

AG 26 '02

# FORWARD IN CHRIST

September 2002

The Word from the WELS

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lasting spiritual  
legacy

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a bugged life?

Potluck poll  
results



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## A FIELD RIPE

89/9





# Did you know...

- in the 800s, missionaries rang bells to tell the pagan tribes that it was time for church?
- the name Lutheran was actually given to the church by its enemies?
- the word *nike* means more than just a brand of shoes?
- the custom of having a choir dates all the way back to the Old Testament?
- the Common Service liturgy has been used in its present form for more than 1,500 years?
- standing during worship is about more than just taking a break from sitting?
- why the Christian day of worship changed from Saturday to Sunday?
- the purpose of a wedding service is to worship Jesus Christ?

**Find out what the ABCs of Lutheran worship tradition are all about!**

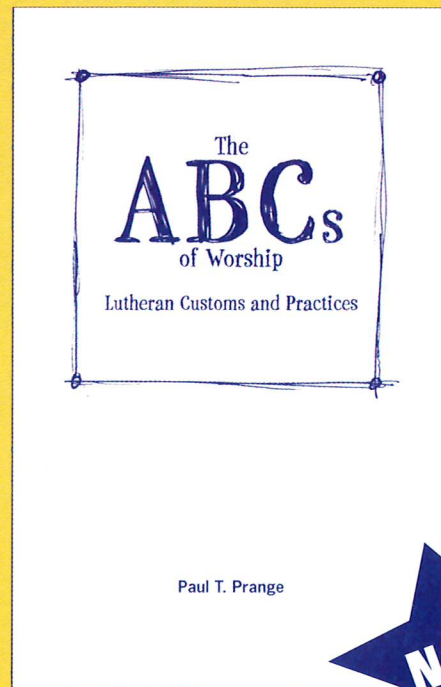
There's more in *The ABCs of Worship: Lutheran Customs and Practices* by Paul T. Prange. This booklet is a handy, 40-page guide with 26 alphabetical chapters that cover everything from A (for adiaphoron) to Z (for Omega, the last letter of the Greek alphabet). The short chapters are packed with useful information; each one shows the deep appreciation for the gospel reflected in Lutheran customs and practices.

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by Paul T. Prange

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# Jesus' creations

*For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. Colossians 1:16*

Eric S. Hartzell

**Y**ou might think it could go without saying, but it can't. Jesus made everything, and he made it for himself. Your things, my things, and everyone's things are really all for Jesus. He is the king who not only made the things in his own kingdom, but also made the things in every other king's kingdom too.

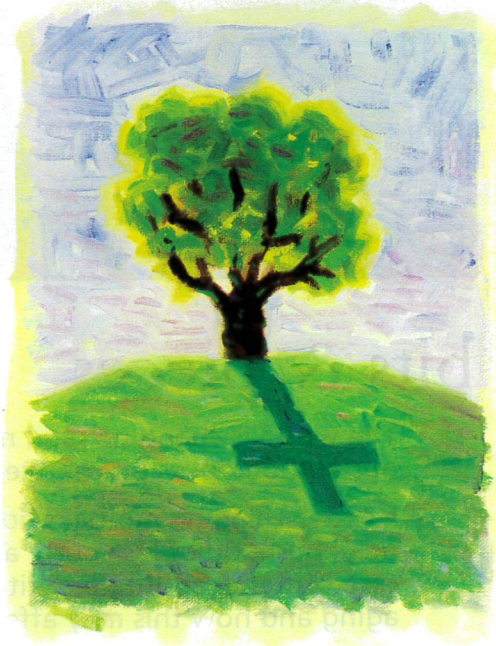
That is what makes what happened to Jesus in this world seem particularly strange and unfair.

## Using Jesus' creations to crucify him

Several thousand years ago Jesus made a certain tree. He caused it to germinate from a seed; he sent the rain and dew to water it. He sent the light from his sun so the tree could live and grow. One day men cut this tree down, chopped it crudely, and hewed it to rough planks. They placed the planks into the form of a cross. It was Jesus' tree and his wood. It was even a shape he had made.

Jesus was also the maker of some sharp thorns. He saw evil men carefully plait those thorns into a crown.

Jesus made all the flat stones in the world (and all the other ones too). Men took some of his flat stones and fashioned them into a plastered yard that they called *Gabbatha*, the place of pavement. He saw them put a chair there and a basin of water. He was the carpenter who created the stuff for the chair. He made the water too.



Jesus made the voices of the ones who cried, "Crucify! Crucify!"

He made the intricate machines of sinew and bone called hands that seized him and pushed him and jabbed him and nailed him with his iron to his wood on his hill. He looked into their faces and forms and saw the people he had made—all of them.

All things were created by him and for him.

## Using Jesus' creations to sin against him

The money we have is his. The eyes we see with and mouths we speak with are his. The brains we think with are his cleverest creation. The bodies we have are his—he wants to live in them. He has that right. They are his creation.

How patient Jesus is. Every day he sees what he has made misused and abused. He sees wonderful minds he made polluted with junk and smut from flickering screens and magazines. He sees mouths he made to sing him praise used to brag and boast about things that don't matter at all.

He made hands with wonderful skill to fashion things for his kingdom and his glory, and he watches as these hands are folded idly by. He sees hands reach into other people's pockets. He sees hands making obscene gestures. He sees hands clenched in fists, hitting and hurting others.

These are all things created by him and for him.

## Using Jesus' creations to save us

But wait a minute. It wasn't just for him. It was also for us that Jesus made all things.

He created the wood and the iron and the hill and the hands. He knew what their use would be in his work of dying and saving all. He made the strength of the wood, the point of the thorn, the unyielding nature of the iron. He made hands clever to do what they did.

He made all for himself, but he also made it all for us.



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



## FORWARD IN CHRIST

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### Editorial office

*Forward in Christ* magazine,  
WELS, 2929 N Mayfair Rd,  
Milwaukee WI 53222-4398

FAX, 414/256-3862

<fic@sab.wels.net>

### Editor

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

<garyb@sab.wels.net>

### Senior Communications Assistant

Julie K. Wietzke, 414/256-3231

<juliew@sab.wels.net>

### Communications Assistant

Nicole R. Balza, 414/256-3232

<nicoleb@sab.wels.net>

### Seminary Consultant

D. P. Leyrer

### Contributing Editors

J. D. Buchholz, K. A. Cherney, D. J. Engelbrecht,

R. L. Gurgel, E. S. Hartzell, R. K. Hunter,

P. M. Janke, P. L. Kieselhorst, M. J. Lenz,

A. J. Panning, T. A. Westra, P. E. Zell

### Art Director

Paul Burmeister

### Graphic Designer

Carianne Ciriacks

### Photographs and Illustrations

Frank Ordaz, p. 3; PhotoDisc & Fred Kogler,

p. 8; William Bukowski, courtesy of Paul Fries &

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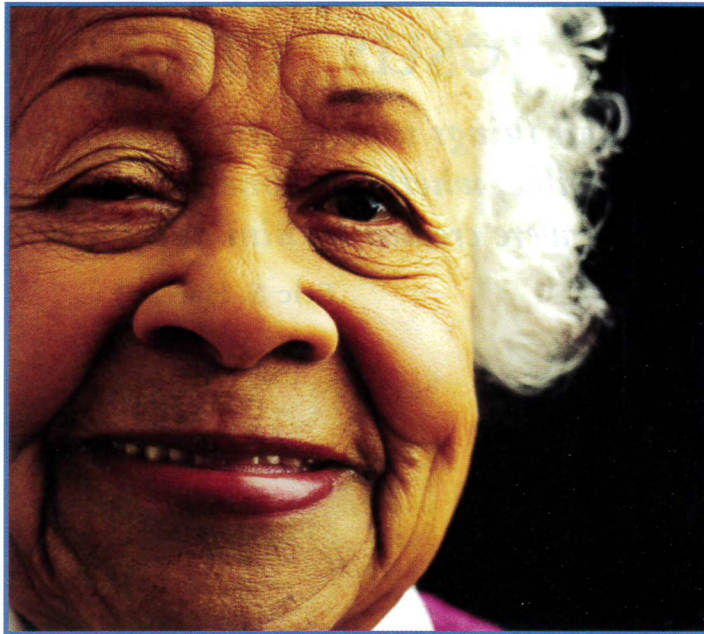
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There before me in a way that I never considered as clearly before was a field "white unto the harvest" (KJV).

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## bits & pieces



The world is changing, and not always for the better. Two of our authors focus on change and how we should deal with it.

- After selling his mother's house, driving through the changing neighborhood of his youth, and visiting his mother at a health-care center, Fred Kogler writes on how the United States is aging and how this may affect our outreach (p. 8).

- Editor Gary Baumler reflects on his recent visit to his first parish in New Jersey and the changes that he observed. He also discusses what never changes—God's Word. Check out "You can go back" (p. 34).



Each of our 12 districts met in June to elect officers, receive updates, discuss important issues, and share fellowship. Find out more details in our special news section (p. 21).



Two articles this month concentrate on the importance of families and parents' responsibility for the spiritual training of their children. Read "Leaving a lasting legacy" (p. 18) by Richard Gurgel and "The value of families" (p. 7) by Armin Panning. Then also read Richard Gurgel's "In the cross hairs," which talks about when a child falls away (p. 32).



You may notice a new name on our pages. Nicole (Moline) Balza was married in July. Her first article under her new name tells about the work of Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Service, Inc. (p. 14).



Remember when you thought that Jonah was only about a man and a big fish? Thanks to Paul Zell, you know now that that's not the case. We thank him for showing us how the book of Jonah applies to our lives. Read his final article on p. 30.



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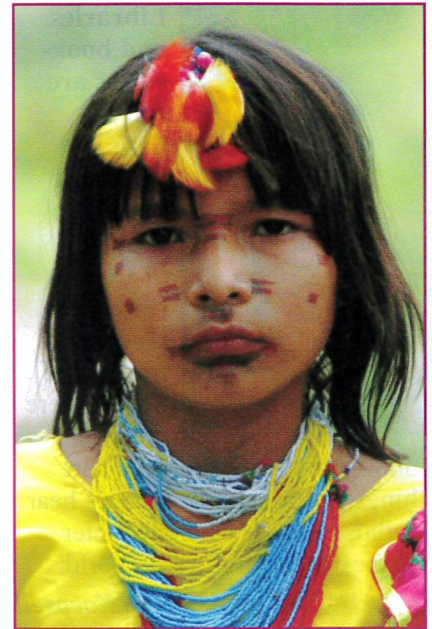
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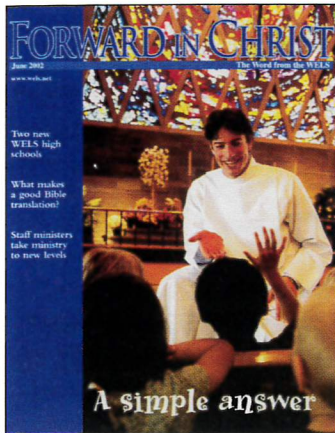
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**You can go back**





**Libraries and bookstores are full of fiction. We don't need it in *Forward in Christ* ["Because God loves me," June].** Surely there

are true accounts out there of just the sort of thing you fictionalized. Let's hear from those people who encounter real experiences in the real world.

*Jan Koepsell*



*Paonia, Colorado*

Re: "Because God loves me" [June].

As I read *Forward in Christ*, I thank God for evidences of his grace at work in our world. **I pray about difficult situations when they are reported. This is part of my "walking together" with God's people. But how can I pray about a fictional person or situation?**

"Truth is stranger than fiction." I know God's actualities are more effective, more challenging, more captivating, more faith-building than anything we can imagine.

There is always more news to report than there is space to report it in. Please don't replace the witness of God's work through his Word and in our lives with three pages of someone's ideas of how God could work.

*Barbara Jo Miller*



*Mandan, North Dakota*

**How well I could identify with the writer of the article "A dirty, not so little secret" [May].** Even pastors are not exempt from the temptation. Now in my seventies, I have been addicted to pornography

since adolescence. When I subscribed to the Web, I found myself spending far too much time in the wrong places. Jesus said in Matthew 18:8, "If your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off . . ." Putting it in today's context, "If the Internet causes you to sin, cut it off . . ." That's what I had to do. I no longer have access to the Internet.



*Name withheld*

**I heartily agree with Pastor Mueller's critique ["Lutherans expect heaven in heaven," July] of millennialists and others who seek a heaven on earth in the wrong place, that is, in an earthly kingdom.**

However, we Lutherans know (as all catholic Christians) that we will not only enjoy heaven in heaven. We enjoy it now! Heaven is found on earth, not figuratively, but in reality, in the liturgy and most specifically in the mass (Lord's Supper). Our pastor reminds us about this when he invites us to sing the song on loan from angels (the Sanctus) "therefore with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven . . ." We enjoy the eschatological, heavenly banquet every time our Lord Jesus sets his table before us.

*John W. Berg*



*Fremont, California*

**Re: "In the news" [July].** "Worship attendance in our mission congregation has doubled the last five years. The majority of new members are younger than 35, about one-third with no WELS background." I'm not sure what led the vicar from St. Mark's to such a firm conclusion that "We can't do things the way we did them 50 years ago."

Bethlehem's numerical growth has come even as we continue to worship the way we worshiped 50 years ago. We invite our visitors to hold the hymnal and join in the historic liturgy. The pastor preaches

his sermon from the pulpit. Congregation members and visitors sing traditional and contemporary hymns from *Christian Worship*. We celebrate the Lord's Supper every other week in the service, and on festivals, and invite visitors to learn more about it.

Congregations may choose traditional and liturgical forms of worship. Congregations may choose something else. The presentation hasn't changed. The only things that have changed are personal and collective perception and preference.

*George Ferch*



*Carmel, Indiana*

**Update:**

In the article "Today is the day" [Aug.], some phone numbers of the pregnancy counseling centers and life resource centers have changed. Here are the updated numbers:

San Jose, Calif.—408/249-6707

Flint, Mich.—810/767-1262

Livonia, Mich.—734/522-8484

Madison Heights, Mich.—  
248/546-5225

Saginaw, Mich.—989/752-7664

Milwaukee, Wis.—414/384-2799

for both the Southside and Northside centers.

Racine, Wis.—262/552-9600

Watertown, Wis.—800/924-6073

Waukesha, Wis.—262/513-9590

The Ann Arbor, Mich., center has recently closed.

For information about starting a pregnancy counseling center or for general information, contact Christian Life Resources, 800/729-9535; <[www.christianliferesources.com](http://www.christianliferesources.com)>.

Send your letters to Readers forum, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398; FAX, 414/256-3862; <[fic@sab.wels.net](mailto:fic@sab.wels.net)>. Include full name, address, and daytime phone number. Letters are edited for clarity, conciseness, and relevance. Writers' views are not necessarily those of WELS or *Forward in Christ* magazine.





# The value of families

Armin J. Panning

The opening of another school year brings to mind two interrelated but somewhat different quotations. One is from a sobering, five-part series in the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* that asserts: “The family structure is breaking down to the point of becoming not just a critical public policy issue, but a threat to the community’s future.” That quotation refers to the city of Milwaukee, but the observation holds true on a much wider scale.

The second quotation is from the inspired pen of King Solomon. He writes, “Children’s children are a crown to the aged, and parents are the pride of their children” (Proverbs 17:6). In our day and age, with its many problems, what Solomon pictures here seems almost hopelessly idealistic and woefully out of touch. How is one ever to achieve what he envisions? Again, the book of Proverbs has the answer when it says: “Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it” (22:6).

In a word, the answer lies in early education. Even the world knows that and agrees with it. The newspaper article cited above quotes a local leader as saying, “I don’t think we can underestimate the incredible power that a family has in ensuring that a kid gets off to a good start in life.”

Commendably, the article observes that the problem will not be solved simply with money, but rather through instilling values. But for that to happen, the family has to provide its support, both at home and in backing the educational system.

We occasionally tend to be critical of the public school system, and justifiably so on some issues. But as another school year begins, we need to ask for God’s blessing on the efforts of the many conscientious teachers in the public system.

We also need to pray for cooperative parents to work with the system, so that young people graduate as stable, well-trained citizens ready to assume responsible roles in life and thus avert the “threat to the community’s future” that the newspaper series understandably fears.

But surely in urging the training of youth, Solomon had more in mind than just preparing for secular life in the community here and now. Rather, he is looking ahead to eternity, and he is speaking of imparting spiritual values.

By the grace of God his words have not fallen on deaf ears. Our beloved synod has a long and distinguished track record of supporting and fostering Christian education for our youth. Currently WELS has some 329 early childhood centers, 362 elementary schools, and 22 area Lutheran high schools. Let us pray for their success and cheerfully support them, even in times of a sluggish economy.

But Christian education isn’t only for the young. There is a growing movement toward and acceptance of adult education and continuing education. In many congregations, September marks not only the opening of another school year, but also the resumption of Bible classes. Let us not miss the opportunity to avail ourselves of these precious learning opportunities.

It’s often said that the family that prays together stays together. That’s doubly true of the family where all are involved in continuing study of the Word. There Solomon’s ideal is realized. There “children’s children are a crown to the aged,” and “parents are the pride of their children.”

*Armin Panning, a member at St. Matthew, Port Washington, Wisconsin, is a professor emeritus at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin.*

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# Bringing in the



**In an expanding, aging, diverse population, the need and urgency for proclaiming the gospel is before us more than ever before.**

**Frederick A. Kogler**

**R**ecently I went through the agonizingly hard process of selling my mother's house.

## **Looking back at past events**

It was a little place, not very fancy, and located in a nondescript neighborhood that had seen many changes over the years. But it was home. It was where she and Dad had lived out their married lives. It's where they had raised five kids. Its floors were now creaky, walls that had heard the sounds of laughter and sadness from the parade of our family's four generations needed paint, and the threshold to the kitchen door had worn down to the point of needing replacing.

After the final moments of the formal closing of the sale at the attorney's office, I decided to take one more drive by the house before I made my way to the health-care center where my mother was now living to tell her the details. As I slowly drove down the street

past the house, I reflected on what the years had done to the neighborhood, the people that used to live there, and what might lie ahead for all of us.

Things around Mom's house have really changed. What used to be a goat yard has become a bank's parking lot. The large open field that had been our family garden plot is now filled with the school district's large steel bus garage. The nearby small creek and the wetland it used to drain, where we used to catch frogs and pick cowslips and pussy willows for Mom's table, is now filled. Piles of insulation, roofing materials, and the ever-smoking hot tar pots that are the materials of a large roofing company stand there in readiness for the next job.

The people and the activities in the neighborhood have changed as well. Some of the folks are gone forever. Others are much slower in their movements. A couple peek

out of their windows in white-headed curiosity as I slowly drive by. The sounds of bleating nannies, barking dogs, and laughing children are gone.

I left the avenue of my youth, turned on to the county line, accelerated in escape, and drove on, soon arriving at the health-care center that is now called by Mom, "my new home." While walking to her room, I was greeted by several residents with cheery smiles and extended hands. They recognized me as Katherine's boy, the one that's the preacher. "Pastor," Mother's roommate, Elaine, said, "Your mom's in the dining room. I think she's waiting for you for lunch."

## **Looking ahead to future work**

As I entered the large hall that serves as the dining room for over a hundred residents, I was struck by what I saw. There before me was a veritable field of white heads in the various attitudes of eating,



Frederick Kogler did go about his business of reaching out to the elderly. In August 2001, he retired after serving as pastor of Emanuel, St. Paul, for over 28 years, and went back to school to pursue a master's degree in social gerontology.

His goal? To understand enough about old age and the aging process to help design outreach tools for seniors to share the gospel with other seniors.

"At age 62, I will be demonstrating that for seniors, life-long learning is a reality. . . . I would by what I've done encourage others to seriously consider how they may serve the Lord with the rest of their life," says Kogler.

Kogler has a love in his heart for reaching out to seniors because of all his visits to seniors during his ministry. With America's growing aging population, he recognizes the importance of this ministry.

"Our usual model is to evangelize nuclear families with young children," says Kogler. "We're not giving as much energy or attention as we should to our seniors."

Kogler will do "whatever the Lord allows" when he graduates in May 2003. Whatever it is, you can be sure that the gospel will be spread.



Fred Kogler and his mom, Katherine.

talking, drinking, calling out for assistance, or waiting to be served. At the same time workers cheerfully made their way among this field, offering help, encouraging, teasing, and doing their jobs as part of the food service.

It was then, in reflection, prompted perhaps by the activities of the morning and focused now by the scene before me, that the Spirit of God brought to my heart and mind the following words: "Do you not say, 'Four months more and then the harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. Even now the reaper draws his wages, even now he harvests the crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together" (John 4:35,36). There before me in a way that I never considered as clearly before was a field "white unto the harvest" (KJV). I wondered how the Lord would have this harvest gathered in.

Things have changed in our nation,

in our towns, and in our churches. Our American society is growing older more quickly than ever before. Today one out of eight Americans is 65 or older. In 25 years the ratio will change to one out of four. Families made up of moms and dads with five children are rare. The average today is 2.2 children per family unit, and over 50 percent of our families are redefined as fragmented constellations or single-parent families. Grandparents are raising or helping to raise grandchildren, while married or single moms and dads busy themselves with the work of providing.

The need and urgency for proclaiming the good news about Jesus is before us more than ever before. In an expanding, aging, diverse population, the opportunities for sharing the gospel have never been as great. The strengthening of our nation because of national calamity, the easing of bruised and wounded consciences necessitated

by misspoken words or thoughtless actions, or the fearful contemplation of an uncertain future are all needs that must be supplied. These needs and the questions that come with them are shared by all generations of people. Providing the answers is possible, but only through the message of God's eternal love in the sacrifices of his Son, Jesus Christ. The mercy, forgiveness, peace, and hope that we all need is secured and offered by Jesus. The details of this message are set forth clearly in the gospel.

As I sat down with Margaret, Clara, and Lucille that day, my bright-eyed, 94-year-old mother asked: "Well, Son, did you get all your work done today?" I said, "No, Mom, not yet." She replied, "Then we'd better pray about it, and let you go about your business."



*Fred Kogler is a member at Emanuel, St. Paul, Minnesota.*



# FAMILY ALBUM

Julie K. Wietzke

Discover your sisters and brothers of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Peru through pictures.

## The Evangelical Lutheran Synod

Members: 21,729  
Established congregations: 142  
Mission congregations: 12  
Foreign missions: 2  
Pastors: 176



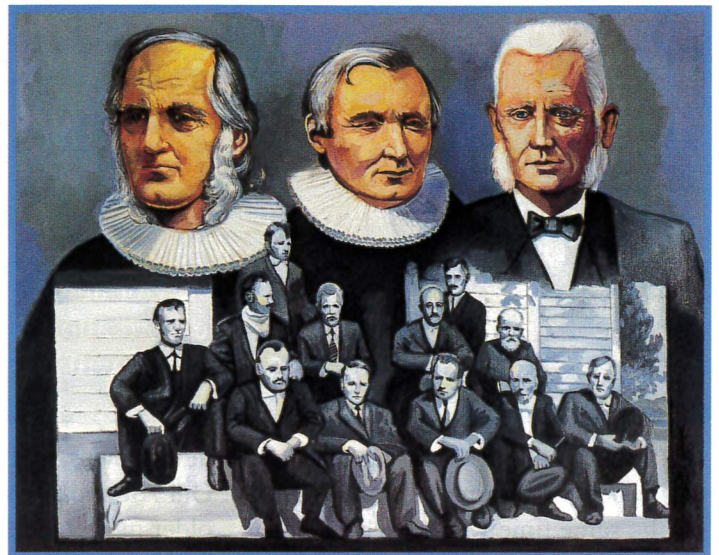
Pastor Young-Ha Kim, a Korean, baptized Mr. and Mrs. Lee in May at Kim's congregation in Irvine, Calif.

Kim's Asian Mission Church sublets space from an ELS sister congregation. From there Kim reaches out to immigrants, mostly students at Californian schools. After two years, Kim's congregation has grown to 60 people.

But that's the middle of the story. The story began in 1997 when Kim, a former Reformed pastor in Chicago, learned the distinction between the law and gospel from a WELS pastor and laymen. Kim attended Bethany Lutheran Seminary for two years to learn more. He then became an ELS pastor.

The ending is yet to be determined. Members of Asian Mission Church who returned to Korea want the synod to serve them. The synod is exploring possible mission work in Korea by sending teachers to Korea to teach at an English preschool and to teach English as a Foreign Language. Where the synod goes from here depends on how God blesses this work.

Meanwhile the Evangelical Lutheran Synod reaches out in Peru and Chile and works through Thoughts of Faith, a church-related organization, to help church bodies in the Czech Republic, Ukraine, and Latvia.



(l to r) Herman Amberg Preus, Jakob Aal Ottesen, and Ulrik Vilhelm Koren—the early fathers of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. Below them are the men who reorganized the synod in 1918 at Lime Creek, Iowa.

The Evangelical Lutheran Synod began in 1853 when a group of Norwegian pastors founded "The Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church in America," consisting of 38 congregations in Wisconsin, Iowa, and Minnesota.

Problems arose. The synod was divided over the doctrine of election in the late 19th century. When the synod merged with other Norwegian churches in 1917, a small group knew this merger was not based on full doctrinal agreement. This group met in 1918 to reorganize the synod.

Recently retired ELS President George M. Orvick tells of that historic moment: "At the time of the Lime Creek meeting it was sarcastically said . . . , 'That little synod is nothing but a plucked chicken.' . . . But a sensible down-to-earth Norwegian farmer is reported to have responded, 'Yes, but if the chicken is healthy, the feathers will grow back.' "

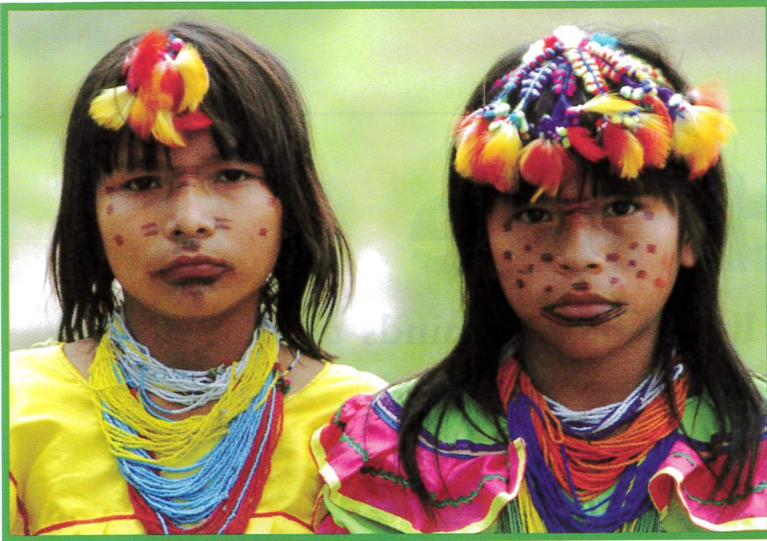
Grow back they did—into the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

The synod continued to grow. In 1927—a time when most Lutheran church bodies were only providing higher education for pastors and teachers—the synod opened Bethany Lutheran College, a two-year institution in Mankato, Minn., that provided Christian education for all walks of life. Today this now four-year college has more than 400 students and shares a campus with Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary, where the synod trains its pastors.



## The Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Peru

Members: 970  
Established congregations: 16  
Mission congregations: 14  
National pastors: 6  
Vicars: 11  
Lay leader: 1  
Expatriate missionaries: 3 ELS missionaries



These native Chayaita girls are members of a new Christian day school in Nueva Barranquita, Peru.

The Evangelical Lutheran Synod tried to reach mothers and children when they began a mission in Peru in 1968. One of the first efforts was establishing a mothers' club in Año Nuevo, a dirt-road village outside of Lima. From there they reached out to families and began starting congregations.

The Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Peru has its challenges—poverty, safety issues in outlying areas, and the presence of religious sects and Latin American Roman Catholicism. But the synod turns these challenges into blessings. For example, when the Shining Path terrorist group made members move from their villages in the 1980s and 1990s, the members established churches in new areas instead of letting the churches die.



Variety abounds in the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Peru.

Half of the synod's members live in Lima, Peru's capital city. The main seminary is there as well as a drug rehabilitation center. Twelve men live at this center, where they receive treatment for drug addiction and the healing power of God's Word.

Two hundred fifty miles away lies the city of Huaraz, the hub for the synod's work in the Andes Mountains. From there, missionaries and national pastors travel by horseback to outlying villages to share God's Word.

On the other side of the mountains rest the jungles of the upper Amazon Basin. As pictured, the missionaries and national pastors rent motor boats or canoes at river towns like Yurimaguas to make the trip upriver to share the Word with the people of the native villages. In one such village, the bright blue, thatched-roof church is across from a lagoon where local fishermen catch piranhas.



Missionary Timothy Erickson (right) with two school administrators in front of the new Christian day school in Año Nuevo.

Three Christian day schools were started in Peru in 2002 to serve members and to reach out to the communities. The communities are responding. The school in Año Nuevo already has 150 students, 90 percent being mission prospects.

Besides training the youth, the synod trains Peruvians to be pastors. Although the main seminary is in Lima, "satellite" seminaries have sprung up so men who live in the jungle or in the mountains don't have to move to Lima for training. The missionaries currently do the training, but soon the national pastors will be teaching in the satellite seminaries.

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

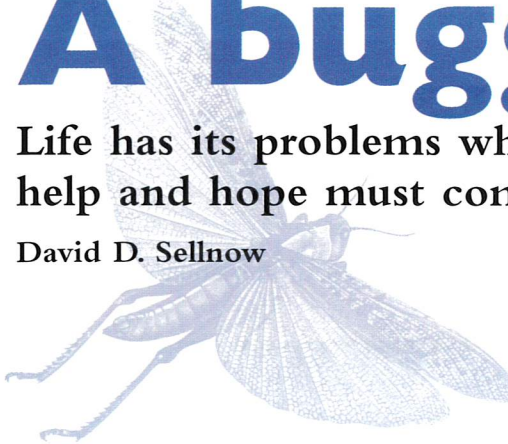
*Thanks to Pastors Steve Petersen, Gaylin Schmeling, and Tim Erickson for providing information for this article.*



# A bugged life

Life has its problems wherever we live, which reminds us that our help and hope must come from someplace else.

David D. Sellnow



I miss my cockroaches. (Sure, they're disgusting, but they stay away if you spray.) I moved from the South to the North, and now I'm bombarded by a bunch of other bugs. Gnats gnaw on my neck. I swat; they swarm. Then come the horseflies. And mosquitoes! People here wear t-shirts picturing "skeeters" as the state bird. It isn't funny when itches and welts keep your kids up at night. My wife is least pleased by centipedes—hundred-legged, loathsome squirmies that crawl in cupboards and slip between bed-sheets. At least the spiders here aren't as big or as hairy.

I live a bugged life and so do you. The things that bug us extend beyond insects and arachnids. There is the weather. (We don't like the cold, or we can't stand the heat.) There are the woes of the road. (We are tired of city traffic, weary of the long drive in from the country, and bothered by countless potholes.)

Life has its problems wherever you live. We cannot cultivate a place fully protected from pests and harm. Nowhere is there immunity from sickness. Not a single household can avoid troubles, stress, and

ultimately, death. In a world marred by sin, there will be frustration and catastrophe. These things remind us that an end to this world is coming and that our help and hope must come from someplace else.

## Past and present problems in the Promised Land

In biblical times, a bug infestation of apocalyptic proportions once demonstrated this lesson. God voiced warnings and promises through the prophet Joel in the aftermath of a locust plague. My impression of locusts in the Middle East is that they are like enraged grasshoppers on steroids. They come in hordes and devour everything in sight. Joel described the plague of them as a lion-fanged, numberless nation (Joel 1:6). They blew in as ominous clouds. They left behind a withered wasteland. There would be no joyful harvest that year, only struggle and hunger.

God used this occasion to call his people closer to himself: " 'Even now,' declares the Lord, 'return to me with all your heart, . . . Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate' " (Joel 2:12,13).



God himself was the only reliable refuge for his people. Their country could not ensure their security. Their lives could be (and were) disrupted by pestilence and drought. At various times, Israel was overrun by enemy armies. The homeland God had given was only an emblem of a greater, eternal home with God. Plots of ground were never meant to be ends in themselves.

**We cannot find paradise any longer on earth. Our hope must aim higher.**

Significantly, the Promised Land has remained a problem place. In 1881, the first *aliyah* (immigration) of modern Jewish settlers began "going up" to *Eretz Israel* (Land of Israel). They were "Lovers of Zion," wanting to stand where the temple once stood, to find fulfillment in the place where their ancestors were buried. Pogroms against Jews in Russia and Eastern Europe initiated this movement. The urgency of seeking safety intensified as Nazi Germany began systematic



racial persecutions in the 1930s (later shifting to policies of horrible elimination). The atrocities of the Holocaust inspired pity for the plight of the Jews—and eventual United Nations support for granting them part of the area of Palestine.

But *Ha'aretz* (The Land) has been no haven or sanctuary. When Israel declared itself as a nation in 1948, there was immediate war with Arab peoples in the region. A steady stream of bullets and blood has flowed since then. Jews have been both victims and victimizers. At the very place where Abraham and Sarah are said to be buried, Muslims have been massacred. Zion itself—the Temple Mount—has been the scene of intense clashes between Palestinians and Israelis. The Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem was besieged. Security in the Holy Land today is garnered by guns, not by God.

### **A blissful future in heaven**

We are certainly grateful when our own streets are safe, when our lives are lived freely, without lethal threats or dreadful dilemmas. But even the best of times and places are—ever since Eden was spoiled—a precarious felicity at best. Every bug bite nags us with this knowledge. The greater evils of war and tragedy shove the brutal truth in our face: We cannot find paradise any longer on earth. Our hope must aim higher.

Joel prophesied a day of redemption that would more than make up for “the years the locusts have eaten” (Joel 2:25). He told of how the LORD would pour out his Spirit and how “everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved, for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance” (Joel 2:32).

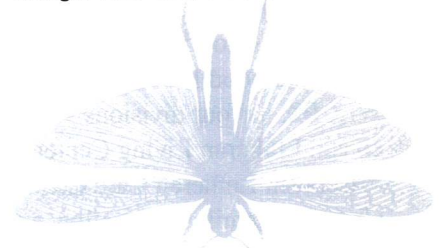
Clearly, Joel was not foretelling peace and prosperity by means of Jerusalem as a political entity. Joel was not a Zionist, attaching aspirations to territory or manmade structures. Joel pointed people to the sole source of soul security: “The Lord will be a refuge for his people, a stronghold” (Joel 3:16). In Joel’s terminology, ideas like Zion and Israel are not earthbound places but spiritual realities—confident visions of a blissful future. His hope was like that of the patriarchs who longed for “a better country—a heavenly one” (Hebrews 11:16). His vision was like that of the last Bible writer, who saw “the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God” (Revelation 21:2). Joel saw in the locust plague an indication of the transitory nature of earthly existence. He sounded the alarm of the coming final judgment. He offered the singular answer to our human dilemma—which is to trust in the Lord our God.

The problems in our own daily lives may be minimal—bugs, peeves, irritations, mistakes. Or they may be maximal, bringing us face-to-face with death and

disaster. Either way, our trust must be constant in Christ. Some places on this earth may be more pleasant than others, less chaotic than others, optimally inhabitable compared to others. But there is no bug-free environment. There is no sin-free zone. There is only a whole creation that groans and a planet replete with wars, rumors of wars, and numerous calamities that signal that the end is approaching. So we do not seek roots in any earthly soil, but constantly set our hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. The one who trusts in him will never be dismayed.



*David Sellnow is a professor at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota.*





# A passion for serving

Those at Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Service, Inc., are applying the healing and helping ministry of Jesus Christ to the people of a sinful and troubled world.

Nicole R. Balza

“We have a passion for serving,” says Sue Bilitz, coordinator of program operations for ministry support services at Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Service, Inc. (WLCFS).

Indeed, they do. Those who work for WLCFS hold tightly to the mission of the organization: “To apply the healing and helping ministry of Jesus Christ to the people of a sinful and troubled world.” Because WLCFS’s passion for doing that comes from love for our Savior, it produces good fruit.

As that good fruit abounds at WLCFS, its four divisions—the Wisconsin Lutheran Living Center, the Wisconsin Lutheran Care Center, Christian Family Counseling, and Educational Services—work together to carry out the healing and helping ministry of Jesus Christ to people of all ages, from all walks of life.

## Wisconsin Lutheran Living Center

“The Living Center is a step between independent living and a nursing home that many older adults need,” explains Bob Krug, administrator of the assisted living facility that can house up to 28 residents.

The facility, located in Milwaukee, provides residents with three meals a day; help with bathing, medication and health monitoring; and recreational activities. The Center’s chaplain, John Zickuhr, conducts weekly Bible classes and worship services.

## Wisconsin Lutheran Care Center

Zickuhr also serves the Care Center, which offers 24-hour skilled nursing care and rehabilitative services.

“Our emphasis is on Christian, quality care,” explains Mary Gross, activities and volunteer services director. “The staff cares. We make a constant effort to be better. There

is a commitment to values and to serving our mission.”

WELS churches support the 161-bed Care Center with offerings of money and time. Each summer a dozen or more high school students participate in the Center’s Volunteering program. These teens help residents by reading them devotions, writing letters for them, taking them outside, and helping them participate in recreational activities. The WLCFS guilds, made up of members from area churches, help bake birthday cakes and raise money for things like chapel furnishings and a wheelchair-accessible outdoor swing. In 2001 over 21,000 volunteer hours were donated to the Care Center.

## Christian Family Counseling

In addition to senior facilities, WLCFS also offers Christ-centered, Scripture-based counseling services in Illinois, Minnesota, and Wisconsin.

## WLCFS moves out West

Rick Loewen, a staff minister, began a new ministry of the Educational Services division of WLCFS in November 2001. This ministry, based in Phoenix, Ariz., serves White Mountain Apache Reservation residents and Arizona Lutheran Academy students.

On the reservation, Loewen operates a family ministry center that focuses on spiritual counseling and family education programs. Emphasizing peer ministry, Loewen is trying to combat the effects that abusing drugs, alcohol, and sex has had on the Apache people. Loewen also works with East Fork Lutheran High School and Grade

School and the Apache Christian Training School, which helps members who want to become church workers.

“The reservation is an excellent place to begin programs that can help the rest of the synod,” explains Loewen. “And, it fits perfectly into WLCFS’s Ministry Support Services.”

At Arizona Lutheran Academy, Loewen is also focusing on peer ministry—teaching teens how to help each other. Through the high school’s Mission Club, Loewen also encourages teens to work on service-oriented projects and mission projects.



## Oakbrook Meadows—A Haven for Renewal

WLCFS is finalizing plans for an adult education/conference center near Columbus, Wis., only 25 miles from Madison, Wis., and 60 miles from Milwaukee.

The center will be the home for WLCFS's Educational Services programs. Within a year, WLCFS hopes to begin construction on the conference center. The first phase of the project will provide overnight accommodations for up

Dan Loe, a WLCFS therapist in New Ulm, Minn., describes the advantages of Christian counseling: "Christian counseling actively uses God's Word in the process of healing. Christian counselors label sin as sin, and talk about repentance as well as the forgiveness offered to us in Christ. This is in sharp contrast to the 'forgiveness' spoken of by the secular therapist. God's Word is recognized as absolute truth which, again, contrasts the secular world-view that sees truth as whatever an individual believes to be true. By using God's Word and his truth, Christians therapists help clients use their faith to make God-pleasing choices while resolving their issues."

The therapists, who are licensed or certified in the states where they work, helped 1,895 families in 2001. Not only do therapists work one-on-one with clients, they also facilitate group services and make presentations to church and school groups about a variety of issues.

### Educational Services

The Educational Services division, begun in 1999 as an outgrowth of the church presentations given by therapists, is the fastest growing area within WLCFS. Educational Services is divided into two areas, Ministry Support Services and the Institute for Christian Leadership.

Ministry Support Services counselors work with world missionaries and their families to make the transition into foreign cultures as easy as possible. When a worker receives a world mission call, Ministry Support Services administers a prefield assessment to that worker.

Issues such as stress resilience, personality characteristics, and emotional stability are evaluated. If a worker accepts the call, Ministry Support Services works with the Board for World Missions to prepare the worker and his family for life in another country. If a world missionary needs help while out of the country, a Ministry Support Services staff member is on-call 24 hours a day. WLCFS staff members even make on-site visits to world mis-

sionaries. When the missionary and his family return from the foreign mission field, Ministry Support Services counselors help them make the transition.

These counselors also help called workers by providing retention counseling for those struggling in the ministry and transition counseling for those leaving the ministry. Educational presentations for groups that include "Keeping Servants Healthy—A Stress Management Seminar" are available.

As Sue Bilitz, coordinator of program operations for Ministry Support Services, says, "We are proactive as well as reactive."

The Institute for Christian Leadership was established in June 2001 as a proactive tool to help strengthen and encourage people to model Christ, the servant leader, in every relationship. It carries out its mission by offering programming and assistance to both laypeople and professional church workers on topics ranging from parenting to marriage to aging to peer ministry training to congregational team building—and more.

The many services provided by WLCFS are varied, but they all share the common thread found in the organization's mission statement: To apply the healing and helping ministry of Jesus Christ to the people of a sinful and troubled world.

*Nicole Balza is a communications assistant for Forward in Christ magazine and WELS Communication Services.*

*For more information about the services that WLCFS offers, contact 1-888-685-9522.*

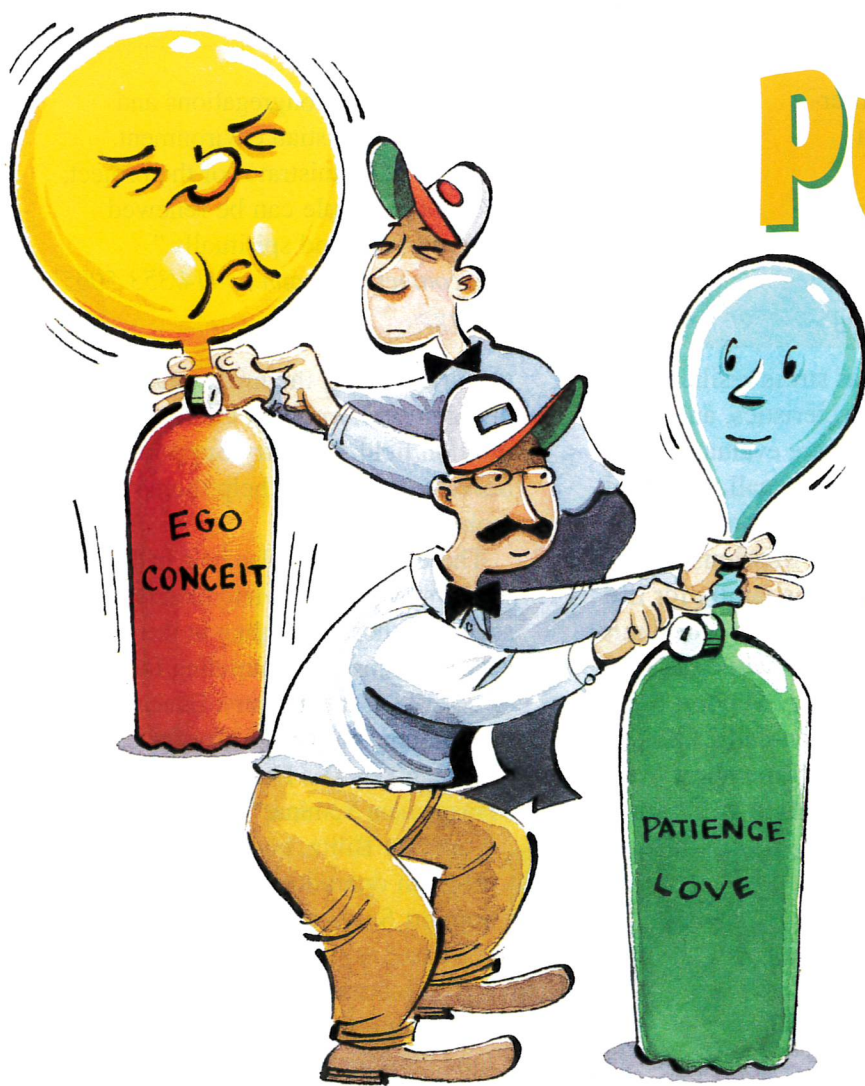


They're not just clowning around—these funny noses and glasses help world missionaries and their families learn about stress management. Counselors from the Ministry Support Services division of Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Service, Inc., gave the stress management workshop at this year's world missionary orientation.



Apache children working on crafts at vacation Bible school at Open Bible, Whiteriver, Ariz. In June, Michigan Lutheran Seminary students conducted this VBS, and teens from Holy Word, Austin, Tex., conducted one at East Fork, Whiteriver. Rick Loewen organized evening activities to combine both groups.





# Puffed up doesn't build up

Without changing what Scripture has already decided for us, we get along best in the church when we apply knowledge with love.

John L. Eich

**D**oes anyone know where that foolish adage “What you don’t know can’t hurt you” ever came from? Or how about the equally silly “Ignorance is bliss”?

Obviously, what you don’t know—from the prowler lurking outside your home, to the toxic dump outside your hometown, to the vengeful and baseless gossip co-workers spread about you—can hurt you, personally, physically, or professionally.

And ignorance—ignorance isn’t bliss. Ignorance is hard work. It forces you to make do, get by, scrape along, without vision or hope for something better.

### Perspective matters

Knowledge doesn’t seem all it’s cracked up to be either. One of the

most annoying things about knowledge is how momentary it can be. The half-life of an education (that is the amount of time that passes before half of all you learned is out of date) is dropping like a stone. For people in the sciences or medicine, it is about seven years. For computer software writers, the half-life can vary from three years to a few months, depending on the area of expertise.

Even those things we think we know as constant universal laws can change and challenge our perceptions. See if you can figure out this little demonstration.

Each of three people is holding a small block of pinewood. The first person releases the block, and it falls to the ground. The second person releases the block, and it moves

upwards. The third person releases the block, and it remains in exactly the same place.

In the first case, the behavior is expected. In the second case, the behavior is bizarre. In the third case, the behavior is simply unbelievable. This is true because you assume that all three cases are taking place in the same universe.

It turns out that the first person is standing on the surface of the earth, so the wood falls to the ground. The second person happens to be standing underwater, so naturally the wood floats upwards. This is perfectly normal and logical in that situation. The third person is in an orbiting spacecraft with zero gravity, so the piece of wood stays just where it has been released.



This is also normal and logical in that universe. (*I Am Right—You Are Wrong: From Rock Logic to Water Logic*, Edward De Bono, New York: Viking, 1991, pp. 60,61.)

Three different people, with three different experiences, can know very different things about something as simple as a piece of wood and what happens to it when it is dropped. Imagine how different their views may be about more complex issues like how to run the church, how to deal with a specific situation, how to raise the kids.

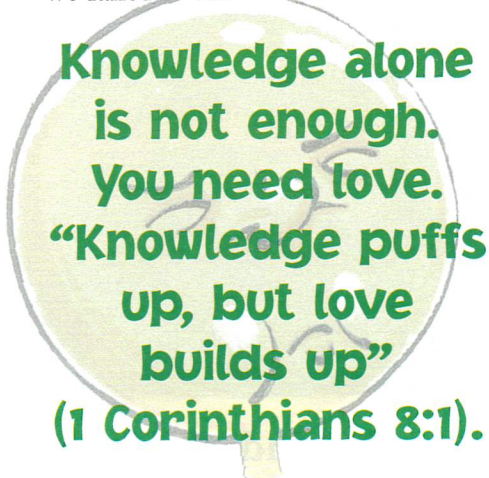
Although ignorance can be deflating, knowledge can be inflating. Like a hot air balloon, a person puffed up with his own knowledge swells and tries to rise above everyone else. “Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him” (Proverbs 26:12). We can get so “puffed up” by what we know, or assume to know, that we lose learning to see from others’ perspectives. Like the Big Bad Wolf of the Three Little Pigs fame, we spend so much time huffing and puffing to others that we end up blowing down the house of God, instead of building it up.

### **Knowledge needs love**

Knowledge alone is not enough. You need love. “Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up” (1 Corinthians 8:1). Knowledge, in other words, can be self-centered, but love reaches out to include someone else. Knowledge tends to generalize. We assume that everybody understands the reason for what we are doing or saying. But love does not do that. Love individualizes. Love says, “Not all possess this knowledge. Not everybody is acting out of the understanding that

I have come to. They may not see things the way I do.”

This became clear to me years ago at college. My roommate and I were discussing something, and I said, “All of those rules would be as thick as a phone book.” To which my roommate replied, “That’s not too bad.” That started an argument about how many rules would be involved. This argument got hotter until we realized that from my big-city background a phone book was a thick volume. From his small-town perspective a phone book isn’t much at all. Two true perspectives, yet very different based on our backgrounds. In our impatience to convince the other, we failed to understand each other.



### **Love is patient**

Patience is not a common element in human relations today. Knowledge pushes through quickly. A split second has been defined as the moment of time between the stoplight turning green and the sounding of the person’s horn from the car behind you. We must have quick food, instant gratification, fast diets, instant fixes, and easy answers. We try to solve the problem or gain the solution by insisting on our knowledge. Yet the human puzzle doesn’t respond well to the quick fix or the Band-Aid approach.

If we keep in mind the piece of wood demonstration, we will be slow to judge another person’s point of view until we understand why they think that way. Maybe we’ll find that their viewpoint is valid, from their experience. “Love is patient” the Holy Spirit writes through Paul. Love takes its time to understand, to explain, to learn, to encourage. In that way two people can walk together, instead of one being left behind in the dust. Love is willing to invest whatever time it may take to gain a mutual understanding. Love is future oriented.

Paul didn’t think that all truths are equal. For him there was right and wrong. Paul neither compromised his convictions nor watered down his arguments. Scriptural truth can never be changed, no matter what our experience.

But human truth can be deeply influenced by experience. In any church or family debate, that can mean that for the sake of love we forsake the satisfaction of being proven right. The process may be tough and the decision against my personal convictions, and yet: no need to argue, it is love that builds us up.

Let’s not puff ourselves up. Rather let’s build each other up. That way our house won’t come crashing down.



*John Eich is pastor at Good Shepherd, Alma/St. Louis, Michigan.*



# Leaving a lasting legacy



The Heinrich Naumann family

**Christian parents who leave behind children swaddled in the gospel leave behind the blessing of a spiritual legacy that spans generations.**

**Richard L. Gurgel**

No greater power in all the world exists than the influence of Christian parents who share the gospel of Jesus Christ with their children. Such gospel-powered parental influence can reach across generations and even around the globe.

### **The story of Heinrich Naumann**

Let me show you what I mean by sharing with you the story of

a relatively unknown Christian husband and father named Heinrich Immanuel Naumann. Heinrich Naumann was a Christian bookseller who lived in Dresden, Germany, during the middle of the 19th century. God blessed him and his wife, Emily, with nine children. Emily died shortly after the birth of their ninth child (a daughter who was named Emily after her sainted mother), leaving Heinrich as a single parent.

What makes Heinrich worth at least a passing glance is not that he was a capable businessman who conducted his book selling affairs with diligence and care. He was that, although he probably would not have been listed in any Who's Who of 19th-century Germany. What makes Heinrich important for our consideration is that he considered the eternal welfare of his children's souls to be his



greatest concern. The Bible was not just one of the tools of the trade for Heinrich, but it was shared by him regularly with his children. There was no doubt in that household that the greatest treasure of this life was Jesus.

### **Heinrich's legacy**

Now allow me to share how God has blessed that sharing of the gospel. That sharing of the gospel through one sinner/saint has continued to touch lives with blessings untold around the world and across generations. From his descendants have come two missionaries to India and a wife of another missionary in India. From his grandchildren and great-grandchildren have come missionaries to Cuba, to Hispanics in Texas, and to Bulgaria. There have been two WELS presidents, presidents or vice presidents of six of the 12 WELS districts, dozens of other full-time called workers, and many faithful lay members of Lutheran congregations in Germany and in the United States.

All this comes from God's blessing on the Word shared by one father in one household. Of course, all that we listed counts only the kind of blessings that can be outwardly

measured. If only we could see the results from God's vantage point!

Living now in the 21st century in the United States, I obviously never met Heinrich Naumann. In fact I had not heard of him until about 10 years ago. But in a way, I have known him my whole life.

In 1941, his granddaughter, Lydia Alvina Emily Naumann, married a young graduate of our seminary by the name of Karl August Gurgel. I met Heinrich Naumann in his granddaughter, my mother, who made it clear that Jesus Christ was most important in life. I met Heinrich Naumann in countless Bible stories read to me at bedtime and in Christian hymns sung to me until I could sing them back. I met Heinrich Naumann in a mother who carried on the spiritual resolve of her grandfather that those in her household would be bathed in the gospel of Jesus Christ every day.

Across four generations and even around the globe, the blessings of one Christian father sharing his faith with his children continues to bless lives in ways beyond counting. God blessed me through a sinner/saint I never knew, but whose love for his Savior and his family continues to bear fruit to this day.

### **Christian parents' legacies**

I share that story with you not because it is unique, but because it is representative of how God desires to bless every Christian family. Unlike the legacies of money or other earthly treasures that so many parents leave behind, Christian parents who leave behind children who have been swaddled in the gospel of Jesus Christ leave behind the blessing of a spiritual legacy that spans generations.

What is more, God wants to work just such a blessing through you and me and other Christian parents today. When we share the gospel with our families, God is laying a foundation to work eternal blessings for potentially thousands of people we will never meet in places where we may never go. The gospel we share with our children is the tip of an unseen spiritual iceberg moving through the waters of this world for as long as God extends this world's time of grace. Indeed, Christian parents who share the gospel of Christ leave behind an eternal legacy.



*Richard Gurgel is a professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin.*

## *Look for these upcoming articles in this series:*

**October:** Where does Scripture speak of this prime role of parents in the spiritual nurture of their children? In this issue we will look at the example of our common spiritual ancestor and will see the pattern for believing parents set by "father" Abraham.

**November:** The most influential "pastors" and "teachers" our children will ever have are those who already bear the titles "dad" and "mom." When parents remember that and act on this

God-given privilege, great blessings are promised. When that is neglected or forgotten, great spiritual harm is the potential. In this issue we will look at how this understanding can become clouded right in our midst.

**December:** What can we do in our own families and as encouragers in our own congregations that will make a difference for eternity for generations still to come? Check out this issue for the answers!



# WHATNEVER

## Thinking about Grandpa

A grandson reminisces and shares lessons learned after the death of his grandfather.

Brett Ehлке

When I was 14, my grandpa died. It has been four years since his death, but it was only about a month ago when I realized how much I loved him. I don't know why this thought came to me all of a sudden. Whether it was naivety, apathy, or some other emotion that has kept me so long without realizing this, it has certainly left a mark on me that I will never forget. I remembered those afternoons he would pick me up from school, those days he would take me out to Mary's for a bite to eat, those hot summer afternoons when my brothers and I would do yardwork for him, those Sundays when we would watch the Packers play.

But what troubled me the most was that I missed the opportunity to tell him how much I loved him. I did not realize how much until it was too late. That feeling digged and gnawed sharply at my stomach.

**As I thought more about the death of my grandpa, I found it interesting how people do not realize how important a person is until he or she is taken away.** Whether it is a loving husband or wife, a close brother or sister, or a caring mother or father, one of the most painful feelings is the feeling that no good-bye was said. It is usually too late to completely appreciate those blessings God has given to us. That was the most

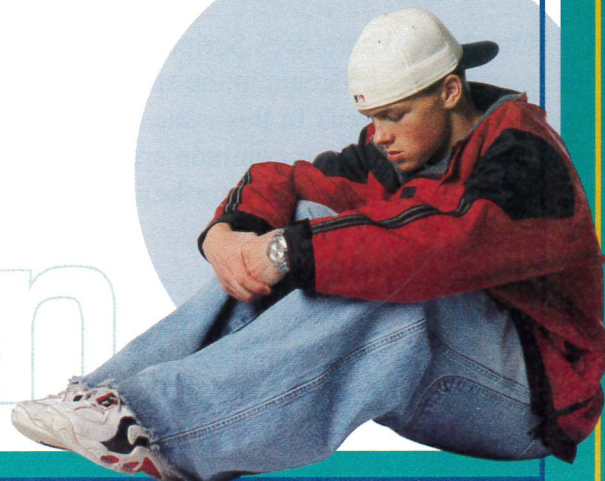
valuable lesson I learned from this experience—never take for granted the blessings in life.

I was left in emotional agony about my grandpa. Thinking about family and close friends helped me to feel better. I shifted the focus from my grandpa's death onto them. I vowed to never take any of them for granted. Still, the feelings of my grandpa remained.

**Nothing helped the situation until I thought about the greatest comfort in the world.** I remembered that I will see my grandpa again in heaven. I know that he is in heaven because it was God's plan completed in Jesus Christ. My grandpa no longer has to deal with the troubles and toils on earth.

I will miss my grandpa for the rest of my life, but the sorrow I have is nothing compared to the fact that one day I can tell him how much I love him. He has started a new life with Christ.

Brett Ehлке graduated from Fox Valley Lutheran High School, Appleton, Wisconsin, in May, and is currently attending Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota.



# heaven



## District convention news

### Arizona-California

June 10-12, Phoenix, Ariz.

District President Paul Janke reported that the Work While It Is Day stewardship emphasis has been favorably received in the Arizona-California District. A resolution passed encouraging each pastor and congregation to fully implement this stewardship emphasis.

Other resolutions included:

- That the district recommit itself to a careful study of God's Word individually, as congregations, and in our circuits to promote spiritual growth.
- That when the number of congregations in the district grows by 10 percent (presently 127 congregations, including exploratories), the district presidium appoint a committee to restudy dividing the district into two and bring its recommendation to the subsequent convention.

The 2004 convention will mark the 50th anniversary of the Arizona-California District.

Hermann John  
Kenneth Pasch

### South Central

June 3-4, Holy Word, Austin, Tex.

Change and constancy were the two themes that ran through the South Central District Convention. We change as necessary as the times change. Yet, what never changes is our God, who gives us the tools and gifts we use to do gospel ministry.

Wayne Mueller, vice president of mission and ministry, gave a two-part presentation/Bible study on the theme, "Work while it is day." The encouragement in this presentation emphasized the grace of God and the strength he gives us, no matter what our various gifts may be.

Peter Snyder

### Dakota-Montana

June 11-13, Great Plains Lutheran High School, Watertown, S.D.

This convention emphasized missions by setting aside time for Missionary Pieter Reid and his wife to give a presentation on Indonesia.

The district encouraged the following:

- That all congregations take part in the Work While It Is Day stewardship effort.
- That all members make use of the synod gift planning counselors to learn more about deferred gifts.
- That those who wish to respond to the Mission Opportunity Task Force questions submit their thoughts on-line or by forwarding responses to David Maertz.
- That each congregation use the new compensation package as a guideline when establishing compensation policies.

Wayne Rouse



Called workers who can play an instrument had a jam session in the Great Plains Lutheran High School dormitory.

### Michigan

June 11-13, Saginaw, Mich.

The 101st Michigan District Convention was held under the theme "Be Imitators of God, As Dearly

Loved Children." Each day opened and closed with a devotion centered around the theme's Scripture reference, Ephesians 4:30.

Delegates resolved to make the district pastoral assistant call a permanent call rather than the current practice of making it a two-year call. This will help the district president's congregation have continuity in programs and services.

The district also encouraged the Synodical Council not to combine the Home and World Mission Boards and to devote maximum priority, resources, and manpower to worker training and home and world missions.

John Eich



Michigan District delegates worshiped at St. Paul, Saginaw, Mich.

### Northern Wisconsin

June 9-11, Appleton, Wis.

"Work while it is day" was the theme of the Northern Wisconsin District Convention, which began with an inspiring service held at St. Paul in downtown Appleton.

Delegates especially appreciated Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary President David Valleskey's keynote paper on stewardship.

Joel Lillo



## Minnesota

June 18-20, Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn.

The 43rd biennial convention of the Minnesota District opened with a communion service at St. Paul, New Ulm, Minn.

Three evangelism workshops were held, including a panel discussion led by Pastor Michael Borgwardt, which focused on overcoming social and cultural barriers when sharing the gospel.

A resolution was passed to move the district convention back one week in order for pastors to be able to attend Summer Quarter at the seminary without having a conflict with the convention. Because of the importance of ongoing education for called workers, the motion will be implemented beginning in 2004.

Jeffrey Bovee



Martin Luther College Professor John Nolte works the sound mixer.

## Pacific Northwest

June 14-15, Evergreen Lutheran High School, Des Moines, Wash.

A total of 82 delegates attended the convention—36 pastors, two retired pastors, one staff minister, 14 teachers, and 29 lay delegates.

A special dinner was held honoring Warren Widmann for his years of service as district president. Because Widmann accepted a

call to serve as Spiritual Growth Task Force Director for the synod, he did not seek reelection.

Ted Lambert, pastor at Christ the King, Bremerton, Wash., was elected as the new Pacific Northwest District president. Lambert, an avid outdoorsman, is known to be a jovial man and a compassionate pastor. He has spent his 30 years in the ministry at Christ the King. He received the call to establish the congregation when he graduated from the seminary, and it is now a thriving congregation with its own school.

Speaking of his election, Lambert says, "It's exciting. . . . It will be a change and another challenge, but with God's help, I'll do the best I can."

David Birsching



The Pacific Northwest District's newly elected president, Ted Lambert.

## North Atlantic

June 8-9, Elizabethtown, Penn.

The 10th biennial convention of the North Atlantic District was a bit different from past conventions—it was held on a weekend rather than during the week so that more lay delegates could attend.

The convention served as a time for deepening fellowship ties. Delegates did this through their work on floor committees, on the convention floor, and in informal gatherings

when the convention was not in session. This fellowship time enabled lay and called worker delegates to grow in their appreciation for one another and their ability to serve each other.

Kevin Schultz

## South Atlantic

June 10-12, Indian Rocks Beach, Fla.

Convention delegates noted their appreciation for the work of those involved with the Work While It Is Day stewardship effort. Congregations were encouraged to prayerfully use these stewardship materials and to educate members on the financial challenges facing WELS.

The convention resolved to "encourage our district to implement the Synodical Compensation Plan by July 1, 2003, or as soon as possible thereafter."

Mark Vance, a member at Good Shepherd, Jacksonville, Fla., spoke about the WELS relief efforts in New York City that he participated in following Sept. 11, 2001.

Christopher Kruschel



The South Atlantic District celebrated Donald Meier's 50th anniversary in the pastoral ministry at the convention. He has served in the South Atlantic District as development director of Southern Lutheran Academy, and has also served 11 WELS vacancies and two Evangelical Lutheran Synod vacancies in Florida. Pictured with him is his wife, Lois.



## Southeastern Wisconsin

June 11-12, Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee

The elections and presentations were fairly uneventful. Among many others, there were presentations by:

- Ken Fisher, pastor at Risen Savior, Milwaukee, who reported on <WhatAboutJesus.com>, a Web site developed by the Commission on Evangelism to inform and educate unchurched friends, relatives, associates, and neighbors about Jesus.

- John Braun, vice president of Northwestern Publishing House (NPH), who presented a multimedia report about NPH. In the discussion that followed, NPH was encouraged to send its catalog to all of Lutheranism, to Barnes and Noble, and to <amazon.com>.

A short amount of time was allowed for delegates to fill in answers to the 11 questions for the Mission Opportunity Task Force posed on p. 15 of the *Report to the Twelve Districts*.

*Robert Pasbrig*

## Western Wisconsin

June 9-11, Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis.

The purpose of the Western Wisconsin District Convention can be summed up by three words—inform, encourage, and equip. Information was shared by reports on a district and a synodical level. Encouragement was given by keynote speakers and by all who discussed ministry off the convention floor. Equipping individuals and congregations for ministry was the purpose behind the workshops provided by the Board for Parish Services.

*Martin Baur*

## Nebraska

June 10-12, Nebraska Lutheran High School, Waco, Neb.

Delegates welcomed two new congregations—Crown of Life, Pueblo

West, and Living Word, Montrose, both in Colorado. Sadly, four congregations also closed since the last convention—Christ our Savior, Ordway, Colo.; St. Paul, Colome, S.D.; Peace, Carlock, S.D.; and Redeemer, Council Bluffs, Iowa.

Secondary Christian education continues to thrive in the Nebraska District. Nebraska Lutheran High School in Waco is starting its 24th year with an enrollment of 110, an increase of 15 percent over last year. Rocky Mountain Lutheran High School is opening its doors for the first time in August. The school is beginning with ninth grade and will add a grade each year until ninth through 12th grades are available. The school is using facilities at Lord of Life, Thornton, Colo.

*Darren Green*

Thanks to the district reporters and district secretaries for providing these reports.

## District officers

The following pastors were elected for two-year terms at this summer's 12 district conventions. The district presidents, along with Synod President Karl Gurgel, Vice President of Mission and Ministry Wayne Mueller, and Second Vice President Jon Mahnke make up the Conference of Presidents.

### Arizona-California

President: Paul Janke  
First Vice President: Joel Prange  
Second Vice President: Daniel Pautz  
Secretary: Kenneth Pasch

### Dakota-Montana

President: Peter Naumann  
First Vice President: Douglas Free  
Second Vice President:  
William Russow  
Secretary: Stephen Geiger

### Michigan

President: John Seifert  
First Vice President: Paul Naumann  
Second Vice President: Carl Otto  
Secretary: James Seelow

### Minnesota

President: Larry Cross  
First Vice President: Charles Degner

Second Vice President: Joel Luetke  
Secretary: Michael Hatzung

### Nebraska

President: Joel Frank  
First Vice President: Philip Zarling  
Second Vice President: Mark Voss  
Secretary: Michael Helwig

### North Atlantic

President: Walter Beckmann  
First Vice President: Joel Petermann  
Second Vice President:  
Thomas Zarling  
Secretary: Jeff Wegner

### Northern Wisconsin

President: Douglas Engelbrecht  
First Vice President: David Sternberg  
Second Vice President: Ross Henzi  
Secretary: Ronald Szep

### Pacific Northwest

President: Ted Lambert  
First Vice President: Tom Unke  
Second Vice President:  
Douglas Weiser  
Secretary: Jon Buchholz

### South Atlantic

President: John Guse  
First Vice President: David Priebe  
Second Vice President: Larry Zahn  
Secretary: Robert Krueger

### South Central

President: Vilas Glaeske  
First Vice President:  
Donald Patterson  
Second Vice President: Mark Bitter  
Secretary: Christopher Goelzer

### Southeastern Wisconsin

President: David Rutschow  
First Vice President: James Huebner  
Second Vice President: Mark Jeske  
Secretary: Robert Pasbrig

### Western Wisconsin

President: Herbert Prah  
First Vice President: Mark Lindner  
Second Vice President:  
Steven Staude  
Secretary: Mark Johnston



## WELS members spared from fires

Although many WELS members were evacuated from their homes during the massive wildfires that affected Arizona and Colorado in June, no one was hurt, and no homes were damaged.

One hundred fifty members of Immanuel, Lakeside, Ariz., were evacuated for one week because of the Rodeo-Chediski wildfire in Eastern Arizona. Members stayed with family and friends, at East Fork Lutheran High School, or at other provided housing. Five families, including the family of the pastor, Gerald Ditter, stayed at Immanuel, the WELS church in Springerville, Ariz.

Retired pastor Art Guenther and his wife were among the evacuees.

“When you are given one-hour notice, what do you do?” asks Guenther. The Guenthers grabbed photos, writings, and a Native American collection they had gathered during their ministry to the Apaches.

This wildfire—the result of two fires that merged June 23—burned more than 415,000 acres of land and destroyed more than 400 homes. Almost 30,000 residents were evacuated.

“We have empathy for those people who lost everything,” says Guenther. “For the first few days [after you’re evacuated], you’re down. But the Lord is still in command. You realize that you’re still breathing and that you have food.

The power of the Holy Spirit comes into you and says, ‘Take it easy.’ Then you just want to help others.”

WELS Committee on Relief has sent an initial gift of \$10,000 to the Springerville Relief Fund to help people who were affected by the fire.

In Colorado, eight families of Mountain Joy Fellowship preaching station, Lake George, Colo., were evacuated for 15 days, and three WELS families in Woodland Park, Colo., were on standby for evacuation. Although none of their homes were destroyed, there was smoke damage and food loss.

John Kurth, pastor at Saint Paul, Las Animas, Colo., and Mountain Joy Fellowship, was among those evacuated. He writes: “Fire reached the road northwest and southeast of our home, but not a blade of grass burned on our place.”

The Colorado Hayman fire was the largest fire in Colorado history, burning 137,000 acres and destroying 133 homes and more than 400 outbuildings. About 8,000 people were evacuated.

The Missionary Ridge fire in the Durango, Colo., area did not affect any of our members, but it did provide a service opportunity for members of Christ the Rock, Farmington, N.M. Members helped provide and distribute devotional materials to firefighters and evacuees. A \$5,000 gift from the Committee on Relief paid for the materials.

## DEFINING RELIGION

**Ecumenism:** the desire for visible union and religious cooperation among all Christian groups without regard to differences in teaching and practice. As Christians we want to express fellowship with those who teach and believe as we do, but we cannot express fellowship with those who teach falsely (Romans 16:17).

## Obituaries

### Geraldine M. Boelter 1918-2002

Geraldine Boelter was born Dec. 25, 1918, in Fond du Lac, Wis. She died June 15, 2002, in North Fond du Lac, Wis.

A 1939 graduate of Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., she served St. Paul, Tomah; Friedens, Kenosha; St. John, Lannon; and Emanuel, New London, all in Wisconsin.

She is survived by two nephews, one niece, two grandnieces, and two grandnephews. She was preceded in death by one brother and one sister.

### Leo C. Gruendeman 1903-2002

Leo Gruendeman was born Jan. 23, 1903, in Kolberg, Wis. He died July 2, 2002, in Wauwatosa, Wis.

A 1928 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Wauwatosa, Wis., he served Mt. Olive, Lincoln, Neb.; Grace, Burke/Peace, Carlock, S.D.; and St. John, Witten, S.D. He served as first and second vice president of the Nebraska District.

He is survived by three daughters, one son, six grandchildren, five great-grandchildren, and other relatives and friends. He was preceded in death by his wife, Margaret.

## Shopping early for Christmas?

Start your Christmas shopping early this year. Get your child, parent, friend, or neighbor a subscription to *Forward in Christ* magazine!

For only \$12 a year, *Forward in Christ* magazine offers a variety of features, Bible studies, news stories, and devotional material—all centered on God and his Word.

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Call Northwestern Publishing House or order on-line today: 1-800-662-6093, ext. 8. Milwaukee, 414/615-5785. <[www.nph.net/html/periodicals.html](http://www.nph.net/html/periodicals.html)>. Charge it—Discover, MasterCard, or Visa—or bill it. Mention this ad to receive your free calculator.





## Conferences inspire and instruct attendees

Three WELS conferences this past summer inspired WELS members and gave them information to help them further God's kingdom.

### National Conference on Worship, Music, & the Arts

Nearly 1,000 people registered for the National Conference on Worship, Music, & the Arts, held July 21-24 at Carthage College, Kenosha, Wis. An additional 500 people participated. The conference, with over 70 workshops, recitals, and reading sessions, shared resources that could help any congregation. A special focus was on enabling small churches. Small parish worship models demonstrated different worship forms that would work in these parishes.

Worship was an important part of this conference, with five different plenary worship opportunities throughout. One service included a new musical setting for the Common Service, which will be released this fall.

Two large concerts rounded out the conference offerings. More than 110 high school students formed an honor choir that practiced during the conference for its concert on the last day. A 125-member festival choir and 43-piece orchestra gathered the day before the conference to rehearse for its concert on the opening evening. But singers didn't wait until then to practice. Five women from Minocqua, Wis., met regularly months before the conference to practice the festival choir music with a rehearsal CD.

The Commission on Worship coordinated this conference.

Members of the high school honor choir during the final concert of the National Conference on Worship, Music, & the Arts.



### 2002 WELS School Leadership Conference

About 275 people descended on the Country Inn Hotel & Conference Center, Waukesha, Wis., from June 25-27 to improve their leadership skills. Under the theme "The Heart of Leadership," the conference recognized that this is a critical time for WELS schools and highlighted the opportunities—including doing outreach—that WELS has through these schools.

A WELS area Lutheran high school principal who was unable to attend the conference served as a source of inspiration. Right before the conference, Kurt Troge, principal of Manitowoc Lutheran High School, Manitowoc, Wis., discovered he had a malignant brain tumor. Prayers were offered for him at the conference.

"Knowing of his struggle helped us think more seriously of seizing the time God gives us," says Jason Nelson, parish schools administrator. "It made us sad, but God used it to bring us together."

The Commission on Parish Schools coordinated this conference.

*Look for the next WELS School Leadership Conference in 2005.*

Dan Schmal (left), CPS chairman, presents a Heart of Leadership award to former CPS administrator Dan Schmeling.



### Special Ministries in Lutheran Education Conference II

"I came back not feeling alone."

Linda Comins, a member of Our Savior, Lena, Wis., states what typified her experience and that of the 100 attendees at the Special Ministries in Lutheran Education Conference in Bloomington, Minn., in June. Fellowship and networking, along with a number of workshops, made attendees "partners" in their work of spiritually training individuals with special needs.

Comins, a grandmother of three special-needs children, came because she was concerned about how she should train them spiritually.

The conference and those attending the conference provided this information and more. "It was so good to be able to share," says Comins. "Everything they talked about I have been through."

She continues, "People just don't realize how much help is out there."

Inspired by the conference, Comins is ready to use what she learned. She is working with Jesus Cares Ministries, one of the coordinators of the conference, to start a special-needs Bible class in the Lena area.

The commissions on Special Ministry, Youth Discipleship, and Parish Schools also coordinated the event.

*Look for the next SMILE Conference in the Milwaukee area in 2004.*

Attendees played instruments in a workshop about teaching songs to those with special needs.





## Diagnosing a need for spiritual growth

The symptoms have been popping up for years—spiritually unhealthy families, weak relationships with Jesus, a lack of unity and purpose, inflexible ministry methods . . . and the list goes on.

Until recently, though, WELS had not faced the severity of the condition. That changed in November 1999 when the WELS Synodical Council appointed the Spiritual Growth Task Force. During an in-depth analysis into the spiritual growth in WELS, the task force discovered the above “symptoms of a need for spiritual growth.” After interviewing pastors, teachers, staff ministers, lay leaders, and students, 20 challenging issues were identified that are weakening WELS’ ministry and that can be addressed by taking spiritual growth seriously.

The condition is critical, but not terminal—as long as WELS members are willing to make a commitment to spiritual growth. Warren Widmann, called to be the Spiritual Growth Task Force Director, explains, “It is a process, not a program, that we’re trying to develop. It involves three areas of the synod—current called workers, future called workers, and congregations. We want these areas to look at the 20 challenging issues, study them, and determine how they affect their areas. Then we will help these areas develop a process where they can work on those spiritual growth issues.”

As current and future called workers and congregations work on those spiritual growth issues, they can rely on the three important blessings of WELS that the task force also identified—a commitment to God’s Word, gifted called workers, and laypeople who are eager to grow spiritually. These strengths can see WELS through this process of spiritual growth.

As with any diagnosis, though, the treatment is only as good as the follow through—which is where Widmann comes in. “Coordination and accountability, those are my two jobs,” he says.

### Key issues and objectives for WELS compiled by the Spiritual Growth Task Force

- 1** Issue: Spiritually healthy families.  
Objective: That congregations implement a plan for nurturing spiritually healthy families.
- 2** Issue: Spiritual character formation of future called workers.  
Objective: That students in our ministerial schools understand the importance of and actively participate in personal spiritual growth and development.
- 3** Issue: Personal spiritual growth of current called workers.  
Objective: That called workers understand the importance of and actively participate in personal spiritual growth and development.
- 4** Issue: Interpersonal and management skills.  
Objective: That called workers acquire appropriate communication, relationship, team-building, and management skills needed for ministry today.
- 5** Issue: Universal priesthood and public ministry.  
Objective: That called workers and congregation members identify and use the many and varied opportunities to practice the Bible’s teaching of the universal priesthood.
- 6** Issue: Male spiritual leadership.  
Objective: That congregations implement a plan for fostering and training male spiritual leadership and that future called workers learn how to develop such leadership.
- 7** Issue: Ministry control.  
Objective: That current and future called workers learn how to entrust and empower ministry to others.
- 8** Issue: Students’ spiritual and academic growth.  
Objective: That our ministerial education schools implement meaningful changes that will bring greater balance between what our future workers need to know and who they need to be.
- 9** Issue: Opportunities for member ministry.  
Objective: That current and future called workers learn how to lead congregations to implement a plan that builds volunteer ministry around people’s gifts and interests and provides them with adequate training and support.
- 10** Issue: Personal relationship with Jesus.  
Objective: That members more deeply understand, appreciate, grow in, and exhibit a personal relationship with Jesus.
- 11** Issue: Women’s spiritual gifts.  
Objective: That congregations identify and implement biblically-appropriate roles for women to use their gifts.
- 12** Issue: Serving in an atmosphere of permission giving and trust.  
Objective: That congregations create an atmosphere of permission giving and trust in which people serve without fear, and that current and future called workers learn how to benefit from making mistakes.
- 13** Issue: Mission of the church.  
Objective: That called workers and members study the mission of the church and design the congregation’s ministry to reflect it.
- 14** Issue: Teaching flexibility in ministry methods.  
Objective: That future called workers are trained and encouraged to be flexible in ministry methods.
- 15** Issue: Martin Luther College multi-track worker training ministry.  
Objective: That Martin Luther College continues to grow in unity of purpose for preparing a variety of servant leaders needed for the 21st century.
- 16** Issue: Relevant preaching and teaching skills.  
Objective: That pastors implement a plan to enhance their preaching and teaching skills, and that future pastors learn how to make their preaching and teaching more relevant for those they will serve.
- 17** Issue: Employing flexibility in ministry methods.  
Objective: That current called workers embrace and employ flexibility in their ministry methods and encourage others to do likewise.
- 18** Issue: Ministry attitudes.  
Objective: That current called workers conduct ministry in confidence, humility, and with passion, and that our future called workers learn to do the same.
- 19** Issue: Mutual encouragement and support.  
Objective: That current called workers provide encouragement and support to others, especially fellow called workers, and that future called workers learn to do the same.
- 20** Issue: Ministry evaluation.  
Objective: That current called workers accept and use a ministry evaluation process as a benefit for God’s kingdom, and that future called workers learn to see its benefits too.



## “Do good to all people”

The Health Educator program trains laypeople from each LCCA congregation in first aid and the fundamentals of health practices. Each class is taught intensely for a week and followed up by courses several months later. Since many of the health issues are related to moral issues, these classes provide opportunity to discuss God’s will for our behavior and also to tell of his forgiveness.

The goal of the Health Educator program, according to Irene Brug, chairwoman of CAMM, is “to train these LCCA church members to serve physical needs and to be a bridge to the pastor when spiritual needs are identified.” These health educators give health lessons to other church members, visit the sick, and encourage people to use the clinics in their areas.

Nurse Rebekah Carey, who heads up the Health Educator program, says, “I hope that through the health educators and through ‘friendship evangelism’ there will be a Bible-based behavioral change in Zambia. I fear that without such change, we will be talking about the Zambia ‘that once was.’”

Laura Warmuth



Warren Widmann and his wife, Carol (pictured), will continue to live in Portland, Ore., while Warren serves as Spiritual Growth Task Force Director.

### Mission of the WELS Spiritual Growth Task Force

To assist God’s people of WELS in identifying issues that are symptoms of a need for spiritual growth and to then assist them in addressing these issues through the use and application of God’s Word.

#### Task force’s objectives

- 1 Help God’s people see and understand our ongoing need for spiritual growth.
- 2 Help God’s people take ownership of these ongoing needs for spiritual growth.
- 3 Help God’s people develop processes and strategies that apply God’s Word to these issues.
- 4 Assist and encourage God’s people to implement these strategies and processes in their individual lives of service.

*Warren Widmann and the Spiritual Growth Task Force will meet with those who can help WELS achieve the objectives outlined above so that God’s kingdom can be strengthened by the spiritual growth of WELS members.*

Meeting needs. That is what the Central Africa Medical Mission (CAMM) has been doing since 1961. Nurses, missionaries, and Lutheran Church of Central Africa (LCCA) pastors follow the instruction from Galatians 6:10 to “. . . do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.” As the needs of the African people become more urgent, a new Health Educator program, begun in 1998, helps meet those needs more efficiently.

“The killer disease,” as Zambians call AIDS, reached epidemic proportion in the late 1980s. About 30 percent of Zambians between the ages of 13-55 are now HIV-positive, and in Zambia alone about 500,000 orphans have been left behind by victims of the disease. One pastor is taking care of not only his own seven children, but also five orphaned children of his relatives.

Much of the spread of AIDS is due to native customs and traditions that are continued today. Since these cultural barriers stand in the way of American nurses, the Lutheran Church of Central Africa in Zambia has worked with CAMM to develop a program where Zambians can help care for each other.



In response to the AIDS epidemic in Zambia, Nurse Rebekah Carey (far right) trained these Lutheran Church of Central Africa members to be health educators.





**New name for AAL/LB**—Aid Association for Lutherans/Lutheran Brotherhood is getting closer to using its new name, Thrivent Financial for Lutherans.

Seventy-nine percent of its voting members approved the name in a vote that ended in early May.

Steps still need to be taken before the name becomes official, including completing the state and federal approval process. So far more than 80 percent of the states have approved the use of the name.

Aid Association for Lutherans and Lutheran Brotherhood merged on Jan. 1, 2002. The organizations continue to provide financial products and services to Lutherans, including insurance, mutual funds, and banking services.

**Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod faces budget cuts**—The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) had to make one of the largest budget cuts in its history for the upcoming fiscal year (July 2002-03), cutting \$9.1 million from its current budget.

The operating budget, \$89.6 million, is \$10 million less than last year's budget. That means that little new work will be started, and some current work and staff will be eliminated.

Chief Administrative Officer Brad Hewitt cited two "key messages":

- Unrestricted income was down \$2 million.
- The LCMS had to cut ministry, not waste.

[LCMSNews, June 13, 2002]

**Abortion legalized in Switzerland**—

In a national referendum in May, Swiss voters supported legislation making it easier for a woman to get an abortion within the first 12 weeks of pregnancy. The new law goes into effect Oct. 1.

Abortion will remain a crime if it is performed without following certain requirements. Women must present a written request, prove they face "distress" if they have a child, and meet with an abortion practi-

tioner in the presence of a counselor. After 12 weeks, a woman may have an abortion only if the doctor believes her "physical integrity" will be threatened or she will face "profound distress."

[LifeWire, June 4, 2002]

**Ecumenical discussions continue**—

Evangelical, Orthodox, Pentecostal, mainline Protestant, and Roman Catholic leaders met in April to discuss how to develop a common Christian witness to the United States.

Calling themselves "Christian Churches Together in the U.S.A.," the group released a statement that would begin "to sketch the outlines of a new level of relationship and action that offer a common witness for Christ to the world."

This common witness would be seen by the member churches "celebrating a common confession of faith in the Triune God; seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit through biblical, spiritual, and theological reflection; engaging in common prayer; speaking to society with a common voice; promoting the common good of society; fostering faithful evangelism; seeking reconciliation by affirming our commonalities and understanding our differences; and building a community of fellowship and mutual support."

Participating groups include (in part) the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the Episcopal Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Greek Orthodox Church, the Orthodox Church in America, the Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches of North America, the Presbyterian Church (USA), the Reformed Church in America, the Roman Catholic Church, the United Church of Christ, and the United Methodist Church.

The next meeting will be held in January 2003.

*WELS is not a part of this organization.*

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.



**So, God, what about ... ?**

Want God's advice, but you're not sure where to look? We'll get you started with the basics. Remember these verses—and share them!

*Ever wonder about angels? Let's see what God has to say about them.*

- "For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone" (Psalm 91:11,12).
- "See that you do not look down on one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven" (Matthew 8:10).
- "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father" (Mark 13:32).
- "Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness" (2 Corinthians 11:14,15).
- "For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment; . . . if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment" (2 Peter 2:4,9).

**On your own**

- God often used angels to deliver messages or give warnings. Check out these stories: Genesis 19:1-29 (Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed), Numbers 22:21-39 (Balaam's donkey), Luke 1:5-38 (the births of John the Baptist and Jesus foretold).
- Read about how God's Son is superior to the angels in Hebrews 1:1-14.



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

**Bartling, Mark F.**, to Immanuel, La Crosse, Wis.  
**Buelow, Timothy H.**, to Emanuel First, Lansing, Mich.  
**Carmichael, Erling L.**, to retirement  
**Juroff, Henry A.**, to retirement  
**Kehren, Jonathan P.**, to Peace, Eagle River, Alaska  
**Neumann, Robert E.**, to retirement  
**Rosenow, David D.**, to First German, Manitowoc, Wis.  
**Schmidt, Russell L.**, to retirement  
**Schoch, Wayne D.**, to Christ, Zumbrota, Minn.  
**Schulz, James R.**, to Divine Savior, Indianapolis, Ind.  
**Schwark, Melvin A.**, to Courtland, Courtland/  
 Zion, New Ulm, Minn.  
**Staab, William E.**, to retirement

**Teachers**

**Aswege, Daniel D.**, to Emanuel, New London, Wis.  
**Biesterfeld, Heidi J.**, to Divine Savior, Indianapolis,  
 Ind.  
**Bivens, Brandi L.**, to St. Marcus, Milwaukee  
**Bowman, Rebecca L.**, to Good Shepherd,  
 Omaha, Neb.  
**Buske, Terry A.**, to St. Mark, Watertown, Wis.  
**Chappell, Michael S.**, to Star of Bethlehem,  
 New Berlin, Wis.  
**Downey, Patrick J. Jr.**, to Lakeside LHS, Lake  
 Mills, Wis.  
**Festerling, Kevin**, to St. Marcus, Milwaukee  
**Gresnan, Phyllis S.**, to St. Mark, Green Bay, Wis.  
**Gusman, Joanna**, to Messiah, North Hollywood, Calif.  
**Hagenow, Michaela M.**, to St. Matthew, Iron  
 Ridge, Wis.  
**Hayes, Aubrey L.**, to Lamb of God, West Allis, Wis.  
**Luetke, J. Anna**, to Pilgrim, Mesa, Ariz.  
**Meyer, Lance K.**, to Atonement, Milwaukee  
**Musinski, Barbara**, to Divine Grace, Lake Orion, Mich.  
**Perry, Kristi J.**, to Timothy, Saint Louis Park, Minn.  
**Phelps, Paula J.**, to St. Peter, Plymouth, Mich.  
**Scharp, Greta L.**, to Atonement, Milwaukee  
**Schaser, Sarah E.**, to Trinity-St. Luke West,  
 Watertown, Wis.  
**Shilling, Deborah M.**, to Epiphany, Racine, Wis.  
**West, Gregory S.**, to Trinity, Nicollet, Minn.  
**Yttri, Karen M.**, to St. Lucas, Kewaskum, Wis.

**2002 MLC ASSIGNMENTS**

**Dretske (nee Brien), Rebecca**, to Immanuel,  
 Manitowoc, Wis.  
**Uecker, Alissa**, to Mount Olive (ELS), Mankato, Minn.  
**Walta (nee Blum), Jamie**, to St. Paul, New Ulm, Minn.

**REQUESTS FOR COLLOQUIES**

Lowell Nader, a recent graduate of Concordia  
 Seminary, St. Louis, has requested a colloquy  
 for the purpose of serving in the pastoral min-  
 istry in WELS. Correspondence related to this  
 request should be addressed to President  
 Larry Cross, Minnesota District, 4024 Carol  
 Lane NW, Rochester MN 55901-1366

Rev. Steven Kurtzahn, Austin, Minn., formerly a pas-  
 tor of the Confessional Lutheran Church, has  
 requested a colloquy for the purpose of entering  
 the pastoral ministry of WELS. Correspondence  
 related to this should be addressed to President  
 Larry Cross, Minnesota District, 4024 Carol Lane  
 NW, Rochester MN 55901-1366.

**ANNIVERSARIES**

**Crandon, Wis.**—St. Paul (100). Sept. 15. Service,

3 PM. Dinner to follow. 715/478-5620.

**Otsego, Mich.**—Peace (50); school (20). Sept.  
 15. Service, 9 AM. Potluck, 11:30 AM.

**Toledo, Ohio**—Zion Lutheran School (50). Sept.  
 15. Service, 4 PM. Dinner, 5 PM. 419/531-8904.

**Arlington, Minn.**—St. Paul (130). Sept. 22.  
 Service, 10 AM. Refreshments to follow.  
 507/964-2731.

**Kenton, Ohio**—Grace (50). Oct. 6. Service, 4 PM.  
 Dinner to follow. 419/675-2148.

**Owensville, Mo.**—Peace (50). Oct. 13. Service,  
 4 PM. Dinner to follow.

**Manitowoc, Wis.**—Immanuel (75). Oct. 13.  
 Services, 8 & 10:30 AM. Catered dinner and  
 entertainment to follow. 920/684-3404.

**Milwaukee**—Mt. Lebanon (75). Oct. 13. Service,  
 9:30 AM. Dinner to follow. 414/461-1563.

**West Salem, Wis.**—Christ (100). Oct. 20.  
 Services, 8 & 10:30 AM. Potluck to follow.  
 608/786-1250.

**Schofield, Wis.**—St. Peter (100). Oct. 27. Service,  
 3 PM. Catered dinner to follow. RSVP, 715/359-2829.

**Bay City, Mich.**—Bethel (150). Oct. 27. Service,  
 10:30 AM. Dinner at noon. 989/892-4252.

**COMING EVENTS**

**WELS Home Educators Retreat**—Sept. 6-8.  
 Camp Phillip, Wautoma, Wis. Debbie  
 Thompson, 920/348-6482.

**Life-a-thon run/walk**—sponsored by WELS  
 Lutherans for Life, Metro-Milwaukee. Sept.  
 14. Peter Georgson, 414/933-7322.

**Women's Retreat**—Sept. 20-22. Holiday Inn &  
 Conference Center, Ocala, Fla. Janice  
 Horvath, 407/291-6100.

**WELS Lutherans for Life (Waukesha  
 Chapter)**—fifth annual life banquet and silent  
 auction benefiting Tomorrow's Choice  
 Pregnancy Counseling Center. Sept. 22.  
 Auction, 3 PM. Lunch, 4 PM. Country Inn Hotel  
 & Conference Center, Pewaukee, Wis. Speaker  
 will be U.S. Congressman Paul Ryan. RSVP by  
 Sept. 16, Bonnie Frederick, 262/547-6954.

**Symposium on Holy Baptism**—for WELS & ELS  
 pastors. Sept. 23-24. Wisconsin Lutheran  
 Seminary, Mequon, Wis. 262/242-8100.

**Enrichment retreat**—for pastors and their  
 wives. "Keeping servants healthy," spon-  
 sored by Wisconsin Lutheran Child and  
 Family Service Ministry Support Services and  
 the Marvin M. Schwan Retreat &  
 Conference Center. Sept. 24-26. Schwan  
 Retreat & Conference Center, Trego, Wis.  
 800/577-4848.

**National Youth Counselors' Workshop**—  
 Sept. 27-29. Camp Lutherdale, Elkhorn, Wis.  
 Bob Mateske, 414/256-3224.

**Celebration of Life Ball**—Sept. 28. Double Tree  
 Grand Hotel, Bloomington, Minn. Silent auc-  
 tion, 6 PM. Dinner, 7 PM. Steve Cambrice,  
 612/272-2105.

**WELS Church Librarians Organization meet-  
 ing**—Trinity, Minocqua, Wis. Sept. 28.  
 Registration, 8:30 AM. Joanne Weber,  
 414/256-3222; <jaweber@sab.wels.net>.

**Christian Life Resources National Conven-  
 tion**—Oct. 4-5. KI Center, Green Bay, Wis.

**Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Auxiliary meet-  
 ing**—Oct. 5, 8 AM to 1:30 PM. Wisconsin  
 Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis. Registration  
 including lunch, \$10. Jan Lampe, 414/771-4622.

**Christian Growth Seminar**—Oct. 12, 8:15 AM  
 to 1:30 PM. Luther High School, Onalaska,  
 Wis. Linda Williams, 888-378-2182.

**Capital Area Christian Women's Retreat**—  
 Nov. 1-3. Devils Head Resort, Baraboo, Wis.  
 Joy Strutz, 262/898-3244.

**Retreat**—Nov. 2, 8:30 AM to 3 PM. Trinity,  
 Minocqua, Wis. "The church in a changing  
 culture." Registration, \$15 for adults, \$10 for  
 teenagers. Includes continental breakfast and  
 lunch. Sue, 715/356-7542.

**National Campus Rally**—Dec. 27-30. Michigan  
 State University, East Lansing, Mich. Karen  
 Marshall, 414/256-3279.

**WELS National Campus Rally**—Dec. 27-30.  
 Michigan State University. 517/336-9293.

**WELS/ELS Ladies Retreat**—Jan. 10-12, 2003.  
 Woodlands Lutheran Campground, Montverde,  
 Fla. Cost, \$110. Judy Becker, 941/355-6591.

**Today's Christian Women's Retreat**—Mar. 21-  
 23, 2003. Sheraton Lansing Hotel, Lansing,  
 Mich. Laurie Starr, 248/391-1133.

**AVAILABLE**

**Science books**—for third through sixth grades.  
 Discover Science. 1991 copyright. Free for the  
 cost of shipping. Samuel, Marshall, Minn.  
 507/532-2162 or 507/537-1188.

**Oak pews and Hammond electronic organ**—  
 free for pickup from St. Marcus, Milwaukee.  
 Sara Kreuter, 414/562-3369.

**Thirty-five junior choir gowns**—light green  
 with gold stoles. Free for the cost of shipping.  
 Robert Wagner, 920/231-8957.

**SERVICE TIMES**

**Mountain, Wis.**—Mountain Ambulance Service  
 Building, 14336 State Hwy 32. May-Sept.  
 Saturday worship, 6:30 PM. Craig Korth,  
 715/473-5633.

**Wausau, Wis.**—Salem, 2822 6 St. Sunday wor-  
 ship, 7:30 & 9 AM. Memorial Day through  
 Labor Day. Tim Mandeik, 715/845-2822.

**Grass Lake, Mich.**—St. Jacob, 12501 Riethmiller  
 Rd. Sunday worship, 9:15 AM until Labor Day.  
 517/522-4187.

**Safford, Ariz.**—Grace, 225 E Main St. Worship,  
 10:30 AM. Bible class before church. Paul  
 Schulz, 928/428-7620.

**NAMES WANTED**

**U.S. Military Academy, West Point, N.Y.**—  
 Don Tollefson, 908/876-5429.

**Marion County, Fla. (Ocala area)**—Paul  
 Lemke, 352/694-1861.

**POSITION AVAILABLE**

**President**—for Wisconsin Lutheran College,  
 Milwaukee, Wis. Must be eligible for a call  
 into the WELS public ministry; be a spiritually  
 mature servant leader; preferably possess an  
 earned doctorate from an accredited universi-  
 ty; have demonstrated skills and experience in  
 resource development, higher education  
 administration, and strategic planning; and  
 have exceptional ability to articulate and com-  
 municate the college's mission.

For more detailed information, see <www.wlc.edu>,  
 under employment opportunities. The college's  
 Board of Regents invites inquiries, written  
 nominations, and applicants to contact Clifford  
 Buelow, chair of presidential search commit-  
 tee, Wisconsin Lutheran College, 8800 W  
 Bluemound Rd, Milwaukee WI 53226; or e-mail  
 <search\_committee@wlc.edu>.

To place an announcement, call  
 414/256-3210; FAX, 414/256-3862;  
 <BulletinBoard@sab.wels.net>. Deadline  
 is eight weeks before publication date.



# The Jonah in each of us

When we see the Jonah in each of us, we praise God that there is also a Jesus for each of us.

Paul E. Zell

Ending one's book with a question would ordinarily be considered unacceptable. The book of Jonah, however, is hardly ordinary. Not only does the inspired writer close with a question; he has us pondering other intriguing questions as well.

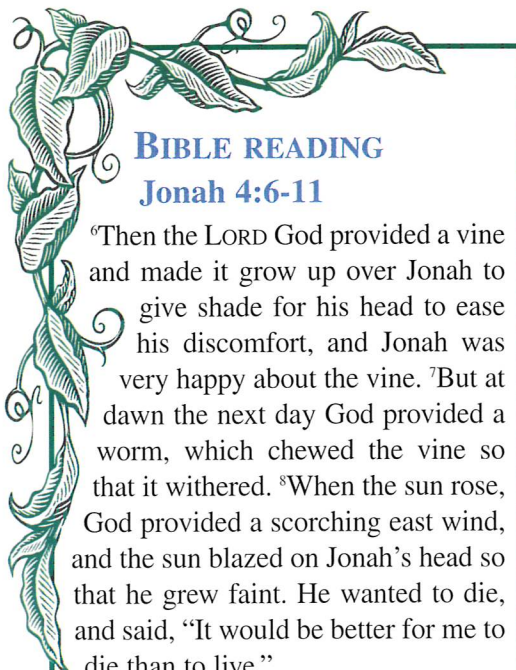
## Should the Lord not have been concerned about Nineveh?

In the Old Testament's only other reference to Jonah, the Spirit says that at Jonah's time "everyone in Israel, whether slave or free, was suffering" (2 Kings 14:26). Meanwhile, mighty Nineveh posed a serious threat to Israel. If Nineveh was spared God's wrath, Jonah must have reasoned, then its armies could invade his homeland and inflict even greater misery upon his people. That's apparently why Jonah ran away from his initial assignment. That's also why he's so angry here.

But the Lord saw beyond the balance of political power in the Middle East. He was concerned about 120,000 children in Nineveh so young that they could not "tell their right hand from their left" (4:11) and their parents, grandparents, older siblings, and neighbors. Like the Israelites, these were eternally precious souls. They had "turned from their evil ways" (Jonah 3:10). The Lord had compassion and forgave them. His closing question indicates that his concern about Nineveh would continue.

## Did Jonah finally see things as the Lord did?

We find a self-centered and self-righteous fellow sitting outside Nineveh. Jonah was more perturbed about a leafy vine than the fate of thousands of souls.



## BIBLE READING Jonah 4:6-11

<sup>6</sup>Then the LORD God provided a vine and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort, and Jonah was very happy about the vine. <sup>7</sup>But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed the vine so that it withered. <sup>8</sup>When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah's head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die, and said, "It would be better for me to die than to live."

<sup>9</sup>But God said to Jonah, "Do you have a right to be angry about the vine?"

"I do," he said. "I am angry enough to die."

<sup>10</sup>But the LORD said, "You have been concerned about this vine, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. <sup>11</sup>But Nineveh has more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left, and many cattle as well. Should I not be concerned about that great city?"

Yet Jonah himself later wrote this account, laying out his own misdeeds with no attempt to excuse them. Could he have written such a humiliating story unless he first had repented? Jonah's hope, it seems, was that others would learn from his selfish errors and especially from God's patience with him.

## Is there a Jonah in each of us?

We gain little if we study this book merely to analyze the life and times of Jonah. But have you or I ever

- found more pleasure in the temporary than in the eternal?
- become upset about losing an earthly comfort, while overlooking the gain of heavenly joys?
- focused too much on us and ours, not seeing how God is also concerned about them and theirs?

Sometimes there is a Jonah in each of us. We praise God that there is also a Jesus for each of us. Our Savior presented his life as a sinless sacrifice for our sins. Through his Word and sacraments he assures us that our guilt for misplaced priorities has been washed away by his blood and that God counts Jesus' goodness as our own.

Celebrating that, we will see more clearly that the mission he once placed before Jonah is still our mission. There's no question that you and I too can proclaim that gospel to any person and every nation.



*Paul Zell is a professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin.*

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# Jesus' miracles: PORTRAITS OF REDEMPTION

Mark J. Lenz

**INTRODUCTION**

Have you ever been caught in a violent storm? What emotions did you experience? What action did you take? How did you feel when the storm was over?

In what sense is life in this world like being caught in a violent storm? What would happen if we were left on our own? How has Jesus stilled the storm and rescued us?

**TEXT—MATTHEW 14:22-33**

Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. <sup>23</sup>After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, <sup>24</sup>but the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

<sup>25</sup>During the fourth watch of the night Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. <sup>26</sup>When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear.

<sup>27</sup>But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

<sup>28</sup>"Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water."

<sup>29</sup>"Come," he said.

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. <sup>30</sup>But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"

<sup>31</sup>Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"

<sup>32</sup>And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. <sup>33</sup>Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

**QUESTIONS, CONTINUED**

3. How did the disciples react when they saw Jesus coming to them on the sea? How did Jesus calm their fears?
4. What proof did Peter require that it really was Jesus? What happened when Peter saw the wind? What did Jesus do? Why did Jesus reprove Peter?
5. What happened when Jesus and Peter stepped into the boat? How did the disciples in the boat react (Mark 6:51,52)? What is the significance of what they said to Jesus?

**APPLICATIONS**

1. What are some of the storms people commonly experience? What are the causes of these storms?
2. Jesus knew that for his disciples to struggle in a storm would be less dangerous than staying with the wrong crowd. Give a modern-day example of this.
3. Artists have depicted Jesus on a hill praying, while in the distance the disciples are in a boat struggling against the storm. Suggest other possible ways to depict the scene.
4. Does God in his Word ever ask us to do something that at first seems foolhardy? Why or why not?
5. How can you experience Jesus' calm in the midst of the storms of life?
6. Why does God often choose to meet our needs in unexpected ways? What would it say about God if we could always forecast his actions?

**PRAYER**

Lord Jesus, I trust your wisdom in permitting the storms that come into my life. I am confident that you will either calm the storms or allow them to rage while you calm me. Most of all, thank you for conquering Satan and all the forces of evil so that the firestorm of hell cannot draw me into its vortex. Amen.

**QUESTIONS**

1. What "crowd" did Jesus dismiss (v. 21)? Why did he dismiss them (John 6:15)? How might this explain why Jesus immediately made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him? What did Jesus do after he sent the disciples away?
2. What problem did the disciples face? How far out to sea were they (John 6:19; Mark 6:47)?



# IN THE CROSS HAIRS

Richard L. Gurgel

## TOPIC: WHEN A CHILD FALLS AWAY

**Question:** Proverbs 22:6 tells us, “Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.” How do you explain when children, who went to Lutheran school and were taught by parents and grandparents to attend church faithfully, fall away, or so it seems? Why have they become neglectful when the Bible states that they won’t turn away?

**Answer:** Your question has troubled many Christian parents and grandparents who have watched children forsake the faith. Is God being unfaithful to a promise?

Before seeking to understand the comfort this verse gives in such situations, it would be helpful to remember two things. First, Scripture nowhere guarantees heaven to all who enroll in Lutheran school or attend church with family. Only faith in Jesus saves. A powerful part of spiritual training as God designed it is the witness of Christian parents and grandparents who testify to God’s law and gospel in everyday living. Although none of us comes close to being perfectly consistent, if our example of life conflicts with what is taught in church and school, that hardly would be training “a child in the way he should go.” This passage warns us as parents when our lives contradict God’s Word.

Second, note that many of Solomon’s inspired proverbs state how things typically work in God’s world. Often it would be stating more than the verse has said to insist it promises what always must happen. For example, look just four verses after the one you quote: “He who loves a pure heart and whose speech is gracious will have the king for his friend” (Proverbs 22:11). Certainly that is a general truth of how life works in the world that God

governs. However, a wicked ruler may indeed choose friends who are as wicked as he while despising those pure of heart. In the same way, verse six does not say, “No child trained in the way he should go will ever turn from it. There are no exceptions.” Sadly, some who have been richly blessed by the word and example of faithful Christian parents turn from the faith and never return.

However, this verse provides much comfort for a parent even in the midst of what seems to be just such a turning away by a child. The Holy Spirit is still at work in the heart of that child through the law and gospel that child once believed. The Spirit may also use difficulties to lead that heart to consider what it has left behind. Today’s unfaithfulness of a child may cause great sadness. But tomorrow may still bring the day when God’s grace yields eternal fruit through what was once planted in home, church, and school. Remember the parable of the (temporarily) lost son (Luke 15)!

Finally, remember that we cannot see faith. Even where a child’s life appears to give little evidence of faith, the Spirit may have preserved a tiny spark of saving faith that clings to Jesus. Thankfully, we follow a Savior about whom it is said, “A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out” (Isaiah 42:3). At such times we pray for that child and continue our witness by word and life. Many a mourning Christian parent will find joy on eternity’s morning that a child thought lost was not.



*Richard Gurgel is a professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin.*

*Have a question you want answered? Send it to 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222; <fic@sab.wels.net>.*

**Even where a child’s life appears to give little evidence of faith, the Spirit may have preserved a tiny spark of saving faith that clings to Jesus.**



# What's your favorite . . . results

In July we asked you what your favorite Bible passage was. We received a number of favorites—more than we have room to print. We appreciate every response and thank you for taking time to share your inspiration with us. Look for another potluck poll in the October issue.

## **Isaiah 43:1—Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name, you are mine.**

*Nancy Schneider, a member of St. Luke, New Lisbon, Wis., writes:*

This was my confirmation verse back in 1957. I'm sure the Holy Spirit was guiding my pastor when he chose this verse for me because I have relied on it so many times over the years.

## **Ephesians 2:8,9—For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.**

*Connie Wahoske, a member of Grace, Prickett, Wis., writes:*

It is my comfort when life overwhelms me. I am going to spend eternity in heaven, and I have nothing to do with it.

## **2 Corinthians 5:21—God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.**

*Earl Reichert, a member of Emanuel, New London, Wis., writes:*

Jesus on the cross actually became that very thing the Almighty God hated: sin. All the wrath of God over sin was poured out on Jesus. Jesus endured an infinite amount of pain and wrath in a finite amount of time. As Hebrews 12:2 says, Jesus “endured the cross” for the “joy set

before him.” The joy set before him was the face of everyone who in finite time would believe in him and worship him as Lord of all.

## **Hebrews 11:1—Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.**

*Nancy Whitcomb, a member of St. John, Burlington, Wis., writes:*

I experience so much comfort each time I read this verse. That brief sentence says it all for me regarding faith.

## **1 Corinthians 2:9—No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him.**

*Dorothy Hildebrandt, a member of Abiding Word, Houston, Tex., writes:*

Thanks to our Savior we have this unimaginable bliss and joy awaiting us for all eternity. It makes the cares and problems of this life seem so trivial. We Christians are strangers here on earth only passing through. Heaven is our real home.

## **Lamentations 3:21-23—Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning.**

*Jodi Smiley, a member of Gethsemane, Davenport, Iowa, writes:*

This passage is posted on my bathroom mirror so that I see it before bed every night and repent of my sins of the day. Every morning when I wake and see it I am reminded of God's compassion and wonder about the mercies and love God will show me this new day! I can find comfort and joy as I go about

my daily tasks, living for God each day and not worrying about whether or not I'm getting it right, but relying on his compassion to help me along the way.

## **Psalms 46:1—God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.**

*Elaine Lehmann, a member of Good Shepherd, Wisconsin Rapids, Wis., writes:*

It [this verse] has been with me always. As children we heard our grandparents give us devotions, and Psalm 46 was always included. When confirmation instruction had memory work, one topped the list—Psalm 46. Imagine my joy when it became my *Dankspruck*. During our early life of marriage, it often was part of devotions and always in mind. Through these 80 years, it has been a comfort in sickness and in health.

## **Mark 10:14,15—Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.**

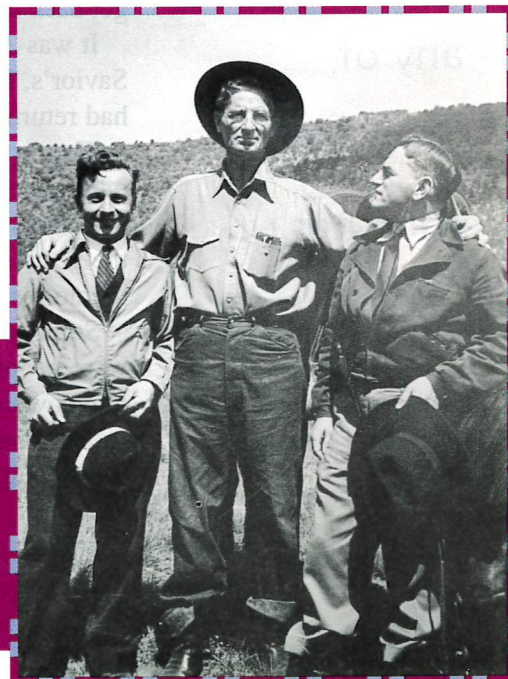
*Dan Oday, a member of Woodlawn, West Allis, Wis., writes:*

After watching my daughter work with the “Jesus Cares” program, I feel that these special children of God show us what it really means to receive the kingdom of God like a little child.

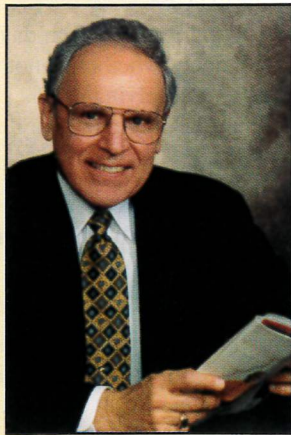
## Picture this

When asked to pose by a photographer after a mission meeting on the Ft. Apache Indian Reservation, Arizona, in the 1940s, Pastor Adalbert Schultz (left), Pastor E.E. Guenther (center), and Pastor Edgar Hoenecke couldn't help but have a little fun. Ruth Kessel writes: “It is obvious why the Apache people referred to my father [Guenther] as *Inashoot Ndezen*—the tall missionary.

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.

By God's grace  
the message  
does not  
change and  
will not  
change in  
any of  
our WELS  
churches.

## You can go back

**A**s we drove toward the oceanfront, we noticed how rundown the neighborhood had become. The once stately hotel slumped by the side, faded and peeling, like an unshaven derelict. Although the sun shone brightly and the temperature reached the 70s, only a handful of people showed up on the boardwalk.

The big carousel in the bigger building, where we and our children once rode the broncos and tried for the rings, was gone. Debris littered the floor where it stood, and the building groaned in disrepair. The shops were gone or closed, the miniature golf course overgrown, and the restaurants we once sought out now signaled, "Stay away." Boardwalk boards were bowed with time.

"I guess you really can't go back," I muttered to my wife.

Returning to the church where I began my ministry, within commuting distance from New York City, we noticed changes there too. Wider roads, more people! Our favorite orchard, now a big housing development! Many different ethnic groups, making new opportunities for ministry! And, you already know the big change we'd observe once we got back to Manhattan.

It was 26 years since we'd left Our Savior's, East Brunswick, N.J., and we had returned for its mortgage burning.

The changes around the church and parsonage were not as stark as some of the others we had noticed. Inside the nave, the years seemed to meld together as old memories flooded back.

Some of the people who came to church were people we knew 26 years ago, but others were new. All were friendly and welcoming. We allowed time for some sightseeing, but we agreed that the high-

light was at the church and with the congregation.

So, why do I tell you all this? Because I want you to know that you can go back to where God's Word is faithfully taught and God's people gather to praise him. Places will change, people will age, new people will come, even ministry styles will vary; but the message of Christ crucified and risen, and the eternal comfort it brings, does not change and did not change at Our Savior's. By God's grace the message does not change and will not change in any of our WELS churches.

The cheer I felt came at the bedside of a now bedridden friend and long-time member whose hope and comfort come from the living Christ. We didn't hear any complaints of fortunes turned sour. We heard words of praise and thanks to God and for God's people for their grace and goodness in Christ.

It came from those whose thankful hearts spilled over in praise and thankfulness to our Savior in the festival service, at the celebration banquet, and in our conversations. It came from old friendships renewed and new friendships begun, all tied together in Christ our Savior.

It came in the Pentecost service the next day when the current pastor at Our Savior's directed us to see once again how wonderfully the Holy Spirit sent by Christ has worked in our lives and will use us in God's service.

My cheer comes now, too, when I think of the bond you, the reader, and I share by faith in Jesus, making us family under God with work to do while it is day.

*Gary P. Baumler*



# Charitable Gift Annuities

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and **YOU!**



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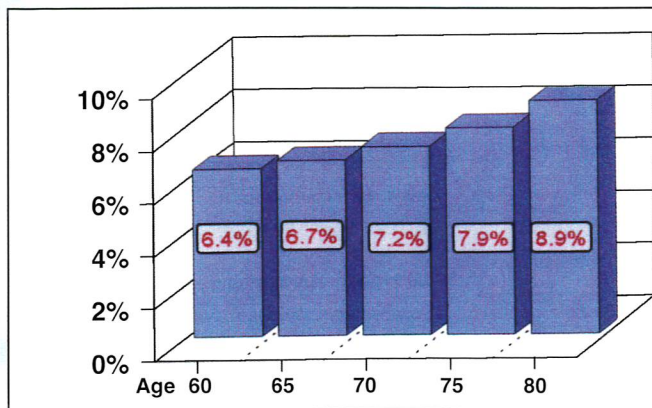
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## Here's more . . .

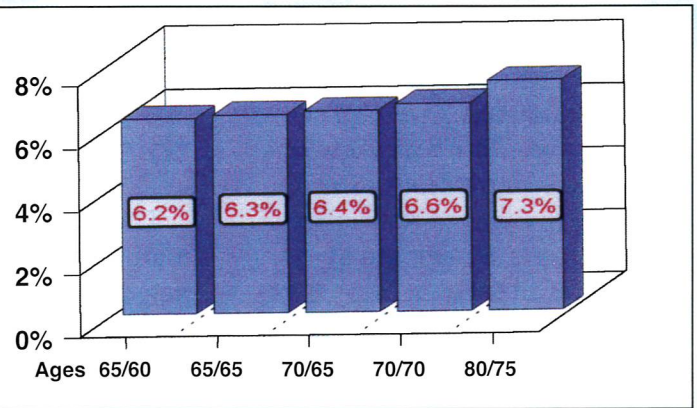
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HELLO  
my name is

MARTHA

**A name can mean many things, but one name truly counts.**

Martha C. Sherod

I've hated my name almost my whole life. **In grade school I was teased about being married to George Washington.** My oldest brother often quoted Jesus' words to me, "Martha, Martha . . ." (put a lot of exasperation in there!). I wanted to crawl under the pew every time the pastor preached on the story of Mary and Martha. She was always the bad sister, always choosing the wrong thing. Wouldn't you know it, the first text my husband was assigned to preach on was Luke 10:38-42.

Although I suppose Jezebel or Sapphira would have been worse biblical names, I always felt burdened. I grew up in a time of Kimberlys, Nancys, Janets, Susans, and Marys. Martha was so out of it. In my three-year high school of 1,200 students, there was only one other Martha. Couldn't my parents have picked something less old-fashioned sounding?

It wasn't until I was in college that the other story featuring Martha started to make an impact on me. The first half of John 11:5 quickly became a favorite verse: "Jesus loved Martha. . . ." Later in the

story of Lazarus' resurrection, Martha makes a bold statement of her faith in Jesus: "Lord, . . . if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask" (John 11:21). What faith she had! I too wanted to be like this Martha who trusted so completely in her Savior.

**The powerful promise of the resurrection is for all of us, not just for the Marthas of this world.**

**The years passed, and I guess I matured so that my name was no longer such a burden.** I rarely think of it that way anymore. But recently I've been drawn back to John 11, especially to verse 23. There Jesus assures Martha, "Your brother will rise again." No, I don't have a brother named Lazarus, but I did have a brother named John. A few years ago, after a short and terrible battle with cancer, my dear brother died and went to be with our Lord. What

a comfort Jesus' words are to me.

Over and over in Scripture the Lord reassures us of the resurrection of all believers. When we come face to face with death among our family and friends, we turn again to his Word and to his promises. How do people without a loving Savior make it through those terrible times? In those last days my brother thanked my parents for sharing God's Word with him while he was young. He carried his Bible along to all the chemotherapy treatments and doctor appointments. One of the last times I talked to him, he told me he wasn't afraid to die. The powerful promise of the resurrection is for all of us, not just for the Marthas of this world.

**I think now that my parents were right in naming me Martha.** I do in fact act like a Martha, much more than a Mary, and I know that the Lord wants me to spend more time with him, being assured of his love and his resurrection.

*Martha Sherod, wife of Missionary Jim Sherod, is a member of Megumi (Grace), Mito, Japan.*