

LUTHERAN



**AIDS intervention—
is there hope?**

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**A man of
“unusual
talents”**

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**“We sang
hymns. . . .
bullets were
flying.”**

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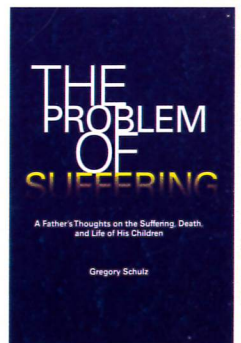
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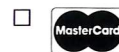
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Let's talk

The Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend. Exodus 33:11

Eric S. Hartzell

Friends use doorbells. They walk up the walk, push the doorbell and wait. When their friend opens their door, there they are, face to face. Then they talk. That's the reason for pushing the doorbell.

The artist's rendition of Jesus standing by a door comes to mind. There is no doorbell, so he is knocking. He is waiting for the door to be opened. Instinctively, we know why he wants the door to open. He wants to talk. He wants to go in. That's how it is with friends.

God wants to be our friend

So with Moses and God: "The LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend." This did not just happen once. It was their practice and their pleasure. We envy Moses. What would it be like to have God for a friend you could talk to face to face?

The Almighty himself wanted to talk to Moses, as a man talks to his friend. The One who owned everything didn't have everything. He didn't have Moses' conversation until Moses gave it. He didn't have Moses' spoken account of how the day was going until Moses spoke it. He didn't have Moses' words of praise for the good help and guidance and protection until Moses gave them. And God didn't have Moses' listening ear (the kind friends give each other) until Moses gave it. There is a time when God will force everyone to hear him talk—Judgment Day. But that trumpet-call

kind of talking will not be like a man talking to his friend.

Moses was not the only friend God had. Abraham was a friend, too. "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness, and he was called God's friend" (James 2:23). In fact, Jesus describes many friends of God when he says: "I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you" (John 15:15).

God wants us to talk to him

There is something in friendship that wants to talk. We who have not yet seen God face to face, as Moses did, desire to talk to God, our friend. When Jesus said we should pray without ceasing, that wasn't an invitation. That was Jesus, our friend, saying, "Fulfill our friendship. Talk!"

It would hurt an earthly friend deeply if we had tragedy overtake us and we told everyone but him, especially when he said, "Call on me in the day of the trouble." It would hurt an earthly friend if we had some wonderful thing happen but never got around to telling him about it. It would hurt our friend if we didn't thank him for a gift he gave us. May the hymn verse not describe how we treat Jesus: "Behold a Stranger at the door! He gently knocks, has knocked



before, has waited long, is waiting still; you treat no other friend so ill" (TLH 650).

Jesus is the kind of friend we talk to. He is the friend who has, above all friends, our best interests at heart. He wasn't called "a friend of tax collectors and sinners" for nothing. He talks to them.

Eric Hartzell is pastor at Cross and Crown, Georgetown, Texas.



- In the United States, the battle against AIDS seems encouraging. But the AIDS problem in Africa is worse than we can imagine. On page 6, read "AIDS intervention—is there hope?" There you'll hear what WELS is doing to offer earthly relief and eternal hope to Africans.
- For the first time in the history of WELS, missionaries had to be evacuated from a country because of safety concerns. In March, our missionaries to Albania were evacuated. On page 20, learn more about how God protected the missionaries who went across the world to spread the Word.
- With the year 2000 right around the corner, more people are thinking about the future, even as they yearn for the past. In a new series, Paul Wendland will discuss last words for last days. Turn to his first article, "Our place in time," on page 8.
- Mark Braun starts our new Bible study this month. Based on the book of James, he'll be covering "Real faith for real life." See page 30.
- We welcome Eric Hartzell, our new contributing editor. He is a long-time writer for NL but a first-time contributing editor. He will pen our Thought for Today devotion. You'll find his first article on page 3.

—LRB

Cover photo courtesy of the Central Africa Medical Mission

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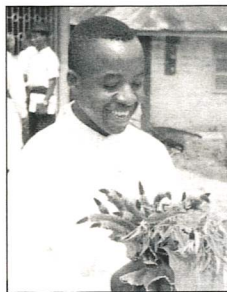
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AIDS intervention—is there hope?

Although medical care and present moral values offer little hope, we can offer a hope centered in a Savior who came to seek and to save the lost.

Ernst H. Wendland

According to recent press reports, the battle against the AIDS virus in America has reached the stage of “cautious optimism.” Although no vaccine has been found, the past year has brought news of “dramatic breakthroughs.” The recent Fourth Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections reported that experiments with potent drug combinations now show “good results.”

The American scene

Headlines and lead stories can often mislead. I am reminded of TV commercials, loudly promoting auto sales and rentals at bargain prices, with the basic restrictions in barely visible print following somewhere down below. As you read further in news articles about the “good

results” in the AIDS battle, you find the “optimism” becoming more and more “cautious.” Anti-HIV treatment is still in an experimental stage, is limited to small groups of people, and involves the risk of dangerous side-effects. Economically, it is far beyond the income of the average individual.

Unfortunately, all too little appears in these reports about the basic societal problems that should concern us. Promiscuous sex continues to be flaunted as an acceptable lifestyle. Teenage pregnancies are on the rise. Researchers in the Communicable Disease Center in Atlanta report that AIDS cases among 13- to 25-year-olds have risen 20 percent within the last five years.

Is there hope? Not if present moral values continue to prevail.

The African scene

Statistics become even more frightening when looking at Africa. Sub-Saharan Africa has about 10 percent of the global population yet accounts for 63 percent of the cumulative HIV infections in the world. In Zambia’s urban settings, nearly one-third of young adults are HIV positive. By the year 2000 an estimated 600,000 children, about one tenth of Zambia’s total population, will be orphans.

America may feel somewhat “optimistic” about its “dramatic breakthroughs” in its efforts to “eradicate the AIDS virus.” However, this has little to do with Africa, where even common drugs are out of reach for most people, and where a complicated regimen requiring precise timing of meals and pills is out of the question. Last year President F. T. Chiluba urged Zambians and the world at large “to look at HIV/AIDS as a problem that can no longer be denied, trivialized, or ignored.”

Efforts of Zambia’s government agencies, generously supported by foreign governments, including the USAID (United States Agency for International Development), have so far had little impact in checking the spread of the disease. Health education programs, in action for a decade, have ended in failure. Groups that have had most access to AIDS education continue to have the



An African member of the Mwembezhi Lutheran Rural Health Center teaches women about health issues. The center serves 25,000 to 30,000 patients a year, trying to educate Africans about primary health care in order to combat the rapid spread of AIDS.

highest HIV positive percentages. Most distressing of all, the majority of AIDS deaths occur among the educated, the skilled, the experienced leaders in the community. A massive distribution of condoms, regarded as a sort of "safety-valve answer" to the problem, has, according to interviews with Zambian leaders, become a contributing factor toward promiscuous behavior.

Realizing that the AIDS epidemic had reached a crisis stage, a USAID-sponsored workshop was conducted in Lusaka last year "to better identify the problem areas in AIDS intervention." Zambians who had been involved in existing programs were the leading participants.

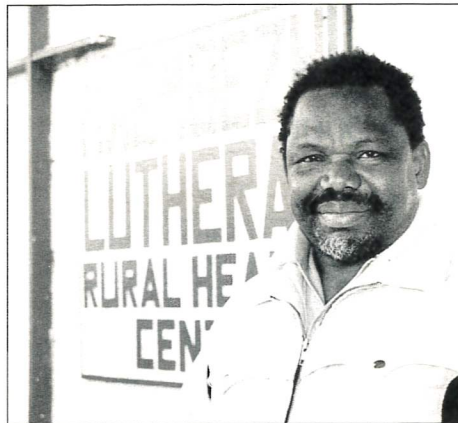
Results of the study pointed to a decided "change in direction." The need for a "behavioral change" was strongly emphasized. Non-government agencies such as rural health centers, church organizations, and community health workers were recognized as the primary sources of help in combating the problem. Overemphasis on the sale of condoms was warned against. Providing "home care and counseling services in local areas" was singled out as one of the most effective ways of dealing with the situation.

Is there hope? A ray of hope, at least, began to gleam on the horizon.

The WELS mission scene

It's rather remarkable, isn't it, that the "change in direction" recommended by the Zambians themselves points to a type of agency that the women of our WELS congregations have been supporting in Zambia for 35 years.

The Mwembezi Lutheran Rural Health Center, located about 50



Clinical Officer Alfred Mkandawire. Mkandawire and Sister-in-Charge Nurse Sylvia Gustavison conduct workshops for training community health workers to help with AIDS counseling. He has worked at the Mwembezi Lutheran Rural Health Center since it opened in 1961.

miles west of Lusaka, reaches out to about 60,000 people in the Sala Reserve area. It serves 25,000 to 30,000 patients annually, caring for those suffering with malaria, diarrhea, dysentery, pneumonia, and other ailments, as well as conducting immunization and nutrition programs for mothers and children. In recent years it has moved in the direction of primary health care, training community health workers and traditional birth attendants from the surrounding villages.

Our Central Africa Medical Mission is aware that this health center lies in the country where AIDS has struck its most devastating blows, and that a special need exists right where God has placed us. Representatives Debbie Teuteberg and Joanne Halter were sent to Zambia to study the situation. Sister-in-Charge Nurse Sylvia Gustavison and Clinical Officer Alfred Mkandawire are conducting workshops for training community health workers to help with AIDS counseling. We still need to study

how the medical mission's program can be more fully shared with other congregations and areas in the Lutheran Church of Central Africa.

Realizing that the final answer to the AIDS problem, whether here in America or abroad, lies with guiding sexual behavior and family values according to the principles of God's Word, we do not need to be apologetic about our place in the scheme of AIDS intervention. The Christian viewpoint is what counts. In whatever care and counseling service we may have to offer, we know we can work with the one essential ingredient, the one that goes beyond the material and physical things of this life and reaches into life eternal.

Is there hope? While medical experts struggle to cope with the greatest physical disaster that has hit this world in years, we know that with the Lord on our side, we can offer a hope that the world can neither give nor take away, a hope that is centered in a Savior who came to seek and to save the lost.

Ernst H. Wendland, a retired missionary to Zambia, lives in Two Rivers, Wisconsin.

NL

AIDS in Central Africa—Is There Hope?, a study of AIDS intervention from a Christian viewpoint, is available through the Central Africa Medical Mission. It contains an in-depth study of the situation, gained through extended interviews with African leaders in church and secular affairs.

For your free copy, contact Irene Brug, chairperson of CAMM, 11757 Seminary Dr, Mequon WI 53092. A \$2 donation for postage is appreciated.

Our place in time

We look forward to the year 2000 with a mixture of anticipation and dread.

Paul O. Wendland

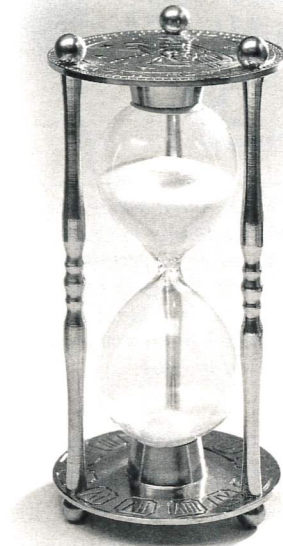
Our century has had to absorb more than its share of change—some good and some bad. Our eyes have seen the glory of men walking on the moon. Our ears have heard the wonder of people oceans away talking to us as if they were across the table. We've learned to point and click our way to paradise on the Internet, where there are no boundaries to our dreams, no end to our visions.

But there have been sights we'd have been glad not to see and sounds we'd have been glad not to hear. Our eyes have seen the shame of gaping holes torn into the sides of buildings where normal people worked and little children played. We've watched, with horror, great airliners fall from the sky. Loud and angry voices, broadcast from distant lands, filled our living rooms with their digital sound and fury.

So it's not surprising that as we count down the final years of the millennium, we find ourselves looking forward to the year 2000 (2001 for the purists) with a mixture of anticipation and dread. Which feeling predominates depends a great deal on our whole attitude toward the passing of time.

Living in the past

A few are lost in the past. They long for an era when days flowed quietly, and life made sense. More than once I've counted myself among their company. Who never



wants to escape the noise and glitter of our own graceless age? Who never wants to go back to a simpler, cleaner, purer past—a past that only is that way for me because it never was. I've invented it by smoothing out the sharp edges of a time that was, in its day, just as ragged and rough as our own. Like Lot's wife, I'm looking back to a city that seems good to me only because I'm away.

I know this because God permits me to experience more than sweet dreams as I think of time gone by. Nightmares of guilt and oceans of regret also wash over me, as I remember things I've done and things I've left undone.

Besides, God's own voice in Scripture calls to me and gently reminds me that it is the hardened

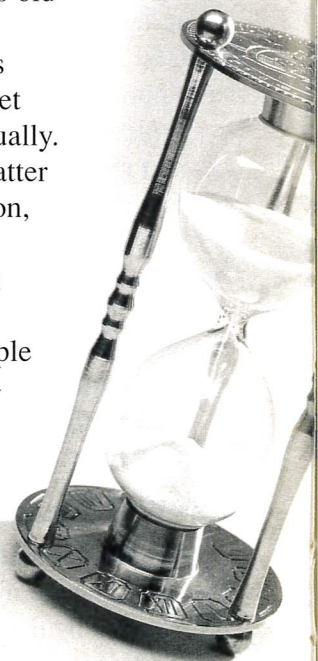
and impenitent who are so steadfastly resistant to change, who taste everything new with a grimace and say, "The old is better" (Luke 5:39). How can I forget that God, in Christ, means to make something new out of me?

Living for the present

Many more live for the present, trampling on custom and common sense, unmindful of consequence. The hunger for novelty, I suppose, rules the mind: "What's new? Show us something new.

We're tired of this old stuff." The fierce urgency of now is never content to let things grow gradually. It forces every matter into instant fruition, like folks forcing bulbs to bloom in winter. Impatient and loveless, people living for the present demand instant everything.

As a man in middle age, I too have felt the tempting tug of novelty. If I feast my eyes on all that glitters, maybe I can forget about the passage of time, the lengthening shadows of my life, and days that now seem so crowded and



short. And so I let my eyes wander and become distracted by the sparkle of something I see shining in a sun-drenched field. I leave the road to look but find it's just another broken bottle.

Why do I want to defeat in myself the sense of time grown short? Because I'd rather not remember the sentence spoken at the Fall: "Dust you are and to dust you shall return." Filling itching ears with something new is one way of not listening to God's voice. Those forgetful of time, like the son who got lost, are only running from the guilt of their sin. They'll end up wasting everything they have.

Living for the future

The majority have their hearts set on the future. The future, they say, is our promised land, the brave new world filled with a kinder, gentler humanity and a kinder, gentler technology.

Maybe Americans feel this way because we're no longer so sure about our past, and the present leaves us in a muddle.

The only thing left for us to hope in is the future. Like some hero in a forgotten poem, we pursue a glorious destiny that always seems to elude our grasp. The myth of progress. After all, if something is new, it has to be improved. Or is it an accident that *Star Trek* has a greater hold on this generation than the Western?

On the other hand, we always were a little fanatical about our destiny. Maybe this is more of the same attitude that has caused each generation to fashion from their

respective landscapes the bricks they needed for building their brighter tomorrows. "Let us found a city, with a tower to the heavens, and let us make ourselves a lasting name. . . ."

Funny how humanity never learns. How many Babel towers have to fall before we finally figure out that here—in this place, in this time—we'll never build a lasting city. Humanity?! Why talk in grandiose terms about humanity? How come I never learn? How many times, like the Rich Fool, will I dream of building barns that will let me take life easy? How many private dreams of glory must I follow into swamps?

Here's the truth: "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field. The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the Lord blows on them" (Isaiah 40:6,7).

Living from God's promise

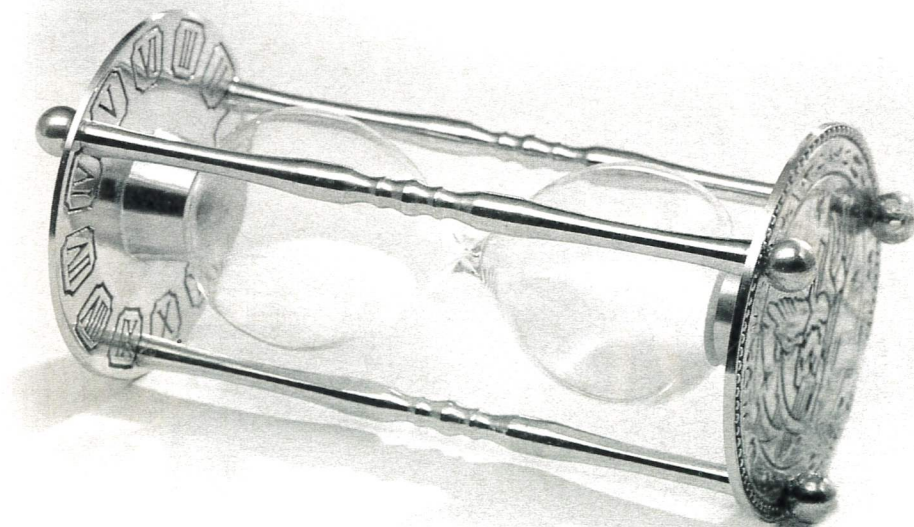
Is that it? Is God's final pronouncement on everything old and everything new simply one of

condemnation? Is his last word to us who live in this time, "Despair"? Not at all! To despair of ourselves is one thing. To despair of God is another. Grass may wither and flowers may fade, "but the word of our God stands forever" (Isaiah 40:8). We despair of ourselves and this world because, for us, this world is far too dark and narrow a place to hold our hopes. Here, we'll never find enough time to sing the praises of him who loved us.

And so we neither hang onto the past like Lot's wife, nor waste the present like the Lost Son, nor bank on the future like the Rich Fool. As citizens of God's everlasting kingdom, we've learned how to bring out of storehouse treasures both old and new. Of that we'll speak more next time.

NL

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



Shattering the myths

Understanding God's purpose for singles helps combat three myths.

Julie K. Tessmer

The phone rings. It's your long-lost friend, "just calling to see how you were doing." He begins regaling you with everything that happened in the past months, including his engagement. Before you get a word in, he asks . . .

It's Thanksgiving. You're seated around a table piled high with turkey and candied yams, making small talk. You wait with dread for a lull in the conversation, when you know a relative will turn and say . . .

You're at the fourth wedding reception you've been to this summer. You managed to dodge the tossing of the bouquet, but you know there's a question you won't be able to dodge . . .

"So, are you seeing anyone special?"

If your answer is no, the topic is immediately dropped or changed, after a sad shaking of the head and

the ever-so-assuring: "Don't worry. It'll happen when you're ready."

The myths

But why the sad shaking and the reassuring words? Is there something wrong with being single? Is God's highest calling for men and women to get married?

These myths exist:

- 1—If you're not married, you don't have a purpose; you're not a "whole" person.
- 2—If you're not married, you are alone.
- 3—Everyone wants to get married.

Such myths are rarely spoken aloud. They apply to singles everywhere, whether widowed, divorced, or never married. They're easy to believe and hard to change.

How they developed

But why do these myths exist? What makes married and single

people question the validity of being single?

Societal pressure pushes some myths on us.

"In the secular sense, it's considered a leg in your journey on earth," said Brent Baumler, a Christian counselor at Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Service, St. Paul, Minn. "You go to school, have a career, get a girlfriend, get married, and live happily ever after."

But can't married and single people be comfortable with the notion that singles can live happily?

Do you want to read about living a purposeful life as a single person? Or about combating loneliness, whether you're single or married?

These resources from Northwestern Publishing House offer guidance on issues concerning singles:

- *Survival Guide for Being Alone* by Brian Terrell and Ron Koehler III (item number 15N2004)
- *Who says get married? How to be happy and single* by Don Meredith (item number 12-2250)
- *Learn to Risk—finding joy as a single adult* by Dr. Bobbie Reed (item number 12-2600)
- *Issues for Every Single Christian. A Bible study on ministry to and by Christian singles* by E. Allen Sorum (item number 22N0817)

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Many still think marriage is the only route to happiness.

“Single people make us [married people] feel uneasy,” said Allen Sorum, pastor at Garden Homes, Milwaukee, Wis. “We feel they must be miserable because they’re not married. Actually, married people need to be educated on God’s plan for some to be single.”

Myth one—purpose

Education about God’s plan is one way to combat myths about singles.

Because God does have a plan. Being single is not a punishment.

God wants us, whether single or married, to concentrate on spreading his Word. God won’t provide a spouse for everyone because he wants to use the flexibility a single’s life provides. Singles glorify God by using their time and energy to serve him and others.

Through serving others, a single person can find the fulfillment and happiness many feel is missing from a single’s life. Finding a mate will not make you a “whole” person. Serving God will.

And remember, God may provide a spouse later; it just might not be in your time frame.

Myth two—being alone

For some, it’s difficult to wait.

“Being single is neither good nor bad,” said Pastor Brian Terrell, administrator of Lutheran Counseling Services Southwest Association, Tucson, Ariz., and co-author of *Survival Guide for Being Alone*. “It’s neutral—a state of life. We all go through it; some just go through it for a lifetime. But if we attach a negative feeling to it, we will experience loneliness and feel unfulfilled.”

5 TIPS

For better relationships with your married friends:

- Remember that marriage doesn’t solve problems; it may even create different ones. Listen and be supportive.
- Include married friends in your life. Just because they’re married, doesn’t mean they can’t or don’t want to do things with you.
- Give your married friends the privacy they need. Continue to do things with them, but don’t “latch on.”
- Get a Bible study on being single started at your church. Invite your married friends so they can understand issues you face.
- Pray that God will bless your married friends.

For better relationships with your single friends:

- Know when to matchmake (and when not to!).
- Be sensitive to your friend’s “singleness.” Be careful not to imply (even inadvertently) that something is wrong with being single.
- Don’t flaunt your marriage by monopolizing conversation with tales of married life. Talk about your life but also talk about common interests.
- Invite your single friends to church activities with you. (Church events can be family oriented, making some singles uncomfortable.)
- Pray that God will bless your single friends.

Everyone, whether married or single, will experience loneliness. It’s a part of life. We need human relationships, and sometimes sinful humans aren’t always emotionally there for each other.

It’s dangerous if we always feel that no one cares.

“Anywhere along the entire continuum of loneliness—from feeling a little lonely to complete despair—we can forget or ignore the one who always loves us and cares about us,” said Ron Koehler III, pastor at Grace, Tucson, Ariz., and co-author of *Survival Guide for Being Alone*.

But we are never really alone. “God has said, ‘Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you’ ” (Hebrews 13:5).

And we will always have our family in Christ. “So in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others” (Romans 12:5).

Myth three—choices

Our family is made up of different people, from those who are married to those wanting to marry to those not wanting to marry. One isn’t better than the other. We shouldn’t judge others’ decisions concerning marriage. We shouldn’t make our choice on how it affects our earthly life, but on how it can help us best serve God and others.

In the end, earthly relationships won’t really matter.

“God’s church is not made of families, but of individuals,” said Terrell. “Your relationship with God is not based on your relationship with others. It’s one-on-one.”

So we can say we really are involved with someone special, all the time—Christ.

NL

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

I believe that God still preserves me

Once God's blessing is lifted, heart, life, and everything else ceases immediately.

Wayne A. Laitinen



I used to think the bag lady deserved my most profound compassion. She was as destitute as she was crazy.

I first saw her, wrapped in a fur coat, lumbering down a sidewalk on a day so hot you could fry an egg on the pavement. Her shopping bag was filled with the accumulated treasures of curb and gutter. She cursed and sometimes assaulted anyone who tried to help her. Legend had it she used to be the wife of a wealthy lawyer. They say when her husband died, something snapped. She gave it all up to share the steps of an abandoned hotel with the pigeons.

I said, I used to think she deserved my most profound compassion. But when I see how the human spirit grovels at the shrine of increased wealth, I'm not so sure.

You want to be rich?

The lure of affluence tends to make people take leave of their senses. Those who once trusted God for treasures that moth and rust cannot destroy can become consumed with earth's riches once again. During this last hour of earth's titanic voyage, they run frantically from one abandoned stateroom to another, filling pillowcases with treasures destined for the deep. Of course, the

world hails this behavior as a virtue. And no one dares to question it.

Here's a way to test that hypothesis: The next time someone suggests you ought to be in God's house or that you ought to be there for your family, simply say, "I've got to work." There. Case closed. End of discussion.

Now we can all bow our heads and pray "The Collect for the American Dream": "Lord, I know that money can't bring me happiness, but why not let me find that out for myself?" What's really scary is that no one fears that God might grant that prayer without editing it. Everyone thinks he is strong

enough to avoid the destitution of Richard Corey or John DuPont or the rich man to whom the Lord said, "You fool, this very night your soul will be required of you. . . ."

If life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness belong to us by right, then God owes them to us. Or at least he owes us the chance to work for them. Divine grace is out of the question. And in a time of unprecedented individual wealth, it's easy to congratulate ourselves for a job well done. What, then, can a crust of bread or a cup of cold water mean to us?

You are already rich

Is there an antidote for such terminal ingratitude?

Christ's bride understands that nothing is hers by right. She looks up to her Groom with tears of appreciation and confesses: "Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his mercies never fail. They are new every morning."

The depth of God's compassion is found at our Savior's cross. There, he opened his arms to receive our condemnation. There, he opened his heart to receive his creation back into communion with him. There, he opened his hand to satisfy the desire of every living thing.

Luther helps us understand the length and breadth of our heavenly Father's compassion. In the Small Catechism he wrote, "I believe that God still preserves me by richly and daily providing clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, spouse and children, land, cattle and all I own, and all that I need to keep my body and life."

Look around you and see how gracious he is. Do you need water? We can lay a pipeline to your

house, but we can't make a drop of it fall from the sky. Do you need nourishment? We can buy you a meal, but we can't bless it to your health. Do you need to earn a living? We can give you a job, but we can't give you the intelligence or strength to work. Do you want to live? We can give you a nitro tablet and use the paddles, but once God's blessing is lifted, heart, life, and everything else ceases immediately.

Yet he makes one heartbeat follow another—without our notice or approval. His blessings are more regular than a quartz crystal watch: sunrise and sunset, rest and work, rain and sunshine, seedtime and harvest—not for a decade or a century, but since the world began.

Be grateful for your riches

Why does God treat the unworthy, the irreverent, and the rebellious so lavishly? Although we brought death upon ourselves, he still gives us "everything that is pleasing to the eye and good for food." Our Creator even surrounds those who despise him with family and friends, hearth and home. He shows such mercy to the wicked that, having sampled his grace in this life, they might turn and embrace life that is life indeed. "He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?"

The Holy Spirit has given us eyes to see each new morning as a gift of God. Now we see ourselves as living sacrifices to a loving God. Each task is a tribute of praise to our Creator and Preserver. Those who live around us are loved by God and potential coregents with Christ. This God-given gratitude insulates us

against the unthankful folk religion of personal prosperity and allows us to say with Agur:

"Give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, 'Who is the Lord?' Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God" (Proverbs 30:8,9).

NL

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

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ,
his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand
of God the Father almighty.
From there he will come to judge
the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

Impressions of their seminary

Meet the “Fabulous 14”—the men of Cameroon who are preparing for the ministry.

Carl R. Henkel

God willing, they will be the class of 1999: the first graduating class of the Lutheran Theological Seminary of Cameroon. These 14 men, ranging in age from 21 to 48, will be joined by three others who were forced to cut short their theological training in Nigeria, and will begin their third year in September. If the Lord brings it about, they will start this new school year in a brand new seminary complex.

I'd like to introduce some of the students to you.

Daniel is a happy man. He and his blushing bride just began their new life together.

But he hasn't always worn a happy smile. The crushing impact of his father's death is evident as he

painfully states, “I thought that was the end of my life.”

At one time, he planned to make a living as a taxi driver but was attacked by armed robbers, brutally beaten, tied hand and foot, and left by the side of the road to die. His car (his livelihood) was stolen. He lay by the road until morning when a passer-by discovered him

Six years ago, he fell in love with a young lady and was planning to marry her. She, however, died unexpectedly, leaving Daniel in sorrowful confusion and dark depression.

Yet through it all, the Lord had his gracious hand on Daniel, preparing him for a life of service. Daniel will make a kind, compassionate, and understanding pastor, perhaps even a leader in the Lutheran Church of Cameroon some day.

At 40, Michael is affectionately considered one of the “elderly” students. Michael is smiling more these days too, because, now that we bought him a pair of glasses, he can read the footnotes in his Bible.

Like the other eight married students, Michael leaves his wife and family in their remote village for six to eight weeks at a time and travels long, hard miles, many on foot, to attend the seminary. When he left home last term, his little girl was running a high fever and vomiting worms. There are no telephones or post offices in the villages, so he will not hear about her condition until returning home.

At one time, Michael had given up going to church and had left his former denomination. Through the preaching of a Lutheran pastor, however, the Lord touched his heart and not only brought him back into the church but also into the ministry. It's hard not to love Michael.

Then there's George, the youngest of the students. When he came to the seminary, he could barely speak or write English. Thanks to the patient teaching of Missionary Norb Meier and the faithful tutoring of fellow student, Godfred, George's grasp of the English language is improved. (Most seminarians struggle to read, write, and speak good English, but show noticeable improvement every month.)



The “Fabulous 14.” They will be the class of 1999: the first class graduating from the Lutheran Theological Seminary of Cameroon.



Seminary student Njumbe Daniel and Carl Henkel. Daniel suffered much during his life, including an attack by armed robbers and the death of his father and fiancée. Yet God stayed with him, preparing him for a life of service.

Some time back, George spent three months in the hospital recovering from a serious head injury caused by a falling tree. He is convinced that God allowed him full recovery so he could dedicate his life to preaching the Word to his fellow Cameroonians.

Julius did not grow up in a Lutheran home, but writes: "I was always scolded by my parents whenever I went wrong, and in some situations they used a whip on me. This scolding and whipping made me grow up to be shy, but it also kept me from doing some of the evil things my friends were doing." Julius is mourning the recent death of his mother.

Joseph is an orphan. After his father died, he was forced to leave school because there was no money. He felt lost and dejected. "But when the gospel was brought to me as I was attending the Lutheran church, I received it with faith in my heart. After hearing this wonderful message from the preacher, I saw that there was nothing I could do but give all my problems to Jesus."

Last term, while Joseph was away at seminary, his wife had a miscarriage and nearly bled to

death. She was found on the dirt floor of her house. This, too, Joseph has committed to Jesus.

John E. has lost both parents. He has the largest family of the seminarians, with nine children.

John A., also an orphan, had six brothers and sisters, but they all died as children. He and his wife had six children; one of them passed away. (One out of five Cameroonian children die in infancy.)

And who can forget Israel? The Cameroonians often think of unexplained illnesses as poisonings. Israel believes he was poisoned by a village chief. He grew violently ill, but "God rescued me from the poison, and when I saw what God had done, I decided to serve the Lord." Israel's face is smiling these days.

Samuel, Peter, Mathias, Godfred, Felix, Barnabas. They all have a story to tell. Each story is different. Each student is special. Each one struggles with his own pain and strives with the help of God to overcome handicaps and obstacles. God-willing, each one will shepherd a congregation, or congregations, in the Lutheran Church of Cameroon.

It has been an uphill battle for both student and teacher. Things have gone one step forward and two steps back. Yet it is evident the Lord blesses this seminary program. Perhaps the daily grind does not permit us to see much progress, but we are overwhelmed with praise and thanksgiving to God when considering how much has happened since the first shaky, uncertain days.

Thanks to the generous gifts of three U.S. congregations and several individual donors, plans are being

developed to build a new church center and seminary complex, featuring classroom and meeting facilities and housing for married and single students.

Leaving wives and children behind has been a heavy burden for the seminarians. They have been willing to do it to prepare for the ministry, but we pray, come September, they won't have to any longer. If additional offerings are received, a chapel will be built on the spacious hillside overlooking the village of Barombi Kang.

I thank the Lord for giving me a small role in training the class of '99. Getting to know and growing to love the "Fabulous 14" has been a real blessing.

Pray for them, won't you?

NL

Carl Henkel is teaching for one year at the seminary for the Lutheran Church of Cameroon.



Seminary student Israel Muankume Mesue with Linda Henkel. Israel believes he was rescued by God after being poisoned by a village chief. He decided to serve the Lord after seeing what God had done.

A man of “unusual talents”

Carl F. W. Gausewitz, best remembered for his work on the Small Catechism, also served unselfishly as a pastor and administrator.

Morton A. Schroeder

Physically, the English-only edition is a modest book. Measuring five inches by seven and weighing less than seven ounces, its 166 pages are bound in unattractive pea green boards. Its title is in hard-to-read red print. The author's name, in the lower right-hand corner of the cover, is illegible at first glance.

Intellectually, it's a classic example of the old saw, “Don't judge a book by its cover.” The Small Catechism had a profound impact on thousands of children in Lutheran elementary schools, Sunday schools, and confirmation classes. Put to intense use during that intense time in children's lives, it still evokes memories of daily study of God's Word. Its impact on adults is equally indelible, and they remember it with heartfelt emotion.

His name may be almost invisible on the cover of the English-only edition and non-existent on the German-English edition, but the people who used either of them—or the German edition, for that matter—call it the Gausewitz catechism, honoring a man they know very little about: its author, Carl F. W. Gausewitz Jr.

Pastor's son

Gausewitz's father, Carl Gausewitz Sr., in seniority the 21st member of the Wisconsin Synod, had been trained to be a weaver. He left the loom to study for the ministry at

Barmen, Germany, went to America, learned American ways from Pastor Philip Koehler in Manitowoc, Wis., and became the first resident pastor of St. James, Maple Grove, Wis.

Gausewitz Sr.'s fiancée, Amalie Lobscheid, a bright, cheerful, educated woman, gave up her position as private tutor to follow her love to America. She would face with him the grim realities of frontier life. Married by Koehler in First German, Manitowoc, the couple lived with members until a block house was built for them. In that humble home, at the edge of civilization, was born their first child: Carl Friedrich Wilhelm Gausewitz Jr.

Gifted pastor

Carl's early education, before he entered the worker-training school at Watertown in 1872, must have

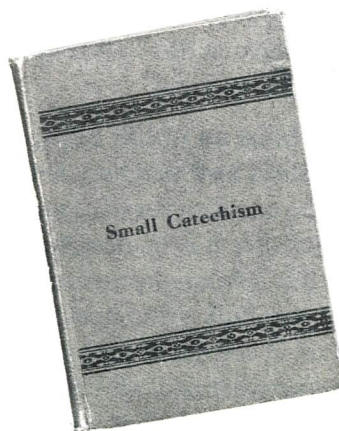
been haphazard. Gausewitz Sr., serving where he believed he was needed, ministered to at least six congregations before pitching camp in Owatonna, Minn.

After graduating from the seminary, Gausewitz Jr. was assigned to Zion, East Farmington Twp. (Osceola), Wis. Like his father, a congregation's first resident pastor, he would be 21 two days after his ordination and installation.

Before Gausewitz married, he lived with members—as his parents had. He made his calls on horseback. His beginning salary of \$300 was raised to \$375 the next year. The anniversary edition of Zion's church paper, *The Friendly Valley Lutheran Messenger*, says, “This pastor possessed unusual talents. . . .”

The second verse of this laud, given in *A Short History of St. John Ev. Lutheran Congregation, St. Paul, Minnesota*, states “Pastor Carl Gausewitz succeeded Pastor Hoyer. . . . During his 21 years at St. John, the congregation benefited from the many gifts with which the Lord had fitted him for the ministry.”

Under Gausewitz's leadership, St. John bought prime real estate at a princely price, built a two-story frame school building and, at a cost of \$43,000, a new church seating 1,400+ people. It also accepted one-half ownership in the financial responsibility for Elmhurst cemetery



Gausewitz's revised Small Catechism. The original was used for 39 years. The revised version was used for another 26.

from Trinity, a sister congregation that formed a neat complex with the state capitol and the Catholic cathedral in downtown St. Paul.

When Gausewitz accepted the call to Milwaukee's Grace Lutheran Church, he could not have foreseen the radical changes in the complexion of Grace's neighborhood. Years of rapid growth in the last quarter of the 19th century gave way to membership decline. Despite financial woes, the congregation redecorated the church and improved the organ. The jewel built in 1901 sparkled again for the congregation's 75th anniversary in 1924.

Able administrator

Gausewitz's peers recognized him as a leader and repeatedly chose him for responsible positions. His first major elective office came when he was 33; his last ended when he was twice that age. Except for five years during his Grace pastorate, he was at one time or another president of the three synods that were major joys in his ministry: the Minnesota Synod, which he led out of fiscal crisis by eliminating the "salaried collector"; the Joint Wisconsin Synod; and the Synodical Conference. He served two of these bodies simultaneously for 11 years.

Gausewitz led in another way. An able administrator of existing organizations, he also helped found new ones. WELS is a case in point. While pastor in St. Paul, he was an active player in forming the Joint Synod of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, and Other States. When the first convention of the synod was held in October 1892, Gausewitz was elected vice president. He turned 31 fewer than 45 days

before. Six years later, he helped found the Lutheran Home in Belle Plaine, Minn.

Gausewitz served on the boards of control of Dr. Martin Luther College, Northwestern College, and the Lutheran seminary in Wauwatosa; was a member of the editorial committee of *Gemeindeblatt*, the official German organ of the synod; and chaired the Milwaukee Lutheran city missions.

Catechist par excellence

But Gausewitz is best remembered as catechist par excellence. In 1907 the federal synod appointed a blue ribbon committee to write a catechism. In 1913 it expressed regrets at the obvious lack of progress, fired the committee, and turned the project over to Gausewitz. He proceeded famously, producing in less than four years a book widely praised for its evangelical tone. The original "Gausewitz" served the synod for 39 years. A revision, produced by a committee of nine over eight long years, lasted another 26 years. Another revision, which used the New International Version of the Bible, was published in 1984.

Gausewitz died six days after his 66th birthday. His passing recalled the circumstances surrounding Pastor Theodore Jaekel's death. Jaekel, Gausewitz's predecessor at Grace, had died 21 years before while teaching a confirmation class in the church basement. Gausewitz was in the sacristy preparing for a communion service when the Lord called him home.

Five weeks after Gausewitz died, the classroom building at Dr. Martin Luther College was dedicated. A plaque that recognized Gausewitz's

"unselfish devotion and valuable service" to the school, the gift of friends of DMLC, graced the main entrance until recent events rendered it passé.

NL

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



Born Aug. 29, 1861, Maple Grove (Reedsville), Wis., to Pastor Carl and Mrs. Amalie Lobscheid Gausewitz

1879, graduated Northwestern College, Watertown, Wis.

1882, graduated Lutheran Seminary, Wauwatosa, Wis.

1882-1885, pastor, Zion, East Farmington Twp., Wis.

June 26, 1884, married Anna Borth
1885-1906, pastor, St. John, St. Paul, Minn.

1894-1906, president, Minnesota Synod

1906-1927, pastor, Grace, Milwaukee

1901-1907 and 1913-1917, president, Wisconsin Synod

1917, finished work on bilingual catechism

1912-1927, president, Synodical Conference

Died Sept. 4, 1927

The 54th Biennial Convention of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

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 Mr. Russell Becker
 Mr. Don Denekamp
 Mr. Al Hagert
 Mr. Michael Klatt
 Mr. Harris Lewis
 Mr. Doug Lutz
 Mr. Kermit Oldre
 Mr. Martin Otte

Mr. Roy Pickhard
 Mr. Al Pitt
 Mr. Walter Pollex
 Mr. Clayton Radtke
 Mr. Ken Sprain
 Mr. Fred Steiber
 Mr. Jerry Zimpelmann

NO. 13—RESOLUTIONS

Teacher Timothy Schroeder, Chairman
 Rev. Steven Degner
 Teacher Clarence Jenkins

NO. 14—MEDIA RELATIONS

Rev. William Meier, Chairman
 Rev. Wayne Schneider
 Teacher David Hackmann

NO. 15—CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

Rev. Lyle Lange, Chairman
 Rev. James Connell
 Rev. Jerry Enderle
 Rev. Kenneth Everdt
 Rev. Philip Gieschen
 Rev. Thomas Gumm
 Rev. Steven Korth
 Rev. David Lau
 Rev. Jim Pankow
 Rev. Ralph Polzin
 Rev. Ralph Scharf
 Rev. David Seager
 Rev. Paul Ziemer
 Teacher Robert Bock
 Teacher Ray Manthe
 Teacher David Payne
 Teacher Craig Schwartz
 Teacher Paul Wendland
 Mr. Paul Albrecht
 Mr. Roger Buz
 Mr. Arnold Dorn
 Mr. Rob Franzo
 Mr. Jim Hovind
 Mr. Todd Hubert
 Mr. James Huska
 Mr. Bill Jacobs
 Mr. Larry Martell
 Mr. Warren Menche
 Mr. Lloyd Nimmer
 Mr. Fred Pieper
 Mr. Steve Remmers
 Mr. Tony Rosener
 Mr. Keith Wakeman
 Mr. Richard Zeeb

NO. 16—STEERING

Rev. Warren Widmann, Chairman
 Rev. Vilas Glaeske
 Rev. John Guse

NO. 17—CONVENTION TRAVEL

Teacher Thomas Koepsell, Chairman
 Rev. Robert Pasbrig
 Mr. Keith Carabell

rē · li · giōn

Defining religion

liberalism: a theological movement originating in the 19th century that tries to accommodate the message of Christianity to the claims of modern science, philosophy, sociology, and psychology. Liberals deny the inerrancy and infallibility of the Scriptures and see the primary purpose of the church as improving social conditions on earth rather than saving souls for eternity.

NOMINATIONS BY THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The following slate of candidates (listed alphabetically) has been chosen by the Synod Nominating Committee to be presented to the delegates at the 54th convention of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, July 28-Aug. 1, 1997. The delegates will elect one for each position listed. The district affiliation of each candidate is noted in parentheses, and incumbents are noted by an asterisk (*).

Board for World Missions

Latin American Executive Committee

Layman
Andrew Alff, Austin, TX (SC)
George Schultz, Normal, IL (WW)
Allen Stueck, Mundelein, IL* (SEW)

Native American Executive Committee

Pastor
Gerald Ditter, Pinetop, AZ (AZ-CA)
Eric Hartzell, Georgetown, TX (SC)
William Kessel, Cottonwood, AZ (AZ-CA)

Teacher

Lance Hartzell, New Ulm, MN (MN)
Richard Korth, Arlington, WI (WW)
Lynn Kueher, Mesa, AZ* (AZ-CA)

Lutheran Church of Central Africa

Executive Committee

Layman
Dennis Hanink, Hudson, OH (MI)
Herb Schaper, New Ulm, MN (MN)
Donald Whitlock, Franklin, WI (SEW)

Japan, Europe, and Asia Executive Committee

Pastor
Bruce Ahlers, Jackson, MI (MI)
David Haberkorn, Ripon, WI (NW)
Stephen Valleskey, Houston, TX* (SEW)

Layman

Gene Rodewald, New Ulm, MN (MN)
Karl Sandvick, Milwaukee, WI (SEW)
Kenneth Westlund, Lakewood, CO* (NE)

Southeast Asian Missions Executive Committee

Layman
Donald Abinante, Portland, OR (PNW)
David Habben, Rolling Meadows, IL (SEW)
David Schwalenberg, Austin, TX (SC)

Teacher

James Brandt, Crete, IL (SEW)
James Holman, Citrus Heights, CA* (AZ-CA)
Richard Siegler, Manitowoc, WI (NW)

Board for Parish Services

Chairman

Curtis Seefeldt, Aberdeen, SD (DM)
John Stellick, Winthrop, MN (MN)
Thomas Zarling, Sterling, VA* (NA)

Member-at-large (Layman)

Robert Hering, Yukon, OK (SC)
Steven Kalscheur, De Forest, WI (WW)
Mark Naumann, Wauwatosa, WI (SEW)

Youth Discipleship Commission

Chairman
Mark Buske, Roanoke, VA (NA)
John Parlow, Green Bay, WI (NW)
Allen Zahn, Indianapolis, IN* (SEW)

Adult Discipleship Commission

Chairman
Randy Hunter, Middleton, WI (WW)
Kieth Kuschel, Trumbull, CT* (NA)
Fred Piepenbrink, Milwaukee, WI (SEW)

Northwestern Publishing House Board Of Directors

Seminary Professor
John Brenner, Mequon, WI (SEW)
Leroy Dobberstein, Mequon, WI* (SEW)
John Hartwig, Mequon, WI (SEW)

Layman

Jerome Bentz, New Ulm, MN (MN)
Kenneth Hull, Downers Grove, IL (SEW)
James Rainey, Newton, IL (SEW)

Layman

Greg Martin, Wauwatosa, WI (SEW)
James Spiegelberg, New Berlin, WI (SEW)
Michael Wilson, De Forest, WI (WW)

Board for Ministerial Education

Chairman

Charles Degner, St. Peter, MN (MN)
Lynn Schroeder, Saginaw, MI (MI)
Donald Sutton, Watertown, WI (WW)

Layman

Hogey Holtz, Saginaw, MI (MI)
William Steinbrenner, Fond du Lac, WI (NW)
David Williams, Flagstaff, AZ (AZ-CA)

Teacher

David Niemi, La Crosse, WI (WW)
Stephan Rodmyre, Kent, WA* (PNW)
Ronald Zahn, Lansing, MI (MI)

Pastor

Richard Kogler, Fallbrook, CA* (AZ-CA)
David Kolerander, New Ulm, MN (MN)
Paul Naumann, Benton Harbor, MI (MI)

Martin Luther College Board of Control

Chairman
David Krenke, Leesburg, FL (SA)
Ralph Scharf, West Allis, WI (SEW)
Roger Woller, Fairfax, MN (MN)

Synodical council (provisional slate)

Member-at-large
Pastor
David Bode, Delano, MN (MN)
William Gabb, Watertown, WI (WW)
Jon Mahnke, San Jose, CA (AZ-CA)

Teacher

John Freese, Wauwatosa, WI (SEW)
Gary Krug, San Diego, CA (AZ-CA)
Gordon Vetter, New London, WI (NW)

Coordinating Council (provisional slate)

Layman
Marc Frey, San Antonio, TX* (SC)
Osama Izzat, Saginaw, MI (MI)
Gerald Pepke, Great Falls, MT (DM)

Layman

Donald Dall, Rolling Meadows, IL (SEW)
Charles Schranz, Waupun, WI (NW)
Todd Witte, Brookfield, WI (SEW)

NOMINATIONS BY THE DISTRICTS

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Board of Control

Pastor (NW)
Michael Dietz, Green Bay, WI
Keith Haag, Manitowoc, WI
Eugene Kock, Minocqua, WI

Layman (SEW)

Robert Bengry, Fox River Grove, IL*
Melvin Heckendorf, Jackson, WI
Dennis Valerio, Lindenhurst, IL

Martin Luther College Board of Control

Pastor (MI)
Norman Burger Jr., Lansing, MI
Carl Otto, Saginaw, MI
Richard Starr, Lake Orion, MI

Pastor (MN)
William Runke, Caledonia, MN
Jefi Schone, Arlington, MN
Roger Woller, Fairfax, MN

Pastor (NE)
Raymond Beckman, Waco, NE
Louis Sievert, Sioux City, IA
Michael Traudt, Longmont, CO

Pastor (NW)
Robert Bitter, Oakfield, WI*
Bruce McKenney, Manitowoc, WI
Richard Warnke, Kiel, WI

Teacher (PNW)
David Sauer, Spokane, WA*
Werner Lemke, Tacoma, WA
Jeffrey Koepsell, Yakima, WA

Layman (SEW)
William Bartholomew, Milwaukee, WI
Steven Danekas, Naperville, IL*
Allen Heckendorf, Thiensville, WI

Teacher (WW)
Philip Leyrer, Middleton, WI*
Arnold Nommensen, Sparta, WI
Scott Herrewig, Bangor, WI

Luther Preparatory School Board of Control

Teacher (MI)
Ronald Brullag, Livonia, MI*
John Henderson, Dowagiac, MI
Ronald Zahn, Lansing, MI

Layman (MN)
Robert Hinnenthal, New Ulm, MN
Dennis Pipkorn, Wayzata, MN
David Schleicher, Rochester, MN

Layman (NE)
Richard Brucker, Boulder, CO*
Kurt Aaberg, Stanton, NE
Burt Johnson, Longmont, CO

Pastor (NW)
Ronald Ash, Appleton, WI
Jeffrey Suhr, Appleton, WI
Fred Toppe, Fond du Lac, WI

Pastor (SC)
Eric Hartzell, Georgetown, TX
Wayne Laitinen, Oklahoma City, OK*

Teacher (SEW)
Daniel Feuerstahler, Menomonee Falls, WI*
Raymond Manthe, Oak Creek, WI
Joel Nelson, Muskego, WI

Layman (WW)
William Schmidt, Watertown, WI*
Gary Baumgarten, Onalaska, WI
David Zahn, Stoddard, WI

Michigan Lutheran Seminary Board of Control

Pastor
Mark Gieschen, Portage, MI
Paul Schweppe, Bay City, MI
Fred Zimmerman II, Kawkawlin, MI

Layman
Gary Aita, Grosse Pointe Park, MI
Mark Eubank, Saginaw, MI
Thomas Schrems, Hemlock, MI

Board of Trustees (provisional slates)

Layman (AZ-CA)
James Dallmann, San Diego, CA
Dale Dyrssen, San Marcos, CA
Dennis Schlittenhart, Phoenix, AZ

Layman (MI)
Alfred Cereske Jr., Saginaw, MI
John Seelow, Livonia, MI
David Toepel, Saginaw, MI

Pastor (NE)
Marc Frey, Seward, NE
Phil Spaude, Beatrice, NE
James Tauscher, Boulder, CO

Layman (WW)
William Pollman, La Crosse, WI
Kyle Koltz, Madison, WI
Keith Schedler, Tomah, WI



A number of us from church joined one of our members to celebrate her 90th birthday by dining at Catfish Haven. That morning, my wife, who teaches pre-K, was explaining our plans and helped the children understand by counting to 90. When they reached it, one student called out, "That took a long time!" At the dinner, Marcy told that story to Lydia and she replied, "It took a long time to get there too."

*Pastor Myrl Wagenknecht
Fort Worth, Texas
via the Internet*



“We sang hymns. . . . bullets were flying.”

Linda R. Baacke

One day Karla Russow was planning a song for Easter worship. Less than 12 hours later, she was packing to leave the country.

Fighting had broken out in Albania earlier in the week because the collapse of financial schemes left the poorest country in Europe even poorer.

Wednesday night, Mar. 12

On Wednesday night, Kirby Spevacek, a WELS missionary to Albania, called the American embassy. There was no official word to evacuate yet, but Kirby decided to leave.

“I packed suddenly,” says Audrey Spevacek. “It was very confusing.”

They left almost all their possessions behind, including family photos. “I’m thinking, ‘Why did we do that?’ But it’s not important,” says Audrey. “Our earthly things are temporary, the most important thing is our soul.”

Thursday morning, Mar. 13

The next morning, Kirby and Audrey, with 9-year-old daughter, Roxanne, and Missionary Richard and Karla Russow, with 10-month-old son, Caleb, went to the dock to process their passports. As the missionaries finished, Vitori and Agron Mece, translators for the mission, said, “Hurry! There’s trouble. Get to the ferry right away.”

The Russows and Spevaceks grabbed their luggage and ran. But the captain of the boat saw a mob of Albanians coming, so he didn’t dock.

“You can imagine the sinking feeling in our hearts as we saw our chance of escape disappear,” says Kirby. “Then we heard the shooting start.”

Many young men grabbed guns—AK47’s. The police moved the evacuees to an area protected from bullets. Then the police ran away.

“We had no police protection, no army protection. All of us huddled together,” says Kirby. “We sang



A soldier stands guard as foreigners are rescued from the civil war in Albania.

hymns. We were praying. Meanwhile bullets were flying. We could see tracer rounds going up in the sky like little rockets.”

Thursday night, Mar. 13

At 11 PM, they saw lights in the harbor. Italian marines came with landing craft and rescued most of the Italians. The missionary families were in the second group that was to leave.

However, mobs of Albanians, mixed with criminals, were trying to escape and got between the families and the marines. Someone threw an M80—a large firecracker. The marines fired with their rifles and threw a concussion grenade.

“The mob fell over out of fear, and then panicked,” says Kirby. “They ran right over us.”

Someone stepped on Roxanne’s head, but her bruise disappeared the next day.

“I am sure there was a line of angels around the perimeter of our

group during the night,” says Kirby, who thought of Psalm 34:7—“The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him.”

After the mob fled, the Italians took off.

“It was a great disappointment when the Italians left,” says Richard. “But I hadn’t given up hope. I knew the Lord would work out the rescue somehow.”

Friday morning, Mar. 14

At 7 AM, after a stressful night, with armed bandits around them and no light, no food, no water, and no sleep, the mission families saw more landing craft.

With shooting still going on, they got onto a boat and were taken to a helicopter carrier. Small boats then took them from ship to ship until they reached Brindisi, Italy. From there, they took a bus to Rome.

Knowing the Lord was in control through the events filled the mission staff with quiet confidence. “God’s angels definitely protected us,” says Karla. “But I knew if I didn’t make it off that pier, I’d be in the best place possible—in heaven.”

Monday afternoon, Mar. 17

On Monday, the Spevaceks and Russows flew to the United States.

One of the Spevaceks’ seven daughters, Rachel, 20, said the girls trusted in God to protect the missionaries but were still relieved to see their parents and sister. “It was the best feeling in the world to see them walk through those gates safe and sound.”

The present

But some people couldn’t leave Albania and weren’t able to walk through airport gates safe and sound.

That’s what most concerns the Russows and Spevaceks. They want to make it clear that they weren’t abandoning Albania.

As Audrey was buying ferry tickets, a woman started crying. Audrey told her, "I am so sorry we have to leave. We were told to leave by Washington." And she reassured the woman, "Don't worry. We will be back. We will pray for you. You aren't left alone here."

The staff left money for humanitarian aid and Bible study materials and readings for each week, hoping the Albanians can gather for worship.

"I was heartbroken," says Richard. "The people in Albania are very good people. And there's great potential for the work of the gospel."

And the work of the gospel has been showing fruit. Though the mission is new, it already has a Christian Information Center with Sunday school, worship services, and materials being translated into Albanian.

"More and more people were coming for classes. More and more children were coming for Sunday school. Young people are especially interested. Older people are harder to work with because they've been brain-

How WELS mission work in Albania began

After communism collapsed in Albania, Robert Muarem, a member in Kenosha, Wis., received letters from Albanian relatives. They were so interested in God's Word that Muarem contacted the Board for World Missions and asked missionaries from Bulgaria to visit.

The mission staff from Bulgaria, including Spevacek, visited and baptized several people.

After that, the missionaries served the Albanian contacts and visited every quarter. When that became too difficult, permanent missionaries were called.

Kirby, Audrey, and Roxanne Spevacek moved to Albania in November 1996. Richard, Karla, and Caleb Russow joined them in December 1996.

Missionary Richard Russow introduces you to some of the Albanian Christians left behind.

• *Agron and Vitori Mece.* "Agron is such a sincere man. He showed his Christian concern by looking after our families. He came to that dock to make sure we got away. Vitori, our translator, was in tears thinking she would never see us again."

• *Christine.* At age 16, she was baptized. An Eastern Orthodox custom says a person can choose a different name when baptized. "She

washed by 45 years of atheistic Marxism," says Kirby.

The future

It may take up to six months before the missionaries can return to assess the situation and visit members.

"We pray we can get back because now, more than ever, they need God's guidance," says Richard.

Before the missionaries can go back, three criteria must be met.

One—absolute security.

Missionaries must be able to work without fear. That, right now, is impossible. "Everybody has guns," says Kirby. "Even children."

Two—food. Grain mills have been looted, so there will be large-scale problems getting food. If ships dock, thousands of people will try to jump on to get food.

Three—ability to communicate with the United States. Missionaries would need complete access to the American embassy and to the Board for World Missions.

From their 22 harrowing hours on the dock to their concern for the Albanians to their desire to return, the mission families have kept focused. "You could cry tears of joy because this brought out all the more . . . that we are taken care of completely by the Lord. Now we use our faith," says Audrey. "Nothing else matters."

changed her name from Elvira to Christine to show her Christian faith.

• *Edlira.* Edlira's father, a Muslim, will not allow her to be baptized. Edlira, 16, is crushed. "We have done everything we can to assure her that her faith is what saves her."

"Keep praying for the people there. Because as much of an ordeal as it was for us to leave Albania, Christians are still living in constant terror. The only real solution is that people be touched by the gospel."

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

To see video footage of the interview, watch your May *WELS Connection*.

If the missionaries can return, volunteers will be needed to help teach English as a second language and children, and help with humanitarian aid. No plans are set yet, but keep this opportunity in mind.



The mission families safe and sound in the United States. From left, standing: Roxanne, Audrey, and Kirby Spevacek; seated: Richard, Caleb, and Karla Russow. They would like to return soon. "I'm very impressed with the Albanian people," says Audrey. "They have real hearts."



IN THE NEWS

WELS member wins award

Three years after learning about e-mail, Judith A. Kuster won an award for her work on the Internet.

Kuster, a member at St. John, New Ulm, Minn., is an associate professor in the communication disorders department at Mankato State University, Minn.

In November 1996 Kuster won the Louis M. DiCarlo Award for Outstanding Recent Clinical Achievement. The award recognizes one of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association's more than 87,000 members.

Kuster received the award because she has developed a nationally recognized computer online program to help in communication disorders, particularly stuttering. Her pages are linked to other sites around the world. In its first year, the homepage on stuttering logged more than 25,000 visits by people throughout the United States and in 39 foreign countries.

You can access Kuster's Internet projects at the following URL's:

- Net Connections for Communication Disorders and Sciences—www.mankato.msus.edu/dept/comdis/kuster2/welcome.html
- The Stuttering homepage—www.mankato.msus.edu/dept/comdis/kuster/stutter.html
- Internet Resources in Speech-Language-Hearing—www2.asha.org/asha/internet.htm

WELS CareLine offers confidential Christian counseling



"Our 21-year-old son is having difficulties with his girlfriend. We aren't sure what we should or can do."

"I feel alone and lonely."

"Our teenage son refuses to listen to us. What can we do?"

"My husband and I have separated. I would like to talk about our situation."

The list could go on. These are only a sample of calls coming in to WELS CareLine.

WELS CareLine provides 24 hours of Christian care and counseling. Since the CareLine began on May 1, 1991, over 10,500 callers have received Bible-based help.

The CareLine is answered by a WELS professional Christian counselor from 8 AM to 5 PM (Central Time) on regular work days. During the evening hours and on weekends, the CareLine is staffed by trained WELS volunteers.

All counselors and volunteers encourage each caller to talk to their pastor. In many cases, the pastor asked them to call the CareLine to discuss their particular situation with a trained WELS counselor. Both the professional counselors and the trained volunteers willingly share God's Word with the callers. Called workers are encouraged to use the CareLine for consultations as well as their own personal problems.

The WELS CareLine phone number is **1-800-422-7341**. The CareLine is operated by Wisconsin Lutheran Christian Counseling, Milwaukee, Wis., a division of Wisconsin Lutheran Child & Family Service, Inc.

Christian Worship goes to house church in China

Xing Gui Xu holds a copy of *Christian Worship* that she requested to use in a house church in China. Before returning to mainland China, Xing attended English as a Second Language class at Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel, the WELS campus ministry at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Each week 60 international adults and children from China, Korea, Japan, Ukraine, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Peru, Russia, and Malawi hear the good news of Jesus Christ. Many live in UW's married student housing. The CW hymnal to China may be a first. Rev. John Chworowsky is the full-time Director of International Ministry at the chapel.

Thomas H. Trapp



Xing Gui Xu

<www.wels.net> has new look

WELS has a new tool to reach out to people around the world—a new website on the World Wide Web.

This website replaces the current WELS homepage, but with some important changes.

It focuses on sharing God's Word.

Although ministry helps are still available, connecting people with Christ is the website's primary goal.

To accomplish this, the website includes daily prayers, Bible studies, devotions, and explanations on Christian beliefs. The prayers, devotions, and Bible studies will change often, drawing people back to the site on a regular basis.

The website also provides information to WELS members. Call reports, news, mission stories, a WELS calendar, *Northwestern Lutheran* features,



and links to other WELS-related sites are just a few options offered. WELS commissions and boards have pages that provide information and resources from their ministries.

The website tries to avoid an "institutional" look by incorporating user-friendly language and illustrations. This look may attract the casual browser who is looking for answers or curious about Christian beliefs.

The WELS website is located at <www.wels.net>. Check it out, and let us know what you think.

Christ-Light™ curriculum FAQ

Christ-Light™, the synod's new coordinated religion curriculum, will be phased into congregations over a four-year period, starting in 1998. Over the next few months, we will run questions frequently asked about Christ-Light™, with answers supplied by Gerald Kastens, youth discipleship administrator. —ed.

Will each lesson have a clear gospel motivation? Will lessons be distinctly Lutheran, emphasizing a clear division of law and gospel, objective truths, and the means of grace?

A curriculum designed to carry out God-pleasing Christian nurture will be based on God's inerrant Word and will aim at carrying out the purposes for which God gave it to us. *Christ-Light™* is based upon a number of premises, which permeate everything from the general goals to each individual lesson.

These premises are

a) that by learning the law, Christians realize ever more fully their sinfulness and utter helplessness to save themselves;

b) that by learning the gospel, Christians grow in their knowledge of God as their loving Creator, God the Son as their gracious Redeemer, and God the Holy Spirit as their enlightening Sanctifier;

c) that by learning the gospel, Christians keep growing in faith, ever more firmly embracing Christ as their only hope of salvation;

d) that by learning the gospel as motivation and the law as a guide, Christians keep growing in the dedication of their whole life as a sacrifice of thanksgiving to God for his undeserved grace;

e) that by training in the proper use of law and gospel, Christians are enabled to use the gifts God has given them as members of his church to win others and to nurture fellow Christians in the faith;

f) that by continual personal and group Bible study, Christians grow in their ability to use the Bible for daily growth in faith and in leading a Christian life.

Students hop to action

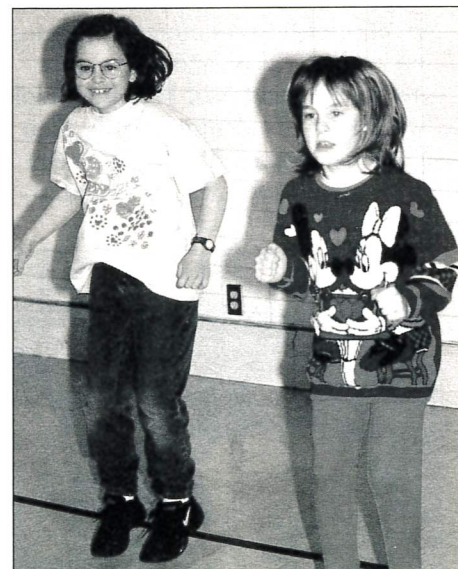
Students at St. Matthew, Oconomowoc, Wis., hopped to it to remember their friend.

At the Hop for Leukemia, preschoolers through third-graders hop on one foot as many times as possible for two minutes. They receive prizes from the Leukemia Society and know they are helping find a cure for the disease that took their classmate's life last year.

Luke Sandvold, a second-grader, died from leukemia. "It was difficult because Luke was apparently on his way to a full recovery," said Eric Ziel, principal at St. Matthew. "A sudden case of chicken pox was all it took."

The school newsletter reminded parents that "Hop for Leukemia" gave them an opportunity to tell children that Luke is in heaven.

And that because of Jesus, they can have the same confidence Luke had. One of the last things Luke said to his grandfather was "I just want to be with Jesus."



Students at St. Matthew Oconomowoc, Wis., participated in Hop for Leukemia in memory of their classmate Luke Sandvold who died last year from leukemia. The students were reminded of Luke's faith and the certainty that he is with Jesus.



Large congregations given networking opportunities

In February, 135 people from 51 congregations that average over 500 in worship met to talk about the blessings and challenges of being involved in a large congregation.

"We had positive responses," said Bruce Becker, administrator for adult discipleship. "Everyone was glad to have a chance to encourage one another and discuss the issues."

Pastors and leaders of large congregations, together with the Commission on Adult Discipleship, put together this first-ever Large

Congregation Networking workshop, held in St. Francis, Milwaukee.

Their first purpose was to facilitate discussion. Interactive workshops and networking opportunities help them accomplish this goal.

"We don't do enough sharing," said John Schewe, pastor at Emanuel, New London, Wis., and member of the planning committee for the workshop. "Congregations have excellent ideas about what works and what doesn't. We need to help each other."

Their secondary goal was to get

large congregations to continue talking about common issues.

Emanuel, New London, Wis., and St. Mark, Watertown, Wis., are doing just that. Congregational leaders from these churches met in April in New London and plan to meet again in Watertown.

"We plan for this [sharing] to continue," said Schewe. "We can just pick up the phone and share our ideas and thoughts."

YOUTH NEWS

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

The **Manitowoc Academic Decathlon Team** captured first place in regional competition and competed at the state tournament in March. Students competed in language and literature, math, science, social science, economics, fine arts, and speech, essay, and interviews. Matt Brauer and Neil Free both took Top Overall Student honors in their divisions. Dorcas Eberhardt placed second, and Aaron Hartwig placed third in their divisions.



Emilie Meier, an avid soccer player, traveled to England, France, Belgium, and Germany to play their national soccer teams in March. Meier is one of the U.S. representatives chosen by the Olympic Development Program, a feeder program for the U.S. gold medal winning team. Meier is a member at St. Peter, Plymouth, Mich.



Justin Danhoff (left), an eighth-grader at Milford Middle School (N.H.), won the state wrestling championship at 109 pounds. He was also named outstanding wrestler of the tournament. **Charles Danhoff** (center), a 10th-grader at Milford High School, won the New Hampshire small high school state title at 112 pounds. He was named the outstanding wrestler of the tourney. Their father, **Jack Danhoff**, is their wrestling coach. The Danhoffs are member of St. Paul, Amherst, N.H.



Seated from left: Aaron Hartwig, Steven Nolte, Matt Brauer, Neil Free, Dorcas Eberhardt. Standing from left: Angie Wendt, Coach Jennifer Monke, John Reuther, Cindy Peschka.

Obituaries

Erna Magdalena Sprengeler 1905-1996

Erna M. Sprengeler (nee Albrecht) was born on Nov. 1, 1905, in New Market, Minn. She died Dec. 11, 1996, in La Crosse, Wis.

A 1927 graduate of Dr. Martin Luther College, Sprengeler served at Apache Lutheran Mission, East Fork, Ariz., and Mt. Calvary, La Crosse, Wis.

She is survived by four sons, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, four sisters, and one brother. She was preceded in death by her husband, Ernst.

Hogey William Bergholz 1915-1997

Hogey W. Bergholz was born on July 2, 1915, in Green Bay, Wis. He died Feb. 5, 1997, in Appleton, Wis.

A 1939 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Bergholz served at Trinity, Brillion, Wis.; Terry, Mont.; St. Paul, Rapid City, S.D.; and St. Paul, Appleton, Wis. He taught at Fox Valley Lutheran High School, Appleton, Wis. Bergholz also served as chairman of the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary board.

He is survived by wife, Viola, one daughter, one sister, and one niece.

Edmund C. Hellmann 1910-1996

Edmund C. Hellmann was born May 22, 1910, in Nicollet, Minn. He died Dec. 2, 1996, in New Ulm, Minn.

A 1933 graduate of Dr. Martin Luther College, he served congregations in Rhinelander, Milwaukee, and Cudahy, all in Wis., and in St. Paul and New Ulm, Minn.

rē·li'giōn

Defining religion

trespass: to cross over into forbidden territory. Trespass is one of the words Scripture uses to picture sin. God draws a line beyond which we are forbidden to go. If we cross that line, we trespass, we sin.

District news

North Atlantic

Redeemer, Pembroke, Ontario, sold its church in January. The church's contents were made available to neighboring WELS-Canada churches for their use. The congregation is worshipping at a nearby nursing home, which could prove to be a wonderful location for doing outreach. . . . **Our Shepherd, Poltimore, Quebec**, is considering offering vacation Bible school this summer in French, since this is the language that many people in Quebec speak. Members of Our Shepherd, as well as members of neighboring WELS-Canada congregations who speak French, will have the opportunity to use their French language skills. . . . **Our Savior, Springville, N.Y.**, celebrated its 25th anniversary on Feb. 2.

Kevin Schultz

Minnesota

The Men's Leadership Retreat in Wilmar, Minn., scheduled for January but postponed due to severe weather, has been rescheduled for Sept. 5-6. . . . Minnesota Valley LHS celebrated principal **John Schultz's** 40th anniversary in the ministry on Apr. 6. . . . **St. Paul, North Mankato, Minn.**, is celebrating its 75th anniversary with special services throughout 1997.

Jeffrey Bovee

Northern Wisconsin

In April, three teachers at Fox Valley LHS, Appleton, Wis., celebrated their 40th anniversaries in the ministry: **Merlin Putz, Lynn Sackenheim, and Iris Sackenheim.** The Sackenhims' entire years of service have been at FVL.



The following have been added to the AVA library:

Creation Science Videos

From Evolution to Creation (Code 8330), 1997, 40 min., color, SCA

Gary Parker describes the scientific evidence that changed him from an evolutionist to a creationist.

Fossils and the Flood, (Code 8331), 1997, 40 min., color, SCA

Ken Ham shows why the fossils (evolution's strongest evidence) are better explained by the Flood described in the Bible.

The Book of Acts

1997, 45 min., color, JSCA
The narration is the Acts of the

Apostles according to the NIV, while actors try to portray the events that St. Luke describes.

Acts-NIV 1:1-8:3 (Code 8324)

Acts-NIV 8:4-13:52 (Code 8325)

Acts-NIV 14-20 (Code 8326)

Acts-NIV 21-26 (Code 8327)

These videos are available for rental for \$7.50 by congregations, schools, and church groups. Subscribers may order them for the cost of return postage from Audiovisual Library Services, Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 N 113 St, Milwaukee WI 53226-3284; 414/475-6600; 1-800-662-6093.

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MAGAZINE!**

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Most news reported in this section is derived from Religion News Service. Items do not necessarily reflect the views of WELS or *Northwestern Lutheran*.

Religion going down the tube on TV

In a study of nearly 800 television commercials, only 16 had any spiritual or religious content.

The study examined commercials from four broadcast and four cable networks, including CNN, early last year. Fewer than two percent had any spiritual or religious content. Eight commercials with religious aspects were shown a total of 16 times.

The researchers said this does not necessarily mean religion is becoming less significant in society but rather may demonstrate advertisers' reluctance to highlight religious content that is less dramatic than high-energy activities such as skiing, jogging, and surfing, and less flashy than a model on a beach.

Brendan Maguire of Western Illinois University, Macomb, and Georgie Ann Weatherby of Gonzaga University, Spokane, Wash., conducted the survey.

Anglicans ban banns

The Church of England's General Synod voted to scrap the 800-year-old practice of reading the banns of marriage in church on three Sundays before a couple can be married.

The procedure is an invitation for anyone who knows "any cause or just impediment" to the pending marriage to voice an objection.

Delegates to the synod recognized that the majority of couples whose banns of marriage are read in church are generally unknown to the congregation. They called on the synod's standing committee to look for another way to inform church members of weddings planned by congregants.

College frosh serve more, support abortion less

College students are becoming more involved in community service and are showing a decreased support for legal abortion and casual sex, according to a survey of more than 250,000 freshmen who entered U.S. colleges and universities this past fall.

According to the survey, 72 percent of college freshmen performed volunteer work in the past year, compared to 70 percent in 1995 and a low of 62 percent in 1989.

For the fourth year in a row, support declined among college freshman for keeping abortion legal. Just 56 percent said they support legal abortion, compared to 65 percent in 1990 and a low of 53 percent in 1979.

Meanwhile, support for casual sex by college freshmen is at an all-time low.

In the current survey, 42 percent agreed with the statement, "If two people like each other, it's all right for them to have sex even if they've known each other for a very short time." In 1995, 43 percent agreed with the statement and in 1987, a high of 52 percent agreed with it.

The survey of students at almost 500 institutions has a margin of error of less than plus or minus 1 percent. The survey was conducted by the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA's Graduate School of Education and Information.

Supreme Court case may affect your religious freedom

The U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments in February on a case that religious groups across the theological spectrum believe could have implications for freedom of religion.

This case, *City of Boerne vs. Flores*, centers around St. Peter the Apostle Roman Catholic Church in Boerne, Tex. The church was denied permission to expand facilities to accommodate its growing congregation. City officials said because St. Peter is in a historic district, renovations would violate local preservation laws.

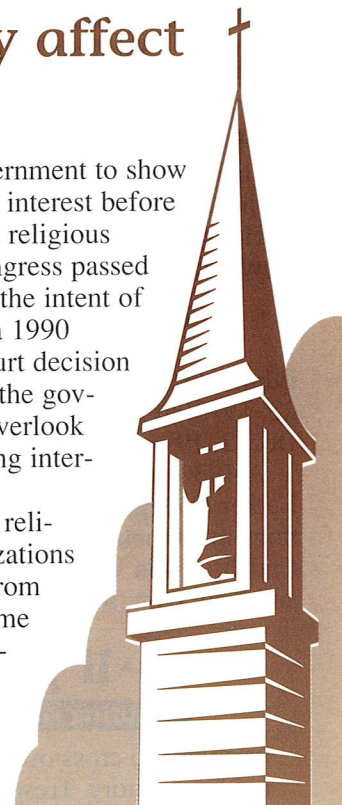
St. Peter's sued the city, arguing the code violated the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) by hindering the church's ability to freely exercise its religion. A decision is expected by the end of June.

But the case extends beyond whether this church can remodel its building. This case questions the constitutionality of the RFRA.

RFRA, signed into law in 1993,

requires government to show a compelling interest before it can restrict religious practice. Congress passed the law with the intent of overturning a 1990 Supreme Court decision that allowed the government to overlook the compelling interest criteria.

Currently, religious organizations are exempt from following some laws that violate their beliefs. For example, churches that believe homosexuality is a sin may not be forced to hire gay pastors, even in jurisdictions prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation.



WISCONSIN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD **Financial report****BUDGETARY FUND****Statement of changes in fund balance / Six months ended December 31**

	1996 actual	1995 actual	1996 budget
Changes in Unrestricted Net Assets			
<i>Revenues:</i>			
Congregational Mission Offerings	\$ 7,361,573	\$ 7,205,965	\$ 7,466,000
Gifts and memorials	3,059,406	696,559	2,734,000
Bequest/planned giving	744,029	449,009	498,000
Tuition and fees	4,705,489	4,293,645	4,445,000
Other	58,394	22,170	61,000
Transfers-endwmt/trust earnings	123,683	109,603	127,000
Transfers-gift trust	3,855,155	3,967,062	3,831,000
Transfers-continuing programs	1,722,554	1,678,534	1,571,000
Transfers-other	20	100	-
<i>Total revenues</i>	<u>21,630,303</u>	<u>18,422,647</u>	<u>20,733,000</u>
<i>Expenditures:</i>			
Administration Division	1,619,798	1,316,915	1,910,000
Home Missions Division	3,486,476	2,855,907	3,720,000
World Missions Division	4,019,184	3,752,087	3,938,000
Ministerial Education Division	9,672,420	9,989,011	10,110,000
Parish Services Division	675,548	643,372	737,000
Fiscal Services Division	681,689	689,318	779,000
<i>Total expenditures</i>	<u>20,155,115</u>	<u>19,246,610</u>	<u>21,194,000</u>
<i>Changes in Unrestricted Net Assets</i>	1,475,188	(823,963)	
Changes in Temp Restricted Net Assets			
Gifts and memorials	58,013		
Bequest/planned giving	(7,847)	-	
Change in value of trust agreements	(30,058)	-	
Satisfaction of restrictions	(2,510,644)	-	
<i>Change in temp restricted net assets</i>	<u>(2,490,536)</u>	<u>-</u>	
<i>Net assets - beginning of year</i>	<u>5,109,960</u>	<u>627,702</u>	
<i>Net assets - end of period</i>	<u>4,094,612</u>	<u>(196,261)</u>	

In brief

The rate of women who become pregnant before age 20 is down in many parts of the world compared to 20 years ago. In the Dominican Republic, teen child-bearing is down to 33 percent compared to 52 percent 20 years ago. In Morocco, the figure dropped to 19 percent from 39 percent. Of all the industrialized nations, the United States has the highest rate of teen pregnancy. According to the report, 14 percent of American girls between the ages of 15 and 19 gave birth in 1996, double that of Britain, which had the next highest teen birth rate. [Alan Guttmacher Institute]

CONGREGATION MISSION SUBSCRIPTION PERFORMANCE

	Total Subscription			Offerings Received		Percent of Sbscrpntn	Annlzd Ave Per Commun
	Communicants 12/31/95	1996	Year to Date Projected	December Offerings	Twelve Months Offerings		
Arizona-California	16,630	\$985,340	\$985,340	\$171,467	\$973,893	98.8%	\$58.56
Dakota-Montana	9,375	426,387	426,387	83,211	416,675	97.7	44.45
Michigan	36,926	2,132,175	2,132,175	412,459	2,077,714	97.4	56.27
Minnesota	43,642	2,369,952	2,369,952	492,565	2,219,083	93.6	50.85
Nebraska	10,110	560,636	560,636	125,288	594,266	106.0	58.78
North Atlantic	3,646	302,506	302,506	46,443	313,936	103.8	86.10
Northern Wisconsin	61,574	2,498,651	2,498,651	541,740	2,403,471	96.2	39.03
Pacific Northwest	4,770	268,056	268,056	43,998	262,357	97.9	55.00
South Atlantic	6,303	394,707	394,707	54,823	403,524	102.2	64.02
South Central	4,126	345,765	345,765	59,947	384,203	111.1	93.12
Southeastern Wisconsin	58,087	3,261,224	3,261,224	751,078	3,156,330	96.8	54.34
Western Wisconsin	59,910	2,972,138	2,972,138	650,437	2,956,048	99.5	49.34
Total - This Year	315,099	16,517,537	16,517,537	3,433,456	16,161,500	97.8	51.29
Total - Last Year	316,221	16,434,979	16,434,979	3,234,526	15,868,179	96.6	50.18

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

	Dec. 31, 1996	Dec. 31, 1995
<i>Assets:</i>		
Cash and cash equivalents	2,088,234	74,019
Due from other funds	45,496	-
Accounts receivable-cash adv.	101,750	91,750
Cash advances-schools	-	445,200
Other accounts receivable	135,802	219,769
Contributions receivable	2,222,380	-
Mortgage note receivable	17,790	19,567
Allowance for doubtful acct	(92,000)	(92,000)
Prepaid expenses	16,051	65,613
<i>Total assets</i>	<u>4,535,503</u>	<u>823,918</u>
<i>Liabilities and fund balance:</i>		
Due to other funds	-	759,975
Due to schools	136,802	-
Accounts payable	304,089	260,204
<i>Total liabilities</i>	<u>440,891</u>	<u>1,020,179</u>
Unrestricted net assets	1,887,881	(196,261)
Temp restricted net assets	2,206,731	-
<i>Total net assets</i>	<u>4,094,612</u>	<u>(196,261)</u>
<i>Total liab. and net assets</i>	<u>4,535,503</u>	<u>823,918</u>

—Randy Matter, Controller

CORRECTIONS:

- In the obituaries [Feb.], Walter O. Johnson was listed as having been the oldest living teacher in WELS. Actually, he was the oldest living graduate of Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn.
- In "Lutherans serving in 105th Congress" [Mar.], Representative Ron Kind (D-Wis.) was inadvertently omitted from the list of Lutherans in the House of Representatives. Kind is a member at Immanuel, La Crosse, Wis., a WELS church.

Bulletin BOARD & NOTICES

To place an announcement, call 414/256-3231;
FAX, 414/256-3899; e-mail, nl@sab.wels.net
Deadline is six weeks before publication date.

CHANGE IN MINISTRY

Pastors

Baumann, Jon A., from Willow Lake, Willow Lake, S.D., to St. John, Newburg, Wis.

Clement, Arthur J., from Madison Institutional Ministries, Jefferson, Wis., to retirement

Golm, Curtis A., from Zambia to Holy Scripture Word, Ft. Wayne, Ind.

Grubbs, Mark S., from West LHS, Hopkins, Minn., to Thoughts of Faith, Inc. (ELS)

Korthals, James F., from Faith, Oregon, Wis. (ELS), to WLS, Mequon, Wis.

Lindke, Allen L., from Redeemer, Pembroke, Ontario, to Mt. Sinai, Montrose, Mich.

Mueller, Robert P., from Salem, Owosso, Mich., to retirement

Nelson, James D., from Trinity, Hoskins, Neb., to St. Matthew, Winona, Minn.

Rakos, Joel K., from St. Paul, Amherst, N.H., to Thoughts of Faith, Inc. (ELS)

Ristow, August K., to Emmanuel, Las Cruces, N.M.

Ruddat, Arnold E., from St. Peter, Chilton, Wis., to Manitowoc LHS, Manitowoc, Wis.

Schulz, Paul W., from Our Savior's, Bylas, Ariz., to Trinity, Duncan/Grace, Safford, Ariz.

Valleskey, Thomas A., from Grace, Sitka, Alaska, to Our Savior, East Wenatchee/Holy Cross, Withrow, Wash.

CORRECTION: Mark T. Kipfmiller was from First, Elkhorn, Wis., not St. John/St. James as reported in April.

Teachers

Heckendorf, Mark T., from St. Paul, Plymouth, Neb., to WLHS, Milwaukee, Wis.

Jungemann, Amy E., from St. Peter, Balaton, Minn., to St. Andrew, Chicago, Ill.

Murphy, Mark W., from St. John, Dakota, Minn., to Zion, Monroe, Mich.

Roekle, Diane M., from Zion, Chesaning, Mich., to Grace, St. Joseph, Mich.

Sievert, Walter H., from First German, Manitowoc, Wis., to retirement

White, Kenneth J., from Immanuel, Hutchinson, Minn., to St. Paul, East Troy, Wis.

REQUEST FOR NOMINATION

The Board of Control of Luther Preparatory School has been authorized by the Board for Ministerial Education to call a replacement for Prof. Steven Thiesfeldt, who accepted a call to Martin Luther College. Pending BME approval, the board will also call a replacement for Prof. Harold Kaiser, who is retiring. Voting members of the synod are invited to submit candidates for nominations. Candidates should be qualified to teach math, science, or English. Experience and ability in one or more of the following is desirable: administration, academic guidance, coaching, drama/forensics, and choral directing.

Submit names and pertinent information by May 20 to President Mark Schroeder, LPS, 1300 Western Ave, Watertown WI 53094; <Mschroed@lps.wels.net>

The synod administration building will close:

May 26—Memorial Day
Callers may leave voice mail messages, 414/256-3888; FAX, 414/256-3899

Northwestern Publishing House summer store hours (from Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day weekend)

Monday through Thursday—9 AM to 5:30 PM

Friday—9 AM to 8 PM

Saturday—9 AM to 1 PM

ANNIVERSARIES

Enterprise, Wis.—St. John (100). June 22. Dinner noon; service, 2:30 PM. On County G, four miles west of U.S. Hwy 45; 715/487-5484.

Salt Lake City, Utah—Prince of Peace (25). June 1. Service, 3 PM; dinner following. 1441 W Tamarack Rd, Salt Lake City UT 84123; 801/261-3808.

Kekoskee, Wis.—St. Peter (125). May 18—service, 10 AM; potluck follows. 23 Main St, RR 2, Mayville WI 53050; 414/387-4043.

Dallas, Tex.—Calvary school (25). June 14—picnic and fellowship, 4 PM. June 15—service, 4 PM; meal and program follow. 9807 Church Rd, Dallas TX 75238; 214/348-5567 for reservations.

Tampa, Fla.—Northdale (formerly Mt. Calvary) (40). June 8. Service, 4 PM; dinner following. 15709 Mapledale Blvd, Tampa FL 33624; 813/961-9195.

St. Paul Park, Minn.—St. Andrew (50). June 22. Services, 8 and 10:30 AM and 2 PM; dinner at noon. 1000 Portland Ave, St. Paul Park MN 55071; 612/459-2569.

Oconomowoc, Wis.—St. Matthew (75). June 15—God's grace to our family of faith, potluck follows; Aug. 3—God's grace in feeding his lambs, potluck follows; Nov. 2—God's grace in proclaiming his pure Word, noon dinner. Call ahead to attend Nov. 2 dinner. 414/567-2418.

Greenfield, Wis.—St. Jacobi (125). May 25,26—founding fathers. July 27,28—missions/evangelism. Services at 8:15 and 10:45 AM on Sunday, 7 PM on Monday. Summer hours, 8:15 and 10 AM. 8605 W Forest Home Ave, Greenfield WI 53228; 414/425-3030.

COMING EVENTS

Commencements—

Martin Luther College, 10 AM, May 17

Luther Preparatory School, 10 AM, May 21

Michigan Luther Seminary, 10:30 AM, May 24

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, 10 AM, May 30

Youth rally bus—Seats still available. Originating from Rice Lake, Wis., we will spend a day touring Milwaukee and then on to Tennessee. Pastor Knippel, 715/234-2412; <rbrtknl@win.bright.net>

OWLS hostel—College training and fellowship. July 11-16 at MLC, New Ulm. Commission on Special Ministries, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222; 414/256-3241; <usr10@sab.wels.net>

NPH music reading workshops—Music from Northwestern Publishing House and other publishers. June 21—MLS, Saginaw, Mich.; July 12—MLC, New Ulm, Minn.; July 13—Bloomington Lutheran Church, Bloomington, Minn.; July 19—WLC, Milwaukee, Wis. Lila Snyder, 1-800-662-6093 ext. 163; Milwaukee area, 475-6600 ext. 163.

Convention—WELS mission for the deaf and hard of hearing. July 25-27. Radisson Hotel, La Crosse, Wis. Gene Seidel, 414/536-1651.

Convention—Wisconsin State Teachers' Convention. Oct. 30-31 at Wisconsin LHS, Milwaukee. Steve Enter, 414/463-5030.

Lutheran Vanguard of Wisconsin 1997 performances 414/921-4930.

June 13—Brillion, Wis., 9 PM

June 14—Appleton, Wis., 2 PM; Menasha, Wis., 7 PM

June 21—Fox Valley LHS, Appleton, Wis., 2-7 PM

June 26—Brooklyn Center, Minn., 6 PM

June 27—Rochester, Minn., 6:30 PM

June 28—Rogers, Minn., noon

June 29—Alexandria, Minn., 1:30 PM

June 30—Roseville, Minn., 6:30 PM

July 4—Watertown, Wis., 10 AM; Northbrook, Ill., 2:30 PM

July 5—Whitewater, Wis., 10 AM

July 6—East Troy, Wis., 1:30 PM

July 10—Traverse City, Mich., 7 PM

July 12—Traverse City, Mich., 10:45 AM

NAMES WANTED

Tampa, Fla.—Northdale and Mt. Calvary. Names and addresses of former members for 40th anniversary celebration. Vida Curtis, c/o Northdale, 15709 Mapledale Blvd, Tampa FL 33624; 813/961-9195.

Elko, Nevada—Judy McCulloch, 994 Wolf Creek Dr, Elko NV 89801; 702/774-1656.

Vacaville/Fairfield, Calif.—Pastor Scott Stone, exploratory, 730 Roscommon Dr, Vacaville CA 95688; 1-800-244-7307; <sjsevang@cwnet.com>

NEEDED

Altar paraments and lectern—Pastor Pries, 1538 71st School Rd, Fayetteville NC 28314; 910/868-1907; <DavePries@aol.com>

Actors—for pro-life TV commercials to air in 1998 for a national WELS Lutherans for Life campaign. Send picture and short bio to Life Resource Center, 2949 N Mayfair Rd Ste 115, Milwaukee WI 53222; Ann Zuleger, 414/774-1331.

Church furniture—pews, old dark 1800s style furniture, altars, pulpit (with steps on each side), artifacts dealing with WELS history, photos of churches over 100 years old. For WELS Historical Institute, Salem Landmark Church. Char Sampe, 414/464-3559.

High school and college students—for Milwaukee's inner city VBS. Spend one week canvassing and one week teaching. June 8-22. John Gensmer, 4316 S Nicholson Ave #51, St. Francis WI 53235; 414/483-4512.

Preacher—July 6 & 13 at Ascension, Jacksonville, N.C., for lodging half an hour from the beach. Tadd Fellers, 910/353-7000.

SERVICE TIMES

Colorado Springs, Colo.—Vacationing in the Pikes Peak area? Join us Sundays (June 1-Aug. 31) at 8 or 9:30 AM or Wednesdays at 7 PM. Located at 4318 N Chestnut just off Garden of the Gods Rd.; 719/599-0200 or 719/599-0216.

AVAILABLE

Hymnals—*The Lutheran Hymnal*, 250. Free for cost of shipping. St. Luke, 916 Huron Ave, Vassar MI 48768; 517/823-7923.

Hymnals—*The Lutheran Hymnal*, 200. Free for cost of shipping. King of Grace, Golden Valley, Minn.; 612/546-3131.

Extinguishing evil

Kenneth A. Cherney

Some genius whose name I don't recall once announced that he had the answer for America's crime problem. "Simple," he said, "Make everything legal. Robbery, murder, extortion—everything—instantly, no more crime problem."

Humans' faulty solution

Some people propose a similar solution for America's illegal drug problem. The answer, they say, is to legalize everything. Do that, and the problem of illegal drugs disappears.

Usually, these people are a little fuzzy on the details—like on how removing the controls from controlled substances is going to diminish their use and the horrors they unleash. The genius mentioned above didn't go into detail either about what life would be like in a world where nothing was out-of-bounds.

Obviously, both arguments ignore the same fact. Destructive behaviors are not a problem because they're illegal. They're illegal because they're a problem.

To use the homely Anglo-Saxon word, they're evil. Yes, despite what some people say, there still is such a thing. And our present state of moral paralysis will continue until we admit it. Certain behaviors are evil: not misguided, not unfortunate, not disadvantageous, but evil. They're not wrong because we have declared them to be so, because that's just the way we happen to have been raised. They're wrong because Almighty God says so. And deep down everyone knows it.

God's real solution

Admitting that is the first step, and we won't get anywhere until we take it.

Worse—God's solution to the problem will be meaningless to us, until we take it.

The Christian message says that evil has a solution. In a real sense, God has solved it already. In Jesus Christ, he's invaded this "present evil age" (Galatians 1:4) with his goodness and his love. He's atoned for the evil in each of us. He's broken the power of the evil in the world. And one day he'll banish it from his world forever. We have God's own word on it—credible as it may seem right now.

It's wonderful news, but the wonder of it is lost on a person who won't face the problem, who won't admit that evil is evil. A sighted person can see the room is dark and wish for the light. A blind man doesn't care.

God is coming to throw the light switch. The spiritually sighted are thrilled by the news. They can't wait for it to happen.

The blind are wondering what all the fuss is about.

Ken Cherney is pastor at Living Hope, Mandeville, Louisiana.

*Destructive
behaviors
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They're illegal
because they're
a problem.*

Real faith for real life

James wrote a brilliant essay on Christian living, a blistering assault on phony faith.

Mark E. Braun

Though one of the last books in the Bible, James may have been the first New Testament book written.

It wasn't authored, by John's brother, Zebedee's son. That James was martyred. Nor by the other James, son of Alphaeus. This James was one of our Lord's four "brothers"—maybe Joseph and Mary's sons or maybe Jesus' cousins. They didn't believe in him during his lifetime (John 7:5), thought he was out of his mind (Mark 3:21), and tried to intrude on his ministry (Matthew 12:46).

A servant of God

This James became another example of God's wondrous grace. Jesus appeared to him after his resurrection, and James was among those awaiting the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem. He stayed there all his life. Paul met with him on his first and final visits and regarded him as a pillar of the church. James mediated the knotty question of whether Gentile believers were required to obey the same laws the Jews followed and may have drafted the conciliatory letter to believers in Antioch.

When he wrote this letter, James called himself "a servant of God and the Lord Jesus Christ" (1:1); his readers knew who he was. He addressed them as "the 12 tribes scattered among the nations," *Diaspora* Jews who had lived for centuries outside of Palestine but who believed the one they'd longed for had come in Jesus of Nazareth. Jews by race, but Christians by grace.

Luther and James

James wasn't Martin Luther's favorite book. While conceding that James was "a good book" because it "set up no new doctrines," Luther refused to number James "among his chief books." In table conversation, he was harsher: "It doesn't amount to much. It contains not a syllable about Christ, nothing of his suffering and resurrection." An epistle of straw, Luther said. "Some day I will use James to fire my stove."

Luther reopened a question the Church hadn't asked for a thousand years: was James rightly included in the New Testament? Some early lists of "accepted books" omitted it; few church fathers quoted it. Yet it was more neglected than rejected, and Luther never took it out of his Bible. Straw, as any farmer will tell, is good for something; it's just not as good

as hay. James doesn't teach justification by faith as clearly as Romans and Galatians do, but it has value.

And despite his protests, Luther agreed with James. In his preface to Romans, Luther called faith "a living, busy, active, mighty thing," that "does not even ask whether good works are to be done, but . . . has already done them." In *Freedom of a Christian*, Luther wrote, "Our faith in Christ does not set us free from works," but from the "false presumption" that works save us. In both, Luther insisted that if you don't do good works, you are no Christian.

An assault on phony faith

That's what James says. He does not recount what Jesus did for us, implore us to evangelize others, or explain how to live among pagan neighbors. Instead, James wrote a brilliant essay on Christian living, a blistering assault on phony faith. He hated cheap grace, low expectations, careless living, mere theoretical Christianity.

He knows we trust Jesus. He knows we don't always reflect the faith we profess. He knows the good Spirit of God touches hearts and changes lives.

James calls for a real faith for real life.

Mark Braun is a professor at Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee.

real faith for real life
james

Mothers—a blessing from God

Walter F. Beckmann

The news today is full of the subject of abortion. People ask, "Will this new congress make another attempt to pass a bill banning late term, partial-birth abortions, and if it does, will the president sign it into law?"

One pro-life march held to protest 24 years of *Roe vs. Wade* generated a lot of pro-abortion rhetoric. One determined woman insisted she had fought too hard and long to win that right and wasn't about to give up now. She wanted this to be her legacy to her two-year-old daughter. Another said she had the right to expel an unwanted fetus from her body just as she had the right to throw an unwelcome intruder from her home. An exit poll after last year's national election claimed that 60 percent of the women interviewed admitted that the right to have an abortion had figured heavily into their vote.

Our nation is preparing to celebrate Mother's Day. Women who demand their right to have an abortion will be accepting cards and flowers from the children they chose not to abort. We need to share God's Word with them, patiently reminding them that conception is a miracle of God, and that children are a heritage from the Lord.

As we approach Mother's Day, I fondly remember my mother, who died a little over a year ago. She didn't approve of *Roe vs. Wade*. She didn't consider abortion to be her right. She regarded it as an attempt to seize a right that God reserves for himself alone.

According to today's thinking, my mother would have had good reasons to

abort me. I was born in 1932 during the Great Depression. My parents were living in a very small apartment. Economically, they were just getting by. The last thing they needed was another mouth to feed. But they never suggested I was an unwelcome intruder. They regarded me as a gift from God and accepted the responsibility of caring for me and raising me in the Christian faith. I'm glad they did.

I'm also reminded of another mother from long ago. When God's angel told Mary that she was about to conceive the Christ-child, she could have come up with the logical objection, "What will people think?" Instead she said, "I'm your servant. Use me as you see fit." Aren't we glad she did? Aren't we glad for that special child God gave us through her? We join with all generations of believers and call her "blessed."

Today I call my mother blessed for all the blessings God gave me through her, especially for all the blessings he has given me through Christ, whom I first learned to know at her knee.

May God graciously give our nation such an attitude toward motherhood. May all the mothers of our nation strive to be what God would have them be—his special blessing to their children, children whom they regard as a special gift and trust from the Lord, to be raised in faith to his glory.

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

Today I call

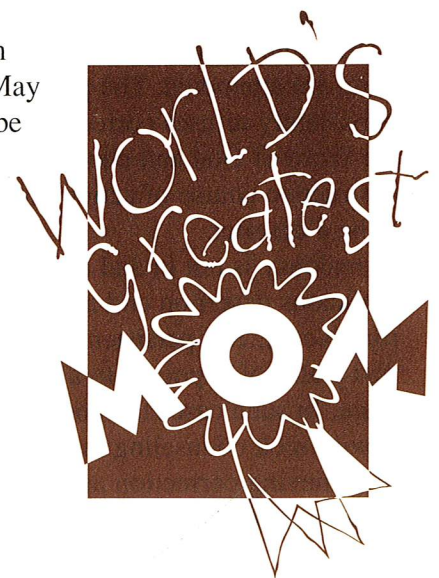
my mother

blessed for all

the blessings

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through her.



When marriages go bad

John F. Brug

When one spouse cheats on another, the marriage is considered broken, and divorce is possible. Can a marriage be broken in other ways too? What if one spouse no longer trusts the other? Jealousy is picking the marriage apart as one spouse is being falsely accused.

In 1 Corinthians 7 Paul teaches that if an unbeliever deserts a marriage, the believing party is not bound to that marriage. For this reason, "malicious desertion" is often listed as a second grounds for divorce along with adultery. Permanent, voluntary departure from the home is malicious desertion. Persistent actions that make life together in the home impossible can become malicious desertion. Refusal of sexual intercourse, refusal of support, continual threats of violence and violence against spouse and children can become malicious desertion. The injured party may have to live apart while correction and reconciliation are attempted. The person who persistently refuses correction from the Word of God and continues in a destructive course of action proves to be a deserter.

Jealousy is not in and of itself malicious desertion and a grounds for divorce. But persistent unjustified jealousy is poison to a marriage. In such cases the couple should seek counseling in the hope of achieving correction and reconciliation before it becomes too late.

In many weddings 1 Corinthians 13 is read as a description of love. The increase in divorce shows that this love often fails. Was this failure paid for by Christ's death? My pastor explained to me that my spouse had deserted me, but do I still fall into sin by this divorce?

1 Corinthians 13 describes what love should be like. Every day all of us fall short of such perfect love in all of our relationships. For this failure, we need God's forgiveness. We are assured of such forgiveness by the perfect love Jesus practiced throughout his life and by his perfect payment for our sin.

**Even in cases where
one or both parties have been
guilty of breaking the marriage
by adultery or desertion,
if they are repentant,
they are forgiven.**

In every marriage both husband and wife fall short of the perfect love described in 1 Corinthians 13. For such failure we need forgiveness from God and from each other. Such sins of weakness, however, are not grounds for breaking a marriage.

Every divorce is caused by sin. In some cases both parties may be guilty of breaking the marriage by

adultery or desertion. But in some cases one party breaks the marriage in spite of the desire of the other to preserve it. In such cases one person may be an "innocent party" who is not guilty of breaking the marriage.

Even in cases where one or both parties have been guilty of breaking the marriage by adultery or desertion, if they are repentant, they are forgiven as David was (Psalms 32 and 51). Christ paid also for the sins of adultery and divorce (1 John 1:7).

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

*Send questions to
Your question, please,
Northwestern Lutheran,
2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee
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<nl@sab.wels.net.>*



“Why do pastors get so quiet during the sermon?” my grandfather asked. I explained that the rising and falling of the voice emphasized certain points. My grandfather said he was unable to hear parts of the sermon. Turning up the volume on his hearing aid was of no benefit when the pastor became quiet.

Pastors, please remember not all members and visitors have perfect hearing. Hearing aids can help, but they also amplify the other sounds most of us tune out.

The Mission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing has assistive listening devices available for loan. If you have difficulty hearing the pastor, ask your congregation to borrow a device from MDHH. You may be surprised how much you've been missing.

*Dawn Schultz
Waukesha, Wisconsin*

My basketball team from Arizona Lutheran Academy, Phoenix, was on its way to Tucson. We ran into heavy traffic and had to stop. We saw flashing police and ambulance lights ahead. Later we heard a Flight for Life helicopter. Soon a second helicopter landed. About 20 minutes later, the helicopters took off, and we were on our way.

When we got to where the accident happened, we saw a van and a car turned upside down in the ditch, and three people on the ground, with the paramedics working frantically.

A team manager said, “I think we should pray for them.” No matter what we were doing, we bowed our heads and prayed that the Lord would protect those who got hurt.

How many public school basketball teams do that as a group? Not many. Praying with all my friends is comforting. This is why I strongly support ALA and a Christian education. There may be faults at ALA, and everyone may not always get along, but it comes down to one thing: We are all Christians, and we can boldly say we have Christ.

*Erin Gray
sophomore at ALA,
Phoenix, Arizona*

I read and enjoy *Northwestern Lutheran* a great deal and always look forward to the next issue.

But for the first time, I read the obituaries and found it odd that the dates of their deaths took place up to March 1996. Why are they published so late?

*Joyce Pitsch
Birchwood, Wisconsin*

NL relies on churches and family members to submit obituaries. We print them when we receive them. For timely reporting, we encourage people to submit called workers' obituaries as quickly as possible.

I'm concerned about the apparent absence of support for *The Lutheran Hymnal* (TLH), which carries with it a subtle, yet real, stigma projected by WELS on congregations still using TLH.

I, and many others, would appreciate a word of assurance for congregations that stayed with TLH. I see articles in NL that directly or casually promote *Christian Worship* (CW), but never is there mention that congregations who stayed with TLH are worshiping God with music and liturgy that reflects as true a worship as those using CW.

I'm not suggesting a complete return to TLH, or that TLH is “better.” However, some find the word-

ing in TLH better reflects their personal worship to God.

We are not asking for a spotlight, but rather a break in NL's silence on TLH with a word of assurance that we who worship from TLH are not “old sticks-in-the-mud” but a part of the WELS fellowship of true believers in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

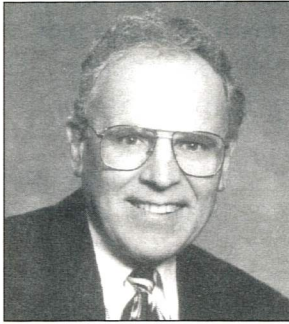
*Jack Callaway
Strafford, Missouri*

Through my Bible in 3 years

June 1997

1. Ezekiel 22
2. Ezek. 23
3. Ezek. 24
4. Ezek. 25, 26
5. Ezek. 27, 28
6. Ezek. 29, 30
7. Ezek. 31, 32
8. Psalm 73
9. Ps. 74
10. Ps. 75, 76
11. Ps. 77
12. Ps. 78:1-39
13. Ps. 78:40-72
14. Ps. 79, 80
15. Ps. 81-83
16. Ps. 84
17. Ps. 85
18. Ps. 86, 87
19. Ps. 88
20. Ps. 89:1-37
21. Ps. 89:38-52
22. Ezekiel 33
23. Ezek. 34
24. Ezek. 35:1—36:15
25. Ezek. 36:16-38
26. Ezek. 37
27. Ezek. 38
28. Ezek. 39
29. Ezek. 40:1-47
30. Ezek. 40:48—41:26

Where you fit in



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

**Under God, only
two categories
exist: believers
and unbelievers.**

If you have grown tired of hearing about “Boomers” and “Busters” and “X-ers,” brace yourself. Now it’s “Heartlanders” and Modernists” and “Cultural Creatives.” (See *American Demographics*, February.)

These new categories represent world views rather than age groups. Heartlanders (29 percent of Americans) stand on tradition and imagine a society returned to “the Good Old American Ways,” typified by small towns and strong churches.

Heartlanders live largely on memory. We’re the first to hearken to the good-old-days, but we sometimes suffer from selective memory and imagine a Brady-Bunch America that never was. We don’t like change. We are likely to have conventional and conservative religious beliefs. We are most apt to fail to relate to the changing world and likely to cocoon.

“Modernists (47 percent) place high value on personal success, consumerism, materialism, and technological rationality.” Modernists do the most to drive the economy and tend to measure success by money. We like our money for ourselves and are wary of others getting it, whether charity or government. We are more secular and cynical in outlook, not idealistic.

The third, smallest, least-known of the three, Cultural Creatives (24 percent) are into “human potential.” “They put a strong emphasis on having new and unique experiences” and are “powerfully attuned to global issues and whole systems.”

Cultural Creatives have been quietly emerging as a social force to be reckoned with. We are clustered around a median age of 42 years, six in 10 are women, we are more likely to do volunteer work, and we are typified as “information junkies.” We are not buying into materialism, but are captivated by mysticism, idealism, and social activism.

What all this means for America, I leave for others to speculate. But I venture some thoughts for the church.

- First, we live with diversity. If the message of Christ ever gets confined to any one category, it will die with that group. In truth, some of all of these categories dwell in all of us, for better or worse. That’s why I used the pronoun “we.” Some elements contradict the truth of Christ and must be dealt with, but his truth will bring out his best in all. We have God’s mission to bring Jesus to all categories of people.

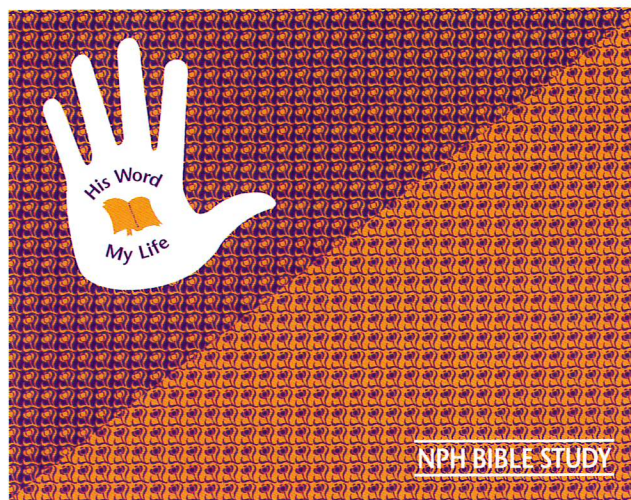
- Next, although categorizing people accentuates differences, we are not at all different in our basic spiritual needs. Even our differences reveal a common thread or two. In each category, people care about living in a personal comfort zone and having a world that makes sense and offers peace and safety. The three world views are this-world directed and seek to influence this world.

Christ Jesus also influences this world, profoundly, not so much by categories of people as by individuals who live in his faith. But his purpose reaches beyond this world and is eternal. His fervent prayer the night before he died included: “Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory . . .” (John 17:24). His legacy is the forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

- Finally, categories and subcategories of people serve a purpose, if only to recognize the variables. But under God, only two categories exist: believers and unbelievers. Our task from the Savior is to spread his good news so more unbelievers will believe and be saved.

Gary P. Baumler

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Vacation and grace

So what if it gets a little late and more than a little dark before I get home? Soon enough my time of grace shall end.

David Danford

It was almost 11 PM. The sunset had long ago faded to black, the 13th day of a 16-day vacation. I was behind the wheel trying to keep from fading to black myself on some desolate two-lane road in North Dakota.

In between my failing efforts to strike up lively conversation with the sleeping children in the back seat, I pondered how it was that we were out so late trying to find our way back to the motel from one of the least visited tourist attractions in North America—the Theodore Roosevelt National Park—North Unit.

Of course I knew why. This was our vacation. We don't get a lot of free time every year to do fun things and expand our horizons. This time was valuable, and we knew we

wouldn't be here again soon, if ever. How could we live with ourselves if we came all this way and didn't go the extra mile and see what they had at the Theodore Roosevelt National Park—North Unit!

So what if it got a little late and more than a little dark before we got in? Soon enough we'd be back in Omaha, playtime would be over, and we'd wonder wistfully, "What do you suppose they have at the Theodore Roosevelt National Park—North Unit, anyway?"

When you look at it that way, like a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, the choice is clear.

It was almost 10 PM. The sunset had long ago faded to black, but the lights were still on in the church

basement at the Council meeting. I was at the fourth table on the left trying to keep from fading to black myself as the Council struggled through old business. I pondered how it was I came to sit there so late this evening.

Of course I knew why. This is my time of grace. In the space of eternity, my life is terribly short. I don't get a lot of time to praise and give thanks to my Savior by participating in his work. My opportunities grow fewer and fewer with each passing day. I will not pass this way again. How could I live with myself if I did not take the opportunity to serve him.

So what if it gets a little late and more than a little dark before I get home? Soon enough my time of grace shall end, and I'd wonder wistfully, "What do you suppose I might have done for the Lord's kingdom if only . . ."

When you look at it that way, like a once-in-an-eternity opportunity, the choice is clear.

On our best days as Christians, we view this life as one big opportunity to join with Jesus who said "As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work" (John 9:4). On our worst days, we, like the disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane, turn in early.

David Danford is a member at Good Shepherd, Omaha, Nebraska.

