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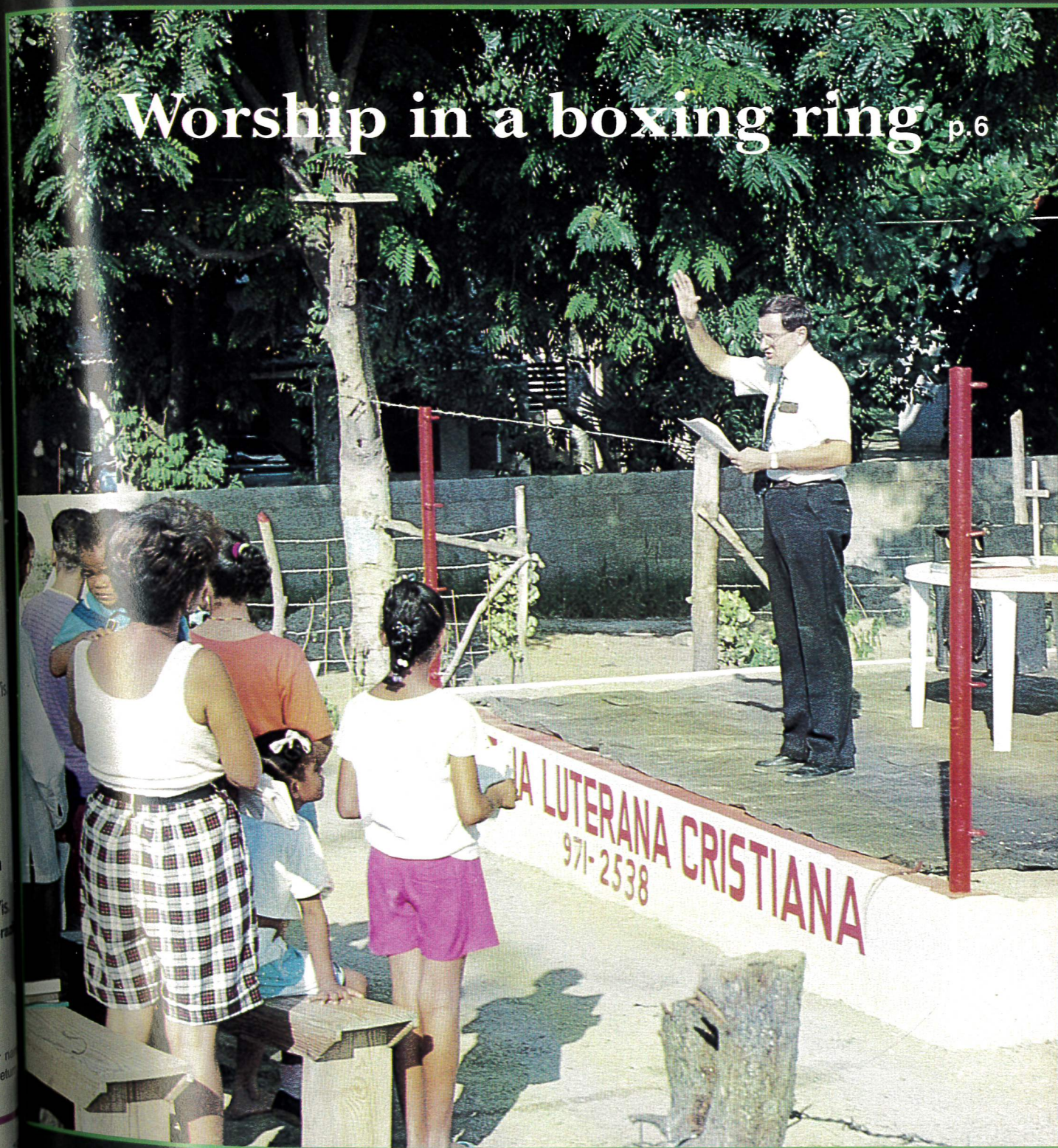
NORTHWESTERN

February 1994

# LUTHERAN



## Worship in a boxing ring p.6



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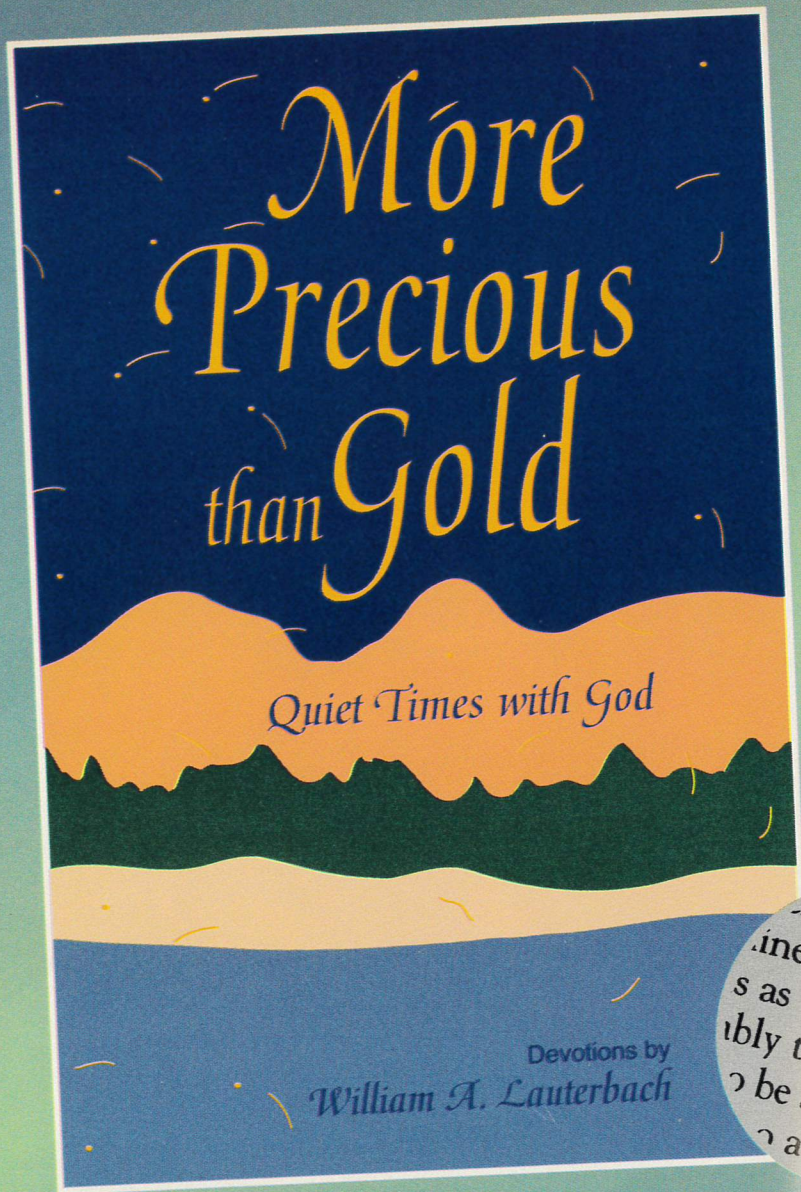


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precious  
than  
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Psalm 19:10

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What kind of towel was it? Made of wool perhaps, from sheep of nearby Bethlehem? Stained with color perhaps, from some nut or berry in a day before our modern dyes? We don't know. Far more important is it for us to note who took that towel and what he did with it.

**Feel his love**

There was only one foot-washer in that upper room that first Maundy Thursday evening. But what love he exhibited! Never would the world see his likes again. He to whom holy angels had ministered since their creation now ministered like some slave as he washed his disciples' dusty feet. He into whose hands the Father had placed all things now filled a basin and picked up a towel. That night the Savior washed feet with water in the upper room. The next morning he washed souls with his blood on Calvary's cross. That night his hands took up a towel. The next morning they were torn by nails.

How can we miss the love behind it all? A love that took up a towel and handled dirty feet. A love that tasted hell's doom and grave's darkness because he was handling the world's sins. From that love came such wonderful cleansing for sinners like Peter and John, Matthew and me, even for Judas and unbelievers like him, though they still reject it.

As believers, cleansed by Jesus' blood, we still have to walk the world's dusty road. And some of its dust sticks daily to our feet. In the Lenten Season, perhaps more than any other time of the year, we need to check our feet again, noting clearly what greed and envy, what pride and jealousy, what love for the world's goods and lack of love for our neighbor have been layered there. Seeing the dirt, it's time again to kneel before our loving Savior's cross with the plea, "Wash me, Savior, or I die."

**Follow his lead**

There was only one foot-washer in that upper room that first Maundy Thursday evening. But there should



FORD MADDOX BROWN

## He took a towel

by Richard E. Lauersdorf

*He poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.*

John 13:5

have been more. The disciples who earlier had quarreled over who would be greatest in the kingdom weren't about to swallow their sinful pride and take up that towel. So Jesus had to teach them, and as always, example spoke louder than words. Would they ever forget the sight of their Lord down on his knees in his undergarment, bathing their feet? Was Peter thinking of this when almost 30 years later he urged, "Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble'" (1 Peter 5:5)?

Among Christ's twentieth-century disciples, pride is still one of the most regular sins, and humility one of the rarest virtues. And it shows in the way we wrinkle up our nose at a neighbor or fellow church member. In the way jealousy gnaws when someone else receives the recognition. In the way feelings are hurt when we don't get the praise we thought we had coming. In the way we leave the basin untouched and the towel folded instead of responding to the needs of anyone and not just those who can wash our feet in return some day.

Do you want to follow the Savior's lead and, without grumbling or tiring, exhibit such love? Love that watches over a soul or wipes away a tear, forgives a fault or bears with an injustice? Love that changes diapers or scrubs floors, does homework or carries out the garbage, goes to work and supplies the cash? Love that brings offerings, witnesses to souls, pounds nails, uses talents for his kingdom?

There's only one way. Only as we kneel before the Savior's cross, there to be served by his rich love through Word and sacrament, will we be ready to take up our towels and get going.



Richard Lauersdorf is pastor of St. John, Jefferson, Wisconsin, and the synod's first vice-president.



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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COVER: Missionary Ronald Baerbock held the first worship service, of "The Lutheran Christian Church" as the sign says, in the Dominican Republic. Photo by Duane Tompkins



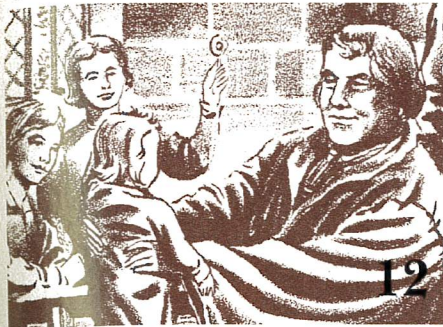
**FORWARD**

■ With this issue we introduce some new items, all of which need your participation:

- A message from the synod's president is not new; but a new—since August—president is bringing a new name to his column: "Person to person" (page 18) and an invitation to you to let him know your concerns and feelings about the synod.
- An ongoing conversation with synod administrators will be found in "Open doors." Claire Ochs, administrator for the Board of Trustees, is up first on page 19, with answers to some questions about the synod's finances. Send us your questions and we'll pass them on.
- A new series, "The family table," begins this month on page 12. As an introduction, author Tom Franzmann describes the lively talks that went on around Luther's table. What issues might be discussed around your family table? You are invited to suggest topics.

■ We also say good-by, at least temporarily, to one regular feature. Paul E. Kelm, author of "Life is looking up," has taken what we hope is a brief leave of absence. Thanks for your contributions, Paul, and hurry back.

Dorothy Sonntag



The family table



WELS mission in Dominican Republic



Different, but alike

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Missionary Ronald Baerbock leads the first Lutheran service in the Dominican Republic.

# Worship in a boxing ring

A boxing ring was the setting for the mission's Bible class and worship

by Lawrence A. Retberg

**M**ission congregations often meet in unusual settings—shopping malls, funeral homes, even taverns. But *La Iglesia Luterana Cristiana*, in the Dominican Republic, may be the first to worship in a boxing ring.

Located in the Caribbean between Cuba and Puerto Rico, the country occupies the eastern two-thirds of the island called Hispaniola. Christopher Columbus discovered the island in 1492. It was the site of the first Spanish settlements in the New World. The Dominican Republic's capital city, Santo Domingo,





Left to right are Missionary Ronald, Joshua, Karen, and Matthew Baerbock.

Domingo, has the oldest university in the Americas. The country boasts a population of at least 7.5 million people. Yet there was no Lutheran church there.

### No Lutheran church

That is what our missionaries found when they visited the Dominican Republic in August 1992. They visited the contacts provided by our Hispanic congregations in Miami and Puerto Rico. They found the people open to the gospel. They learned that the government permits the entry and work of missionaries. But they did not find a Lutheran church.

Based on the number of prospects, on the openness of the government, and on the desire of the Dominican people to hear the gospel, our Puerto Rican missionaries and members of our Puerto Rican Lutheran Church who had accompanied our missionaries on the visit petitioned the Board for World Missions to begin exploratory work in the Dominican Republic. When Lift High the Cross offerings became available, the board approved exploratory mission work there.

These events were the beginning of our Lutheran mission work in the Dominican Republic. Veteran missionary Ronald Baerbock agreed to serve. After a mountain of paperwork and moving details, he and his wife Karen and their two youngest children arrived in the Dominican Republic on August 20, 1993. They settled in the city of Santiago.

### Bible class in a boxing ring

With household goods and mission materials still in storage, Baerbock began Bible study classes in three different areas of the city. One prospect, Manuel, a former champion boxer, introduced Baerbock to neighbors and to the young boxers Manuel was training. Bible classes were started in Manuel's house.

When an outdoor boxing ring was constructed in a vacant lot in the neighborhood, one side of the ring boasted a sign with the name *La Iglesia Luterana Cristiana* (The Lutheran Christian Church), along with Missionary Baerbock's phone number. When

the Bible study class became too large for Manuel's home, its 50 members

moved to the vacant lot where light bulbs were strung to provide light. Missionary Baerbock stood in the ring, leading the Bible study.

On November 7 the fledgling group held its first worship service. It was held outdoors, at the same boxing ring.

### Lift High the Cross funds at work

Thanks to you and others who contributed to the Lift High the Cross offering, there is a Lutheran church in the Dominican Republic. It is preaching the gospel of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. It is preaching to a people who are hungry for the Word of God.

This mission work is of an exploratory nature at this time. The funds that have been committed are very limited. Missionary Baerbock is our lone worker. As of December 15, he and his family were still waiting for their resident visas and permission to bring in their household goods and mission materials. The desire to send a layman as an assistant from our Puerto Rican mission has not yet materialized. In spite of this, the Lord is blessing our efforts to preach his Word. Will he make it a stepping stone to neighboring Cuba?

We ask that you rejoice with us that there is now a Lutheran church in the Dominican Republic. We also ask that you include Missionary Baerbock, his family, and this exploratory work—begun in a boxing ring—in your prayers.

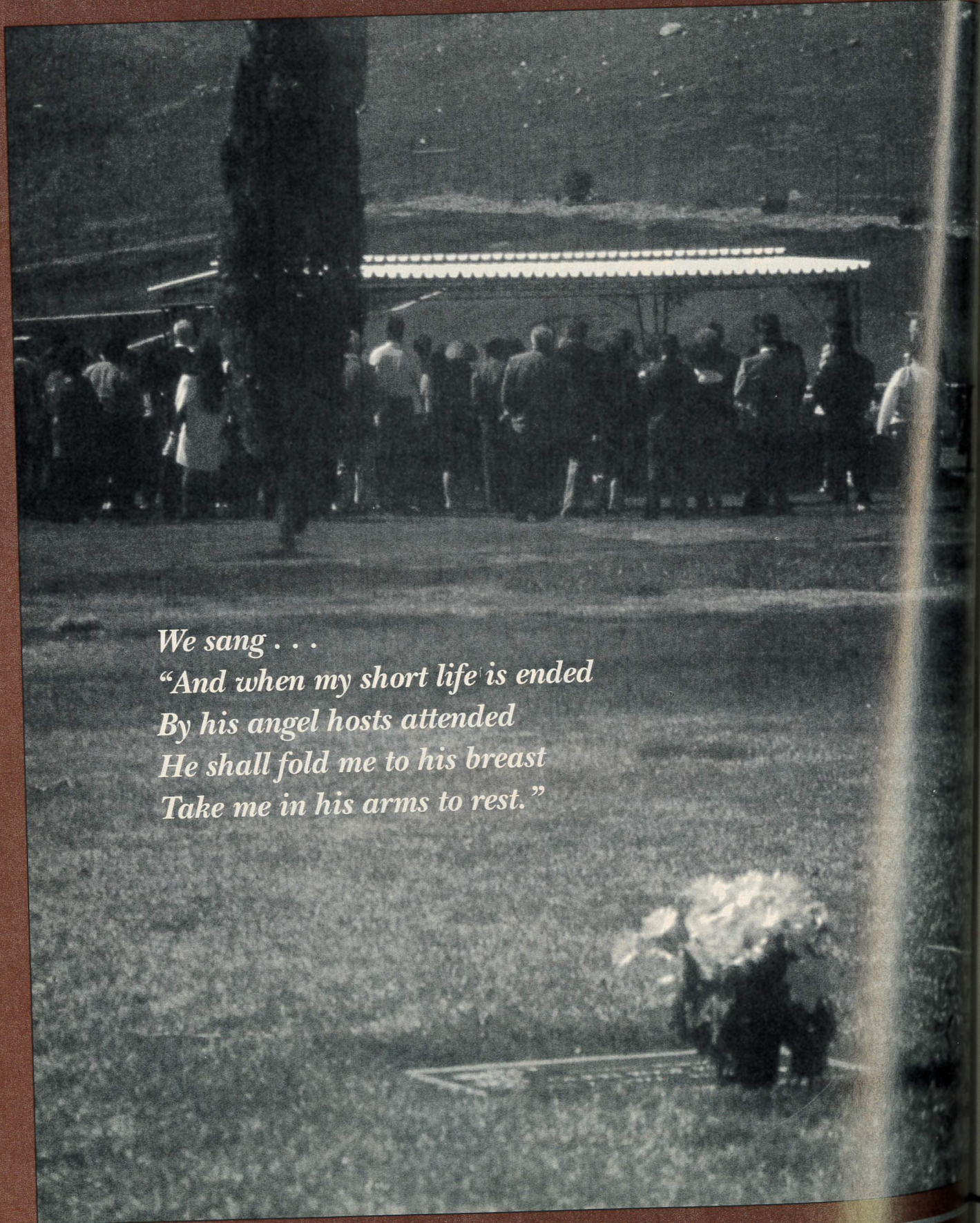
*A videotape, "Dominican Republic Exploratory: First Report" (VHS 137), is available through your congregation from the Audio/Visual Library Services of Northwestern Publishing House. The 18 minute video is suitable for individual or group showings.*



Larry Retberg, who teaches at Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, chairs the executive committee for Latin America.

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a Lutheran  
to worship  
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*We sang . . .*

*“And when my short life is ended  
By his angel hosts attended  
He shall fold me to his breast  
Take me in his arms to rest.”*



# Journey to the cemetery

We gathered at the cemetery to say good-by to Amanda and Matthew, but the story doesn't end there—not for us

by Dorothy J. Sonntag

**I**t's been ten years, but the memory is etched as sharply in my mind as if it had just occurred.

The December day was cold and gray. Sharp gusts of wind sent flurries of snow into the faces of the small group of mourners gathered at the grave. We were there to say good-by to Matthew and Amanda, twins born prematurely, who lived only briefly—our grandchildren.

Our journey to the cemetery began with a phone call from our son-in-law. Trying to keep the fear from his voice, he told us that his wife, our daughter, had gone into premature labor. The danger was even greater because she was carrying twins.

In a frantic race across the city we followed the blinking lights of the ambulance that carried our daughter to the hospital. For three days we stayed there, going home occasionally, unwillingly, to attend to other responsibilities, while the medical staff sought to delay the birth of the babies too tiny to face the world.

Others were there, too—Ruth, our son-in-law's mother, whose calm faith sustained us all; relatives and friends who visited briefly and left us with their promises of prayer; the pastor who came frequently, bringing the reassurance of God's love.

The days of waiting ended. The doctors could do no more. The babies were born, far too soon for any hope of survival.

A nurse baptized them moments after their birth. She brought them into the hospital room

so we could share their brief lives. Matthew's tiny body soon grew still. Amanda followed him a short time later.

A few days later our families gathered at the cemetery. A small coffin rested on the frozen ground. The babies would be buried beside their grandfather, Ruth's husband.

The pastor spoke words of comfort, words of promise. We sang a hymn—"I am Jesus' little lamb." Our voices cracked and the cold wind stung the tears in our eyes, but we sang. "And when my short life is ended/By his angel hosts attended/He shall fold me to his breast/Take me in his arms to rest."

We said good-by to Matthew and Amanda. And we went back—to school, to work, to the everyday events that fill our lives. God gave our daughter and son-in-law other children, bright, healthy boys who are loved with extra measure because of the brother and sister they never knew.

**T**he story doesn't end in the cemetery, not for us. It ends when those tiny bodies are resurrected. It ends when we meet again in heaven. It ends when we finally get to hold the grandchildren who did not stay on earth long enough for even one hug.

When that happens, the story just begins.



*Dorothy Sonntag is assistant editor for Northwestern Lutheran.*



# Doing a double take

by Carl R. Henkel

We don't do many double takes anymore. Very few things shock us. I'm concerned, not only because of the callousness I see in society, but especially because I see it in Christians.

**I**t was somewhere in the middle of Wisconsin near Baraboo, I believe. I was on my way to a meeting in Milwaukee.

I had been following a new white car for several miles. "NOT JIM" was the message on the personalized Wisconsin license plate.

Finally deciding to pass, I glanced over at the driver of the other vehicle and did a double take. Sitting in the driver's seat was an infant in a car seat. The driver, a woman, was sitting on the passenger side, behind the right-mounted steering wheel. A strange and unexpected sight indeed!

We don't do many double takes anymore, do we? Very few things shock us. We are rarely surprised by what we see or hear. Continued news coverage of crimes of every variety have deadened our senses. Sensing they are losing our interest and are no longer able to shock us with generalities, the media are becoming daringly graphic and explicit.

## We're becoming callous

I'm concerned, not only because of the callousness I see in society, but especially because I see it in Christians and in myself.

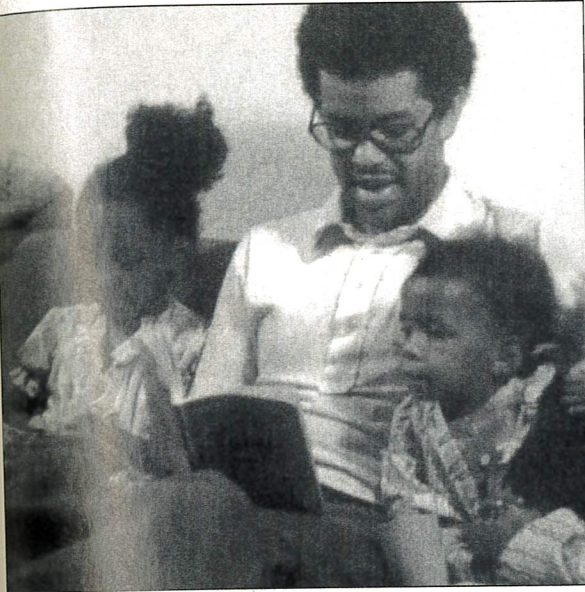
Have you noticed how those committing minor and serious crimes are getting younger and younger? What has gone wrong that a toddler can be savagely killed by a pair of 10-year-olds, and a 70-year-old woman is stabbed 86 times by two 17-year-olds who stomped on her dead body and tried to scalp her before stealing \$81.72 in pension money?

An article in the *Appleton [Minn.] Press* quotes Marshall McLuhan: "If the temperature of the water rises one degree every 10 minutes, how will the bather know when to scream?" The point: When things are going badly in society, and everyone adjusts to the growing problem and discomfort, things can get absolutely terrible, and we still don't realize that we should be screaming. The horrible things we see and hear are accepted as routine in normal American life.

Writer John Leo says, "The sad truth is that America's social crisis won't be solved, or even addressed, until there's enough outrage to break through the denial and the pretense that everything will get better."



COURTESY OF WELLS MEDIA MINISTRY/PHOTO BY GERALD KOEHLER STUDIO



### *What can a person do?*

- √ *Get our consciences fine-tuned through the faithful study of God's Word.*
- √ *Devote ourselves to prayer.*
- √ *Bring up our children to know the law of God.*
- √ *Lead our children to see God's love revealed in Jesus Christ.*
- √ *Welcome each morning as "the day the Lord has made! Let us rejoice and be glad in it!"*

#### **What we can do**

Now I'm sure that everyone reading this is concerned and even frightened about the sinfulness of the world in which we live. We would all scream until we had no voice if we thought it would do any good. We'd march and picket and march some more if we were convinced that God would be glorified through such actions. But frankly, what can one person do? One congregation? One synod?

For starters, we could get (and keep) our consciences fine-tuned through faithful study of God's Word. Sin is sin, regardless of what some may call it and others may do with it. (Did you hear that a defense attorney is trying to get his client off by pleading "temporary loss of morals"? And he's serious!) We must be able to do a double take if we are going to address sin in our own lives and in our society.

In addition, the Scriptures urge us to devote ourselves to prayer. How's your prayer life these days?

We need, also, to commit ourselves to bringing up today's children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. We may not be able to convince all people of America that abortion is murder, drugs and alcohol kill, adultery is sin, homosexuality is perversion, pornography is evil and cheating is immoral, but we dare not fail to instill these truths in our children and those entrusted to our care. Our children must know

the law of God. It must be fixed upon their minds and implanted in their hearts.

Our children must also be led to see God's love revealed in Jesus Christ. God's love motivates us to love. God's love forgives and moves us to forgive, comforts and permits us to comfort, heals and provides us opportunity to be healers. No effort, no expense, can be spared in providing for the spiritual training of our children. No shortcuts can be taken. Mothers, fathers, grandparents, congregational members, take heed!

Last but not least, we must consciously welcome each morning as we breathe the air and greet the sun of another day. "This is the day the Lord has made! Let us rejoice and be glad in it!" God is still in charge. He still determines who lives and who dies. He permits Satan to roam, but keeps him on a short chain. He still allows his sunshine and rain to fall on the good as well as on the evil. And he still desires all to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Our God reigns! We answer to him. All others in this world will also have to do the same.

Maybe we can still do a double take, when we think of God's love. Now that's amazing!



Carl Henkel is pastor at Mt. Olive, St. Paul, Minnesota.





ILLUSTRATION FROM MARTIN LUTHER: MAN OF GOD, USED BY PERMISSION.

# Luther's table talk

When Martin Luther's extended family gathered at the meal table, just about any subject might come up

by Thomas B. Franzmann



**T**ry to picture yourself seated at Martin Luther's family table. Having difficulty? Maybe I can help a little.

When the Reformation took hold after 1517, monastic life came under public ridicule. Many monks and nuns left the seclusion of monasteries and convents to serve their Lord more directly among his people. That was true also in Wittenberg.

For about 150 years Luther's order, the Augustinians, had maintained a cloister in Wittenberg. When Frederick the Wise decided in 1502 to build a university there, he envisioned a key role for the Augustinians in it. He authorized a new cloister to be built for them. Because of its size (45 feet wide by 40 feet high by 165 feet long), and because of budget shortfalls, it was not finished until 1518. During the early 1520s, most of the Augustinian friars vacated the Black Cloister, as it was called because of the Augustinians' black robes. But Luther continued to live there.

**Luther's family—no quiet little group**

Luther married Katharine von Bora in June 1525. They set up housekeeping on the second floor of the Black Cloister, where remodeled rooms had been prepared for them. Before long, walls that had heard only the sombre chants and padding footsteps of monks bound to a strictly-enforced silence echoed with the noises of children playing.

In this building, the Luther family would gather for meals, the most substantial about ten in the morning, followed by a lighter supper in the early evening. The modern mind might envision a quiet

little group—father, mother, and several children. Not so!

Martin and Katharine were blessed with six children. In addition, a maiden aunt of Katharine and several orphaned nephews and nieces lived there. Some students who could not afford room and board lived with them, earning their keep by doing clerical and domestic chores.

That added up to more than a dozen. But there's more. Because the Reformation came at a time when people were hungry for the Word of God, and because Luther was such a gifted talent, people were constantly clamoring for his time. As a consequence, hardly a day passed when there were no guests present—sometimes students, sometimes fellow workers in the Reformation, sometimes visiting theologians—all hoping to catch some tidbit that "fell from the master's table." One visiting friend reported that in the Luther household there was a "constant disturbance."

**Meal time—discussions on almost any subject**

When that extended family gathered at the meal table, just about any subject might come up. Frequently Luther would arrive at the table deep in thought, having just come from his large study in the same building. Ideas and concepts jelling in his mind from his study of the Scriptures, concerns about the direction the church was taking in that time of turmoil, worries about the future of the simple people who were trusting his leadership at risk to themselves, and some moodiness caused by his own problems with digestion—any or all of these might cause him to



ILLUSTRATION FROM MARTIN LUTHER: MAN OF GOD. USED BY PERMISSION.

Luther with his family.



come to the table and sit in silence for some time. Then the others would also eat quietly without disturbance.

But part way through, the reformer would usually look around at his "family" and ask, "What's new?" That would be the signal for a discussion to begin, on almost any subject. A question would be directed to him, and he would answer. As he spoke, students and others would take notes. Can you picture that around your table?

Keep in mind there were no tape recorders. Taking notes was the only way to keep a record of what Luther said at those popular gatherings. Luther was a genius. People recognized it. They did not want his gems of wisdom to be lost. So, as they ate and talked, the scratch of quill on paper could be heard.

#### Taking notes at the table

The notes were often written in a kind of shorthand students had developed. Frequently they were rewritten later, copied and recopied. Sometimes they were embellished and modified to suit the writer's purposes. When we read them now, it is often impossible to tell what was said in humor or seriousness, how an inflection changed a word, or what body language accompanied the phrase.

Though the "Table Talk" of Luther may not be the most reliable source for determining his doctrine and practice, his contemporaries took it very seriously. One German edition of his works includes six volumes of *Tischreden*. The English edition that many pastors have contains almost 500 pages.

At the table Luther answered some of the deepest theological questions with amazing clarity and appropriate support from Scriptures, even though these

were unprepared and unrehearsed comments at a dinner table. He also took up the simplest questions of his children. Perhaps that's where he acquired, sharpened, his skill at speaking on the level of children, as his catechism revealed.

The Luther household knew its share of difficulties. The family talked about death, politics, finances, doctrine, marriage, family problems, moral decay in society. The topics not discussed are probably less numerous than those that

#### Your family table

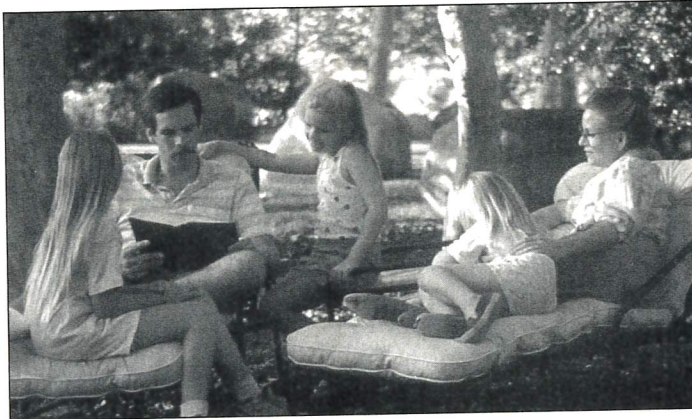
I hope you now have in mind a fair picture of the Luther family. That picture is the drop for a series of articles I've been asked to do under the general topic "The family table." Your family table probably does not resemble the size and composition of the Luthers'. It would be good if

would emulate theirs as a place to discuss issues, problems, joys, and future plans. Probably no one is taking notes for posterity at your family table, but it only helps you to be more intimate and real. Being Lutherans, your table, like theirs, will have Lord Jesus as the constant guest, with his gospel setting the tone and shaping the discussions.

*In this series, we want to cover topics that might be discussed at your family table. Please send your suggestions to Family Table, Northwestern Lutheran, 2000 Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53226-4398.*



Tom Franzmann is pastor of Our Redeemer, Santa Barbara, California.



MRS. KEVIN SCHEIBEL PHOTOGRAPHY

**M**uch is said these days about family issues. For broader coverage we recommend the family magazine *Wellspring*. It provides daily family devotions, feature articles, and other helps.

*Wellspring* is available from Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 N 113th St, Milwaukee WI 53226-3284. Call toll-free 1-800-662-6093, ext. 8. In the Milwaukee area call 414/475-6600, ext. 5.





# WE'RE MORE ALIKE



# than different

by Duane Anderson

**W**hat is your ethnic tolerance level? Do you wince in the grocery check-out line when the young Latino male stumbles with his English? Do you have trouble communicating amicably with your African-American co-worker?

If you experience anger or frustration when talking with people of other cultures or races, remember that Jesus died for all sins of all people. Salvation is free to all of us through faith in Christ.

### We're the same

- **The same human needs**—Think about the needs we all share, whether Christian or non-Christian, African-American or Latino, WASP or Japanese: We all seek financial security. We need nourishing food on a regular basis. We desire to be needed, to be loved, to belong.

- **The same spiritual needs**—We all have spiritual needs. We seek an understanding of who God is and what he is like. One of the basic desires of unregenerate hearts is to perform good works in an attempt to satisfy God. All religions, except Christianity, believe in human effort to effect a relationship with God.

All people are afflicted with a sinful nature. Because of our common inherited malady, we are spiritually dead. But God has provided a remedy: We have been reconciled to him through Christ.

- **The same Savior**—The most striking aspect of

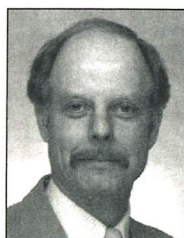
human commonality is that the atoning work of Lord Jesus is sufficient for all; and all who believe in Jesus as their Savior from sin have eternal life.

- **The same spiritual goals**—We become one with God, and one with each other in the body of Christ, united in his invisible Church by a common bond of faith. Because we are one in Christ, we share common spiritual goals. We look forward to eternity with Christ in heaven. Together we acknowledge the Bible to be the inerrant, inspired Word of God. Together we worship and thank our God. We tell others about him, so that they too may be reconciled to God.

### We're different

- **Different cultures**—Our commonalities do not mean we all wear the same clothing, eat the same food, or even speak the same language. Diversity is richness. Under God, we can enjoy these aspects of cultural diversity. Remember, God created the different races.

May we reach out to all, people of color, people from different races, and not limit our contacts to those from similar cultural and racial backgrounds.



Duane Anderson is a member of the synod's Multicultural Ministry Committee.



# LITURGY:

Holy  
BaptismThe Communion  
Service and Sacrament

putting you

by Bryan M. Gerlach

**T**he cartoon showed a stylishly-dressed man shaking a pastor's hand after the service and saying, "Well, that was fun. We'll have to do that again sometime."

Do you rate worship the same way you rate a golf game or going to lunch with a friend? Or do you evaluate worship by different criteria?

Americans are redefining worship. Creating an enjoyable experience, a spiritually fun time, is often part of the redefinition. Whatever worship is, it must be pleasant—even entertaining. Under that definition, liturgical worship is usually judged to be inadequate.

## Worship is more about God than about us

*Christian Worship*, our new hymnal—with its liturgies, psalms, and hymns—stands solidly within the Reformation tradition that uses the historic pattern of the liturgy to proclaim God's majesty and grace and to give ample opportunity for our response. This hymnal lets objective, God-centered elements have primacy over subjective, human-response elements. Worship is always more about God than about us: who he is, what he has done for us, how he inspires us to approach him.

The central teaching of the Bible shapes our hym-

nal and worship just as it shapes all of our teaching and life. That central teaching is justification, God's action and declaration of "Not guilty! Forgiven!" The doctrine of justification is why we worship as we do.

In justification God gives forgiveness and salvation. In the liturgy he gives these gifts through the Word and sacraments. Thus worship is always sacramental before sacrificial. Worship always receives gifts from God and then responds with the sacrifice of praise.

The themes of justification and sacrament explain why Lutheran worship at its best is liturgical. Liturgy—not one specific liturgy, but the broad idea of liturgical worship—is the ideal vehicle for proclaiming God's justification and for receiving the Word and sacraments. Worship always starts with God. The focus is on him and the gifts he offers.

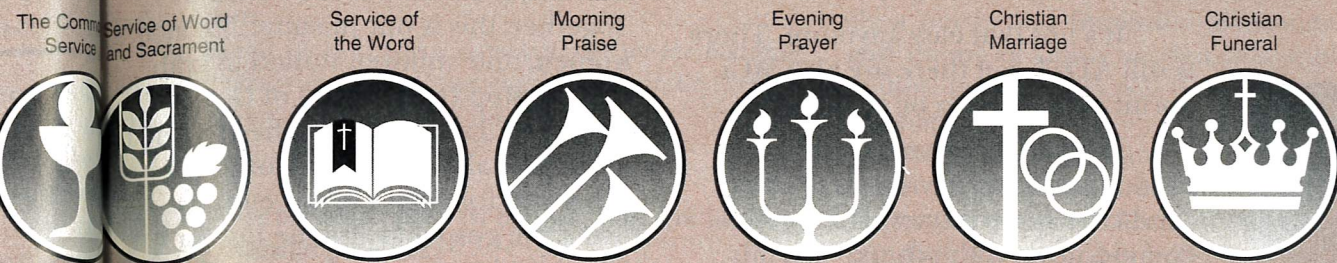
## Worship before the King's throne

This article is the final in a series on the new hymnal. But the most helpful way to grow in worship is not found between the covers of *Christian Worship: Lutheran Hymnal*. That most necessary ingredient is not in any book; it's in your heart.

If you want to grow in concentration and participation in worship, don't look for new worship for-



*A hymnal by itself does not make worship*



# Put your heart into worship

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or fresh hymns. Look instead at the throne described in Psalm 17. Look at the activity surrounding that throne in Revelation, where thousands of angels and saints sing, "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever."

Imagine yourself before that throne every time you worship. Imagine yourself following a ceremony (the liturgy) in which the king from his throne gives you the richest blessings you can imagine—forgiveness of sins, a stronger relationship with him, an eternal life of perfection and joy. Imagine yourself responding from the depth of your being to this great King and Savior, and your worship will be renewed no matter what liturgy or hymnal you use.

Of course worship leaders must do their best and work for improvement when leading worship. But that's only half the story. The other half requires the best from worshipers—the best participation, the best concentration. With such involvement before the King's throne, worshipers won't be passive. They won't evaluate worship by criteria that apply to other areas of life.

### Renewal doesn't come from a new hymnal

One indication of enthusiasm for the new hymnal

is that all copies of the first printing were sold and shipped in less than three months. But worship renewal doesn't come simply from a new hymnal. It comes when we understand and appreciate more deeply what is happening in worship.

Such renewal happens best when each worshiper takes personal responsibility for his or her involvement and heart-felt participation. After all, the gracious King is before us on his throne!

The more we put ourselves into worship, the more we find how powerfully God is there. New hymnals are exciting. But a hymnal by itself does not make worship. People, stimulated by God's good news, need to use the book. When we eagerly join in worship, we receive the best that God has to give, and give him our best in return.

And we won't express the shallow sentiment of that cartoon character leaving church. Instead we might say to our Lord, "This was wonderful! Thank you. I'll certainly be here again next week."



Illustrations from *Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal*. Used by permission.

Bryan Gerlach, pastor of St. Mark, Citrus Heights, California, was a member of the synod's Joint Hymnal Committee.



## From one person to another

**H**as the telephone company been calling you lately? Which one? That used to be an easy question to answer. Why, Ma Bell, of course.

It's not that easy anymore. There is still AT&T, but there are also MCI, Sprint, and a dozen or so more.

Each of them wants your business. It wants to provide the means (and collect the money) for you to communicate with others. "Friends and Family" and "Reach out America" are designed to make it easy for you to communicate, person to person.

We're not the phone company. But we have even more reason to want to establish ways to communicate.

Ringin' in our ears is the gospel message of God's undeserved love for us. Forgiving us, it brings peace to our hearts. We have confidence for the future; heaven is ours. And, right now, it steadies our trembling knees. God is for us.

All this makes us want to communicate what we know, what the Holy Spirit has brought us to believe. We want to talk, person to person.

Person to person, face to face, I would like to communicate with each one of you. As opportunities present themselves, I look forward, in person, to doing just that.

I invite you to do the same. In person, by letter or telephone, communicate with me person to person.

Still, for many of us, any person to person contact will have to be on the pages of *Northwestern Lutheran*. Right here, optimistically, I want to share with you the mission of our church. Encouragingly, I want to illustrate how we together can seize the

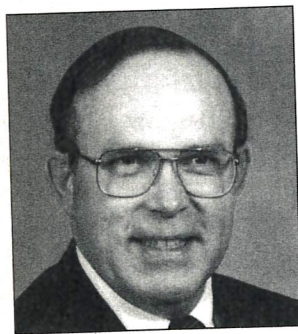
opportunities God is providing. Opportunities are numerous for telling his love person to person.

Person to person is how we are to view this fellowship we call WELS. Together, this is our mission: "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."

Person to person, from one person to another, that's how the gospel is shared. The words above, affirming that task, were adopted as the mission statement of our synod. It underscores our commitment to share the same gospel someone once shared with us. Nurtured in our own faith by the Word, we will be inspired to share the Word. When we do, by the power of the Holy Spirit always at work in that Word, disciples will be won for Christ for time and eternity.

What a glorious mission! "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation" (Mark 16:15). What a wonder! God makes us all partners in it. So, right here, let's share our mission, person to person.

*Karl R. Gurgel*



Pastor Karl R. Gurgel  
is president of the Wisconsin  
Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

Do you have a question for  
President Gurgel? Please send  
it to *PERSON TO PERSON*,  
Northwestern Lutheran,  
2929 N Mayfair Rd,  
Milwaukee WI 53222-4398.



# The synod's budget

*With this issue we introduce a new department in NL. Do you have questions about the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod—how it functions, how decisions are made and carried out? Synod administrators will try to provide some answers.*

*This month Clair V. Ochs, administrator for the Board of Trustees, which has fiscal and legal responsibility for the synod, answers questions about finances.*

## **H**ow does the synod fund its budget? Why are we having financial problems?

The synod was founded on the premise that a group of congregations can do more to advance God's kingdom together than individually. The concept still applies. The synod is effective in carrying out mission outreach and assistance in proportion to the support and desires of member congregations.

This gets us into Synod Mission Offerings (SMO). When a family gets into financial difficulties, it cuts back or earns more by a second job or some other source of income. For the synod, the alternatives are to cut programs or find other sources of support, such as special offerings, gifts, or memorials.

Alternative sources of income work fine for seeding new outreach efforts, but once started these, too, must be funded. Special offerings can be effective and adequate only after an ample base has been established. So what do you do when budgetary support is diminishing and special gifts have not adequately matured to offset SMO shortfalls?

SMO offerings accounted for 55 percent of total synod revenues in fiscal year 1991-92, 52 percent in 1992-93, and are projected to be 48 percent in 1993-94. What is the answer? The trend is toward special gifts, but those offerings do not guarantee we can operate on the mandatory balanced budget basis. Increases in SMO are the only answer, at least until special gift planning contributions pick up the slack.

It is important to keep focused on the purpose of the synod—congregations working together to promote God's kingdom. Working in this office, I sometimes sense a feeling of "we versus them." That is not the way it is. Our efforts are directed toward mission outreach and providing assistance, not on a "we-them" but on a "we-we" basis. We are trying to do what you want us to do. It's your call.

## **H**ow are we going to pay for the new schools?

Funding and budgetary activities are somewhat more intense and complicated as we carry out the amalgamation of the synod schools. We have plans to do a needs and feasibility assessment. The amount and timing of funds needed to complete the amalgamation by mid-1995 will determine the type of funding used.

Whatever the amount, the funds will come from a variety and combination of sources. The Board of Trustees has not yet decided on any specific options, but they will probably include interfund borrowing, outside borrowing (within a cap of \$10 million at



Clair Ochs (pronounced "Oaks") has been administrator for the Board of Trustees since December 1992. Until then he and his wife, Caroline, lived in Maryland, where he was a management consultant. They attend Christ the Lord in Brookfield, Wisconsin.

any one time), undesignated bequests, dollars generated by the sale of Martin Luther Preparatory School, and savings accruing from the amalgamation of the schools.

## **W**hat questions are you most frequently asked?

We frequently get calls from congregations and individuals about tax related issues. These are normally referred to our controller, who is a CPA. The tax manual published a few years ago and distributed to each congregation, which is updated annually, has done a lot to minimize these calls. The number of calls on other subjects ebbs and flows with the synod-related issues being addressed at the time.

Please send your questions about the synod administration to *OPEN DOORS*, Northwestern Lutheran, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398.



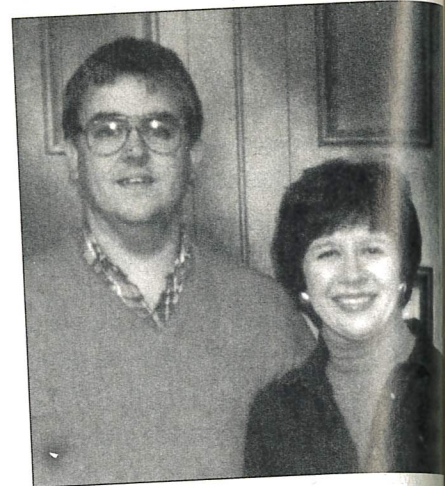
## Human Resources Coordinator begins work

Fourteen years in a mission field help tell why Jon M. Flanagan gave up the winter warmth of Louisiana for icy Wisconsin in January. That and the opportunity to be involved in the church's mission on a broader scale. Jon, his wife Marjorie, and their two children, Matthew, 5, and Katherine, 2, have moved so Jon could become the synod-mandated Human Resources Coordinator for WELS.

The 39-year-old Flanagan began his work in mid-January, confident

that the Lord had led him to accept this opportunity to serve. He counts his experience in the small mission in New Orleans as a strength for the position, enabling him to bring a fresh perspective to it and a zeal for it. In his years in Louisiana, he worked and talked with many called workers so that he came to understand the challenges to called workers in various situations. He also brings with him considerable job experience. He has been a human resources director for Bayou Steel Corporation in LaPlace, Louisiana, dealing with just about every aspect of the job—plus he has a strong business background.

What can we expect from our human resources coordinator? Expect a man who will listen and observe before he acts. Look for someone who will be available and able to help people where they need his help. Look for someone who will be working hard to develop



Jon and Marjorie Flanagan

a total compensation concept for all synodical workers.

Flanagan will serve not only the personnel at the synod administration building in Milwaukee, but all synodical workers. Already he is looking into human resource concerns in connection with the amalgamation of our ministerial schools.

The Flanagan family is making home in the Milwaukee area, where Marjorie hopes to continue her work as a vocal music teacher.

## Suggestions invited for new school names

The 1993 synod convention resolution authorizing amalgamation of the synodical colleges and merger of two preparatory schools also called for new names for the schools. The one school will be the combined college at New Ulm, Minn., which will provide teacher and preseminary pastor education. The other will be the preparatory school at Watertown, Wis., which will train candidates for the college. The boards of the new schools are asking for suggestions.

"The schools also need team names, mascots, and school colors," said Pastor Roland Zimmermann, chairman of the college board. "We'd like ideas for those, too."

Please send suggestions by February 20 to the WELS Board for Ministerial Education, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398.



St. Paul, Monroe, Michigan, built in 1860, is the oldest Lutheran structure in Michigan has been preserved as a historical landmark. (It is pictured here as seen in 1963.) St. Paul is the second oldest WELS congregation and celebrated 160 years in December. The congregation worships in a facility built in 1973.



## Labor of love plus an award

When the Board for World Missions commissioned Pastor Theodore A. Sauer to be project director for a book commemorating 100 years of WELS world missions, the retired administrator of the board jumped at the chance. His deep love for Christ and Christ's mission moved him. His gifts for organization and attention to detail, as well as a wealth of personal experience, made him the ideal choice. His reward was telling the story.

The resulting book, however, has also earned Pastor Sauer an Award of Commendation for:

being project director for *To Every Nation, Tribe, Language and People*, a history marking the centennial of the world mission program of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. This well-done history provides a vivid picture of WELS efforts to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a world in need.

The Concordia Historical

Institute, which granted the award, reported also that Pastor Sauer was one of only 13 chosen from a great number of nominations. The institute's committee granted awards to "congregations, agencies, boards and individuals for historical publications, unique contributions to Lutheran Literature, and for personal service in the field of Lutheran archival and historical work and support."

Former missionary and professor Ernst H. Wendland, who with Professor Harold R. John (Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary) co-edited the book, accompanied Sauer to the awards banquet in St. Louis, Missouri, and also received recognition. In all, eight writers contributed to the 100 year history. In a letter from Pastor Sauer thanking Northwestern Publishing House for its part in publishing the book, he concluded: "More important, of course, than any award is the fact that a story has been told, a story of the remarkable working of God's grace." And he added the



Theodore Sauer accepts award.

prayer that God "would continue to use this account of our synod's world mission outreach to bring encouragement, joy, and blessing to many."

As a part of the same awards ceremony, Mrs. Grace Stiemke, of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, was honored for her article, "A Mid-20th Century Dakota Parsonage," which appeared in the *WELS Historical Institute Journal* (October 1992). Hers was "a fascinating first-person account that recalls, after 50 years, the author's early years of married life with her pastor-husband in rural South Dakota."

## New academy in the making for WELS "kids in crisis"

When, where, and who are still uncertain, but the steering committee for Calvary Academy is clear on what and why. More help is needed for WELS "kids in crisis."

Pastor Paul Scharrer of St. Paul in Fort Atkinson, Wis., explains:

You may know of families who are facing the tremendous challenge of having a child or a teen who is "out of control." You may describe him as a "crisis kid." This child is skipping school or running away from home. She is either in trouble with the law or headed in that direction. Maybe he was dismissed from your Lutheran

elementary school or high school because of disruptive behavior. Then what? Do Christians just give up?

There is a Christian answer. Calvary Academy, now in the planning stages, will provide the care that is needed for children who are "out of control." It's a school which will be founded on Christ, rich in Christian love, but also highly disciplined. Able counselors and teachers will be there 24 hours a day to help these special needs kids. The goal of this boarding school is to meet the needs of these youth, to

enable them to return to their families committed to their Savior, to equip them to overcome their problems and to live vibrant Christian lives.

The steering committee for Calvary Academy consists of Larry Marquardt and Robert Wasser, Principal Paul Hartwig, and Pastors James Aderman, Paul Scharrer, and Robert James Voss.

The committee's challenge is to find funding, an adequate site (preferably in the upper Midwest), a staff of qualified WELS/ELS teachers and therapists, and students. God-willing, Calvary Academy will open with all of the above by the fall of this year.

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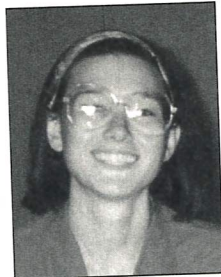
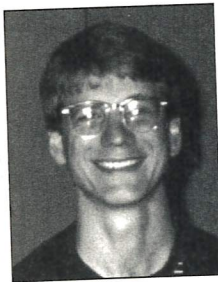
## New African missionaries

Three new missionary families left recently for Central Africa.

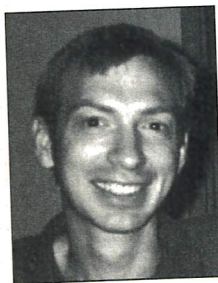
Paul and Susan Nitz, and their 15-month-old son, are in Malawi.

John and Sharon Hartmann, with their three children ranging from 10 months to five years, are in Zambia's Southern Province. Lift High the Cross funded the work among the Tonga-speaking people.

Curt Golm also is in Zambia. Like Hartmann, his work was made possible by Lift High the Cross. He and his wife, Janet, are the parents of a five-year-old daughter.



Paul and Susan Nitz, Malawi



John and Sharon Hartmann, Zambia

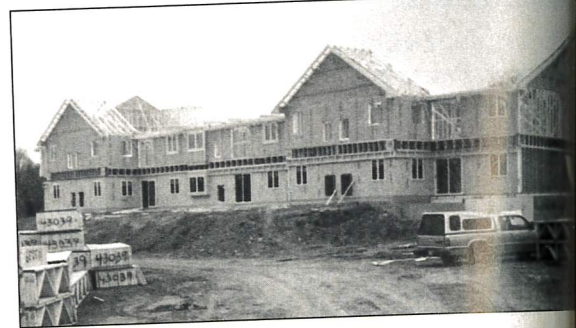


Curt and Janet Golm, Zambia



**Mission teams**—Kirby Spevacek and Daniel Kelm, the pastoral mission team in Bulgaria, and Philip Malchow and John Sullivan, the pastoral mission team in Russia, posed for picture after Sullivan's commissioning—held in the Spevaceks' living room in October. This was the first time a WELS missionary was commissioned in a foreign field to serve in that field.

## Retirement complex nearing completion



Construction is under way in a southside Milwaukee suburb for a retirement apartment complex operated by WELS members. Stoney Creek Adult Community Center is scheduled for completion by this summer. The center is located in Muskego, Wis., on land adjacent to St. Paul church, and is owned by Lutherans Incorporated for Elderly (LIFE).

"The plan is to complete a home to serve the needs of fellow-Lutherans," says Pastor Martin Lopahs, visitation pastor at St. Paul. "This 'dream home' will provide a most comfortable and secure environment for all while a spiritual emphasis throughout the program maintains the fellowship of like-minded saints."

The complex will have 52 one or two bedroom apartments, each with a patio or balcony. Also included in the complex are a chapel, library, fitness room, craft room, workshop, store, cafe, and a beauty salon and barbershop. The entire building will be wheelchair accessible. Under-

ground parking is provided.

A number of services will be available to residents: devotional opportunities, planned activities, health screening, and assistance with banking and tax forms. Housekeeping services can be provided, and several food service options are available.

"Heaven is the joyful eventual destination of the redeemed," says Lopahs, "but God's children spend their years prior to heaven in all sorts of living quarters. Describing this as a 'dream home' is quite appropriate, considering all the amenities offered its residents."

Stoney Creek is the second retirement complex sponsored by WELS members in the Milwaukee area. Luther Haven, on Milwaukee's northwest side, is operated by Wisconsin Lutheran Retirement Community, Inc.

For more information about Stoney Creek, call or write Stoney Creek Adult Community, 12765 Janesville Rd, Muskego, WI 53150, 414/425-9111.



## WELS capsule news

• The **1995 synod convention** was scheduled to be held on the Northwestern College campus the last full week in July. The site has been changed to Michigan Lutheran Seminary where the 1993 convention was held. President Gurgel says the switch is being made because of construction at Northwestern's campus.

• The Board for World Missions reports that it has approved the format of a **commissioning service rite for world missionaries**, which includes the opportunity for world missionary wives standing at their husband's side "to be publicly acknowledged and sent as companions in the mission work." In the "charge" the wife is also addressed: "Go then, dear sister, to joyfully serve the Lord as wife and witness to the joy you both share in Christ. May your willingness to support your husband in this important work and life bring happiness and blessing to your home." Previously the missionary's wife had no part in the words of commissioning.

• Citing fewer babies available for adoption, **Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Service** announced recently that it is closing its adoption application list. The agency has 85 WELS/ELS couples on its waiting list now and has placed only ten children for adoption over the last three years. WLCFS is still interested, however, in working with couples who may want to adopt a child with special needs.

• According to statistics developed by the Commission on Youth Discipleship, the synod's **Lutheran elementary school enrollment** as of last year is a

shade under 32,000. This represents 42 percent of the children in this age group. In Sunday School there are 43,500 enrolled. In 1970 the school enrollment was 26,200, which represented 33 percent of the synod's grade school children. Sunday school enrollment in 1970 was 53,000 or 67 percent of our eligible children.

• The **Organization of WELS Lutheran Seniors** reported making 18,300 phone calls in 1993 in its gospel outreach program. Clarence Saatkamp of Milwaukee, program chairman, reported that 744 prospects were located for 5 missions, scattered from Florida to California. He recently reported what happened to the other 17,556 calls. There were 11,944 who were not at home. Callers got the answering machine on 2,584 more. Already churched accounted for 7,548, and 2,643 "responded negatively."

• Aid Association for Lutherans has awarded the synod's campus ministry at the University of Minnesota a \$2,500 grant to help develop a new program to enhance its **campus ministry**. AAL also awarded a grant of \$28,500 to **Northwestern College** for several research projects, an inter-faculty conference, and development of a college level Hebrew grammar. **Wisconsin Lutheran College** (WLC) in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, has been awarded three grants totaling \$26,500. The grants will be used to develop and present a multi-media presentation illustrating the need for early financial planning for college, to hire a marketing consultant, and to enhance the relationship between WLC and the 20 WELS-affiliated national high schools. **Lutheran Pioneers**, a boys youth program based in Burlington, Wis., has been awarded a \$10,000 grant.

The money will allow 60 adult volunteer leaders to attend national field staff training.

• The Lutheran Brotherhood Foundation has made a grant of \$65,000 to cover the costs of the parish planner, Pastor Ronald Heins, for 1994-95 and provide support for training individuals to continue this work after the initial three-year phase. The **Parish Assistance Project** is one of the services provided by the Parish Services division. For more information about the project call 414/771-1235.

• The recent synod convention restructured the Board for Ministerial Education (new name for the Board for Worker Training). The restructuring called for the addition of four new voting members. Appointed by the Conference of Presidents were **Dr. John Freese** of Watertown, S. Dak.; **Pastor Richard Kogler** of Yucaipa, Cal.; **Martin Sell** of Juneau, Wis.; and **John Wempner** of Troy, Ohio.

### Touch of laughter

After I had preached my final sermon before my retirement, a little girl came up and hugged me. "Why do you want to retire?" she asked. I called her attention to the word "tire" in retirement and told her I was tired. "Oh, pastor," she said, "why can't you just sleep in?"

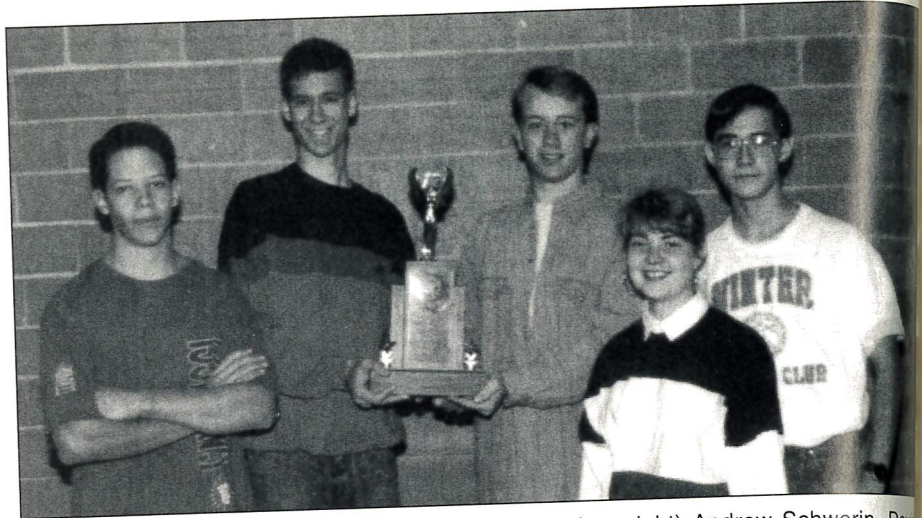
*Ed Zell  
Redford, Michigan*

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



## Nebraska District

Twenty-one students from **Nebraska Lutheran High School in Waco** participated, and its teams placed first in class C (out of about 25 schools) in two fast-paced events at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's fourth annual Math Day, November 11. In overall individual competition, David Wietzke of York placed fourth of more than 1000 students and received a \$4000 scholarship to the university.



Among students in the Nebraska math bowl are (left to right) Andrew Schwerin, David Wietzke, Brent Frey, Erika Johnson, and Robert Leerssen. The math teachers at Nebraska LHS, Waco, are Kathy Stern and Tim Malchow.

## North Atlantic District

On Sept. 18, Grace, Falls Church, Virginia, celebrated the 35th anniversary of **Pastor Walter Beckmann**. Beckmann has served Grace, the first congregation in what is now the North Atlantic District, since 1963. He has been president of the district since its inception.

—Jon R. Bitter

## Northern Wisconsin District

Friedens, Bonduel, observed 57 years of service as organist for **Anna Boerst** on October 10. . . . Bethel of Menasha celebrated 25 years in the teaching ministry of **Ruth Huebner** on Oct. 24. All 25 years have been at Bethel. . . . **Trinity Ladies Aid, Marinette**, celebrated its 100th anniversary on Sept. 25, with the theme "Main Street 1893." Shops of the era lined the walls, and tables held food available at 1893 prices.



Anna Boerst

—Jan C. Eggert

## South Atlantic District

On November 28, members of **Ascension, Sarasota, Florida**, and guests from several area congregations gathered to dedicate Ascension's new Family Enrichment Center.

The center provides a 7,000-square-foot lower level that incorporates Ascension's original facility. It has offices, a kitchen, and a fellowship hall. Facilities for a preschool, designed to accommodate 45 children and expected to open by early spring, are also on the ground level. The upper level houses twelve Sunday school rooms and quarters for Lutheran Pioneers and teen ministry.

What is remarkable about this building project is that it was completed almost entirely by volunteer amateur workers. During the 22 months of construction, members of Ascension and dozens of "snowbirds"—winter visitors—contributed over 20,000 hours. Many of them were inexperienced at swinging a hammer, yet this volunteer work force did everything except install the air conditioning, plumbing, and sprinkler system. In the wake of

Hurricane Andrew they even spent two weeks attaching 800-plus hurricane straps.

Ascension's pastor, John Huebner, says that he doesn't know of any building project on this scale done by volunteers in our synod. He is "amazed that the people have hung in there this long. Such evidence of faith!" Pastor Huebner remarked that "we always had more work than people. Those who volunteered knew that they were needed."

Ascension began with exploratory services in 1977. A sanctuary, also built with a great deal of volunteer effort, was dedicated in 1987. The congregation has grown since its early days, but much of the Family Enrichment Center was constructed with future needs in mind. Outreach through the preschool will have high priority.

—Paul E.

### 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 fewer than 500 words or more than 1000 words. Send manuscripts to *Northwestern Lutheran, WELS*, 2300 Mayfair Rd., Milwaukee WI 53222-4398. (NL may be delayed if it is sent to the publishing house.)



## Obituary

### Hildegarde Koepsell Shuster 1939-1993

Hildegarde A. Shuster, nee Koepsell, was born July 19, 1939. She died November 26, 1993.

A graduate of Dr. Martin Luther College, she taught at Zion, Toledo, Ohio. She was past president of the Ohio circuit of the Lutheran Women's Missionary Society and

composed the anthem sung at the LWMS 1991 national convention.

Surviving are her husband, Roland, sons Jonathan and Michael (Renee), daughters Heidi (Andrew) Willems and Joelle, and five grandchildren. Also surviving are her parents, Walter and Gertrude Koepsell, and brothers Arthur and Thomas.

## Book notes

**Christian Worship: Manual**, 572 pages, hardcover, \$29.99 plus \$5.50 for postage and handling, stock no. 03N3004. **Planning Christian Worship, Year B**, 130 pages, ring binder, \$15.99 plus \$4.25 for postage and handling, stock no. 03N3005. Northwestern Publishing House.

If you have anything to do with planning worship, or if you simply wish to enrich your worship life, call now to order *Christian Worship: Manual*. It's all about our worship life, from the building of a church with all its worship accouterments to every detail of the worship service including the pastor's garb.

I have read a book or two on Lutheran worship, but this is the one that has given me the best insight into our worship in a language most of us can understand. If you are a lay worshipper, this book will broaden your horizon by some miles. Don't let the price put you off. It is worth every cent, and more relevant to your eternity than most books at any price.

The manual is really a "philosophy"—a system of motivating beliefs, concepts, and principles—of Christian worship in general, as practiced in the post-Reformation Lutheran Church. Although 20 people are listed as having a hand in the writing, there is no substan-

tial change in style or quality. This, no doubt, is due to the general editors, Gary Baumler and Kermit Moldenhauer, and copy editor, Sharon Uekert. They are to be highly commended.

*Planning Christian Worship, Year B* is intended as a help for pastor, organist, and choir director. Each Sunday is titled, the purpose and theme of the Sunday is explained, followed by the prayer for the day. The Old Testament reading, psalm, the Gospel, and Epistle for the day are listed and briefly commented on to maintain the focus of the Sunday. The hymn of the day is listed together with additional hymn suggestions. The book should help in getting heads together to plan the Sunday worship.

—James P. Schaefer

**Through the Looking Glass and Back: Your Passport to Identity** by Susan G. Bondow and Paul E. Kelm. Northwestern Publishing House. 96 pages, hardcover, \$9.99 plus \$3.25 for postage and handling, stock no. 15N2000.

Part of a new Christians in Crisis series by NPH, this book addresses the issue of self-image in a refreshing light. Bondow, a professional counselor, and Kelm, a campus pastor, don't look to the self for easy answers to self-image. Instead, they focus on the image of Christ and what he's done for us—making us

## Board member named

Pastor Richard K. Pankow, Appleton, Wis., was named to the board of the synod's combined preparatory school to be located in Watertown, Wis. His name was omitted from the previously published list of board members.

the forgiven and deeply loved children of God. Easy to read and understand, with thought-provoking, soul-searching questions at the end of each chapter, this book will offer a new outlook to those who are tired of looking at themselves through the world's eyes and are ready to look through God's eyes in Christ—where all the answers are.

—Linda R. Baacke

**Pressed Down but Not Forgotten** by H. Curtis Lyon and John Juern. Northwestern Publishing House. 112 pages, hardcover, \$9.99 plus \$3.25 for postage and handling, stock no. 15N2001.

Part of the Christians in Crisis series by NPH, this book offers an honest and insightful look into depression. Lyon, a parish pastor, and Juern, a psychologist, lead the reader through a thorough yet understandable explanation of depression, its various stages, its treatment, and how the average person can help. Included is a Bible study, which helps the reader focus on Christ as the companion who offers true healing to a burdened soul.

—Linda R. Baacke

These books may be ordered from Northwestern Publishing House 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.



## German church dedicates seminary building

After 40 years in rented quarters, members of the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church (ELF) met in Leipzig, Germany, on October 16-17 to dedicate a new seminary building.

The Berlin Wall, which divided Germany after World War II, also divided the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of Saxony. The larger group, in the West, is now part of the Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church (SELK). The smaller, in the East, is the present ELF. Because ELF ministerial students could no longer attend the seminary near Frankfurt in West Germany, ELF founded the seminary in Leipzig, located in rented quarters.

In 1989 Germany was reunified. However, doctrinal differences caused a break between ELF and



The Evangelical Lutheran Free Church seminary in Leipzig, Germany.

SELK, and the need for the Leipzig seminary continued. ELF purchased and renovated a building, which includes living quarters for students and also serves as a place of worship for Trinity congregation.

The two-day dedication festivities featured several speakers: ELF

President Gerhard Wilde; ELF pastors Dr. Gerhard Herrmann, Martin Hoffmann, and Dr. Gottfried Wachler; Dr. Ingemar Furberg from the Lutheran Confessional Church (Sweden and Norway); and retired Prof. Armin Schuetze from WELS.

ELF has 2700 members in 19 congregations and 27 preaching stations, served by 18 pastors. Four students presently attend the seminary.

To assist ELF, our synod has established a nonbudgetary fund. Gifts may be sent to Germany Support Fund, WELS fiscal office, 2929 N Mayfair Road, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398.

—Armin W. Schuetze

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

## Level of faith in nation called into question

Citing new provocative studies, *Newsweek* magazine reported recently that "while religion pervades the American landscape, only a minority take it seriously." Although national polls have consistently reported that about 45 percent of American Protestants and 51 percent of American Roman Catholics attend services weekly, other studies now reveal that perhaps "half the people who tell pollsters that they spend Sundays in church aren't telling the truth." A team of sociologists recently found that "only 20 percent of Protestants and 28 percent of Catholics show up on Sundays." They based their figures on actual head counts in selected churches, which they then compared with surveys of the same communities.

The report points out that most

religion polls "are notoriously imprecise." They are conducted by telephone, rely on small random samples, and fail to distinguish the level of commitment of the believers. Even a study by Barry A. Kosmin and Seymour P. Lachman of the City University of New York, which collected data from 113,000 respondents, is flawed because "it is a self-identification survey which takes respondents at their word." It is felt that in such a survey "many respondents simply report the faith they were brought up in."

A third in-depth survey of 4001 Americans has addressed the question of religious commitment. The results follow:

- Only 19 percent of adult Americans are committed to their religion and regularly practice it.

- Another 22 percent are mostly religious.
- 29 percent are barely or non-religious.
- That leaves 30 percent, nearly one in three, of adult Americans who are categorized as totally secular in outlook, including 10 percent who describe themselves as atheists or agnostics.

The report concludes: "Half the American population claims a religion that does not inform their attitudes or behavior. It also appears that there is a genuine culture gap between secular and religious America."

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



## Declining giving threatens church with extinction

An updated analysis of denominational giving data finds the church in the United States facing extinction at the national level in the year A.D. 2048. Data trends indicate that church members will be giving 0 percent of their incomes to the church budget category of benevolences by that year. Benevolences includes funding for national denominational offices.

Giving patterns for 11 denominations were traced for the 70-year period of 1921-1991. Changes in

U.S. per capita income and giving data were charted on an annual basis. Giving as a percentage of income for these denominations was lower in 1991 than in either 1921 or 1933, the depth of the Great Depression.

While per member giving as a percentage of income for benevolences was projected to reach 0 percent in A.D. 2048, congregational finances were projected to reach 0 percent in A.D. 2187.

## New cult of virginity

This news item brings a mixed message. The good news is that increasing numbers of teenagers are choosing to remain virgins in the 1990s. The report calls the trend a cult of virginity. From billboards to peer-support networks to signed pledge cards, teenagers are getting and giving the word that virginity is better than sexual promiscuity.

But the driving force behind the cult of virginity is secular, not religious. And, comments the Religious News Services report, that says something profound about the changing nature of religion in the latter decades of the

twentieth century.

In a dramatic shift from decades and centuries past, the real motivation for remaining a virgin is fear—not fear of divine retribution, but fear of deadly disease, namely, AIDS.

The report goes on to say it's a sad commentary about the state of religion in the 1990s that fear of disease drives morality. Religious leaders, so eager to avoid offending, have proffered a toothless morality, or none at all. And so it is left to the scientists and public health officials to advise adolescents on how to conduct their sexual lives.

## Lutheran Layman's League (LCMS) launches outreach effort

In January the International Lutheran Layman's League of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod launched a three-year ministry campaign to reach 2.5 million unchurched people in North America, and bring 1.2 million people into congregational ministries. Titled "Go . . . tell a NEW generation," the \$98.7 million ministry campaign

will consist of three major initiatives: mobilization of lay volunteers, extensive North American media outreach, and expanded international ministry efforts. This comprehensive ministry campaign initiates the League's new evangelism approach under the theme, "Bringing Christ to the Nations—and the Nations to the Church."

## New law reaffirms religious rights

In November President Clinton signed the Religious Freedom Restoration Act into law. Since then some have asked, "What prompted the creation of this law, and what dangers would there be if Congress had rejected it?"

The Religious News Service gives the following answer:

A broad coalition of religious groups began pressing for a law to restore religious freedoms after a 1990 Supreme Court ruling greatly strengthened the government's hand in restricting religious practices in the name of the public good.

In the 1990 ruling, known as the "peyote case," the court said the State of Oregon had the right to deny unemployment compensation to two state workers who were fired. The reason: they had used peyote during a Native American worship service.

The ruling threw out a previous standard that required the government to show a "compelling state interest," such as public health or safety, before interfering in religious practice.

Such a high standard, Justice Antonin Scalia wrote in the decision, was a "luxury" the nation could no longer afford.

The Religious Freedom Restoration Act restores that standard.

Advocates of the new bill cited what they termed a long string of government abuses that followed the peyote decision. Those included zoning ordinances that blocked homeowners from putting up crosses on private property, denying accreditation to a Catholic hospital because it refused to perform abortions, and subjecting Jewish auto accident victims to autopsies despite religious objections by family members.



## NOTICES

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

### OVERSEAS LAY WORKERS NEEDED

WELS Kingdom Workers seeks college graduates to work in the Far East in any of these areas: teach English, establish or teach computer courses, or establish businesses. Individuals should be experienced in cross-cultural work and willing to commit two years or more overseas. Housing and other resources are provided.

Contact Dale Mueller, WELS Kingdom Workers, 2401 N Mayfair Rd, Suite 204, Wauwatosa WI 53226; 414/771-6848; or toll-free 1-800-466-9357; FAX 414/771-6130.

### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR CANADA

WELS Kingdom Workers seeks volunteers for an evangelism program in the Toronto area in the spring. Duties will include mailings, phone canvassing, and door-to-door evangelism. Time commitment can be one to six weeks. Contact Dale Mueller, WELS Kingdom Workers, 2401 N Mayfair Rd, Suite 204, Wauwatosa WI 53226; toll-free 1-800-466-9357; FAX 414/771-6130.

### RN OR EMT VOLUNTEERS

Camp Phillip seeks registered nurses or EMTs to volunteer as health care director for one-week and half-week sessions at Son Shine camp this summer. Contact Steve Huhn, Camp Phillip, Rt 3 Box 190, Wautoma WI 54982; 414/787-1085.

### SUMMER JOBS AVAILABLE

Camp Phillip, a ministry of the Milwaukee Federation of WELS churches, needs applicants for the following positions for May 31-Aug. 17: Counselors, waterfront director, lifeguards, adventure coordinator, head chef, drama coordinator, junior staff director. Applicants must be WELS Christians experienced and motivated to work with children. Positions provide room and board and pay \$1325-\$2000.

For application packets and more information, contact Steve Huhn, Camp Phillip, Rt 3 Box 190, Wautoma WI 54982; 414/787-1085.

### REQUEST FOR COLLOQUY

James F. Esmeyer, formerly a teacher in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, has requested a colloquy for the purpose of entering the teaching ministry of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. Correspondence relative to this request should be addressed to the president of the Southeastern Wisconsin District: Pastor David N. Rutschow, 527 Sixty-third Street, Downers Grove IL 60516.

### CHANGE IN TIME OF SERVICE

**ROSCOMMON, MICHIGAN**—St. Martin. 6:30 p.m. Roscommon Community Center, 510 South St. For directions call 517/275-5443.

### ITEMS AVAILABLE

**ORGAN**—Lowry. Free for cost of shipping. Contact Elaine Borchardt 414/262-1522.

**THE LUTHERAN HYMNAL**—300. Contact Zion Lutheran Church 715/294-3489.

### CHANGES IN MINISTRY

#### PASTORS:

- Chworowsky, John F.**, to Ascension, Roseville, Mich.
- Hoepner, Harold L.**, from Redeemer, Ann Arbor, Mich., to Faith, Pittsfield, Mass.
- Kuhnke, Gerald J.**, to Hope, Twin Lakes, Wis.
- Main, Donald G.**, to Prince of Peace, Mason City, Iowa.
- Taves, Kristian L.**, from First, Aurora, Neb., to St. John, Alma City, Minn.
- Voss, Robert James**, from St. John, Libertyville, Ill., to retirement.
- Wendland, Paul O.**, from Prince of Peace, Salt Lake City, Utah, to Northwestern College, Watertown, Wis.
- Yahr, Terry L.**, from Faith, West Newton, Penn., to exploratory, Charleston, W.V.
- Zank, Marvin W.**, from Immanuel, Medford, Wis., to St. Mark, Stambaugh, Mich./St. Paul, Tipler, Wis.

### CHURCH LIBRARIANS

WECLO, the WELS church librarians organization, will meet April 9 at Salem, 2400 N Cramer, Milwaukee. Registration begins at 9 a.m., meeting at 9:30. Registration fee is \$7.00.

Program will include a panel discussion on criteria to use when choosing books for church libraries, book exchange, book display, and question and answer period. Lunch will be provided.

For more information, write WECLO, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398 or call 414/256-3222 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

### CONFIRMATION REUNION

As part of its centennial celebration, Siloah, Milwaukee, Wis., invites everyone confirmed at Siloah to a reunion service March 27, 10:30 a.m. For more information call 414/873-5770.

### VACATIONING IN HAWAII?

St. Paul Lutheran Church invites vacationers to worship. Sunday school and Bible class-9:15 a.m. Worship-10:30. Worship from June to August-9:30 a.m. East Foster Community Center, 4341 Hakupapa St (near Pearl Harbor). For more information contact, Roger Rockhoff, 808/422-4693.

### 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.

### 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 Phillip, 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.

## WELS Connection videotapes

### February topics

- A Japanese teacher in a WELS school
- Missionary Tim Soukup in Mozambique

### March topics

- Rural churches
- WELS Kingdom Workers

### April topics

- Child care
- Easter message from President Gurgel

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

### 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 or 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 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 Publishing House**  
1250 North 113th Street  
Milwaukee WI 53226-3266



# False ideas about the atonement

Even Christians have mistaken beliefs about the atonement

by Fredric E. Piepenbrink

**T**here are only two religions in the world. One includes all who expect salvation by their doing; the other, all who expect salvation by something already done by God. In other words, either you save yourself, or you are saved by God—salvation by works or salvation by grace. All religions outside of Christianity teach the former and, therefore, deny the atonement.

## “Limited” atonement

But the atonement is also attacked by some within Christianity. This has happened in the false belief that Jesus died only for the sins of the believer. This is sometimes called “limited” atonement. A limited atonement makes God responsible in some way for the lost sinner. But that cannot be. Jesus paid for the sins of the whole world.

## “Helper” atonement

Another misconception of the atonement within Christianity is one that could be called the “helper” atonement. Here, Jesus’ atonement is not good enough by itself. One person who helped, some say, was Mary, the mother of Jesus. I quote from the *Catholic Catechism*:

Mary’s title “mediatrix-in-atonement” [“mediatrix” means “female mediator”] rests on the pain she freely underwent in union with her Son. . . . Alongside her Son [at the cross], Mary has become part of this plan by contributing her share to the justification of the human race, beginning with herself and extending to everyone ever justified.

According to this idea, Jesus and Mary both provided atonement for you and me.

Another “helper” atonement idea involves the individual sinner. By doing penance, by suffering for sins in purgatory, by offering an unbloody sacrifice in the Lord’s Supper, the Christian is appeasing God’s wrath

and earning oneness with him. Jesus started the atonement; Christians need to finish it.

## No atonement

One less obvious, and therefore more dangerous, foe is the one you will likely encounter when you come into contact with theological liberalism.

Liberalism has no doctrine for a real atonement. Its understanding of the atonement, simply stated, is this: There is no enmity or wrath on God’s part for the sinner. God’s love is supreme. All that is necessary is that the sinner come back to God and be forgiven. Whether Jesus was God or not doesn’t matter; whether he performed miracles or not doesn’t matter. The only significance of Jesus’ dying on the cross was an attempt on God’s part to remove man’s misconception about God; to teach him that God is not a stern judge, but a loving Father. As Jesus saw God’s love in the midst of suffering, so we should see it too, no matter what happens in our life.

In this theory the cross does not represent what Christ has done for us, but what we must do for ourselves, and that is change our thinking about God. Believe that we are accepted just as we are, and everything will be all right. This is sometimes called the “moral influence theory” since Jesus’ good, moral life, even in suffering, helps us see God’s free forgiveness.

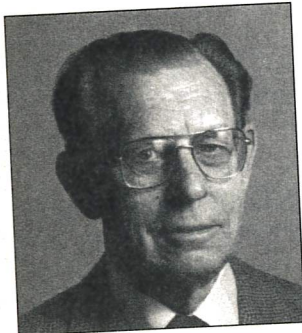
But God’s precious atonement in Christ Jesus is not limited. It does not need our help. It is not a simple moral model to follow. In the atonement the world’s sins were covered, God’s justice was maintained and satisfied, and the wall of separation between God and mankind removed. The only one who could do all that, and has done it, is the Lord Jesus with his full atonement.



Fredric Piepenbrink is pastor of Atonement, Milwaukee.



## But where is repentance?



Carleton Toppe, president emeritus of Northwestern College, lives in Watertown, Wisconsin.

After 37 years of articles and editorials for *Northwestern Lutheran*, this writer is laying down his pen. Citing advanced age and health complications, Carleton Toppe has asked to be relieved of his duties as a contributing editor.

We pay tribute to Toppe for his contribution to NL for these many years. Readers will remember his editorials as clear, concise, and courageous stands on contemporary issues. Toppe made us all think and, at times, reexamine our views. He directed us unfailingly to Scripture's principles.

We will miss your writing, Carleton. God be with you.

Last October a task force of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America released a set of proposals concerning sexual conduct. The proposals alarmed that church body and attracted the attention of the nation's media. The task force had issued a statement on human sexuality that, for example, allowed sexual activity among single adults who can demonstrate an acceptable degree of "trust, intimacy and commitment" to each other, permitted living together before marriage if there is "enduring commitment to one another," and sanctioned sexual relations between persons of the same sex if they were in "loving, just, committed sexual relationships" with each other.

In other words, extramarital sex and homosexuality can be accepted if those who engage in them love each other and are committed to each other. The Statement on Human Sexuality called on ELCA members not only to tolerate such homosexuality but also to affirm it.

Soon after the statement became public, the ELCA Chicago offices received some 20,000 calls regarding the statement. Last May, ELCA's periodical, *The Lutheran*, published two articles sympathetic to homosexuality. Mail from ELCA members ran three to one against the articles.

The authors and promoters of the Statement on Human Sexuality explain away the condemnation of homosexuality in Genesis 19 as applying only to homosexual rape. They interpret the condemnation of homosexuality in Leviticus 18 and 20 as applicable only to religious practices "that ceased centuries ago." They discount the condemnation of homosexuality in the New Testament by trying to limit it to sexual prostitution, to the practice of enslaving

boys for sexual purposes.

Romans 1 is too clear and precise to permit that kind of editing. There Paul unmistakably condemns homosexuality (both the desires and the practice) as grievous sin.

How does the ELCA endeavor to dilute Paul's condemnation in Romans 1? An ELCA seminary professor, a contributor to *The Lutheran*, summarizes Paul in Romans 15:1-7 as follows: "Christians who have many different opinions [should] welcome one another just as Christ welcomed them." As if Christians who have weaknesses in understanding are in the same class as those whose homosexuality is destroying their souls.

The professor has no word that points out that the only sinners whom Christ admits to his discipleship are penitent sinners—sinners who heed John the Baptist's as well as Christ's uncompromising demand that sinners "Repent!"

He has no word that indicates the homosexuals must admit their sinfulness, must confess it, must renounce it, must turn away from it to faith in the forgiveness Jesus Christ grants to all repentant sinners, but only to repentant sinners.

He has no word that explains the "weak brothers and sisters" whom the Roman congregation should "welcome" were penitent sinners who had weaknesses in understanding.

Yes, our Lord and his people welcome homosexuals who repent of their soul-destroying sin, who renounce their homosexual desires and activities and who embrace their Savior's forgiveness and live by it. But he and his church cannot welcome those who do not repent of their homosexuality but who tolerate and affirm it.

Carleton Toppe



by John F. Brug

**One pastor has said that the New International Version of the Bible has a "Reformed slant." What does that mean?**

Although the Wisconsin Synod has never had a mandatory Bible translation, in recent years the NIV has been accepted for general use. The NIV was translated by a panel of scholars representing the whole spectrum of evangelical Protestantism, including a few Lutherans. They naturally served as a check against each other and prevented narrowly biased translations.

About the time that WELS members began using the NIV, I received a tract that denounced the NIV as doctrinally unreliable. The Baptist author's main objection was that it was too Lutheran. Perhaps if some Lutherans call the NIV too Reformed and some Baptists call it too Lutheran, the translators did a better job of avoiding bias than some critics have given them credit for.

This is not to say that the NIV translation is perfect. Some passages may reflect a doctrinal slant on the part of the translators, but all can be understood correctly.

There would be advantages to a translation prepared by confessional Lutherans, but there would still be benefits in using the commonly accepted translation for witnessing and instructing people from other denominations. The NIV appears to be the translation that has the best chance of gaining such status, at least among evangelical Christians.

**Is the Lord's Supper a celebration or is it a penitential sacrament?**

The most important message of the Lord's Supper to those who receive it is "Your sins are forgiven because Christ died for you." Since the Lord's Supper is a proclamation of the gospel, the predominant response it calls forth in those who receive it is joy.

There are two reasons, however, why a serious tone is in place during a communion service. The proclamation of forgiveness presupposes true sorrow and repentance for our sins. We begin with a solemn, penitential tone during the confession of sins and other elements of the service that prepare us for the reception of the Lord's Supper. In the Lord's Supper itself, the joy of forgiveness predominates.

Furthermore, a reverent, serious demeanor is in place throughout the celebration of the Lord's Supper, because we receive the very body and blood of Christ. The scriptural warning against failing to recognize the presence of Christ's body and so receive this supper to our condemnation also points

us in the direction of a reverent, respectful attitude during the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Casual and frivolous attitudes and actions are out of place.

However, in giving such warnings we should be careful that we are not scaring penitent sinners away from the Lord's Supper nor denying the celebration of God's grace given there.

**I enjoy reading Family Voice, the magazine of Concerned Women for America, I have to give a minimum donation to get the subscription, but I do not join in any of the group's prayer activities or sign their petitions. How should we view organizations such as CWA?**

Christians should not belong to or worship with any organization whose principles or teachings are contrary to the Bible. Nor should they offer financial support to such organizations.

For the sake of obtaining information, Christians can buy books or subscribe to periodicals from groups whose philosophy they reject and which they would not join. The subscription price is for goods received.

Drawing clear lines may become more difficult when the organization is not religious, but has some religious activities. In such cases Christians need to decide to what degree they want to be involved.

As citizens, we may participate in political action groups that try to influence legislation and government policies to bring them into closer agreement with the moral principles set forth in the Bible.

A problem arises when organizations blur the line between religion and nonsectarian political action by including religious activities in their program. If the objectionable activity is incidental to the purpose and program of the group (such as prayer at the opening of a convention), Christians should refrain from participating in that activity and should express their objections. They may participate in the secular functions of the group.

Don't join any organization whose beliefs and practices conflict with the Bible. If incidental violations of biblical principles arise, object to them and do not participate in them. If membership involves you in beliefs or practices contrary to Scripture, or if activities involved in membership trouble your conscience, quit.

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.



# What are you doing for your spiritual health?

by John Underwood



**Do you guard your spiritual health as well as you guard your physical health?**

**A**mericans are concerned about proposals to revise the nation's healthcare system. Spiritual health, however, is of greater importance.

When we feel ill, we routinely search our medicine cabinets for vitamin supplements, aspirin, and cold or allergy remedies. When the illness is more severe, we visit our doctor, clinic, or hospital for treatment.

## Curing spiritual illness

Spiritual illness—like physical illness—varies in severity. Minor spiritual ailments often are resolved by taking a spiritual vitamin from God's word. This usually can get us through the day and back on our feet. More serious conditions require more serious treatment.

Here is the dichotomy: we seldom hesitate to visit our doctor when we want physical relief; yet we may put off calling our Christian caregivers when spiritual care is needed. I have noted occasions when ailing Christians will say or do nothing during a crisis. Instead they wait for a pastor or elder to discern a problem. They ignore spiritual vitamins and medication, their church attendance declines, and they become bitter, wondering when someone will notice and respond.

We could argue that this behavior is part of the aging spiritual condition. But how long would we wait for a doctor to make a house call, especially if he or she doesn't know we are sick?

## Spiritual caregivers

Our pastors, elders, and Christian brothers and sisters are the spiritual doctors, nurses, and technicians who will help us get back on our feet, but only if we notify them of our illnesses.

Good health is our personal responsibility. We need to guard our spiritual health in the same way we guard our physical health. Daily spiritual vitamins, weekly visits to our spiritual care centers for worship and fellowship, and the means of grace are essential. Further, we can contact Christian caregivers for help and support when we are spiritually ill.



John Underwood lives in Omaha, Nebraska.

Although our medical healthcare system may be in trouble, we have absolute confidence in our spiritual healthcare system. It provides universal and unlimited access, plenty of resources, and Christian love and support. All of this and it is cost-effective too!



**The atonement**

"The atonement's complete satisfaction" (Dec.) states that "even after Jesus performed his work of atonement, God was under no obligation to justify." It seems to me that God obligated himself to justify us long before Jesus performed his work of atonement: "He hath chosen us in [Christ] before the foundation of the world" (Ephesians 1:4). How could God have chosen us in Christ unless he first had obligated himself to justify us?

Furthermore, the Old Testament is replete with God's promises to redeem us, an outstanding example of which is Isaiah 53:11: "by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many: for he shall bear their iniquities." Therefore God was obligated to himself and to us because of his promise.

*Paul Allerding  
Redford, Michigan*

The author, Pastor Fredric Piepenbrink, responds:

*Your point is well taken. God did obligate himself to justify us in Christ when he chose us before the foundation of the earth. But even before he chose us, he loved us. Grace remained the ultimate cause for our justification. In that context, justification is the result of grace. Grace did not carry with it an obligation, but preceded it. Grace is pure grace. Thanks for helping to clarify the issue.*

**New hymnal worth the wait**

Thanks to the Joint Hymnal Committee and all others who helped produce our new/revised hymnal. It was worth the 10-year wait.

The function of a hymnal should be to enhance our worship. *Christian Worship* certainly does that! It has added flair and contemporary language to our Lutheran hymnology and liturgics. There is a nice variety of services, psalms, prayers, and hymns, and a blending of the old and the new. And even though we find ourselves occasionally stumbling through some of the new tunes and slipping in a few of the old words, we are finding

our new hymnal to be an exciting addition to our worship.

I encourage those who have been reluctant to use the new hymnal to come aboard with the rest of us. It's not a radical change from *The Lutheran Hymnal*. Even if you only use portions of *Christian Worship* to begin with, you'll probably find that you'll enjoy it more than you thought and you'll adapt to it sooner than you thought.

Welcome to the 1990s.

*Oliver H. Lindholm  
Winona, Minnesota*

**Harmony in the hymnal**

My curiosity is aroused regarding the alteration to the harmony of some of the hymns. I realize that progress is important, but even though—or because—I am not a musician, an explanation evades me as to what way, if any, these changes enhance progress. Some traditions remain indelible! Efforts to follow the subtle harmony changes sometimes distract from the meaningful words of the hymn.

*Ewald Reichert  
Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin*

Kermit Moldenhauer, music editor at Northwestern Publishing House, responds:

*It is true that the harmony in Christian Worship is not the same as in The Lutheran Hymnal. One reason for change was correcting errors in TLH. There were some mistakes in the music of TLH.*

*The more compelling reason came to light early in the hymnal project. Organists, choir directors, and lay leaders were asked questions in regard to the new hymnal. Repeatedly the committee heard requests for new and "fresh" harmony for the hymns. This was interpreted to mean an expansion of the harmonic language.*

*I am guessing that this expanded harmonic language is what you correctly identify as "subtle harmony changes."*

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.*

**March '94**

- 1. Matthew 12:22-50
- 2. Matt. 13:1-23
- 3. Matt. 13:24-52
- 4. Matt. 13:53—14:12
- 5. Matt. 14:13-36
- 6. Matt. 15:1-20
- 7. Matt. 15:21-39
- 8. Matt. 16:1-20
- 9. Matt. 16:21—17:13
- 10. Matt. 17:14-27
- 11. Matt. 18:1-35
- 12. Jeremiah 1
- 13. Jer. 2:1—3:5
- 14. Jer. 3:6—4:31
- 15. Jer. 5, 6
- 16. Jer. 7:1—8:3
- 17. Jer. 8:4—9:22
- 18. Jer. 9:23—10:25
- 19. Jer. 11, 12
- 20. Jer. 13
- 21. Jer. 14, 15
- 22. Jer. 16:1—17:18
- 23. Jer. 17:19—18:23
- 24. Jer. 19, 20
- 25. Jer. 21, 22
- 26. Jer. 23
- 27. Jer. 24, 25
- 28. Matthew 19:1-22
- 29. Matt. 19:23—20:28
- 30. Matt. 20:29—21:22
- 31. Matt. 21:23-46

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



## 2 + 2 = 2

The amalgamation of WELS ministerial education schools has received much ink and even more discussion since the historic WELS convention of 1993. Opinions have run from “a wise, bold step forward” to “the most tragic decision ever made by WELS.” Right now only God knows which is more correct. We will find out.

Meanwhile, how do we work through the widely diverse feelings? Let's begin by acknowledging the differences and trying to understand them.

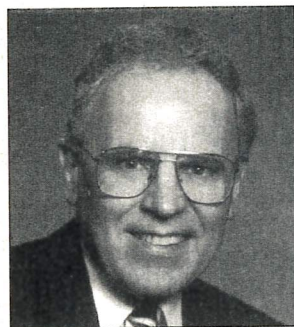
Above all we should be sensitive to the feelings of those most personally affected, namely, the two faculties who must move (not to mention the two student bodies). Not only do they have to deal with serious misgivings they may have about the decision, but they must, without choice, make some major personal adjustments in the process. Anyone who has experienced similar upheaval will understand.

Knowing the people involved, I feel safe to say they, with God's help, will work through their feelings and rise to the occasion.

But what about the uncertain future of the educational system? Two schools will join with two other schools while needing to do the same job the four did previously. Mathematically it's a strange equation. But it can work. The decision to do it is firm.

What must happen? In my opinion,

- everyone involved must work hard in a wholehearted cooperative effort to make it work. They must listen to each other and seek reasonable solutions to knotty problems. That effort




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*Two schools will join with two others schools to do the job that four did previously. Mathematically it's a strange equation. But it can work.*

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is in progress.

- the new schools must maintain their focus on ministerial education. In particular, the pastor training curriculum must maintain its integrity.
- where feasible, new technology should be incorporated and updated to enhance the training.
- the synod needs to provide adequate facilities to do the job well.
- congregations must vigorously support the synod mission offerings, which make it possible to educate our ministers.
- we must all pray continually to God for his guidance, and trust him to show us the way.

You may have heard all of these exhortations before. Nevertheless, they bear repeating. They beg commitment.

They all deserve more attention but I'll comment further on just one here: the integrity of the pastor training curriculum. The strength of WELS pastor education has been its in-depth study of God's Word, using the original languages of Scripture. No matter where we do that training or what tools we use, we dare not lose that emphasis. Strong language programs, particularly in Greek and Hebrew, are essential. Every man, woman, and child in WELS gains spiritually by having a clergy so educated. Our confessional heritage lives on through the Word so learned and taught.

We are on our way to a newly devised ministerial education system. With God's blessings, two plus two, in this case, can equal a big TWO to his glory.

*Gary A. Baumbler*



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# Come, follow me

Somehow, we have to get over the thought that following is bad

by Eric S. Hartzell

“He was a great follower.” You don’t see that written in admiration of anyone in history books. The opposite might be true. “He was a great leader.” Yes, that sounds more like it.

As a matter of fact, no one is encouraged to be a follower. If the teacher tells us about our child, “He is a follower,” we get alarmed. We aspire to be leaders. We want to see leadership qualities in our children. The very word “leadership” conjures up ideas of strong and good and self-sufficient and admirable.

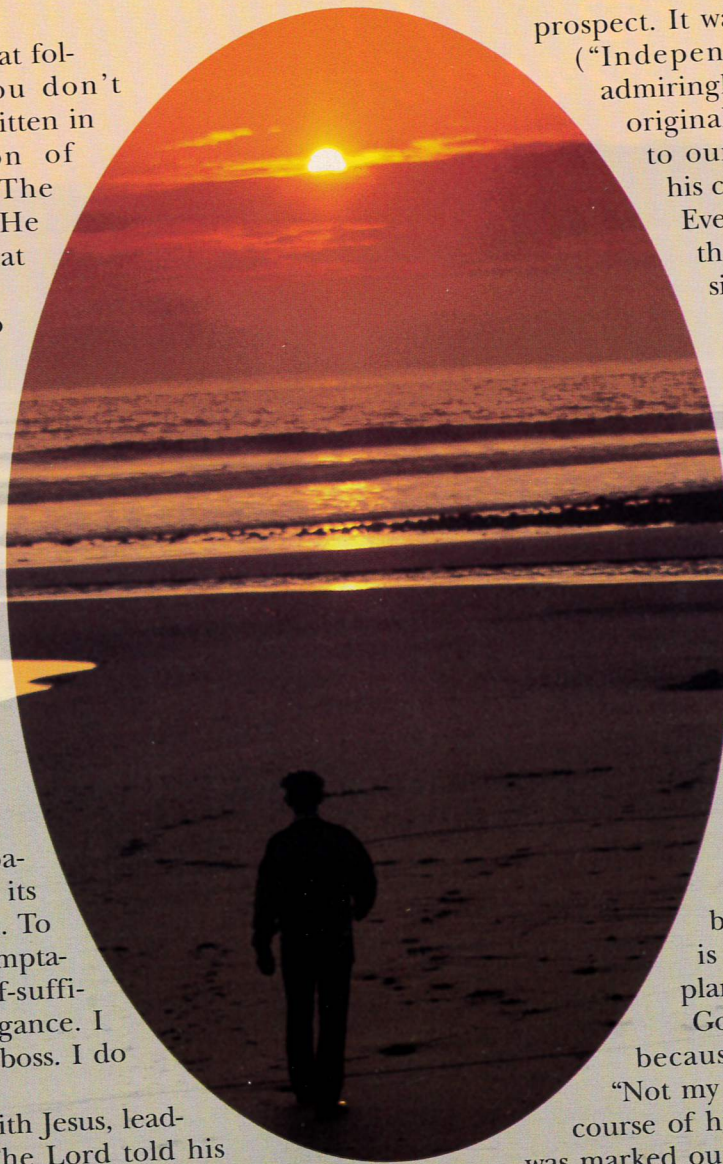
## Preoccupied with leadership

Perhaps this preoccupation with leadership and its qualities is from the devil. To be a leader is to court temptation with pride and self-sufficiency and possible arrogance. I am the leader. I am the boss. I do things my way.

In our faith and life with Jesus, leadership is of the devil. The Lord told his first disciples and all disciples since then, “Come, follow me.” He called them to be followers, not leaders.

The Lord is not impressed with good leadership qualities. Death comes to the one who strikes out on his own and blazes new spiritual trails. Jesus says, “Come, follow me.” To be a good follower of him is exactly what he wants us to do and what he calls great.

The King James Version translates Philippians 2:5, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. . . .” That is another way to say, “Follow Jesus in your thinking.” But our sinful mind balks at the



prospect. It wants to think on its own (“Independent thinking,” we say admiringly.) There is no room for original thinking when it comes to our God and his Word and his commandments. Adam and Eve tried it and their original thinking led to their original sin.

## Great followers

Somehow, we have to get over the thought that following is bad. When we follow God, we do just that. We are following God. His ways are not our ways. His ways are higher than ours. His ways are God’s ways. And when we follow his thinking about what is important in this life and what not, we enter the realm of God in our thinking. Following that we would never be by leading. To follow is not to enter life on a low plane, but on a higher.

God’s greatest greats were because they followed. Jesus said, “Not my will but yours be done.” His course of his life from beginning to end was marked out by his Father. Jesus followed the directions that led to the cross. He was the best of all followers.



Eric Hartzell is pastor of East Fork, Whiteriver, Ark.

So if someone should read on our tombstone, “was a good follower,” that would be the greatest commendation that could be said. Jesus said, “Come, follow me.” The Book of Life is called *Who’s Who*. It contains only names of followers.