

FORWARD IN CHRIST

September 2001

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The five solas



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Good afflictions

It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees.

Psalm 119:71

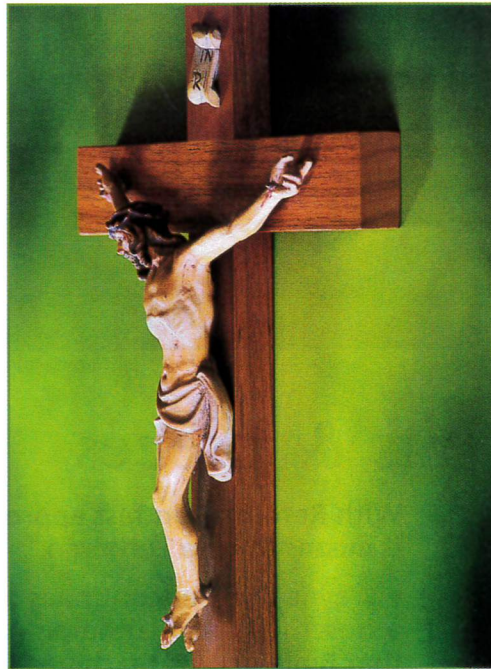
Paul M. Janke

Who but a masochist could say, “It was good for me to be afflicted”? That depends on what you mean by affliction. The affliction of which the writer speaks in Psalm 119 is not self-inflicted. The believer does not seek affliction, but suffers it by the will of God. Such affliction, because it comes by the permission of a gracious God for the benefit of the believer, is good.

Avoiding affliction

It’s easy to think that a believer should not suffer affliction. It even seems logical that the number of our afflictions should drop to zero the moment we believe in Jesus. The reasoning goes like this: God loves his people. God’s power has no limit. Therefore, God will use his limitless power to prevent afflictions from entering the lives of the people he loves. This logic overlooks, however, that God can—lovingly—use afflictions for the good of his people.

That was news to Peter. The same impulse that caused him to rebuke Jesus for prophesying his suffering and death also caused him, in a moment of weakness, to deny that he knew Jesus. Peter did not want Jesus to suffer affliction, nor, when it came down to it, was he willing to suffer affliction for the name of Jesus. To avoid affliction, Peter swore vehemently that he had no association with Jesus. We’ve shared in Peter’s sin if we’ve sought anonymity rather than stand up for the name of Christ.



Isaac Watts was speaking of the temptation to detour affliction by denying Jesus when he wrote:

“Am I a soldier of the Cross,
A follower of the Lamb,
And shall I fear to own his cause
Or blush to speak his name?
Must I be carried to the skies
On flowery beds of ease
While others fought to win the prize
And sailed through bloody seas?”
(*The Lutheran Hymnal* 445:1,2)

Accepting affliction

What enabled the psalmist to accept affliction was realizing that through it he learned God’s decrees. Educators and parenting experts speak of “teachable moments,” windows of opportunity to make an important point to a child. Frequently, those moments come in connection

with some difficulty. Something similar can happen in our afflictions if we realize that in those moments, God is saying, “Now that I have your attention, listen to this.”

Psalm 119 is a psalm in praise of God’s Word. In verse after verse the psalmist details the blessings of the Bible. One blessing we may not have considered is that God uses his law to afflict us. When we grow comfortable with our sins, when we proudly assume that we’re standing firm, the law says, “Be careful that you don’t fall!” “Repent and do the things you did at first.” When we’ve been made uncomfortable by such affliction, the decrees of the LORD (his gospel promises) assure us that for Jesus’ sake God has forgiven us and pledges to keep us from falling.

Calling affliction good would make little sense if not for Jesus. Isaiah reminds us that Jesus was afflicted by God as he carried our sorrows. “He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth” (53:7). He suffered in holy silence for our iniquities so that now, through faith, we are certain to experience eternal life in God’s presence. In order to keep us on the right path, the one that leads to the heaven Jesus prepared for us, God will at times allow us to suffer afflictions.

In light of that, we open our mouths to say, “It was good for me to be afflicted.”



Paul Janke is pastor at St. Peter, Modesto, California.

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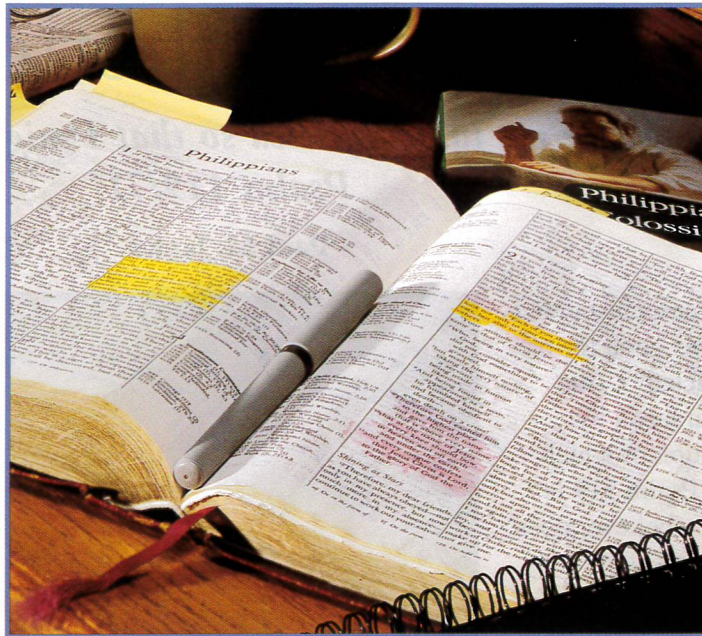
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Lutherans carry dirty Bibles, worn and full of handwritten notes and pages that are bent and soiled. But we, like Luther, don't just stand on our Bibles. We use them.

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bits & pieces



With Reformation fast approaching, many will consider what it means to be a Lutheran.

- Wayne Mueller continues his series on this very subject with a closer look at a Lutheran's dirty Bible and why we stand on that Bible and its teachings (p. 8).

- God brought back the five "solos" through Martin Luther. What they are and what they mean are subjects John Eich covers in his article, "The five solas of the Reformation" (p. 14).



What does it take to leave your home, family, culture, and way of life? Support, a lot of faith, and God's tender care, says Brad Wordell, a WELS missionary who in 1999 left his home in Lake Mills, Wis., to serve in Tokyo, Japan. Read more about his life-changing experience in "To the Land of the Rising Sun" (p. 10).



Educating our youth is a crucial part of WELS' ministry. Our 23 area Lutheran high schools and two preparatory schools help accomplish this task. Yet how much do you really know about these schools? Our new 11-part series will fill you in. Check out the first article on p. 12.



Mark Paustian asks small churches the who, what, when, where, why, and how questions of small-church ministry in the conclusion of his series (p. 18). See if you know the answers.



Watch for a special convention issue of Forward in Christ magazine next month!

—JKT

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A Lutheran's Bible is filled with handwritten notes on pages that are bent and soiled.

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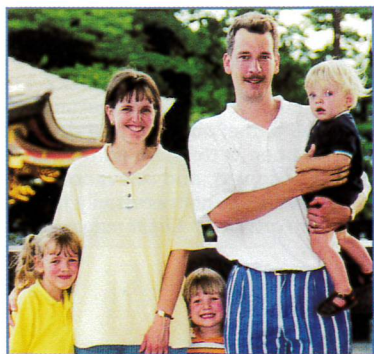
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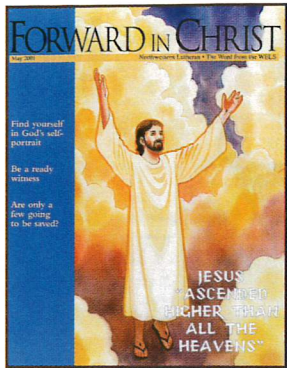
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Each and every article in this issue [May] related to life issues and thoughts in my life. As a recent graduate of Minnesota State University, Mankato, the

WELS Campus Ministry was a constant refuge from the turmoil of college life. I was sad to leave but felt God had given me a solid foundation as I travel to New York City to intern this summer. How fortunate I am to also have a WELS exploratory mission nearby. Thank you!

 A. Mickelson

I started to read "Fruitful seniors" [June] with skepticism.

Here I am sitting home from church again too weak to get ready, having gone through two recent heart procedures and a husband also recently hospitalized. What could I possibly do for my church? The answer came almost immediately. I had an e-mail from a student at New Ulm who needs volunteers to write to those weak in faith, a request found in May's *Forward in Christ* magazine. Jesus said that he was the Way, and he showed even someone like me a way to serve him sitting at a computer and using cyberspace.


 Lois Knobloch
Tinley Park, Illinois

I'd like to comment on Pastor Cherney's editorial "People skills" [July]. I have been privileged and blessed for more than 60 years to be part of a church body that takes God at his Word. I have appreciated the pastors who have served me and those pastors' loyalty to God's Word. But what has alarmed me about WELS is


that we don't seem to understand that people skills do matter. Jesus was known for his "teaching," as well as for his people skills among the sinners he was seeking to save.

We need to understand that we are members of a declining church body. It is time to wake up! Having the truth does no good if we don't reach the people in our communities.

It is true that "it is the Word that does the work," but it can be the pastor who prevents people from hearing it.

 John J. Parlow Sr.
Racine, Wisconsin

This current [June] issue, like many others, is truly filled with super writing. With Westra and Hartzell writing, along with the others, you really have a winner. FIC is delightful reading, inspirational, stimulating, and thought provoking.

 Bob Sawall
San Angelo, Texas

Regarding "Set us free, Lord" [July].

It is definitely a Christ-centered article and certainly points out my own sinful nature as a daughter, mother, and person. But I would like to have seen some practical, hands-on application of this Christ-centered information to help the mother dealing with this child.

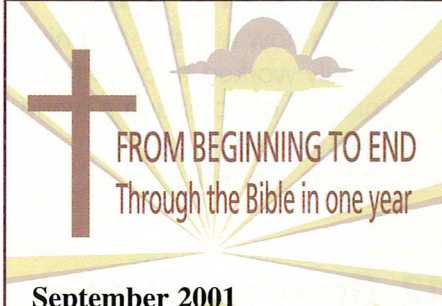
Although my own son is grown, it is still a struggle for me as a mother to guide in a God-pleasing manner. There have been many times while my son was growing up, as well as now, that he and I have locked horns on behavioral issues.

I would like to see more down-to-earth and practical hands-on application of scriptural truths when dealing with our sinful natures. And why not include observations and the hands-on experience of other mothers who are and have dealt with a child's misbehavior? I would certainly like to make a connection to share the

joys and frustrations of raising kids to know their sinful and willful ways along with sharing the terrific news about our Savior.

Laura V. Borchin
Lewisville, Texas

Correction: Paul Huebner from Menomonee Falls, Wis., was incorrectly reported as the author of a July readers forum letter. Paul Huebner from Grass Lake, Mich., actually wrote the letter.



September 2001

1. 1 Chronicles 22:6-24	14. Ps. 43 • Joel 15. Amos 1-5
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All these things . . .

Armin J. Panning

This column is being written as I sit among a welter of boxes and bags, baskets and crates, stacks and piles of personal and household belongings. You see, after 25 years of living in the same house, it's now drawing toward the day of reckoning when I must downsize to fit into our somewhat smaller retirement home.

Therefore, it was not a particularly welcome reminder that the deadline for material in the current issue of *Forward in Christ* magazine had been moved up two weeks to correspond exactly with the day that the moving van is coming to our house.

Be that as it may, it's that conjunction of events that leads to the thoughts of this editorial. Somewhat irreverently, a clip from Christ's Sermon on the Mount keeps flitting through my mind: "Seek first God's kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you as well."

It would be an egotistical kind of logic to conclude: All this stuff is an indication of how well I've "first sought his kingdom." We all know that can't be true. The accumulation is rather the result of two other factors, one negative and the other positive.

The negative is my inclination toward saving things. Call it a pack-rat mentality that takes seriously the proverbial wisdom, "Waste not; want not." Furthermore, with uncanny foresight I can predict that the day after I throw something away, I'll be needing it. So, admittedly, my nature is partly to blame for this accumulation.

But the real reason is a positive one: it's the overwhelming generosity of our creator and preserver God. Daily and richly he gives us all that we need for body and life and not only what we need, but infinitely more.

We shouldn't be surprised at this. After all, he has promised to provide for our every need. Recall our Savior's winsome

logic: If God dresses up flowers better than Solomon, won't he also clothe you? If he is concerned about sparrows, won't he feed you? (Matthew 6:28f).

He backs up his promises with action. Recall how he fed over 5,000 people with five loaves and two small fish—and the group had 12 baskets of leftovers to take home. Still today he gives us more than we need. Look at all this stuff I have to sort through!

We shouldn't be surprised at God's generosity, nor dare we take it for granted or become dissatisfied with his level of providing for us. It's an observable—and sobering—phenomenon that quantity of goods doesn't bring satisfaction. In fact, it often brings just the opposite, namely, an unwholesome desire for more.

It's no wonder, therefore, that Scripture so often warns against covetousness. A reference work such as *Nave's Topical Bible* lists 63 passages (37 Old Testament, 26 New Testament) warning against covetousness. We need to be on guard against becoming attached to things as though we absolutely need them for our survival. Hence our Savior's gentle reminder, "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own" (Matthew 6:34).

My "trouble" for today is deciding what of God's gracious providing is still needed and what can be disposed of. I'm forced to do so. After all, the van is coming, but that isn't until tomorrow.

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

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LUTHERANS CARRY DIRTY BIBLES

A Lutheran's Bible is worn, filled with handwritten notes on pages that are bent and soiled.

Wayne D. Mueller



One rebellious monk stood alone against an assembly of powerful religious and political figures. It was intimidating. Rome had called Martin Luther to account for his radical departure from the church's teachings.

Luther called for the true repentance that John the Baptist and Jesus Christ preached. Eventually, his criticism of indulgences began to pinch the income Rome gathered from the common people. Luther was cutting into support for the clergy's luxurious living and cathedral construction.

Luther had options. He could recant as Rome's leaders demanded. He could take back his Bible talk and revert to the staid traditions and empty rituals of his mother church.

Or, Luther could compromise and fudge. He could promise to reconsider, to agree to disagree for a while, and to try to work things out to everybody's liking. He could be politically correct and save his own hide.

But Luther chose none of the above. Instead, he stood on the Scriptures. He said, "Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise."

An indelible I.D.

Luther was the first Lutheran. But still today, you identify a Lutheran by his indelible stamp of standing squarely on the Bible. Lutherans don't throw the Bible at people like Fundamentalists. We don't swing the Bible in the air when we preach like evangelical pitchmen. We don't drum the Bible like moralists. We simply stand on it.

To stand on the Bible means that we trust that God gave us this book. It is his voice. The Bible's authority stands above all philosophy and

The 12 attributes presented in this series reflect what makes Lutherans unique. Although each attribute on its own may be shared by other religious groups, when all the attributes are studied together a uniquely Lutheran image emerges.

human opinion. With the Word of God we can withstand popes, church councils, and even political correctness.

We stand on the Bible because Jesus is at the center of it. God gave us the Bible to tell us about his Son, our Savior. “These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name” (John 20:31). Lutherans elevate this central message of Jesus over law. We do not view the Bible as a moral code book that God gave to reform society. We proclaim a saving gospel, not a social gospel.

Everything in the Bible becomes clear through Jesus, so Lutherans also stand on the clarity of Scripture. We know God did not give his Word to confuse people; the Bible does not contradict itself. “No Scripture is of any private interpretation” (2 Peter 1:20 KJV). We don’t force our ideas into its words. When a passage allows more than one interpretation, we let the Bible and its focus on Christ interpret itself.

Don’t just stand there

Our mark of standing on Scripture makes it easy to spot a Lutheran. He’s the one carrying the dirty Bible. Her Bible is worn, full of handwritten notes, pages are bent and soiled. Like Luther, Lutherans don’t just stand on their Bibles. We use them. We speak the Word, live it, and suffer the consequences of doing so.

It bodes well for the future of our church that our people are getting into their Bibles as never before.

Bible class attendance in WELS nearly doubled over the last eight years. Practical series of books produced by Northwestern Publishing House such as *The People’s Bible* and *People’s Bible Teachings* are bringing a deeper understanding of the Word to thousands of our members. Our congregational leaders are learning the value of guiding their ministry by the Word. Christian literature and daily devotions are finding greater appreciation in our households. We pray that it will not be too long before all of us are recognized by our dirty Bibles.

We stand on the Bible because Jesus is at the center of it.

Luther suffered the consequences of his bold stand. He was excommunicated, threatened with death, and had to go into hiding. But even in seclusion, getting the Bible’s message out was the driving force of his life. He spent years translating the Old and New Testaments into an easily understandable language of his people. He strengthened the faithful with personal contact and correspondence.

The consequences we suffer today for our stand on the Bible may be more subtle, but they are just as inevitable. Our biblical stands on original sin, Jesus’ teachings on divorce, men and women’s roles, and church fellowship provoke ridicule even from other so-called Bible-based churches. Our firm scriptural positions against murderous abortion, homosexual perversion, and premarital sex don’t jibe well with prime time TV fare.

Most of the recrimination we endure today, however, comes from keeping Jesus at the center of the

Bible’s message. The world doesn’t mind when we teach that Jesus died for all, but pagans get really uptight when we say that Jesus is the only way. An exclusive Savior does not fit the American ideal of melting pot diversity. Yet Lutherans affirm the apostles’ confession: “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

Preaching Christ crucified is still “a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles” (1 Corinthians 1:23). Believing and sharing Jesus only irks the age-old religion of the world that man can save himself by trying hard and being good. The media gives air time to “faith-based” organizations but can’t accurately report a Jesus-based church. Many religious people don’t comprehend what it means to put more trust in the power of the Word—what God says to us—than in the power of prayer—what we say to God.

Here we stand

Luther’s bold stand on the Bible still marks those who wear his name. To put the Word of God above the word of men indelibly marks us as distinct from the world we live in. It is an identification tag that make us unique among Christian denominations.

Luther demonstrated by his life that standing on the Word is not a static position. His bold defense—preaching, teaching, catechizing, studying, confessing, sharing—marked him as the first Lutheran with a dirty Bible. We implore God through the power of his Word that he make us Lutherans who stand on his Word, but don’t just stand there.



Wayne Mueller is first vice president of WELS.

To the Land of the Rising Sun

A garden plant transplanted to new soil usually droops but, with time and tender care, will perk up. Should it surprise us when something similar happens to families moving overseas?

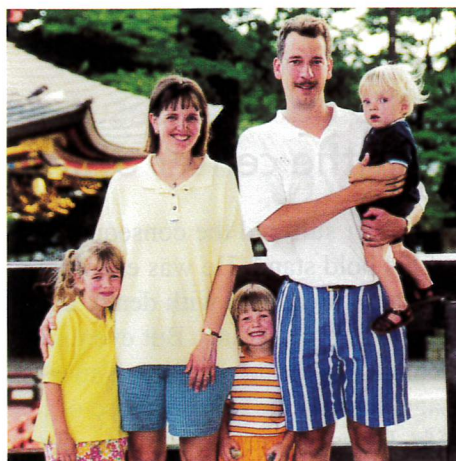
Brad D. Wordell

The call to serve as missionary to Japan came in November 1998. As my wife, Andrea, and I prayerfully considered where the Lord wanted us to serve, these two somewhat-contradictory thoughts about Japan kept recurring: “We could do it” and “This would not be easy.”

Concerns and challenges

The first message we received from Japan asked us to consider these questions: “Are you physically healthy? Are you spiritually healthy? Is your marriage healthy?” We felt comfortable saying yes to the first question. But the other two made us think. The implication was that living in Japan would put our faith and marriage to the test.

A transplanted garden plant droops, not because the new environment is bad, but because it is *different*. We would be moving from a large congregation in a little Wisconsin town to a small congregation in one of the biggest and most densely populated cities in the world. Throw in new language, new culture, new friends, and new food, and we wondered how well we would adjust.



Brad Wordell, his wife, Andrea, and their three children (from left) Brianna, Benjamin, and Jonathan, when they first arrived in Japan in June 1999.

Before accepting the call, we didn’t think much about the logistics of moving overseas—planning, organizing, packing, flying. (As it turned out, all those things went smoothly.) But we did think often about how difficult it would be to leave family and friends and be so far away.

Our other main concern was our children. At the time we had three: a five-year-old daughter, a three-year-old son, and a son just learning to walk. How would this decision affect them? Children growing up in a cul-

ture different from that of their parents are called “third-culture kids.” One writer used this example: Third-culture kids are not like the culture of their parents (blue), nor like the culture in which they live (yellow). They are a blend. They are green.

Because of this, to varying degrees, third-culture kids sometimes “droop” when they return to the culture of their parents. How would our children do?

Our current congregation had a Lutheran elementary school. About a mile away was one of our area Lutheran high schools. If we went to Japan, our children could be attending a small, one-room school. How many friends would they have? If we went to Japan, we would most likely be sending our children back to the States for high school. How would they do without us? And we without them?

Answers to concerns

As we discussed going to Japan, our preschool daughter had some thoughts to share. “If we go, I would encourage Daddy to put the real God into his sermons.” On another occa-

People holding calls to foreign missions are encouraged to speak to Missionary Support Services (MSS), a ministry of Wisconsin Lutheran Child & Family Services, as part of their deliberation. MSS staff, John C. Johnson, Sue Bilitz, and Dan Nommenson, meet with the prospective missionary and his family for eight hours of test-taking and interviews.

Johnson says they look for the following things in the session:

- *Stress resilience.* How will the individual and his family fare with the inevitable stress of a move to a different country and culture?
- *Adaptability.* How comfortable will the individual and his family be in a different culture?
- *Family.* How will the individual's immediate and extended family manage the transition?

After the session, Johnson and his staff interpret the tests and put together a written report, which they share with the one holding the call.

Besides working with people before they take calls, Missionary Support Services helps with orientation of new missionaries, repatriation of returning missionaries, and on-site counseling and consulting.

sion she was talking about what she would take to Japan. "A baseball bat," she said, "so we can knock down the naughty statues." This gave us the opportunity to talk to her about whether or not that would help us tell people about Jesus. More important, our daughter's remarks reminded us of the need and urgency of mission work in Japan and the positive effects a mission experience could have on our children.

Heartfelt letters from missionaries and their wives indicated that living in a foreign country had actually made their families closer and

stronger, helping them to focus on God's kingdom and his work. As for sending their children away for high school, they talked about how they entrusted this to the Lord.

As part of the deliberation, we were encouraged to see counselors John Johnson and Sue Bilitz. Through our discussions and the tests that they administered, they helped us learn about ourselves. We talked about what it would be like for people like us to adjust to a new culture. They told us how they could give us long distance help and support if needed. Also, they seemed to think that we could answer "yes" to the healthy marriage question.

As for being far away from family and friends, our contact with the missionaries in Japan showed us how modern technology had made the world a little smaller. More important, we found great comfort in the message of the resurrection. In heaven there will be no shortage of time with loved ones.

"We are going to Japan."

That's what my wife wrote in her diary the day we decided for sure that we could and would go. We still thought it would be difficult, but so many brothers and sisters in Christ helped us prepare for the move. There were special farewell celebrations wishing us the Lord's blessings in Japan. The commissioning service—with the message of the sermon, the songs of the choirs, and the expressions and prayers of so many people—encourages us to this day. A week of orientation with Bible study and discussion with mission workers going to different parts of the world helped us know more what we could expect.

New environment

When we arrived in Japan in June 1999, we met new people—people who have since become our dear friends in Christ. We ate new foods, some of which we have learned to like. We started learning all over again how to do things like driving, shopping, reading, writing, and talking.

During those first months we had many chances to laugh at ourselves. What else can you do when you go to a gas station, try to ask for a tank of regular, and have the attendant bring you a can of brake fluid? What else can you do as you lose your slipper in the center aisle on your way back from the pulpit?

But we weren't always laughing. Those first months were difficult. Many times we thought about and missed our old environment. Did we droop at all? Without a doubt! But, with time and God's tender care, we perked up.

God's tender care

God's tender care came through his Word. About a month after we arrived in Japan, WELS met in convention, and the convention essay by Professor Paul Wendland (posted on the WELS Web site) brought us great comfort. He reminded us that Christians are pilgrims and strangers in this world. We felt out of place in Japan, but we were out of place in the United States too. "To Christians, every homeland is foreign."

Our real home is in heaven, the land of the Risen Son. Should it surprise us if we all droop a little until we get there?

Brad Wordell is a WELS missionary in Tokyo, Japan.



GROWING PAINS

The smallest of WELS' area Lutheran high schools are all experiencing growing pains, but they also value the closeness that their small student bodies allow.

Nicole R. Moline



Great Plains Lutheran High School (GPLHS), Watertown, S.D.

Year school began: 1996

2001 enrollment: 62

Number of teachers: Seven full-time

Enrollment trend: 517% increase since opening five years ago

Mascot: Panther

The youngest of WELS' area Lutheran high schools, GPLHS has grown up quickly. In only five years, the school has moved from a student body of 12 that operated in a rented facility to a student body of 62 that operates in its own building, which includes a dormitory and gymnasium.

"Our size allows students to participate in virtually everything we offer," notes Great Plains' principal, Daniel Myers. "We are very much like a family. We offer personal attention for each student, and the faculty really cares."

"We have approximately 45 congregations in our association, spanning from western Minnesota to eastern Montana," Bert Falak further explains. Falak has taught at Great Plains for the five years of its existence. "We also have students from all over the nation. If we were a prep school that would be no big deal. But since we are an area Lutheran high school, it is a big deal. Our 'area' is huge!"

Falak adds, "Trying to gain and maintain support from people at such a distance is a definite challenge, but the people in this part of the country are used to challenges and are ready to do whatever it takes to keep secondary WELS education in their district."



The 2000-01 cross country team at Great Plains Lutheran High School (from left): Coach Greg Diersen, Paul Kanzenbach, Jeremy Bilitz, Mike Nei, Eric Lindemann, and Brandon Schaffer.



Illinois Lutheran High School (ILHS)

Year school began: 1987

2001 enrollment: 92

Number of teachers: Seven full-time, two part-time

Enrollment trends: 45% increase over the past 10 years

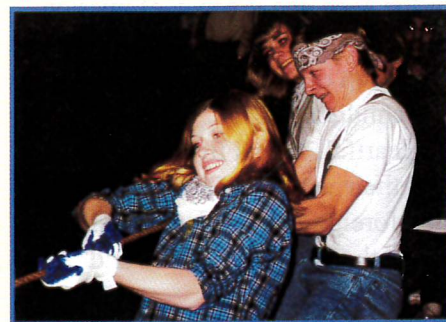
Mascot: Cavalier

Illinois Lutheran High School is part of the Crete Evangelical Lutheran Schools system, operated by Zion and Trinity congregations in Crete, Ill. ILHS is unique because only two congregations support it. Yet, it is thriving.

In fact, each area of its space is being used to its fullest capacity. Illinois Lutheran is not even housed in its own facility. It shares a building with the lower grades of the grade school, and portable classroom units were set up in 1999. Athletic fields and gym space are also shared with the grade school, making practices and events difficult to schedule. All this has led Crete Evangelical Lutheran Schools to begin working on plans for expansion.

The tight quarters do make for a tight student body, though. Jeff Spiaser, a science and technology teacher at Illinois Lutheran, says he is proud of the relationships built at ILHS. He notes, "Every student knows every teacher. We know nearly all parents and most siblings."

Principal Joe Archer adds, "We are blessed with great, dedicated teachers who love what they're doing and love their students. Supportive parents are willing to help in many ways. And, we have a great board—involved, dedicated, knowledgeable, and caring."



These Illinois Lutheran High School students are serious about winning the Homecoming Week tug of war contest.



Nebraska Evangelical Lutheran High School (NELHS), Waco

Year school began: 1979

2001 enrollment: 100

Number of teachers: 10 full-time, two part-time

Enrollment trend: 10% decrease over the past 10 years

Mascot: Knight

Nebraska Evangelical Lutheran High School “is a small dormitory school in a small village in a remote part of the U.S.,” reports *Go & Teach God’s Word to the World: The History of the Association of Lutheran High Schools*. “Eighty to 90 percent of [NELHS] students live on campus. . . . [NELHS] students become unbelievably close with their friends and the adults who care for them.”

During the 2000-01 school year, Nebraska Lutheran had students enrolled from 13 states and the island of Puerto Rico. William Goehring, director of development at NELHS, says that so many students living in the dormitory “enables us to provide a structured Christian environment that breathes a spirit of Christian love—from the time the kids get up in the morning to the time they go to bed at night.”

Goehring is excited about the 2001-02 school year because for the first time in the school’s history a second-generation student is enrolled and a graduate is returning as a member of the teaching staff.

When Craig Charron, a 1989 graduate of Nebraska Lutheran, returns to his alma mater to teach, he will find it in the middle of some substantial changes as NELHS approaches the halfway point of its \$3.6 million expansion/renovation. The building project will add 42,890 square feet to the present 13,700-square-foot facility.



Nebraska Lutheran High School’s Commencement Concert is a time for students to shine.



Huron Valley Lutheran High School (HVL), Westland, Mich.

Year school began: 1975

2001 enrollment: 54

Number of teachers: Eight full-time

Enrollment trend: 30% decrease over the past 10 years

Mascot: Hawk

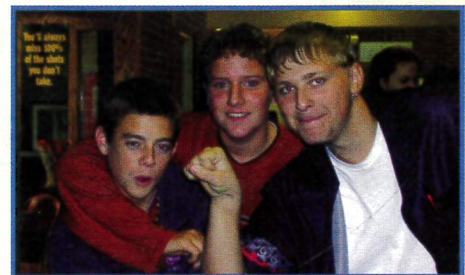
“The most important thing I have learned [at Huron Valley Lutheran High School] is how to make the best out of both good and bad situations,” says Jennifer Kleinke, a senior at HVL. “I’ve learned that God puts you in many different environments, and no matter what, he has you there for a reason and is still looking out for you.”

Faith like that has kept HVL going, even though the school’s enrollment has dropped 50% in the past 15 years. After enrollment peaked in 1985 with 108 students, it has slowly dropped to its present 54 students.

Huron Valley’s principal, Tim Plath, is not going to let that stop him, though. Plath is excited about HVL’s building project, Growing in Christ. “After 17 years in our present facility without a full-sized gymnasium-auditorium, God-willing we will begin a capital campaign this fall to build a gym, replace the roof over our present facility, do some renovations in our present facility, and some operational support. . . . We pray that God will continue to bless our efforts in this project as well as the continued opportunity to minister to those young souls entrusted to our care.”

The school’s small size is not necessarily a negative. Kris Springstroh, who has taught at HVL for three years, observes, “A small student body allows [our students] the opportunities to participate in everything and showcase all their talents.”

Timothy Kovak, a junior at HVL, is proud of his school’s small size, because it allows students and teachers to become close. “We can go to our friends whenever we need help, but believe it or not, we can also go to our teachers. . . .” says Kovak. “Whether you want it or not, the teachers become more than your teachers. They are also your friends.”



(From left) Dan Schultz, Tim Kovak, and Josh Dorow strut their stuff in the halls of Huron Valley Lutheran High School.

THE FIVE SOLAS

These five solas were the foundation of the Reformation, and they continue to be the base of the Lutheran faith.

John L. Eich

As we approach our Reformation celebrations, we will be reminded of the great solas that God brought back to his church through Martin Luther. We are most familiar with the first three, *Sola Scriptura*, *Sola Gratia*, and *Sola Fide*. But there are two additional ones that we don't want to forget: *Solo Christo* and *Soli Deo Gloria*!

Sola Scriptura—by Scripture alone

Up to the time of the Reformation, the church had developed a vast library of study and knowledge on the Bible. Some of it was true, but some was not. Because respected theologians had written it, it was all contained in what the church declared to be "tradition." However, as years went by, these traditions were held in higher and higher honor, until they were actually considered more authoritative than the Bible itself.

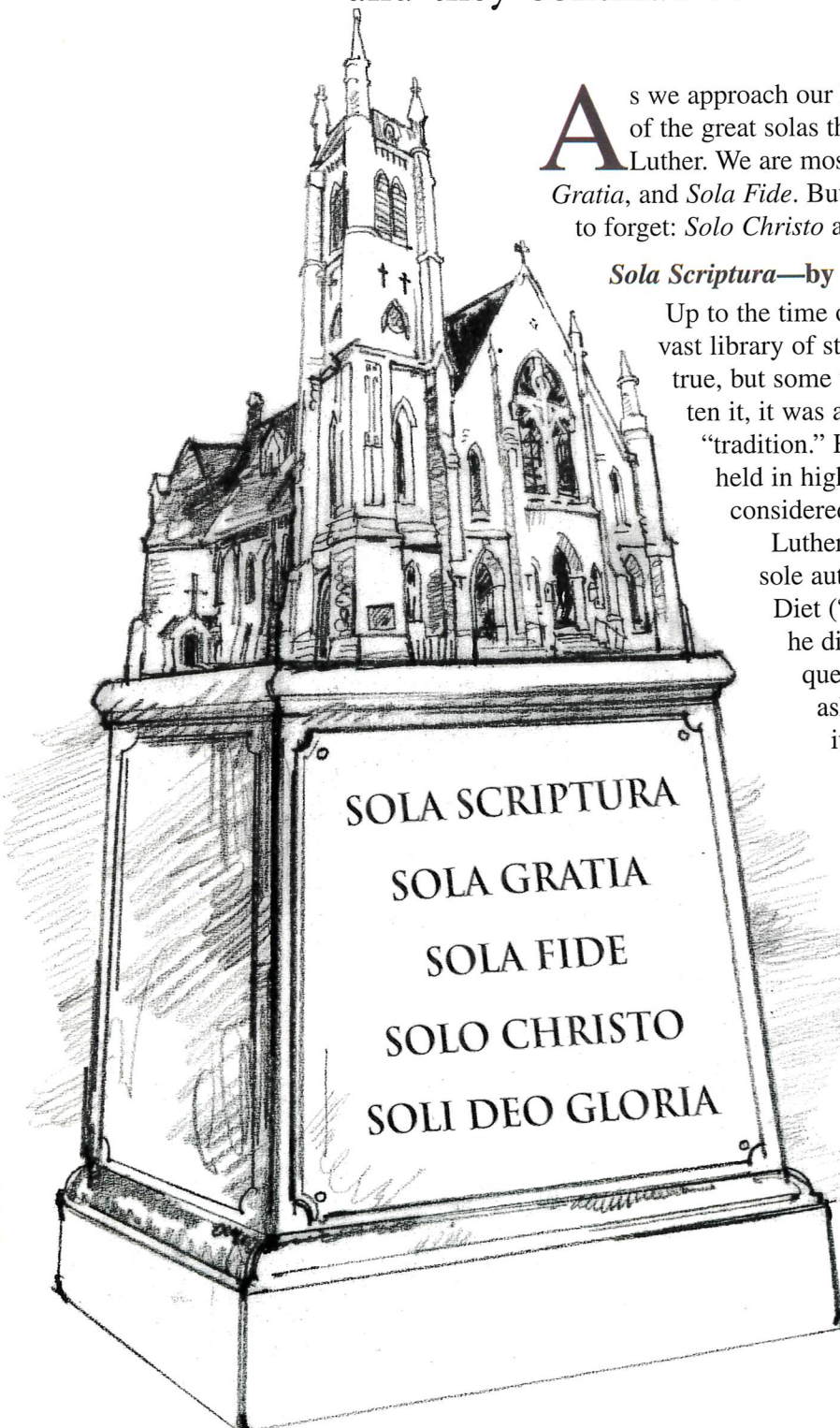
Luther, however, was drawn back to the Scriptures as the sole authority. When he went to defend his writings at the Diet ("Assembly") of Worms (held in Worms, Germany), he didn't take the proceedings lightly. When asked the question of whether or not he would recant, Luther asked to be given the night to sleep on it, pray about it, and think it over.

The next day, though, Luther appeared before the assembly and said, "Unless I am convinced from the sacred Scriptures that I am in error, I cannot and I will not recant. Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise. God help me."

Scripture alone should determine our teachings. It doesn't matter what a certain pastor says or what a church body says. What matters is what God says. Whether it is an obvious doctrine like justification, or the more difficult questions of our age like the eternal destiny of infants who have died, or hot button issues like male headship, we need to let the Bible be the final authority for faith. Everything else is just opinion. The Reformation brought back that truth for us.

Sola Gratia—by grace alone

We can sing almost all the verses of *Amazing Grace* by heart. It's America's favorite



OF THE REFORMATION

hymn. But ask any American what grace is, and he will probably give you a blank look.

Simply put, grace is God's love for the undeserving sinner.

From a human point of view, free grace is offensive, absolutely unfair! That God would show love and mercy towards those who are his enemies and who constantly reject him and strive against him is offensive.

Grace is only free to us, however. It cost God. It was paid for at a terrible cost—the holy, precious blood and innocent suffering and death of Jesus. This was a price more than anyone else could pay. It was a price only God could pay.

Most of the evangelical movement today would say that grace is God making salvation possible in Jesus Christ, leaving the fulfillment of salvation to one's decision or merit. Lutherans, standing solely on Scripture, say unashamedly that grace means that God didn't just make salvation possible, but that he accomplished salvation for everyone! All sinners are justified, or declared spiritually right with God, by the blood of Jesus. That is the richness, the majesty of grace.

***Sola Fide*—by faith alone**

God gives his grace freely to all people, and through faith his people claim that justification in their own lives. Faith is the hand, given to us by God, by which we reach out to God to receive his salvation.

There is nothing divinely accept-

able in our lives. Faith alone makes the merit of Christ our own. Faith alone allows us to stand accepted by God. There are no works involved on our part to gain God's approval.

Consider the omelet. Take three eggs and scramble them. Now what would happen if I added one rotten egg to the two fresh eggs? The whole omelet becomes inedible. That's the way it is with sin in our lives. It's spoiled the whole. If works were part of the equation, none of us would be acceptable in God's sight, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Faith alone trusts solely in Jesus.

***Solo Christo*—by Christ alone**

Am I saved by works? Absolutely! By the work of Christ alone!

Unfortunately the church had begun to teach that Jesus made it possible for a person to be saved, but that it was up to that individual to earn that salvation. They could do it by doing good works or by suffering in purgatory. Or they could borrow the good works from the saints who had done more good works than they needed. Salvation became a mixture of the work of Christ, the individual, and the saints.

By the grace of God, the reformers restored Christ alone as our Savior. Only he took our place under the law. Only he was perfect enough to fulfill the law in our place. Only by the work of Christ are we saved. With faith in Christ alone for our salvation we can rest

our souls, knowing that our struggle with God has ended.

***Soli Deo Gloria*—glory to God alone**

For our salvation—glory to God alone! He has washed us! He has bought us! Glory to God alone!

J.S. Bach signed each of his musical scores with the words "To God alone be the glory!" What a perfect way for us to finish everything we do. Each of us can say, "In my work—let the glory be to God alone! In my family life—let the glory be to God alone! In my children's education—let the glory be to God alone! In our church—let the glory be to God alone! In our nation—let the glory be to God alone!"

Paul exclaims, "Oh the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! 'Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor? Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?' For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen!" (Romans 11:33-36).

These five *solas* were the foundation of the Reformation. They helped the Reformers, and they will help us keep our faith as a doxology to God instead of to us. After all, he deserves it.



John Eich is pastor at Grace, Alma/Zion, St. Louis, Michigan.

CAMPUS MINISTRY MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Tempted to step away from church, college students step into God's Word through WELS campus ministries.

Julie K. Tessmer

WELS conducts about 390 campus ministries across the United States. Pastors in these ministries serve about 8,200 students either through actual Bible studies and activities or by mailing materials.

But campus ministry is not so much about numbers as about the impact it has on students through the gospel. What matters is what students, in this pivotal time of their lives, gain from an active campus ministry.

Who better to tell us about that than the students themselves? Here are some of their answers to the following questions:



The 1999-2000 end of year party for the campus ministry at the University of South Dakota-Vermillion.



The WELS Tucson Campus Ministry display table at the Club Fair on the University of Arizona campus.

How has campus ministry helped you in your college years?

"It's forced me to make time for God and keeps me accountable to my walk with him."

—Amanda Kessel
University of Arizona-Tucson

"At the start of each Bible study, we discuss issues that each of us has faced since we last met. Our pastor's excitement for the Word energizes us until we meet again."

—Kathie Kienetz
University of South Dakota-Vermillion

"Every college junior must take a class called 'World of Ideas.' In

the class, we are required to read parts of the Bible. But the professor changes and challenges what the Bible says. . . . Campus ministry has helped me by first warning me about the class and some of the theories and by also showing me how to address the class and teacher with what the Bible and God says."

—Ruth Becraft
University of Wisconsin-Whitewater

"While at college your faith is always under attack. It is a relief to have a place to go every week where faith can be supported and uplifted rather than dragged down."

—Justin Luehmann
University of Wisconsin-River Falls

"It's a place where I feel safe."

—Jena Schwichtenberg
Minnesota State University, Mankato

"Campus ministry has provided me a place to worship and hear God's Word, but it also has gotten me more

involved. I heard about Travel Canvass Witness through my campus ministry, and last spring break I went to Virginia to help Our Savior's Lutheran Church."

—Andrew Schoeneck
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

"I feel like even though I don't have as many Christian friends on campus as I'd like, I always have a little family of people who share my beliefs and values. I can go to them and my campus pastor for rejuvenation when life at school is complex or makes me feel all alone."

—Kami Jo Radsek
Lawrence University, Appleton, Wis.

"Campus ministry has helped me through the rough times in life. It is so awesome to have Christian friends who share the same beliefs and can understand how I feel. Every time I go to church or activities I am reminded that Jesus is our best friend."

—Christine Lattaine
Lansing Community College, Lansing, Mich.

“Campus ministry is totally what I need to get through my week. In addition to attending weekly church services, campus ministry is a great way to get a boost on my week with fellow collegian believers.”

—Renee Roloff
University of Wisconsin-Platteville

“The weekly meetings and Monday night Bible study give me an easy opportunity to ask questions and get the proper spiritual guidance that we humans so desperately need.”

—Jeremy Wittig
University of Wisconsin-Platteville

What has campus ministry taught you?

“No matter how busy college life is, there should always be time for God.”

—Katie Hoffmann
Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minn

“There is nothing better than a friend who will study God’s Word together with you and help you when you need it.”

—Thomas Weinstein
Pima Community College, Tucson, Ariz.

“No matter where you end up in the world, there is always an opportunity to either hear God’s Word preached or to witness to God’s wonderful words.”

—Jeremy Wittig
University of Wisconsin-Platteville

“One of the coolest things about campus ministry is when we all pray the Lord’s Prayer together at the close of each meeting. There is no greater feeling than that of meeting together to send our prayers and praises to our heavenly Father above. Through one of the most spiritually challenging times of our lives, those

in campus ministry can be trusted and counted on for prayers and support.”

—Renee Roloff
University of Wisconsin-Platteville

“Campus ministry has taught me to stand up for what I believe in.”

—Kirsten Krowas
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

No campus ministry?

Sometimes students are in areas that don’t have a campus ministry. Christopher Cox, a student at Valdosta State University, Valdosta, Ga., attended the last campus rally and wrote about his experiences:

“I come from a school in south Georgia where there is no campus ministry and the closest WELS church is two hours away in Florida.

“I try to strengthen my faith by having daily devotions and Bible studies. Having no spiritual guidance on campus, I was helped through my first semester by keeping in touch with my youth pastor via e-mail at my home church. He told me of the WELS Internet site and the devotions/Bible studies they offer.

“Though I feel singled out as a WELS Lutheran in my school, I know that I am not alone. The Lord has put me there for a reason—whether it is to test my spirituality or to help light the path for others, I do not know.

“I am proud to be a Christian, and all my friends know of my dedication to the Word. This leads to many deep conversations on Christ and the Word. It is hard because I have no experience sharing the Word. People like to argue with me over my religion, and it puts a strain on me. But I know that the Lord guides my words to hopefully help people I come in contact with.”

“Friends in faith have a much different perspective when helping with dilemmas.”

—Kathie Kienetz
University of South Dakota-Vermillion

“I view other people differently than before because they are all people for whom Christ died.”

—Daniel Dogs
University of Wisconsin-Madison

“It has never been more of a rewarding challenge to talk about my religion and my faith and take friends to church with me. I don’t hesitate to share the Word. I see every opportunity to share as the only chance I have to let others know what will save their life.”

—Rebecca Roloff
University of Wisconsin-Platteville

“I have learned how unique all of our gifts and talents are. Each of us brings to the group a slightly different perspective, but we all share what’s most important—faith in Jesus. Sometimes just knowing that there are other Christian young adults out there living the same trials I live is all I need to be renewed. . . . With campus ministry, I feel I have the resources and support to live my faith to the fullest.”

—Kami Jo Radsek
Lawrence University, Appleton, Wis.

This information was gathered last December at the campus ministry rally held at the Schwan Retreat Center, Trego, Wis.

Want to get your name on the student list for campus ministry? Contact WELS Campus Ministry, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222; 414/256-3279; <karenm@sab.wels.net>; Web site, <www.wels.net/sab/cm/frm-cm.html>.

Julie Tessmer is senior communications assistant for Forward in Christ magazine and WELS Communication Services.

Questions for the small church

How can a small church offer the closeness it enjoys to the new person that walks in the door?

Mark A. Paustian

Small Church, people dear to God, beneath your faithless fears about membership declines and budgets done up in red, beneath the mumbling pessimism about your future and about each other and about yourselves, beneath the daily pile-up of good reasons to be sorry, there lives something else. It is alive and well.

Small Church, I've seen your faith, stubborn and tenacious. You trust in Jesus and have not denied his Word. I've felt your love, the one you have from Christ. I see his Spirit at work whenever one of you is in need. I see good and holy desires stirring beneath your flesh, to be somehow useful to him who loved you and made you his. I see all this even when it's not apparent to human eyes, because you are people of God.

That's how I know that God is at work in your midst by the means of grace, doing something powerful and good. He said he would.

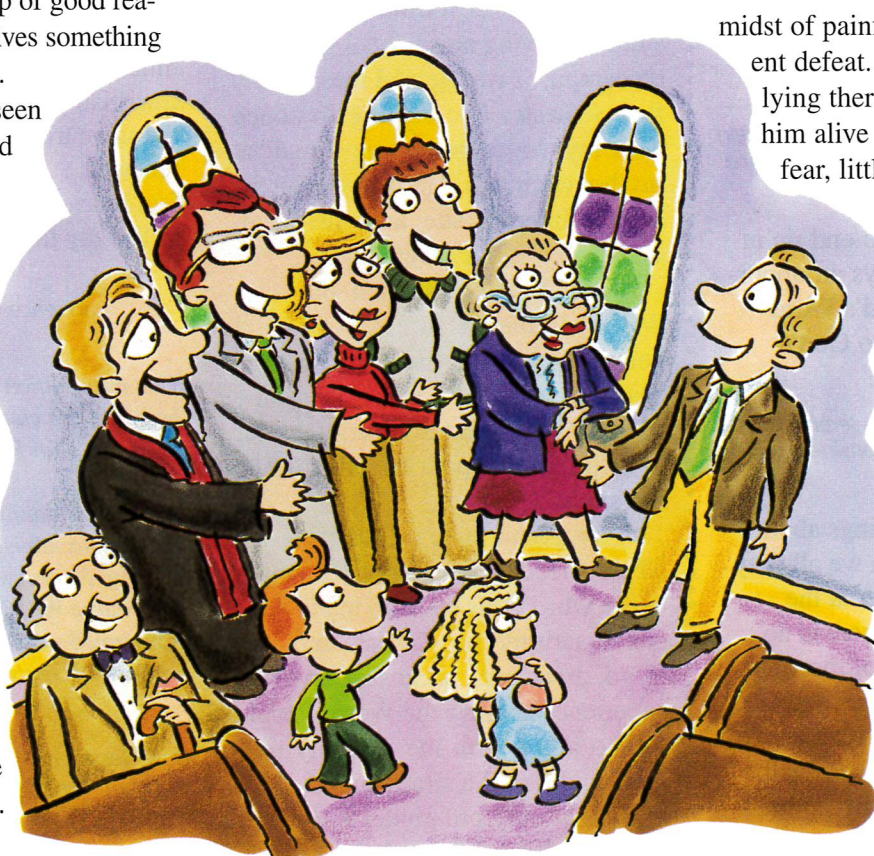
So, Small Church, I want to be careful not to offer easy advice of

the "just do this and this and you'll grow" kind. That would betray the mystery of God's relentless work in building his kingdom, by his strength, in our overwhelming inadequacy. Our "theology of the cross" reminds us that God does his best things in the midst of painful struggle and apparent defeat. Just remember Jesus lying there dead. Then remember him alive and well, and "have no fear, little flock."

Now, rather than come with simplistic answers that promise "success" if you'll just follow all the steps—that's not what ministry is like—I offer questions that only you can answer within your own small circle of faith.

Who?

As a small church in WELS you are far from alone. Somewhere there is a small church that has made it over the same hurdle that has



you scratching your heads, a church that is looking back with satisfaction on the very territory you are looking ahead to with such uncertainty. Somewhere is a pastor or lay leader that could listen to you and know just what you mean. Start asking, “Who? With whom do we need to spend some time? What connection, beyond our little walls, do we need to make?” I maintain that your brothers and sisters out there are more valuable to you than any program-of-the-month or three-ring binder could ever be.

Where?

Where has God placed you? Take a fresh look at your community. What are the needs and problems that people talk about to each other? What keeps them up at night? If you don’t know, why don’t you go knock on 20 doors and ask them!

Are there people no other church is noticing? Answering “no” may only mean that you don’t notice them either.

Is some other Christian group managing to reach people in your community? We’re quite adept at pointing out how other people are doing it all wrong—and I’m not suggesting we adapt methods that don’t flow out of our wonderful theology of grace. Still, you could stand to be a little curious, if someone has found a way to reach people in the very place where you are living.

When?

When has God blessed your labors with good fruit? We do get rather caught up in “analysis paralysis.” We try to figure out why one church grows and another doesn’t. We look for the cause and effect and tend to settle on answers that oversimplify. Instead, look back at your own history and learn from those times when, humanly speaking, “it worked.”

How’s this for homespun wisdom: what seemed to be blessed before, *do more of that!* In terms of outreach, *do something!* Push on one door after another (e.g., canvassing, vacation Bible school, newcomer outreach). If suddenly one seems to budge (e.g., friends accept our invitation), then make a joyful noise, call your people together, and keep pushing all the harder where the door swings open.

What?

What will be your “one thing”? To what need of your little corner of the world will you respond? Where do the gifts and passions of your people and the lack in your community intersect? You hereby have permission to stop burning yourselves out on a dozen programs that you only do because you always have, that haven’t gone as well as hoped for some time now. Find your premiere program, your “one thing” to be performed beautifully and well in the love of Christ for the people of your community.

How?

How are you going to offer the closeness you enjoy to the new person that walks in the door? Your greatest strength is your greatest threat. You are like a family, a thing both beautiful and, if you’re not careful, exclusive. What you love about your congregation is its warmth and familiarity, its shared history and traditions, the way everyone knows everyone else. But when you see that bond, do you also see how difficult it can be for outsiders to come in, much less find themselves at home? It doesn’t just happen.

So how will you welcome them? What occasions will you create for them to feel a part of you? What opportunities will you provide for

them to play significant roles in your body? And, knowing that the only bond is Christ through his shared Word, how will you offer it in such a way that the uninitiated can receive it?

Why?

Why? Because you see Jesus, and he is beautiful in your eyes of faith. For this very reason—“whenever two or three come together in my name, there am I in the midst of them”—your small church is beautiful, too. The only thing more beautiful is seeing it grow.

You aren’t the only one in your midst that knows this desire, that wants to share what you have, and find out every good thing you have in Christ (Philemon 6). So, here’s a thought. Find those kindred minds. Get up with the sun one morning every week. Take turns buying the coffee. Have the Scriptures open. Have a heart to heart. If there are only two of you, then that’s where you start. In the quiet spirit of Mary, who found that “one thing needful,” listen to each other reading from the Word. In the muscular spirit of Jacob, who wrestled with God, pray. “I will not let you go unless you bless me” (Genesis 32:26).

Small Church, keep asking and asking until the answers begin to take shape. Do this on the strength of the promise from Christ himself. “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you” (Matthew 7:7).



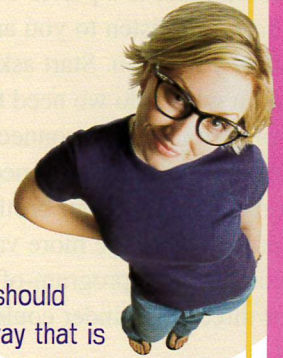
Mark Paustian, former pastor at New Life, Rockford, Illinois, is a professor at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota.

WHATEVER

Drawing the line

After being a teenager and now being a soon-to-be-married 23-year-old, I found that this is one topic worth talking about.

Paula R. Sulzle



Many dating couples ask themselves: “Where *do* we draw the line? How *far* can we actually go?”

That is because, when we grow closer as a couple, our emotional and physical needs increase. We spend more time together. Nothing is wrong with that, right? How can we get to know each other if we don’t spend time together?

We also spend more time alone. We don’t do many group outings. We realize we need to set some dating behavior guidelines, so we draw a line and try not to cross it: “We can hold hands and kiss, but nothing more.”

Even a God-fearing couple soon becomes weaker. That “nothing more” turns into something more, and that line gets pushed back a little further. Finally, the line may stop just before having sex. Anything up to that point is okay . . . isn’t it?

All of this is the conniving work of the devil, the world, and our sinful nature, working together to get us away from our Lord. The devil sees this line being pushed back, and he laughs.

But what if there were no line? I don’t mean that we can do anything we want. I mean that we don’t have to draw a line. Rather, we can turn to God’s Word to see how we should act.

His Word says, “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit . . . ?” (1 Corinthians 6:19). Our bodies are temples. That means we need to treat our bodies well and with respect.

“Honor God with your body,” Paul adds (6:20). Honor God with our bodies? How can we do that?

Do what is pleasing in God’s sight. Paul writes in 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5:7: “It is God’s will that you should

be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God. . . . For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life.” Do your actions reflect control of your own body?

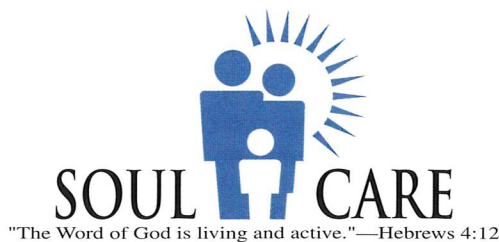
Paul says in Philippians 4:8, “Whatever is true, . . . whatever is right, whatever is pure, . . . whatever is admirable . . . think about such things.” So true! Can your dating behavior be considered admirable? How about pure?

None of us is pure. Our own flesh betrays us. We can try all we want, but the devil is hard at work, especially against the faithful. That is why we have Jesus. God sent Jesus to die on the cross for *all* our sins. Think about that for a minute. We have full and free salvation, even after we give God slap after slap in the face. God is merciful and gracious, loving us unconditionally. He will never forsake us. What comfort! Now we will want to honor God with our bodies.

A couple should spend time together alone to get to know one another well before marrying. However, the temptation to dishonor God is great. When you find yourself being tempted, stop. Pray together that God will strengthen both of you so that you may live as he wants you to live.

I had a pastor once tell me, “If you always use your body to honor and glorify God, you will never have to ask the question, ‘Where should we draw the line?’ ” Let God’s Word be your line!

Paula Sulzle graduated from Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., in May, and was assigned to teach at Peace, Hartford, Wis. She was married on June 22.



"I just can't get excited about it." When have you said that? When someone else was gushing about a car? Or a sports team? Or the latest fashion? Different strokes stir different folks, but everyone is passionate about something.

All things are under the Savior's feet, but we have no reason to believe he's passionate about everything. He's not a "Chevy" god or "Cubs" god, but he is passionate about some things. A most famous passage reveals his passion: "God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son."

What is God passionate about? Among other things: his glory, his message, his people, his reputation through his people, and his gifts to his people.

What are you passionate about? Are they things that matter to God?

Health factor—Passionate about things that matter to God

God's Word

For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; ⁶and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; ⁷and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. ⁸For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins (2 Peter 1:5-9).

1. In verses 5-7, Peter encourages us to add seven qualities to the faith God has given. Underline each one.
2. What does that list tell you about Christian faith?
3. We are passionate about things that matter to God when his goals become our goals. What two goals does God have for you (v. 8)?
4. What is it that the person who is "nearsighted and blind" can't see (v. 9)?
5. The good news is that each of us has been "cleansed from his past sins." Forget that, Peter reminds us, and you lose the qualities you're making "every effort to add." Remember that, he might have written, and . . . (complete the sentence).

My soul *for personal check-up*

1. Read the seven qualities you underlined. Pause after each one to complete the sentence, "I know I have grown in this area because . . .".
2. Read the seven qualities again. Pause after each one to complete the sentence, "If I were more passionate about this, I would . . .".
3. Spiritual is a word that describes our connection with God through faith in Jesus. If someone were to ask you, "What are your spiritual goals?" what would you tell him?
4. What helps you keep from forgetting that you have been cleansed of your past sins?

My church *for group check-up*

1. Use a concordance to look up passages containing the seven words you underlined. Choose three verses to read. Discuss additional insight you find from each passage.
2. Read the words you underlined. Ask each member of your group to complete the sentence, "If our church were passionate about this, we would . . .".
3. How could a church know it has become "ineffective and unproductive in its knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ"?
4. Ask each member of your group to name one possible benefit for your church if your church makes these seven virtues a priority.

Web-med

Intriguing Web sites to help you continue your check-up.

Do a search for the word "spiritual." Visit a site or two and compare what you find with this definition: "Having to do with your relationship with God through faith in Christ."

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

REAL TIME WITH A MISSIONARY

In this section, you'll hear news that came via e-mail from missionaries. We hope you enjoy these tidbits from our missions.

From Steve Wagenknecht, a WELS missionary in Guayama, Puerto Rico:

Teamwork evangelism is what Paul described in 1 Corinthians 3:6: "I planted, Apollos watered, but God made it grow."

You could say that Christ Lutheran Church in Guayama, Puerto Rico, did teamwork evangelism with their newest member, Sr. Jorge "Gungi" Guevara. Gungi has been the next door neighbor of the missionaries in Guayama for the last 15 years. He's always been a good neighbor, kind and helpful. But he always had his excuses for not having time for the church.

God was loving and patient with Gungi, extending his time of grace. Through the years, he heard

different people present the gospel on many different occasions, but the seed of the Word took its time in sprouting. When his dear wife, María, became sick with leukemia, the two of them received pastoral visits. When she passed away, he looked for Christian comfort in his loneliness.

After a heart attack made him note his own mortality, he attended church, where the love and care of the members helped to increase his interest in the gospel. After another heart attack, the doctors told him that it was a miracle that he was still alive. He then asked to study the Word of God in order to become a member of the Lutheran church.

I thank the Lord that I had the opportunity to see what God accomplished in Gungi's life through the law and gospel as a team of Christians faithfully preached the Word. Jorge Guevara was 77 years old when he was confirmed in Christ Lutheran Church on Dec. 17, 2000. What a joyful day it was when the Christian team in Guayama celebrated the



Steve Wagenknecht (left) is thankful that Gungi (right) no longer makes excuses to not attend church.

salvation of another soul! While the first missionaries that shared the Word with Gungi were not present to see the fruit of their labor, they can count on enjoying with him the eternal joy of heaven.

WELS Connection celebrates 15th anniversary

For 15 years, the *WELS Connection* video series has transported viewers around the country—and the world—in an ongoing effort to keep our congregations connected. Nearly three-fourths of WELS churches now see the monthly program.

"Video has the special ability to bring the sights and sounds of our Lord's work directly into our congregations," says Ron Roth, who oversees the production of the series as administrator of the Commission for Communication on Financial Support (CCFS).

WELS Connection stories give viewers a first-hand look at nearly every aspect of our church's mission and ministry—from home and world

missions to youth ministry and ministerial education. Plus, the program reports on the work taking place within individual congregations across the country. It's a "news you can use" approach—designed to communicate good ideas that other congregations might want to consider.

Before Roth became the administrator of CCFS, Daniel Malchow oversaw the program's production from its inception through the early 1990s. The face most people associate with *WELS Connection* is Bill Bernhardt, pastor at Divine Peace, Milwaukee, who has hosted *WELS Connection* since 1987. Steve Boettcher, a member at Calvary, Thiensville, Wis., and his co-workers at Boettcher-Trinklein

Television Inc. produce the series.

According to Roth, most of the ideas for *WELS Connection* stories come from WELS members. That grass-roots participation is important as the program moves into the next 15 years.

"As long as the Lord keeps blessing our synod, there will be no shortage of compelling material for *WELS Connection*," he adds. "But we need members to continue to take an active role alerting us to potential stories."

If you would like to submit a story idea to WELS Connection, contact Roth at 414/256-3214.

Steve Boettcher

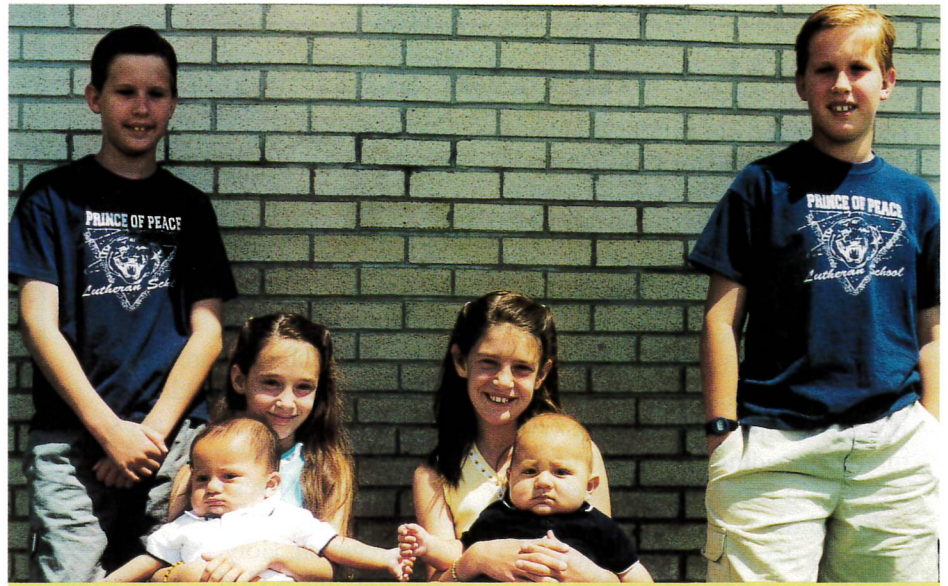
Seeing double?

Walk into Prince of Peace Lutheran School, Salt Lake City, Utah, and you're bound to "see double." Three sets of twins are part of one of the newest schools in WELS and the only WELS school in the state of Utah.

It all started with our phone canvass at church. One of the hundreds of calls was to the Fernandez family, inviting them to visit us at Prince of Peace. After many Sunday visits and one Basic Christianity class later, Mike and Angie Fernandez became a part of our church family, entering into membership with their son and our first set of twins.

Angie shared her newfound faith with best friend Patsi, inviting her to vacation Bible school (VBS), and soon our second set of twins joined us. A VBS invite a year later to their neighbors, the Dicksons, brought—you guessed it—another set of twins into our church fellowship.

A "one-room schoolhouse" has brought plenty of challenges, just ask principal/teacher/coach/recess monitor Mark Kaiser and his talented wife and teacher, Jill. Throw in three sets



Prince of Peace Lutheran School, Salt Lake City, Utah, is used to seeing double. Three sets of twins already attend, and two more sets are following close behind. Above are Ben and Chris Dickson, fifth-graders; Kate and Kim Fernandez, third-graders; and Isaac and Jacob Leon, about nine months, who are members of the church.

of twins (two are identical), and there can be "double trouble." At Prince of Peace, we'd rather think of it as being "twice blessed."

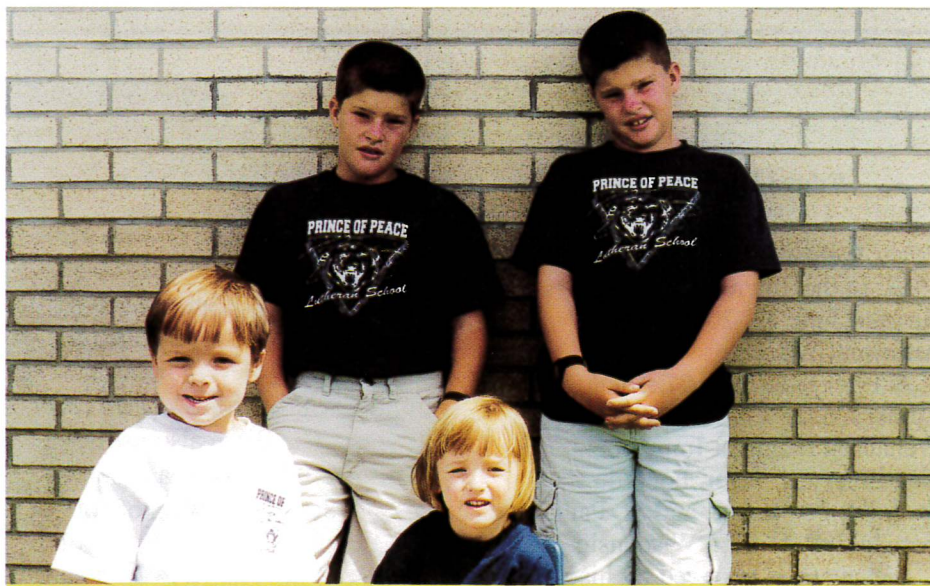
Our school ministry blessings come in twos in other ways. Hearing God's Word each day and growing in the company of Christian playmates builds strong young Christians in a

state known for an unchristian heritage. We have been able to nurture not only our own, but also reach out and touch other children who do not know the saving grace of our Lord. Our school has grown from 18 students our first year to 33 this year. Four families originally bringing their children to our school as prospects now call Prince of Peace their church home.

Our goal is to expand our facility to have room not only for our rapidly expanding school ministry but to reach out and serve more souls hungering for the truth.

Although the reality of expanding our facility and the future is unknown, we're certain of God's faithfulness and promises. Another thing we're sure of is that the trend seems to be continuing. There are little TJ and Mallory Ryan, who just celebrated their third birthday in March and are planning to come to school in just two years. And you guessed it . . . the Leon family blessed our growing church family with twin sons, Isaac and Jacob, this past Christmas.

Robyn Smith



Prince of Peace Lutheran School opened in 1997 with 18 students. Thirty-eight students are enrolled for this fall including Austin and Taylor Smith, fourth-graders. Three-year-olds T.J. and Mallory Ryan are planning to attend in two more years.

Meet the editorial staff—uncut

Ever ask yourself, "Who are these people who write for Forward in Christ magazine?" Through this series you can find out. Read on:

The greatest challenge

Jon Buchholz enjoys challenges. He flies airplanes and enjoys woodworking. He knows Spanish and recently picked up Portuguese. But to him the most exciting venture is spreading God's Word as a pastor in Des Moines, Wash.

Buchholz grew up in a small town on the Arizona-Mexico border. As a boy, he admired his grandpa, Venus Winter, who was our synod's first Spanish missionary. Buchholz attended Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and followed his grandpa's tracks into the ministry.

While at the seminary, Buchholz attended a party where he met his future wife, Sandy. "I left the party and later returned, then left and returned again. As she and her friends were leaving, she saw me once more and said, 'Oh look, it's my recurring night-

mare!' After our first date at Kopp's custard, though, things were headed in the right direction. We still enjoy the flavor of the day, cookies and cream, every year on the anniversary of the day we met."

The Buchholzes are now blessed with four children—two boys and two girls ages three to nine.

His family lives in Auburn, Wash., about four miles from his congregation, Holy Trinity. "Let me tell you, this is God's country out here! We love the mountains, ocean, forests, mild climate, everything!" Holy Trinity is a congregation of about 525 members with an elementary school of 100 students. The congregation is currently building a new church and school to accommodate growth in membership.

Buchholz has taught several classes at nearby Evergreen Lutheran High School. He serves as secretary of the Pacific Northwest District. In 2000 he was appointed to the synod's



Jon Buchholz and his family (from left to right): Jon, Sandy, Ruth, Katrina, Carl, and Mark.

Latin American Administrative Committee to serve as liaison to Brazil. But most of all, he just loves being a pastor.

"Being a pastor and being able to share God's Word with people is hands down the best job in the world. Our ongoing challenge is to reach out to the community. We want to share the gospel of Jesus with people who've never met their Savior before. People are hungry, but they don't know what they're hungry for. We have something that fills their hunger!"

Adam Goede

Obituaries

James Dale Hopman

1931-2001

James D. Hopman was born Mar. 7, 1931, in Odin, Minn. He died June 25, 2001, in Rochester, Minn.

A 1952 graduate of Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., Hopman served at St. Paul, Menomonie, Wis., and St. John, Goodhue, Wis.

Hopman was preceded in death by his daughter, Linda. He is survived by his wife, Dorothy (nee Goelz); six children, 14 grandchildren, two great-grandchildren, and one sister.

Edgar R. Wehausen

1918-2001

Edgar Wehausen was born May 19, 1918, in the Town of Liberty, Wis. He died June 29, 2001, in Fort Atkinson, Wis.

A 1939 graduate of Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., Wehausen taught at Immanuel, Kewaunee; St. Peter, Fond du Lac; St. John, Fox Lake,; and St. Paul, Fort Atkinson, all in Wisconsin.

Wehausen is survived by his wife, Shirley Mae; three sisters; two children; four grandchildren; and two step-grandchildren.

DEFINING RELIGION

Disciple: a pupil or learner who follows a teacher, learns from him, and spreads his teachings. Every believer is a disciple of Christ because every believer follows Christ as his master and teacher. The Bible also uses the term for followers of a prophet (Isaiah 8:16), followers of John the Baptist (Matthew 9:14), followers of the Pharisees (Matthew 22:16), and in a special way for the 12 apostles (Matthew 10:1).

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.

Vice President for Mission and Ministry

414/256-3204

Kurt Austad from Sedalia, Colo., is the new Synodical Council lay representative from the Nebraska District.

Tel/Tech Task Force

262/650-1592

The Synodical Council authorized a **revamped Tel/Tech Task Force**. It succeeds the original task force, which has concluded its five-year role. The new telecommunications and technology task force consists of a central task force with two committees and a director. Wayne Borgwardt accepted the call to continue in his position as director of Tel/Tech.

Commission on Youth Discipleship

414/256-3274

New LivingBold articles are being posted weekly at <www.livingbold.net>. *LivingBold* is a WELS teen e-zine (on-line magazine). Check it out for polls, T-shirt drawings, chats with authors, and information about what's cool on the Web.

Board for Home Missions

414/256-3279

The WELS Campus Ministry rally will have a different twist this year. Students will be given an opportunity to serve their Lord either through participating in a Travel Canvass Witness (TCW) project or through service projects in the greater Phoenix area. TCW training and other workshops as well as plenty of opportunities for fellowship will also be provided. The rally, hosted by Emmanuel, Tempe, Ariz., will be held Dec. 27-30. For more information, contact Daniel Heins, 507/437-6948; <dmheins1@home.com>.

Constitution Committee

414/259-8122

The current edition of the WELS Constitution is now available on the WELS Web site, <www.wels.net/sab/constitute.html>.

Commission on Evangelism

414/256-3287

Lay personal-witness mentors are being recruited and trained in each of the 12 districts. These mentors will be available to assist congregational witness teams. The goal is for every congregation to have well-prepared witness teams to make law and gospel visits to prospects.

Commission on Worship

414/256-3265

More than 50 new articles are available on the worship section of the WELS Web site, <www.wels.net/sab/frm-bps-2.html>.

Board for Ministerial Education

414/256-3236

Seventy-five men and 75 women graduated from **Martin Luther**

College on May 19. Forty-four of those men are continuing their pastoral ministry studies at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary—the largest number since the mid-1980s.

Board for World Missions

414/256-3239

Membership in WELS world mission fields today stands at 62,859 souls, an increase of 2,341 from the previous year. There are 97 national pastors and 208 evangelists. World-wide enrollment in seminary programs includes 183 Bible institute students and 83 seminary students.

A world mission Sunday school conference was held June 18-20 in Milwaukee. The conference addressed the challenge of developing effective Sunday school curriculum materials for world mission fields. Representatives from 10 overseas fields were present.

There were 779 baptisms in India in 2000, compared to 126 in 1999. That is a 619 percent increase compared to the previous year.



In July, the Board for World Missions released a map illustrating the global mission efforts of WELS. Here (from right) Kenneth Fisher, map project director, and Benjamin Lawrenz, map designer, present a framed copy to synod president Karl Gurgel. Not pictured is Nicole Kruschel, who helped coordinate the project with each mission field. Copies can be ordered at <www.shopWELS.net>; 800/662-6022.

District news

South Central

Our gracious Lord spared **WELS' churches in Texas** during the June flooding. The WELS Committee on Relief donated \$5,000 to be used by church or community members in Houston who experienced severe flooding.

Minnesota

On Apr. 29, members of **St. John, St. Clair, Minn.**, dedicated their new handicapped-accessible entryway.

Southeastern Wisconsin

May 24 marked the 25th year that the **central city churches in Milwaukee** have celebrated Ascension with a joint service. Five different choirs plus piano, organ, and handbells enriched the service, which took place at Siloah. Participating congregations include Salem, St. Marcus, St. Philip, Garden Homes, Christ, St. Peter, Zebaoth, and Siloah.

Michigan

On May 24, 77 people gathered for the first Ascension Day Kite Fly at **Grace, Muskegon, Mich.** Gordon Negen of the Mackinaw Kite Company in Grand Haven, Mich., taught the kids how to make their own kites. Following the kite fly, Grace held an Ascension service. Geoff Kieta says Grace flew kites for Ascension, "because Jesus was lifted up into heaven. Kite flying seemed like a great way to underline that truth for our kids and for the guests who joined us."

South Atlantic

Six teens from **Living Word, Johnson City, Tenn.**, traveled to St. Mark, Watertown, Wis., to help with outreach. The trip was funded by WELS Kingdom Workers.

Happy Anniversary!

MN—The 2000-01 school year marked the 100th anniversary of **St. John Lutheran School, Fairfax, Minn.** A worship service of praise and thanks was held on June 10.

On June 17, **St. John, Sleepy Eye, Minn.**, celebrated its 125th anniversary. **Ascension, Rochester, Minn.**, celebrated its 25th anniversary on July 22.

On April 27, members of **St. John, Fairfax, Minn.**, praised God for the 25 years

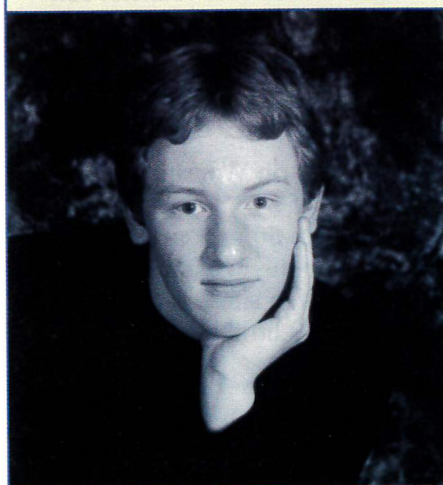
Vinita Schrupp has served in the teaching ministry.

SEW—The year 2001 marks the 40th year that **Robert Michel** has served in the pastoral ministry.

On June 10, St. Andrew, Chicago, Ill., celebrated **Douglas Semenske's** 25th anniversary in the pastoral ministry.

WW—**Beautiful Savior, Spooner, Wis.**, celebrated its 10th anniversary on July 22.

Pacific Northwest



Daniel Tacke, a student at Evergreen Lutheran High School, Des Moines, Wash., began composing music when he was only six years old. He was first runner-up in the Music Teachers National Association school composer competition. This year Tacke performed a series of piano recitals at the University of Puget Sound Concert Hall. Tim Strong, an adjunct faculty member at the University of Puget Sound, has given Tacke music lessons since Tacke was eight. Strong says, "He's one of those students who comes along once every 20 years or so."

These pastors are the reporters for the districts featured this month: MI—Geoffrey Kieta; MN—Jeffrey Bovee; PNW—David Birsching; SA—Mark Haefner; SC—Peter Snyder; SEW—Scott Oelhafen; WW—Elton Stroh.

Watch for our synod convention issue!

The October issue of *Forward in Christ* magazine will feature coverage of the 56th biennial convention of WELS. It will also have an evangelism emphasis and include a readers' survey to help us serve you better.

So all our members stay informed about the important business of the synod, all congregations will receive the October issue. Make sure to pick it up and discover more about the work that we all do together and the direction that work will take in the next two years.

Corrections

Four Martin Luther College graduate pictures were switched around in the August issue [p. 27]. The pictures below are correctly labeled. We apologize for the error.



Tricia L. Wolter ■
Hustisford, Wis.



Dustin B. Yahnke ◆
Kendall, Wis.



Erin J. Zastrow ▲
Hustisford, Wis.



Kristine M. Zschernitz ▲
Neillsville, Wis.

◆ Bachelor of Arts
▲ Bachelor of Science in Education—Elementary Education
■ Bachelor of Science in Education—Early Childhood Education

Jackie Gannon, not Jackie Chandler, chose Martin Luther as her topic for a Frontier in History competition [Aug. district news].

Ready for a change

Whether it's moving from Virginia to Wisconsin, or shifting from directing the communication services division of a multi-million dollar technology company to dealing with about 250 home missions and their work of saving souls, Melvin Schuler, the new associate administrator for the Board for Home Missions (BHM), was ready for the change.

"I've been looking for a change," says Schuler. "When this opportunity came along, my wife and I thought maybe this is where we should go."

Besides being a change for Schuler, this call was a change for the Board for Home Missions. Previously, pastors had filled the BHM administrative positions. This is the first time a layman has filled this role.

"We were determined to try and use appropriate skills and experiences as well as engage more of God's people in the service of their Lord," says Harold Hagedorn, BHM administrator.

Though he will be working with

all aspects of home missions, the emphasis of Schuler's work will be on the business affairs, including focusing on BHM expenditures and how to better use the funds as well as working closely with the Church Extension Fund and how it relates to home missions.

"The Lord gave many different types of ability," says Schuler. "A large amount of the work here can be done by a person with a business background that wouldn't necessarily be in a pastor's repertoire. It's using people where their talents can best serve the Lord."

He continues, "We can also always use more pastors in the mission fields."

Schuler began his work in June, filling a call that had been vacant for almost a year. But working with home missions isn't a new thing for Schuler. Since 1989 he had served as the North Atlantic lay representative to the Board for Home Missions.

Previously, he was employed for



Mel Schuler. Schuler was born and raised in Milwaukee but moved to Virginia while he was with the U.S. Army. How does he feel about returning to Wisconsin? "The cold winter will be hard!" he says.

29 years at Halifax Corporation in Alexandria, Va., working his way up from a technician to vice president of the communication services division. He and his wife, Shirley, have three children—Barbara, Paul, and Mark—and five grandchildren.

In the news

Louise Pagel, a member at Grace, St. Joseph, Mich., was crowned Mrs. Southwest Michigan 2001 on Apr. 22. Pagel's platform is the



Mrs. Southwest Michigan 2001 Louise Pagel is a member at Grace, St. Joseph, Mich.

sanctity of human life. The *South Bend Tribune* reported the event in an article entitled, "A crown with a message" and quoted Pagel as saying, "The issues I represent are very important to me. If I can help just one family to make the decision of adoption over abortion, family values over violence, then it will all be worth it."

Benjamin Olson, a seventh-grade member at St. John, New Ulm, Minn., won a statewide Minnesota Twins "What My Father Means to Me" essay contest for his grade. His father, **Lawrence Olson**, is a professor at Martin Luther College, New Ulm.

"My father is my mentor, guide, and best friend," wrote Benjamin.

After filling out a questionnaire relating to fathering and a telephone interview, Lawrence was selected as the Minnesota Twins "Father of the

Year." *The Journal* in New Ulm reports that Lawrence was chosen because of his involvement in his children's lives.

The April 12 issue of the *Crete Record* reports that **Emma Schweer**, a 105-year old member at Trinity, Crete, Ill., is the oldest elected office holder in the state of Illinois. In April, Schweer was re-elected for the 16th time as township collector.

"I really wasn't looking to run again, but they [the township's Republican organization] put me on the ballot anyway," said Schweer in an Apr. 2 article in the *Chicago Tribune*.

The article continues, "Asked if she planned to run again for township collector in four years, Schweer let out a hearty laugh and said, 'I don't think I'll be around by then, but if I am and they put my name on the ballot again, I just might give it a shot.'"



By the numbers—

- The Pentecostal movement is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year. More than 500 million people worldwide have joined this movement since its beginning in 1901.

- The number of Roman Catholics worldwide rose by 1.6 percent in 1999 to a total of 1.038 billion, making up 17.4 percent of the world's population. Almost half the total of baptized Catholics live in the Americas, 27.3 percent in Europe, 12 percent in Africa, 10.4 percent in Asia, and 0.8 percent in Oceania.

[Vatican reports from the *Pontifical Yearbook* for 2001]

- The Presbyterian Church (USA) lost 34,871 members last year, the largest drop in membership since 1994. That put total membership numbers at the end of last year at 2,525,330. The denomination also lost 38 churches, but the number of ministers increased by 77, to a total of 21,065.

- The Salvation Army served a record 36 million needy Americans in 2000, an increase of 3.3 million people from 1999. Twenty million people were assisted through local family casework programs. In addition, 5.6 million received holiday assistance, 4.6 million were visited in institutions, and almost 2 million were helped during disasters. They also served more than 51 million meals and furnished lodging for 9 million homeless people.

Survey shows giving to churches declining—Seventy-eight percent of adults donated money to a non-profit organization or a church in 2000, a decline of six percent from 1999, according to a survey conducted by the Barna Research Group.

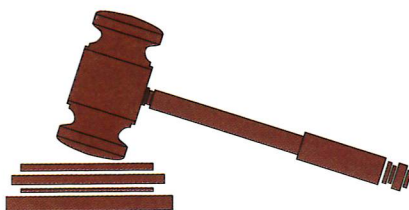
Average giving per person decreased by 15 percent in 2000, to a mean of \$886.

However, churches still remain the organizations most likely to receive financial support from individuals. Sixty-one percent of adults gave money to one or more churches,

down six percent from the previous year. The average church donor contributed a mean of \$649 to churches in 2000, down from \$806.

The data was collected from telephone interviews with a nationwide random sample of 1,005 adults. The survey had a margin of error of plus or minus three percent.

[Barna Research Group, Ltd., news release, June 5, 2001]



Arkansas Supreme Court rules a fetus as "a person"—In a wrongful death lawsuit brought by a man whose wife and unborn child died during induced labor, the Arkansas Supreme Court ruled that a viable fetus is a person.

This May judgment overturned a circuit court ruling in which a judge decided in favor of the Pine Bluff, Ark., hospital. Evangeline Aka and her unborn son both died in 1995 about 30 hours after she was admitted to the hospital. Her husband, Philip, charged that the medical personnel were negligent.

In the decision, the chief justice cited a 1999 law that included a living fetus at least 12 weeks old in its definition of a person in the state's criminal code.

American Heart Association backs down on stem cell research—In June 2000, the American Heart Association agreed to support using money from donors and federal funds to further the study of human stem cells. Four months later, they changed their mind and voted not to fund the research.

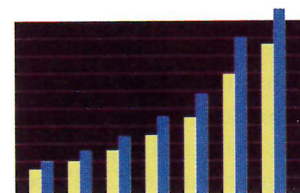
The American Heart Association, the nation's second-largest patient advocacy group, still supports federal funding for embryo cell research but

is not lobbying President Bush for it as he decides whether or not to invest federal money in this research. The association also declines to spend any of its \$133-million annual research budget on embryo experiments.

[*LifeWire*, June 26, 2001]

Promise Keepers continues to hold conferences—Promise Keepers is holding 16 two-day events from June to November 2001, marking its 11th year of sponsoring conferences to encourage Christian men.

This ecumenical group will also introduce its first "Passage" conference for teenage boys in December.



Polls: Majority of Americans oppose human cloning—Two recent polls show most Americans oppose human cloning.

A Gallup poll says that roughly nine in 10 Americans (89%) say that the cloning of humans—if it becomes possible—should not be allowed. These results are based on telephone interviews with a randomly selected national sample of 1,012 adults, 18 years and older, conducted in May.

A poll of 1,013 adults, conducted by International Communications Research, showed 84 percent of Americans oppose human cloning for reproductive purposes and 86 percent oppose it for medical research. The poll had a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

[*LifeWire*, June 11, 2001, and Religion News Service]

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

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

Bey, Gregory L., to Zion, Crete, Ill.
Johnson, Joseph B., to Minneapolis Campus Ministry, Minneapolis, Minn.
Ponath, David M., to retirement
Reich, Terry W., to Zion, Marathon/St. John, Edgar, Wis.
Siemers, Ronald E., to Trinity, Nicollet, Minn.
Vomhof, Ervine F., to St. James, Prairie du Sac, Wis.
Witte, Steven L., to Beautiful Savior, Green Bay, Wis.
Zuleger, Chester W., to retirement

Corrections:

Two calls were incorrectly reported in the August issue. Pastor Thomas Behnke did not accept his call to David's Star, Jackson, Wis., and Pastor Kevin Schultz did not accept his call to Immanuel exploratory, Maple Valley, Wash.

Teachers

Baker, Leslie, to St. James, Milwaukee
Bastien, Anita, to Eastside, Madison, Wis.
Callies, Ruth M., to St. Peter, Mayville, Wis.
Flack, Diane, to Trinity, Aberdeen, S.D.
Flunker, Sandra L., to St. Paul, Appleton, Wis.
Fricke, Jeanne A., to St. John, Baraboo, Wis.
Fricke, Rebecca L., to Grace, Portland, Ore.
Glazier, Cassandra, to St. John, Stanton, Neb.
Hauf, Beth A., to Bethany, Manitowoc, Wis.
Hurley, Patrick, to St. Marcus, Milwaukee
Johnson, Jennifer E., to St. Mark, Citrus Heights, Calif.
Keller, Susan L., to Pilgrim, Menomonee Falls, Wis.
Klockziem, Virgene E., to retirement
Luedeke, Jennifer L., to Messiah, Wichita, Kan.
McKenney, Lois A., to Western Koshkonong, Cottage Grove, Wis.
Meier, Lawrence J., to Christ, Eagle River, Wis.
Meihack, Marc J., to St. Peter, Fond du Lac, Wis.
Schmidt, James P., to Martin Luther, Oshkosh, Wis.
Sehloff, Sarah E., to Mt. Olive, Appleton, Wis.
Stolt, Rita, to St. Paul, Bloomer, Wis.
Tews, Lisa M., to St. Peter, Fond du Lac, Wis.
Thiel, Rosanne, to Christ, Oakley, Mich.
Vieths, Judith C., to St. John, Red Wing, Minn.
Wales, Susan, to Risen Savior exploratory, Woodbury, Minn.
Wietzke, Mary C., to Redemption, Milwaukee

ANNIVERSARIES

Lutheran Pioneers—(50). St. John, Burlington, Wis. Sept. 8. Service, 1:30 PM. 888/214-8225.
Fort Atkinson, Wis.—St. Paul (140). Sept. 9. Services, 8 & 10:30 AM. Lifting High the Cross in our Confirmands. 920/563-2263.
New Hope, Minn.—Holy Trinity (50). Sept. 16. Service, 2:30 PM. Meal, 4 PM. \$7.50/person. RSVP, 763/560-8975.
Helenville, Wis.—St. Peter Lutheran School (150). Sept. 23. Services, 8 & 10:15 AM. Noon meal and program to follow. 920/674-3245.
Jefferson, Wis.—St. John (150). Sept. 30. Services, 8 & 10:30 AM. Catered dinner, 12:30 PM. RSVP, 920/674-4922.
Manitowoc, Wis.—St. John, Newtonburg (150). Oct. 28. Services, 10 AM & 2 PM. Catered dinner at noon. RSVP by Sept. 28, 920/758-2625.

North Fond du Lac, Wis.—St. Paul (100). Oct. 27. Service, 6:30 PM. Oct. 28. Services, 8 & 10:15 AM. 920/922-1080.

Sarasota, Fla.—Ascension (25). April 7, 2002. Service, 3 PM. Catered meal and program to follow. 941/371-2978.

COMING EVENTS**Sunday school conferences—**

Sept. 8, Tappen, N.D.
 Sept. 8, Watertown, Wis.
 Sept. 29, Port Charlotte, Fla.
 Oct. 6, Loves Park, Ill.
 For information, contact Dave Zubke, 262/886-2441; <buzz@wi.net>.

LWMS Women of WELS (WOW) retreats—

Sept. 14 & 15, Larkspur, Colo., Lori Neumann, 303/925-0431.
 Sept. 21 & 22, Escanaba, Mich., Betty Warning, 715/484-4405.
 Sept. 21 & 22, Perrysburg, Ohio, Ruth Kemerley, 419/365-5503 or Lois Meier, 517/266-0007.
 Oct. 5 & 6, Trego, Wis., LaVonne Condrad, 651/501-0490.
 Oct. 12 & 13, Davenport, Iowa, Deonne Titus, 815/273-2780.
 Nov. 2 & 3, Norcross, Ga., Tiffany Ausdemore, 770/736-4686.
 Nov. 9 & 10, Milwaukee, Wis., Danica Krueger, 414/817-0820.

Symposium on Christian Freedom—Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis. Sept. 24, 1 PM-Sept. 25, 12:30 PM. \$40. Register, 262/242-8100.

Fourth annual life banquet—sponsored by the Waukesha Chapter of WELS Lutherans for Life. Sept. 30, 3-8 PM. Country Inn, Pewaukee, Wis. 262/513-9590 or 262/547-6954.

WELS Youth Leaders' Workshop 2001—Sept. 28-30. Lutherdale Retreat Center, Elkhorn, Wis. Commission on Youth Discipleship, 414/256-3274.

Fall color bus tour—visiting Niagara Falls and Stratford, Canada. Oct. 1-6. Sponsored by St. John, Lewiston, Minn. M. Bartling, 800/632-1903.

Annual meeting—of the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Auxiliary. Oct. 6, 8 AM. Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary auditorium. Registration and lunch, \$7.50. Checks made payable to Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Auxiliary and mailed to Marilyn Krueger, 6565 W Edgerton Ave, Greendale WI 53129.

Christian Life Resources national convention—Oct. 12-14. Mayo Civic Center, Rochester, Minn. 414/774-1331.

Christian Growth seminar—Oct. 13, 8:15 AM-1:30 PM. Luther High School, Onalaska, Wis. Linda Williams, 888/378-2182.

Capital area Christian women's retreat—Nov. 2-4. Devils Head Resort, Baraboo, Wis. Joy Strutz, 920/623-5516.

Exodus tour—to Egypt, Sinai, & Jordan. High school students and family members welcome. Dec. 26, 2001-Jan. 5, 2002. Cost, \$2,495-\$2,970. Led by Pastors David Putz (Winnebago Lutheran Academy) and Leon Ehler (Fox Valley LHS). Register by Sept. 16 to avoid late fees. 920/921-4105 or 920/735-6034.

International Girl Pioneers convention—Apr. 5 & 6, 2002. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn. Diane Jabs, 952/492-2540

Footsteps of Apostles' Tour—Greece, Turkey, Rome, and cruise of Greek Islands. Departs

June 15, 2002. Sponsored by Camp Phillip. Hosted by Pastor Kenneth Fisher and Mr. and Mrs. Mark Krueger. Early registration ends Sept. 15. Kenneth Fisher, 414/354-7320.

Special Ministries In Lutheran Education (SMILE) conference—June 28-30, 2002. Ramada Inn-Airport, Bloomington, Minn. Goal is to promote and strengthen the partnership of those involved in the spiritual training of people with developmental disabilities. Includes parents, caregivers, teachers, pastors, and volunteers. Bruce Cuppan, 920/922-8672.

National Conference for Worship, Music, & the Arts—July 21-24, 2002. Carthage College, Kenosha, Wis. 414/256-3226; <worship@sab.wels.net>.

Western Wisconsin District Regional Youth Rally—Wisconsin Dells. July 25-27, 2002. Paul Steinberg, <stpaul@mw.net>. <www.welsyouth.com>.

NAMES WANTED

WELS/ELS members stationed at Misawa Air Force Base, Aomori Prefecture, Japan—Jim Sherod, WELS Japan Mission, Ishikawa 1-4022-3, Mito City, Ibaraki 310-0905 Japan; <lecjws@po.net-ibaraki.ne.jp>.

Mountain/Suring/Breed/Lakewood, Wis.—Craig Korth, 715/473-5633.

West Point/Hyde Park, N.Y.—Donald Tollefson, 908/876-5429.

Singers and instrumentalists—for the National Conference on Worship, Music, and the Arts. July 21-24, 2002. Carthage College, Kenosha, Wis.

1. Adult choral singers with advanced ability for opening concert and opening worship—July 20-22.
2. Adult choral singers with advanced ability for special "Christmas" service. Must be conference participant able to arrive July 20 for rehearsal.
3. 10th-, 11th-, and 12th-graders interested in Honors Choir—July 21-24.
4. Instrumentalists (high school and adult) with orchestral experience—opening concert, July 20-21; conference participation, July 20-24; and high school honors concert, July 24.

To receive an "Instrumentalist/Singer Interest Form" contact the Commission on Worship, 414/256-3226; <worship@sab.wels.net>; or visit <www.wels.net/worship/events>.

Grenada, Caribbean Sea—<Lutheran@caribsurf.com>.

AVAILABLE

Brass altar ware—28" brass cross with crucifix and two 19" single candleholders. Free for the cost of shipping. Ralph Merklinger, 719/254-7516.

SERVICE TIMES

Baltimore, Md.—Atonement. Service, 9 AM.

Mountain, Wis.—WELS outreach. Mountain Ambulance Service Building, Hwy. 32/64. May 12-Sept. 29. Sat., 6:30 PM. 715/473-5633.

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

The perfect child

Jesus was perfectly obedient to his human parents and always submissive to the will of his Father in heaven.

Jon D. Buchholz

Can you imagine what it would be like to raise a perfect child? A kid who never sassed? A child who always did what he was told the first time?

Jesus was that child!

The boy Jesus must have caused his parents no end of amazement. I wonder if his siblings weren't often jealous of their always-perfect older brother. Just think: there were no rebellious teenage years. There were no struggles with a Jesus who didn't want to keep his room clean. He was in every way the perfect son.

Obedient to his parents

We know little about the childhood of Jesus. We know that after his birth Jesus was whisked away to Egypt to escape the murderous King Herod. Returning to Palestine, Joseph's family took up residence in the northern village of Nazareth. We can picture Jesus, the obedient son, growing up in the household of a carpenter, learning his father's trade.

In the early days of Christianity several manuscripts of questionable origin told fantastic stories about a boy who did miracles even as a youngster. According to the tales, little Jesus and his friends made birds out of river clay, and with a pass of Jesus' hand the figures came to life. He confronted the town bully and struck him down. With a flick of his wrist he cleaned up after Joseph's blunders as a carpenter. The anec-

dotes of Jesus' childhood are interesting—even humorous sometimes—but they have no basis in fact.

But one thing we know for certain—Jesus never sinned. He was perfectly obedient to his human parents and always submissive to the will of his Father in heaven. He had to be. He came into the world to be the perfect substitute for sinners.

Submissive to his Father

At age 12 Jesus celebrated his Bar Mitzvah. He began a more active role in the religious life of the Jewish community, reading in the synagogue services and intensifying his study of the Torah. That year, in obedience to the law, he traveled with his parents to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. There in the temple he amazed the teachers of the law with his knowledge of the sacred Scriptures. He was, after all, the Word of God incarnate!

Jesus had no sins for which he needed to repent.

Our Savior had reached the age of 30 when, at the Jordan River, he asked his second cousin, John, to baptize him. John the Baptist, who preached a baptism of repentance, was amazed that Jesus should make such a request. Jesus had no sins for which he needed to repent. But the



Lord insisted. "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15). Jesus wasn't baptized for himself; he was baptized for you and me.

Ask any Christian what Jesus did to save the world, and you'll get the unflinching answer, "He died on the cross for our sins." That's true, but it's only part of the story. That's because before Jesus died, he lived. For 33 years he lived perfectly. We call it Jesus' active obedience, his uncompromising devotion to his Father in heaven. He kept the law of God in every way, without ever stumbling, because you and I have not kept God's law. He is "the Lord our Righteousness" (Jeremiah 23:6).

"For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect" (1 Peter 1:18,19).



Jon Buchholz is pastor at Holy Trinity, Des Moines, Washington.

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FOR THE LUTHERAN CHURCH

Less is still less

Rolfe F. Westendorf

Once thought that women who smoked were evil. Then I learned that a woman I admired smoked cigarettes. Maybe it was okay for women to smoke.

Divorced women were once avoided by “good” people. The pain of divorce is still with us, but the stigma is gone. Divorced Christians are now respected members of our congregations.

Women who left their children in child care in order to make money were once considered unworthy of motherhood, unless forced by poverty to do so. Now the working mother has become an accepted part of our economic reality. Support and sympathy have replaced the condemnation, and those who criticize the working mother are themselves criticized.

Social stigmas disappear with the changing times. Even in the church, activities that were once prohibited (like dancing) are now tolerated and even embraced.

In some ways the change is beneficial. It was wrong to judge people because of circumstances that were beyond their control. Yet there was usually some truth behind the stigmas that are no longer with us.

The condemnation of smoking was once unfairly applied to women, but many women were healthier because of that condemnation. The condemnation of divorce was unfairly applied to the wives of lecherous husbands. But that condemnation kept some children from losing a stable home.

It was wrong to condemn women who chose to use their God-given talents in the marketplace when the real needs of their children were adequately being met. And yet that condemnation provided many children with the full-time parenting that was more beneficial than anyone realized at the time.

Most would agree that the troubles of childhood have increased, as has the

increase in part-time parenting. However, it is impossible, even dangerous, to identify a cause and effect relationship between the two. Many other forces work against a healthy childhood. Children of two-income families often turn out fine, while a full-time parent is no guarantee against failure.

Besides that, the overwhelming potential of increased income cannot be ignored. If current standards of living are definitive, a family cannot survive on one income, even if they want to. In some cases the attractiveness of success in the workplace eliminates any desire to return to full-time parenting.

Yet the risks of part-time parenting dare not be ignored. Although children’s failures cannot be blamed on part-time parenting, less is still less.

Children of working parents receive less parenting than children who are blessed with a full-time parent. That is a risk that cannot be denied. It may be a risk worth taking. It may be a necessary risk. The dangers involved may never materialize. But the risk is there, and caring parents should not allow themselves to ignore the risks, which can easily happen when feelings of guilt interfere with personal comfort.

As high-speed driving in comfortable cars can blot out the symptoms of danger, the lifestyle of two-income families can wipe out awareness of the risk. Then, when a failure occurs, it may be too late to undo the harm that the child has suffered.

Less is still less. It may not be too little, but parents who choose a two-income lifestyle must be aware of the risk and ready to sacrifice to protect their children from it.

Jesus said, “A man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.” Let parents make sure that their children have a life.



Rolfe Westendorf is pastor at Siloah, Milwaukee.

Although
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Self-reliance?

Human nature continues to buy the old lie of the snake that we can rely on ourselves because we will “be like God.”

Thomas H. Trapp

Nineteenth-century American poet and philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson taught that the fall of man had nothing to do with sin and everything to do with self-distrust. In his essay “Self-Reliance,” Emerson promoted self-reverence. He writes, “The highest revelation is that God is in every man.”

Emerson’s philosophy urges us to see the god in each of us. He rejected original sin, eternal punishment, and God’s judgment. Instead Emerson “joyfully preached a gospel of innocence of the self and the infinitude of its powers,” according to Roger Lundin in his book *The Culture of Interpretation: Christian Faith and the Postmodern World*.

While our 19th-century Lutheran forefathers sang “false and full of sin I am; Thou art full of truth and grace” (*Christian Worship* 357:3), Emerson simultaneously trumpeted the glories of the American self and its amazing potential.

Self-reliance

Eighteen hundred years before Emerson lived, a rich young man had the same feelings about the human potential. He asked Jesus, “What good thing must I do to get eternal life?” This accomplished, young, affluent entrepreneur had conquered Wall Street, never bombed any buildings, and never

made a baby cry. The only thing left for him to do to maximize his potential was to gain the presence of God. All he needed was a little direction.

“If you want to be perfect,” the sinless Son of God answered, “go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me” (Matthew 19:21). Bam! Greed nailed the young man to his cross. So much for relying on himself! He walked away sad.

Does this sound familiar to our 21st-century ears?

On campus today and throughout our culture, people continue to down the Emersonian elixir of self-reliance. Flattering one’s ego is the American way—from self-help books that boast, “Only you can give yourself a genuine sense of your own value,” to feel-good churches that tell you, “God knows you’re worth it, so he sent his Son for you.” Human nature continues to buy the old lie of the snake that we can rely on ourselves because we will “be like God” (Genesis 3).

Jesus-reliance

But can we rely on ourselves?

Two millennia ago a self-reliant religious leader wrote, “If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: . . . a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legal-

istic righteousness, faultless. But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ” (Philippians 3:4-7).

After Paul had downed the Christian elixir of God’s Word, he admitted, “I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. . . . What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!” (Romans 7:18,24,25).

SELF-reliance? No, JESUS-reliance. The Bible says Jesus is our rock, our righteousness, our strength, and our salvation.

Don’t rely on yourself. Rely on Jesus, who “saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy” (Titus 3:5).

Eighteenth-century English hymn-writer Augustus Montague Toplady sums it up best in his well-known hymn “Rock of Ages”:

Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling;
Naked, come to thee for dress,
Helpless, look to thee for grace.
Foul, I to the fountain fly—
Wash me, Savior, or I die!”
(CW 389:3)



Thomas Trapp is full-time campus pastor at Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel & Student Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS

- When you have sinned, call Psalm 51
 - For Paul's secret to happiness, call Colossians 3:12-17
 - When you feel down and out, call Romans 8:31-39
 - When you want peace and rest, call Matthew 11:25-30
 - When you want Christian assurance, call Romans 8:1-30
 - When you leave home for labor or travel, call Psalm 121
 - For a great invention/opportunity, call Isaiah 55
 - When you want courage for a task, call Joshua 1
 - For how to get along with fellow men, call Romans 12
 - When you think of investments/returns, call Mark 10
 - If you are depressed, call Psalm 27
 - If your pocketbook is empty, call Psalm 37
 - If people seem unkind, call John 15
 - If discouraged about your work, call Psalm 126
- All lines are open to heaven 24 hours a day.



Mt. Olive, St. Paul, Minn., newsletter



potluck

“Forgiveness is the antiseptic for our emotional wounds.”
—Floyd McClung Jr.

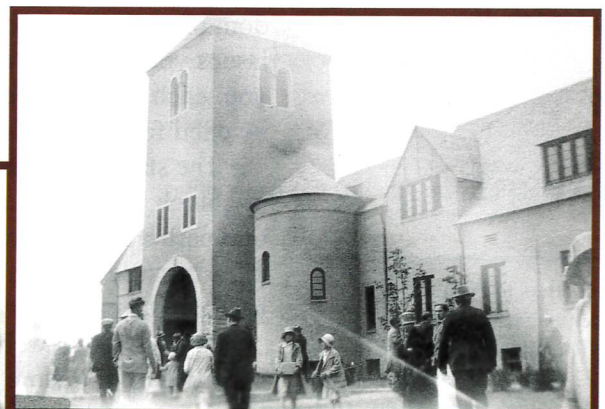
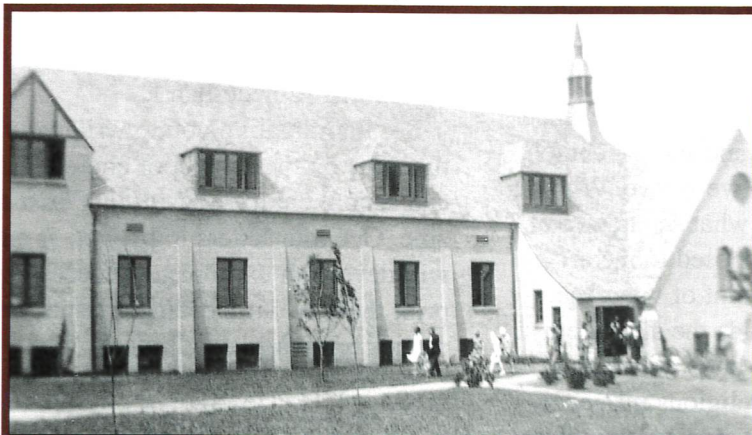
(Current Thoughts and Trends, July 2001)

“The reality is that criticism and opposition will drive you somewhere. Let it drive you closer to God, and you will become better. Let it drive you away from God, and you will become bitter.”—Dan Southard

(Current Thoughts and Trends, July 2001)

“Marriage is not just another lifestyle choice, but the foundation of healthy families and a healthy future for America.”
—Louisiana governor Mike Foster Jr.
(Current Thoughts and Trends, July 2001)

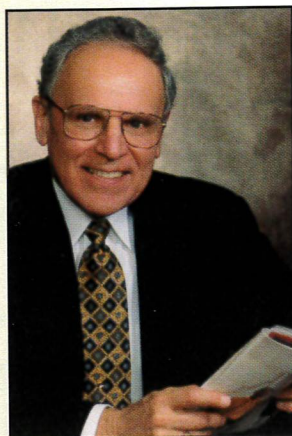
Picture this



Here are some pictures of the Seminary grounds on the day the Sem was dedicated [in 1929]. . . . Our family all attended, and my dad took all the pictures.

Alice Reichert Thompson

Send pictures to *Picture this*, Forward in Christ magazine, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398. On a separate sheet, give us information about the photo. Those whose photos are chosen will receive a small gift.



Gary P. Baumler is editor of *Forward in Christ* magazine and WELS Director of Communications.

Who even knows any more what separation of church and state is supposed to mean?

Send letters to *Forward in Christ* magazine, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398 or e-mail them to <fic@sab.wels.net>. As usual, we reserve the right to edit for length, for theological correctness, and for relevance to the subject. Space may limit the number of letters printed.

A tangled web

I'm about to go where wiser men have steered clear. But it is such a tangle, I feel somehow caught in the web. I'm talking about government and religion.

Let's see . . .

- The National Council of Churches wants to lobby the government on countless socio-political issues but cries foul at any hint of the government influencing the church.

- The United States government has for years provided PELL grants unchallenged to persons studying at church-run schools, but school-choice grants are said by many to violate separation of church and state.

- Funding for faith-based welfare initiatives is proposed, and politicians and church bodies are lining up on both sides of the issue.

- Schools can't open with prayer, but Congress can, although Congress doesn't really have free choice about who will lead that prayer.

- Churches are tax exempt but will lose their tax-exempt status if they endorse specific candidates for office. Endorsing specific issues attached to specific candidates is okay (I think).

- We have freedom of religion and freedom of speech, but be careful what moral issues you speak out about or even how you teach who will be saved, or you might be cited for a hate crime.

- The state has no jurisdiction in matters of church jurisprudence. Still, I have known of a pastor afraid to exercise church discipline because the man involved threatened to make it a civil issue and sue the church.

What a tangled web we weave. Who even knows any more what separation of church and state is supposed to mean?

From the political point of view, the U.S. Constitution forbids the state from establishing a religion but says nothing about eliminating all religious influence from public (state-run) arenas. "Congress shall make no law respecting an establish-

ment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. . . ."

From the biblical perspective, the state has a proper function under God: e.g., protecting citizens, maintaining civil justice. We are directed to pay our taxes and obey the laws. The church, on the other hand, has a directive from God that is not only separate from but supersedes the state's authority: to speak the whole truth of God's salvation in Jesus Christ.

Although it may not sound profound, my formula for working through the tangles follows: As a citizen, I will pay my taxes, obey the laws of the land, support my government in protecting our country from hostile enemies, exercise my right to vote, and influence government through peaceful means. As a Christian, I will obey God's laws even when the state's laws are more liberal, and I will speak God's truth even when the state opposes it. I will thank my God for his gift of grace in Christ and for placing me in a country where I have the freedom to worship openly and to tell God's Word to others without government interference.

But I have only scratched the surface. Surely, someone wishes I had said more, had pointed out more anomalies in church and state matters. Just as surely, someone else wishes I had said less or maybe nothing at all on the subject, maybe takes exception with what I've written. Certainly some of you can do a better job expounding on this subject than I.

So, I am inviting you to write your thoughts on the subject of church and state and send them to *Forward in Christ* magazine. Get your letters in by Oct. 7, and we will devote an extra page, if necessary, to print them in our December issue. Keep replies brief; space is limited.

Gary P. Baumler

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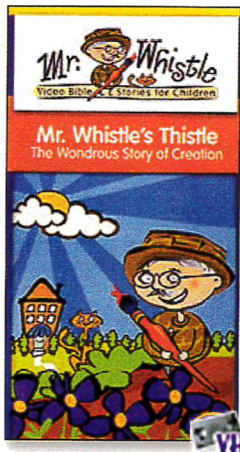
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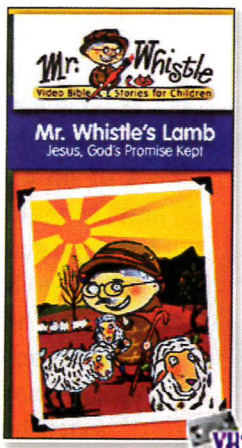
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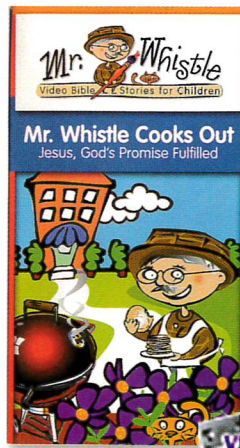
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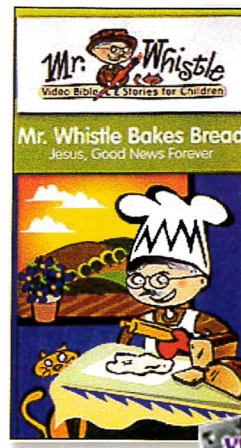
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THE DITCH DIGGER

**It's not enough to teach the Good Samaritan lesson.
Jesus wants us to join him in the ditch to search
for others who are buried under the dirt of their sins.**

Victor L. Vieth

His followers included a prostitute and a thief. Some of his followers slept on streets and begged for handouts that seldom came. Many were so diseased that the smell and sight of their deformed bodies turned the strongest stomachs. A few of them were children. They were, to say the least, different.

He was different too. The King born in a barn. The fighter who stood still. The carpenter who nailed himself to a cross. The man who, when scolded for the company he kept, said simply, "They need me."

He was a ditch digger who broke ground in search of contemptible creatures buried under the dirt of their sins. I was in that ditch once. So were you. That he pulled us out of Satan's hole is not nearly as remarkable as what came after.

Once clean, once the mire and muck of sin was in the past, he whispered softly but persistently that we should go back and, with his help, pull a few more out.

It's not enough to teach the Good Samaritan lesson.

He wants us to serve soup at the homeless shelter.

It's not enough to preach against the waywardness of a back-alley addict with an unclean needle up his arm. He wants us to wash the wounds of an AIDS patient.

It's not enough to memorize the fifth commandment. He wants us to visit the prisons where killers lurk.

It's not enough to assail abortion. He wants us to tell the pregnant teenager, "I'm here to help" and mean it. And if the pregnant girl is a juvenile delinquent, a prostitute, or a race different than ours, he still calls us into the ditch.

He is different, and he expects us to be. Clean yourself to a shine this weekend. Wear your Sunday finest and flee to the nearest of his houses. Once inside, fill your heart until it overflows with a love that will take you from the pew and straight to the nearest pit.

That's where you'll find the ditch digger.



Victor Vieth is a member at Trinity, Woodbridge, Virginia.

