

# LUTHERAN



## Hurricane Luis hits Caribbean church

page 22

## Faith on earth?

page 14

## I hope so!

page 6

NML 19436 0 0 1 2/97  
 REV FREDERIC H NITZ  
 604 MAPLE CREST LN  
 WATERLOO, MI 48094



# Free!

Receive an issue  
**FREE**  
when you order a  
one-year subscription  
to *Lutheran Parent*.

**Lutheran Parent** is a Bible-based parenting magazine and devotional publication issued six times a year. Each issue contains:

- Feature articles on timely topics
- Parenting tips
- Family activities
- Questions from parents
- Home/school insights
- Topical devotions

**Just \$18.99**  
for a one-year subscription  
(six issues).



Call subscription services toll-free  
**1-800-662-6093 ext. 8**

(Milwaukee area 414-475-6600 ext. 5).  
Business hours: 8 A.M. to 4 P.M. weekdays.

Or use the convenient order form below.

- I would like **Lutheran Parent** (Plus the FREE issue) for one year at \$18.99.

#### METHOD OF PAYMENT

- Check or money order enclosed (make payable to Northwestern Publishing House)



Card #.....  
Exp. Date.....

Name (please print).....

Address.....

City/State/Zip.....

Daytime phone # (.....)



Northwestern Publishing House  
1250 N 113th Street Milwaukee WI 53226-3284

# Thanks for the extraordinary ordinary

*I urge you to take some food. You need it to survive. Not one of you will lose a single hair from his head. After he said this, he took some bread and gave thanks to God. Acts 27:34,35*

Robert H. Hochmuth

The crew had been through two nerve-racking weeks of violent weather, and the worst was still to come. Paul urged them to keep up their courage, conveying God's promise that not one life of the 276 on board would be lost. Here he combines the encouragement with gratitude to God.

God's hand sustained them through the raging "Northeaster," and he was about to work more wonders—thwarting not only storm and shipwreck, but also wary soldiers and venomous snakes.

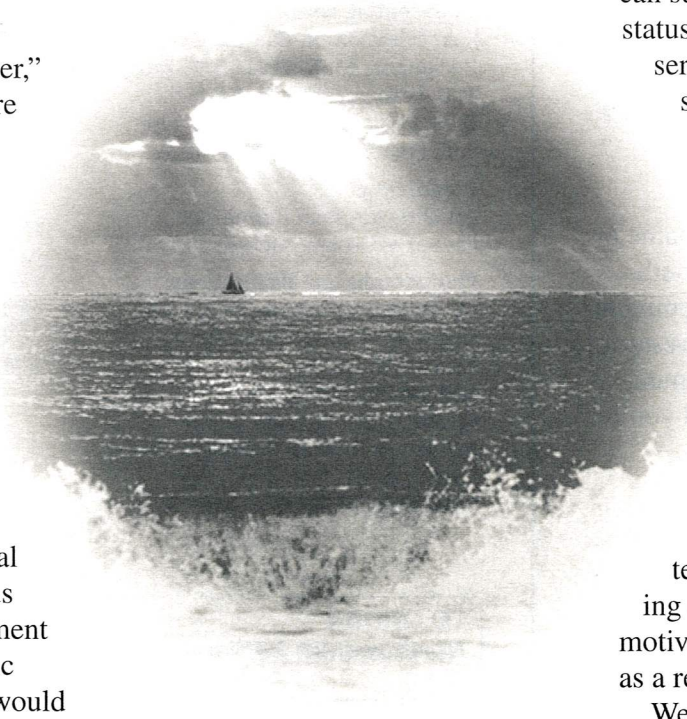
## Extraordinary in the ordinary

God, who can preserve us by extraordinary intervention in earthly events, chooses usually to provide through ordinary processes and means. The crew's survival depended on God's miraculous hand, but also on the nourishment plain bread provided. A fanatic might have presumed angels would show up to carry them to shore. Paul urged them to count on the ordinary as God's means for strength to survive the ordeal ahead. For this, Paul gave thanks—even before God fulfilled his promise.

After the ship ran aground the next day, all made it to shore—some swimming and some clinging

to planks and pieces of wreckage—spared by God's unusual, nourished by his usual, manner of providence.

Observing God's hand in the usual, as well as in the remarkable, amplifies our gratitude.



## Looking long range

Although God provides for our physical well-being, that is secondary. God sustains us for a purpose greater than mere physical survival.

For Paul, the longer-range outcome of his survival on Malta's

shore was so God's kingdom and his offer of life in Christ could be proclaimed to western Europe.

For all of us, God provides bread for our bodily lives in the interest of our spiritual lives. The real objective of our time on earth is not to see how long or prosperously we can survive; rather, it is to enjoy our status as heirs of eternal life and to serve our heavenly Father. His

saving grace has restored us fallen creatures to that privileged role. We serve him by reaching out to others in the interest of their eternal life. That makes our years significant, regardless how few or how many.

Celebrating Thanksgiving is not limited to taking an inventory of the year's blessings. It does not await being filled, it is a matter of being fulfilled—cherishing our high calling and being motivated to make each day count as a response to his saving mercy.

We have received not only good things for this life. God has bestowed his best through Jesus for eternal life. Because of this, like Paul, we thank God for ordinary and extraordinary events still to come.

*Robert Hochmuth is interim pastor at Good Shepherd, Pleasanton, California.*



- On the cover you see some of the destruction Hurricane Luis wreaked on the Caribbean. During the storm, WELS members in Antigua witnessed the awesome power of God and thanked him for his amazing protection. Read "Hurricane Luis hits Caribbean church" on p. 22.
- In May over 700 of you voted on a new WELS logo. On p. 21, you'll see the result of your votes. We hope you like the logo and use it to share the promise.
- You'll notice another new name on the masthead of NL this month. Julie Tessmer is our new communications assistant for *Northwestern Lutheran* and WELS Communication Services. We're glad you're here, Julie.
- At Thanksgiving, we thank God for you, our readers. And we thank you for your letters, prayers, and constructive criticism. This is your magazine, and we're thankful for the privilege of serving you. Please continue to let us know how we're doing.

—LRB

Cover photo by Joel Jaeger.

## NORTHWESTERN LUTHERAN

Official magazine of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod  
November 1995 / Vol. 82, No. 11

### Editor

Rev. Gary P. Baumler, 414/256-3230

### Communications Assistants

Linda R. Baacke, 414/256-3232

Julie K. Tessmer, 414/256-3231

### Northwestern Lutheran

#### WELS

2929 N Mayfair Road

Milwaukee WI 53222-4398

Phone 414/256-3888

Fax 414/256-3899

### Communication Services Commission

R. J. Zink (chairman), R. D. Balge,  
J. M. Barber, W. F. Bernhardt, M. D.  
Duncan, T. L. Schultz.

### Contributing editors

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

### Production

Art Director: Paul Burmeister  
Layout & Design: Melissa Homan

### Photographs and Illustrations:

H. Armstrong Roberts, p. 6 & 14  
Courtesy of Gary Schroeder, p. 12  
Kevin Fritz, p. 16  
Melissa Homan, p. 19  
Courtesy of John Vogt, p. 20  
Joel Jaeger, Dennis Needham, David  
Kehl, p. 22  
Chad Hug, p. 36

### Subscriptions

Northwestern Publishing House  
1250 N 113 St  
Milwaukee WI 53226-3284  
1-800-662-6093 ext. 8  
Milwaukee area 414/475-6600 ext. 5

USA and Canada—one year \$9. All other countries—one year, air mail \$40; one year surface mail \$24. Write for multi-year, blanket, and bundle rates.

Available on audiocassette from Workshop for the Visually Handicapped, 559 Humboldt Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55107.

NORTHWESTERN LUTHERAN (ISSN 0029-3512) is published monthly by Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 N 113th Street, Milwaukee WI 53226-3284. Second class postage paid at Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

**POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to *Northwestern Lutheran*, c/o Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 N 113th Street, Milwaukee WI 53226-3284. ©1995 by *Northwestern Lutheran*. Printed in the USA.

### TO ORDER

#### Northwestern Lutheran

Send this coupon with check or money order to:

Northwestern Publishing House  
1250 N 113th Street  
Milwaukee WI 53226-3284

A subscription  
in U.S.A. or Canada

- for 1 year at \$9.00  
 for 2 years at \$17.00  
 for 3 years at \$24.00

Name (print) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

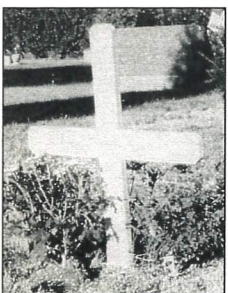
(Note: You can also subscribe to *Northwestern Lutheran* by calling toll-free 1-800-662-6093, ext. 8. In the Milwaukee area call 414/475-6600, ext. 5. Phone weekdays between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.)



I hope so!  
page 6



Faith on earth?  
page 14



The foolishness  
of the cross—  
the power of God  
page 36

- 3 THOUGHT FOR TODAY  
**Thanks for the extraordinary ordinary**  
*Robert H. Hochmuth*  
God provides bread for our bodily lives in the interest of our spiritual lives.
- 6 INSIGHTS  
**I hope so!**  
*Eric S. Hartzell*  
For believers, “I hope so” is not “I hope so” with a sigh.
- 8 BY FAITH THEY LED  
**William H. (Bill) Scheppe: code name for missions**  
*Morton A. Schroeder*  
With little experience in the field and limitless trust in God, Scheppe led the way for mission work in Nigeria.
- 10 SHARE THE PROMISE: LET THE CHILDREN COME  
**Crossing generations**  
*Laurie Biedenbender*  
Whether it’s children serving seniors or seniors serving children, everyone benefits when the generation gap is bridged.
- 12 MISSIONS AROUND THE WORLD  
**Growing faith in the face of growing uncertainty**  
*Julie K. Tessmer*  
Individuals, opportunities, and independence develop within Hong Kong mission churches.
- 14 HARD SAYINGS OF JESUS  
**Faith on earth?**  
*Thomas H. Trapp*  
When the world is spinning for the last time, it will be difficult to find believers.
- 16 WELS AT WORK  
**Reaching lost souls**  
*Linda R. Baacke*  
Members of Grace, Portland, Ore., actively share the message of salvation with their unchurched community.
- 18 CONVENTION ESSAY  
**We share the promise with our offerings**  
*Ronald M. Muetzel*  
God, the determiner of times and places that people live, has determined that we live in a time and place of considerable wealth.
- 20 A PART OF GOD’S FAMILY  
**The foolishness of the cross—the power of God**  
*John Vogt*  
Of all the wisdom Brunnschweiler learned in her life, the most important came at her death.
- 21 WELS NEWS
- WELS adopts logo
  - Hurricane Luis hits Caribbean church
  - “God’s indispensable people”
  - Synod schools open
  - WELS members moved to give generously
  - Lift High the Cross exceeds goal
- 28 WORLD NEWS
- LWF promotes ordination of women
  - McDonald’s sign better known than cross
  - Majority are “golden rule Christians”
  - ELCA elects seminary president as bishop
  - Presbyterian church draws line on women pastors and elders
- 29 BULLETIN BOARD
- 30 FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT  
**The fruit of the Spirit is gentleness**  
*James A. Aderman*  
The Spirit’s virtue of gentleness includes much more than we’d normally assign that word.
- 31 EDITORIAL COMMENT  
**“I love to tell the story”**  
*Walter F. Beckmann*  
Preaching for holiday services is not an infringement on a pastor’s family time. It’s a special privilege from God.
- 32 YOUR QUESTION, PLEASE  
**Applause in church**  
*John F. Brug*
- 33 READERS FORUM
- 34 THE EDITOR’S PEN  
**Old-fashioned substance**  
*Gary P. Baumler*  
We might make a good case for being radically different from the world because the message is radically different.
- 36 THANKSGIVING  
**A Thanksgiving Day before the fact**  
*Paul O. Wendland*  
We cry out to God for help. He comes to our aid. We thank him. That’s the way it always goes. Or is it?

# I hope so!

For believers, "I hope so" is not "I hope so" with a sigh.

Eric S. Hartzell



Hope has been hurt. The word has. Somehow doubt has been injected into a word that God intended to have no doubt. For instance, when your spouse asks you if you will be back home by noon, you say, "I hope so." There is doubt there. You hope so, but you aren't sure. In fact, the way things usually go, there is a good chance you won't be home by noon.

### Some hope reflects doubt

"I hope so" really has two meanings. There is the one just mentioned: hope meaning a wish. "I hope the rain stops." "We hope that somewhere in the rubble of the bomb blast there is a survivor." Like that. Then there is the other meaning, an almost extinct meaning for most folks. It is hope without doubt. I hope so, and I am absolutely sure it will happen. Period.

When we say, "I hope Jesus helps me," we aren't suggesting Jesus won't help us. We aren't stating a wish; we're stating a fact. We're saying we look to Jesus for his unfailing help because we believe in his unfailing love. His help is our hope. Job said it this way, "Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him" (Job 13:15). If there ever was a hopeless situation, that was it. But that is where hope existed. That is even where it thrived. Not some pious wishing that God could pull off the impossible, but the quiet confidence he would.

True hope is not the indomitable spirit that refuses to give up even when it is beaten down in disappointment. Not the rough and tough individual, the eternal optimist. Not the so-called "hope against hope." A person who doesn't know God may be able to hope, but not the

way a Christian can. The Christian hopes in the future: "Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord his God, the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them—the Lord, who remains faithful forever" (Psalm 146:5,6). That is hope with no conditions, no sighs.

### True hope is confident in all conditions

Consider the following: the doctor says you have inoperable cancer. It would be misplaced hope to say, "I hope the cancer goes away" or "I hope I get better." That hope has doubt in it. God could make it go away if he wished, but he nowhere says or promises he will make all inoperable cancers go away. Still, there is hope, and it is real and certain. "I hope my God will cause this to come out for my good." Our God will never fail us in that hope. He will make the inoperable cancer work for our good, as he promised.

---

### *Hope can scoop up the depressed and the discouraged.*

---

A Christian can say, in the face of the most heart-breaking news, "I hope I will live." It is a doubtless hope. As Jesus told Martha, who at her brother's grave was staring triumphant death in the face, "He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die" (John 11:25). That is brave hope at its best.

When all strength is gone, there is hope. Not just wistful hope that somehow we might be strong, but certain hope that we will. "Even

youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint" (Isaiah 40:30,31).

### Hope springs us from hopeless places

Hope can scoop up the depressed and the discouraged. It is not the bootstrap kind of hope held out by some, or the rigid chin kind of hope held out by others. It is certain hope with a question asked first: "Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God" (Psalm 42:5,6).

And when famine and death prowl lean and hungry, there, too, is hope. "But the eyes of the Lord are on those who fear him, on those whose hope is in his unfailing love, to deliver them from death and keep them alive in famine" (Psalm 33:18,19).

Zechariah calls us "prisoners of hope" (Zechariah 9:12). There still are waterless pits we find ourselves in. We could call them hopeless places. But our God calls to us, "Return to your fortress, O prisoners of hope." We of all prisoners have hope. Our God is a God who springs us from hopeless places. He does! Count on it. Hope in it.

So "I hope so" is not "I hope so" with a sigh. For believers it remains "I hope so" as a statement. Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we cannot see. Not a hurt hope, but a sure one.

NL

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

# William H. (Bill) Schweppe: code name for missions

**With little experience in the field and limitless trust in God, Schweppe led the way for mission work in Nigeria.**

Morton A. Schroeder

*Missionaryschweppe* was a Wisconsin Synod code word before the term became fashionable. Beginning in the 1930s and ending in the 1960s, *Missionaryschweppe* was the synonym for overseas missions, for dangers in spreading the Word abroad, for festival preachers who urged the faithful to use the extra mission envelope, for parish school studies aimed at illuminating the Dark Continent.

*Missionaryschweppe* was also a synod cottage industry before the term became part of the idiom. *Missionaryschweppe* sparked work opportunities for many: administrators who tracked him and filed their reports, fund-raisers who provided extra-budgetary funds for unheard-

ofs like the \$7,000 machine that made cement building blocks, writers who kept church members informed, historians who recorded his deeds, and the makers of mite boxes—those small, effective tools for providing support for God's messengers.

Before *Missionaryschweppe*, that is, from 1893, when Wisconsin Synod scouts reached Arizona, until 1937, when Schweppe landed in Nigeria, foreign missions consisted of work done in Apacheland. By a twist of logic, the work carried on from 1924 to 1939 among ethnic Germans living in Poland was not regarded as foreign mission. American pastors preaching in German to people whose native tongue was German made it something else.

## *Missionaryschweppe* begins

Then a student knocked at our door, and foreign missions became intrinsic. Even so, we lagged British groups by some 90 years. Pleas of repatriated Christian slaves had led Wesleyan and Anglican mission societies to Nigeria as early as 1842.

The Ibesikpo clan, part of the Ibibio tribe, dissatisfied with what was being taught, sent one of its own, Jonathan Udo Ekong, to America to find an orthodox church. Studying at Immanuel Lutheran College, Greensboro, N.C., Ekong came in contact with the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical



*The Schweppes lived in Obot Idim, Nigeria. Obot Idim was also the location of a seminary classroom building, dedicated in 1951, and several other mission buildings.*

Conference of North America. The conference, aware that Ekong's mission had substance, but not sure of its obligations or even confident of its abilities, voted 53 to 33 to send an evaluation team to Africa.

After a brief visit to Nigeria, the team submitted its report: the field is ready. A team member, Dr. Henry Nau, president of Immanuel, left in 1936 to return to Calabar province to begin the harvest. Others were fearful; the first three men called as first permanent missionary declined far-off husbandry.

The fourth stepped into the furrow. William H. Schweppe was willing to plant and await the Lord's harvest. Commissioned by John Brenner, synod president, Schweppe by faith led the trek into an unknown: Nigeria, a British protectorate situated at the trigger position of pistol-shaped Africa; its size that of Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska,



*William Schweppe with wife, Leola, and children Dorothy, David, and Paul. Schweppe was the first WELS missionary to work overseas in a heathen mission field. He served as superintendent of the Nigerian mission for 22 years.*



and the Dakotas; its population estimated to be 25 times denser than that of those states.

Schwepe and his bride, along with Missouri Synod Pastor Vernon Koeper and his wife, and Helen Kluck, R.N., faced a huge task, equipped with the Naus' limited experiences, a brief introduction to the farm, their personal ignorance—and limitless trust in God's promises.

### **Missionaryschwepe thrives**

Things began badly. Illness forced Koeper to return to America, leaving Schwepe, who worked out of the main station at Obot Idim in Calabar, with 36 congregations and about 1,500 communicants. Field hands were hard to come by; four calls were declined.

But the Lord's will is done. Ekong finished his studies, was ordained, and returned to begin a 46-year ministry among his folks. Justus Kretzmann accepted a call to preach, Christine Rapiet one to teach at the girls' school, and Koeper returned with restored health.

The missionaries were confronted by formidable foes: tribalism, pagan beliefs, polygamy, colonialism, a worldwide depression, World War II, malaria, all kinds of crawling things, and poor communication and transportation.

Missionaries, to get anywhere, often had to use Jeep, motor bike, motor boat, canoe, and foot. One missionary said, "The debilitating heat, dampness, and rain permit only 18 months' effective work." After that, he felt, intruders in the strange land merely existed.

In spite of conditions that boggle the mind, the mission grew; Schwepe and his coworkers thrilled to the Spirit's miracles. On Palm Sunday 1949, Schwepe

baptized 265 infants. At another time, he baptized 362 adults. It was said to take "five days to examine all the [baptism] candidates."

Schwepe experienced a nostalgic thrill when he attended the mission's silver anniversary in April 1961. Interrupting his furlough flight home from Rhodesia, then his field of hopes, he rejoiced in the numerical successes of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Nigeria. Numbering 33,433 souls, 13,645 communicants, 194 churches, and 33 preaching stations, it was served by two lay workers, nine medics, seven teachers, and 18 African and 18 American pastors. The growth is attributed to the Obot Idim seminary, which trained an indigenous ministry. In 1961, the compound also included homes for the superintendent and his African and American colleagues, a high school, dormitories, a print shop/bookstore, and a school for missionaries' children.

Death came violently to Schwepe. Returning home from work in a new, distant field in Rhodesian bush country, he and the driver of the other car were killed in a head-on collision on a strip road, a narrow path that requires oncoming vehicles to yield.

Survivors were his wife, who never tired of walking the furrows with her "Bill," and their children: Dorothy, David, and Paul. Thousands of others also mourned his death: extended family, coworkers, African and American church members, missionaries of other denominations, and civic officials.

NL

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



**William H. Schwepe**

- Born March 29, 1907, St. James, Minn.
- Graduated Lutheran Seminary, Thiensville, Wis., 1932
- Served Osceola, Wis./St. Croix Falls, Wis. parish, 1933-1936
- Married Leola Roessler Feb. 14, 1937
- Arrived Nigeria April 24, 1937
- Superintendent, Nigerian mission, 1937-1959
- President, Lutheran Seminary, Obot Idim, Nigeria, 1949-1958
- President, Lutheran Synod of Nigeria
- Doctor of Divinity degree, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, June 5, 1958
- Pioneered mission work in Ghana
- Accepted call to Lusaka, Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia), 1961
- Died July 15, 1968, near Mazabuka, Zambia, Africa
- Buried Lusaka Cemetery, Lusaka, Zambia

# Crossing generations

Whether it's children serving seniors or seniors serving children, everyone benefits when the generation gap is bridged.

Laurie Biedenbender

When Lois Schrimpf asked her husband Ralph to be an aide in her prekindergarten classroom, he hesitated. A retired farmer with a bad back? How could he possibly bend over and help put puzzles together? Would his farmer's hands fit those little scissors? Wouldn't the children be afraid of him?

A quick peek into the St. John, Lake City, Minn., classroom a few weeks later proves Ralph's hesitation unfounded. A dozen four-year-olds clamor for his lap. Lois says, "I have to keep a list, because only a few children can fit on one lap at one time."

The experiment is a success. Lois has the help she needs, the children have an adult to love and help them learn, and Ralph, back pain mysteriously gone, looks forward to greeting his little friends twice a week.

"Going soft and living with old people all the time isn't my bag of tea," he says. "If you work with young people, you stay young."

## Seniors minister to children

Seniors like Schrimpf know Jesus' injunction to feed his lambs carries no senior citizen exemption, so they gladly offer time and love to nurture children with the Word.

"Christian nurture of our children is a part of our church's mission and ministry to families," says Gerald Kastens, youth discipleship administrator. "That's the focal point of our theme for youth educa-



Lucille Abraham, a senior citizen volunteer at St. John, Lake City, Minn., uses her time and talents to work one-on-one with a student.

tion: 'Let the children come.' "

Seniors are uniquely well-equipped for the task. "Our level of sanctification grows as we get older and immerse ourselves more and more in the Word," says Art Hackbarth, principal at Lake City. "That spiritual maturity is something seniors can share."

Jerry Kieselhorst, who coordinates a yearly grandparents' appreciation brunch at Kettle Moraine Lutheran High School, Jackson, Wis., agrees. "It's neat to look out and see a gym full of young and old sharing a common faith and working for a common cause. We talk about how grandparents can pass on their Christian values."

Bringing seniors and children together isn't a new idea. "Grandparents teaching youth is a cornerstone of Sunday school,"

says Kastens. "For as long as we've had schools and Sunday schools, seniors have taught Bible stories, listened to memory work, demonstrated arts and crafts, and shared their faith with children."

"Now, more than ever, it is important to bring children and senior citizens together," says Alfons Woldt, administrator for special ministries. "Children need the personal attention seniors can provide. Seniors have the time to share their knowledge and experiences with the children."

## Children minister to seniors

Pastors like Tim Schoeneck of St. Paul, Green Bay, Wis., recognize that transgenerational ministry is a two-way street. Children can be a blessing to seniors, too.

Once a month, Schoeneck takes

third and fourth graders along on his shut-in calls. The children visit with the seniors, sing songs, and participate in worship.

“At first I wasn’t too sure if the people would want children along,” says Schoeneck. “But now if they can’t come, I really hear it. ‘Where are the kids?’ ”

Ministry to seniors is a focus of all St. Paul’s youth programs. First and second graders make holiday cards for seniors. Vacation Bible school projects are delivered to a nursing home. Lutheran Pioneers make and deliver wood-crafted gifts to shut-ins.

“It’s been a real blessing,” says Schoeneck.

Other schools hold grandparents’ days, invite seniors to lunch in the cafeteria, and cut lawns and clean windows at seniors’ homes. An adopt-a-grandparent program can unite people half a century apart and ignite a spark of Christian love that burns for years.

Judy Eisenmann coordinates volunteers at Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Service of Milwaukee. Middle graders escort residents to chapel on Wednesday afternoons. Teenagers play cards, take walks, garden, or go shopping with residents.

“With an extra pair of hands or ears, the residents can do so much more,” says Eisenmann. “And the volunteers learn to recognize opportunities for ministry to seniors in their own congregation. That one-on-one interaction is so important.”

**Whether we’re nine or 90**

When Eisenmann asked 94-year-old Wanda Schmidt to visit with a confirmation class, Wanda appeared with three pages of prepared notes.

She showed her wedding picture and talked about her husband who had been a school principal. She told about her own schooling and recited her confirmation passage in German. A German Bible and a picture of the pastor who confirmed her 80 years earlier fascinated the children—who thought they had come as a service to the residents.

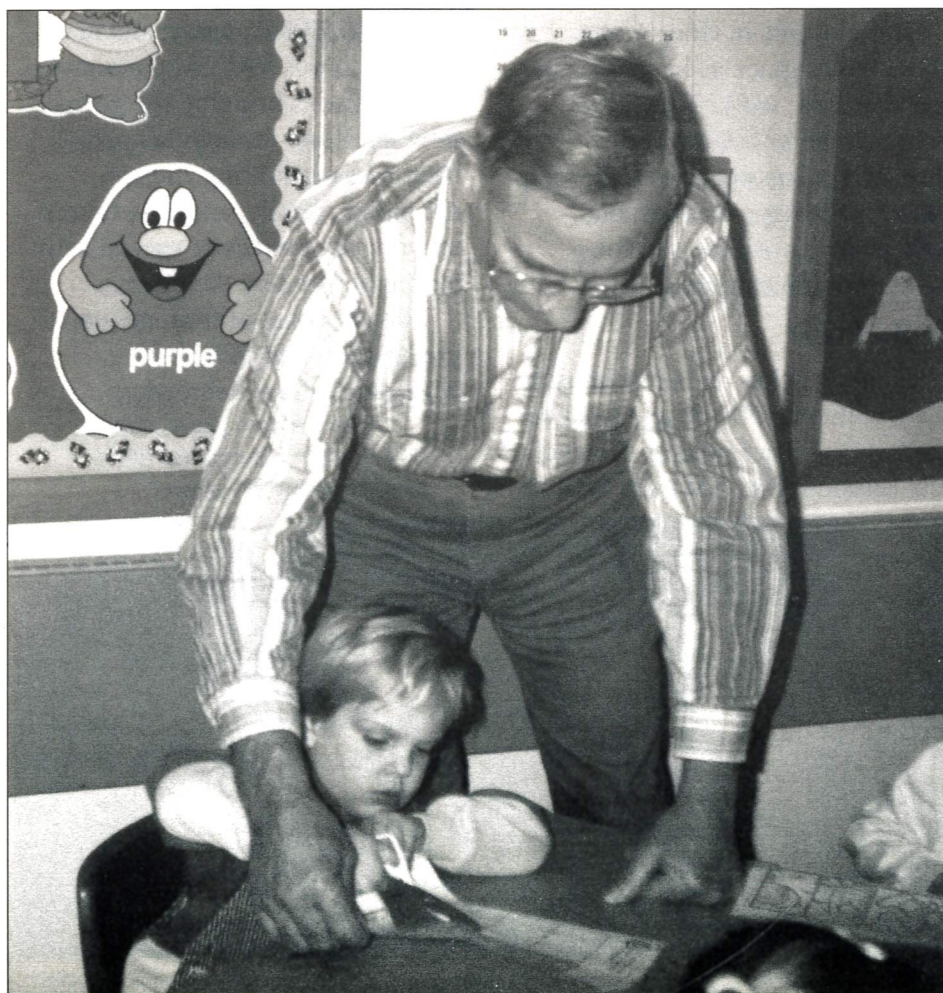
That’s how it usually is. When we share the promise, when we share lives that have been touched by the promise, we’re all blessed, whether we’re nine or 90.

NL

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

*Crossing Generations*, a handbook developed by the Organization of WELS Lutheran Seniors (OWLS), lists ways seniors can minister to children in schools and Sunday schools. Suggestions range from friendly listeners to arts and crafts teachers to computer lab assistants. It also includes suggestions for recruiting seniors and implementing a program.

The handbook has been sent to every WELS school and congregation. For a copy, contact Harold Runke, 520 S German St, New Ulm MN 56073.



*Ralph Schrimpf volunteers in the prekindergarten class at St. John, Lake City, Minn.*

# Growing faith in the face of growing uncertainty

Individuals, opportunities, and independence develop within Hong Kong mission churches.

Julie K. Tessmer

The mission ordained its third national evangelist, Reverend Tse Nga Kok.

Shaukeiwan Kindergarten opened.

Yuen Long Church celebrated its fifth anniversary and its financial independence from other congregations.

These events in Hong Kong show God's grace as he blesses the missionaries' work. They also demonstrate how God works through the missionaries to develop individuals, opportunities, and independence within the Hong Kong mission churches.

## Individuals

Eight churches and preaching stations with over 500 people make up the South Asian Lutheran Evangelical Mission (SALEM), the WELS

sister mission church in Hong Kong. Four WELS missionaries and their families minister to the people.

But they're not the only ones spreading the gospel.

Seven nationals have undergone training at the SALEM seminary and now are pastors and evangelists within local congregations, teachers at the SALEM seminary, and members of various SALEM committees.

God also is bringing the gospel to Hong Kong through lay people. Members often bring friends, neighbors, family, and co-workers to worship services or special activities sponsored by the church.

Even in times of trial, members are sharing their faith, said Missionary Gary Schroeder:

In the last two years, our Tai Po Lutheran Church has ministered to about five cancer



Pastor Tse Tat Chiu is vice chairman of the SALEM board of directors, vice chairman of SALEM calling committee, seminary manager, seminary teacher, and pastor of Lai King Church.

patients. . . . Chong Hiu Yan was one such person. She was a believer and a member of Tai Po when she was diagnosed with cancer. Her mother's first reaction was that she got cancer because she had become Christian. But through the love, support, and care of Tai Po members, Hiu Yan's father came to believe in Christ, and her mother now is open to the gospel. Hiu Yan has gone to be with Jesus.

Missionary Schroeder said these situations have made church members consider the true meaning of life. "The members have had some special opportunities to serve others, care for them, and reach out with the love of Christ," he said.

## Opportunities

Opportunity to spread the gospel began in 1965, when WELS first sent missionaries. God continues to provide opportunities to reach the unchurched, including one-on-one contacts and educational facilities.

Personal contacts are made with the Chinese through teaching English as a second language. Mission-



Many people attended a church camp on Hong Kong Island in August 1994. Special activities like these help missionaries strengthen their relationships with members as well as develop relationships with guests the members bring.

aries are taking special training to help them develop this outreach.

Students can find a quiet place to study as well as have chances to hear the Word at six study centers operated by SALEM. These centers are located in housing estates, complexes that house 18,000 to 150,000 residents. An evangelist or supervisor is always on duty, ready to witness about God and the Christian faith. On the weekend, the study centers are used for worship.

Tai Po Lutheran Church meets in Immanuel Lutheran College, a school managed by the mission for students from grades seven to 13.

SALEM hopes to make contacts with parents of students through the new kindergarten at Shaukeiwan.

Challenges, however, still exist. Cantonese Chinese, the native language spoken in Hong Kong, is hard to learn. The people also are used to a fast-paced, high-stress lifestyle, that makes developing relationships and growing in the faith difficult.

A final challenge is the political instability in Hong Kong. In 1997, China will once again rule the now-British colony. Many members of SALEM congregations are emigrating to escape an uncertain future.

Events in 1997 leave many questions and challenges for SALEM and the missionaries. How will the change in rule affect them? The answer is uncertain.

### Independence

So the Hong Kong mission continues to prepare itself for the future. National participation has escalated within the mission congregations, making it possible to have only four missionaries serve there. Congregations continue growing, and new schools and churches continue opening. All SALEM congregations



Immanuel Lutheran College, a middle school of 1,217 students managed by SALEM, also houses Tai Po Lutheran Church. About 500,000 Chinese in Hong Kong are Christians (55 percent Catholic and 45 percent Protestant).

gations are financially self-supporting for all operational expenses. The only subsidy the SALEM congregations receive is for a central office. This subsidy will end in 1996, before Hong Kong reverts to Chinese rule. Newer SALEM churches are becoming independent from older, more established congregations. All these things make SALEM stronger.

SALEM has many goals for the future. They want to strengthen individuals in the faith through worship, fellowship, and classes, as well as encourage them to train for lay or

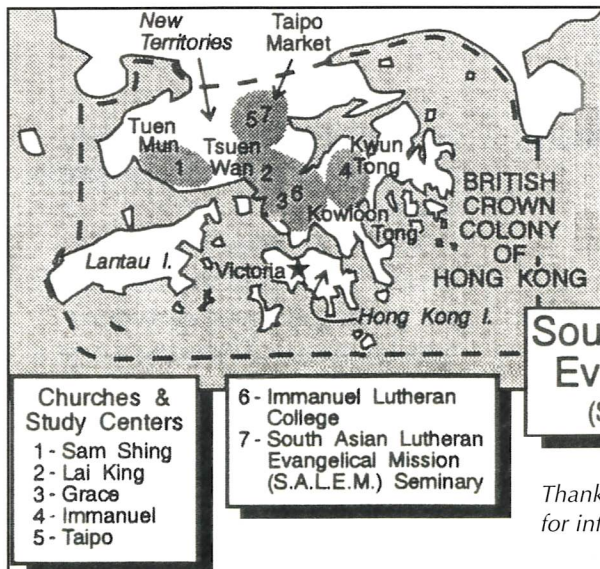
public ministry. The mission also wishes to open a ninth church in the new Shaukeiwan Kindergarten.

With the increased involvement of nationals, WELS missionaries hope soon to transfer the remaining administrative and leadership positions to the people of SALEM.

By God's grace, individuals, opportunities, independence, and faith continue to grow in Hong Kong.

NL

Julie Tessmer is communications assistant for WELS Communication Services and Northwestern Lutheran.



### Sharing the gospel in Hong Kong:

- Gary and Carol Schroeder
- Roger and Becky Plath
- Mark and Susan Sprengeler
- Tom and Melanie Frei

### South Asian Lutheran Evangelical Mission (S.A.L.E.M.) Hong Kong

Thanks to the Hong Kong mission staff for information for this article.



## Faith on earth?

**When the world is spinning for the last time,  
it will be difficult to find believers.**

**Thomas H. Trapp**

*When the Son of Man comes,  
will he find faith on the  
earth? Luke 18:8*

**W**hen Jesus comes again to this earth, with a loud command and the trumpet call of God, will anyone believe in him? Jesus' response to his own question is disturbing. He gives no response. Although Scripture speaks of believ-

ers existing on earth when Jesus returns (1 Thessalonians 4), Jesus is silent here.

There's a reason. It isn't that Jesus is ignorant of this truth. He's just making a crystal clear point with his silence. When the world is spinning for the last time, it will be difficult to find believers. Unbelievers will be a dime a dozen.

Freedom from Religion Foundation, Inc., (FFRF) an organization

based in Madison, Wis., is one example. FFRF wants the name of God to be relegated to a myth in our society. It wants to eradicate God from our culture. On the grounds of church and state separation, FFRF attacks anything religious in the public realm: Christmas tree, Ten Commandments plaque, worship service in a state park, "Bible Week" in a small midwest town, Good Friday recess, and the religious pref-

erence option for university students. Whether this “freethinkers” organization’s actions are legal or not, it’s obvious their desire is to “get God out of American culture.” It is not freedom of religion they desire. It’s freedom from religion.

### Faith attacked on campuses

“Devout Professors on the Offensive” is the title of an article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (May 4, 1994). It talks about faith being attacked on campus. “Academics who are deeply religious say they are tired of apologizing for their faith,” the article begins. “Frustrated by an academic culture they feel marginalizes religious views, some scholars are going on the offensive. ‘It is time,’ they say, ‘to acknowledge the role that religion plays in people’s lives—and in their scholarship.’ They want to know why, in this era of pluralism and identity politics, academics feel free to label themselves as feminists or Marxists or gay scholars or minority group members—but not as religious people.”

History professor George M. Marsden in his recent book *The Soul of the American University: from Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief* states: “Why should it be taken for granted that religious perspectives should be out of bounds?” Marsden knows that in campus classrooms today faith in God, especially faith in Jesus Christ as God, is “out of bounds.” A *New York Times* book review on Marsden’s book sums it up: “How can God who is so omnipotent as to have created the world become so insignificant on the American campus as to be denied tenure?”

### Faith attacked in the churches

It’s rather easy to illustrate the problem of faithlessness on campus and in freethinker organizations. One might think it is harder to illustrate such faithlessness in the organized Christian church—not if the end is at hand. “False Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect—if that were possible,” Jesus warns (Matthew 24:24). False teachers and ministers will be coming out of the woodwork just before Jesus returns. What better place to attack than within the organized church itself? And what better book to attack than the Bible itself?

---

*Never in the history  
of the world has the  
authority and credibility  
of the Bible been under  
so much attack as today.*

---

Since Jesus ascended into heaven, the vast majority of Christian pastors and theologians through the centuries have accepted the Holy Scriptures as the very words of God written by Spirit-filled humans. The special six-day creation, the virgin birth of Jesus, his supernatural acts, and the ultimate miracle of his post-crucifixion physical resurrection were taught as absolute truth.

Not so today. Today more and more mainline “Christian” theologians see Scripture as just another human document to be scientifically critiqued like any other book. The supremacy of human reason has replaced faith. Some products of this faithless approach are

redefining miracles as myths, justifying homosexual clergy, and teaching that there are many paths to heaven besides Jesus.

For hundreds of years, such false teachings were soundly rejected by the Christian church. Not so today. We live in unique times. End times. Never in the history of the world has the authority and credibility of the Bible been under so much attack—by “Christian” theologians—as today.

### Faith persistent under attack

The answer is yes, there will be faith on this earth when Jesus returns. But not much. “Wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it” (Matthew 7:13,14).

Jesus encourages us not to be shocked by any of this. He also pleads with us to “keep the faith”—to know his Word, live his Word, share his Word. To keep the faith, we daily need the Spirit’s power to bow down before him who lived, died, rose, ascended, and is coming again for us poor sinners.

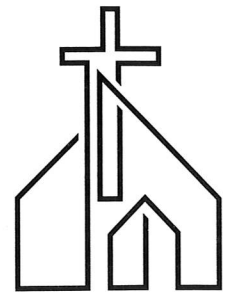
When Jesus returns will he find faith on the earth? Jesus gives no answer here. He has worked the answer in our hearts. Will we keep the faith?

NL

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

# Reaching lost souls

Members of Grace, Portland, Ore., actively share the message of salvation with their unchurched community.



Linda R. Baacke

Reach the unchurched with the gospel—that's what drives the members of Grace, Portland, Ore. And in a metro area with one and a half million people, they're a busy congregation. Plus, said Pastor Andrew Schultz, "Oregon is the second least-churched state in the nation. There's so much work to do."

"In essence, the atmosphere at Grace lives and breathes evangelism," said Pastor Warren Widmann. Grace, located in the multicultural northeast part of the city, is the largest and oldest of four WELS churches in the Portland region.

## Serving each other

Grace's number one priority is outreach. A number of Bible class opportunities help prepare the congregation to witness more effectively: Sunday mornings, weeknights, separate Saturday morning studies for women and men, Thursday morning classes for retirees and those who work in the home. In addition, each board and committee meeting begins with Bible study.

Through this instruction, training, and encouragement, Grace's outreach mindset developed slowly over the last 15 years. "Our congregation moved from an older and somewhat 'status quo' type of church to an outreach-minded church," said Widmann.

Yet outreach includes serving the congregation. Lisa Oka and her husband joined Grace one and a half years ago. She is already involved in



Pastor Widmann (left) and Pastor Schultz, greet members after church. Although Schultz is the outreach pastor, the two pastors divide duties and make sure that lay people are actively involved in the congregation.

an ad hoc committee and she joined the outreach committee in August. "They want new members to get involved, to get new ideas. The congregation works together on problems to reach the answers."

Committees and boards mainly function without the pastor present, and the chairmen lead the Bible studies at meetings. Once a year, Grace holds a Laity Sunday. Laymen conduct the Sunday service while the pastors are attending a conference or convention.

## Serving others

Members also actively reach out—through the outreach committee and friendship evangelism.

The outreach committee uses a mission statement to help keep them focused. They prepare an annual schedule of events, submit a budget, and use that plan to reach

out to the community.

Monthly, the group canvasses door-to-door in the southeast and northeast. Twice a year, the congregation holds large-scale cold-call phone campaigns, and direct mail is used year around. "At the moment we have more prospects for follow-up than we have time to follow up, and we have unchurched members in Bible information classes on a regular basis," said Widmann.

A follow-up committee of lay people, trained to present a clearer understanding of sin and grace, visit solid prospects. Their monthly meetings are training sessions to enhance their outreach skills.

Along with the organized outreach, friendship evangelism flourishes. Lisa Oka and her husband visited after a friend invited them. "Neither my husband nor I grew up with a church. We visited different



churches, but everyone at Grace was warm and friendly. They made me feel at home. I was missing something before. Now, because of what's preached at Grace, I have a sense of wholeness."

### Starting a mission

Perhaps Grace's most venturesome undertaking is starting a new congregation in the rapidly expanding area of suburban southeast Portland. The district mission board asked them to combine mission dollars from synod and budget dollars from Grace to reach the unchurched.

"At the time of the mission board's request we had just built a new school building. Many of us looked at the large school investment as a form of outreach, but in fact the school really didn't bring us new, unchurched members. It's more of a nurturing tool than an outreach tool," said Peter Dorn, president of Grace. "So, with a group of fairly aggressive members pushing everyone toward more outreach, our voters—without controversy—agreed to try something new."



*Grace, an inner city congregation, is located in northeast Portland. Members are also starting a new mission in southeast Portland. But, they will make sure extra time and money aren't spent merely to provide a more convenient location for current members to worship.*

The pilot project started in 1992, when Schultz was called to work both in northeast and southeast Portland. "I'm out canvassing to reach people. But I'm also training our current members to use their talents to go door to door and witness," said Schultz.

Grace's first service in the southeast was held on Mother's Day. "During the past three years we've had some pretty tough financial problems, but nothing we couldn't eventually handle. We've also

enjoyed some remarkable growth—coming from both northeast and southeast neighborhoods. Last year alone we had eight adult baptisms and 21 adult confirmations, which for us is unheard of," said Dorn.

The congregation plans to function with a unified budget—one school and two worship locations. "Maintaining contact between the northeast and southeast groups is important. We also have to make sure the pastors don't have more work—but rather a proper division of work—and to make good use of lay people," said Widmann.

"Overall we need to keep the focus on reaching lost souls, not on building a church," said Dorn. "This particular approach in Portland has focused us on outreach. If the district mission board hadn't asked us to try something new, we wouldn't have done this, and a good number of unchurched people in southeast and northeast Portland still wouldn't know and believe that Jesus died for their sins."

### GRACE

Portland, Oregon  
organized 1909  
members: 450 souls

#### Pastors:

Warren Widmann  
Andrew Schultz

#### Vicar:

John Boggs

#### Teachers:

William Hartwig  
Marilyn Baer  
JoAnn Cordes  
Susan Hartwig

enrollment: 70



NL

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

# We share the promise with our offerings

God, the determiner of times and places that people live, has determined that we live in a time and place of considerable wealth.

Ronald M. Muetzel

The July 7 *Kiplinger Washington Letter* reported annual per-capita church contributions in the main-line denominations. Lutherans ranked seventh out of nine denominations. Are we to conclude Lutherans are poor, not very well-off?

## Rich people in Scripture

Some 20 years ago I heard that every pastor ought to conduct "a rich person's Bible study."

The apostle Paul singled out this rather exclusive student body when he wrote: "Command those who are rich in this present world . . ." (1 Timothy 6:17). He likely aroused curiosity then as his words arouse curiosity now. Who are the rich? How much wealth characterizes a person as rich in this present world?

It's easy to recall Jesus' negative comments on wealth. He targeted the rich fool in one of his parables. He told how beggarly poor Lazarus fared better eternally than the wealthy estate owner. He drew the unforgettable picture of a rich man trying to squeeze through an opening large enough to accommodate only a thread. Perhaps this list explains why we resist the label "rich."

It's not so easy to remember positive examples of wealth, though it's clear God blesses some Christians materially. Matthew and Zaccheus were men of substance. A

rich man from Arimathea provided our Savior's body a burial place among the wealthy. Barnabas divested himself of a field and donated the proceeds to the church. Lydia, the merchant of purple cloth to Macedonia's rich and famous, was likely a woman of means.

---

*God doesn't tell us  
how generous to be;  
he allows us to wrestle  
with our flesh  
and grow in his grace.*

---

## Rich people today

Names like Rockefeller, Hughes, and Walton (deceased founder of WalMart) bring great wealth to mind. Did Paul intend a rich person's Bible study only for people with their vast sums?

About two years ago *World Monitor* shared some statistics on world wealth.

The world's richest 20 percent receive more than \$7,500 per family member per year. They enjoy a lifestyle unknown in the past. They eat meat and processed packaged food. They drink from disposable containers. They live in climate

controlled buildings, with major appliances and electrical gadgets. They travel in cars and planes. They use a lot of disposable goods.

The application is simple. We eat our fill of beef, pork, chicken, and fish. We drink our cola out of bottles and cans. We are warmed by furnaces and cooled by air conditioners. We walk for exercise, not out of necessity. We need more land to bury our disposable waste. We are counted among the richest 20 percent.

God, the determiner of times and places that people live, has determined we live in a time and place of considerable wealth. We wring our hands over recessions and fret about retirement money, all while we enjoy a standard of living well above 80 percent of the world's population.

God, the great benefactor of our salvation, has also made us spiritually wealthy. "You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich" (2 Corinthians 8:9). We possess the love God lavishes on us, a fortune of free forgiveness, the precious presence of God, and an inheritance in heaven.

Because of our wealth, we ought to take "a rich person's Bible study" to see how God wants us to use our wealth to share the promise.

**Rich people's Bible study**

Ponder Paul's words: "Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment." Note the interplay—those who are rich, not to put their hope in wealth, hope in God, who richly provides.

Think about the modern tendency to hope in wealth. Although wealth is so uncertain, our culture tends to equate wealth with security. Reflect on the gyrations of the stock market and the overnight devaluation of currencies. It is said, "Earthly riches may disappear overnight or may dwindle and melt away like snow in the sun."

Paul continues with these words to the rich: "Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and

to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life."

What is the treasure for the coming age? No more death, mourning, crying, pain; bodies like Jesus' glorious body; an inheritance that can never perish, spoil, or fade; streets of gold, like transparent glass.

**Rich people sharing the promise**

The rich have special opportunities to be generous and willing to share. God doesn't tell us how generous to be; he allows us to wrestle with our flesh and grow in his grace.

Read about another treasure in Jesus' parable in Luke 16:1-9. When we use our worldly wealth to share the promise, the Holy Spirit works through the gospel. He calls people from unbelief to faith. They become children of God and heirs of heaven.

When we die and enter heaven, those friends will await us and welcome us into eternal dwelling.

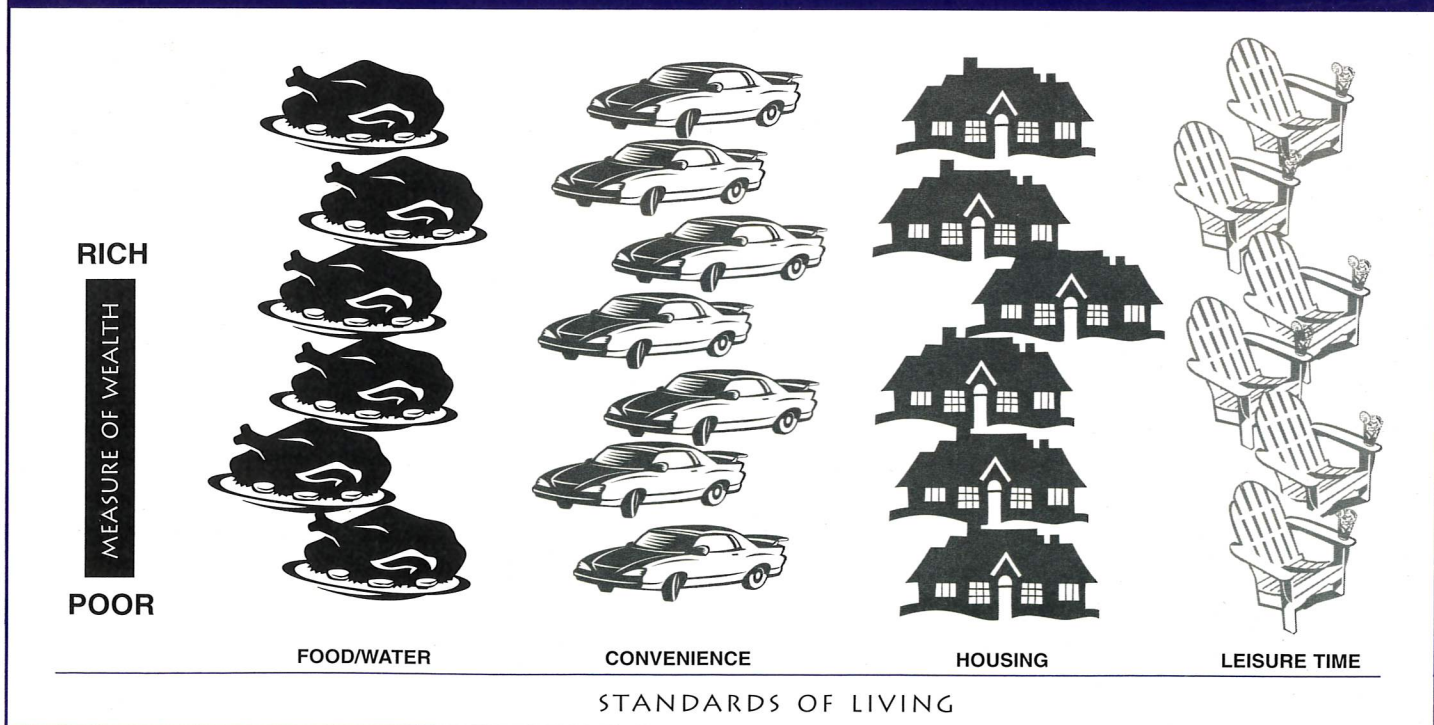
Recall the names of several people who converted to faith in Jesus Christ and recently became members of our congregations. Recall the names of several people from every tribe and language and people and nation who have been reached through our mission efforts. Count all of them among the friends who will welcome us into heaven.

People want sound investments that promise a good return. No investment of worldly wealth offers a better return than investment in the life that is truly life. May God use our generous gifts to share the promise.

NL

*Ronald Muetzel is pastor at Trinity, Bay City, Michigan.*

**LUTHERAN WEALTH INDEX**



# The foolishness of the cross— the power of God

Of all the wisdom Brunnschweiler learned in her life, the most important came at her death.

John Vogt

**D**r. Tamara Brunnschweiler was one of the most interesting and intriguing persons you'd ever meet.

Baptized and confirmed in the Lutheran church of Latvia, she earned her doctorate at the University of Zurich, Switzerland. A professor and librarian at Michigan State University for 35 years, she went to the University of Brasilia Graduate School in Brazil on a Fulbright Scholar Teaching Award. She was fluent in five languages and visited some of the remotest regions on this planet.

**But for everything she accomplished, something was still missing.**

As a scholar, Brunnschweiler encountered different and conflicting ideas about God that challenged her faith. In fact, she questioned the most basic tenets of Christianity.

Then in 1994, Brunnschweiler was diagnosed with terminal cancer.

Her neighbor, a member of Emanuel First in Lansing, Mich., asked if the pastor could stop by. Hesitantly, she accepted the pastor's offers of a brief devotion and prayer. As time went on, she would request, "Tell me a story from the Bible and pray with me." Although she couldn't bring herself to confess faith with orthodox precision, she welcomed the Word. Through that Word, the Holy Spirit rekindled her baptism faith.

**In her last week of life, Brunnschweiler kept the Bible by her bed and had it read to her frequently.** When the chips were down, the Word comforted her. She confessed, "I never believed in life after death, but now I know I will live forever."

And she gave these instructions: "Make a simple, white, wooden cross to place on my grave. See to it," she emphasized, "that the people have to walk by the cross!" Her only son is a minister in a church that teaches that Jesus failed on Calvary. Yet he honored her wishes. The cross was set before the congregation as the pastor preached on the "foolishness of the cross."

Then it was taken to the cemetery. In keeping with Latvian custom, each mourner was invited to throw dirt over the remains. With the dirt in place, the funeral director planted the simple, white, wooden cross into the ground for all to pass as they returned to their cars.

Of all the lessons and wisdom Brunnschweiler learned and taught in her life, the most important came at the time of her death, the lesson from 1 Corinthians 1:23: "We preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength."



*A simple, white cross marks Brunnschweiler's grave. After a life of complex academics, the basics of Christianity brought her peace.*

*John Vogt is pastor at Emanuel First, Lansing, Michigan.*

NL



# WELS adopts logo

- “Simple but striking, stands out from the page—shouts the message of the cross.”
- “This cross truly sends the message of the saving grace of the Triune God to all the earth.”
- “Just tells it all, nothing fancy, represents us.”
- “Impressive, dignified, bold, easily identified, commands attention, says ‘Christian!’ ”
- “Reminds us to spread Christ’s gospel to the four corners of the earth.”

So WELS members voted overwhelmingly for the above logo in our May NL straw poll. The Communication Services Commission and the Conference of Presidents agreed and adopted it as our synodical trademark.

“The logo now belongs to WELS,” explained Gary Baumler, director of communications. “We look for widespread use of it as an expression of our unity in the mission it represents.”

The mark stands as an anchor of hope and a call to faith.

The symbol of the cross is recognized by people worldwide. The cross, an instrument of torturous death, has become a sign of victory and life. We use the empty cross because Jesus Christ didn’t just die there and end his ministry. He died for the sins of the world and then rose from the dead to assure us of forgiveness and eternal life.

The cross alone signals that WELS is Christ-centered and has the message of salvation in Christ. The logo need say no more.

However, we can see other meaningful symbolism in it:

- † Four sections make up the cross, reminding us to spread Christ’s gospel to the four corners of the world.
- † The three layers of the cross represent our Triune God.
- † The center of the cross is white, the color of heaven and holiness.
- † When printed in color, the rest of the cross is purple, signifying both the passion of Christ and his royalty.



Karl R. Gurgel, WELS president, talks about the symbol: “The WELS logo is a simple cross, stained purple. It reminds us of Lent, our Savior’s death for us. But it is also an empty cross pointing to the Easter victory. Not Jesus, not we, will ever have to die again for sin. He’s won the victory. His cross says it all.

“And it is for all. To the four corners of the world the saving message of the cross is to be preached. That is the mission of the church. His cross, our cross, says it all.”

## Straw poll results

### You voted, we listened

In the May *Northwestern Lutheran*, WELS Communication Services asked you to vote on one of three possible new WELS logos. Over 700 people called, faxed, wrote, or stopped by our office to vote. All over the country, families discussed it at dinner, Bible study classes voted

on Sunday mornings, classrooms of grade school children added their votes.

Although the respondents varied greatly, the responses were strikingly similar. By more than 2 to 1, the “simple, strong, traditional cross” made the clearest statement to you about who and what WELS is.

Although many church bodies may feel this could represent them, this cross design is available for

use only by WELS congregations and organizations. The logo is in process of being registered as a trademark. A manual on how to use this logo to maintain legal rights is being developed and should be in your congregations soon. This project was made possible in part by a grant from AAL.

Here’s the new WELS logo you helped choose. We’re excited about it and hope you are too.

## Hurricane Luis hits Caribbean church

Danny Wehmeyer

Hurricane Luis left deep scars as it passed through the Caribbean in early September. It spanned 700 miles and damaged an estimated 75 percent of the buildings in Antigua. St. John's Lutheran Church and its members experienced their share of damages as well.

### Riding out the storm

The church and school had roof damage. Many preschool materials were lost. Several members lost their homes, including Pastor David Kehl, whose house was dry and secure until the wind shifted, ripped off most of the house roof, and caved in the front cement block wall of the house. Many others lost their roofs or major pieces of them as did Pastor Mark Henrich and Teacher Brian Schneck.

The members of St. John's took it well. Eleven members, including Headmaster Dennis Needham, rode out the storm at the school, moving

from room to room as sections of the roof gave way and the gallery blew off. Nine people, including Teacher Jean Korte, spent 12 hours in one bathroom at the Henrich house. The Schnecks moved to their vehicle in the carport because the roof of the house lifted and fell with each wind gust. The six members of the Kehl family and their one dog spent five hours under bunk beds, in several inches of water.

### Help arrives

Pastor Joel Jaeger from St. Lucia arrived three days later. Supplies from Missionary John Strackbein in Puerto Rico arrived the following day. Two dozen church members showed up to clean the property. Roofs were patched, and rooms were mopped and cleaned. Danny Wehmeyer, Caribbean coordinator for the South Atlantic district mission board, and his wife arrived Sunday



*Pastor David Kehl visits a member of St. John's whose house was damaged after Hurricane Luis struck in early September. The members didn't bemoan the loss of property, rather they thanked God for protecting them through the storm.*



*The Kehl home was destroyed by Hurricane Luis. The house weathered the storm for 12 hours until the wind shifted and caved in the entire front wall.*

afternoon from Florida with supplies.

Although the church, school, and staff homes were insured, most of the member's homes were not. But there was never a tragic sense of loss from the people. Sunday morning service after the storm was packed with people. The service began with 45 minutes of joyful a cappella singing and lasted two hours. A recurring theme was "thank God for life." These people celebrated the saving of lives, and expressed respect for God's power and appreciation for his protection.

Pastor Henrich noted, "This is the happiest I've ever seen our shut-ins—just smiling and glad to be alive." And the clean-up moved quickly. Pastor Kehl explained, "Antiguans aren't great planners, but they pitch in to help one another in a crisis, often without regard to their own property. They have a great relationship with God through Christ."

There is much rebuilding to be done in Antigua. Some of it will take years. For the members of St. John's and other Christians on the island that is all secondary.

*Danny Wehmeyer is a member of King of Kings, Maitland, Florida.*

*Some of the information in this article was taken from a letter by St. Lucia missionary, Joel Jaeger.*

Prior to Hurricane Luis, Hurricane Iris flooded most of Antigua and St. Lucia. On the heels of Luis, Hurricane Marilyn pummeled Antigua with 50 mile-per-hour winds that blew rain back into the houses and buildings and damaged some of the repairs, delaying the opening of school for two more days.



*Members and mission staff of St. John's work to repair holes in the school's roof. Over 24 people showed up to help restore the school, even before repairing their own homes.*



*Many homes in Antigua were decimated by Hurricane Luis. In addition to the loss of property, the land suffered damage—trees are barren and beaches are destroyed.*



## WELS members moved to give generously

Due to the generosity and Christian concern of WELS members in the 1994-95 fiscal year, the Committee on Relief has sent grants totaling \$227,605 to individuals suffering from disasters and calamities.

In May, the committee sent the following grants:

- \$10,000 through our churches in Oklahoma City to aid victims who lost their homes in an apartment building due to the bomb blast
- \$16,700 for individuals with personal needs
- \$11,000 for flood victims in Louisiana
- \$25,000 to aid families devastated by tornadoes in Illinois and Kansas
- \$5,000 to aid evangelism work among the poor in Bay City, Mich.
- \$2,000 for the relief fund of our mission in the Dominican Republic

The committee also sent grants to numerous foreign relief areas such as food aid to Rwanda, Haiti, Bulgaria, and Bosnia and to various domestic areas throughout the year.

## For the record

WELS world mission work is going on in 311 preaching stations, 9 Bible institutes, and 10 seminaries around the world. The 100 WELS world mission workers and 198 national workers spread the gospel on 5 continents, in 25 countries, and in 33 languages.

*Information provided by WELS Board for World Missions.*

## District news

### Minnesota

On Sept. 16, the Minnesota District Commission on Youth Discipleship sponsored a **Sunday school conference** to offer congregations practical advice on developing an active program. . . . **Zion, Hutchinson**, celebrated its 100th anniversary on Sept. 10. . . . On June 11, **Zion, Sanborn**, celebrated its 125th anniversary.

—Brad Pearson

### Michigan

St. John, Frankenmuth, Mich., celebrated the 30th anniversary in the ministry and also of service to St. John by Pastor **Joel Ehlert**.

—David M. Zahn

### Northern Wisconsin

Four teachers from St. Mark, Green Bay, celebrated anniversaries this year: 15 years, **Carol Glaeser** and **Nancy Schneider**; 20 years, **Paul Kaiser**; 25 years, **George Traucht**.

### Southeastern Wisconsin

A total of **554 children attended vacation Bible school** at six inner-city churches in Milwaukee in June.

Seven of those children have been baptized and three parents are in Bible information classes. . . . On Sept. 10, Wisconsin Lutheran High School, Milwaukee, celebrated anniversaries of these teachers: 40 years, **Jerome Harders**; 25 years, **John Ibisch, Robert Lehninger, Robert Ring, Gunter Thoms**, and **Lee Westphal**.

—George Ferch

### Western Wisconsin

On July 9, **Gethsemane, Davenport, Ia.**, burned its mortgage and held a mission festival. Gethsemane used to be on the outskirts of town; the city now extends three miles past the church. There are 99 communicant members. . . . Grace, Wausau, celebrated Pastor **Ronald Winter's** 25th anniversary on July 23. . . . **Beautiful Savior, Spooner**, dedicated its new worship and education facilities on Oct. 1. . . . **Larry Parker** and **Larry Collyard**, teachers at St. John, Watertown, celebrated their 25th anniversaries this year.

—Elton Stroh



*Immanuel, Findlay, Ohio, dedicated a new 17,000 square foot facility in August. It includes a fellowship hall, 10 classrooms, three offices, a library, kitchen, parlor, and nursery.*

## rē · li · giōn

**Defining religion**

**ecumenical movement:** a movement to unite all Christian groups without regard to differences in teaching and practice. The Bible, however, warns us "to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them" (Romans 16:17).



## Special services provided for "God's indispensable people"

Jesus Cares Ministries, an outreach of WELS for people with developmental disabilities, has added another component to the programs it provides—a worship service.

On July 17, more than 30 people attended the first half hour worship service at Atonement, Milwaukee. Services are held there the third Monday of every month by Samuel Clemons, pastor of Atonement. Services were added in September at Trinity, Waukesha, Wis.

The service was adapted for those program administrator James Esmeier calls "God's indispensable people." Tambourines were distributed so non-verbal worshipers can join in with the music. The confession of sins consisted of worshipers repeating after Clemons: "God, I have sinned. God, I am sorry. Jesus died for me. God forgives me." Symbols in front of the church were changed to identify different parts of the service, and other visual elements illustrated Clemon's short sermon.

"We're not trying to say that we don't think they should attend regular services," says Esmeier. "These services are enrichment."

Started in 1985, Jesus Cares Ministries now has Bible classes at 11 churches in Wisconsin and Illinois, individualized confirmation instruction, two parent support groups, Christmas programs, a fall camp, and a full schedule of recreational activities. The program is a model for 50 similar ministries in WELS districts nationwide.

For information on Jesus Cares Ministries, contact James Esmeier, 8420 W Beloit Rd, West Allis WI 53227; 414/541-6066.

## Synod schools open

A total of 1,711 students are attending synod schools this year. Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, opened with 111 (plus 52 vicars). At Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis., 506 students are registered, and 323 are studying at Michigan Lutheran Seminary, a prep school in Saginaw. In New Ulm, Minn., at Martin Luther College, 771 students are preparing for the teaching and preaching ministries, 181 in the pastor track.

Luther Prep is a new school formed by combining Martin Luther and

Northwestern preparatory schools. Martin Luther College was formed by the amalgamation of Northwestern and Dr. Martin Luther colleges.

The move was no small task. Two full libraries, requiring seven vans, needed to be moved. Northwestern College's library alone contained over 50,000 volumes, including a rare book collection, and several volumes that were several centuries old. Three to four vans made trips between campuses almost constantly from Apr. 13 to July 31, and 15 to 20 people were involved daily in the move.



Students in front of the student union at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn. MLC prepares young adults for the teaching and preaching ministries. Teaching candidates will go directly into the ministry and pastoral candidates will attend Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary for another four years of study.



Luther Preparatory School underwent extensive remodeling to prepare for the new school year. Here, people attending the LPS dedication on Aug. 20, visit the remodeled gym and student commons.



Deborah Teuteberg can't seem to get enough of medical mission work. Teuteberg, who has a masters degree in nursing, served the WELS medical mission from 1982 to 1984 and has also worked for the U.S. Peace Corps in Nepal—teaching community health nursing and contributing to a nursing textbook. She was commissioned in August for a second tour to the Mwembezi Lutheran Rural Health Center in Zambia. For more information on medical mission service, contact Kathie Wendland, 7428 CTH B, Two Rivers WI 54241; 414/682-5694.

## Obituary

### Manfred J. Lenz 1913-1995

Manfred Lenz was born Dec. 13, 1913, in Sheridan Township, Minn. He died Aug. 9, 1995, in New Ulm, Minn.

A 1935 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, he served St. Peter, Monticello, St. John, Alma City, Mt. Olive, Delano, all in Minn. He also served Prince of Peace, Thousand Oaks, and Shepherd of the Hills, LaMesa, Calif. He served as a district president and a first vice president of the synod.

He is survived by wife Jonette; sons Mark (Esther) and Greg (Chris); six grandchildren; sisters Edith (Karl) Tomfohr, Norma Borg-Breen, Hertha, Ruth (Bernard) DeFrang, Dori (John) Clark, and Janet Webb; and brothers Gilbert and Julius. He was preceded in death by parents and brothers Milton, Armin, and Werner.



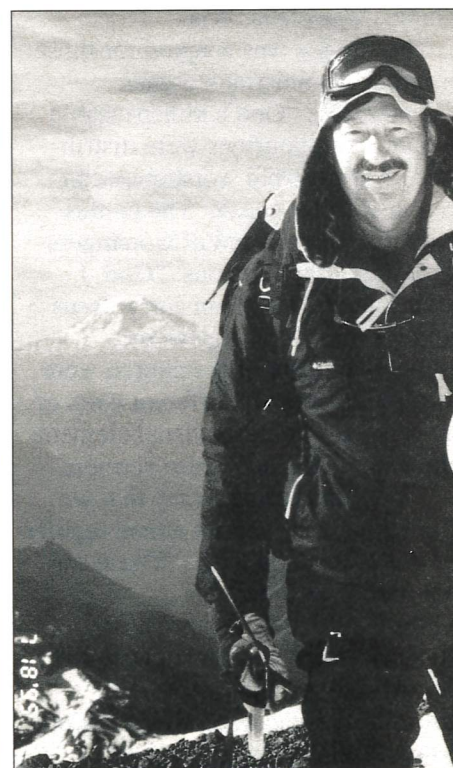
Harris Kaesmeyer (left) and Merlyn Voss (right) present a check from Organization of WELS Lutheran Seniors (OWLS) to Gerhard Wilde, president of the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of Germany. The money was the offering from the closing service of OWLS July convention. Only 200 people attended the service, yet gave \$2,836 for the seminary in Leipzig, Germany.



**Sink or Swim** (Code 8275)—1995, 30 min. color JSC (\$7.50)  
The best swimmer on the high school team loses a college scholarship through a series of poor choices. A Christian friend teaches God's forgiveness by word and example. Excellent discussion starter for teenagers.

**Warrior of God—Man of Peace** (Code 8276)—1995, 45 min. color, SCA (\$7.50) Story of Jacob Preus, former LCMS president, and his battle to restore the authority of the Bible to Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo. Recommended for those who did not experience these events.

Order from Audiovisual Services, Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 N 113 Street, Milwaukee WI 53226-3284.



With Mt. St. Helens in the background, Clyde Wobeck, a social studies teacher at Luther High School, Onalaska, Wis., celebrated his 60th birthday in "high" fashion—he climbed 14,411 ft. Mt. Rainier, Wash., the fifth highest peak in the lower 48 states. After completing a one-day class, Wobeck and 23 others undertook this climb that is comparable to running four marathons in two days. Wobeck attributes this, and all accomplishments, to God's grace.

## Lift High the Cross exceeds goal

Lift High the Cross, a special offering authorized by the 1989 synod convention, had raised over 20 million dollars at the end of the campaign on June 30, 1995.

Sixty percent of these gifts was designated to support mission expansion. The offerings funded 29 home missions stretching from southeastern Alaska to Tallahassee, Fla.; four home mission projects; and six world mission projects which provided missionaries to Thailand, Cameroon, and the Dominican Republic, as well as supported various projects in Africa.

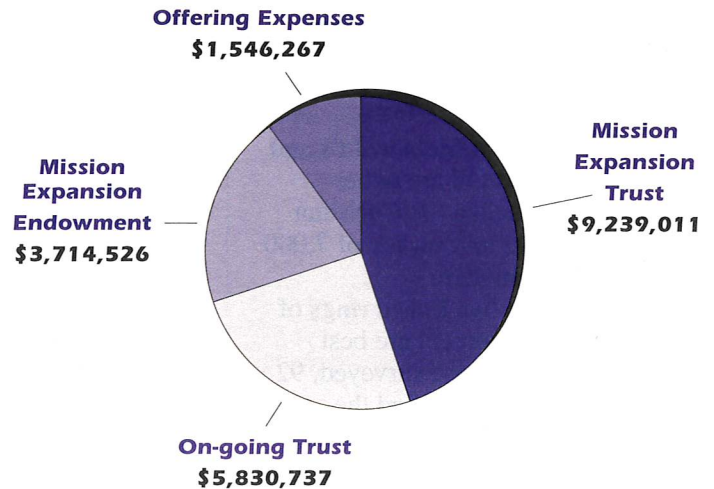
The remaining 40 percent of these gifts supported on-going work of the synod, including a staff ministry program, a secondary teacher education program, and an early childhood education program.

Approximately \$6 million remains for continued support of mission expansion and on-going synodical work.

Thousands of people, who chose to give as individuals, families, or through their congregations generously supported the program with 14,892 one-time gifts and 10,938 three-year commitments.

Lift High the Cross was seeking to raise a minimum of 16 million dollars for the

WELS Gift Trust Fund at the onset of the campaign.



## youth news

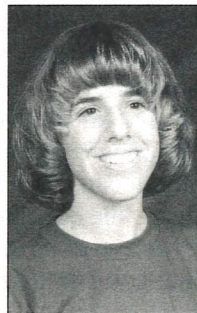
Please send photos or news on teen activities to: **youth news**, Northwestern Lutheran, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398.

**Anna Witt**, a member of Martin Luther, St. Louis, Mo., attended the Hugh O'Brien Youth World Leadership Conference in Boston, Mass. The junior at Lindbergh High School was one of 220 students from 34 countries who met to discuss the role of the U.S. in the world community.



Cousins **Dana Maedke** and **Rebecca Sager**, members of Trinity, Coleman, Wis., won gold medals in the 400 meter relay at the Wisconsin State Track and Field Championship. They are sophomores at Coleman High School.

**Ann Blado** represented Robinsdale Armstrong High School in Plymouth, Minn., at the Future Problem Solving International Conference in Rhode Island. Representatives meet to discuss problems dealing with cities, schools, prejudice, and the homeless. Blado is a member of Ascension, Plymouth.



**Ben Kohls**, a 13-year-old karate student, competed this summer in the AAU National Karate Tournament in S.C., the Junior Olympics in Iowa, and the Indiana State Fair International Americas Tournament. He brought home two

bronze medals, three silver medals, and one gold medal. He feels karate gives him a chance to share his faith with his fellow classmates as well as with competitors he meets across the nation. Ben is a member of New Life, Rockford, Ill.





## McDonald's sign better known than Christian cross

The arched "M" of McDonald's and the shell of Shell Oil are better known symbols than the Christian cross, according to a survey of 7,000 people in six countries.

However, the five linked rings of the Olympic movement are best known of all. Of those surveyed, 92 percent correctly identified the Olympic symbol. Eighty-eight percent recognized the Shell and McDonald's logos. Only 54 percent correctly identified the cross, while 36 percent recognized the United Nations symbol. Each participant was shown nine well-known logos for unaided identification.

The Anglican Bishop of Manchester, Christopher Mayfield, told the *Daily Mail* newspaper in London: "The Olympic movement, Shell, and McDonald's have a worldwide vision, so they are to be congratulated on getting their message across to the world. Christianity also has a worldwide vision, but we have not been so successful in communicating the faith, and we have got to do better." (Reported by *Ecumenical News International*)

## ELCA elects seminary president as bishop

Rev. H. George Anderson, 63, president of Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, was elected as the second presiding bishop of the eight-year-old Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Anderson succeeds retiring Bishop Herbert Chilstrom.

## Presbyterian church draws line on women pastors and elders

The theologically conservative Presbyterian Church in America warned its sister evangelical denomination, the Christian Reformed Church (CRC), that if it does not "repent and rescind" a decision allowing women to hold the offices of pastor and elder, the Presbyterian body will seek to expel the CRC from the North American

Presbyterian and Reformed Council. "The action of the Christian Reformed Church is in contradiction to the clear teaching of Scripture [on the role of women] and the historic Presbyterian and reformed confessions of faith," the 239,000-member Presbyterian Church in America said in a letter to the CRC.

## Lutheran World Federation promotes ordination of women

The council of the Lutheran World Federation called on its 122-member church bodies around the world to support the ordination of women in the wake of a decision by the Lutheran Archbishop of Latvia to suspend women's ordination.

Archbishop Janis Vanags, who was elected in 1993 to lead the Latvian church on a platform of

opposing women's ordination, announced earlier this year that he would stop ordaining women because of the negative effect it has on ecumenical relations with the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches.

*(WELS is not a member of the Lutheran World Federation. -ed.)*

## Majority are "golden rule Christians"

Mainstream Christians have shed the sectarianism of their forebears to become what sociologist Nancy Ammerman calls "golden rule Christians."

Based on a survey of 1,995 people in 23 congregations from Roman Catholicism and a variety in Protestantism, she concludes that doctrine means less to most Christians than being good to their families and

"doing good deeds to provide care and comfort to people in need."

"Golden rule Christians" have a level of tolerance that accounts for the ease with which they move from one church to another without regard for denominational loyalty. "Fifty-one percent . . . do not think it essential to define oneself in terms of strict religiosity," Ammerman said.



Our three-year-old adopted daughter (now 32) accompanied me on a grocery shopping trip. The young woman at the checkout counter looked at my little girl's blue eyes, and my dark brown eyes, and said "You must have gotten your blue eyes from your dad, you certainly didn't get them from your mother." My three-year-old replied, "God gave them to me."

—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.

## CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Subject to approval by the BME, the Board of Control of Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, requests nominations for the position of dean of students. The dean should be a theologically trained man with counseling and organizational skills, and able to be involved with dormitory supervision. Submit nominations by Nov. 30 to secretary Jerold E. Meier, 12958 Beck Rd, Plymouth MI 48170.

## CHANGE IN MINISTRY

### Teachers:

**Bush, Kerri**, to St. John, Oak Creek, Wis.

**Drew, Kimberly**, to Emanuel First, Lansing, Mich.

**Roecker, Roberta**, to Bethany, Manistowic, Wis.

**Schulz, Rebecca**, to Zum Kripplein Christi, Iron Ridge, Wis.

### Pastors:

**Glasgow, Robert G.**, from Faith, Pittsburg, Kan., to Friedens, New Prague, Minn.

**Henke, Mark**, from Christ, Oakdale, Minn., to Trinity, Waukesha, Wis.

**Krueger, Wilbert T.**, from St. John, Lannon, Wis., to Christ, Pewaukee, Wis.

**Lillo, Joel E.**, from Christ, Merrill, Wis., to Trinity, Ellington/St. Paul, Stephenville, Wis.

**Maasch, Orville F.**, from St. Luke, Vassar, Mich., to Martin Luther Memorial Homes, Mich.

**Zemple, Dean D.**, from Our Savior, Jacksonville, Fla., to St. John, Lannon, Wis.

## NAMES WANTED

**Sudbury/Parry Sound/North Bay, Ontario, Canada**—Pastor Douglas Priestap, 165 Kingsview Dr, Bolton, Ontario, Canada L7E 3W8; 1-800-561-1917 or 905/857-7486.

**Oakville/Mississauga/Burlington/Hamilton, Ontario, Canada**—Pastor Douglas Priestap, Cross of Life Lutheran Church, 165 Kingsview Dr, Bolton, Ontario, Canada L7E 3W8; 1-800-561-1917 or 905/857-7486.

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

## NEW ADDRESS

**Stow, Ohio**—Hope. Formerly at 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; 216/688-6300.

## NEW LOCATION

**Buffalo Grove, Ill.**—New Life, Twin Groves Jr. High School, 2600 N Buffalo Grove Rd (corner of Buffalo Grove Rd and Half Day Rd/Hwy 22). 708/520-9176. Worship 9:30 AM; Sunday school and Bible class 10:45 AM.

## COMING EVENTS

**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.

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

**WELS Historical Institute annual meeting**—All historical institute members and interested individuals invited. Sun. Nov. 12, 3:30. David's Star, 2740 David's Star Dr, Jackson Wis.

**The synod administration building will be closed the following dates:**

November 23 & 24—Thanksgiving  
Callers may leave voice mail messages on those days, 256-3888; FAX 256-3899.

## POSITION AVAILABLE

**Childcare teacher**—St. Paul, Franklin, Wis. Knowledge and experience in pre-school needed to help out in various classrooms. Part-time, Mon.-Thurs. Call or send resume, St Paul's Lutheran Child Care Center, c/o Michelle Yass, 6881 S 51 St, Franklin WI 53132; 414/421-1833.

**Director of nursing**—The Lutheran Home: River Falls, Wis., is seeking an R.N. with healthcare experience for the position of director of nursing. Send resume to The Lutheran Home: River Falls, 640 N Main St, River Falls WI 54022; 1-800-679-2260; 715/425-9911.

**Fine Arts Administrator**—Wisconsin Lutheran College is seeking a fine arts administrator for its new fine arts facility to be completed by Sept. 1996. The person will be responsible for overall supervision of the facility and coordination of all fine arts programming. A minimum of a bachelor's degree and administrative experience in an arts-related, non-profit, or educational setting is required. Contact vice president for academic affairs John Bauer, 8800 W Bluemound Rd, Milwaukee WI 53226; 414/443-8816.

## ITEMS AVAILABLE

**NL special edition**—extra copies of issue highlighting ministerial education system. Excellent for new member distribution. Contact *Northwestern Lutheran*, WELS, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398; 414/256-3210; FAX 414/256-3899.

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

**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.

**Altar covers**—White and green. Pulpit, lecturn, 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.

## ANNIVERSARIES

**Downers Grove, Ill.**—Good Shepherd (20). Nov. 12. Services, 8 AM, 10:30 AM, buffet lunch, 12:30 PM. 525 63 St, Downers Grove IL 60515; 708/852-1519.

**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.

**Hudson, Wis.**—Emmanuel (20). Dec. 10. Service, 9 AM, fellowship brunch, 10:15 AM. 715/386-9851.

**South St. Paul, Minn.**—Grace (75). Dec. 25; Jan. 21, 1996; Feb. 18; Mar. 17; Apr. 28. Services, 10 AM, plus a 2 PM service on Apr. 28, 1996; meals follow. Fellowship party, 6 PM, Apr. 27. 612/451-1035.

**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.

**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. Confirmations contact Rachele Richert, PO Box 52, Wonewoc WI 53968.

**DON'T  
KEEP  
THIS  
MAGAZINE!**

## Give it away.

Encouraged by someone's story of faith? Uplifted by a Bible study? Inspired by a devotional thought?

Share it with a family member, friend, coworker—or a stranger.

Write or call to let us know how—and if you want, why—you shared your copy. We'll send you another. Northwestern Lutheran, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222; 414/256-3232.

# The fruit of the Spirit is gentleness

James A. Aderman

No single English word fully translates Paul's term for gentleness in Galatians 5:23. The Greek word, too, might be misunderstood. The Spirit's gift of gentleness extends beyond the word's normal meaning in both languages.

The Greek word for gentleness is also rendered mildness, meekness, considerateness, or courteousness. Its opposite is anger, cruelty, fierceness, self-interest, and self-assertiveness. The problem for Paul's day was the Greek word only described how people behaved toward each other, never toward God. It described their conduct, not their attitude. Worse, it might imply condescension and self-interest. A king who curried the favor of his people—not because he loved them, but because he wanted to manipulate them—was called gentle.

## Gentleness lives to please God

New Testament gentleness is much different. Christian gentleness is a reflection of God's loving relationship with the believer. It doesn't hint at condescension. It testifies about humble submission to a loving Father's will. Paul's word never includes selfish manipulation. A Christian's gentleness finds its energy in living to please God.

Our English word gentleness must stretch for an adequate translation. A gentle child of God is not weak, spineless, or timid. Like the Savior, God's child is open, caring, and sensitive—first toward the Lord, then toward others.

Jesus called himself "gentle and humble in heart" (Matthew 11:29). We see that when, praying in Gethsemane, he bowed to his Father's will. Jesus' gentleness was apparent when he dealt with Lazarus' grieving sisters and a repentant Peter. Jesus was meek and considerate, but never weak-kneed and vacillating.

## Gentleness doesn't lack courage

Our word must stretch in another way. Often people are mild-mannered because they lack courage. Jesus' gentleness didn't spring from cowardice but from the infinite resources of God he had at his disposal. For him "equality with God [was not] something to be grasped" (Philippians 2:6). His lofty position gave him the courage to always be kind. Even when the Lord drove money changers from his temple, boldly faced his accusers, and resolutely marched on to the hell of the

cross, he acted in biblical gentleness.

Our gentleness also flows from our lofty position. We are the children of God. The sovereign Lord of the universe caringly controls every event for our benefit, so we humbly accept our Father's dealings with us—including the painful experiences. When others harm us, our gentleness allows us to bear the injustice. Our Father permits those sins to chasten and purify us. Out of a gentle spirit, the Christian forgives the wrong and seeks reconciliation.

The Spirit's virtue of gentleness includes much more than we'd normally assign that word—in Greek as well as English. But with the infinite Spirit living inside us, we can expect his fruit will always be far above normal.

### FOR PERSONAL STUDY

1. Write the definition of biblical gentleness in your own words. Page through the Gospels looking for examples of Jesus at his gentle best.
2. Read about your lofty position in Christ in Ephesians 2:4-10 and 1 Peter 2:9,10. How will focusing on that enable you to be gentle when your life is in upheaval?

*Next: The virtue of self-control*

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



# “I love to tell the story”

Walter F. Beckmann

Last year I read a disturbing article in the newspaper. A pastor was upset that he was so busy during the season from Thanksgiving through Christmas. He resented that his congregation expected him to be in the pulpit, when he really wanted to be at home with his family.

I hope none of his members read it; that could take joy out of their worship. They'd sit in church on Christmas, knowing their pastor didn't want to be there preaching the gospel.

Pastors, especially young pastors, can't celebrate the same way their members do. When my children were young, they didn't open their gifts on Christmas Eve or early Christmas morning, as many of their friends did. I was too preoccupied with my sermons. They opened their gifts after church on Christmas Day so I could enjoy the experience with them.

Years later I suggested I might have matured to the point where we could celebrate as other people did, but my family didn't want to. Our way of celebrating was a tradition they didn't want to give up. We hadn't been deprived of anything. We had learned to adapt to our circumstances.

Preaching for holiday services is not an infringement on a pastor's family time. It's a special privilege from God, who allows the pastor what he once sent angels to do—bring his people glad tidings of great joy. Rest assured that our pastors consider it an honor and a joy to do so.

At times pastors have to be a little creative at the holiday seasons to fill their calling in the pulpit, without neglecting their responsibilities to their families (but we all knew that when we entered the ministry). Then too, every vocation involves some adjustments. A fireman can't stand on the curb with his family and watch a three alarm blaze. He has to be up there with the ladders and the hoses. But his family certainly hears more captivating fire stories than most families do.

The more holiday seasons I serve, the more I realize the time will come when I won't be in the pulpit delivering the message on great Christian holidays. When that time comes I'll probably feel like a retired ball player, sitting in the stands, wishing I were on the playing field again where the thrills and action are. Believe me, it is a thrill to stand in the pulpit and proclaim the gospel. “I love to tell the story.”

I can't think of any way I'd rather spend the holiday season, and I can't think of one good reason why God should have given me such a privilege. No reason, of course, except for his grace.

When you see your pastor in the pulpit on Thanksgiving or Christmas, don't feel sorry for him and say, “It's too bad that holidays are so busy for him.” Count the pastor privileged, and thank God for his grace.

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

*Preaching for  
holiday services  
is not an  
infringement  
on a pastor's  
family time.  
It's a special  
privilege from  
God.*

# Applause in church

John F. Brug

*Is it proper to clap and be loud in the church after a concert or pageant?*

The Bible gives us little guidance as to the propriety of clapping in church. The answer to your question, therefore, is a matter of judgment. For example, in some cultures, clapping is a part of the worship. The meaning of applause in a given culture, and the nature and purpose of the musical or dramatic performance should be our guide.

In our society, applause has three main functions: to welcome a speaker or performer, to approve the contents of a speech, and to express appreciation for the quality of a performance. Certainly, approval of the contents of the message is a proper response to any true proclamation of God's Word, whether in word, song, or drama.

But we have traditionally regarded applause as the appropriate response to a performance, which may be judged by our subjective opinion, not to the preaching of God's Word, which is not subject to our judgment. We don't customarily applaud the condemnation heaped on us by God's law nor the absolution, which frees us from sin. We don't cheer the creed or give a standing ovation to the Lord's Supper, though we fully approve of their content. We don't usually interrupt the sermon with applause when we like its content or style.

Are the biting condemnations of God's law any different when they are preached by the pastor or sung by a choir? Are Christmas pageants or passion plays intended to be

theatrical performances or dramatic presentations of the gospel lesson? If the music and drama in the church are intended to present the Word rather than perform a show, it would seem most appropriate that we respond to them as we would to any other presentation of the gospel. This is usually quite clear if such presentations occur in a worship service. On other occasions, it is easy to prevent the intrusion of applause through a brief announcement, just as wedding bulletins often ask guests to refrain from flash photography to preserve an atmosphere of worship.

---

*The appropriateness of applause in response to a religious concert, then, is a matter of cultural judgment.*

---

Another consideration is that people who experience the concert or drama as worship and as an occasion for meditation consider applause a disruption to the mood and spirit of worship. A glorious anthem takes our minds soaring to a contemplation of heaven, but jarring applause brings us crashing down to earth.

Mingling worship and applause also creates practical difficulties. If worship is treated like performance, do we withhold applause when beautiful truths of the Word are presented in less than elegant style or when the content doesn't appeal to our sinful nature? Is it fitting to applaud a human composition, but



to respond to the inspired gospel lesson with silence?

We teach pastors that the goal of good preaching is to direct attention and honor to the message, not to the human messenger or his eloquence. Should our goal be any different if the message is presented in song?

The appropriateness of applause in response to a religious concert, then, is a matter of cultural judgment, but it also depends on how we answer the following questions: What does greater or lesser applause say about our response to God's message? What does applause say to the messengers about our criteria for judging their presentation? Does applause send confusing signals about the relative importance of the substance of the message and its outward form (1 Corinthians 2:1-4)? What does applause do to the mood of the congregation at worship?

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



**“Peers can help keep youth in church” [July] points out a problem of the heart.** My feeling is that the majority of youth presented for confirmation are not prepared. They recite what they are told, rather than professing what is truly in their hearts. Many just want to get it over with. Is it like a factory where we turn them out, ready or not? Is it realistic to think that all people are ready for confirmation at the same time? Has the ritual become the end instead of the means?

*Brian Kersten  
Baldwin, Wisconsin*

**Professor Roland H. Hoenecke was more than pastor, teacher, and a member of “synod’s doctrinal commission”** [obituary, Sept.]. He was for many years during the ’50s and ’60s a valued and valuable member of the editorial staff of *The Junior Northwestern*. The synod’s magazine for children would not have gone without his input.

Many WELS members in their 40s and 50s will recall with delight his chatty sketches of synod’s people and places, his Bible quizzes, and especially the monthly crossword puzzle which he enjoyed constructing as much as the readers enjoyed solving.

Roland Hoenecke was a man for all people—including girls and boys.

*Morton A. Schroeder  
Appleton, Wisconsin*

**I was confused when I opened the Sept. issue of NL.** The headline hit my eye, “Hate your father and mother.” A young child or an older person, able to see the photograph and read the large print, but not handle the smaller print, might be

misled and tempted to give up reading NL and focus on sports. Thank you for listening.

*Doris Schumann  
Jefferson, Wisconsin*

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*.

**T**his is the final reading for our



“Through my Bible in three years” series.

Congratulations to those of you who read along with us for the past three years. Please let us know if you finished.

We’d love to hear from you.

We will start the series again next month.

**rē·li’giōn**

**Defining religion**

**Predestination (election):** God’s determination in eternity of whom he was going to make his children through Christ (Ephesians 1:3-6). God did not choose some because they were better than others, but because of his grace according to his own purpose (2 Timothy 1:9). God, however, didn’t predestine anyone to damnation. If someone is lost it is that person’s own fault (Matthew 23:37).

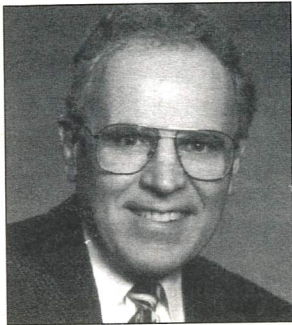
THROUGH MY  
**BIBLE** in 3 YEARS

December 1995

- 1. 1 Corinthians 5, 6
- 2. 1 Cor. 7
- 3. 1 Cor. 8, 9
- 4. 1 Cor. 10:1-11:1
- 5. 1 Cor. 11:2-34
- 6. 1 Cor. 12
- 7. 1 Cor. 13
- 8. 1 Cor. 14
- 9. 1 Cor. 15:1-34
- 10. 1 Cor. 15:35-58
- 11. 1 Cor. 16
- 12. Psalm 30
- 13. Ps. 31
- 14. Ps. 32
- 15. Ps. 33
- 16. Ps. 34
- 17. Ps. 35
- 18. Ps. 36
- 19. Ps. 37:1-20
- 20. Ps. 37:21-40
- 21. Ps. 38
- 22. Ps. 39
- 23. Ps. 40:1-10
- 24. Ps. 40:11-17
- 25. Ps. 41
- 26. 2 Corinthians 1:1-11
- 27. 2 Cor. 1:12-22
- 28. 2 Cor. 1:23-2:17
- 29. 2 Cor. 3:1-4:6
- 30. 2 Cor. 4:7-5:10
- 31. 2 Cor. 5:11-6:10

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

## Old-fashioned substance



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

---

*We might make a good case for being radically different from the world because the message is radically different.*

---

We look at megachurches, and we ask, "Can we learn something from them to help get more people to hear the gospel?" We are impressed with big, and we have good reasons to want the church to grow. Not that "big" is necessarily "better." It isn't. But what about the tenets proposed by some megachurch enthusiasts?

I think of two I heard in a television interview of a megachurch leader:

1. "People are bored with old-fashioned sermons."

2. "The forms of the church are incongruent with the world we live in."

**Boring sermons?** Who of us hasn't heard a boring sermon or two (or preached them)? But what does the megamaster's criticism imply? What is it about "old-fashioned sermons" that bores people?

Boring delivery can bore people. Shoddy preparation can lead to boring delivery and possibly boring telling of God's truths. People make things boring, and we can't afford to do that when telling God's Word.

Also, the Bible nowhere dictates a single style of preaching for the church.

However, "old-fashioned" preaching also implies law/gospel preaching. That message is never boring, even if people get bored with it. It tells us over and over why we need the Savior and how God gave us the Savior. It is new every morning, the one truth that opens heaven for this earthbound creature. It is the one message that brings true church growth.

Maybe we can do some things, such as use visual aids or dramatize Scripture, that are not "old-fashioned" and can help avoid "boring." But we dare not change God's message of salvation nor relegate

it to an afterthought—an "Oh, yes, we all know we're saved . . .". Who's to say our sermon trees don't need pruning now and then? But that's no reason to cut down the tree and plant a different kind in its place.

**Incongruent forms?** Yes, the way we worship is different from most other things we do. And, yes, we can use contemporary forms and can vary forms from place to place.

The issue is much the same as the sermons issue. Exactly why and how we change forms needs attention. Do we change just to be more like the secular world? Why do we think that's better? We might make a good case for being radically different from the world because the message is radically different. It's unique and may deserve unique forms.

On the other hand, the forms should enhance the message and help us relate to the message. Substance, God's message, comes first. Form follows. We must avoid at all costs being "all form and no substance."

We probably can learn something by looking at what the megachurches are doing. Maybe some of it should be obvious to us, both the good and the bad. More important, we can learn by continually looking at what we are doing. Do our sermons bring glory to God and build up his people in faith? Do our forms serve the message of salvation? Let's be neither "old-fashioned" nor "contemporary." Let's be godly.

*Gary P. Baumler*

# A ONE-ACT CHILDREN'S MUSICAL

ORDER FROM  
NORTHWESTERN  
PUBLISHING HOUSE

Call order services toll-free  
**1-800-662-6022**

(Milwaukee area 414-475-6600)  
Business hours: 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. weekdays

Or use the convenient order form below.

- Please send me the musical  
"The Greatest Show of All" \$49.95  
plus \$6.00 shipping (#38-4004)

## Method of Payment

- Check or Money order enclosed (make payable to  
Northwestern Publishing House)

*Master Card*       *Visa*       *Discover*

Card # \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

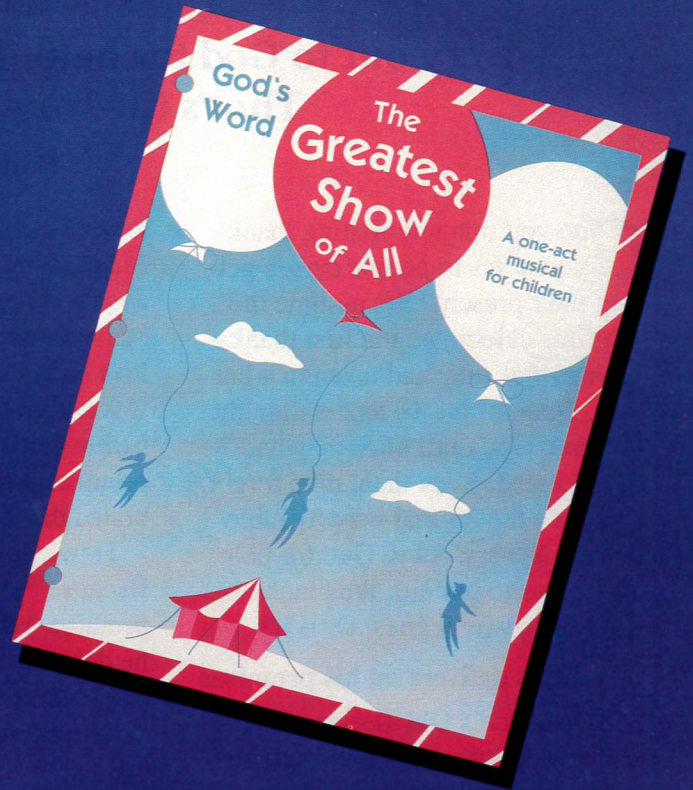
Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime phone# \_\_\_\_\_

Northwestern Publishing House  
Order Services  
1250 N 113th Street  
Milwaukee WI 53226-3284



- ✓ Teaches children how to evangelize.
- ✓ Builds enthusiasm and confidence to witness to friends and neighbors.
- ✓ Provides Sunday school and Lutheran elementary school children the opportunity to share their faith through a community event.

## FEATURES

- Original music by WELS musicians
- A children's script in copymaster format
- Rehearsal and performance audio cassette

# A Thanksgiving Day before the fact

We cry out to God for help. He comes to our aid. We thank him.  
That's the way it always goes. Or is it?

Paul O. Wendland

Can you imagine writing thank-you notes to people *before* getting their present? We assume the pilgrims celebrated the first thanksgiving *after* they had taken in a harvest. None of the 10 lepers thought to thank God until *after* they had been healed. Even then, nine forgot.

That's the normal way. Trouble comes. We cry out to God for help. He comes to our aid. We thank him. That's the way it goes. Or is it?

## The Lord delivers on his promises

Once, God's Old Testament believers celebrated a thanksgiving before God did anything to help them. Three enemies of God's people had joined forces to invade Judah. Before the Jews were even aware of the threat, the wolf was at the door. There was no time to prepare. The situation seemed hopeless.

Under King Jehoshaphat, the people gathered in the temple to ask God's help. As they were praying, Jahaziel the prophet said, "Listen: 'Do not be afraid. . . . You will not have to fight this battle. Take up your positions, stand firm, and see the deliverance the LORD will give you'" (2 Chronicles 20:15-17).

Armed with little more than this promise, they set out to face the enemy. For all the world, they looked more like a congregation

leaving church than the army of Judah going to war. In front marched a male chorus of Levites, who sang, "Give thanks to the Lord, for his love endures forever" (20:22). This was *before* they saw the enemy, *before* God made good on his promise to save them. They celebrated thanksgiving before the fact.

How could they be so confident? Because the Lord made them a promise. When the Lord promises, he delivers. It's as good as done, even before it's done. Was their confidence misplaced? Read

the rest of the story in 2 Chronicles 20.

The Lord fought the battle for Judah. All they did was observe the Lord's work and praise him again for what they saw.

## The Lord's promises are for us, too

On this Thanksgiving, however abundant our blessings, we'll still have problems. Just round up the usual suspects: murder, violence, an earthquake here, a riot there, that deep ache from a personal trial. But whatever troubles we have—the fightings without, the fears within—it will still be an excellent time to take them to the Lord, and then, at once, to praise him in confident thanksgiving.

God has made us a few promises, too. He has promised to take care of us, promised not to hold our sins against us, promised to be with us always, promised to make all things serve our good. Come what may, we can't lose.

So, when you go to God's house this Thanksgiving, plan to get there a few seconds early. Lift your burdens off your mind by giving them to the Lord. Then compose your heart in Christ and listen in the silence for the sound of the ancient Israelites singing, "Give thanks to the Lord, for his love endures forever." Join them in their song. God never yet gave someone a reason to regret a thanksgiving, whether spoken before or after the fact.



Paul Wendland is a professor at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota.