

LUTHERAN



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God gives enough for each day

The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time. You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing. Psalm 145:15,16

Richard D. Balge

“Give us today our daily bread,” our Savior taught us to pray. Daily bread is what we need to survive, but we know God adds much more. King David says that every creature gets what it needs from the Creator. Shouldn’t we be confident as God’s highest earthly creatures, bought with his blood, called to be his saints, that he will continue to provide for us as he has always done?

No need for anxiety

In some families it is the custom that the head of the house fills the plate of each person at the table. Each person, waiting for food, looks toward the head of the table—toward the host. That is the picture of how all creatures, rational or irrational, look toward God. Understand it or not, acknowledge it or not, all are dependent on his providence.

They are not disappointed. At just the right time, God is generous and provides. Jesus applied this truth to his disciples—to us—in the Sermon on the Mount, when he said: “Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? . . . So do not worry . . .” (Matthew 6:26,31).

God gives food. God opens his hand. God satisfies the desires of every living thing. There have been horrible exceptions, not because God lacked resources or because he became tight-fisted, but because of the shortsightedness and selfishness of sinful human beings. The exceptions remain exceptions. The truth remains that God provides for all the life he has created.

No room for pride

Just as David’s words tell us there is no need for anxiety, they also tell us there is no room for pride. Unbelievers say and Christians may be tempted to say: “I work for my bread. If I didn’t, my children and I wouldn’t eat.” Don’t

forget that the man who composed this psalm was a person who worked, too: shepherd, soldier, king, musician.

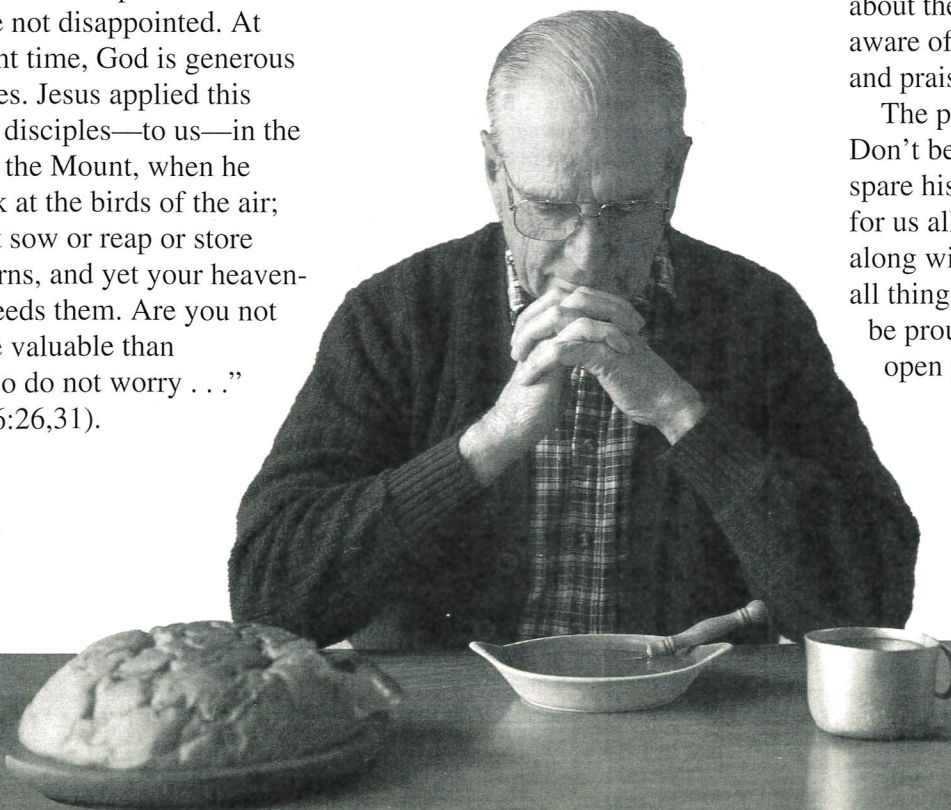
*Understand it or not,
acknowledge it or not,
all are dependent on
God’s providence.*

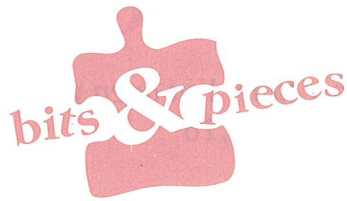
But he realized, as we do, that if it were not for God’s watchful care and generous blessing, we would not be able to work—or even to draw the next breath. If not for his goodness, our work would not produce daily bread. He uses our labor as a “mask,” said Martin Luther, as a “front” for his benevolence.

Recognizing that, we are less smug about the role we play and more aware of God’s claim on our thanks and praise.

The psalm gives us the grounds: Don’t be anxious. “He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?” (Romans 8:32). Don’t be proud. Lord, you give; you open your hand; you satisfy.

Richard D. Balge is a professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon.





- On the cover are Mrs. Matsuo with her daughter Yuki-Chan of Tokyo. Thanks to you, they've learned the meaning of *megumi*—grace. To show how your offerings make it possible to share God's grace around the world, we'll take a tour of WELS world missions, starting with Japan. See "What is 'Megumi,' Mommy?" on page 6.
- Mothers have always been busy. Even in an earlier era, an hour alone with Mother was "quality time." Don't miss this delightful reminiscence on page 8.
- "Isn't it often true," asks Paul Wendland, "that we find it easier to attempt the heroic than to carry on with the humdrum?" Just the same, he encourages us to "Aspire to something small." It's on page 14.
- Even if your eyes glaze over when you hear the word "budget," we invite you to enroll in Synod Budgeting 101. This short course will teach you how the WELS Coordinating Council plans and budgets for the work of the church. We promise it will be easy and interesting—and there's no final exam. Class begins on page 26.

—Dorothy Sonntag

Cover photo supplied by James Sherod

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Editorial office

Rev. Gary P. Baumler, Editor
414/256-3230
Dorothy J. Sonntag, Assistant Editor
414/256-3231
Linda R. Baacke, Communications
Assistant
414/256-3232

Northwestern Lutheran

WELS

2929 N Mayfair Road
Milwaukee WI 53222-4398
Phone 414/256-3888
Fax 414/256-3899

Editorial Commission

Prof. Richard D. Balge (chairman),
Mr. John Barber, Rev. John A. Braun,
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Rev. Victor H. Prange.

Contributing editors

R. D. Balge, W. F. Beckmann, M. E.
Braun, J. F. Brug, T. B. Franzmann, J. C.
Gerlach, R. H. Hochmuth, R. E.
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Prange.

Production

Art Director: Marie Farley
Layout & Design: Melissa Homan
Photographs and Illustrations:
Mrs. Kevin Scheibel Photography, p. 3
Rachel Tacke, p. 8
Robyn Smith, p. 14
Melissa Homan, p. 17 & 21
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Jim Whitmer Photography, p. 36

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“What is ‘Megumi,’ Mommy?”

The real story of the Japanese outreach is told in the lives of the Christians who have experienced the happiness God’s love brings.

Gary P. Baumler

The little girl saw the word on the front of the church. “What is ‘Megumi,’ [Grace], Mommy?” she asked.

Had her parents known then what they know now, they might have answered, “Grace is the wonderful love of God that caused him to send his Son to be our Savior. Grace is the love of God that caused him to send Lutheran missionaries here to reach our hearts.” But they didn’t know that then, so their answer was perfunctory.

However, God’s grace led their daughter Tomoko to learn about her Savior and be baptized and later bring her child to be baptized. God’s grace led her parents finally to ask to study about the Savior “even though they were old and slow to learn,” as missionary John Hering tells it.

Grace in the face of obstacles

What but God’s unfathomable love would allow souls to be added to the rolls of heaven in a country where a mere three percent of the people is Christian, Christianity has been called the “heretical religion of blue-eyed foreigners,” and Christians are considered misfits?

“In Japan, [the misfits] perception is deadly,” missionary Jim Sherod points out, “because the Japanese culture values uniformity very highly.” The Japanese Christian risks being ostracized by friends and family.



Mrs. Matsuo holds her daughter Yuki-Chan on her baptism day in Tokyo.

Still the gospel has worked in Japan. Today our Japanese brothers and sisters have their own Lutheran Evangelical Christian Church (LECC). Five national pastors and five WELS missionaries serve nine congregations and three preaching stations with over 300 baptized souls and another 150 active prospects. Thousands listen to radio broadcasts beamed out into the Kanto Plain, where 32 million people live.

Grace to reach others

These Japanese Christians are reaching out into their communities with every means their culture

Raining God’s blessings

Ten years ago, a missionary’s daughter had to walk to school because it was a rainy day and not safe to ride her bike as usual. On her way home, this second-grader started talking to two Japanese high school girls. She invited them to come home with her, and they did. They started studying the Bible. One of the two, Sonobe San, was baptized about five years ago. She in turn brought her high school friend, Ishijima San. What joy filled those two girls’ hearts when they became sisters in the faith.

Ishijima San, a professional pianist, has been coming to church for about five years.

A long-awaited harvest

On Christmas Day 1994, one congregation had three baptisms and one confirmation. Of those, one woman had been coming to church 33 years. “I finally told my husband that I was going to be baptized. All these years I have put it off because he was against it, but not any more.”

Her son was also baptized. He has been coming to church since he was a middle school student. He is married and has two children, who are members.

allows. They make contacts and do witnessing through special activities of all kinds: cooking classes, English classes, sweet-potato cookouts, snowman building, home-stay opportunities in America, vacation Bible school, Christian information centers, children's evangelism parties. They pass out thousands of tracts.

Sherod says of the outreach in Japan: "Reaching the unchurched with the gospel relies heavily upon personal relationships, just because relationships are so very important. Even more than in an American church, the battle in the trenches is carried on by the members of the church who say to their friends and neighbors, 'Come and see what I have seen about Jesus!'"

Grace that brings happiness

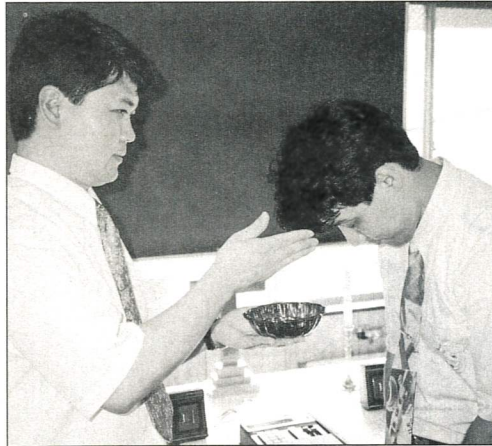
The real story of the Japanese outreach is told in the lives of the Christians who have experienced the happiness God's love brings. Missionary Sherod introduces us to several of those individuals, not by name, but by their words of faith:

"I was looking for a love that wouldn't change. Just at that time, I received a tract about the Christmas Eve service. . . ."

"The person whom I was in love with died. . . . a Christian friend recognized the emptiness in my heart. Through the Word, the Holy Spirit gradually led me to believe."

". . . I am the oldest son, which means I have a special obligation to keep ancestor worship going within our family. However, I had a disease and when hospitalized, the people and pastor from the church visited me. God used this disease to bring me to faith. I now enjoy going to church every Sunday."

Sherod asks, "Are you as excited



Pastor Takeshi Nidaira baptizes Mr. Koichiro Enta in Zushi. Mr. Enta was invited to church by Miss Erina Hirasawa who contacted the church after receiving a tract. Now they are married and help teach God's Word to others.

as I am by the words of these fellow believers? One said of the day she was baptized, 'I was happier than on my wedding day.' Another, the day before he was to be baptized, said, 'I won't be able to sleep tonight. I am so excited. Tomorrow I will be baptized.'"

God's grace will continue to work in LECC churches as long they stay firmly grounded in God's Word. That's the goal, says Sherod. And he adds, "The torch of an unflinching dedication to God's Word is the best legacy that WELS can hope to pass on to a church which is ablaze with zeal for the gospel."

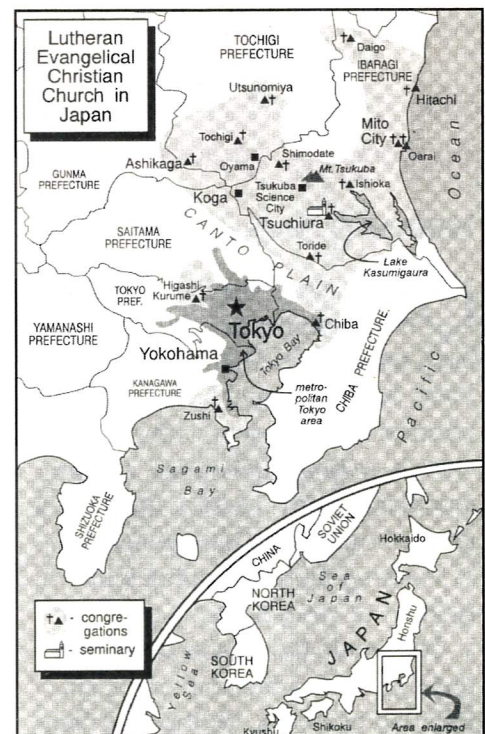
NL

For the history of the mission to Japan, read To Every Nation, Tribe, Language, and People, pp. 141-167. NPH, 1992.

Thanks to our fellow Christians in Japan for sending the information and pictures for this feature.

Japan

- About the size of California
- Four main islands plus over 3,000 small islands
- Population 125,000,000
- 90% of Japanese are Buddhists, often mingled with Shinto
- The Japanese language has over 1800 ideographs (characters)
- WELS work began in 1952 with spiritual care of WELS military
- Since 1952, 13 WELS missionaries have served in Japan
- The Lutheran Evangelical Christian Church (LECC) of Japan was formed April 9, 1962
- Five national pastors and five WELS missionaries presently serve nine congregations and three mission stations and one radio broadcast
- LECC has over 300 souls and over 150 active prospects



Sharing the gospel in Japan:

Kermit and Marjorie Habben
Roger and Kiyoko Falk
Patty Bintz
John and June Hering
Glen and Jackie Hieb
James and Martha Sherod

Quality time



An hour alone with Mother. The song of a skylark, God's awe-inspiring gift to man. That was quality time.

Mildred O. Meyer

Quality time! She had never heard the words. They hadn't been minted yet. Had she heard them, Mother would have said they referred to time spent with Jesus in church, in home devotions, and private Bible study. Quality time was a phrase coined by a later generation of working mothers coping with twinges of conscience.

She would have understood their feelings. With a brood of eight, six girls and two boys, Mother had plenty on which to focus her attention. Yet added to that was her stint as bookkeeper for Dad's lumberyard.

She would tell us laughingly she got that assignment from President Woodrow Wilson himself. George,

the bookkeeper, had been drafted for military duty to help save the world for democracy. When Dad could find no suitable substitute, the lot fell on Mother.

She loved the job. Yet she had twinges of conscience. Had not the Lord admonished parents to bring up children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? Annie, our hired girl, was a capable housekeeper, but could she take the place of a parent?

Fortunately, our home was near the lumberyard. Whenever there was a bit of a lull, Mother would rush home. In this way she managed to keep an eye on her brood.

I repeat: Mother had never heard

about quality time. Yet, instinctively, she realized that each of her children needed time alone with her.

An hour alone with Mother

"Would you care to come along for a little ride? We might stop at the Acoma cemetery," she told me.

Would I? Absolutely! Alone with Mother? A rare treat for this middle child.

Leaving our village, we drove parallel to the Crow River. A few lone fishermen lounged on the bank. So intent were these gentlemen on the day's catch that passing motorists were of no concern.

Leaving the river we passed yellow fields of ripening grain.



edge of the place, spread a blanket in the tall grass, took off her shoes and suggested I do the same. I stretched out my feet beyond the confines of the blanket and the grass tickled my toes. The sky above was God's blue-vaulted cathedral. How beautiful his marvelous gifts!

Looking about me, I observed, "What a funny-looking field. Just a bit of green here and there."

"That," said Mother, "is called a fallow field. The farmer plowed it and then left it unseeded."

"Why?"

"He hopes to destroy weeds and improve the soil."

The song of the skylark

"Look at that bird," I said. "It runs instead of hopping like other birds."

"That," explained Mother, "is a skylark, a wonderful bird created by God for man's enjoyment. The lark chooses to live in open, grassy country like this."

"It doesn't have any bright colors like the bluejay or cardinal."

"No," continued Mother. "The skylark is inconspicuous. His brownish coloring blends in with the fields. God did this to protect the lark from enemies. God also provides his nourishment, just as he supplies yours and mine. The lark feeds on insects, small berries, and seeds. How would you like such a diet?"

"Well, the berry part would be OK, but I'd skip the rest. Where does it build its nest?" I inquired.

"Right on the ground," stated Mother. "It builds a grassy cup. The mother lark lays three to five eggs in the nest. The female sits on the eggs for about twelve days. The father bird defends the nest and supplies his mate with food."

"Good arrangement," I asserted.

Suddenly the bird flew toward the sky. It uttered a song I shall never forget. Clear, flutelike tones. I have since heard world-renowned coloratura sopranos voicing enchanting runs and trills, but nothing comparable to the song of the lark.

Mother had never heard about quality time. Yet, instinctively, she realized that each of her children needed time alone with her.

It sounded as though the bird was thanking God, its creator, for the sheer joy of life, for the fallow field, for the cup-shaped nest in which the eggs would soon hatch into wee chicks.

The song continued as the lark flew higher and higher. Surely, its wings brushed the turquoise of the sky. Then it began the downward descent, still filling the expanse with glorious music. When the soaring bird touched the field, the song ceased.

Mother and I sat mute for some seconds.

"That's why I brought you here," she said softly. "I wanted you to hear the magnificent song of this wonderful bird."

An hour alone with Mother. The song of a skylark, God's awe-inspiring gift to man. Even though Mother had never heard the words, that was quality time. Real quality time.

NL

Mildred Meyer is a member of St. John, Jefferson, Wis.



CAIN LEADS ABEL TO DEATH

In him is life

Far from taking life, our Lord Jesus gave his life to give us life.

Wayne A. Laitinen

The teacher stood in front of us sixth-graders and asked, "If a tree fell in a forest and no one heard it, did it really make a sound?"

Our quizzical glances darting across the room reflected the absurdity of the question. The awkward silence was broken by a classmate who raised his hand and protested, "Of course it did!"

With a condescending smile the teacher replied softly, "How do you know? You weren't there." His response troubled and silenced us, but it was flawed. It left God out of the picture.

We had been given a religion lesson, and we didn't even know it. If there is a god, the teacher was saying, he knows nothing of falling trees. What should we do with such a blundering old fool? Ignore him! We can be our own gods. Nothing is real unless we experience it.

Furthermore, the teacher's question leads to matters of more importance than falling trees. If a baby is aborted and no one knows, did a child really die? If no one sees me cross the road to avoid a neighbor in distress, did I contribute to his death? If I secretly hate my neighbor, can anyone convict me of murder? If Abel is slain in a field and no one witnessed it, was he really murdered?

We cannot easily dismiss the questions. God knows.

God reads our hearts

When Cain murdered Abel, he thought he had buried his dirty little secret deep in the ground.

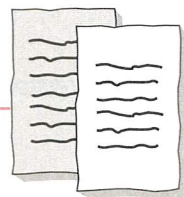
But God saw that murder in

FIFTH COMMANDMENT

You shall not murder.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not hurt or harm our neighbor in his body, but help and be a friend to him in every bodily way.



progress long before Abel's blood cried out to him. God asked Cain, "Why are you angry?" Murder was written all over Cain's heart.

Whether or not our unrighteous anger leads to someone's death, God recognizes it as murder and judges it accordingly. And you know that no murderer has eternal life in him.

When you know where Cain's anger led, don't you want to just shake him by the collar and tell him to get a grip on himself? That's exactly what God did. God's words are written in Genesis 4:7 to warn us to turn to the Lord for forgiveness before our unholy anger can continue its coup d'état in our hearts.

God reads our faces

Murder was written all over Cain's face as well. God knew Cain's heart. He didn't need to read his face. But God asked "Why is your face downcast?" to show that a

murderous heart was barking orders to the rest of the body. The countenance falls; the lips dutifully cry, "You fool!" Fists may clench, nostrils flare, doors slam, or the silence becomes deafening.

Is God the only one who sees hateful eyes as windows to a hate-filled soul? Rarely does anyone intervene until fists are flying and there is a real risk of physical harm. But a fallen countenance may be the early symptom of a homicide in progress. If it is not the death of Abel, then it is the silent, everlasting death of Cain. No wonder the Almighty is so alarmed about the sin that crouches at our door!

God became our brother

The bigger question is, "Why did a holy and just God bother to intervene to rescue us at all?" He does not just warn us when hatred arises in our hearts. He became his brothers'—and sisters'—keeper.

To do that, God became our brother. He lived a holy life among us to be a worthy ransom for our souls. He innocently endured tongue-lashings, lynching attempts, betrayal, whipping, criminal death, and the wrath of the Almighty against us all. Far from taking life, our Lord Jesus gave his life to give us life.

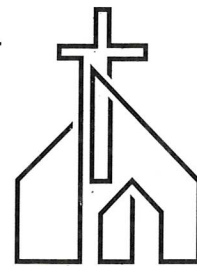
The sanctity of life comes from a knowing, caring, and self-sacrificing Savior. A world without him is a world without compassion.

NL

Wayne Laitinen is pastor at Gethsemane, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

Salt of the earth in Salt Lake City

Being Christians in a religious—but non-Christian—setting offers unique witness opportunities for Prince of Peace, Salt Lake City, Utah.



Linda R. Baacke

As a WELS exploratory mission among Utah's Mormon majority, Prince of Peace in Salt Lake City suffered its share of setbacks and struggles. Now an established congregation, its location gives members limitless opportunities for witness.

Setbacks and struggles

After six years of using Taylorville Recreational Facility, members built their own chapel. Don and Nancy Nomann recall, "We were finally going to have a place of worship. No more hauling hymnals around, no more temporary altar. Dedication was a beautiful day—May 16, 1976. Our prayers were answered!"

Their joy was brief. "Three days later an arsonist set our beautiful place of worship on fire," reported the Nomanns. "Only the walls were standing."

The setback was also brief. WELS congregations offered hymnals and pastoral robes, and the congregation worshipped in a Pentecostal church until the chapel was rebuilt.

They also struggled with a loss of members. But this struggle was positive. "In 1991, while still a mission

PRINCE OF PEACE

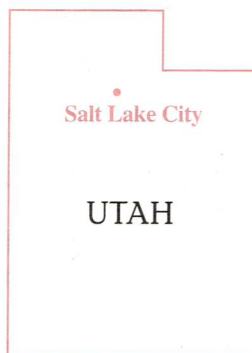
Salt Lake City, Utah

160 members

Exploratory work started—1969

Organized as a congregation—1972

Michael Quandt, pastor



ourselves, we struggled to get a congregation started at Layton—25 miles north of Salt Lake City. This led to the founding of Light of the Valley," said Jeff Beifuss, Prince of Peace's president. "The Lord blessed us, however. We overcame the 'loss' of 20 members to that congregation and now average attendance is 100."

Bringing friends to faith

"Our congregation, as a whole, is fairly young," said Beifuss. "We have lots of children, and the older folks lie about their age! Yet nearly everyone—young and old, single and married, kids and retired—greet our guests and visitors. Many are transplants to this area

and Prince of Peace becomes 'family.' As family, we naturally reach out to those around us."

"One of the happiest experiences in personal outreach came in our neighborhood. Jan met Kym Voseipka when they were room mothers at school. That led us to witness to Kym's neighbor, Carol Stone," said Jan and Larry Steinbach. "After sharing concerns about children growing



Children with painted faces clown around at vacation Bible school.

up in a Mormon culture, Kym and Carol encouraged their husbands to visit Prince of Peace. Both the Voseipkas and the Stones became members.”

Ministry to Mormons

The Latter Day Saints [LDS]—better known as Mormons—constitute about half the population in the Salt Lake Valley. The culture, which is very religious but not Christian, provides members with witness opportunities.

“For years, my husband, Lloyd, and I attended social events with our LDS friends,” said Joan Lysengen. “When it came time to dedicate our new fellowship hall, I sent invitations to six LDS families, including a Mormon bishop. Five families, including the bishop, came. They still speak highly of Prince of Peace. We don’t know if any of these families will fall away from their misdirected faith, but if they do, they will remember that Prince of Peace wasn’t too scary to visit.”

Faithful follow-up

Church secretary Robyn Smith said, “Religion—unlike some places in America—is an everyday topic of conversation here. The unchurched and nominally Christian come into this valley looking for work. Mormon missionaries soon visit them. But they don’t want to be Mormon so they seek some community where they feel at home.”

So many people are seeking such a community that Prince of Peace averages one new face a week. Extraordinarily, however, on one Sunday in March, 25 percent of the worshipers were visitors.

Much of the congregation’s success is due to faithful follow-up of visitors. First-time visitors receive a

visit within a week.

But members don’t sit and wait for people to come to church. Last year the evangelism committee canvassed 10,000 area homes. Their prospect mailing list now exceeds 350 names.

As Pastor Michael Quandt said, “Opportunity is not only knocking, it’s pounding with all its might.”

NL

For a glimpse into one member’s thoughts on Prince of Peace’s vacation Bible school ministry, see page 36.

Linda R. Baacke is communications assistant for WELS Communication Services.



Don Homann takes a break while working on Prince of Peace’s new education and fellowship wing.



Easter breakfast—served by the men of the congregation—offers fellowship, outreach opportunities, and a view of the mountains.

Aspire to something small

Why do we waste our lives in pursuit of big things, and fail to find joy in doing small things?

Paul O. Wendland

David longed for a cup of cool water from home. "Oh that someone would get me a drink . . . from the well near the gate of Bethlehem!" A whim arising out of a weak moment, when the rigors of war and the privations of camp life made him wish he were elsewhere, in a simpler, more settled time and place.

Little did he reckon with the caliber of men he led. Three of them were willing to hazard their lives on his whim. They broke through enemy lines to bring him back a taste of Bethlehem's well. To his credit, David refused to touch it. "Should I drink the blood of these men?" he said. He knew that a life was far too precious to waste on foolish desires.

Glory versus love

And yet isn't it often true that we find it easier to attempt the heroic than to carry on with the humdrum? To rise to the occasion rather than repeat with courage and vigor what we've done a thousand times before, and probably will have to do a thousand times more? To weather the crisis rather than to hold out for the long, hard slog?

Why is that so? A no-brainer,



really. The one brings fame, the other goes unnoticed. The one earns us glory, the other gets taken for granted. The one confers status and recognition and power—all the chips people play for in the game of life. The other seems to be the ordinary action of one more face in the crowd. Quite the usual thing. No big deal.

So we waste our lives in pursuit of big things, and fail to find joy in doing small things.

“If anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward.” It seems such a little thing to give a cup of water to one of Jesus’ own. But the one who loved us best did not speak these words in a moment of whimsy. He was restating God’s unchanging desire that we love one another as he has loved us.

Glory and love

Now the love of God is something great, certainly, great beyond our power to grasp. Who can deny the royal generosity of Christ’s majestic gift on Calvary? It is absolutely without parallel. Just how great, how deep, how wide, how tall is that love? Great enough to love me while I was still his enemy, deep enough to find me buried in a hole so dark only sin and death would linger there, wide enough to embrace a world of sinners in revolt, tall enough to touch the morning stars and make them dance for joy.

But while Jesus’ life reached its climax at Calvary, there was a great deal more than Calvary to Jesus’ life. We examine it and see how much Jesus occupied himself during that life in doing small things.

Did that make him any less great?

He walked dusty roads and slept in hard places without complaint. He dealt patiently with disciples who seemed so slow to learn and so helpless to resist the impulse to wrangle over who should sit in the biggest chair. He noticed a widow drop her two thin coppers into the temple treasury, while the rest could only see the folks who were putting in big amounts. Preaching to huge crowds often pressed him past the point of exhaustion, yet still had time to spare for one disciple like Mary who hungered to hear more.

*It seems such a little thing
to give a cup of water to
one of Jesus’ own.*

When you think about it, most of what we know of his life is concentrated into three short years. What was he doing during all the rest of the time? Nothing larger than life. No mountain-top pilgrimages or spiritual jaunts to India. This is the sort of wispy stuff the restless heart of man fashions to build its own dreams on. Jesus’ silent years were silent because he was about the often unremarkable business of doing his Father’s will. He was obeying Mary and Joseph, perhaps learning a trade from his foster father, studying his letters in the local synagogue, helping his mother. Small things. Small things by which our entire lives were redeemed and we were qualified as heirs of eternal life.

Glory in love

A deed doesn’t have to dazzle the eye like some great bolt of lightning

to make the grade as an act of Christian service. A life of love is much more a mosaic made up of tiny pieces of service steadily put in place day after day according to God’s will.

A mother listens to her first grader gabble out every detail of her school day. A husband plunges his hands into a dishpan full of supper dishes and suds. A father takes the time to hear his son laboriously sound out the words of his first reader. A big sister comforts her little brother who sees bad shadows in the closet.

Luther said something once about serving God in our various callings. Husbands, wives, parents, children, employees, employers: “Let each his lesson learn with care and all the household well shall fare.” He had it exactly right. True love is faithfulness to Christ in the small things, a pattern revealed in the warp and woof of our lives.

Our Lord in his grace promises to give his eternal recognition to just such love. “He will not lose his reward,” he tells us. And so he invests the seemingly insignificant with an unimaginable greatness by telling us, “I see. I hear. I notice. You do it for love of me, and you’ve done it unto me.” In such a way the whole broad world in every tiny particular becomes a place in which I meet the Lord Christ as he lies hidden under the faces of others, my brothers, my sisters. The little ones.

God grant me the grace to aspire to something small.

NL

Paul Wendland teaches at Northwestern College, Watertown, Wisconsin.

Do not throw pearls to pigs

We are to share the pearl of God's grace and forgiveness with all the world. Yet some in the world hate it.

Thomas Trapp

Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces (Matthew 7:6).

A number of years ago my wife and I participated in an archaeological dig in Israel. The study group was composed of a diversity of religious beliefs.

One of the pottery-analysis leaders was a young American teacher. I do not recall what brought on the quote, but the teacher quoted John 1:1-3. "In the beginning was the Word. . . ." I was pleased that he quoted it, knowing that Jesus' divinity is proclaimed in verse 3: ". . . and the Word was God."

My feelings quickly changed, however. The teacher never completed the verse. Instead he said, "and the Word was . . ." and then he spat on the ground.

He was trampling on the pearl of God's truth.

Jesus said, "Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces" (Matthew 7:6).

We are to share the pearl of God's grace and forgiveness through the Lord Jesus Christ with all the world.

Yet some in the world hate it. Some spit at the Messiah's call to repent and follow. "Who needs God?" they insist.

Know when to share the Word

Jesus knew it was useless to share the Word with those who trample his truth under foot. When Jesus was on trial before Herod Antipas, Herod had no interest in the truth. He wanted to see Jesus perform a miracle. Herod's request was for fun, not from faith. Mockery awaited the miracle. Jesus remained silent.

*It hurt me to hear
the sacred pearls of
God's truth trampled
by blasphemers.*

As a campus pastor, I have witnessed debates between atheists and Christians. One debate centered on whether Jesus was a real person. The other concentrated on the cornerstone of Christian faith: whether Jesus literally came out of the grave.

The debate allowed those who had never considered Christianity before to hear God's side and be challenged to read the Bible. Yet it hurt me to hear the sacred pearls of God's truth trampled by blasphemers.

Believers in the early church regarded the Lord's Supper as one of those precious pearls. The *Didache*,

the first worship book of the early church written about AD 100, states, "Let no one eat or drink of your Eucharist except those baptized into the name of the Lord; for, as regards this, the Lord has said, 'Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs.' "

Third century church father Tertullian complained that the heretics shared the Lord's Supper with unbelievers: "That which is holy [these heretics] cast to dogs and pigs."

God's law and gospel are to be shared with everyone. All are to be called to change their evil ways and seek forgiveness from the Savior. No one believed this more than the apostle Paul. He shared God's truth with all, until they rejected the Word and stiff-armed God's grace. Then he "shook the dust from [his] feet in protest against them" and discontinued sharing the pearls (Acts 13).

Don't give up living for Jesus

Does all this mean we are to abandon some people forever? No. What our Christian words can't do, perhaps our Christian lives can do. Our lives can make people reconsider the Lord Jesus Christ and his call to lay their sins at the foot of his cross.

At an international camp, young Christians were discussing ways to witness about Jesus. They turned to a girl from Africa and asked, "What do your people do?" She responded,

“Oh, we don’t have formal missions or hand out pamphlets. We just send one or two Christian families to live and work in a village. When people see what Christians are like, then they start to ask about Jesus Christ and want to become Christians too.”

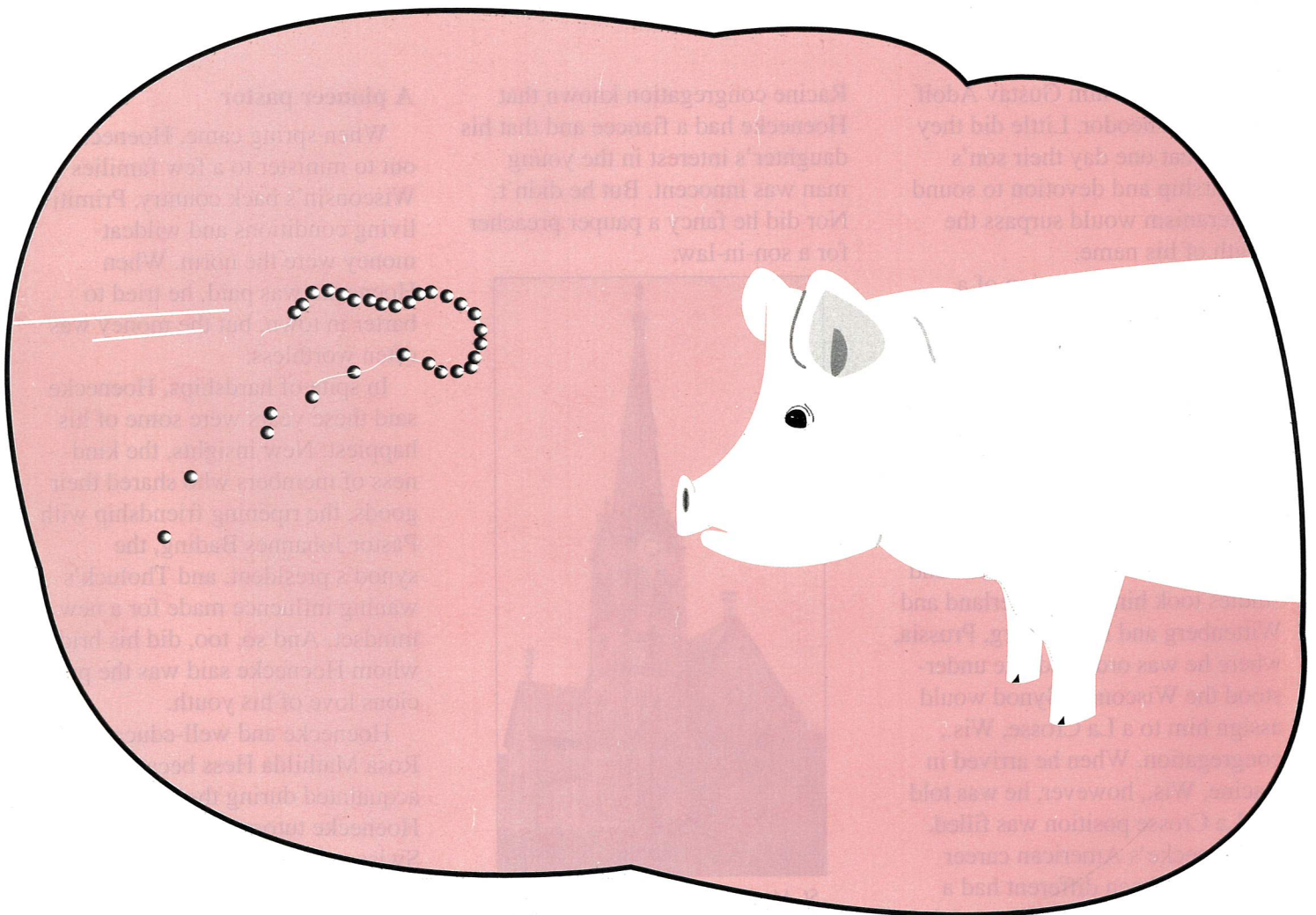
A man from the Middle East gave the same advice: “Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us” (1 Peter 2:12).

Jesus said, “Do not give dogs what is sacred.” . . . Does this mean we are to abandon some people forever? No. What our Christian words can’t do, perhaps our Christian lives can do.

Yes, do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs—and do not give up living for Jesus, for by our lives others will be tempted to reach down, pick up a pearl, and live forever.

NL

Tom Trapp is campus pastor for Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel and Student Center at the University of Wisconsin—Madison.



Adolf Hoenecke: devoted to sound Lutheranism

Regarded by many as the Wisconsin Synod's finest theologian, when doctrinal disputes wracked the synod in the 1860s, he was one of the leaders who upheld the gospel in all its truth and purity.

Morton A. Schroeder

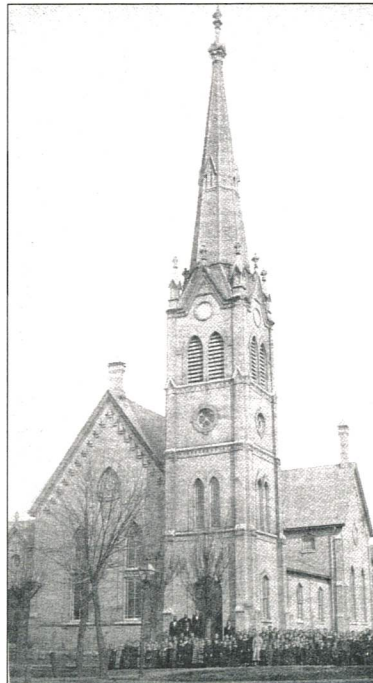
They named him Gustav Adolf Felix Theodor. Little did they realize that one day their son's scholarship and devotion to sound Lutheranism would surpass the length of his name.

Adolf Hoenecke, scion of a military family, attended grammar school and gymnasium in his home town to prepare for work in the university at Halle, Prussia. There he studied theology under famed Prof. F. A. Tholuck. One of Tholuck's favorites, he learned to listen while others spoke.

Hoenecke's tutorial position and studies took him to Switzerland and Wittenberg and Magdeburg, Prussia, where he was ordained. He understood the Wisconsin Synod would assign him to a La Crosse, Wis., congregation. When he arrived in Racine, Wis., however, he was told the La Crosse position was filled.

Hoenecke's American career might have been different had a rich and influential member of the

Racine congregation known that Hoenecke had a fiancée and that his daughter's interest in the young man was innocent. But he didn't. Nor did he fancy a pauper preacher for a son-in-law.



St. Matthew church and congregation in 1875.



Pastor Hoenecke and the Ladies Aid in 1879. Mrs. Hoenecke is in the middle row, third from the right.

A pioneer pastor

When spring came, Hoenecke set out to minister to a few families in Wisconsin's back country. Primitive living conditions and wildcat money were the norm. When Hoenecke was paid, he tried to barter in town, but the money was often worthless.

In spite of hardships, Hoenecke said these years were some of his happiest. New insights, the kindness of members who shared their goods, the ripening friendship with Pastor Johannes Bading, the synod's president, and Tholuck's waning influence made for a new mindset. And so, too, did his bride, whom Hoenecke said was the precious love of his youth.

Hoenecke and well-educated Rosa Mathilda Hess became acquainted during the two years Hoenecke tutored in the home of Swiss nobility near Bern. They were married in 1865 by Bading at St. Mark in Watertown, Wis. Their

wedding trip was the eight-mile walk from Watertown south to the wilderness crossroads where Immanuel Lutheran Church is still located. Their union was blessed with five sons and four daughters.

A keen intellect

Hoenecke soon won the respect of his colleagues. Known as a keen intellect with diverse talents, interests, and hobbies—reading, music, painting, botany, philately—Hoenecke became Bading's alter ego during the president's absences. The synod also recognized Hoenecke's gifts and called him to posts of trust: secretary, editor, seminary theology professor, college inspector. Hoenecke shelved his original plans to return to Germany, finding himself to be in tune with his new communion and out of harmony with the Prussian Union.

When the Wisconsin and the Missouri synods tried to merge their seminaries in St. Louis, Hoenecke was asked to move to Missouri. Lack of funds, it is said, killed the plan, and Hoenecke was called to St. Matthew, Milwaukee. The congregation's 75th jubilee memorial book demonstrates Hoenecke's humility. An important drive wheel in St. Matthew's physical and spiritual growth, his name is conspicuous by its infrequent use.

After an eight-year hiatus, the synod reopened its own seminary. Hoenecke was elected director and theological teacher. Two generations of seminary students were immersed in biblical Lutheranism in his courses in pastoral theology, ethics, dogmatics, and homiletics.

A history maker

Many regard Hoenecke as the Wisconsin Synod's finest theo-

gian. In the doctrinal disputes that wracked the synod in the 1860s and '70s, especially those dealing with fellowship and election by grace, he was one of the leaders who upheld the gospel in all its truth and purity.

Hoenecke was a raconteur who dominated conversations, a debater quick with repartee, a formidable on-his-feet extemporaneous speaker. But he appears to have been a reluctant writer. After his death, miscellaneous jottings, notes made on scraps of paper, lectures, formal essays, and his four-volume *Dogmatik* were edited by others, including his sons Walter and Otto.

Hoenecke's death was unexpected. Although he was almost 73, his health was fairly good; his colleagues expected him to serve for years to come. However, pneumonia struck him shortly before Christmas recess. As the new year opened, his life closed.

Synod president Friedrich Soll said this: "Dr. Hoenecke was not only a part of the history of the Lutheran Church of his time; he helped to make that history. The latter half of his life is . . . the history of his own Wisconsin Synod and of our Joint Synod."

Hoenecke's relationship with the Wisconsin Synod, which began formally on November 24, 1864, when Immanuel joined the synod, lasts to this day. The names of progeny, the fruit of his marriage to Mathilda Hess and descendants of son Otto, are still present in the WELS *Yearbook*.

NL

Morton Schroeder, a retired professor, lives in Appleton, Wisconsin.



**G. Adolf
Hoenecke**

- Born February 25, 1835, in Brandenburg, Saxony, Prussia
- Died January 3, 1908, in Wauwatosa, Wis.
- Pastor, Immanuel, Town Farmington, Wis., 1863-1866
- Professor, Watertown seminary/college 1866-1870
- Pastor, St. Mark, Watertown, Wis., February-June 1869
- Pastor St. Matthew, Milwaukee, Wis., 1870-1890
- Director and professor Milwaukee/Wauwatosa seminary 1878-1908
- Editor, *Evangelisch-Lutherisches Gemeinde-Blatt*
- Editor, *Theologische Quartalschrift*

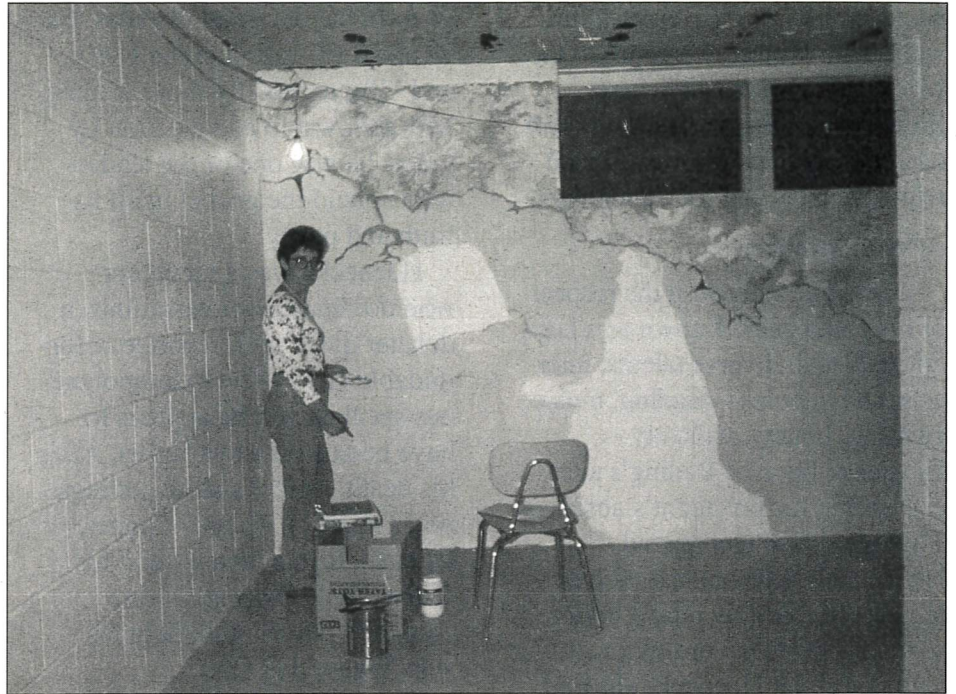
OWLS plan convention

OWLS (Organization of WELS Lutheran Seniors) will meet in Des Moines, Iowa, July 11-13, for the annual convention, the group's first gathering in Iowa.

Convention chairman Larry Carlovsky reports that the agenda includes eight workshops, with topics from Bible study to cooking. Convention-goers can also join sight-seeing tours in the area. The convention will be followed by a hostel stay July 13-19 in Waco, Neb.

OWLS members are 55 or older or retired. The organization, which offers opportunity for ministry and fellowship, has about 1500 members.

Contact OWLS, 8420 W Beloit Rd, West Allis, WI 53227.



The Bible in a mural—Wendi Raiford, Watertown, Wis., spends her weekends painting a 310-foot mural of Bible scenes on the walls of a tunnel connecting the school and church at Immanuel, Greenville, Wis. "The kids use the tunnel to go back and forth between school and church," she said. "They send me notes telling me which pictures they like best." During the week Raiford works at Northwestern College, where her husband Chris is a student.

Generosity has far-reaching results

What do you do when your congregation has a student assistance fund but has no students attending a synodical ministerial education school? You make money available for a student outside your congregation.

That's what St. John, Riga, Mich., did. Several years ago a member of the congregation established a trust fund to provide financial aid to members of the congregation studying for the preaching or teaching ministry.

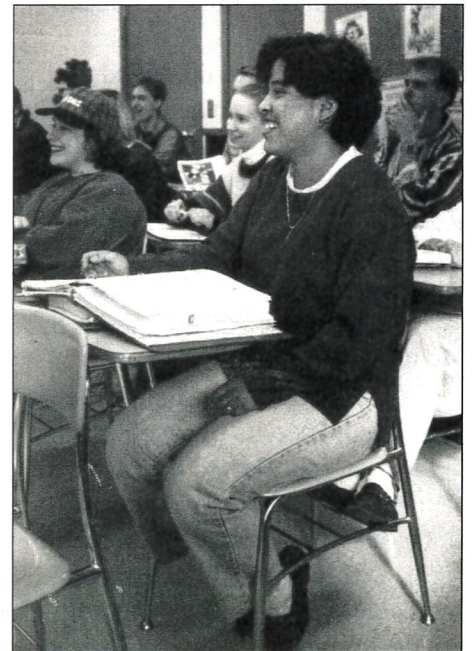
In 1991 the congregation had no members studying for the ministry. St. John's pastor, Paul Naumann, heard about a young lady in Monterrey, Mexico, who wanted to attend Michigan Lutheran Seminary in Saginaw. She lacked the necessary funds. Pastor Naumann asked his church council if they might be willing to use their student assistance fund

to sponsor her. They readily agreed.

Because of their generosity, Patty Fernandez was able to attend Michigan Lutheran Seminary for her junior and senior years. Miss Fernandez is now a student at Dr. Martin Luther College in New Ulm. Her experience has encouraged others from Mexico to enroll at MLS. One act of generosity can have far-reaching results.

If your congregation does not have a student assistance fund, think about starting one. The Board for Ministerial Education can help. Ask for "Congregational Scholarship Guidelines." Contact Ruth Rogahn, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398; 414/256-3237.

—John M. Brenner



Patty Fernandez is studying for the teaching ministry, thanks to a congregation's generosity.

Obituary

Susan Koeppen Bugbee 1937-1995

Susan C. Bugbee, nee Koeppen, was born July 28, 1937, in Bay City, Mich. She died March 4, 1995, in Garden Grove, Calif.

A graduate of Michigan Lutheran Seminary and Dr. Martin Luther College, she taught at Lutheran schools in Benton Harbor and Bay City, Mich., and Garden Grove.

She is survived by her husband, Milton; children, Joel (Jill), Jill (Aaron) Bornstein, Anne (Jeffrey) Clanin, and Katy (Joseph) DeNovi; three grandchildren; and a brother, James (Carla) Koeppen.

Edward C. Fredrich 1917-1995

Edward C. Fredrich was born July 20, 1917, in Helenville, Wis. He died March 1, 1995, in Watertown, Wis.

A graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, he served at Winnebago Lutheran Academy, Fond du Lac, Wis.; Paul the Apostle, Detroit, and Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Mich.; Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn.; Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis. He retired in 1991.

He is survived by his wife, Elaine; children, Edward (Mara), Christine (Donald) Heise, Hope, and Joel (Janet); nine grandchildren; sisters Ruth (John) Oldfield and Lois (George) Abel.

rē · li · giōn

Defining religion

ascension: The act of going to heaven in bodily form from earthly life. Jesus ascended 40 days after his resurrection from the dead. God “exalted him to the highest place” (Philippians 2:9), from which he will return to take all believers to be with him.

District news

Arizona-California

Apostles School in San Jose celebrated its 25th anniversary May 7. Gloria Dei School, Belmont, also celebrated its 25th anniversary Feb. 19. . . . A donor has promised matching funds for **California Lutheran High School** up to \$160,000 through June 1996.

Hermann John

Southeastern Wisconsin

Wisconsin Lutheran High School, Milwaukee, hosted the national WELS high school band festival in March. Over 150 musicians from 20 schools came for the annual weekend event. . . . **Morning Star, Jackson, Wis.**, is the new daughter congregation of David's Star, also in Jackson. Services are held in the Jackson fire hall. . . . Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Service has called its first full-time chaplain, John Zickuhr.

George Ferch

Michigan

Michigan Lutheran High School has received \$60,000 in non-budgetary donations, making possible “wish-list” items including new lockers, a television in each classroom, computers, and new gym lighting. . . . **Huron Valley Lutheran High School** will receive accreditation in the Michigan Non-public School Accrediting Association. Plans are moving forward to build a gymnasium. . . . **Peace, Elkhart, Ind.**, is sponsoring Life-Talk, a radio outreach series, and has sent out city-wide mailings, inviting listeners to attend Easter Sunday service.

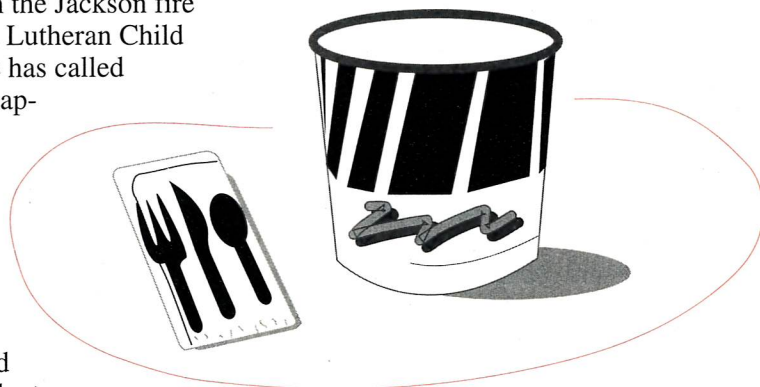
David Zahn

Pacific Northwest

Loaves and chicken

Pastor Thomas Gumm's installation day Jan. 22 at **Grace, Seattle**, will be remembered as a day the Lord provided a new pastor and chicken, too. The women in charge of the post-service meal had ordered enough chicken for 75 people, but 125 came. Even if the women could get enough chicken for 50 more people, how would they pay for it?

They described their dilemma to the manager at Kentucky Fried Chicken, who said they could have all the chicken in the restaurant. Because KFC had just been robbed, she was closing for the day. Everyone had enough to eat, the meal was a success—and the police caught the thief.



On February 5, the geoduck (pronounced “gooey-duck”) circuit in Washington held a **joint mission festival at Salem in Edmonds**. The afternoon service included an area-wide choir, three church choirs, a children's chorus, instrumental music, and a slide presentation of WELS mission work in Malawi, Africa.

David Birsching



Dr. Martin Luther College plans "farewell" service

Dr. Martin Luther College will use its May 20 graduation day as its "farewell" to 111 years of preparing faithful teachers for service to the WELS. The graduation service will be at 10 am. A special festival concertato is being written and an alumni choir is planned. The call service will be held at 2 PM.

Worship resource center moves forward

With the shelving of about 300 volumes in Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary's library, a resource center for students, church musicians, and pastors is under way. The Kurt J. Eggert Hymnological and Liturgical Memorial Collection includes books, manuscripts, and archival material on worship and church music.

The collection honors the late Kurt J. Eggert, project director for *Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal*, who died a month before the hymnal's first use at the 1993 synod convention. Eggert's correspondence and other material relating to *Christian Worship* are available to users of the memorial collection.

A \$2,000 grant from Aid Association for Lutherans helped seed initial expenses. Additions will be made to the collection as more funds become available.

Suggestions for enhancing the collection may be addressed to the chair of the committee overseeing the collection, Rev. James Schaefer, 8900 N Park Plaza Ct, Brown Deer WI 53223.

St. Croix Lutheran High School becomes world mission field

"The Lord is bringing a foreign mission field to our feet," says Merlyn Kruse, principal of St. Croix Lutheran High School. When the West St. Paul, Minn., school opens a dormitory next fall, up to 25 of its residents will be Asian students.

The new dormitory will house 50 students. "We're reserving half for WELS and ELS students," said Kruse, "and the other half for foreign students."

Most of those foreign students will come from Hong Kong and Taiwan, he said. They will be recruited by a Macalaster College professor whose niece graduated from St. Croix. "He says so many Chinese want to study in America that he can easily find 25 students for us," explained Kruse.

"Foreign students will create diversity in the student body," he added. "It will make students aware of the world community and give them a chance to be missionaries to kids who have no religion."

Educators explore ways to bring Bible to Bulgarian schools

An election dashed their hopes, but the WELS representatives who hoped to bring the gospel to Bulgarian youth aren't giving up. They're revising their plans.

Last fall, Bulgarian officials invited synod representatives to propose a religion curriculum for Bulgaria's schools. Members of the world mission board, together with Gerald Kastens and Daniel Schmeling, went to work. Kastens is the synod's administrator for youth discipleship and Schmeling for parish schools. They planned to visit Bulgarian officials and present an outline for a religion curriculum.

When the political climate changed and the officials who invited them were voted out of office, Schmeling and Kastens began looking for alternatives. Together with Harold Essmann and Steven Valleskey of the synod's world missions board, they spent two weeks in February in Sofia, where they talked to parents, students, teachers, school administrators, and government officials.

Kastens and Schmeling reported that after 50 years under communism Bulgarians know little about religion.

The Bulgarian Orthodox Church, a political force, opposes the idea of other church bodies providing spiritual instruction even though the Orthodox Church itself offers little religious education.

Because of that opposition, plans for a school curriculum "are on the back burner," said Schmeling. "We can work on some other things, though. We may be able to develop religion units that can be plugged into their literature, history, and philosophy courses."

In addition, officials at the Ministry of Education were receptive to his suggestion that WELS provide training for Bulgarian teachers. Teachers avoid biblical topics because they lack knowledge about Christianity, he noted.

Schmeling said another way is to offer religious training during youth activities—clubs, weekend events, and summer camps. Finally, he noted, the government permits private religious schools.

Both Kastens and Schmeling believe Bulgarians want Christian education. "They're looking for more," Kastens said. "People know there's a spiritual vacuum."

Ministry to seniors becomes ministry by seniors

"What do people do who retire at 65?" Gerhard Schmeling wonders. At 90, and after 49 years in ministry, he is still serving others.

Advancing years have barely slowed the retired pastor, who makes tapes of the Sunday service at St. Matthew, Milwaukee, and delivers them to shut-in members. "If they can't come to church," he said, "I can bring the church to them."

Schmeling is among a growing number of retirees who are causing changes in attitudes about senior ministry.

"The idea used to be to provide ministry to seniors," said Alfons Woldt, the synod's special ministries administrator, "but now it's moving to ministry by seniors—from being served to serving."

In February, an ad hoc committee on senior ministry listed ways they've found that seniors can serve.

Pastor Robert Lehrkamp reported that at Grace in Indianapolis, Ind.,

retirees deliver information packets about the congregation to visitors who were in church. Seniors also make regular contact with new members to encourage them to keep coming to church.

Lehrkamp also is training older adults in friendship evangelism so that they can teach others. He needs their help, he said, to reach his goal of training over 50 percent of the families at Grace.

Grace's seniors also want to use the telephone to canvass the area for prospective members. To that end, they have asked for help from OWLS (Organization of WELS Lutheran Seniors) members from Watertown, Wis., who are veterans at telephone evangelism.

At Winneconne, Wis., seniors are tutoring seventh and eighth graders enrolled in confirmation classes. Pastor John Covach meets with the volunteers once a week to suggest ways to apply the lessons he has

taught in class. "The parents are enthusiastic, and I see the difference when the students come to class, especially in memory work," he said.

Other committee members are planning more ways to use retirees. Pastor Scott Carmichael of Renville, Minn., encourages seniors to conduct devotions in nursing homes. Richard Winters, pastor in Escanaba, Mich., wants to train older adults to support Christians who are facing life crises. Pastor Roger Woller, in Fairfax, Minn., wants retirees to bring spiritual comfort to the terminally ill.

When they meet in May, the committee members will make more plans for senior ministry. They believe many older adults agree with Gerhard Schmeling, who says, "The Lord has kept me in good health, and I believe it's so I can serve him. As long as you have good health, there's no reason to retire."

World mission briefs

The WELS world mission office reports these news briefs:

Nigeria—A recent graduation class brings the number of native-born pastors to 10.

India—Rao Dasari, an Indian pastor, is attending Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. Another Indian pastor, Kaki Devabhusanam, attended a world mission conference at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in Mequon.

Hong Kong—Missionaries are concerned about the impending takeover by China in 1997. Two native pastors serve the church.

Indonesia—One resident missionary, Pieter Ried, is assisted by state-

side pastors who make periodic visits.

Thailand—Two missionaries are in a two-year exploratory program. Preliminary reports indicate this is a promising mission field.

Japan—Five missionaries and five national pastors serve twelve congregations and preaching stations.

Arizona—On the Apache reservation, the synod's oldest mission is developing an adult leadership program. Once entirely dependent on synod budgetary funds, schools now receive much of their support from gifts to the Partnership in Apache Learning (PAL) fund.

Latin America—The newest mission is in the Dominican Republic, where over 40 worship on Sundays and up to 140 children and adults attend weekly Bible classes. Last

December missionary Ronald Baerbock confirmed 11. In Mexico, a seminary program is in place.

Russia—The congregation in Akademgorodok has had 22 confirmations and 12 baptisms. Average attendance in services is 60 to 70.

Bulgaria—About 60 attend weekly services. The government has officially registered the Lutheran Church in Bulgaria.

Central Africa—the largest WELS overseas mission has over 30,000 members in 165 congregations and 30 preaching stations, with medical missions in Zambia and Malawi.

Cameroon—Raymond Cox and Norbert Meier are assisting the Lutheran Church of Cameroon and training pastors and evangelists.

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Defining religion

new self: The new life the Holy Spirit creates in a person at conversion. This new self trusts in Jesus for salvation, brings forth good works, and struggles against the old Adam or sinful nature.

Building bonds across cultures—a blessing and opportunity



Students at St. Marcus, Milwaukee, Wis., combined the school building's 100th year with a celebration of black history.

Although many urban Lutheran schools face dwindling enrollments, St. Marcus School, in the heart of Milwaukee's inner city, is thriving. Pastor Mark Jeske says one reason is the congregation's attitude.

On Feb. 19 the congregation celebrated the school's centennial (the building's, that is; St. Marcus has had a school for 120 years). Students, church members, alumni, and visitors packed the church for a festival service.

Then they moved to the school, where the children presented a musical celebrating black culture. With a student body that is predominately African-American, combining Black History Month with a school anniversary makes sense,

said Jeske.

"The attitude is not that we're a white church and you can come if you'll adopt our customs," he said. "We work at making sure blacks know their culture is respected." The congregation is about half white and half black.

"The main thing is attitude," Jeske continued. "By God's kindness, people in this church see it as a blessing and opportunity to build bonds across cultures. Instead of resenting that we're stuck here, we're glad we're in this neighborhood."

That neighborhood is where St. Marcus plans to stay. The congregation is renovating the 100-year-old school building, because they hope to celebrate more anniversaries there.

From architecture to evangelism, he's still building the church

Duane Anderson used to help build the church by planning chapels. Now he's building the church by sharing the gospel.

In the '70s, Anderson, an architect, worked full time designing mission chapels for the synod. Now he has sold his architectural business to become the minister of evangelism for Trinity, Bay City, Mich.

He is called to work especially with the economically disadvantaged in the southeast corner of Bay City. The area has high poverty and unemployment rates.

Anderson's job will be to reach the

poor, who are "easily overlooked in the evangelism program, since it's usually based on friendship evangelism," said Ronald Muetzel, one of Trinity's two pastors.

The goal isn't to increase Trinity's membership, Muetzel said. "That's not a criterion for evaluating our success. The most important thing is to share the gospel."

Anderson says his wife Judy may need to find a job, but he is hoping she'll eventually be able to work with him. "She's as excited as I am," he said. "When I got the call, my wife said, 'Do not say no. We have to go.'"



Athletic director wins awards—The Wisconsin Athletic Directors Association presented two awards to Harold A. Kaiser, athletic director at Martin Luther Preparatory School in Prairie du Chien, Wis. One award noted Kaiser's 40 years as a high school athletic director. The second award named him the district athletic director of the year.

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ext. 8; (Milwaukee 475-6600 ext. 5) weekdays 8 AM to 4 PM.
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Long-term pastorates touted

According to Religion Watch, Dec. 1994, congregations with long-term pastors fare better than those with frequent changes. As a result some denominations are rethinking the philosophy that a change of clergy every few years is good. Studies by the Alban Institute indicate that a pastor needs three to four years to build up credibility and trust. Constant turnover in pastor leadership can be debilitating to a church. (*Current Thoughts & Trends*, Feb. 1995)

Jesus portrait must go, says court

US Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens has turned down an appeal by a Michigan high school seeking to keep a portrait of Jesus on display on a hallway wall. Stevens rejected the appeal by Bloomingdale, Mich., school officials to postpone a lower court's order that the portrait be removed by March 1. The officials asked for the postponement while they prepared a formal appeal to the Supreme Court.

The picture, a print of Warner

Sallman's famed "Head of Christ," has been bolted to a hallway wall in the Bloomingdale high school for 30 years.

The dispute began in 1992 when student Eric Pensinger, who described himself as an agnostic, sued the school, saying the picture made him feel like an outsider and the display suggested the school endorsed Christianity.

School officials said the portrait has been removed and placed in storage.

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Defining religion

eschatology: The study of the last things.

Theologians generally include the following topics under the heading of eschatology: death, the last times, Christ's return, the resurrection of the dead, judgment day, the end of the world, heaven, and hell.

In brief

- **A child in a one-parent family is only slightly more likely to live with a divorced parent** as with a never-married parent, compared to ten years ago when three times as many children lived with a divorced parent as with a never-married parent. (US Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, May 1994, reported in *Current Thoughts & Trends*, February 1995)
- **People who attend church or synagogue at least once a week and who value religion have lower than average blood pressure**, even when smoking, age, and weight are taken into account. (*Wesleyan Advocate*, Feb. 1995, reported in *Current Thoughts & Trends*, March 1995)
- **Even as civil rights groups are suing to get any symbol or picture of Christianity out of public places**, municipal officials in San Jose, Cal., have spent half a million dollars in taxpayers' money to erect a statue of the Aztec god Quetzalcoatl in a public park. (*World*, July 2, 1994, reported in *Current Thoughts & Trends*, March 1995)
- **Two Christians cleared of blasphemy charges in Pakistan have fled the country for Germany.** Salamat Masih, 14, and Rehmat Masih, 40, had been **convicted of blasphemy for allegedly scrawling graffiti on a mosque wall** and were facing the death penalty. On Feb. 23, a Pakistani appeals court dismissed the charges, but the two received numerous death threats after the dismissal.
- **The US Armed Forces employs chaplains. Congress employs chaplains. Chaplains serve in hospitals, nursing homes, colleges, and prisons. Some businesses and airports provide chaplains. Now it's apartment complexes.** One program, Multi-Housing Ministry in Houston, working in conjunction with the Southern Baptist Convention, has nearly **100 chaplains assigned to 95-apartment complexes.**
- **In Africa, there is only one seminary-trained pastor for every 600 congregations.** (*National & International Religion Report*, Jan. 23, 1995, reported in *Current Thoughts & Trends*, March 1995)

Synod Budgeting 101:

A short course in how the WELS Coordinating Council plans and budgets for the work of the church

Peter C. Dorn

After two long February days holed up in a basement conference room in Milwaukee, members of the WELS Coordinating Council were about to cast votes on how to budget \$30,000. At issue was whether the money should be spent for a part-time clerical staffer and some computer gear for WELS fiscal services, or spent on the janitorial staff and supplies at Martin Luther College.

The janitors won.

Standing alone, that \$30,000 choice represented a fairly modest

decision. But taken together with more than 70 votes previously cast by the council members, the decision represented the last allocation of nearly \$37 million in synodical funds for the 1995-96 fiscal year.

The Coordinating Council—15 synodically elected representatives—is charged with recommending a balanced synodical budget to the WELS biennial convention. Setting the final budget requires tough choices among the needs of our synod's diverse and worldwide operations. With virtually every

vote, members have to weigh whether a college janitor is of higher priority than a missionary in Taiwan, whether more clerical staff in the fiscal services department is of greater need than an interest subsidy for a new mission church, or whether a new teacher at Luther Prep School would be better for the synod than support funds for retired clergy and their spouses.

Planning for balance

This voting culminates a two-year planning process followed by the Coordinating Council. One goal of the process is to produce a budget. But more important, the process is designed to help keep our synod balanced and focused on its mission instead of on financial need.

A formal statement of the WELS mission (p. 28)—paraphrasing Jesus' Great Commission found in Matthew 28:19,20—summarizes what the nearly half-million members of more than 1200 WELS churches collectively strive to do as a synod. In addition, a statement of the WELS vision (p. 28) offers a more detailed summary of what, under God, we hope to see accomplished in coming years. These statements, adopted and reaffirmed by WELS convention delegates, guide the Coordinating Council as it works to allocate dollars among the six divisions of our synod.

Within weeks following the

1995-96 proposed WELS
budget: \$36.9 million

Administration: 7.8%

World missions: 19.3%

Home missions: 17.6%

Ministerial education: 47%

Parish services: 3.6%

Fiscal services: 3.8%

Note: The budget total and the percentages above include tuition, fees, special designated gifts, and grants.

biennial WELS convention, the divisions begin planning. They analyze strengths and weaknesses of existing programs, address options for coping with changes and trends, and write reports for the Coordinating Council. The council evaluates the reports and returns its own report on long-range strategies for the divisions to consider as they begin preparing detailed budget proposals.

By early February of odd-numbered years, each division provides the council with a list of "decision packages." Each package represents a grouping of related expenses for work the division would like to fund. Package sizes vary, typically from \$20,000 to \$100,000. In this way, annual cost of the entire operation of WELS—from its 400 employees to its millions of dollars in assets—is divided into more than 900 pieces, each of which must be prioritized.

Divisions and their units prioritize their packages and pass their recommendations on to the Coordinating Council. The council approves a percentage of the divisional packages, up to a set dollar limit. This year, the limit was 88 percent of the previous year's budget amount. Then the council votes to prioritize all packages above the 88 percent limit, picking and choosing which will be funded among the "unprotected" packages. The voting continues until the total value of all approved decision packages reaches an estimate—prepared by the WELS Board of Trustees—of how much income WELS should expect from congregations and individuals.

Planning for change

Through this process—marked more by divisional cooperation than by competition—the Coordinating

Council is able to present to our synodical convention delegates a budget proposal that balances the world program of our church body.

Beyond the two-year budget cycle, the council also evaluates long-term trends and opportunities our synod must address. Based on current membership's historical funding patterns, for example, it is clear that during the next ten years, the cost of doing the same things our synod is doing now may rise well beyond our ability to support it. Growing expenses at the local church level often cause a drop in congregational giving for synodical work. Regulatory costs, environmental costs, and inflation make it harder each year just to maintain basic services. At the same time, new outreach opportunities at home and abroad demand attention.

In response to such trends, the Coordinating Council will be encouraging all synodical divisions—as well as our member congregations—to look hard and long at alternative ways of meeting our mission through new approaches to funding, more creative ways of doing our jobs, and constant focus on streamlining operations. The purpose of our synod—set forth so clearly in our Lord's great commission—will not change. But just as clearly, our earthly means and methods in doing that work must always be challenged to improve.



Peter Dorn, a member of the WELS Coordinating Council, is a member at Grace, Portland, Oregon.

An urgency for Christians to do the Lord's work is created by:

1. **God's desire that men be saved. 1 Tim 2:4**
"Who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth."
2. **The necessity that people hear the gospel. Romans 10:14,15**
"How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent?"
3. **The necessity that there are well-trained spiritual leaders. 2 Tim 2:2**
"And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others."
4. **The need for young and old Christians to be nurtured in the faith. John 21:15-17**
Jesus said to Simon Peter: "Feed my lambs." . . . "Take care of my sheep." . . . "Feed my sheep."
5. **The uncertainty of life and time. John 9:4**
"As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work."

What makes it important that we have an organization like a synod? The work God has given us to do would be impossible to accomplish alone.

OUR WELS 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.

What are the principles that guide us in accomplishing this mission?

OUR OBJECTIVES

1. To uphold and testify to the truth of God as fully revealed in the inspired, inerrant, infallible Holy Scriptures and articulated in the Lutheran Confessions (**The Word is everything!**)
2. To seize every opportunity the Lord provides to evangelize lost souls and establish ministering churches throughout the world (**Go with it!**)
3. To help each other grow and mature in the faith through public worship and life-long study of the Word of God (**Study it!**)
4. To encourage and equip each other for the application of our faith in lives of Christian service, for the Lord, his church, and his world (**Apply it!**)
5. To recruit and train candidates qualified for full-time ministry and provide for their continuing education so that the Word of God is proclaimed faithfully and effectively in accord with the Lutheran Confessions (**Teach it!**)

What, under God do we hope to accomplish in the next ten years? What is our synodical direction?

OUR VISION 2003+

The Word is everything!

- Ongoing Scriptural study of doctrine in every congregation and conference
- Publication of theological studies on contemporary issues challenging Christianity
- Increased use of up-to-date methods of communication to proclaim God's Word

Go with it!

- Plant new churches with a goal of 300 new groupings (e.g., congregations, preaching stations, daughter congregations)
- Ten new multicultural missions in urban areas of our country
- Increase overseas mission corps to 70 trained missionaries and 30 mission workers
- Reach lost neighbors through a structured evangelism program in every congregation

Study it!

- Increase synodical church attendance from 44% to 60%
- Increase synodical Bible class attendance from 11% to 30% of confirmed members

- Enroll 100% of our children in formal programs of Christian education
- Equip all of our members for personal and family devotional life

Apply it!

- Double our personal offerings for the Lord's work
- Provide training, opportunities, and structure for ministry in all congregations
- Provide Christian marriage and parenting programs, Christian schools and child care, youth ministry, family support groups, and Christian counseling

Teach it!

- Recruit enough students to produce 52 pastor candidates and 103 teacher candidates annually
- Recruit, train, certify, and call staff workers other than pastors and teachers
- Provide professional growth in ministry for all called workers
- Provide mutual encouragement, counseling, and adequate financial provisions for all called workers

Bulletin BOARD & NOTICES

To place an announcement, call 414/256-3231; FAX 414/256-3899. Deadline is six weeks before publication date.

COMING EVENTS

SUNDAY SCHOOL CONVENTION—July 7-9, Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee. Contact WELS Youth Discipleship, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398; 414/256-3274.

OWLS HOSTEL—July 14-19, Nebraska LHS, Waco. Call 414/256-3241 or write Special Ministries, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222.

FAMILY FEST—June 9-11 at Camp Phillip, Wautoma, Wis. Music, sports, games, workshops, worship. Call 414/787-1085.

CAMP KILLARNEY—Summer camp about 125 miles south of Saginaw, Mich., for children ages 8-14. July 9-15, girls. July 16-22 and 23-29 (synod convention week), boys and girls. Contact Gary Tryggestad, 313/242-3241.

COMMENCEMENT CONCERT—Dr. Martin Luther College choirs, band, and handbell choir. May 19, 7:30 pm, New Ulm, Minn.

REUNION, OSHKOSH, WIS.—Grace Lutheran School class of 1970. May 28. Worship 9 am. Lunch at noon, program follows. Open to anyone, not just class members. Contact Vicki Knacktedt Walsh, 414/426-1305.

MUSIC READING WORKSHOP—July 15 at Trinity, Waukesha, Wis., and July 29 at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn. \$15. Registration forms in your church mail, or call 414/475-6600.

HOLLAND, MICH., TULIPTIME VISITORS—Lord of Life (ELS) worships Sundays 9 am at Glerum School, 342 Lakewood Blvd. Contact Pastor Mike Smith, 616/738-5433.

COMMENCEMENT—WELS SCHOOLS

Dr. Martin Luther College	May 20	10:00 AM
Martin Luther Preparatory School	May 18	10:00 AM
Michigan Lutheran Seminary	May 27	10:30 AM
Northwestern College	May 17	10:00 AM

Northwestern Preparatory School May 17 1:30 PM
Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary May 26 10:00 AM

POSITION AVAILABLE

ACTIVITY DIRECTOR—River Falls, Wis. Work with chaplain to provide for residents' spiritual needs. Degree in recreation therapy or related field or COTA. Write John Oliver, The Lutheran Home: River Falls, 640 N Main St, River Falls WI 54022; 715/425-5353.

ANNIVERSARIES

SAN JOSE, CA—Apostles School (25). May 7. Services 8, 9:30, 11 AM. Noon barbecue followed by open house, games, and 4 PM program. School office: 408/578-4800.

LACROSSE, WI—Grace (50). June 25: Confirmation reunion. 10:30 AM service at Morman Coulee Park. Pot luck to follow. Open house after pot luck.

BARRE MILLS (LACROSSE), WI—St. John (125). June 11. Worship, 9 and 11 AM. Dinner following.

WINONA, MN—St. Matthew (75). June 11, 8 and 9:30 AM, 2 pm. 11:30 AM meal followed by program. Call 507/452-2085.

ROCHESTER, MN—Resurrection School (25). April 30. 2:30 PM. Lunch following. 507/289-4667.

AVAILABLE

BASKETBALL UNIFORMS—50 or more, girls and boys, blue and white. Call St. John, 414/863-8083.

GREEN PARAMENTS—Altar, pulpit, lectern. Available for cost of shipping. Contact Geneva Laabs, 7610 Richter Lane, Larsen WI 54947; 414/836-2106.

NEEDED

COMMUNION WARE—for mission church. Chalice, pitcher, container for wafers. Also used choir robes. Crown of Life, Ft. Myers, Fla. 813/482-7315.

PREACHER—Stay in Deltona, Fla., parsonage in exchange for preaching July 2, 9, 16. One hour from Orlando, half hour from Daytona Beach. Todd DeNoyer, 407/321-7510.

SYNOD CERTIFICATION COURSE

Dr. Martin Luther College will offer a course for synodical certification at Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee, June 12-30, 6-9 PM, Mon.-Fri. each week. The course (Edu 1410, Principles of Christian Education, 3 credits) applies to certification requirements for all levels of synodical certification. Instructor—Dr. LeDell Plath. Cost—\$230. Registration deadline—June 1. Contact Special Services, DMCL, 1884 College Heights, New Ulm MN 56073; 507/354-8221.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

MUSIC/WORSHIP EDITOR

The Northwestern Publishing House Board of Directors requests nominations for Music/Worship Editor. Responsibilities include reviewing manuscripts, editing music and texts, recommending materials for publication. Should be theologically trained as a pastor or teacher, and have advanced skills in choral and keyboard music. Computer skills are desirable but may be acquired. Nominations should be sent by May 25 to Mr. Thomas Schultz, NPH Board of Directors, 1250 N. 113th Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53226.

REQUEST FOR COLLOQUY

Mr. Ger Yang has requested a colloquy for the purpose of entering the ministry of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. Address correspondence relative to this request to the president of the Minnesota District, Pastor Larry Cross, 4520 19th Ave NW, Rochester MN 55901.

Financial report WISCONSIN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD

BUDGETARY FUND

Statement of changes in fund balance

Revenues:			
Synod mission offering	\$ 7,582,808	\$ 7,212,308	\$ 7,306,000
Gifts and memorials	180,813	140,523	75,000
Bequest/planned giving income.....	336,520	74,535	251,000
Tuition and fees	4,122,664	3,623,241	4,182,000
Other.....	30,358	39,774	40,000
Transfers—endowment/trust earnings	106,322	93,739	112,000
Transfers—gift trust	3,775,370	3,481,131	3,887,000
Transfers—continuing programs	1,078,699	770,661	999,000
Total revenues	\$ 17,213,554	\$ 15,435,912	\$ 16,852,000
Expenditures:			
Administration.....	1,281,412	1,329,831	1,358,000
Home missions.....	2,808,581	2,710,814	2,925,000
World missions.....	3,494,675	3,301,214	3,344,000
Ministerial education.....	8,224,060	8,170,613	8,373,000
Parish services.....	573,090	561,835	650,000
Fiscal services.....	744,742	744,084	727,000
Total expenditures	\$ 17,126,560	\$ 16,818,391	\$ 17,377,000
Net change.....	\$ 86,994	\$ (1,382,479)	
Fund balance—beginning of year.....	\$ 155,746	\$ 1,075,572	
Fund balance—end of period	\$ 242,740	\$ (306,907)	

SUBSCRIPTION OFFERINGS RECEIVED

Nine Months ended September 30, 1994

District	Communicants 12/31/94	1994 Totals	Twelve month offerings	Percent of Subscription	Ave. per communicant
Arizona-California.....	16,389	\$ 916,596	\$ 901,295	98.3%	\$ 54.99
Dakota-Montana	9,276	425,465	427,365	100.4	46.07
Michigan	37,338	2,037,058	2,003,342	98.3	53.65
Minnesota	45,160	2,434,440	2,362,854	97.1	52.32
Nebraska	9,975	540,488	563,968	104.3	56.54
North Atlantic	3,576	327,633	312,725	95.5	87.45
Northern Wisconsin.....	61,367	2,447,009	2,366,521	96.7	38.56
Pacific Northwest.....	4,673	278,826	233,944	83.9	50.06
South Atlantic.....	6,228	390,697	378,953	97.0	60.85
South Central	3,947	298,376	306,513	102.7	77.66
Southeastern Wisconsin..	58,542	3,198,090	2,937,258	91.8	50.17
Western Wisconsin.....	60,277	2,946,178	2,861,088	97.1	47.47
Total—this year.....	316,748	\$ 16,240,856	\$ 15,655,826	96.4%	\$ 49.43
Total—last year.....	317,119	\$ 16,498,781	\$ 15,471,890	93.8%	\$ 48.79

The fruit of the Spirit is joy

The Spirit's assurance of God's gracious commitment brings joy in the face of persecution, pain, heartache, injustice.

James A. Aderman

Christians are joyful. Our lives brim with joy as the Spirit fills our soul with Jesus' gospel. The presence of the Spirit guarantees our joy.

The Spirit teaches, "There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." Since our relationship with God is secure, what could rob us of our joy? God is for us, who can be against us?

Finding joy in every situation

Christians view life optimistically because "in all . . . things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us."

The Spirit empowers Christians to move beyond the smile of a positive attitude. He leads believers to rejoice because of the assurance that nothing "will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:1, 31-39).

Joy accompanies the presence of the Spirit because the Spirit leads us to see life through God's eyes. Our joy is built on the assurance that God loves us and does what is best for us.

Christians find joy in every situation. Their loving Father is in total control. He has designed the

circumstance, allowed it, tempered, and timed it. The Spirit's assurance of God's gracious commitment brings joy in the face of persecution, pain, heartache, injustice.

So an imprisoned apostle can write, "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!" (Philippians 4:4). James encourages, "Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds . . ." (James 1:2). And Peter encourages, "In [your hope in Christ] you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials" (1 Peter 1:6).

Finding joy through the Word

Our journey into heaven's eternal joy is not intended to be a humorless wake. It is a triumphal march of glad celebration. Jesus has won; we have won. He reigns without equal; we are secure. He transforms bad into benefit; we are blessed.

Our joy depends on God's Word. Luther wrote, "I still constantly find that when I am without the Word,

Christ is gone, yes, and so are joy and the Spirit. But as soon as I look at the psalm or a passage of Scripture, it so shines and burns into my heart that I gain a different spirit and mind."

The Spirit works on us through his Word to empower his joy to smile within us. "The precepts of the Lord are right," he says, "giving joy to the heart" (Psalm 19:8).

Joy is the result of trusting God's loving will. Jesus is the proof of God's love and power. The Spirit keeps us focused on Jesus, and so the fruit of the Spirit is joy.

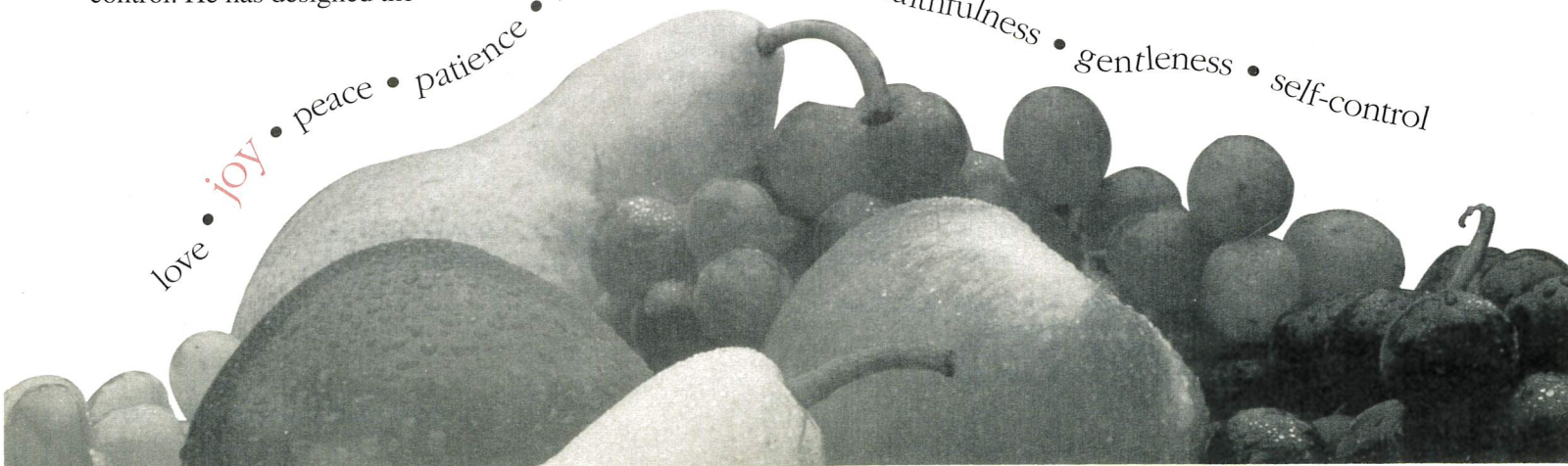
James Aderman is pastor at Fairview, Milwaukee.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

1. Read Psalm 68. Note how the psalmist points to God's sovereignty and love as the basis for joy.
2. Peter points us to God's salvation in Jesus Christ as the source of joy in the face of trials (1 Peter 1:2-10). What does he say God wants to accomplish by sending trials? What advice do you find there for facing trials in your life?

Next: The virtue of peace

love • joy • peace • patience • kindness • goodness • faithfulness • gentleness • self-control



Freedom, godliness, and saving faith

Walter F. Beckmann

May is a month we associate with patriotism. It's the month we observe Memorial Day, the holiday on which we honor the memory of departed loved ones, especially those who died in the service of our country.

For me, Memorial Day brings back childhood memories. We grade school students would assemble in Erickson's Park, where we were issued flags. We carried them proudly as we marched through town, out to the cemetery, and placed them at the graves of veterans.

Freedom isn't free. Our liberty has been bought and preserved at a great cost to those whose memory we honor again this month.

Freedom and liberty are such precious gifts that we should never take them for granted. We should hold them with a solemn sense of gratitude and responsibility, for liberty without responsibility quickly becomes license to do evil.

Words like freedom and liberty are used to justify the right to promiscuity, pornography, suicide, abortion, and every kind of perversion, the right to say anything without considering its effect on others, and the right to stand toe-to-toe with anyone and say "In your face."

But that's not really freedom. That's slavery, slavery to our old Adam. How sad to think that in a free country so many choose to live in spiritual slavery!

Citizens who are slaves of sin are not a blessing to themselves or to their nation. They live only for themselves, at the expense and inconvenience of others, and they undermine public morality and thereby bring God's displeasure on their nation.

The Bible tells us "righteousness

exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people" (Proverbs 14:34). The destruction of the world in the flood, of Sodom and Gomorrah, the Canaanite cities, and the city of Jerusalem in the days of Jeremiah, show that God brings judgment on nations who disregard his law. By our lack of civic righteousness, our nation could lose the freedom God has given it through the blood of those whom we'll be honoring this month.

But we shouldn't be concerned only about public morality. Although civic righteousness exalts a nation, it doesn't save anyone. More important, "Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD" (Psalm 33:12). That's the LORD, the God of salvation, who loved the sinful world so much that he sent his own Son to be our Savior. Only the gospel of his Son can bring us to call God our LORD. Civic righteousness can produce an environment in which the gospel can be freely proclaimed, and that's pleasing to God. But only through the righteousness that is ours in the gospel can sinners be reconciled to God.

As we celebrate Memorial Day and enjoy the freedom preserved by our veterans, let's see to it that liberty does not become a license for sin. Then those buried beneath all those white crosses will not have died in vain.

Let's devote ourselves especially to spreading the news of the spiritual freedom bought by the blood of Christ, so that others may enjoy that freedom with us. Then he who died on Calvary's cross will not have died in vain.

Walter Beckmann is pastor at Grace, Falls Church, Virginia.

*Freedom isn't
free. Our liberty
has been bought
and preserved
at a great cost
to those whose
memory we honor
again this month.*

Baptism—immersion, reaffirmation, vows

John A. Brug

Why does Martin Luther describe baptism as immersion when the Lutheran Confessions say that sprinkling constitutes a valid baptism?

Luther often expressed the opinion that baptism by immersion would provide a better symbol of “drowning the Old Man” [our sinful nature] than baptizing by pouring or sprinkling water, but he also stated that immersion was not necessary for a valid baptism. Luther often referred to baptism by pouring, however, and his own order of baptism prepared in 1523 specified baptism by pouring.

The Lutheran Church chose not to follow Luther’s preference for immersion, and he himself seems to have become less committed to the idea later in his life.

It is likely that two factors prevented the Lutheran Church from adopting baptism by immersion. Tradition favored baptism by pouring, and the insistence of some sects that baptism must be by immersion prompted the Lutherans to retain baptism by pouring as a testimony against this false demand.

At any rate, there is abundant evidence that Luther never believed baptism must be by immersion.

Please speak about the practice of reaffirmation of baptism.

Because baptism is the sacrament of rebirth, it is done only once. If a

person has been validly baptized, there should be no second application of the water of baptism.

Because baptism is God’s promise to us, not our promise to God, the church should not do anything that gives the impression that any subsequent action of ours can make a baptism more valid than it already is.

Our baptismal rite is designed to emphasize the action of God in baptism. . . . The order focuses attention on God’s promise and power.

If a child has been baptized at the hospital, no further rite is necessary. If the family and congregation choose to have a prayer in the service asking God’s continued blessing on the child and recognizing that the child has been received as a member of the congregation, there is nothing wrong with this.

The term “reaffirmation,” however, can give the impression that the baptism was a promise we made that we are now repeating. Any ceremony performed to recognize a baptism should focus attention on what God did in the baptism, not on the actions of sponsors or witnesses. Our baptismal rite is designed to emphasize the action of God in baptism. Any secondary ceremonies should do the same.

Why has the renunciation of the devil been eliminated from the baptismal rite in our hymnal?

One reason that some elements from the old rite were omitted from Christian Worship was to keep the order brief.

Another reason was that addressing questions to an infant’s sponsors led some people to think this required the infant to make a promise to God before baptism.

Now no questions are addressed to the infant. Instead the emphasis is properly placed on the promise God is giving to the infant. Deliverance from the devil is specifically mentioned as a benefit God gives in baptism. The order focuses attention on God’s promise and power, rather than on a confession made in the name of the child.

Some questions are addressed to adults who have come to be baptized, since they are able to answer for themselves. In the case of infants, however, the rite properly emphasizes that they are brought to God bringing nothing, and that they are recipients of his grace.

NL

John Brug teaches at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon.

What would you like to ask? Write QUESTIONS, Northwestern Lutheran, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398.

Regarding the design changes . . .

I appreciate especially the more legible typeface and the three-column arrangement. Both of these design changes, in my opinion, are conducive to relaxed and speedier reading. In addition to these changes, the page numbers can more easily be spotted.

Regarding the contents, *Northwestern Lutheran*, by the grace of God, has stayed the same throughout the years, consistently bringing to its readers spiritual instruction and inspiration based solidly on God's Word.

By the way, I am already carrying out your mandate: "Don't keep this magazine!" Keep up the good work.

*Arthur Glende
New Ulm, Minnesota*

Many have expressed concern because some of our churches are using computer generated music. I "come to the WELS" congregation to hear God's Word. The music is a fringe benefit.

Our congregation is blessed with an abundance of talented musicians. If, however, God had chosen to bless our congregation with a computer rather than six organists, etc., we would still be duty bound to thank, praise, serve, and obey him.

Please, let's not get hung up on the source of music. We need to focus on bringing the message of salvation through Jesus Christ. With this message we will never stop singing!

*John G. Ruppel
Waukesha, Wisconsin*

Our children have attended public schools, area Lutheran schools, and prep schools ("Public school," April). No matter which they attended, some well-meaning Christians had something negative to say about

our choice. Please, let's not judge other parents' decision on which schools their children attend. God's calling is different for every family.

*Eric and Marian Jacobsen
Durand, Wisconsin*

Are the items listed in the "1992 consumer spending in the US"

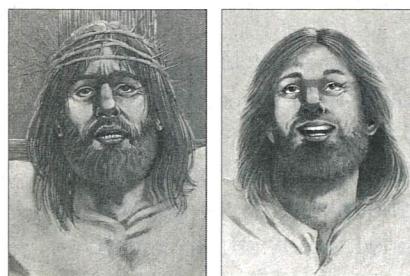
graph [Feb., p. 28] included in "all the good things" a fair salary will allow a public minister to share [p. 11]? In a culture where excess is the norm, should not the public minister's lifestyle be nonconforming and countervailing?

*Thomas Haar
Scarborough, Ontario*

About those covers

Northwestern Lutheran commissioned an artist to do the covers for the March and April issues. His assignment was to depict Jesus on the cross and then risen. His pictures have received mixed reactions. We want you to know we are listening. The pictures do not represent a trend, and we try to be sensitive to the tastes of our readers. Thanks to those who wrote or spoke to us.

—ed.



March and April cover pictures

"No organist? Get a computer" respondent [Mar.]. I am grieved to think that people are offended by the use of computer services. The talented organist (which our congrega-

tion has and is grateful for) who blesses a congregation can also bless small churches who have neither the organist or the finances to purchase the organ. They too can enjoy our form of music.

*Joan Sleeseman
Corunna, Michigan*

Send your letters to Readers Forum, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398; FAX 414/256-3899. Include full name, address, and daytime phone number. Letters are edited for clarity and conciseness. Writers' views are not necessarily those of WELS or Northwestern Lutheran.

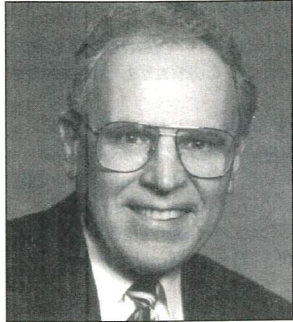
THROUGH MY
BIBLE in 3 YEARS

June 1995

- 1. Acts 7:44-8:4
- 2. Ac. 8:5-25
- 3. Ac. 8:26-40
- 4. Ac. 9:1-19a
- 5. Ac. 9:19b-31
- 6. Ac. 9:32-42
- 7. Ac. 9:43-10:33
- 8. Ac. 10:34-48
- 9. Ac. 11:1-18
- 10. Ac. 11:19-30
- 11. Ac. 12:1-24
- 12. Exodus 1, 2
- 13. Ex. 3:1-4:17
- 14. Ex. 4:18-6:9
- 15. Ex. 6:10-7:25
- 16. Ex. 8
- 17. Ex. 9
- 18. Ex. 10, 11
- 19. Ex. 12:1-36
- 20. Ex. 12:37-13:22
- 21. Ex. 14:1-15:21
- 22. Ex. 15:22-16:36
- 23. Ex. 17
- 24. Ex. 18
- 25. Ex. 19, 20
- 26. Acts 12:25-13:12
- 27. Ac. 13:13-43
- 28. Ac. 13:44-52
- 29. Ac. 14:1-12
- 30. Ac. 14:13-28

Next month's readings will appear in the next issue.

Alone with my work



Gary P. Baumler is editor of Northwestern Lutheran.

I can do little more than point out the hurt and call for us to address the problem.

Years ago I hurt my knee in a football game but managed to finish without the coach knowing of the injury. However, I can still hear him hollering, as I limped around at practice the following Monday, “Baumler, does it really hurt that much?”

It did. And that’s what this column is about today: “hurting that much.” I’m talking about a hurt most people don’t see until it’s too late—a hurt that contributes to burnout, heart attack, divorce, depression, and even suicide.

I never thought this problem could hurt that much. But my eyes were opened. The catalyst was the following paragraph written by someone who is hurting:

WANTED: A dad for me and my little sister and someone to help Mom with big chores. I want someone who plays sports, helps me do homework, and says, “Good job!” When I was little my real dad would make up neat stories at bedtime. Now my mom asks me to read to my sister because she is tired. Mom gets sick a lot, but I think she is just sad. Actually I still have a real dad, but he’s at work all the time. When he comes home we can’t bother him because he’s busy. He takes us to church on Sunday, but we have to be quiet there too.

Then another letter came telling of a suicide. The young man was driven to depression and despair by a workload that consumed all his time and energy and still appeared insurmountable. His wife, children, and extended family still live with the hurt. Coincidentally, I have spoken with persons whose lives have been hurt and scarred because a spouse worked “all the time.”

Common to these cases is that all the people who have been overwhelmed by busyness are Lutheran teachers and pastors. They are conscientious persons

who are always there whenever they are needed. They never say “no” to another job for the Lord. They coach sports, drive buses, clean the church, and do whatever needs to be done—even if they haven’t been trained to do it.

They and theirs often hurt.

In the space I have for this column, I can do little more than point out the hurt and call for all of us to address the problem.

Perhaps the following thoughts will give a small push in that direction (and keep in mind, you don’t have to be a minister to suffer from this problem):

- In the beginning, God declared it is not good for a man to be alone. It is the devil, then, not God who causes the workaholic to isolate himself from his spouse and to create the very loneliness that marriage should prevent.
- Called workers also have a call from God to care for their families.
- You who call the workers need to care for the workers. That means helping keep their workload in balance, volunteering to relieve the load, insisting they take some time for themselves and their families, talking with them to find out what problems they might be experiencing, praying for them.
- You who are caught in the busyness blues need to learn to say “no,” if necessary. You should take a day off and talk with those close to you about how to get things back in balance.
- Stop being busy long enough to listen to the Word of Christ. You can get so involved with bringing Jesus to others you fail to see his place with you and your family. It’s time to take Jesus home with you.

Gary P. Baumler

WELS logo: a straw poll

WELS Communication Services wants to hear from you. We're working on a logo for WELS and welcome your opinion.



logo "A": The orb reminds us of the world, the aura surrounding it the light of our eternal God. The dove reminds us of the Holy Spirit as he works through God's Word. The cross reminds us we are Christ-centered.

logo "B": The cross reminds us we are Christ-centered. The three shades of the cross remind us of the Triune God. The four sections that make up the cross remind us to spread Christ's gospel to the four corners of the earth.

logo "C": The cross reminds us we are Christ-centered, the book that we are Bible-centered. The three stripes of the book's pages remind us of the Triune God.

Why a logo?

In its 1993 convention, WELS created the Communication Services Commission (CSC) and called for "a clear and consistent communication of the synod's mission" as well as improved "quality of all publications and mailings" representing WELS.

It became clear that first, a strong visual image was needed to tie the communications together and to signal to all who see it: "That's WELS!" Presently, at least 18 different letterheads are sent from WELS national offices. WELS has a corporate seal it uses as its legal mark, and some use the symbol of a well from an evangelism program as an identification mark. But WELS has no national logo.

With the logo, we can show visually the unity we enjoy confessionally in Christ.

What's a logo?

A logo is a corporate mark that visually identifies an organization to whoever sees it. It must be simple,

easy to recognize, and project a sense of the body's mission. It's used on all the organization's stationery, publications, and signs. It will usually be applied more widely, e.g., on ring binders, jewelry, or video.

A WELS logo must reflect primarily that we are Christ-centered. It should give a sense of our mission to nurture and reach out with God's Word.

What about cost?

In approving this project, the Conference of Presidents (COP) stipulated that we fund it outside of the budget. CSC received a grant through Aid Association for Lutherans for development, promotion, and unbudgeted changeover costs.

Why the straw poll?

CSC and COP will choose the logo. However, it will serve all of WELS, so it is important to give us all the opportunity to voice our opinions before the choice is made. CSC and COP will welcome the input.

Tell us which logo you prefer, or

if you don't like any of them. Mail or fax the handy form provided, drop a note, or call. You can leave a phone message on voice mail at any hour. Be brief. Keep comments to 25 words or less. Poll ends May 20, 1995.

Thank you!

WELS logo: straw poll

Check the one you like best, or rank them 1, 2, 3. Return by May 20, 1995.

A ___ B ___ C ___

Comments _____

Logo, CSC, 2929 N Mayfair Rd,
Milwaukee WI 53222; 414/256-3210.
FAX 414/256-3899.

VBS? What's that?

Did the words “vacation Bible school” really describe what happens at our little mission church for one week a year?

Robyn Smith

“VBS? What’s that?” asked my neighbor as she peered over my shoulder at the stacks of papers, books, and index cards on the table next to me. We were sitting in the hot June sun watching our children, assorted ages and styles, frolic in my neighbor’s pool.

“Very busy schedule,” I glibly replied as my mind raced through the itinerary I knew would be forthcoming next week.

Then I paused, “Actually, **very boring suppers** is more like it. At least that was what

my husband would think as we inhaled simple dinners between the time he arrived home and we had to be at church each evening.

“Does Jesus even love you when you’re naughty?”

“But you know, it could stand for **vans, Buicks, and Subarus**. You should see them come rolling into our parking lot Monday evening. Registration is usually a zoo with kids milling around aimlessly, the air conditioning usually breaks down, and parents look as if they are at their wits’ end.”

I was on a roll. “**Velvet, bells, and string**,” I said thinking of the crafts we concocted, trying to stretch an already overstretched church budget.

“All right, okay, enough!” my friend said. Another neighbor suggested the sun was scrambling my brains.

I was enjoying myself now. I rambled, “You know, it really should stand for **vacuums, brooms, and scrub-brushes**,” thinking of what the week-long program would do to our church floor and walls.

I sobered up and really thought for a minute. Did the words “**vacation Bible school**” really describe what happens at our little mission

church for one week a year? It was just ten hours of actual “school,” but weeks and even months went into its organization and preparation.

Did the words “vacation Bible school” really sum up how it feels to see new faces enter our doors and leave each evening, clutching hand-made crafts reminding them and telling their families who Jesus was, and that he loves them?

Could mere initials—VBS—explain how a teacher feels when a toddler asks, “Does Jesus even love you when you’re naughty?” or when a young teen wipes a tear from his cheek while he watches a video of his Savior’s crucifixion?

A flood of memories from past VBS times came rushing back: scared toddlers, skinned knees, cream-filled cookies and sugary punch, glued fingers, and glitter on the carpets.

There were the mom and her children who are so much a part of our church now, and there were the faces we have never seen again—but maybe, maybe in heaven.

There were memories of off-key voices, children’s laughter, sticky hugs, macaroni and pipe cleaners, and, of course, the thread that runs through it all—Jesus.

Finally, with a kind of awe, I answered my friend’s question. “VBS is about a **very beautiful Savior**. Would you like to come and meet him yourself?”

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

