

# FORWARD

September 1999

Northwestern Lutheran • The Word from the WELS

Dealing with  
depression

The WELS  
"49-ers"

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## Men's Issues

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# True religion, like math, is exact

*For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. James 2:10*

Eric S. Hartzell

Some people look at religion as something akin to philosophy. You have yours, I have mine. We're both okay; we just have different philosophies. People assume out loud that you can't criticize them if they don't have things just the way you believe God has them.

## We can't get it right

But religion is not like philosophy. Religion is more like mathematics. It is exact. One wrong number spoils the equation. As James says: Get the numbers right, do the figuring right, do everything right except for one little thing, and the whole problem turns out to be wrong. It doesn't work to quarrel with a math teacher and say, "But everything else was right except this one number. . . ." Unless the math teacher cheats for you, your work will be marked wrong.

"Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect," (Matthew 5:48). Jesus said all the numbers have to be exact. He also said, "For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:20).

It aggravates our cultivated sense of fair play that our God should be such a stickler for details. People, if they really understand what Jesus is saying about the Pharisees and their righteousness, get angry!

$A = \pi r^2$   
**Jesus = perfection**  
 $E = mc^2$   
 $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$

In *The Jesus I Never Knew*, Philip Yancey points out that the Pharisees had "atomized" God's law into 613 rules—248 commands and 365 prohibitions—and bolstered these rules with 1,521 emendations. Jesus points out that Pharisee righteousness was not too much but too little.

Who could be so precise and particular? The Pharisees tried. Our hope of entering the kingdom of heaven can't be the wish that somehow Jesus has gone soft on the requirements for righteousness.

## Jesus got it right for us

The equation is beyond our ability. That's why Jesus said, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them" (Matthew 5:17). He came to fulfill God's law. He came to do the equation right. He is "The Way" for us to God's right answer.

Jesus came to fulfill—to fill full—God's Law.

God gave us a sack and said if we wanted to be saved we had to fill that sack with all good things and present them to him at the Judgment. If he finds everything all right, good. Then we live. "This do and you shall live" is the promise. But remember, it has to be everything because God is an exact God and nothing less than perfection will do.

Jesus said he was baptized to "fulfill all righteousness." He said from his cross, "It is finished." Our righteousness was finished. It was full. His righteousness for our lack of it. His full sack for our empty sack. He gives us the full sack of all good things that he collected throughout his perfect life. We can spread out the contents for a meticulous search by our Judge. He will look for everything—every single thing—and every thing will be there. The complicated equation of our life with all of its chances for error will be forever solved in the cross's computation, and we live on with the fullness of his "right-ness."

The spiritual mathematics is done. Our problem is solved. Jesus' right for our wrong. "Well done!" we hear. "Perfect score!"

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

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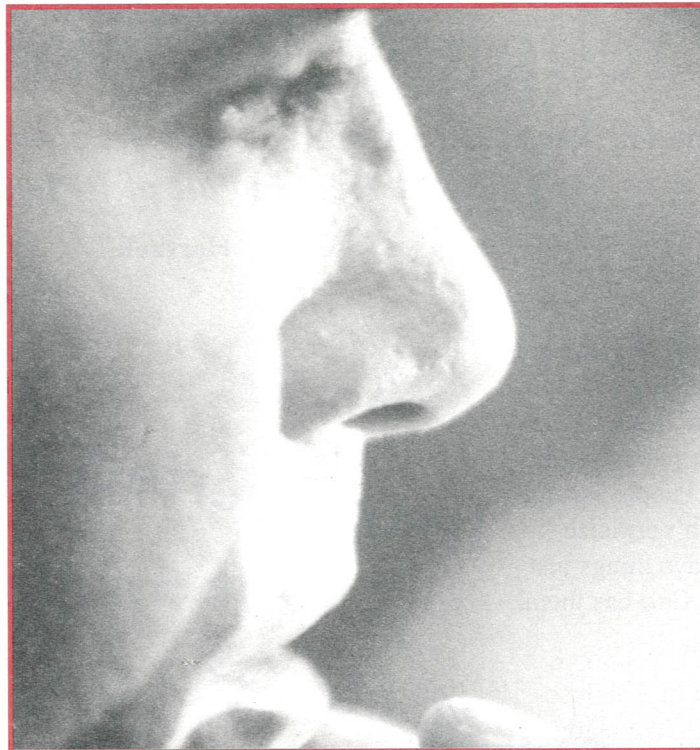
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How men begin to face the issues of Christian manhood.

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## bits & pieces



The world expects a lot from men. Voices from home, church, and society are asking that their needs be met. While men are wondering "What do people want from me?", they first need to ask, "What has God called me to be?" Read our series on men's issues over the next four months and see how a Christian man is always connected first to his Savior and how that applies to the home, the church, and the world. (p. 8)



We all get the blues—maybe for a day, maybe for a week. But for some, depression is far more serious, and potentially life threatening. They need more than a slap on the back and a "hang in there." Read one woman's account of how depression held its grip on her and what she needed from the family of faith. (p.10)



Fifty years ago, two WELS pastors sailed from the States to Africa, looking for a site for our world mission. Read about their frustrations and joys while searching for a place to share God's Word. Because of its historical importance, we've expanded this feature to three pages. (p.18)



Every time we run an article about worship, we hear from a number of people with varying viewpoints. One reader's response really caught our attention. Instead of joining the fray over contemporary versus traditional, he steps back and asks some new, thought-provoking questions. (p. 31)

—LRB

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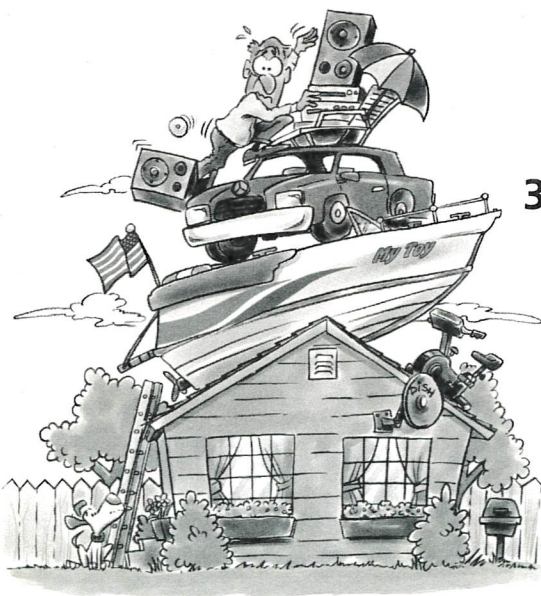
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**I agree with your article on the back page for June ["We aim to proclaim"].**

I was wondering if something might not be missing. Namely, perhaps a word of praise for Falwell for saying something he

knows he will be ridiculed for in attempt to speak out for the Sixth Commandment. We, too, in proclaiming the gospel and living good lives need to be ready to accept ridicule from pagans. Thanks for the article.

Dan Haag



Akaska, South Dakota

**I disagree with Pastor Sellnow's opinion [June].**

I don't believe Christians speak out or take action against sins often enough. I thank Rev. Falwell for informing me and other Christians that the color purple and upside-down triangles are gay pride symbols. I do not want my video and toy dollars going to organizations that promote this sinful lifestyle. I also don't want my child to become accepting of groups associated with these symbols.

Christians should not be tolerant of anything associated with sin. We should speak out against it and then withhold our financial support from it. Doing without a Teletubby doll is a small price to pay to stand firm.

Kerry S. Franks



Radcliff, Kentucky

*Pastor Sellnow responds:*

*WELS does not endorse or support sinful lifestyles. As the article stated, "We oppose the evils that others condone." But overall, our message carries a positive tone. We don't define ourselves as "the church that is against homosexuality." We are believers who speak for Christ and his righteousness. If I speak out against the evils in society but I don't speak to my neighbor personally about his sin and God's grace, I am not doing the work of an evangelist.*

**In response to the article "Healthy body, active service" [June]:**

The reason many of us cannot "lose those last 10 pounds" is that we are caught up in the sin of gluttony. Gluttony is eating anytime we are not physically hungry. Many of us think it is okay to eat as much as we want, as long as it is fruits, vegetables, or fat-free foods. This simply is not true. This could be gluttony as well. Satan loves it when we turn to food instead of God for comfort. I know many people who have been able to lose weight without extra exercise simply by avoiding gluttony while relying on God's strength.

Kevin Schultz

Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

**In two different churches, I recently observed the improper displaying of the United States flag.**

Title 36, Chapter 10 of the United States Code approved July 7, 1976 states that, "When displayed from a staff in a church, the flag of the United States of America should hold the position of superior prominence, in advance of the audience, and in a position of honor at the clergyman's right as he faces the audience."

The staffed United States flag should always be placed to the right of the clergyman without regard to a platform or floor level, or displayed in the chancel or in the sanctuary.

The rationale for this procedure is that the clergyman is presenting the United States flag for the church as a whole not the individuals seated in the sanctuary, and as such the flag is always placed to the clergyman's right as he faces the congregation!

David R. Schumann  
Watertown, Wisconsin

**Re: "Something's fishy here"**

**[May].** I belong to a mission congregation on Kodiak Island, Alaska. Our congregation has existed for two years now, initially because of Pastor

Zietlow and Christ, Juneau, Alaska. The first member of our church here went fishing with Pastor Zietlow and was told about Shepherd of the Hills, Anchorage, and their efforts with the rural Alaska teleconvener worship.

The next Sunday two lifelong WELS members could worship via the phone lines. Now two years later, we have vacation Bible school, Sunday school, and adult Bible study, and Sunday worship attendance is 25.

Thank you, Pastor Zietlow, for your efforts during "fishing." Your efforts and the power of the Holy Spirit are now working in Kodiak!

Gregory A. Buxa



Kodiak, Alaska

**After reading a letter from Jill S. Fury [July], we must respond.**

Telling your daughters to wear makeup "to the glory of God" is counterproductive. That command teaches young women that their value comes not from their actions and beliefs, but from their appearance.

We are not suggesting that dressing like a slob is acceptable. However, it is unnecessary to put oneself on display for attractiveness.

The Lord does not look at your face to determine if you are a believer. Instead of concentrating on creating falseness through makeup, we should focus on our hearts and minds. Time should be spent on Bible study, not applying mascara.

Stephanie L. Holstad, 19

Jana Pochop, 16



Albuquerque, New Mexico

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# Three Rs—and 10 commandments?

Armin J. Panning

School openings remind us how important good educational institutions are for the life of our nation. Perceived weaknesses cause concern. We moan when testing shows subpar academic achievement. We deplore social problems that attend youthful experimentation with drugs, alcohol, or sex. In particular, the rash of school shootings has engaged public attention and brought demands for changes—including posting the Ten Commandments in schools.

Whether or not our constitution allows such posting, we need to ask: What benefits can be expected from students' knowing the Ten Commandments? Or put differently: What can the law accomplish? And what not?

The clear expression of God's will in the Ten Commandments is a blessing. Endowed with a conscience by the Creator, people use their natural knowledge of God, reinforced by revealed knowledge from the Ten Commandments, to determine a proper course of action in their decisions.

When people follow these God-given guides, they avoid hurting their neighbor or stealing his property. When they dutifully pay taxes, they further stabilize government. When they obey traffic regulations, they ensure their own and everyone else's safety. Outward conformity to the commandments, often called civic righteousness, results in great blessings.

But despite the blessings civic righteousness brings, it can't make individuals better before God or improve their chance of salvation. Civic righteousness can produce right action, but it can't create the pure heart a holy God requires.

Basically, civic righteousness springs from one of two motives: fear of punishment or hope of reward. Fear of punish-

ment is a sinner's proper reaction, but it leads only to spiritual despair. On the other hand, the hope of gaining a reward from a perfect God for the imperfect service we render to him is unfounded optimism.

Neither approach works. But why not? Is there something wrong with the Ten Commandments? Not at all! Rather, we need to recognize that the law is only half of God's message to us.

A correct understanding of the demands of God's law leads only to despair. It shows us we can't possibly do what God wants done. We need help! The second part of God's message provides the solution. Whereas the law tells us that we have no righteousness of our own, the gospel gives us the good news that there is righteousness for us. Earned by Christ, it is brought to us in the gospel—to be accepted by faith.

As schools begin, we pray for God's blessing on their work, asking that they succeed in imparting useful knowledge and good citizenship. But such training, even if undergirded by a knowledge of the Ten Commandments, is not enough. It can equip people for life on earth, but can't prepare them for eternity. That requires the gospel.

Such gospel-centered education is the combined task of parents in the home and of the church working through its various educational agencies. Only there do we find the gospel, and only a proper understanding of both law and gospel can make the total change Paul envisions when he says, "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

*Armin Panning is a professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon.*

The law tells us that we have no righteousness of our own. The gospel gives us the good news that there is righteousness for us.

# Connected AT THE HEAD

A man who is  
connected at the  
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from his Head,  
Christ.

Wayne D. Mueller

**M**en are growing up in a vacuum. For three decades, society has focused on women's issues. Feminists grab for attention and authority. Media promote the interchangeability of the

sexes and their roles. Entertainment treats the male-headed family as an archaic anomaly. The politically correct have redefined family to include not only dysfunctional but even perverted relationships.

## Looking for the meaning of manhood

One sure sign of a screwed up social order is that we have more diaper changing stations in men's rooms and fewer fathers who know how to use them.

A boy growing up today learns before puberty to bear the epithet of chauvinist just because he's male. He hears his father condemned for creating a patriarchal society. He hears complaints about glass ceilings and sexual harassment for women. His workaholic parents provide a minimum of nurturing for him during his formative teen years.

The fact is that home and society spend a lot of time telling young men what not to be but offer almost no positive definition of manhood.

This void persists into adult life. The trend is for young men to leave home earlier and get married later. During this 20-something time of life their sense of manhood should be polished and refined. But there's little help out there. Sports and entertainment figures are generally poor role models. Women they date may echo society's vacuous attitudes about men. Guys they hang around with are often as clueless as they are about the meaning of manliness.

Where is God in all of this? He is where he always is, present in his powerful Word, ready to fill the void with his message and motivation for men. But even in our churches, many fathers and sons neglect God's voice. More than 60 percent of Lutheran confirmands give up regular worship before age 20. WELS Bible classes have nearly doubled in size in the last seven years, but fewer men than women attend. Elected male leaders of our congregations come to Bible studies less often than those who



elect them. And not one man in 10 among us leads his family in daily Bible readings or home devotions.

### **Learning about headship**

Yet God is amazingly patient and forgiving. He is using the evils of society to force us to face the issues of Christian manhood. Men's participation in Bible study, although weak, is growing. Our Parish Assistance effort helps male leaders in our congregations to be more spiritual, less political. Men from our churches across the country have organized more than 40 retreats within the past few years. At these rallies our men listen for God's voice in his Word, look to Christ for forgiveness, and seek the Spirit's help to live as Christian men.

God calls to our men with simple but powerful words in 1 Corinthians 11:3. There Paul writes, "Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ." A believer's relationship to others grows out of his relationship to his Savior. What a man believes Jesus is to him, he will be to others. A Christian man knows by faith that Jesus is his head. Jesus exercises his headship with authority. So Christian men also exercise authority.

But, let's face it. This whole idea of male headship scares a lot of people. Because of its politically correct focus on women's issues, society rejects male headship. The world's negative pronouncements about the way men will abuse headship have become self-fulfilling prophecies. Even in the church, many women are wary of male headship because they have suffered at the hands of men who use headship as an excuse for mental and physical abuse.

People who have not witnessed the unselfish use of authority will naturally be afraid of it. But the

ungodly abuse of headship, even by the majority of males, must not deter believers from urging the godly use of it. Jesus is our head, so headship exercised in faith cannot be something bad. To keep silent about male headship is a sinful concession to social pressure and casts aspersion on Christ's own headship.

We have never seen Jesus abuse his authority. The eyes of faith don't view Jesus as a boss, a dictator, or a control freak. Believers know that Jesus always uses his headship to help and save his people. Jesus taught his disciples to avoid the pagan use of authority for selfish control: "The Gentiles lord it over them . . . not so with you!" So, unless we resent Christ's headship toward us, his church, we will not be afraid of headship that is patterned after Christ's.

### **Applying proper headship**

A man who is connected at the Head will provide to others what he most cherishes from his Head, Christ. From Jesus, every man receives love, forgiveness, protection, daily bread, and regular communication through the Word.

A Christian man becomes Christ-like to those for whom God has appointed him as their head. He grows closer to his Head through daily attention to the Word. He communicates that Word to others, especially to those he loves the most. He puts spiritual example above physical provision. A godly man works to change others the way Jesus changes his people—with the gospel. He prefers encouragement to compulsion, forgiveness to control.

The problem lies in man's stubborn, sinful flesh. Men have trouble trusting that the gospel can accomplish more than law. We listen too


much to society and too little to God. So we try to change people the way political and corporate America does—by passing resolutions, making pronouncements, and demanding order. Our natural urge is to push rather than lead. We treasure success above mercy. We watch Bill Gates and Bruce Willis instead of keeping our eyes on our real Head, Christ.

That's why men get impatient when their spouses won't listen, their children won't obey, and the church council won't accept their idea. Frustrated, they take a shortcut to change by issuing still more orders that are not followed. It is then that men must send their stubborn natures back to the cross. We must let our Head speak to us and pose that tough question. In Scripture Jesus whispers to us and asks, "What do I do when you will not listen to me, when you will not follow, when you will not change?"

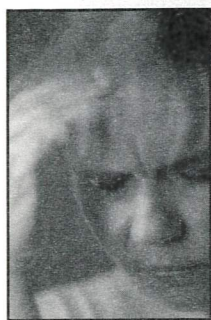
The answer, of course, cuts us to the heart. Jesus always forgives, provides new encouragement, and patiently waits for us to change and follow his lead more closely. In the way our Head deals with us, we learn again how to exercise our headship toward others.

When we who trust Jesus do not exercise his style of headship, we not only offend other Christians, but also give pagans another reason to despise God's headship in Christ.

So men need to wrestle with God's idea of Christian manliness and how to live it. In the next three articles we will listen to the voice of God to learn how to lead like Christ in the home, the church, and the working world.

  
*Wayne Mueller is the administrator of the Board for Parish Services.*

# You can help



## One woman's story of how depression ruled her life.

**I**t was my fourth hospitalization in two years. I hadn't eaten for six days. Medical doctors were checking for any physical problems, but couldn't find anything wrong. The psychiatrist threatened court-ordered tube feeding. You see, I chose not to eat. I outright refused food! I even broke the plastic tableware the nurses brought. I only wanted to die.

### A person doesn't just get over it

Unable to work, my life seemed useless. My marriage was ending, and I was convinced I was a failure—to others, to myself, but most of all, to God. I was suffering from depression. Not the kind where you “just get over it,” or “pull yourself up by the bootstraps.” This was serious stuff. My life was at risk.

I was in a hospital behind locked doors. Nurses watched every move (for my protection), and I was more resentful of it each day. Bathrooms were locked—opened by staff when

needed. I couldn't wear shoes because of the laces. I couldn't leave the unit. I was expected to attend therapy groups.

I was confused. I was in the best place for me, but still wanted to die. I saw nurses, doctors, therapists, and more doctors, nurses, and therapists. I was afraid to talk to anyone because my thoughts were so bad, so wrong. After all, I thought: “I am a Christian, and Christians don't think that way.” Because I had thoughts of wanting to die, I felt I deserved to die.

My illness had taken me beyond being rational. The hardest part was that I could see the fight within me. Right and wrong were battling it out, but I couldn't overcome the wrong. I couldn't escape.

I began eating. I put on a good enough front to get an overnight pass to leave the hospital. It was difficult, but I made it through the evening. In the morning, I took my two girls to school. However, I also took a bottle with a variety of old pills in it.

Feeling a strong desire to harm myself (at this point I no longer wanted to die, but just wanted to

harm myself), I stopped to see a pastor, the very friend who helped me see my need for hospitalization in the first place. I trusted him more than anyone else, but I couldn't tell him what I was about to do. I was too ashamed.

As I was driving back to the hospital, I overdosed. I took the pills close enough to the hospital so I would not jeopardize anyone else. I would be parked before I started feeling any effect. An hour later I met with my psychiatrist. I told him what I had done.

Within a half hour, I was moved to a secure unit and put on a 72-hour hold. I drank liquid charcoal to absorb the toxic material in my system. I had blood tests. Medical doctors, therapists, nurses, and psychiatrists hovered, watching even more closely than before. I felt even more ashamed! Even with all these people around, I still felt alone.

I ended up at a state hospital but was released 13 days later. I had improved some, but also learned what to do to beat the system. I did just that.

---

## One thing is needed

Now I am living safely at home with my two children. I have returned to the hospital once—for only two days. I continue with medications, individual therapy, and support groups.

Have you noticed something missing? I sure did. Even when I wasn't rational, thoughts of God kept entering my mind, and I would feel even more guilty or ashamed. I had some of the best psychiatrists, nurses, and therapists, but what I really needed was spiritual guidance and support. Once I was hospitalized for eight weeks and only once saw a non-denominational pastor. I received one phone call from my own pastor, as I was hospitalized many miles from my church. I felt isolated. I couldn't ask for what I needed because at the time, I did not know what I needed. That's common with depression.

People of all ages can suffer from depression. No one is exempt. I was baptized, raised, and confirmed in WELS. I taught vacation Bible school and Sunday school. I sang in choirs, was active on church committees, and worked for Christian organizations. I attended church regularly. I know the Lutheran Catechism and Bible stories. I know the law and the gospel. I've repeatedly read about Moses, David, Job, and Paul—but that didn't prevent me from feeling like Judas.

I wondered where my fellow Christians went. Were other people praying for me? Did God . . . could God still love me with all my terrible thoughts? I have my family and friends to thank for getting me this far and reminding me that God is still with me.

## You have the one thing

What do you say to people with depression who can't see that things will get better? What good will it do when they just roll their eyes or say, "You don't understand"?

I can say from experience that what I knew and what I needed to hear may have been the same thing, but I still needed to hear it. I needed to hear that God still loved me and forgave me even though I had such thoughts, that no sin was unforgivable, that taking my life into my own hands would result in a death and could result in damnation.

I didn't need lectures. I didn't need more guilt. (I put enough on myself). I didn't need to be told right and wrong. What I needed was reassurance that God still loved me, that he died for me, and was with me—even though I felt alone. I needed the prayers of other people, and I needed someone to say prayers with me since I couldn't concentrate enough to do it myself. I needed people to offer these things because I wasn't in the state of mind to ask for them.

Clinical depression isn't something one "snaps out of." It is an illness, a chemical imbalance in the brain. It is not something one chooses. Recovery is a process that takes time. There will be high and low points. The person may appear fine, but inwardly be suffering. The individual, psychiatrists, medical doctors, therapists, clergy, family, and Christian friends are all part of a team who can help the healing.

I hope my story gives people who suffer from depression courage to ask for help, and motivates other people to reach out to those who suffer from this disease. You could

easily be the person who says something that makes sense to the depressed person at that moment. Those words may be the only thing to cling to. It could be as simple as saying, "God is with you!"



*Because of the sensitive nature of the article, the author's name has been withheld.*

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## Common symptoms

- Persistent sadness or anxiety
- Feelings of hopelessness, pessimism, guilt, and worthlessness
- Loss of interest in activities
- Sleep disturbances—insomnia, early waking, or oversleeping
- Restlessness and irritability
- Decreased energy or fatigue
- Appetite loss or gain
- Thoughts of death or suicide
- Physical symptoms—headaches, digestive disorders, and chronic pain
- Neglecting Bible reading, prayer, worship, Lord's Supper, and Christian fellowship
- Fanatical involvement with spiritual things (a work righteous orientation to appease God and return to health)

## Life management strategies

- Embrace hope; reject despair (Philippians 4:4; Romans 5:1-5).
- Fix your eyes on Jesus and throw off coping strategies (sins) that entangle (Hebrews 12:1,2).
- Develop practices that flow from life by the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-6:10).
  - Feed on Word and Sacrament.
  - Pray without ceasing
  - Give thanks in all things
  - Repent regularly, forgive often
  - Take time for R&R
  - Eat right
  - Build relationships

*Thanks to John Johnson at Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Service for the information. If you are suffering from depression, please contact your pastor. He may also refer you to reliable counselors. Or contact the WELS Careline at 1-800-422-7341.*

# Meeting and serving our new neighbors

Estimates are that by 2050 one in four U.S. residents will be of Latin American origin. Learn how some WELS congregations are reaching their Hispanic neighbors.

Michael A. Roth

**W**hen William called, I could hear the excitement in his voice: "My wife had our baby!" His wife, Erica, had just given birth to their first child, and he wanted a pastor to come to the hospital. They were not members of any church then, and their call came to me because I was "on call" for a neighboring, vacationing pastor. Such a phone call is not unusual for any pastor, but the story of this family is.

## They come to a land of opportunity

William grew up in the coastal town of Humacao, Puerto Rico, where he

went to school and lived with his family. In 1989, he left in search of work in the United States. Meanwhile, Erica was growing up in Lima, Peru. She too left home to come to the United States in search of work and new opportunities. Their separate journeys of more than 2,000 miles each came together in Milwaukee, Wis., where they met and married.

I met with Erica in the hospital, with newborn daughter, Francis, cradled in her arms. We rejoiced at God's gift of this new life. We thanked God for keeping them safe and healthy. Then we talked about baptism. Erica was excited, but she

had a question. "We don't have any money. How can we afford to have Francis baptized?" After she explained to me that the church in Peru charged money for a baptism, I assured her that there was no charge here.

Amazed and excited at this, she had one more nagging question: "Can my baby be baptized if I haven't been baptized?" Her family hadn't had enough money to pay for her baptism when she was born. After I assured her that we could still baptize her daughter, the conversation shifted to baptizing Erica! On Christmas Eve 1998, Pastor Jim Getka baptized both Erica and her baby, Francis, at St. Peter.

William and Erica are part of a new and rapidly growing segment of "new Americans." Hispanics and Latinos from all parts of Central and South America, Mexico, and the Caribbean are now calling the United States home. They come to the United States looking for work, hoping to support their families back home, and searching for the opportunity to start new. William and Erica are not alone. According to census projections, currently about one in every nine Americans



Erica (fourth from left) and her baby, Francis, were baptized Christmas Eve, 1998, at St. Peter, Milwaukee. Also pictured are (second from left) William (Erica's husband), Naomi Getka, Pastor James Getka, and friends of the family.



Steve Mueller, a former LSM worker, distributes food to a family in need. On the same visit, he also conducts an in-home Bible study.

**Satisfaction and experience.** That's just two joys that Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary students receive from working at Lutheran Southside Ministries (LSM), a program that helps Christ and St. Peter, Milwaukee, minister to the Hispanic neighborhoods in Milwaukee.

Students can feel satisfied because they are helping keep the churches' names—and God's name—on the streets. They do this by canvassing, making evangelism calls, holding in-home Bible studies, and helping with Spanish worship, vacation Bible school, a summer youth program, and the food pantry.

Developed in 1993, Lutheran Southside Ministries also provides students valuable experience in ministering to Hispanics and helps them maintain Spanish language skills.

Students gain satisfaction and experience. Yet they give a whole lot more—the saving words of the gospel.

Ah, satisfaction.

is of Hispanic origin. Conservative projections estimate that this number will jump to one in every four by the year 2050.

Already, large portions of the Western United States, Texas, Florida, New York, and Chicago are seeing this changing face on their streets. Spanish is spoken in many homes and businesses. The rhythms of merengue and ranchera music pulsate from our radios and TVs. Mexican restaurants with their tacos, chimichangas, and salsa, together with Caribbean plantains, are now part of our dining cuisine. Stores specializing in products that appeal to Latin Americans are opening on street corners in cities and towns all over the United States, even in places like Milwaukee.

Our Hispanic neighbors aren't across the border anymore. They're across the street.

### **We have the opportunity**

That fact creates wonderful new opportunities for our WELS churches. Many people from foreign mission fields that we have supported in Latin America are now here in the United States. They are here in large cities and small towns. Some come knowing the message of Jesus as their Savior, but many do not. The

opportunity for sharing the gospel with a Hispanic may now be as close as your nearest neighbor. Now is the time to look across your street, not with skeptical eyes, but with eyes looking for the opportunity to share Jesus, with eyes hoping to find a new brother or sister.

Isn't that one of the great joys of being a Christian and working together in the church with fellow believers? God gave us the precious message of salvation. He created faith in our hearts and continues to fill us with the awesome joy of being forgiven, of being loved, and of having worth because Jesus died for our sins. He gives meaning, value, and purpose to our lives. Then he uses us to share that message with others. God isn't stopped by the challenge of language. God won't be stopped by the differences in culture. God simply continues to use us as his servants.

Instead of being turned away by languages, challenges, and different cultures, many WELS congregations are seeing opportunities. From Miami to Phoenix, from El Paso to Milwaukee, and many places in between, outreach efforts and worship services are being conducted in Spanish.

God has blessed that work.

Hispanic neighbors are becoming our Hispanic brothers and sisters. A recent survey of WELS and ELS congregations in the United States and Latin America reports that more than 3,000 Hispanics are already our brothers and sisters, with nearly 1,000 of them in the United States alone. William, Erica, and Francis are just three such examples.

That phone call on the day of Francis' birth was not our first contact with the family. They had first come to the food pantry at St. Peter. They had begun to establish a relationship of trust and friendship with us during the days and weeks before God provided the opportunity for witness. God gave us the means. God created the faith. We were merely the instruments he used to accomplish his great goal and mission.

Look across your street or over to the other end of town. You might be surprised who is living there. You also might be surprised to find out what God has planned. You never know who God has waiting—waiting for you to share his Word.

*Michael Roth is pastor at Christ, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.*



# Speak the truth in love

## Christians have a message for the 1.2 billion followers of Muhammad.

The Islam religion began some 600 years after Christ when Muhammad proclaimed himself a prophet of Allah. Since that time Islam has become a way of life for one-fifth of the world's population.

### The same god?

Islam and Christianity have one thing in common that other major religions do not have. Both teach that God wants their message spread to all people. The result has been controversy and clashes between Islam and Christianity.

Today, many are working to do away with this ancient animosity. Governments and religious institutions are attempting to foster mutual tolerance and a healing of relations. In May, Samuel R. Berger, assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, said before the American Muslim Council, "Our relationship with the Islamic community is vital to almost everything we are trying to do. . . . The President has made a conscious effort to dispel the old stereotypes of Islam."

In the official view of the Roman Catholic Church, the Islam religion is acceptable. "The plan of God's salvation includes those who acknowledge the Creator, and in the first place among them the Muslims" (2nd Vatican Council, L.G. 16).

Even in Malawi, Africa, where I

live, both government and the general public make the same comment, "We all worship the same god."

But do we worship the same God?

### Different God

Islam is an attractive religion. Its followers have a strong sense of belonging and clear direction for every aspect of life. Joining this community is simple. A person must say one short sentence in Arabic—*"Ashhadu Alla Ilaha Illa Allah Wa Ashhadu Anna Muhammadun rasulu'Llah"* ("I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is his Apostle")—and he is a bona fide Muslim. He should follow that with praying five times a day, giving 2.5 percent of his income to the poor, fasting during Ramadan, and making a trip to Mecca. If he doesn't do these things, he will simply spend a bit more time in hell before going to paradise.

Islamic teaching contains many regulations. Some are foreign to us such as forbidding playing chess, eating pork, or drinking alcohol. But Islam's core message is that if a person does good things, he will be rewarded with paradise.

Our God is different. He demands much more than five prayers a day and 2.5 percent of our income to the poor. He demands perfect obedience every minute of every day. The one

Paul D. Nitz

who fails will go to hell, permanently. However, if a person has Christ, he is freed from judgment. Christ's life and death has redeemed him from any punishment in hell and awarded him a pass into heaven.

God has saved people in spite of their evil hearts. The Bible makes it clear that the reward of paradise is a gift of God that cannot be won—even by 50 prayers a day.

The Islamic "bible" is the Qur'an (Koran). It calls for belief in Allah as the only true god, belief in angels, in prophets, and in the Last Day. Islamic teaching gives direction for daily life, annual ceremonies, and civil law. The Qur'an and other Islamic holy books, drawn in part from the Bible, depict Jesus as a holy prophet.

Despite this, devout Muslims often do not tolerate Christianity. In Malawi when a former Muslim read from the Qur'an in his Seventh Day Adventist Church, the Muslims were outraged. They stormed the preacher's house in the middle of the night, demanded that he turn over his



Landlocked Malawi ranks among the world's least developed countries. The economy is predominately agricultural, with about 90% of the population living in rural areas.



Qur'an, and said if he tried to preach from it again, he would die. Although this is extreme, it underscores a level of the animosity sometimes found toward Christians. Some Muslim sects, in fact, believe in carrying on a *jihad* or holy war against non-Muslims.

Still, we do not worship the same God. Islam is a religion of works, and opposes Christianity. Regardless of the present day push toward reconciling Christianity and Islam, we should recognize the irreconcilable differences and work to promote the truth of God in Christ.

### **Attitudes**

Yet when we look at the spread of Islam it can make us apprehensive.

The militant Muslim minority frightens us. Those who call for war and speak of death make us nervous.

Here in Malawi, however, the Muslims are a quiet and generally peaceable minority. Christians, though, are concerned about its growth in Malawi. Muslims are pouring money into the country. New mosques and Islamic education centers sprout up overnight. Muslims appear to be making good on their promise to make Africa the first Islamic continent.

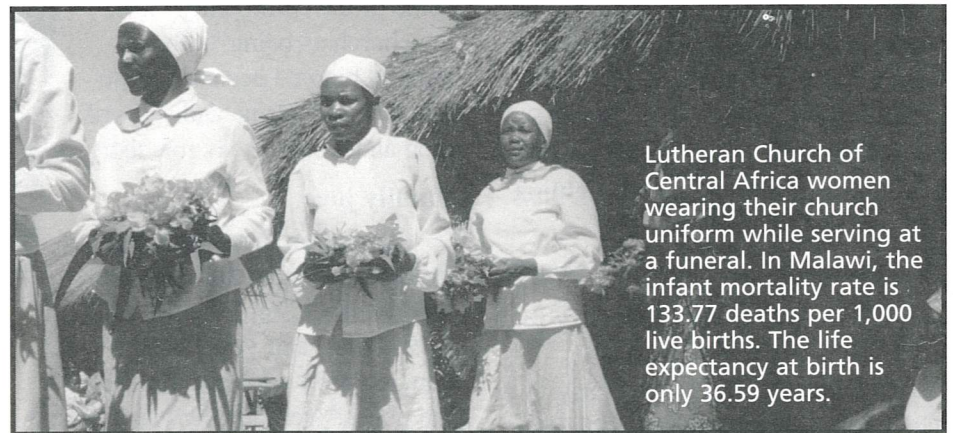
In America a far smaller percentage of the population is Muslim. Only six million Muslims worship in over 1,200 mosques and Islamic centers across the States. But Islam is the fastest growing religion in the United States.

Islam is a threat here in Africa, in America, and, most of all, in Islamic countries. But its numbers and political strength are not the big threat.

Their spiritual message threatens every Muslim with eternal separation from God.

Christians have the means to counter that threat. As God's children we are kept for his kingdom of glory. But the 1.2 billion followers of Muhammad are kept in darkness and headed for hell. We Christians can offer their only chance for rescue.

Are we willing? Many of us have prejudices that we need to deal with first.



Lutheran Church of Central Africa women wearing their church uniform while serving at a funeral. In Malawi, the infant mortality rate is 133.77 deaths per 1,000 live births. The life expectancy at birth is only 36.59 years.

We may have heard that all Muslims are fanatical, militant, hate Christians, and enslave women. Some Muslims have done such things, but most are not fanatical and militant. In either case, our job doesn't change. If we have a chance to present the gospel to a Muslim, it doesn't matter if he is militant or not. We don't leave a man to drown just because he might insult us during the rescue, and we don't withhold the keys of heaven to anyone whether they like us or not. After all, we by nature oppose God, but he did not withhold his love from us.

Love is the core issue. While we were still sinners and God's ene-

several Jewish families (including a rabbi) for whom I worked when in school. Our attitude toward Muslims may well encourage someone else to be brave and reach out. Perhaps someone we influence will in turn bring many lost Muslims to Christ.

Pray that we do not stumble over our prejudices and send a wrong message to others, but that our love for the lost be an inspiration. Pray also for the salvation of Muslims around the globe.



*Paul D. Nitz is a missionary in Malawi, Africa.*

**to define:** Islam is the religion. Muslims are the believers or followers.

A typical road in Malawi, with Mt. Mulanje in the background. Malawi, slightly smaller than Pennsylvania, has a population of 9,840,474. Of those, 55% are Protestant, 20% are Roman Catholic, 20% are Muslim, and the other are traditional indigenous beliefs.

Members at St. Peter, St. Albert, Alberta, share their struggles and their joys.

Linda R. Baacke

# Just like a family

**T**hey're just like a family—any family, your family. Just like a family, they've stuck together—for better, for worse. And there's been a lot of "worse."

Still, the members at St. Peter, St. Albert, Alberta, demonstrate that the best things in life are worth fighting for—just like a family.

## Family struggles

In 1965, WELS decided to try to establish a congregation in St. Albert. But the road wasn't easy. The congregation struggled, had to restart, and finally became self-supporting in 1987.

Within months, big troubles came when the church split over the doctrine of fellowship. Men, women, and children combined, over half of the congregation left.

"It was the most gut wrenching thing that ever happened in our congregation," said Pastor Thomas Rawerts. The following years were hard. "We went down to 20-30 in attendance and had to ask for subsidy again from WELS."

Though the well-publicized split happened 12 years ago, some of the community views the church as being "unbending and bigoted because of the fellowship doctrine and roles of men and women" say members.

## Family joys

"Perception is reality," goes the adage. But in this case, it's just not true. Step into the doors at St. Peter, and you'll see a congregation whose remaining members "were tested with fire and came out better," says Rawerts. "They learned what it takes to stay faithful to the Word of God."

In addition, they came to rely on God's faithfulness. "The Lord's power and promises encouraged us in the past and will be our confidence in the future," mentions an article about their church's history.

There are other blessings. "God's pure, unaltered Word is taught," says one member.

They also realize the true blessings of fellowship. "It has been a ballast to weather the storms of life. I have fellowship with like-minded individuals, who have given me encouragement to grow in



"Family" members gather around a campfire. Taking time to relax and have fun together keeps St. Peter's family close-knit.

the Word," shares another.

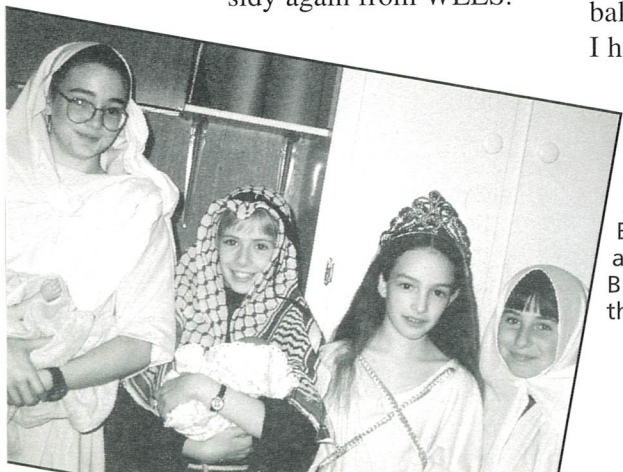
Also, members have become "real prayer warriors," says Rawerts. "They go to the Lord in all things." Each Sunday, the bulletin lists prayer requests for members, non-members, and other WELS congregations.

Finally, they have become one another's support group—"my Christian family," one member confides.

## Increasing the family

Because the church means so much to members, it's natural for them to want to bring others in. With the pervasive attitudes about them, though, outreach can be difficult.

"Satan uses our stance to try to hurt us. But the love of Christ leads people to investigate," says Rawerts. "When people see the love of Christ in action, they're bewildered. They



Dressing up as women of the Bible provides these Girl Pioneers at St. Peter the opportunity to see Bible stories come alive right before their eyes.



think: 'They're awfully strict, but awfully nice too.'

The love of Christ in action typifies this congregation. To give a Christian witness, the Mary-Martha Ladies' Group hands out small packages containing items and verses for people who need support from the Word. The women draw names of members and pray for those families during the year. The congregation also distributes food hampers for the needy at Christmas.

To get people to hear the Word, members invite people to church through word of mouth and personal invitation. They've also used canvasses, fliers, newspaper ads, and posters in malls. Birthday Breakfast with Jesus in December, Easter for Kids, and vacation Bible school, draw in children from the community.

Though their efforts may not result in big numbers, members can rest assured that they've touched at least one person: "As a newcomer to St. Albert, I was desperately lonely. I tried two churches before finally being led to St. Peter. I had been asking the Lord to help me find a Christian friend. He has supplied me with four 'sisters' and many friends. I feel at home at St. Peter and enjoy our 'family' gatherings."

Family—that's what this congregation is. Though they still face small numbers, lack of new members, and financial challenges, they are hopeful.

"We are learning to be content with what the Lord has given us and do the best we can," the members say. "We are learning to walk by faith as we share the Word and encourage each other." Just like a family.

*Linda Baacke is the senior communications assistant for Communication Services and Forward/NL.*

Hosting "Birthday Breakfast for Jesus" attracts members of the community to visit St. Peter. The birthday angel helps run the event, which is designed to teach guests the true meaning of Christmas.



### Special challenges in Canada

• **Economy.** The value of the Canadian dollar versus the U.S. dollar makes things expensive. For example, Forward/NL is \$9 in the U.S. "For us it is \$14.35 Canadian," say members.

• **Small numbers.** "Having so few WELS churches in Canada makes it difficult for youth group activities and Sunday school programs."

• **Distance.** "The exciting events in the States seem far away," they share. To overcome some of that, a Ladies' Day is held for congregation members from Alberta and Saskatchewan once a year. "We're also feeling more connected because of the blessings of e-mail and the WELS Web site."

• **Culture.** "It may be a stereotype," says Rawerts, "but in Canada, many have religious apathy because they don't know the importance of it." Patience is important in witnessing. "Contacts may take two, three, four years before they develop an interest in taking a Bible information class."

### Church in transition

*As we started preparing this issue, Rawerts accepted a call to Aberdeen, S.D. What it's like to say goodbye to the family he's served for 15 years?*

"We were really close, like family. We were all hurting when the decision was made," says Rawerts. "After I announced it, we had a chance to evaluate how the Lord calls and uses pastors."

"We came to grips that the church is not about the pastor, it's about the Lord working. And there are other pastors—real good ones—God uses to serve."

*Serving the group will be Daniel Habben, who graduated from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in May and was assigned to serve St. Peter. He was ordained and installed on July 25. Here he shares his thoughts on his move to Canada.*

"I've actually been spending more time getting my work visa than thinking about the move," said Habben. That's not quite true. He has been thinking about the move—he's heard it's a nice location, a nice city, and that members are very supportive. But he didn't want to form any solid opinions—for a good reason.

"The first three years will be a learning time. Getting to know people, seeing where they're at," he said. "I have to fit into what they're used to, without becoming what Pastor Rawerts was."

"I have no preconceived ideas, whether it's Canada or Timbuktu," said Habben, who, after growing up in Japan, is no stranger to living outside the United States. "I want to be what God has made me and fit that into what the congregation wants me to do."

### St. Peter

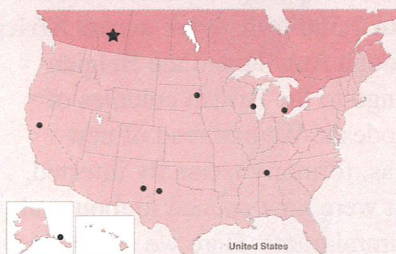
Founded: 1965

Communicants: 70

Souls: 95

Pastor: Daniel Habben

55 Stanley Dr, Saint Albert, Alberta, Canada T8N 0J6



★ = featured congregation

• = congregations already featured



# The Hook of the Kafue



Travel back in time with Pastor Edgar Hoenecke and Pastor Arthur Wacker on the 50th anniversary of their journey to find a WELS mission site in Africa.

Edgar H. Hoenecke

Edgar Hoenecke (left) and Arthur Wacker on April 24, 1949. They began their trip the next day.

We originally planned to include Nigeria in our quest for a mission field in Africa, but on our Atlantic voyage, we saw the folly of trying to cover too many miles instead of a more thorough search south of the equator.

So we went up the Atlantic coast from Capetown through South and Southwest Africa. We saw mission openings among the tribes in what is now Namibia and two populous areas of Angola. Here Señor Jose Lazaro, a teacher and manager of pickers on a caster plantation, assured us of his help in inducing the 35,000 pickers he employed to join in our mission.

We felt that openings of this type would not be considered seriously by our synod. We would have to push on. June was almost gone, and we had not found a field to recommend.

We were discouraged as we now faced the prospect of the more than 1,500-mile drive across Africa through Angola and the Belgian Congo to the British colonies of Rhodesia. We had read of new areas, formerly tsetse fly infested, that were now opened to thousands of immigrants. Here we might find people not reached by other Christian missions.

As this long road unrolled before us, our progress through one tiny village after another made us more and more discouraged. Even the frequent cries of "Viva la Mission" just emphasized that our missionaries would have to learn either French or Portuguese to work among them.

The irritations caused by the road dust, which plugged our fuel line; the raging grass fire through which we had to drive; the frequent breaking of our rear wheel rims; the scarcity of gasoline stations; and the river crossings on shaky ferries all brought our temper to a short tether. It almost blew up when a band of pygmies and their cattle drifted leisurely across the trail.

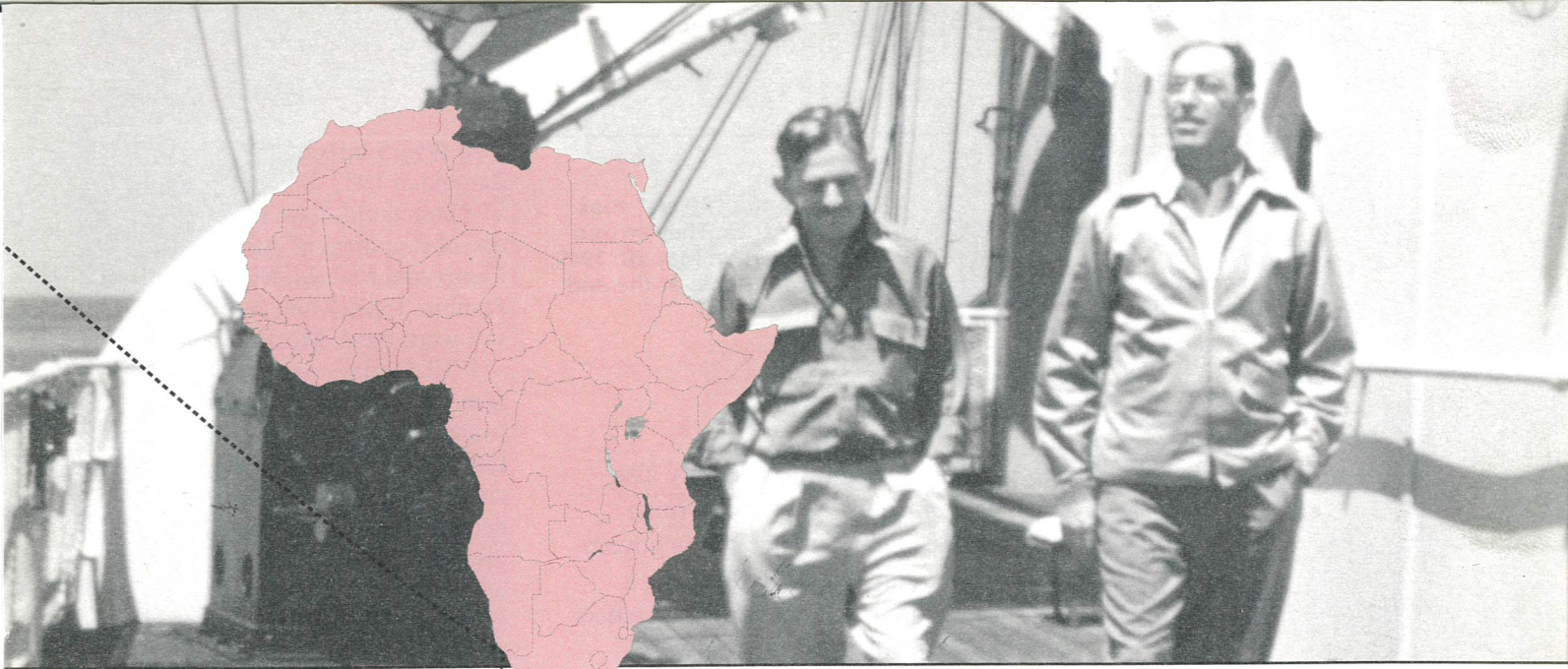
Finally, we reached Elizabethville on July 1, the Independence Day of the Belgian Congo. The almost interminable trek was over, as we headed southward toward Rhodesia.

Crossing a high bridge over a deep, forested canyon, we left the Belgian Congo. A road sign in English greeted us on the other side!

Now, almost magically, everything seemed to change. The border post gave us only a cursory inspection, and we were happy with a better road in Northern Rhodesia (Zambia).

Children and adults were at first shy, but soon friendly to the foreigners.





The countryside seemed to welcome us. Great white clouds floated lazily on a deep blue sky. The dense forest of the Congo was gone. We were in tropical savannah land, 2,000 feet above sea level.

We sensed the full truth of Jesus' promise: "Go, and I will be with you wherever you go." His remarkable leading alone now led us to the mission field the Lord apparently had in mind for our church.

We met with the Mayor of Ndola, who urged us to stop at the Salvation Army derelict persons' rescue mission for information about mission openings.

Art Wacker mused (as he did frequently), "How much of this work of mercy to the unfortunate can we simply evade by relegating it to the Salvation Army when Jesus has clearly said, 'I was a stranger, and you took me in?'" (Matthew 25).

The mayor suggested we stop to talk to a veteran missionary at Broken Hill. "He will know how to advise you from his many years as a missionary." We followed his advice and found not only the missionary, but also his daughter, a medical doctor, and her husband, a pastor whose mission was located in the Kafue River basin.

Capetown

The two missionaries spoke with us over a cup of tea and warmly welcomed us to their mission district, since the new government program had just opened in their area. The large tract of the Kafue valley had been cleared of the dreaded tsetse fly and was ready to be opened to thousands of native settlers. They hoped that a conservative mission would come to this "Hook of the Kafue" to give stability to the natives who left their homes and moral anchorage to settle in the new area.

Here we first heard the phrase, the Hook of the Kafue. This was our Fourth of July celebration back in 1949!

**These developments encouraged us. They were answers to our prayers for the Lord's guidance in finding a promising field** where our church could carry out synod mission resolutions of 1945 and 1947.

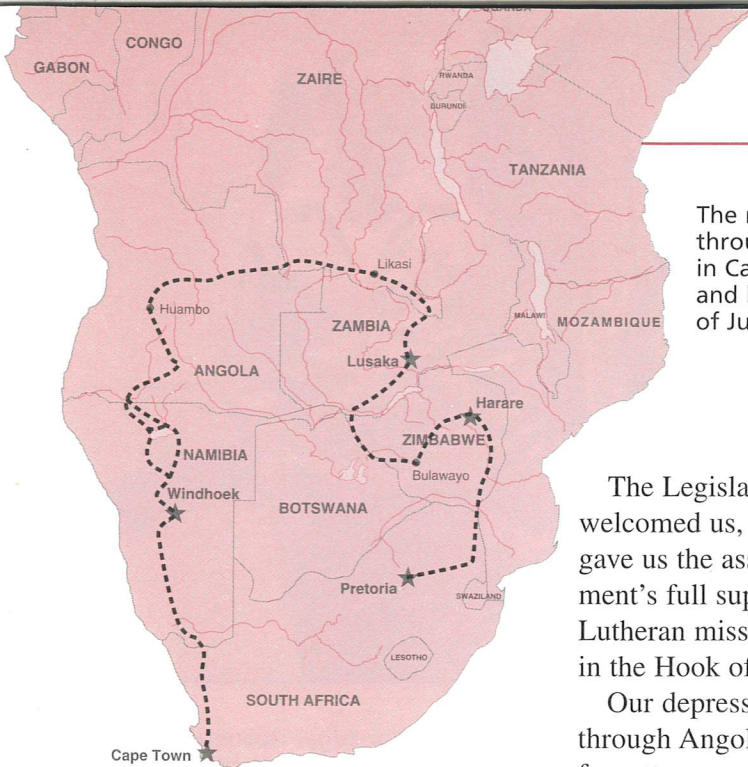
The rest of the story is well known. In our first meeting with Native Development Secretary John Moffatt at Lusaka, he remarked, "Your coming is an answer to our prayer."

*continued on next page*

Pastor Edgar Hoenecke and Pastor Arthur Wacker on the deck of the African Crescent, a freighter that they would call home for three weeks. The ship transported them 8,000 miles from Brooklyn to Capetown, Africa. There they began their search for a mission field in Africa.

This five-ton house on wheels was the explorers' home for over three months as they toured Africa. Despite the caravan's special design, the African roads were punishing on the vehicle.





The route the "49-ers" took through Africa. They arrived in Capetown on May 20, 1949, and left for home at the end of July.

The Legislative Assembly also welcomed us, and the chairman gave us the assurance of his government's full support in opening a Lutheran mission among the settlers in the Hook of the Kafue valley.

Our depression on that long road through Angola and the Congo was forgotten as we parked our caravan under the large baobab tree in Lusaka. We thanked the Lord for his leading.

Today, 50 years later, our praise and thanksgiving know no bounds for the Lord's wonderful blessing on our labors in the Lutheran Church of Central Africa. He has granted our once wavering outreach his success and harvest, just as he promised. "Lift up your eyes and look about you: All assemble and come to you; your sons come from afar, and your daughters are carried on the arm. Then you will look and be radiant, your heart will throb and swell with joy; the wealth on the seas will be brought to you, to you the riches of the nations will come" (Isaiah 60:4,5).

*Edgar Hoenecke is the former executive secretary for the Board for World Missions. Hoenecke, who turned 96 in August, lives in California. Arthur Wacker died on Jan. 30, 1974.*

**"The WELS Forty-niners,"** a booklet published in 1985 by the WELS Historical Institute, tells the entire story of their search. Limited copies are available for purchase. Contact Martin Westerhaus at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, 414/242-8116.

Two WELS missionaries first entered Zambia in 1953. Since then a total of 57 missionaries have ministered to one of four areas of Africa—Cameroon, Malawi, Nigeria, and Zambia. Twenty-nine missionaries still work there. Much has changed.

WELS missionaries used to do most of the work in Malawi because churches were small, with few national workers. Now national church boards and committees determine policy for outreach, and the mission and national church work together. Much has changed.

Two things remain constant—the Word we preach and the blessings God grants.

Missions in Africa	Cameroon	Malawi *	Nigeria	Zambia
Baptized	1,200	29,240	2,452	8,152
Missionaries	2	10	0	17
National pastors	17	19	9	14
Congregations	24	109	22	99
Preaching stations	2	10	22	116

Statistics taken from the 1998 *Statistical Report*  
\*1997 statistics

### In 1949, men explored the land. How do we find missions today?

The Committee for Mission Expansion works under the Board for World Missions to find new fields. Here are three ways of finding a field.

1. Some mission fields are near existing fields. Neighboring missionaries or administrative committee members initially investigate them.
2. Other times, people ask for help. This happened in India, when the mission grew so much that Pastor Eugene Kauffeld asked WELS to administer it.
3. Sometimes, we simply want to enter a field. For instance, when the wall fell in Russia, a tremendous opportunity surfaced. So we took it.

Today we have more means to find mission fields, but we still need people like Hoenecke and Wacker to report back.

*Thanks to CME member Pastor Harold Essmann for explaining the process.*

Two of the people Hoenecke encountered on the trip.





# Inter-Act

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

## Introduction

A hen and a hog once passed a church bulletin board and noticed the subject of the pastor's sermon: "How can we show love to others?" After a moment's reflection, the hen said, "I know what we can do. We can give people a ham-and-egg breakfast!" The hog protested, saying, "The breakfast would be only a contribution for you, but for me it would mean total commitment!"

Contribution or commitment? Which best describes the work of Christ for our salvation? Which best describes the Christian life?

## I. Text

Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7:

<sup>4</sup>Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. <sup>5</sup>It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. <sup>6</sup>Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. <sup>7</sup>It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

## II. Questions

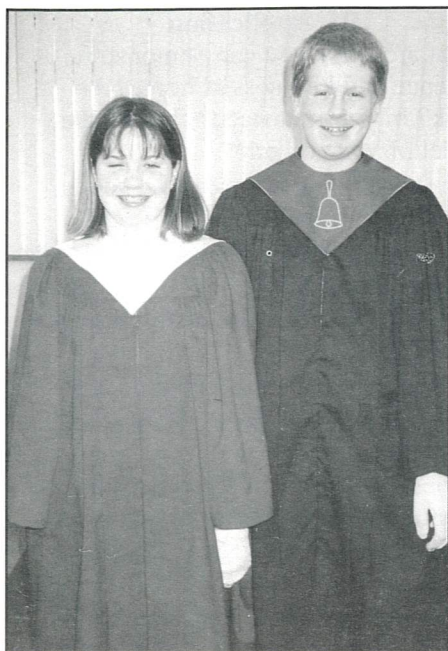
1. The "love" of which Paul speaks is exemplified in Christ. What is the love of Christ? (1 John 3:16)
2. List the ways in which Paul describes love positively. List the ways in which he describes love negatively.
3. Think of an incident from the life and ministry of Jesus that illustrates one of the positive qualities of love.
4. When Paul says love "is not proud," he may be referring to a problem in Corinth. What was the problem? (8:1ff)
5. How had the Corinthians been guilty of rudeness? (11:18-22)
6. In what kind of evil had the Corinthians been delighting? (chapter 5)

## III. Application

1. What are ways you can demonstrate patience and kindness at home? At work? In your marriage? Behind the wheel of your vehicle?
2. Does a Christian ever have reason to boast or be proud? (Galatians 6:14)
3. "I give of my time, talents, and treasures to serve the Lord." "I am committed to the Lord." Which statement do you prefer? Why?
4. In what ways are cliques and factions in a Christian congregation examples of rudeness?
5. Rather than condemning evil, today's society often delights in it. Cite examples. Why is this foreign to Christian love?
6. Why might Christians be accused of foolish naiveté? Is such a charge ever justified?
7. It has been said that believers "live to die and die to live." How do the characteristics of Christian love reflect this?

## IV. Prayer

Father, you demonstrated your great love for me in that you sent your Son, Jesus, to suffer and die for my sins. Help me reflect your love in all I say and do. May your commitment to me be revealed in my commitment to you. Cause me to show selfless concern for the welfare of others. Teach me patience and kindness. Keep me from envy and sinful pride. If I am to keep a record of wrongs, let it be my own, but then lead me to repentance and the certain assurance that all my sins are washed away in the blood of the Lamb. It is because of him that I confidently come before your throne of grace. Hear me for his sake. Amen.



Two ringers at the WELS Handbell Festival.

## Carol of the bells

About 950 people attended the 20th annual WELS Handbell Festival, held April 10-11 at D.C. Everest Junior High School, Schofield, Wis. There were 452 ringers from 43 choirs, representing 31 WELS congregations and schools from Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and South Dakota.

The first WELS handbell festival was held May 4, 1980, at Siloah, Milwaukee. Five choirs participated. In the first years of festivals, individual choirs rang alone and only a few mass numbers were used. In 1986 the format changed to all mass ringing.

As more choirs participated, the festivals divided into three regions. Regional festivals are held for two years, and a national festival is held once every three years.

There are 106 WELS congregations and schools known to have handbell choirs. If your congregation has a handbell choir and is not on the mailing list, contact Cheryl Diener, 223 W Badger St, Waupaca WI 54981.

## News briefs

Wisconsin High School Forensic Association named **Winnebago Lutheran Academy, Fond du Lac, Wis., and Wisconsin Lutheran High School, Milwaukee,** as "Excellence in Speech" recipients. They were among the teams cited as being in the top five percent of 386 schools participating in the State Speech Festival at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, in April. Dave Lauber coaches the WLA team, and Carol Krause coaches the WLHS team.

**Cristo Redentor (Christ Redeemer), Juarez,** one of our churches in Mexico, was broken into in June. The candelabra and crucifix were taken from the altar. This is the second time in two months that the church has been robbed. The congregation is doing what it can to protect its property, but doesn't have the funds to replace the altarware (see bulletin board, p. 29). The church—made up of about 100 souls—is in Juarez, a city across the border from El Paso, Tex.

**Paul Tess,** a teacher at St. John Lutheran School, Manitowoc, Wis., was among 66 teachers selected as Lead Teachers for the 1999-2000 Wisconsin Academy Staff Development Initiative Lead Teacher Institute. The Institute, a professional education program for K-12 teachers, is designed to shape and improve mathematics, science, and technology education by integrating the courses with real world applications. The vision is to get students excited about math, science, and technology. The teachers will have more than 240 hours of leadership training over 18 months.

## Christ-Light® update

Excitement still hasn't waned for *Christ-Light*®, the synod's coordinated religion curriculum. During 1998-99, 82 percent of WELS congregations used the New Testament materials for prekindergarten to eighth grade. That's about 66,000 students who studied God's Word from *Christ-Light*. Parents' and teachers' excitement shows in their reactions.



"I've taught Sunday school for several years, and this is the first year I've been able to say I truly and consistently enjoy it, and look forward to preparing for it," said Tracy Unnasch, a Sunday school teacher at Light of the Valley, Layton, Utah. "I've told my husband before each meeting, 'Have I told you how much I love *Christ-Light*?!?' He says, 'Yes, dear, you have . . . once or twice.'"

Another Sunday school teacher, Tammie Jensen, relates her own and her daughter's excitement: "The new *Christ-Light* materials have opened a new avenue of ways to talk about God with my daughter. . . . I see evidence that the story she learns on Sunday stays with her every day. . . . She even looks forward to reading chapters in the Bible."

That excitement was the goal of the producers of *Christ-Light*. "We're excited that parents, children, and teachers are talking about and excited about God's Word. That's what we were hoping would happen," said Jerry Kastens, administrator for youth discipleship.

The Commission on Youth Discipleship has been working with Northwestern Publishing House since 1994 to prepare *Christ-Light* materials for elementary and Sunday schools.

## Apache students reach out to Navajos

Apache students from East Fork Lutheran High School, East Fork, Ariz., got their first taste of mission work this May when they traveled to Farmington, N.M., to help with outreach to the Navajo people.

But they don't want it to be their last.

"Unfinished business is what we have," said Abel Classay, one of the six students who participated. "We have started something very important, and we cannot let it end here. Pastor James Fleming [mission pastor in Farmington] is doing important work, and it is important for us to help him out."

The students spent their weekend hanging door hangers, attending a devotion with Navajo children, and helping with Sunday school. The trip was funded by WELS Kingdom Workers.

"The last activity was the Sunday school lesson, and my kids really got to work hands on with the Navajo children," said Doug Plath, the teacher who led the outing. "Pastor Fleming and Pastor Jensen [a mission pastor outside Farmington] noticed a difference with the [Navajo] kids during the lessons. Some were more involved than they

had been; others behaved better. It was because they finally had Native American role models showing them the right things."

Classay relates his feelings about working among the Navajos:

"Jarred and I were with the older boys. While we sat there and listened to them read, we could tell they had a problem with their reading skills. Some of them needed some discipline. . . . When Pastor Fleming left for a moment, we sat with the boys and talked with them about why they were acting the way they were. Some of those boys had a hard life, and it has hurt them. We all got attached to those kids in some way, and it made leaving difficult."

This was the first time WELS Apaches had done mission work among the Navajos.

"It was awesome," said Fleming. "The benefit there is having Native Americans minister to Native Americans."

Though the students had to leave after the weekend, they didn't leave without making plans to come back. Tentatively, Fleming has set up three opportunities for the students to return to Farmington: vacation Bible

school in March 2000, basketball camp in April, and canvassing and Sunday school in May.

They also left with a desire to do more mission work and with wonderful memories. Said Classay, "The memories are stuck in my mind and the joy of helping those kids is stuck in my heart."

The faculty of East Fork Lutheran High School, along with the Native America administrative committee, has developed a five-year plan to set a new direction for the high school. Hopefully, this plan will enhance the school's role in the Apache mission and insure its long-term future.

The plan includes:

- develop a staff dedicated to carrying out world mission principles, attuned to Apache culture, and excited about creating innovative ways of meeting mission and educational goals;
- aim the curriculum to prepare students for Christian service and public ministry, for college, and for functioning successfully in Apache and American cultures;
- encourage Apaches to become more involved in the school's operation;
- provide classes for potential adult leaders;
- recruit those wishing to be pastors and teachers;
- use students to canvass, witness, teach vacation Bible school, and assist in outreach in local congregations; and
- seek alternative funding for the high school.



Six students from East Fork Lutheran High School went to Farmington, N.M., in May to help with outreach to the Navajos. They are (from left to right) Jamie Hughey, Joelinda Dude, Natrissa Quintero, Francine Quintero, Abel Classay, Teacher Doug Plath, Jarred Truax.



## WELS news briefs

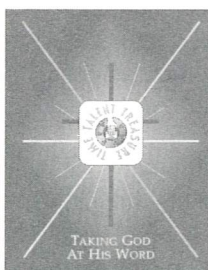
*These updates are from the offices at the synod administration building. You can contact these offices and administrators at 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398.*

### Commission on Adult Discipleship 1-800-567-8669 or 414/256-3278

Five new Bible studies have been published in four Bible study series:

- *Burden Bearing* [LU22N0975] in "His Word—My Life"
- *Sanctification* [LU22N0918] in "People's Bible Teachings"
- *The Kingdom of God* [LU22N0896] in "The Gospel"
- *Hebrews 11—Heroes of Faith* [LU22N0898] and *How to Interpret the Bible* [LU22N0894] in "NPH Bible Insights"

All are available from Northwestern Publishing House, 1-800-662-6022.



**The 1999-2000 stewardship emphasis, Taking God at His Word,** is available. This one-Sunday stewardship worship program works well with every

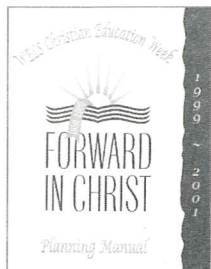
member visits or small groups. A free sermon study and Sunday worship emphasis was sent to all WELS and ELS congregations. Other materials include: an interactive Bible study video, a Bible study copymaster, visitation brochures, a guidebook, flip chart, overheads, pledge cards, banner planner, and clip art.

### Commission on Parish Schools 414/256-3220

In July, **280 school leaders attended the second WELS School Leadership Conference** in Waukesha, Wis.

**Making the Pieces Fit**, a resource book for WELS principals is available for \$49.50. This three-ring binder, a valuable resource to WELS

principals, comes with forms on computer disk for easy access and personalization.



It contains original music for Forward in Christ and samples of promotional materials available through CPS and CYD. The manual is also available on the WELS Web site <[www.wels.net/sab/cyd/fix/](http://www.wels.net/sab/cyd/fix/)>.

CPS and the Commission on Youth Discipleship sent a **WELS Christian Education Week Planning manual** to every WELS congregation and elementary school.

### Commission on Evangelism 414/256-3288

**The Outreach 2000 television spots for pre-Easter 2000** were premiered at the synod convention in July. The spots feature Christians (as WELS members) from various backgrounds and cultures as real people with real failings and problems, but at the same time filled with joy because they know they are loved by and forgiven through Jesus. The TV spots will be featured on national cable and regional network television.

### Board for Home Missions 414/256-3285

At its April 1999 meeting the BHM granted the following:

**Two mission openings:** St. Charles County, Mo.; Lexington, Ky.

**Expanded support:** Beautiful Savior, El Paso, Tex.; Huntsville, Ala.; New Orleans, La.; Mobile, Ala.

**Land search authority:** Farmington, N.M.; Peoria, Ariz.; South Las Vegas, Nev.

**Facility planning authority:** Cheyenne, Wyo.

The BHM is developing a **new strategic plan** for the first decade of

the 21st century. The four areas of emphasis are: one, how will we continue to open new missions; two, how will we seize opportunities to work across cultures; three, how will we position the Church Extension Fund so it is most helpful for new missions; and four, how will we help existing missions move forward.

### Committee on Relief

**The Committee on Relief has distributed \$159,251** in grants since Jan. 1, 1999. Over \$60,000 went for refugee relief in Kosovo, \$15,000 for tornado relief in Wichita, Kan., and \$50,000 for tornado relief in Oklahoma City, Okla.

### Telecommunications/ Technology Task Force

**Web-based instruction** has become the next major thrust of the task force. Other thrusts are Internet presence, intranet services, video conferencing, and video-based distance learning.

**Video conferencing** was installed at the synod administration building in July to accommodate groups of fewer than 20 participants. The program was piloted at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, in fall 1998.

## DEFINING RELIGION

**good work:** Every thought, word, and action that flows from faith and is in accordance with God's law. Good works are not meritorious, but are the response of thanks to God from a heart renewed by the Holy Spirit prompted by God's mercy and goodness (John 15:5, Matthew 15:9, Ephesians 2:8-10).



## Synodical council approves new programs

The Synodical Council prioritized programs of mission and ministry to help us to proclaim Jesus to the world. While continuing all essential, ongoing programs, these are some highlights of what was added for the next two fiscal years. The programs began on July 1.

- Three additional recruiters to energize the recruitment of students for the public ministry.
- \$150,000 to move forward intensive efforts to increase adult Bible study
- First salaried worker to administer the prison ministry program. Over 1,000 volunteers serve 10,000 prisoners.

- Subsidize 70 new home mission starts opened in the last three years and open three to five new home missions each year. Substantial dollars for outreach in urban, cross-cultural centers such as Miami, New York City, and Toronto will also be provided.
- In view of recent expansion in world missions, support the World Mission Building Fund and the World Mission Translation Program.
- Manpower to mentor first and second year Lutheran elementary school principals and for strength-

ening Sunday schools.

- \$200,000 for grants to congregations to stimulate outreach.
- Provision for pre- and post-graduate education courses through video conferencing and the Web.

To accomplish these programs, projections were made for a revenue increase of 5.2 percent in year one and a 4.9 percent increase in year two. That is three percent more than the 1999 increase in subscriptions for congregation mission offerings. That sounds daunting, but last year's offerings exceeded subscriptions.

## Who's in the news?

**Retired pastor William Hein**, age 70, made the Associated Press national news wire service for doing what he loves to do most: serve men and women in prison. God gets the glory in his story, run first in the *Watertown [Wis.] Daily Times* on Feb. 20 and later in *The Minnesota Star Tribune*.

**Pastor David Putz**, teacher at Winnebago Lutheran Academy, Fond du Lac, Wis., made the front page of *The Reporter*, a Fond du Lac newspaper, on Father's Day. The article talked about the Putzs' family values as they raise their nine children.

Winnebago Lutheran Academy had a student make the pages of the local newspaper in March. An article about **Andrew Schlieve**, manager for the boys' basketball and baseball teams at WLA, related how Schlieve, who has special educational needs, excelled in those roles.

Two Martin Luther College freshmen, **Eric Schroeder** and **Aaron Dolan**, were featured in the *Appleton Post Crescent*. Schroeder and Dolan graduated #1 and #2 from their class at Fox Valley Lutheran High School, Appleton, Wis. The article, titled

"Class Acts," talked about the boys' accomplishments, and included quotes that testified to their faith.

Early in April, a newborn baby found in the trash in Saginaw, Mich., inspired a local TV station to contact the **WELS Lutherans for Life Pregnancy Counseling Center in Flint**. Hoping to get the message out to women in crisis pregnancies that there is help so that desperate mothers avoid such acts in the future, the evening news interviewed the center about its services. At the end of the broadcast, the hotline numbers for the Flint and the Saginaw Centers were given.

## Watch for our special synod convention edition

The October issue of *Forward/NL* will feature the synod convention, which was held in July.

The issue, with four extra pages, will replace the *WELS Herald*—a separate publication that covered only convention news. To make sure that all WELS members stay informed about convention decisions, the October issue will be sent to every congregation. Check it out and read up on the important work that we are accomplishing together.

## Looking for a way to share your faith?

Why not give someone a gift subscription to *Forward/Northwestern Lutheran*? Each month, you'll be sharing your faith through the Bible studies and inspirational articles.

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

## District news

### Arizona/California

**California Lutheran High School, Wildomar,** is raising money for a building program. The future education center will contain classrooms, labs, an assembly hall, and a gymnasium.

### Southeastern Wisconsin

**Mt. Zion, Kenosha, Wis.,** dedicated its church renovation/addition on May 23. The offering was designated for a home or world mission.

**Bethlehem, Carmel, Ind.,** broke ground on June 2 for its first worship facility. The mission congregation of 120 souls currently worships in a local public school's cafeteria. Construction should be complete in six months.

### Western Wisconsin

**Resurrection, Verona, Wis.,** had its first worship service on Sept. 12 at their ministry center. During April the Lord blessed this group of 50-55 by helping them find a spot for their ministry center. The next months were used to prepare the site and have vacation Bible school and Bible classes to let the community know about their location.

### Southeastern Wisconsin



Over 30 seniors gather every Thursday at **St. John, Wauwatosa, Wis.,** for Bible study. The class is a varied group: Hedwig brings her German Bible, Annette her King James version. Ernie and Jules are theologically trained. Gil comes with a magnifying glass. Jim always adds a touch of humor. Everyone is there for one purpose—to grow in God's Word.

### Happy anniversary!

**AZ-CA—Steven Rhode,** teacher at Reformation, San Diego, Calif., celebrated his 25th anniversary in the teaching ministry on May 29.

**MN—Zion, Winthrop, Minn.,** celebrated its 100th anniversary in June.

**Zion, New Ulm, Minn.,** celebrated its 100th anniversary in July.

**NA—St. Paul in Ottawa, Ontario,** is celebrating its 125th anniversary. Celebrations are scheduled throughout the year. The main event will be in November.

**NW—St. John, Peshtigo, Wis.,** celebrated its 125th anniversary with special services on July 25 and Aug. 1.

**SEW—St. Paul Lutheran School, Brownsville, Wis.,** celebrated its 75th anniversary on Aug. 8.

**Edwin Fredrich,** pastor at St. Lucas, Kewaskum, Wis., celebrated his 25th anniversary in the ministry.

**Earl Monday,** a teacher at Kettle Moraine Lutheran High School, Jackson, Wis., celebrated his 25th anniversary in the teaching ministry on Apr. 25 at Peace, Hartford.

**Zum Kripplein Christi, Iron Ridge, Wis.,** celebrated its 150th anniversary

on Aug. 1. A special communion chalice was loaned to them for this celebration and was on display at the church. This chalice was a gift from Martin Luther to his sister for her wedding. A member of the congregation contacted a direct descendent of Luther's sister and received the chalice.

**WW—Emmanuel, Stratford, Wis.,** celebrated 100 years of God's grace on Aug. 8.

**St. Mark, Normal, Ill.,** celebrated 25 years as a congregation and also dedicated an addition to their WEF (worship/education/fellowship building) in May.

**Lord and Savior, Waunakee, Wis.,** celebrated 10 years as a congregation on May 23.

These are the reporters for this month's featured districts: AZ-CA—Hermann John; MN—Jeffrey Bovee; NA—Kevin Schultz; NW—Joel Lillo; SEW—Scott Oelhafen; WW—Elton Stroh

## THROUGH MY BIBLE IN 3 YEARS

### October 1999

- |                       |                   |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. 1 Kings 9:1-10:13  | 15. Jn. 1:35-51   |
| 2. 1 Kgs. 10:14-11:43 | 16. Jn. 2:1-22    |
| 3. 1 Kgs. 12:1-32     | 17. Jn. 2:23-3:21 |
| 4. 1 Kgs. 12:33-13:34 | 18. Jn. 3:22-36   |
| 5. 1 Kgs. 14          | 19. Jn. 4:1-26    |
| 6. 1 Kgs. 15:1-16:7   | 20. Jn. 4:27-54   |
| 7. 1 Kgs. 16:8-34     | 21. Jn. 5:1-29    |
| 8. 1 Kgs. 17, 18      | 22. Jn. 5:30-47   |
| 9. 1 Kgs. 19          | 23. Jn. 6:1-21    |
| 10. 1 Kgs. 20         | 24. Jn. 6:22-40   |
| 11. 1 Kgs. 21         | 25. Jn. 6:41-71   |
| 12. 1 Kgs. 22         | 26. Jn. 7:1-24    |
| 13. John 1:1-18       | 27. Jn. 7:25-52   |
| 14. Jn. 1:19-34       | 28. Jn. 7:53-8:29 |
|                       | 29. Jn. 8:30-59   |
|                       | 30. Jn. 9         |
|                       | 31. Jn. 10:1-21   |

## Anniversary update

*In the year 2000, WELS turns 150 years old. From the 1999 synod convention to the 2001 synod convention, WELS will celebrate this anniversary.*

### Plans for a big party!

**The Southeastern Wisconsin District** is planning a Reformation Festival for Oct. 31, 1999, at the 6,000 seat Milwaukee Auditorium. This old hall was the site of the WELS Centennial Celebration in 1950.

**The Michigan District** is renting the 9,000 seat Convocation Center at Eastern Michigan University for a one-day celebration.



## TV commercials make a difference

Under the theme "Life, You Make a Difference," WELS Lutherans for Life kicked off a media broadcast campaign. For two weeks in early 1999, six TV commercials highlighted issues from post-abortion syndrome to teenage pregnancy.

At the end of each commercial, a 1-800 number was shown. This hotline was staffed by WELS members who volunteered their time. The commercial reached a potential viewing

audience of over 25,000,000 people. More than 1,000 calls were received.

These are the results of the topics covered on the calls:

Post-abortion . . . . .	27%
Crisis pregnancy . . . . .	26%
Single parenting . . . . .	13%
General information . . . . .	8.8%
End of life . . . . .	8.7%
Abstinence . . . . .	4.5%
Adoption . . . . .	3.5%
Other . . . . .	8.5%

## LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE

*In the spirit of Matthew 5:16, we're sharing examples of people who live their faith. If you have an example to share, send it to us at 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398; <nl@sab.wels.net>*

*Greg Hermanson, pastor at Faith, Antioch, Ill., writes the following:*

At the end of 1998, John Flister, a 46-year-old accountant, discovered he had terminal kidney cancer. After the reality set in, John went into action. His years as an accountant and a dedicated Christian were paying off. He wanted to leave no detail undone. He and his wife, Gail, planned the funeral, the family's future expenses, and, most of all, prepared their children. They talked about God's will for their lives, the power of God's love even when it hurts, and how John would soon be in heaven with Jesus.

John also reached out to his spiritual family at church. He dictated the following letter to them in January 1999.

Thank you for all your prayers, cards, and letters. They mean so much to me. The number of people praying for me throughout the world overwhelms me.

I want you to know that this cancer is terminal. While the Lord can always perform a miracle, it seems at this point that he is intending to call me home to heaven through this illness.

I want everyone to view this as something good from the hand of our Lord, not that he is unsympathetic to our cries. He has promised us that he will turn all things to good for those who love him. While this is sad and brings pain, we can also see the power of God's Word. Through his Word he has brought us to faith, washed us clean, and adopted us as his children. He gives us the power to live each day free from guilt and in the confidence of his love.

Why this is happening now is a question that we may never be able to answer. However, we need to accept from the hand of our Lord even the things that we cannot understand. I believe that

God's hand is still in this and that he is allowing this because he loves me. It is a reminder for us to always be prepared to greet our Lord and Savior. We are not guaranteed a long life and can be called home at any time and in any place. It is so important for us to be living in the faith that the Holy Spirit has given us.

I ask all of you to continue in your prayers every day, not only for me and my family, but also for all the called workers, the entire church, the preaching of the gospel, and our building project so that more people might be able to hear about their Savior, Jesus. . . .

Thank you again for all your love and support. May God bless you in every way through the power of his Word.

John died Feb. 18, 1999. He was survived by his wife, four children, his parents, his siblings, and a church family that holds unspeakable love and admiration for this man of faith.



**Covenant Marriage Movement launched**—A coalition of 24 groups dealing with marriage, counseling, family issues, and education combined forces to launch an effort aimed at strengthening marriages.

The coalition plans to challenge couples across the country to sign a “Covenant Marriage Statement,” declaring a commitment to lasting marriages to counter the divorce and family breakdown trends.

The movement is developing in the wake of covenant marriage laws that some states have enacted. In Louisiana, for example, a law took effect in 1997 that offers couples the option of getting a covenant marriage license that would require them to get premarital counseling and more counseling before they could be granted a divorce.

**A year to define a day**—The Presbyterian Church in America has agreed to take another year to study one of its most contentious issues—the length of the days of creation.

Some consider creation a literal 24-hour length for each of the six days in which Genesis says God created all things. Others in the denomination think those days could have been longer periods of time.

Delegates to the General Assembly that met in June gave the committee studying the issue another year before reporting back. The PCA has 300,000 members.

**No school on Muslim holidays**—In response to its rapidly growing Islamic population, a New Jersey school district will cancel classes for all students on the two holiest Muslim days beginning next year.

The Paterson school board voted last month to close its 37 schools and administrative offices in observance of the end of Ramadan, the monthlong fast in the Muslim faith, and *Eid al-Adha*, which marks the end of the annual pilgrimage to

Mecca. The decision may make Paterson the first school district in the country to cancel school for Muslim holidays.

**“Day of the unborn” established**—Guatemala established March 25 as the “Day of the Unborn.” The Guatemalan Congress came to this decision through an “agreement,” not a “decree.”

The agreement acknowledges that “the State guarantees human life from conception, in keeping with the American Convention on Human Rights, of which the Republic of Guatemala is a signatory.”

The agreement states that the declaration of March 25 as the “Day of the Unborn” will “be widely publicized in all national and private educational centers, coupled with campaigns for life, respect for oneself and for others.”

**A new definition of marriage?**—The Supreme Court of Canada ruled that a provision in Ontario’s Family Law Act that prevented homosexuals from applying for alimony was unconstitutional.

After two women terminated their relationship, one sought alimony from the other but was denied under the Ontario law that limits the right to claim alimony to married couples or to common-law heterosexual couples. She then sued to have the law struck down. The High Court found that the Ontario law violates Canada’s 1982 Charter of Rights and Freedoms by promoting the view that same-sex couples “are less worthy of recognition and protection.”

The ruling is likely to have far-reaching implications in Canada. Even though the ruling stops short of legalizing same-sex marriages in Canada it establishes that same-sex couples have the same legal standing as heterosexual common-law couples. [5/21/99—reprinted from Church & State Update]

**Child Custody Protection Act passed**—The House of Representatives approved a bill that aims to restrict the transportation of minors to other states to seek an abortion.

The bill, passed by a vote of 270-159, makes it illegal for a person other than a parent, guardian, or legal custodian to take a pregnant girl younger than 18 to another state for an abortion if such an act would violate parental involvement laws in the child’s home state. More than 30 states have such laws.

The vote fell short of a two-thirds majority required to overturn a presidential veto. The Senate has yet to act on the measure, but the White House has threatened to veto it.

**Jehovah’s Witnesses win recognition in Russia**—Jehovah’s Witnesses, one of Russia’s fastest growing faiths, scored a surprise victory by winning nationwide government recognition as an authentic religion. The move will help smooth the way for the registration by local authorities of 900 Jehovah’s Witnesses congregations across Russia by year’s end—the deadline established under a controversial and restrictive 1997 religion law.

The 1997 law recognizes Russian Orthodox, Judaism, Islam, and Buddhism as “traditional” faiths and provides other religions with varying degrees of privileges. The next highest level is that granted to the Jehovah’s Witnesses.

Russian opponents have sought restrictions on the group, which they regard as a cult. The group claims 250,000 adherents in Russia, a country of 146 million people.

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

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

**Bode, David E.**, to St. Stephen, Beaver Dam, Wis.  
**Kempf, Dennis E.**, to retirement  
**Lindemann, Daron J.**, to Grace, Milwaukee  
**Marks, Harry W. Jr.**, to retirement  
**Zwieg, Larry G.**, to Calvary, Canyon Country, Calif.

**Teachers**

**Backus, Andrew J.**, to St. Paul, Lake Mills, Wis.  
**Barnes, Laurie**, to Parkland, Tacoma, Wash.  
**Bauer, Becky A.**, to Cross of Christ, Universal City, Tex.  
**Bauer, Gayle S.**, to Lakeside LHS, Lake Mills, Wis.  
**Bauer, James T.**, to Lakeside LHS, Lake Mills, Wis.  
**Birsching, Deborah R.**, to St. John, Bay City, Mich.  
**Bremer, Steven B.**, to Grace, Glendale, Ariz.  
**Bunde, Steven G.**, to St. Paul, Livonia, Mich.  
**Cortez, Theckla F.**, to St. John preschool, Pardeeville, Wis.  
**Curtis, James G.**, to St. Paul, Appleton, Wis.  
**Dahl, Mary A.**, to St. Paul, Appleton, Wis.  
**Ernst, Melissa M.**, to Lincoln Heights, Des Moines, Iowa  
**Esmay, Kerri L.**, to St. John, Milwaukee  
**Falk, Michael W.**, to St. John, Bay City, Mich.  
**Fix, Shelley L.**, to Zion, Hartland, Wis.  
**Fricke, Rebecca L.**, to Zion, Valentine, Neb.  
**Grev, Rachel E.**, to St. Croix LHS, West St. Paul, Minn.  
**Gross, Megan R.**, to Trinity, Nicollet, Minn.  
**Hering, Linda K.**, to Kettle Moraine LHS, Jackson, Wis.  
**Hinds, Lori A.**, to Little Lambs of Pilgrim, Menomonee Falls, Wis.  
**Hirschfeld, Ruth E.**, to St. John, Jefferson, Wis.  
**Jackson, Tami J.**, to Trinity, Marshfield, Wis.  
**Jacobsen, Naomi K.**, to Mount Olive, Appleton, Wis.  
**Kante, David**, to St. Peter, Fond du Lac, Wis.  
**Kohrs, Linda M.**, to St. John, Lake City, Minn.  
**Krause, Laury A.**, to Grace, Oshkosh, Wis.  
**Kunz, Vicky L.**, to St. Peter, Chaseburg, Wis.  
**Mayhew, Sandy L.**, to New Salem, Sebawaing, Mich.  
**McCargar, Amy L.**, to St. John, Two Rivers, Wis.  
**Pluger, Chris J.**, to Wisconsin LHS, Milwaukee  
**Richardson, Robert A.**, to Manitowoc LHS, Manitowoc, Wis.  
**Rohrback, Lyubov V.**, to St. John, Waterloo, Wis.  
**Schaper, Laura J.**, to St. John, Dakota, Minn.  
**Scharp, Greta L.**, to Atonement, Milwaukee  
**Schleiden, Jenny**, to Atonement, Milwaukee  
**Schommer, Jodie E.**, to Lakeside LHS, Lake Mills, Wis.  
**Schuelke, Lois E.**, to Trinity, Marinette, Wis.  
**Siegler, Joanna R.**, to Minnesota Valley LHS, New Ulm, Minn.  
**Steele, Patrick W.**, to WLC, Milwaukee  
**Ungemach, Carrie L.**, to Good Shepherd, Benton Harbor, Mich.  
**Weber, Carol M.**, to St. Peter, Fort Collins, Colo.  
**Whalen, Annette C.**, to retirement  
**Wilsmann, Rebecca E.**, to St. Peter, Fond du Lac, Wis.  
**Yerks, Catherine**, to Divine Grace, Lake Orion, Mich.

**ANNIVERSARIES**

**La Crosse, Wis.**—First (140). Sept. 12. Confirmation remembrance and former called worker reunion services, 8 & 10 AM; cookout follows.  
**Milwaukee, Wis.**—Salem (East Side) (110). Sept. 12. Service, 10 AM; dinner 1 PM at Bavarian Inn. RSVP by Sept. 1 for dinner. John Hoh, 414/365-6470.  
**Toledo, Ohio**—St. Andrew (35). Sept. 12. Anniversary/homecoming service, 11 AM.  
**Hemlock, Mich**—St. John (100). Sept. 19. Christian education services, 8 & 10:30 AM; dinner follows.  
**Portland, Ore.**—Grace (90). Sept. 26. Communion festival service, 9:30 AM; anniversary service, 4 PM. Meal follows. 503/254-8034.  
**Beverly Hills, Fla.**—St. Paul (25). Oct. 3. Service, 3 PM; dinner follows. Call for reservations, 352/861-8661.  
**Prescott, Wis.**—St. Paul (125). Oct. 10. Service, 9 AM; program and potluck follow.  
**Rib Lake, Wis.**—St. Peter (100). Oct. 10. Service, 10 AM; meal follows. Audrey Skibbie, 715/748-5742.  
**Neillsville, Wis.**—Immanuel (100th anniversary of church building). Oct. 3. Service, 9 AM; lunch follows.  
**35th anniversary of WELS in Puerto Rico**—Oct. 3. Service, 10 AM; lunch and program follow. John Strackbein, 787/720-4795.

**COMING EVENTS**

**South suburban ladies retreat**—Sept. 24 & 25. Cedar Lake Bible Conference Center in Cedar Lake, Ind. Cost, \$65. Deb Witte, 708/672-0633.  
**Fall Pastors' Institute**—Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis. Five consecutive Mondays, beginning Sept. 27. 1:30 PM in the multi-purpose room. James Korthals will present a course on Luther and Melancthon. David Kuske will present a course on selected passages from 1 Peter. \$25 registration fee. 262/242-8100.  
**Waukesha Chapter Lutherans for Life banquet**—Oct. 3. Country Inn Hotel & Conference Center, Waukesha, Wis. Kathy Gates, 414/513-9590.  
**MLC ladies' auxiliary meeting**—Oct. 13, 9 AM registration. MLC, New Ulm, Minn. Paul Dolezky, 507/426-7819.  
**Church Librarian Organization meetings**—Oct. 16, 8:30 AM registration. Our Hope, Chippewa Falls, Wis. Registration materials available. April 29, 2000. Grace, Prairie du Chien, Wis. Joanne Weber, 414/256-3222. <jaweber@sab.wels.net>.  
**Regional campus rallies**—Oct. 22-24, 1999, Lubbock, Tex.  
 Dec. 27-29, 1999, Baton Rouge, La.  
 Mar. 3-5, 2000, Philadelphia, Penn.  
 Mar. 17-19, 2000, Columbia, Mo.  
 Mar. 24-26, 2000, Stevens Point, Wis.  
 Apr. 14-16, 2000, Tempe, Ariz.  
 Contact Karen Marshall, 414/256-3279; <usr20@sab.wels.net>.

**AVAILABLE**

**Choir gowns**—25 black, adult gowns; 25 burgundy, young adult gowns. Free for cost of shipping. Mount Lebanon, Milwaukee, 414/461-1563.

**Chalkboards**—9, black. Free for cost of shipping. St. Matthew, Winona, Minn., 507/454-3083.

**Hymnals**—75 TLH hymnals. Free for cost of shipping. Sola Scriptura, Decatur, Ga. 404/241-6093.

**Sanctuary lights**—6-8. Peace, Granger, Ind. Steven Mischke, 219/272-5682.

**NEEDED**

**Stories**—of how women serve in their churches. Kristine Pratt, 815/465-6132; <katagillian@geocities.com>.

**35 mm slides**—of Ken Kremer's Grace-Plan. St. John Lutheran School, West Salem, Wis. Denise Favorite, 608/486-4433.

**Materials/ideas**—for PreK-12 education within WELS & ELS. Editor of new book is seeking materials that enhance instruction across the curriculum. Ideas and efforts to integrate Scripture are of special interest. Contact John Freese by Sept. 30, 414/257-9491; <jmffreese@aol.com>.

**NAMES WANTED**

**Indiana college students**—Valparaiso University, Our Shepherd, Crown Point, 219/663-5853. Ball State, Divine Savior, Indianapolis, 317/849-9692. Purdue, Faith, Kokomo, 765/457-0578. Indiana State, Indiana Univ., or Rose Human, Shepherd of the Valley, Terre Haute, 812/877-4141. Butler University, Bethlehem, Carmel, 317/571-0204.

**Champaign/Urbana, Ill.**—Star of Bethlehem. Tim Glende, 217/384-8920.

**Vacaville, Calif.**—Vacaville, Fairfield, Travis AFB area. Scott J. Stone, 707/455-7575.

**POSITIONS AVAILABLE**

**Management team**—husband/wife team needed at Thoughts of Faith (ELS) in Ukraine to oversee the mobile medical and life center programs. Contact Larry Dilgard, 800/729-9535.

**Teachers**—Zion Early Childhood Development Center, Hartland, Wis. Full and part-time positions available beginning fall 1999. Janis Visaggio, 414/367-3617.

**Controller**—Full-time, immediate opening in Wisconsin Lutheran College's business office. Responsibilities include supervision of staff and all accounting duties, preparation of detailed financial reports, and supervision of annual budget and audit. Qualifications: bachelor's degree in accounting or business management with a minimum of 3-5 years experience, CPA required; familiarity with PC and its related programs; written and oral communication skills. Send resume to Duane Schlomer, 8800 W Bluemound Rd, Milwaukee WI 53226.

**Correction:** Last month we incorrectly reported that Wayne Zuleger was retiring. He is still teaching at St. Paul, Ixonia, Wis.

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

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

# God will . . .

God promises to open our eyes—now and even wider in heaven—so we see, understand, experience who Jesus is.

James A. Aderman

**I** picture the author of Psalm 91 as a white haired rabbi with a matching long beard. The old teacher describes God's never-failing protection, providence, and love.

But someone barges into the classroom. It's the principal. The almighty God, who has been listening outside the door, affirms everything this seasoned believer has said. Note his six "I will" statements in Psalm 91:14-16.

**"I will rescue him,"** God promises. The Hebrew word for "rescue" pictures the believer securely held in the Almighty's hands after slipping through danger's grasp.

**"I will protect him (literally, set him securely on high)."** When preschool grandchildren visit, grandmas tend to put all their precious and fragile treasures out of the reach of curious little hands. God promises to do the same for his precious saints.

**"I will answer him."** The Hebrew is closer to "I will respond to him." The thought: When my people pray, I will do whatever is called for.

The Almighty promises, **"I will be with him in trouble."** God will stand by us through the most severe trials. "Trouble" is the word used to describe the distress Joseph felt when his brothers sold him as a slave. God's commitment is that, even if everyone else has deserted us, he will be with us; he will live up to his name: Immanuel.

**"I will deliver him and honor him."** The Lord of armies promises to deliver us by equipping us with all the weaponry we need to face any enemy. Then he vows to honor us. That Hebrew word means "to make heavy," to heap praise on us. Striking, isn't it? God defends us, God equips us, God gives us the victory, and then he honors us as

though we had won the day on our own. How gracious our God is!

**"With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation."** You know that Thanksgiving Day feeling after the turkey is consumed and you're sprawled across your couch watching the football game? That's this

Hebrew word "satisfy." God will satisfy those who love him, not with a drumstick, but with long life, eternal life at his table in heaven.

Here's how that happens: God shows us his salvation. More precisely, God will cause us to look intently at it. God is the one who enables us to see and appreciate his salvation. In Hebrew salvation sounds like "yesh-oo'-aw." Yeshua (we say Jesus) was the name God commanded Joseph to call his stepson. The reason: "He will save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). God promises to open our eyes—now and even wider in heaven—so we see, understand, experience who Jesus is: the eternal God, our Savior, our friend, our brother.

The rabbi was right. "He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty."

*James Aderman is pastor at Fairview, Milwaukee.*



## For further study

1. Of the six "I will" statements in these verses, which means the most to you? Why? Spend some time thanking God for his commitment to you.
2. Look up 2 Corinthians 1:20. How is Jesus the guarantee that God will keep his promises?

# The role of worship

Daniel D. Rebers

For two millennia, worship has strengthened believers through Word and sacrament, and provided an outlet for the believer's initial response to God's mercy through praise and gifts given back to God. Some see the role of worship today changing to include outreach.

To be a witness, one must first know information. This is the same order that Paul speaks of in Romans 12:1, "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices . . ." Faith in Jesus ("God's mercy") must come before godly living, just as knowledge comes before witnessing. Just as the gospel creates and nourishes faith, it at the same time moves hearts to share the good news.

The unbeliever will not likely find a worship setting appealing, because "the man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them" (1 Corinthians 2:14). Faith comes first, then worship—that is, a desire to hear God's voice and respond.

For faith to be created and nourished, God's Word must be provided in sufficient quantity and context. While it is possible for worship to serve as this evangelism tool, this is comparable to using a pair of pliers to drive a nail—it can be done, but you will very likely hurt the tool in the process. In my experience, when attempts are made to force worship into the role of evangelism, both the quantity and context of the Word suffer.

For worship to be an acceptable tool for evangelism, it must constantly change for the age, socio-economic status, cultural background, and the perceived needs of the worshiper. The problem with this is that as you attempt to offer more to the individual "seeker," you offer less to the body of believers. You move away from a cohesive

whole that addresses the "one thing needful" for all ages, races, classes, and tongues, and you attempt to appease the needs, preferences, and tastes of a group so varied that the goal becomes impossible.

None of this suggests that worship shouldn't change or that we exclude visitors from worship. Rather it points out that there are better tools for evangelism than worship, especially one-on-one personal evangelism. Examples might include inviting the community to parenting (or any Bible) classes, day-care facilities open to the community, and other programs open to the community and staffed by members. These give members an opportunity to do what the church's worship services and Bible classes prepare them to do—witness!

Using worship as an evangelism tool is tantamount to saying that the pastor should be the primary evangelist, and our job is simply to invite visitors to worship. When Paul said, "I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some" (1 Corinthians 9:22), he was not speaking about worship but about his personal evangelism methods. Though not as easy, our personal witness is far more effective than inviting someone to church in the hope that during that service they will receive all the benefits from the Word they need. Instead, once we have been evangelists, then the invitation to worship, along with an explanation about worship, is timely and appropriate.

We do well to first use our ingenuity to find new ways to touch other people's lives with the gospel and then teach people about worship. Let's let worship be that for which it is best suited—a nourishing activity for believers. For without nourishment we will have no evangelists.

*Dan Rebers is a member at Bethlehem, Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin.*

There are  
better tools  
for evangelism  
than worship.

# Tips to witness

John F. Brug

*I am recently employed. I'm a Christian and love the Lord dearly but have a hard time proclaiming him at work. As soon as someone mocks God, I do nothing to defend his holy name. Why is that? I can worship him with friends and family, but I can't seem to share him with the people I work with.*

The frustration and weakness that you see in yourself must be confessed by every Christian. Paul asked for fellow believers' prayers for parallel reasons (Ephesians 6:19,20; Colossians 4:4). Despite our sincere love for the Savior, which you express well, there remain the problems of indwelling sinfulness and human weakness.

You ask, "Why is that?" Our struggles with sinful nature, our bouts with spiritual immaturity, our less than fervent love for our neighbor, and our tendency to demonstrate spiritual indifference are proper starting points.

Aside from that, these factors are perhaps worthy of mention—not to excuse our lack of witnessing, but better to understand obstacles that must be dealt with prayerfully and thoughtfully.

Sometimes we work with false images of witnessing and think that "proclaiming" him might include pressure tactics (arm-twisting, brow-beating, discourteous plying of emotions). No wonder some hesitate to testify if this is what they feel is necessary. There is the inevitable fear of rejection, even mockery, though it may come in subtle forms.

All forms of persecution and the potential loss of friendships are

never pleasant to ponder. In our society there is the added epidemic of opposition or indifference to biblical truth. Taking a stand that indicates less than a full toleration of all religious ideas (as though none were better or worse than another) is to go against the prevailing standard of thought in the United States.

## Never underestimate the power of your tool, God's gospel.

Another common problem is a personal sense of inadequacy that questions our ability to say the right thing the right way. Related to this is our sense of personal imperfection and lack of holiness that is wrongly seen as a disqualification to speak at all.

Is there help? Yes. First, find one or more fellow believers and friends with whom you can discuss the challenges regularly. Talk of specific obstacles and opportunities and encourage one another with concrete knowledge of your situations. Other appropriate reminders will include these:

**1. Never underestimate the importance of lifestyle** that often precedes and always accompanies loving testimony. You wrote, for example, that you were "recently employed." Maybe it will take time for you to set the stage for the most effective witnessing as you demonstrate kindness, gentleness, helpfulness, patience, and cheerfulness at work.

**2. Make sure the primary testimony is centered in Christ** and the

real forgiveness of real sin that he won for us all. You wrote that you wanted to "defend his holy name" when coworkers would mock God. Strive to stress why and how his name is holy (it is the saving name, the name revealed for our salvation—Acts 4:12, Romans 10:13) rather than simply rebuking or showing displeasure with wrong behavior. This also means to testify primarily about Christ, not the church or a particular congregation or church body. There may be time for that later, after the centrality of Christ and saving faith is established.

**3. Never underestimate the power of your tool, God's gospel.** What appears to be an inadequate, foolish message remains God's power for changing hearts (Romans 1:16, 1 Corinthians 1:18-25).

**4. Never forget the importance of gentle words, a kind attitude, a loving lifestyle, quiet confidence, and a respectful approach.** These are often remembered by people who purposely forget what you wanted to tell them. Be humble. "Be a beggar telling other beggars where to find the food."

Do not think all worthy points are covered here. Do not prematurely or unnecessarily burden your conscience. Seek the counsel of a friend and search for fitting books on the subject (but beware of simplistic, mechanical, artificial approaches). I wish you well!

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



Old Irish Toast:  
 “May you live all the  
 days of your life.”

John 10:10  
 “I [Jesus] have come  
 that [you] may have  
 life, and have it to  
 the full.

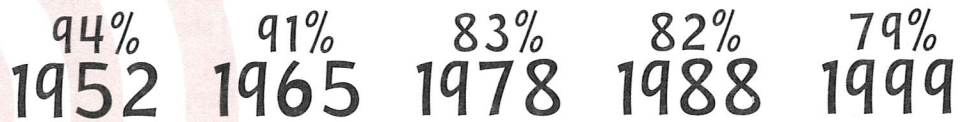
“Aim at heaven and you  
 will get earth thrown in.  
 Aim at earth and you  
 get neither.” C. S. Lewis

## Raising children in the faith

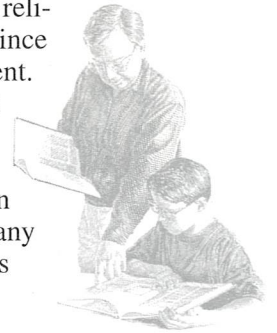
As many as eight in 10 Americans (79%) say they received religious training as a child, a high figure but down 15 points since the first measurement in 1952 when the figure was 94 percent.

Still, many religious observers might question the impact of religious training on society, in view of the continuing biblical illiteracy, the inconsistency in the practice of religious disciplines, and an ethics gap—the difference between what we think of ourselves and the way we actually are. Many observers would contend that religion in the United States is broad but not very deep.

Those answering yes to the question  
 “Did you receive any religious training as a child?”



*Emerging Trends, December 1998*



The more things change; the more they stay the same. Only the places change.

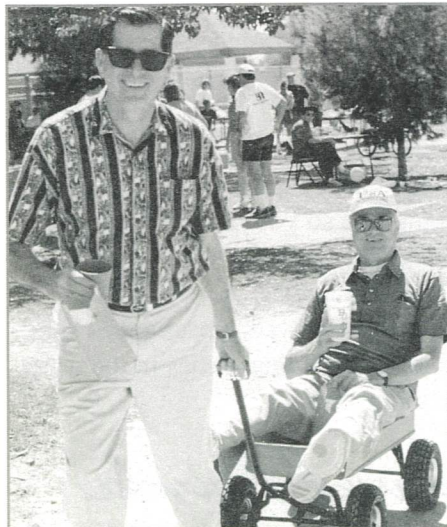
Sixty years ago in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, these WELS men enjoyed the moment at a church picnic. From left: Theophil Hoffman, pastor of St. Paul, Gladstone; Karl Lemke, Sunday school superintendent at Salem, Escanaba; and William Lutz, pastor of Salem. (All right, maybe today the pastors would shed the ties.)

Submitted by Donald Lemke, son of Karl.



Today, these men carry on the picnic tradition at a WELS Tucson, Ariz., area picnic. John Cotton, council member, pulls Bill Raugh, council president, in a wagon. (Who said picnics are for kids?)

Submitted by Debra J. Alonge.

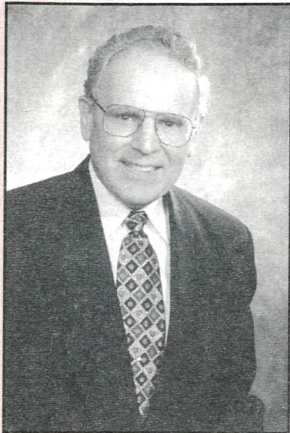


Do you have a picture showing your church life that you want to share? On a separate sheet, tell us why you took it, who is in it, and what it means to you. Include your name, address, and phone number. Those whose photos get printed will receive a small gift. Picture this, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398.

## On Christian joy

“[This] is Christian joy. A joy ‘in spite of.’ A joy that defies every kill-joy. A joy like a Rembrandt—‘an illuminated face shining out of a dark background.’ A joy that is ‘not the ripple of the shallow brook gurgling over its pebbly bed, but the calm, steady silent flow of the river in its well-worn channel too deep to be noisy.’ A joy as serene as ‘the heaven-lies’ which are its sphere, as solid as the promise of Jesus on which it rests.”

Oswald Riess



Gary P. Baumler is editor of *Forward/NL* and WELS Director of Communications.

You have a  
foundation  
that tragedy  
cannot shake.  
You have  
Jesus.

## The real tragedy is . . .

**No tragedy is so great as those left without hope when tragedy strikes.**

The van swerved—too late to avoid the semi cutting into its lane. The driver lost control. The van careened into the median barrier and into another car. Moments later, a child lay dead in the road.

Tragedy had struck—again!

You probably didn't read about this tragedy as you did about the school shootings, the killer tornadoes, the "ethnic cleansings." But something like it happens every day, every hour, every minute.

Still, the full tragic impact doesn't hit until it strikes at you and invades your living room.

Tragedy happens.

The clock is ticking. What will it be next: a life-devouring illness, a raging natural disaster, a mind-numbing act of terror, a crushing accident? Who will it be next?

We don't like to think about it, do we? We don't need to think about it. We should not think about it—in the sense of harboring worry, apprehension, anxiety. We can place our cares on Jesus' shoulders. The shoulders that carried the cross for you will carry your anxieties too.

You believe that, don't you?

But, then the moment comes that forever alters your life. "What a tragedy!", friends whisper in solemn quietness and with bowed heads.

What do you say this time—when it's your tragedy? What do you feel and keep hidden from your friends?

You're a Christian. Do you cry? Even Jesus did that. Do you ask, "Why? Why? Why?" How can you not ask? Do you get angry—with God? Yes, that happens too.

You hurt. You ask questions that have no answers. You try to forget, but that's not possible.

You deal with tragedy.

But you're a Christian. You have a joy that tragedy cannot destroy. You are kept for a future where tragedy cannot reach. You have a foundation that tragedy cannot shake. You have Jesus.

Jesus fills the void where everything seems empty. He relieves the pain when it seems the pain will never stop. He stays with you even when you question if he's really there. Jesus is your hope in the most hopeless of times. Jesus is the way.

Take away Jesus, and you have real tragedy.

"Stay close to me," says Jesus. "I'll bring you through this."

"Don't be troubled," he assures. "I've prepared a place for you in my Father's house."

Without Jesus, there is no promise. Not for today. Not forever.

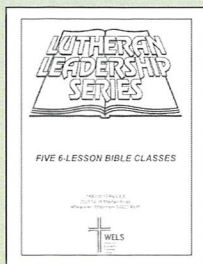
Thirty years ago a Christian woman lost her son in war. She asked all the hard questions and never quite understood. She grieved. She remembered—every day. She wrote:

"A thousand times a day, it seems  
I cry 'My God! My God!'  
I know not why.  
This little mind of mine  
Cannot conceive the meaning of this  
tragedy."  
She trusted.  
"But this much I know:  
In taking one so young,  
So full of life to live,  
He's gained another;  
These aging feet walk closer at His side."  
Jesus is the light that shines in the darkness. Without Jesus . . .

*Gary P. Baumler*

# Leading through Learning

Leadership has its privileges—and its challenges. WELS has developed many practical resources to help our Lutheran leaders meet the demands of strengthening our congregations, in our Savior, through scripturally-based programs and services.



## Lutheran Leadership Series

Five 6-Lesson Bible classes designed to strengthen and encourage Lutheran parish leaders:

1. *Lutheran Leadership*  
by Wayne D. Mueller
2. *Jesus; Mission for His Church*  
by Paul E. Kelm
3. *The Biblical Concept of Planning*  
by David N. Rutschow
4. *Church and Change*  
by Ronald K. Heins
5. *Priority in Ministry*  
by Richard E. Lauersdorf

Spiral Bound  
Book .....\$7.50 each  
3.5" Diskettes  
& 3-hole Punched  
Copymaster ..... \$15.00  
Formats available:  
WordPerfect 5.1 for DOS  
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Contact:  
WELS Board for Parish Services  
414-256-3229  
bps@sab.wels.net



## Adult Spiritual Growth

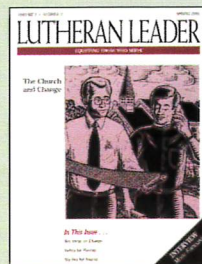
These invaluable Bible Study resources include:

*His Word—My Life*  
A series of repeating Bible Study courses which includes a comprehensive leader's guide.

*Adult Bible Study Handbook*  
A resource tool for use by congregational leaders to improve and expand the adult Bible Study opportunities in their congregations.

*Teaching Methodology Workshop*  
A review of adult teaching methodology for Bible Study leaders offered in a 3-5 hour workshop by Administrator Bruce Becker.

For purchasing and scheduling information please contact:  
WELS Commission  
on Adult Discipleship  
414-256-3278  
cad@sab.wels.net



## Lutheran Leader

This quarterly publication aims to help leaders in Lutheran congregations with a Bible-based approach to ministry.

32 pages are packed with ideas and information shared by fellow leaders in various areas of ministry from all over WELS.

The thought- and discussion-provoking material in this magazine is targeted to lay leaders as well as called workers. This insightful resource can be shared with leaders of all generations and in congregations of all sizes.

To order or for more information on special bulk rates, please contact:

Northwestern Publishing House  
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For reprint permission please call:  
1-414-256-3229

*If a  
man's gift . . .  
is leadership, let him  
govern diligently. Romans 12:8*



## WELS Parish Services

Please join us for:  
*Saturday Leadership Retreat: Mission*  
• Your Lutheran Church  
• Anywhere, USA or Canada  
A Retreat by Wayne Mueller  
WELS Parish Services

The purpose of this retreat is to unite the committed members of your congregation to pursue the spiritual goals of the church. Invite officers, elders, stewards, evangelists, secretaries, organists, choir directors, teachers, committee workers, all group officers, regular Bible class attendees, and the spouses of the aforementioned.

The retreat begins with high biblical motivation and proceeds to the practical ways of outreach through adult spiritual growth and outreach.

Contact:  
WELS Board for Parish Services  
414-256-3229  
wmueller@sab.wels.net



## WELS Parish Assistance

A flexible step-by-step effort to help individual congregations focus on their Means of Grace ministry of outreach and nurture.

Who might benefit from this professional and confidential assistance? Pastors or leaders of congregations which are:

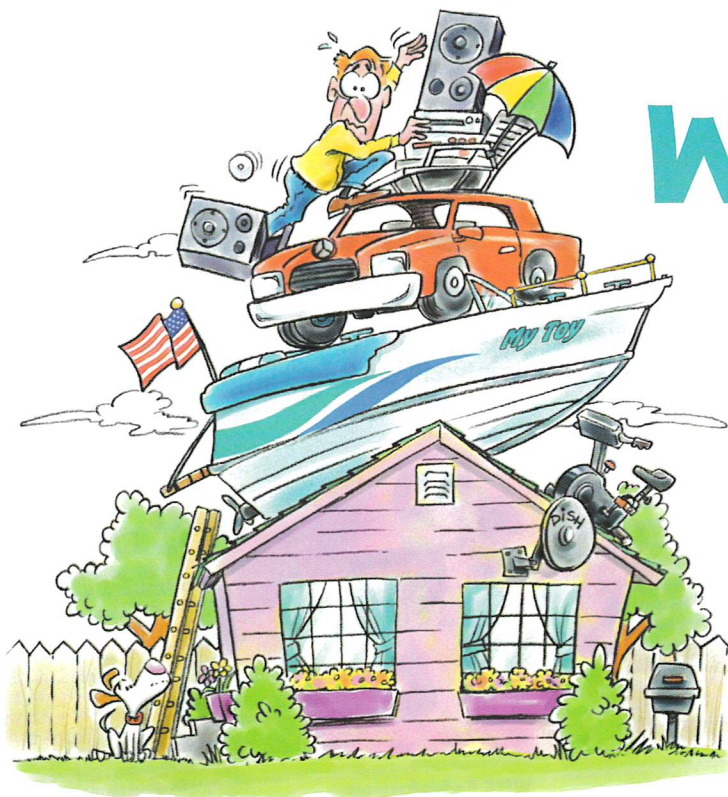
- in transition
- evaluating and planning
- facing major change
- declining in membership and/or attendance
- struggling with internal organizational conflict
- considering opening a Christian Day School

The help Parish Assistance offers rests on three key premises:

1. The Word of God Works
2. Planning Helps People
3. Leaders Lead

For more information on the five phases of assistance, specialty assistance, and costs, please contact:

Parish Assistance  
WELS Parish Planner  
Pastor Ron Heins  
414-771-1235  
heins@sab.wels.net



# What I want

Next time you find yourself  
longing for happiness, don't take  
an inventory of your possessions.

Seek a change of heart.

David D. Sellnow

**T**he roots of human nature can be observed in children. A child will have his heart set on a toy he's seen in a catalog. He begs, he whines, he moans to get his wish. Then one day—either for the joy of giving or just to end the groaning—his parents buy him the toy he desires. He's enthralled. He's so happy, he's hopping. He plays with the toy all day, shows it off to every friend and relative. He could not be more satisfied.

But the next day, or within a few days, he's back paging through the catalogs. "Mom, I really want this toy!" The chant has changed. His satisfaction ended, and he's coveting again.

## Unsatisfied

As I said, what is observable in children is human nature in all of us. We all yearn to be satisfied by this thing or that thing:

If I could just have a Lexus (or other luxury car), I'd be happy.

If I could just have that new house in that upscale subdivision, then I'd be happy.

If I could just find a better job . . .  
If I lived in a different city . . .

If I had a better body, a prettier face, a different appearance . . .

If I had more free time, more money, more vacation days . . .

If I had all these things that my heart desires, then I'd finally find the happiness I seek.

Wrong. The problem is not that you don't have all the things your heart desires. The problem is a perpetually unsatisfied heart.

People change jobs, move, undergo cosmetic surgery, and dissolve marriages, all in attempts to be happier . . . and find that these things are not the answer.

## Satisfied

Happiness begins in the heart—when the heart is touched by God's grace and is appreciative of God's greater gifts. Forgiveness, faith, hope, eternity . . . all these things mean far more than money, place of residence, wardrobe, vehicles.

So, next time you find yourself longing for happiness, don't take an

inventory of your assets or possessions. Seek a change of heart. Pray to God for a healthy attitude, appreciative of his greater, spiritual blessings.

Pray, and listen to God's wisdom in the matter:

"But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

"But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, and gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith" (1 Timothy 6:6-12).

David Sellnow is pastor at Shepherd of the Plains, Lubbock, Texas.