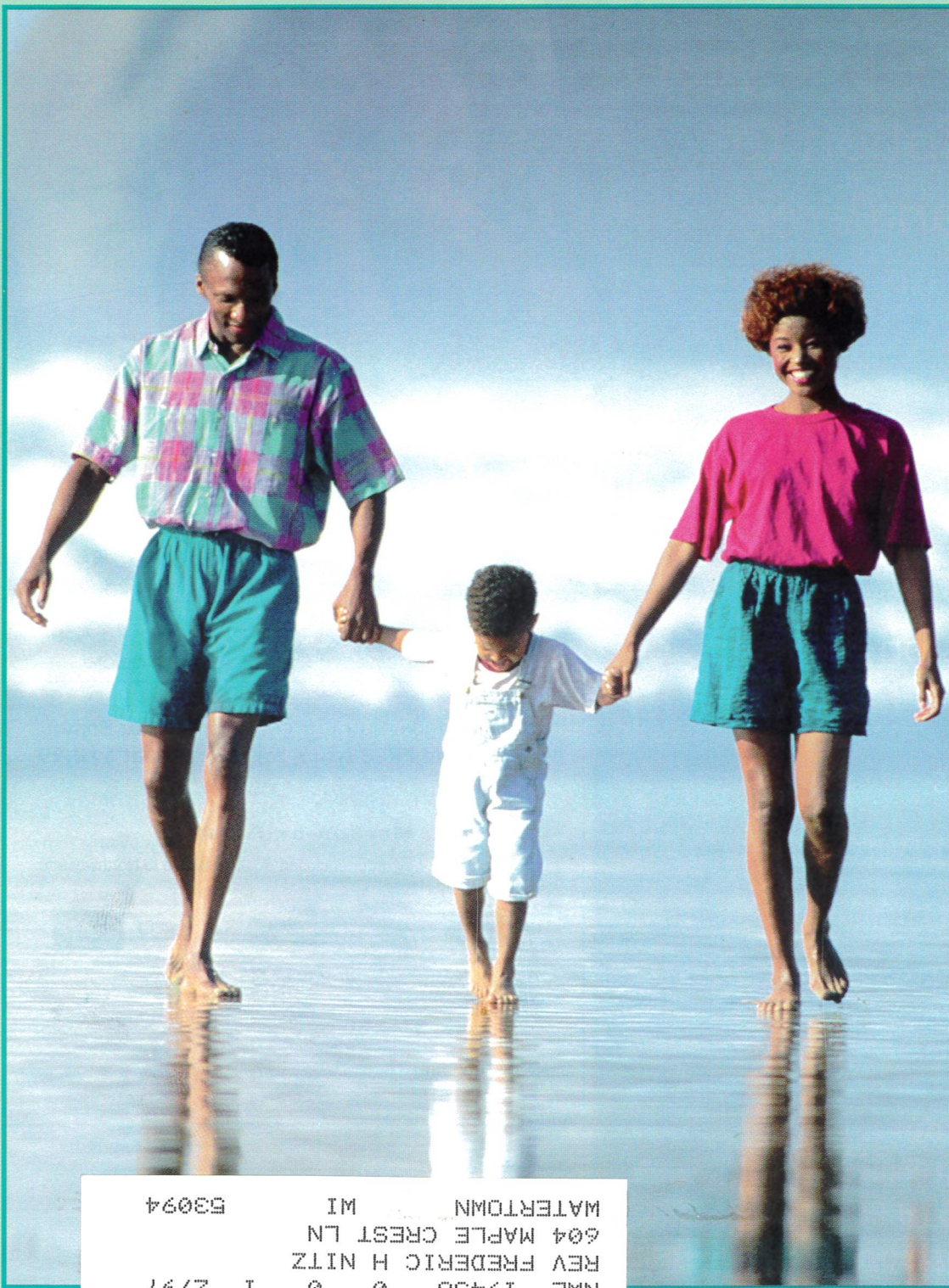


LUTHERAN



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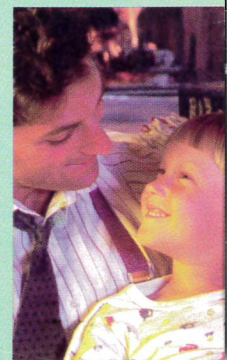
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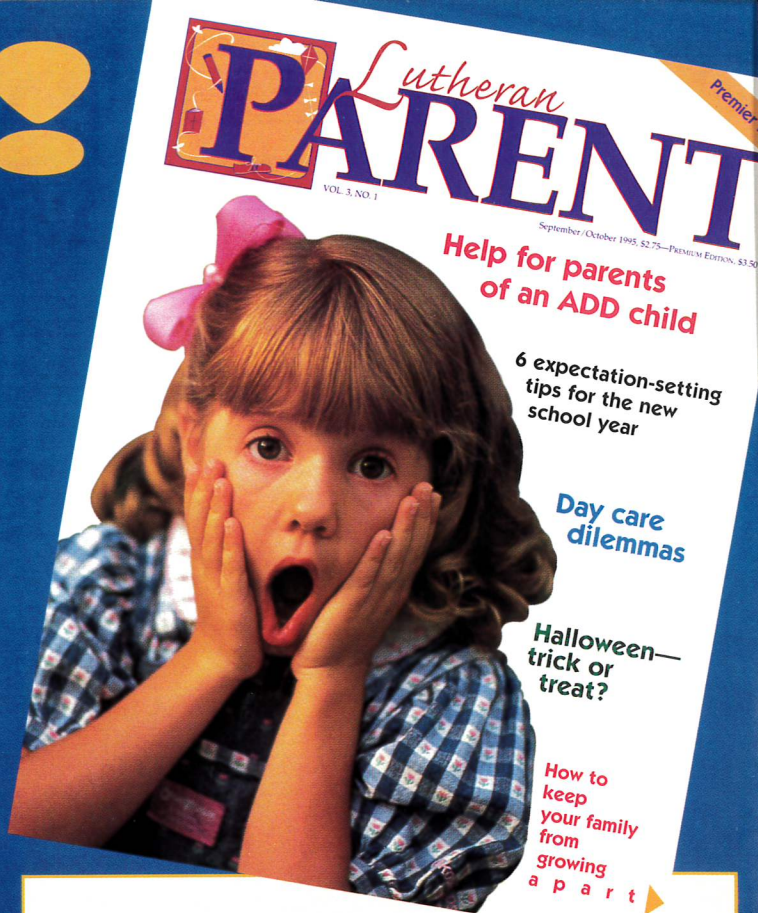
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Families fit for life

Now fear the Lord and serve him with all faithfulness. . . . As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord. Joshua 24:14,15

Richard E. Lauersdorf

A long battle was almost over; any second now their little boy's soul would leave this world. In that hospital room only one concern flooded their minds. Not whether he was popular in school or which college he would attend, but where his soul would go was the question.

This month, as Christian education kicks into high gear, we share the same concern. Where will our children go? We want our families to be fit for life.

Remembering

We get our direction from Joshua, who at age 110 stepped down as Israel's leader, reminding the Israelites again of what a God they had. He recounted how the Lord brought them out of galling slavery in Egypt, through watery walls of the Red Sea, across searing sands of the Sinai desert, into land flowing with milk and honey. Above all, he reminded them of the coming Christ who would wash away every stain and let nothing of their sin remain. This "Joshua" would lead them to the heavenly Canaan. A hush must

have fallen over Israel as Joshua spoke.

We have so much more to tell our children than what Joshua had for Israel. We have an eternal God taking on our flesh. A God who perfectly kept his own laws and counted it for everyone. A God who became the God-forsaken one because he shouldered our sins. A God who trampled over death and triumphed over our graves. A God who reigns forever, ruling the world in our interest. This is what we teach our children. This is what they need to hear if our families are to be fit for life.

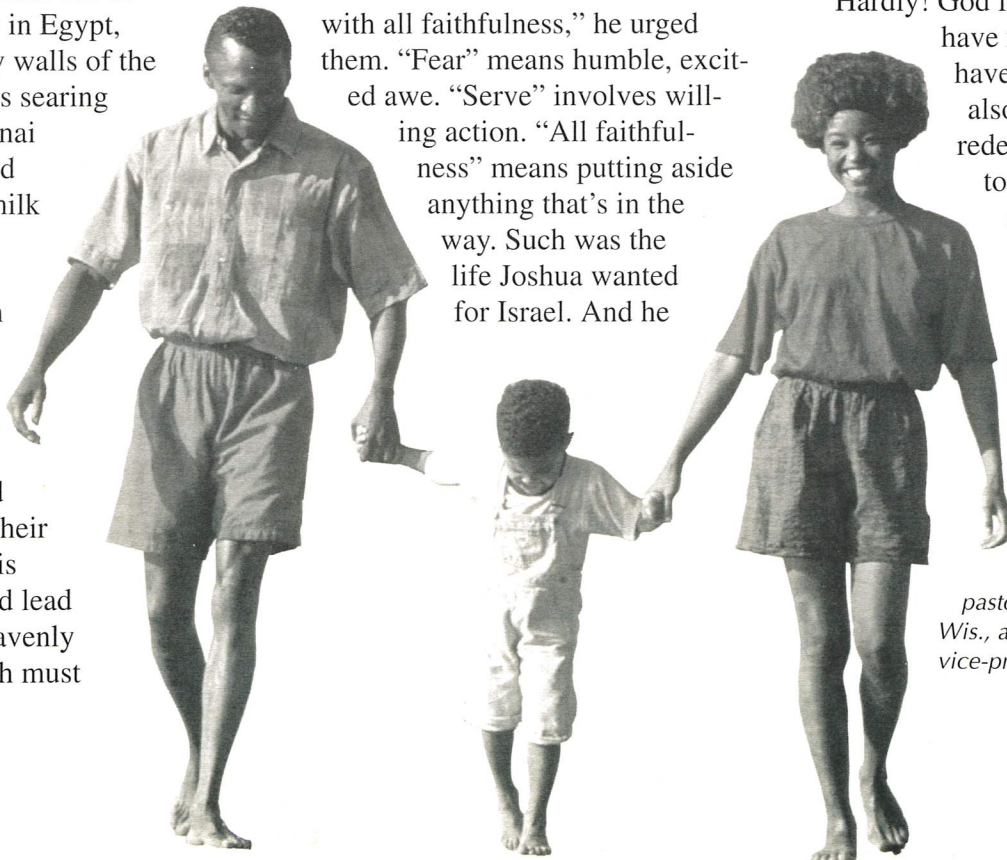
Responding

One last charge Joshua had for Israel: "Fear the Lord and serve him with all faithfulness," he urged them. "Fear" means humble, excited awe. "Serve" involves willing action. "All faithfulness" means putting aside anything that's in the way. Such was the life Joshua wanted for Israel. And he

pledged the same for his household.

Want to have families fit for life? Families that live for their Lord even as they wait for heaven? Remember whose task it is to teach them. A Christian church and school aid in training, but parents take the lead. Let's rededicate our homes as workshops where daily we reach for God's Word so we may marvel at what he has done. Where God's name is used in praying and praising, not cursing and swearing. Where love is practiced by giving instead of getting, caring instead of carping. Where concern for the lost is taught by the example of personal witnessing and mission offerings.

Perfect families? Perfect leaders? Hardly! God forgive us where we have failed and when we have fallen short. God also power us as we rededicate our homes to the task of training souls for the only life that really counts, life for the Lord on earth and life with the Lord in heaven.



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



- Discussion about families and family values abounds these days—also in the pages of NL. What's special about our discussion is that the basis of all family values is faith in Christ.
 - ✓ Richard Lauersdorf (page 3) encourages us to follow Joshua's example and dedicate our families to the Lord.
 - ✓ God commands parents to share the promise with children so that future generations may worship him. See Richard Gurgel's article on page 10.
 - ✓ Children in homes where Jesus is the center may be tempted to fall away, but the Lord in his mercy often brings them back. Read "A lesson from the storeroom" on page 36.
 - ✓ Tom Trapp puts a different spin on family values in "Hate your father and mother." Turn to page 8 to discover the challenge Jesus puts before you.
 - ✓ And don't forget the latest help available for Christian parents. See page 2.

- On the 25th anniversary of the medical mission in Malawi, nurses and missionaries reflect on the Lord's blessings. See page 6 to read the varied experiences of those who served.

- This issue ends our series on the Ten Commandments, page 14. We thank author Wayne Laitinen.

—LRB

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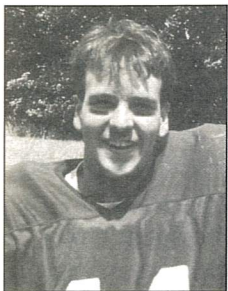
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Calm days, stormy days

For 25 years, WELS has carried on a medical mission in Malawi that has aided 612,000 people.

Ernst H. Wendland

The time was right to begin our synod's second medical mission in Africa. Missionary Ted Kretzmann and his wife Hilda arrived at Senga Bay on Lake Malawi in March 1970. They came from Mwembezhi, Zambia, where a Lutheran dispensary had already been opened in 1961.

Ted remembers as his greatest joy "the opening of mission congregations in the surrounding area, and the building of mission chapels that are still serving God's people there."

Hilda remembers too the world's twelfth largest lake as "the bluest imaginable, turning into purple, red, and pink with the rising of the sun, with its African women doing their wash and the fishermen bringing in their nets on the shore." She also recalls "the whitecaps and the crashing of the angry sea on the beach, louder than the freight trains roaring into a western U.S. town."

The beautiful skies and the crashing waves describe the 25 years that our synod's medical mission has enjoyed in Malawi. There have been calm days and stormy days.

Grateful for the opportunity

Yet the nurses who have served there are unanimously grateful for having had the opportunity. "Malawi has had a positive influence on my entire life," declares Edie Hintz, our first nursing sister in Malawi. "Not only is this true of me personally, but a lasting rela-



One of the first rural clinics of the Malawi Mobile Mission, located at Chagunda village near Lake Malawi.

Medical mission personnel who served in Malawi

Edith (Schneider) Hintz
Ruth Vatthauer
Darlene Boehme
Linda (Phelps) Golembiewski
Katherine (Barthels) Wendland
Nancy Oelke
Carol (Coffey) Hinrichs
Corrine (Sievers) Berry
Beth (Ebert) Evans
Nola (Christianson) Pallot
Debra (Kraemer) Pietsch
Deloris Schwartz
Cindy Hains
Kerry Laper
Nick Laper

Medical missionaries-in-charge

Theodore E. Kretzmann
John M. Janosek
Raymond G. Cox
Stephen P. Valleskey
Ernst H. Wendland
Norman C. Kuske
Michael L. Hintz
Walter W. Westphal
Peter D. Zietlow
John P. Hartwig
Paul G. Waldek

tionship has been established for my entire family as a part of the African mission."

"I have no regrets, only pleasant memories," writes Linda Golembiewski, who served our synod's medical missions nearly 10 years both in Zambia and Malawi. "I grew as a person, closer to my Savior."

Kathie Wendland says in retrospect: "My experiences in Africa presented me with the biggest challenges in my life. I saw how God was in control, especially when all human supports were gone."

Cindy Hains, who spent five years after the mobile clinic was moved from Senga Bay to Lilongwe, explains, "I think of blessings beyond anything imagined or deserved. Out of the best and worst experiences of my life I always gained new insights into my own weaknesses, and of God's wisdom, even his sense of humor."

What beautiful testimonials for a nurse recruitment program!

These are but a few excerpts from the fascinating accounts of those who have accepted an opportunity to serve the Lord by serving others. Included among the many benefits they mention are "a better understanding of people of another culture," "a thorough knowledge of tropical diseases," and "a fuller appreciation of what it means to combine spiritual with physical healing."

Excited about the service

Malawi missionary and nursing staff have experienced no lack of excitement during these years. Hilda Kretzmann tells about "Mr. Hippo" suddenly emerging from the waters of the lake while the missionary families were swimming nearby.

Every nurse has a story about spending the day in the middle of nowhere, after getting hopelessly mired in the mud, or experiencing problems with the mission vehicle. During the earlier years the nurses had to walk over a railroad trestle while avoiding a glance at the swirling waters below. Driving an all-terrain vehicle known as the "Coot" was quite an experience for them, as well as a source of endless curiosity for the Malawians.

Their greatest joy as nurses was observing the improvement of women in prenatal and of children in under-five clinics, as the teachings about water sanitation, nutrition, and immunizations began to show results. They were also happy to see a change in emphasis from treating diseases to preventing them.

More than merely exciting for the nurses at Senga Bay was to observe the inexorable rising of the waters of Lake Malawi, eventually reaching a point where their quarters were in danger of crashing into the sea. Those were anxious days, wondering at night if their home would still be standing in the morning! As a result, the Malawi mobile mission headquarters was moved from Senga Bay to Lilongwe in 1982.

Four rural clinics are now serviced out of Lilongwe, Malawi's capital. These are also used for church services on weekends. Recently, the Malawi medical operation engaged a husband and wife team from



Women walk for hours to get to the clinic. Once there, they mark their place in line, find a spot in the shade, and wait for their turn to be helped.

America, instead of two nurses, to supervise the work. Nick Laper is the administrative coordinator and his wife Kerry the nurse. This option is now possible because of the developing clinical competence of the national staff. Eight Malawians complete the health care staff.

The 25th anniversary of the Malawi medical mission will be celebrated in a special service in Lilongwe on September 10, in conjunction with a visit by members of the Central African Medical Mission Committee. A special litany has been prepared for synod-wide use in our congregations this fall, and a slide series and video are available through the Central African Medical Mission contact women.

Our congregations are urged to celebrate the Lord's blessings upon this humanitarian effort and to continue supporting it with their prayers and gifts. As many as 60,000 people in Zambia and Malawi are presently receiving medical help through the free-will offerings of our people,

amounting to approximately \$200,000 annually.

Ernst H. Wendland is a retired missionary to Africa, and professor em. of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon.

NL



Mothers crowd around while nurses weigh the babies.

Hate your father and mother

Nothing is to interfere with our commitment to following Jesus Christ—not even our family or our own feelings.

Thomas H. Trapp

If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—even his own life—he cannot be my disciple. And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. Luke 14:26,27

It's unnatural, immoral, and even goes against what Jesus himself taught. Yet Jesus said it, "If anyone comes to me and does not hate . . . , he cannot be my disciple."

What do most football players say when the TV camera is on them? "Hi, Mom!" It's natural to love our parents. It is also God's will: "Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God has commanded you, so that you may live long and that it may go well with you . . ." (Deuteronomy 5:16). To hate our parents, spouse, children, siblings, or our own life goes against God's moral will and human nature itself.

It's even unchristian to hate our enemies! In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus himself taught: "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you love your enemies . . ." (Matthew 5:43,44; Luke 6:27). There is no place for literal hatred in Jesus' teachings.

Complete commitment

So what does Jesus mean when he says that his true disciples are to hate their blood relatives and even their own lives? A parallel passage in the gospel of Matthew helps clarify Jesus' usage of the word "hate" in Luke. Matthew writes these words of Jesus: "Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me" (Matthew 10:37,38).

*Are you ready to
"take your cross"
and leave all—
even your family
for Jesus?*

In the gospel of Luke, Jesus is speaking hyperbolically. With an extreme statement, Jesus makes it crystal clear what it means to be his disciple. Nothing is to interfere with our commitment to following Jesus Christ—not even our family or our own feelings.

Living our commitment

"Amen," we say to Jesus. But saying we're committed is much easier than being committed. I know of young adult converts

whose unbelieving parents are angry with their children for becoming followers of Jesus. I know parents who are rejected by their own children when the parents urge them to leave their sinful ways and follow Jesus. It's not easy to follow Christ above all, but it's God's will. Love for the Lord comes first. It is central. It is total. "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" (Matthew 22:37), states the first table of the Law.

The same truth of complete commitment is rephrased by Jesus right after his call to "hate" our relatives and self: "Anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple."

Nothing less than total dedication is Christ's demand when he tells us to "take our cross." When Roman soldiers came to a Jewish village, forced a man to carry a cross, and led him away, the people of the village knew it was a one-way trip. He would never come back.

Taking our cross

Are you ready to do that? Are you ready to say with the Apostle Paul, "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20)? Are you ready to "take your cross"

and leave all—even your family—for Jesus?

There's a young Christian man who did just that. One Easter season, a student who regularly worshipped at one of our campus ministries told the campus pastor how his father, who was then a member of one of our churches, left his home and went to live with a woman who wasn't his mother. His mother, who was then also a member of one of our churches, had a man other than his father move in

with her. The young man was distraught over his parents' infidelity. He told the campus pastor: "I'm not going home this Easter. I'm going to stay here and celebrate Christ's resurrection with my Christian family. What is there to celebrate with my parents? Their unrepentant lifestyles show they don't love the Lord."

He was right. His parents put down their crosses, turned from Christ to sin, and walked away.

Don't put your cross down. Instead, pick it up, then look up—

at the cross—the one on which Jesus died for your sin. And follow him.

NL

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



We share the promise with our families

God uses parents to spread the gospel to future generations.

Richard L. Gurgel

Except that God does not gamble, you could almost call it his “calculated risk.” You find the risk in a familiar passage, “Our Father in heaven” (Matthew 6:9). With that, Jesus not only instructed us how to pray, but also reminded us that God stakes part of his reputation with every parent.

As children pray, “Our Father in heaven,” how do they picture their heavenly Father? As our children watch us, God is using us—their sinful fathers and mothers—to form our children’s concepts of what their heavenly Father must be like.

Furthermore, as they hear—or fail to hear—God’s Word from us, God is shaping their knowledge of him through us. As they watch us apply—or fail to apply—its truths and promises, we are telling them what God means to us. God’s “calculated risk” is that he uses us to shape who he is in the minds of the next generation.

Our responsibility

As those whom God has called to share the promise, we start in our homes. In our homes, either God’s name will be hallowed and souls pointed toward heaven, or God’s name will be dishonored and souls will be confused and misdirected.

Will we retreat? Or will we remember that God never gives us any responsibility without supplying the strength to accomplish it?

God really is taking no risk, since he is more than able to make our homes strongholds of his gospel. He equips us to share the promise with our families.

For those of us wishing to check the “pass” box when it comes to this spiritual responsibility—that is impossible. God has given us a task to accomplish.

By the perfect life and innocent death of his Son, God won salvation for every soul. God called us all to share that promise. He called us as parents to play a critical, spiritual role as we pass the promise to our children. In fact, this influence goes beyond one generation. The sin of one generation will play itself out in generations to follow. Positively, the promise of the gospel, shared with one generation, will bless generations to follow. Because God chooses us to share his promise, he places the souls of generations to come into our sphere of influence.

The question is never: Are we going to be a spiritual influence on our children? The question is: Will that influence be positive or negative? How sad, then, that we too often forget that the most important link of home-church-school is the home. We can delegate many of our responsibilities, but we cannot delegate our spiritual responsibilities at home. To neglect our role of sharing the promise in our homes is to cast aside a key element for passing

down the message of salvation from generation to generation.

Our neglect

Evidence of such neglect is staggering. Informal surveys of WELS people indicate that regular devotions and Bible reading may be taking place in only 5 to 10 percent of our households. Even among called workers, less than 40 percent may lead their families at home in the Word of God.

God promised to work wonders in our hearts only by the means of grace—Word and sacraments. If the Word is stifled, we subtract the power of the Holy Spirit from the daily dynamic of our family. If we fail to equip our families with the full armor of God, we send our children into the world defenseless to face a well-armed opponent.

Consider the spiritual havoc we wreak on our family when we fail to share the promise in our homes. If our children hear of Jesus only in church and school, are we telling them that “Jesus stuff” is not what real life is about? Do we give our children the message that the “one thing needful” is needed only for an hour on Sunday mornings?

Our fathers’ part

Husbands, consider the effect on our spouses when we neglect our Christ-like servant leadership. Have we acted as if spiritual training of

children were strictly our wives' responsibility? By default, too many wives have been forced to be the chief spiritual influence in the home—the role God entrusted to husbands. Could some of the struggle over the roles of man and woman be the result of husbands abdicating their spiritual responsibilities? Without excusing those who do not agree with biblical principles, we who fail to practice in our homes what we preach in our churches bear the greater responsibility for the confusion.

The sad toll of male spiritual irresponsibility falls on the men themselves. How many Christian men, successful at work and active in their congregation, carry a heavy burden of guilt for homes that lack a strong spiritual center? Many of those men may even be standing in our pulpits and classrooms.

Understand what is at stake here—the souls of our families. We must look in the mirror of God's law, and face where we have missed our call and where, because of that, our families may be spiritually wounded and bleeding.

Our Father's grace

An honest look at how well we have shared the promise with our families isn't easy. Who cannot trace the sad fruit our negligence bears in the next generation? It is a burden too heavy to bear.

Thank God we need not bear it, for as soon as God shows us our failures, he reminds us of what he has

done. God's grace in Christ has removed the guilt of every sinful failure in our lives. His forgiveness and grace are still new every morning.

But we don't share the promise just with others. We must daily share the promise of forgiveness with our own hearts, drawing from



that refreshing well of salvation. As spiritual leaders in our families, let's take our daily run to Calvary and hang all our failures on the cross.

When we leave the cross, we do not walk away empty-handed. We carry the same promise by which Paul did God's work: "I can do everything through him who gives me strength" (Philippians 4:13). Where God gives awesome responsibility, he gives competence, strength, and ability to carry it out.

Our single parents

And don't forget those who raise children without the benefit of a second Christian parent. God's promise helps them as well.

Though God may have allowed a Christian father or mother to be absent from your home, he can

make up the difference by his grace. Timothy's life proves that. Timothy grew up in the home of a believing Jewish mother, but, it appears, an unbelieving father. God overcame that obstacle through the witness of Timothy's mother, Eunice (and grandmother, Lois). Just as God blessed Eunice's efforts to share her faith and beliefs with young Timothy, so God has blessed many a single Christian parent with the strength to do double-duty in sharing the promise in the home.

Our challenge

Pray for a renewed commitment to the awesome task God has laid before us in our homes. In daily repentance, confess your failures. And revel in the wonders of his forgiving grace. Then, move

ahead to share the promise with your families. In heaven, your children—and your children's children's children—will thank God for you!

NL

Richard Gurgel is pastor of David's Star, Jackson, Wis.

This essay has been edited to fit the space available in NL. The full text will be printed in the convention Proceedings.

Peace in the Lord

Members at Peace, Bradenton, Fla., find joy in being part of a synod.

Linda R. Baacke

Surrounded by people moving in and out every week and others who wonder what Lutheranism is, members of Peace, in Bradenton, Fla., set out to share what "Lutheran synod" is and how much joy there is in being part of one.

Welcoming visitors

"Over 1000 people move to Florida every week," said Pastor James Pope, "which makes for a lot of new faces." In fact, about 60 percent of Peace's members joined in the last six years. Only two charter members remain.

Because people are so new to Peace, they often don't know what "synod" means. "It's such a neat thing to share with people what it means to be a part of a synod. We are connected, by our faith in Christ, to over 1200 churches and

300 schools across the nation and the world. Together we support missions, and call teachers and pastors. People are amazed to hear that," said Pope.

But before anyone can share what a synod does, they need to learn what Lutheran means. "Lutheranism in general is still not well-known in the South," said Pope. "Our yellow pages ad reads, 'Peace Lutheran Christian Day School.' We say Christian, just to help identify what Lutheran is."

Teaching children

The ad for the school is one way Peace reaches out to new residents. "So many people are looking for a quality education and want their children to attend our school, but we just can't accept them all," said Pope. Of those who are accepted,

many join the congregation.

"Our challenge is supporting a good-size school with a smaller congregation. Yet, God continues to bless us," said Pope.

The school has proved to be a blessing, said Diana Hawkins. She and her husband, Craig, joined Peace three years ago. "My kids use Scripture in everyday life—it's amazing. The school makes all the difference," she said.

Winter visitors provide blessing

New residents aren't the only ones who visit the congregation, however. Like most Florida congregations, Peace has many people who attend for all or part of the winter.

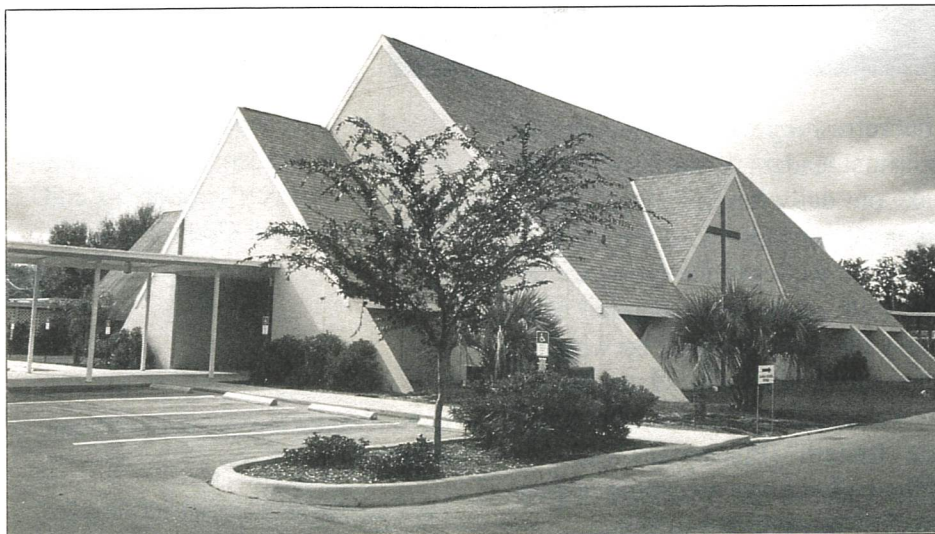
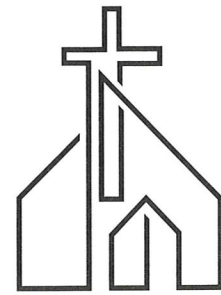
This, combined with summer vacations, makes for a "roller coaster" of ups and downs in church attendance, offerings, and volunteers available for various projects.

While this presents a challenge, it also provides a blessing. "Synod members who visit pass along greetings from acquaintances, colleagues, and relatives," said Pope. "Conversations with new visitors often reveal common friendships, proving that it is a small world and synod after all."

Serving each other

Even as members are busy welcoming visitors, they find time to build their friendships.

Arleen Verlinden, who moved to



Peace, Bradenton, Florida, was dedicated in 1992 after adding offices, a new sanctuary, and two classrooms.

Florida ten years ago with her husband, Ken, attends the once-a-month women's prayer breakfast. "It's wonderful to get together to pray and visit," she said. "There is also a fellowship guild, group activities, and Bible class—all of which are wonderful."

Serving the Lord

"We sure couldn't do as much without our volunteers," said Pope. "There really is a good spirit among the people to step forward and help out."

One family underwrites the cost of Proclamations of Peace, a radio broadcast condensed version of Sunday worship. Aired weekly, it reaches most of west central Florida. "Members tell us that their family and friends, say 'I heard that.' It lets us know people are listening to it," said Pope.

But Florida heat can be a factor in Peace's ministry. "It's better to go places early morning or late afternoon," said Pope. "Yet you can't always work your ministry that way. So you go in spite of the heat, and drink a lot of water." And baseball? "We play in the winter and spring instead of summer."

But, the best thing is how "the Lord is at work in our church," said Diana Hawkins. "We are a close church, the people are great, and, above all, we hear the true Word of God. Our church's name is Peace, and we truly have the Lord's peace."

NL

Linda Baacke is communications assistant for WELS Communication Services and Northwestern Lutheran.



Parents and children work on valentines to distribute at nursing homes and retirement centers. Each year the children sing and hand out religious crafts at the centers.

PEACE

Bradenton, Florida
organized 1958
members: 270

Pastor:

James Pope

FLORIDA

Teachers:

Daniel Gartner
Judith Gartner
Jane Schlenvogt
Eva Glaeske

enrollment: 73

Bradenton



Grade school children sing at the school's 25th anniversary celebration.

The enemy within

When God tells us not to covet we begin to understand just how impossible it is to live the holy life God demands.

Wayne A. Laitinen

An employee works only half the time he's on the job, but he receives full salary and benefits.



An accident victim becomes independently wealthy by launching an aggressive court case against an insurance company.

A widow is confronted with a sales agent who won't take "No, thank you" for an answer. Too weary to contend with him and too polite to dismiss him, she signs the papers and closes a deal she never wanted.

What do these scenarios have in common? If each were done with a gun, it would be a felony. Yet, they are so commonplace that if you raised an eyebrow, you would be howled down. Larceny has found its legal loophole.

Hearts set on felony

God closed the loophole with the command: "You shall not covet."

Here God shows us what he sees: Like buzzards on fence posts, each waits for something to happen—death, misfortune, a moment of inattention, ignorance, confusion, weakness—anything that can be turned into an opportunity for gain. When it does, everyone swoops down to fight over the carcass.

One man secretly revels in the neighbor woman's divorce. Another lies awake at night thinking of ways to contest the estate of a deceased relative. A third knows how to save his friend's business, but says nothing so he can buy him out at a rock-bottom price. Another amasses credit card charges irresponsibly, hoping he can avoid his creditors by declaring bankruptcy. When he files, others chide themselves for not have taken

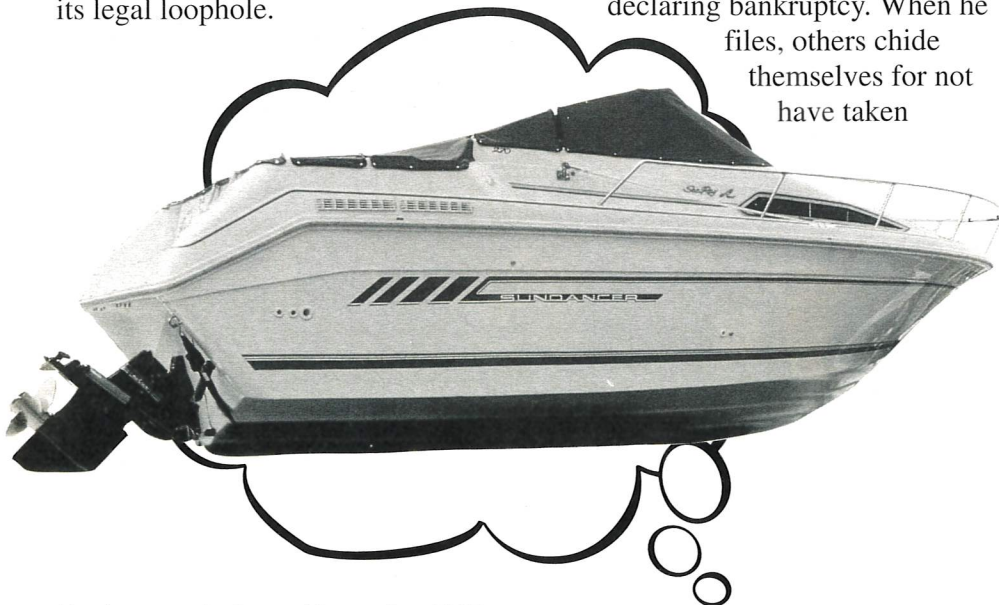
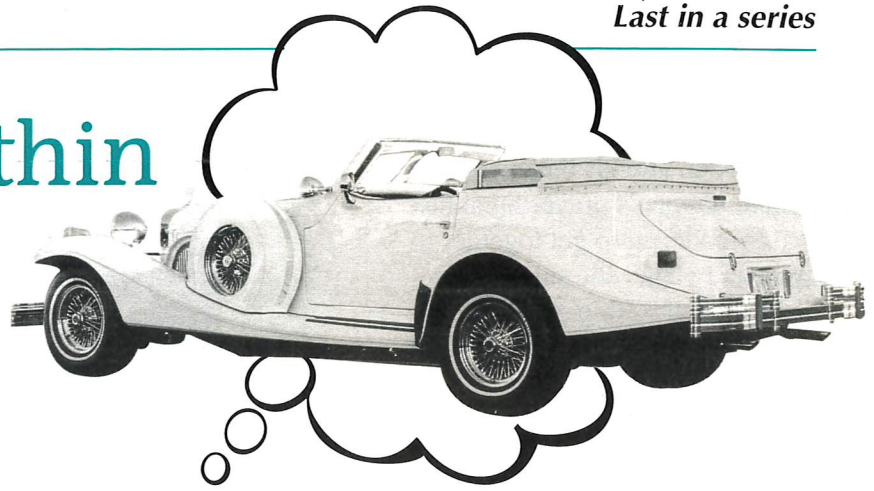
advantage of the bankruptcy laws sooner.

Policemen won't arrest you for it. In fact, the world will praise you for being shrewd. But God sees that our hearts do not have our neighbor's best interest in mind, and condemns us for such lovelessness.

We could pass stricter laws and enforce more severe punishments, but that doesn't get to the heart of the problem. Have you ever seen a movie where the criminal is bound and gagged? Usually he's thrashing on the floor, screaming muffled obscenities. Police may have kept him from hurting society for the time being, but everyone knows if he ever gets loose, he'll be seven times the rogue he was before he was arrested. Why? Because handcuffs don't change a man. They only inflame the wickedness in his heart.

Coveting has more to do with who we are by nature than what we do. Jesus said that the heart we were born with is a polluted well from which every evil flows: "... out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander" (Matthew 15:19).

When God tells us not to covet we begin to understand just how impossible it is to live the holy life God demands. We stand guilty of breaking all of the commandments. As St. Paul said to the Romans in



chapter 3, “There is no one righteous, not even one. . . . Therefore, no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law: rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.”

With the apostle in Romans 7 we cry out, “What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?” We exult in Paul’s comfort as well: “Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

*Nothing stands
between us
and the
love of God—
not now,
not ever.*

Hearts set free

When the time was right, Jesus took our place under God’s justice. He paid our debt of sin and reconciled us to God. The Holy Spirit came to us through baptism and the Word to assure us that God gave us a new identity, a new image, a new name, and a new heart. We are holy in his sight. Now nothing stands between us and the love of God—not now, not ever.

Freedom from sin’s dominion is one of the many gifts we enjoy this side of eternity. “Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated on the right hand of God.”

As believing children of God we can put the power of Jesus’ cross to work against sin. “Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to the earthly nature: sexual immorality,

impurity, lust, evil desires, and greed, which is idolatry. . . .”

By faith we can flex our newfound strength to live the way God wants us to—from the heart. “Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you” (Colossians 3:12,13).

Even our eagerness to obey God is a little foretaste of the heavenly life that awaits us: “I run in the path of your commands, for you have set my heart free” (Psalm 119:32).

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

NINTH COMMANDMENT

You shall not covet your neighbor’s house.

What does this mean?

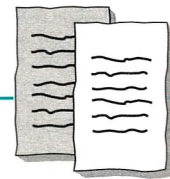
We should fear and love God that we do not scheme to get our neighbor’s inheritance or house or obtain it by false claims, but do all we can to help him keep it.

TENTH COMMANDMENT

You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife or his workers or his animals or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not force or entice away from our neighbor his wife, workers, or animals, but urge them to stay and do their duty.



F. W. Meyer: the consummate teacher

A man with a vision for Christian education, he helped shape our synod's elementary education system.

Morton A. Schroeder

He was a tall man. A big, bearish, scraggly man. And sometimes unkempt. But he had the disposition of a friendly puppy, a trait everyone liked. Friends knew he was acquainted with, and willing to forgive, human foibles. Colleagues realized he was tuned to their needs. Novices appreciated his empathy.

Perhaps Frederick W. Meyer's unstable childhood was the womb that cradled his kindly nature. Born in Buffalo, Minn., he began his education in the Lutheran school in New Ulm. Following the death of his parents, he was moved to near-by Gaylord to live with an uncle and continue his schooling.

After confirmation and a year in Gaylord's public schools, Meyer transferred to the high school department of Dr. Martin Luther College. Graduated from the college at 22, he confidently faced the future in a world standing on the brink of WWI.

Meyer's career almost ended before it began. A climate-caused illness in Green Bay, Wis., forced him to resign. When he resumed teaching, his varied skills caught the eyes of Wisconsin Synod elders. It was natural then that when the synod wanted someone to pilot its prospering elementary school system, it eventually piped the even-tempered Meyer on board.

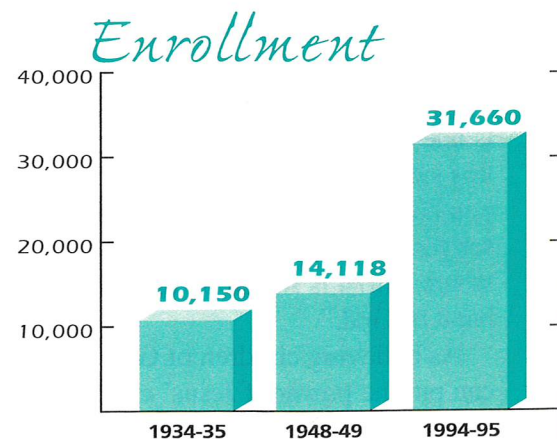
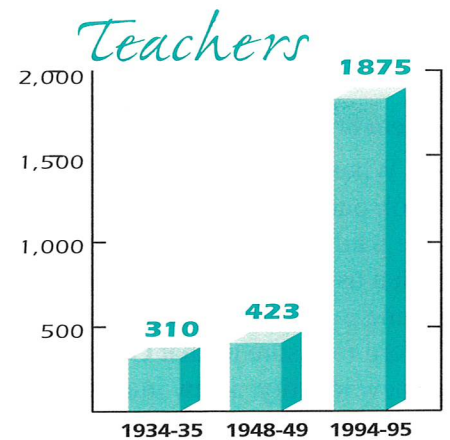
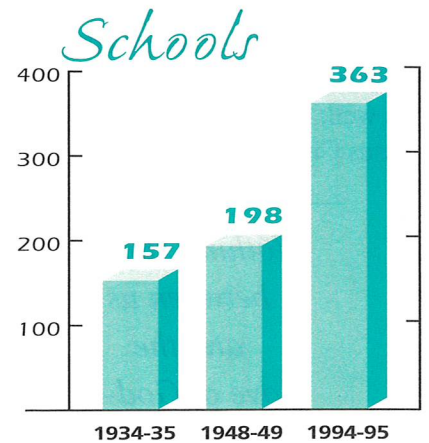
Search for a synod school secretary

Meyer must have been surprised when he found his name among the 15 nominees for the new, controversial position. If so, he was not surprised when he was passed by. The second list of 23 nominees was more impressive than the first; it included men from five states, among them the veteran president of the Wisconsin Lutheran state teachers' conference and the man who would become president of Dr. Martin Luther College.

Meyer was humble, ready to serve where and when needed. The third choice of the calling body, he accepted the call when the Lord was ready to use his special gifts.

The position Meyer pioneered was slow in coming. Wisconsin, Michigan, and Minnesota synod leaders were ardent advocates of Christian education. During the constituting convention of the Wisconsin state synod in Granville in 1850, a school sermon was preached. Later, John Schaller, successively president of DMLC and the seminary, said, "There is no institution like the parochial school in which Christian parents may find real and satisfactory assistance toward the education of their children."

A synod school secretary was



Statistics of Lutheran elementary schools during Meyer's administration and today. Information from WELS Proceedings 1935 and 1949 and Commission on Parish schools.

appointed as early as 1890, but that position, apparently a reaction to the infamous Bennett Law, seemed more concerned with statistics than with structure and an undergirding philosophy. It was not until the organic union of 1917 that the synod commissioned a panel to formulate principles designed to meld its disparate schools into a cohesive system.

Acting on the recommendation of the panel, a school visitor was called in 1920. This generic title lasted less than a decade. In 1933 it was changed to reflect the essence of this ministry.

The executive secretary position went wanting for more than two years, in spite of near panic expressed in the synod's Christian education organ. The *Bulletin* was unkind, and its editor was critical of "the lack of a centralized uniform control."

Accepting an impossible challenge

When Meyer was appointed executive secretary, basics became his *raison d'être*: he was to understand the gospel and apply it in training children. He was to be the consummate teacher. He was to use Christian tact in all of his activities.

The complete job description was an impossible dream. The executive secretary was to concern himself with "textbooks, standards, course of study, brotherly relations, statistics, congregational attitude to school, teacher salaries, language question, library suggestions, school equipment, building conditions, establishment of new schools, school journal, proceedings of the legislature, comparative standings of public and parochial schools, school calendar, daily program."

Although the records are silent on this matter, it's obvious that

Meyer's sense of humor was a necessary part of his survival kit.

Meyer was a diplomat. He had poise and the knack of reaching consensus with groups that thought they had opposing agendas. When the complete plan of school visitation was placed before the synod in 1933, two of the 10 major points sought to "allay all secretly harbored fears of pastors" and "dispel all false hopes of teachers."

Meyer was equal to the challenge. He set the ship on course in two months, piloting it with skill until his death. During those 12 short years, he served as link between the corporate body, the synod, and its component parts, the eight districts. He fostered a necessary and amicable working relationship with Dr. Martin Luther College. He deserved and won the confidence of his colleagues. All of this made him a leader among equals.

Meyer became ill during the summer of 1948. When his doctor prescribed rest and almost guaranteed recovery, the board urged the patient to take a vacation. Recovery was not to be. Meyer missed a conference in early November. His report on the status of education in the Wisconsin Synod was read by another.

Meyer died nine days after undergoing a serious operation and 14 days after his 57th birthday. Funeral services were held at Jerusalem Lutheran Church, Milwaukee. Burial was in Grace-land cemetery on November 26, 1948. Survivors were his wife Lydia and their daughters Ruth, Norma, Marie, and Lois—and 198 schools with 423 classes taught by 207 men and 213 women.

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

NL



**Frederick
W.
Meyer**

- Born November 8, 1891, Buffalo, Minn.
- Graduated from Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., 1913
- Taught in Lutheran elementary schools in Green Bay, Wis. (1914), New Prague (1915-1921) and Arlington, Minn. (1921-1928), and Fond du Lac, Wis. (1928-1936)
- Appointed Executive Secretary of the School Commission, April 13, 1936
- Died November 22, 1948, Milwaukee, Wis.

Christianity: more than just a name

Most people in Brazil have some kind of religious belief that is a mixture of Christianity, New Age, and African religions.

Gary P. Baumler

Most Brazilians call themselves Christian. But not many know what the Bible says about Jesus Christ. When they learn what the Word says, we see miracles of faith worked by the Holy Spirit.

Who they are

Maria Regina is one of those miracles. After her fiancé jilted her, she discovered a book that told how Jesus Christ could help the suffering. She believed and turned next to the Bible, which she read from Genesis to Revelation in a year and a half.

That led her to desire fellowship with other Christians. She had never had contact with a Christian church since her baptism in the Catholic church. She prayed the Lord would lead her to a church that would help her on her journey to heaven.

Ignoring other churches closer to

her home, Regina visited our Christian Center for Information in Porto Alegre. She received instruction and was confirmed.

Says Missionary Bruce Marggraf, "She is a wonderful example of a young Christian who lets her light shine so brightly that one can hardly fail to be impressed."

In three areas as far apart as Milwaukee is from New York City and as diverse, that scene is being played out in different versions in our Brazil missions.

But it's a struggle. At our Christian Information Center in São Paulo (15 to 20 million people), Missionary Charles Gumm reports, "One woman told me she was pregnant and her baby had communicated to her that she should ask me for \$500. A man came in and wanted to open a healing clinic in the upstairs



Christian Information Center, São Paulo, Brazil.

room of the Center."

Although the people haven't heard the truth about Jesus, Gumm often hears them saying: "I'm a Christian too. Boy, that's great you're doing what you are doing. But I already know that stuff, so I don't really need to study the Bible."

Still, God blesses our efforts. An elderly lady in Gravatai, who can hardly read anymore because she needs new glasses, has been overcoming the obstacle and reading two chapters each day to finish the Bible in two years. Says Marggraf, "She is also saving up her money to buy new glasses (cost is \$90—she lives on about \$70 a month) because she is afraid her eyesight will give out before she has read the Bible."



Brazilians walk through the outdoor fruit market. Missionary Marggraf reports that fast food availability is limited, but "our family is probably in better health for eating food of more nutritional value," he said.

How we reach them

The people are wary of most religious groups and especially foreign missionaries. So our missionaries work hard at mastering Portuguese and search for ways to get the Brazilians themselves active in outreach. Much of the contact is through children's classes, family Bible studies, instruction classes, counseling, direct mail, telephone canvassing, seminars, home visits. Some people show interest because they want to be baptized.

In Dourados, a frontier city of 150,000, our six-year mission reaches about 120 people each week. Missionary Flunker recounts: "On New Year's Day, one of the young men said: 'We have to have one of our planning meetings soon, because I have lots of ideas.' This shows that the Lord is leading his people to take responsibility for their part of the kingdom, and to do it eagerly."

Most of the people come, says Flunker, because the others invite them. "Recently we had to cut printed materials because of rising costs," he points out, "but people

Two years ago a couple with two school-age children moved to town to be nearer his brother. The young woman had experience in the Pentecostal church, but her husband was not interested and refused to attend.

The missionary began Bible studies with them at their home, because the wife wanted some kind of religion and chose her brother-in-law's. Before long the husband was listening and then attending services with his family. They requested instructions, their children were baptized, and they were confirmed.

That same man, who was not

discovered that talking is free, and with the Lord's blessing, they continue to witness and invite, not needing anything printed to do so."

Flunker, who has lived in Latin American countries as a missionary for 20 years, counts it a privilege to help reach the Brazilians and teach them of Jesus (although all our missionaries and their families make great sacrifices). When asked about

the sacrifice, he puts it all in perspective: "We appreciate that, understanding that no country on this earth is paradise, we have to focus on heaven, our true country, and the place where we are going."

NL

Our thanks to missionaries Gumm, Marggraf, and Flunker for the information and pictures for this article.



interested in God, now rides his bicycle almost 10 miles to church every Sunday. His wife and the children come by bus, but he bikes to save money. If part of the road is muddy from rain, he carries his bike to the asphalt. The family is actively evangelizing both of the neighbors, one of whom has begun to attend church, and is continuing Bible studies at home.

A young woman with three children can't read and is being instructed through a picture course.

One day Jehovah's Witnesses stopped by to present their testimony. She said she was learning about the true God from the Bible. She

proceeded to show them her picture Bible course. They laughed at her, but she was not bothered by this. She insisted that her God was the true God and she didn't have to listen to anything else.

Another time she was trying to explain something to her father and picked up her "Bible" to read" to him, showing the pictures that explained what she wanted to say.

Sharing the gospel in Brazil:

Charles and Elsbeth Flunker
Charles and Wendy Gumm
Bruce and Kathleen Marggraf
Guy and Linda Marquardt

Adult spiritual growth

Bruce Becker talks about adult discipleship.

What does the Commission on Adult Discipleship do?

We have six areas of responsibility, all dealing with adult spiritual growth.

The key one is adult Bible study. We assist congregations as they seek to encourage their members to grow in the Word.

Second is stewardship. That covers the Christian's whole life of stewardship, not only time, talent, and treasures, but everyday life and attitudes.

Third is family ministry, helping families in a society that is constantly attacking the family structure as we know it from God's Word.

Fourth is member retention and reclamation.

Fifth is member ministry. That focuses on members who are in leadership positions of the congregation.

The last is fellowship and group life.

In all six of these areas our goal is to provide whatever help and assistance we can to congregations as they seek to carry out their work.

Why are these things needed?

Many congregations and pastors are asking for help and resources in these areas. Most don't have the time to do all of these things and do them well. They select our helps as they have need.

We offer tools and resources that you can put to use in your congre-

gation, if you want them. If something doesn't fit your particular situation, pass on it.

We are here to help congregations, not to tell them what to do.

It's been said that adult spiritual growth is job one. What does that mean?

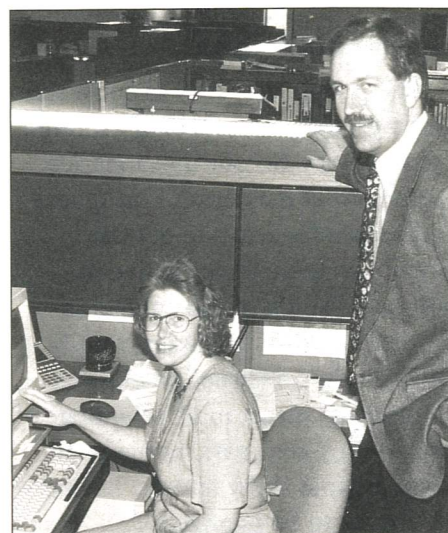
When Christ told us to make disciples of all nations, he said to teach them all things he has commanded us. Adult discipleship addresses how we grow in the knowledge of our Savior, our faith, and our life.

That is job one in the sense that when we are well founded in the Word of God, we will be encouraged and motivated to go out and share that gospel with others, support the work of the church, worship on a regular basis, study the Word of God, and show Christian love in our families.

Don't your six areas of responsibility overlap with other agencies of the synod?

Where they do, we work cooperatively. For example, family ministry includes children and, therefore, involves the Commission on Youth Discipleship. The two commissions work closely with a committee that has been established to address family ministry.

The Commission on Evangelism also works in retention and reclamation. We concentrate on encouraging people to remain faithful in worship and Bible study. We want to prevent them from getting so far



Commission on Adult Discipleship staff: Lenny Hanson and Bruce Becker.

away from the church that they need reclaiming.

We work closely with Northwestern Publishing House, because much of our work becomes NPH product. Right now, we are working together on a Bible-study curriculum.

What is that Bible curriculum?

We're preparing a new repeating core Bible curriculum that will begin next year. It has 16, eight-lesson courses.

The target audience is the person who has come out of the Bible information class and is eager to continue in Bible study but maybe not in a comprehensive course.

The curriculum has two key concepts: one, the courses are designed to be repeated, and two, a trained member could teach it who may not have seminary, or even college, training.

For more information contact, Commission on Adult Discipleship, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398; 414/256-3888; fax 414/256-3899.

Graduate summer assignments

The Conference of Presidents met July 19, in Mequon, Wis., to issue calls into the preaching and teaching ministry. The graduates assigned will serve at the following congregations:

PASTOR ASSIGNMENTS:

Blaho, David J., Trinity, Lincoln/St. John, Mio, Mich.

Schultz, Thomas J., Trinity, Elkton/Immanuel, Ward, S.D.

TEACHER ASSIGNMENTS:

Deck, Deanna, Pilgrim, Mesa, Ariz.
Hansen, Amy, St. John, Libertyville, Ill.

Halldorson, Stephanie, Timothy, St. Louis Park, Minn.

Johnson, Wendy A., St. Mark, Mankato, Minn.

Leyrer (Twietmeyer), Dana, Atonement, Milwaukee, Wis.

MacKain, Cynthia, St. Andrew, Chicago, Ill.

Mays, Tabitha, Beautiful Savior, Grove City, Ohio

Patterson (Lemke), Lara M., St. John, Red Wing, Minn.

Plocher (Hussman), Mary, Living Word, Mission Viejo, Calif.

Rosenthal (Petermann), Darlene, Trinity, Neenah, Wis.

Schroeder (Hummel), Stacy, Immanuel, Fort Worth, Tex.

Schloff, Naomi, East Fork, Whiteriver, Ariz.

Slattery, Jill, St. John, Westland, Mich.

Steinbrenner, Shelly, St. Paul, Tomah, Wis.

CORRECTION:

In August, the listing of Northwestern College graduates was incorrect. NWC students do not get assignments. The cities listed were their hometowns. Most of the graduates will continue at the seminary this fall.

Not just atheists oppose public school prayers

In a speech House Speaker Newt Gingrich delivered in Roswell, Ga., this summer, he spoke out against a suit filed by a Mississippi woman, Lisa Herdahl, to stop prayers over the public address system at her children's school.

Gingrich said that Herdahl's legal challenge to the prayers was an example of "anti-religious bias" and suggested Herdahl might prefer "an atheist school" to the public school.

Mrs. Herdahl is a member of WELS.

WELS has consistently maintained that such public prayers violate the scriptural principles of fellowship.

People for the American Way, a Washington-based religious liberty advocacy group, has asked Gingrich to apologize for his comments.

Lutherans "Share the Promise"

"God's people, share God's promise!"

At the 53rd WELS biennial convention, July 24-29 in Saginaw, Mich., delegates were encouraged to "share the promise." Five short essays and Bible studies highlighted the theme. They focused on how we share the promise from God, with our families, with our friends and neighbors, with our offerings, and into the third millennium.

WELS congregations are asked to keep the theme, "Share the Promise," alive and to fulfill it throughout the biennium and beyond.

In convention business, delegates

- ✓ were asked to approve five new world mission fields: Dominican Republic, Russia, Bulgaria, Thailand, and Guntur, India.

- ✓ considered improved ways of funding the synodical work.

- ✓ discussed restructuring synodical administration. The plan calls for the Board of Trustees and the Coordinating Council to combine into a single Synodical Council and for the first vice president to be full-time, allowing the president to serve both the Conference of Presidents and the Synodical Council.

In addition, delegates heard a summary report of the amalgamation of the synod's ministerial education schools, considered using its mission statement as a preamble to the constitution, examined increasing the number of lay delegates to achieve a 50 percent lay and 50 percent pastors and teachers delegates ratio, and elected the synodical officers.

Look for complete coverage of the convention in October's *Northwestern Lutheran*.

rē · li · giōn
Defining religion

Invocation: A prayer asking God to be present with us as we worship. We generally begin our worship services with the brief Trinitarian invocation, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."



God's Word reaches behind bars

Because of a generous anonymous gift, Bibles and Bible studies from WELS are making their way into prisons. In May, a letter was sent to about 600 prisons and prison chaplains, letting them know that Bibles and Bible correspondence courses were available free of charge. As of July, 10,000 of each were requested. One chaplain even asked for a minimum of 2000 Bibles, if possible.

The Bible—written on a fourth grade level—is sent, then a WELS pastor in the area is contacted. He is asked to follow up and study the Bible with the prisoner.

WELS seniors take care of distribution. The headquarters are at the Workshop for the Visually Handicapped in St. Paul, Minn. In addition to distributing the materials, the seniors serve as test correctors and penpals to the inmates.



Matthew, my seven-year-old great-nephew, takes seriously what adults tell him. He told me his Sunday school teacher said that God watched over you no matter where you were. He paused to let this information sink in properly and then he said, "So tonight I won't NEED my night light!"

*Virginia Florey
Midland, Michigan*

Can we insure a continuing supply of ministers?

What will the future bring? No one knows for sure. That's why people buy insurance—to protect themselves and their families from the unexpected loss of home or business or car.

What about insurance to guarantee that we will have enough pastors and teachers to serve us in the future? Can we take for granted the steady supply of ministerial students our synod has enjoyed for so many years?

The Bible suggests that we shouldn't take that supply for granted. Our Savior reminds us, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field" (Matthew 9:37,38). Jesus encourages us to pray that God will move young men and women to dedicate their lives to full-time service in his kingdom.

But where will those young people come from? They'll have to come from congregations like yours, congregations that are willing to give encouragement and financial support to those training for the ministry. They'll have to come from families like yours, families that respect the public ministry and hold the ministry up to their children as an honorable calling and worthy goal.

God has blessed your efforts so far. We have higher than expected enrollments at Luther Prep School, Michigan Lutheran Seminary, and Martin Luther College. The students at these schools will take their places in the classrooms and pulpits of our synod over the next 12 years. Higher enrollments will help provide for mission expansion at home and abroad.

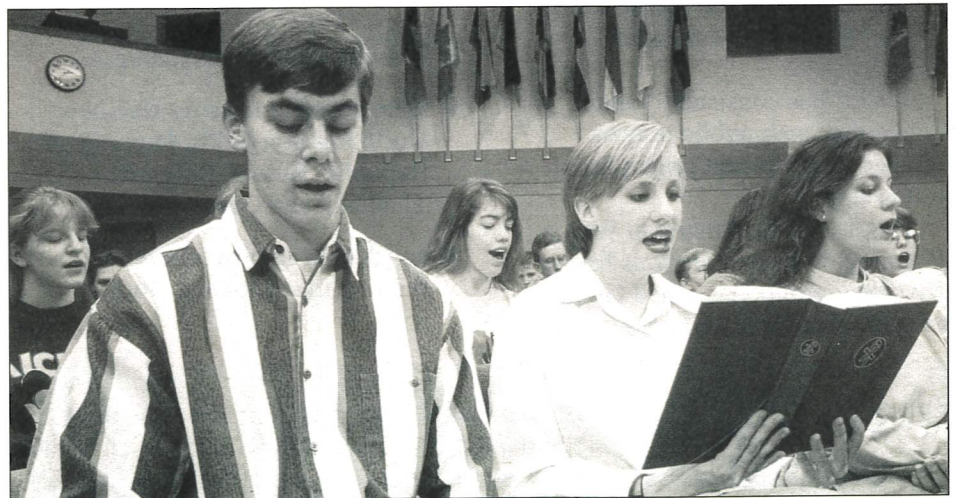
But higher enrollments mean that financial assistance will have to be divided among more students. Each will receive a smaller piece of the pie.

Your continued support of the WELS Student Assistance Fund and Student Assistance Endowment Fund insure that our ministerial students will not have to bear the full financial burden themselves.

The future is in God's hands. As we see God's blessings, we thank him and ask that he continues to supply workers. We also offer financial support and words of encouragement so that our young people might consider the public ministry.

For more information contact Ruth Rogahn, WELS Board for Ministerial Education, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee, WI 53222-4398; 414/256-3237.

—John M. Brenner



Michigan Lutheran Seminary students attend chapel daily while they prepare for the ministry.

District news

Southeastern Wisconsin

St. Paul, Lomira, celebrated its 140th anniversary on June 25th. Along with a celebration service, a German service was held. . . . **St. Andrew, Milwaukee**, is celebrating its 100th anniversary this fall with a series of services and activities.

George Ferch

South Central

Ted Burgdorf stepped down from the South Central district mission board last fall. A charter member of Calvary, Dallas, he served on the board since the district was formed in 1982. . . . Construction of new worship facilities began at **Abiding Word, Houston**, and **Good Shepherd, The Woodlands, Tex.** Both hope to complete construction by late fall. . . . **Immanuel, Fort Worth**, celebrated its 25th anniversary on May 21. Over 200 people attended the service.

Charles L. Learman



Ted Burgdorf left the South Central district mission board last fall after serving for 12 years.

Western Wisconsin

St. Paul, Mauston, dedicated its new worship facility on July 30. . . . **St. Matthew, Winona, Minn.**, will celebrate the school's 40th anniversary on Sept. 10. . . . **St. Paul, Marshall**, dedicated its new sanctuary, fellowship hall, and pipe organ on July 16.

Elton Stroh

Dakota-Montana

St. Martin's, Watertown, S.D., hosted the **WELS Regional Handbell Festival** on April 23. Handbell choirs from Wisconsin, Minnesota, South Dakota, and other states participated. . . . **Mountain View, Calgary, Alberta, Canada**, dedicated its new church on May 21. Incorporated in June 1994, it received mission status in September, 1994. Members are sharing the gospel in west Calgary, population 730,000, and the growing, rural area west of the city limits, Springbank, a community of 6,000. . . . **Redeemer, Pierre, S.D.**, celebrated its 25th anniversary on May 7. . . . **Christ Lutheran Church, Morrystown, S.D.**, marked the 45th anniversary for Pastor **Wilber T. Niermeier** on April 30.

Ronald L. Kruse

**DON'T
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Children of all ages gathered at Camp Phillip in Wautoma, Wis., for Family Fest 1995. "It's our 20th anniversary of family ministry," said Steve Huhn, the camp's program director, "and we wanted to celebrate in a unique way." Family Fest offered workshops, Bible study, and physical activities.

"But it was also a Christian music fest," said Huhn. "We wanted to give exposure to WELS Christian musicians, letting people know they're out there."

A ministry of the Southeastern Wisconsin district, Camp Phillip offers summer camps, retreats, and year-round camping.

Campus ministry finds a home



Lance Schwartz and Jeff Schone help break ground for the new campus ministry student center in Mankato, Minn.

WELS/ELS campus ministry in Mankato, Minn., broke ground on June 4 for its new student center. A student center, in the works for more than 12 years, finally found a permanent location.

The campus ministry used to operate in a house near the university. When Mankato State University moved to a new location, the house was sold and land adjacent to the university was bought. The student center will be located across the street from the university commons, virtually surrounded by student housing, making it a prime location for its ministry.



Life's been pretty hectic, my husband's out of town, and—as I flip through my magazine—I'm feeling sorry for myself. An article attracts my attention. A 27-year war is hap-

Man does what he can for the Lord

Twelve years ago a drunk teenage driver ran a red light and put David Meier in a coma for six weeks. His face and right forearm were shattered, his trachea was crushed, and his left arm rendered virtually useless. He also suffered some brain damage.

Because of the physical and mental damage Meier sustained, he lives with his parents in a retirement community in Florida.

Although part of his life was taken away in the accident, Meier gives back what he can. He volunteers at the local hospital, repaying—in a way—those who helped him recover.

He also wishes he had better speaking ability so he could warn teenagers about the dangers of drinking and driving.

Known as the “can man” Meier drives around in a golf cart, collecting aluminum cans. All the money he makes on aluminum goes to his congregation, Faith, in Leesburg.

His brother-in-law Wayne Mueller, administrator of WELS parish services, admires David's faith. “With his diminished capacity, Dave sets an example of humble Christian service that encourages us with full abilities to rededicate ourselves to the Lord.”



David Meier, injured in an accident, collects aluminum cans and donates the money to his congregation.

pening in Sudan. Families are torn apart—children without parents, people without a country.

Then I come across Rebecca, a 50-year-old woman who has a worm inside her from polluted water. Her husband is dead, her family is separated. She witnessed her father being gunned down during a prayer meeting. Still, she's deeply religious. She carries

a wooden cross wherever she goes.

Suddenly, as I sit in my safe home, I don't seem to have as many problems as I thought. Then I pray: Dear God, forgive us for our sinfulness. Help us to be active Christians, dedicated to you. Lead us to contentment. Amen.

—Deborah Ade
 Everett, Washington

West seeks to expand

West Lutheran High School, Hopkins, Minn., has purchased 7.25 acres of land in Plymouth, Minn. The property, purchased for \$200,000, was appraised at \$758,000.

After using rented facilities for the past 16 years in an area WELS church, then Central Junior High in St. Louis Park, and currently Eisenhower Community Center in Hopkins, West has outgrown the space available to it.

Obituaries

Milton John Frederick Weishahn 1917-1995

Milton Weishahn was born June 7, 1917 near Daykin, Neb. He died June 13, 1995 in Beatrice, Neb.

A graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, he served congregations in Fort Morgan, Col.; Aurora, Sutton, Brewster, and Norfolk, all in Neb.; Des Moines, Iowa; and Cibecue, Ariz. He was the Nebraska district secretary and on WELS Board for Parish Services.

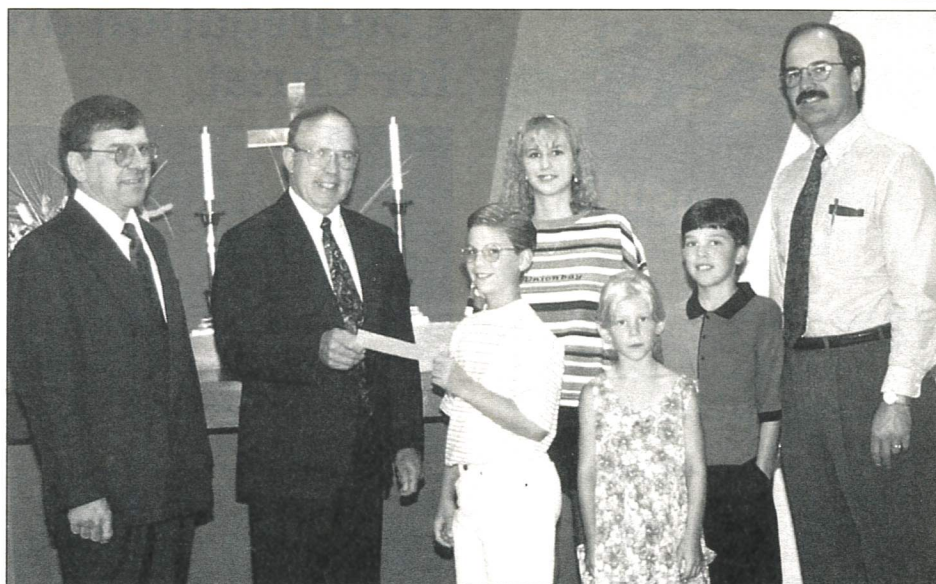
He is survived by wife, Vernita; daughters Janice (Arlin) Spilker and Joyce (Gary) Lambert; four grandchildren; brother Don (Jackie); and sister Lorraine (Wallace) Kruger. A son, Bradley, preceded him in death.

David G. Luetke 1943-1995

David Luetke was born December 22, 1942 in Hemlock, Mich. He died June 26, 1995 in a plane crash in Tyler, Tex.

A graduate of Northwestern College, he taught at Luther High School, Onalaska, Wis.

He is survived by wife, Norma; daughters Julie (Jeff) Lillo, Lisa, and Carrie; son Paul; sisters Lois (Harold) Kluender, Grace (David) Stoering, Ruth (Stan) Aufderheide, and Rachel (Michael) Spaude; brothers Daniel (Priscilla), Joel (Julie), and Paul (Kim).



Sunday school students from St. Paul's, Muskego, Wis., designated their entire year's offerings—over \$2000—for Christ Light, a coordinated religion curriculum for Sunday schools, Lutheran elementary schools, and vacation Bible schools. Young people from all across

the synod have sent donations for Christ Light.

Pictured from left: Jerry Kastens, administrator for youth discipleship, President Karl R. Gurgel, Chad Eichman, Heidi Schultz, Samantha Jacyna, Eric Nelson, and Joel Nelson.

Roland H. Hoenecke 1907-1995

Roland Hoenecke was born Aug. 18, 1907 in Milwaukee, Wis. He died June 32, 1995 in New Ulm, Minn.

A graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary he served at St. John's, Mansfield, and Faith, Tacoma, both in Wash.; Zion, Chesaning, and Christ, Brady, both in Mich. He also served at Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, and Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, and was on the synod's doctrinal commission.

He is survived by wife, Frances; daughters Thekla (James) Schneider, Carla (James) Koppen, and Mona (Russell) Vitale; eight grandchildren; five great-grandchildren; sisters Edith Radtke and Ethel Backer; and brother Edgar (Meta). He was preceded in death by brothers Hugo and Gerald, and sisters Gertrude Zessin, Hilda Pfeiffer, Thekla Radtke, and Tusnelda Hoenecke.

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Defining religion

Sadducee: A member of the ruling or priestly party of the Jews during the time of Jesus and the apostles. The Sadducees were rationalistic. They denied the resurrection of the dead and the existence of angels (Acts 23:8).

decision theology: The teaching that an unconverted human being has spiritual power to accept the gospel or invite Jesus into his heart. The Bible, however, teaches that by nature we are spiritually dead, spiritually blind, and opposed to God. Conversion is, therefore, entirely the work of God without our effort (Ephesians 2:8,9).



The Life of Christ—1995, 25-28 min. color PIIJSCA (\$7.50) Actors tell the story of Jesus' life.

The Birth and Childhood of Jesus (Code 5162)

A Voice in the Wilderness (Code 5163)

Jesus Calls His Disciples (Code 5164)

Jesus Begins His Ministry (Code 5165)

Jesus Heals the Sick (Code 5166)

Jesus, the Teacher (Code 5167)

Jesus, the Messiah (Code 5168)

Jesus Goes to Jerusalem (Code 5169)

The Upper Room and the Garden of Gethsemane (Code 5170)

Jesus' Trial (Code 5171)

The Crucifixion of Christ (Code 5172)

The Risen Lord (Code 5173)

Contact Audiovisual Services,
Northwestern Publishing House, 1250
N 113 St., Milwaukee, WI 53226-3284.
1-800-662-6093

New service for WELS congregations

WELS Capital Funding Services opened its doors in July to assist congregations with major building or expansion projects. A professional consultant works with congregations' leaders, providing direction and assistance to gather the funds needed to carry out the program and ministry of the congregation. For more information, contact Pastor Daniel Malchow, 414/256-3205; 414/771-6119.

Congregation and band "parade" for Christ



The Lutheran Vanguard band plays on the steps of the county courthouse. The band performed for the community the night before they marched in the parade.

Members of Faith, Pittsfield, Mass., used a parade and a visiting band to witness to their community. For the community's Fourth of July parade, members sponsored the Lutheran Vanguard Band, made up of students from area Lutheran high schools in Wisconsin. The band, the largest in the parade, has 180 members—four

times the size of Faith. As the band played, Faith's members handed out 5,000 balloons preprinted with the church's name and upcoming vacation Bible school dates.

The Lord led 15 nonmember children to VBS through Faith's efforts, which included a mailing to homes.

youth news

Please send photos or news on teen activities to: **youth news**, Northwestern Lutheran, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398.

Julia Moldenhauer, a junior at Kettle Moraine LHS, Jackson, Wis., will spend one year in Estonia. She will be the first American exchange student in that country.

Sister and brother, **Becky and Chad Froelker**, members of Peace,

Owensville, Missouri, earned All-State honors at the Missouri State Track and Field Championship in May. Becky won both of her races, and Chad placed third in the long jump. Both are students at Owensville High School.

China to allow 5 million Bibles

East Gate Ministries International, a group involved in mission work in China, has gained permission to print and distribute 5 million Bibles in the Asian nation.



The group said the agreement allows for the Bibles to be distributed exclusively to “house-church” Christians in China. House-church Christians are not affiliated with government-recognized religious bodies.

Chinese officials have repressed Christians who have refused to be part of officially sanctioned religious movements, and in the past house-church Christians have had to rely on Bibles smuggled into China.

Religion education in Russia atheistic?

Officials of the Russian Orthodox Church are complaining about the “atheistic character” of religion in Russian schools. Religion, an all-but-forbidden topic in the schools of the former Soviet Union, is now a popular subject in the estimated 250,000 educational institutions in Russia.

“In practice, many so-called religious subjects are being taught by former atheism teachers, who have merely changed their colors,” said Marina Kandurina, an official at the Moscow Patriarchate’s Religious Education Department. “Since most are relying on the same textbooks, today’s classes in religious history and theory are just propagandizing atheist views in a different form,” she said.

Americans want to see their values in movies

Almost two-thirds of Americans polled in a survey for the Catholic Communications Campaign said it is important for them to see their own moral and ethical values reflected in the movies they watch.

Yet 60 percent of those polled said that only half or less of the movies they have viewed in the past year reflect those values.

According to the poll, conducted by the Gallup Organization, adults

under the age of 50 are almost as likely as adults over 50 to say that seeing their own values reflected in movies is very or somewhat important.

Among the positive values those polled wanted to see were honesty and integrity, family life, Christian values, respect for self and others, kindness, decency, and trust. And 30 percent said they would like to see less crime, violence, sex, and profanity in films.

United Methodist centrists urge doctrinal conformity

Claiming the United Methodist Church faces a theological crisis, a group of 900 self-identified “centrist” Methodists has denounced what they call “private versions of the faith” that make the denomination “incapable of confessing with one voice the orthodox Trinitarian faith.”

“We deny the claim that the individual is free to decide what is true and what is false, what is good and what is evil,” the group said in a published statement.

“We reject widespread and often unchallenged practices in the church

that rebel against the Lordship of Jesus Christ,” the statement said.

As examples, it said unnamed Methodists were “experimenting with pagan ritual and practice;” enjoying wealth without regard for the poor; and accepting sexual promiscuity, divorce, homosexual practice, and widespread abortion.

Officials of the group claim that some 13,000 people have signed the movement’s manifesto. The United Methodist Church, the nation’s second largest Protestant denomination, has 8.6 million members.

“Parental rights” legislation considered

Several conservative Christian groups have added their support to proposed legislation in Congress aimed at preventing government intrusion into parental upbringing of children.

“Parents face increasing intrusions into their legitimate decisions and prerogatives by government agencies in situations that do not involve traditional understanding of abuse or

neglect but simply are a conflict of parenting philosophies,” states the proposed bill, the Parental Rights and Responsibilities Act of 1995.

The measure would require that government have a compelling reason to interfere with parental rights. The legislation says protecting children from abuse and neglect is “a compelling government interest.”



Bible readers more satisfied with life, survey finds

Americans who read the Bible regularly have a "higher overall satisfaction with their lives" than those who never read the Bible, according to an extensive survey commissioned by the American Bible Society.

The survey—of 1212 people in the U.S.—found that, on average, Americans go to church about as often as they go out for dinner. On average, 55 percent of survey participants said they go to church at least once a week; 53 percent go out to dinner at least once a week. By comparison, 27 percent read fiction at least once a week, 11 percent take part in sports once a week, and only 9 percent go to the movies at least once a week.

The survey also found that people use well-known quotes from the Bible to articulate personal values. More than 85 percent of participants found the "Golden Rule" was useful: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." However, 26 percent said that the best rule for life was "look out for number one."

Participants also revealed that 24 percent of them claim to read the Bible daily, while 59 percent read it at least once a month. About 92 percent own a Bible. Most women (57 percent) read the Bible frequently. Among men the figure was 35 percent.

In brief

- The United Bible Society says **more than 608 million Bibles were distributed around the world last year, but that demand is outstripping supplies.** According to the society, growing world population continues to overwhelm even increased Bible printing and distribution.
- Pastors and other staff members of the Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil received a 50 percent wage increase this summer. **Wives of pastors from one affected district had written a letter to the denomination's governing body arguing that their husbands' insufficient salaries were a "national aggravation"** and were causing family conflicts and putting pastoral work at risk.
- **Christian radio stations have a weekly audience of 12.7 million to 13.2 million people,** according to *Religion and Media Quarterly*, a publication that covers religious media in the United States.
- Catholic schools increased enrollment nationwide for the third year in a row. More than 41,000 students entered Catholic schools in the 1994-95 academic year.
- **Religion in cyberspace:** *National and International Religion Report* (NIRR), a biweekly news briefing, is pioneering a new phase of religion reporting by being available free-of-charge to anyone via e-mail. The service began with the May 29 issue of NIRR.
- **The number of missionaries sent out from South Korea has increased** from 93 to 3,272 in the past 15 years.*
- Christianity is waning and Islam and New Age religions are gaining influence in Germany's inner cities, speakers told the German Evangelical Alliance (GEA) at a recent meeting. Harmut Steeb of the GEA said **most Germans no longer practice Christianity, and they experiment with astrology and occultism.***
- **In 1980, 28 percent of Scotland's adult population belonged to the Presbyterian Church. By 1993, membership had declined to 19 percent.** In studying the problem, the church noted that apathy and a prevailing "self-sufficient attitude in society today" are some of the barriers. It reflected also that misbehavior of church members and ministers repel potential believers, as do overlong or dreary church services.*
- According to pollster George Gallup, **90 percent of American adults believe in heaven.** Nearly three-fourths believe in hell, but very few think they will end up there. Also, nearly 80 percent believe in miracles; 96 percent say they believe in God or a universal spirit; 3 percent say they don't believe in God; and 65 percent of American adults believe in the devil.*

(* Reprinted with permission from National & International Religion Report.)



It was a cleaning day at our church. One of the last things we tackled was the floor in the entryway next to the pastor's office. Just as we got soapsuds all over the tile, our pastor came to the door and asked if he could get through. One of the women said, "I thought you could walk on water." Straightfaced, he replied, "On water, yes. On soapsuds, no!"

Virginia Florey
Midland, Michigan

Bulletin BOARD & NOTICES

To place an announcement,
call 414/256-3232; FAX 414/256-3899.
Deadline is six weeks before publication date.

CHANGE IN MINISTRY

Teachers:

- Bahn, Elizabeth**, to St. Stephen, Fallbrook, Calif.
Boll, Arlyn W., from Peace, Hartford, Wis., to St. Jacobi, Greenfield, Wis.
Buege, Heidi R., from Immanuel, LaCrosse, Wis., to Shepherd, Albuquerque, N.M.
Colantonio, Suzanne M., from Jerusalem, Morton Grove, Ill., to LPS, Watertown, Wis.
Dankert, Steven W., from Lakewood, Tacoma, Wash., to St. Mark, Eau Claire, Wis.
Eisenmann, Lori, to Calvary, Milwaukee, Wis.
Gartner, Steven, from Beautiful Savior, Cincinnati, Ohio, to Woodlawn, West Allis, Wis.
Gray, Beverly J., from Trinity, Neenah, Wis., to Beautiful Savior, Milwaukee, Wis.
Johnson, Wendy, to St. Mark, Mankato, Minn.
Keller, Kevin, from Atonement, Milwaukee, Wis., to Centennial, Milwaukee, Wis.
Koester, Michael J., from St. Paul First, N. Hollywood, Calif., to St. Mark, Mankato, Minn.
Kohler, Joanne, to MLS, Saginaw, Mich.
Kohn, Harvey J., to Beautiful Savior, Milwaukee, Wis.
Korth, Jeffrey, from St. Lucas, Milwaukee, Wis., to St. Mark, Watertown, Wis.
Lodde, Jill, to St. John, Burlington, Wis.
Marten, John A., from St. Peter, Milwaukee, Wis., to Christ, Milwaukee, Wis.
Martin, Laura, to Our Savior, Grafton, Wis.
Mattek, John, from Trinity, Waukesha, Wis., to LPS, Watertown, Wis.
Miller, Patrick L., from Good Shepherd, Omaha, Neb., to East Fork LHS, Whiteriver, Ariz.
Neubert, Karrie, from Riverview, Appleton, Wis., to Grace, Oshkosh, Wis.
Neujahr, David J., from Emanuel, New London, Wis., to St. Stephen, Fallbrook, Calif.
Noldan, Edna J., from Zum Kripplein Christi, Iron Ridge, Wis., to St. John, Juneau, Wis.
Ohrmundt, Marla R., to LPS, Watertown, Wis.
Pahmeier, Fred W., from St. Paul, Ixonia, Wis., to Zion, Chesaning, Mich.
Piepenbrink, Laura, to Trinity, El Paso, Tex.
Raasch, Jennifer, to First and St. Paul, Green Bay, Wis.
Robbert, Lois M., to St. John, Juneau, Wis.
Salzwedel, Mitchel A., from Pilgrim, Mesa, Ariz., to St. Peter, Schofield, Wis.
Schultz, John F., from St. John, Goodhue, Minn., to St. Paul, Green Bay, Wis.
Schultz, Paula K., to Mt. Lebanon, Milwaukee, Wis.
Snyder, Patricia A., to Fairview, Milwaukee, Wis.
Thiesfeldt, Paul A., from Mt. Olive, Overland Park, Kan., to Winnebago LA, Fond du Lac, Wis.
Thompson, Diane M., to Grace, Durand, Mich.
Toback, Taylor, to St. Paul First, North Hollywood, Calif.
Vilski, William J., from Faith, Antioch, Ill., to St. John, Lomira, Wis.
Welke, Dawn, to Shepherd of the Hills, Inver Grove Heights, Minn.

Wempner, Christine M., from Our Savior, Pomona, Calif., to St. Mark, Green Bay, Wis.

Williams, Mark W., from Mt. Calvary, Flagstaff, Ariz., to Gloria Dei-Bethesda, Milwaukee, Wis.

Wilsmann, Kathy E., from Trinity, Neenah, Wis., to Winnebago Lutheran Academy, Fond du Lac, Wis.

Yarbrough, Kristine, from Shepherd, Albuquerque, N.M., to St. Paul First, North Hollywood, Calif.

Zickuhr, Karen, from Zion, Crete, Ill., to Atonement, Milwaukee, Wis.

Pastors:

Cooper, David R., from Christ the Lord, Clearwater, Fla., to St. Paul, Slinger, Wis.

Davidson, Walter C., from Salem, Loretto, Minn., to St. Peter, Schofield, Wis.

Fricke, Thomas J., from Grace, LeSueur, Minn., to St. John, Baraboo, Wis.

Jeske, John C., from WLS, Mequon, Wis., to St. Luke, Watertown, Wis.

Jeske, Thomas, from Abiding Word, Highlands Ranch, Col., to Living Hope, Omaha, Neb.

Peters, Gordon J., from Christ Our Redeemer, Bend, Ore., to Our Savior's, Cedarville, Mich.

Raasch, Robert F., from Peace, Houghton, Mich., to Mt. Olive, Appleton, Wis.

Schoeffel, Daniel L., from Abiding Word, Moon Township, Penn., to Bethel, Galesville/Good Shepherd, Holman, Wis.

Waldek, Erich W., from Word Eternal, Ontario, Can., to Cross of Christ, Liverpool, N.Y.

Witte, David A., to Abiding Peace, Streamwood/St. Andrew, Elgin, Ill.

MLC EXTENSION COURSES

Principles of Christian Education, Edu 1410—Fox Valley LHS, Appleton, Wis. Mondays, 6:30-9:30 PM, Sept. 11-Dec. 18. Instructors: LeDell Plath and Gerald Kastens. This course applies to certification requirements for all levels of synodical certification. Applicants must be accepted into certification program before registration.

Theology and Practice of Ministry, SM 9020—Bloomington Lutheran Church, Bloomington, Minn. Sept. 8-9, 29-30; Oct. 20-21; Nov. 10-11; Dec. 1-2. This course is required for staff ministry certification. It is not applicable for preschool through post-secondary teacher certification.

For more information contact, Special Services, Martin Luther College, 1995 Luther Ct, New Ulm MN 56073; 1-800-686-4142.

NEW STORE HOURS

Northwestern Publishing House—Starting after Labor Day. Retail store hours. Mon., Tues., Thurs., Fri.: 9 AM-8 PM. Wed.: 9 AM-5:30 PM. Sat.: 9 AM-4 PM.

NEW LOCATION

Ahwatukee, Ariz.—mission field formerly known as South Mountain. Timothy Ehlers, 2708 E Mountain Sky Ave, Phoenix AZ 85048.

ANNIVERSARIES

Oskaloosa, Iowa—Grace (50). Oct. 15. Services, 10 AM, 3 PM; noon meal. 515/672-2762.

Osceola, Wis.—Trinity (75). Sept. 17. 715/294-2828.

Burlington, Iowa—Our Savior (20). Oct. 29. Services, 10 AM, 4 PM; dinner 5:30 PM. 319/752-7224.

Wonevoc, Wis.—St. Paul (125). Jan. 14, 1996—theme Sunday; Apr. 28, 1996—Confirmation reunion; Aug. 11, 1996—fellowship picnic; Oct. 27, 1996—Anniversary heritage. Confirmations contact Rachelle Richert, PO Box 52, Wonevoc WI 53968.

ITEMS AVAILABLE

Hammond organ—M-100, two manuals and one octave pedalboard. Free for cost of shipping. Grace, Prairie du Chien, Wis.; 608/326-4899.

Evangelism big books—"Who is Martin Luther?" The Commission on Youth Discipleship has published the second in a series of four big books for pre-K through third grade. To order "Who is Martin Luther" and accompanying resources (catalog item 38-4001, \$14.95) contact Northwestern Publishing House; 1-800-662-6022; 414/475-6600.

Altar—modern style altar, and baptismal font which can also serve as a lecturn/pulpit. Free for cost of shipping. Dan Reich, 813 N Mellette Ave, Pierre SD 57501; 605/224-5201.

COMING EVENTS

Church librarians' meeting—WELS-CLO. Sept. 16 at St. John, Lannon, Wis. Registration, 8:30 AM. Fee \$7, lunch included. Speakers: Bruce Becker, adult discipleship administrator, author Sharon Burow. 414/256-3222.

Early childhood conference—Sept. 23 at Saint Peter, St. Peter, Minn. For information write, Saint Peter, 427 W Mulberry St, St. Peter MN 56082.

Wis. Luth. Seminary Auxiliary—Annual meeting. All WELS/ELS women invited. Oct. 7 at WLS, Mequon. Registration, 8 AM. Fee \$7.50, includes lunch. Make checks payable to WLSA. Send registration with name, address, phone, and congregation to Jan Lampe, 1645 S 79 St, West Allis WI 53214.

WELS Lutherans for Life Convention—Oct. 7 at Saginaw Civic Center, Saginaw, Mich. Worship, workshops, grades K-6 children's convention, and teen convention. Child care available. Speakers: Wayne Mueller, administrator for parish services; Anthony Schultz, pastor; John Seifert, president of Michigan district; and actor Charlton Heston. 1-800-729-9535 or 414/771-1331.

Martin Luther College Auxiliary—All WELS women invited to first annual meeting on Oct. 11 at New Ulm, Minn. Registration, 9 AM. Child care provided. Wendy Enter, RR2 Box 9C, New Ulm MN 56073; 507/359-7670.

Pastors institute—Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. Five Mondays, beginning Sept. 25, 1:30-4:30 PM. Topic: Repentance, forgiveness, and hope in pastoral counseling. Fee \$25. Send registration to WLS, President Panning, 11831 N Seminary Dr, Mequon WI 53092.

The synod administration building will be closed: September 4—Labor Day
Callers may leave voice mail messages, 256-3888.

REQUEST FOR NAMES

Gift Planning Counselors—On behalf of the COP, the Commission on Communication for Financial Support requests the names of WELS members (pastors, teachers, laymen) to fill three gift planning counselor positions authorized by the synod in convention. Nominees should be mature Christians who understand the scriptural principles of stewardship, are committed to furthering the spread of the gospel, can work with groups and individuals, and are willing to travel. Training in Christian estate planning and tax-wise giving will be provided. Submit names by Sept. 30 to Ronald Roth, WELS, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee, WI 53222-4398; 414/771-0697.

The fruit of the Spirit is goodness

James A. Aderman

“**E**very good tree bears good fruit. . . . A good tree cannot bear bad fruit” (Matthew 7:18). No tree produces fruit that is contrary to its nature. Apple trees must produce apples. This truth applies to goodness—whatever is good by nature will produce good results. It can’t do otherwise.

God is good. He is the source of whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, or praiseworthy. We judge goodness with him as the standard. “No one is good,” Jesus says, “except God alone” (Mark 10:17,18). Like Jesus’ good tree, God only bears good fruit.

Proof of God’s goodness

The ultimate proof and guarantee of God’s goodness is that he “wants all men to be saved” (1 Timothy 2:4). It’s astounding he gave his Son to accomplish that.

A hallmark of God’s goodness is its relentless desire to benefit his creation. Because he is good, he gives us “every good and perfect gift” (James 1:17) and “in all things God works for the good of those who love him” (Romans 8:28). And since God’s goodness never wavers we are “confident of this, that he who began a good work in [us] will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus” (Philippians 1:6).

Imitating God’s goodness

The Spirit brought his goodness when he entered our hearts. Now his goodness reproduces its fruit in us. “For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do” (Ephesians 2:10). It is in imitating God’s goodness—a goodness that searches out ways to benefit others—that we show we belong to him. “Anyone who does what is good is from God” (3 John 11).

It is in imitating God’s goodness that we show we belong to him.

Taste the sweet fruit of goodness on our branches.

- We “cling to what is good” (Romans 12:9) and “overcome evil with good” (21).
- We “please [our] neighbor for his good, to build him up” (Romans 15:2).
- We “want . . . to be wise about what is good and innocent about what is evil” (Romans 16:19).

- We trust, “God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work” (2 Corinthians 9:8).
- We “do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers” (Galatians 6:10).
We “do not let any unwholesome talk come out of (our) mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen” (Ephesians 4:29).

The Spirit of goodness has transformed us through Jesus into good trees that bear good fruit. It can’t be otherwise. He lives within us.

James Aderman is pastor at Fairview, Milwaukee.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

1. God is incapable of doing anything less than good for us. Does that comfort you? Encourage you? Urge you to trust him?
2. Look again at the list of ways goodness shows its fruit in our lives. Think of a real life situation for each item and how you would show goodness.

Next: The virtue of faithfulness

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



Beware of over-belief

Victor H. Prange

As the year 2000 approaches, talk about the end of the world will likely increase. This subject has fascinated Bible students for centuries. Several American religious groups, including the Seventh Day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses, had their origins in speculations about the end of the world.

One event many such groups anticipate is the millennium. This Latin word means "thousand" and refers to what some expect is coming in the future: a thousand year rule of Christ. This belief is based on verses in Revelation 20 that refer to a thousand year reign of Christ. There is no other reference to a millennium in the Bible.

For someone to expect a thousand year reign of Christ based on this one passage in Revelation is a case of what William James, who studied various religious experiences, termed *over-belief*. Over-belief is to affirm something as true that goes beyond biblical evidence. The book of Revelation is rich in figurative language and symbolic numbers. Taking this into account and realizing that no other passage in Scripture suggests a millennium, it is a case of over-belief to anticipate that Christ will reign a thousand years on earth.

Over-belief may be a reaction to *under-belief*. Religious groups that stress the end of the world and teach a millennium may perceive that this is a neglected subject in other church bodies. They compensate by over-belief. In their teachings, they go beyond the biblical evidence about the end of the world.

Over-belief confronted the New Testament church. The apostle Paul had opponents who maintained it was necessary for believers in Christ also to be

circumcised. This demand for circumcision was based on passages in the Old Testament. This was a case of over-belief—those who insisted on circumcision did not appreciate Christ's work of fulfilling completely the Old Testament law. The law of circumcision is abolished. Those who today insist on keeping Saturday as a day of rest, the Sabbath, are likewise guilty of over-belief.

The Roman Catholic Church falls into the trap of over-belief by its teaching of transubstantiation: that the bread and wine in Holy Communion are changed into the body and blood of Christ. This goes beyond the Biblical evidence, reading more into Christ's words than is actually there.

The same thing can happen to members of WELS. If we go beyond the biblical evidence in teaching some doctrine or condemning some practice, we become guilty of over-belief. One is especially prone to over-belief when certain doctrines and practices are in dispute. In times of controversy the danger of over-statement is a greater temptation.

It is important that we neither add to nor subtract from what the Word of God teaches concerning Christian faith and life. Over-belief is as detrimental to God's saving message as is under-belief. Let us guard against both extremes.

Victor H. Prange is pastor at Peace, Janesville, Wisconsin.

*If we go beyond
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Saving faith: What is it and who has it?

John F. Brug

Why do some people say that to be saved it is necessary to believe that Jesus is Lord, not just that he is the Son of God? Exactly what is saving faith?

Saving faith is trust that Jesus paid for all my sins when he died on the cross. When Jesus said, "It is finished" on Good Friday, he had completed the work of paying for the sins of the whole world.

Saving faith does not depend on perfect knowledge and acceptance of every teaching of the Bible. (But acceptance of false teaching is a danger to saving faith.)

Saving faith does not depend on perfect obedience to God's law or perfection in following Christ's example. (But failure to obey Christ is sin.)

We should accept Jesus as Lord, but this should not be contrasted with accepting him as Savior or as the Son of God, as if accepting Jesus as Lord is somehow a higher stage of faith than merely accepting him as Savior. Such statements make efforts to obey Jesus' commands and follow his example a necessary part of saving faith.

Our efforts to follow Christ's commands are not a part of saving faith. They are a result of saving faith. Our works do not help us obtain salvation. They express our gratitude that salvation has been given to us.

When the Holy Spirit has worked saving faith in us, we have complete forgiveness. Nothing more needs to be added to obtain salvation.

*In matters of sin,
salvation, and our
status before God,
there is no difference
between men and women.*

Does 1 Corinthians 11:7, "A man . . . is the image and glory of God, but the woman is the glory of man," show a difference in the relationship between God and males and God and females? I had always believed Genesis 1:27 showed there is no difference.

Genesis 1:27 says both male and female were made in the image of God; that is, they had a happy fellowship with God, knew his will, and were able to obey it. In the fall into sin, both man and woman lost the image of God for themselves and all their descendants. "There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:23,24).

The image of God is restored in men and women through the redeeming work of Christ and the

sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. This restoration will be complete when we enter heaven. In this restoration, there is no difference between male and female (Galatians 3:26-28). To put it briefly, in matters of sin, salvation, and our status before God, there is no difference between men and women.

In 1 Corinthians 11:7 Paul speaks of a difference between man and woman because he is addressing a different question. His subject in this verse is not the relationship of man and woman to God in matters concerning salvation, but the relationship of man and woman to each other during life on this earth. In this latter relationship Paul is showing differences based on the fact the woman was created from man and for man (1 Corinthians 11:8-12). But that is another question, which should not be confused with the question you have raised.

John Brug is a professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon.

***What would you like to ask?
Write Questions, Northwestern
Lutheran, 2929 N Mayfair Rd,
Milwaukee WI 53222-4398; fax
414/256-3899.***

In "This is my body. . . my blood," [June] Pastor Trapp states that the words of Jesus have split the Christian church into three parts. I disagree. What has split the church in connection with Jesus' words of institution are the attempts of sinful man to answer the question "How can the bread and wine also be the body and blood of Jesus?"

The words of Jesus have never split the church. The words of men split the church all too often. Pastor Trapp hits the nail on the head when he simply says, "Believe it!"

*David G. Peters
Union Grove, Wisconsin*

I read with interest the article, "Peers can help keep youth in church." [July] The problem of our youth "dropping out" of active church life has long bothered me. This problem begins as soon as many of our young people are confirmed. Some of this can be blamed on poor parenting, especially if the parents themselves don't attend church regularly.

However, as the article states, we do have a problem with the young adults. Using peer pressure to keep them active in church sounds good. I think we may have forgotten one important thing. Why do they stay away from church? Have we surveyed these young adults to find out what keeps them away from church?

*Frederick P. Schleg
Friendship, Wisconsin*

I just finished reading "Getting Out the Word" [July]. I offer several corrections to the history provided by Kevin Raddatz.

About Ordway: "by 1966 no regular services were held" and "the congregation reorganized in 1969" are not accurate statements. In regard to Las Animas: "visiting pastors served the churches" is also not correct.

My brother, James Koch, graduat-

ed in 1965 and was assigned to Christ Our Savior, Ordway, and St. Paul, Las Animas. In 1966, he was also installed as pastor at the church in Rocky Ford. He served all three congregations as resident pastor until 1970.

My brother was replaced by Pastor Ronald Ash. It was after Ash accepted a call two or three years later that visiting pastors served these congregations.

*Marvin H. Koch
Arlington Heights, Illinois*

In regard to "The changing American family" [July]. I cannot agree with the statement, "America will never be a Christian nation. It never has been and never will be."

When the Pilgrims landed in 1620 they were Christians. God, Christianity, and the Bible played a tremendous role in the beginnings of this nation whether you single out the leaders, educational institutions, the church, the culture, or government itself. One can easily see God's blessings over those years.

I agree that America, from a present assessment, will never again be a Christian nation but then, "never" is a strong, relative word and I do not know the Lord's plans for the future. I do know from 1-2 Kings what happens when a nation follows God and also what happens when a nation disregards or rejects God.

Thank God for our beginnings and pray for a return to those religious ideals.

*Richard H.G. Lindemeyer
Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin*

As we consider the combining of our ministerial education program we may become overwhelmed or enthusiastic . . . maybe both. Let us remember to present our requests to God for blessing on this new venture—its campuses, boards of control, faculties, students, and families. Then let us continue to support

these schools, trusting in God, for his glory and for the eternal good of many.

*John Keibel
Yucaipa, California*

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.

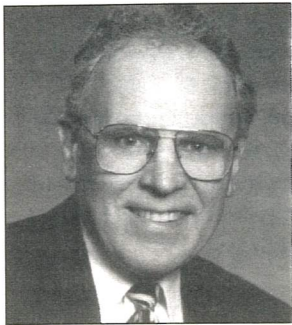
THROUGH MY
BIBLE in 3 YEARS

October 1995

- 1. Proverbs 10:1-11:13
- 2. Prov. 11:14-12:28
- 3. Prov. 13:1-14:21
- 4. Prov. 14:22-15:23
- 5. Prov. 15:24-16:33
- 6. Prov. 17, 18
- 7. Prov. 19:1-20:13
- 8. Prov. 20:14-22:16
- 9. Prov. 22:17-23:35
- 10. Prov. 24
- 11. Prov. 25:1-26:12
- 12. Prov. 26:13-27:27
- 13. Prov. 28, 29
- 14. Prov. 30
- 15. Prov. 31
- 16. Romans 1:1-17
- 17. Rom. 1:18-32
- 18. Rom. 2:1-16
- 19. Rom. 2:17-29
- 20. Rom. 3:1-20
- 21. Rom. 3:21-31
- 22. Rom. 4:1-15
- 23. Rom. 4:16-25
- 24. Rom. 5:1-11
- 25. Rom. 5:12-21
- 26. Rom. 6:1-14
- 27. Rom. 6:15-7:6
- 28. Rom. 7:7-25
- 29. Rom. 8:1-17
- 30. Rom. 8:18-39
- 31. Rom. 9:1-13

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

"S" words making a comeback?



Gary P. Baumler is editor of Northwestern Lutheran and WELS Director of Communications.

Sin and shame that can be put to rest by my own sorrowful actions manage, at best, to put a coat of whitewash over rotting wood.

I was relieved to see it. There was *Newsweek* (February 6, 1995), trumpeting not one, but two, seemingly forgotten "s" words: "shame" and "sin."

How many times I have wondered whether any sense of shame still existed in our society! And haven't we done away with the idea of sin in favor of self-esteem? Where sin and shame exist, it's hard to maintain self-esteem. So away with them. Deny they exist. Deny them any place in your life.

At least the churches haven't given in, have they? Do today's sermons convict my heart of sin or conveniently bash the sins of others around me in society? Am I comfortable going to church because no one ever threatens my personal comfort zone? We need a sense of shame and of sin for our own good.

Did I say I was "relieved" to see *Newsweek* acknowledge sin and shame? It seems strange to speak of relief over sin and shame. Then, too, a close reading of what the authors say about the two "s" words does as much to confirm my earlier fears as to allay them. But at least someone is talking about the problem, and a few are even acting on it.

What is missing from this picture? The *Newsweek* writers maintain that provoking shame in wrongdoers can be "redemptive." Our religious congregations serve us well, they say, when the congregations remind us that "actions have consequences for which guilt can and must be acknowledged, forgiveness humbly begged, reconciliation sought." Yes, socially speaking, those things are true. I can be shamed to act better.

But what if I gain the whole world and lose my own soul? Sin and shame that can be put to rest by my own sorrowful actions manage, at best, to put a coat of whitewash over rotting wood. It looks better but doesn't solve the real problem.

The ultimate solution to the problem lies in one more "s" word: "Savior." In the best and in the worst of societies (do we forget how it was for the early Christians in the Roman Empire?), the sense of sin and shame come and go. Sometimes they affect behavior positively. But when the individual sinner sees the fullness of sin and shame, how damnable they are, then he or she falls into a deep dark hole of despair. Many a psychologist will attest to dealing frequently with damaged psyches struggling with guilt, shame, and sin.

The Savior alone brings light to that darkness and lifts sinners out of their holes of shame. He does it with the word of his salvation. He does it with the cry, "Repent and believe the good news!" (Mark 1:15). He does it with his death and resurrection.

So I say, let the news magazines call for a greater sense of shame and a dealing with sin. Let's hope that our society will take matters of sin and evil more seriously. But for real solutions for individuals everywhere, let's work harder to bring the people the word of the Savior from sin and shame.

Gary P. Baumler

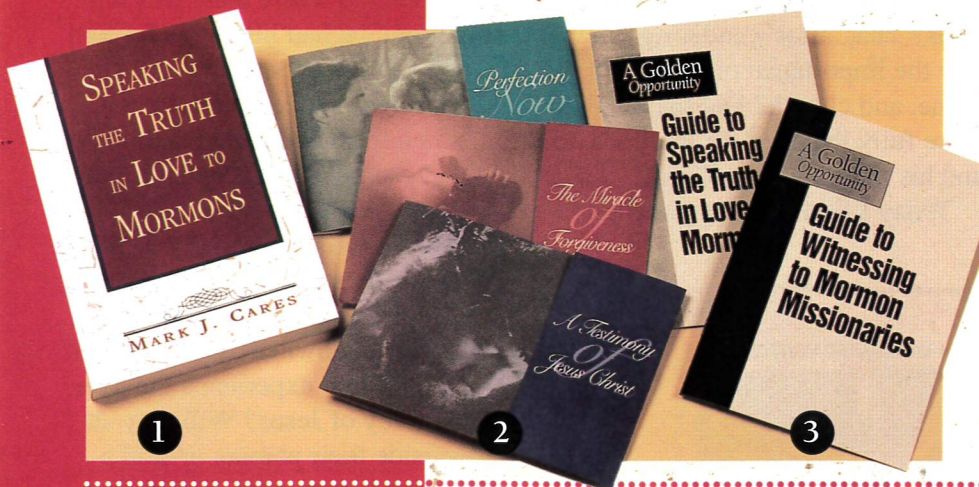
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Christian Research Journal
Fall 1994



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A lesson from the storeroom

Words from a despairing pastor in 1936
offer new insight to a pastor in 1995.

Carl R. Henkel

We called it the storeroom. For me it was a little boy's dream, an adventure land overflowing with excitement, where treasures were neatly boxed, bundled, and stored.

Now I had to sort and discard the room's contents: birthday cards, Christmas cards, postcards—dating from the '20s. Even 261 shares of stock in a dairy association that no longer exists.

Unfaithful to their vow

Among the treasures was a yellowed piece of paper—dated May 31, 1936. It listed the 67 confirmands from 1927 through 1936. Below, the pastor added:

“How many are still with the church? About half. Where are the rest? Apparently returned back to the world, because they have become unfaithful to their confirmation vow. And how many will remain faithful to the church from the 12 to be confirmed May 31, 1936?”

I was surprised. I had the idea it

wasn't until I entered the ministry that alarming numbers of confirmands began disappearing. I thought the problem of “confirmation dropouts” was a recent phenomenon. Those who wonder about the lack of church involvement in today's youth may not accurately remember “the good ol' days.”

Returning to their roots

I recognize a number of those confirmands. Many of them live in the same community and attend the same Lutheran church. Some of them died in faith and are with the Lord. Others moved away but are faithful Christians.

Could it be that after a time, those who “returned back to the world,” returned to their Christian roots? That, after wandering, they saw the importance of their faith, home, and church? Did they realize more fully the need for the Lord and his life-changing Word?

Today I find encouragement and

hope in the words of that despairing pastor, because I've felt the ache he was feeling and the pain he was expressing. It seems, at times, that our work is in vain—that efforts to share the message of sin and grace fall on deaf ears. The empty pews, the lackluster spirits wound us deeply. But here was evidence: God's grace continued, and one by one, those who left the Father's side found their way back home.

Rooting them in the faith

Unchanged from the '20s is the influence of the Christian home. Young people, with roots in a home where the Lord was taken seriously, though tempted to stray, returned to the Savior's waiting arms. But those from a home where there was little time for God had little time for him when they were on their own. They drifted away, never to return. Satan claimed them and carted them off to hell. I can point to exceptions, but they are just that—exceptions.

The storeroom is empty. Will the new family store their own memories in this room? More important, will the new owners' children and grandchildren experience the love and mercy of Jesus? Will they sit alongside their parents in God's house and grow up to love their precious Savior? These questions have eternal significance.

A house goes the way of all things temporal, but a home where Jesus lives as Savior and reigns as Lord lasts forever.

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

