acknowledged that their discovery cannot account for all homosexuality. They concluded that the origins of homosexuality are complex and varied and may never be fully understood.

Every sin is both a choice of the will and the expression of an inborn tendency to sin. As a result of our sinful nature we take pleasure in our sins and defend them. This universal tendency is apparent also in the efforts of gay rights activists to condone their homosexuality.

We may also yield to a particular sin so often that the sin controls us. We may find ourselves yielding to sin even when we don't want to.

Our individual degree of susceptibility to some specific sins may be due in part to differences in our bodies. Abuse of alcohol and a hot temper are two examples of sins that may be affected by the chemistry of our bodies. Few would deny that the inclination toward sexual sin is greater at 18 than at 8 or at 88, and a primary reason is the changing chemistry of our bodies. A person's susceptibility to homosexuality may depend in part on bodily differences.

God holds us responsible for all our sins, even those that enslave us and those we are not aware of. We also need God's forgiveness for the sinful desires we resist. (Read Romans 7 for a treatment of slavery to sin.)

Applying these general truths about sin to homosexuality, we may conclude:

- Homosexuality is a sin and is contrary to God's intention in creating man and woman. Sinful resistance to the revealed will of God is a factor. People may become slaves to this sin (Romans 1:18-31, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

- Many factors contribute to individual acts of sin: the sinful nature we are born with, the weaknesses of our bodies, evil influences in our environment, temptations and encouragement from other sinners, and our own sinful choices. The proportionate role of these various factors may vary from case to case.

- We must warn the impenitent that homosexuality, like all sins, excludes people from eternal life (1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

- We are happy to assure the repentant who are struggling against sin that they have complete forgiveness through the blood of Christ. When Christ died,

he gained forgiveness for homosexual deeds, for homosexual desires, and for the inborn sinful nature that produces these sins (1 Corinthians 6:11).

- We should sympathize with all who are struggling against this sin, remembering that we too have "pet sins" that have a strong hold on us.

- We all look forward to the resurrection of the body. Then all the weaknesses of body and soul that now lead us into sin will disappear forever. Then all of us will be able to serve God perfectly and purely in everything we do.

Please tell me what the Church of God is and what its teachings are.

At least ten churches call themselves the Church of God. The list of Churches of God in the reference books on denominations is incomplete since some of them refuse to submit any information.

Usually a church that uses this name is trying to claim that it is a church which follows the teachings of the apostles without the addition of later denominational peculiarities. Often they claim that Church of God is the only proper name for the church. The various Churches of God are usually distinguished by a word or phrase in parentheses which gives its hometown or some clue about its teachings. Two of the most interesting names are the Church of God (Original) and the Church of God (as Organized by Christ).

Among the more prominent Churches of God are the Church of God (Anderson, Ind.) This church teaches the Wesleyan idea that Christians can reach perfection already in this life. It rejects all creeds.

The Church of God (Cleveland, Tenn.) is another. This church is pentecostal, that is, it emphasizes speaking in tongues. Most other Churches of God also emphasize one or more of these beliefs: perfectionism, speaking in tongues, and rejection of creeds.

You can read about these and other Churches of God in *The Religious Bodies of America* by F. E. Mayer or *Profiles in Belief* by Arthur C. Piepkorn.



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.

*"Believing that true love waits,
I make a commitment to God, myself, my family,
those I date, my future mate, and my future children
to be sexually pure until the day I enter
a covenant marriage relationship."*

A pledge or a prayer?

by Reuel J. Schulz

A recent Associated Press release made me think of the young people in our churches who, like their peers, are bombarded from all sides by powerful temptations to break the sixth commandment.

In a reaction to our pagan culture's preoccupation with adulterous sex, glorified and glamorized in music (MTV and much rap), movies ("Dirty Dancing" and too many more films), television travesties like "Married with Children," and obscenity-laced cable comedy programs, some concerned church leaders have challenged their young people to speak and sign the following pledge:

"Believing that true love waits, I make a commitment to God, myself, my family, those I date, my future mate, and my future children to be sexually pure until the day I enter a covenant marriage relationship."

Should our teens take the pledge?

Should we encourage our teens to make the same pledge?

Perhaps a humble prayer, in place of a self-assured pledge, would be more appropriate. Let's encourage our young people to pray for chastity and sexual abstinence prior to marriage.

Perhaps the following prayer based on 1 Corinthians 6:20 may be helpful or even inspirational to God-fearing teens:

"Heavenly Father, thank you for giving me my body and soul. From your Word I know that my body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. I know that I am not my

own, that your Son Jesus bought me at the price of his holy precious blood and his innocent suffering and death. Enable me, dear Father, to flee from sexual immorality, to avoid adultery before and outside of holy matrimony, and thus to honor you with gospel-inspired behavior."

Pledge or prayer?

Pledge or prayer? Which is preferable? Sexual activity among teens is an issue we cannot ignore. A poll taken four years ago at our local Lutheran high school revealed, not too surprisingly, that a significant number of our teens, especially high school seniors (almost 40 percent), are acting out the impure, marriage-mocking behavior glorified by our American society.

I can't imagine anyone who hasn't encountered the "living-together-in-sin-without-that-silly-piece-of-paper lifestyle" which is becoming increasingly commonplace and popular in our hedonistic culture. Surely we cannot in good conscience join the US surgeon general's crusade to saturate the lockers, pockets, purses, and school bags of America's kids with condoms.

Pledge or prayer? Let's share and discuss both with our youth. They need all the help, direction, encouragement, and understanding love we can give.



Reuel Schulz is pastor of Woodlawn, West Allis, Wisconsin.

Calling ourselves Lutheran

Three cheers for Pastor Curtis Peterson and his definitive article, "Why don't we stop calling ourselves Lutheran?" (Oct.). It struck a note with us. It was refreshing to read his article and know that he stands square for Lutheran doctrine and obviously has not been influenced by the church growth movement.

*Norm and Jean Woehrle
Westerville, Ohio*

Contemporary music

The report on '93 International Youth Rally (Nov.) was of interest to our young people who attended it and enjoyed themselves. However, the rally mostly featured Christian contemporary music. Organizers missed a chance to direct our kids to something better; and they also created problems for those of us who are directing our young people away from Christian rock and its reformed influences. CCM is exactly that, contemporary. Lasting Christian music is being written today, but it won't be found in the rock version. Let's not give in to the notion that we can only keep our kids if we keep their music. They deserve better. The Spirit will keep them.

*Peter Berg
Plymouth, Michigan*

Rewording hymns

While overall the editors did a most estimable job in revising our hymns ("Why we changed the language in our hymns," Nov.) there is one I don't like very much. The third verse of "The Church's One Foundation" in *The Lutheran Hymnal* reads "Tho' there be those that hate her/false sons within her pale." The revision in *Christian Worship* reads "Though there be those that hate her/And strive to see her fail." The powerful imagery is largely lost in the revision.

I would have preferred something on the order of the following: "Though there be those that hate her/False sons work for her fall/Against both foe and traitor/She tri-

umphs over all."

It is more important to retain vivid verbal imagery than to retain as much of the original wording and rhyme as possible. While the Word of God is sacrosanct, a hymn in public domain is not.

*Oswin W. Herrmann
Kansas City, Missouri*

Singing harmony

I respectfully disagree with Victor Prange's comment (Readers Forum, Nov.) that people singing harmony should consider the effect on other worshippers who have trouble even singing the melody.

One thing I love about our church is the ability of the people to sing beautiful music. Lots of people harmonize and when I'm sitting near them, my weak voice blends in with them and I feel like I'm singing beautiful music too. When everyone sings on one tone, my off-sounding notes stand out and then I feel like I'd better not sing.

I don't know what the solution is, but I just want to give you an opinion from someone who doesn't sing like a nightingale.

*Becky Gartman
South Prairie, Washington*

Home schools

As home school parents/teachers, we were pleased to see coverage of the home school convention (Dec.). Our synod has always been very concerned with the Christian education of our children, and we were pleased to see that Dr. Ledell Plath was able to attend and support home schooling.

Unfortunately, the article missed the real joy of training your children at home. The support that home schoolers desire can be had when parents are better educated about their God-given roles mentioned in Deuteronomy 6:6-9.

Home schooling is an alternative form of education and it is one of the most enjoyable relationships parents can have with their children.

*Glenn and Michelle Jones
Shawnee, Kansas*

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.*

**Encourage
a friend to subscribe to
Northwestern Lutheran.
SEE PAGE 5.**

February
'94

- 1. Matthew 4
- 2. Matt. 5:1-16
- 3. Matt. 5:17-48
- 4. Matt. 6:1-18
- 5. Matt. 6:19-34
- 6. Matt. 7:1-12
- 7. Matt. 7:13-29
- 8. Jonah 1, 2
- 9. Jon. 3, 4
- 10. Joel 1:1—2:17
- 11. Joel 2:18—3:21
- 12. Zephaniah 1
- 13. Zeph. 2:1—3:7
- 14. Zeph. 3:8-20
- 15. Nahum 1
- 16. Nah. 2, 3
- 17. Habakkuk 1:1—2:5
- 18. Hab. 2:6-20
- 19. Hab. 3:1-15
- 20. Hab. 3:16-19
- 21. Obadiah
- 22. Matthew 8:1-22
- 23. Matt. 8:23—9:8
- 24. Matt. 9:9-34
- 25. Matt. 9:35—10:23
- 26. Matt. 10:24-42
- 27. Matt. 11:1-24
- 28. Matt. 11:25—12:21

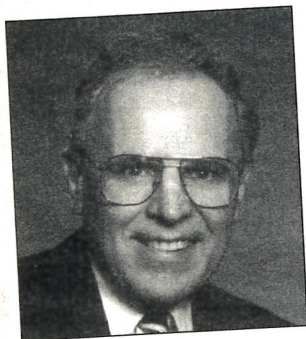
One of the marks of God's people is their love for his Word. Many have said, "I will start at Genesis and read the Bible through to the end." But the project is soon abandoned. These proposed readings—5 to 10 minutes each day—will take you through the entire Bible systematically and with variety. The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

THROUGH MY BIBLE IN THREE YEARS THROUGH MY BIBLE IN THREE YEARS

Farewell, Jeb

To those who have read his editorials in this column over the past 12 years, he is Pastor James P. Schaefer, but to some of us he is, fondly, "Jeb." Today I want you to know Jeb more personally as we bid him farewell in his retirement after 46 years of public ministry.

When Jeb describes those 46 years, two phrases stand out: "exciting" and "by God's grace." One can immediately appreciate "by God's grace." How else could any of us serve the Lord? But in what way is the ministry "exciting"? Consider:



- Twenty years at Atonement Lutheran Church in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, while the baptized membership grew from about 900 to 1800
- After ten years, a grand new church building to the glory of God
- Director of the Missio Dei offering, the first lay-led fund raising effort in WELS
- Director of the Called to Serve Program in 1969, which raised the synodical giving by 43 percent—"by God's grace"
- The rapid growth of WELS congregations throughout the United States in the '70s and a corresponding world mission growth during the years of his ministry
- Stewardship Counselor of WELS
- Director of Public Relations of WELS
- "Every one of the 12 years as editor of *Northwestern Lutheran*—by God's grace"
- "Every one of the 13,790 days I have spent with my dear wife, Ruth"

Jeb labels his 12 years as editor of NL as the "most exciting" of all (the days with Ruth are in a class by themselves). He cites the estimated 120,000 readers as the reason. Again "by God's grace," a monumental ministry! During his years those readers have seen some changes in format, design, and editorial policies, but also a continued dedication to the unchanging truth of God's Word. The subscriptions have grown from 41,000 in 1981 to 61,000 today. Jeb hopes they will reach their potential of over 80,000 in his lifetime.

Why do we call him Jeb? Here's his explanation:

To put it succinctly: I am a third generation first cousin of James Ewell Brown Stuart, the great Confederate cavalry general, mortally wounded in 1864. My grandfather Palmer, a transplant from Virginia, brought the blood of the Whitehead/Stuart clan along with him to the midwest. Unable to keep hidden this relationship from the keen and jealous wits in my class, I was promptly dubbed Sir Jeb. Later the "sir" was dropped.

Jeb plans to keep busy in retirement with research, work in the synod archives, and working on an updated synodical constitution and bylaws, a two-year project. We assume Ruth is happy to hear that.

Farewell, Jeb and Ruth! May God make your retirement years truly golden—by his grace.

Gary P. Baumbler

G ifts

of

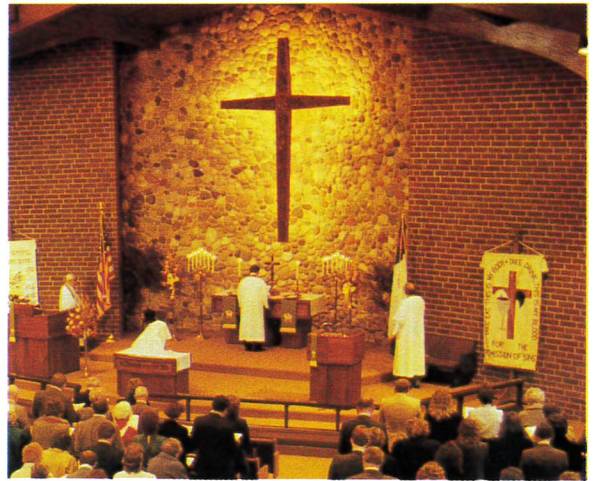
Love

- an opportunity to choose the type of work YOU want to support:
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 - evangelism
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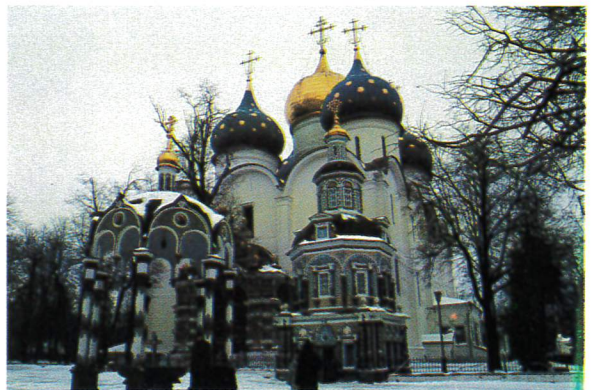
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Gifts of Love information,
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1-800-827-5482
or
Milwaukee: 771-0697



65 world missionaries
260 home missionaries
who faithfully labor where we cannot go

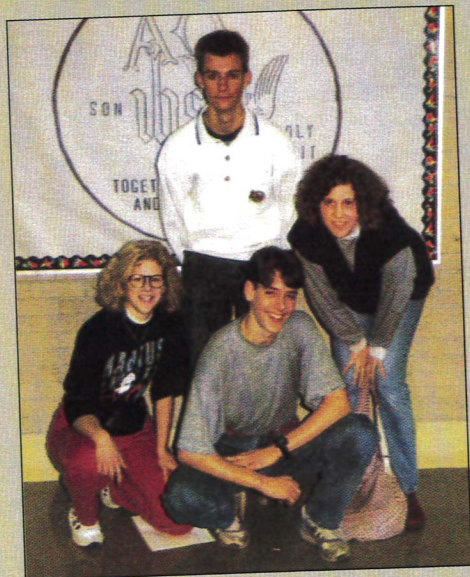


New and proposed materials and programs
that will benefit all of us



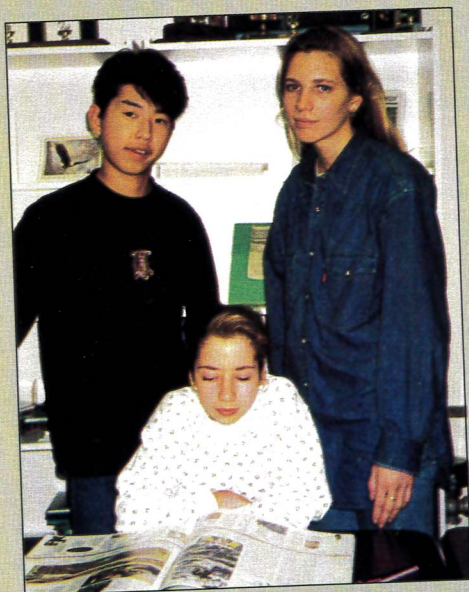
Open doors in countries such as Bulgaria,
Russia, Dominican Republic

Seventeen countries are represented at eight WELS high schools this school year.



Huron Valley Lutheran High School, Westland, Mich.

(Standing) Falko Grote, (kneeling) Christine Schneider, Andreas Baumann, Carmen Fehrenbach, **Germany**



West Lutheran High School, Hopkins, Minn.

Taisuke Oshita, **Japan**; Karina Ovsepian, **Russia**; Eva Horstmann, **Germany**



Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Mich.

(Back row) Joel Haar, **Ontario**; Olaf Wiedmann, **Germany**; Mikal Schwark, **Ukraine**; Carlos Leyrer, **Colombia**; Ravi Kunavarapu, **India**; Johannes Neumer, **Germany**; Eric Chen, **Taiwan**; Avinash Sallipudi, **India**; Scott Lawrenz, **Zambia**

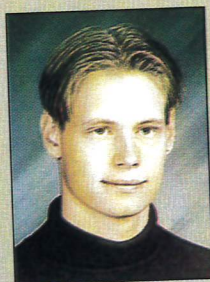
(Middle row) Yohanne Balsingham, **Ontario**; Roberto Mogot, **Indonesia**; Valeria Stchetina, **Russia**; Alexandra Büemlein, **Germany**; Adriane Haar, **Ontario**; Marianne Sylvester, **Grenada**; Elizabeth Zimdars, **Mexico**; Kazu Ito, **Japan**; Takami Iwai, **Japan**; Alice Chen, **Taiwan**

(Seated) Patricia Harley, **Antigua**; Synara Leyrer, **Colombia**; Lianne Balsingham, **Ontario**
Missing: David Chen, **Taiwan**; Sean Boileau, **Ontario**; Juan Delgado, **Colombia**; Stephen Wendland, **Zambia**



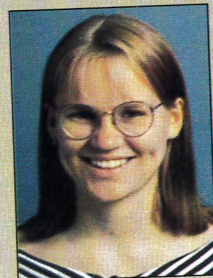
Martin Luther Preparatory School, Prairie du Chien, Wis.

Nathan Boettcher, **Japan**; Jonathan Kovaciny, Karl Kovaciny, **Ukraine**



Saint Croix Lutheran High School, West St. Paul, Minn.

Gunnar Rekvig, **Norway**; Robin Wong, **China**



Manitowoc Lutheran High School, Manitowoc, Wis.

Sirpa Johanna Kaper, **Finland**



Winnebago Lutheran Academy, Fond du Lac, Wis.

Maryana Baltazar, **Mexico**



Wisconsin Lutheran High School, Milwaukee, Wis.

Sheyla Alonso, **Brazil**

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.