

# LUTHERAN



**Gouge out your eye**

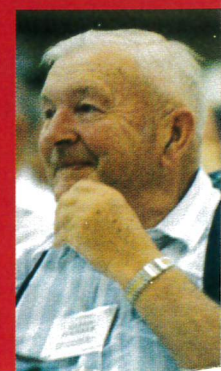
page 6

**We share the promise with our friends and neighbors**

page 14

**Promises mean everything to a child**

page 34



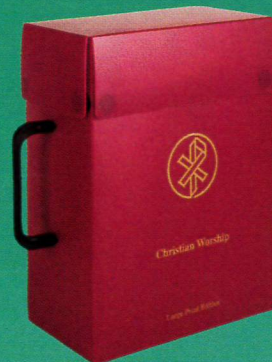
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# Thank God for Martin Luther

*Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Romans 8:1*

**Richard E. Lauersdorf**

“I’m afraid to die,” said the man in the hospital bed. His statement was understandable. Death is not something we have experienced. Nor is it something anyone has returned to tell us about.

The pastor, recognizing that man’s need, spoke about Christ’s payment for sin and the removal of death’s sting. “God’s children never die,” he said, “they just move from here to hereafter.”

“I’m afraid of my sin,” said the woman in the counseling session. Caught in a sin and sure that God would never forgive her, she was living in dread. Her statement was understandable. Who of us doesn’t have something from the past we would just as soon forget, but seems etched in our conscience.

The pastor, recognizing that woman’s need, spoke of how sin is like a nail pounded into a board. You can pull the nail out, but the hole is still there. You have to live with the aftermath—and often the memory—of sin, but never with the fear of punishment. “There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,” the pastor told that penitent woman. “God has fully paid for your sin by his Son’s death. Your sin is gone from you and from God’s memory.”

## **Restoring the message of salvation**

Do we realize, though, the pastor might not be telling people such wonderful news if it weren’t for the work of Martin Luther? Through his servant, God restored the saving message of how “God made him

who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21). Through Luther’s work, God placed before sinners’ eyes the truth they desperately need, how “the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).

---

*Through Luther’s work,  
God placed  
before sinners’ eyes  
the truth  
they desperately need.*

---

Listen to what Luther had to say once God led him into the Scriptures and as a result to the Savior’s cross. Of forgiveness he wrote, “If the great, sublime article called the forgiveness of sins is correctly understood, it makes one a genuine Christian and gives one eternal life. This is the very reason why it must be taught in Christendom with unflinching diligence and without ceasing so that people may learn to

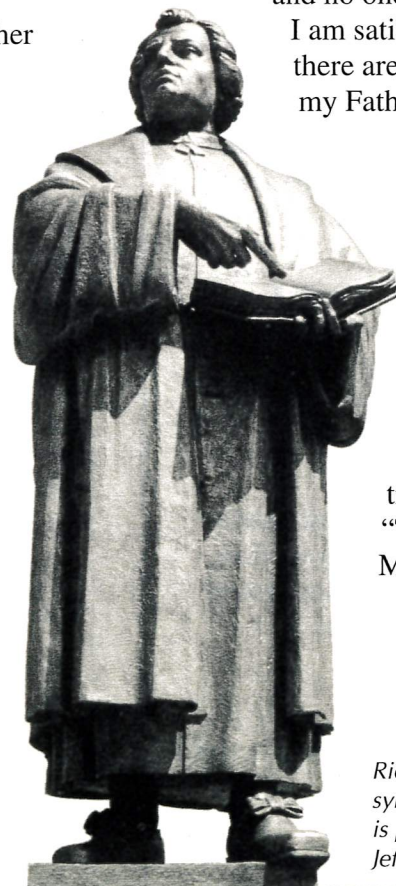
understand it plainly, clearly, and discriminatingly” (What Luther Says, pg. 514).

## **Trusting in the hope of heaven**

Of death he wrote, “He [Christ] himself will provide a place where my soul will continue to exist, he who was so concerned about it that he sacrificed his own life in order to redeem mine, this best of Shepherds and blessed Bishop of the souls of those who believe in him! . . . Nor do I want my soul placed into my own hands and care, for in that case it would be devoured in a moment by the devil. But he has it in hand and no one can tear it from him.

I am satisfied to know that there are many mansions in my Father’s house” (pg. 377).

Only because of what God gave us in his Word and enabled us to see clearly through Luther can we live in hope and die in peace. This month as we mark the Reformation, it’s time to say again, “Thank God for Martin Luther.”



*Richard E. Lauersdorf, the synod’s first vice president, is pastor of St. John, Jefferson, Wisconsin.*

*Martin Luther*



■ “Share the Promise!” Our two-year theme focuses on Jesus’ command. Four articles explore whom we reach with that promise.

✓ Laurie Biedenbender previews her new series on how we share the promise with children. See “Let the children come,” p. 8.

✓ Wayne Schulz urged convention delegates to share the promise with friends. Now it’s your turn to read his message on p. 14.

✓ God’s promises give us hope to live each day. Read “Promises mean everything to a child,” p. 34.

✓ WELS 53rd biennial convention kicked off our Share the Promise theme. Bob Sievert’s convention coverage starts on p. 19. For additional news, contact your pastor for a copy of *WELS Herald*.

■ We’ve all been let down by a Christian brother or sister. On p. 29, President Gurgel confronts our failures, and calls for repentance and forgiveness.

■ Paul Burmeister is the new director of advertising and design services at Northwestern Publishing House and will also work on NL. Welcome, Paul.

—LRB

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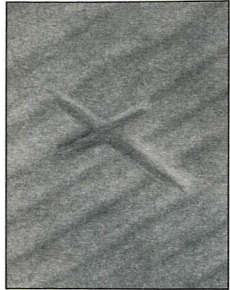
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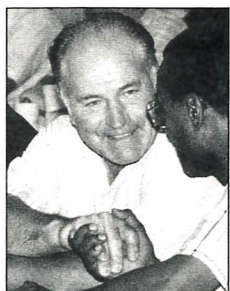
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Let the children come  
page 8



From chicken coops  
to chapels  
page 16



Share the promise  
page 19

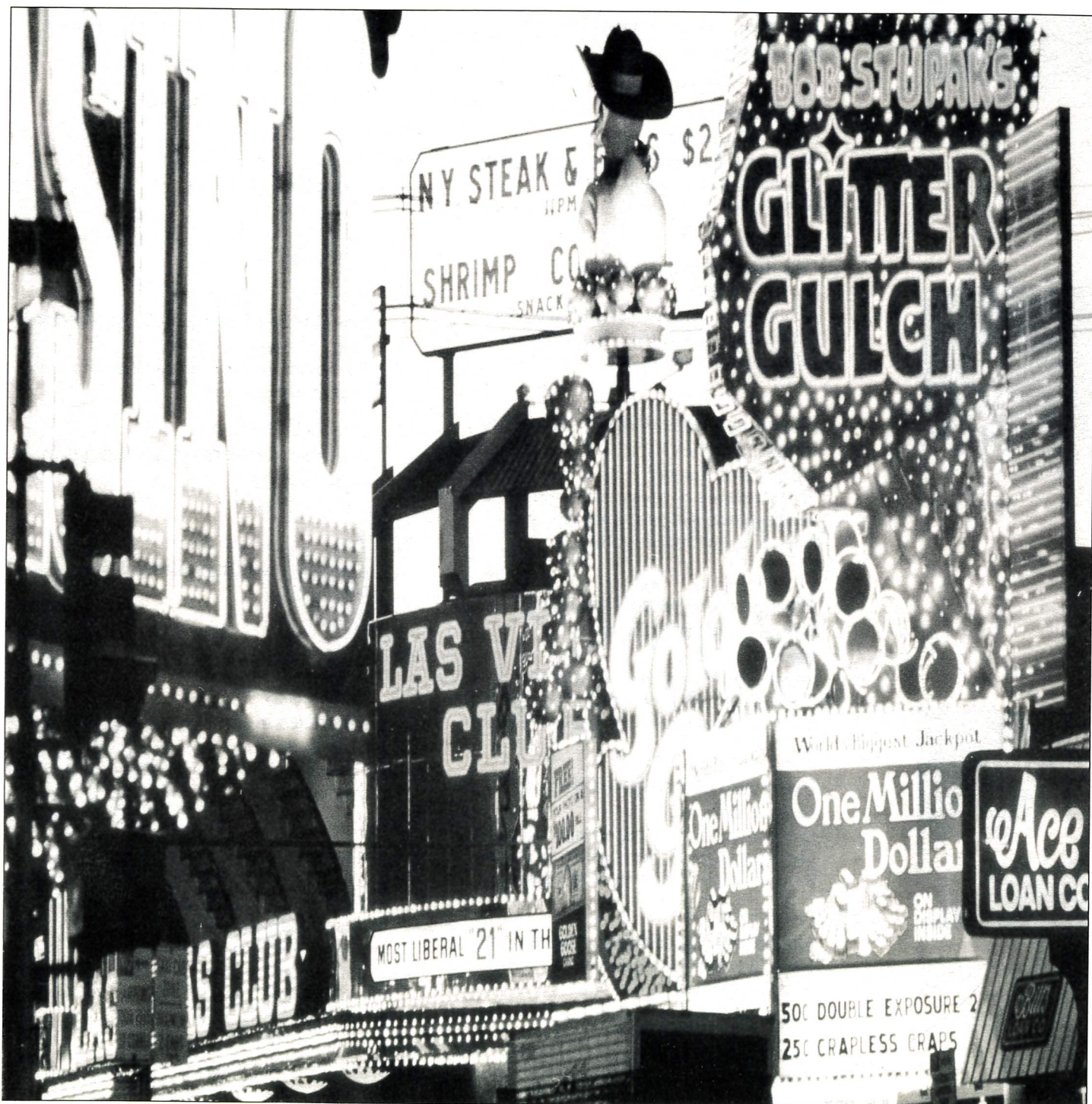
- 3 THOUGHT FOR TODAY  
**Thank God for Martin Luther**  
*Richard E. Lauersdorf*  
Through Luther's work, God placed before sinners' eyes the truth they desperately need.
- 6 HARD SAYINGS OF JESUS  
**Gouge out your eye**  
*Thomas H. Trapp*  
What is tempting you to turn from God? Take drastic measures to avoid it, run from it, remove it.
- 8 SHARE THE PROMISE  
**Let the children come**  
*Laurie Biedenbender*  
We make it our mission to meet the needs of children in a changing world with the promise that never changes.
- 10 WELS AT WORK  
**Old houses, renewed hearts**  
*Gary P. Baumler*  
Although the neighborhood has changed around Trinity, Bay City, Mich., the need for the gospel remains constant.
- 12 BY FAITH THEY LED  
**Edwin Edgar Guenther: missionary to the Apaches**  
*Morton A. Schroeder*  
For Guenther's 50 years as teacher, administrator, and pastor, the Apaches made him their blood-brother.
- 14 WELS CONVENTION ESSAY  
**We share the promise with our friends and neighbors**  
*Wayne I. Schulz*  
Friendship witnessing is the way of Christianity: one person telling another the message of mankind's sin and God's grace.
- 16 MISSIONS AROUND THE WORLD  
**From chicken coops to chapels**  
*Linda R. Baacke*  
Overcoming humble beginnings and continuing challenges, the churches in Puerto Rico continue to grow by God's grace.
- 18 OPEN DOORS  
**Coordinating, leading, and serving**  
Karl Gurgel answers questions about being WELS president.
- 19 WELS CONVENTION NEWS  
**Share the promise**  
*Robert A. Sievert*

- 23 WELS news
  - Building bridges across islands
  - Around the islands: WELS missions in the Caribbean
  - WELS teachers develop science curriculum materials
  - Big changes for WELSNET
  - WELSNET announces communication awards
- 26 World news
  - LCMS re-elects Barry
  - WELS convention focuses on worship and missions
  - Delegates to China conference warned against bringing Bibles
  - Group wants state to disconnect papal visit phone line
  - American Christianity sluggish
- 28 BULLETIN BOARD
- 29 PERSON TO PERSON  
**Great expectations**  
*Karl R. Gurgel*  
How often we disappoint one another with the unexpected!
- 30 THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT  
**The fruit of the Spirit is faithfulness**  
*James A. Aderman*  
The Savior guarantees that God faithfully forgives the penitent.
- 31 EDITORIAL COMMENT  
**Promise Keepers—"A man's man is a godly man"**  
*Joel C. Gerlach*
- 32 YOUR QUESTION, PLEASE  
**Church teachings and church fellowship**  
*John F. Brug*
- 33 READERS FORUM
- 34 THE EDITOR'S PEN  
**Promises mean everything to a child**  
*Gary P. Baumler*  
Give your children God's promises over and over again.
- 36 INSIGHTS  
**The blessing**  
*Eric Hartzell*  
The trademark of the real God is that he blesses his people.

# Gouge out your eye

What is tempting you to turn from God? Take drastic measures to avoid it, run from it, remove it.

Thomas H. Trapp



*If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.*

*Matthew 5:29*

When William Tyndale completed the first English translation of the New Testament in 1525, some theologians were afraid that people would take this passage literally. They warned: "The entire country will be full of blind men!" Their fears were unwarranted, since there is no record of mutilation because of these words of Jesus.

### **Hell is real**

So what did Jesus mean when he said, "If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out"? If this saying is to be interpreted literally, then he is asking us to commit suicide because our brains cause us to sin. We are born sinful and every part of our body is affected by sin. If Jesus is not literally telling us to gouge out our eyes or cut off our hands, then why are his words so drastic? Because hell is literal, and he does not want us to go there.

Jesus knows hell is real. He experienced the forces of hell when he was tempted after 40 days and nights in the wilderness, when he cast out demons who possessed people, when he confronted the so-called religious leaders of the community with truth, and when he hung on the cross and cried out "My God, my God why have you forsaken me?"

Hell is a reality. Jesus knows. That's why he came to this earth. He came to rescue us from eternal

fire. So he warns: "If your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire" (Matthew 18:8). Whatever leads us into sin or causes us to sin or tempts us to sin, take drastic measures to avoid it, run from it, remove it. Gouge it out.

---

*Is a little sin  
in your life  
leading you away  
from your Savior?  
Jesus says,  
"Gouge it out!"*

---

### **Hellish temptations need gouging**

What is tempting you to turn from God? What is leading you into sin? King David of Israel let his eyes guide him into a little lust. It led him into adultery, deception, murder, and a lifetime of regret. A little sin leads to big destruction. King Saul let a little pride take over his life. It led to his loss of faith. Judas let a little greed take over his life. It led him to taking his own life. The apostle Peter permitted a little fear to direct his life. It led to a denial of his Savior.

Is a little sin in your life leading you away from your Savior? Jesus says, "Gouge it out! Throw it away!" Gouge out greed, lust, worry, anxiety, selfishness, bitterness, unbelief, and pride. But how? Race to Colorado and hide out in the Rocky Mountains to escape evil? Move to the northwoods and live with the deer to dodge the temptations of the big city?

Antony (c. AD 251-356), a Christian holy man of Egypt, tried to escape evil. He lived in the desert, alone. For 35 years he fasted, went many nights sleepless, and tortured his body, trying to think of nothing but God. Yet, in his biography, Antony says that for 35 years he fought temptation anyway: "The devil tried to lead me away from discipline, whispering to me how great it was to be wealthy, the joy of prestige, and the pleasure of food and the flesh." Antony forgot that when he went into the desert there was one thing he took with him—his sinful nature.

### **God's Word shows how**

So how do we root out the sins that are ruining our lives? By continually filling our minds with God's Word. The only way to defeat evil thoughts is to think God's thoughts: "Whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable . . . think about such things," the apostle Paul advises us in Philipians 4. God's Word moves us to admit the damning truth about our sins and to accept the saving truth that "the blood of Jesus . . . purifies us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). When we fill our minds with God's Word, the Holy Spirit moves us to fill our lives with his work. When we continually do God's work, evil has no time to enter our lives.

What's causing you to sin? Gouge it out. Fill your mind with God's Word and thus your life with God's work. You'll be better off. Forever.

NL

*Thomas H. Trapp is a campus pastor for Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel and Student Center at the University of Wisconsin—Madison.*

# Let the children come

**We make it our mission to meet the needs of children in a changing world with the promise that never changes.**

Laurie Biedenbender

In a dusty closet at First Lutheran is a desk. They say it's over 100 years old. Chair's broken, but the top is intact. And there in the bottom corner, so small you can hardly see it, is a cross, etched into the wood by some little boy or girl who's long since been confirmed, married, and buried.

Who knows how many little fingers have felt the imprint of that cross—have touched that cross while God's promise of the cross touched them.

Maybe that old desk should be on display somewhere, a visual reminder of the generations of WELS Christians who have shared the promise of Christ crucified with children.

## **We need strong children's ministry now**

"The congregations of WELS have always demonstrated a special sense of commitment to children through their approach to Christian education," said Gerald Kastens,

administrator for youth discipleship.

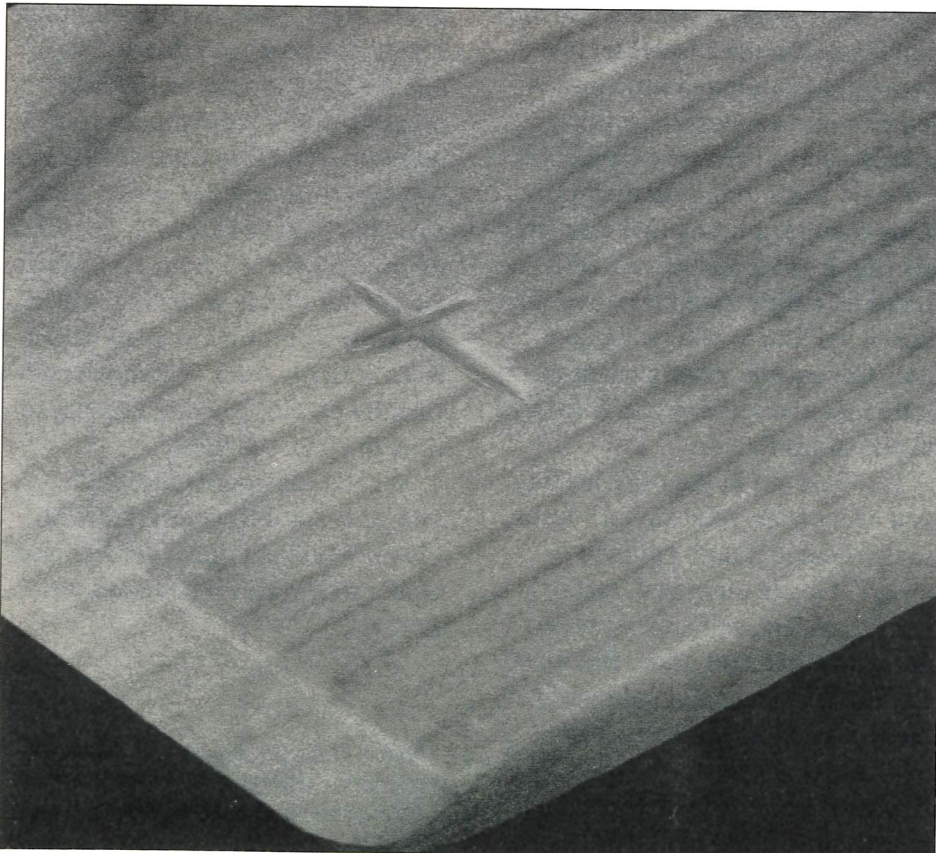
That commitment has produced Sunday schools and elementary schools in their second century of growth, area Lutheran high schools that can boast of decades of blessings, and early childhood education programs that now reach hundreds of young souls every year. Vacation Bible schools, Christian day camps, Lutheran Pioneers, youth groups, special ministries like Jesus Cares—all are arms of the church that reach out to children with the promise.

Although the promise these ministries share doesn't change, the context may. "Christian classrooms are far different than they were even as late as the '60s," said Kastens. Citing family and social problems many children grow up with, he continued, "If there ever was a need for strong children's ministry programs, it is now."

## **Jesus called for children's ministry**

So we make it our mission to meet the needs of children in a changing world with the promise that never changes.

"That mission takes on great importance and urgency when we understand that it is Jesus who calls us to our work," said Kastens. "When the risen Lord commanded Peter, 'Feed my lambs,' he was delivering the commission upon which Christian education is found-





ed. Parents, pastors, teachers, the church—it's truly a cooperative effort with one goal in mind."

This goal is echoed in the 1995 synod convention theme, "Share the Promise." And Jesus' own words urge us not to forget the young: "Let the children come."

### Jesus blesses children's ministry

In the next few months we'll focus on these two themes in a celebration of the blessings of children's ministry.

- We'll see how senior citizens are recommitting themselves to Christian education and reaching across the years to lead little ones to Christ.
- We'll meet parents who, knowing their children's training isn't just the church's job, are putting Christian nurture back at the top of the to-do list.
- We'll look at youth programs that reach and keep teenagers in the Word and in the church.
- We'll ask congregations to show us how they're entering the 21st century with eyes and minds open to new ways of teaching children.
- We'll see the fruits of Christian education—how God's children come, follow him, and then go and serve others.

And as we count all our Christian education blessings, we'll thank our heavenly Father who opens all the doors, sustains all the efforts, and makes it all possible in the first place—because it is he who etches that promise of the cross in each of our hearts.

NL

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



***Jerrid, an eighth grader, writes how his life changed when someone shared the promise with him.***

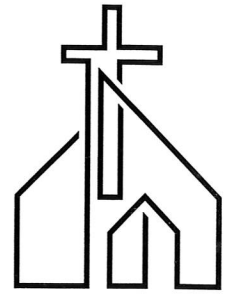
I would say if you're someone like me, that's been through alot, and still are a Christian, this is the easiest way for you. Church really doesn't thrill me. I shouldn't say that, but Jesus knows it anyways. I never understood a word they said, so I started going to youth rallies, which is fun. After a while life got rough and I went into a hospital. Not need to say what for. But when I got out I knew the only reason I didn't die was cause of God. It was close. When I thought for a while I decided that I needed

a Christian life, and I thought since I didn't understand much at church that I would go to a Christian school. I couldn't in my home town cause my reputation was bad. I got hold of a friend of mine and he told me how St. John's Lutheran School would be good for me since my dad worked in the same city. So I had an orientation and decided I liked it. I've only been here for about 2 months, but I enjoy it. I'm still myself here, but I'm really starting to understand God better. I'll have to say I'm closer to him now also, thanks to this school.

*Jerrid*

# Old houses, renewed hearts

Although the neighborhood has changed around Trinity, Bay City, Mich., the need for the gospel remains constant.



Gary P. Baumler

“Most of the houses are old. The yards are not the well-manicured lawns of suburbia,” Pastor Ronald Muetzel explains, as he describes the setting around Trinity Lutheran Church in Bay City, Mich. “The people have all sorts of family, social, health, and economic problems; the devil has had evident success with many of them.”

The setting has changed dramatically since German Lutheran immigrants founded Trinity 109 years ago. Now, mostly, German families are gone or are leaving. According to Muetzel, a variety of people (racially diverse, lower income, single parent, live-together) are moving in.

## People to reach

To some, the change may sound like an excuse for a church in

decline, but not so here. It is reason for sharing God’s Word more zealously. “There are people,” says Muetzel, “precious souls whom God loves and for whom Jesus died. We are here to serve these people with the gospel.”

The congregation has had its ups and downs, with membership peaking in the mid-60s. But “the congregation has been revitalized with a major emphasis on nurture (adult Bible study) and outreach,” Muetzel reports. “The congregation is growing and excited about its future. Worship attendance is up by over 100 per weekend.”

A genuine concern for people permeates the members of Trinity. They regularly invite people to church, bring them, and inform the pastors about potential prospects. “Our

prospect list is so large,” says the pastor, “we find it difficult to work with them all.” Some they work with, train, and welcome as members fall away again in spite of efforts to integrate them in the congregation. “The back door losses tend to frustrate.”

Still, the church has confirmed an average of more than 20 adults per year over the last 10 years, and the people express joy in sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ.

“The pastors have us setting goals and setting our sights on the purpose why we exist—to make disciples,” explains Ned Kleinke when asked what typifies Trinity. He’s eager to discuss the work. “Everyone is very aware of that. Outreach is a very big thing.”

## People to do the reaching

Closely related to the changed neighborhood and the renewed spirit of the congregation is a transition from social/fellowship organizations to more involvement in ministry. Couples club, retirees club, ladies aid, men’s club have been giving way to visitation, worship planning, music, teaching, witness calls, assisting in school and preschool. Although some members miss the old organizations, they see more people active in touching the lives of other people with the gospel.

“Reaching into the neighborhood has been an eye-opener,” says Kleinke. “Many people are unchurched. They tell us they have

## TRINITY

Bay City, Michigan  
organized 1886  
members: 900

### Pastors:

Ronald Muetzel  
Mark Schulz

### Minister of Evangelism:

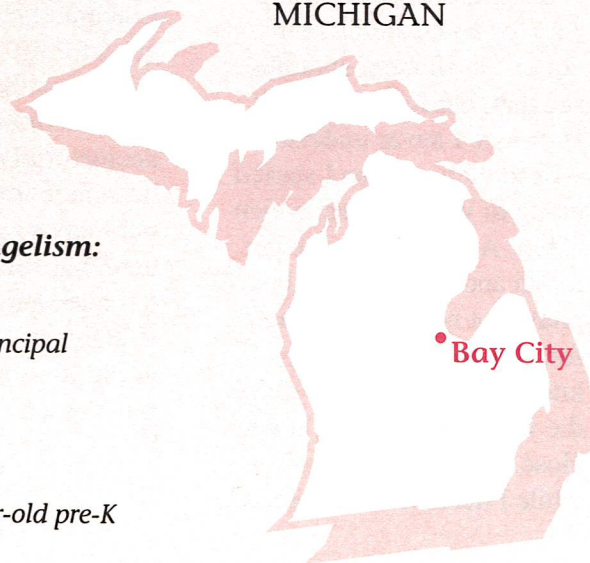
Duane Anderson

### Teachers:

Randy Cochran, principal  
Brian Abraham  
Robin Ebelt  
Mary Herbst  
Nancy Kleinke  
Kim Cochran

three- and four-year-old pre-K  
grades K-8  
enrollment: 91

## MICHIGAN



noticed us, but they say, 'No one ever talked to us about the church.' ”

To reach people, Trinity's pastors are willing to go so far as to jail. Every Sunday afternoon, they conduct services for about 40 inmates at Bay County Jail. But they do more than serve the incarcerated inmates; they develop many new contacts and prospects for continued ministry.

Pastor Mark Schulz has trained the

members of Trinity's witness team. They always have people to see. This year, Trinity's annual Friendship Sunday, planned and publicized by the members, yielded over 50 prospects. The school and preschool provide other points of contact with unchurched people of the community.

Recently, Mr. Duane Anderson joined the congregation as the Minister of Evangelism in a new

program called "Project Share," sponsored by WELS Kingdom Workers. "Duane and members of the congregation are aggressively reaching into the community primarily to share the gospel, also to share materially where there is need," explains Muetzel. "We hope this outreach effort will be shared by the other WELS churches of Bay City."

NL

"Absolutely!" Randy Davies exclaimed when asked if he wanted to talk about Trinity. Randy and his wife, Sandy, weren't Lutheran and weren't active before coming to the congregation. Then they "heard the gospel together" and became part of the close fellowship that the members cherish. Now Sandy is taking witness training to spread the good news of Jesus.

Randy wanted to talk about his pet project, Project Share. As a business man, Randy is part of a business club that meets monthly to help place disadvantaged people—ex-addicts, ex-prisoners, homeless—in employment. When Duane Anderson brought Mike, a young man with a "difficult background," to Randy, he hired him.

The employment is only a part of the program, however. The idea is to lead those who are hired to know their Savior and get them involved in the church. "It's working well with Mike," says Randy. "I witness to him regularly. Whenever he needs direction, I teach him to look to the Savior. Next Sunday he will usher with me at church."



Unique advertising for vacation Bible school attracted neighbors to Trinity. The congregation is changing its outreach techniques to reach the changing community with an unchanging message of forgiveness and salvation.



Five members are in training to be part of the witness team. The congregation is excited about its future—reaching out to others with the gospel.

# Edwin Edgar Guenther: missionary to the Apaches

For Guenther's 50 years as teacher, administrator, and pastor, the Apaches made him their blood-brother.

Morton A. Schroeder

Edgar Guenther arrived in Arizona in 1911. Edgar Guenther died in Arizona in 1961. During the intervening half century, he was an instrument of God's grace to his beloved Apaches.

WELS work among Native Americans of our Southwest pre-dates the federal synod and the 20th century. Acknowledging that the Great Commission includes more than recycling German Lutherans in the Midwest, the Wisconsin state synod, as early as 1876, considered evangelizing the Good Shepherd's "other sheep." Various options were considered; consensus chose Indians native to America.

Merger intervened before Wisconsin realized its plan, but the federal synod picked up the staff. In 1892, it sent two pastors to find a flock it could gather into the fold.

## Mission to the Apaches

The Apaches were not gathered because they were amiable. They were reputed to be warlike and equal to exacting tribute from contiguous tribes. Their congenial reception of white people gave way to hatred, stoked by the intruders' acts.

Geronimo, the fierce Apache warrior, had been exiled with his band to Florida only six years before synod's vanguard reached the out-back. And point of view determined

whether soldiers garrisoned on the reservations were ominous threat or reassuring comfort.

The Apaches were gathered because other tribes had been reached earlier by more aggressive denominations. And because a former Lutheran, at this time the head of the Presbyterian mission to the Pima Indians, directed the sheep-seekers to Apacheland.



*Minnie and Edgar Guenther raised nine children and brought many orphans into their home as well. Minnie devoted her life to the Apache orphanage and was honored as the 1967 American Mother of the Year.*

Optimistic reports prompted the federal synod to move quickly. In less than a year, John Plocher and George Adascheck were at San Carlos Indian Reservation. They opened a mission nine miles north of the agency on land given by

Chief Casadora and named it Peridot after the region's semi-rare crystal. It was another gem in Christianity's outreach crown.

Illness, language problems, and culture shock cut short the pioneers' work. Others carried on love's labor in southern Arizona, the land of desert flowers. They later extended the crook north to the land of pines, to the people at Fort Apache.

## Working on the mission

Guenther was one of those others. In January, he and his bride arrived in Globe on a freight wagon. The mission superintendent, Gustav Harders, ordained him and installed him as pastor of East Fork mission. However, snow blocked the passes; the Guenthers were unable to continue until spring thaws opened the trails.

The first mission on Fort Apache Indian Reservation, East Fork, was begun a year after Peridot. Guenther, its fourth pastor, was to stabilize it and reopen its school. Although the school grew slowly, Guenther never gave up the idea that the best way to reach the Apaches was through their children.

In this remote corner of the earth, Edgar and Minnie fashioned a life founded on the Word and centered in the family: their nine children, five Apache children whom they

took into their home, and numerous other Apaches who felt their love. Twenty-five years later, the extended family adopted Guenther and made him their blood-brother.

### Expanding the mission

Guenther founded preaching stations, building some with his own hands. One, the Church of the Open Bible, Whiteriver, was begun in 1912. First services were held in a carpenter's shop.

Six years later, when Guenther was called to Whiteriver, he won the trust of Baha ("the Wolf") Alchessay, Chief of the White Mountain Apaches. After Alchessay persuaded his tribesmen to accept "Long Coat" and the federal government gave approval, a church seating 400 was built. At its dedication in April 1922, a dramatic replay of Acts 2 took place: Alchessay and 100 tribesmen were baptized. The chief became godparent of a Guenther son; the godson's middle name is that of that famous "other sheep."

### Leading the mission

Guenther became mission head when Harders, worn out at 53, died. His administration was tested by dramatic events: WWI, burial of the first San Carlos mission by waters piling up behind Coolidge Dam, the Great Depression that forced mine closings and loss of jobs, and hints of another great war.

Guenther publicized the mission cause by writing in synod magazines and in *The Apache Scout*, a paper published by the mission since 1923 and now called *Apache Lutheran*. Guenther's style was humorous, and his words evoked colorful images. Mud was "putty," children's faces shone as if they had

"a bacon rind application," a school was "dinky," a house a "shack." Guenther wrote tenderly about Apaches who died in the Lord at home or on the battlefield.

### Advocate of the mission

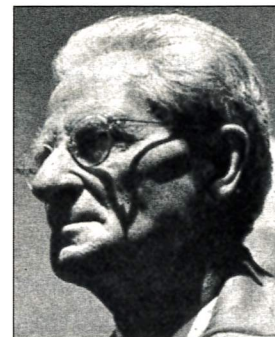
Guenther was an advocate. He encouraged the synod to appreciate the missionaries' aloneness. Cibecue, he said, was one of the most isolated communities in America. He reminded midwesterners that his conference was a lone waif. He fretted over the money woes that consumed the missionaries. He tried, to discourage the assumption that manual labor was, by default, part of a call.

Guenther, a man ahead of his time, saw two of his concepts largely ignored. The synod could not accept the idea that natives should be trained to serve as full-fledged missionaries. Nor was it inclined to form a medical mission. Times were hard, and conventional wisdom held that money needed to fund these programs could be used elsewhere. People spoke of "retrenching" the "costly" mission and of finding "more promising fields."

On June 3, 1961, hundreds gathered spontaneously at Whiteriver to pay final tribute to the beloved missionary. Somehow, they had heard that *Inashoot n,deezen*, who had lain ill for weeks in Tucson, had died. But they knew the retirement chair they had given him 25 years before would not sit empty. The "Tall Long Coat's" work would continue, and much of it would be carried on by their pastor, the godson of the revered Chief Alchessay.

NL

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



**Edwin  
Edgar  
Guenther**

- Born June 1, 1885, Rauville, S.D.
- Educated in high school department, Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn.; Northwestern College, Watertown, Wis.; Lutheran Seminary, Wauwatosa, Wis.
- December 1910 cut short schooling to accept call to Apacheland
- December 28, 1910 married Minnie Knoop
- March 11, 1911 arrived at East Fork
- 1918-1936 mission superintendent
- 1923 opened "Cracker-box Orphanage" at East Fork
- Died May 31, 1961, Tucson, Ariz.

# We share the promise with our friends and neighbors

**Friendship witnessing is the way of Christianity: one person telling another the message of mankind's sin and God's grace.**

Wayne I. Schulz

At age 16, twins Chantell and Nicole became babysitters for a WELS family who did friendship witnessing. The family spoke openly about spiritual things. They took Chantell and Nicole to church. Soon the twins participated in worship, completed the pastor's Bible information class, and became active members. The mission congregation virtually adopted them as spiritual children.

When Nicole went to college, Chantell stayed with the missionary's family. "Finally I found a home, and I know where I belong," Chantell said, referring not only to the congregation, but especially to Jesus—the rock of her salvation, the center of her faith and life.

A young university student discussed spiritual matters with a WELS friend, who brought her to a Bible information class. Having learned to know Jesus as the joy of her salvation, she witnessed to her unchurched parents. Now her parents are seeking spiritual guidance from one of our home missionaries.

An eighth-grader invited his unchurched friend to confirmation class. There was one problem—the boy's unchurched mother had to drive some distance for him to attend. Rather than wait outside, she sat and listened while the pastor taught her son and his friend. But she made it clear she had no interest



in the church. When her son's confirmation approached, the unchurched mother, who attended all the classes, asked, "What would it take for me to become a member of this church?"

## Share person to person

The history of Christianity is loaded with accounts of people like this—people sharing the message of fulfilled promises with their friends,

relatives, neighbors, and associates. Today we call it friendship witnessing. It's much more than simple friendship. It's personal evangelism. It's the way of Christianity: one person telling another the message of mankind's sin and God's grace. Person to person, the promise is shared; the gospel is spread.

Isn't friendship witnessing natural for all Christians, who cannot help but speak about what they have

heard and seen? Jesus says, "You [Christians] are the light of the world; you are the salt of the earth."

We used to know that. Our families used to remind us. But nuclear Christian families in smaller communities are no longer standard. We're spread across the continent. Many young people do not have the example of grandparents or aunts and uncles speaking about their faith. Instead, the work of gospel outreach becomes the responsibility of the evangelism committee. What a difference if every man, woman, and child worked in concert with the outreach committee, talking to their own friends.

### Share where you are

Mission fields are not only located in places like Asia and Africa. Increasingly, North America resembles the world of the first apostles. The mission field is pressing in our front and back doors. It is there. It faces us. Though we know it, we often ignore it. We are afraid of saying the wrong thing, afraid of rejection.

But the unchurched face more fear than we can imagine. Frustrating fear and desperate death and horrendous hell dwell in hearts that don't know the comfort of reconciliation through Christ's death and resurrection. Some of your friends live in such hopelessness, covering it up. How will they hear God's promises unless someone tells them? How will they come to the well of salvation unless someone invites them?

God has supplied us with the water and bread of life to give to those who hunger and thirst. You are God's people, armed with his Word, living in special communities. Locally, you may not be ready to take on the world. But com-

bined—across Canada, the U.S., and the world—we live in communities that represent millions of people. We have the privilege and responsibility of displaying God's splendor to these millions.

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*Isn't friendship witnessing natural for all Christians, who cannot help but speak about what they have heard and seen?*

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What shall we do? First, think about what the fulfilled promises of God mean for you. Second, examine how you can share the promise among your family, friends, neighbors, and associates.

How can you work together with WELS Christians in your conference, district, and through home and world missions? How can you get excited about mission work in Russia or India if you are not getting a taste of personal mission work? How can you comprehend the obstacles and joys of home mission work in Canada and the U.S. if you are not doing what the Lord expects in your own surroundings? How can you prepare ministers to reach sinners if you are not tuned into the world where you live, striving to turn more hearts to the truth and joy of Christ?

### Share as you can

Ask yourself some questions.

Pastor, how can you, with your family's help, make more contacts each week with those who do not know Christ? How can you make a greater effort at funeral luncheons and wedding receptions to meet more people, to make more con-

tacts for sharing the promise?

Teacher, how can you instill in children the love to share the promise? How can you remind yourself that your ministry is not limited to 25 or 35 children, but that you are a soldier of Christ in your congregation and community?

Lay person, you have greater access to the field ripe for harvest than most full-time church workers. How can you look at people with a greater purpose than you have before? How can you share the great love of God with them? What might you do to involve more members in friendship witnessing?

Professor, as you train students for ministry, how can you get to know them better and guide them so they will be ready to share the promise to the unchurched world? How can you be a gospel-influence in your community and neighborhood?

Synodical worker and officer, how can you keep your eyes focused on the ripe field? How can you encourage ministers and congregations to widen their outlook, to scrutinize the greater picture, to work hard at planning to bring God's fullness in Christ to the world's emptiness?

How do you begin your personal life of witness? Spend a quiet moment for introspection; delve into the Word. Then ask yourself an army of questions about who you are in God's eyes and what you will do to share the Word of God with your friends and neighbors.

NL

*Wayne Schulz is a WELS home missions counselor.*

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

# From chicken coops to chapels

Overcoming humble beginnings and continuing challenges, the churches in Puerto Rico continue to grow by God's grace.

Linda R. Baacke

In nine years, WELS hopes to stop doing mission work in Puerto Rico. Not because efforts are failing, but because they are thriving.

Puerto Ricans are taking such an active role in their churches that, by 2004, missionaries hope to turn over all the work to national pastors and lay leaders.

## Mission becomes a church body

Work began in 1963 in the poorest of the poor neighborhoods, Gran Stan Bran. The first chapel was a 12x15 ft. converted chicken coop. Now, in four cities, 226 people worship in houses, hospital chapels, and buildings they are buying.

They are served by Tom Zimdars and vicar Tim Otto in Guayama and Barrancas; John Strackbein, theological education director, in San Juan; and Tim Satorius, evangelism and outreach director, in Humacao and San Juan.

However, the Puerto Ricans do not rely solely on the missionaries to do the witnessing. Every year Missionary Strackbein asks each member to invite 12 unchurched friends to an evangelism presentation and, ultimately, to an adult Bible class. Yet, like most people, the members are afraid of rejection and humiliation. The first year, all the church members were afraid their friends would laugh at them. Finally, after praying for courage, one man invited people—14 showed up and seven took the class.

With faith and leadership like that man's, the four churches formed their own church body—the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Church of Puerto Rico. By forming this church body, they took another step towards being self-supporting by the year 2004. Then, WELS missionaries could start mission work elsewhere.

## Mission faces challenges

Although successes are evident, so are challenges. Fatalism—a belief that everything, including sin, is God's will—is rampant. A man may take food money, gamble it on horses, and say, "It is up to God whether I feed my family." Also, many citizens are Roman Catholic but disagree with that church's teachings. However, they feel that since they were born Catholic, they were meant to be Catholic and, therefore, can't change.

Many men are actively committed to God's service; however, male participation isn't considered macho. "Macho pride, inherent in Puerto Rican culture, leads to a huge crime rate, lots of adultery, and, consequently, a large number of divorces. This bullish spirit is contrary to humility, serving, and loving your neighbor as yourself," said Missionary Strackbein.

## Mission moves beyond its own shores

In addition to overcoming challenges and developing their own churches, Puerto Rican congregations are a stepping stone to other world missions. In 1993, Ronald Baerbock moved from Puerto Rico to Santiago, Dominican Republic, and established the only Lutheran church there. Larry M. Schlomer, a 1995 seminary graduate and former Puerto Rico vicar, was assigned there this summer.



Edwin Ortiz, second from right, and his school friends. Edwin grew up in the Dominican Republic and attended St. John's Lutheran School in Antigua. He returned to the Dominican Republic, sought out the missionary there, and became active in the congregation.





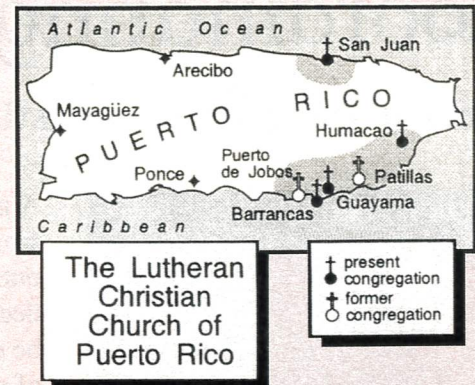
Missionaries who are bringing Puerto Ricans the Savior write, "We are in Puerto Rico in your place. That's why we need your support, especially your prayers, and your zeal to share that same message wherever you are."

#### Sharing the gospel in Puerto Rico:

Timothy and Lorna Satorius  
John and Barbara Strackbein  
Thomas and Shelley Zimdars  
Timothy Otto

#### Sharing the gospel in the Dominican Republic:

Ronald and Karen Baerbock  
Larry M. and Katherine Schlomer



Puerto Ricans gather after worship. They are described by one of their own poets as being "a religious people looking for religion."

Because of people like Anita Rivera, missionaries from the two countries keep in touch. Missionary Satorius writes, "Anita visited a Lutheran church when she lived in Puerto Rico. However, she never heard of one in the Dominican Republic, where she now lived. When Missionary Baerbock moved there, Anita was one of the first to take confirmation classes. Her husband Ramón, who was not religious, sat in on the classes and soon looked forward to them. They were going to be the first Dominican Republic confirmands—then Ramón got sick. They moved to Puerto Rico for better medical care, and continued classes with missionaries there. One week before confirmation, Ramón died. For over 80 years he didn't trust his Savior. His last year he

learned of a Savior who paid for his sins. Anita was later confirmed as a member of San Juan, Puerto Rico."

The Dominican Republic mission has its share of ups and downs. Vicar Steven Wagenknecht writes, "It's taking more than 26 weeks to complete 26 lessons because we never know what kind of excitement there will be. Frequent power outages make group study difficult. One class was even postponed by fire; we were halfway through when we smelled smoke coming from the house's back room.

"When we finally finish, we're not sure how many will be ready for confirmation. But we have noticed growth in the Word among students who previously had little or no contact with the Bible. Rosmeri, one of the more serious

students, reads the Bible on her own. When we asked, 'If you die tonight, where will you go?' Rosmeri answered, 'To heaven because Jesus died to forgive me.' "

It's answers like Rosmeri's that keep WELS missionaries and Puerto Rico congregations reaching out—to their friends and to those in other countries.

NL

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

For more information on WELS home and world missions in the Caribbean see pages 23 and 24.

For the history of the mission to Puerto Rico, read *To Every Nation, Tribe, Language, and People*, pp. 227-241, NPH, 1992.

# Coordinating, leading, and serving

Karl Gurgel answers questions about being WELS president.



President Karl Gurgel and secretary Estelle Vaichinger.

## As president, what is your relationship to members of WELS?

I am called to be a pastor to called workers and to bring together all parts of the synod in its work program. I need to be responsive to the called workers' concerns—to be sympathetic to their pressures, the pressures of the ministry.

I'm responsible for carrying out the people's wishes in what their synod does. I coordinate what the synod in convention decides. I serve as a coordinator and a communicator at the synod offices and also outside to the members of the synod.

## Two years ago you were new as president of WELS. What is different for you as you start your second term?

Two years ago was a great transition in our synod's history. The schools' amalgamation had just been voted in by the convention.

A great deal of energy was spent working on amalgamation, to carry out what the synod convention had decided. Now more of my time can be devoted to the primary mission of our synod, which is reaching out with the gospel both in our country and in the world.

## What do you consider the synod's greatest challenge?

I don't believe it has changed since the Lord gave it to us. It's to see and to reach the mission field at our back door and outside our community. To see that mission field right in front of our eyes and then beyond our eyesight around the world.

## What questions do people ask most frequently when you visit congregations?

Lay people want to know how the synod works. They've been members of it for a lifetime, and they love their synod. They pray for it, work for it, give for it, but they really don't know how it operates.

They also ask whether my work allows me much time with my family. The work involves a lot of weekend travel. But during the week, in the evenings particularly, I'm with my family more than I've been before. That's good. My family is important.

## Speaking of how the synod works, why are we considering restructuring it?

By the grace of God, the synod has operated effectively through the

years, working through God's devoted servants, both lay people and called workers. However, to many, the administrative structure looks like a maze. They can't see through it. So the whole idea of restructuring is that synod workings become transparent, that people can see how to input to it and they can see the outcome.

We also sometimes appear to lack sufficient input from outside synod offices. The new structure addresses that by having a lay representative from every district on the synodical council to carry things to us.

## What one thing in particular would you like to say to WELS members?

To immerse themselves deeply in the study of God's Word. It will help their congregation retain the priceless heritage we have and will aid us as we work together to share that heritage with others. You can't go with something you don't have. We need to retain that Word and take it with us wherever we go—both in our community and ultimately, through those who go for us, in all the world.

*Do you have a question about WELS? Send it to Open doors, Northwestern Lutheran, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398; fax 414/256-3899.*

# Share the promise

Robert A. Sievert

Sharing is participating. Instead of being passive listeners to two or three essays, the 373 voting and 53 advisory delegates to the 53rd biennial synod convention actively took part in five small-group Bible studies on the theme "Share the Promise."

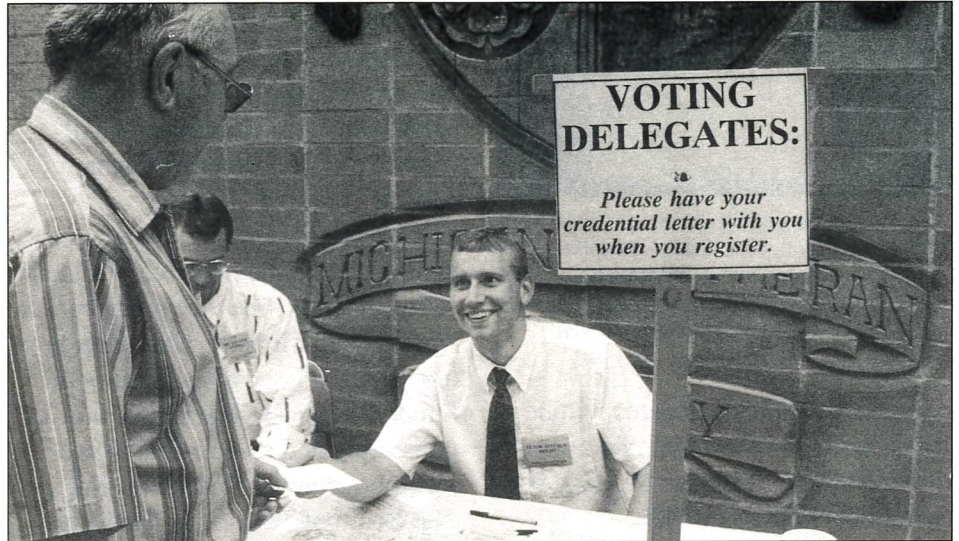
Assembled at Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Michigan, July 24-27, 1995, the delegates shared insights on how we

- Share the Promise from God
- Share the Promise with our Families
- Share the Promise with Friends and Neighbors
- Share the Promise with our Offerings
- Share the Promise into the Third Millennium

Introductions and outlines for the discussions were presented by Professor John Lawrenz, Pastor Richard Gurgel, Pastor Wayne Schulz, Pastor Ronald Muetzel, and Pastor Harold Essmann.



The calm before the storm—binders and papers await over 400 voting and advisory delegates.



Tutor Stephen Melso registers a delegate. All 12 synod districts are represented by pastors, male teachers, and laymen. These delegates vote on how the synod will operate over the next two years.

## World missions

The delegates realized that sharing the promise is a world-wide mission as they ratified the decisions to add Bulgaria; Dominican Republic; Guntur, India; Russia; and Thailand to the world mission program. They also encouraged the board to continue exploratory work in Cuba. It was noted, too, that national pastors now outnumber our missionaries in the Lutheran Church of Central Africa.

## Catechism review

Some changes in policy were approved to facilitate sharing the promise of God. By a 173-124 vote the delegates adopted the revision of Luther's Small Catechism to be used in our churches and schools. Some discussion centered on the differences in some wording between the *Christian Worship* hymnal and the revised catechism. Such

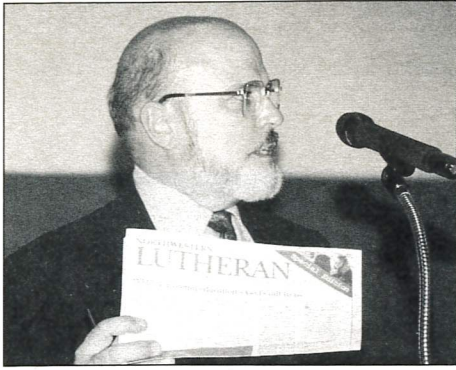
differences should be footnoted in the new catechism.

## Called and lay delegate ratio

Voters defeated a motion by the floor committee to rescind a 1993 resolution for a 50/50 balance of lay and public ministry delegates to synod conventions. A system to implement the same number of lay



President Karl R. Gurgel opened the convention. Gurgel was first elected WELS president at the 1993 convention; this year he was reelected on the first ballot.



Rev. Wayne Borgwardt, administrator for ministerial education, encouraged delegates to read the special edition of *Northwestern Lutheran*. The edition highlights the WELS ministerial education schools and school system.

and called worker delegates will be in place for the 1997 synod convention to be held at Luther Preparatory School in Watertown, Wis.

### Communication Services

Another adopted change merges the Committee on Periodicals and the Editorial Commission for *Northwestern Lutheran* into the Communication Services Commission.

### Synod restructuring

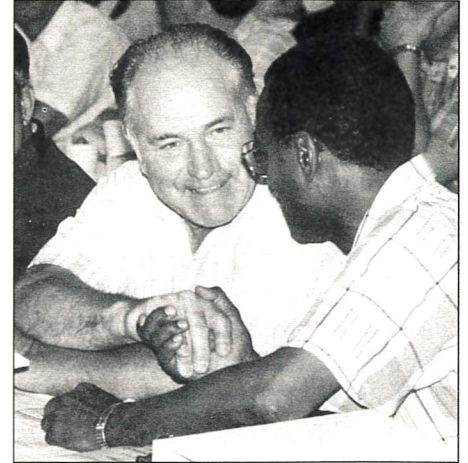
The most far-reaching change is a plan—adopted in principle—for the restructuring of the synod. It will be referred to the 12 districts for study and recommendations, and returned

to the 1997 synod convention for a decision. The plan calls for a single governing body, a Synodical Council of 21 men, including three district presidents, a lay representative for each of the 12 districts, four divisional board chairmen, one pastor, and one teacher, with the synod president serving as chairman. It will replace the Coordinating Council and the Board of Trustees.

Also reporting to the synod president would be the first vice president, serving as full-time vice president for Mission and Ministry, and a person employed as Executive Director of Support Services. The synod, now an unincorporated association, would incorporate under Wisconsin law. The Board of Trustees is presently seeking to incorporate all synod owned schools, enabling donors to give gifts directly to the schools.

### Ordaining male teachers

Recognizing the effectiveness of other policies, the convention voted to keep many the same. They reaffirmed the 1991 resolution to ordain male teachers. The Mission Statement and Objectives will not be printed as a prologue to the constitution, thus, Article IV "Object" will remain as stated.



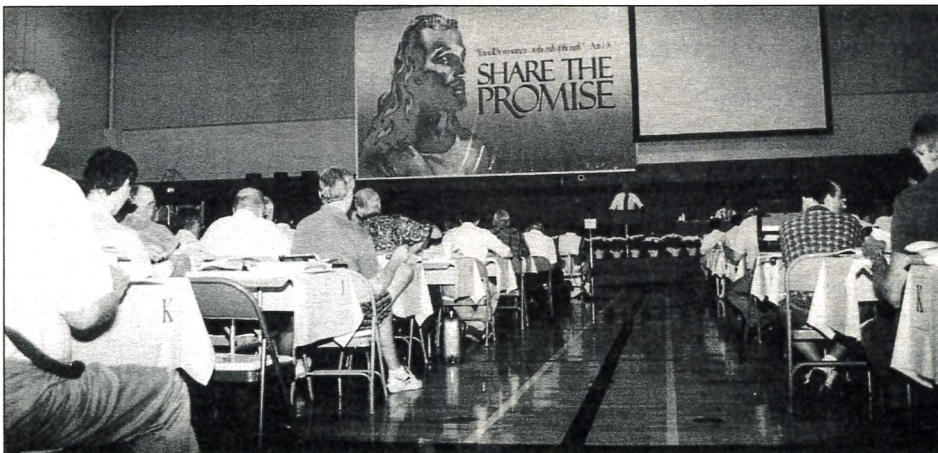
Delegates get to know each other before they get down to work.

### Stewardship efforts

To provide financial resources to share the promise, the convention adopted a coordinated funding effort entitled, "Proclaim the Promise." The congregational phase of "Proclaim the Promise" seeks to strengthen relationships with congregations through visits by synodical and district officers, to foster financial stewardship through a Bible study entitled "The Grace of Giving," and to encourage increases in congregational mission offerings that exceed inflation.

The individual phase of "Proclaim the Promise" seeks to raise 25 million dollars in current gifts and 75 million dollars in deferred gifts for the synod over a five-year period. The plan also seeks to provide a similar amount for congregations and WELS agencies. The convention authorized the calling of three additional gift planning counselors for 1995-96 to accomplish these goals.

Delegates adopted a budget for 1995-96 of \$36,907,000 and \$36,591,000 for 1996-97 fiscal year. The Human Resources Committee was directed by the convention to prepare a rationale



Share the Promise—the convention and synod two-year theme—was highlighted to the delegates, reminding them of our mission.

for the various salary schedules and present it to the 1997 convention.

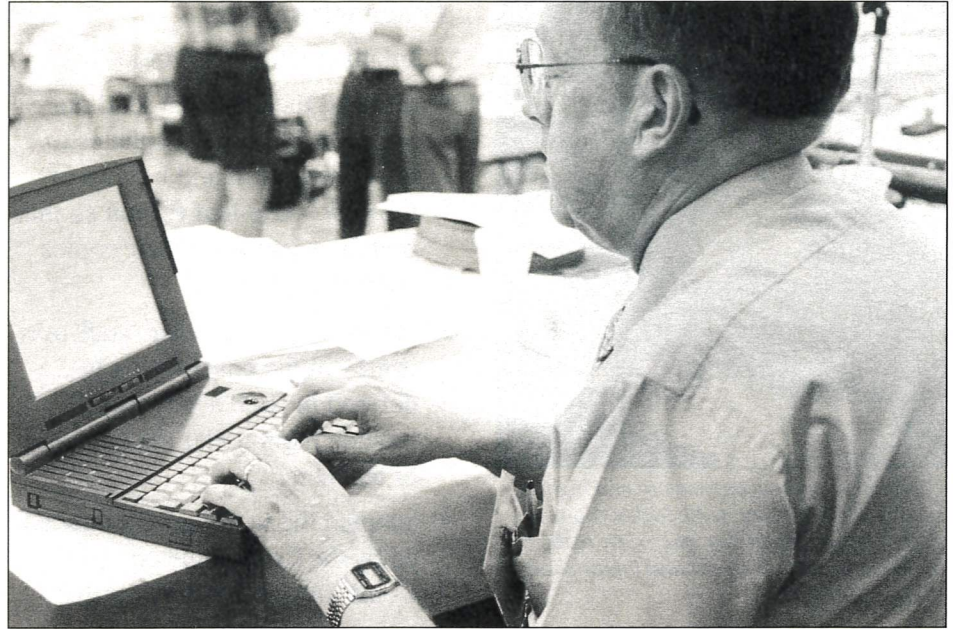
Reimbursement of health care premiums to all synodical salaried workers who retire after August 31, 1995, will be discontinued. To achieve an orderly transition to this loss of benefits, active workers 55 and older as of October 1, 1995, will receive an annual salary supplement based on their age and years of service.

### High tech

High tech communication was evident throughout the convention. Pastor Doug Bode recorded the minutes of the sessions on his laptop computer enabling instant correction of a master copy used to produce copies for the delegates. Pastor Robert Fleischmann provided daily reports of convention action to the entire synod via WELSNET through his laptop computer. Floor committee chairmen used computers to generate reports and resolutions of floor committees by word processing. Votes for the elections were recorded on computer cards and electronically counted, with the results printed instantly. The Media Relations Committee transmitted press releases to news sources through fax machines.



*It wasn't all work for the delegates. Some take advantage of a break to read and relax in Michigan Lutheran Seminary's student union.*



*One example of the high tech convention: synod secretary, Rev. Doug Bode, recorded the minutes on his laptop computer. This allowed corrections to be updated immediately and copied for the delegates.*

### Special visitors

Reverend George Orvick, president of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and Pastor Gerhard Wilde, president of the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church in Germany addressed the convention. Missionaries John Janosek, Blantyre; Pieter Reid, Indonesia; John Hartwig, formerly from Thailand; James Sherod, Japan; John Sullivan, Russia; Gary Schroeder, Hong Kong; Charles Gumm, Brazil; and teacher William Hadler, Apacheland, also reported concerning their ministries.

### Synod archives

The convention directed the synodical presidium to appoint a special committee to examine the need for expanded archives and adequate staff with special concern for cost and sources of funding. The committee will report its findings to the 1997 synod convention.



*Meet Glenn Flunker, a member of Trinity, Appleton, Wis. Flunker was a first time delegate to this year's convention.*

*"I've been to district conventions, but they aren't the same. This was a once-in-a-lifetime experience.*

*"There's a camaraderie—everyone thinks the same. Not only do you get to see and hear what's going on, you get together with people from all over who are of the same belief. I really enjoyed it."*



Convention pages—elementary and high school students relax in the locker room. Pages are on call all day, each day, ready to hand out copies of reports and information to every delegate.

### Other action

In other action the voters

- directed the synod to send out accurate and timely updates to the constitution and bylaws in the new loose-leaf format so that members can keep their copies current.
- resolved that the term “staff ministers” in the constitution be defined in such a way as to include them under the category of teachers.
- adopted the wording recommended by the Committee on Constitutional Matters for the

establishment of the boards of control for Martin Luther College and Luther Preparatory School.

Seven congregations, 32 pastors, and 40 teachers were accepted into membership.

In the closing service, the delegates witnessed the installation of Professor Theodore Olsen as the first president of Martin Luther College, and the reelected officers of the synod were also installed.

*Robert Sievert is development manager of Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Service, Milwaukee.*

## Election results—53rd WELS convention

### RESULTS OF SYNOD PRESIDUM OFFICES

**President:** Rev. Karl Gurgel

**1st Vice President:** Rev. Richard Lauersdorf

**2nd Vice President:** Rev. Robert Zink

**Secretary:** Rev. Douglas Bode

### RESULTS OF SYNOD NOMINATING COMMITTEE OFFICES

#### World Missions—Executive Committee for

Lutheran Apache Mission: Rev. Silas Krueger

Lutheran Church of Central Africa: Rev. David Sternhagen

Japan, Europe, and Asia: Rev. Ronald Freier

Latin American Missions: Prof. Lawrence Retberg

Southeast Asia Missions: Rev. Daniel Koelpin

#### Northwestern Publishing House

##### Board of Directors:

Professor/Pastoral Ministry:

Professor Joel Fredrich

Layman: Mr. Thomas Schultz

Pastor: Rev. Myron Sordahl

##### Board for Parish Services:

Chairman, Commission on

Evangelism: Rev. James Huebner

Chairman, Commission on Parish

Schools: Teacher Daniel Schmal

Member-at-Large: Mr. Thomas Koepsell

##### Board for Ministerial Education:

Area Lutheran high school representative: Teacher Merlyn Kruse

Layman: Mr. R. Bowen Loftin

##### Coordinating Council:

Layman: Mr. Robert Hering

Layman: Mr. Merle Blum

##### Divisional Board for Home Missions:

Chairman: Rev. Kenneth Gast

##### Divisional Board for World Missions:

Chairman: Rev. William Meier

##### Divisional Board for Ministerial Education:

Chairman: Rev. Mark Zarling

##### Board of Trustees:

Chairman: Rev. William Gabb

### RESULTS OF DISTRICT-NOMINATED OFFICES

#### Board of Trustees:

Pastor (MN): Rev. Carl Henkel

Layman (SA): Mr. Robert Steinke

Layman (NA): Mr. Dale Anderson

Layman (DM): Mr. Wilfred Bauer

Layman (SC): Mr. David Griffith

#### Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary

##### Board of Control:

Layman (SEW): Mr. John D.

Jenswold

Pastor (WW): Rev. John Schuetze

Pastor (MI): Rev. James Mattek

#### Michigan Lutheran Seminary

##### Board of Control:

Pastor (MI): Rev. Lynn Schroeder

Teacher (MI): Teacher Jerold Meier

Layman (MI): Mr. Hoge Holtz

##### Board of Trustees:

Pastor (MI): Rev. Steven Korth



Reelected WELS officers, from left: first vice president Richard Lauersdorf, president Karl Gurgel, second vice president Robert Zink, and secretary Douglas Bode.

## WELSNET announces awards

WELSNET plans to honor two WELS members for outstanding efforts in communication. The communication award will be given to someone over 21 who, through computers, television, radio, print, or audio and visual tapes, has positively affected or taught a significant number of WELS members.

The communication scholarship recipient will be a college freshman, sophomore, or junior. In some way, he or she must have furthered communication efforts within the synod—possibly in an educational institution.

Nominees must be WELS members to qualify. For a nomination form and guidelines, contact Amanda Kohlmetz at 414/475-7514 ext. 157; WELSNET e-mail address: amanda.kohlmetz@wels.net. Deadline: February 16, 1996. Recipients will be announced in March 1996.

## Obituary

### James Lester Raabe 1936-1995

James Lester Raabe was born Nov. 3, 1936 in Stevensville, Mich. He died Aug. 1, 1995 in Onalaska, Wis.

A 1959 graduate of Dr. Martin Luther College, he served at St. Peter, Milwaukee, St. Paul, Menomonie, and St. Paul, Wonewoc, all in Wis. He also taught at Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, and St. Paul, Arlington, Minn. He was principal of Luther High School, Onalaska, Wis.

He is survived by wife, Lillian; sons Michael (Lori) and Dennis (Kim); daughter Sherri (Joel) Wendland; four grandchildren; mother Lillian; sisters Ellen (Arlan) Miller and Peggy (Peter) Birschbach. He was preceded in death by father Lester, brother Richard, and grandson Nicholas.

## Building bridges across islands

Home and world missionaries in the Caribbean met in February to exchange ideas and encouragement. Because the missions are administered separately, they have had little opportunity to get together. World missions supervise Spanish-speaking islands, and home missions supervise English-speaking islands.

Missionary David Kehl, from St. John's, Antigua, shares why the spirit of cooperation is vital:

We thought we might not see Edwin Ortiz again. Ten years old, he came from Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. He only spoke Spanish. As the years went on, he learned English. He also learned tremendous things about Jesus. Four years later, he graduated and moved away—we

didn't know where he was, or if he would come back.

Then Missionary Baerbock reported, "A 14-year-old young man called me from Santo Domingo. He said he was Edwin Ortiz—a graduate of St. John's. Since then he has gone with me to classes, and I have given him communion. We have become good friends; I am impressed with Edwin. It says something to me about the training you do with God's Word that Edwin would seek out an unknown pastor in another country to continue growing in the faith."

Missionaries are planning to meet again in January 1996. They want to work together to help as many as possible mature in Christ with the eagerness of Edwin Ortiz.



Lawrence Retberg, at the chalkboard, solicits ideas for ways world and home missions boards might cooperate in the work in the Caribbean.

**DON'T  
KEEP  
THIS  
MAGAZINE!**

### One reader writes:

"I share my *Northwestern Lutheran* with residents of a rehabilitation center. I read some

articles plus a paragraph or two from the Bible to them. They are like sponges—ever thirsty for the Word

and for stories they can understand where God is working. Thank you for making it easy to let people know that God loves them."

Have you shared NL? Write or call to let us know how—and if you want, why—you shared your copy. We'll send you another one free.

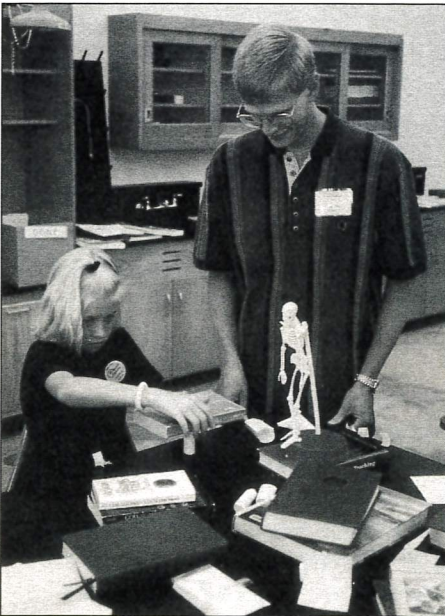
*Northwestern Lutheran*, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398; 414/256-3232; fax 414/256-3899.

## WELS teachers develop science curriculum materials

Twenty-six WELS teachers gathered at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., in July for a science curriculum institute. The participants—working with MLC science department professors—developed materials to assist WELS teachers in teaching science from a scriptural viewpoint.

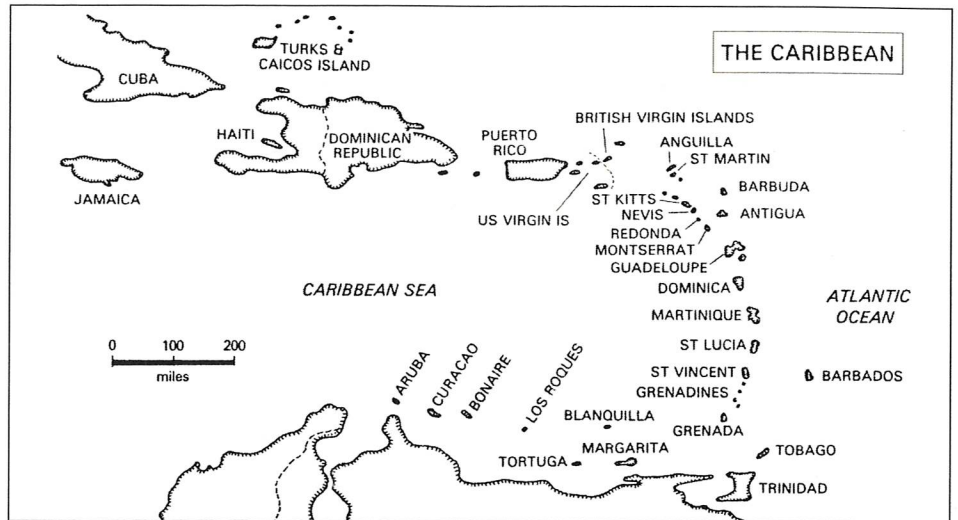
The institute included early childhood, elementary, and high school teachers from throughout the synod. The group identified topics and developed the units of study, emphasizing a hands-on approach.

Materials will be available to WELS teachers at next year's national teachers convention. WELS Commission on Parish Schools sponsored the institute with the help of a grant from AAL.



Alan Uher, St. Martin, Watertown, S.D., observes an elementary student as they work on the project he developed as part of the Science Curriculum Institute held at Martin Luther College.

## Around the islands: WELS missions in the Caribbean



### English speaking—home missions Antigua

St. John's, started in 1973, has 340 souls. Sixty children are enrolled in the preschool and primary school. Errol Howe from Antigua accepted a position as local worship assistant. A new worship/study center is planned for the southern part of the island.

### St. Lucia

Trinity, an exploratory mission, began as an Antiguan outreach. A total of 80 people are under spiritual care. Members are looking for a house to use as a parish center. Services are held in the assembly hall of a school.

### Spanish speaking—world missions Dominican Republic

WELS is the only Lutheran church on the island. An average of 60 people attend two weekly worship services, and 240 total attend adult and children's Bible studies held every day of the week.

### Puerto Rico

Its four congregations are located in San Juan, Humacao, Barrancas, and Guayama. With a total of 226 baptized members, Puerto Rico continues on its course to develop an indigenous church that could continue without the presence of a missionary.

### Outreach stations Cuba

Missionary John Strackbein and others have made five trips to Cuba. They are strengthening ties with a Lutheran pastor who shepherds about 1,500 souls in 22 house churches. Bimonthly visits by Spanish-speaking missionaries are planned over the next two years.

### Grenada

A telecommunication link with Antigua's worship and Bible studies is being planned to give a weekly ministry to people our missionaries visit every other month.

### U.S. Virgin Islands

Puerto Rican missionaries lead periodic worship for several WELS members in St. Thomas and St. Croix.

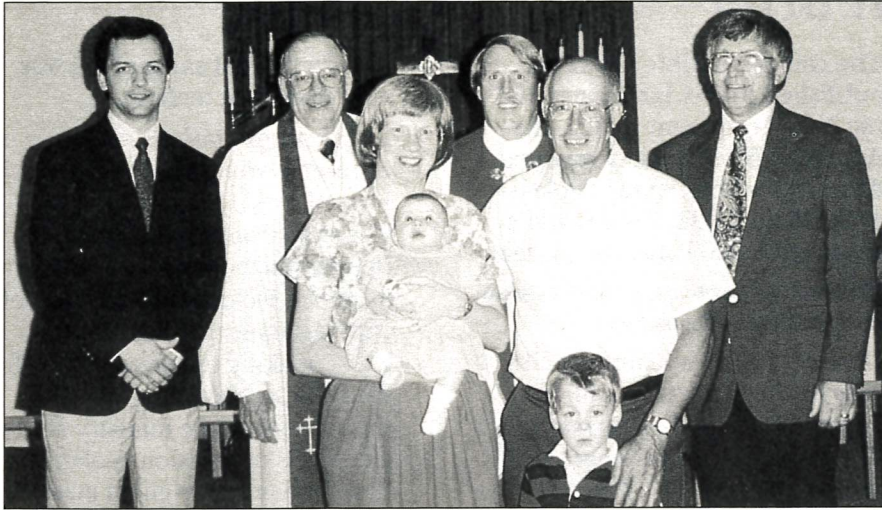
### Future opportunities Cayman Islands

A number of Lutherans who lived in the Isle of Youth moved to the Caymans. Missionaries at the 1996 conference of Caribbean churches hope to do an outreach test there.

### Trinidad

WELS member Noel Gobin lives in Toronto, Canada. He makes frequent trips to visit contacts from Toronto, his family and friends, and those connected to our ministry in Antigua.





Gerald and Doris Schulte were commissioned on July 9 as lay workers for the Mwembeshi mission compound in Zambia. They will assist the mission staff with general maintenance of the grounds, transporting pastors, bookkeeping, and payroll.

"Our bags should always be packed. We should be ready when

God calls us to serve in any capacity," said Gerald. The Schultes, supported by WELS Kingdom Workers, will serve for three years, replacing Daryl and Nancy Lucke who completed a five year call in July.

Back row, from left: David Maertz, Daniel Westendorf, Lance Hoff, James Mumm; front row, Doris and Gerald, Sarah, Nathan.

## rē · li · giōn

Defining religion

**apologetics:** The use of logical arguments and evidence in defense of Christian truth against the attacks of unbelievers. However, human argument can never bring anyone to faith. The gospel alone is God's power for salvation (Romans 1:16; 10:17).



Jacob Tse Nga Kok was ordained on April 9. Tse is an evangelist at South Asian Lutheran Evangelical Mission (SALEM), Taipo Lutheran Church in

Hong Kong. Reverend Tse is SALEM's secretary, one of the seven Chinese directors, and chaplain for Immanuel Lutheran College.

## Big changes for WELSNET

Format changes to WELSNET, the computer bulletin board for WELS, have made it easier to keep in touch by computer with others in WELS.

The old format required each command to be typed in. The new format allows you to access files, execute commands, or move around the system with a click of your mouse.

To access WELSNET's graphics, subscribers will need to use NovaTerm—a customized, client communication software. NovaTerm is free to WELSNET subscribers. Other communication software may be used, but will only allow for text-based interface.

Another new WELSNET feature is its Internet connection. This does not give WELSNET users the ability to access the Internet, such as the World Wide Web; it only allows people to access WELSNET via the Internet. The connection does, however, give WELSNET subscribers the ability to send and receive e-mail on the Internet. It also allows long-distance subscribers who access WELSNET via the Internet to pay only for a local phone call and a monthly Internet provider fee. Check the local Internet providers in your area for fees and services. Some local libraries or chambers of commerce offer free or discounted Internet access.

To access WELSNET on the Internet, the telnet address is "wels.net"—to access WELSNET through your modem, dial 414/475-7514.

## For the record

Members of WELS churches increased financial support of their congregations by more than \$5.5 million in 1994. Congregational support for the synod increased by \$412,000, but special offerings by WELS members declined by more than one million dollars. Overall giving increased \$4.8 million, slightly more than 3 percent.



## American Christianity sluggish

A poll taken this year by Barna Research Group has led the polltakers to conclude that "Christianity is a faith at risk." Some negative trends were



adult Sunday school attendance—down to 16 percent in 1995 from 23 percent in 1991



Bible reading outside of church—down to 31 percent from 47 percent



belief that Jesus Christ committed sins while on earth—42 percent

Although church attendance has remained stable over the past year, it is at 42 percent, down from 49 percent in 1991. Still, 70 percent claimed to believe in a biblical definition of God.

(Reported in *The Futurist*, July-August 1995)

## LCMS re-elects Barry

The 1200 voting delegates to the 59th convention of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) re-elected Rev. A.L. Barry, 63, to a second three-year term as president of the 2.6 million-member denomination.

## In brief

- **The complete Bible has been published in 341 languages and the New Testament in 822**, the American Bible Society reported. At least one book of the Bible is available in 2,092 of the world's estimated 6,000 languages, it said. *(Reprinted with permission from National & International Religion Report.)*
- **God is on the wane among citizens in the European Union**, according to a poll published July 27 by the European Commission, an agency of the EU. The poll reports that in every country except Greece and Spain, the number of people rating God as "very important" in their lives is down in comparison with a similar survey 10 years ago. Denmark was the least religious country in the European Union, with only 14 percent of those polled saying God was important in their lives. Greece was the most religious, with more

than 75 percent saying God was very important to them.

- **Local congregations still may be regularly violating the copyright laws of the U.S.**, according to Christian Copyright Licensing International of Portland, Ore. For example, the common practice of copying songs onto church bulletins, making rehearsal copies for the choir, or recording worship services for a tape ministry is illegal unless permission is obtained first for any copyrighted material used. **A brochure for church workers by Richard R. Hammar, "Copyright Law and the Local Church," is available to answer some of the frequently asked questions from congregations.** (The brochure is available in limited quantity from WELS Communication Services, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398; fax 414/256-3899.)

## Delegates to China conference warned against bringing Bibles

U.S. delegates to the September international women's conference in China were warned they might be arrested if they took Bibles into the country or participated in religious activities while there.

A State Department official warned representatives of American groups planning to attend the United Nations-

sponsored conference in Beijing that the United States would not be able to protect them if they violated laws of the Communist nation.

"You may be thinking of taking a lot of Bibles," Georgia A. Rogers, the State Department's director of consular affairs, said. "That is not a good idea. They don't like that."

## ELS convention: worship and missions

In his 22nd annual message to the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) June 18-22, President George Orvick urged listeners to follow "a God-pleasing directive for our synod—have a mission-minded spirit." Recalling the commission of Christ, Orvick emphasized, "The work of missions is the very life-blood of the church."

The convention essay was a study

in Lutheran liturgy and hymnody. The Worship Committee announced that nearly 6,000 copies of the synod's new hymnbook, the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary*, have been sold before publication. The pages will soon go to the engraver. Final editing, proofing, and some copyright work remain before printing. The project is about four years old.

## Group wants state to disconnect papal visit phone line

Church-state separationists have criticized the governor of Maryland for setting up a toll-free telephone number to dispense information about Pope John Paul II's planned October visit to Baltimore.

Americans United for Separation of Church and State said the telephone number violated the Constitution and should be suspended. "Promotion of the pope's visit should be left to the Archdiocese of Baltimore, lest the impression be

created that the state of Maryland is granting special favors to one church," wrote Barry W. Lynn, executive director of Americans United.

Lynn noted that a federal court found Philadelphia officials had crossed the church-state divide when they spent more than \$200,000 to erect an altar and a cross for a papal Mass in that city during John Paul's 1979 visit.

The governor, Parris Glendening, who is Catholic, said that the toll-free

number was a necessary part of planning for the safety and traffic requirements associated with the papal visit. At an earlier news conference, he also said the papal visit "transcends any particular religion."



### WISCONSIN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD Financial report

#### CURRENT BUDGETARY FUND

##### Statement of changes in fund balance/Year ended June 30, 1995

	1995 actual	1994 actual	1995 budget
Revenues:	\$	\$	\$
Synod Mission Offerings	15,861,709	15,422,928	15,700,000
Gifts and memorials	379,969	138,140	150,000
Bequest/planned giving income	600,022	360,152	500,000
Tuition and fees	7,612,601	7,041,081	7,538,000
Other income	90,433	89,636	80,000
Transfers-endwmt/trust earnings	225,403	221,615	224,000
Transfers-gift trust	7,656,781	6,907,470	7,783,000
Transfers-continuing programs	2,350,357	1,632,145	1,993,000
Transfers-other	3,493	-	-
Total revenues	<u>34,780,768</u>	<u>31,813,167</u>	<u>33,968,000</u>
Expenditures:			
Administration Division	2,783,512	2,596,899	2,762,000
Home Missions Division	6,155,861	5,963,844	6,326,000
World Missions Division	6,770,479	6,331,520	6,406,000
Ministerial Education Division	16,086,293	15,306,228	15,950,000
Parish Services Division	1,162,887	1,133,301	1,261,000
Fiscal Services Division	<u>1,349,780</u>	<u>1,401,201</u>	<u>1,396,000</u>
Total expenditures	<u>34,308,812</u>	<u>32,732,993</u>	<u>34,101,000</u>
Net change for the period	471,956	(919,826)	
Fund balance-beginning of year	155,746	1,075,572	
Fund balance-end of period	<u>627,702</u>	<u>155,746</u>	

#### SCHEDULE A—SYNOD MISSION SUBSCRIPTION PERFORMANCE

##### Six Months Ended June 30, 1995

	Total Subscription			Offerings Received			
	Communicants 12/31/94	1995	Year to Date Projected	June Offerings	Six Month Offerings	Percent of Sbscrptn	Annual Ave Per Commun
Arizona-California	16,420	\$ 950,146	\$ 425,864	\$ 67,956	\$ 428,283	100.6%	52.17
Dakota-Montana	9,340	432,230	166,245	24,829	169,296	101.8	36.25
Michigan	37,272	2,090,667	872,478	155,310	895,141	102.6	48.03
Minnesota	44,834	2,454,042	1,074,543	156,398	975,413	90.8	43.51
Nebraska	10,010	537,906	208,126	34,633	226,614	108.9	45.28
North Atlantic	3,605	326,428	143,424	26,525	155,348	108.3	86.18
Northern Wisconsin	61,350	2,524,580	1,015,553	155,553	953,875	93.9	31.10
Pacific Northwest	4,745	252,972	112,913	18,160	113,343	100.4	47.77
South Atlantic	6,172	386,716	191,798	35,191	183,895	95.9	59.59
South Central	4,053	314,366	146,773	25,336	151,114	103.0	74.57
Southeastern Wisconsin	58,165	3,235,311	1,295,290	223,631	1,209,220	93.4	41.58
Western Wisconsin	<u>60,255</u>	<u>2,929,615</u>	<u>1,214,670</u>	<u>204,356</u>	<u>1,252,235</u>	<u>103.1</u>	<u>41.56</u>
Total - This Year	<u>316,221</u>	<u>16,434,979</u>	<u>6,867,677</u>	<u>1,127,878</u>	<u>6,713,777</u>	<u>97.8</u>	<u>42.46</u>
Total - Last Year	<u>316,748</u>	<u>16,240,856</u>	<u>6,704,428</u>	<u>1,172,796</u>	<u>6,507,894</u>	<u>97.1</u>	<u>41.09</u>

#### BALANCE SHEET

	June 30, 1995	June 30, 1994
Assets:	\$	\$
Cash and cash equivalents	545,721	11,534
Due from other funds	16,680	20,465
Accounts receivable-cash adv.	88,250	73,250
Cash advances-schools	274,437	275,798
Other accounts receivable	85,487	44,256
Mortgage note receivable	21,240	22,813
Allowance for doubtful accts	(92,000)	(92,000)
Prepaid expenses	<u>37,958</u>	<u>6,338</u>
Total assets	<u>977,773</u>	<u>362,454</u>
Liabilities and fund balance:		
Accounts payable	350,071	206,708
Fund balance	<u>627,702</u>	<u>155,746</u>
Total liabilities and fund balance	<u>977,773</u>	<u>362,454</u>



We experienced several rainy days while our six-year-old grandson was visiting us this past summer. On the evening news the weatherman was giving a flash flood warning. Our grandson looked at us and said, "There won't be a big flood because God promised, and he gave us the rainbow to remind us."

—Edna Woodard  
Zapata, Texas

# Bulletin BOARD & NOTICES

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

## COLLOQUY REQUEST

Jon Nelson, former LCMS teacher, has requested a colloquy for the purpose of entering the WELS teaching ministry. Please address pertinent correspondence to Pastor Herbert Prah, 215 E Hamilton, Eau Claire WI 54701.

## CHANGE IN MINISTRY

### Teachers:

**Bader, Connie**, to Luther HS, Onalaska, Wis.  
**Beyersdorf, Scott D.**, to St. Andrew, St. Paul Park, Minn.  
**Bintz, Patty J.**, from Japan, to Calvary, Thiensville, Wis.  
**Brinkman, Joseph M.**, to Zion, South Milwaukee, Wis.  
**Bufe, Katrina**, to Zion, Columbus, Wis.  
**Buman, Lynn M.**, from St. John, Burlington, Wis., to Emanuel, Tawas City, Mich.  
**DuFore, Ruth A.**, from Christ the King, Palatine, Ill., to Faith, Antioch, Ill.  
**Frey, Elaine**, to Nebraska LHS, Waco, Neb.  
**Gauger, Beth L.**, to West LHS, Hopkins, Minn.  
**Goodall, Richard A.**, from Good Shepherd, Cedar Rapids, Ia., to Good Shepherd, Omaha, Neb.  
**Guenther, Susan E.**, to St. John, Mukwonago, Wis.  
**Hahn, Sandra A.**, to St. John, Oak Creek, Wis.  
**Kiecker, Michael**, to Emanuel, New London, Wis.  
**Lange, Dianne R.**, from St. John, Oak Creek, Wis., to Peace, Holiday, Fla.  
**Lange, Eric C.**, to Peace, Holiday, Fla.  
**Lindeman, Angela R.**, to Bethlehem, Menomonee Falls, Wis.  
**Luehring, Frederick M.**, from Our Redeemer, Madison, Wis., to St. Paul, Lake Mills, Wis.  
**Marten, Nancy M.**, to St. Peter, Milwaukee, Wis.  
**Miller, Martin M.**, to St. Andrew, Chicago, Ill.  
**Ohr, Mark A.**, to St. John, Goodhue, Minn.  
**Oldre, Sonja J.**, to Jerusalem, Morton Grove, Ill.  
**Ricke, Joy K.**, to Mt. Olive, Overland Park, Kan.  
**Sievert, Jean**, to Risen Savior, Milwaukee, Wis.  
**Sosinski, Michelle K.**, to St. John, Bay City, Mich.  
**Stern, Patricia G.**, to St. Stephen, Adrian, Mich.  
**Uher, Alan E.**, to St. Martin, Watertown, S.D.  
**Wendorf, Marilyn**, to Centennial, Milwaukee, Wis.

## rē · li · giōn

Defining religion

**nihilism:** A teaching that denies all traditional values and any objective ground of truth or morality. Our Savior, however, declares, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free" (John 8:31,32).

**Wernicke, Diane E.**, from Mt. Olive, Appleton, Wis., to Trinity, Kaukauna, Wis.

**Wilk, Cathlyn**, from Gloria Dei Bethesda, Milwaukee, Wis., to Good Shepherd, West Allis, Wis.

**Zuleger, Wayne**, from Northwestern College, Watertown, Wis., to St. Paul, Ixonia, Wis.

### Pastors:

**Backus, Andrew R.**, from Trinity, Johnson, Minn., to St. John, Hemlock, Mich.

**Bork, Gregory R.**, from Faith, Irvine, Calif. (ELS), to California LHS, Wildomar, Calif.

**Broehm, Dennis L.**, from Prince of Peace, Martinez, Ga., to Immanuel, Manitowoc, Wis.

**Gerlach, Bryan M.**, from St. Mark, Citrus Heights, Calif., to administrator, WELS Commission on Worship.

**Hefti, Roy**, to Luther HS, Onalaska, Wis.

**Leyrer, Carl W.**, from Confessional Ev. Luth. Church, Colombia, South America, to Winnebago Lutheran Academy, Fond du Lac, Wis.

**Limmer, Bill F.**, from Immanuel, Tyler, Minn., to St. John, Caledonia, Minn.

**Rahn, Kenneth D.**, from St. John, Redwood Falls, Minn., to Samuel, Marshall, Minn.

**Schlieve, Richard W.**, from Grace, Geneva, Neb., to Trinity, Dundee, Wis.

**Tauscher, James W.**, from Our Savior, San Antonio, Tex., to Peace, Boulder, Col.

### ITEMS WANTED

**Old paraments**—to make new ones. Especially need symbols for festivals, Holy Spirit, and Advent. Kathleen Bell, 918/251-4710.

**Church pews**—two. Call Linda for more information, 414/256-3232.

### ITEMS AVAILABLE

**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 the book and accompanying resources (catalog item 38-4001, \$14.95) contact Northwestern Publishing House, 1-800-662-6022.

**Organ**—with Leslie speaker. Free for cost of shipping. Dorothy Simmons, 608/752-3097.

**Organ**—for mission church. Hammond, excellent condition. Free for cost of shipping. 414/757-6457.

**Organ**—Rhythm II Hammond T-422. Free for cost of shipping. Good Shepherd, Beloit, Wis., 608/362-0669.

**Altar covers**—White and green. Pulpit, lectern, and superfrontal, 70x18". Free for cost of shipping. Trinity, Hartford, Wis., 414/673-3033.

**Hymnals and Bibles**—171, *The Lutheran Hymnal*; 48, King James Version Bibles. Free for cost of shipping. St. John, N 9125 Military Rd, Kaukauna WI 54130; 414/766-5838.

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

### ANNIVERSARIES

**Hubertus, Wis.**—Crown of Life (25). Oct. 1. Service 9 AM; entertainment and dinner following. Call 414/628-3476 for reservations.

**Redford, Mich.**—Lola Park (50). Nov. 19. Service, 10:15 AM; pig roast follows. 313/532-8655.

**Pompano Beach, Fla.**—Ocean Drive. Nov. 19, 30th anniv. of church building and dedication of remodeled facilities. 305/942-1216.

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

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

**Wonewoc, Wis.**—St. Paul (125). Jan. 14, 1996—theme Sunday; Apr. 28, 1996—confirmation reunion; Aug. 11, 1996—fellowship picnic; Oct. 27, 1996—anniversary heritage. Confirmands contact Rachelle Richert, PO Box 52, Wonewoc WI 53968.

**Decatur, Ga.**—Sola Scriptura (25). Oct. 29. Services, 8:30 and 11:30 AM; 4:30 PM—Reformation/anniversary, meal follows. George Thompson, 770/474-7682.

**Wrightstown, Wis.**—St. John school (50). Apr. 28, 1996. 9:30 AM, service; 11 AM, open house; noon, dinner and program. 261 Clay St, Wrightstown, WI 54180; 414/532-4361.

### NAMES WANTED

**Ken-Caryl Ranch/SW Denver Metro Area, Col.**—Pastor Ross Stelljes, 11198 Wildhorse Peak, Littleton CO 80127; 303/904-1214.

### NEW ADDRESS

**Findlay, Ohio**—Immanuel, 2300 N Ridge Rd, Findlay OH 45840.

**Stow, Ohio**—Hope. Formerly Cuyahoga Falls. Worship 9:30 AM; Echo Hills Elementary, 4405 Stow Rd, Stow OH. Mailing address: Pastor Earl Noffsinger, 46 Monroe Ave, Cuyahoga Falls OH 44221.

### COMING EVENTS

**Enrichment seminar**—Oct. 14, Luther HS, Onalaska, Wis. Topics include: marriage, parenting, retirement, prayer. Registration, 7:45 AM. \$10, includes breakfast and lunch. Kids' convention held at St. Paul, Onalaska. Contact Jeff Pralle, W5077 Beverly Dr, Onalaska WI 54650; 608/783-2049.

**Women's retreat**—Spiritual renewal weekend for women. Apr. 12-14, 1996, Rochester, Minn. Bev, 507/931-1866.

**Women's retreat**—Christian woman today retreat. Mar. 15-17, 1996. Country Inn, Waukesha, Wis. Naomi Schnitker, 414/784-9477.

**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.

**Drawing from the WELS**—Art exhibit of work done by WELS artists across the U.S. Opening reception—Oct. 20, 6-7:30 PM. Wisconsin Lutheran College, 8800 W Bluemound Rd, Milwaukee WI 53226; 414/774-8620; FAX 414/774-9367.

**WELS handbell festival**—Apr. 20-21, 1996. St. Croix LHS, West St. Paul, Minn. Cheryl Diener, 223 W Badger St, Waupaca WI 54981; 715/258-7203.

# Great expectations

Karl R. Gurgel

**H**ave you ever dealt with something unexpected. Didn't it leave you off-balance and unsure? At those times we feel vulnerable and at the mercy of others. Experiencing the unexpected does not build confidence.

All of us come equipped with expectations. A baby cries, expecting some attention: to be changed or fed. People talk, usually expecting someone to listen. A loving spouse expects to be treated lovingly in return. It throws us off when the expected does not happen.

Called workers come with expectations, too. We might even say they have great expectations. They expect the Word of God to work. For, whenever the Word of God is read, spoken, or heard, the Holy Spirit is active in and through it and produces results. Called workers come with that expectation. Would you want it any other way?

Called workers expect it to be that way with you too. They expect the Word of God to have worked in your heart and to be at work in your life. Just as you expect them to act in a Christian way, they expect the same of you.

Called workers, as they care for your soul and the souls of your children, expect you will be concerned about their physical welfare. They expect, just as your children expect from you, that they will mean more to you than just another name, another person. They expect there

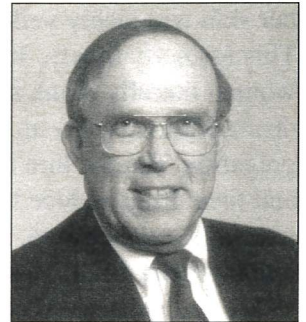
will be genuine Christian concern and love between you.

But, how often we disappoint one another with the unexpected! Expecting a Christian response from a fellow believer, we experience instead a callous and loveless attitude. It's almost as if we weren't both part of the same family, the family of believers, whose one head is our Savior, Jesus.

Unfortunately, such sins against each other can be expected. They happen. Can we also expect a simple sentence, "I'm sorry," and an equally simple response, "I forgive you"?

By this time the 221 new workers who were assigned this spring have taken up their duties in many of our congregations. How about the expectations they had of you, or you had of them? Have they all been realized? Do you even know what expectations they had? Do they know yours?

I hope the answer is yes. I hope the answer is yes because you asked them what they were expecting from you and you told them what you were expecting from them. I hope where either failed the other, where the unexpected happened, each could expect the other to take the lead in saying "I'm sorry" or "I forgive you." I pray I can have this expectation of all of you because of the great expectation we all share in common, God's unexpected love for us all.



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

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*How often  
we disappoint  
one another  
with the  
unexpected!*

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# The fruit of the Spirit is faithfulness

James A. Aderman

**H**er body was beautifully dressed and laid in a rich casket, but her skin was sickly yellow brown. This formerly lovely, 30-something woman literally drank herself to death. Melissa grew up in my congregation. But the lure of alcohol and then drugs seduced her out of a marriage, motherhood, steady employment, health, and the church.

We had occasional contact over the years, mostly when she was hospitalized with a failing liver. I talked to her days before she died. She was jaundiced and weak, but eager to talk. She admitted she made a mess of her life; she spoke openly about her health and dying.

"Melissa," I asked, "if you were to die, do you know where you'd be?"

"Heaven. I'd be in heaven."

"How can you be sure of that?" I probed.

Her confident answer, "Because Jesus forgave my sins."

Like the prodigal son's father, God remained faithful to Melissa though she "squandered [her] wealth in wild living." He refused to cancel his baptism covenant. He nursed her faith. He welcomed her home. "If we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself" (2 Timothy 2:13).

## God's faithfulness is evident

No less than 11 times in the New Testament—more than 30 in the Old—God is called faithful. We see his faithfulness at Jesus' cross and empty tomb. The Savior guarantees that God faithfully forgives the penitent, protects us, defends us.

He never flinches, "Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:35-39).

## Imitators of God's faithfulness

We are not just recipients of God's faithfulness; we are imitators. Inseparably attached to faith in Jesus is the Spirit's reliability and fidelity. He hasn't only promised, "Be faithful . . . and I will give you the crown of life" (Revelation 2:10); he has empowered us to faithfulness.

Being made faithful to God, we become faithful in all our responsibilities and relationships. Christian husbands live as the Christ-figure in their homes; wives as a picture of

the church. Believing parents are able to be as patient and forgiving as our Father was to Melissa. Christian children faithfully obey their parents.

The strength to practice the Spirit's faithfulness is in our possession; it's part of the new person we are in Christ. We not only enjoy our Father's faithfulness. We enjoy being faithful like our Father. We are positioned as the "faithful servant" who hears his master's commendation, "Well done!" (Matthew 25:21). "The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it" (1 Thessalonians 5:24).

*James Aderman is pastor at Fairview, Milwaukee.*

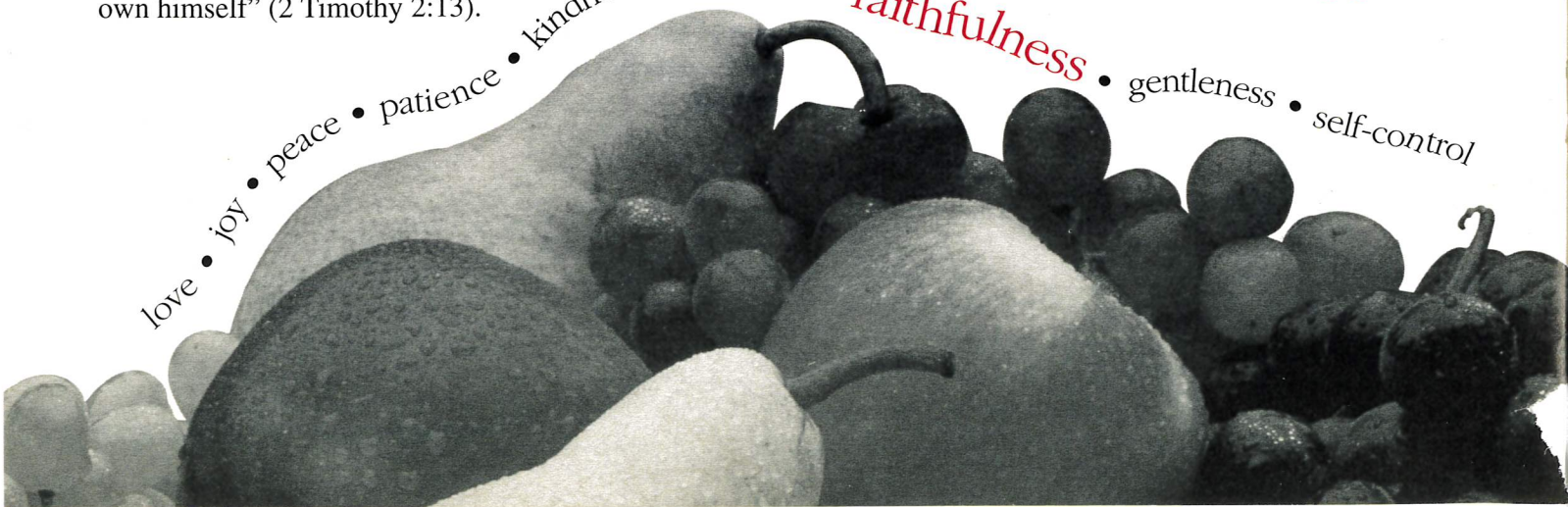
### FOR PERSONAL STUDY

1. Examples of God's faithfulness are mentioned above. List other references by checking a concordance under "faithful." When do you especially need assurance of the Lord's faithfulness?

2. List commitments you are tempted to neglect. The Spirit's faithfulness lives within you along with your faith in Jesus. How does that bolster you to fulfill those commitments?

*Next: The virtue of gentleness*

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



# Promise Keepers— “A man’s man is a godly man”

Joel C. Gerlach

“I’d like to see men come together in great numbers and show them that a man’s man is a godly man.” That’s what Bill McCartney, football coach at the University of Colorado, told a friend.

McCartney’s dream has become reality. He resigned from his \$350,000 position and founded Promise Keepers—a nationwide movement to promote his conviction: “a man’s man is a godly man.”

The great numbers McCartney envisioned have materialized—more than he ever imagined. The first Promise Keepers conference in 1991 attracted 4,200 men to a stadium in Boulder. In ’92—22,000, in ’93—50,000. The movement expanded to other cities in ’94 and drew 280,000. This year 600,000 men are expected to attend conferences in 12 cities. The first, in Pontiac, Mich., drew 72,000 at \$55 each.

The two-day conferences urge men to pledge to keep seven promises. They include commitments such as honoring Jesus Christ through worship and obedience; practicing spiritual, moral, ethical and sexual purity; building strong marriages and families through biblical values; supporting the mission of the church; reaching beyond denominational barriers to demonstrate the power of biblical unity.

Obviously, Promise Keepers has tremendous appeal. McCartney’s goal was a worthy one. Marriages and families need all the help they can get. But the program McCartney developed calls for careful scrutiny, particularly because it is first and foremost a religious movement.

Promise Keepers is ecumenical in its outlook. “A Promise Keeper is committed to reaching beyond any racial and denominational barriers to demonstrate the power

of biblical unity.” Reaching across denominational barriers is an exercise in religious unionism, not a demonstration of genuine biblical unity. Biblical unity is demonstrated by devotion “to the apostles’ teaching” (Acts 2:42), not by compromising it.

That compromise is part of Promise Keepers strategy became apparent when Roman Catholics and Mormons were officially welcomed as participants. If Promise Keepers are “committed to honoring Jesus Christ through worship, prayer, and obedience to his Word,” how can they welcome Mormons who deny the deity of Christ? How can they accommodate Roman Catholics who supplement Christ’s Word with ecclesiastical traditions and papal decrees?

Promise Keepers is yet another example of how Satan uses a popular program to disguise the importance of fidelity to God’s Word. How can one criticize a program that seems so successful in addressing the major societal problem of our times?

Christians, who live by God’s promise to us all, need to remember that one promise takes precedence over all others. That is the promise to be faithful to God and his Word. All other promise keeping is God-pleasing only if it is an integral part of our promise to hallow his name by being true to his Word. Promise Keepers who compromise Scripture are not honoring Jesus Christ no matter how faithfully they keep their promises to their wives and their families.

McCartney is right. A man’s man is a godly man. But we need to let God tell us what a godly man is.

*Joel C. Gerlach is pastor at St. John, Wauwatosa, Wisconsin.*

## Promise Keepers seven promises

A Promise Keeper is committed to

- 1- honoring Jesus Christ through worship, prayer, and obedience to his Word through the power of the Holy Spirit.
- 2- pursuing vital relationships with a few other men, understanding that he needs brothers to help him keep his promises.
- 3- practicing spiritual, moral, ethical, and sexual purity.
- 4- building strong marriages and families through love, protection, and biblical values.
- 5- supporting the mission of the church by honoring and praying for his pastor and by actively giving his time and resources.
- 6- reaching beyond any racial and denominational barriers to demonstrate the power of biblical unity.
- 7- influencing his world, being obedient to the Great Commandment (Mark 12:30-31) and the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20).

# Church teachings and church fellowship

John F. Brug

*Why can't WELS members have Christian friends or relatives who are not WELS sing at their funeral or wedding? Can we judge who is a member of God's church or not?*

Biblical principles teach us that we are not to worship or pray with individuals who adhere to false teachings (Romans 16:17, 2 John 10-11, Titus 3:10). If we worship with them, we fail to give clear testimony against doctrinal differences that separate us. It is our practice, therefore, that only fellow Christians who are in doctrinal agreement with our church will lead us in worship.

Christian weddings and funerals are not private, personal ceremonies held to honor the wedding couple or the deceased, but are services directed to the glory of God and based on his Word. Therefore, those who lead worship during a wedding or funeral must meet the same biblical standards of doctrinal unity with us that apply to other services.

We cannot judge who is a member of the "invisible church of all believers" since membership depends solely on the presence or absence of faith in Christ. Only God can detect this faith with certainty and can judge who will enter heaven.

God commands us, however, to judge a person's doctrine by comparing it with Scripture. In public worship, we must use the confession of the individual's church membership to determine whether

we may join in church fellowship with that individual. If people are members of a church that adheres to false doctrine, we may not invite them to take a leading role in our services without compromising our testimony to the truth.

Family ties cannot set aside this rule. When there is conflict between ties to family and friends and obedience to God's Word, God's Word must always take priority (Matthew 10:32-39).

This is hard to accept and practice, but God clearly says he will not take second place in our lives. Obedience to his Word must come before every human loyalty.

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*When there is conflict between ties to family and friends and obedience to God's Word, God's Word must take priority.*

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## ***What are the beliefs of the Quaker religion?***

The Quaker religion gives greater priority to following a common life-style and style of worship than to doctrinal statements. For Quakers, religious experience is more important than creeds. The basic principle of Quakerism is that God communicates with people through the "Inner Light," a form of direct revelation, apart from the written Word and sacraments.

Historically, Quakers were very

negative toward pastors, church buildings, liturgy, and the sacraments. In the typical Quaker meeting, the members sat around waiting for someone to receive a revelation from God. Quakers strongly advocated social reform, and opposed all war and all oaths.

More recently, Quakers have been strongly influenced by evangelical Protestantism. Many of their services differ little from evangelical Protestant worship, and their theology ranges from fundamentalist to liberal.

Today it is difficult to say what the Quakers' position is, even on such basic issues as the Trinity, the Bible, and the sacraments, because there is no unanimity. Nevertheless, the basic premise remains the same: the "Inner Light" is sufficient to lead people to salvation, even without knowledge of the facts recorded about Christ in the Bible.

This belief separates them sharply from Lutherans who emphasize the importance of the Word and sacraments. Lutherans are also separated from Quakers by our insistence that the historic acts of redemption by Christ take priority over and are the basis for our personal religious experience.

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

*Have a question? Send it to Questions, Northwestern Lutheran, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398; fax 414/256-3899.*



**I hope I can clarify “State buys school campus,”** (July). To call Martin Luther Preparatory School, Prairie du Chien, Wis., a merger of Martin Luther Academy, New Ulm, Minn., and Northwestern Lutheran Academy, Mobridge, S.D., blurs history. The transfer of MLA from New Ulm to Prairie du Chien, Wis., was approved by a 1978 special synod convention. The resolution that created MLPS makes no mention of Northwestern Lutheran Academy, but does call for a phase-out of the teacher training program at Northwestern Prep, Watertown, Wis.

A year later the decision was made to close NLA. The final result may be called a “merger.” However, by that time MLPS had already been created, retaining all the traditions of MLA. NLA students and faculty were deprived of the heritage of their school. It’s good to see that efforts have been made to avoid that in this year’s amalgamations.

*Philip Wilde  
Englewood, Florida*

**Thank you for the piece on Christoph Ludwig Eberhardt** [July]. My sister, cousin, and I have come across his name because he performed marriage ceremonies of several of our great aunts, uncles, and cousins. We are working on our family tree database, and with the article and reference to St. Paul’s church, we now have another source of information. Thank you again.

*Pamela Wenzel  
Freeland, Michigan*

**The well-being of the next generation, our children, is the whole purpose of Martin Luther College.** Our future pastors and teachers will be important role models for these children.

For incontrovertible reasons of health, we do not want our children learning to smoke. Teachers and pastors should be setting good examples. A high school coach grabbing a last smoke before joining his team en route to a sporting event, or a pastor having a cigarette after confirmation instruction class do not portray positive role models.

The professors at our synod prep schools, college, and seminary should also set good examples. As a former smoker, I appreciate the difficulty in quitting. But, our children must be the motivation to do so.

*William Tacke  
New Ulm, Minnesota*

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.

**CORRECTIONS:**

- The list of those who served the medical mission in Malawi was incomplete (Sept.). Inadvertently omitted was nurse Kim (Korje) Kumwenda and missionary in charge Mark Rieke.

- Concerning the article (Sept.) “Not just atheists . . .” taken from *Religion News Service*:

1. NL has learned that Lisa Herdahl apparently was once but is no longer a WELS member.

2. It is reported that Mrs. Herdahl made statements on public television that are contrary to the biblical position that true prayer is in Jesus’ name.

3. NL in no way endorses People of the American Way or its policies.

We are sorry for any confusion the article may have caused.

**rē · li · giōn**  
**Defining religion**

**martyr:** One who suffers death for testifying to his beliefs and refusing to renounce his religion. Stephen is the first Christian martyr mentioned in the New Testament (Acts 6,7).

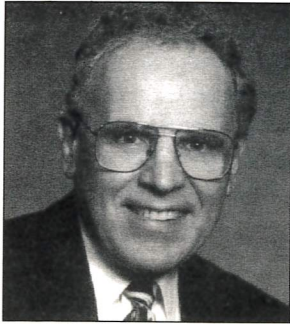
THROUGH MY  
**BIBLE** in 3 YEARS

November 1995

- 1. Romans 9:14-29
- 2. Rom. 9:30-10:21
- 3. Rom. 11:1-10
- 4. Rom. 11:11-24
- 5. Rom. 11:25-36
- 6. Rom. 12
- 7. Rom. 13
- 8. Rom. 14
- 9. Rom. 15:1-13
- 10. Rom. 15:14-33
- 11. Rom. 16:1-16
- 12. Rom. 16:17-27
- 13. Luke 20:27-21:4
- 14. Exodus 21:1-32
- 15. Ex. 21:33-23:19
- 16. Ex. 23:20-24:18
- 17. Ex. 25, 26
- 18. Ex. 27, 28
- 19. Ex. 29
- 20. Ex. 30, 31
- 21. Ex. 32
- 22. Ex. 33
- 23. Ex. 34
- 24. Ex. 35:1-36:7
- 25. Ex. 36:8-37:9
- 26. Ex. 37:10-38:31
- 27. Ex. 39, 40
- 28. 1 Corinthians 1:1-17
- 29. 1 Cor. 1:18-2:16
- 30. 1 Cor. 3, 4

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

# Promises mean everything to a child



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

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*Give your children God's promises over and over again.*

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Promises mean everything to a child. Mom promises to throw a birthday party. Dad promises to help fly a kite. Bosom buddies promise to be friends forever. The child eagerly expects the promises will be fulfilled.

Promises become increasingly serious as we leave childhood and assume greater responsibilities. The bride and groom promise abiding love and faithfulness. An employer promises opportunities to advance. A homeowner promises to pay his mortgage. Each promise evokes some of that childlike expectation.

We live on promises. And much of our happiness depends on whether promises are kept. When they are not, we hurt and lose some trust for the next promises. We learn to expect disappointments.

A fulfilled life depends on fulfilled promises, and sharing such promises begins with family. However, with much potential for broken promises, what chance do families have?

The outlook improves when the promises improve. For that we look to God. He is "not slow in keeping his promise." And in God, we are "children of the promise."

God does not disappoint us. He comes to us in his promises. He stimulates our faith. He saves us. He gathers us into his family, where all promises come to be and we live fulfilled. "No matter how many promises God has made, they are 'Yes' in Christ."

God, who cannot lie, promised us the hope of eternal life before the beginning of time, and "the promise of entering his rest still stands." "This is what he promised us—even eternal life."

People who believe the promise of God can deal better with the broken promises

of those around them and find support in keeping their own promises. Families who share God's promises have the most important basis for all that can be good in families, such as, comfort, love, understanding, faith, and promise itself.

God guides us to share his promise with those around us, especially with our families. "The promise is for you and your children. . . ." What a blessing! What a responsibility! What an opportunity!

Do you lament you cannot promise comfortable living to your children? You can promise the comfort of the risen Savior. Do you feel down because you fail to keep all your promises to your family? You can share the promise of forgiveness through Christ-crucified. Give your children God's promises over and over again. God keeps his promises.

Blessed is the family where the children learn God's promises at home. Mothers, don't give up. Fathers, do your part. "Fathers, do not exasperate your children, instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord."

Much is said today about the breaking down of the family in our society. For many, the family has become a place where there is no promise any more. Doomsayers paint a bleak picture, and increasing numbers are inclined to believe it.

But it doesn't need to be that way. God's promises give eternal hope. Many families still live in that hope, and many will continue to. Yours can be among the number. Just remember, promises mean everything to a child.

*Gary P. Baumler*

# Charitable Gift Annuity

*A gift to the Lord you didn't think possible*

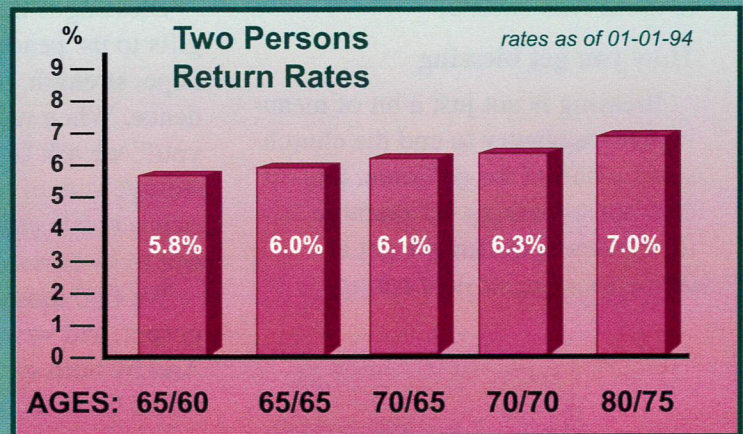
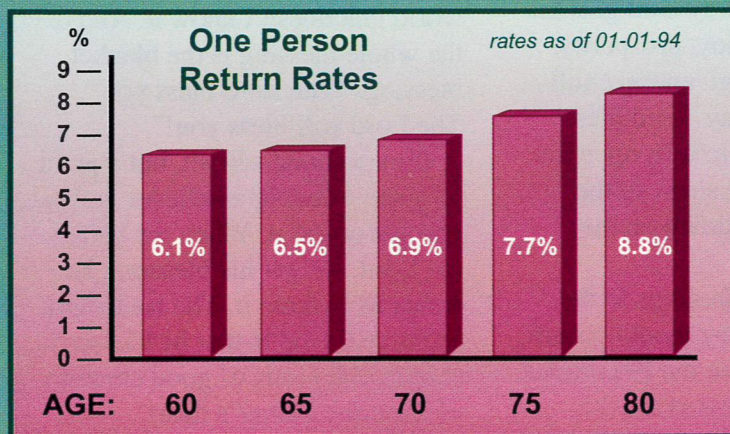


## What is a charitable gift annuity?

It's an agreement by which your gift of cash, stocks, bonds, or mutual funds is exchanged for an income guaranteed for life.

After death the remainder of the gift will be used by your congregation and synod as you specified.

## What are examples of gift annuity rates?



## Features

- A meaningful gift for the Lord after your death.
- Minimum of \$1,000. No maximum limit.
- Irrevocable. Once established it cannot be changed or canceled.
- Secured by the assets of the Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran Synod Foundation, Inc.
- Income you cannot outlive — regular, dependable, unchangeable.
- Immediate payment annuities available to WELS members aged 60 and over; deferred payment, aged 45 and older.

## Benefits

- The opportunity of designating your gift.
- The joy of making a gift for the Lord's work in your congregation and/or synod.
- The assurance of a steady income, possibly greater than you are now receiving.
- A deduction on your income tax return if you itemize.
- A portion of your annual payments free from income tax.
- If funded with appreciated assets, the avoidance of some tax on the capital gains.

### I'm interested. How can I receive more information?

Please write or call:  
Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran Synod  
The Ministry of Planned Giving  
2929 N. Mayfair Road, Milwaukee, WI 53222

Milwaukee area:  
771-0697  
1-800-827-5482

# The blessing

The trademark of the real God is that he blesses his people.

Eric Hartzell

“**B**less you!” And we think someone sneezed.

Too bad that, other than for sneezing, blessing isn’t spoken often. In fact, many people squirm if you talk too much about blessing. But what does blessing mean, even to those who sneeze?

## How you get blessing

Blessing is not just a bit of meaningless pageantry to end the church service before we go home. It is also not something we mumble thoughtlessly before we get at the serious business of eating.



But blessing is something a Christian would struggle to get—if that were the way to get it. Jacob did it when he tricked Esau out of his blessing. He did it again when he wrestled with God and said, “I will not let you go unless you bless me.”

Blessing is the way God gets his gifts to us: peace, joy, prosperity, hope, strength, forgiveness, confidence. When we say “God bless you!” we ask God to turn open his storage tank of blessings so the riches inside pour down on the one to be blessed.

We find those blessings in the gospel, and we enjoy them by faith. And by faith we live the Beatitudes, which bless us. Blessed are the poor in spirit, the meek, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, those who are persecuted because of righteousness, the insulted for Jesus’ sake. In the Beatitudes, Jesus invites us to receive blessing.

We can also get in the way of a blessing, to stand where it will rest on us. We do that on Sunday when we stand to receive the pastor’s benediction: “The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace” (Numbers 6:24-26).

## What you get from blessing

The end of the service is the crown. In that blessing, God says he will give us gifts that will keep our lives. He will turn and look with love and care on us. He will give us peace and sustain this peace in a world that doesn’t know it. And over the whole blessing is the blanket blessing, “The Lord bless you. . . . The Lord will bless you!”

It may sound selfish, but a great blessing of being a believer is what you get out of it. When we believe the Lord, we get his blessing. He wants us to have it. The trademark of the real God is that he blesses his people. All kinds of good come to us from the Father’s heart.

An Apache man worked for the railroad in San Carlos, Arizona. His work shift made him late for church every Sunday. He managed to step into the back of the church just as the pastor gave the benediction.

“Why do you come if you can’t be here for the service?” someone asked him after a time.

“I come for the blessing,” he replied.

The benediction comes at the end of the service to help us with the beginning of the new week.

God wants to bless us . . . even when we sneeze. We never despise a blessing, nor those who give it in faith. We would lose out, though, if a sneeze were the only time we pay attention to “God bless you!”

*Eric Hartzell is pastor at East Fork, Whiteriver, Arizona.*