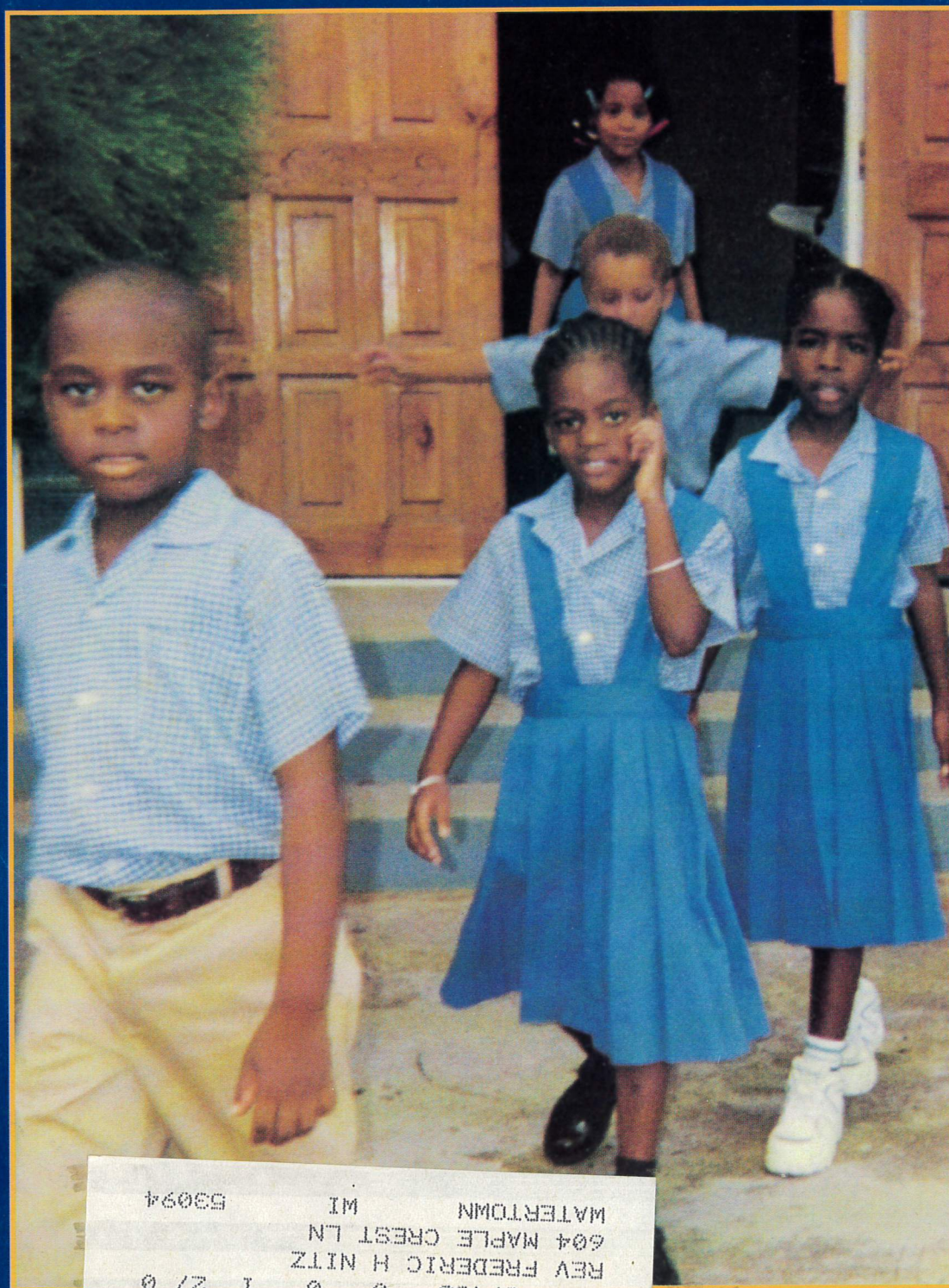


NORTHWESTERN

January 1998

LUTHERAN

THE WORD FROM THE WELS



*Church through
a child's eye*

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**He simply
believes**

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marriage**

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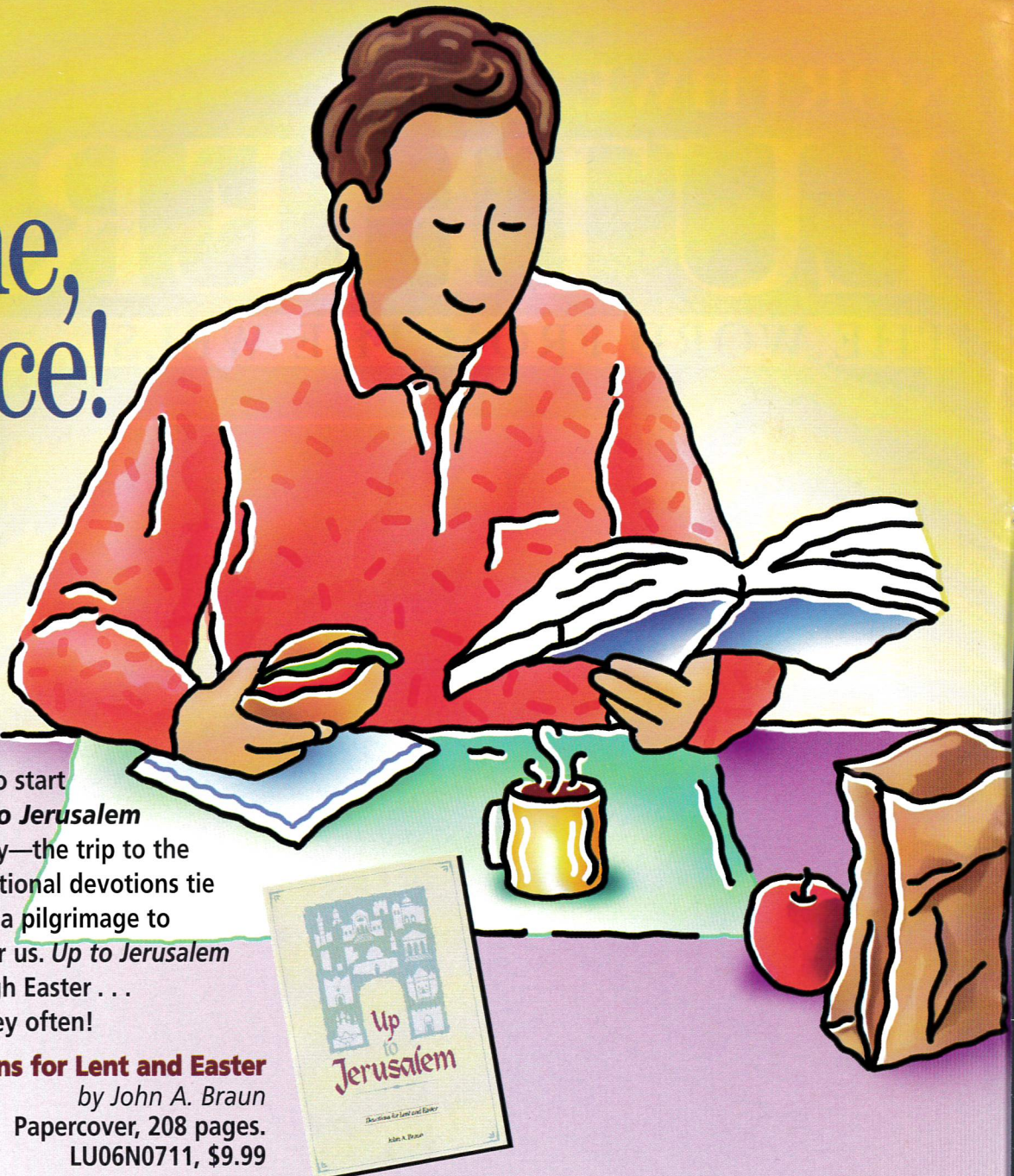
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He's still there

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Hebrews 13:8

Richard E. Lauersdorf

“Are you still there?” Danny’s trembling voice asked. Suddenly awakened in that dark motel room, he needed to know if his parents were in the room. Assured that they were, the little fellow drifted back to sleep.

Isn’t this a new year’s thought for us? Without the assurance of our Savior’s presence there’d be far less sleep and far more worry for us in 1998.

The same pardon

Changing years involve a glance into life’s rear-view mirror. What do we see when we look back on the year gone so rapidly by? The litter of sin. Those evil thoughts like blowing pieces of paper, those evil words like shattered glass, those loveless deeds like dirtied plastic litter on the highway of another year.

Who will pick up that ugly debris? Not just bag it and haul it away to some landfill somewhere, but eliminate it forever? Jesus will. Jesus has. On Calvary’s cross, he plunged our sins into the depths of the sea. The precious blood of God’s own Son paid for all our sins. That payment still stands and was our assurance throughout 1997.

It will also be our assurance through 1998. For our Jesus does not change. When we come to him with our failures and faults, we won’t need to wonder, “Will he for-



give me yet another time? Will he tell me that I’ve used my quota and show me to the door?” “Still there?” We sinners ask with trembling voice, only to hear the answer, “Yes, with the same pardon yesterday and today and forever.”

The same peace

Years change and so does life. What will 1998 bring? Could be that our journey will be uneventful, that the waves will be only ripples and the bumps only minor on this journey we call life. Could be that the waves will rock the boat and the bumps wreck the steering. Could even be that the journey will end in 1998. Who knows?

This much we do know: Jesus will go with us. When clouds cover the winter sky, we know the sun has

not stopped shining. It’s just that we can’t see its splendor because of the clouds. So with the troubles of life. Even in the darkest day Jesus is still shining on us with his warmth and comfort, seeing that all things work for our good. “Still there?” we wearied travelers ask with trembling voice, only to hear the answer, “Yes, with the same peace yesterday and today and forever.”

The same promise

Just as another year ends, so will our life. Each year, in fact each day,

brings us one step closer to the inevitable. We may not like to think or may even refuse to think about it, but that doesn’t change the fact that life is a short story that soon reads “The end.”

So, what shall we do? Look over our shoulders, straining to hear the grim reaper’s footsteps catching up? Or look expectantly and eagerly ahead to that Jesus who promised, “Because I live, you also will live” (John 14:19). “Still there?” we dying mortals ask with trembling voice, only to hear the answer, “Yes, with the same promise yesterday and today and forever.”

Let the years change. Jesus doesn’t.

Richard E. Lauersdorf is the synod’s vice president for mission and ministry.



◆ All new years bring changes. NL is not exempt. As we enter our 85th year of publishing, we bring some new things and say good-bye to others.

✓ First, we've added a tagline to our cover. The phrase "The Word from the WELS" identifies that *Northwestern Lutheran* brings a message based on God's Word to people everywhere.

✓ A second change comes at your request. In the surveys we conduct, we always hear: Add more Bible study. So, starting this month, we'll devote one page to a question and answer Bible study format. We hope this helps you delve into God's Word and listen to him speak to us today. With this series, we welcome Randy Hunter as a contributing editor.

✓ A new item is our two-part series on how children perceive church. To get a true look at church through a child's eye, NL's communications assistant, Julie Tessmer, sent cameras to 10 selected, widespread congregations. Children from these churches were given free reign with the cameras. With each photo, the children describe their picture and why they took it. (p. 8)

✓ We start another series this month. Over the next six months, various authors will discuss marriage—from pre-marital counseling to practical issues couples face. (p. 6)

✓ With this issue, Pastor Richard Lauerdsdorf ends his service as a contributing editor. His name first appeared in our masthead in the Sept. 22, 1974 issue. We thank him for his years of inspirational messages from God's Word.

✓ Our thanks to interim designer Eric Cook for his work on the December and January issues.

Cover photo by Tabitha Bonous

—LRB

NORTHWESTERN LUTHERAN

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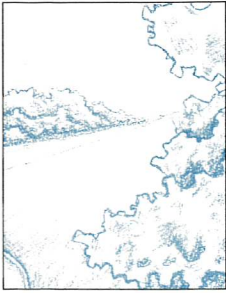
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Sometimes doing nothing is the best thing you can do—unless your faith is involved.

Marked for marriage

It's the power of God's love that offers every marriage the greatest chance for success.

John Mattek

It's 6:55 PM on a cold Sunday in January. Couples are arriving for the first of five premarital sessions at church. There is tension in the room, perhaps because some people are unfamiliar with the others. Or maybe they don't know what to expect. Will some embarrassing, deep, dark secrets be uncovered? I try to ease the tension with a warm welcome and friendly conversation.

The class is diverse. Some couples have been engaged for over two years. Others met only a few months ago. Most are entering marriage for the first time—others for a second, or third. A majority are in their twenties. A few are well into middle age. At least one from each couple is a member of our church. Over half of the nonmembers belong to another WELS church, but some are from other Christian denominations or unchurched. These sessions will provide an opportunity for friendly evangelism.

Church premarital sessions

Twelve couples are attending our premarital session tonight. If national statistics apply to them, only six will remain married.

**Today's parents have the
opportunity to train their
children to become
tomorrow's happy husbands
and wives.**

How things have changed. In 1932 there were only two divorces in every 12 marriages, in 1912 only one. Still, all 12 will face challenges to their marital love and faithfulness. Sound marriages and solid families don't fit Satan's game plan. God willing, these classes will strengthen the love and resolve that binds couples together.

Our premarital classes cover the wedding service and marriage

issues. We explore Scripture to discuss the definition of marriage, eligibility for marriage, the purpose of marriage, role relationships in marriage, how marriages are strengthened, pitfalls in marriages, and the blessings of marriage. Time is set aside to talk about communication skills and resolving anger. We discuss attitudes towards sex, money, children, job, and church—touchy issues in the '90s. An understanding of God's unconditional, saving love for sinners in Jesus sets the tone for the classes.

As this premarital class gets to work, it's a joy seeing them learn and grow together. But as one listens to the discussions and comments, and later watches these couples live out their marriage vows, something else becomes evident. Namely, another kind of premarital class is a necessary prelude to the one with the pastor.

Premarital training at home

That one is taught in the home by



mom and dad. Solomon says "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it" (Proverbs 22:6). This also applies to premarital training. What children learn growing up in the home they often take with them into their married lives. Five premarital classes with the pastor will probably not significantly change that fact. If good premarital seed is sown in the lives of children at home, a good harvest can be expected. But the opposite is also true.

Consider the family of King David. Well known are the negative examples of marriage that David modeled for his children. Legendary are the personal troubles David reaped for his sins. But his children also suffered. It seems they developed a unique inability to establish proper relationships. Son rebelled against father. Brother raped sister. Brother killed brother. Son surpassed father in polygamy. While it's wrong to blame David entirely for his children's actions, it's also naive to miss the cause and effect lesson recorded in 2 Samuel.

Today's parents have the opportunity to train their children to become tomorrow's happy husbands and wives. Children watch how dad and mom treat each other with kindness and compliments. They notice the body language and

tone of voice. They see how mom and dad embrace and help each other, and they notice the sacrifices one makes for the other. As mom and dad take their pressures and problems to the Lord in prayer, the children learn to do so as well. As mom and dad talk out differences of opinion in an atmosphere of civility and respect, children learn too. When children regularly see how mom and dad forgive, remain faithful, worship, and enjoy life's pleasures together in moderation, good things will be carried into their own married lives. God promises that.

Not all the people at this premarital class had good premarital training as children. Perhaps we didn't either. Maybe as parents we could have been better examples for our children when they were young. Is the outlook only bleak?

Certainly, what has been sown will bring forth a harvest. But there is help and comfort. Scripture promises "but where sin increased, grace increased all the more" (Romans 5:20). It also says, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9). In fact, it's the power of God's love that offers every marriage the greatest chance for success.

I look at these 12 couples on a cold night in January. They are obviously experiencing the thrill of engagement and the anticipation of a happy marriage. With God's love in their lives, there is every reason to believe that these couples will be among those who celebrate silver and golden wedding anniversaries down the road.

NL

John Mattek is a professor at Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wisconsin.



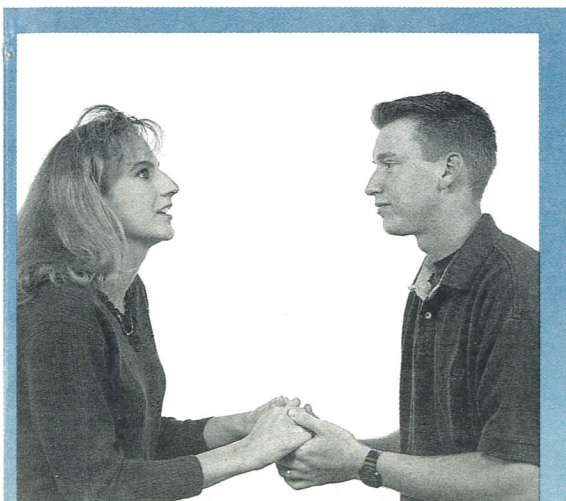
Look for the following topics about marriage in upcoming issues of *Northwestern Lutheran*:

- Planning a wedding.
- Expressing love and maintaining commitment.
- Handling and preventing conflict—and making your marriage stronger after conflict occurs.
- Coping with crises.
- Understanding the roles and the importance of roles.

Want to read more?

These books on marriage, and getting ready for marriage, are available through Northwestern Publishing House. Call 1-800-662-6022 (Milwaukee area, 414/475-6600). Include item number when ordering.

- *Getting Ready for Marriage Workbook* (AA12-2658)
- *Planning a Christian Wedding* (AA12-2061)
- *Building the Christian Home: A Marriage Enrichment Manual* (AA15N0557)
- *Made for each other: Devotions for Newly Married Couples* (AA06-2263)
- *Strike the Original Match* (AA12-2340)
- *Growing Together in Christ* (AA15N2005)



Out of the lenses of babes



Christ the King, Palatine, Illinois

Abigail Clara-Marie Schultz, age 6

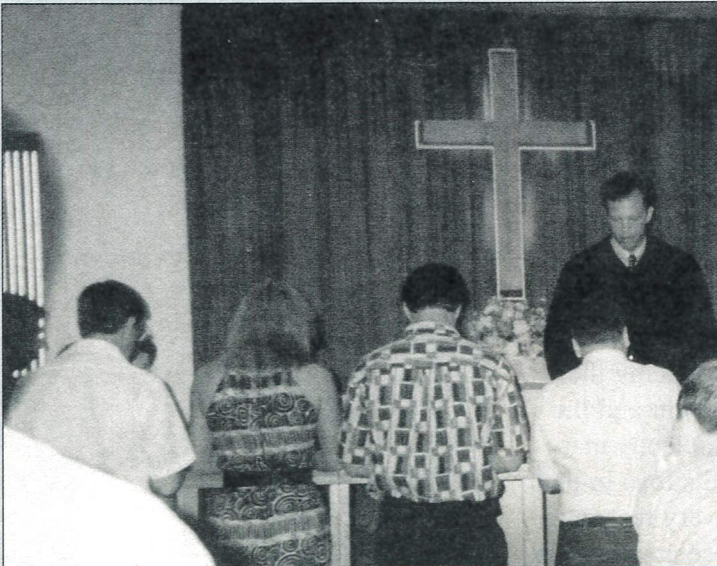
"Pastor Schulz sings 'Glory to God in the highest,' and now I sing it too."



Abiding Word, Orleans, Ontario, Canada

Caleb Schultz, age 7

"My choir is singing to Jesus."



Good Shepherd, Deltona, Florida

Philip Pete, age 11

"People go up to the pastor to take the Lord's Supper. This is important because we receive Jesus' body and blood."



Good Shepherd, Deltona, Florida

Erin O'Connell, age 11

"A child is added to the family of God through Holy Baptism."

Remember when you were little and you had to look up . . . and up . . . and up at an adult? Your church's steeple seemed to reach the clouds, and the pastor looked huge standing in front of church in his long, flowing robe.

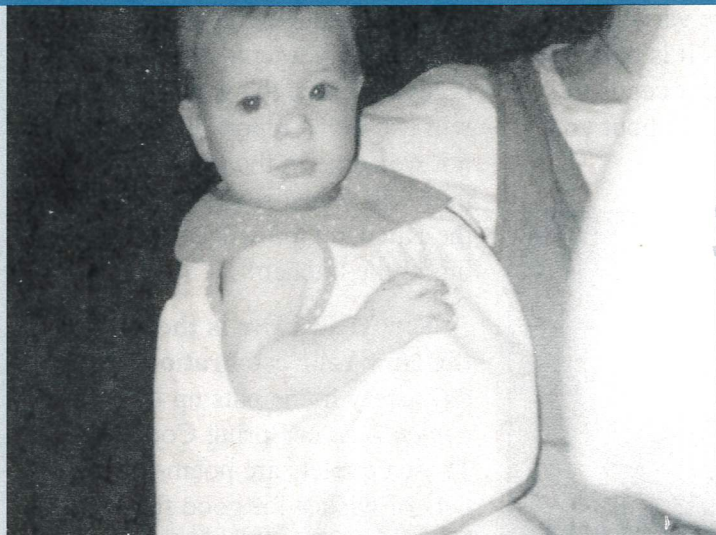
You also "saw" things differently

then. Life was simpler, and so was the way you viewed it.

Now you have a chance to go back and see things that way again. You won't ever have your childlike vision again, but you can see how children from WELS churches from around the world picture their

churches. And you can see the amazing faith these children have as they explain what their pictures—and their faith—mean.

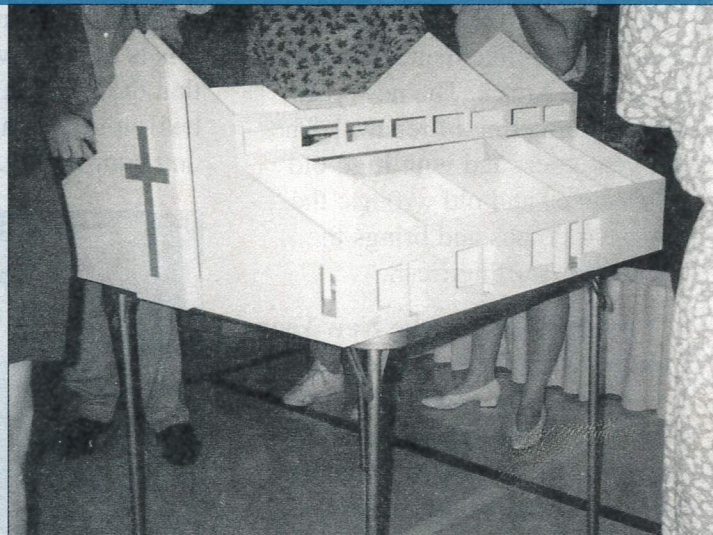
So sit back and gain a fresh perspective on church—as seen through the eyes of a child.



Cross of Christ, Boise, Idaho

Rachel Ashley, age 5

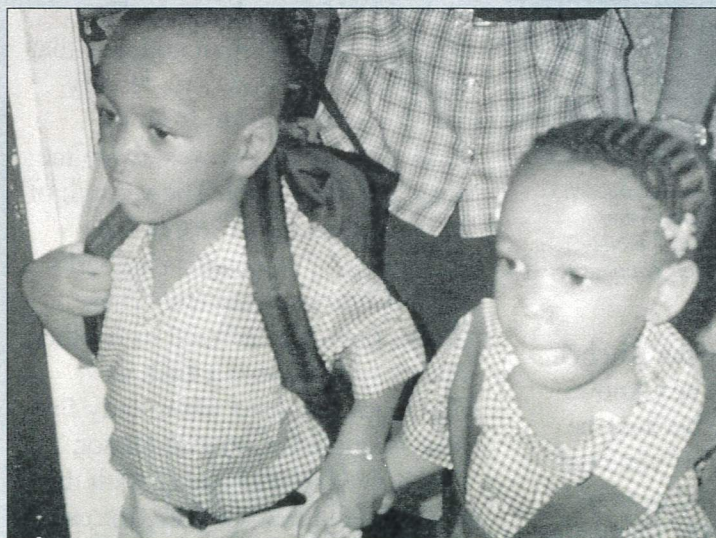
"This is Bailey (Spiegelberg). She goes to church so that she can learn about Jesus."



Cross of Christ, Boise, Idaho

Hans Steinbrenner, age 5

"This is what our new church will look like. But it won't be white because churches have to be colored with paint."



St. John's, Antigua

Linda Salem, age 11

"Two preschool pupils entering their new classroom."



St. John's, Antigua

Tabitha Bonous, age 12

"Pupils coming out of our opening worship service on Sept. 1, 1997."

Happy New Year!

A WELS missionary in Taiwan explains Chinese New Year customs and how they affect Chinese Christians.

Kevin Stellick

For the Chinese people, Chinese New Year is the most important holiday of the year.

In some respects, Chinese New Year is not unlike that celebrated in the United States. The new year brings the feeling of renewal. The old year goes, and with it go old misfortunes and old wrongs; the new year comes and brings the chance for starting fresh.

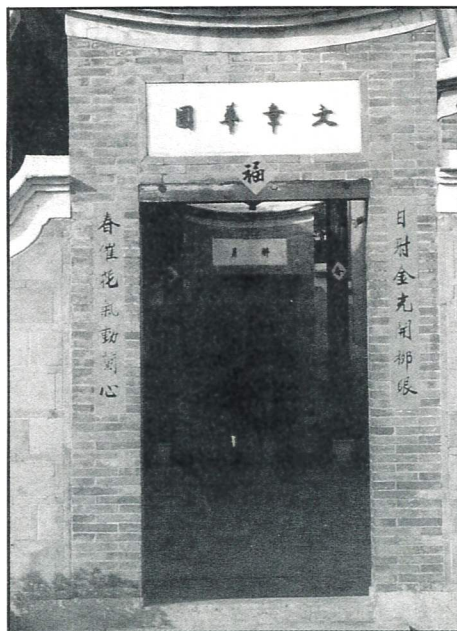
Preparations for the New Year holiday start weeks in advance.

For example, two weeks before New Year is the special day for sweeping the floors. A complete house cleaning begins in every home. Nothing is left untouched. After the house is in order, Chinese housewives begin stocking up for the New Year holiday. Shops make much money as people buy all the food they will prepare and eat over the coming days.

Once New Year's Day has dawned, no one may use a knife or do any work for at least two days. Because of this, the days just prior to New Year are the busiest in the kitchen. All food must be readied.

New Year also means buying presents, which are given to family and friends. In this way, Chinese New Year is similar to the Western celebration of Christmas, including its commercial impact.

The day for Chinese New Year is set according to the Lunar Calendar. Last year, it fell on Feb. 7. Although there are variations, this is the time when it is believed that the Kitchen God ascends to heaven to give a report about you and your family.



These spring couplets are placed over the doorways of homes. They are wishes for good fortune and blessings in the New Year. The mission families use their couplets to witness to the grace of God.

According to lore, the Kitchen God is the deity that best knows you and your family because he lives in your kitchen. If you cook and eat three meals a day, you spend much time in the kitchen,

right? In order to make sure the Kitchen God gives a sweet report to the powers-that-be in heaven, people will set out candy for the Kitchen God to enjoy and, by so doing, sweeten the words that he will use in his report. Children are not welcome in the kitchen for fear they will reveal something bad that the Kitchen God will hear. No arguing in the kitchen!

New Year's Eve is the climax of the New Year celebration. On this day, every home puts up their *Chuen Lien* or Spring Couplets. These couplets are poem-like banners of wishes for good fortune and blessings in the New Year.

The couplets come with three sayings. One is hung over the doorway to your home and the others on each side of your doorway. For example, the Christian couplets that we have by our door say: "Every blessing springs forth from the Lord. The spring breezes excite me to spread the gospel. The warmth of spring moves me to search the Scriptures." The couplets are written in Chinese characters. These *Chuen Lien* have offered us another chance to witness our faith as Christians in a land where only five percent confess Christ as Savior.

Out with the old and in with the new! Buying new clothing for every

member of the family is a common custom for Chinese New Year. The greeting for the day is “*Gong Shee, Gong Shee!*” which means “Congratulations, you have made it through another year!”

For Chinese Christians in Taiwan, Chinese New Year can be one of the most difficult times of the year. Why? For many Chinese people, New Year is a time to go home and be with family. For many, New Year is a time for remembering and paying your respects to (worshiping) your ancestors. Many Chinese Christians, because of their faith in Jesus, will be persecuted during this time of year. When they return home for New Year, as is expected of them, they will be faced with the pressures of being expected to worship their ancestors.

Pray for our Chinese brothers

and sisters in Christ. Pray that the Lord strengthens their faith and prepares them to face persecution for his name’s sake.

“Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted . . . continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you have learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 3:12f).



The woman holding a bowl of rice depicts worship of the dead. According to Buddhist belief, the spirits of the dead can return to eat the essence of the rice—or whatever food may be offered—thereby satisfying the hunger of the ghosts. This allows the ghosts to leave without harming their relatives.

NL
Kevin Stellick is a missionary in Taiwan.

TAIWAN STATISTICS

Population: In 1990 (the latest year for which statistics are available), Taiwan’s population exceeded 20 million. It is one of the world’s most densely populated places.

Religions: Buddhism and Taoism are predominant. Ninety-seven percent of Taiwan’s people live in unbelief.

Language: Mandarin Chinese is the official language, though dialects are spoken. Many people can speak some English.

WELS work: WELS has supported mission work in Taiwan since 1968. WELS supports three missionary families whose primary purpose is church planting and training Taiwanese Christians in and for ministry in the Christian Lutheran Evangelical Church of Taiwan.

The six mission churches are primarily shepherded by Chinese Christians. None are full-time church workers yet, but they freely give their time and energy. All expenses are paid by the local church. Missionaries work side-by-side with the Chinese in evangelism and visitation. A Bible Institute and

seminary train Christians to better use their gifts in both part-time and full-time ministry.

Another outreach method is gospel “seed planting” among children and young people through teaching English. One missionary wife teaches simple Bible stories weekly at a preschool. Another missionary teaches an English/Chinese Bible Class. In the past, missionaries did the teaching, but there are now several Chinese members who are professional English teachers. These teachers are offering their time and skills to be light among those who don’t know Jesus.

He simply believes

Challenges abound when working with a child who has Down Syndrome. But blessings are even greater.

Nancy J. Schneider

It began in 1988 when I volunteered to teach vacation Bible school. As I glanced at my list of students, I saw the name Chris Wehman. My heart skipped a beat. Oh no! If I had Chris, I'd also have his brother Brian.

Brian has Down Syndrome, is non-verbal, and was 14 years old.

In my years of teaching, I had no experience with a special needs child. I voiced my concerns and was assured Brian was no trouble. But I felt less than reassured. I was scared. I wondered why his parents sent Brian to Sunday school and VBS. Surely he couldn't grasp what they were talking about.

I prayed "Please God, help me through this. You know I'm not equipped to handle Brian."

Thus began my journey.

In the class, Brian sat quietly in his own little world. The other kids accepted him. No one made fun of him. Then again, no one paid much attention to him. He was just there. Soon I was absorbed in teaching and forgot Brian.

Next came Sunday school. Once again Brian was in my class. I learned to keep an eye on him but concentrated on the class. I tried to occupy his time but didn't try to teach him. At least he no longer made me feel uncomfortable.

The following year, I got Brian again. I prayed: "God are you trying

to tell me something? Why do I keep getting Brian?"

When Brian saw me enter class, his face lit up. My heart did a flip-flop. Could I have misjudged him? It was unsettling. That's when I finally talked to his parents.

I learned that because Brian is non-verbal and has Down's, many think he is stupid. He's not. He simply learns more slowly. He functions below level intellectually and has limitations.

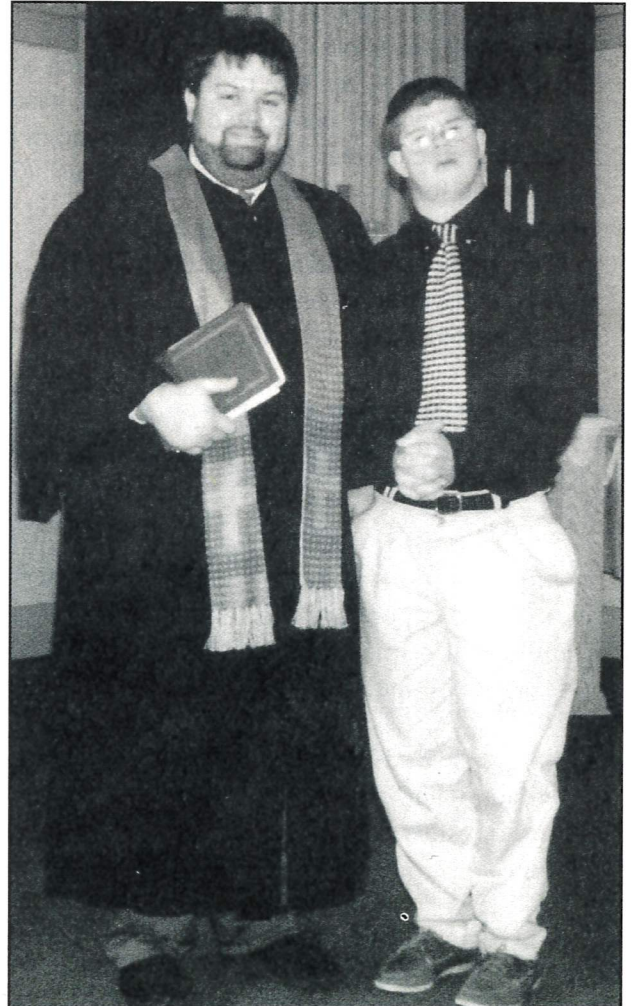
After that, I talked often with his parents. Not everything went smoothly, but I had changed. I now wanted to teach Brian.

As I worked more with Brian, I began to truly love him. I saw him as a person who was more like me than different from me. He had the same need for a Savior. I finally got the message. Faith is a gift from God, and it's not based on your I.Q.

Brian was learning sign language, so I studied it, too. He also was able to say some words, although not clearly.

Brian's parents talked

to the pastor about confirmation instruction. Pastor would work with Brian during the week, and I would reinforce it on Sundays. We would teach basic law and gospel, the Ten Commandments, the Creed, Lord's Prayer, and Sacraments.



Pastor David Leistikow and Brian Wehman. Brian, who has Down Syndrome was confirmed at St. Luke, New Lisbon, Wis., after two and a half years of classes.

In Fall 1994 we began. The first lesson: the First Commandment. It's aim: God wants us to love him more than anyone or anything.

I started by talking about God and how much he loves us.

"Lots of people love you, including me, but God loves you most." I made a list, with pictures, of people Brian loved. I put Jesus on the top, then his mom and dad, his brothers and sister, and even his dog. I then asked Brian, "Which do you love best?"

He looked them over and said, "Deda," and made the sign for Jesus.

I smiled and said, "Yes Brian, Jesus."

In another lesson I said, "Brian, Jesus loves you." He smiled. Then I asked, "Brian, does Jesus love you even when you're naughty?"

Panic, or maybe fear, replaced the smile, so I quickly reassured him, "Yes, Brian, Jesus loves you even when you're naughty."

"Even if Jesus always loves us, what should we do when we've been naughty or sin?"

Without any prodding Brian said, "Pay Deda," and made the signs for pray and Jesus.

I said "Yes!" and hugged him.

When we studied the Sacraments, I took Brian to the baptismal font. I put water in it and let him put his hands in the water. Then I told him how we use water and God's Word, the Bible, when we baptize someone. He then dipped his fingers in the water and touched his head and said "Uh?" I said yes.

For Communion, I showed Brian the wafer and the wine. Brian approached the altar, but stood back from it. He knew there was signifi-

cance to this small wafer and would not touch it.

I worked hard to understand him, and he worked hard to learn. But many times I didn't understand him. He would get frustrated—I didn't blame him. Once, I took his face between my hands and said "Brian, sometimes you're smarter than I am. I know you're trying to tell me something, but I don't understand."

Finally, after two and a half years, Brian was ready to be confirmed. On Nov. 3, 1996, he proudly walked up to the altar with his parents. His hands were in his pockets—a sign that he was nervous.

Pastor asked "Brian, you were baptized, weren't you?"

"Yes."

"You don't like the devil or sin, do you?"

"No."

"You'd like to belong to this church and will come as often as you can, won't you?"

"Yes."

"You want to come to communion, don't you?"

A very emphatic "Yes!"

Pastor gave Brian a blessing and shook his hand. He then leaned down and said softly, "This means you can now take communion Brian. Congratulations!"

Brian turned around and had the biggest smile on his face. His eyes hunted for me, and when he saw me, he gave me the thumbs up sign.

Does Brian understand the mystery of communion—how the bread and wine, and the body and blood work together? I don't know. But he believes it. Brian knows Jesus told us to "do this to remember" that Jesus died to forgive all our sins.

Do you know someone like Brian? Would you like to help?

These resources offer information on reaching out to the developmentally disabled with the Word of God.

• *The Confirmation of Mentally Retarded Persons*

This booklet discusses the possibility and method of instructing the mentally disabled for participation in the Lord's Supper. Contact Commission on Special Ministries, 414/256-3241.

• *The Simplified Catechism*

This simplified version of Luther's Small Catechism helps teach God's Word to those who have low vocabulary levels, learning disabilities, or mental retardation. It prepares the student for communicant membership in the church. Contact Northwestern Publishing House, 1-800-662-6022 (Milwaukee area 414/475-6600) (AA07N0753)

• For other resources and materials or a consultation, contact the WELS Resource Center, 414/259-0292.

Brian may have a greater faith because he doesn't question—he simply believes.

NL

Nancy Schneider is a member at St. Luke, New Lisbon, Wisconsin.

A legacy of service

Werner Herman Franzmann used his writing skills in the parish, school, and synodical office to illumine, inform, and inspire readers.

Morton A. Schroeder

Werner Franzmann was given a rare gift: the ability to write prose and poetry that stimulates thought, stirs emotions, and moves hearts. He used it to serve our Lord in parish, school, and synodical office. In retirement, his writings predated today's computer-driven, in-house work vogue. His oeuvre was instructive and Christ-centered.

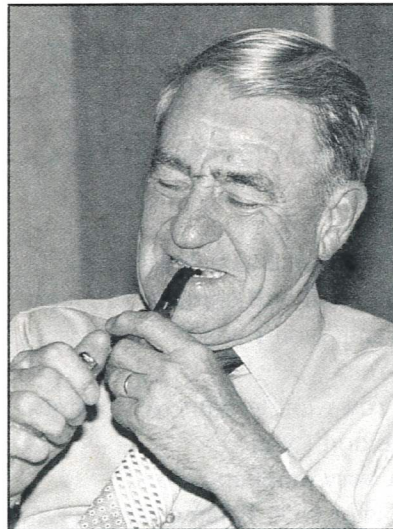
His "work of love"

Franzmann was the first editor of this magazine who did not collaterally minister to a parish. Some say he was its first full-time editor. That is imprecise. While it is true he was its managing editor, he had also been installed as literary editor at the synod's publishing house in Milwaukee. That position saw him produce *Meditations*, which remains 40 years later a popular Northwestern Publishing House publication.

Franzmann was editor of *The Northwestern Lutheran* for almost 12 years, writing editorials, informationals, and miscellanies. They explained the synod's actions and positions during the unsettling, traumatic 60s and 70s. The 75th anniversary history of *The Northwestern Lutheran* nutshell the era this way: "[They] were the decades of Woodstock and moon walk, of assassination and resignation of American presidents, of the Great Society's war on poverty and

its war fought on the killing fields of Viet Nam. . . .

"[They] were tumultuous decades also in the history of our synod. They began in 1961 with the withdrawal of fellowship with the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. They ended with the death of the incumbent synodical president. . . .



Franzmann with his trademark pipe.

They witnessed the expansion of the area Lutheran high school system, the population explosion in synodical schools and subsequent building programs. They saw our gospel flag planted in Hawaii, Mexico, Colombia, Indonesia, and Taiwan."

Franzmann, who regarded himself a moderating influence, said, "We were in the throes of our struggle with Missouri. The magazine

had to place strong influence on that, setting forth the principles we [the Wisconsin Synod] were to uphold. Yet, we [I] tried very hard not to nit-pick."

Franzmann played synod's official organ skillfully. Its music was in pitch, its key singable. It placated rather than agitated, harmonized rather than antagonized.

Meanwhile, Franzmann tried to fine tune the magazine. "I wanted to brighten [it]," he said. Columns for lay people were added. Bright, cheerful holiday issues added luster, bringing a sense of well-being to its readers. Subscribership swelled.

The work at Northwestern Publishing House expanded exponentially during the mid-60s, but two demanding positions proved too demanding. Franzmann opted for the parish. His swan song ran in the Aug. 4, 1968 issue: "Editing our church paper has been a work of love. . . . Entering a new field . . . made it necessary to discontinue . . . our 'spare time' task of editing *The Northwestern Lutheran*."

His parish and school ministry

Franzmann's call returned him to the district in which he had begun his ministry. Darlington, Ann Arbor, Mich., a "mission congregation on the edge of a materialistic, worldly-minded, university town," was new. Begun in 1946, it enjoyed successes and suffered setbacks. Opening a

Lutheran elementary school within six months of holding its first services was joy; closing it seven years later was sorrow. Franzmann was at Darlington four years, his ministry abbreviated by his wife's illness.

Darlington was Franzmann's second parish. After tutoring at Northwestern, he began his ministry at Salem, Coloma, Mich. It was Franzmann's home for 12 years. There he met the daughter of a neighboring pastor, wed her, and began a family. The congregation grew threefold and became self-supporting. It also discontinued services in German, Franzmann's father's native tongue.

Franzmann's gift of language, a trove nurtured from childhood, was noticed by his peers. Called to Michigan Lutheran Seminary, he was dean and taught English, Latin, religion. He was an apt teacher, using the chalkboard and maintaining classroom decorum in equal measure. Though a bit unbending and not willing to flex, he is remembered warmly by students.

His service in retirement

In retirement, Franzmann and his wife moved to rural Westfield, Wis., near their daughter Elsa Russell. There, far from the madding crowd, embraced by the serenity of 750-acres of field and forest, Franzmann set to work to use his gift.

During the 70s and 80s, Franzmann and the WELS Board for Parish Education forged a strong relationship. Sensing need for an understandable and accurate Bible history for eight- to 10-year-olds, the board commissioned Franzmann to write the texts of 142 stories to be included in *Children's Bible History*.

The board also commissioned Franzmann to write an Old Testament commentary and, when finished, a companion two-volume New Testament commentary. They are massive tomes, their 2,158 pages revealing their author's intimate connection with and thorough knowledge of God's Word. Franzmann also edited a Sunday school course and wrote three Bible courses for adults on Acts.

Franzmann began writing hymns when he was in his 50s. Many appeared first in *The Northwestern Lutheran*; five are included in *Christian Worship*. "For Years on Years of Matchless Grace" (CW 621) was written in 1971 for the 25th anniversary of Darlington Church.

Although Franzmann translated German hymns, none are used in *Christian Worship*. The manuscript of one anthem, "Can You Count the Stars Up Yonder?," rendered in Franzmann's own hand, is a family treasure. Written for children, it is a song of praise that reflects the translator's keen interest in the everyday wonders of God's creation.

After he retired, Franzmann for parts of two successive years assisted his son Thomas, then pastor of St. Mark, Citrus Heights, Calif. And as long as health permitted, he helped at St. John's-Emmanuel parish, Montello, Wis. But advancing years and failing health forced him, as it had his wife, out of their home, and he became a resident at Montello Care Center for the last months of his life.

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



- Aug. 11, 1905, born to Pastor William and Mrs. Elsie Griebing Franzmann, Lake City, Minn.
- 1925, graduated from Northwestern College, Watertown, Wis.
- 1929, graduated from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Wauwatosa, Wis.
- 1929-30, tutor, Northwestern College
- 1930-42, pastor, Salem, Coloma, Mich.
- Aug. 12, 1931, married Naomi G. Mayer
- 1942-47, dean of students, Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw
- 1942-56, professor at MLS
- 1956-68, literary editor, Northwestern Publishing House and managing editor, *The Northwestern Lutheran*, Milwaukee.
- 1957, organized the production of and edited *Meditations*
- 1968-72, pastor, Darlington, Ann Arbor, Mich.
- 1973, wrote *Children's Bible History*
- 1980, *Children's Bible History*, 2nd ed. published
- 1980, *Bible History Commentary, Old Testament* published
- 1989, *Bible History Commentary, New Testament* (2 vols.) published
- Died, April 6, 1996, Montello, Wis.
- Buried, April 11, 1996, Oak Hill Cemetery, Town of Westfield, Marquette County, Wis.

NL

Peace in the midst of change

Moving back to the United States after 16 years in Hong Kong, a missionary's wife shares the struggle—and peace—that comes with change.

Becky Plath

Sixteen years ago God led us—Roger, Becky, and Tamara—to serve him in Hong Kong. The only thing that held us back was the health of our overdue second daughter. On Sept. 19, 1981, Jami was born happy and healthy. Our final decision was made. Three exhausting months later, we landed in Hong Kong.

Now 16 years have passed. Tamara celebrated her first birthday in the United States, and she will celebrate her 18th here too. Every other one has been in Hong Kong. While there, my husband and I had two more children: Alicia and Joshua. We learned one of the more difficult languages in the world and adapted to the Hong Kong culture. We struggled with repeated health problems due to mold and pollution, but enjoyed a cross-cultural setting and international friends. We traveled throughout Asia and expanded our worldview. Over the years we developed a real heart for this side of the globe.

In 1997, again at the Lord's leading, we moved to America. Our leaving Hong Kong brought an end to much of what our children knew. For the most part, we took only memories with us.

Transitions cause us to face many endings

At a philosophical level, I believe endings prepare us for our

final ending—death. During our journey through life, the significant endings we face hold the potential to teach us to let go of the familiar and focus on the eternal. But to stay philosophical would be to pretend endings don't hurt.

Although we are confident our decision to leave Hong Kong is from the Lord, the awesomeness of it sometimes rattles me. I've been on a mission field over half my life (including early years in Zambia), so to let go of our role as missionaries has been more than difficult.

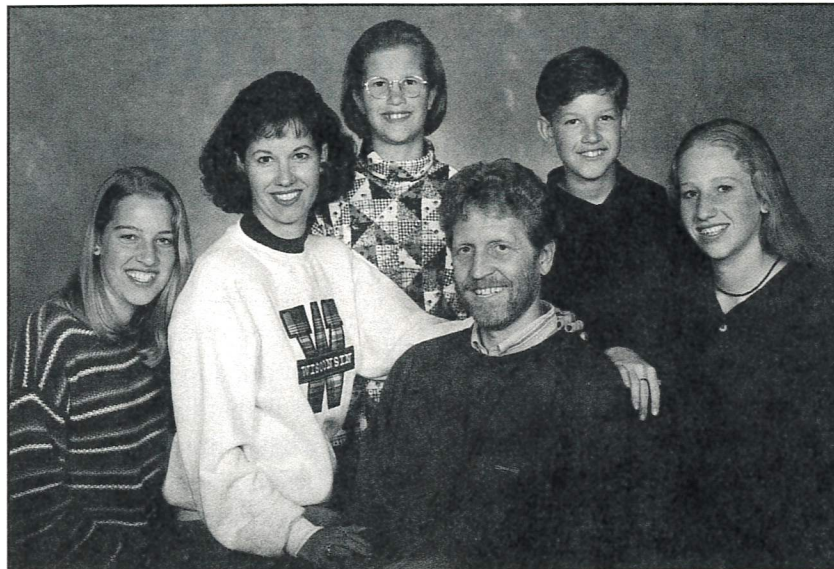
My work of counseling and managing a counseling agency was a blessing. It not only filled the gap

that was left when I put my nursing in Hong Kong aside, but also put me back "in ministry." Though not always easy, life on the field gave meaning and a sense of purpose. Now I must make meaning in new ways and find purpose in new places.

Roger, too, found it hard to leave the mission. He enjoyed working with and training leaders in the Chinese churches. As president of the mission's seminary in Hong Kong, he wrote many courses and taught classes in Cantonese. Prior to his seminary position, he planted a church in a tutorial center. Our first service was on June 4, 1989—the same day as the Tiananmen Square



The Plaths and members of a congregation in Hong Kong. Roger Plath started this congregation as part of his ministry. When the Plaths decided return to the United States, they wrote down 100 things they would miss about the country and made a paper chain. Each day they tore off one of the rings, prayed about, it and turned their worries over to the Lord.



Roger and Becky Plath with their four children Tamara, Alicia, Joshua, and Jami. The Plaths spent 16 years serving the WELS mission in Hong Kong. They returned to the United States in July 1997.

massacre. It was a special day to share the special hope only Jesus can give. It is a day neither of us will forget.

Not long ago, many from that church came to celebrate Chinese New Year with us. We ate and talked and laughed. We knew it was our last Chinese New Year together. Before they left, their new evangelist put two chairs in the center of our living room and asked us to take a seat. Then they laid hands on us and prayed for us. We cried, and many of them did, too. Significant changes always bring a sense of loss and pain—feelings our Lord Jesus is familiar with. So we embrace our walk through the “not-so-fun feelings” and allow ourselves to grieve.

It is important to face the losses that change brings in order to truly move beyond them. Then, instead of pushing the hurt away, we can invest our emotional energies into a clean and fresh beginning. To help us say good-bye to Hong Kong, our

family made a paper chain—one link for each of our last 100 days there. On each link we wrote the things that we would miss. At morning devotion, one of us tore off a link, acknowledged the loss, and gave it to the Lord. We trust him to fill the gap in his own time. Slowly we are learning to let go.

Transitions propel us towards new beginnings

Some of the new beginnings will be experienced internally. During our six furloughs, America was a wonderful place to visit. Families, friends, and churches were gracious hosts. We were nurtured, encouraged, and pampered. But now we return not as visitors, but as residents. Our one-way ticket signaled the beginning of a complicated process where each of us will integrate yet another culture into our identity.

Through a variety of experiences, we will gradually perceive America less as a host country and more as our home. The extent to which we go through this process will depend

on a blend of our individual choice, ability, and the perceptions we develop of America. Our goal is not necessarily total integration into American culture but rather peace with our blended identities.

Externally there are new challenges, too, especially for our children. I find it fascinating and touching to listen to them process the changes. In Hong Kong, they tried to imagine what American schools would be like. (As a Mom, I miss school uniforms—they made life easier.) They all looked forward to a real house that connects with the ground instead of an apartment up in the sky. Our dinner table conversations featured talk about a yard and pets. They all insist they will one day return to Hong Kong, their first home.

To leave Hong Kong has been the toughest decision we've made. But once we made the decision, we've had peace. In my mind, I picture Jesus standing by a door ready to take us to our new home and new work. He's looking back, looking for us, wondering if we were coming yet. “ ‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you’ ” (Jeremiah 29:11-13).

We can have peace in the midst of all that is changing around us and within us when that peace is anchored in our good and faithful God.

NL

Becky Plath is a member at St. Marcus, Milwaukee. The Plath family moved from Hong Kong to the United States in July 1997.

Love enough to try again

If you have a loved one trapped in the burning house of unrepentant sin, use every window God gives you to try to rescue that person from those damning flames.

John M. Parlow

We hear of children trapped in burning buildings and the heroic efforts of a stranger to rescue them. Despite insurmountable odds, the stranger tries again and again, exhausting every effort, until he finally rescues the trapped children from deadly flames.

Jesus gives you that same picture in Matthew 18. But here Jesus is talking about one of his children, your brother in the faith, trapped in the damning flames of unrepented sin. His love for your brother's soul is so great he commands and urges you to "love enough to try again."

Loving discipline begins with a believer going privately to a sinning brother and rebuking him (v. 15). But what if that person tells you to get lost? Do you say, "Well, I tried!" If your child were trapped in a burning building, would you try just once to help? Jesus teaches us three more ways to try to regain the straying sheep.

Establishing witnesses

"Take one or two others along" (v. 16). The idea is that you love this person enough to pursue the matter. The objective is to show your brother his sin so he understands it and forsakes it.

Why have two more people involved now? First, it intensifies the caring, concern, and love.

Second, it's "so that every matter may be established by two or three witnesses." The witnesses confirm that the sinning believer was properly rebuked and that he has or has not repented. By carrying out this step, you prevent the situation where it is one person's word against another. Witnesses can say, "Yes, there was repentance" or "No, there was no repentance."

But what if they don't listen to the two or three?

The Good Shepherd has forgiven all our sins, all our faults, all the times we have strayed from his path.

Telling the church

If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church . . ." (v. 17).

You may tell it publicly in a church service or tell your board of elders. The intention is key. You tell it to the church in hopes of regaining the straying sheep. That person's soul is precious. The whole community of believers needs to care for it. First an individual, then two or three, now the church. So many times people drift away from the church.

Instead of pursuing, we let that person drift. Is that love?

But what if the sinning brother doesn't even listen to the loving admonition of the church?

Excluding the person

"Treat him as you would a pagan or tax collector" (v. 17). The final step is ostracism. Jesus said to treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector, both seen as despised outcasts.

The term pagan was used of non-Jews who held to their traditional paganism. Such a pagan had no part in the worship or social life of Jews. Because tax collectors were traitors to their own people—they worked for the hated Roman government—they were more despised than pagans. Such a man was not an outcast by birth but by choice. Jesus meant that a believer who continues to live in a sin is to be put out of the church and treated as an unbelieving, unrepentant outsider.

Persistently unrepentant members are to be ostracized from the fellowship of the church. By willingly rejecting God's standards, they shipwreck their faith. When Hymenaeus and Alexander would not forsake their profane use of the Lord's name, Paul "handed [them] over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme" (1 Timothy 1:20). Such

people will repent and stay with God's people or hold to their sin and be given over to the world and the devil.

This step in discipline is not optional; it is a command. Paul told the Thessalonians, "We command you, brother, to keep away from every brother who is idle and does not live according to the teaching you received from us" (2 Thessalonians 3:6). And he said, "Do not associate with him, in order that he may feel ashamed" (v. 14). When a church has done all it can, without success, to bring a sinning member back to purity of life, that soul is to be left to his sin and his shame.

Loving the soul

Removing an unrepentant member from the church does not end the process. It should not end until the person has either repented or died.

As to the welfare of the church, removing the sinning person protects fellow believers from falling into unrepentant sin and tells the world around us that we take sin seriously.

As to the person's welfare, the purpose is not to punish but to rescue, and therefore must be done in humble love and never in a spirit of self-righteous superiority. Remember, Paul said, "Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother" (2 Thessalonians 3:15).

To have no fellowship or social interaction with the unrepentant one does not exclude all contact. When

we have opportunity to admonish and try to call him back, we should do so. In fact, we should look for opportunities. But contact should be for the purpose of calling back. Practically speaking, such people are evangelism prospects.



The fourth step in loving discipline is, therefore, to remove and to call back—to keep the sinning brother out of fellowship until he repents, but also to keep calling him back in the hope that he will. And when a believer repents, he is to be welcomed back into the fellowship, not left at arm's length as a second-class member. He is to be forgiven and embraced, just as the Savior forgave and embraced the prodigal

Peter when he returned from his disobedience.

We can see Jesus' love for us in this familiar text. The holy Son of God cares deeply about dumb, sinful sheep that deserve to die anyway. Here the Good Shepherd, who has forgiven all our sins, all our faults, all the times we have strayed from his path, speaks. Jesus, the perfect Lamb of God, chose us to be members of his sheep pen. If that is how precious you are to him, do you now understand how precious your brother's or sister's soul should be to you?

Removing an unrepentant member from the church does not end the process.

If you have a loved one trapped in the burning house of unrepentant sin, use every window God gives you to try to rescue that person from those damning flames. Remember, hell's fire burns white hot and forever. Jesus loved that straying sheep so much that he died for him—you love him enough to try again.

NL

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

INTER-ACT

Randy K. Hunter

"The word of God is living and active." Hebrews 4:12

Introduction:

"I don't believe the Word works," said the WELS pastor—for shock value. Before anyone could call a heresy trial, he continued, "I don't believe the Word works unless people hear it." What a relief!

Think of times you've heard the Word. Which one(s) stand out in your mind? Why?

Text:

Read Luke 4:1-13

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, 2) where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.

3) The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread."

4) Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone.'"

5) The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. 6) And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. 7) So if you worship me, it will all be yours."

8) Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'"

9) The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down from here. 10) For it is written: 'He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully; 11) they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'"

12) Jesus answered, "It says: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

13) When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.

Questions:

1. What insight into Satan's ways do you gain from this account?
2. What evidence do you find that Jesus, true God, is also truly human?
3. Consider each temptation (vs. 3, 7, 9). For each one, complete this sentence: "In this temptation, the devil is appealing to the human desire to . . ."
4. For years, Jesus listened to teachers of the law. He asked questions. That's how humans learn. Jesus had grown in knowledge and understanding of God's Word. How did that help him?
5. Jesus is also God. He clothed himself with flesh to defeat the devil and obey God's law in our place. What comfort do you find in Jesus' response to Satan?
6. Describe the devil's response each time Jesus spoke the Word to answer a temptation (after vs. 4, 8, 12).

Applications:

1. The devil told Jesus three "lies." What lies has he told you about your family? church? money? work? friends? salvation? happiness? health?
2. Jesus countered the devil's lies with God's truth. What passage might you use to counter the lies you just discussed?
3. If the devil left the Son of God only "until an opportune time" (vs. 13), we know he will watch for opportune moments to test us. As you are comfortable, describe "opportune moments" the devil watches for in your life?
4. We know the devil's lies are coming. How can we prepare for them and remain confident in our salvation?

Conclusion:

Jesus didn't dwell on his difficult temptation, did he? He went back to the Word. That's how he prepared for the next battle.

There's a time for legitimate sadness over sin. It's part of repentance. Then the Lord dismisses us in peace. Sulking over a terrible situation only leads to depression, sleeplessness, ulcers, and ruined relationships. After temptation, go back to the Word to see Jesus living for you. His perfect life counts. Trust him. Satan will tempt. But one little word can fell him: Jesus. The Word still works.

Prayer:

Dear God, we hear so many good sounding lies. But they come from the devil. Help us see temptations as the traps they are. Help us learn your Word and store it in our hearts. Thank you for your forgiveness when we sin and strength when we battle temptation. We love you for it. Give us strength for our journey—strength, as promised, through your Word. Amen.

Randy Hunter is pastor at St. Andrew, Middleton, Wisconsin.



Sem auxiliary anniversary

The Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Auxiliary held its 25th anniversary meeting on Oct. 4, 1997. Over 240 women and men attended.

Recognition was given to founding members and past board members. An anniversary booklet of memories of the past 25 years of blessings was distributed.

The auxiliary has funded many nonbudgetary items for the seminary

during the past 25 years. The present project is to complete portraits of all the past seminary presidents. Individuals or groups may make donations to this project or other smaller projects.

For information contact Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Auxiliary, Corresponding Secretary, 11831N Seminary Drive 65W, Mequon WI 53092.

rē·li·giōn
Defining religion

Epiphany: A revelation or making known; the festival on which we celebrate the revelation of Jesus as the Son of God and Savior of the world. Epiphany is commemorated on January 6. The Epiphany season lasts for one to six weeks depending on the date of Easter.

Hot-wired for Jesus

Working in world missions is often marked by what we call "Get ready . . . get set . . . not yet." Rather than letting delays or problems cause frustration, missionary families adopt a more flexible attitude. Here is an example from a study seminar trip to India in August 1997:

We are ready to leave from Guntur, Andhra Pradesh, India, headquarters for Missionary Dasari and the location of our newest world mission seminary—Rajahmundry—six hours away. We are holding a four-day seminar there for 152 lay workers. The 1996 Tata Sumo, sort of an Indian Jeep Cherokee, is packed with supplies for three teaching missionaries.

An 8 AM start will get us there in good time, but the "not yet" syndrome knocks. The key won't fit into the ignition far enough to unlock the steering wheel and start the car.

There is no "AAA." Since the nearest repair shop is five kilometers away, and the nearest parts shop is in neighboring Vijayawada, a further half hour, we call on "I-I-I"—In India, Ingenuity. Four or five "helpers" materialize to assist.

I suggest oil on the key. The key goes in and out better, but not far enough. Helpers suggest (wince) more oil, then persuasion, so the wheel wrench is converted to a (wince again) hammer. By now the



Missionary Dasari's 1996 Tata Sumo. Missionaries in India had to hot-wire Dasari's car so they would be able to get to a seminar they were holding six hours away.

key is in far enough to release the steering wheel but not enough to turn the starter.

Next suggestion: take apart the steering column. The Tata toolkit's screwdriver is too large. Out comes the universal missionary tool—the trusty Swiss army knife.

When the cover is off, the helpers suggest cutting wires to hot-wire the car. Wiser heads demonstrate how connectors come apart. Now which wires? Here the experience of Pastor Walter Westphal comes into play. Having practiced on the nurses' vehi-

cle in Malawi in a former ministry, he solves the problem with a wire locally found and a roll of electrical tape from his luggage. Two short pieces of wire are inserted into the proper connectors, one taped in, and we're off—hot-wired for Jesus.

The lay workers and, in the following week, 24 seminary applicants benefited from their studies because missionaries are always ready for "Get ready . . . get set . . . not yet."

Tip: When traveling overseas, always take along a universal tool and electrical tape.

John Kurth



Youth gather in Colorado

If you're a young person in the Midwest, fellowship with other Christian youth is easily taken for granted. It's not that way throughout the country though.

That's why teens from Colorado, Arizona, Texas, Nebraska, Utah, and Michigan were willing to drive double-digit hours to get to Rocky Mountain Christian Camp (RMCC), Leadville, Colo.

This year the camp numbered 138 teens. RMCC is camping at it's roughest. Meals are cooked by the campers, grades six through nine, over open fires. There are no showers or hot running water. There's the challenge of climbing a 14,000-foot mountain. There's rain and dirt, burnt grilled cheese, and undercooked pancakes. The Kool-aid is usually weak, but the mosquitoes are always strong. And daily, campers grow with God in Bible classes.

RMCC fills a void—youth from

small churches thrive at camp. They realize they are not alone. Day-to-day living in a state dominated by a cult is a struggle for our Utah youth. Many church youth groups are challenged with few teens. At RMCC they all see they are a part of a bigger picture than just their local church—they meet and make friends with many kids that share their same faith.

RMCC may not have a permanent home with solid buildings. At the end of the week after the tents are packed away and the campground benches are put back in place, you

would never know it existed. But the kids know—it lives in their hearts and memories. The Word works. Those who help at camp are privileged to watch it work.

Robyn Smith



Teens at the Rocky Mountain Christian Camp. Over 150, campers and volunteers, attended last summer.

WELS work in England

Many of us may take our weekly worship for granted. Though we may not attend every week, the option is almost always there.



Pastor Lloyd Huebner leading an outdoor Bible class at a WELS retreat in Salisbury, England. The WELS chaplain in Germany holds services for WELS members in England once a month.

But not for everyone.

WELS members in England have only one service a month, held by Philip Kieselhorst, the WELS civilian chaplain in Germany. The first Sunday of every month, Kieselhorst, or his part-time assistant, travel to two military bases in England and hold services, confirmation class, and Bible

studies. About 15 to 20 people—some traveling over 2 hours—attend each time.

Between the monthly services, people worship individually or in small groups, using printed worship services or services on cassette and videotapes provided by the Commission on Special Ministries and the Board for Home Missions.

Once a year a retreat is held. Over 45 people attended last year's retreat, held in Salisbury, England, in August. They enjoyed devotions, Bible study, and fellowship.

"It was like a family," said Lloyd Huebner, a retired pastor who served as a part-time assistant in Germany for three months last summer. "The people were spiritually refreshed."



In NL, we report the news. But we don't always follow up and let you know what's happening now.

Starting this month, we'll be running "Where are they now?" to give you updates on news items or inspirational features. —ed.

The story "We sang hymns. Meanwhile bullets were flying." appeared in May '97.

Here's a recap:

Last March, fighting broke out in Albania because financial schemes left the poorest country in Europe even poorer.

Because of political instability in the nation, the WELS mission families—Spevaceks and Russows—had to leave the country. After a nervous 22 hours on the dock, with bullets flying around them, the mission families were safely evacuated.

So, where are they now?

The Albanian church:

In July, Agron and Vitori Mece, members of the church in Albania who helped the mission families escape, visited the United States. They attended a translators seminar in Milwaukee and the synod conven-



The mission families after they were evacuated from Albania. From left, standing: Roxanne, Audrey, and Kirby Spevacek. They took a call to serve the Apaches in Arizona. They moved in the summer of 1997. Seated: Richard, Caleb, and Karla Russow. They returned to Albania in November 1997.

tion in Watertown, Wis.

While she was here, Vitori said, "Greet all Christian friends who were praying for us in our trouble. Their friendly letters and warm greetings and prayers had been our only comfort."

While the missionaries were out of Albania, Agron and Vitori did what they could to keep the work going—although response from the people dwindled. It was not possible for the Meces to maintain contact with those who lived in the capital, Tirane, or in the mountainous regions of Korce and Pogradec.

But it was important for the work to continue. "We want to let people know that the Lutheran church is not closed. We still do Sunday school and English classes," said Vitori. "Many sects and cults have come. People are confused about which is right. We tell them it's the Word of God."

The mission families:

Last summer, Missionary Kirby Spevacek accepted a call to serve the Apaches in Arizona.

In September, Missionary Richard Russow and Missionary John Roebke from Bulgaria took a 10-day exploratory trip to Albania. The trip was to determine if the Russows could safely return.

The U.S. Embassy in Tirane brought back dependents of embassy personnel, which indicates they feel the place is safe. And the U.S. State Department does not restrict travel to Albania. It does issue some cautions on travel in the southern part of the country where the flare-up initiated.

On Nov. 13, 1997, Richard, Karla, and Caleb Russow returned safely to Durres to live and work and share the gospel. The biggest challenge now is carrying on work as the sole missionary until a second missionary accepts the call to Albania. In the meantime, Missionary Russow will do his best with a program designed for a two-man team.



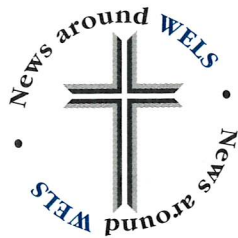
One morning our Saint Andrew (Sacramento) volunteers had assembled over 20 residents in wheelchairs for our regular hymn-

sing and Bible study session at Elk Grove Convalescent Hospital.

I greeted the group and informed them we would be hearing about harps in our Psalm that morning. Then I asked: "Any of you ever play a harp?"

From the last row came nearly-blind Juanita's ready response: "Not yet!"

*Robert Hochmuth
Reno, Nevada*



District news

Arizona

Good Shepherd, Phoenix, and Mt. Calvary, Flagstaff, celebrated their 50th anniversaries with special services throughout October. . . .

Calvary, Chandler, Ariz., dedicated its new 4,600 square foot sanctuary on Oct. 26. The building was constructed with the help of Builder's For Christ. . . . **King of Kings, Apache Junction, Ariz.**, began construction of a new chapel in September.

Kenneth Pasch



Grace, Yorba Linda, Calif., dedicated its church building on Sept. 7.

California

Green Valley, Henderson, Nev., dedicated its education building on Sept. 28. Forty children are enrolled in their preschool. . . . **California Lutheran High School, Wildomar, Calif.**, celebrated its 20th anniversary on Oct. 25. Ninety-one students are enrolled this year. . . . Eighty men attended the **first annual Southern California WELS men's retreat** in San Diego on Oct. 10-11 to examine their role as Christian men in today's world.

Hermann John

Minnesota

On Oct. 13, **St. John, Minneapolis, Minn.**, began its Alleluia anniversary in honor of the congregation's 130th anniversary. The Alleluia year will continue through Dec. 13, 1998, when they observe the 60th anniversary of the dedication of the church building. To mark the anniversary, the congregation is refurbishing its 17 rank pipe organ. . . . On Sept. 28 **Cross of Christ, Coon Rapids, Minn.**, honored **Julie Anderson** for 45 years of service as an organist by dedicating their services to music in worship.

Jeffrey Bovee

Western Wisconsin

On Oct. 11, Luther High School, Onalaska, Wis., held a **one-day enrichment seminar** called "More than Conquerors" for adult members of area WELS congregations. Workshops included topics such as personal devotions, teaching children, communicating with spouses, the gifts of singleness, depression, and caring for aging parents. . . . **Our Savior, Phillips, Wis.**, dedicated its new worship facility on Oct. 26. . . . The Board for Home Missions granted **Our Redeemer, Madison, Wis.**, full-time manpower for the Verona, Wis., exploratory.

Elton Stroh

Northern Wisconsin

Fifty women attended the **15th annual WELS women's retreat** in Eagle River, Wis., this fall.

Southeastern Wisconsin

St. Jacobi, Greenfield, Wis., received the city beautification award for the fourth straight year for outstanding upkeep of their church property. . . . To celebrate the 150th anniversary of **Salem, Milwaukee**, the congregation combined their church/school picnic with an outdoor worship service. Over 400 people attended. . . . **Harry Wiedmann**, pastor at Mt. Calvary, Waukesha, Wis., celebrated 50 years in the ministry on Aug. 24. . . . Two members of St. Paul, Lomira, Wis., celebrated anniversaries at their church: **Bernice Hoag** for 41 years of teaching Sunday school and **Hazel Henkel** for 42 years as church organist. . . . Correction: To submit news to the SEW district, send it to Scott Oelhafen, 1063 Baxter St, Waukesha WI 53186.

Scott Oelhafen



On Aug. 17, WELS members from Chicago area churches got together to play volleyball. New Life, Buffalo Grove, Ill., hosted the tournament. Jerusalem, Morton Grove; St. John, Libertyville; and Good Shepherd, Downer's Grove participated.

In the news

• The Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis, Mo., honored **Ernst H. Wendland** with an award for his book *The Diary of a Missionary*. The book covers Wendland's first 10 years of ministry in Zambia, Africa. The committee calls his book "an honest and exciting account of service on the African mission field, written for the prospective missionary candidate, that shares the high points and low, joys and disappointments of overseas work."

Awards are granted annually to individuals, congregations, agencies, or boards for historical publications,

unique contributions to Lutheran literature, or personal service in the field of Lutheran archival and historical work. His book is available at Northwestern Publishing House, 1-800-662-6022 (Milwaukee area, 414/475-6600), item number AA12N1762.

• **Arthur Guenther**, who served as pastor of Open Bible, Whiteriver, Ariz., for 49 years, received a Twelve Who Care Hon Kachina Award. This award, Arizona's highest honor for volunteer service, was for Guenther's years of service to the Apache people and community groups.



Have you seen the books Northwestern Publishing House has published for you recently? Now is a good time to look. They offer substance for everyone. Check the following:

The Wauwatosa Theology: Koehler—Pieper—Schaller, Curtis Jahn, ed.: These writings from three theologians of our synod when the seminary was at Wauwatosa, Wis., belong in every church library, every pastor's library, and in the homes of laity who want to understand more about the theology that still shapes our synod. The three-volume set is well worth the \$93.99 price tag. Hardcover, about 500 pp. per volume. 15N0565-0567.

Christian Worship: Handbook, C. T. Aufdemberge: This nearly 1,000-page treasure has information on every hymn and hymn writer in *Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal*. It is particularly useful for pastors and teachers in the church. Hardcover, \$49.99, 03N3016.

Essays on Church Fellowship, Curtis Jahn, ed.: Not since the days of controversy between the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod in the 1950s has the subject of church fellowship been more in the forefront of the church. This anthology brings together important documents on the subject from those days until now. Hardcover, 499 pp., \$29.99, 15N0573.



Dr. Theodore Otto at St. John, Wauwatosa, Wis. Otto has been playing organ for over 70 years.

Majestic music, masterful musician

When 10-year-old Theodore Otto played for his baby brother Karl's baptism, he didn't know that was the first year of over 70 in which he would be playing the organ for church.

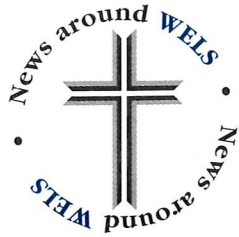
But now for over 70 years worshippers have heard his praise-filled playing.

"He plays a better sermon from the organ than I preach from the pulpit," said Karl J. Otto, his brother and for-

mer pastor at St. John, Wauwatosa, Wis., where Ted has played organ, at least part-time, for over 60 years.

Now Ted, a retired dentist, plays at Grace church and Peace church in Tucson, and St. John in Wauwatosa, during the summer. Former members of St. John still return to hear him—even remaining in the pews at the close of the service to hear his spontaneous postludes.

Margaret Madson



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.

How are the Sunday school and Lutheran elementary school lessons organized?

Sunday schools and Lutheran elementary schools will use the same resource. The approach to teaching will be similar. The Teacher's Guide contains a variety of ideas and activi-

ties that can be used for both settings. Teachers will find more than can be used in a one-or two-day setting. The Sunday school and Lutheran elementary school lessons can be scheduled so there is little or no duplication. Congregations with Lutheran elementary schools that are interested in having all children attend Sunday school will appreciate this feature. Lutheran elementary schools will naturally offer more because they have more time.

Why is the cost so high?

This perception is inaccurate. The cost isn't high. Christ-Light resources are a very competitive product. There is nothing comparable on the market. Resources and learning materials contained in the curriculum are quality materials.

With all of the material that will be available, how will we know what to buy and when?

The challenge is to transform what appears complex into something that is simple to understand. When the curriculum is introduced through district workshops, a curriculum planner will organize the material in a way that will make it easy to implement and to order the material as it becomes available.

rē·li·giōn

Defining religion

chancel: The area around the altar in a church building from which the presiding minister leads the worship service; the chancel is also called the sanctuary or apse.

collect: a formal prayer used in a worship service. The collect follows this pattern: (1) the addressing of God, (2) an attribute of God or the basis for approaching God, (3) the petition or request, (4) the reason for the petition, (5) the doxology or expression of praise to God.

Directors resign

Two long-time synod employees resigned in November.

Cal Patterson resigned as Director of Finance and Treasurer. Patterson served from February 1982 in the Fiscal Services area of the former Board of Trustees, which under synod restructuring is Support Services.

Richard Sonntag resigned as Director of Benefits for the WELS VEBA and pension plans. He served the VEBA and Pension Commissions since June 1984, during which time he worked to provide improved health and pension benefits for WELS called workers.

SYMBOLS For Your Life



Symbol: Lamp

Background and meaning: This familiar symbol comes directly from the Bible—Psalm 119:105. "Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path." God's wisdom, not our own, will guide us through to eternal life. God's Word gives us a guide for life.

Bible gems: "You are my lamp, O Lord; the Lord turns my darkness into light" (2 Samuel 22:29). "You, O Lord, keep my lamp burning; my God turns my darkness into light" (Psalm 18:28). "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path" (Psalm 119:105). "For these commands are a lamp, this teaching is a light, and the corrections of discipline are the way to life" (Proverbs 6:23).

A symbol for your life: How is our God a lamp for us? What is the light referred to in 2 Samuel 22 and Psalm 18? Usually a lamp is a reference to God's Word. Why? What happens if you are in a dark room and don't use a lamp? How is this a picture of a person without the guidance of Scripture?



Americans find common ground on dread topic—death

Americans of a wide range of faiths often find common ground on a topic they dread: death.

A study conducted by American Health Decisions shows Americans fear being hooked up to machines at death, don't talk about their fears, and put off writing dying wishes because the subject is uncomfortable. The study included 385 people in 32 cities.

"These findings challenge the presumption held by many that ethnic and religious differences, as well as age, account for the big differences with respect to people's attitudes about preferences at the end of life," said Beverly A. Tyler, lead author of the study. No matter who the people are, or what their background is, the fears are the same, Tyler said.

"Americans from diverse backgrounds want the same thing," Tyler said. "A humane, compassionate, and trustworthy process for dying that allows them as much control as possible over what happens at the end of their lives."

Other findings showed that Americans don't feel close enough to their physicians to discuss death-related issues. Some assume their families will know what to do at the time of death even though the issue hasn't been discussed. And others don't believe their expressed wishes will be followed.

"What's clear from this study is that one of the things that ails this country is the process of dying in and of itself," Tyler said. "We need to educate people about their choices and change the way the health care system addresses the dying."

WISCONSIN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD Financial report

CONGREGATION MISSION SUBSCRIPTION PERFORMANCE

Nine months ended Sept. 30, 1997

	Total Subscription			Offerings Received			
	Communicants 12/31/96	1997	Year to Date Projected	September Offerings	Nine Months Offerings	Percent of Sbscrptn	Annldz Ave Per Commun
Arizona-California	17,019	\$990,894	\$665,144	\$95,071	\$683,701	102.7%	\$53.56
Dakota-Montana	9,313	427,354	256,683	25,632	257,377	100.3	36.85
Michigan	37,016	2,134,950	1,368,889	178,854	1,350,254	98.6	48.64
Minnesota	43,576	2,381,269	1,505,807	158,508	1,457,137	96.8	44.59
Nebraska	10,126	573,107	343,040	47,722	360,471	105.1	47.46
North Atlantic	3,696	312,620	221,278	24,243	224,090	101.3	80.84
Northern Wis.	61,316	2,491,834	1,540,526	168,765	1,552,262	100.8	33.75
Pacific Northwest	4,890	273,134	180,485	15,626	181,871	100.8	49.59
South Atlantic	6,453	426,791	305,030	33,449	296,608	97.2	61.29
South Central	4,357	377,004	260,071	35,070	281,504	108.2	86.15
Southeastern Wis.	57,805	3,340,777	2,039,408	212,955	1,930,922	94.7	44.54
Western Wis.	59,810	3,036,217	1,941,984	215,617	1,882,404	96.9	41.96
Total - This Year	315,377	16,765,951	10,628,300	1,211,512	10,458,601	98.4	44.22
Total - Last Year	315,099	16,517,537	10,432,413	1,048,683	10,275,061	98.5	43.48

CURRENT BUDGETARY FUND

Statement of activities / Three months ended September 30

	1997 actual	1996 actual	1997 budget
Changes in Unrestricted Net Assets			
Revenues:			
Congregational Mission Offerings	\$ 3,504,666	\$3,455,708	\$3,390,000
Gifts and memorials	3,093,862	2,216,216	2,674,000
Bequest/planned giving	83,061	392,390	134,000
Tuition and fees	3,261,623	2,744,496	2,891,000
Other	54,914	37,547	29,000
Transfers-endwmt/trust earnings	74,687	66,947	65,000
Transfers-gift trust	2,030,571	1,884,624	2,064,000
Transfers-continuing programs	1,139,181	964,486	1,274,000
Transfers-other	10	-	-
Total revenues	13,242,575	11,762,414	12,521,000
Expenditures:			
Home Missions Division	2,016,072	1,688,795	2,370,000
World Missions Division	2,084,174	2,103,658	2,394,000
Ministerial Education Division	6,063,661	5,477,541	6,058,000
Parish Services Division	340,595	323,873	429,000
Administration Services Division	1,259,254	1,814,891	1,575,000
Total expenditures	11,763,756	10,688,848	12,826,000
Changes in Unrestricted Net Assets	1,478,819	1,073,566	
Changes in Temp Restricted Net Assets			
Gifts and memorials	63,200	-	-
Bequest/planned giving	88,000	-	-
Change in value of trust agreements	(1,700)	-	-
Satisfaction of restrictions	(2,085,000)	(2,111,9500)	-
Total revenues	(1,935,500)	(2,111,9500)	
Change in temp restricted net assets	(1,935,500)	(2,111,9500)	
Net assets - beginning of year	5,909,760	5,109,960	
Net assets - end of period	\$ 5,453,079	\$ 4,071,576	

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

	Sept. 30, 1997	Sept. 30, 1996
Assets:		
Cash and cash equivalents	2,054,939	2,360,955
Due from other funds	42,151	-
Accounts receivable-cash adv.	101,750	97,250
Cash advances-schools	45,074	-
Other accounts receivable	67,542	144,352
Contributions receivable	3,329,327	2,585,317
Mortgage note receivable	17,790	19,567
Allowance for doubtful acct	(92,000)	(92,000)
Prepaid expenses	29,448	36,080
Total assets	\$ 5,596,021	\$5,151,521
Liabilities and net assets:		
Due to other funds	-	35,970
Due to schools	-	833,305
Accounts payable	142,942	210,670
Total liabilities	142,942	1,079,945
Unrestricted net assets	2,123,752	1,486,259
Temp restricted net assets	3,329,327	2,585,317
Total net assets	5,453,079	4,071,576
Total liab. and net assets	\$5,596,021	\$5,151,521



Scientists: religious faith has health benefits

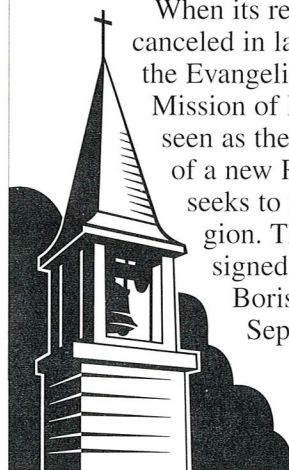
A group of leading scientists has concluded that sincerely held religious beliefs and practices can have a positive impact on physical and mental health.

The scientists said faith helps ward off serious physical or mental illness, provides better coping skills once illness sets in, and enhances recovery. They also said religious faith is an advantage in overcoming alcohol or drug abuse.

Everett Worthington, a psychology professor at Virginia Commonwealth University, said religious faith based on "extrinsic," or social reasons, appears not to provide the same health benefits derived from "intrinsic" faith, or faith based solely on deeply held beliefs.

The Ministry of Justice in the Republic of Khakassia, Russia, reversed its decision to revoke the registration of a Lutheran parish. But the matter is "far from being settled," according to Novosibirsk-based Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod missionary Jeffrey Thormodson, who "mentors" the parish's deacon.

"We fully expect another challenge to the mission's registration," said Thormodson. "A lawyer has been hired, and preparations are being made."



When its registration was canceled in late September, the Evangelical Lutheran Mission of Khakassia was seen as the first casualty of a new Russian law that seeks to regulate religion. The law was signed by President Boris Yeltsin in September 1997.

"While the new law has been passed and is effec-

tive, no one can really say how it will be implemented," Thormodson said. The Russian government is writing regulations that will give local governments instructions on how to enforce the law, he said, and those regulations are expected to be released soon.

The two Russian national pastors said that even though the parish is open, they expect resistance from government authorities. Khakassia's religious-affairs official told them he would "continue to do everything he can to close the parish."

A news service in Russia reported that the congregation has so far experienced no physical interference with its activities. Worship services and visits to rural villages are continuing, but the mood of the parish is tense.

[News and Information Division, Board for Communication Services, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.]

See the December 1997 NL for more information on the law and how it affects the WELS missions in Russia. —ed.

S.C. court: viable fetus is a "person"

The South Carolina state Supreme Court has ruled that a viable fetus is a "person" covered by the state's child abuse law.

The ruling upheld the 1992 conviction of a woman who pleaded guilty to child neglect after her baby was born with traces of cocaine in its system. The woman was sentenced to eight years in prison.

"The consequences of abuse or neglect that takes place after birth often pale in comparison to those resulting from abuse suffered by the viable fetus before birth. This policy of prevention supports a reading of

the word 'person' to include viable fetuses," *The New York Times* quoted the ruling as saying.

Lawyers for the woman said they will appeal the case to the U.S. Supreme Court.

"If a fetus is a person, everything a pregnant woman does is potentially child abuse, abortion is murder, and women lose the right to make medical decisions on their own behalf," said Lynn Paltrow, one of the lawyers representing the woman.

She said that giving the fetus the same legal status as a child will have dire consequences. For example, if a

woman using drugs during a pregnancy can be prosecuted for child abuse, so also could women who smoke or drink or fail to get prenatal care, the lawyers said.

In its ruling, the court also rejected the lawyers' contention that the prosecution had violated the woman's constitutional right to privacy.

"It strains belief . . . to argue that using crack cocaine during pregnancy is encompassed within the constitutionally recognized right of privacy," the court said in its 3-2 decision.

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 IN MINISTRY

Pastors:

Berg, John W., from Bethany, Kenosha, Wis., to Hope, Fremont, Calif.

Goens, Brian L., from Good Shepherd, Cheyenne, Wyo., to Zion, Bonesteel S.D./St. Paul, Naper, Neb.

Green, M. Robert, from Good Shepherd exp., Livermore, Calif., to Trinity, Temple, Tex.

Luetke, Joel T., from Resurrection, Virginia Beach, Va., to Zion, Olivia, Minn.

Pommeranz, Norman E., from Our Savior, Perry, Mich., to retirement.

Rosenberg, Ralph R., from Abiding Peace, Greenville, S.C., to Bethlehem, Hortonville, Wis.

Sprain, John R., from Emmanuel, Tempe, Ariz., to Surprise exp., Surprise, Ariz.

Waldek, Erich W., from Cross of Christ, Liverpool, N.Y., to retirement

Witte, Harvey A., from Apostles of Christ, Wauwatosa, Wis., to retirement

The synod administration building will close:

Jan. 1-2

Callers may leave voice mail messages, 414/256-3888; FAX, 414/256-3899

ANNIVERSARIES

New Ulm, Minn.—St. John (50). Jan. 4. Services, 8, 9:30, and 11 AM. Other dates: March 7-8, May 9-10, July 26, Sept. 26-27, Nov. 21-22. 627 S Washington, New Ulm MN 56073; 507/354-6744.

Watertown, Wis.—St. Luke (150). Celebration services at 7:45 and 10:15 AM every third Sunday from January to June. Dinner, June 21. 1501 S Third St, Watertown WI 53094; 920/261-2120.

Campbellsport, Wis.—Immanuel (75). Jan. 18—service, 2 PM; meal follows. July 12—service, 10:15 AM; church picnic follows. Oct. 25—service, 10:15 AM; church picnic follows. Call ahead to attend dinners. JoAnn Maedke, 920/477-2806.

Greenfield, Wis.—St. Jacobi (125). Jan. 25-26; Feb. 22-23; Mar. 29-30; and April 19-20. Sunday services, 8:15 and 10:45 AM, Monday, 7 PM. 8605 W Forest Home Ave, Greenfield WI 53228; 414/425-3030.

Casa Grande, Ariz.—Grace (50). Feb. 1. Service, 4 PM; refreshments follow. 1805 E Sierra Pkwy, Casa Grande AZ 85222; 520/836-8911.

Denver, Colo.—Zion school (30). Apr. 25—service, 3 PM; open house, 4-6 PM. Apr. 26—potluck follows 10:30 AM service. 2600 S Wadsworth Blvd, Denver CO 80227; 303/985-2334 for reservations.

NEEDED

Electronic pen pals—Elementary students interested in being a pen pal with a student from Atonement, Milwaukee. <atonels@execpc.com>

Bibles—NIV. For worship and Bible class. Good Shepherd, Kearney, Neb. John Borgwardt, 308/234-2999.

Communion ware—Chalice and flagon for common cup communion. Cross of Christ, Boise, Idaho. Pastor J. Steinbrenner, 208/375-3992 or Graham Taylor, 888-321-8402; <grahamtaylor@execu.net>

Preacher—Vacation in the Black Hills. Two nights free lodging at the Shady Rest Motel in exchange for conducting a Sunday service (Vacancy pastor at Shepherd of the Hills, Custer, S.D.) 1-800-567-8259.

COMING EVENTS

Women's retreat—WELS/ELS Ladies Retreat. Jan. 9-11. Woodland's Lutheran Retreat Village, Monteverde, Fla. Judy Becker, 941/355-6591 or pager, 941/750-1061

Family open house—for Martin Luther College. Feb. 7, 8:30-11:30 AM; April 24, 1998, 3-6 PM. MLC, 1995 Luther Ct, New Ulm MN 56073; 507/354-8221; FAX, 507/354-8225; <mlcadmit@mlc-wels.edu>

Regional campus rallies—Information will be mailed about six weeks prior to each rally. Karen Marshall, 414/256-3279 or Dan Heins, 507/437-6948. **San Antonio, Tex.**—Feb. 20-22, **Minneapolis**—Mar. 27-29, **Philadelphia**—Apr. 17-19, **Phoenix**—Apr. 17-19, **Atlanta**—Apr. 24-26, **Pullman, Wash.**—May 1-3

Focus on Ministry weekend—Martin Luther College. Mar. 19-21. For 10th-12th graders interested in learning about studying to be a pastor, teacher, or staff minister. MLC, 1995 Luther Ct, New Ulm MN 56073; 507/354-8221; FAX, 507/354-8225; <mlcadmit@mlc-wels.edu>

Women's retreat—Today's Christian Women's retreat. Mar. 27-29. Lansing Sheraton Hotel, Lansing, Mich. Laurie, 248/391-1133.

Tour—hosted by OWLS. 10-day tour of the Holy Land. Mar. 23-Apr. 1. Lloyd Huebner, 414/677-5420 or Harris Kaesmeyer, 517/793-1020.

Alcoholic awareness retreat—15th annual retreat for recovering alcoholics and family members. Apr. 24-26. Wonderland Camp and Conference Center, Wis. (about 30 miles south of Milwaukee). John Cook, Wisconsin Lutheran Christian Counseling, 6800 N 76 St, Milwaukee WI 53223; 414/353-5005; <wlcfcs@execpc.com>

European choral/history tour—Sing the music of Renaissance and Baroque masters at the places where they lived and worked in England, Holland, and Germany. June 8-26. Credit available for music or history through Martin Luther College. Roger Hermanson <hermanra-fac@mlc-wels.edu> or Mark Lenz <lenzmj-fac@mlc-wels.edu>, MLC, 1995 Luther Ct, New Ulm MN 56073; 1-800-686-4142.

Holy Land tour—11-day tour of Israel and Jordan. June 10-20. Cost: \$2,395. Registration deadline: March 15. Host: Pastor Michael Dietz, 920/435-7970.

Luther tour—Tour Lutherland, stops in Germany, Switzerland, and Austria. June 27-July 10. Hosts: Pastor James and Cheryl Diener, 213 W Badger

St, Waupaca WI 54981; 715/258-7203; FAX, 715/258-0616; <jimdiener@juno.com>

Martin Luther College music camp—July 5-10. Activities focus on keyboard experiences. Participants will play and learn about piano, organ, harpsichord, and electronic keyboards. For children ages 12-14, who have completed grade 6, 7, or 8. Requirement: two years of keyboard lessons. Cost: \$190 (includes dorm, meals, and tour fees). Special Services, MLC, 1995 Luther Ct, New Ulm MN 56073; 507/354-8221: <www.mlc-wels.edu>

Martin Luther College Midsummer Adventure—Christian fellowship and enrichment learning camp for children ages 10-12. July 5-10. Includes worship, computer education, physical education, music, science, reading, mathematics, and nature study. Taught by college staff, Lutheran elementary school teachers. All children stay in the dorm. First-come basis. Cost: \$150 (includes housing, meals, and fees). Special Services, MLC, 1995 Luther Court, New Ulm, MN 56073; 507/354-8221. Apply on the MLC home page <www.mlc-wels.edu>

National campus rally—Dec. 27-30, 1998 in Madison, Wis. Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel, 220 W Gilman St, Madison WI 53703; 608/257-1969; <tjstichm@students.wisc.edu> or <lenjling@students.wisc.edu>

AVAILABLE

Pews—Fifteen 10 ft. wooden pews. Free for cost of shipping. Good Shepherd, Kearney, Neb. John Borgwardt, 308/234-2999.

Organ—4-rank Wicks organ, 2 manuals & pedal. St. John, Pardeeville, Wis. 608/429-3789.

SERVICE TIMES

Eagle, Colo.—Planning a trip to Colorado's ski country? Worship at Mountain Valley in Eagle, 30 miles west of Vail on I-70. For time and location, contact Pastor Brent Merten, PO Box 3547, Eagle CO 81631; 970/328-6718; <mtvalley@vail.net>

NAMES WANTED

Benton Harbor, Mich.—Former choir members for anniversary concert on Feb. 22 for 100th anniversary of St. Matthew. Myrth Kremer, 6390 Territorial Rd, Benton Harbor MI 49022; 616/468-4078 or Aneita Mummaw, 2266 Riverview Ct, Benton Harbor MI 49022; 616/925-5550.

Memphis, Tenn.—Names and addresses of former members of Gloria Dei for 25th anniversary celebration on July 21, 1998. Don Schuppe, 6448 Wynfrey Place, Memphis TN 38120; 901/747-2014; <dfstn@aol.com>

Denver, Colo.—Name, address, year confirmed, and years attended Zion school for 30th anniversary. L. Merklinger, c/o Zion, 2600 S Wadsworth Blvd, Denver CO 80227; 303/985-2334; FAX, 303/985-2466; <ZionLuth@ix.netcom.com>

Kodiak/Valdez/S.E. Alaska/Sitka/Skagway/Ketchikan, Alaska—Pastor Fred Voss, 11600 Elmore Rd, Anchorage AK 99516-2119; 907/345-6129; <fvoss@juno.com>

Boise, Idaho—Amazing Grace exp. Pastor Tom Spiegelberg, 5751 S Hollyhock Pl, Boise Idaho 83716; 208/331-3062; <AGRACEWELS@aol.com>

Hot Springs Village, Ark.—A.W. Schupmann, 9 Meseta Pl, Hot Springs Village AR 71909; 501/922-4125.

Two kinds of wisdom

The kind of wisdom that can make a difference comes only from God and leads to better living.

Mark E. Braun

James had hammered hard on phony faith; now he criticized fake wisdom. Some folks were crowing, apparently, about how “wise” and “learned” they were. Maybe they knew lots of facts, or perhaps they could discuss learned theories.

Is that what it means to be wise?

See where your wisdom comes from

Some wisdom, James wrote, is “earthly, unspiritual, of the devil” (3:15). Such wisdom may be discovered by exploring the world God made or by examining human achievement and behavior. But such wisdom also may be animated by Satan and his wicked angels—hostile to God, bent on spoiling life and damning sinners.

By contrast, **“the wisdom that comes down from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere” (3:17)**. Such wisdom aims not primarily at the intellectual but at the good and noble. Cleansed of ulterior motives, averse to provoking squabbles and strife, God’s wisdom won’t demand its rights but

is eager to correct what’s wrong. It obeys its elders, shows mercy to the distressed, never vacillates.

**A high I.Q. doesn’t
guarantee a warm heart
or a worthwhile life.**

God so loved the world that he did more than provide a description of heavenly wisdom. He gave us a demonstration. Jesus was perfectly pure in heart, among us to restore peace between a rebel world and his heavenly Father. He never insisted that others wait on him, but touched us with free, generous mercy. He loved us all alike. Though he was in very nature God, he went to his death for us. Glorified and ascended, he remains the same yesterday, today, and forever.

“Christ Jesus has become for us wisdom from God” (1 Corinthians 1:24).

See what your wisdom leads to

“Stupid is as stupid does,” said Forrest Gump, but the opposite is true too: wisdom is as wisdom does.

Your walls may be papered with diplomas, your

SAT scores through the roof. But if bitterness, envy, or selfish ambition mark your life, all this boasted-of wisdom is so much pompous gas. A high I.Q. doesn’t guarantee a warm heart or a worthwhile life. Making people smarter doesn’t make them better: educate a thief, and instead of stealing out of a boxcar, he’ll defraud the whole railroad.

“Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom” (3:13). Joseph remained pure, though he faced great temptation. Abraham generously let Lot have first choice. Isaac did what his father asked, without questioning. Zaccheus overflowed with new thankfulness. Peter learned that God does not show favoritism. Wisdom is as wisdom does.

Our world doesn’t need more academics who collect awards and conduct research, but divorce scholarship and education from real life. The kind of wisdom that can make a difference comes only from God and leads to better living.

There’s no time to be all wrapped up in oneself, because God’s wisdom is all wrapped up in serving others.

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

real faith for real life
james

The Orthodox attraction

Joel C. Gerlach

The man Orthodox Christians honor as the 270th successor to St. Andrew the Apostle spent a month in the United States last fall. He is Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, the head of a 300-million-member church body.

Seldom, if ever, has the Orthodox Church received as much publicity here as it did during the Patriarch's visit. Orthodox churches split from Rome in AD 1054 over the papacy and other issues. The split divided Christianity into Eastern and Western churches. Both churches teach the real presence in the Lord's Supper, venerate Mary, confess the Ecumenical Creeds, and are served by an all-male priesthood. They also share an understanding of the doctrine of justification that believes a person is partly responsible for his salvation.

The influx of converts to Orthodoxy began when Peter Gilquist, an associate of Bill Bright in the Campus Crusade for Christ, led a group of co-workers in a study of writings of the early church fathers. Their search for the "historical core" of Christianity led them to the Orthodox Church in 1987. Gilquist told their story in the book *Coming Home—Why Protestant Clergy are Becoming Orthodox*.

What makes this of interest to us is what converts to Orthodoxy find so attractive. Bishop Seraphim Storheim, who heads the Orthodox Church in Canada, is a former Lutheran. He says it was "the certainty of the Orthodox Church in its practices" that drew him. "It isn't only the stability of the service, it's the stability of what we believe and teach," he noted.

David Smith, a former Protestant clergyman now serving an Orthodox congregation, criticizes the churches "that restructure to please their converts and in the process lose the elements that identify them." He is convinced that the Orthodox Church "as an institution is not going to cave in to the whims of the world, and that is comforting today when so many institutions that once seemed untouchable crumble."

A Religion News Service article on the patriarch's visit to the United States says that many converts "are evangelical Christians, Catholics, or mainstream Protestants drawn to the beauty of Orthodoxy's lush liturgy and the unchanging nature of its doctrine." The Divine Liturgy that Smith uses in his church dates back to the fourth century.

Is there any message here for WELS Lutherans? While there are essential doctrinal differences between Orthodox and Lutheran churches, both are liturgical. Some Lutherans chafe at that. They see liturgy as a handicap to outreach. They contend that less formal worship services are more appealing, especially to baby boomers and the X-generation.

Storheim says that most of the converts to his church are between the ages of 20 and 40. As the secular world spins out of control, churches that offer a tradition of stability and order will look more and more appealing to people seeking respite from the mayhem. That is the Orthodox attraction. We can offer the same thing—together with a biblically correct understanding of the gospel.

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

As the secular world spins out of control, churches that offer . . . stability and order will look more and more appealing to people seeking respite from the mayhem.

How we practice communion

John F. Brug

Why don't Lutherans have communion every Sunday like the Catholics do? The Bible says do this often.

The words "Whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" imply that we should celebrate the Lord's Supper often, but they do not define "often"—daily? weekly? monthly? How frequently churches celebrate communion is, therefore, a matter of custom, but also reflects to a degree the different beliefs the churches have about the Lord's Supper.

Reformed churches do not believe that the Lord's Supper is a true means of grace that gives forgiveness of sins or that we receive Christ's body and blood along with the bread and wine. Because they view the Lord's Supper as a commemorative meal, most Reformed churches celebrate it relatively infrequently, in some cases just once a year on Maundy Thursday.

In contrast, Roman Catholics view the Lord's Supper as a sacrifice that presents again Christ's sacrifice for sin. Masses may be said, that is, communion may be celebrated, even for the benefit of the dead in purgatory. Priests, therefore, often celebrated mass without a congregation to receive it. The new Catechism of the Catholic Church says "the Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life." Most Catholic churches, therefore,

offer it very frequently, even daily.

Lutherans believe the Lord's Supper offers forgiveness of sins as a result of the once-and-for-all sacrifice of Christ on the cross but that it cannot benefit the dead, nor should it be celebrated apart from a congregation to receive it (private communion for the sick being an exception). Lutherans, therefore, generally celebrated the Lord's Supper more than the Reformed (a commemoration), and less than Catholics (a sacrifice that continues the work of paying for sin).

Formerly, many Lutheran churches in America celebrated the Lord's Supper once a month or less. This relatively infrequent celebration was at least in part a reaction to Catholicism's overemphasis on the sacrament at the expense of preaching. Lutheran churches tended to center on preaching as the "source and summit" of Christian worship. Recently, however, WELS congregations have tended to celebrate the Lord's supper more frequently. Many congregations now have communion twice a month. A small percentage observe it weekly.

I usually hear our communion practice referred to as "closed communion." Recently I heard "close communion." Which is right?

In the past, confessional Lutherans have regularly used the term "closed communion" to

express the scriptural truth that we should welcome to the Lord's Supper only those Christians who are properly instructed, who recognize the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the Sacrament, who are repentant, and who are united with us in doctrine. The Sacrament is closed to all others to guard them against eating and drinking judgment on themselves (1 Corinthians 11:27-31). Just as a road is closed when a bridge is washed out to protect travelers from harm, communion is closed to those who are not prepared to receive it beneficially.

More recently some people have preferred the term "close communion," which emphasizes the positive truth that the Lord's Supper expresses a close fellowship between all who attend the sacrament together.

The two terms complement each other. To be truly "close," communion must be "closed" to those who are not one with us in faith. Although "closed" is the more traditional term, "close" can be used as an alternate term, as long as we don't intend to hide that communion is also "closed." The terms simply are two sides of the same coin. You can't have one without the other.

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



Thank you to those who participated in the collection of beta-carotene pills for the WELS clinic in Malawi (request in April '97 NL). We've sent over 1,000 doses to Africa. We learned the "Women's Health Study" received extra calls at the time of the request from nurses checking if they had taken a placebo or the real beta-carotene.

Thank you also to those who donated in other ways to the collection.

*Eunice Westendorf
Hartford, Wisconsin*

The article, "The care of God's children," by John Parlow [Nov. '97] was excellent. In this age of designer clothes and designer religion, this article stands out as it proclaims the simple truth of God's Word. The line I found most provocative was "We are not to do that." [We are not to look down on people because of their physical appearance, simple vocabulary, or simple lifestyle.]

As Christians we are not to do that out of love for our Savior and mercy from our loving Father. It is a message and a statement that desperately needs to be said and used over and over out of love for our fellow man. It's what God would have us do.

*Marlene Ziecker
Springville, New York*

I think two important points were overlooked in "Halloween—a question of judgment" [Oct. '97]. First, Prof. Brug says, "The question then is whether these [unsavory] elements have been sufficiently detached from

Halloween and it has become a secular holiday that can be observed without offensive features." The primary question is not "How do people celebrate Halloween?" but "What is Halloween?" One does not have to look far to find an answer: graveyards appear on lawns; ghosts and skeletons swing from trees; mutilated creatures, murders, and dismemberment are common themes. Halloween is a celebration of death and anything that is associated with death. Regardless of how people "celebrate" the day, its essence does not change.

Second, the author was correct in stating that whether to celebrate Halloween is a question of judgment. It certainly is a question about which Scripture does not speak (adiaphora). It did seem strange, however, that Brug mentioned no Scripture references in his discussion, for Scripture is not silent about the topic of adiaphora.

He might have pointed to Philippians 4:8,9: "Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable if anything is excellent or praiseworthy, think about such things."

It is a question of judgment, but as in all matters where Scriptures are silent, let us not give people the impression that the only question they should ask is, "What's wrong with this practice?", but instead let us encourage them to ask, "What about this practice is good, right, excellent, praiseworthy . . . ?"

*Daniel Rebers
Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin*

Through my Bible in 3 years

February 1998

1. Luke 1:1-25
2. Lk. 1:26-38
3. Lk. 1:39-56
4. Lk. 1:57-80
5. Lk. 2:1-20
6. Lk. 2:21-40
7. Lk. 2:41-52
8. Lk. 3:1-22
9. Lk. 3:23—4:13
10. Lk. 4:14-30
11. Lk. 4:31-44
12. Lk. 5:1-11
13. Lk. 5:12-26
14. Lk. 5:27—6:11
15. Lk. 6:12-36
16. Lk. 6:37-49
17. Lk. 7:1-17
18. Lk. 7:18-35
19. Lk. 7:36—8:3
20. Lk. 8:4-21
21. Lk. 8:22-39
22. Lk. 8:40-56
23. Lk. 9:1-17
24. Lk. 9:18-36
25. Lk. 9:37-56
26. Genesis 1, 2
27. Gen. 3
28. Gen. 4, 5

Peter the Barber once asked Martin Luther how he, an ordinary kind of guy, could read the Bible and benefit from it.

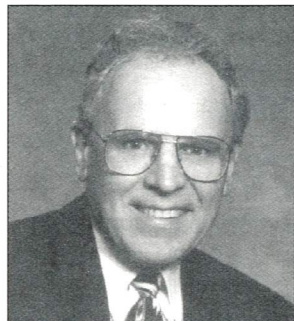
Luther answered:

Ask yourself:

1. What does God tell me here?
2. What makes me glad?
3. What makes me sad?
4. What do I want to pray for?

Try it in your Bible reading.

The relevant church



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

WIIFM?
In the light of
Jesus,
I have life—
abundant life,
eternal life.

In giving writing tips to others, I have two suggestions I often repeat:

1. Apply the “So what?” test. What difference do my words make for the reader? Why should the reader care?

2. Tune into station WIIFM. Answer the question, “What’s In It For Me?”

Readers will read only those things they think have personal value for them.

In the spiritual realm, I have heard of this phenomenon called our “yearning for relevancy.” It’s real and has a profound effect on some churches. We know too well that a dominant complaint of visitors who never return to church is that they found the experience “irrelevant to my life.”

So churches do things to help create a sense of relevancy. They add and improve programs, build relationships, promote causes, solicit loyalty, minister to the whole person. And well they should! It sure beats being aloof, out-of-touch, insensitive, impersonal, inactive. But it also may miss the point.

Here’s where we ask, “So what?” And to answer we need to look closely at what is “relevant.” Many would say, for example, that what is relevant is relative. It depends on each person’s feelings. In the name of relevancy, then, we might avoid ever hurting anyone’s feelings.

Or I think of scientist Candace Pert who abandoned atheism because, scientifically, religion positively affects how the body and mind work as one. Suddenly, religion was relevant to her well-being. However, her interest centered on her physical and psychological, “scientifically observable,” well-being.

One definition of relevancy then might be “what fits into my comfort zone.” And the spiritual application might become

“What can we do to make you feel good about yourself?” And relevancy might be spelled “M-E.”

Still, the relevancy test must be met. If, in fact, the church is irrelevant to my life, why would I ever go there?

Look again.

Life itself and, consequently, death make the biggest differences to me. It is clearly relevant whether I am alive or dead. Nothing else matters until those issues are decided.

“Elementary,” you say. “But if I am reading this, I must be alive.”

Physically, yes. Spiritually? That’s where the church gets relevant. It directs me to God’s Word for a spiritual check up. It examines me in the penetrating light of God’s commands. And it pronounces me “dead”—dead in transgressions and sins, dead as the wages of sin, dead in a body that dies because of sin. At that point, it holds out no hope, and darkness envelops my being. That does not make me feel good, but I need to know that I am, even now, a decaying stench before God. That’s relevant.

Then the church shows me the light of Jesus Christ. It tells me he didn’t sin, and now his perfect life is counted for me. It tells me that he, the one and only Son of God, died to pay for my sins and rose to assure me of life. WIIFM? In the light of Jesus, I have life—abundant life, eternal life. I will not find life anywhere else.

Life in Jesus, as it grows strong in faith, affects all I say and do. It changes who I am and how I act. It puts others first and myself last. It makes me want to share life with everyone. That’s relevant.

In church, then, relevancy is spelled “J-E-S-U-S.”

Gary P. Baumler



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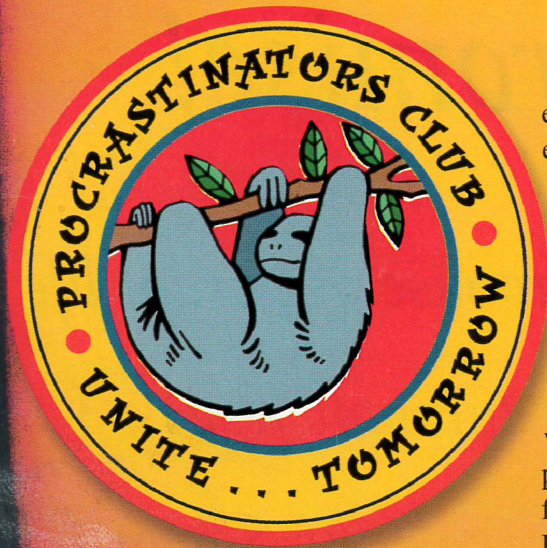
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Procrastinators Club

Sometimes doing nothing is the best thing you can do—
unless your faith is involved.



Have you heard of the Procrastinators Club? They issued a statement denouncing the War of 1812 as a horrible injustice. I think the statement came out in 1975.

At their 1987 meeting (held last week), they adopted an official motto—"If a thing were really worth doing, someone else would have done it a long time ago"—and an official mascot: a South American three-toed sloth.

A "window of opportunity"

Okay, I made that last part up. But there really is a Procrastinators Club, and their spokesman sounded serious when he said, "Our group is dedicated to the proposition that, at times, the best thing you can do about a problem is nothing. Many problems, if you wait long enough, just go away by themselves."

Kenneth A. Cherney

Yes, there are problems that eventually "just go away." Acne, for example. The Soviet Union, for another. There's some truth to the saying, "Nothing is always a good thing to say. Sometimes it's even a good thing to do."

The key word, though, is "sometimes." There are other times when doing nothing is the worst thing possible. Ask a cancer patient how he would feel if he found out his doctor belonged to the Procrastinators Club. Many problems are solvable only within a certain window of opportunity. Once the window closes, the opportunity is gone forever.

Our "time of grace"

That's definitely true in spiritual things. God gives each of us a certain number of years on this earth. Some of us get more, some fewer, but none of us is here permanently. The years of your life are your "time of grace"—the time God has given you to get to know him through the good news of love and forgiveness in his Son, Jesus Christ. It's the time God gives you to come to faith, to have your faith strengthened through the gospel message, and to glorify God by a life of worship and praise.

I hope you've used your years—including the past year—that way. And I sincerely hope you're not thinking, "Getting to church would be good—but not right now. I'll make time for God someday, just as

soon as things settle down a little. Meanwhile, don't call me, God—I'll call you. Okay?"

That's the point. One day—and it could be today—God will call us. On that day, our time of grace ends, and eternity begins. After that, those who've taken advantage of God's grace in Christ during this life will continue to enjoy it forever. Those who haven't will see, to their horror, another side to God entirely.

**One day—and it could
be today—God will call
us. On that day, our time
of grace ends, and
eternity begins.**

That is why the apostle Paul pleaded: Don't procrastinate! "Now is the time of God's favor; now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2).

As a wise Christian once said: "To destroy your soul, the devil doesn't have to get you to say 'No' to God.

"All he has to get you to say is 'Not right now.'"

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