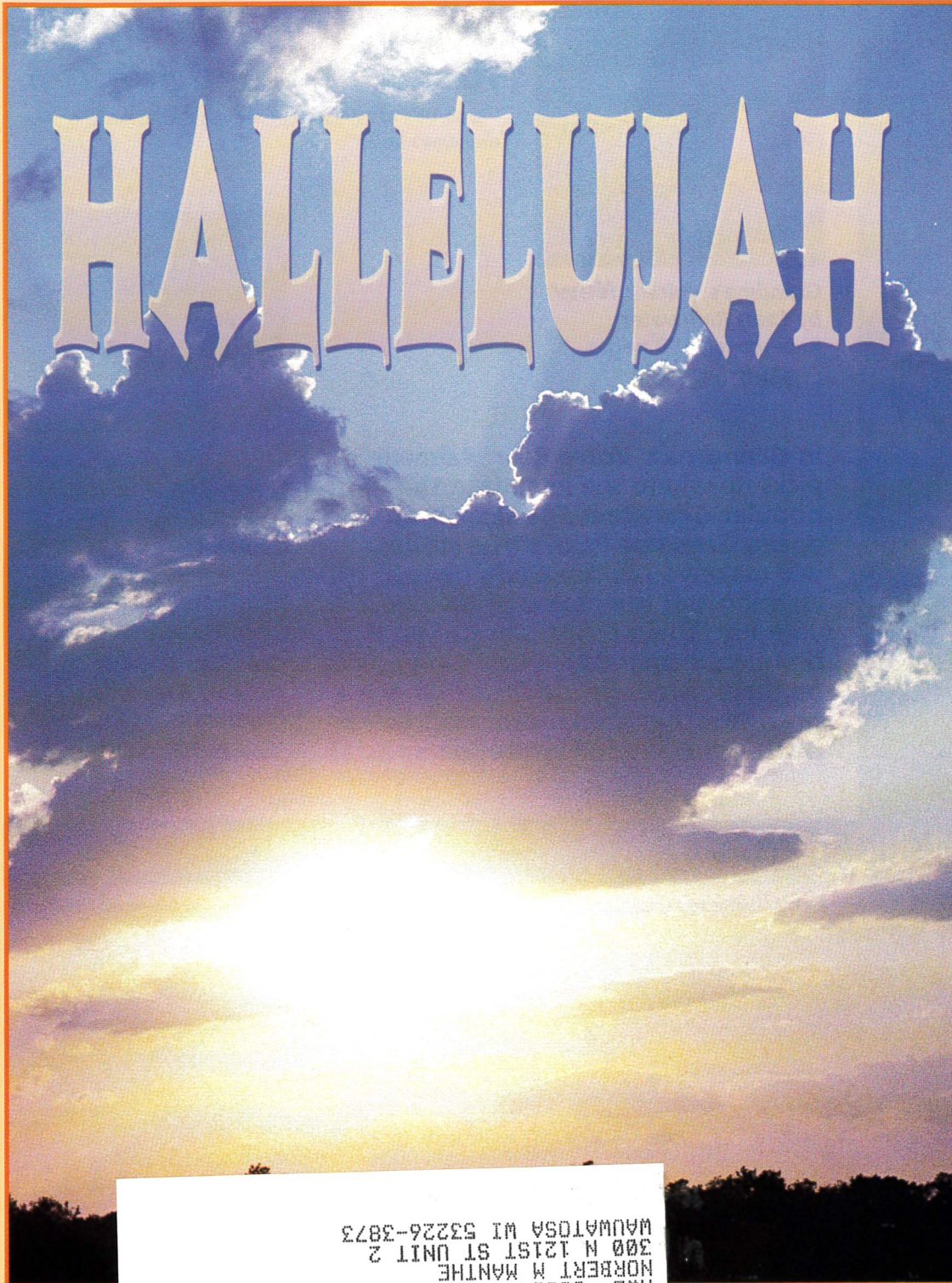


NORTHWESTERN

April 1999

LUTHERAN

THE WORD FROM THE WELS



Jesus died.
But that's
only half of
the story.
Don't miss
the second
half. 8

3 tips to strengthen
confirmation
classes

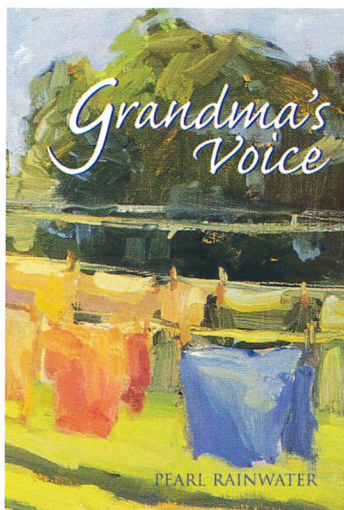
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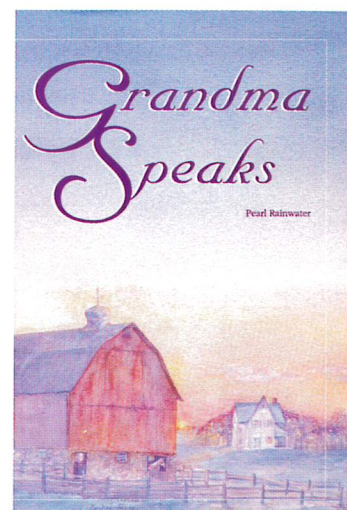
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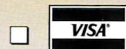
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Because he lives

I know that my Redeemer lives. (Job 19:25)

Thomas A. Westra

“**P**astor, I don’t know how anyone could get through this without Jesus,” she said, with a smile on her face and tears in her eyes. She was in a hospital bed, and we had just finished a devotion based on Psalm 23. Neither of us knew this would be the last time I would see her on this earth—that her Good Shepherd would take her home in just a few hours.

I’ve heard those words from those who have received the sobering news that they have cancer and those who have just learned that they lost their job, from those who are sitting anxiously in the ER waiting area and those who are walking away from a loved one’s freshly dug grave. “Where would we be without Jesus?” “What would I do without my faith?” They are saying: “What a difference it makes in my life that my Savior lived for me, died for me, and lives again!”

What difference does it make?

He lives! So what?

Why do so many people come to church on Easter? Perhaps because they are asking, “Is it true?” Did someone really die and now lives again? Did someone really climb into the ring with death and come out the winner?

Why do so many not come back to church after Easter? Perhaps because they concluded, “Even if someone did beat death, it doesn’t make any difference in my life.”

A man once said to me, “I know Jesus died for my sins. So what?



That was 2,000 years ago. What has he done for me lately?” He was asking, “What does Jesus’ death and resurrection mean for my life right now?”

That’s the reaction of so many.

What a difference it makes

We need to tell them the difference Easter makes. We need to tell them the “so what” of Jesus’ resurrection.

Because he lives, the death of a loved one is not “goodbye forever,” but, “I’ll see you in the morning—the great resurrection morning.” I walk out of the cemetery with the certain hope that because he lives we also will live.

Because he lives, I don’t have to carry around this huge burden of sin, shame, remorse, and regret. I’m free. My crushing debt has been canceled. God accepted the payment that Jesus made for my sins when he suffered on the cross.

Because he lives, I don’t walk into the world alone. He is with me. Job loss? Financial reversal? Terminal illness? It will be okay. I will never face anything that he doesn’t have the resources to handle, and—because he lives—he is with me always, to the very end of this life.

Because he lives, I know his Word is true. In the maze of this crazy and confusing world, I have an unfailing compass that will guide me safely home and never steer me wrong.

Because he lives, I can send my children into a dark and scary world. They’re not alone. He is with them; he will never leave or forsake them. His wise love and his almighty care surround them every step of their life.

Because he lives, I know that my work is not meaningless. Everything doesn’t end in dust and ashes. I am part of an exciting adventure that lasts into eternity.

All because he lives.

NL

Tom Westra is pastor at Beautiful Savior, Cincinnati, Ohio.

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Jesus died,
but now he
is alive again.
His work of
saving the
world is done.

8

bits & pieces



Jesus won. Death lost. This is a fact. If Jesus didn't rise, there would be no point to our faith. But he did—and that's the whole point of our faith. Read more about the certainty of Jesus' resurrection:

- ✓ "Because he lives," p. 3
- ✓ "The ultimate sacrifice . . . and more," p. 8
- ✓ "Who knows? Jesus rose!" back cover



Teens are growing up in a crazy, confusing, and anti-Christian world. Learn tips for parents on raising daughters on p. 10.



Six months after confirmation, about 40 percent of the confirmands have dropped out of church. Does that shock you? It should. Read how we can stop this horrible trend. (p. 18)



We've made a few changes in NL this month:

- ✓ We've **added a new page** called "Potluck." Don't miss it! (Turn to p. 33.)
- ✓ To account for this new page of material, we **decreased the world news to one page**. We plan to bring you as many news items as before—just shorter bits of information.
- ✓ With these new pages, we've **shifted a few article placements**. You'll now find our Readers forum and Editorial comment in the front—on pages 6 & 7.
- ✓ **The table of contents has a new look**. We hope this more inviting format makes it easier for you to find the articles.
- ✓ Some changes you might not notice are the **bigger margins and new fonts**. These, while undetectable to most people, will bring a consistency and an openness to our pages.
- ✓ We hope you like the changes. We want the magazine to invite in first-time readers and continue to welcome our long-time faithful readers. Please let us know what you think. And from all of us at NL . . . Happy Easter! Christ is risen.

—LRB

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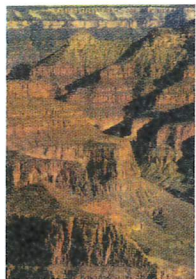
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Regarding “Science through God’s eyes” [Feb.].

Prof. Boehlke was correct to point out the changing dogmas of academia in scientific matters.

One thing that

should have been mentioned is that much if not all of what guides scientists is a strong commitment to methodological naturalism, which *a priori* denies the supernatural.

This same thing takes place in much of biblical scholarship, where form and redaction theories hold sway over many seminaries and religion departments because the idea of supernatural revelation and the possibility that the supernatural phenomena in Scripture might actually be true are discarded for a more “scholarly” naturalism. Thus, everybody should take dogmatic pronouncements of materialism-led quests for truth with a badly needed grain of salt.

Eric Vestrup



Downers Grove, Illinois

Re: Science through God’s eyes. A creationist is one who rejects whatever does not agree with biblical cosmogony, or who believes and teaches what God has told him in Genesis 1 and 2, and elsewhere in Scripture.

In his article, Boehlke asks “How can science be so far from Scripture?” The question is improper. He should ask: “How can evolutionism be so far from Scripture?” The answer is that the evolutionist does not base his thinking on Scripture. As noted above, the creationist is scripturally based and oriented.

Boehlke’s article is a diatribe against those who, in their scientific pursuits and thinking, believe, teach, and practice according to the biblical doctrine of creation. Boehlke says he believes in God’s holy Word. If so, why is he so suspicious of creationists?

Ralph C. Lohrengel

Beverly Hills, Michigan

The February issue, p. 27, contained an article about persecution in Pakistan. The article mentioned that “former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto tried to amend the law, but *HE* backed away when radical Islamic groups called for the death of anyone supporting the change.”

“He,” I believe, is still a “she.”

Small as it is, a factual error in secular matters can erode confidence in what you say in spiritual matters. God’s blessings on your efforts to publish an exciting and inspiring magazine.

Howard Festerling



Langley, British Columbia, Canada

In reading “Your epiphany bough” [Jan.],

I was reminded of my grandmother’s letter when I was assembling material for my family tree.

My grandmother, a regular attendant at Methodist churches, wrote my father and mother and strongly suggested that my sister and I should be taken to “Sunday school regularly and to church, that they may be brought up in a Christian home and I hope they will be good Christian women.” She continues, “Please set the example by attending church and Sunday school yourselves. They will escape so many dangers and be so much safer if they are brought up in the church.” She lived to see both of us enrolled in a Lutheran day school but died before we were confirmed. Later our parents joined.

I am so proud of that letter and wish that today’s parents and grandparents would be strong in seeing that Sundays are for church-going. My family diaries tell of the church being the center of their life during the week.

Would that today’s churches were that important in our daily lives.

June Drummond

Fort Wayne, Indiana

Regarding “Balance in the kingdom” [Feb.].

I read and reread this article with great interest. I was

somewhat disturbed with the innuendoes that may have been intended with the following statements:

“We allocate 70 percent of the congregation’s budget to nurture 121 children while the remaining 30 percent nurtures 1,050 adults and reaches out to 10,000 unchurched folks in our community” and “Our school can be an excellent outreach tool. But reality is, it’s not.”

I was left with the impression that the article wanted to convey the idea that there were few fruits resulting from such a large investment. However, we are treading on dangerous ground when prescribing exactly what results we expect the Holy Spirit to perform as a result of our Christian ministry.

Instead, we should remind ourselves of God’s promise of abundant blessings on our efforts: “So is my Word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it” (Isaiah 55:11).

I was very happy with the following statement from the article: “Our Lutheran elementary schools continue to be a jewel in the crown of WELS ministry.”

In general I agree that a study regarding a “balanced ministry” could have a wholesome effect on kingdom work. However, in our study and future plans toward a more “balanced ministry,” let us continue to support and strengthen what has been and will continue to be the “jewel in the crown of WELS ministry.”

Arthur Glende

New Ulm, Minnesota

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To judge or not to judge

Joel C. Gerlach

“Do not judge, or you too will be judged” (Matthew 7:1). People often cite those familiar words of Jesus when someone admonishes them for improper behavior—as though Jesus intended his words to be an absolute stricture against making any judgments.

Hardly! Jesus also said, “Stop judging by mere appearances, and make a right judgment” (John 7:24). Making a right judgment assumes there is a standard to use to determine if something is right or wrong. It also assumes that we approve what is right and condemn what is wrong.

Our society once did that. Our founding fathers brought a civil code based on a Judeo-Christian ethic. For 200 years that ethic gave shape and substance to a free nation. It was the essence of our greatness.

Not any more. Our nation has been swept up in a postmodern age. An absolute standard of right and wrong is passé. Truth is relative and personal. It depends on one’s perspective.

That view of truth has consequences. In *One Nation after All*, sociologist Alan Wolfe observes, “Middle-class Americans are reluctant to pass judgment on how other people act or think.” How can they if there is no reliable standard? Wolfe suggests that the only commandment still in force is “Thou shalt not judge.”

In a graduation address at the U.S. Naval Academy, William Bennett summed up the dire consequences of moral relativism: “We are a nation that has experienced so much social regression, so much decadence, in so short a time, that we have become the kind of place to which civilized countries used to send missionaries.”

While we ascend to mind-boggling heights of knowledge and power, we simultaneously sink to new depths in

which character, virtue, honor, and time-tested values are conspicuous by their absence. We have lost our capacity as a society to tell good from evil. “Free Willy” (the whale) becomes a moral imperative, but not saving unwanted babies.

Public indifference to the White House scandal is an alarming example of the moral relativism that threatens to destroy us. The 70-plus percent approval rating of a president who acknowledges that he committed adultery and misled the country prompted columnist Mary McGrory to call him “our first president to be strengthened by charges of immorality.” Her criticism was directed not so much at a wayward president as it was at a confused populace that condones what should be condemned. What else can we expect when our ability to make moral judgments has been mortally impaired?

The postmodern rejection of objective, absolute truth presents a challenge to every Christian citizen. When someone tries to put you off with the question, “Who are you to judge?” don’t let that question go unanswered. Tactfully help that person to understand the implications of such a view. Point out that if we cannot make judgments, neither can we maintain justice. Imagine the chaos if jurors were to say, “Who are we to judge?” How could we ever have put an end to slavery or ushered in the civil rights movement if there was no standard other than popular opinion by which to make judgments?

What Jesus said about making right judgments was said in a different context. But his words are still pertinent, more than ever. To judge or not to judge is not really an option in the civic arena any more than it is in the realm of spiritual things.

Joel Gerlach is serving a vacancy at Our Savior’s, East Brunswick, New Jersey.

We have lost
our capacity
as a society
to tell good
from evil.

The ultimate

Jesus' death on Calvary's cross and the flowing of blood from his sacred veins accomplished more than all the previous sacrifices combined.

Have you read any good books lately? I'm not thinking of old classics or current bestsellers. I'm thinking of books of the Bible like, say, Leviticus. Frankly, I don't find Leviticus very interesting. In fact, it can be downright depressing. However, if you ever start to feel that Jesus Christ is not all that important, then a few chapters from Leviticus will quickly jolt you from your complacency.

Burnt offerings, grain offerings, fellowship offerings, sin offerings, guilt offerings—these are all spelled out in great detail. If you and I were living in Old Testament times, we'd be trying to figure out when, where, why, and how to make the proper sacrifice to the Lord. Should our offering be a bull, ram, ewe, or two doves?

Likewise, the priest would have to be very exact as to which parts of an animal to place on the altar and where the blood must be placed. Everything had to be done with precise accuracy according to the Lord's directives. For example, shortly after Nadab and Abihu began their ministry, they "offered unau-

thorized fire before the Lord" (whatever that means), and "fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed them, and they died" (Leviticus 10:1,2). Scary business!

After reading the book of Leviticus, two simple verses from the first epistle of John sound awfully good: "The blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. . . . If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:7,9).

Jesus' crucifixion is just half the story.

Hundreds of thousands, maybe millions of animals were sacrificed on the altar of the tabernacle and later the temple. Rivers of blood flowed from those same altars. But Jesus' death on Calvary's cross and the flowing blood from his sacred veins accomplished more than all the previous sacrifices combined. The writer of Hebrews confirms this by saying that Jesus "has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to

do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Hebrews 9:26). Peter reaffirms it when he writes, "For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God" (1 Peter 3:18).

If Jesus, God's holy Son, had not died on Good Friday in our place, then you and I would be without hope. At least a half dozen times in the book of Leviticus, God's command was clearly stated: "Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy." The words are crystal clear. Living up to them is impossible. Had Jesus not taken our sins to the cross and exchanged them for his perfect righteousness, we'd all stand eternally condemned before almighty God.

But Jesus' crucifixion is just half the story. If Jesus had only died and not returned to life as he had promised, then he would have been no different from the millions of men and women who had gone to their graves before him. His death would have accomplished nothing more than to arouse the sympathy of a few close friends.

sacrifice...

Carl R. Henkel

and more

That's why Good Friday is followed closely by Easter Sunday. Jesus' resurrection to life early that first Easter Sunday morning was God the Father's way of affirming the work of his Son. It was the official guarantee that when Jesus said "It is finished," it was indeed finished. His work of saving the world was done. All sins had been paid for. There was nothing left for anyone else to do. Jesus had died, and now he was alive again to declare his victory to the world. Believe in me, he says, and you'll live too.

If Jesus Christ didn't rise, then you and I could not live in heaven.

One of the things I remember from science class is the mysterious and unique property of water. While other common substances of the earth expand when they grow warmer and contract when they become colder, water reacts in the opposite way. When water reaches the freezing point, it expands. If this

were not so, if ice grew denser than water, and heavier, it would sink to the sunless bottom of things, forever to accumulate its dead weight. Instead, although colder water sinks and warmer levels rise, ice itself is buoyant and floats to the top. If this were not so, there could be no life on earth!

If frozen water didn't float, then you and I could not live on earth. If Jesus Christ didn't rise, then you and I could not live in heaven. Both statements are absolute truth. The former is scientifically proven; the latter is biblically affirmed and accepted in faith. "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. . . . But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead" (1 Corinthians 15:17,20).

There was terrific joy in the hearts of Cleopas and his unnamed companion as they hurriedly ran back from Emmaus to tell their friends in Jerusalem that they had seen Jesus face to face. Alive! Their painful sadness of his death had been replaced by indescribable joy in his resurrection. Now they

knew with absolute certainty that Jesus was indeed the Lamb of God who had taken away all their sins.

New Testament Christians have lived—and died—in that same sure hope. They've been comforted in knowing that all their sins have been washed away in Jesus' blood. They faced death with the certain hope that they will live forever with Jesus in heavenly bliss and glory. By the power of the Spirit, they understood the meaning of Good Friday and the importance of Easter Sunday.

May that sure and certain hope also be yours. Jesus gave up his life on the cross for you. And he arose again—also for you. He died, but he's alive again. Believe it!

Hallelujah!

NI

Carl Henkel is a pastor at Mt. Olive, St. Paul, Minnesota.

How to RAISE godly daughters

Tips to help you raise a unique Christian woman.

Laurie Biedenbender

Raising godly daughters today is like flying a kite in a hurricane. The mighty winds of the world keep battering against us.

Looking for examples

Read the teen mags' headlines: "How to Flirt with Your Crush." "The Better Body Plan." "The Truth About Guys and Girls." Our daughters won't get much truth out of these at best silly and at worst dangerous magazines. As we strive to raise godly daughters, we certainly don't look for guidance there—or in any of the secular media.

Unfortunately, we won't get much help from the Christian book market either. Some evangelicals preach one persona that every Christian woman must acquire: well-dressed, smiling, and carrying a Bible in a quilted bookcover. These self-help books contain chapters on makeup and housecleaning, as if these superficialities constitute commitment to Christ. At the other end of the shelf, we find the "Christian" feminists who trample on the roles of man and woman, which God clearly laid

out at Creation. Their deliberate misinterpretation of Scripture and their rancorous tone also won't help us as we guide our daughters to Christian womanhood.

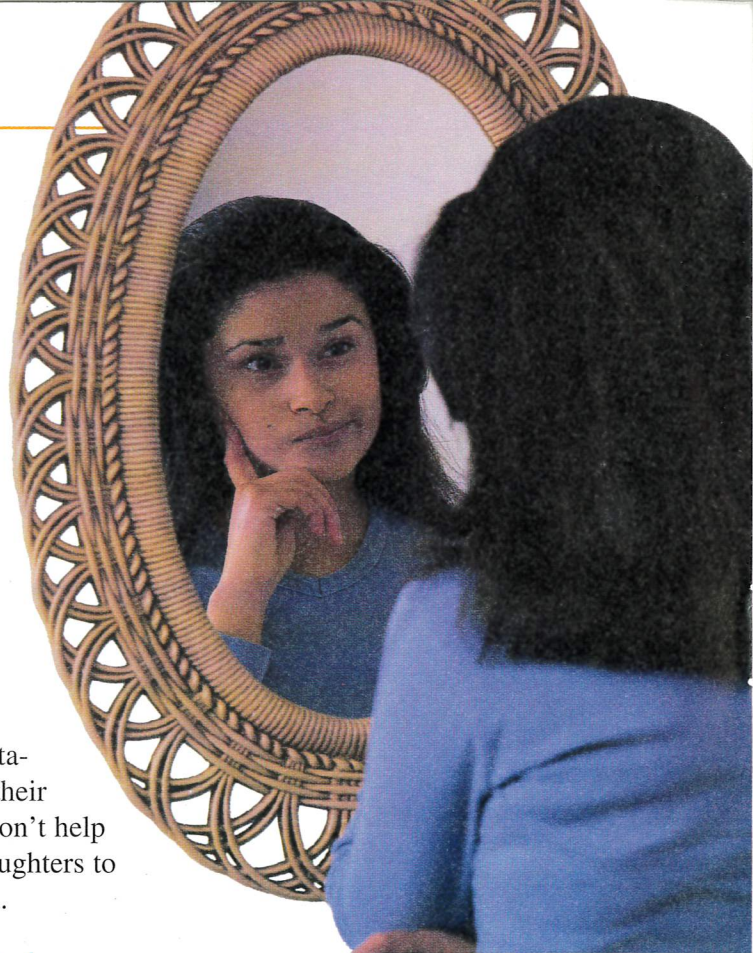
Our girls each have a unique personality, place, and purpose in life.

How about a look at the Bible's women? There's beautiful Sarah, whom Peter praises for calling her husband her master. There's Rebekah, who understood that God wanted her younger son to have the blessing but then took the matter into her own hands. Ruth, who left her people and country for the one true God. Deborah the judge, who encouraged her more timid partner to obey God's calling. Esther, who risked her life to save her people. Martha, who showed her love by serving, and Mary, who chose "what was better" that afternoon in

Bethany. Priscilla, half of the husband-wife team who taught the Word in the early church. And the women of Galilee, who took care of the room-and-board details of Jesus' entourage, kept vigil by the cross when the disciples had vanished, and were graced by our Lord's first visits Easter morning.

Raising a unique child

It's a mixed bag of women. Their examples are only descriptive, not prescriptive, but they show us that there is not one kind of believing woman. Our daughters too are all different: careful thinkers and spontaneous risk-takers, quiet souls and vibrant movers and shakers, confident leaders and happy followers. Thank God for those differences! Thank God he didn't make all



All around us are negative models and ideas of what women should be. But as God says, "Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised." To learn more about the qualities God says are important, read Proverbs 31:10-31.

A dozen ideas for raising godly daughters

- 1 Worship and study the Word together at church and home.
- 2 Lead her on paths of righteousness, trusting Jesus as the only way to heaven and living a life that says thank-you to him.
- 3 Emphasize that her value does not lie in how much she weighs, how many boys like her, or how high her grades are. Her value lies solely in her status as a child of God, created by the Father for a unique purpose, redeemed by the Son for all eternity, and made alive and growing by the Spirit for service on earth.
- 4 Think about your expectations. What's more important, looking

- pretty or working hard? Acting nice or having an honest and loving heart? Being successful or being faithful?
- 5 Encourage the "gentle and quiet spirit" of 1 Peter 3:4 without squelching her. God doesn't ask her to keep all her thoughts to herself.
- 6 Mothers, practice humble submission. It will show her what kind of wife to become. Fathers, practice sacrificial headship. It will show her what kind of man to marry.
- 7 Point her thoughts toward others. The more she stops thinking about herself, the more she will become herself.
- 8 Talk about the world. Tell her she can make a difference.

- 9 Attend her forensics meets, choir concerts, basketball games.
- 10 Open her mind to thought-provoking books and movies.
- 11 Help her discover and develop her gifts. Encourage her to practice good stewardship by getting that Ph.D. Affirm her compassion, persistence, and good cheer—those gifts that are not acknowledged at awards banquets. Encourage her to use her gifts to serve others, especially those "who belong to the family of believers" (Galatians 6:10).
- 12 Make sure she knows she's a beautiful child of God—especially on the inside.

women hands or feet in the body of Christ. Our girls each have a unique personality, place, and purpose in life. We dare not try to mold them into pre-fab models of perceived piety.

One Biblical woman we can model is Jesus' mother. Mary didn't say, "Gabriel, please tell God it was nice of him to think of me, but this is too hard. I'm not ready to be divorced, booted out of the synagogue, and labeled a lunatic." No, Mary said, "I am the Lord's servant. May it be to me as you have said."

Isn't that what we want our daughters to say? "Lord, I am your

humble servant. I will open myself to your will for my life. I will accept being single, or I will happily submit to the husband you give me. Together with him, I will care for our children, understanding that they are yours, on lease to us. I will faithfully serve you in each role of my life: obedient child, hard-working student, congregation member, wife, mother, stockbroker, senator, secretary. But I know that none of these externals is as important as my relationship with you. As your redeemed and sanctified creature, I will offer myself as a living sacrifice to you. With my feet on the ground

and my heart in heaven with you, I will make everything I do a thank-you for your great sacrifice for me."

Holding tight in the eye of that worldly hurricane are strong Christian families and congregations encouraging their daughters—and sons—to grow in their heart-and-soul love affairs with their Savior and to serve him with a humble heart in the many different ways he has prepared for them.

NL

Laurie Biedenbender is a member at Trinity, Watertown, Wisconsin.



Talents on loan from God

The key issue is how we manage our talents. It's a matter of Christian stewardship.

Bruce H. Becker

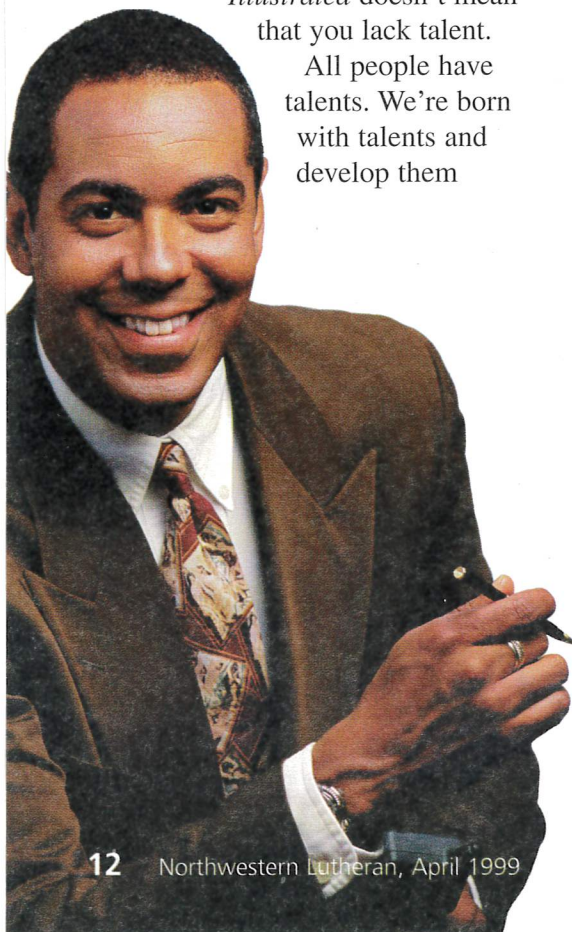


What do Michael Jordan, Bill Gates, Rush Limbaugh, and you have in common?

Michael Jordan has been called the most talented athlete in the history of sports. Bill Gates is a brilliant combination of technological genius and business savvy. Rush Limbaugh is the most successful radio personality today, with a listening audience of 20 million people.

What do you have in common with them? Nothing you say? That's not true. Like each of them, you possess talents, abilities, and skills. Just because you haven't had your picture on the cover of *Sports Illustrated* doesn't mean that you lack talent.

All people have talents. We're born with talents and develop them



throughout our lives. The issue isn't whether we have any talents or even how many or how great our skills are. The key issue is how we manage our talents. It's a matter of Christian stewardship.

From gene pool to talent pool

Our personal talents make up an important part of who we are. Talents are linked with personality traits and individual characteristics. Are you left- or right-brained, more logical or more artistic? Or, have you taken a personality profile that identifies you with letters of the alphabet or birds, such as an owl or swan? Our talents comprise just one of many interconnected traits that make us each unique.

Talents are often inherited. Children have similar talents as their parents. It's been that way since the beginning. In Genesis we learn of

different families with varied talents. Jabal was called the father of those who lived in tents and raised livestock. Jubal was the father of those who played the harp and flute. Tubal-Cain was a toolmaker, specializing in bronze and iron. These people had special talents and passed their talents on to their children and grandchildren. Many of our talents came to us, at least in part, via the gene pool.

In the gospels we learn about people like Peter, Andrew, James, and John who had a talent for catching fish. Zacchaeus had the ability to make money, even though it was through less than honest means. Lydia was a businesswoman who used her gift to sell specialty fabric.

Our talents can be developed and expanded through education and experience. The young pianist develops her natural talent through private

To evaluate how you might use your God-given talents, ask a three-part question: How can I use my talents to serve God? To serve my family? To serve others? Consider these examples:

A Christian who is talented in music: I can serve God by using my gift in our church's services. I can serve my family by filling our home with beautiful music. I can serve others by playing music twice a month at a nursing home.

A Christian who is talented in computers: I can serve God by setting up a computer system at church to make the office run smoothly. I can serve my family by keeping my regular job administering computer systems. I can serve others by teaching computer classes to adults in the community.

A Christian who is talented in carpentry skills: I can serve God by constructing bookshelves for the church library. I can serve my family by building a jungle gym for the kids. I can serve others by helping our synod's Builders For Christ.

What about you?

I have a talent for . . .
I can serve God by . . .

I can serve my family by . . .
I can serve others by . . .

lessons and practice. The electrical engineer expands his talent by continuing education and personal experience. Gifted athletes develop their skills through coaching and training. From gene pool to talent pool, we have them. But how do we use them?

From Saul to Paul

He was a most talented individual. Early on, you knew he would be somebody some day. He went to the best schools and learned from the best teachers. When he grew up, he was a model citizen and leader in his church and community. He was an intellectual. He had immense vitality and zealous determination. If you wanted something done and done well, you gave the task to him. Although he wasn't as gifted at oral communication, he was an excellent writer. He possessed an infectious spirit and a flair for developing friendships. He supported himself with one trade while he passionately pursued his principles. His name was Saul.

One day his life changed. While Paul was pursuing his passionate resolve to put Christians on the endangered species list, Jesus shined the light of truth on him. Although blinded by the experience, his eyes were opened to God's perspective on life. The experience on the road to Damascus changed him forever. The persecutor became the proponent. The adversary became the advocate. Saul became known as Paul. He was a product of God's grace.

Although Paul himself was changed, the experience didn't change his talents. Paul still had the same talents and abilities he had when he was called Saul. What changed was his motivation for using his talents. Saul was motivated by what he could accomplish for

himself. Paul was now motivated by what Jesus accomplished for him.

What also changed were his goals. One of Saul's goals was to bring death to the followers of Jesus. Paul's chief goal was to bring the Word of Life to all people. Talents can be used either to hinder the kingdom of God or to further it.

From self-service to full-service

As Christians, we are products of God's grace too. Because of Jesus, God has changed our motives and goals and how we use our talents. Our talents remain the same, but how we use them changes from self-service to full-service.

Talents can be used either to hinder the kingdom of God or to further it.

Full-service use of our talents doesn't eliminate the use of them for ourselves. We still need to use our talents to earn a living or do our job. We use them to provide personal satisfaction and enjoyment.

As products of God's grace, however, we look for ways to use our talents also to benefit others. The apostle Peter suggested that "each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms" (1 Peter 4:10). The use of our talents is no longer focused on serving self. Now we seek to serve God, to serve our family, and to serve others. Our motive has changed and so have our goals.

Using our talents is part of our Christian stewardship. God graciously gives each of us unique talents and abilities. We have them for as long as God entrusts them to

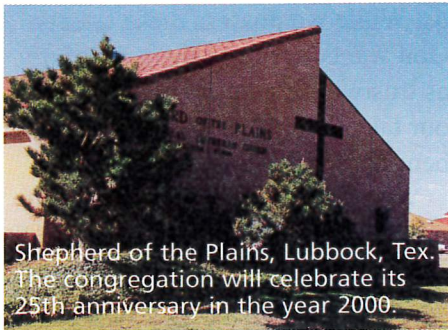
us. While we possess these talents, God wants us to use them faithfully, as trustworthy managers. We use our talents for his glory and for the benefit of our family and others.

What else would a Christian do with talents truly on loan from God?

NL

Bruce Becker is administrator for the Commission on Adult Discipleship.





Shepherd of the Plains, Lubbock, Tex. The congregation will celebrate its 25th anniversary in the year 2000.

Small church, **BIG MESSAGE**

Shepherd of the Plains, Lubbock, Tex., may be small, but they look for creative ways to spread their big message. **Linda R. Baacke**

When Shepherd of the Plains, Lubbock, Tex., was asked to participate in this “WELS in action” series, Pastor David Sellnow replied, “I keep racking my brain trying to figure out why *Northwestern Lutheran* wants to focus on our small congregation.”

But he quickly figured it out.

“The majority of WELS congregations are in our size category,” he said. “Many of your readers are in congregations like ours—small and struggling. Our story is their story.”

He’s right. Many WELS congregations are small. Out of 1,250 WELS congregations, over 650 have fewer than 100 members. Also, in 1997, the median attendance in WELS churches was 89.¹

In the 80s, shortly after Shepherd of the Plains became independent and needed to pay off its building debt, they lost large numbers of members, mainly due to job changes.

Debt remained a constant albatross—most years the congregation paid only interest, not reducing any principle. Some years not even the interest was paid, and debt increased instead of decreased.

Early in 1996, the debt stood at \$238,569. So the congregation made a major effort to pray about it. The year’s stewardship theme became “I believe in miracles!”

At the end of 1998, the debt stood at \$138,527. That’s \$100,000 paid in three years—all while membership numbers have basically stayed the same.

Miracles do happen at Shepherd of the Plains.

And just as Shepherd of the Plains is similar in size to many of our congregations, it also is similar in knowing the importance of sharing the gospel—and doing what it takes to get the message out.

Small church

Life can be lonely in West Texas. Lubbock, with a little over 200,000 people, is a traditional, heavily churched, Bible-belt city. Because of the large Baptist and Church of Christ population, “Lutherans are not known in West Texas,” says Sellnow. “And WELS Lutherans are considered especially weird.”

All of West Texas has only three WELS churches: Shepherd of the Plains, Lubbock; Good Shepherd, Midland; and Our Redeemer, San Angelo. They are at least 120 miles apart.²

Remote and small describes Shepherd of the Plains. “We don’t have much of anything that would wow an outside observer,” says Sellnow.

The congregation has 126 souls. The small chapel seats only 100 and usually has 50 to 60 worshipers. Members are tough to keep because Lubbock, an agricultural city, is driven by the annual cotton crop. Often people are confirmed and move away to find a job.

“We routinely transfer out twice as many members as we transfer in,” says Sellnow. Since 1990, the congregation has transferred out 45 communicants, transferring in only 24.

Although the church may be small, member Betty Alderson focuses on the positive. She remembers that, when she joined 15 years ago, finding a church that preached the gospel was “like a fresh drink of water” to her faith.

Unique ministry

The congregation’s size and location make creativity essential to ministry. “When you’re a small church on the frontier, you have to invent a lot of wheels,” says Sellnow. The congregation has to find effective ways to worship, educate, and minister without the staff and volunteers of a big church.

Consider some of the ministries that need a creative twist:

- A sister congregation. In addition to Shepherd of the Plains, Sellnow shepherds the group in Midland, a two-hour drive away. He visits once a month, but every Sunday members at Good Shepherd participate in Bible class via conference calls.
- Confirmation class. One student in Midland and one in Hobbs, N.M., take confirmation classes using three-way calling. Sellnow personally meets with each student once a month to follow up on this instruction.
- Vacation Bible school. Few members were available on weekdays to help with VBS. Evenings didn’t work either.

So VBS became limited to two- or three-day programs. Members could help with ministry by taking just a day or two off from work.

- **Worship.** When all three organists were out of town for a weekend, how did the congregation cope? They held an a cappella "Christmas in July" service with everybody's favorite carols.

Big message

This small congregation recognizes it has a vital ministry: "the day-to-day work of sharing peace and good news with people who are sad and confused," says Sellnow. But not all the sad and confused people in the world simply walk into the church.

So how does Shepherd of the Plains get the message out? For one, the congregation airs one-minute spots on commercial radio. Also, "The Shepherd's Voice," a weekly 15-minute broadcast, is aired on the area's premier Christian radio station.

Shepherd of the Plains also uses other technology to tell people about Jesus. "The Electric Gospel" is a

weekly message sent by e-mail or fax. "We have a number of local subscribers, and—the odd thing—we're getting requests from people all around the country who've picked it up from a friend who sent it to a friend who forwarded it to a friend" says Sellnow.

But technology can only do so much. Personal contact is vital to witnessing. So a regional outreach program was developed to train members to witness to their community. John Gillespie, regional outreach director, coordinates the lay evangelism efforts for the three West Texas churches.

Gillespie knows the importance of sharing the gospel. He was confirmed through the congregation's campus ministry outreach—a key congregational ministry that reaches Texas Tech students.

"We want to motivate people to get involved with evangelism," says Gillespie. To get people involved, he is making phone calls, sending mailing, and visiting members and campus ministry students. "We all need to be reminded of what we've got—and share it," he says.

Shepherd of the Plains

Founded: 1975
Communicants: 96
Baptized: 126
Pastor: David Sellnow

5812 73rd St, Lubbock TX
<<http://users.arn.net/~wels/>>



God hasn't said that every congregation must be large. He has said that every congregation must go and make disciples. And that's what Shepherd of the Plains has done, and continues to do.

¹Statistics provided by Bob Hartman, evangelism administrator.

²These stats do not include El Paso, which is 500 miles away and in a different time zone.

NL

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



Pre-K Sunday schoolers work hard at their projects. Like many congregations, Shepherd of the Plains has a children's sermon during the church service. Unlike many congregations, however, this message is delivered by lay members.

Ideal leaders see the real world

Spiritual leaders assess contemporary reality realistically.

Paul E. Kelm

Some people are idealists, driven by a vision of what should be. Some people are realists, honest with themselves about the way things are. Nehemiah was some of both. Spiritual leaders need to be.

The idealist in Nehemiah envisioned rebuilt walls, renewed spiritual life, and restored glory for the city of God. The realist in Nehemiah saw political red tape, financial necessities, and likely opposition. The realist in Nehemiah kept him from riding off on his white horse into folly. The idealist in Nehemiah kept him from quitting in frustration.

Every plan or program must fit a congregation's reality.

Christian realists are the product of law and gospel in balance. God's law assures leaders that there will be sins and weaknesses, problems and conflicts in the church. There will be apathy and antagonism in the world around us. "Murphy's Law" will frustrate planning and effort. God's gospel

reminds leaders that the risen Lord Jesus governs all in the interest of his Church. Forgiveness and love heal hurts. Truth and wisdom resolve issues. The gospel moves God's people to serve him. The Holy Spirit provides Christ's Church every gift essential for that service.

Assess realistic problems

It was the realist in Nehemiah that saw the need for letters of safe-conduct and a line of credit from Artaxerxes before he left Susa. Realists anticipate problems and plan with a sense for the bottom line.

The realist in Nehemiah read the times. This wasn't Solomon's Jerusalem. The grandeur and independence of God's people were gone, and the freedom of religion they enjoyed under Persian rule might not last. While generations past needed the thunder of Amos and Hosea against crass

Suddenly, Christians are targeted in India

lifestyle and comparing ourselves. (Adapted from 1992 Me...

WASHINGTON TIMES, 1999

Americans in no rush to marry
More couples opting for cohabitation, Census Bureau

idolatry and social injustice, Nehemiah understood that this generation needed the back-to-the-basics of Moses to call them to faithfulness and comfort them with God's promise. Every generation in the church must counter the culture of its world and address the needs and questions of contemporary members. Spiritual leaders are, first, students of Scripture who recognize which truths require emphasis in their day. But they are also students of the society around them, who understand how best to reach the lost and shepherd the saved, today.

A VIEW FROM THE FLOCK

1 of Colombia quakes

tural disaster is bad enough, but looting
tical instability may be even

\$12 Million Fraud Scheme Parallels Greater Ministries

Fourth of a seven-part series

The realist in Nehemiah spent three anonymous days in Jerusalem, no doubt observing and absorbing the patterns and moods of the city. Realists understand that every church has its own setting. The history of the congregation and the nature of the community shape reality. The values and traditions members hold dear, the degree of openness and the level of contentment, the issues in controversy and the voices people listen to, members' hopes and fears—all this describes reality. And every plan or program must fit a congregation's reality.

The realist in Nehemiah took his "night ride" to inspect the walls for himself, without any spin-doctors to explain the situation or busybodies to broadcast the conclusions they'd jumped to. Realists respect hard data: statistical trends, percentages of involvement, budgetary numbers, and facts in writing. They see for themselves, listen carefully, and ask tough questions. Realists understand that to convince others of what needs doing will require assembling the evidence of reality in order to demonstrate the need.

Keep godly vision

A popular maxim says: "Perception is reality." There's a kernel of truth in that philosophy. People do act on their perceptions;

they vote on the basis of their assumptions. Leaders who don't listen to people's opinions or respond to their perceptions face a reality of conflict. But misperception is not reality. One task of a leader is to describe and interpret reality for members, as the basis for evaluating the ministry we're doing and as the starting point for planning the ministry we—under God—hope to do.

Christian realists are the product of law and gospel in balance.

We may wish that American culture was the idyllic world of Ozzie and Harriet. We may assume that church members understand basic doctrine and are committed to the Great Commission. We may long for old traditions that were a constant in times of personal turmoil, and remember fondly the youth group where we met our mate or the potluck mission dinners that the Ladies' Aid used to sponsor. We may feel that change is bad and that the church's best days are behind her. We may think that the way we think is how others think . . . or ought to think. None of this serves Christ's Church well. Spiritual leaders understand that. They assess contemporary reality realistically.

Nehemiah discovered a Zion in decline caused by enemies of the Church, by neglect and complac-

cy within the Church, by the ravages of time, by the consequences of disobedience, and by failure to trust in God. Spiritual leaders may find things similar still. Then they pray in specifics and work concretely to do something about it.

We don't need "paralysis by analysis." We can't afford the negativism of self-appointed critics. But let's not sanctify ignorance and assumptions. Spiritual leaders assess contemporary reality realistically, above all, to thank God for the blessings that become apparent, to reassert the truth and power of Scripture as the foundation for future ministry, to remind members how perfectly relevant the forgiveness and love and hope and power and purpose that we have in Jesus Christ is for their lives and for their friends.

When analysis turns up wrongs, spiritual leaders lead God's people in repentance. When evaluation uncovers weaknesses, spiritual leaders lead the church in prayer for God's strength. If self-study reveals needs and problems, then spiritual leaders marshal the gifts and resources God has given in answer.

Just like Nehemiah.

NL

Paul Kelm is a parish consultant for the Board for Parish Services.

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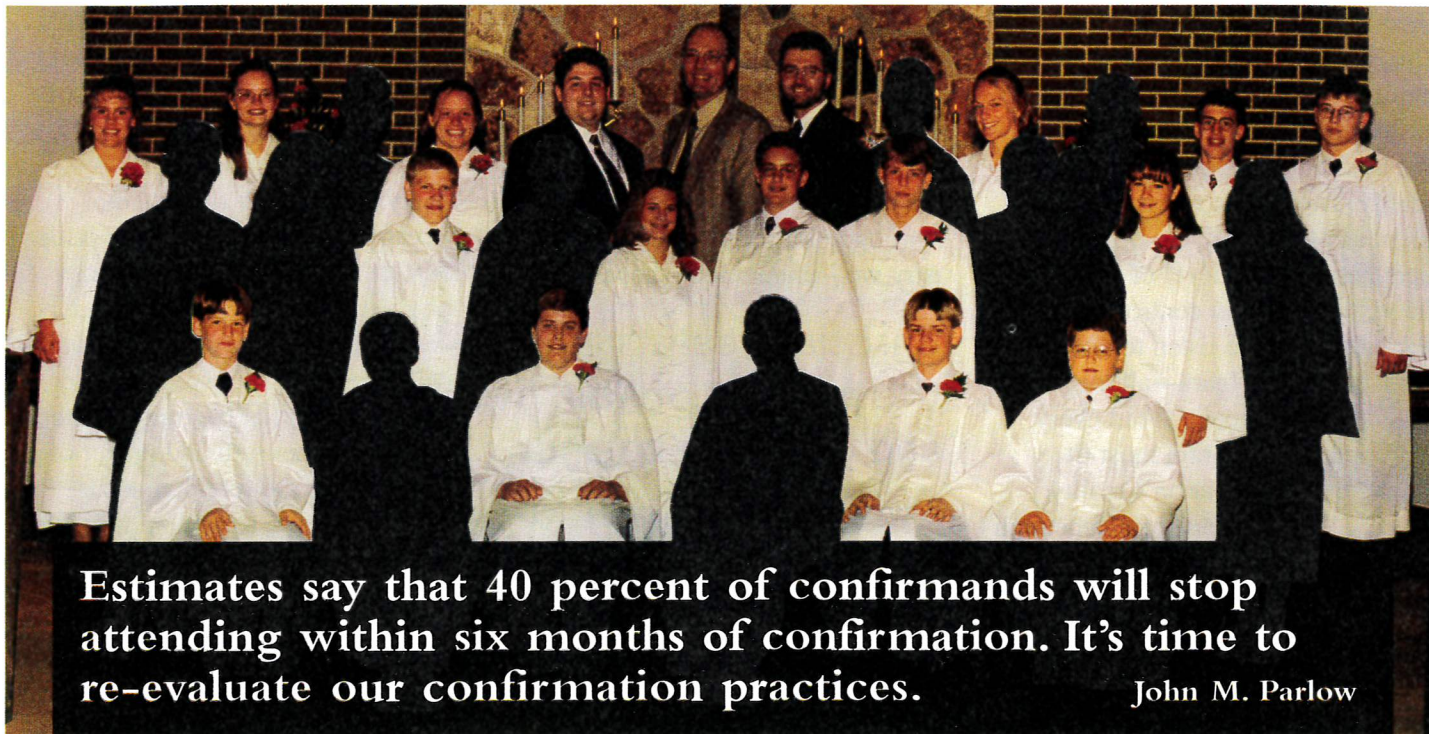
Other ultimatum for Kosovo

K patriarch under pressure

he Olympics scandal grows calls for a change at the top

did you ever wonder . . . ?

Life after confirmation



Estimates say that 40 percent of confirmands will stop attending within six months of confirmation. It's time to re-evaluate our confirmation practices.

John M. Parlow

The following situations are true; the names have been changed to protect the forgiven.

"How can you be so narrow-minded?" Sarah's words hit him like a blast from a furnace. Tom had made it clear that the Bible said Jesus was the only God. "Where does it say that in your Bible? And if it does, who cares! It's just a book written by men who need a spiritual crutch. Wake up, there is no god!" Tom turns quickly to you. He knows you are religious. What should he say?

Linda knew she would be challenged at college. But her anthropology professor was over the edge. He asked all students to sign an agreement that they wouldn't question the validity of any man's religion. When a freshman asked about fairness and freedom of speech, he responded: "This is my classroom. You will not question me. Keep your narrow-minded

opinions out of my classroom. You Christians need to remember that all religions achieve the same result!" Linda needs the class for her major, but doesn't know how she will cope in such a hostile atmosphere. She is starting to question the exclusivity of Christianity. She asks you, her roommate, what she should do.

Eight months ago Bobbi had an abortion. It was emotionally horrifying, and she still requires weekly counseling to help her cope. Bobbi feels that abortion is murder; she believes God will never forgive her. Bobbi noticed that you wear a cross and occasionally speak of church. She asks to talk with you after work and tells you of her shattered past, sleepless nights, and overwhelming hopelessness. She wonders why she should go on feeling like damaged goods. She is sitting in your car, waiting for your reply.

Facing strong attacks

Such are situations confirmands will face in the future. Our changing society challenges pastors, parents, congregations . . . Christians! The once popular death of God movement still lives, and has permeated every discipline in secular universities. On one university's recruitment video, an alumnus said: "One of the best things this university has done for me is that it has allowed me to become an intellectually fulfilled atheist."

There are unrelenting, subconscious attacks on Christian absolutes. I asked a world religion professor if I could speak about the remarkable reliability of the Bible. She took my request to her supervisors, but came back and said, "I would welcome you if you were Muslim or Wiccan, but I cannot bring you into my classroom because you are Christian. I will run into conflict with the administration."

Training strong Christians

Is your congregation's confirmation class equipping young people for what's coming, training them to be active life-bearers? Or are you sending out white-robed sheep who can recite the catechism but are ill-equipped for gospel-evangelism in a society that blends religious world views?

Since a significant number of confirmands leaves the flock within six months, it is imperative to re-examine our confirmation practices. These suggestions may help us better equip young people (and their families) for life after confirmation.

1. Confirmation needs to be life-related. Has confirmation become an orthodox version of a "Mega Memory" course? Is it really all about the explanation to the First Article, two years of classes and quizzes, a memorized confirmation verse, and an intellectual assent on Palm Sunday in front of Uncle Joe and Aunt Betty? Just because you are 14 and sat through class, does it mean you are ready to wear a white gown and make a lifelong commitment of faithfulness to the Lord?

Confirmation needs to be more than truth memorized. It needs to be truth applied—to real life, to the neighbor's situation, to a society filled with flawed heroes. Challenge confirmands with the skeptic's questions. (They'll be confronted with them.) Show them what it means to apply truth in a truthless society. (They live there.) Equip them to answer Sarah's, Linda's, and Bobbi's questions. (They'll meet them.)

Youth who use their Bibles and catechisms as swords of light when sin darkens a life serve the kingdom better than those who accurately

recite Luther's fourth part of Baptism but don't have a clue how to share the gospel. Confirmation is all about training youth to partake of and give away real life.

2. Confirmation needs to be servant-oriented. Many times we view youth as granite walls on which we are to make an impression with a Q-tip. When you feel like that, remember—real faith, born and empowered by the Word, works and lives.

Our confirmation-age youth are not the church of tomorrow; they are the church of today. We need their gifts now, not just when they are 28, married, and have 2.4 children.

Incorporate service opportunities into your confirmation instruction. Have youth volunteer at the hospital, providing childcare as family members stand by children undergoing chemotherapy. (God's gift of health is better appreciated!) Assign them to the worship committee. (You may be pleasantly surprised.) Have each confirmand adopt a shut-in for a year and visit that person monthly. (Pass the baton of faith to the next generation.) Add them to your ushering teams. (Cross-generational ministry is good for everyone.)

If this generation is lost to the church, it won't be because we expected too much—but expected too little. Youth are looking for a cause worth dying for. Confirmation is all about serving the Servant who is that cause.

3. Confirmation needs a team approach. Pastors, parents, and members lose sleep over confirmation fallout often because they have forgotten "it takes a team to raise a confirmand." A quick review of Deuteronomy 6:4ff and Matthew

28:18-20 reminds us that the team consists of three players: church, parents, and youth. Confirmation needs a team approach so that at "The End" no one is missing. Which is missing in your program? No one loves that confirmand more than her parents, but too often we fail to involve the ones who love the most.

Parents need to be on every congregation's confirmation team. Summer parents' meetings and confirmation contracts can help create a winning team chemistry. Parents and youth can periodically meet for special confirmation classes held Sunday morning. (The Word edifies both.) Assign projects that need to be completed by both parent and student. (Both are capable of handing in a 125-word sermon summary.) Involve both in service projects. (Imagine families ushering together!)

Christian peers are also part of the team. Help youth build strong relationships. They will need Christian friends who love them enough to be honest and who are there when everyone else has left.

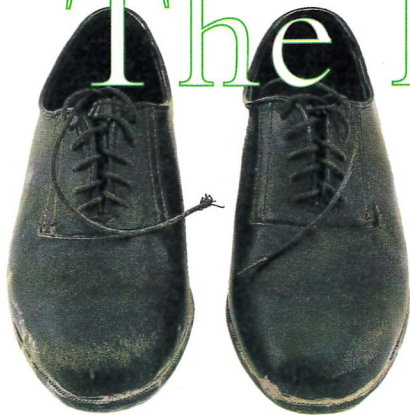
Questions will always surround confirmands. The key is equipping the confirmand with answers. Equip him to boldly tell Tom and Sarah that belief in a living God is not a crutch, but a lifesaving trust. Equip her to confidently tell Linda that Jesus is the only way to heaven, which is a private party and not a city park. Equip them to lovingly comfort Bobbi with the message that the Savior gives her a second chance through forgiveness and can make sense out of her shattered past.

The situations our confirmands will face are real—we've been given their names to equip the forgiven.

NL

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

The last impression



Don't only make a good first impression. Leave a good last one too.

Eric S. Hartzell

Charlie Brown noticed that the front of Linus's shoes was nicely shined, but the back was scuffed. When Charlie Brown asked why, Linus said, "I care about what people think of me when I enter a room. I don't care what they think when I leave."

We know about the importance of first impressions. We are inclined to polish the fronts of our shoes with Linus.

But we shouldn't leave the backs of our shoes unshined. Last impressions might be more important than first. When we leave we want others to remember, "That person's last actions were those of a Christian." The trick is not only to make a good first impression but also to leave a good last impression. If what is seen last is scuffed shoe, then what is remembered is scuffed shoe.

Impressions of Jesus

Jesus didn't always make a good first impression. Isaiah said, "He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him" (Isaiah 53:2). Nathaniel summed up a common first impression: "Can anything good come from Nazareth?" (John 1:46). Many were offended by their first impression of Jesus. People even

imagined the impression they wanted to have of Jesus. The Emmaus disciples said, "But we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel" (Luke 24:21).

The last impression these disciples had of Jesus, however, was the most telling: "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" (Luke 24:32).

Among the last impressions we have of Jesus was his saying, "Father, forgive them, they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34). We are struck by his obedience and concern for us and the focus and resolve with which he carried on his saving work. We are impressed with his last words, "It is finished" (John 19:30). We see forgiveness, love, purpose, and dedication in the dying Jesus.

We come to God with scuffed shoes.

The very last impression of Jesus was his ascending into the clouds with his arms raised over his disciples blessing them. The angels said, "This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven"

(Acts 1:11). The shoes were truly shined—front and back.

Impressions of us

We come to God with scuffed shoes—front and back. He is not attracted to our shine but to our souls that need saving. But he makes it possible for there to be good reflections of his goodness. The psalmist said, "He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun" (Psalm 37:6).

If making good first impressions was the only concern a believer in Jesus had, we could relax. But it isn't, and we can't. Jesus says, "It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so [serving the other servants] when he returns" (Matthew 24:46). He is concerned with the impression we make and the impression we leave. "Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us" (1 Peter 2:12).

That's why faith and forgiveness are so good. They assure us that Jesus' last impression with his Father is stamped on our lives.

NL

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



Inter-Act

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

Introduction

When the Indianapolis Colts made the playoffs, quarterback Jim Harbaugh told reporters, "First, I want to give all praise and glory to my Lord, Jesus Christ." A week later, they were knocked out of the playoffs. After the loss, Harbaugh told the same reporter, "First, I want to give all praise and glory to my Lord, Jesus Christ." He said the same thing in defeat as he said in victory. That's one definition of confidence. What's yours?

I. Text

Read Luke 7:37-50

³⁷When a woman who had lived a sinful life in that town learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster jar of perfume, ³⁸and as she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them.

³⁹When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner."

⁴⁰Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you." "Tell me, teacher," he said.

⁴¹"Two men owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. ⁴²Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he canceled the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?"

⁴³Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt canceled."

"You have judged correctly," Jesus said.

⁴⁴Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. ⁴⁵You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. ⁴⁶You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet.

⁴⁷Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little."

⁴⁸Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

⁴⁹The other guests began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?"

⁵⁰Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

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

II. Questions

1. The closer you are to a light, the clearer you see your faults. This woman stood next to the light of the world and wept. Why?
2. How did she demonstrate a change of heart about sin?
3. Simon saw the sin of the woman. What did Jesus see?
4. I can forgive you a debt you owe me, but not a debt you owe someone else. Only the one offended can forgive. Jesus said, "Your sins are forgiven." What does that tell us about Jesus?
5. Paraphrase Jesus' words to Simon (vs. 44-47).
6. What words of Jesus built up this woman's confidence?

III. Application

1. Evaluate this statement: The more Christ transforms you into his image the more you feel your guilt.
2. What can prevent you from thinking like Simon?
3. We'll never run out of ways to demonstrate our change of heart about sin. Why?
4. God condemns every sin. In Jesus, he forgives every sin. Still, Simon considered some sins "worse" than others. Why do some sins seem to be "worse"?
5. Communicants are often excused with the words, "Go in peace." Why do these words fill you with confidence?

IV. Prayer

God, it's so easy to look in the wrong places for confidence. We look to our strength and skill, especially if we're strong-willed types. Simon did that and received nothing. The sinful woman looked to you and received everything. Lord, fill us with the confidence that comes from your forgiveness. Let us "Go in peace." Make us repentant and thankful people who see your purpose for our lives. Amen.

The 55th Biennial Convention of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod July 25 - 30 Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota

Conference	Lay delegates	Arizona-California Congregations	Teachers	Pastors
Apache	Mr. Rick Joy	Immanuel, Springerville, Ariz.	Mr. Robert Adickes Mr. Duane Behm Mr. Lynn Kuether Mr. David Neujahr Mr. Dale Schamberg	Rev. Allen Beyersdorf Rev. Alan Eckert Rev. Timothy Ehlers Rev. Charles Found Rev. Ricky Johnson Rev. Daniel Pautz Rev. Donald Pieper Rev. James Plitzuweit Rev. Thomas Rothe
Black Canyon	Mr. Edwin Duff Mr. Wendell Folkerts Mr. Dale Huska Mr. Ziegfried Jarcik Jr. Mr. Tom Press	Our Savior, Sun City, Ariz. Resurrection, Phoenix, Ariz. Prince of Peace, Yuma, Ariz. Cross of Christ, Kingman, Ariz. Grace, Glendale, Ariz.		
California North	Mr. Merle Breiland Mr. Eugene Hammerson Mr. Gerald Ledermann Mr. Jimmie Smith	Apostles, San Jose, Calif. Christ, Lodi, Calif. St. Peter, Clovis, Calif. Mt. Calvary, San Jose, Calif.		
California South	Mr. George Bomba Mr. James Dallmann Mr. Keith Harrison Mr. Bill Waters	Alpine, Alpine, Calif. Reformation, San Diego, Calif. St. Paul, Riverside, Calif. Our Redeemer, Santa Barbara, Calif.		
Gadsden	Mr. Allan Baker Mr. Edwardo Garcia Mr. Randy Welch	Emmanuel, Las Cruces, N.M. San Juan, El Paso, Tex. Holy Cross, Tucson, Ariz.		

Dakota-Montana Conference	Lay delegates	Congregations	Teachers	Pastors
Eastern	Mr. Carlos Abraham Mr. Maurice Gunderson Mr. Lester Kramer Mr. Arnold Meyer Mr. Harry Schoeneman	St. Paul, Henry, S.D. St. John, Summit, S.D. Trinity, Elkton, S.D. Peace, Milbank, S.D. Immanuel, Ward, S.D.	Mr. Alan Draeger	Rev. James Janke Rev. Lloyd Lemke Rev. Paul Metzger Rev. Tom Rawerts Rev. Eugene Roecker
Rocky Mountain	Mr. Don Franck Mr. David Kasten	St. Paul, Livingston, Mont. Salem, Circle, Mont.		
Western	Mr. Roger Burke Mr. David Korfman Mr. Marion Kruse Mr. Ryan Schlomer Mr. Mario Schlomer Mr. Gary Weismantel	St. Paul, Rapid City, S.D. St. Peter, St. Albert, AB Canada Trinity, Sturgis, S.D. St. Jacobi, Glenham, S.D. Christ Our Redeemer, Gillette, Wyo. St. Paul, Mound City, S.D.		

Conference	Lay delegates	Michigan Congregations	Teachers	Pastors
Northern	Mr. Alan Irvine Mr. Mark Bannan Mr. LeRoy Loeffler Mr. John Rathje Mr. Werner Rosenbaum Mr. Thomas Schindler Mr. John Thompson Mr. Gary Treichel Mr. Richard Vaughan Mr. William White	St. John, Mio, Mich. Christ, Saginaw, Mich. New Salem, Sebewaing, Mich. Faith, Mt. Pleasant, Mich. St. Paul, Saginaw, Mich. St. Bartholomew, Kawkawlin, Mich. Good Shepherd, Burton, Mich. Emanuel, Flint, Mich. St. Paul, Manistee, Mich. Trinity, Bay City, Mich.	Mr. Ronald Briney Mr. Steven Grosinski Mr. Philip Moll Mr. Gary Nolan Mr. Roland Schultz Mr. Douglas Stellick Mr. Steven Westphal Mr. Kenneth Zahn	Rev. Patrick Bell Rev. Joseph Dietrich Rev. Gregory Gibbons Rev. Douglas Hartley Rev. Mark Kock Rev. Norval Kock Rev. Ronald Muetzel Rev. Gary Pieper Rev. Kevin Salzwedel Rev. Arlyn Schmeling Rev. Paul Stern Rev. Jonathan Voss Rev. Larry Wiederich
Ohio	Mr. Richard Fischer Jr. Mr. Jim Meyer Mr. Roy Ohr Mr. Charles Searson	Beautiful Savior, Grove City, Ohio St. Timothy, Maumee, Ohio Abiding Word, Maineville, Ohio Grace, Kenton, Ohio		
Southeastern	Mr. Gary Aita Mr. Howard Parr Mr. Tom VanBlaricom Mr. Ronald Wendland	Mt. Olive, Detroit, Mich. Salem, Ann Arbor, Mich. Zion, Lansing, Mich. St. Peter, Plymouth, Mich.		
Southwestern	Mr. James Dowling Mr. Richard Terpstra Mr. Willard Ziel	St. Paul, Sodus, Mich. Hope, Hartford, Mich. Christ Our Savior, Rockford, Mich.		

Minnesota Conference	Lay delegates	Congregations	Teachers	Pastors
Crow River	Mr. David Beadell Mr. Todd Boelter Mr. Gary Hoffman Mr. Kevin Zeltwanger	St. Luke, Grand Rapids, Minn. Mt. Olive, Delano, Minn. Mt. Olive, Graceville, Minn. St. John, Hancock, Minn.	Mr. Paul Bases Mr. Steve Bilitz Mr. David Farstad Mr. Richard Gibson Mr. Carl Lemke Mr. LeRoy Levorson Mr. Brent Schacht Dr. Arthur Schulz Mr. James Unke Mr. Gregory West Mr. David Zabel	Rev. Joel Fredrich Rev. David Gosdeck Rev. Theodore Hartwig Rev. Donald Hochmuth Rev. Alan Horn Rev. David Koelpin Rev. Mark Kolander Rev. Edwin Lehman Rev. Bill Limmer Rev. Steven Schlicht Rev. Richard Schwerin Rev. Carroll Sengbusch Rev. Scott Spaulding Rev. Dennis Strong Rev. Paul Werner
Mankato	Mr. Frank Papke	St. John, Glencoe, Minn.		
New Ulm	Mr. Jerroll Dittbenner Sr. Mr. Roland Mehlberg	Zion, Morgan, Minn. St. John, New Ulm, Minn.		
Red Wing	Mr. David Holst Mr. Ken Klawiter Mr. Howard Maertz Mr. James Thomford	Grace, Goodhue, Minn. Trinity, Austin, Minn. First, LaCrescent, Minn. Christ, Zumbrota, Minn.		
Redwood Falls	Mr. Ordell Laumer Mr. Lyle Witte	Zion, Olivia, Minn. Zion, Morton, Minn.		
Southern	Mr. Lon Schlittonhart	Grace, Columbia, Mo.		
St. Croix	Mr. Gary Anthony Mr. John Beck Mr. Ted Loescher Mr. Howard Marschel Mr. Gene Pasche Mr. Orlin Plath Mr. David Sauer	Redeemer, Maple Grove, Minn. Emanuel, Hudson, Wis. Christ, Cambridge, Minn. Ascension, Plymouth, Minn. Hope, Andover, Minn. Christ the Lord, Cottage Grove, Minn. Christ, Eden Prairie, Minn.		

Conference	Lay delegates	Nebraska Congregations	Teachers	Pastors
Central	Mr. Walt Ahlers Mr. Alfred Kleinschmidt	Beautiful Savior, O'Neill, Neb. Christ Our Savior, Fremont, Neb.	Mr. Christopher Avery Mr. David Biedenbender	Rev. William Allwardt Rev. Kurt Ebert Rev. Loren Fritz Rev. William Heiges Rev. David Rockhoff Rev. Philip Zarling
Colorado	Mr. Kurt Austad Mr. Clay Rouse	Abiding Word, Highlands Ranch, Colo. Good Shepherd, Cheyenne, Wyo.		
Southern	Mr. Philip Larsen Mr. Wayne Schroeder	St. Paul, Broken Bow, Neb. Christ, Beatrice, Neb.		

North Atlantic

Conference

Colonial North

Lay delegates

Mr. Jerome Koeske
Mr. Neal Lovins
Mr. James Petrie

Congregations

St. Paul, Amherst, N.H.
Good Shepherd, South Attleboro, Mass.
Abiding Word, Orleans, Ontario

Teachers

Pastors

Rev. Harold Hoepfner
Rev. Kieth Kuschel
Rev. Karl Schmugge

Colonial South

Mr. Robert Kerby
Mr. Mark Ristow

Immanuel, Long Valley, N.J.
Our Redeemer, Yorktown, Va.

Conference

Fox River Valley

Lay delegates

Mr. Robert Carlovsky
Mr. Harland Schroeder
Mr. Dan Wallender

Northern Wisconsin

Congregations

Immanuel, Waupaca, Wis.
Immanuel, Greenville, Wis.
Eternal Love, Appleton, Wis.

Teachers

Mr. Edward Becker
Mr. Wade Cohoon II
Mr. Robert Fischer
Mr. Paul Hartwig
Mr. Timothy Hunt
Mr. Scott Jungen
Mr. Donald Kolander
Mr. David Nell
Mr. James Neujahr
Mr. Dennis Oldenburg
Mr. Robert Potratz
Mr. Kenneth Richmond
Mr. John Schultz

Pastors

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Rev. Jeffrey Berg
Rev. Edwin Biebert
Rev. Bruce Bitter
Rev. Roger Carter
Rev. Jan Eggert
Rev. William Favorite
Rev. Alan Klessig
Rev. Darrick Kofterjahn
Rev. Bruce McKenney
Rev. Michael Plagenz
Rev. Stephen Sauer
Rev. Robert Schultz
Rev. Tim Zarling

Lake Superior

Mr. Richard List
Mr. Daniel Schlenrogt

St. Matthew, Pound, Wis.
Holy Cross, Daggett, Mich.

Manitowoc

Mr. Gordon Griepentrog
Mr. Scott Mittelstadt
Mr. Leon Strutz

Zion, Morrison, Wis.
Zion, Kiel, Wis.
St. John, Two Rivers, Wis.

Rhineland

Mr. Wallace Kudick
Mr. Robert Prosek
Dr. John Talsma

St. John, Pelican Lake, Wis.
St. Paul, Hurley, Wis.
Bethany, Bruce Crossing, Mich.

Winnebago

Mr. Carl Bender Jr.
Mr. John Hall
Mr. Lester Whitefoot

St. John, Kingston, Wis.
Martin Luther, Oshkosh, Wis.
St. Paul, Marquette, Wis.

Pacific Northwest

Conference

Alaska

Lay delegates

Mr. Mark Burdick
Mr. Earl Lackey

Congregations

Grace, Kenai, Alaska
King of Kings, Wasilla, Alaska

Teachers

Mr. David Habeck

Pastors

Rev. Jay Blum
Rev. Ted Lambert
Rev. Lawrence Nolte
Rev. Warren Widmann

Cascades

Mr. Eric Anderson
Mr. George Anderson
Mr. W. Daniel Cox III
Mr. Terry Tomt

Gethsemane, Tigard, Ore.
Grace, Zillah, Wash.
Holy Cross, Withrow, Wash.
Faith, Tacoma, Wash.

Conference

Cottonbelt

Lay delegates

Mr. David Knuth
Mr. Jude Peck

South Atlantic

Congregations

Our Savior, Birmingham, Ala.
Hope, Irmo, S.C.

Teachers

Mr. James Wade

Pastors

Rev. William Greenlee
Rev. David Krenke
Rev. LeRoy Martin
Rev. Joh Meyer
Rev. David Sternhagen

Cypress

Mr. Danny Wehmeyer

Our Savior, Daytona Beach, Fla.

Everglades

Mr. Rainsford Smith

Trinity, Castries, St. Lucia

South Central

Conference

South Central

Lay delegates

Mr. Adolph Basse
Mr. Dearl Lance
Mr. Henry Lippe
Mr. Art Perry
Mr. Kenneth Robertson

Congregations

Shepherd/Hills, Fredricksburg, Tex.
Gethsemane, Corpus Christi, Tex.
Our Redeemer, San Angelo, Tex.
Our Savior, Arlington, Tex.
Faith, Russellville, Ark.

Teachers

Mr. James Henrikson

Pastors

Rev. James Bourman
Rev. David Kapler
Rev. Larry Zwieg

Conference

Chicago

Lay delegates

Mr. Robert Bengry
Mr. Harry Dolan
Mr. Will Katzinski

Southeastern Wisconsin

Congregations

Lord & Savior, Crystal Lake, Ill.
Our Savior, Zion, Ill.
Hope, Louisville, Ky.

Teachers

Dr. Paul Boehlke
Mr. Joel Buege
Mr. Steven Carlovsky
Mr. David Dahlberg
Mr. Gerald Johanning
Mr. Keith Kopczynski
Mr. Gerald Lanphear
Mr. Marc Meihack
Mr. Thomas Mellon
Mr. Douglas Nass
Mr. David Nelson
Mr. Mark Probst
Mr. Craig Radue
Mr. Robert Sawall
Mr. Stephen Schafer
Dr. Daniel Schmeling
Mr. Timothy Schneider
Mr. Max Schram
Mr. Charles Sonnenburg
Mr. Kevin Sonntag

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Rev. Dean Anderson
Rev. George Ferch
Rev. Michael Feuerstahler
Rev. Victor Fischer
Rev. Edwin Fredrich
Rev. Thomas Knickelbein
Rev. David Kuehl
Rev. Terry Laabs
Rev. Gerald Lange
Rev. Paul Lehninger
Rev. Kenneth Lenz
Rev. Peter Panitzke
Rev. David Peters
Rev. Don Schuerlein
Rev. E. Allen Sorum
Rev. Daniel Westendorf
Rev. David Witte
Rev. Mark Zarling

Dodge-Washington

Mr. Robert Laetsch
Mr. Charles Roethke

Zion, Allenton, Wis.
St. Peter, West Bend, Wis.

Metro North

Mr. L. Baumann
Mr. Robert Luedke
Mr. David Timm
Mr. Richard Waldschmidt
Mr. Keith Wendt

Jerusalem, Milwaukee, Wis.
Garden Homes, Milwaukee, Wis.
Atonement, Milwaukee, Wis.
St. John, Lannon, Wis.
St. Mark, Brown Deer, Wis.

Metro South

Mr. Robert Ast
Mr. Joseph Lopina
Mr. John Lucht
Mr. Harry Rutter
Mr. Robert Schimmelpfennig
Mr. James Shallow

Resurrection, Milwaukee, Wis.
Nain, West Allis, Wis.
Reformation, Genesee Depot, Wis.
Mt. Calvary, Waukesha, Wis.
St. Andrew, Milwaukee, Wis.
Jordan, West Allis, Wis.

Southern

Mr. Tim Hagen
Mr. Dennis Hommensen
Mr. Derek Straight

Trinity, Caledonia, Wis.
St. John, Oak Creek, Wis.
Peace, Wilmot, Wis.

Western Wisconsin

Conference

Central

Lay delegates

Mr. David Bock
Dr. George Davis
Mr. Gerald Gast
Mr. Jeff Guse
Mr. Robert Homan
Mr. John Pratt
Mr. Leland Schmidt
Mr. David Schumann
Mr. Bob Zahn

Congregations

Lord and Savior, Waunakee, Wis.
St. Stephen, Beaver Dam, Wis.
Cross of Christ, Portage, Wis.
St. Luke, Watertown, Wis.
St. John, Waterloo, Wis.
Zion, Columbus, Wis.
St. Mark, Richwood, Wis.
St. Mark, Watertown, Wis.
St. Matthew, Janesville, Wis.

Teachers

Mr. John Ashenmacher
Mr. Steven Biedenbender
Mr. Randy Bode
Mr. Mark Eternick
Mr. John Hartwig
Mr. John Kanter
Mr. Robert Klindworth
Mr. Timothy Matthies
Mr. David Niemi
Mr. Terry Schallert
Mr. Duane Schlender
Mr. Scott Sievert
Mr. Roger Tewes
Mr. Michael Wilde

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Rev. Thomas Hilliard
Rev. Gerald Hintz
Rev. Gary Johnson
Rev. Roger Kobleske
Rev. Wayne Mueller
Rev. Joel Pless
Rev. Conrad Prell
Rev. Mark Schroeder
Rev. Wayne Schulz
Rev. Melvin Schwark
Rev. Paul Stuebs
Rev. Joel Suckow
Rev. James Werner
Rev. Steven Wilkens

Chippewa River Valley

Mr. Mark Brann

St. Mark, Eau Claire, Wis.

Southwestern

Mr. Daniel Potaracke

Christ, West Salem, Wis.

Wisconsin River Valley

Mr. Leonard Becker
Mr. Eldon Nuessmeier

Our Savior, Wausau, Wis.
Divine Word, Plover, Wis.

Wisillowa

Mr. Cal Kassvelke
Mr. Ken Kraemer

Bethlehem, Urbana, Ill.
St. Paul, Platteville, Wis.

Missionaries

Rev. Charles Gumm
Rev. Eric Hartzell
Rev. Glen Hieb
Rev. Daniel Kroll
Rev. Joel Spaude
Rev. Kevin Stellick



Sharing light with high school students

This May, six college students from the WELS campus ministry at Minnesota State University, Mankato, will take a road trip to 12 area Lutheran high schools in Minnesota and Wisconsin.

The team, Rays of Light, hopes to connect with high school students through a 50-minute motivational presentation. Using the theme, "C's the Day," team members chose five "C" words: choices, conflict, character, commitment, and confidence. Based on their experiences, the team will tackle each of these with a Christian focus and apply them to everyday challenges that young people encounter.

"If they take just one thing that they remember and apply it to their life, I will feel like I've accomplished my goal," said Angela Mickelson, a sophomore.

Rays of Light is a new opportunity for the campus ministry students. The six team members—Angela Mickelson, Paul Osterman, Amy Enter, Matt Jacobs, Paul Diehn, and Tara Jacobs—work with Dave

Liggett, the campus ministry pastor at Minnesota State.

Not only will the team gain public speaking and planning skills, but their relationship with God will be strengthened.

"I felt I needed to get a firmer foundation in my faith," said Mickelson of why she joined the Rays of Light team.

The team also wants to impact how students view their own faith.

"I want to be able to reach someone who goes through the motions and who hasn't fully submitted themselves to Christ," Paul Diehn, a senior, said.

Planning began in January 1998. Co-coordinator Tara Jacobs said the program planning, promotional strategies, and travel arranging were right down her alley as an upcoming marketing graduate.

"These have been invaluable experiences—things we would not have gained in a classroom," Jacobs said.

From May 10-14, Rays of Light will appear at two to three schools each day in Wisconsin and the Twin

Cities. One performance will be April 23 at Minnesota Valley LHS, New Ulm, Minn.

Rays of Light is free to each school, thanks to a grant from Aid Association for Lutherans and other donations.

For information on when Rays of Light will be near you, see the bulletin board, p. 29.

Amy Enter is the co-coordinator of Rays of Light.

Large print NL

In July, *Northwestern Lutheran* will be available by subscription in large print. The large-print edition will cost \$2 an issue, or \$24 a year.

Congregations, consider ordering a bundle subscription. An order of five copies is available for \$20 each a year—a savings of \$4 per subscription, per year.

Contact Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 N 113th St, Milwaukee WI 53226; 1-800-662-6093 ext. 8 (Milwaukee, 414/475-6600 ext. 5).

DEFINING RELIGION

Pharisee: A Jewish sect that developed in the centuries following the return of the Jews from the Babylonian Captivity. The Pharisees were particularly concerned about the legal observance of Jewish religious rituals, but they were often more concerned with forms and outward observance than with the proper attitude of the heart. Jesus condemned them because of their hypocrisy and works righteousness (Matthew 23:13-38).



Participants at the third Large Congregation Networking workshop discuss the issues. In February, 145 people from 40 congregations that average over 500 in Sunday worship attended this three-day workshop in Brookfield, Wis. Its main purpose was to get leaders together—through interactive workshops, speakers, and plenty of free time—to discuss similar challenges and joys faced by large congregations. The Commission on Adult Discipleship sponsored the workshop.

Two congregations, one mission

Almost all the teens at Immanuel, Findlay, Ohio, are broke. Although their church had a Rent-A-Youth program, where teens completed projects for members, they were still short on funds for the 1998 regional youth rally in Chicago.

Almost all the members at Emmanuel, Zephyrhills, Fla., are retired. Although they have 25 adults in their Bible class each week, they don't have a Sunday school or youth group.

Ed Frey, pastor at Immanuel, found out about the Florida congregation after he began calling churches in the synod directory to find a church willing to try a new idea. Frey offered the youths' assistance with evangelism in exchange for financial assistance for the youth rally.

Emmanuel, Zephyrhills, readily agreed. So the money was sent, and the youth went to the rally in July.

Then the teens spent Christmas in Florida. They handed out 10,000 invitations for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services. The teens also cleaned up the church grounds, rehearsed with the Emmanuel church choir, and performed some home projects for church members.

The exchange produced amazing blessings.

Obviously, to youth from Ohio, Christmas in Florida was a blessing by itself. But the teens received other blessings, such as the interaction of different generations. "I didn't know old people can be so fun," observed one teen.

The teens also learned that they could make a difference. They could share the gospel. "If you can help one soul be saved, it will be worth it," said Lauren May.

The youth are so excited about mission work that they are considering another trip in the summer to help a different congregation with vacation Bible school. Some are more seriously considering the public ministry.

The congregation in Florida benefited also.

"It has been a tremendous boost in morale here," said Dave Bostedt, pastor at Emmanuel. "Because we are small, we think we can't do things."

The experience changed their minds. Emmanuel renewed its

commitment to spread the Word. For winter months, a second service was added to better serve the snowbird members. Sunday school resumed in January to attract and serve younger families in the area.

They also gained a new respect and trust for the youth who are the future of our synod.

And did the outreach work? "We had about 40 new visitors in the week since Christmas, just because of the work done by the kids," said Bostedt.

As one elderly member in Florida commented: "This is the first Christmas I have given totally to my Savior and his work. It has been the greatest Christmas I have ever celebrated!"



Youth from Immanuel, Findlay, Ohio. After receiving financial help from members at Emmanuel, Zephyrhills, Fla., the teens traveled to the Florida congregation to help them with outreach.



Trying to fill Easter baskets?

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Call toll free **1-800-662-6093 ext. 8**; (Milwaukee 475-6600 ext. 5) weekdays 8 AM to 4 PM. Charge it—Discover Card, MasterCard, or Visa—or bill it.



District news

South Atlantic

WELS Kingdom Workers have provided **lay couples to assist with outreach efforts** at Beautiful Savior, Summerville, S.C.; Risen Savior, Savannah, Ga.; Risen Savior, Orlando, Fla.; Hope, West Palm Beach, Fla.; Abiding Faith, Smyrna, Tenn.; and Victory, Jacksonville, Fla. . . . **Abiding Faith, Smyrna, Tenn.,** and **Victory, Jacksonville, Fla.,** held their first public services on Mar. 21. . . . **Ascension, Sarasota, Fla.,** had a family with four kids lose their house in a fire. No one was home at the time, but all was lost. The family was buying it, and all the insurance went to the seller. They only received the land. The church collected over \$3,000 on one Sunday. That amount was doubled by Aid Association for Lutherans. Lutheran Brotherhood also provided funds. . . . To be placed on a mailing list for information on The Lutheran Home Association's **plans to build an assisted living facility and a retirement community in Florida,** contact Robert G. Johnston, 9242 N Commodore Dr, Citrus Spring FL 34434; 352/489-3213.

North Atlantic

God truly blessed the opening service of **Tree of Life, Cary, N.C.** this past December. Having worked for a year and a half before starting services, this was a milestone. The theme of the opening service was "A New Beginning." Eighty-three people attended, including 18 visiting prospect families.

Pacific Northwest

For the third year in a row, the **Evergreen Lutheran High School, Des Moines, Wash., varsity boys' soccer team** won the academic award for having the highest average GPA of all teams competing in the state of Washington in their classifi-

cation. The team average GPA was 3.67. On the playing field, the team finished fourth in the state for the second year in a row. The varsity girls' soccer team finished second in state academically.

California

Ascension, Escondido, Calif., dedicated its new preschool building on Jan. 31. The preschool classroom is phase one of a planned education/office complex containing a pastor's office, a secretary's office, conference room, and two additional classrooms. Construction will begin on the remaining rooms this summer. The preschool will reopen in the fall. . . . **California Lutheran High School, Wildomar,** won the championship of the California Interscholastic Federation eight-man small schools division football playoffs.

South Central

Living Waters, Hot Springs, Ark., broke ground for a new worship facility on Feb. 7.

Western Wisconsin

St. John, Waterloo, Wis., made the December 1998 cover of *Hoard's Dairyman*. The scratchboard and colored ink illustration was created by Jim Baird.

Happy Anniversary

SEW—John Lawrenz, administrator of the Board for Ministerial Education, celebrated 25 years in the ministry with a service at the Synod Administration Building in Milwaukee on Feb. 10.

These are the reporters for this month's featured districts:

CA—Hermann John; NA—Kevin Schultz; PNW—David Birsching; SC—Peter Snyder; SA—Mark A. Haefner; SEW—Scott Oelhafen



Some members of St. Paul, Hopkins, Mich., found an alternate way to get to Sunday services after a blizzard in January dumped over 35 inches of snow in Western Michigan. Melvin and Cindy Krumm used their John Deere tractor to make it to church at a time when many members couldn't even get out of their driveways.

THROUGH MY BIBLE IN 3 YEARS

May 1999

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Deuteronomy 14, 15 | 16. Mk. 10:32-52 |
| 2. Dt. 16, 17 | 17. Mk. 11:1-19 |
| 3. Dt. 18, 19 | 18. Mk. 11:20-33 |
| 4. Dt. 20, 21 | 19. Mk. 12:1-27 |
| 5. Dt. 22, 23 | 20. Mk. 12:28-44 |
| 6. Dt. 24, 25 | 21. Mk. 13:1-23 |
| 7. Dt. 26 | 22. Mk. 13:24-37 |
| 8. Dt. 27:1—28:14 | 23. Mk. 14:1-25 |
| 9. Dt. 28:15-68 | 24. Mk. 14:26-52 |
| 10. Dt. 29, 30 | 25. Mk. 14:53-72 |
| 11. Dt. 31 | 26. Mk. 15:1-21 |
| 12. Dt. 32:1-47 | 27. Mk. 15:22-41 |
| 13. Dt. 32:48—34:12 | 28. Mk. 15:42—16:8 |
| 14. Mark 10:1-16 | 29. Mk. 16:9-20 |
| 15. Mk. 10:17-31 | 30. Judges 1:1—2:5 |
| | 31. Jdg. 2:6—3:6 |

Obituary

Harold J. Zink 1906-1999

Harold Zink was born July 10, 1906, in Frankenmuth, Mich. He died Jan. 11, 1999, in Stevensville, Mich.

A 1930 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, he was a tutor at Northwestern College, Watertown, Wis., and Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw. He also served at St. Matthew, Freeland, and St. Paul, Stevensville, both in Mich. He served on the Michigan District Mission Board for 16 years, playing a major role in opening Florida for mission expansion.

He is survived by two sons, two daughters, 10 grandchildren and 22 great-grandchildren.

Youth news

Aleah Bakken, a senior at Luther High School, Onalaska, Wis., competed in the national "Make it yourself with wool" competition in Denver, Colo., in January. She qualified by winning the Wisconsin state competition for sewing a wool cape and skirt.

ON THE BRIGHT SIDE

We were on a family vacation to the Black Hills. While attending a Passion Play in Spearfish, S.D., our four-year-old son, Craig, who now is a student at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, exclaimed after the crucifixion scene and the bright lights of Easter morning, "Hey, that wasn't three days!"

*Willard and Barbara Engel
Bay City, Michigan*

Mark Meissner, director of finance

CONGREGATION MISSION SUBSCRIPTION PERFORMANCE

Twelve Months Ended December 31, 1998

	Total Subscription		Offerings Received				
	Communicants 12/31/97	1998	Year to Date Projected	December Offerings	Twelve Months Offerings	Percent of Sbscrlptn	Annldz Ave Per Commun
Arizona-California	17,110	\$1,025,567	\$1,025,567	\$187,421	\$1,017,604	99.2%	\$59.47
Dakota-Montana	9,195	429,512	429,512	88,917	430,201	100.2	46.79
Michigan	36,777	2,129,256	2,129,256	425,476	2,161,308	101.5	58.77
Minnesota	43,636	2,387,541	2,387,541	544,193	2,405,472	100.8	55.13
Nebraska	10,334	590,248	590,248	139,734	610,826	103.5	59.11
North Atlantic	3,831	321,867	321,867	56,945	344,545	107.0	89.94
Northern Wisconsin	61,019	2,542,489	2,542,489	550,554	2,520,776	99.1	41.31
Pacific Northwest	5,067	264,918	264,918	81,127	284,311	107.3	56.11
South Atlantic	6,661	467,354	467,354	67,309	478,347	102.4	71.81
South Central	4,531	416,738	416,738	81,047	440,688	105.7	97.26
Southeastern Wisconsin	57,563	3,334,263	3,334,263	766,397	3,250,134	97.5	56.46
Western Wisconsin	59,631	3,058,170	3,058,170	674,941	3,109,135	101.7	52.14
Total - This Year	315,355	16,967,923	16,967,923	3,664,061	17,053,347	100.5	54.08
Total - Last Year	315,377	16,765,951	16,765,951	3,559,502	16,536,629	98.6	52.43

CURRENT BUDGETARY FUND

Statement of activities/Six Months ended December 31

	1998 Actual	1997 Actual	1998 Budget
Changes in Unrestricted Net Assets			
Revenues:			
Congregational Mission Offerings	\$ 8,004,643	\$7,801,019	\$7,597,800
Gifts and memorials	2,327,418	2,092,671	3,818,700
Bequest/planned giving	734,892	284,029	436,100
Tuition and fees	5,263,974	5,241,416	5,123,000
Other	90,708	129,737	66,600
Satisfaction of restrictions	-	2,085,000	-
Transfers-endwmt earnings	141,753	135,141	130,000
Transfers-gift funds	3,931,818	4,345,304	3,928,300
Transfers-continuing programs	2,115,307	2,115,364	2,643,000
Transfers-other	-	20,060	-
Total revenues	22,610,513	24,116,741	23,743,500
Expenditures:			
Home Missions	4,812,837	4,122,365	4,816,900
World Missions	4,353,954	4,037,542	4,672,200
Ministerial Education	11,444,281	10,868,720	11,236,900
Parish Services	893,019	726,268	1,056,400
Administrative Services	2,738,964	2,638,282	3,232,900
Total expenditures	24,243,055	22,393,177	25,015,300
Changes in unrestricted net assets	(1,632,542)	1,723,564	
Changes in Temp Restricted Net Assets			
Gifts and memorials	-	87,800	-
Bequest/planned giving	-	(36,000)	-
Change in value of trust agreements	-	(9,600)	-
Satisfaction of restrictions	-	(2,085,000)	-
Total revenues	-	(2,042,800)	-
Change in temp restricted net assets	-	(2,042,800)	-
Net assets - beginning of year	5,939,285	5,909,760	
Net assets - end of period	4,306,743	3,866,960	

Statement of Financial Position

	Dec 31, 1998	Dec 31, 1997
Assets:		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$1,101,265	\$2,252,796
Due from other funds	653,932	30,046
Accounts receivable-cash adv.	105,250	104,750
Cash advances-schools	-	102,412
Other accounts receivable	90,778	146,356
Contributions receivable	3,024,800	3,222,027
Mortgage note receivable	13,895	15,901
Allowance for doubtful accts	(92,000)	(92,000)
Prepaid expenses	69,443	6,945
Total assets	4,967,363	5,789,233
Liabilities and Net Assets:		
Due to schools	488,716	-
Accounts payable	171,904	198,709
Total liabilities	660,620	198,709
Unrestricted	1,281,943	2,368,497
Temp restricted	3,024,800	3,222,027
Total net assets	4,306,743	5,590,524
Total liabilities and net assets	4,967,363	5,789,233

“Lutheran Hour” host honored—
The National Religious Broadcasters (NRB) presented its highest honor to the host of “The Lutheran Hour” radio program at the group’s annual convention in Nashville, Tenn.

Oswald C.J. Hoffmann received the NRB’s Hall of Fame award for his 33 years of service as the program’s host. The Lutheran Hour is a weekly radio program sponsored by The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod.

More teens say “no”—After 20 years of steady growth in the rate of sexual intercourse among teens, more teenagers are refraining from sex, a federal study has found.

According to the survey, produced by the Centers for Disease Control, slightly less than 49 percent of young males reported that they had sexual experience, down from over 57 percent in 1991. Slightly less than 48 percent of girls reported sexual experience, down from 51 percent.

The decrease marks the first time in the 1990s that fewer than half of the country’s high school students say they have had sex.

Annually, however, in the United States one million teenagers become pregnant, and there are three million cases of sexually transmitted diseases among teens.

Riots in Indonesia—During January, because of Christian-Muslim violence, seven mosques, nine churches, and 189 homes were burned. Also, 43 people died, and another 134 were injured, 102 of them seriously.

The fighting reportedly erupted after Muslims attacked a Christian they accused of being drunk and insulting Islam, which forbids the use of alcohol. About 90 percent of Indonesia’s 202 million people are Muslim. A small minority are Christian.

Why people don’t attend church—
In studies by Gallup, titled “The Unchurched American,” people have identified certain reasons why they do not attend church.

- At least half said that churches were too concerned with organizational issues.
- A substantial minority (one-third to four in 10) said that churches were not concerned enough about social justice.
- Eight in 10 Americans have consistently over the last half-century maintained that one does not need to attend church or synagogue to be a good Christian or Jew.

Mormon missionaries: no more e-mail home—The Mormon church has told its young missionaries around the world they may not use e-mail and faxes to communicate with families and friends.

Don LeFevre, a spokesman for the church, said exceptions will be made for missionaries living in areas where postal service is poor.

The church has always tightly controlled communication between missionaries—typically men in their early 20s—and their families as a means of keeping missionaries focused.

Missionaries are allowed to phone home only twice a year—Christmas and Mother’s Day—and are not supposed to write more than once a week. But LeFevre said that because of e-mail’s convenience, “some missionaries may be communicating more than once a week and that would detract from missionary work.”

Bonnie Carter of Orem, Utah, called the policy change “a cruel move” at a time when several missionaries have been injured or killed in foreign countries. Her son, Andrew, is on a two-year mission for the church in Sweden.

Landlords can refuse to rent on religious grounds—By a 2-1 decision, a federal appeals court in San Francisco upheld a lower federal court ruling in favor of two Anchorage, Alaska, landlords who said their Christian faith forbade them to rent to unmarried people living together.

If the Jan. 14, ruling stands, it will be binding on federal courts in Alaska and eight other western states.

The Great Commission isn’t over—The percentage of Americans who are “unchurched” has changed little over the last two decades. In a Gallup survey, 44 percent fit this category, the same number as in 1998, and slightly higher than the percentage in 1978 (41%).

The unchurched are defined as those who are not members of a church or have not attended services in the previous six months other than for special religious holidays, weddings, funerals, or the like.

In general, the unchurched are more likely to be male, under 30, to live in the West, to be single or married to a spouse with a different religious background.

This is the 1998 demographic profile of the unchurched:

National	44%
Men	50%
Women	39%
Whites	45%
Non-whites	37%
Blacks	32%
18-29 years	49%
30-49 years	44%
50-64 years	42%
65 and older	40%
Conservatives	35%
Moderates	47%
Liberals	55%

[“The Unchurched American,” Gallup]

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

**CHANGES IN MINISTRY****Pastors**

Holub, Curtis J., to Brooklyn, Brooklyn Park, Minn.

Ruege, John A. Sr., to Our Redeemer, Ladysmith, Wis.

Siverly, Keith H., to St. Mark, Mankato, Minn.

Teachers

Berg, Amy E., to Holy Word, Austin, Tex.

Cuppan, Else M., to retirement

Gnewuch, Kim L., to St. Andrew, Middleton, Wis.

Gutzke, Ann C., to St. John, Minneapolis

Hahm, Amy D., to Wisconsin LHS, Milwaukee

Loersch, Kevin J., to St. Luke, Watertown, Wis.

Meyer, Beverly A., to retirement

Price, Thomas E., to Northland LHS, Wausau, Wis.

Rosenbaum, Kurt E., to Ascension, Sarasota, Fla.

Rust, David M., to St. Paul, Livonia, Mich.

Schmidt, Marjorie I., to retirement

Schultz, Jeffrey D., to Zion, Chesaning, Mich.

Wade, Jane L., to Ascension, Sarasota, Fla.

Zunker, Timothy J., to Faith, Fond du Lac, Wis.

SYNODICAL CONVENTION

The 55th biennial convention of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod will be held July 26 to 30 at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn.

Opening communion service will begin at 9 AM, opening session at 11 AM. Delegates—register July 25, or before the opening service. Mini essays/Bible studies and an essay will carry out the theme: "Forward in Christ."

Housing will be provided for all delegates. Meals will be served in the cafeteria. The synod secretary will send each delegate a letter certifying his delegation and informing him of his floor committee assignment. The school will send each delegate instructions regarding travel and housing. All air travel arrangements are to be made through an 800-number provided to the delegates. Mail for delegates during the convention should be sent c/o Martin Luther College, 1995 Luther Ct, New Ulm MN 56073-3965. Delegates may be reached at 507/354-8221; FAX 507/354-8225.

ANNIVERSARIES

Augusta, Ga.—Prince of Peace (20). June 13. Service, 3 PM; dinner following at 5 PM.

Winthrop, Minn.—Zion (100). April 18—German heritage and traditions from the past anniversary service, 10 AM. German and American potluck dinner follows. June 26—service to commemorate confirmation classes, 5 PM; light supper follows. June 27—Centennial celebration service, 9:30 AM; dinner follows; mission service, 2:30 PM; refreshments follow. Lori Klockmann, 507/647-5582.

Omaha, Neb.—Gethsemane Lutheran School (50). April 25. Service of Praise, 4 PM. Catered dinner, 5 PM. 402/431-8509.

To place an announcement, call 414/256-3210; FAX, 414/256-3899; <karenb@sab.wels.net> Deadline is six weeks before publication date.

Swartz Creek, Mich.—Hope (50). April 25—service, 3 PM; dinner follows. Former members invited. David Krueger, 810/635-4692; <krueger@tir.com>.

Oklahoma City, Okla.—Holy Cross (25). May 2—services, 10:30 AM & 4 PM; catered dinner follows 4 PM service. RSVP by April 11 for catered dinner. Bill Jennings, 405/794-8046.

Tomah, Wis.—St. Paul (125). May 16—Christian education Sunday services, 8 & 10:30 AM; potluck follows. Former teachers and students invited. Sept. 19—Anniversary festival Sunday services, 8 & 10:30 AM; dinner follows. Former pastors, teachers, and members invited. 608/372-2347.

Lake Orion, Mich.—Divine Grace (25). May 23—New organ dedication services with organist Charles Bonow, 8 & 10:45 AM. Anniversary service, 4 PM; meal follows. 248/391-1131.

COMING EVENTS

National WELS handbell festival concert—April 11, D.C. Everest Middle School, Schofield, Wis, 2 PM. Cheryl Diener, 715/258-7203.

Rays of light performance—Campus ministry students from Minnesota State University, Mankato, will challenge high school students to live their faith.

April 23—Minnesota Valley LHS, New Ulm, Minn., 1:30 PM

May 10—Luther HS, Onalaska, Wis., 9 AM; Lakeside LHS, Lake Mills, Wis., 2 PM

May 11—Shoreland LHS, Somers, Wis., 9 AM; Wisconsin LHS, Milwaukee, 2 PM

May 12—Kettle Moraine LHS, Jackson, Wis., 8:15 AM; Winnebago Lutheran Academy, Fond du Lac, Wis., 10:30 AM; Manitowoc LHS, Manitowoc, Wis., 1:45 PM

May 13—Fox Valley LHS, Appleton, Wis., 9 AM; Northland LHS, Wausau, Wis., 1 PM

May 14—St. Croix LHS, St. Paul, Minn., 9 AM; West LHS, Plymouth, Minn., 1:45 PM

OWLS convention—Organization of WELS Lutheran Seniors (OWLS) convention, July 13-15, Willmar, Minn. OWLS, 8420 W Beloit Rd, West Allis WI 53227; 414/463-6221.

OWLS hostel—Organization of WELS Lutheran Seniors (OWLS) college training and fellowship. July 16-21 at Bethany Lutheran College, Mankato, Minn. Air-conditioned dormitories. OWLS hostel, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222; <usr10@sab.wels.net>; 414/256-3241; FAX: 414/256-3899.

AVAILABLE

Altar cloths—one green for altar (7' 11" long), two green for lectern and pulpit; one white for altar (7' 10" long), two white for lectern and pulpit. Free for cost of shipping. Mt. Olive, Detroit, Mich; 313/885-3023.

Computer printers—Panasonic KX-P1180 multi-mode printer, 9-pin dot matrix. Epson FX286 dot matrix. Free for cost of shipping. Mt. Olive, Detroit, Mich.; 313/885-3023.

Steeple—fiberglass. 19 feet high, 26 inch cross (21' 2" total). Free for cost of shipping. Abiding Faith, Fort Worth, Tex.; 817/294-9303.

Organ—Hammond Rhythm II organ. Free for cost of shipping to mission congregation. Roger Neumann, 314/227-6639.

Carillon tapes—18 tapes of hymns for various seasons of the church year for I.T. Verdin model

680 carillon. Free for cost of shipping. St. Paul, Winneconne, Wis.; 920/582-7772.

NEEDED

Preacher—for any of the following Sundays: June 20, June 27, July 4, July 11, and July 18. In exchange for preaching you have full use of the parsonage in Amherst, N.H. Amherst is 45 minutes north of Boston, one hour from the Atlantic Ocean, and two hours from the White Mountains, Vermont, and Maine. Joel Petermann, 603/880-8574.

Northwestern College Memorabilia—for ton-tine box. Pictures, music, athletic/music event programs, coaches' items, coins, grade books, beanies, etc. Items to be tagged: date or time period, who had it, who is giving it. Need items by the end of April. Alan W. Gumm, 520/317-1737; <agumm@c2i2.com>.

Loving Christian couple—to live with parents (WELS) in modern farm home, SW Missouri/NW Arkansas area. Assist with care of Parkinson's patient, light housekeeping plus companionship. Compensation: living quarters, meals, and agreed upon wages. References required. Send resume to Marie Anderson, Rt. 1 Box 1701, Pineville MO 64856.

NAMES WANTED

WELS/ELS members stationed at Misawa Air Force Base, Aomori Prefecture, Japan—Pastor Roger W. Falk, WELS Japan Mission, 3-29-6 Hyogozuka, Utsunomiya, Tochigi 321-0138 Japan. TEL/FAX +81-28-653-6353.

Names wanted—of Asian students for Asian student rally, Sept. 10-12. Joel Lintner, 612/378-1346; Leon Piepenbrink, 651/306-0645; Loren Steele, 651/222-2429.

Southern Maryland area—names, addresses, phone numbers of WELS/ELS prospects in Charles, St. Mary's, Calvert counties. Bruce Wietzke, 24275 Hunt Ct, Hollywood MD 20636; 301/373-3299; <wietzke@tqci.net>

POSITION AVAILABLE

Professors—Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee, is seeking faculty candidates in the following disciplines: anthropology, art, biology, business, chemistry, communication, computer science, economics, education, English, finance, German, history, mathematics, music (keyboard, choral, and instrumental), philosophy, political science, psychology, sociology, Spanish, theater, theology.

Candidates should hold a doctorate or equivalent; doctoral students will be considered. Previous college or university teaching preferred. Active membership in a WELS or ELS congregation is required. Positions may not be available immediately, but openings are anticipated in the next few years. Send names to Dr. John Bauer, vice president of academic affairs, WLC, 8800 W Bluemound Rd, Milwaukee WI 53226; 414/443-8816; FAX, 414/443-8514; <jbauer@wlc.edu>.

1999 YEARBOOK CORRECTIONS

Pastor Peter Snyder's home phone number is incorrect. His home number is 409/680-1500.

Timothy Ristow's (ELS) home phone number is incorrect. His home number is 616/924-4243.

For a weekly updated bulletin board, see the WELS Web site <www.wels.net>.

Dwell in the shelter

Nothing and no one is greater than our God.

James A. Aderman

Last summer, in the searing heat of the Dead Sea, I boarded a cable car along with 25 others to make my way to the top of Masada, Herod's mountaintop fortress. Unfortunately, for a couple of us, the ride bordered on terrifying. Two folks from our group stood in the middle of the car, implored God for safe arrival at the summit, and looked at the floor rather than the desolate beauty all around.

That's a picture of the way I often trust God. Panting with fear because of how I perceive my lot, I miss the breathtaking scenery that my Father wants me to enjoy. Psalm 91 begins with a description of our God and the assurance that, as he transports us through life, our journey is so secure that we can enjoy the view.

Who God is

Read Psalm 91:1,2. **"He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, 'He is my refuge and my fortress,**

my God in whom I trust.'" A seasoned believer speaks about his personal experience with the God who would not fail him. Notice the words he uses to describe God. "Most High" (Hebrew *Elyon*) pictures God as the Supreme Being, the pinnacle of all power, glory, wisdom, and grace. No one and nothing is greater than he. "Almighty" is the name the patriarchs often used for God to emphasize his covenant to love, protect, and prosper his chosen nation (e.g., Genesis 17:2). The Hebrew term, *El Shaddai*, literally is "the God of omnipotence." It's related to words that describe the destructive power of tempests, wild beasts, and hostile armies. You want *El Shaddai* as your friend, not enemy.

Our psalmist calls God the "LORD" (Hebrew *Yahweh*). In Exodus 34:6,7 God tells us what that name stands for: "The LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion, and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished."

God is called our "refuge" and "fortress." David defines both words in his hymn, "The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation. He is

my stronghold, my refuge and my Savior" (2 Samuel 22:2,3).

El is the Hebrew word for "God." It is related to the Hebrew word for one who is strong, a hero.

How God treats us

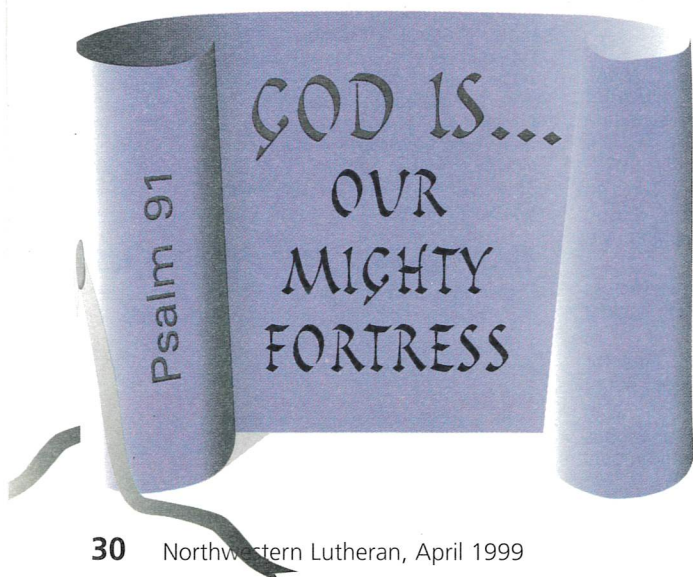
Now that we know who God is, look at how he'll treat us. When we dwell—sit down and settle into his shelter—we have rest. The Hebrew word for rest pictures, in today's terms, lounging by an indoor pool at a Hilton Hotel while a deadly January blizzard swirls outside. We have that leisure because we are in the Almighty's shadow. Like living next to a fully-ready military base, help is always immediately available.

It is no surprise that our experienced believing friend testifies, "I trust [him]." The Hebrew word for trust means to lean on God, to confidently depend on him—much like when you sat down to read this article, trusting your chair would hold you. When we recognize that *Elyon*, *El Shaddai*, *Yahweh* has forgiven and adopted us, it's incomprehensible that we don't lean on him for everything, even when life's cable car seems to dangle by a thread.

James Aderman is pastor at Fairview, Milwaukee.

For further study

Compare Psalm 46. Note how the same terms for God are used. The bottom line of Psalm 91:1,2 is that believers have rest and shelter because of who God is. What does Psalm 46 conclude?



An IRA for Easter

Do you have an IRA? Is it fully funded by someone else? Can it be affected by stock market fluctuations or interest rate changes? Could you ever outlive its proceeds?

If answering any of these questions puts doubts in your mind, do I have an IRA for you! No, I'm not an insurance salesman or a stockbroker on the side. And before I get in trouble with any regulatory agency, let me add that what is being offered here is not a normal IRA, an individual retirement account. Rather it is an individual redemption account, a far more valuable IRA that is closely connected with Easter.

This IRA is entirely funded for us by another. It's completely secure; nothing earthly can alter its value. You can't possibly outlive it, even if you lived forever. In fact, that's exactly why God designed an Easter IRA—so you could live forever.

Paul's Spirit-inspired words in Romans 8:11 is the plan document: "And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you."

The Holy Spirit, Paul emphasizes, opened the IRA in our name. Through the Spirit, planting faith in our hearts, the complete deposit Jesus made for us by his death became ours. Easter, Jesus' victory over death, guarantees it. The result, says Paul, is life for our mortal bodies.

In calling our bodies mortal, Paul is powerfully portraying the effect of sin. God had created Adam and Eve to be deathless. It didn't stay that way for long; sin changed all that. The result, for them and us, is death.

However, because Christ, after making the payment for sin with his death, has been raised to life again, God has credited the payment he made to each of us. Our

IRA has been fully vested, fully funded by another.

The value of this IRA is unaffected by worldly fluctuations. In Romans 8, Paul lists things that can't affect the value of our IRA. "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

That's an impressive list. It seems like any one of them could affect our assets, but not in our individual redemption account! Jesus' resurrection says there is nothing on earth, or under the earth, certainly nothing in heaven, that can lessen the value of what Jesus has earned for us.

Last of all, perhaps best of all, you simply can't outlive it. For the life our Savior won for us, the life the Spirit makes ours by faith, is the very principle of life itself. It cannot be taken from us even when we die. At the moment our body dies, our deathless soul goes to be with our Redeemer. And, one day, on the last day, our mortal body also becomes immortal, when it will be joined to our deathless soul.

Now that's a really valuable IRA! It's fully funded by someone else, unaffected by the changes of life, and one you can never outlive.

Thank God this Easter season that by his death and resurrection Jesus has opened an IRA, an individual redemption account, for every one of us.



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

God
designed an
Easter IRA—
so you could
live forever.

Ceremonial laws and Christian service

John F. Brug

The Third Commandment says “Remember the Sabbath Day,” so why don’t Lutherans worship on the seventh day as God commanded? The Ten Commandments are not ceremonial law that we can drop.

It is true that God commanded Israel to worship on the seventh day and to observe that day as a day of rest from all regular labor. It is also true that we have no right to change any of God’s commandments. But God himself limited the application of some of his commands to Israel. Not all of his commands apply to all people. The command to observe the seventh day as a day of rest was such a limited command. Even though it appears within the Ten Commandments, the Sabbath command was not moral law, but ceremonial law. It applied only to Israel and only for the duration of the Old Testament.

The New Testament specifically tells us that we have been freed from the Sabbath commands. Paul told the Colossians, “He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. . . . Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day” (Colossians 2:13-16). We know that the Sabbath law is not moral law, because the New Testament sets it aside.

Should lay people who have been given the talent and honor to help in the worship service be paid? I don’t think they should be, since the gifts they have received from God should be given back willingly.

Scripture says “The worker deserves his wages” (1 Timothy 5:18). Certainly those who devote their lives to serve in the church should receive adequate wages whether their work is preaching, teaching, musical performance and direction, or administration.

The New Testament specifically tells us that we have been freed from the Sabbath commands.

The situation is not so clear-cut when we consider part-time service by individuals who earn their support in some other profession. The types of service under discussion include directing the choir, playing the organ, teaching, secretarial work, keeping financial records, or cleaning and repairing the church. All of these services could be performed by members of the congregation as freewill offerings. Some of these services could be performed by individuals who are called to part-time paid positions. Some services such as janitorial work could

be performed by nonmembers hired to do the job.

Congregations are free to decide how to fill these needs. Whether they offer pay for specific services will usually depend on the amount of time and commitment needed to fulfill such an assignment in a given congregation. When deciding whether to compensate those who serve in part-time positions, congregations should be wary of arbitrary distinctions such as paying organists but expecting teachers or custodians to do an equal amount of work without pay. Church boards and voter assemblies should carefully evaluate the requirements of all the positions they ask members to fill, so there is fair treatment of all who serve.

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

Has your Bible study brought up a question? Has a nonchristian challenged your beliefs? What questions are you wondering about?

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

You don't say . . .

"Looking at the earth from this vantage point, looking at this kind of creation, and to not believe in God, to me, is impossible . . . to see [the earth] laid out like that only strengthens my beliefs."

Astronaut John Glenn, *Internet for Christians Newsletter*, Nov. 9, 1998, quoted in *Current Thoughts & Trends*, Jan. 1999

IS ANY LUTHERAN GATHERING COMPLETE WITHOUT A POTLUCK?

No. So neither is our monthly meeting with you for *Northwestern Lutheran*. That's why we're creating this new page called Potluck. You'll get a little sampling of whatever we feel like bringing—just like a normal potluck. We'll bring photos from you, our readers. We'll also have statistics, quotes, ideas, a little humor. If you find anything you'd like added to this page—send it in.

So enjoy . . . and come back for seconds.

Experiencing the passion

Ever wonder what it was like living during Jesus' time? To see Jesus captured in the garden? To hear the people yell, "Crucify him! Crucify him!?" To feel the earth tremble when Jesus died and again when he rose? Then check out an interactive passion history at <www.geocities.com/~dolorosa/index.html>. The Web site—put together by Guy Marquardt, a WELS missionary in Brazil—takes you through Jesus' passion, starting with the Garden of

Gethsemane and ending with Easter morning.

In this site, you are a fictional character who follows along with the disciples as they witness the suffering and death of Jesus. You choose your own paths and interact with others (both fictional and historical) along the way.

Experience Jesus' passion through this site. But then experience it again by reading—and rereading—the Lenten account in the four Gospels.

Ideas

Here are some ways you can let your light shine:



- Wear Christian jewelry
- Have a business card with a Christian message
- Send WELS Heaven Sent e-mail postcards to your friends <www.wels.net/sab/frm-pc.html>.
- Have a wallpaper with an inspirational Bible verse on your computer screen <www.wels.net/sab/frm-wallp.html>.



Picture this

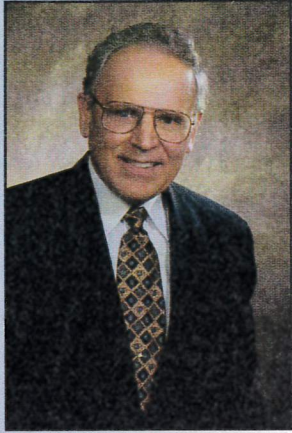
Lisa Carmichael, a teacher at Divine Grace, Orion, Mich., shares this picture and her thoughts on her trip to India:

This photo was taken in October 1998 in Jabalpur, India—one of several areas in India where we're doing mission work. A friend and I had the privilege of sharing God's Word with a group of women there and enjoyed interacting with them. Although we spoke different languages, we didn't have problems communicating! Their enthusiasm and eagerness to read the Bible was overwhelming and touched our hearts deeply.

NL is looking for photos with spiritual meaning or value—pictures that show Christian fellowship, worship, and faith. Photos may be color or black and white. Tell us about the photo, why

you took it, who is in it, what it means to you. Include your name, address, and phone number. Do not write on your photos. Those whose photos get printed will receive a small gift.

Send photos to *Northwestern Lutheran, Picture this*, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398. Questions? Contact us at <nl@sab.wels.net> or 414/256-3232.



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

Why would we wait until the year 2000 to be ready for the worst on this earth? Today, we need to be content in Jesus.

Why 2K?

Brace yourself! It's coming! The dreaded Y2K (year 2000) computer bug! Actually, it's here already, the bug that is. It's built into hundreds of thousands of computers and computer components around the globe. It awaits only the tick of the clock to the year 2000 to activate it—or deactivate it, as the case may be.

If you haven't heard about Y2K yet, you are remarkably insulated from the rest of the world, and maybe better off for it. The concern is that, because most computers register years by only two digits (99 for 1999), when we reach 2000 (00 on the computer), the computers will read 1900 instead. Worse yet, although we've known about this glitch for a long time, many people are already too late to get it fixed in their computer systems.

So, what does a computer do when it reads 1900 instead of 2000? It might malfunction, erase financial records, send false signals, and create general havoc. Everything in our lives could be affected, including our food supply, our water, our heat, our lights. Or, the computer might simply shut down. That, too, would disrupt our lives, but it would be easier to fix, if not less chaotic. Or the computer might not change its basic functioning at all. We might wake up on Jan. 1, 2000, to business as usual.

Meanwhile, computer people everywhere are working feverishly to beat the clock and fix the problem. Others are storing up non-perishable food, batteries, generators, candles, and various survival gear. Still others are willing just to wait and see. Some see it as an opportunity to be prepared to help others and witness to Christ when it happens. For many, throw in a dash of millennial fever, and the next New Year's celebration looms as the most phenomenal event ever.

If you've read this far to see what I think the outcome of the Y2K problem will be, I'm sorry to have misled you. I don't know any more than most people, which is precious little. I just want to ask one simple question: What's new under the sun?

We live in the joy of the resurrection of our Savior. The one future event we look forward to is his return to take us all to glory in heaven. Meanwhile, we live with the daily reality that, in the next moment, our world could erupt in chaos. In the next moment, our secure personal worlds could be invaded by unthinkable tragedies. The stock market could collapse, the banks close. Erratic weather patterns could spread famine around the globe. New volatile viruses could bring suffering and death to now healthy people. We could face a fatal accident. Evil governments or terrorists could wreak destruction on countless people.

Christ Jesus could return for the final judgment even as you are reading this article.

Don't you see that all of the possible calamities are bounded by Jesus? Jesus lives, and because he lives, we live—forever. Why would we wait until the year 2000 to be ready for the worst on this earth? Today, we need to be content in Jesus—whether we're rich or poor, well-fed or hungry. Today, we need to look for ways to help those in need and to witness to them of the crucified and risen Savior. Today, we need to be ready to accept the consequences if computers all self-destruct. Today, and in Y2K if we get that far, we need to live with Jesus, assured that he is with us now and always.

Gary P. Baumler

*pastors... elementary, high school, and college teachers...
worship committee members... interested lay people...
organists... choir directors: plan now to attend –*

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July 18-21, 1999

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VISIT displays by music and worship vendors...

Interested? Watch for registration information in early spring. Call the WELS Commission on Worship at 414-256-3226, email us at: worship@sab.wels.net, or look for more information at www.wels.net/sab/frm-cow.html.

Who knows?

Kenneth A. Cherney

“I’m not interested in religion,” a botanist friend once told me. “It’s nothing but opinion. Everybody’s got his point of view, and nobody can ever agree. That’s why I like science: nothing but cold, hard facts. There’s a lot less to argue about.”

I think...

Searching for truth

In response, one could ask whether the world of science really is as genteel a place as my friend thought it was. Instead, let’s take a look at her view of religion, which is a common one. Most people would probably agree that religion is more like picking a good movie than it is like studying botany. In other words, it’s a subjective thing. You simply find what works for you and stick with it. In religion, words like “true” or “false” really don’t apply.

In my opinion...

It’s a popular idea—but is it true? Is Christianity really just one of many valid ways of looking at spiritual things? When we say, “Christianity is true, and people who reject it are wrong”—is that really no different from saying “My wife

is prettier than yours”? Is it all just a matter of personal taste?

Actually, almost 2,000 years ago, God himself removed it from this category permanently.

He did that by raising Jesus Christ from the dead.

There’s no “In my opinion . . .” or “It seems to me . . .” or “Personally, I prefer to think . . .” about this. It’s a simple question of fact, a matter of truth or falsehood.

It seems to me...

Either Jesus returned to life three days after undergoing death by crucifixion, or he did not. If he did not, then no matter how appealing I find Jesus and his teachings, I have to face the fact that he told people an awful lot of things that weren’t true—for instance, that he was going to die and rise again, or that he was the Son of God. If Jesus did

not rise, then Christianity might be mildly interesting as a social phenomenon. But it certainly wouldn’t be enough to get me out of a warm bed on Sunday morning.

However . . .

Believing the truth

If Jesus did rise (and there’s more than enough evidence to show that he did), then that changes everything. In this case Jesus’ claims are true. He really is the Son of God and Savior of the world. He really can claim our loyalty, our trust, and our worship. But best of all (and the apostles spell all this out for us in the New Testament): If Jesus rose, then the debt of our sin really was

paid. God really accepted Jesus’ payment. Now, like Jesus, we’re free from the guilt of sin and the sting of death, forever.

All this hinges on a fact of history—which either happened or did not happen. Jesus is risen. You can dispute the fact, but it is emphatically not “just my opinion.” It’s not even the apostles’ opinion. And personal taste—“what works for you”—has absolutely nothing to do with it.

Celebrate the resurrection on Easter Sunday. You’ll see why it’s the most important event in all history—and you’ll find that not all historical facts are dull and dry.

Some, in fact, make you want to break into song.

NL

Ken Cherney is a professor at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota.

Jesus rose!