

LUTHERAN



**WELS
convention**

page 18

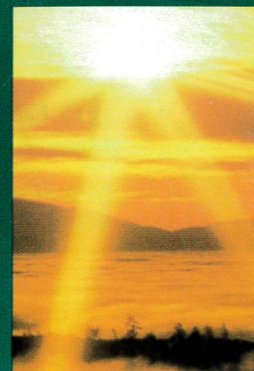
**Glory be
to Jesus**

page 3

**A lesson
about
Reformation**

page 28

MML 19436 0 0 1 2 / 0
 REV FREDERIC H NITZ
 604 MAPLE CREST LN
 WATERTOWN MI 53094



Do you have trouble finding middle C?



It's between x and v on your PC keyboard. Actually, with **Hymnsoft™ Home Edition** installed on your personal computer, playing hymn accompaniments can be that easy. This unique electronic version of *Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal* is wonderful for the home or classroom. Almost every function is accessible by a mouse click or simple keyboard command—

Search by title or number for hymns or psalms.

Display the texts of hymns, psalms, and canticles.

Play the accompaniment for every hymn; and choose the melody or full accompaniment for all 59 psalms and the major liturgical settings.

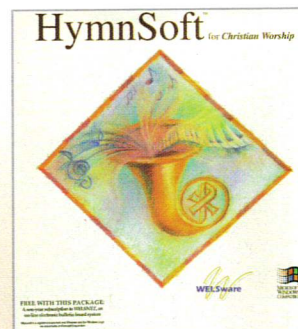
It's the answer to memory work woes, performance jitters, ragged rehearsals, and the home without a piano. **Make HymnSoft part of this school year—you'll be lost without it!**

System requirements: IBM compatible 386 or higher, 2MB RAM with 8 MB of disk space on installation drive, Windows™ 3.1 or higher, VGA monitor and compatible graphics card, 16-bit sound card, stereo speakers.

To order call 1-800-662-6022,

Milwaukee Area (414) 475-6600 (8:00 A.M.– 4:30 P.M. weekdays)

MasterCard, Visa, and Discover Card accepted. All orders are subject to shipping and handling costs and sales tax where applicable.



HymnSoft™
1.0 Home Edition
LU35N0104, \$69.95

Hymnsoft is a trademark of Northwestern Publishing House.

Microsoft is a registered trademark and Windows and the Windows logo are trademarks of Microsoft Corporation



**Northwestern
Publishing House**

1250 N. 113th St., Milwaukee, WI 53226-3284

Glory be to Jesus

Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers. He says, "I will declare your name to my brothers; in the presence of the congregation I will sing your praises. . . ." Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. Hebrews 2:11,12,14,15

Richard D. Balge

The priests of Old Testament Israel came from the same people as those for whom they made sacrifices. So our High Priest, Jesus, who made us holy by removing our sins, is of the same flesh and blood as we. When he submitted himself to the law and performed its requirements, he did it as one of us. When he sacrificed himself on the cross, he did it as a fully-human being. The One who makes people holy and the people who are made holy have a common humanity.

Not ashamed to call us brothers

We might expect that his divine holiness would make it impossible for him to acknowledge us as his family. He is holy, and we are sinners. His perfect love shames our loveless words and attitudes. Our sinful foolishness is in stark contrast to him who is God's wisdom incarnate. Yet, he has become one of us, "so that Jesus is not ashamed to call (us) brothers."

"He says, 'I will declare your name to my brothers, in the presence of the congregation I will sing your praises.'" The words are from Psalm 22, a song about how Christ would make us holy by suffering and

dying. From childhood the Savior was not ashamed to go to God's house with his people. He didn't need to hear about forgiveness, because he was sinless. He did not need instruction in the way of righteousness, because he is the Lord our Righteousness. Nevertheless, he was there as our representative, praising his Father—there as our teacher, opening up the meaning of Scripture. Now he is at God's right hand, pleading our cause.

Glory be to Jesus! Even though he found us in the dark alleys of sin, he is not ashamed to acknowledge us as family members.

Delivered us from fear of death

Death was waiting for us when we were born. In taking our sins on himself, Jesus subjected himself to death. He did it "so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the

power of death—that is, the devil." To destroy the devil, to free Satan's captives, to overcome death, he needed more than human might. He has it—his immortal divine power.

Through his victory he has freed us from the fear of death. It is sin that gives death its sting. Sinners are aware they are answerable to God, and that makes death dreadful.

Christ, however, has destroyed "him who holds the power of death." The devil still exists, but he has lost his power to accuse and terrify us, because we are joined to Christ by faith. We are still sinners, but at the same time the righteousness of God is ours through faith in his Son. Death still waits, but its stinger has been pulled by the Savior.

There is a song that says: "Life is what you do while you're waiting to die." That is not living! That is the desperate existence of the doomed.

In its place, our Lord Jesus Christ has given us freedom, peace with God, the hope of a glorious resurrection to eternal life.

For that we say: "Glory be to Jesus!" For that we glorify him in our lives.

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





■ The 1997 WELS convention—a family reunion of sorts. Under the theme, We are family under God, 500 delegates from around the United States and the world met to prayerfully discuss what God wants WELS to do in the next two years. God has blessed our synod in the past and we ask him to guide us into the future. You'll find an expanded section devoted to the convention on pages 18-22.

■ It's October, the month of the Reformation. We are addressing a number of issues relating to reformation. Two articles point out the differences between Lutherans and the need for doctrinal agreement:

- ✓ WELS and other Lutherans (p. 16)
- ✓ Close communion revisited (p. 31)

Another addresses the need for personal, daily reformations:

- ✓ A lesson about Reformation (p. 28)

A fourth discusses views on Halloween—a holiday that shares its observance with the Reformation:

- ✓ Halloween—a question of judgment (p. 32)

■ One series ends this month. We thank Paul Wendland for his usual outstanding, thought-provoking work. You'll find his final article on page 8.

—LRB

Cover photo by Gary Baumler

NORTHWESTERN LUTHERAN

Official magazine of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod
October 1997 / Vol. 84, No. 10

Editorial office: *Northwestern Lutheran*, WELS, 2929 N Mayfair Road, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398; FAX, 414/256-3899; <nl@sab.wels.net>

Editor

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

Senior Communications Assistant

Linda R. Baacke, 414/256-3232

Communications Assistant

Julie K. Tessmer, 414/256-3231

Communication Services Commission

R. D. Balge, J. M. Barber, W. F. Bernhardt, M. D. Duncan, R. E. Lauersdorf, J. Sprecher

Contributing Editors

J. A. Aderman, R. D. Balge, W. F. Beckmann, M. E. Braun, J. F. Brug, J. C. Gerlach, E. S. Hartzell, R. E. Lauersdorf, F. E. Piepenbrink, V. H. Prange.

Art Director

Paul Burmeister

Graphic Designer

Melissa Homan

Photographs and Illustrations

Anne Hause, p. 3
Mrs. Kevin Scheibel Photography, p. 6
Gary Baumler, p. 18-22
Peggy Henning, courtesy of Ruth Eggert, p. 10
Fran Lee, p. 12
H. Armstrong Roberts, p. 8, 14
Bill Frauhiger, p. 36

Subscription services

1-800-662-6093 ext. 8

Milwaukee area **414/475-6600 ext. 5**

Northwestern Publishing House

1250 N 113 St

Milwaukee WI 53226-3284

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

Available on audio cassette from Mission for the Visually Impaired, 559 Humboldt Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55107.

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

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Northwestern Lutheran*, c/o Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 N 113 St, Milwaukee WI 53226-3284. ©1997 by *Northwestern Lutheran*. Printed in the USA.

TO ORDER *Northwestern Lutheran*

Send this coupon with check or money order to:

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

A subscription
in U.S.A. or Canada

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

Name (print) _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

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



Avoid causing a child to sin page 6



God promises love page 12



A family affair page 18

- 3 **THOUGHT FOR TODAY**
Glory be to Jesus
Richard D. Balge
 Even though he found us in the dark alleys of sin, he is not ashamed to acknowledge us as family members.
- 6 **FAITH LIKE A CHILD**
Avoid causing a child to sin
John M. Parlow
 God promises blessings to those who treat his children well and gives dire warnings to those who cause us harm.
- 8 **LAST WORDS FOR LAST DAYS**
God is love
Paul O. Wendland
 God's love for us burned in his great heart from all eternity; it burned with a fierce flame brighter than a million suns.
- 10 **BY FAITH THEY LED**
Presto, fermata, al fine
Morton A. Schroeder
 Kurt John Eggert's gift of music left a legacy to the Christian church.
- 12 **FAMILY PLANNING**
God promises love
Wayne A. Mueller
 God promises that his laws are there to preserve our happiness, not destroy it.
- 14 **APOSTLES' CREED**
The Holy Spirit calls me through the Means of Grace
Wayne A. Laitinen
 We torment and rob ourselves of faith in Christ to whatever degree we rest our confidence on our response to God.
- 16 **YOUR QUESTION, PLEASE**
WELS and other Lutherans
John F. Brug
- 18 **WELS CONVENTION 1997**
A family affair
Gary P. Baumler
- 23 **WELS NEWS**
 - WELS buys Biblical Gardens' statues
 - Lutheran Vanguard of Wisconsin celebrates 20th anniversary
 - Congregations working to spread the Word
 - Translating all things for all people

- 26 **WORLD NEWS**
 - Supreme Court rejects Religious Freedom Restoration Act
 - Guidelines for federal workplace religious expression unveiled
- 27 **BULLETIN BOARD**
- 28 **SPEAKING MY MIND**
A lesson about Reformation
Jeffrey D. Wegner
 Taking a lesson from King Josiah and the people of Judah, hadn't we better find the hidden Book of the Law for our lives?
- 29 **PERSON TO PERSON**
Table talks
Karl R. Gurgel
 As we sit around our kitchen tables, remembering we are all family under God, wouldn't this be a good time to talk about God's gifts to us?
- 30 **BIBLE STUDY**
Are all sins equal?
Mark E. Braun
 All sins—big ones and little ones—deserve his judgment.
- 31 **EDITORIAL COMMENT**
Close communion revisited
Joel C. Gerlach
- 32 **YOUR QUESTION, PLEASE**
Halloween—a question of judgment
John F. Brug
- 33 **READERS FORUM**
- 34 **EDITOR'S PEN**
Held to a higher standard
Gary P. Baumler
 The pastor is a model, but he is not perfect. He cannot be.
- 36 **INSIGHTS**
We've always done it that way
Kenneth A. Cherney
 The battle over old versus new continues. The answer is found in what God says.

Avoid causing a child to sin

God promises blessings to those who treat his children well and gives dire warnings to those who cause us harm.

John M. Parlow

I am the father of three children and wouldn't trade them for any I've met. I love them. I am zealous for their spiritual growth. I want them to know what Jesus has done for them. I feel responsible for them. I protect them and provide for them.

I'm sure you feel the same about your loved ones. We attempt to protect our children from influences of unbelieving classmates, neighborhood kids, co-workers, politically correct college professors, or just

the sinful world trying to squeeze our children into its godless mold. And we all live by a basic truth: the way you treat our children directly affects us.

If we feel that way, you can imagine how God feels. God is the perfect model of parental concern. He has always been deeply concerned about the way his children are treated—it is important that we be protected and nurtured. He loves us. He therefore promises blessings to those who treat his children well and gives dire warnings to those who cause us harm.

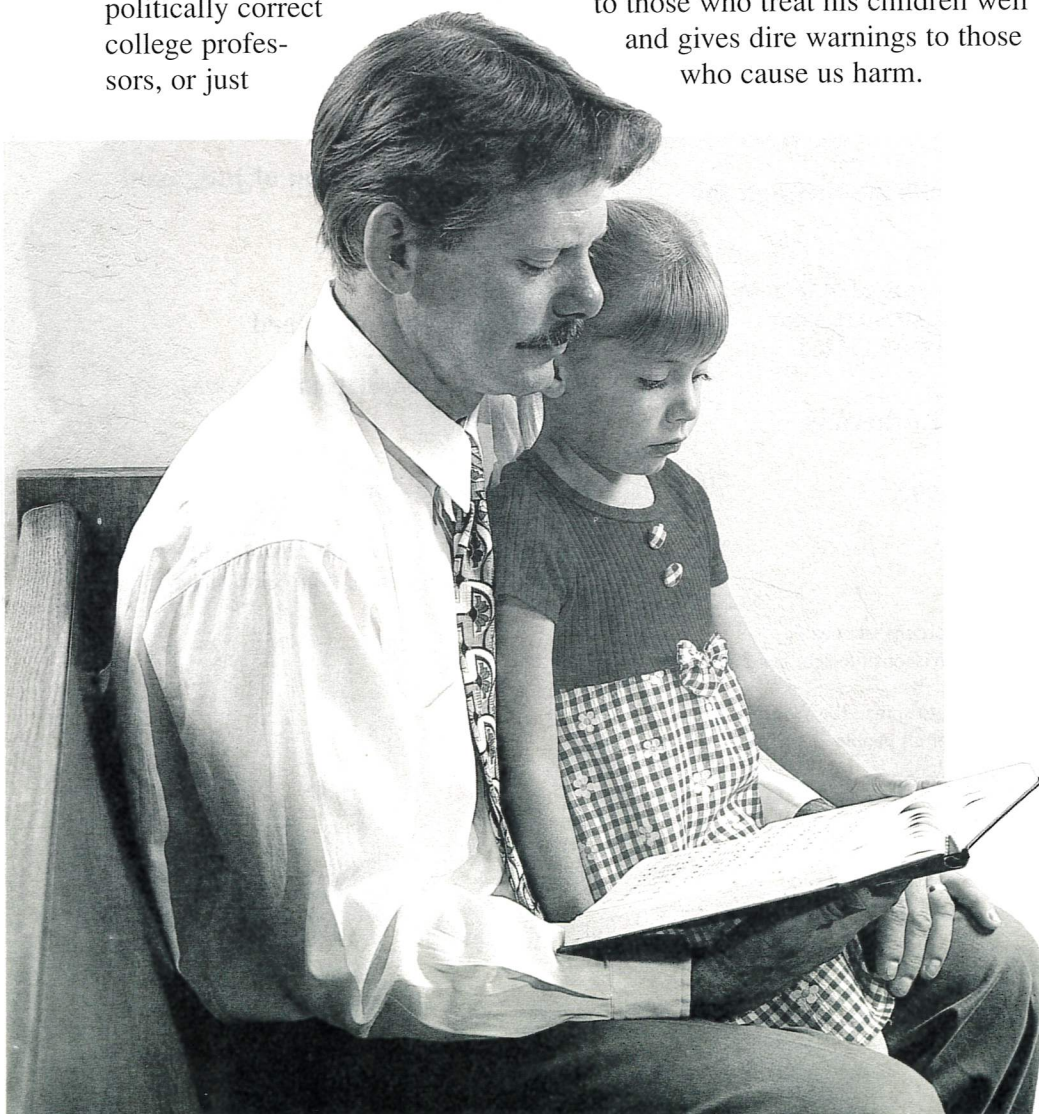
As Jesus held the young child in his arms, he taught a lesson about the care of his children. He taught about the danger of causing his children to sin.

The principles

Jesus starts with a principle: "And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me." Jesus' primary point here is that how you treat Christians is how you treat him. God's life is bound up in his people. When anyone treats a Christian with tenderness and kindness, he treats Christ the same way. Remember he said, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me" (Matthew 25:40).

Believers are to treat one another with care and kindness. We are to "correct, rebuke, and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction." We are to care for each other like precious children. What a vital message to the church as it reaches out in a me-first, throw-away world.

That is the positive. Jesus now presents the negative. When a person mistreats a Christian, he is mistreating Christ: "But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea" (Matthew 18:6).



We dare not miss the word picture here. The word “sin” literally means “to cause to fall, stumble, to catch in a trap.” The Lord is therefore speaking of enticing, trapping, or influencing a believer—in any way—that leads him into sin or makes it easier for him to sin.

To make this point clear, Jesus says that a person who causes a believer to sin would be better off dying a terrible death. It would be better for him that a millstone be hung around his neck, and he be drowned in the sea.

The Romans sometimes used this form of execution. Such a pagan execution was unimaginably horrible to Jews, perhaps in some respects more fearful than crucifixion. Yet Jesus said that suffering such a terrifying death would be better than causing even one of his believers to sin. Do you see how serious Jesus is about sin?

The causes

What a lesson! I imagine there were a few gulps in the room. The disciples had just been causing each other to sin as they argued who was the greatest. Every believer is a child of God and, like all children, needs protection, care, and understanding. It is an enormous crime in God’s sight to harm even one believer by leading him to sin.

There are many ways we can cause people to stumble into sin. The most obvious is by directly tempting them: “Don’t worry about taking those office supplies home, Bob. This is such a big company. They’ll never know.”

Another way is through sinful example. Parents, if we rely on others to teach our children God’s Word and then contradict it by the way we

speak or live, we endanger our child’s faith. By our bad example, we can lead believers of all ages into sinful attitudes and practices. We want to make sure that we do not, either consciously or subconsciously, cause God’s children to sin.

**If any habit, hobby,
relationship, or anything else
causes you to stumble, it
should be permanently
forsaken. Great danger often
requires drastic measures.**

This is extremely serious. There seems to be no end of books, magazines, videos, TV programs, web pages, and commonly accepted practices and attitudes that mislead those who belong to God. The devil loves to set traps for God’s people. Here God warns you about being part of the problem.

The solutions

That leads us to the prevention. “If your hand or your foot causes you to sin cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell” (Matthew 18:8,9).

The Lord is obviously speaking figuratively. No part of our physical bodies causes us to sin, and removing any part of it would not keep us from sinning. The point was that a

person should do whatever is necessary to keep from sinning or to keep from causing others to sin. Nothing is worth keeping if it leads to sin. If any habit, hobby, relationship, or anything else causes you to stumble, it should be permanently forsaken. Great danger often requires drastic measures.

That is a lot of law. Do you know where you find the gospel in this text? You find it in the preacher of this marvelous sermon—Jesus. The One who convicts you and warns you with the law is the same one who lived under it perfectly so that it would not crush you eternally. The One who gave his life for you motivates you to live for him. The One who makes demands on you is the one who offers you, his child, the power to fulfill those demands and overcome any temptation. The One who points the finger of holiness toward you is the one who opened his arms for a sinner like you.

And never were those arms opened so wide as they were on the Roman cross. Those open arms are the embrace of forgiveness offered for every sinner and every sin. We see our Heavenly Father protecting his children from the harm of others. We see a friend, the greatest friend you can ever have, receiving you as an honored guest to be treated with kindness and special attention. We see a loving God warning us about the eternal, fiery danger of sin. We see the Redeemer redeeming a sin-filled world. We see Jesus express his loving concern for you. No wonder they call him Savior.

*John Parlow is pastor at St. Mark,
Green Bay, Wisconsin.*

NL

God is love

God's love for us burned in his great heart from all eternity; it burned with a fierce flame brighter than a million suns.

Paul O. Wendland



God is love, the Scriptures say. Never hate, although he does hate sin. Never wrath, although he is angry with the wicked every day. Hatred and wrath are not God's essential nature, not the way love is. When he punishes iniquity, transgression, and sin, it is as one who is doing a work foreign to himself, alien to his true nature. "I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked," he tells us. Even his judgments on sin and his displays of wrath must finally serve the interests of his

grace. That is why we know that God's last word to us is love.

God's love burned from all eternity

He does not speak that word to the smug, to the complacent and self-satisfied individual who is all puffed up with himself. He speaks it only to those who know that they are beggars before him. To those who can say, "Ah, dear Lord, without your love, I am nothing, no matter what I am. Without it, I know

nothing, no matter what I know. Without it, I possess nothing, no matter what I have. Without it, I can do nothing, no matter what I do." To us, his sinful creatures, overwhelmed by want, possessing nothing and needing everything, who mourn in lowly exile here as aliens and strangers, to us he says, "I have loved you with an everlasting love."

God's love for us burned in his great heart from all eternity; it burned with a fierce flame brighter than a million suns. That flame was

so powerful that it leaped over the great chasm dividing us from our Creator, becoming a man in Christ Jesus. Here at last was a human being who loved. He loved his own, and he loved them to the end. He loved until his great heart finally moved him to shoulder all our woe and to carry it with him to the cross. The message of his love struck the spark of faith in our hearts. Now, through the Word of Christ, the Spirit of God has kindled in us his answering flame.

God's love has come to us

Christ was patient, Christ was kind, Christ did not seek his own good, but ours. He willingly put himself into the hands of our tormentors to set us free from their tyranny forever. He accepted the accusations of our own guilt as his very own. He took on the taunts and jeers of the world and did not reply in kind. He allowed the full and terrible sentence of death to wash over him, though it could never wash him away. Not one whose love was so perfect, and so complete.

We are still so weak, and we hold the message of his love in hands that tremble. We do not always see his love so clearly as we view the passing scene on earth. But faith still knows. Faith sees, knows, and lives from the Father's love, begotten in eternity, born in the man Jesus, raised in triumph over the highest heavens. Faith is certain that God's love still leads us in his own bright way. Until faith finally gives way to sight.

God's love defies description

And what will we see then? And where will we be then? In the place where God's perfect love will shine on us, perfectly. Though we may

see it now "in a glass, darkly," we still see something. The Scriptures are so rich in pictures and images to describe heaven. It speaks of a feast attended by many "from the east and west." It speaks of God's family perfectly united under one Father, by one Brother, through one Spirit. It speaks of a garden where we will find rest beside tranquil waters, shaded by the tree of life. It speaks of a city, fair and high, where at last our exile will end and where we will be free from every danger and everything that now threatens us.

Scripture's many pictures and images . . . can no more capture the full truth of heaven than a loving husband can describe to someone else all he feels in his heart about his beloved wife.

These images are all very beautiful; they give us something on which to build our hopes in times of woe. We find great comfort, too, in hearing about those things that won't be there. The sin that weighs us down, the sorrow that makes our days on earth a misery, the death that lays us low. It will be the land where no one will hear the sound of weeping, and no child will cry out in pain. Gone forever will be every reason to cry. It will be the land where God's every promise will become a reality, and the Christian's every hope a lasting joy. The old order of things will have passed away. God will have made all things new, fresh, and delightful.

Most of all, we look forward to seeing our God face to face. The Scripture's many pictures and images of that future life are simply that: pictures and images. They can no more capture the full truth of heaven than a loving husband can describe to someone else all he feels in his heart about his beloved wife. Our words are too poor.

God's love fills our lives

But we know every good and perfect gift that we enjoy here and now comes from the Father of the heavenly lights. We think of all the pleasure we have in wholesome conversation with our good friends, of gathering together around the table as a family, of feeling safe and secure in our own home. We think of the holy joy that is ours when we assemble in God's house at Christmas and when, in the light of the manger, we catch a tiny glimpse of God's eternal love. We think of that sweet sense of life triumphant that is ours when, on Easter Sunday, the bright sunshine, the warm breezes, and the lovely fragrances of spring all combine to reinforce the pastor's message to us, "He is risen! He is risen indeed!"

These good things thrill our hearts even now, and these good things are from God, every one. How much brighter and clearer will be our vision, how much purer and deeper will be our joy when we see him as he is! What greater rapture does the beloved have than to bask in the gaze of him who loves her best? God is love. We will see him there, and abide in his love forever.

NL

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

Presto, fermata, al fine

Kurt John Eggert's gift of music left a legacy to the Christian church.

Morton A. Schroeder

The Lutheran Hymnal was *de rigueur* in many churches of the Synodical Conference for nearly half a century. Published in 1941, it was used by several generations of worshippers.

Like all earthly things, the book slowly lost its charm. Its '40s' sheen became its later shadows. People grumbled about its archaic vocabulary and grammar. Like the King James translation, which gave way to what many readers regard as a more vibrant version, the hymnal found its worth hampered by anachronisms.

Call for change

Recognizing need for change, the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod began a revision. It asked other former Synodical Conference members to join it. The Wisconsin Synod, which had a hymnal committee—two men studying liturgical concerns—accepted the invitation. But it withdrew from what became a pan-Lutheran chorus, feeling increasingly out of tune with the tenor of the project.

When WELS opted to sing solo, it realized it had to make some changes. The undertaking was too large for two people, especially since both held full-time calls: Martin Albrecht as professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and Kurt Eggert as pastor and choir director of Atonement Lutheran Church.

A group of six, called the Commission on Liturgy, Hymnody, and Worship, was formed. Albrecht

was chairman; Eggert, secretary. One commission member recalls with joy the consensus-building work Eggert did to help synod resolve in 1983 to "begin work on a new/revised hymnal of its own."

In 1983 the WELS Conference of Presidents (COP) called Eggert as project director. Eggert's brother-in-law, James Schaefer, then editor of this magazine, urged Eggert to accept the call. He said, "You've been preparing for this for your entire life."

A man gifted for the task

It is true: Eggert immersed himself in music. He was an accomplished pianist. By age 16 he had given professional-quality concerts. He studied at the Wisconsin Conservatory of Music, Milwaukee; the University of Wisconsin—Madison; State Teachers College, Valley City, N.D.; and Concordia Teacher's College, River Forest, Ill. He attended church music conferences. His favorite: choral and directing classes held at St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minn. All of this did not lead to advanced degrees. Eggert said, "All in all, many courses, but no academic cigar!"

In the early '50s, Eggert initiated programs to promote wider use of good music in WELS. He conducted church music seminars in the Watertown area and published *Viva Vox*, a mimeographed quarterly designed to broadcast the seminars' proceedings and papers.



May 8, 1923, born to Pastor William and Mrs. Paula Kirchner Eggert, Wausau, Wis.

1929-44, attended St. Mark Lutheran School, and Northwestern Prep School and College, Watertown, Wis.

1945-46, instructor, Bethany Lutheran College, Mankato, Minn.

1947, graduated from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (WLS), Mequon.

1947-48, tutor, Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw

June 27, 1948, married Ruth Westcott

1948-50, pastor, St. Paul, Valley City, N.D.

1950-55, pastor, Immanuel, Farmington, Wis.

1955-66, pastor, Gethsemane, Milwaukee

1957-93, director, The Lutheran Chorale of Milwaukee

1960-62, instructor in liturgy and church music, WLS

1966-70, instructor, Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee

1970-84, associate pastor, Atonement, Milwaukee

1984-93, project director, new/revised hymnal

1986, *Sampler*, 60-page introduction to the work of the Commission on Worship, published

Thursday, June 17, 1993, given first copy of *Christian Worship* by WELS president, Rev. Carl Mischke

Tuesday, June 22, 1993, died, Milwaukee

Most notably, Eggert founded The Lutheran Chorale of Milwaukee in 1957. For 36 years, until shortly before his death, he was its conductor. Using “Sermons in Song” as its motto, the choir gave more than 80 concerts. Choir members recall Eggert’s attributes: innovative, demanding, meticulous, intense, a director who introduced them to “an old favorite or something new and daring.” His drive to excel enabled members to give to their choirs what they had learned from him.

Eggert’s musical tastes were eclectic. He delighted in Bach and Mendelssohn but enjoyed other classical composers, the operettas of Gilbert and Sullivan, Burl Ives, and even Spike Jones.

When the COP called Eggert, it also chose 15 men to deal with various aspects of the hymnal: liturgy, hymn tunes, hymn text. Eggert, who with the music editor served as resource person and coordinator, attended as many committee meetings as he could. One committee member said, “Time and again he (Kurt) would raise a question. . . . Invariably his question was a good one and brought out something we had passed over. . . . He kept us from going too fast.”

That same member added, in a lighter vein, “Kurt also made himself responsible for supplying the bakery treats for our meetings.”

Although Eggert did not regard himself as poet or composer, his work is included six times in *Christian Worship*. He also wrote tunes for canticles; settings for introits, texts, and tunes; and settings for miscellaneous works. His *Wedding Glory* found almost instant, widespread use.

His talents spread in service

According to a family member, Eggert “was not consumed by music.” He played tennis well, rode his bicycle into his late 60s, and followed Wisconsin’s professional sports teams. He loved nature, and he, Mom, and the seven “kids” combined stays at the family cottage or camping, boating, and fishing expeditions with his workshops and seminars. These outings also gave him the chance to indulge in bird watching and astronomy. He was a history buff, and traveling to historic sites delighted him.

From 1963 to 1991 Eggert produced *Lutheran Guideposts*, a 15-minute, twice-a-month television program of music, narration, and sermonette. During 16 of these years (1971-1987), he edited *Focus on Worship*, a publication of the Commission on Worship. Both projects consumed much time, but his family never felt neglected.

The foundation for his family was laid, although Eggert did not know it then, when he was asked to put his seminary studies on hold to help out at Bethany Lutheran College in Mankato, Minn. He left

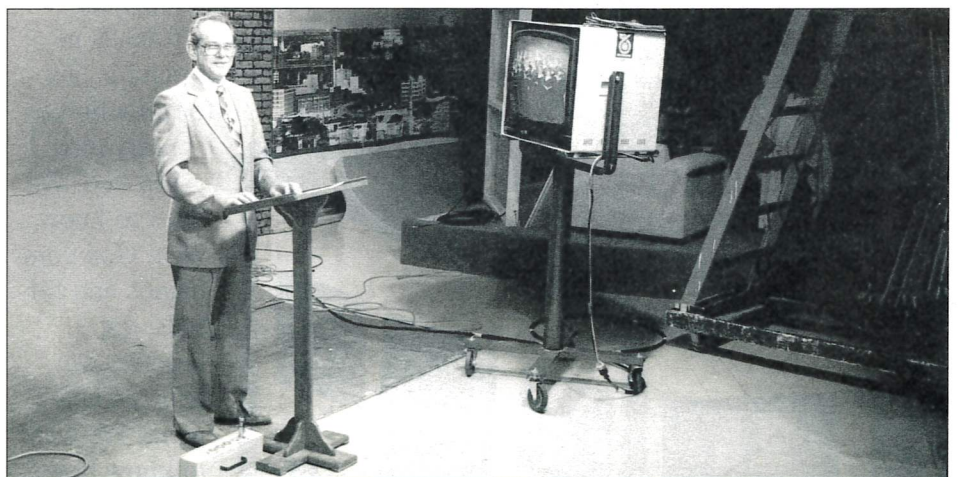
Bethany with a new friend: Ruth Westcott, one of his English class students. The “prof/student” relationship changed to friendship as they rode from Mankato to Watertown, where both lived. Friendship ripened into love as they discovered common interests, one of which was tennis. Mrs. Eggert said, “we had many a date ‘under the lights’ on the courts in Watertown.”

Amidst all this, Eggert had time for Christian education. During his Gethsemane years, the congregation opened a school. He served on the board of directors of Wisconsin Lutheran High School, was a member of the synod’s Board for Parish Education, and chaired the synod’s Commission on Higher Education.

Eggert summarized his ministry: “My professional life has centered in serving my church and my Lord as a pastor and church musician. I account it a great privilege, and a marvelous gift of God that provided the opportunity to couple theology, church music, and the preparation of weekly worship.”

NL

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



Eggert on the set of Lutheran Guideposts. Eggert produced this 15-minute, twice-a-month, later once-a-month, television program for 28 years.

God promises love

God promises that his laws are there to preserve our happiness, not destroy it.

Wayne A. Mueller

Every morning Jimmy struggled to get his papers delivered on time. His old, rickety bicycle was hard to steer and even harder to pedal. So Jimmy was always looking for shortcuts. One of those shortcuts took him right through the middle of his aunt's gladiolus bed on the corner lot.

Jimmy knew the damage he was doing. So, when his aunt arrived late to his birthday party, he could hardly look her in the face. Afraid of what she might have written in the birthday card, Jimmy opened hers last. Under her name signed, "With love," was a note at the bottom of the card: "I've got something for you in the trunk of my car."

Jimmy was sure it was a carton of gladiolus bulbs for him to replant her corner bed, but, dutifully, he followed her outside. Then his eyes filled with tears as his aunt lifted the trunk lid to reveal a brand new, shiny bicycle.



The loving law

Couples who do not search the Scriptures for guidance in family planning may fear they will find a box of gladiolus bulbs.

They're afraid that God's laws will force them to do something they don't want to do. Like Adam and Eve, they think God's commands will restrict their happiness.

With his new bicycle, Jimmy carefully drove around his aunt's gladiolus bed. It wasn't fear of being scolded that changed his driving habits. It was his joy over her surprising gift.

Joy over God's surprising gift leads us to search his law for direction in family planning, too. We want to know what God commands and forbids, not because we fear punishment. We want to know how to express our



appreciation for his gift of forgiveness. "This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome" (1 John 5:3).

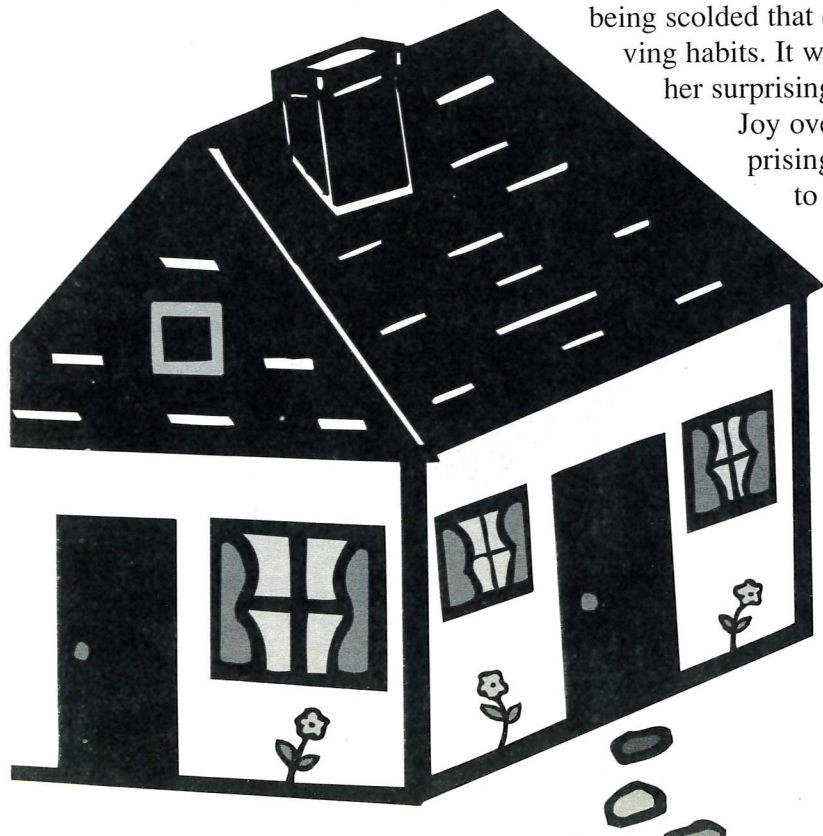
Laws that apply to family planning demonstrate another promise of God. He promises that his laws are there to preserve our happiness, not destroy it. We even obey laws we don't understand (or agree with), knowing they are for our good. We who believe in Jesus share the psalmist's confidence: "The precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart. . . . By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward" (Psalm 19:8,11).

The guiding law

The Fifth Commandment offers Christian couples practical guidance for family planning: "You shall not murder" (Exodus 20:13). Luther explains the intent of this law: "We should fear and love God that we do not hurt or harm our neighbor in his body, but help and be a friend to him in every bodily need."

God is the author of all life, especially human life. Conception is the way God begins each human life. At the time a baby is conceived—when the husband's sperm unites with the wife's egg—God has started another human life.

Scripture leaves no doubt that conception is the moment when



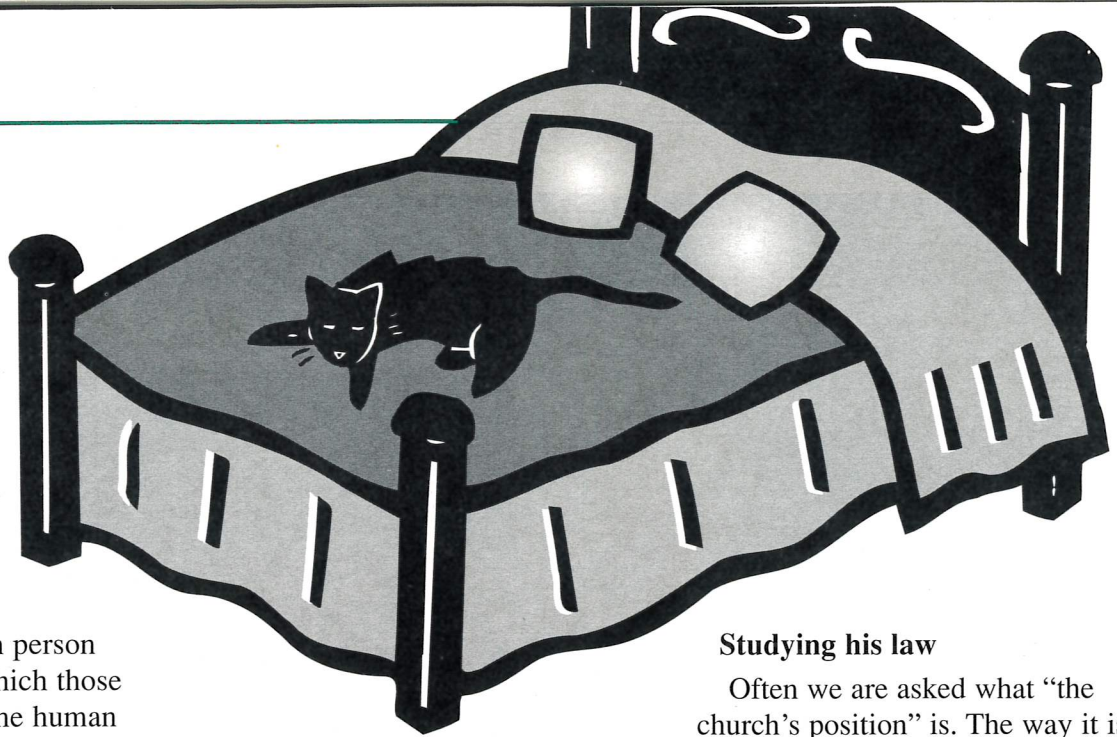
human existence and identity begins.

Weekly we confess that we believe in Jesus Christ "who was conceived by the Holy Ghost." Jesus' human existence and identity began at his conception, not at birth. The point at which Jesus became a human person is the same point at which those he came to save become human persons.

Any form of birth control, then, mechanical or chemical, that interposes after God has begun human life, is murder. Birth control methods that destroy or expel a fertilized egg are called abortifacients. We don't need graphic pictures of babies developing in the womb to convince us. We have God's Word on it: "See now that I myself am he! There is no god besides me. I put to death and I bring to life" (Deuteronomy 32:39).

God's command to do no harm to ourselves or our neighbor applies beyond the abortifacient nature of the method. Even methods that do not destroy a fertilized egg may harm the mother's health. Many drugs enter the market with no proven record of long-term safety. They may hurt the mother or pose risk to future pregnancies.

Every husband has a key role in family planning. As God's appointed head of the marriage, he must be lovingly involved in decision making. A spiritual leader, he thinks beyond personal pleasure.



Studying his law

Often we are asked what "the church's position" is. The way it is asked hints that the questioner will consider any answer a human opinion and feel free to agree or disagree with it. In a faithful church, however, teachers impose nothing more or less than what the Lord himself asks. They remind you what God's will is and that his love stands behind his commands.

Family planning is not merely a private human decision or a medical choice. For believers, it is a way to bring glory to God for keeping his promise of a Savior. We honor that God by making him a part of our thinking and choosing. We draw him into our decision making by studying his law. His law was given for our good and aims at our happiness. What we eventually decide to do reflects our trust in his promise.

Willingly, we ride our bicycles around his gladioluses.

NL

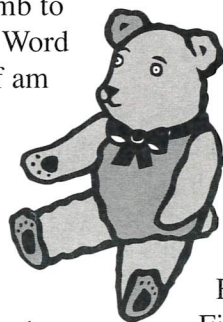
He considers more than the convenience, availability, and effectiveness of artificial methods. "Husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies" (Ephesians 5:28). He will be with his wife at the doctor's office asking all the hard questions.

Surgical methods of contraception also need to be evaluated in the light of God's law. Tubal ligations and vasectomies are not abortifacient and usually pose little health risk.

From the viewpoint of the Fifth Commandment,

Christians are free to avail themselves of these surgeries.

The First Commandment, however, demands that we examine not only the procedures themselves, but also our motive for seeking them. Will this possibly-irreversible decision glorify God? Are we putting God's purposes for marriage and his promise that children are a blessing above our personal dreams and agendas?



Wayne Mueller is administrator of WELS Parish Services.



The Holy Spirit calls me through the Means of Grace

We torment and rob ourselves of faith in Christ to whatever degree we rest our confidence on our response to God.

Wayne A. Laitinen

People just can't teach God enough. It has been that way since our first rebellion. It will continue until our Lord returns.

Naaman typifies our expectations of God

Take Naaman (2 Kings 5). His otherwise brilliant career as the commander of the Syrian army was threatened when he contracted leprosy. In desperation, he cast national pride aside and appealed to Israel's king for a cure. This, like every other avenue of healing, led to a dead end.

Finally he found himself at the unlikely doorstep of an Israelite holy man. As humiliating as it was, this pagan leper had definite ideas about how God's prophet should heal him. He said, "I thought that (Elisha) would surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, wave his

hand over the spot and cure me of leprosy."

But the prophet never left the house. Instead he sent a lowly messenger to the commander with the instructions, "Go, wash yourself seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh will be restored and you will be cleansed."

Can an outward washing cleanse you of internal infection? Of course not. To Naaman's way of thinking, the God of Israel just didn't get it. In a rage Naaman turned and stalked away from the prophet's house muttering something about the superior rivers of his homeland.

But Naaman's servants reminded him that if Elisha had asked him to do some great work to be free of this disease, he would have done it. How much easier it would be to wash seven times in the Jordan!

This is how it must be with the sons of Adam and daughters of Eve.

Our Savior simply invites us to believe the Word, be washed, eat and drink. But people think, "No, this is too easy. I must do something to prove my sincerity. I must pray 'the believer's prayer.' I must weep and be deeply moved. I must feel the inner stirring of the Holy Spirit or do something few others have done at great personal expense. Then I will know I am saved!" This is precisely how Naaman lectured God.

It takes God's Spirit to change us

What does Christ's Bride mean when she says, "I believe in the Holy Spirit . . . ?" She means that "I cannot by my own thinking or choosing believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to him."

Note well the word *cannot*, as in, "dead men *cannot* pray." We were born dead in sin. As far as God's grace is concerned, our ears were

stopped and our mouths were silent from the warm, watery grave of our mother's womb. How can we call on the One we have not believed in? And how can we believe without the gospel? Still, human reason wants to do its part. So we invent "believers' prayers"—prayers to convert the unconverted—unlike any prayer we've seen in the Bible. In these prayers the dead are taught to pray as if they were alive, the living to pray as if they were dead, and both imagine that their prayer made the difference.

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.

Cannot, as in, "adrenaline rushes *cannot* save me." Today people look for emotional highs to prove that Jesus is working in their hearts. It is the equivalent to the ancient clamoring for signs and wonders. To be sure, where there is faith in our Savior, there is joy. But let's be clear on its source. The mother of our Lord did not exult in her joy. She rejoiced in God her Savior. The Magnificat betrayed the source of Mary's joy: she borrowed heavily from the song of Hannah, the Psalms, and the prophets. And let's not stereotype Christian joy as a constant euphoria. From Egypt to Calvary that poor woman's heart was pierced more often than not. Still, she rejoiced in her Savior.

Cannot, as in, "human reason *cannot* comprehend the ways of God." Can the muddy Jordan wash away leprosy? Can a handful of water cleanse the heart of guilt? Not normally. But we're dealing with the God who made all things out of nothing. He declared that water can do these great things. Not because the water has healing properties of its own, but because the promise of almighty God stands behind both actions. The first promise was for Naaman only. But the second is for all people: "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

God's Spirit works a miracle

As long as God was the pupil and Naaman the teacher, Naaman could not be helped. So, too, we torment ourselves to whatever degree we rest our confidence on our response to God. When we are in great turmoil or on our deathbed, Satan will hammer away at the weakest seam in our faith: "What if your prayer for salva-

tion was not sincere?" he taunts. "Could there have been self-serving reasons for being converted at that time? Did you think you could fool God? Haven't unbelievers done more good works than you? You can't die now—you need more time to prove that you've accepted Christ." Our Adversary will not let up until we are so focused on ourselves that we despair of all hope.

Were it not for two miracles, Naaman's life would have ended in despair. The obvious is that he was cleansed of leprosy. But the greatest miracle was that the Holy Spirit, through the prophet, overcame Naaman's unbelief. Naaman confessed that the God of Israel is the only true God.

The Holy Spirit performs the greatest of all miracles to this very day. Through Word and Sacrament, he puts to death our old way of thinking. Through Word and Sacrament the Spirit raises us to the humility of a student. Then our dear Lord enters with peace and everlasting life.

Since our conversion is the Holy Spirit's work from beginning to end, it has no seams or weaknesses. Let Satan accuse us as he will, our baptism is the Spirit's pledge that, for Jesus' sake, our conscience is clear before the highest and most exacting court in the universe.

Through God's Word, the Holy Spirit nourishes our baptismal faith and protects it from being destroyed. Though my body may be racked with pain, my soul assaulted by doubts, and the world tell me that God has forsaken me, the Spirit testifies with my spirit that I am a child of God.

NL

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

WELS and other Lutherans

John F. Brug

What are the differences between WELS and other Lutheran churches?

With about 400,000 members, WELS lies at the numerical center of American Lutheran church bodies. Two much larger Lutheran church bodies number in the millions—the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. There are about 20 much smaller Lutheran church bodies in the United States, each of which has only a few hundred or a few thousand members.

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS)

For nearly 100 years (1872-1961) the LCMS and WELS were in doctrinal fellowship in the Synodical Conference. They cooperated in mission work and education. What led to the end of this fellowship?

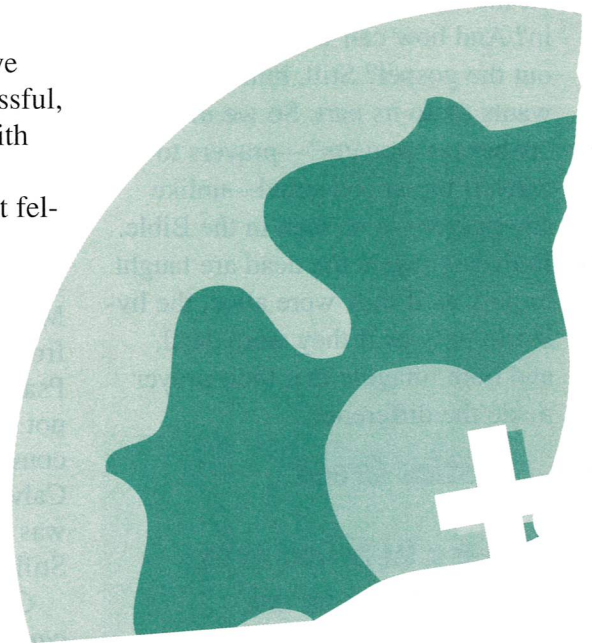
Formerly, the LCMS and WELS agreed that agreement in all doctrines of the Bible is necessary for church fellowship, and that all forms of worship, including joint prayer, are expressions of church fellowship. In the 1930s the LCMS began fellowship talks with the American Lutheran Church (ALC) even though the ALC did not believe that complete doctrinal agreement was necessary for fellowship. The LCMS also changed its position on prayer fellowship to allow joint prayer with the leaders of other churches with whom the LCMS was not in doctri-

nal agreement. Efforts to resolve these differences were unsuccessful, and WELS broke fellowship with the LCMS in 1961.

Although disagreement about fellowship and the practice of fellowship in such groups as the Scouts and the military chaplaincy was the immediate cause of the break between WELS and the LCMS, other divisive issues that arose included the introduction of historical-critical methods of Scripture study into the LCMS seminary at St. Louis during the 1960s, differences concerning the doctrine of church and ministry, and disagreement about the role of women in governing bodies of the church.

WELS has also been disturbed by a seeming lack of corrective action against lax fellowship practices, such as open communion and ecumenical services, in some LCMS congregations.

Although the LCMS has made progress at rolling back the influ-



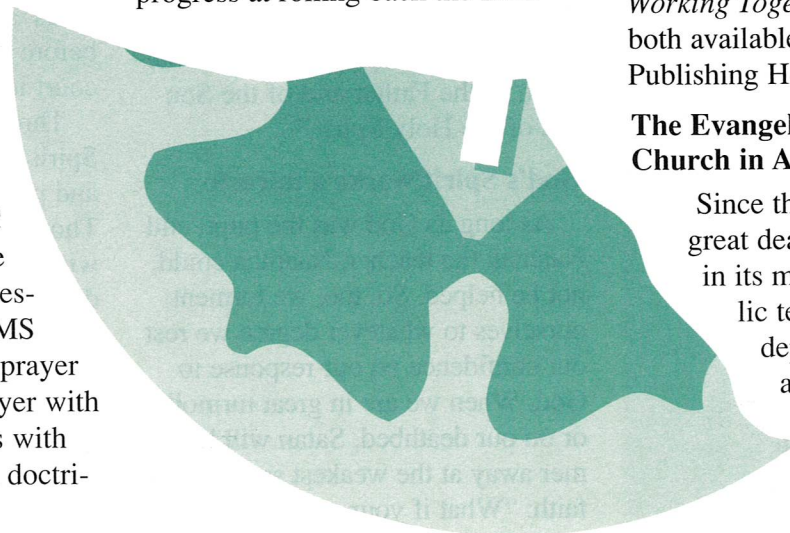
ence of historical-critical methods of Scripture study in its midst, published remarks by recent presidents of the LCMS show that the disagreement concerning fellowship practices still remains unresolved.

Summaries of the relations of WELS and the LCMS from a WELS perspective can be found in the books *WELS and Other Lutherans* and *Church Fellowship: Working Together for the Truth*, both available from Northwestern Publishing House.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)

Since the ELCA accepts a great deal of doctrinal diversity in its midst, the accepted public teaching of the ELCA departs with Scripture in almost every doctrine.

Most of the differences stem from the



fact that the ELCA rejects the inerrancy of Scripture and believes that unity in doctrine is not necessary in the church. At the time it was established, the ELCA deliberately excluded a confession of the inerrancy of Scripture from its statement of faith, in spite of the objections of some congregations.

Among the doctrines that are publicly denied in the ELCA are belief in all the miracles in Scripture, the virgin birth of Christ, and the truth that salvation is only through faith in Christ.

Churches are separated from WELS by specific viewpoints they have on church fellowship, church and ministry, charismatic gifts, or personal piety.

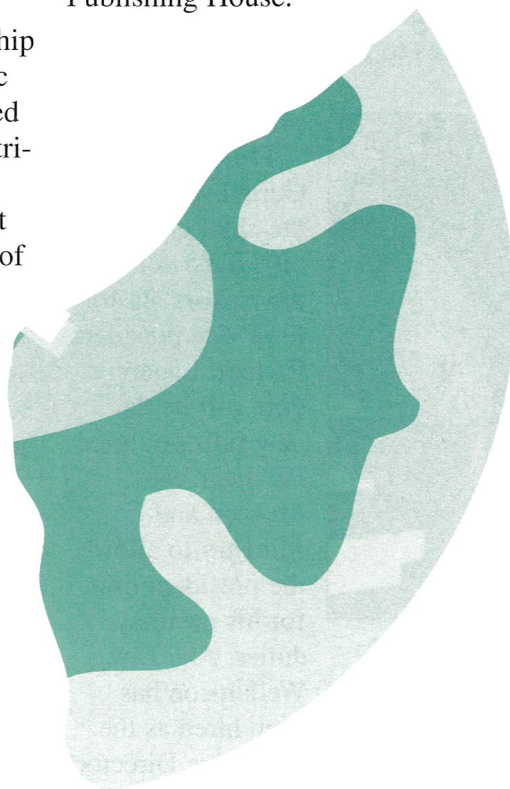
The ELCA is pursuing fellowship relations with the Roman Catholic Church and with various Reformed churches in spite of a lack of doctrinal agreement with them. WELS practices "close communion," that is, we believe that only members of churches that are in doctrinal agreement should commune together. The ELCA believes people can commune together without doctrinal agreement. In August, it gave official approval to join in full communion with three major Reformed church bodies that are not in agreement with the Lutheran doctrine of the Lord's Supper.

The ELCA ordains women as pastors. WELS does not believe

that women can be ordained as pastors of the church because of the prohibition of woman exercising authority over men in the church in such passages as 1 Corinthians 14:34 and 1 Timothy 2:12.

WELS teaches that homosexuality and sex outside of marriage are sins, condemned by God's law. There is forgiveness for those who have repented of these sins and are struggling against them, but the church must speak against such sinful lifestyles and practice Christian discipline against those who cling to them. There is still much controversy in the ELCA about the exact position it will take on these issues, but there is considerable public support among the leaders of the ELCA for the position that such lifestyles are not necessarily sinful.

The differences between WELS and the ELCA are summarized in the book *WELS and Other Lutherans*, available from Northwestern Publishing House.



Other Lutheran bodies

Here are only a few of the other Lutheran churches in the United States:

The Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS): WELS is in doctrinal agreement and church fellowship with the ELS.

Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC): This church was formed by people who left WELS and ELS because they believed that these synods delayed too long in breaking with the LCMS. The CLC maintains that a difference in the doctrine of fellowship exists between the CLC and WELS and ELS.

Lutheran Confessional Synod (LCS): This small synod was briefly in fellowship with WELS and ELS but abruptly terminated fellowship because of differences concerning the doctrine of church and ministry.

Most of the other small Lutheran churches in the United States originated either as break-off groups from the LCMS or from the ALC and its antecedent bodies (now in the ELCA). These churches are separated from WELS by specific viewpoints they have on church fellowship, church and ministry, charismatic gifts, or personal piety.

The specific viewpoints of these groups are briefly summarized in the book *WELS and Other Lutherans*, available from Northwestern Publishing House.

NL

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

A family affair

Gary P. Baumler

From across the country and outside the country, 447 voting and advisory delegates converged on Luther Preparatory School in Watertown, Wis., for the 54th biennial convention of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

(WELS). They came for a convention, and enjoyed a family reunion, as they united in faithfulness and a forward spirit under the theme "We are family under God."



A new look for our family

The major issue before the convention was how WELS will be organized to carry out the ministry God has given to our church family. Following four years of intense committee work and synodical,

district, and individual discussions and resolutions, the delegates voted unanimously for restructuring, with only minor changes as proposed by the floor committee. Two changes were to retain the two-year terms for district presidents instead of four and the name Commission on Communication for Financial Support instead of Commission for Funding Synod's Mission.

With the new structure, WELS now has a 21-member Synodical Council (SC) replacing the former Coordinating Council and Board of Trustees to guide the synod's ministry between conventions.

President Karl Gurgel will act as the chief executive officer as well as the pastors' pastor. First vice president Richard Lauersdorf will be the new full-time Vice President for Mission and Ministry to allow the president time for his pastoral duties. And Doug Wellumson has been hired as the Executive Director



The WELS Praesidium. From left: Richard Lauersdorf, first vice president; Jon Mahnke, second vice president; Karl Gurgel, president; Douglas Bode, secretary. This will be Mahnke's first term in office. Lauersdorf, Gurgel, and Bode were reelected.

of Support Services. Twelve of the SC members are laymen, each elected by one of the 12 districts of the synod.

The Conference of Presidents will continue its role in overseeing doctrine and practice and funding the synod's ministry, and four areas of ministry—home missions, world missions, ministerial education, and parish services—will coordinate and cooperate in the worldwide mission of the church body.

New technologies are also having an impact on the "look" of the synodical family. The newly formed Telecommunications and Technology (Tel/Tech) Task Force is encouraged to continue its work with the Internet and with intranets to serve the family's needs in evangelism and internal communication.

Finding new family members

The worldwide mission of our church begins with our closest neighbors. As the home missions floor committee said: "Because we know firsthand the pardoning grace of our God for us and for all people, which God has commissioned us to



A committee meets to discuss its work. All delegates are divided into 13 committees, each responsible for a separate area of work. The committees consider the work before them and then return to the convention floor with recommendations. All delegates vote on whether to accept the resolutions or not.

share with all the world, we may and we must share it with others.”

There followed a series of resolutions to assure, in particular, increased efforts to reach across cultures everywhere with the gospel of Christ. The synod resolved that the Commission on Evangelism and Mass Media Ministry produce a series of video tapes to assist the members of our congregations to recognize the mission potential in the various ethnic, social, and cultural groups they find in their geographical areas and to respond to the opportunities for cross-cultural outreach the Lord is placing before them. The commission is also to develop printed materials that may be used by our congregations in cross-cultural outreach.

The Commission on Worship, in consultation with the Board for Home Missions, is to prepare guidelines and provide worship materials that conform to sound scriptural principles and reflect cultural sensitivity.

The Board for Home Missions, Board for World Missions, and Board for Parish Services are to establish jointly a clearing house for the suggested materials.

Also, those involved with educating our youth are asked to develop lessons and other materials to assist them in telling people of other backgrounds about their Savior, and the synod's mission boards are asked to develop a network of people with cross-culture experience in ministry to help others in their efforts.

The Seeking Our Neighbor (SON) Committee, which had outlined goals to make members aware of the opportunities God places before us and to provide information, was asked to function two

more years to help implement the resolutions.

Meanwhile, home missions has the go-ahead to begin 50 new missions during the biennium, and world missions reports unprecedented opportunities to reach more souls in places like Russia and India. The delegates ratified the work recently begun in Albania and Cuba, and encouragement was given to expand mission work in Canada and strengthen the bond of unity with WELS-Canada.

The extended family

Underscoring our precious unity of faith, Presidents George Orvick of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Gerhard Wilde of the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church in Germany, and Wilbert Gawrisch of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference, an international association of confessional Lutheran church bodies, addressed the convention.

Missionaries from around the world brought greetings and gave thanks for the support and prayers of WELS.

Caution was also sounded, in view of the full communion fellowship proposed this summer by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) with the Episcopal Church and three reformed churches (The Presbyterian Church in the

USA, the Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ), as well as a proposed “Joint Statement of Justification” with the Roman Catholic Church. Although we treasure the fellowship we share with those who hold the same teachings we do, we see the fellowship efforts just described as contrary to the teachings of Scripture regarding fellowship and spiritual unity (1 Corinthians 1:10) and a threat to the teaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ by tolerating and even accepting false teachings (Galatians 5:7-9).

Training our ministerial family

To continue to serve God's family and to invite others with the gospel, we thank “God for his love in Christ and for a system of schools that prepares young people to share that love through various forms of public ministry. We are thankful for the progress this system has made since amalgamation,” reported the Ministerial Education floor committee.



Almost 450 delegates from around the world attended the 54th biennial convention of WELS in July. Delegates spent four days voting on issues that affect the synod as well as growing in their faith through Bible studies and worship.



President Karl Gurgel signs the letters of incorporation for WELS. Under restructuring, WELS is now entirely incorporated.

Promoting the family

The WELS synod convention kicked off the synod's 1997-99

theme, "We are family under God."

This theme is broken down into three parts:

- We are born to a family.
- We are reborn to the family of faith.

- We are to reach out to bring others into the family of faith.

We encourage you to use this theme in your ministry and in your daily life.

To help you do this visually, a biennial logo is available to you at no cost. You can either download it from the WELS webpage at <www.wels.net> or contact WELS Communication Services for a logo disk.

A banner project is also available. To order, call, write, or e-mail WELS Communication Services, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222; 414/256-3210; <annette@sab.wels.net>



Looking ahead, the convention highlighted the Multicultural Preseminary Program now underway at Martin Luther College (MLC) in New Ulm, Minn., streamlined the process for calling pro-

fessors by using the Internet and mail, and encouraged looking into providing graduate studies at MLC.

A family celebration

In the year 2000, by God's grace, the WELS family will mark the 2,000th anniversary of the birth of Christ and the 150th anniversary of the synod's founding. The convention resolved "that we encourage continued planning and implementation of the anniversary celebration with the theme 'Forward in Christ.'"

The suggested components are that

- all districts of the synod should have either a simultaneous celebration or a series of celebrations;

- the celebration end with the 2001 synod convention;

- it involve every circuit, congregation, school, organi-

zation, committee, and member of the synod;

- the Anniversary Committee attempt to encourage, produce, or supply all desirable components for the celebration; and

- a special offering be planned.

For the offering, high consideration will be given to

1. a synod archives building to remember the past;
2. a chapel at MLC to celebrate the present; and
3. an energetic outreach program to look to the future.

Specific plans for the offering will be presented to the 1999 synod convention.

Family nurture

Special attention was given to the spiritual nurture of families within the WELS family. All WELS pastors, teachers, and congregations are encouraged to study and discuss confirmation and youth nurture in our churches, attend the Christ-Light Introduction Program (CLIP) workshops in preparation for receiving the new youth curriculum, and use the adult discipleship materials



Delegates enjoy the sunshine during a break at the convention. The campus of Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis., along with week-long temperatures in the mid-70s, made for an enjoyable convention.

Convention election results

I. OFFICERS OF THE SYNOD

President	Rev. Karl R. Gurgel
1st Vice President	Rev. Richard Lauersdorf
2nd Vice President	Rev. Jon Mahnke
Secretary	Rev. Douglas Bode

II. BOARD/COMMITTEE MEMBERS NOMINATED BY THE SYNOD

World—Executive Committee

1. Latin American Mission (layman),
Mr. Allen Steuck
2. Native American Missions (pastor),
Rev. Eric Hartzell
3. Native American Missions (teacher),
Mr. Lynn Kuether
4. Lutheran Church of Central Africa (layman),
Mr. David Whitlock
5. Japan, Europe, Asia (pastor),
Rev. Stephen Valleskey
6. Japan, Europe, Asia (layman),
Mr. Kenneth Westlund
7. Southeast Asian Missions (layman),
Mr. David Habben
8. Southeast Asian Missions (teacher),
Mr. James Holman

Northwestern Publishing House Board of Directors

1. Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Professor,
Prof. Leroy Dobberstein
2. Layman, Mr. Jerome Bentz
3. Layman, Mr. Kenneth Hull

Board for Ministerial Education

1. Chairman, Rev. Donald Sutton
2. Layman, Mr. David Williams
3. Teacher, Mr. Stephen Rodmyre
4. Pastor, Rev. Richard Kogler

Board for Parish Services

1. Chairman, Rev. Thomas Zarling
2. Youth Discipleship Commission Chairman,
Rev. Allen Zahn
3. Adult Discipleship Commission Chairman,
Rev. Keith Kuschel
4. Member-at-large, Mr. Mark Naumann

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Board of Control

1. Northern Wisconsin District (pastor),
Rev. Keith Haag
2. Southeastern Wisconsin District (layman),
Mr. Robert Bengry

Martin Luther College Board of Control

1. Chairman, Rev. Ralph Scharf
2. Michigan District (pastor), Rev. Carl Otto



3. Minnesota District (layman),
Mr. Robert Hinnenthal
4. Nebraska District (layman),
Rev. Raymond Beckmann
5. Northern Wisconsin District (pastor),
Rev. Robert Bitter
6. Pacific Northwest District (teacher),
Mr. David Sauer
7. Southeastern Wisconsin District (layman),
Mr. Stephen Danekas
8. Western Wisconsin District (teacher),
Mr. Philip Leyrer

Luther Preparatory School Board of Control

1. Michigan District (teacher), Mr. Ronald Brutlag
2. Minnesota District (pastor), Rev. William Runke
3. Nebraska District (layman), Mr. Richard Brucker
4. Northern Wisconsin District (pastor),
Rev. Ronald Ash
5. South Central District (pastor),
Rev. Wayne Laitinen
6. Southeastern Wisconsin District (teacher),
Mr. Daniel Feuerstahler
7. Western Wisconsin District (layman),
Mr. William Schmidt

Michigan Lutheran Seminary Board of Control

1. Michigan District (pastor), Rev. Paul Schweppe
2. Michigan District (layman), Mr. Mark Eubank

Synodical Council

1. Member-at-large (pastor), Rev. William Gabb
2. Member-at-large (teacher), Mr. John Freese

such as *Privileges, Principles, Promises, His Word—My Life, Adult Bible Study Handbook, and Five Steps to Improve Bible Study in Your Congregation.*

The delegates also urged all congregations “to provide a copy of *Northwestern Lutheran* for each



family as a means to help our members grow spiritually and stay informed of the synod's programs and activities”; use the *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, the synod's theological journal; the

Lutheran Educator, directed toward those who have an interest in Christian education; *Lutheran Leader*, directed toward all congregational leaders; and *Mission Connection*, the official periodical of the boards for Home and World Missions.

The family budget

With thanks to God, who has moved his people to give generously, the convention approved bud-

Family facts

WELS, begun in 1850 with three German pastors meeting in Milwaukee, Wis., has grown to 1,235 congregations in the United States, Canada, Antigua, and St. Lucia. It has 413,839 baptized members, which includes 315,127 communicants, served by 1,214 pastors. WELS congregations support 361 Lutheran elementary schools, 264 early-childhood education programs, and 21 area Lutheran high schools served by 2,604 trained teachers.

The synod operates four ministerial education schools. These are Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis.; Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn.; Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis.; and Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Mich.

In world missions, WELS supports 66 missionaries and 22 teachers doing work in 36 different languages in 26 countries on five continents. Fifty-one national pastors, 10 vicars, and 177 evangelists and assistant pastors work alongside our missionaries serving 347 preaching stations.

gets of \$45,337,000 and \$46,948,000 for the next two years. It added: “We pray for God's continued blessing on his people that their response to his great love in Christ might mean far greater gifts than the proposed budgets so that we might reach out even farther to the millions who are lost.”

The delegates also called for special attention to be given to programmed maintenance of synodical properties, increasing pension benefits for called workers, increased compensation for seminary graduates who are placed in mission settings, and overall fair and equitable compensation for called workers based on scriptural principles.

The meaning of family

Undergirding the entire convention were the worship services and the study of God's Word. Missionary Kirby Spevacek preached for the opening service and District President Marcus Nitz for the closing, both emphasizing how we grow and flourish as family under God through his Son Jesus Christ. Three Bible studies focused on “Today's Christian Family: Designed by God as the Basic Social Unit, A Place for Companionship and Loving Care, and Built to Last by God's Word.” Rev. David Valleskey, president of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, presented an essay, “We Are Reborn to the Family of God,” extolling the blessings and clarifying the responsibilities of our spiritual family's fellowship.



David Valleskey (second from left), president of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, had an opportunity to discuss issues with John Vogt (far left), pastor at Emanuel First, Lansing, Mich. Valleskey presented an essay entitled “We Are Reborn to the Family of God” at the convention.

Would you like more information about convention news and decisions?

Four sources offer different types of coverage. See the September edition of *WELS Connection*, the *WELS Herald, Proceedings*, or the WELS website at <www.wels.net>.



Congregations working to spread the Word

Forty-six WELS churches received financial aid to conduct special evangelism programs through a \$92,000 Lutheran Brotherhood Church Extension grant.

The money, distributed by the Board for Home Missions and the Commission on Evangelism, helped new and established congregations follow up on plans developed at WELS Schools of Outreach. These evangelism schools help congregations evaluate and plan how they can share the gospel in their communities.

The money also was used to advertise special services through print and media advertising, mass mailings, and follow-up mail campaigns.

Ascension, Jacksonville, N.C., advertised their Easter for Kids program and their Easter worship service by placing ads in the local and military newspapers and by sending two mailings to prospects. Close to 50 children attended Easter for Kids, a one-day Vacation Bible school two weeks before Easter. Ten of these families were unchurched prospects.

"It's a great way to reach out to unchurched prospects and add to your prospect list," said Tadd Fellers, pastor at Ascension.

Although there were no prospects at the Easter services, Fellers said he noticed some new faces on the Sundays following Easter.

CORRECTION:

Due to an error at the printer, in the September issue the name "Johannes Meyer" appeared over Professor Carl John Lawrenz's photo. NL regrets the error.

WELS buys Biblical Gardens statues

A once popular attraction at the Dells has become an opportunity for WELS.

The Commission on Youth Discipleship and WELS Lutherans for Life have purchased statues from the Biblical Gardens, a tourist attraction in Wisconsin Dells, Wis.

Forty-seven statues make up 34 different scenes that depict Jesus' life. The statues—some concrete, some fiberglass—are three-fourths life size with the heaviest statue weighing 600

pounds. Volunteers helped lift the statues up 55 steps so they could be transported to their temporary location in Waukesha, Wis.

The Commission on Youth Discipleship is planning on using the statues in sets for *Kid's Connection*, their monthly video magazine for youth. The statues may also be put on display and used in pictures for publications.

"It's a visual way to make an impression—and not only for our youth," said Jerry Kastens, administrator for youth discipleship.

Some statues are in need of repair, and a few of the displays were left behind.

"We also sold the statue of St. Francis of Assisi," said Kastens. "It just didn't fit in."

The owners of the Biblical Gardens auctioned off the statues in July because they had sold the land where the statues were displayed. WELS paid \$5,000 for the entire set. National ads had estimated the set's selling price at \$90,000.



Volunteers helped move 47 statues from the Biblical Gardens in Wisconsin Dells to Waukesha, Wis. To do this they first placed the statues on mattresses to pull them down the hillside. Then volunteers used a pulley system to lift the statues up the 55 steps to awaiting trucks.

YOUTH NEWS

Heidi Woller and Stacy Horner, recent graduates of Minnesota Valley Lutheran High School, New Ulm, were among 20 people who comprised the Mankato area 1997 Free Press Academic Excellence team. Students were selected for outstanding scholastic achievement.

Twins **Corie and Jenni Krueger**, seniors at Pacific Lutheran University, Tacoma, Wash., are two of the nation's best small-college hammer throwers—Corie was 1997 NAIA champion, and Jenni placed third. Jenni also placed fifth in the heptathlon. They are members at Grace, Portland, Ore.



Translating all things for all people

Forty-three people from 15 countries attended a workshop in Milwaukee this July to learn basic principles of translating English materials into other languages and to improve the quality of their translations. The Multi-Language Literature Committee sponsored the workshop.

Besides giving general translating principles, the workshop allowed attendees to discuss specific problems and solutions in translating.

"The diversity of problems is also the diversity of solutions," said Ernst R. Wendland, language coordinator and seminary instructor in Lusaka, Zambia, and instructor at the workshop. "A solution in Bulgaria may work in Albania, or even across the globe in Japan."

The literature committee also sponsored a workshop in El Paso, Tex. Fourteen Spanish translators from WELS and ELS Latin America mission fields attended.

Below, meet some translators who attended the workshop in Milwaukee and learn how they help missionaries spread the Word.



Patti Fernandez, from Monterrey, Mexico, is a 1997 Martin Luther College graduate. She was assigned to Mass Communications for Latin America in El Paso, Tex.

"It's very scary. They have so many expectations, and they are so confident," says Fernandez. "I never thought I'd be doing this. I'm very nervous—anxious, excited, yet nervous."

"Everyone here has so much experience," she says. "I don't have that. But I learned that they struggle too. We'll never accomplish perfection."

Yet for all of her fears and concerns, Fernandez has kept perspective on her translating and editing. "I will use what I know from English and Spanish to help others," she says. "All of this work will reach places I can't even imagine."



Attendees and presenters at the translation workshop in Milwaukee. Participants learned general principles of translating that they could teach to other translators in their countries. In the future, the Multi-Language Literature Committee wants to hold specialized workshops in different countries.

Besides gaining knowledge, attendees grew spiritually with people from all over the world who work for the same cause.

"It's inspiring to see how hard everyone works," said Elsbeth Flunker, coordinator of literature in Brazil and wife of Missionary Charles Flunker. "We all became good friends. Everytime we had a five-minute break, we took 20."

Gunilla Hedkvist, who lives in Sweden, is a member of the Lutheran Confessional Church in Sweden and Norway. In 1987, she was asked to be on the editorial committee of the church magazine *Bible and Confession*, which is published in both Swedish and Norwegian.



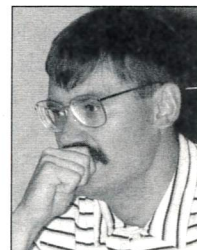
In 1989 Hedkvist and her sister, Madeleine, were asked to conduct seminars on Sunday school materials. They translated *God So Loved the World* curriculum from Northwestern Publishing House into Swedish.

Hedkvist is a seventh through ninth grade school teacher, and translates part-time.

"For me to do it," says Hedkvist, "it needs to be acceptable to my own faith. It's a way to communicate my faith to those who can't read English."

She doesn't take the responsibility lightly. "It's a challenge to transform one way of expressing religious thoughts to another language that expresses religious thoughts differently," she says. "Even before you start, you need to think about your work."

Yuri Pogudin is a computer scientist by trade. Four years ago, he became a member of the Lutheran church through the Christian Information Center.



"I wasn't Lutheran, I was Russian Orthodox before," says Pogudin. But he was not satisfied with the teaching of the Russian Orthodox Church. "The way the Lutherans spread the gospel is much more satisfying."

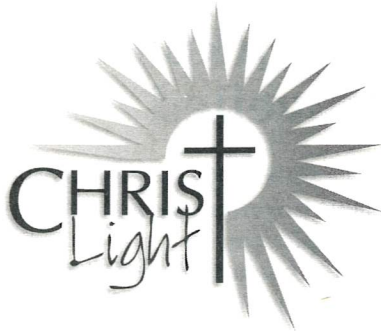
He was very interested in the church and step-by-step became involved.

"They needed an interpreter because the missionaries did not speak Russian," he says. "I spoke an artificial language, did not study English formally."

Now Pogudin's work includes translating sermons, Sunday school materials, and hymns.

"My favorite type of translation is on the hymnal," he shares. "It's more challenging because it can't be done literally."

And he likes the challenge. "Translating is like art," he closes.



Christ-Light™ FAQ

Christ-Light™, the synod's new coordinated religion curriculum for cradle roll through grade 12, will be phased into congregations over four years, starting in 1998. Gerald Kastens, youth discipleship administrator, answers frequently asked questions (FAQ) about Christ-Light.

What is the quality of the materials? Do the writers have proven abilities? Isn't editing for pedagogy, doctrine, etc., an enormous task?

The foundation for the curriculum was developed by Prof. David Kuske. Kuske teaches WELS pastors how to teach God's Word to children and teenagers. He worked for over a year in consultation with Dr. John Isch, instructor at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., to develop the goals, scope, and sequence of the curriculum. Our writers are WELS pastors and teachers who are active in the teaching and preaching ministry.

Once the manuscripts reach NPH, several checks and review processes are in place to insure that the materials are theologically and pedagogically sound. The task is challenging. It takes time and effort. With God's blessing, it will be completed.

**DON'T
KEEP
THIS
MAGAZINE!**

Share it!

Lutheran Vanguard of Wisconsin celebrates 20th anniversary

Over 500 family, friends, alumni, and current band members shared memories of fun, fellowship, hard work, and the opportunities—through music—to confess their common faith at the 20th anniversary celebration of the Lutheran Vanguard of Wisconsin (LVW).

The celebration, held June 21 at Fox Valley Lutheran High School, Appleton, Wis., began with a trip down memory lane by viewing memorabilia such as trophies, T-shirts, and photos from the past 20 years.

The highlight of the celebration was a presentation of the 160 members of the 1997 LVW. The band played through its music—from warmups to parade repertoire. The celebration concluded with a chapel service featuring the LVW choir and brass choir.

Begun with three Lutheran high schools in 1978, this summer band program was known for 12 years as the Fox River Valley Lutheran Youth Band. Since 1990 the band has been known as LVW and has added five Lutheran high schools.

The second celebration date was a picnic on Aug. 3, 1997 in Fond du Lac, Wis. The final event will be held June 13, 1998, in Appleton.

Sara Stellmacher



Members of the 1997 Lutheran Vanguard of Wisconsin. The band celebrated its 20th anniversary this year.

District news

Minnesota

St. John, Darfur, Minn., celebrated its 90th anniversary on Sept. 14.

South Atlantic

Sole Fide, Lawrenceville, Ga., celebrated its 20th anniversary in July. Sole Fide began as a mission congregation with 30 members worshiping in a childcare center. Now the congregation has almost 500 members and over 22 acres of land.

Southeastern Wisconsin

Mt. Calvary, Waukesha, Wis., celebrated Pastor **Harry Wiedmann's** 50 years of service on Aug. 24, and teacher **Carol Krause's** 25 years of service on Sept. 7.



Supreme Court rejects RFRA

To the dismay of many religious leaders, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) in June, saying Congress unconstitutionally usurped power belonging to federal courts and the states when it passed the measure.

The four-year-old law forced the government to show a compelling interest before it could interfere with religious practices. It was passed in reaction to a 1990 Supreme Court decision that permitted government officials to overlook the compelling interest criteria.

Historic preservationists, prison officials, and atheists were among those who cheered the overturning of RFRA. Opponents said the act prompted a plethora of lawsuits from inmates trying to circumvent prison rules.

Supporters of RFRA voiced collective sadness and disappointment. The decision, they said, removes legal protection for religious groups whose practices conflict with state and local regulations.

Supporters may be concerned, but they can rest assured that their religious liberty will still be protected. In the wake of this decision, says Jeffrey Sutton, "the states are acting to fill any gap that may have resulted from the invalidation of RFRA."

rē · li · giōn

Defining religion

atheist: A person who believes there is no God. The Bible calls such a person a fool. (Psalm 14:1, Psalm 53:1)

Guidelines for federal workplace religious expression unveiled

President Clinton, saying religious freedom is "at the heart of what it means to be an American," issued guidelines in August clarifying the law on how faith and belief may be expressed in the federal workplace.

The guidelines note federal employers cannot discriminate in hiring practices on the basis of religion, must "reasonably accommodate" the religious practices of employees, and cannot participate in religious harassment.

Although the guidelines are written specifically for the federal gov-

ernment, some hope they will influence state governments and private-sector employers.

In July, Senators Dan Coats, R-Ind., and John Kerry, D-Mass., introduced a measure to strengthen legislation requiring private sector employers to accommodate employees' religious practices.

"People don't leave their religion at home," said Forest Montgomery, general counsel of the National Association of Evangelicals. "They take it with them."

Here are some directives from the "Guidelines on Religious Exercise and Religious Expression in the Federal Workplace" issued by President Clinton:

- An employee can keep a Bible on a private desk to read during breaks.
- In cafeterias, hallways, and other informal settings, employees can discuss their religious views if they are permitted to discuss other nonreligious topics, such as politics.
- Proselytizing is permitted unless a person being proselytized asks for it to stop or demonstrates in some other way that it is unwelcome.
- Unless there is a safety concern, employees can wear personal religious jewelry unless similar nonreligious jewelry is banned. Likewise, employees can display religious art in their personal work area if other art is allowed and it is clear that the art is a personal religious expression of that employee.
- A supervisor may invite co-workers to a child's confirmation but cannot say to an employee, "I didn't see you in church this week. I expect to see you there this Sunday."
- Employees are allowed to gather at lunchtime for Bible study and prayer in an empty conference room that is available on a first-come, first-served basis.
- An agency must accommodate employee's Sabbath or religious holiday observances if an adequate substitute is available or if the absence of the employee would not otherwise cause an "undue burden" on the agency.
- An employee can wear a crucifix or other religious attire as part of his or her religious practice as long as it does not "unduly interfere" with the operations of the workplace.
- A supervisor can place a Christmas wreath over the entrance of the office's main reception area during the holiday season.

Bulletin BOARD & NOTICES

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

CHANGE OF MINISTRY

Pastors

Ferch, George A., from Risen Savior, Milwaukee, Wis., to Bethlehem, Carmel, Ind.
Grunewald, Kurt L., from St. Paul, Mount Calvary, Wis., to First, Elkhorn, Wis.
Kaiser, Ronald N., from Salem, Colorado Springs, Colo., to Grace, Pueblo, Colo.
Luchterhand, Stephen, from Beautiful Savior, Spooner, Wis., to Deer Valley, Phoenix, Ariz.
Meyer, Louis W., from St. John, Fox Lake, Wis., to retirement
Mueller, Paul M., from Divine Savior, Indianapolis, Ind., to Good Shepherd, Livermore, Calif.
Smith, Melvin C., to St. Michael's Home, Fountain City, Wis.

Teachers

Asmus, Gretchen A., from St. Croix LHS, West St. Paul, Minn., to St. Paul, Lake Mills, Wis.
Bizal, Luanne M., to Pilgrim, Mesa, Ariz.
Bock, Melissa L., from LPS, Watertown, Wis., to Lord of Life, Friendswood, Tex.
Carson, Teresa B., from Holton, Holton, Mich., (ELS) to Resurrection, Aurora, Ill.
Dobrunz, Kathy M., from St. John, Waterloo, Wis., to St. John, Caledonia, Minn.
Edwards, Lynnee A., to Our Savior, Wausau, Wis.
Frey, Amy L., from Eastside, Madison, Wis., to Emanuel Redeemer, Yale, Mich.
Gerner, Steven W., to Siloah, Milwaukee, Wis.
Gierach, Sandra, to St. John, Lannon, Wis.
Hochmuth, Carl R., from Holy Word, Austin, Tex., to LPS, Watertown, Wis.
Horn, Katherine L., from Good Shepherd, West Allis, Wis., to St. Paul, Cudahy, Wis.
Hummel, Sonja S., to Illinois LHS, Crete, Ill.
Kaiser, Paul E., from St. Mark, Green Bay, Wis., to Immanuel, Waupaca, Wis.
Kell, Daniel J., from Redemption, Milwaukee, Wis., to St. John, Princeton, Wis.
Kiecker, Michael H., from St. John, Fremont, Wis., to Emanuel, New London, Wis.
Lange, Eric C., from Peace, Holiday, Fla., to Trinity Christian Academy, Woodbridge, Va.
Loomis, Cheryl A., from St. John, Lannon, Wis., to MLC, New Ulm, Minn.
MacArthur, Amy P., to Samuel, Marshall, Minn.
Martens, Eugene G., from Emanuel, West St. Paul, Minn., to Bloomington, Bloomington, Minn.
Miller, Julie, to Mt. Calvary, La Crosse, Wis.
Nedow, Kristin K., to Eastside, Madison, Wis.
Noack, Linda C., to Salem, Stillwater, Minn.
Nunez, Robin, to Gethsemane, Omaha, Neb.
Pluger, Janine H., to Trinity, El Paso, Tex.
Schacht, Karen E., to Christ, North St. Paul, Minn.
Schaper, Laura J., to St. Paul, Cudahy, Wis.
Schlavensky, John M., from Emmaus, Phoenix, Ariz., to St. John, Fox Lake, Wis.
Schlomer, Corrine K., to Zion, Moberge, S.D.
Schwalenberg, Christy, from Salem, Milwaukee, Wis., to Holy Word, Austin, Tex.
Schwartz, Nicole L., from Emanuel Redeemer, Yale, Mich., to St. Paul, Tomah, Wis.
Scrifer, Scott J., from Trinity, Waukesha, Wis., to Friedens, Kenosha, Wis.
Strieter, Steven W., to St. John, Manitowoc, Wis.

Thiesfeldt, Jeneane M., from LPS, Watertown, Wis., to St. Paul, New Ulm, Minn.
Waage, Elinor J., to Emanuel, West St. Paul, Minn.
Wendland, Rebecca, to Kettle Moraine LHS, Jackson, Wis.
Werth, Darla, to Immanuel, Ft. Worth, Tex.
Wittig, Debbie A., from St. John, Caledonia, Wis., to St. Matthew, Stoddard, Wis.
Zimmerman, Carol, to Morning Star, Jackson, Wis.

ANNIVERSARIES

Livonia, Mich.—St. Paul church (125) and school (50). Oct. 5—mission festival, 8:30 and 11 AM. 17810 Farmington Rd, Livonia MI 48152; 313/261-1360.
Milwaukee, Wis.—St. Lucas (125). Oct. 19—anniversary celebration at Wisconsin Lutheran College. Service, 10 AM; dinner follows. St. Lucas, 414/483-9122.
Greenfield, Wis.—St. Jacobi (125). Oct. 12, 13. Services, 8:15 and 10:45 AM on Sunday, 7 PM on Monday. 8605 W Forest Home Ave, Greenfield WI 53228; 414/425-3030.
Hortonville, Wis.—Bethlehem church building (100). Nov. 2. Service, 8 and 10:30 AM; refreshments follow. 203 N Nash St, Hortonville WI 54944; 920/779-6761.
Spring Valley, Wis.—St. Matthew (100). Oct. 5. Service, 10:30 AM; meal follows. 3006 Hwy 29, Spring Valley WI 54767; 715/233-0199.
Kekoskee, Wis.—St. Peter (125). Oct. 12. Service, 10 AM; catered meal follows. 23 Main St, RR 2, Mayville WI 53050; 414/387-4043.
Clifton Parks, N.Y.—King of Kings (25). Nov. 9. Service, 4:30 pm; catered dinner follows. RSVP for dinner. 1593 Crescent Rd, Clifton Park NY 12065; 518/371-9544.
St. Paul Park, Minn.—St. Andrew (50). Oct. 12. Services, 8 and 10:30 AM. 1000 Portland Ave, St. Paul Park MN 55071; 612/459-2569.
Libertyville, Ill.—St. John (100). Oct. 12. Service, 3:30 PM; dinner, 5 PM. Call for dinner tickets. 501 W Park Ave, Libertyville IL 60048; 847/362-4424.
Weyauwega, Wis.—St. Peter (125). Oct. 18—service, 4 PM. Oct. 19—services, 8:15 and 10:30 AM; lunch, noon. RSVP for lunch. 312 W Main St, Weyauwega WI 54983; 414/867-3169.

COMING EVENTS

SHARE singles retreat—Oct. 3-5 at Camp Philip, Wautoma, Wis. Jeff Leonard, 920/929-9429.
WELS Historical Institute Meeting—7 PM, Oct. 19 at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon.
Singles seminar—Oct. 25 at St. Mark, Green Bay, Wis. Registration, 9 AM; evening social follows seminar. \$15; walk-ins welcome (\$5 extra). Vickie Nell, 920/437-8659 or St. Mark, 920/494-3119.
Retreat—WELSMEN's Christian Manhood Men's retreat. 8 AM to 4:45 PM, Nov. 8 at Wisconsin Lutheran College. \$30. David Timm, 414/771-6848.
WELS Lutherans for Life national convention—Oct. 4 at Paper Valley Hotel and Convention Center, Appleton, Wis., 414/774-1331 or 1-800-729-9535.
Meeting—of the MLC ladies auxiliary. Oct. 8 at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn. Eunice Reese, 612/923-4531.

WELS-CLO meeting—church librarians' organization. Oct. 18 at Woodlawn, West Allis, Wis. \$7 (includes lunch). 414/256-3222; <usr4@sab.wels.net>

NEEDED

Altar paraments and lectern—Beautiful Savior, Fayetteville, N.C. Lori Penha, <LPenha@aol.com>
Photo—of Rev. John E. Schaefer. For 50th anniversary booklet of Mt. Calvary, Flagstaff, Ariz. Elinor Kyte, 1230 W Saturn Way, Flagstaff AZ 86001; 520/774-2510.
Furnishings for worship—hymnals and organ accompaniment, portable altar, keyboard, lectern, standing cross, candles and candlesticks, communion ware, altar cloths, offering plates, free-standing banner holder. For Michigan State University campus ministry. Norman Burger, 517/627-3913.

NAMES WANTED

Chino Valley, Ariz.—Dave Karow, 1010 North Rd 1 E, Chino Valley AZ 86323; 520/636-2796 or 520/708-0729; <djarow@northlink.com>
Savannah, Ga.—James Borgwardt, 138 Mariner's Way, Savannah GA 31419; 912/920-0843.
Prescott, Ariz.—student prospects attending one of the four colleges in Prescott, Ariz. Prescott Campus Ministry, 231 W Smoketree Ln, Prescott AZ 86301. Kent Schaefer, 520/445-3053; <kschaefer@yavapai.cc.az.us>
Myrtle Beach, S.C.—David Pries, 910/868-1907; <DavePries@aol.com>
Bend/Redmond, Ore.—David Leistekow, PO Box 6149, Bend, OR 97708-6149; 541/389-6649; <schmo@coinet.com>
Crown Point, Ind.—students from Valparaiso, for start of a campus ministry. Peter Goetsch, 1515 W 93 Ave, Crown Point, IN 46307; 219/663-5853.
W. Des Moines, Iowa—Beautiful Savior. John Quandt, 3635 E P True Pkwy, W Des Moines IA 50265; 515/226-0670; FAX, 515/225-4392.
Corvallis, Ore.—Names and addresses of former members of Beautiful Savior for 25th anniversary celebration on Nov. 16. 2605 NW 13 St, Corvallis OR 97330; 541/757-8953.

ADDRESS CORRECTION

Rev. Roger Zehms, YI Tereshkovoi 8 KB 92, 630090 Novosibirsk CIS Russia; phone/FAX, 011-7-3832-35-50-21; Christian Information Center, 011-7-3832-36-15-46.

REQUEST FOR NAMES

Gift planning counselors

On behalf of the Conference of Presidents, the Commission on Communication for Financial Support requests the names of WELS members (pastors, teachers, laymen) to fill three gift planning counselor positions authorized by the synod in convention. Nominees should be mature Christians who understand the scriptural principles of stewardship, are committed to furthering the spread of the gospel, can work with groups and individuals, and are willing to travel. Training in Christian estate planning and taxwise giving will be provided. Submit names by Oct. 31 to Ronald Roth, WELS, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222; 1-800-827-5482 or 414/256-3881.

A lesson about Reformation

Jeffrey D. Wegner

In 1970, Archie Bunker spoke, for the first time on television, the word "hell." That word caused a stir in many homes in America. Many had used it as he had, but never on TV.

Recently, as I was watching some of the new highly-rated TV shows, the word "hell" might have been good to hear. Instead, I heard words that I can't describe in a church magazine.

The use of those words is bad enough, but then I realized it went right past the other people with me, seemingly without the blinking of an eye or the twitching of a face. The TV viewers continued to watch as if nothing was wrong.

What is wrong with that picture? Have we become so used to the ways of the world that these things do not even affect us?

A lesson from the past

We could learn a valuable lesson from God's chosen people. Remember how God told the Israelites to conquer their new land, killing all the Canaanites? Remember after a while how they gave up the conquest? Remember how the Israelites fell short of fulfilling God's command to rid the country of the heathen people? Remember how they were sure that they could withstand the influences of their enemies?

The Bible records: "After that generation . . . another generation grew up who knew neither the Lord nor what he had done for Israel."

They had succumbed. False gods were worshiped. The Book of the Law was hidden in the temple. Then, generations later, King Josiah stumbled upon this Book of the Law, read it, and could not believe that their worship, what they thought was the worship of the true God passed on by their fathers, was so far from what God commanded in his Law. (Read 2 Kings 22, 23 or 2 Chronicles 34, 35.)

Little by little, the Israelites let outside influences become part of their every day life. It happened without them even realizing it.

An application for now

Has that happened to us? Has it happened to you? Do the words used on TV pass through one ear and out the other without even being noticed? Do the Calvin Klein ads of partially clothed children pass you by with hardly a notice? Does the "do whatever feels good" attitude permeate your life?

What do we do?

Taking a lesson from King Josiah and the people of Judah, hadn't we better find the hidden Book of the Law for our lives? Where is your Bible? Is it still in the same box in which you received it for your confirmation?

King Josiah led his people through a reformation. False gods were destroyed, altars were burned, all the detestable things were done away with so that the people could once again worship the true God.

October is the month the Lutheran church remembers the

Lutheran Reformation. In this month 480 years ago, the church was in another detestable state. God saw fit to lead a 16th-century Josiah to reform the church, getting rid of the false gods and false altars. Luther was that Josiah of his day. We need to continue that reformation in our church and our lives.

**Taking a lesson
from King Josiah
and the people
of Judah,
hadn't we better find
the hidden Book
of the Law
for our lives?**

Think for one moment how false gods and false altars have come to be almost everyday parts of our lives. Then, during this month of Reformation, let's remember the past with its many glorious reformers, and let's continue our reformation. Turn to the clear, crisp words of our God. They refresh, they renew, they reform!

Jeffrey Wegner is pastor at Good Shepherd, South Attleboro, Mass.

Table talks

Karl R. Gurgel

Did you have any table talk at supper last night? Perhaps supper was eaten on the run. Mom or dad had a meeting, and the young people had school work or a part-time job. Everyone was in a hurry. There was not much, or any, time for table talk.

Martin Luther's household was hectic as well. They lived in a huge home, the Black Cloister, a wedding gift to them from their ruler, Elector Frederick. Besides the Luther family, Luther's wife, Katie, took in student boarders to meet expenses. Also regular guests were there for supper, people who had come to talk with Martin Luther.

They frequently talked at the table. These conversations with Luther, known as the "Table Talks," were recorded by some guests. They covered almost every subject imaginable. They reveal Luther's wit and wisdom, showing how he used many subjects to illustrate biblical truth. Here is a sampling:

When Luther's puppy (Tolpel) happened to be at the table, looked for a morsel from his master, and watched with open mouth and motionless eyes, Martin Luther said: "Oh, if I could only pray the way this dog watches the meat! All his thoughts are concentrated on the piece of meat. Otherwise he has no thought, wish, or hope."

The Table Talks have frequent references to Scripture and reading the Bible, drawing on pictures from nature. "For some years now," the doctor said, "I have read through the Bible twice every year. If you picture the Bible to be a mighty tree and every word a little branch, I have shaken every one of those branches because I wanted to know what it was and what it meant."

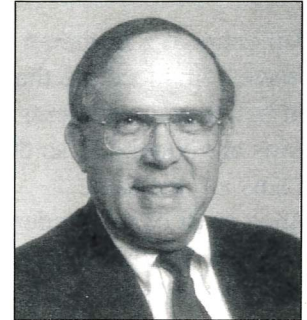
How delightful it must have been to sit at Luther's table and hear him talk. As we sit around our tables, remembering we are all family under God, this would be a good time to talk about God's gifts to us. Each time we eat, we are reminded of our dependence on the goodness of our God. And as we enjoy the food set before us, it would be appropriate for us to talk about God's other good and gracious gifts.

Table talks can be Christians sharing their table and talking about God's kingdom. As our new synod theme says, "We are family under God." Like Luther's family, wouldn't it be appropriate, at the table, to talk about God's kingdom?

An appropriate place to begin is with family devotions. If statistics are true, family devotions are not as common as they once were. The phrase may be trite, but it's still true: "The family that prays together, stays together." The Word of God builds relationships, especially as it uncovers our sinfulness and reveals God's forgiveness. The family table is an appropriate time for letting God talk to us.

The family table is also a proper place for talk about God's kingdom work. We might talk about a *Northwestern Lutheran* article. A prayer for a missionary family could be included. Here would be the place to talk about applying the pastor's sermon to our daily lives. Or we could talk about what we are doing as a congregation to extend the kingdom of God. There are more than enough subjects for our family to discuss.

Like Luther, let's use our family table to do our own table talks.



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

As we sit
around our
kitchen tables,
remembering
we are all
family under
God, this
would be a
good time to
talk about
God's gifts
to us.

Are all sins equal?

All sins—big ones and little ones—deserve his judgment.

Mark E. Braun

Ten years at a Lutheran college have convinced me that a cherished belief many students hold is: All sins are equal. Or, as they put it, “All sins are the same.”

Since most of my students come from synod Sunday schools, elementary schools, high schools, and prep schools, their notion seems to derive from a common source.

Are all sins equal?

An understandable corrective

For centuries Roman Catholicism has distinguished between venial and mortal sins. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* defines a mortal sin as one “whose object is a grave matter,” committed “with full knowledge and deliberate consent.” A mortal sin destroys charity and turns one away from God.

Though a venial sin also offends and wounds, charity can remain in a person’s heart; it is done “without full knowledge or without complete consent.” Venial sin, the *Catholic Catechism* explains, “does not set us in a direct opposition to the will of God.”

Lutherans and Protestants, uneasy with this “grading” of sins, generally avoid the terms venial and mortal altogether.

An imprecise statement

Those who insist all sins are equal are surprised (troubled, even) to read Jesus’ words to Pontius Pilate: “The one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin” (John 19:11). Caiaphas, Annas, Jerusalem’s religious leaders—they knew the Scripture’s promises, and they ought to have welcomed Jesus as the one who fulfilled those promises. Pilate was plainly baffled by Jesus and astonished at how fiercely the crowd clamored for his death. For a time, at least, he tried to set Jesus free. Jesus “came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him” (John 1:11). That sin was worse than Pilate’s.

**To sin at any point makes
one a lawbreaker.**

Where God grants generous blessings and uncommon opportunities, he also demands greater accountability, which means the possibility of greater sin. One who knew his master’s will but didn’t do it will suffer more than one who never knew (Luke 12:47,48).

Some sins are also greater

because they bring harsher consequences to others. Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, John said, and God’s law convicts me even for

thinking of killing my neighbor. But if my sin remains in my heart and doesn’t lead to action, my neighbor’s life is spared. I would hardly say, “Thinking of killing him is just as bad as doing it,” nor should I say, “Since I’ve already murdered him in my heart, I might as well murder him on his driveway!”

An unbroken whole

James was more precise: **“Whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it” (James 2:10).** He didn’t say all sins are equal. He said God’s law is an unbroken whole. To sin at any point makes one a lawbreaker.

Even if one kept every other commandment, and sinned only by showing favoritism, he would still have broken God’s law. The same God gave the whole law. All sins—big ones and little ones, ones everyone knows about, ones no one sees, the good we’ve left undone, the evil we’ve failed to correct—deserve his judgment.

My real problem isn’t the sins I commit each day but the sin that has estranged me from my Father, twisted me into a vain, mean, selfish soul, and earned me a million lifetimes in hell. But for all the guilt I inherited from Adam, and for all the wrong I do each day, my Savior’s mercy is rich and free. “The blood of Jesus purifies us from every sin” (1 John 1:7).

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

real faith for real life
james

Close communion revisited

Joel C. Gerlach

The issue of prayer fellowship that led WELS and the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) to part in 1961 still separates us. But on at least one controversial subject, we still agree—altar fellowship, or close communion.

Holy communion is three-dimensional. One dimension is the union effected by the real presence of the Savior in the bread and the wine. Another is the union between Christ and each communicant. A third dimension is the union between the communicants who celebrate the Lord's Supper. Their oneness in faith is a prerequisite for communing together. Oneness in faith means agreement in all the articles of faith set forth in God's Word (Matthew 28:20). It is a contradiction of the word "communion" when people who are not in doctrinal agreement commune together.

LCMS President A.L. Barry has made the practice of close communion an ongoing emphasis in his administration. He has firmly and evangelically urged LCMS pastors and congregations who have abandoned the practice to return to it. One of the first tasks of his administrative assistant, Rev. Paul T. McCain, was to produce a paper on the subject of close communion for study in the synod's congregations. Earlier this year Barry issued a President's Newsletter in which he addressed "the diverging paths of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)." He cited the diverging views on the Lord's Supper as one of the issues separating the synods.

Barry wrote, "The LCMS believes that the Bible requires full agreement in doctrine before it is possible to join together in altar and pulpit fellowship with other church bodies. The ELCA, on the other

hand, holds that disagreement in doctrine and practice does not prohibit full communion with other churches." He concluded, "The ELCA's approach also represents a significant shift away from the historic Lutheran understanding of altar and pulpit fellowship as based upon complete agreement in doctrine, and it compromises Scripture's clear mandate to confess 'the whole will of God' (Acts 20:27) in all its gospel-centered truth and purity."

Perhaps no other practice in the Lutheran Church is as emotionally charged and prone to misunderstanding as close communion. Most faithful Lutheran pastors tense up when a visitor from another church body asks just prior to a communion service, "May I go to the Lord's Supper with you in your church today?" The tension results not from the fact that pastors don't have a scriptural answer, but because in many instances the answer will not be well received.

That is true especially if the request comes from a relative or friend of a member. The answer causes embarrassment and even disdain. It leaves the pastor and the congregation with a reputation for being strict and unloving. For some people, conformity to pressures begins to take precedence over adherence to scriptural teaching.

It is encouraging to observe that WELS, ELS, CLC, and some smaller Lutheran bodies are not the only synods with a determination to uphold close communion. We wish Barry and his supporters well in their effort to achieve unity in practice in the LCMS. And in the future, may God spare our synod the turmoil over this issue that has disrupted the unity of our former sister synod.

Joel Gerlach is pastor at St. John, Wauwatosa, Wis.

It is a contradiction of the word "communion" when people who are not in doctrinal agreement commune together.

Halloween— a question of judgment

John F. Brug

Is Halloween the devil's holiday as some say? How should we feel about children wearing costumes and trick or treating?

All Hallows Evening was a special night because it preceded All Saints Day, an important festival in the medieval church. The crowds expected for this festival may well have been a factor in Luther's choosing Oct. 31 as the day to post the 95 Theses on the door of the Castle Church.

All Saints Day may have been placed on Nov. 1 because this was the New Year's Day for the Celts of the British Isles. The Celtic festival Samhain on Oct. 31 was concerned with the return of the souls of the dead. The connection of elements of witchcraft or the occult with Oct. 31 thus was in competition with All Hallows Evening and All Saints Day, not a part of it. In countries in which Christianity and superstition coexisted, however, elements of the two often became entangled.

Standard encyclopedias say that Halloween became a secular holiday in America. It apparently was introduced by the Irish and other immigrants. The emphasis is now on costumes and trick or treat, with the treat always given and the trick seldom played.

Halloween now is a secular holiday that descended from both heathen and medieval observances. It has often had unsavory elements such as occult symbols and vandalism associated with it. The question then is whether these elements have been sufficiently detached from Halloween and it has become a secular holiday that can be observed without offensive features. There certainly has been a concerted effort to make it so. Many public schools ban certain types of costumes that are considered too gross or offensive. Secular groups such as UNICEF have tried to replace the emphasis on getting treats for oneself with a concern for raising money to help the needy.

The fact that some people celebrate Halloween in offensive ways does not in itself rule out the holiday. If this were so, we could not celebrate New Year's or even Christmas.

The fact that Halloween occupies the day of a heathen holiday is not unique. Many Christian holidays like Christmas and Easter in a sense compete with heathen holidays, since both were associated with key points of the astronomical calendar. This is also true of the Old Testament holidays prescribed by God.

Some of our Christmas and Easter customs have some similarity to heathen customs just as the Old Testament sacrifices had many points of similarity with those of the heathen. Some Christian holidays have become more secularized even while they remain important festivals of the church year (Christmas). Other minor religious festivals have almost entirely lost their religious connotation (Valentine's Day). For most people St. Patrick's Day has become more of an Irish ethnic festival than a religious holiday.

Whether or not Christians should participate in holidays like St. Patrick's Day and Halloween is a question of judgment. Such holidays may have different meaning and different customs attached to them in different times and places. Whether Christians should or should not participate depends on the meaning of the holiday in the context in which they live and on the impression their participation will give to others. Naturally, they should refrain from objectionable practices if they participate.

Some good arguments can be made against Halloween, but individual Christians should be convinced in their own consciences of what is best for them to do and should be cautious about judging others.

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

**Send questions to Your question, please, Northwestern Lutheran,
2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398;
FAX 414/256-3899; <nl@sab.wels.net.>**



Re: "By faith they led" articles by Morton Schroeder. What a wonderful series of articles on the theologians who helped shape WELS.

As a lay person I find it valuable learning about the hardships these men faced. With God's guidance, they professed and lived their faith, and with prayer used their talents to guide our congregations to become a synod. I marvel at the way they patiently and diligently worked to provide the vision we have today. It is my prayer that we don't forget their labors and that we appreciate our heritage.

Most of all, I thank Morton Schroeder. He has a marvelous writing style and a unique way of making history meaningful. We need articles such as these to appreciate what we have and not take our faith or our churches for granted.

*Susan Jahnke
Jackson, Wisconsin*

Thank you for the editorial, "Angel gives devilish advice" [Aug.]. I was encouraged because it told the truth with love. I have stopped watching "Touched by an Angel" because I found it too "sugary" and a little too incorrect when it comes to Jesus and God's Word.

Thank you for the way you informed us of the pros and cons of this program. You set before readers the facts of the situation and applied them to the Word of God. Your editorial pointed out a constructive way to approach many of the difficult decisions we face as Christians.

A few days after reading the editorial, I was in our public library

when I heard two boys whispering.

One was earnestly telling his friend how to get to heaven. He told him that if he were about to die he should pray to God and he would reach out to him. I could tell by "Bob's" words that he had seen the episode of "Touched by an Angel."

I stood there with all kinds of thoughts racing through my mind: "Should I say something? What about kids and strangers? What would Jesus want me to do? I just read that article, and I know what's needed, and these guys need to hear it. I'm going to do it. I must do it!"

I saw the boys, about 10 years old, sitting at a table. With a friendly smile, I said I heard them talking about "Touched by an Angel." Bob (who was explaining the way to heaven) said yes. He didn't seem afraid of me; neither did his friend "Rick." So I slowly forged ahead.

"You know that show has some real good stuff in it," I said. Bob nodded with a smile. "But, on that part about going to heaven, they left out some important things." They were still listening! I introduced Jesus. Bob had heard that Jesus never made a mistake. Rick didn't say anything, but he was listening.

I decided to tell about salvation in the easiest way I could. I said that Jesus lived a perfect life, died to forgive our sins. When we believe that he is God we have forgiveness. When we die he takes us to heaven.

I added that just because we are forgiven doesn't mean we should go around sinning but that we want to live to thank Jesus for what he has done for us. Bob heartily agreed.

I found out that Bob had attended Sunday school at a local WELS church, but his mom had not signed

him up since last year. I invited them to church. I told them I didn't want to force them, just that they were welcome.

I relate this story because it was so exciting for me to be able to explain Jesus and his salvation. I was able to do it more clearly because of the excellent article you wrote. May Jesus continue to guide you in his amazing love and truth!

*Patrina Boehringer
Watertown, Wisconsin*

Through my Bible in 3 years

November 1997

1. 2 Chronicles 25
2. 2 Chron. 26-28
3. 2 Chron. 29:1—31:1
4. 2 Chron. 31:2—32:33
5. 2 Chron. 33
6. 2 Chron. 34, 35
7. 2 Chron. 36
8. Esther 1
9. Es. 2:1-18
10. Es. 2:19—3:15
11. Es. 4
12. Es. 5, 6
13. Es. 7, 8
14. Es. 9, 10
15. Ecclesiastes 1, 2
16. Ecc. 3:1—4:8
17. Ecc. 4:9—6:12
18. Ecc. 7, 8
19. Ecc. 9:1—10:7
20. Ecc. 10:8—11:8
21. Ecc. 11:9—12:14
22. Song of Solomon 1:1-27
23. Sg Sol. 2:8—3:5
24. Sg Sol. 3:6—5:1
25. Sg. Sol. 5:2—6:3
26. Sg. Sol. 6:4—8:4
27. Sg. Sol 8:5-14
28. 2 Peter 1:1-11
29. 2 Pet. 1:12-21
30. 2 Pet. 2

Held to a higher standard



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

The pastor is a model, but he is not perfect. He cannot be.

Update: Rev. Schuller has since apologized for the plane incident and settled the matter out of court. However, the affected flight attendant has filed a civil suit against him.

Something went radically awry in an alleged scuffle between TV preacher Robert Schuller and a flight attendant on a cross-country flight early this summer. It made the national news.

In reply to the allegations, Schuller insisted, "I am innocent. I have not broken a single one of the Ten Commandments. . . ." In that incident, maybe not. But I wonder what hurt the preacher's image more: the allegation of assault or his overblown claim of innocence?

Hear me out, because this is not about Schuller. It's about our expectations of our pastors.

Every pastor who takes the vows of ordination knows he will be held to a higher standard of conduct than most. He's to be a shepherd, an example, a teacher, a messenger of Christ. He lives in a glass house (cathedral?). He "must be above reproach . . . self-controlled . . . not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome. . . ." (He will not scuffle on airplanes.) He must not love money, "must manage his own family well," and "have a good reputation with outsiders." (See 1 Timothy 3:1-7.) There's more, but you get the picture.

Yes, you ought to see those qualities in all Christians. But these are prescribed as public standards for the pastor. He's to be the model. To fail is to get in the way of the message of Christ. To consistently fail may forfeit the privilege of being a pastor.

So, then, shouldn't you fire the lot of us? Who can meet the standard for pastors all the time? I can't, and I don't suppose your pastor can either.

That brings us back to Schuller's words: "I have not broken a single one of the Ten Commandments." Is that what we are to expect? Clearly not! The pastor is a model, but he is not perfect. He cannot be. "If we claim to be without sin, we deceive

ourselves and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8). Even the apostle John had to admit his sin.

So, it's fair to expect your pastor not to get in fights on airplanes, or anywhere else. You can expect conduct worthy of his calling. But if you stand in wait to catch him making a mistake, you probably will. You can be sure to find something. He is hardly prepared to stand up and say, "I have not broken a single one of the Ten Commandments."

Some of the burden falls on you to make this work out right. If you are going to hold your pastor to a higher standard, then you will pay him higher honor. You'll support him and try to make his work easier. You'll pray for him.

You will not be quick to judge him, but ready to thank him and thank God for him. You will even overlook some of his oh-so-human weaknesses and idiosyncrasies.

Probably your pastor will never be involved in an incident that makes national news, but he is important to you. Remember . . .

- He became a pastor not to get rich or become famous but to serve.
- He's there not to tell you how good he is, but how good God is.
- He knows what's expected of him. Does he know you care about him?
- He doesn't claim to be perfect; he strives to be faithful.
- He welcomes all the help he can get from you to serve the congregation and reach out to the community.
- He needs you, and you need him. God put you together.
- All glory to God in all things!

Gary P. Baumler

Charitable Gift Annuity

A gift to the Lord you didn't think possible

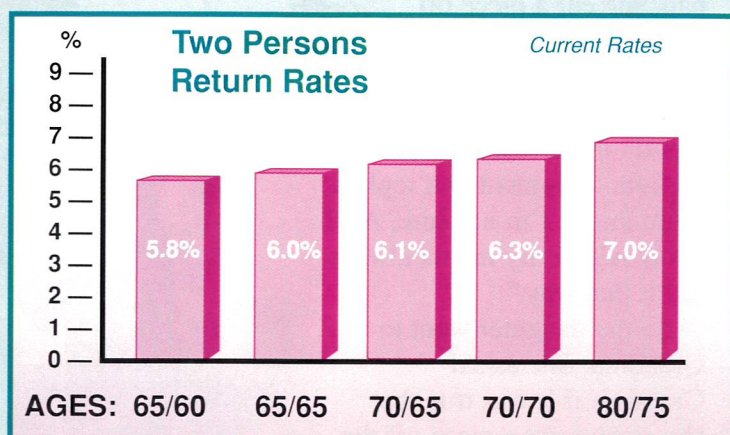
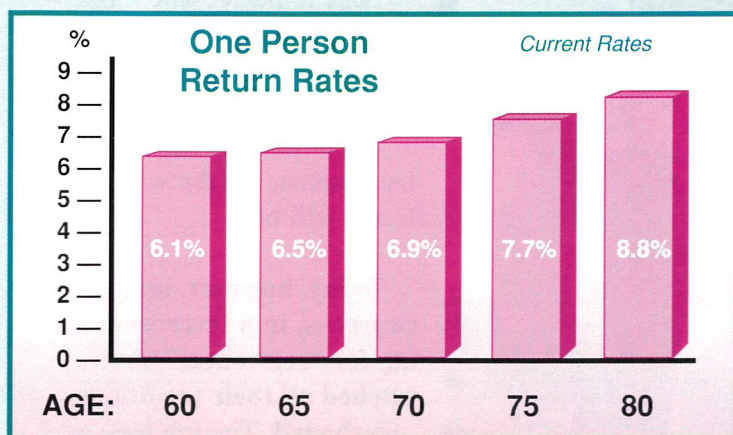


What is a charitable gift annuity?

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

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

What are examples of gift annuity rates?



Features

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

Benefits

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

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

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

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

We've always done it that way

The battle over old versus new continues. At what price?

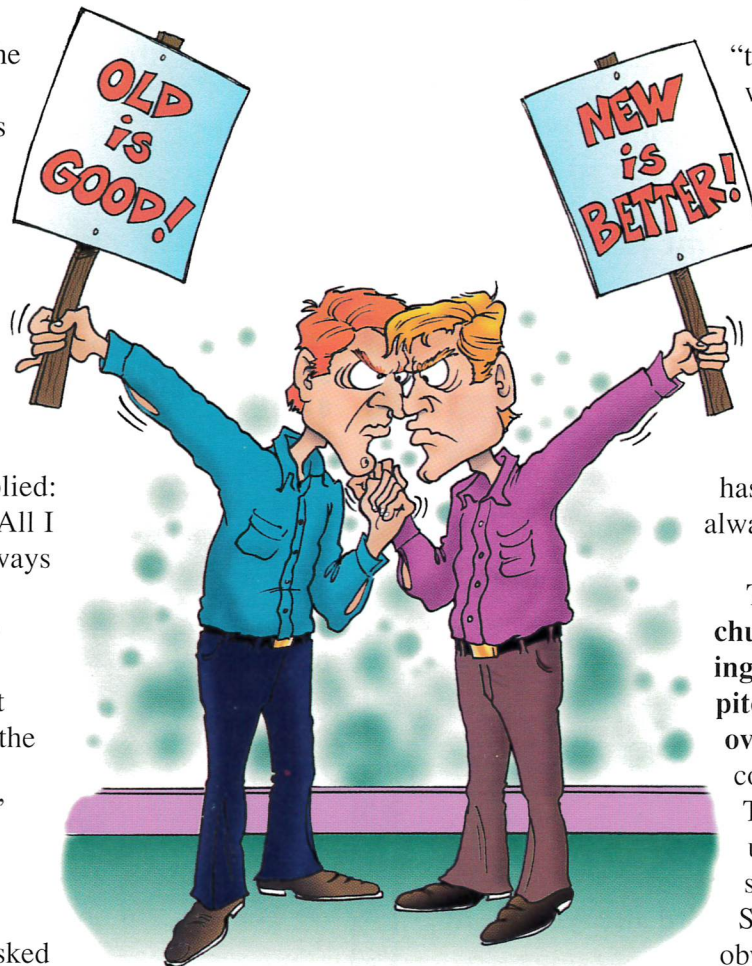
Kenneth A. Cherney

By now you've heard the story about the Christmas ham. (Preachers love it.) It goes like this: One year, as Mama prepared to put the Christmas ham in the pan, she cut a piece off one end. Her daughter was watching, and she asked, "Mama, why do you do that?" Mama thought a moment and replied: "You know, I'm not sure. All I know is that my mama always did it that way."

So the daughter went to Grandma. She asked Grandma if it was true that she always cut a piece off the Christmas ham, and if so, why. "I don't know, child," said Grandma. "I guess it was because my mama always did it that way."

It wasn't until the girl asked Great-Grandma that the truth came out. "Why did I always cut the piece off?" Great-Grandma snorted. "Because my pan was too small. Unless I did that, the ham wouldn't fit. But why they keep doing it is beyond me."

The point of the story is supposed to be: this is what happens to traditionalists. They carry on ridiculous customs that serve no purpose at all, and the only reason they can give you is "That's just the way we've always done it."



I'd prefer to say, "This is what happens to some traditionalists." The ham story shows what happens when we carry on traditions mindlessly, without asking the important questions—"When did this get started? What purpose did it serve then? Does it still serve its purpose, or do we now have a truly better way of doing the same thing?"

The ham story is popular with certain Christian groups who reason that, for people who believe in the absolute authority of Scripture,

"tradition" ought to be a dirty word. Not necessarily. Of course, we Lutherans have never put man-made traditions on the same plane as God's Word. Therefore, any change from "the way it always was" does not automatically mean we've broken one of God's commandments.

Conversely, where God has spoken, it's the way it always will be.

Today, however, many churches, in a feverish craving for "relevance," have pitched all their traditions overboard. The trouble

comes when the fever cools. Then, suddenly, people wake up and realize they've lost some beautiful things. Some, in fact, that were obviously gifts from God.

When it comes to traditions, remember the Russian proverb about the two fools.

The first said, "This is old; therefore it's good."

The second said, "This is new; therefore it's better."

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