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AUGUST 2006

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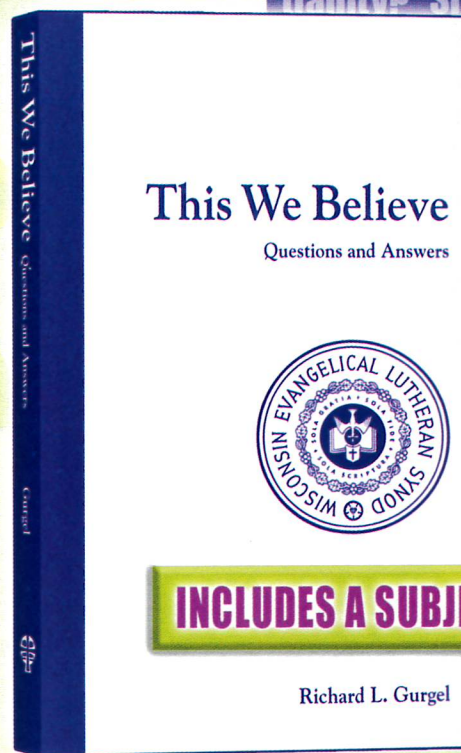
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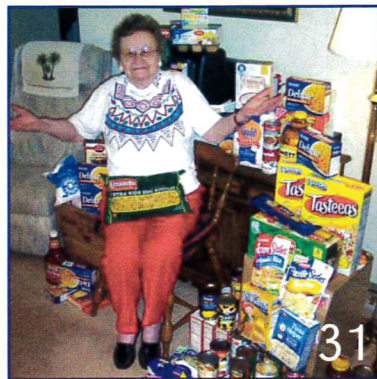
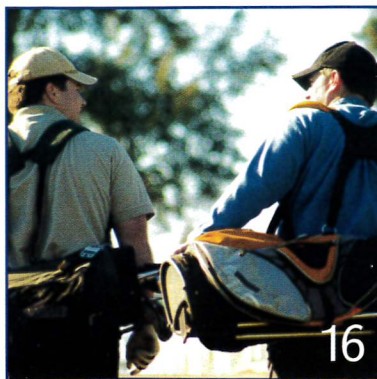
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in him? Where does Scrip-  
ture indicate precisely how  
old the earth is?

“The call to share the gospel is not limited by borders, language, race, or culture.”



SHUTTERSTOCK



## Forward in Christ

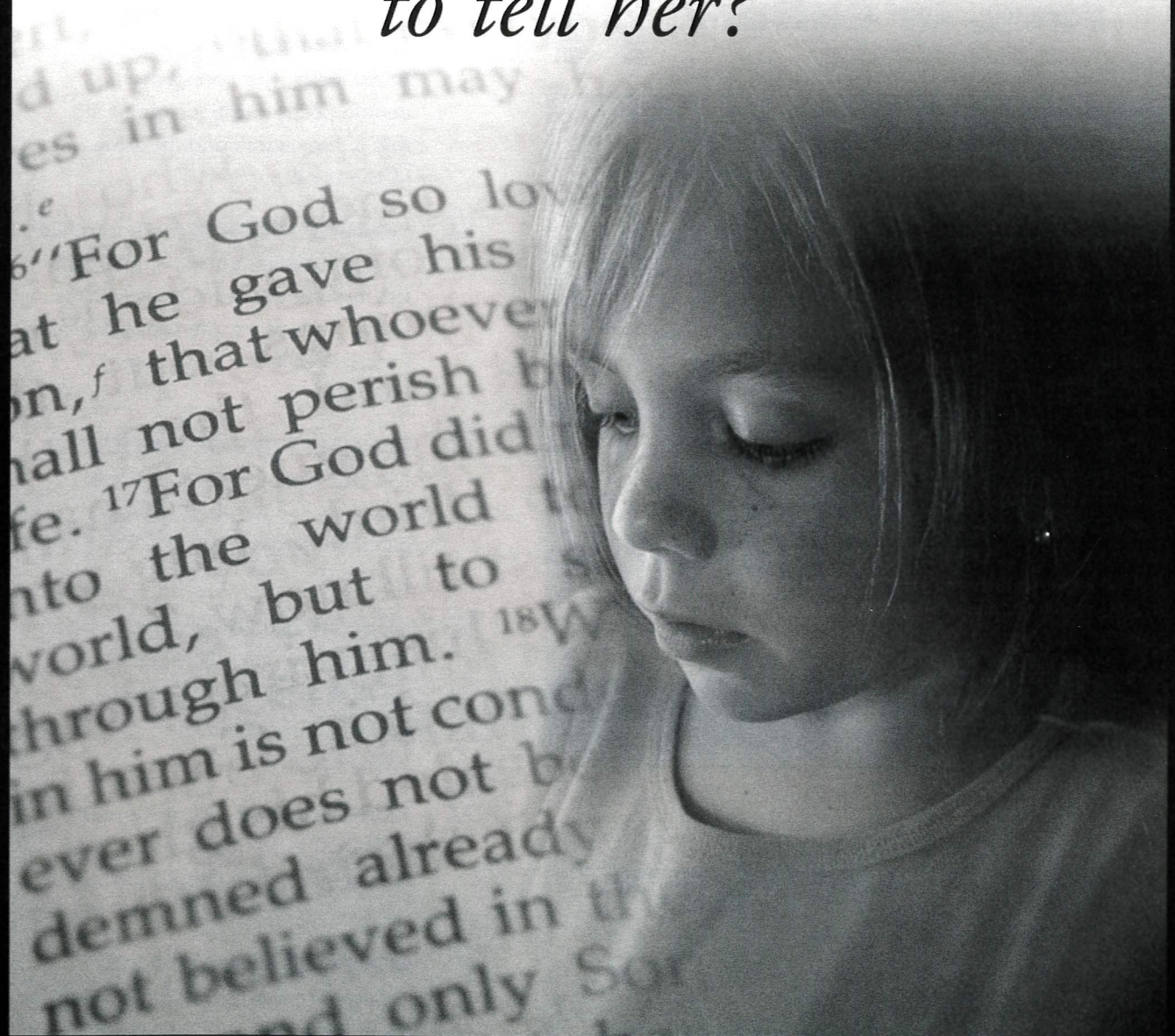
✝ The official magazine of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

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# She doesn't know.

*Will you be the one  
to tell her?*



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MAY THE LORD OUR GOD  
BE WITH US AS HE WAS  
WITH OUR FATHERS;  
MAY HE NEVER LEAVE US  
NOR FORSAKE US.  
*1 Kings 8:57*

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# AUGUST

## WHAT'S INSIDE *by Julie Wietzke*

One of the things for which we strive at *Forward in Christ* is making our articles relevant and helpful to you in your daily life. Several articles this month cover subjects that you are hearing about in the news and discussing at your dinner table. The hot topic of immigration ("The gospel is without borders," p. 10) is one. The debate between creation and evolution ("The great debate continues," p. 14) is the other. We hope these articles provide some biblical background and wisdom for your discussions.

We are also starting a new series—one that we have named "Real life." Here we will tell the stories of people who have encountered challenges and opportunities in their lives and share how God has been with them and helped them in their struggles. The first article discusses losing a child at birth ("Life is never worthless," p. 34). In future months we will be touching on the subjects of wrestling with questions about your faith, forgiving someone for a crime, and attending a secular college. If you have a story to share, submit your suggestion online at [www.wels.net/ficseries](http://www.wels.net/ficseries) or send it to *Real Life, Forward in Christ*, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222; fic@sab.wels.net.

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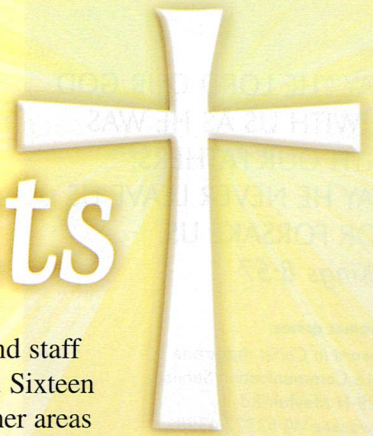
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# Call assignments



On May 20, the Conference of Presidents assigned 98 new and previous teacher and staff minister candidates out of the 126 who were available for assignment to any location. Sixteen May 2006 graduates deferred assignment, choosing to pursue further education or other areas of service. Four declined assignment. Due to marriage plans or living in specific locations, 51 new and previous candidates are available for calls from congregations through their district presidents. Additional calls/assignments have been made since May 20. To see a list, go to [www.mlc-wels.edu/home/academics/resources/assignments/](http://www.mlc-wels.edu/home/academics/resources/assignments/).

## Teachers

**Arndt, Janet J.**, to Divine Savior, Doral, Fla.  
**Babinec, Emily R.**, to St. John, Goodhue, Minn.  
**Babler, Michael A.**, to Peace, Granger, Ind.  
**Beck, Sarah R.**, to Prince of Peace, Salt Lake City, Utah  
**Belz, Carly J.**, to Zion, Monroe, Mich.  
**Block, Logan C.**, to East Fork LHS, Whiteriver, Ariz.  
**Bode, Kevin M.**, to St. John, Libertyville, Ill.  
**Bonow, Samantha S.**, to Immanuel, Fort Worth, Tex.  
**Bush, Crystal R.**, to Peridot, Peridot, Ariz.  
**Deno, Cynthia J.**, to St. Paul, Rapid City, S.D.  
**Dodge, David L.**, to Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis.  
**Douglas, Daniel L.**, to Mt. Calvary, Redding, Calif.  
**Ehinger, Mallory L.**, to Zion, Hartland, Wis.  
**Ehlke, Sarah E.**, to St. John, Lake City, Minn.  
**Ehrenberg, Amanda B.**, to St. Thomas, Goodyear, Ariz.  
**Ewald, Katherine P.**, to St. John, Sparta, Wis.  
**Falck, Jessica M.**, to St. John, Wauwatosa, Wis.  
**Feld, Rachel M.**, to Bethany, Kenosha, Wis.  
**Foster, Abby R.**, to Immanuel, Waukegan, Ill.  
**Glodowski, Adam M.**, to Zion, Egg Harbor, Wis.  
**Graumann, Bethany M.**, to St. John-St. James, Reedsville, Wis.  
**Grootemont, Theresa M.**, to English, Viroqua, Wis.  
**Groth, Justin E.**, to Immanuel, Hutchinson, Minn.  
**Gumm, Joseph B.**, to Salem, Colorado Springs, Colo.  
**Gumm, Peter A.**, to Cross of Glory, Peoria, Ariz.  
**Henselin, Karl P.**, to St. Mark, Green Bay, Wis.  
**Hermanson, Jon M.**, to Trinity, Kiel, Wis.  
**Hermanson, Katie M.**, to Zion, Toledo, Ohio  
**Herrmann, Seth E.**, to St. Andrew, Chicago, Ill.  
**Hieb, Carrie J.**, to Siloah, Milwaukee, Wis.  
**Hill, Daniel R.**, to Shepherd of the Valley, Westminster, Colo.  
**Hochmuth, Nathan J.**, to Salem, Loretto, Minn.  
**Huebner, Paul D.**, to Shoreland LHS, Somers, Wis.  
**Kassulke, Rachel E.**, to Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis.

**Kock, Drew P.**, to St. Croix LHS, West Saint Paul, Minn.  
**Kramer, Rebecca R.**, to Crown Of Life, Fort Myers, Fla.  
**Krause, Aaron A.**, to Bethany, Manitowoc, Wis.  
**Lau, Martha V.**, to Trinity, Caledonia, Wis.  
**Leifer, Paul R.**, to Hope, Penryn, Calif.  
**Lindeman, Katie J.**, to St. Luke, Jackson, Mich.  
**Lockman, Jonathan R.**, to Westside Christian School, Middleton, Wis.  
**Luehring, Kathleen K.**, to Redeemer, Tomahawk, Wis.  
**Maresh, Rebecca S.**, to Riverview, Appleton, Wis.  
**Miskowski, Matthew P.**, to Salem, Milwaukee, Wis.  
**Moll, Katie M.**, to Waucousta, Campbellsport, Wis.  
**Morgan, Leah S.**, to Divine Savior, Doral, Fla.  
**Mueller, Timothy P. Jr.**, to St. John, Sparta, Wis.  
**Mueller, Lisa N.**, to Immanuel, La Crosse, Wis.  
**Niemi, Jonathan D.**, to St. John, Jefferson, Wis.  
**Nitz, Amy G.**, to St. John, Libertyville, Ill.  
**Nolte, Mark R.**, to St. Paul, Howards Grove, Wis.  
**Nottling, Matthew D.**, to St. Mark's, Watertown, Wis.  
**O'Brien, Katie L.**, to Christ the Lord, Houston, Tex.  
**Ohm, Justin M.**, to Immanuel, Hadar, Neb.  
**Olson, Cory D.**, to Nebraska LHS, Waco, Neb.  
**Pappalardo, Renee J.**, to Fox Valley LHS, Appleton, Wis.  
**Peck, Randy D.**, to Faith, Antioch, Ill.  
**Plagenz, Stephanie L.**, to Reformation, San Diego, Calif.  
**Pralle, Maria A.**, to Redeemer, Tucson, Ariz.  
**Priestap, Christa A.**, to Small Steps Christian Learning Center, Port Orange, Fla.  
**Rahn, Deanna R.**, to St. Stephen, Fallbrook, Calif.  
**Rathje, Stefanie L.**, to Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis.  
**Redfield, Matthew R.**, to Grace, Falls Church, Va.  
**Reils, Rebecca L.**, to St. Paul, Norfolk, Neb.  
**Schaffer, Kate E.**, to Kettle Moraine LHS, Jackson, Wis.  
**Schlomer, Amber D.**, to St. Mark, Watertown, Wis.

**Schmidt, Heather R.**, to St. Paul, Franklin, Wis.  
**Schroeder, Terri E.**, to Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Mich.  
**Schuessler, Sara R.**, to Nozomi (Hope), Tsuchiura City, Ibaraki Ken, Japan  
**Schwartz, Cassandra C.**, to Crete, Crete, Ill.  
**Seeger, Jennifer M.**, to Grace, Oshkosh, Wis.  
**Seiler, Jennifer R.**, to Siloah, Milwaukee, Wis.  
**Sellnow, Angela K.**, to Mt. Calvary, Menasha, Wis.  
**Siegler, Justin J.**, to St. John, Baraboo, Wis.  
**Specht, Amanda L.**, to Calvary, Bellevue, Wash.  
**Steindorf, Erin N.**, to California LHS, Wildomar, Calif.  
**Swogger, Kyle P.**, to Palos, Palos Heights, Ill.  
**Tetzlaff, Lauren E.**, to Living Word, Mission Viejo, Calif.  
**Tjernagel, Joelle R.**, to Mt. Calvary, Flagstaff, Ariz.  
**Unke, Daniel J.**, to Beautiful Saviour, Carlsbad, Calif.  
**Valleskey, Katherine E.**, to Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Mich.  
**Wendt, Joshua J.**, to St. Paul, Riverside, Calif.  
**Zahn, Courtney L.**, to Apostles, San Jose, Calif.

## Staff ministers

**Baures, Gregory J.**, to Christ Our Rock, Rochester, Minn.  
**Steenbock, Brandon D.**, to St. Paul, New Ulm, Minn.

Feedback will return to this page next month. Share your thoughts about a specific article or about *Forward in Christ* in general by writing us at **Feedback**, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222; [fic@sab.wels.net](mailto:fic@sab.wels.net).

Letters between 100 and 200 words are preferred. Include full name and address. Letters are edited for clarity, conciseness, and relevance.

# We matter to God

*But Zion said, "The LORD has forsaken me, the Lord has forgotten me." "Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are ever before me. . . ." Isaiah 49:14-16*

James A. Mattek

**H**er beauty is fading, her husband is in bed with another woman, her children are in rebellion, and her job is in jeopardy. And one more thing . . . God's love is in doubt. These often go together: the circumstances of life and the criticism of God. Job did it. Martha did it. The exiled chosen people did it. You've done it. I've done it. We lament the messes in our lives and conclude that God is a bit messed up too.

Because God's people chose to be messed up spiritually, God sent columns of troops from Babylon to snake toward their towns like a killer tornado. They flattened the towns, killed many, and kept some to carry home like trophies. And God predicted his people's response. They would say, "There's something wrong with God. We don't matter to him anymore. The Lord has forsaken us and forgotten us."

## Close to his heart

Contrary to appearances, God was still clearly in their corner. His response to their doubts sparkles from the pages of Scripture: "Can a mother forsake the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you!"

A mother tenderly nursing her infant is high on the universal list of precious moments. God is saying that he cares for you, me, and his exiled people even more than an adoring mom. How impossible for the Lord to abandon us. He holds us close to his heart, even when

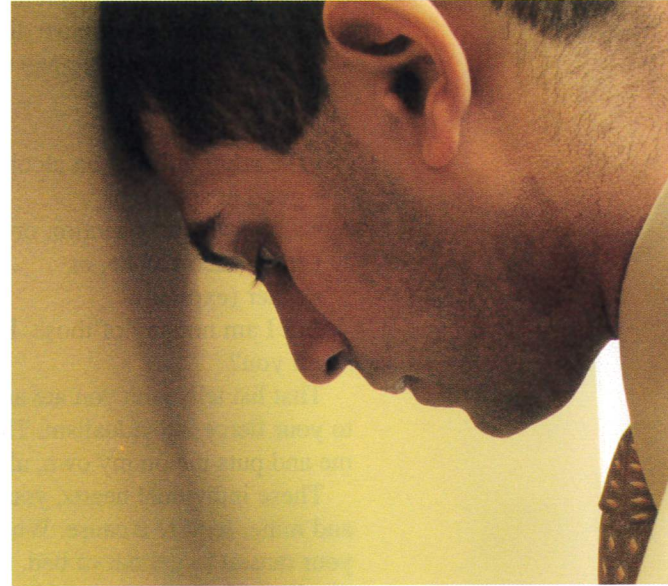
our circumstances tempt us to doubt.

## Tattooed on his hands

To assure us again that our doubting is a waste of our time, God shows us his hands. He has tattooed our names on them. "See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands." Sometimes tattoos are carved onto the skin to display affection for someone. A husband might tattoo the name of his wife on his shoulder. God tattoos our names on his hands because we matter to him. We're always on his mind.

Sometimes human relationships fall apart, and the tattoo has to be painfully removed. But this doesn't happen with God. He put his words into action and lived among us for 33 years. Jesus said that God is like a shepherd who leaves the 99 to hunt frantically for the one stray; like the father who can't stop thinking about his long lost son; like a rich host who opens the banquet hall to a menagerie of bag ladies and bums. We matter to God.

In his social contacts Jesus embraced the unloved and unworthy, the folks who matter little to the rest of society but matter infinitely to God. People with leprosy, quarantined outside the city, Jesus touched. A half-breed woman who had gone through five husbands and who was the center of the town's gossip, Jesus tapped as his mis-



sionary. Another woman, too full of shame over her embarrassing condition to approach Jesus face to face, touched his robe hoping he would not notice. He did notice, and she learned that it isn't easy to escape Jesus' gaze. We matter too much.

Jesus showed that the hand of God is not too big for the smallest person in the world. It is a hand engraved with our individual names and engraved also with the wounds of our salvation. He has not forgotten us. We matter too much.

*Contributing editor James Mattek, chief executive officer of Wisconsin Lutheran Child & Family Service, is a member at Trinity, Watertown, Wisconsin.*

# Alone and together

Thomas J. Jeske

“You don’t know me. You haven’t experienced my loss and pain. You don’t know my people’s story. What could you possibly have to say to me?”

Well. We do come from different towns and time zones. We have different tastes in music, fashion, and food. We have different tones of skin and speech. You happen to be

- divorced, or
- in the military, or
- the adult child of an alcoholic, or
- good at sports, or
- a breast cancer victim, or
- into video games, or
- other (explain).

But I am not any of those. How could I understand you?

That list tells who you are and what contributes to your fierce individualism. That list also labels me and puts me on my own, alone.

These individual hearts, yours and mine, require a cause. What’s your reason to get out of bed, to get dressed, to go to work? Perhaps you need to cope with misunderstanding or face opposition. Why are we willing to endure pain? In other words, we need to be needed. We need to band together.

“The true brotherhood is . . . the communion of saints, in which we all are brothers and sisters, so near to one another that greater nearness could never be conceived. For here is one baptism, one Christ, one Sacrament, one meal, one Gospel, one faith, one spirit, one spiritual body, and each one is a member of the other; no other brotherhood is so deep and close.”\*

We express that unity in the Lord’s Supper. But one woman said to her pastor, “What I do at communion is between God and me. I know that there are other people present, but they don’t speak for me or I for them. My religion is so very personal that others don’t really factor into my Lord’s Supper.”

**We need to be needed. We need to band together.**

“Just as bread is made by crushing many grains of wheat together and the bodies of many grains of wheat become one loaf of bread, in which each grain loses its own body and form and takes on the common body of the loaf, and as the grapes similarly lose their own form and become one . . . wine, so must we if we rightly use the Sacrament.”\*

That woman’s “God and me” idea is a biblical one. But hers is not the whole picture. For after I anticipate a communion table for two—God and me—he gives me peripheral vision to see the diversity of my brothers and sisters in the faith. Communion is not just God and me, but the whole family of faith at the table.

“Out of love, Christ . . . takes on our form and fights with us against sin, death and all evil, so that we, being kindled with love, take his form, trust ourselves to his righteousness, his life and blessedness, and so through the fellowship of the good that belongs to him and the wretchedness that belongs to us, we become one loaf, one bread, one body, one drink, and all is common. Oh! What a great Sacrament this is, that Christ and his Church are one flesh and one bone.”\*

We are all different. Is there any hope for me to understand you? Our t-shirts and rubber wristbands may read NASCAR or Tour de France or Race for the Cure, but

“. . . through the selfsame love we should be transformed and should accept the infirmities of all other Christians and take upon us their form and their afflictions, and give to them whatever we can, that they may enjoy us. This is the right communion.”\*

That they may enjoy us—alone and together.

*Contributing editor Tom Jeske is pastor at Living Hope, Omaha, Nebraska.*

\*Sermon on the Sacrament of the Body of Christ, Martin Luther, 1519





at the foot of the cross. Richard L. Gurgel

## TOPIC: Christian husbands and wives

**1 Peter 3:7 calls the wife the “weaker partner.” In what way is the woman weaker?**

As we get stuck on one phrase from this verse, we fail to see its overall beauty. It’s ironic that a passage that urges husbands to see their wives’ exalted status ends up being a target for some who wrongly accuse Peter and the whole Bible of having a “low” view of women.

So we’ll follow a little tangent before answering your question. Notice this verse’s context. Peter just urged Christian wives to recognize their husband’s headship. He encourages them to do so even if they have unbelieving husbands. In such circumstances, Christian wives weren’t to give in to fear that their unbelieving husbands will abuse their headship. Left unspoken is the confidence Christian women have that the Lord knows how to protect his own.

Peter then continues by urging Christian husbands to not let such sinful distortion of headship be found among us. Peter urges Christian husbands to be considerate as they live with their wives. Then comes the phrase listing one reason Christian husbands show such consideration.

But in our curiosity about the meaning of “weaker partner,” what’s forgotten is that Peter follows that first point with a stronger point. Why else would a Christian husband be considerate toward his wife? She’s a co-heir of God’s gracious gift of eternal life! Our equal status in Christ as loved children of God and heirs of heaven is the Christian husband’s most powerful reason to treat his wife with loving consideration.

Peter closes by giving a warning to Christian husbands when they are tempted to ignore this encouragement. If husbands neglect such consideration, they don’t just damage their relationship with their wives. They damage their relationship with God. They “hinder [their] prayers.” If I live as an inconsiderate head towards my wife, I’m really asking my Head—Jesus—to treat me that same way! That’s enough to send all Christian

husbands to Christ’s cross to confess our lack of consideration. There, in forgiving grace, we find the power to treat our wives as the co-heirs of grace they truly are.

With that context, it’s evident that Peter isn’t in any way speaking in a derogatory manner about wives or women in general when he calls them “the weaker partner.” Part of the misunderstanding can be traced to the New International Version’s translation. While not perfect, the King James Version’s translation, “weaker vessel,” preserved the Greek word’s basic meaning.

The word “vessel” can be any kind of container or instrument that holds something else or serves another specific function, depending on the context. In the ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament it’s often used for the temple “vessels” or “utensils” the priests used. Another use of the word is for the physical body. The apostle Paul uses the word that way in 2 Corinthians 4:7, telling us we possess the gospel in “jars of clay.”

Peter appears to be using the word similarly here. Why ask Christian husbands to be considerate toward their wives? As far as our bodies are concerned, the wife tends to be at a physical disadvantage. Peter appears to be warning Christian husbands not to abuse their physical strength so as to cause the fear in “the weaker partner” that unbelieving husbands often cause.

But Peter may have another concern in mind. Although weaker in physical strength and muscle mass, wives become mothers. Consider how important it is for a Christian husband to exercise wise consideration of his wife as the one that will bring children into the world.

*Contributing editor Richard Gurgel, a professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin, is a member at Calvary, Thiensville.*

# The gospel is without borders

The immigration debate poses questions about the role of the church and the state. As Christians, we just need to share the gospel with all people.

Michael A. Roth

**T**his past spring, thousands of people joined in rallies and debates to address the subject of immigration to the United States, both documented and undocumented. For too long, our nation's laws and the enforcement of those laws have been ambiguous, sending mixed messages to immigrants in this country and to those considering immigration to this country. Headlines and news reports spoke of the need for border security, proposals for temporary worker visas, plans to send the National Guard to the border, and cries for *Justicia por todos*. Others were asking questions like, "Should we in the church be reaching out to undocumented people?" and "Should we in the church be reporting undocumented people?"

History tells us that this is not the first time our nation has struggled with immigration. In the mid 1850s, the question was over who should process new immigrants into the country. The federal government took over that responsibility from the states. Then the question was where to do this processing, so the government opened the first federal immigration station on Ellis Island in the New York harbor in 1892. Various immigration laws in 1907, 1917, 1921, and 1924 tried to

answer the question about who would be allowed to immigrate to this country. Answers in those various laws ranged from open and welcoming proposals to discriminatory and restrictive suggestions against peoples of certain nations and regions of the world. In our own church body, our churches and schools asked the question about whether to worship and provide instruction in English or German.

## **Immigration is the state's responsibility**

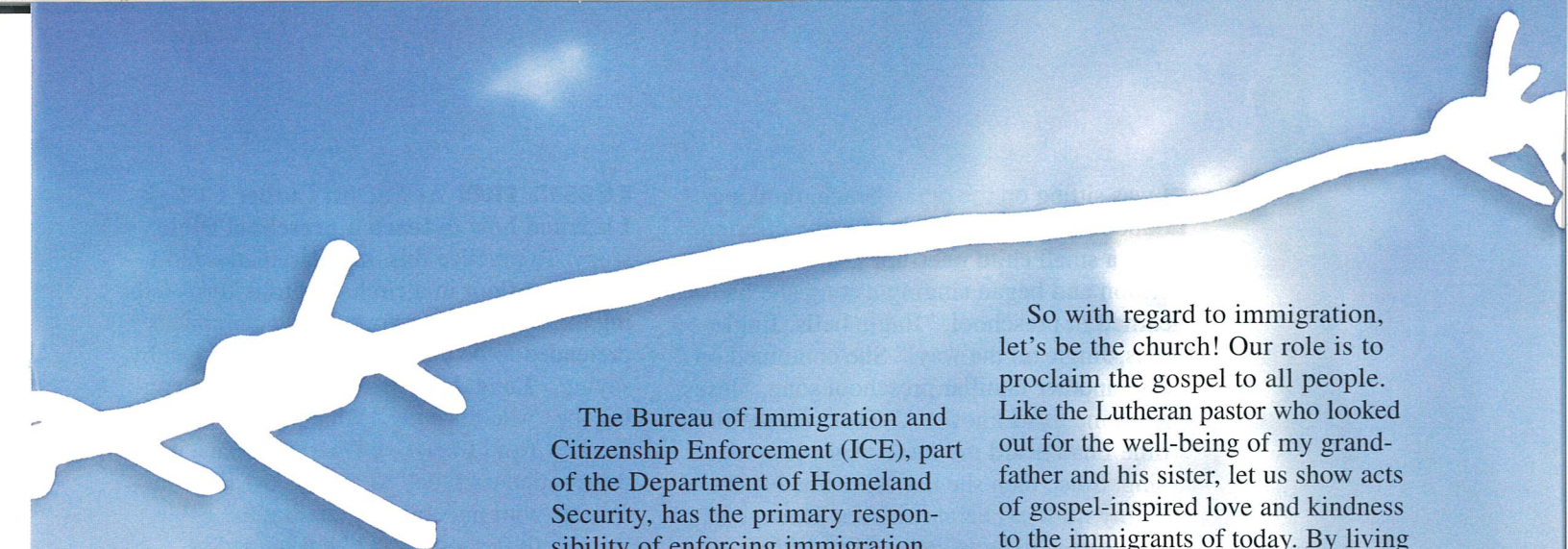
But immigration is more than just a set of historical facts and laws. It is a momentous event for people. The Ellis Island Web site indicates that 40 percent of Americans can trace their ancestry to immigrants who passed through Ellis Island.

I am one of those people. In 1914, my grandfather, then age five, came with his family from Russia to the United States. He and his younger sister contracted measles on the voyage and were quarantined upon arrival at Ellis Island. He was forced to stay there, while his family moved on to the Midwest. According to the story, as told by my grandmother, the family asked a Lutheran pastor in New York City to look out for the two youngest children. My great-grandfather then

returned to New York when they were well to bring them back to the family. I am thankful that the government was there to process my family into this country and provide medical care for my grandfather. I am also thankful that the church was there to look out for his well-being.

This process of immigration was life-changing. It was a new country, a new language, a new culture, a new life. My grandfather and his family found great help in their new lives from the Lutheran church. At church they heard the gospel message proclaimed in their own German language, while they were also learning to transition and assimilate into their new country. The church welcomed them and ministered to them. They were not denied access to the Word of God, to the messages of law and gospel, because of language or immigrant status.

Isn't this part of the wisdom of God, that he gave such defined roles and responsibilities to the church and the state? In Romans 13 God has given authority and responsibility to our government to look out for the safety and security of its citizens. To carry out its responsibility, the government uses laws



and administers punishment for lawbreakers. These are the tools God gave. Therefore, it is good and proper that there would be laws set up to administer the crossing of borders and entrance into our country, for it is these borders that set up the limits of our government's authority and responsibility.

#### **Sharing the gospel is the church's responsibility**

God also gave responsibility and authority to his church. "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19,20). The call to share the gospel is not limited by borders, language, race, or culture. It is a call to proclaim the gospel to all peoples. We believe it is the gospel that has the power to change hearts for the salvation of souls.

Perhaps this is instructive for us as we listen to the debate taking place in our country today. As citizens of this country, let's encourage our government to set up good and wise laws. Let's be people who obey those laws. Let's pray for wisdom for our leaders as they determine how to administer entrance into this country. But then let's also recognize that the administration and enforcement of those laws is limited by borders and limited to those designated by our government to enforce those laws.

The Bureau of Immigration and Citizenship Enforcement (ICE), part of the Department of Homeland Security, has the primary responsibility of enforcing immigration laws. It works, as necessary, together with other law enforcement agencies to do this. However, it repeatedly states that it does not want schools or churches to be reporting undocumented immigrants or people of unlawful presence. Law enforcement is its responsibility! It wants schools and churches to carry out their responsibilities.

**The call to share the gospel is not limited by borders, language, race, or culture.**


#### **Make disciples of all nations.**

This makes sense. It fits with what we already believe and teach about the roles of church and state. The church preaches and teaches obedience to the laws of our nation, but it does not enforce those laws. For example, the church teaches our members to obey speed limits, but we don't stand out front of church and deny entrance to those who admit that they were speeding on the way to church.

So with regard to immigration, let's be the church! Our role is to proclaim the gospel to all people. Like the Lutheran pastor who looked out for the well-being of my grandfather and his sister, let us show acts of gospel-inspired love and kindness to the immigrants of today. By living our faith in this way, God will provide us the opportunities to share the message of salvation with peoples of many nations. The possession of documents allowing legal presence in this country is not a requirement for hearing the gospel. Turning in undocumented people is not the role of the church. Proclaiming the gospel, teaching the message of Jesus and salvation, and guiding people with the Scriptures in their lives of sanctification—these are the roles and responsibilities given to us. Let's first choose to lead people to Jesus and then work with them in their lives of faith and sanctification. Then let their love for Jesus move them to live in accordance with the will of God and obey the God-given authority of the government.

So, let's put aside the rancor of the political debate, and, instead, let's be the church! Many souls that are new to our country need to hear what God has done for them. Many of them came here with legal documents; some did not. Yet, both groups are equally in need of hearing the message of salvation. What creative, gospel-inspired ways can you find to reach out and show the love of Christ to our nation's new immigrants?

*Pastor Michael Roth is the mission development coordinator of Cristo Palabra de Vida, WELS' outreach ministry to Hispanics and Latinos.*



I was sitting on the organ bench, thinking about the music I needed for the offering, when a small child interrupted the pastor's sermon and began singing a song she had learned in preschool. "Jingle bells, Jingle bells, Jingle all the way!" She continued on with another familiar preschool song, "Jesus loves me this I know . . ." That was the first time I had heard my three-year-old student sing. Since then she has blossomed into one of my most exuberant singers. How gratifying to see students develop a love for singing, especially sacred songs.

My dream to be a teacher was fulfilled when I graduated in May 2005. I was assigned to St. Peters, Sturgeon Bay, Wis., to serve as the director and teacher of the preschool, the first-grade language arts teacher, and church organist. My first year of ministry has been one of overflowing blessings from the Lord.

The primary goal of teaching preschool is to provide a quality, Christian-based education for young children, with a special focus of reaching families outside our church walls with the gospel. Each class, professional experience, and assignment at Martin Luther College interlocked to equip me for early childhood ministry.

**Lesson one:** At Martin Luther College I learned how to teach a preschool Bible story. To practice this, my classmates and I sat on the floor in a circle and took turns telling the Bible story as our fellow classmates pretended to be young children. We began by saying, "Long, long ago" and ended by singing the "Alleluia song," which is the Verse of the Day from *Christian Worship*. I have used this routine each day as I sit on the floor in a circle with my children, ending the Bible story with the song just like I learned at Martin Luther College.

One of my preschoolers tried to teach the song to her mother. Despite the mother's best efforts, her daughter insisted that "you're not doing it like Miss Bauer!" This mom even requested a copy of the "Alleluia song" so she could sing it "just like Miss Bauer teaches it." They are now able to sing together that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." The gospel message has reached beyond my preschool walls.

**Lesson two:** Martin Luther College professors reminded me that Christian education must reach beyond the Bible story. It must permeate the entire day. Sometimes the gospel reaches just outside my classroom doors to the hallway bulletin board. The children traced and cut out colorful circles for smiley faces. These happy faces became the artwork for our hallway bulletin board that reads, "Smile, Jesus Loves You!"

# LESSONS LEARNED

A teacher shares how the lessons she learned at Martin Luther College transferred to real-life experiences in the classroom.

Michal Bauer

**LESSON THREE:** While I was student teaching at the Martin Luther College Early Childhood Center, MLC students visited once a week to read to the children. I saw how the children and students enjoyed this special connection. I have been able to connect the generations by incorporating grandparents and older children from our elementary school. These volunteers lead story time, reading to the children as a group or individually.



Michal Bauer and her three-year-old preschool class at St. Peters, Sturgeon Bay, Wis.

**LESSON FOUR:** I am thankful for the spiritual growth provided at Martin Luther College through regular morning and evening chapel services. I also appreciate the spiritual guidance of a professor who began every class with a reading from a devotion book. My principal continues this emphasis of daily spiritual growth as he leads our faculty in devotions before school. I have extended the importance of personal spiritual growth in my classroom as the children and I pray personal prayers aloud every day. I document these prayers and send them home at the end of the week. One grandmother said, "I look forward to reading what my grandson prays about each week. I enjoy seeing how his prayers fit in with all the events of his life." Observing the children growing in faith and ease as they speak comfortably to God is so rewarding for the parents and for me.

My first year of teaching has been one of growth, excitement, and enjoyment. Many small moments have made teaching so rewarding: hearing "Jingle Bells" in the middle of church, listening to a child pray to God, receiving an unexpected hug when it's needed most. Thank you, Martin Luther College, for preparing me for ministry. Thank you, members of WELS, for remembering early childhood graduates like me in your prayers. Thank you, Lord, for blessing the work of all graduates, as you strengthen and enable us to provide a sound Christian education to your little lambs.

*Michal Bauer is the director and teacher of the preschool at St. Peters, Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin.*

*Paul Lutze, principal at St. Peters, Sturgeon Bay, Wis., shares how early childhood ministry fits into the mission of the church.*

**"We exist to share Christ."**

Those words are cemented on two outside walls of our church/school. It is our congregation's mission statement, the driving force for all we do out of love for our Lord. As an extension of the church, our school has adopted the statement, "Excellence in Education to Grow in Christ and to Share Christ."


We opened our Lutheran elementary school doors for the first time in 1983. Ten years later we began a preschool program. This program was intended to be a self-supporting feeder for the Lutheran elementary school. We soon recognized that our focus should not be on numbers, but on sharing Christ. That realization led to our mission statement and full congregational support.

Many students from a wide variety of religious backgrounds have enrolled in our preschool. According to the parents of one such student, their son now knows more about God and his Word than either of his two older brothers who attend a different Christian school, and he's not afraid to share that knowledge.

I now see second-generation students come through St. Peters doors. It is important that these students receive the same message of Christ's love and forgiveness that their parents received. Whether these children attend for one year of preschool or all of elementary school does not change the impact of daily instruction in God's Word.

Throughout WELS, parents and teachers are following the Lord's directive to "train a child in the way he should go" (Proverbs 22:6). What will these children do when they're older? Whose lives will they touch? Will they return to a WELS school as a teacher, training the next generation of WELS pastors and teachers? Will they spiral off from that tight circle and provide Christian guidance as a judge, scientist, or politician?

It is comforting to me that our teachers share a common faith. Regardless of differing personalities and teaching styles, we have the same religious educational background provided at Martin Luther College. Our time is in God's hands. Our future is known and controlled by him who made us. We exist to share Christ. Whether we are a teacher, a student, or a student becoming a teacher, may we strive for excellence in education to grow in Christ and to share Christ.



**Did God create the world or did it evolve?**  
Two different versions continue to clash. But we believe  
that what God said about the origin of the world is true.  
God created us and redeemed us to praise him.

# The great debate **CONTINUES**

Joel D. Otto

Not since the infamous “Scopes Monkey Trial” in 1925 has the debate between evolution and creation been more in the public eye. Then it was Clarence Darrow and William Jennings Bryan arguing the topic in a Tennessee courtroom and the media. Today school districts around the nation have listened to both sides present their views, while the courts and the media weigh in. Invariably, those who hold to creation are presented as backwards and unscientific. Likewise, some Christians, trying to avoid the appearance of being unscientific, try to meld evolution and creation together. They suggest that God got things started by the “big bang,” but then used evolution over the course of billions of years.

Brother Guy Consolmagno, a Jesuit priest and astronomer at the Vatican observatory in Tucson, Ariz., recently said, “Religion needs science to keep it away from superstition and

keep it close to reality, to protect it from creationism, which at the end of the day is a kind of paganism—it’s turning God into a nature god. And science needs religion in order to have a conscience, to know that, just because something is possible, it may not be a good thing to do.”

We could agree with the last part of his statement. Not everything that can be done in the name of science should be done. Human cloning, harvesting stem cells from aborted babies, and some other procedures are examples of science without a conscience.

But what about dismissing the account of a six-day creation as God tells us in Genesis? Is that mere superstition? Does that turn God into some kind of “nature god,” a god we have to appease when we don’t get enough rain or too much, a god who shows his anger through earthquakes and hurricanes? How can we say with

the psalmist, “I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made” (Psalm 139:14), if we don’t believe we are created by God?

The Vatican astronomer would say that God created everything, but that he used evolution. There are numerous problems with this idea, problems that we Christians need to understand as we live in a society that has swallowed the theory of evolution as scientific fact.

**First, evolution changes the purpose of human existence.** God created us to serve and honor him. He put the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the Garden so Adam and Eve would have an opportunity to worship him willingly as their loving Creator. The apostle Paul reinforces that thought: “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31).

But the theory of evolution turns this upside down. Humanity's purpose becomes surviving, doing whatever is in their best interest. Self-service is the norm. Ethics get thrown out the window. The end always justifies the means. The end goal is to get ahead in this world. To survive.

This thinking quickly degenerates further into doing whatever makes me feel good—even if someone else gets hurt; even if what I'm doing goes against God's will. Such a worldview has led to distorted outlooks on sex in our culture, where premarital sex is common and homosexuality is accepted human behavior. Ask an experienced teacher about the attitude change in students. There is less respect for authority. We can see the truth of Paul's words about those who deny their Creator. "Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator" (Romans 1:24,25).

**Second, as soon as Genesis 1 and 2 are dismissed, then what happens to Genesis 3?** If there is no Adam and Eve, no Garden of Eden, no tree, was there really a fall into sin? Maybe every human being is born morally neutral, and it is their choice to live a good life or an evil life. And if there is no fall into sin, then what about God's promise of a Savior? Is there even a need for Jesus?

What does God's Word tell us? "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good" (Genesis 1:31). But everything is not perfect anymore because of the fall into sin. Only through the redeeming work of Jesus is everything made new again. Evolution twists God's plan inside out. Everything is progressing from simple to complex, from bad to good. Humanity becomes its own savior.

An honest look at history and science shows the fallacy of this viewpoint. When humans try to fix things, they only make matters worse. "The war to end all wars" led to an even worse war, which led to the threat of nuclear war. Now we face world terrorism. While science has made great strides in the areas of medicine and technology, new and more deadly diseases seem to crop up on a regular basis, often fueled by human appetites or habits.

**If [God] could raise himself from the dead, why couldn't he create the universe in six 24-hour days by his almighty Word?**

No matter how hard we try, we cannot make heaven here on earth. Paradise was lost when Adam and Eve listened to Satan instead of listening to God. It is only regained through Jesus' death and resurrection and the Spirit's work through Word and sacrament. Even then, the old sinful nature still plagues us. Satan is still doing his evil work. Perfection and the absence of evil are only found in heaven.

**Finally, this idea that a six-day creation as God tells us in Genesis is superstitious or pagan is simply another attempt to make God small and insignificant.** It may even remove God from the picture all together.

The evolutionist—whether Christian or not—makes God weak. But with God all things are possible. If God could become man, born of a virgin; if he could walk on water, heal the sick, and even raise the dead; if he could raise himself from the dead, why couldn't he create the universe in six 24-hour days by his almighty Word? Since God has done that, he can also take care of our problems, no matter how big or small they might be. We can speak with the confidence of the psalmist, "I lift up my eyes to the hills—where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth" (Psalm 121:1,2).

The debate will continue. Scientists will continue to promote the theory of evolution, squeezing God from our lives. Misguided Christians, like Brother Guy, will continue to sell out the Bible for the sake of supposed intellectual acceptance. As confessional Lutheran Christians, we simply go back to God's Word. We trust that what he says happened the way he said it happened. "By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible" (Hebrews 11:3).

*Joel Otto is pastor at Reformation, San Diego, California.*

**Next month:** In recent months, boards of education and courts have listened to debates about teaching the concept of intelligent design in public school classrooms. But is this a good thing? Next month, we'll explore this issue from the perspective of the Bible's account of our Creator God's intelligent design.

**Find out more about this topic at [www.wels.net/jump/fic](http://www.wels.net/jump/fic).**

**A Bible study on creation will be available there after Aug. 5.**

# Sharing Jesus



After we talk to our friends about Jesus, we need to follow up on these spiritual conversations so we continue to bring our friends into contact with God's Word.

**T**he relationships that you have with people are wonderful settings for sharing your faith. Think of the advantages. You have a variety of opportunities to talk about Jesus with the people you know. You don't have to force the situation. As you spend time with friends, you can comfortably build on spiritual conversations that you had previously. You will sense opportune moments when a friend might be more willing to discuss spiritual truths. When you spend time with people, they will also see your faith in action. As they observe your way of life and think about their lives in comparison to yours, they may ask for help to find the strength that they see in you. That opens the door again to talking more about the awesome love and tremendous power of Christ!

## **Why we need to share Jesus**

Sharing Jesus with your friends comes from a love for their souls. Try to imagine what it would be like to be without Jesus in your life. Think of the confusion there would be about the purpose that you have on this earth. Imagine the uneasiness in your heart as you think of your sin and how you stand before God. Visualize yourself

haunted by the fear of what will happen to you when death approaches. What a difference Jesus makes for you! He is the rock of your salvation. Your life of faith is securely built on the Savior's peace through the forgiveness of sins and the certain hope that you will live forever with God.

In sharp contrast to the confidence we have as Christians, our friends without Jesus are lost. Separated from him, they are headed toward an eternity of such horrendous suffering that it makes us shudder. We don't want this to happen to our friends or to anyone else. We can't be so indifferent to say or do nothing. As Christians, our hearts are moved to reach out to people, especially our friends. The famous preacher Charles Spurgeon once said, "Winners of souls must first be weepers for souls." We share our faith with people because we weep for them. We know that without Jesus they are without true joy and lasting hope. With all our heart, we want to keep on sharing the good news of Jesus with our friends.

## **How we can regularly share Jesus**

Start by regularly praying for your unchurched friends. It is a privilege to include them in your prayers, confi-

dent that God will hear your intercessions for them and answer according to his will. You may let people know that you are praying for them. This will help to communicate your love for them and your concern for their spiritual life. They may even ask why you are praying for them or what you are praying about, which opens up the opportunity to talk more about Jesus and your faith.

It's important to keep building your relationship with your friends. When they learn that they can trust you, your friends will be more apt to confide in you with their questions about the Christian faith. They will have the confidence to ask for your help with their spiritual concerns or fears.

Be patient and persistent. People may need to hear Christian truth in several different approaches at many different times. Patiently share Jesus with them. As opportunities present themselves in your relationships, share your faith, as the apostle Peter instructs us, "with gentleness and respect" (1 Peter 3:15).

Be careful about the words that you use. Words that hold rich meaning for Christians may not communicate clearly to non-Christians. Even commonly used words will probably



# anytime

Michael L. Hintz



## CHECK OUT THESE RESOURCES FOR TIPS ON SHARING YOUR SAVIOR:

*PROCLAIM!* is an online newsletter from the WELS Commission on Evangelism that offers practical helps and resources to help you prepare for sharing Jesus. Go to [www.wels.net/jump/proclaim](http://www.wels.net/jump/proclaim) to subscribe to have this monthly newsletter delivered to your e-mail.

*Sharing Jesus with friends* is a new course that includes many resources to encourage and equip members of your church to practice friendship evangelism. To find out more, go to [www.wels.net/evangelism](http://www.wels.net/evangelism), and click on "Friendship Evangelism."

need careful explanation. The challenge is to share the truth of God clearly, without losing or changing God's message. A great way to prepare is to restudy Luther's Catechism. Turning to the index, look up words like *sin*, *salvation*, *faith*, *gospel*, and so forth. Go to the sections of the Catechism that treat those subjects. Study the passages listed and the definitions that are given. Think through how you can clearly explain the concepts that the words convey.

The gospel is the power of God for the salvation of souls. While our life of faith and gentle attitude are important to witnessing, they won't save anyone. God the Holy Spirit uses the Word of God to turn the hearts of people to Jesus and work saving faith. So, after we talk to our friends about Jesus, we look for ways to follow up on those spiritual conversations to continue to bring them into contact with God's Word. Here are some suggestions:

- Invite your unchurched friends to a special service or event at church.
- Invite your unchurched friends to a Bible study. Your friends might be more inclined to come to classes that address issues that they have questioned and talked to you about. Additionally, offer to attend the pastor's Bible information class with your friends.
- Share good Christian books, tracts, and videos. If your church has a library, share some of those resources that address your friends' curiosity and questions about the Christian faith. Northwestern Publishing House is a good source for materials that will help you share the Word of God with people.
- Point your family and friends to [www.WhatAboutJesus.com](http://www.WhatAboutJesus.com), a Web site to introduce people to Jesus. Here they can confi-

dentially ask questions, get real answers, and explore the Bible. You can also direct them to your church's Web site.

- E-mail daily devotions or portions of God's Word. Subscribe for e-mail delivery of inspirational devotions each weekday at [www.wels.net/jump/devotions](http://www.wels.net/jump/devotions).
- Introduce your friends to other Christians who have similar situations, concerns, or interests. God may use the witness of others to help reach them with the gospel.
- Send Christian cards for birthdays, special occasions, and holidays.

God wants to use us to share the message of his love for the world in Jesus. In this series we have considered various aspects of witnessing to our unchurched friends. What remains is doing it. People need to hear about their best friend, Jesus. Prepare yourself and, with God's help, confidently share Jesus with your friends.

*Michael Hintz, administrator of the Commission on Evangelism, is a member at Christ the Lord, Brookfield, Wisconsin.*

*This is the last of a four-part series on confidently sharing Jesus with our friends. To read other articles in the series, go to [www.wels.net/jump/ficarchive](http://www.wels.net/jump/ficarchive), and search by the author's first and last name.*

# WHATEVER

## Religion is everywhere

People always classify public school as having no religion, when actually it's the exact opposite: public school is all religions mixed together.

Susan Decker

**O**h, you're going to public school? You won't find any faith there!" The minute I graduated from my WELS elementary school, I heard that a thousand times. I was going to my area public school because Luther Prep was too far away and my parents thought it was too expensive. However, from my first day at a public high school, I knew that they were wrong about not finding any faith.

People always classify public school as having no religion, when actually it's the exact opposite: public school is all religions mixed together. Generally speaking, in my two years at school I have met and sometimes become friends with Lutherans, self-proclaimed atheists, all-accepting "Christians," traditional and "not very good" Catholics, and the "I used to go to church but not anymore" types. I personally found this to be a great opportunity to strengthen my faith.

**My friend Becky goes to my church, and she has religious discussions with her atheist friend Laura.** It's almost always the traditional arguments such as, "How do you know you will go to heaven when you die?" and "If God is so nice, how could he let a little baby go to hell?" It was a real eye-opener when I heard these questions. It made me realize that some people struggle with these questions because they don't know God and don't trust him to do what is best. I need to be prepared to encounter similar situations in my life and know how to answer when they come my way.

Then there are people who don't really know what they are. My friends Carrie and Julia were talking about their church service the previous Sunday, and we started talking about our different religions. Carrie said that she and Julia were Lutheran as well, but then Julia looked up and said, "No, we're not Lutheran—we're Christian!"

I sat and wondered how people can be so vague about their own faith that they don't drive themselves crazy wondering what they are!

**Public school can actually help your faith.** The experience has taught me how to interact with those of other faiths and has shown me what Jesus meant when he said "Love one another" (John 13:34). Because the school is filled with people who don't share your beliefs, evangelism opportunities are everywhere, especially in friendships!

Personally, I feel that knowing that Christ died for me to take away my sins puts things in perspective and helps me get through days where things seem to be going wrong and getting worse by the minute.

Going to a public school has given me a strong base for my future plans for a career in WELS. For example, we recently finished an evolution unit in science. Some people might think that it's terrible that evolution is being taught. I don't like it myself, but since it's being taught, I've learned to use it as a general background for refuting people who believe it's true. I guess it proves the old saying, "If you don't like something, change it. If you can't change it, change the way you think about it!"

Religion is everywhere in life, even in a public school. So you should know how to handle opposition!

Susan Decker, who will be a junior at Memorial High School, Eau Claire, Wisconsin, is a member of St. Mark, Eau Claire.

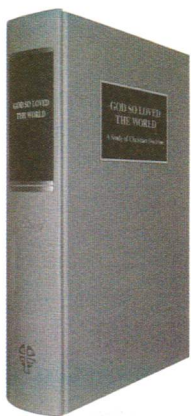


Opposition

# Booknook

A look at new books published by Northwestern Publishing House. For more information, visit [www.nph.net](http://www.nph.net) or call 800-662-6022. Note: These reviews are not meant to represent the opinions of WELS or Forward in Christ.

## Brush up on your Christian doctrine



\$45.50

Billy Collins, former poet laureate of the United States, wrote a poem called "Forgetfulness" in which he laments the loss of memories: "As if, one by one, the memories you used to harbor decided to retire to the southern hemisphere of the brain." So how is your memory these days? Especially your recollection of all the doctrinal truths you learned in confirmation and instruction classes? To the rescue, Northwestern Publishing House recently published a comprehensive single-volume book with the inviting title *God So Loved The World: A Study of Christian Doctrine*.

Albert Einstein may have overstated the case when he said, "Why memorize something if you can look it up?" But if it involves Christian doctrine, it is in this book. And, unlike many an Ivy League theology professor who knows the Bible better than I, the author, Professor Lyle W. Lange, knows the Bible better than I, and, by God's grace, he believes it! Lange's humble scholarship permeates through all 30 chapters of this 729-page book.

Lange's volume is contemporary and fresh. His illustrations are well-conceived and succinct. He quotes liberally from the Lutheran Confessions. In many chapters, the majority of the text addresses errors to teachings. Current topics facing the church and society are referenced: Muslims

and *jihad*, evolution, bioethics, church fellowship, the canon of the Bible, school prayer, heterodox churches, cults. But most important and vital, Lange embeds throughout his text the recurring theme that all doctrines of the Bible relate to the Bible's central teaching: justification by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

The book will serve both the seasoned member and those still cutting their doctrinal teeth. It will certainly serve well in our various WELS/ELS schools. And no small point: the reader will be better equipped to witness.

The quadratic equation and Lincoln's Gettysburg Address may have "retired" from your memory, but this recent NPH publication can help keep your knowledge of Christian doctrine sharp. You can look it up.

Mark Tacke  
Holy Trinity, Des Moines, Washington

**Editor's note:** The 2006-07 *Chapel Talks for Christian Children* is now available. This resource of children's sermons and worship components can be used for Lutheran elementary school and Sunday schools. This series features 43 lessons on "Pictures of Jesus in the Old Testament." The book costs \$26. Northwestern Publishing House is considering offering *Chapel Talks* in an electronic version only. Go to [www.nph.net/cts/sample](http://www.nph.net/cts/sample) for a sample of how this would look. There you can also complete an online survey.

## Obituaries

### Alvin E. Schulz 1927-2006

Alvin Schulz was born June 6, 1927, in Iron Ridge, Wis. He died May 17, 2006, in New Ulm, Minn.

A 1953 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis., he served St. Paul, Seaforth, Minn.; Immanuel, Campbellsport, Wis.; St. Paul, Ridgeland, Wis.; Good Shepherd, Wolf Point, Mich.; St. James, Tolstoy, S.D.; Zion, Akaska, S.D.; and Prince of Peace, Yankton, S.D.

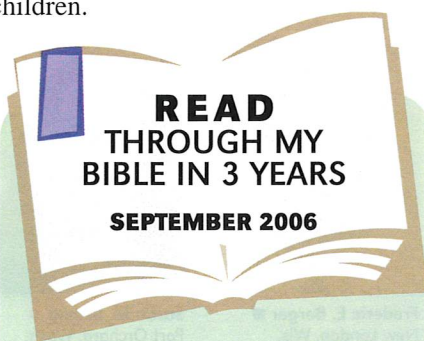
He is survived by his wife, Georgeana; two sons; two daughters; 11 grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

### Wilmer G. Hoffmann 1925-2006

Wilmer Hoffmann was born Oct. 19, 1925, in Faribault, Minn. He died May 19, 2006, in Milwaukee, Wis.

He served as pastor at St. Martin, Winona, Minn.; St. Peter/St. Matthew, Savanna, Ill.; Our Redeemer, Madison, Wis.; Siloah, Milwaukee, Wis.; Beautiful Savior, Summerville, S.C.; and Lamb of God, Madison, Ala.

He is survived by his wife, Faye; five sons; one daughter; and 10 grandchildren.



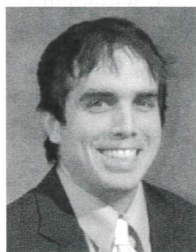
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3. 2 Sam. 18:1-19:8	18. Ps. 66, 67
4. 2 Sam. 19:9-39	19. Ps. 68:1-18
5. 2 Sam. 19:40-20:26	20. Ps. 68:19-35
6. 2 Sam. 21	21. Ps. 69
7. 2 Sam. 22	22. Ps. 70, 71
8. 2 Sam. 23	23. Ps. 72
9. 2 Sam. 24	24. 1 Kings 1
10. Psalms 52-54	25. 1 Kgs. 2
11. Ps. 55	26. 1 Kgs. 3, 4
12. Ps. 56, 57	27. 1 Kgs. 5
13. Ps. 58, 59	28. 1 Kgs. 6:1-7:12
14. Ps. 60	29. 1 Kgs. 7:13-8:11
15. Ps. 61, 62	30. 1 Kgs. 8:12-66

# MARTIN LUTHER College graduates

One hundred ninety-two people graduated from Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., on May 20. One hundred forty-five were in the teacher track or the staff ministry program. Forty-seven completed the preseminary program. Look for where they are assigned on p. 6.



Janet J. Arndt ★  
Watertown, S.D.



Christopher C. Avila ★  
Saginaw, Mich.



Emily R. Babinec ★  
Onalaska, Wis.



Michael A. Babler ★  
Port Orchard, Wash.



John-Dixon L. Backhaus ■  
Kenai, Alaska



Caleb R. Bassett ■  
Collinsville, Ill.



Gregory J. Baures ▲  
Buffalo City, Wis.



Melissa A. Beach ☀  
Saginaw, Mich.



Sarah R. Beck ★  
Kenosha, Wis.



Kimberly K. Behnke ★  
Edgar, Wis.



Carly J. Belz ★  
Stanton, Neb.



Rebekah S. Berg ★  
Fremont, Calif.



Frederic E. Berger ■  
New London, Wis.



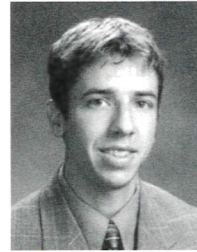
Sarah M. Bishop ★  
Port Orchard, Wash.



Angela K. Bliefnick ★  
Harvard, Ill.



Logan C. Block ☀  
Cedar Creek, Ariz.



Kevin M. Bode ☀  
Beaver Dam, Wis.



Seth D. Bode ■  
Saginaw, Mich.



Samantha S. Bonow ★  
Utica, Minn.



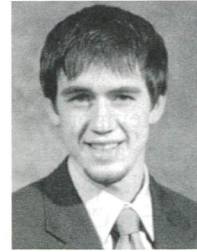
Erika A. Brunner ★  
Alpena, Mich.



Crystal R. Bush ★  
Whiteriver, Ariz.



Jennifer A. Case ★  
Menomonie, Wis.



Ryan C. Cortright ■  
Franklin, Wis.



Justin L. Dauck ■  
Algoma, Wis.

- Bachelor of Arts
- + Seminary Certification Program
- ★ Bachelor of Science in Education—Elementary Education
- ☀ Bachelor of Science in Education—Secondary Education



**Christopher W. Denney** ★  
Appleton, Wis.



**Cynthia J. Deno** ★  
Kaukauna, Wis.



**Daniel L. Douglas** ★  
Westminster, Colo.



**Brett A. Ehlke** ■  
Appleton, Wis.



**Sarah E. Ehlke** ★  
Watertown, Wis.



**Amanda B. Ehrenberg** ★  
Waupun, Wis.



**James R. Enderle** ■  
Dix Hills, N.Y.



**Katherine P. Ewald** ★  
Burton, Mich.



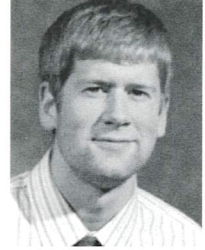
**Jessica R. Falk** ★  
Bay City, Mich.



**Rachel M. Feld** ✨  
Aurora, Colo.



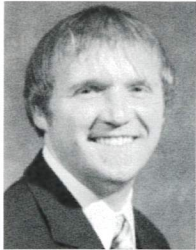
**Mariel A. Féliz Grimm** ★  
Santiago, Dominican Republic



**Eric J. Fillner** ★  
Shelby Township, Mich.



**Andrea J. Fischer** ★  
South Milwaukee, Wis.



**Timothy P. Fischer** ✨  
Wilmot, Wis.



**Daniel J. Foelske** ■  
Manitowoc, Wis.



**Abby R. Foster** ★  
Beaver Dam, Wis.



**Andrew K. Frey** ■  
New Carlisle, Ohio



**Paul D. Fritz** ■  
Harrisonville, Mo.



**James D. Gieschen** ■  
Portage, Mich.



**Heidi L. Gilbert** ★  
Lake Geneva, Wis.



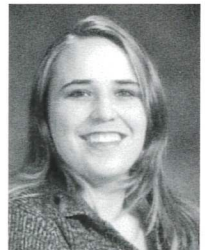
**Stacia J. Glodowski** ★  
Brooklyn Park, Minn.



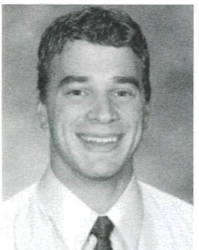
**Bethany M. Graumann** ★  
Lake Mills, Wis.



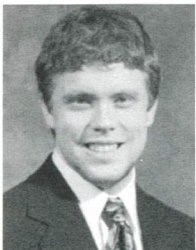
**Theresa M. Grootemont** ★  
Combined Locks, Wis.



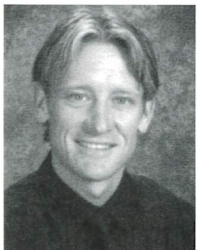
**Heidi B. Groth** ★  
Seminole, Fla.



**Peter A. Gumm** ✨  
Loves Park, Ill.



**Philip J. Gurgel** ■  
Mequon, Wis.



**Keith J. Hackbarth** ★  
Van Dyne, Wis.



**Jacob R. Hanneman** ■  
Arlington, Minn.



**Katie L. Harris** ★  
Boise, Idaho



**Sarah L. Hennig** ★  
Campbellsport, Wis.

- ★ Bachelor of Science in Education—Early Childhood Education
- ◆ Bachelor of Science—Staff Ministry
- Staff Ministry Certification
- ▲ Bachelor of Science—Staff Ministry and Parish Music
- ◆ Bachelor of Science in Education—Elementary Education and Staff Ministry



**Karl P. Henselin** ✨  
Rockford, Ill.



**Jon M. Hermanson** ✨  
New Ulm, Minn.



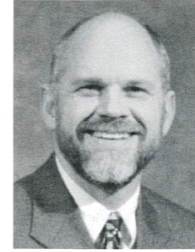
**Katie M. Hermanson** ★  
New Ulm, Minn.



**Seth E. Herrmann** ★  
Sheboygan, Wis.



**Carrie J. Hieb** ★  
Tsuchiura, Japan



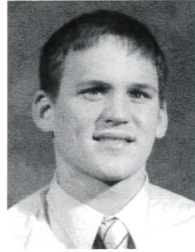
**David P. Hochmuth** ●  
New Ulm, Minn.



**Nathan J. Hochmuth** ✨  
Watertown, Wis.



**Joel A. Hoff** ■  
Helenville, Wis.



**Timothy M. Hoffmann** ★  
Monroe, Wis.



**Allison M. Hosbach** ★  
Bath, Mich.



**Paul D. Huebner** ✨  
Saint Paul, Minn.



**Samuel A. Hunter** ★  
New Ulm, Minn.



**Andrew E. Iles** ★  
Saginaw, Mich.



**Amber L. Ireland** ✨  
Lebanon, Wis.



**Michael S. Johnson** ■  
Federal Way, Wash.



**Rachel E. Kassulke** ✨  
Inver Grove Heights, Minn.



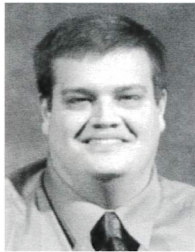
**Heidi C. Kehl** ✨  
Milwaukee, Wis.



**Benjamin P. Kempfert** ■  
Neenah, Wis.



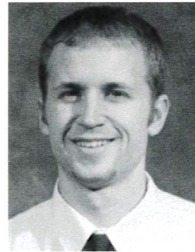
**Angela A. Kleist** ✨  
Appleton, Wis.



**Joel F. Kluender** +  
New Ulm, Minn.



**Amber M. Kluge** ✨  
Bloomington, Minn.



**Drew P. Kock** ✨  
Saginaw, Mich.



**Stephen P. Koelpin** ■  
Tucson, Ariz.



**Rebecca R. Kramer** ★  
Gibbon, Minn.



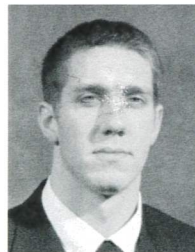
**Aaron A. Krause** ✨  
Watertown, Wis.



**Brett J. Krause** ■  
New London, Wis.



**Ruth E. Krause** ✨  
Oconomowoc, Wis.



**Andrew J. Kruse** ★  
Marana, Ariz.



**Rebekah R. Laitinen** ★  
New Ulm, Minn.

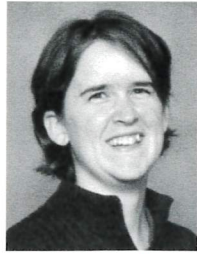


**Daniel F. Lange** ■  
New Ulm, Minn.

- Bachelor of Arts
- + Seminary Certification Program
- ★ Bachelor of Science in Education—Elementary Education
- ✨ Bachelor of Science in Education—Secondary Education



Heather M. Larson ★  
Rochester, Minn.



Martha V. Lau ★  
Onalaska, Wis.



Joel T. Lauber ★  
Fond du Lac, Wis.



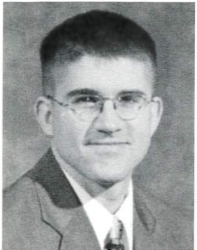
Paul R. Leifer ★  
New Ulm, Minn.



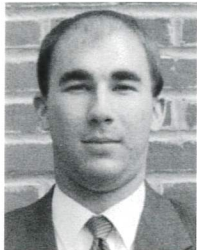
Cindy M. Lemke ✖  
Weyauwega, Wis.



Katie J. Lindeman ✖  
Saint Paul, Minn.



Nathan C. Livingston ✖  
Watertown, S.D.



Jonathan R. Lockman ✖  
Flushing, Mich.



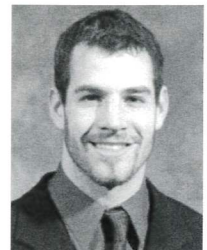
Gregory C. Lyon ■  
Temecula, Calif.



Rebecca S. Maresh ★  
Manitowoc, Wis.



Gregory A. Martin ✖  
DeWitt, Mich.



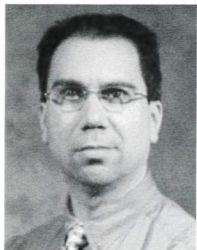
Jeffrey S. Matteson ■  
Tecumseh, Mich.



Joel A. McKenney ■  
Lake Mills, Wis.



Molly D. Merten ★  
Loretto, Minn.



Matthew P. Miskowski ★  
Milwaukee, Wis.



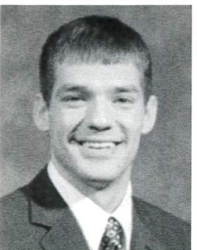
Katie M. Moll ★  
Winona, Minn.



Leah S. Morgan ★  
New Ulm, Minn.



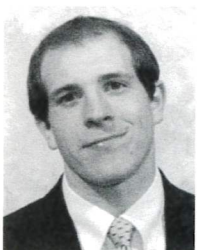
Lisa N. Mueller ✖  
Livermore, Calif.



Timothy P. Mueller Jr. ★  
Watertown, Wis.



Timothy E. Nass ■  
New Ulm, Minn.



Joel M. Naumann ■  
Benton Harbor, Mich.



Natalie A. Nelson ★  
Muskego, Wis.



Steven W. Neuman ■  
Markesan, Wis.



Jonathan D. Niemi ★  
La Crosse, Wis.



Amy G. Nitz ★  
Slades Corners, Wis.



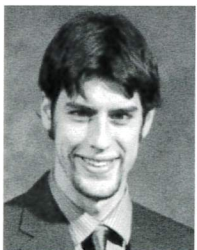
Mark R. Nolte ✖  
Saint Joseph, Mich.



Rebecca R. Nolte ✖  
Longmont, Colo.



Erin J. Nottling ✖  
New Ulm, Minn.



Matthew D. Nottling ★  
New Ulm, Minn.



Michelle I. Nowak ✖  
Munith, Mich.

- ✖ Bachelor of Science in Education—Early Childhood Education
- ◆ Bachelor of Science—Staff Ministry
- Staff Ministry Certification
- ▲ Bachelor of Science—Staff Ministry and Parish Music
- ◆ Bachelor of Science in Education—Elementary Education and Staff Ministry



Amanda M. Ohland ★  
Beaver Dam, Wis.



Sarah E. Olson ★  
Wildomar, Calif.



Renee J. Pappalardo ☀  
Milwaukee, Wis.



Randy D. Peck ★  
Oregon, Wis.



Sara M. Pedde ★  
Florence, S.C.



Timothy F. Pingel ★  
Beaver Dam, Wis.



Stephanie L. Plagenz ✨  
Manchester, Wis.



Melissa J. Poppy ★  
Greenfield, Wis.



Christa A. Priestap ☀  
Calgary, Alberta, Canada



Deanna R. Rahn ★  
New Ulm, Minn.



Stefanie L. Rathje ★  
Port Huron, Mich.



Matthew R. Redfield ★  
Watertown, Wis.



Matthew J. Reis ■  
Manitowoc, Wis.



Brandon J. Rogers ■  
Milwaukee, Wis.



Jessica J. Rohde ☀  
Coleman, Wis.



Joel A. Russow ■  
New Hope, Minn.



Benjamin Sadler ■  
Kenosha, Wis.



Emily J. Sadler ★  
Ripon, Wis.



Brandon M. Schaffer ■  
Mound City, S.D.



Kate E. Schaffer ☀  
Pierre, S.D.



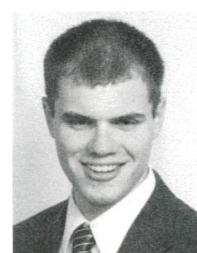
Rachel H. Schleusener ✨  
Wood Lake, Minn.



Heather R. Schmidt ★  
Oconomowoc, Wis.



Nicolas C. Schmoller ■  
Watertown, Wis.



Matthew D. Schoell ■  
Libertyville, Ill.



Matthew D. Schreiber ★  
New Berlin, Wis.



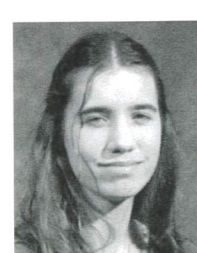
Terri E. Schroeder ☀  
Plymouth, Mich.



Sara R. Schuessler ★  
Livonia, Mich.



Cassandra C. Schwartz ★  
Howells, Neb.



Melissa A. Seefeldt ☀  
Ringle, Wis.



Jennifer M. Seeger ★  
Manitowoc, Wis.

- Bachelor of Arts
- + Seminary Certification Program
- ★ Bachelor of Science in Education—Elementary Education
- ☀ Bachelor of Science in Education—Secondary Education

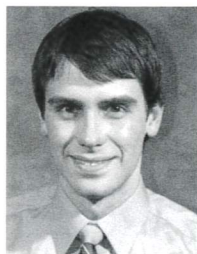




Jennifer R. Seiler ★  
Sturgeon Bay, Wis.



Angela K. Sellnow ★  
Wyoming, Mich.



Justin J. Siegler ★  
Manitowoc, Wis.



Akinpelu A. Smith ☀  
Georgetown, Guyana



Amanda L. Specht ✖  
Mishicot, Wis.



Melissa M. Sprunger ★  
Bay City, Mich.



Brandon D. Steenbock ◆  
Carnation, Wash.



Nicole D. Steenbock ★  
Eagle, Wis.



Benjamin P. Stein ◆  
Milwaukee, Wis.



Erin N. Steindorf ☀  
Watertown, Wis.



David R. Stuht ◆  
Thornton, Colo.



Kyle P. Swogger ★  
Winona, Minn.



Steven R. Tews ■  
Kawkawlin, Mich.



Joelle R. Tjernagel ★  
Cottage Grove, Minn.



Daniel J. Unke ☀  
New Ulm, Minn.



Katherine E. Valleskey ★  
Houston, Tex.



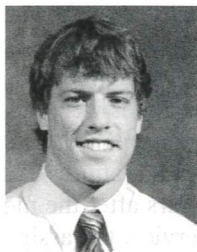
Justin W. Vilski ■  
Lomira, Wis.



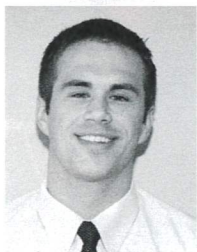
Joshua J. von Stein ◆  
Rawson, Ohio



Paul D. Voss ■  
Williamston, Mich.



Thomas M. Voss ■  
Aurora, Colo.



Jacob N. Wagner ■  
Grafton, Wis.



Justin M. Wagner ■  
Grafton, Wis.



Timothy J. Wahl ■  
Cambria, Wis.



Timothy J. Walker ◆  
Wautoma, Wis.



Destin A. Wease-Casci ★  
Minneapolis, Minn.



Joshua J. Weber ■  
Aurora, Colo.



Amanda S. Webster ★  
Cattaraugus, N.Y.



James R. Weiland ■  
Merrill, Wis.



Karen M. Weiland ★  
Hartford, Wis.



Sarah E. Welfel ★  
Beverly Hills, Fla.

- ✖ Bachelor of Science in Education—Early Childhood Education
- ◆ Bachelor of Science—Staff Ministry
- Staff Ministry Certification
- ▲ Bachelor of Science—Staff Ministry and Parish Music
- ◆ Bachelor of Science in Education—Elementary Education and Staff Ministry



Joshua J. Wendt ★  
Oconomowoc, Wis.



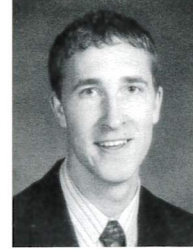
Kristina J. Wessel ★  
St. James, Minn.



Rebecca C. Wilke ★  
Columbus, Wis.



Timothy S. Wilkens ■  
Fort Atkinson, Wis.



Trevor D. Wolter ▲  
Hustisford, Wis.



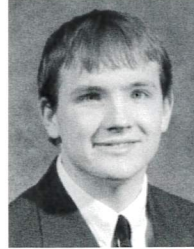
Courtney L. Zahn ★  
Alpharetta, Ga.



Daniel J. Zak ■  
Fond du Lac, Wis.



Jonathan W. Zarling ◆  
Sterling, Va.



Kevin S. Zimmerman ✨  
Oak Creek, Wis.



Suzanne L. Zimmerman ✨  
Beaver Dam, Wis.

**Not pictured:**

David A. Bergemann ●  
Farmington Hills, Mich.

Veronica J. Ide ★  
Federal Way, Wash.

James R. Boggs ◆  
Indianapolis, Ind.

Jeffrey G. Koepsell ●  
New Ulm, Minn.

Eric T. Gullickson ■  
Muskego, Wis.

Andrew M. Lindke ■  
Montrose, Mich.

Joseph M. Hering ★  
Saginaw, Mich.

Maria A. Pralle ★  
Onalaska, Wis.

## Graduate assignments—what an awesome experience!

*Have you ever wondered how candidates from Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis., are assigned to their first call into the ministry? Pastor Robert Pasbrig, WELS' recording secretary elected in 2005, shares his first experience with the process.*

I arrived at Martin Luther College early in graduation week. I was here as synod secretary to meet with the synod praesidium, the 12 district presidents, and the school representatives to determine where graduates will be placed.

Hours of work had already happened before we met in New Ulm. The district presidents had gathered information from schools in their districts that need a newly graduated teacher, and Martin Luther College had assembled a book (nearly an inch thick) with information about each of the graduates, including special skills, practice teaching experience, and the grade level(s) for which the student prepared.

Now we were gathered for two days of intense study. Devotions and prayers asked for the blessing of the Holy Spirit. A rotation was established based on the number of requests brought by each district president. Only then did the assignments begin.

In rotation, each district president presented the needs of a particular school. The graduate biographies were then scrutinized to identify the individual blessed by the Holy Spirit with the particular gifts needed for that school. It was an intense, grueling process.



Joel Petermann, North Atlantic district president (left), consults with Ted Lambert, Pacific Northwest district president, during the Assignment Committee meetings at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary.

Sometimes the match between individual skills and the needs of a particular position were obvious, and an assignment could be completed in minutes. In other cases, the decision took as long as 45 minutes. In all cases, advice of professors as well as presidents from other districts was carefully considered, and the entire Conference of Presidents voted on each individual assignment.

What a joy to place graduates into new positions with the assurance that the Holy Spirit worked through the Assignment Committee to accomplish his will. Every assignee knows that they will be serving where the Almighty God wants them to use their God-given talents and abilities.

The meetings concluded with anguish and prayers for God's blessings on those graduates for whom a position was not identified. In the next few weeks, more positions were identified, and more graduates were assigned.

On Saturday, May 20, just a few hours after the morning graduation service, the assignment service was held. Here, not only the graduates but also family and friends learned where the Holy Spirit, through the Assignment Committee, was sending each graduate to serve. What an emotional experience, one the students will never forget.

What an intense, emotional week! And the entire process was repeated one week later at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary when the vicars and new pastors were assigned to their new positions! It was an experience I will never forget.

*See where Martin Luther College graduates were assigned on p. 6.*

## A renewal for pastors' wives offers rejuvenation

*Forty-eight pastors' wives made their way to Crown of Life, West St. Paul, Minn., from June 9-11, to be renewed by God's Word and each other. Katherine Cross, wife of Minnesota District President Larry Cross, shares her thoughts on the renewal.*

Wilted, worn, and weary were the women who wended their way to Crown of Life Lutheran Church on Friday, June 9. Thirty hours later every spirit was refreshed, rejuvenated, and revitalized. What caused the wonderful transformation? We were "Blooming in the Vine" just as Jesus says in John 15:16: "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last."

Following our theme for our two-day meeting, we learned how to "stay connected to the vine through the Word." The main Bible study, "Back to the Root," asked if we keep Jesus at the center of our lives and if we are

rooted firmly in his care and guidance. It then led us into the Scripture for direction and encouragement.

Kathie Wendland encouraged us in her presentation, "Fruit, ladies. It's all about fruit, good fruit," to bear fruit that glorifies God and makes him "seeable and touchable."



Women visit after a meal at the renewal for pastors' wives.

Mary Heins helped each lady to answer the question, "How can pastors' wives balance church, family, job, self, and other demands?" She focused on Jesus' words, "Now remain in my love . . . so that my joy may be

in you and that your joy may be complete" (John 15:9,11).

What happens when the bloom wilts? Jean Strobel shared how the Holy Spirit gave her hope and perseverance in the midst of pain, illness, and suffering. She told how her bloom was revived and restored through Christ Jesus.

The good Lord nourished us all through his Word and brought joy to the hearts and minds of the ladies who attended. The shared laughter, tears, hugs, and words of encouragement (and don't forget chocolate) gave everyone—young or seasoned—a great measure of peace and joy and hope.

*For information on planning a renewal for pastors' wives, contact Valerie Johnson, c/o True North WELS Campus Ministry, 1501 University Ave SE #308, Minneapolis, MN 55414; coordinator@truenorthwels.org.*

## Bringing the written Word to the world

Every Monday one of my co-workers, who is an immigrant from Mexico, greets me with "Hola! How was your weekend?" And every week I tell him what I did . . . including my trip to church on Sunday morning. After a few months of this, his curiosity about my church grew to a point that our language barrier kept me from sharing my faith in more detail. So I visited Northwestern Publishing House and purchased a booklet called "La Promesa," which explains the basics of the Bible in Spanish. This was my first introduction to Multi-Language Publications (MLP), a branch of the Board for World Missions that is celebrating its 10th anniversary this summer. Throughout its 10 years, Multi-Language Publications has provided people like me (as well as missionaries and other Christians) with the materials to share Jesus with the world.

The purpose of Multi-Language Publications is not only to assist in the production of materials in foreign lan-

guages, but also to provide a comprehensive listing of existing confessional Christian literature and other mass media. It focuses on the languages of countries where WELS is working, as well as other areas or language groups where WELS may never work, so that many more people throughout the world may come to faith in Jesus.

Multi-Language Publications, organized in 1996, involves the work of many people in cross-cultural missions in the United States and other countries. Over the last 10 years, more than a million books, pamphlets, CDs, and videos have been distributed around the globe. Multi-Language Publications has also conducted workshops on translation, English as a second language, Sunday school, writing, and Bible storying (verbally telling Bible stories).

Looking toward the future, Multi-Language Publications seeks to serve the 60 percent of the world's population that is considered illiterate, while continuing to provide printed materials

for world mission fields and the United States' own cross-cultural society. It also hopes to produce more doctrinally sound books. "In the past we have concentrated on producing tools for missionaries at home and abroad to evangelize and instruct the people with whom we come into contact," shares Pastor Harold Essmann, MLP board member. "We need also to produce doctrinally sound theological works that will be a beacon in Christian literature for generations to come."

Essmann reflects that over the last 10 years "the greatest rewards were to see how the publications have been used throughout the world, not only in WELS mission fields, but by many other mission agencies of other church bodies." With the Lord's blessing, Multi-Language Publications will continue to bring the Word to the world.

*Learn more about Multi-Language Publications and how it coordinates with other WELS ministries on p. 32.*

Laura Warmuth

## New youth center reaches out to community

The neighborhood around Redemption, Milwaukee, Wis., has an abundance of youth, yet no safe recreational place that provides structured activities. Most of the population consists of single-parent families, with nearly half living below the poverty level.



Volunteer Terry Buske (front left) plays a game of foosball with participants at the Lighthouse Youth Center in Milwaukee.

To serve these families, the congregation began planning Lighthouse Youth Center in 2004. The center, aimed at reaching out to youth ages 10 to 17, would be housed in the congregation's former elementary school. However, as planning for the center progressed, the idea for Lighthouse to be a separate full-time ministry emerged. Without having Lighthouse as part of Redemption's budget it would allow the center to be incorporated as a non-profit organization, qualify for a number of youth initiative grants, and partner with other WELS congregations. It would also allow

Lighthouse to call its own executive director and focus solely on ministering to youth and their families in the area.

According to Pastor James Buske, executive director of Lighthouse since March, "Our mission is to be a beacon for Christ to the youth of the community."

Through a number of generous donations and grants—including ones from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, the Siebert Foundation, the Bradley Foundation, Christian Stewardship Foundation, and WELS Kingdom Workers—Lighthouse was able to gut and reconfigure Redemption's school and offer a large, inviting space with state-of-the-art equipment to the community.

More important, though, is Lighthouse's goal to provide a Christ-centered environment for the youth of the area. According to Buske, "All members of the center and their parents are required to promise to adhere to Lighthouse's rules and sign a character contract." The character contract highlights the values of respect, kindness, self-control, and honesty, with a biblical basis for each.

The center, open since May, has started slowly with a limited number of participants. This was done so Buske and his volunteer staff of Redemption members could train a core group of

teen leaders who will be an example for other center participants. It also allows the staff at Lighthouse to find out what works and what doesn't. The center's goal is to be ready with a solid schedule of devotions, Bible studies, tutoring, and activities by September when schools open.

Buske notes that community and government support for the center has been strong. "Our alderman is a huge supporter of this ministry because it fits a need. He comes to open houses here, helps with all of our [legal] paperwork, and puts his stamp of approval on everything. So that's a huge relationship."

The relationship with Redemption also continues to be strong. Explains Buske, "In the fall, Redemption's worship schedule will include a service that will be geared for youth and their families. Then we'll turn Friday night's peer discussion group at Lighthouse towards what was talked about in the youth service and bring in other Scripture passages to help answer some of life's tough questions." Buske also envisions how Lighthouse members can begin to see Redemption and church life as an extension of their time at Lighthouse. "When we make time at Lighthouse for going to church at Redemption, well then, that's [the youth's] church. They take ownership of that."

Even with some obvious challenges in opening a new facility, Buske has an infectious enthusiasm for his ministry. "God has been so good and has just opened the floodgates. It's exciting."

## In the news



The *Fond du Lac Reporter* and the *Action Sunday* both covered a May 20 tribute to the military held by Winnebago Lutheran Academy (WLA). Winnebago Lutheran Academy welcomed the different branches of the military to its campus and held hands-on demonstrations of military equip-

ment, including a Blackhawk helicopter. Says Dennis Osterholt of the *Action Sunday*, "In the tradition of the maturity and faith WLA students demonstrate every day, they did our military proud. Once again, this school, their students, and the administration impressed me."

## DEFINING RELIGION

**Vicarious atonement**—the truth that Jesus lived, suffered, and died as the substitute for sinners to pay the price they owed for their sins and to earn for them forgiveness, life, and salvation (Isaiah 53:4-12; Romans 5:6, 18, 19; 2 Corinthians 5:21).

## WELS broadcasts assignment services on the Web

This past May, people from around the United States and the world were able to watch graduation and assignment services from Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., and vicar assignment and pastor assignment services from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis., live over the Internet at <http://streams.wels.net>.

The live video coverage was broadcast on Streams, WELS' biblically-based, interactive, Internet media network. This was the inaugural program for Streams as well as the first time these services have been shown online. "Just a few years ago the technology didn't exist to allow us to broadcast wonderful events like our call services over the Web," says Martin Spriggs, WELS chief technology officer. "We have just now scratched the surface of all the endless possibilities."

The services were popular. One hundred forty-five viewed the graduation service and 300 the assignment service at Martin Luther College. Two hundred

sixty watched live streaming of the vicar assignment service and 490 the pastor assignment service at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. Japan, Malawi, and Mexico were just some of the countries represented.

## Streams

The services also were appreciated. "Thank you so very much for this service," e-mails Pastor Roger Huffman from Peace, King of Prussia, Penn. "I was [at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary] 25 years ago when I received my call and have not been able to go back for this service since. . . . The worship, as well as the news of the calls, was so precious."

This fall will mark the official debut of the Streams network, which will include live and downloadable programming that will educate, inform,

and inspire. This programming may include workshops, training initiatives, news updates, Bible studies, and other live broadcasts of synod events.

This network, supported by the 2005 synod convention, has been in the planning stages for a couple of years.

"In a world of instant communication, we have to be prepared to utilize the God-given tools, and one of these is the Internet . . .," says Steve Zambo, WELS media director. "[Web broadcasting] can be a way for us to create a first line of communication with ourselves—to make sure that we encourage and strengthen each other—but also a first line of communication to those seeking their Savior both here in the United States and around the world."

*For more information about Streams or to discuss programming possibilities, contact Steve Zambo, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222; 414-256-3281; [steve.zambo@sab.wels.net](mailto:steve.zambo@sab.wels.net).*

## District news

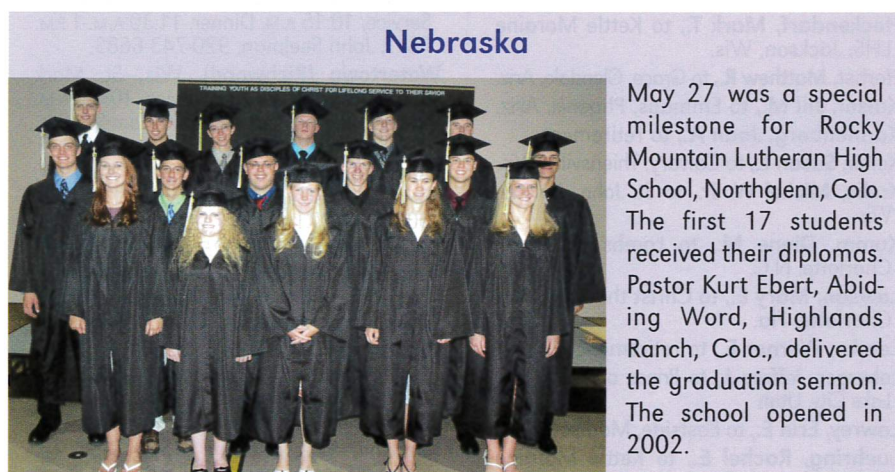
### Nebraska

More than 100 balloons were released after the Easter service at **Mt. Olive, Lincoln, Neb.** One response to the message tied to the balloons was received from Vandalia, Ill., more than 500 miles away! The woman stated that she had found the balloon next to the Interstate and was thankful for the message.

### Pacific Northwest

**Jennifer Werth**, a member of Grace, Kenai, Alaska, was crowned Alaska's Junior Miss 2006 in April. Werth also competed for the national title June 28-30 in Mobile, Ala. Werth will attend Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., in the fall.

**Daniel Tacke**, a member of Holy Trinity, Des Moines, Wash., was recently named a winner in the 54th Annual BMI Student Composer Awards. The BMI Student Composer Awards recognize superior creative



May 27 was a special milestone for Rocky Mountain Lutheran High School, Northglenn, Colo. The first 17 students received their diplomas. Pastor Kurt Ebert, Abiding Word, Highlands Ranch, Colo., delivered the graduation sermon. The school opened in 2002.

talent, and winners receive scholarship grants to be applied toward their musical education. Tacke recently graduated from Oberlin College Conservatory of Music, Oberlin, Ohio.

### Happy Anniversary!

SA—**Mark Boehme** of Bay Pines,

Seminole, Fla., recently celebrated 40 years in the teaching ministry.

These pastors are the reporters for the districts featured this month: NE—Donald Wichmann; PNW—David Birsching; SA—Christopher Kruschel

## CHANGES IN MINISTRY

### Pastors

Frey, Aaron C., to Emanuel, Tawas City, Mich.  
 Gorte, Michael F., to Immanuel, Gibbon, Minn.  
 Horneber, Theodore J., to Living Water, Hot Springs Village, Ark.  
 Lehmann, Philipp A., to St. John, Milwaukee, Mich.  
 Lindholm, Oliver H., to retirement  
 Maurice, Richard A., to retirement  
 Radsek, Joseph A., to Wisconsin Lutheran Institutional Ministries, Milwaukee  
 Russow, Richard S., to Salem, Wausau, Wis.  
 Schroeder, Allen K., to California LHS, Wildomar, Calif.  
 Schumann, James R., to Crown of Glory, Orlando, Fla.

### Teachers

Bock, Jeremy D., to St. Mark, Green Bay, Wis.  
 Braun, Susan E., to Trinity, Waukesha, Wis.  
 Draeger, Delbert D., to retirement  
 Engelbrecht, Jon E., to St. Paul, Wisconsin Rapids, Wis.  
 Engelbrecht, Trisha H., to St. Paul, Wisconsin Rapids, Wis.  
 Fenske, Joel R., to St. Mark, Green Bay, Wis.  
 Frisque, Paul A., to St. Jacobi, Greenfield, Wis.  
 Groth, Heidi B., to Immanuel, Hutchinson, Minn.  
 Grulke, Joel A., to Bethany, Hustisford, Wis.  
 Gumm, Anneliese M., to Salem, Colorado Springs, Colo.  
 Hamilton, Debra A., to Our Precious Lambs, Omaha, Neb.  
 Hartzell, Sarah J., to Peridot, Peridot, Ariz.  
 Heckendorf, Mark T., to Kettle Moraine LHS, Jackson, Wis.  
 Herbst, Matthew R., to Grace, Glendale, Ariz.  
 Kaiser, Jill M., to Emmaus, Phoenix, Ariz.  
 Kannenberg, Joan A., to retirement  
 Keller, Susan L., to Calvary, Thiensville, Wis.  
 Krebs, Michel W. Jr., to St. John, Juneau, Wis.  
 Kumm, Diane M., to Lambs of Grace, Charlotte, N.C.  
 Lawson, Mary E., to Christ the King, Port Charlotte, Fla.  
 Lemke, Werner E., to retirement  
 Loberger, Jeffrey J., to Prince of Peace, Salt Lake City, Utah  
 Lowrey, Erin E., to Eastside, Madison, Wis.  
 Luehring, Rachel E., to Kettle Moraine LHS, Jackson, Wis.  
 McKenney, Lois A., to St. Paul, Lake Mills, Wis.  
 Nelson, Erik J., to The Hope School (High School), Milwaukee  
 Nelson, Natalie A., to Garden Homes, Milwaukee, Wis.  
 Ohm, Bethany J., to Immanuel, Hadar, Neb.  
 Pahmeier, Fred W., to St. Paul, Mount Calvary, Wis.

Reineck, Lois M., to retirement  
 Richter, April S., to St. Marcus, Milwaukee  
 Ristow, John S., to The Hope School (High School), Milwaukee  
 Rouse, Joyce A., to retirement  
 Schultz, Jeffrey D., to Faith, Milwaukee, Wis.  
 Scott, Brooke, to St. Marcus, Milwaukee  
 Smith, Kristina N., to Shepherd of the Valley, West Fargo, N.D.  
 Steinberg, Rebecca B., to Immanuel, Medford, Wis.  
 Templeton, Lucy H., to St. John, Baraboo, Wis.  
 Thoma, Gary L., to St. Peters, Sturgeon Bay, Wis.  
 Volbrecht, Adam, to The Hope School (High School), Milwaukee  
 Wainwright, Kristi N., to Shepherd of Peace, Powell, Ohio  
 Wetzel, Bradley P., to Wisconsin LHS, Milwaukee  
 Windschitl, Jill S., to Hope Middle, Milwaukee  
 Wolff, Tonya M., to Friedens, Kenosha, Wis.  
 Zarbock, Dan, to The Hope School (High School), Milwaukee

### Staff Ministers

Kumwenda, Michael R., to St. Mark, Lincoln, Neb.  
 Lindenberger, Erik J., to Bethlehem, Menomonee Falls, Wis.

### ANNIVERSARIES

Sodus, Mich.—St. Paul (90). Aug. 6. Services, 9 A.M. & 3 P.M. Dinner, 4:15 P.M. RSVP, 269-925-5940.  
 Eugene, Ore.—Trinity (50). Aug. 13. Service, 4 P.M. Meal to follow. RSVP, 541-344-9719.  
 Sturgeon Bay, Wis.—Salem (125). Aug. 20. Service, 10:15 A.M. Dinner, 11:30 A.M.-1 P.M. RSVP, John Seelman, 920-743-6683.  
 Watertown (Richwood), Wis.—St. Mark (100). Aug. 20 & 27. Service 10:15 A.M. Chicken dinner, Aug. 27. RSVP, Tom Strauss, 920-261-3203.  
 Lime Ridge, Wis.—Trinity (100). Aug. 27. Services, 10:30 A.M. & 2 P.M. Dinner, 11:30 A.M. 608-727-4271.  
 Merrill, Wis.—Christ (25). Aug. 27. Commission of bell, 9:30 A.M. Service, 10 A.M. Program and catered dinner to follow. RSVP, Roger Schmoltdt, 715-722-5050.  
 Waterloo (Newville), Wis.—St. John (150). Sept. 10. Service, 10:30 A.M. Lakeside LHS, Lake Mills, Wis. Dinner to follow. RSVP, 920-648-5205.  
 Kenosha, Wis.—Friedens (150). Sept. 16. Christian contemporary concert, 2 P.M. & ice cream social. Sept. 17. Services, 8 & 10:15 A.M. Brunch, 9 A.M.-1 P.M. RSVP by Aug. 15, lori.wuerker@friedenswels.org.  
 Albuquerque, N.M.—Shepherd (40). Sept. 24. Service, 4 P.M. Dinner, 5:30 P.M. RSVP, 505-292-6622.  
 Plymouth, Mich.—St. Peter (150). Sept. 24. Dinner, 1 P.M. Service, 4:30 P.M. Reservations required. 734-453-3393.

## COMING EVENTS

**Commissioning**—of David Beckman as Friendly Counselor to India. Aug. 10. 7 P.M. Chapel at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis. Refreshments to follow.

**WELS retired called workers get together including DMLC alumni**—Aug. 16. 11 A.M. Mount Olive, Appleton, Wis. RSVP, Betty Wolf, 920-756-2835.

**Church dedication**—Aug. 27. 6:30 P.M. St. John, Glencoe, Minn. Fellowship to follow. 320-864-3093.

**WELS North Atlantic District Annual Labor Day Retreat**—Sept. 2-4. Camp Taconic, Hinsdale, Ma. Lois Becker, 603-472-5551.

**Annual walk-run**—supporting Associated Pregnancy Counseling Centers operated by WELS Lutherans for Life, Metro-Milwaukee. Sept. 9. 9 A.M.-noon. NPH Christian Books & Gifts, 1250 N 113, Milwaukee. Early registration, \$14/person or \$40/family. After Aug. 13, \$5 extra. Peter Georgson, 414-727-8176.

**Church dedication**—Sept. 10. 1:30 P.M. Christ, Pewaukee, Wis. Food, fellowship, information booths, and tours to follow. 262-691-0720.

**WELS Church Librarians' Organization fall meeting**—Sept. 16. St. Paul, Mauston, Wis. Cost, \$10/person. June, 608-464-5532.

**Lutheran Ladies League Rally**—Sept. 27. Trinity, Kiel, Wis. Register by Sept. 13, \$6/person. Send check payable to Zion Ladies Aid to Gladys Mueller, 17311 Cty XX, Kiel, WI 53042; 920-693-8347.

**Christian Singles Fall Retreat**—Sept. 29-Oct. 1. Camp Phillip, Wautoma, Wis. 262-534-7852.

**A day at the Seminary**—sponsored by Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Auxiliary. Oct. 7. Barb Bergquist, 414-476-2384.

**Congregational Team Workshops**—Oct. 21. Wisconsin LHS, Milwaukee, Wis. Sponsored by Southeastern Wisconsin District Parish Services. For more information visit [www.wels.net/jump/ctw](http://www.wels.net/jump/ctw).

## NAMES WANTED

**Soldiers and families at Fort Drum, N.Y., or others in the Binghamton, N.Y., region**—Jeremiah Gumm, 315-622-2843.

**Land O' Lakes/Connertown, Fla.**—Michael Weigand, 727-967-4649.

**Portage, Ind.**—Hope (ELS), 6322 Portage Ave., Portage IN 46368; pastor@hopeportage.org.

**Soldiers and families at Fort Bragg, N.C.**—Jason and Karla Wideman, 910-717-4864.

## POSITION AVAILABLE

**Preschool teacher**—Christ the King, Palatine, Ill. 25 hours per week. 847-358-0230; pastor@byfaithalone.org.

To place an announcement, call 414-256-3210; bulletinboard@sab.wels.net. Deadline is eight weeks before publication date. An updated bulletin board is available at [www.wels.net/jump/bulletinboard](http://www.wels.net/jump/bulletinboard).

# Do you know these teachers?

This photo of the 1938 Winnebago Teachers' Conference was sent to our office, by Renata Kitzerow. A number of people have been identified, but do you know any of the others? Visit [www.wels.net/jump/fic](http://www.wels.net/jump/fic) to help us name those in the photo.



## Picture this



Renata Hornik, a member of Risen Savior, Milwaukee, Wis., celebrated her 90th birthday in May. Rather than having friends bring her personal gifts, Hornik had a different idea. "I told them to bring non-perishable food for the Risen Savior Food Pantry." By the end of the day, Hornik had piles of food for the pantry. "Isn't it wonderful that others can be blessed on my birthday?" she said.


*Submitted by  
Pastor Kenneth Fisher*

## ON THE BRIGHT SIDE

Near the end of the service while the collection plate was being passed, my seven-year-old son, McKay, put in \$5 and passed it to his neighbor. He then leaned over and whispered to me, "Grandpa gave \$20 last week, and they let him serve wine. What do I get for my \$5?"

*Julie Potter*

Send pictures to "Picture this," *Forward in Christ*, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222; [fic@sab.wels.net](mailto:fic@sab.wels.net). On a separate sheet, give us information about the photo. Those whose photos are chosen will receive a small gift.



# Going global

Paul J. Hartman

**What we read in English today may be translated into another language tomorrow. These translations allow devotions, doctrine, and Bible commentaries to reach others in faraway places around the world.**

**T**en years ago the Board for World Missions understood that new mission fields, growing churches, and a growing corps of missionaries and national workers dictated an urgent need to publish more resources for cross-cultural ministry. Since then the enormous wave of immigrants to the United States has intensified the need. That's why the board established Multi-Language Publications in 1996. Since then, under God's grace, the total print count of resources in simplified English and foreign languages has swelled to more than one million copies.

## **WE COORDINATE OUR OUTREACH TO THE WORLD**

But Multi-Language Publications is not a publishing house. Only three full-time people work at its office in El Paso, Texas. Instead Multi-Language Publications works with many ministries of our fellowship. The staff helps those ministries find and obtain publications that already exist and sometimes also develops new resources. When developing new materials, the staff conducts training workshops, provides basic resources in English that can be adapted and translated, secures funding, and coordinates the project. Others who know their target audience and are fluent in the native language do the writing and translating.

The recent printing of 10,000 copies of a 378-page Bible story picture book in Chichewa for Central Africa is an example of working together. The text comes from a contemporary Bible translation that Dr. Ernst Wendland Jr. played an important role in producing. Also, to help Christians study basic Christian doctrine in small groups or as individuals, Multi-Language Publications worked with WELS Prison Ministry to adapt a series of booklets for the millions of adults who read English at a simple level. Now various volumes are appearing in Chinese, Japanese, Nepali, Spanish, and Urdu.

Coordination is important. WELS is not a highly centralized and tightly run organization. Instead it is a complex and continually evolving web of congregations, schools, conferences, federations, and programs. The complexity reflects our widely shared desire for grass-roots involvement in ministry. The revolutionary changes in communication technology enable people around the globe to form small cadres for specific projects.

These small groups within our fellowship could compete rather than work together. Energy and limited resources could be wasted on duplication of efforts or worse. Fights about doctrine could cripple any publishing effort. Yet cross-cultural publishing is

flourishing in WELS. This isn't simply because a need for the resources exists or because communications and desktop publishing technology enables grass-roots ministries to participate in the process. The key reason is that the Holy Spirit has motivated us to work together. He has united us in one doctrine.

## **WE ARE ONE IN DOCTRINE**

By giving us a common faith in Jesus Christ and a shared commitment to teach everything he has commanded, the Holy Spirit binds us together. How did that happen? He did this through the Word and sacraments as he gathered us together with a common faith.

But the unity among us has been nurtured and developed in the context of our synod's ministerial education system. Our pastors and missionaries sat at the feet of confessional Lutheran pastor-professors through four years of seminary training and four years of college before entering the seminary. Many of our pastors even attended one of the preparatory schools prior to entering college. And before that many attended our parish schools whose teachers also attended the same college, if not also the same high schools and grade schools. The typical called worker in our fellowship has sat at the feet of Christian teachers for at least four years, and in some



instances for 20 years, prior to entering the public ministry. They have searched the Scriptures and grown in their knowledge of God's truth. They have declared their allegiance to the Lutheran Confessions because they are convinced that those confessions are a clear and faithful declaration of God's Word.

### WE BUILD ON THE WORK OF THOSE WE TRUSTS

This doctrinal unity encourages respect for the work done by others in our fellowship. Multi-Language Publications simply builds on the work of others. For instance:

- Seventy-eight titles from Northwestern Publishing House have been translated into 21 languages.
- The work done by Professor David Kuske and others to produce a new catechism has benefited world mission fields in Albania, Bulgaria, India, Indonesia, Latin America, Russia, and Sweden.
- The WELS parish education curriculum, *Christ-Light*, started at Gethsemane Lutheran Church in Milwaukee, was picked up by Parish Services, and was eventually completed by Northwestern Publishing House. Today, parts of that curriculum are being translated into Albanian, German, Norwegian, Russian, and Swedish.
- Thirty-two pastors, professors, and missionaries wrote the *People's Bible* commentaries. This entire series was translated by missionaries and members of our Hispanic congregations into Spanish, making it the first Lutheran commentary of the entire Bible in that language.
- When a new version of an evangelism tract arrived in El Paso from Russia, Multi-Language Publications called the Commission on Evangelism administrator, Michael Hintz, to explain it. Hintz doesn't know Russian, but he knows the tract because it came from WELS evangelism—through the work of

former seminary president David Valleskey.

- A member of the Multi-Language Publications Committee, Pastor Harold Essmann, wrote a booklet to state in a positive way what confessional Lutherans believe the Bible teaches. That booklet, *What the Bible and Lutherans Teach*, has been translated into 19 foreign languages.

The basic reason why our mission fields respect the work done by Parish Services, Northwestern Publishing House, and Multi-Language Publications is because we are united in doctrine. We have sound materials to use in sharing Christ with the world.

Our ministerial training schools have forged the unity in doctrine that helps us reach out to the world. They have created a pool of educated and talented workers. Think how this helps our global reach. We think that our future workers should be highly literate professionals who can write, teach, counsel, and preach. They should have a good background in literature, history, and music. Some should be fluent in a foreign language. Pastors should be able to translate Bible texts from the original languages; they should have studied at least one theological language, such as Latin or German. The education our church workers have received has had a profound impact on our mission fields. Ministerial education has created a pool of missionaries and national workers who can write, translate, adapt, design, and organize publications in their languages. That's vital when reaching out to those in other cultures who speak another language.

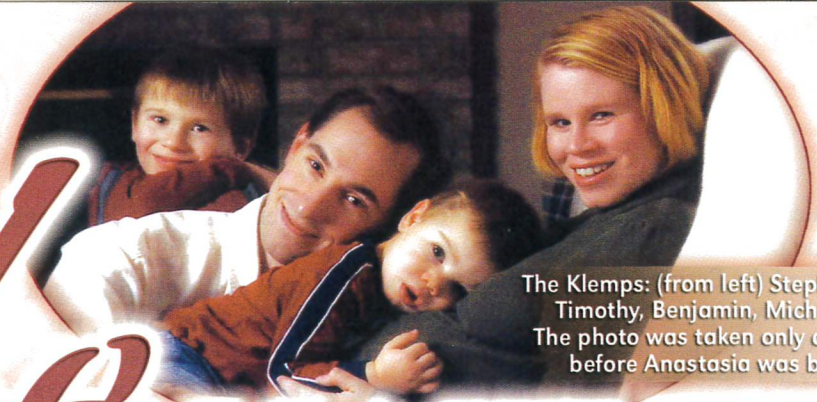
Thank God for this blessing! Thank God also for our synod's system of ministerial education. It's the foundation that underlies Multi-Language Publications and its ability to go global with the gospel.

*Paul Hartman, coordinator for Multi-Language Publications, El Paso, Texas, is a member of Christ our Redeemer, El Paso.*

In the past 10 years, Multi-Language Publications has printed and distributed 450,000 copies of *The Promise* from Chile to Alaska and from Wisconsin to Siberia. This story of salvation is just one of the more than 500 items from Multi-Language Publications. It is available in 34 languages:

ENGLISH	ALBANIAN
ARABIC	BEMBA
BULGARIAN	BURMESE
CHAYAHUITA	CHICHEWA
CHINESE	CREOLE
CZECH	DUTCH
FARSI	FINNISH
FRENCH	GERMAN
HINDI	HMONG
JAPANESE	KOREAN
LAOTIAN	MIZO
NEPALI	NORWEGIAN
POLISH	PORTUGUESE
RUSSIAN	SPANISH
SWEDISH	TELUGU
THAI	TONGA
URDU	VIETNAMESE

To find out more about Multi-Language Publications and the materials it produces, visit [www.mlpwels.com](http://www.mlpwels.com).



The Klemps: (from left) Stephen, Timothy, Benjamin, Michelle. The photo was taken only days before Anastasia was born.

# Life IS NEVER WORTHLESS

Though she lived outside the womb for only an hour, God blessed us through Anastasia.

Timothy and Michelle Klem

The 20-week ultrasound is an exciting event for couples expecting a child. It is the first opportunity to glance at fingers and toes, and maybe even to begin planning for “pink or blue.” As we went for our routine ultrasound this past October, this was the excitement that we were anticipating. We never envisioned how much this ultrasound would change our lives.

**Our hearts sank when two doctors walked into the room.** “There’s no good way to tell you this . . .,” one began. Our daughter had a serious developmental defect called anencephaly. He went on to explain that our baby’s skull had not completely formed. As a result, her brain would not fully develop. There is no treatment. It is always fatal.

These words had barely sunk in before we were asked what our decision would be. The conversations that followed suggested many reasons for aborting our child, but always ended with the words, “But it’s your choice.” A pretty-looking book was placed in our hands. This book, under the guise of giving comfort, was testimony upon testimony of mothers who had aborted their children. Only two short stories were included where life was chosen.

**Hearing our daughter’s prognosis was devastating.** Many expected us to abort. Yet we knew that her life was as precious and meaningful as everyone else’s. Abortion was not a choice. God had created her and had a deliberate purpose in mind. Jesus died to give her eternal life. So she was named Anastasia Grace. Anastasia, for the resurrection that comes through Christ. Grace, that we acknowledge we deserve no favor from God because of our sin.

**Annie’s kicks were initially a sorrowful reminder of what was to come.** However, they quickly became

endearing—a little “Hello,” “Good morning,” or “Good night” for both of her parents and occasionally a kick for her brothers as well. Our hearts were breaking knowing that she was facing death, but we had the confidence that she was completely in the care of the boundless love of Christ.

While I was holding Annie in my womb, our wonderful family and friends were holding us, both through their support and prayers. We were humbled to be the subject of so many prayers and marveled at how awesome it was to see Christian love in action. God also allowed us to see that he was using Annie’s precious life as many people dear to us reported that they had shared her story, witnessing the truths of God’s Word to those around them.

**Anastasia continued to be a powerful witness on Feb. 3, the day of her birth—and death.** Although specialists told us that she was incapable of having any senses, our little girl let every nurse know that she was aware of their efforts to track her. Every time they attempted to gauge her heartbeat, she kicked their instruments and gave them an earful. Every one of them also knew the meaning of her name and our first priority upon birth. As soon as her daddy cut her cord, she was whisked to the prepared basin to be baptized.

Though she lived outside the womb for only an hour, God blessed us through Anastasia by giving us a clearer vision to the importance of life, the power of prayer, and the victory of baptism. We are grateful God gave her to us, and we await the day when we will see her again at our Savior’s side.

*Timothy and Michelle Klem are members at Resurrection, Verona, Wisconsin.*

Dear Anastasia,

Although you were alive outside the womb for only an hour, you have touched the lives of many. Despite the recommendation by doctors to have a "selective termination of pregnancy," your parents chose to give you a chance at life—no matter how short it would be. Through baptism, you became a child of God. An hour later, you joined your Savior in heaven.

At your funeral, there still were tears shed. For me and likely for many others, it was the first funeral of a child I had attended. Seeing your tiny coffin was a reminder of how precious life really is and how every birth really is a miracle. Some of the tears were shed out of sadness, as your presence would be missed. But they were also tears of joy, knowing that you are now safely in Jesus' loving arms.

Your life has a purpose. In our human understanding and insight, we don't know fully what that will be. From the time of that fateful ultrasound up until the present, your story and your family's faith has been strengthened and shared with others, both in person and through the Internet. Blood samples were taken after your birth and will hopefully contribute to the medical understanding and prevention of anencephaly. Perhaps a stronger support system will be formed for expectant parents facing similar situations. As God said to the apostle Paul, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9). Trust in God's grace and wisdom will carry us through even these most difficult of times.

Your eyes, gray and unseeing on earth, now eagerly are on the lookout, anticipating the time when you and your family will be reunited in heaven.

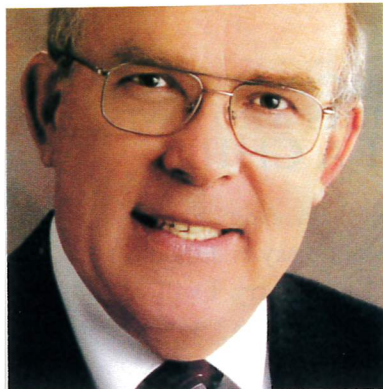
Looking forward to seeing you again.

Your loving aunt,  
Melissa

## HOW YOU CAN RESPOND TO FAMILIES WHO HAVE LOST A CHILD

- Don't avoid them, even though knowing what to say is difficult. A simple "I'm so sorry. I will pray for you. What can I do to help?" is comforting. It is also okay to admit that you are unsure of what to say.
- Offer comfort from God's Word, but try to avoid phrases such as "It must have been God's will" or "Your baby must have been sick anyway" or "At least you have (or will have) other children." This minimizes loss, implying that the parents should immediately move on and forget their sad experience. Sorrow is natural when people lose a child—it is not a lack of faith.
- Treat the loss as you would any other loss of a loved one. Send a comforting card or letter with Scripture; deliver meals; send flowers; or call to say, "How are you?"
- Be available to talk, to listen, or to give a comforting hug. Those who lose a child are experiencing a wide variety of emotions—anger, hurt, sorrow, guilt. They may need someone to talk to who will listen in a non-judgmental way. But also be sensitive to the times when they don't feel like talking.

Ann Jahns



*Carl R. Gungl*

## Perfection to come

**E**ver heard the expression, “the dog days of summer?” It’s often used to describe the hottest and muggiest days of summer, from mid-July through mid-August.

But what’s the origin of the expression? In ancient times, when the night skies were undimmed by city lights, people used their imaginations to connect the stars to outline familiar creatures. Some saw a bull (Taurus), or twins (Gemini), or dogs (Canis Major and Minor).

Sirius is the brightest star in Canis Major (the big dog). It is also the brightest star, usually, in the night sky. For a time in mid-summer, Sirius rises and sets with the sun. Because it is such a bright star, ancient people thought it added heat to the sun, causing the hottest and muggiest days of the summer. They called them “the dog days of summer.”

For most of us living in the Northern Hemisphere, especially in the deep freeze of January, we long for the hot and sweltering days of summer. But when the dog days of summer come, it may be an entirely different story. When the slightest effort triggers a flood of perspiration or when we decline to leave air-conditioned comfort, we might even relish winter’s chill.

Isn’t it amazing how fickle human desires can be? In winter we want it warmer. In summer we want it colder. While there are nearly perfect summer days, memorable winter days as well, reality is never quite as good as it is imagined. Rarely, if ever, is perfection achieved.

But God can use imperfection to teach humans some mighty important lessons. Would we ever desire the assistance of someone else’s strength if we were not conscious of our own weaknesses? Could

we begin to appreciate a Savior if we were unaware of our sinful failures?

God can use anything in our world to impress us with his perfection. There are nearly perfect days in summer—low humidity, comfortable outdoor-living temperatures, refreshing breezes. We might think that it couldn’t get any better.

But when sweat runs off our overheated brows, we’re reminded of our imperfection. It’s just like God said to Adam in the Garden of Eden after the fall, “By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground” (Genesis 3:19). As long as we live, our earthly life is not perspiration-free. It takes effort, sometimes futile effort, to scrap together an existence in this imperfect world.

God’s intention with this recognition is not to rub our faces in the dirt of our own imperfection. Rather it is that, robbed of ultimate satisfaction in anything here and now, we will, by faith, desire the restoration of perfection in heavenly places.

The dog days of summer are such a reminder. Don’t you think God can use these days to cause earthly disillusionment in others, too? Might not the dog days of summer be another opportunity for us to bring a brighter perspective for the future to someone?

Summer isn’t all it’s cracked up to be. Sunburn, picnic-canceling cloudbursts, mosquitoes, poison ivy—the list is endless. But even in the hottest and muggiest times of the year, for the believer, there is refreshing relief close to the Savior.

During the dog days of this summer, why not bring someone with you into the refreshment of God’s love? It’s the privilege of everyone being a missionary.

**C**onfusion swept over the people, leaving them with many more questions than answers. What is happening? How is this possible? Where will all of this lead us? How will we survive?

You might think that I am giving a synopsis of the television show *Lost*. In a way, it fits. But these real questions fit better with the real people lost in confusion on Pentecost (Acts 2). They also fit better with anyone who has ever struggled with these real-life questions.

### Amazed and perplexed

A group of strangers gathered in Jerusalem when suddenly a sound like the rushing of a violent wind swirled around them. At the same time they saw what seemed to be tongues of fire hovering over certain individual's heads, but not burning them. "Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, 'What does this mean?'" (Acts 2:12).

When it comes to events in our lives that perplex us, we want to know: What does this mean? Does this bode well for me, or does it mean that I am in big trouble? Will this lead to a happy ending?

After two seasons of the TV show *Lost*, the viewer is still in the dark as to whether the ending will be a happy one. But for those lost in confusion on Pentecost and for those still

perplexed by life's quirky twists today, the conclusion has been revealed.

### Clearing up the confusion

Behind all of the supernatural events on Pentecost the Holy Spirit was at work. To clear up the confusion, he chose Peter as his spokesman. Peter made it clear that these perplexing events did not bode well for the crowd. "Listen to this: Jesus . . ." (Read Acts 2:14-36.)

## CONFUSION SWIRLS IN OUR HEARTS AS WE CONSIDER: HOW WILL WE SURVIVE OUR SIN?

The name Jesus could mean only the worst news for the crowd gathered that day because they knew very well how they had treated Jesus. "Crucify him! Crucify him!" they had shouted. If God revealed his power among them to exact revenge for how they treated Jesus, they were doomed. They recognized with absolute clarity their sin against Jesus.

"When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter

and the other apostles, 'Brothers, what shall we do?'" (Acts 2:37).

How have we treated Jesus? No matter how perplexing life can seem, we still know with absolute clarity: we have sinned against Jesus. Confusion swirls in our hearts as we consider: How will we survive our sin?

"Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit'" (Acts 2:38,39).

If you want to know, "What does this mean? Will this lead to a happy ending?", the answer can be found in Jesus. Jesus clears up the confusion caused by our sins by forgiving them all. He did not rise from the dead to exact revenge but to assure us of forgiveness. Jesus clears up the confusion concerning how we will survive by giving us the gift of the Holy Spirit through baptism—a gift that means life in heaven.

For anyone perplexed by life's confusing twists, this promise is for you. In Jesus' name, you have a happy ending.

*Contributing editor Philip Kieselhorst is pastor at Gethsemane, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.*

*This is the first article in a seven-part Bible study on God's answers when we're feeling lost.*

*Next month: Lost in isolation*



# LOST

PHILIP L. KIESELHORST

# IN CONFUSION

**IF YOU WANT TO KNOW, "WHAT DOES THIS MEAN? WILL THIS LEAD TO A HAPPY ENDING?", THE ANSWER CAN BE FOUND IN JESUS.**

# Christians as targets

**T**wenty-five thousand Christians recently gathered in San Francisco to voice an alternative to the area's gender policy. You may remember that some time ago, the mayor authorized gay marriages in the city. Many of those "marriages" took place until California declared them to be illegal.

The reaction to the 25,000 Christians by the local government revealed a hostility toward Christians. The city fathers labeled the assembled Christians as disruptive and unwelcome in the city. Clearly they did not want to hear any view that was different from their own—especially a message of Christian morality. Perhaps they felt that the Christian faith was like the bird flu that would infect the population and bring about thousands of deaths.

Not long ago a convert to Christianity in Muslim-controlled Pakistan was arrested for embracing Christianity and threatened with the death penalty. He was released because of world opinion and allowed to emigrate. Muslims who convert to Christianity do so knowing the peril they will face.

Some fear the Christian message in another way. Instead of openly rejecting or opposing it, they mock it. Unless she changes the show, Madonna's upcoming tour will feature her wearing a crown of thorns and mounting a cross. How many examples of such mockery can we find in our world today? Christians are targets. Other religions are treated with more respect.

But that shouldn't surprise any Christian. Jesus said, "A student is not above his teacher . . . If the head of the house has been called Beelzebub, how much more the members of his household" (Matthew 10:24,25). Those opposed to the message of Jesus killed him and tried to stamp out his followers. Even Paul was involved in the effort before his conversion.

In the course of history, the Roman government stepped up to rid the empire of the undesirable Christians. Someone

has always felt it was his duty to oppose the truth of Christ's vicarious death for sinners. The Reformation did not change things.

It won't cease until Christ returns. Christians will continue to be a little flock, apparently easy prey for violence, mockery, ridicule, and scorn. Sometimes the best we can hope for is that the world simply ignores us and lets us alone while we quietly proclaim the gospel.

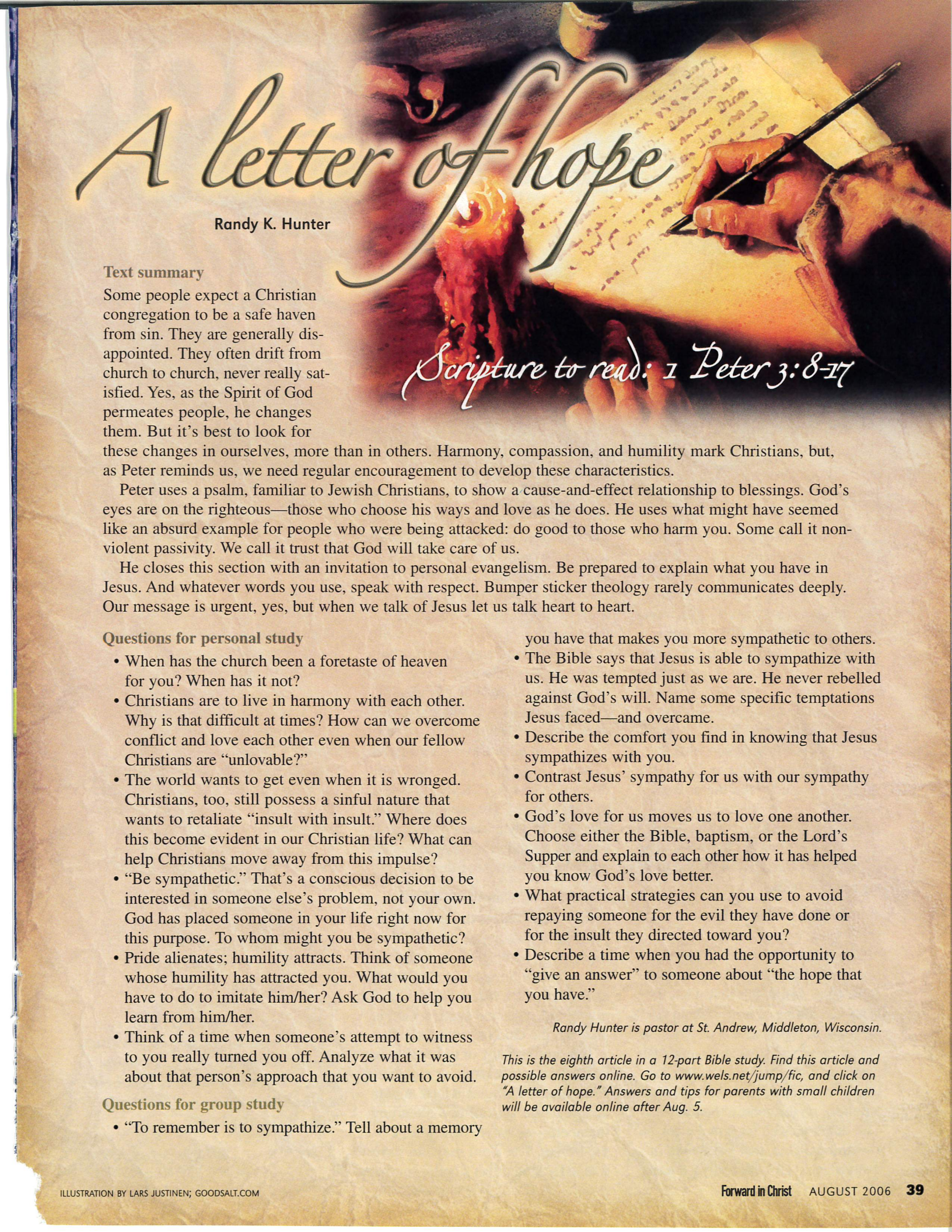
Peter—usually the first apostle to open his mouth and often the first to realize his own ignorance—advised followers of Jesus: "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander" (1 Peter 3:15,16). Good advice from the one who was ready to fight the opposition with a sword in Gethsemane. He also wrote, "If you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name" (1 Peter 4:16).

Let's keep at the work Jesus has given us to do—sharing his gospel. We don't want to infect anyone with a deadly virus, just the life-giving promise of Jesus. We can't stop the world's disdain of Jesus. But we can live exemplary lives as citizens, husbands, wives, and employees, and we can wait. Wait for the Lord to present an opportunity to speak with humility and gentleness about the faith that lives in our hearts.

We wait patiently also for the Lord to return. While we wait, Jesus reminded all his disciples, "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul" (Matthew 10:28). We are of more value to him than many sparrows. He has the hairs of our head numbered, and we have paradise waiting for us.



*John C. Baer*



# A letter of hope

Randy K. Hunter

## Text summary

Some people expect a Christian congregation to be a safe haven from sin. They are generally disappointed. They often drift from church to church, never really satisfied. Yes, as the Spirit of God permeates people, he changes them. But it's best to look for

these changes in ourselves, more than in others. Harmony, compassion, and humility mark Christians, but, as Peter reminds us, we need regular encouragement to develop these characteristics.

Peter uses a psalm, familiar to Jewish Christians, to show a cause-and-effect relationship to blessings. God's eyes are on the righteous—those who choose his ways and love as he does. He uses what might have seemed like an absurd example for people who were being attacked: do good to those who harm you. Some call it non-violent passivity. We call it trust that God will take care of us.

He closes this section with an invitation to personal evangelism. Be prepared to explain what you have in Jesus. And whatever words you use, speak with respect. Bumper sticker theology rarely communicates deeply. Our message is urgent, yes, but when we talk of Jesus let us talk heart to heart.

*Scripture to read: 1 Peter 3:8-17*

## Questions for personal study

- When has the church been a foretaste of heaven for you? When has it not?
- Christians are to live in harmony with each other. Why is that difficult at times? How can we overcome conflict and love each other even when our fellow Christians are “unlovable?”
- The world wants to get even when it is wronged. Christians, too, still possess a sinful nature that wants to retaliate “insult with insult.” Where does this become evident in our Christian life? What can help Christians move away from this impulse?
- “Be sympathetic.” That’s a conscious decision to be interested in someone else’s problem, not your own. God has placed someone in your life right now for this purpose. To whom might you be sympathetic?
- Pride alienates; humility attracts. Think of someone whose humility has attracted you. What would you have to do to imitate him/her? Ask God to help you learn from him/her.
- Think of a time when someone’s attempt to witness to you really turned you off. Analyze what it was about that person’s approach that you want to avoid.

## Questions for group study

- “To remember is to sympathize.” Tell about a memory

- you have that makes you more sympathetic to others.
- The Bible says that Jesus is able to sympathize with us. He was tempted just as we are. He never rebelled against God’s will. Name some specific temptations Jesus faced—and overcame.
- Describe the comfort you find in knowing that Jesus sympathizes with you.
- Contrast Jesus’ sympathy for us with our sympathy for others.
- God’s love for us moves us to love one another. Choose either the Bible, baptism, or the Lord’s Supper and explain to each other how it has helped you know God’s love better.
- What practical strategies can you use to avoid repaying someone for the evil they have done or for the insult they directed toward you?
- Describe a time when you had the opportunity to “give an answer” to someone about “the hope that you have.”

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

*This is the eighth article in a 12-part Bible study. Find this article and possible answers online. Go to [www.wels.net/jump/fic](http://www.wels.net/jump/fic), and click on “A letter of hope.” Answers and tips for parents with small children will be available online after Aug. 5.*



# VACATION

## with God

Next time life tires you out, remember that the best place you can be is close to your Lord.

Jeffrey L. Samelson

**F**or some of us, it's just a summertime thing—but it usually grows into something more than that. For others it's a post-confirmation thing—or maybe an I-just-went-through-something-difficult-in-my-life-and-I-need-change thing. It's the decision—conscious or unconscious—to take a vacation from God. For whatever reason, people stop going to church, reading their Bibles, or thinking much about Christ and what the Lord created them to be and do. These vacationers usually tell themselves that they'll be back after a while—after they've had a rest from all they think that the Lord has burdened them with. But far too often their “vacation” never really ends.

### Jonah tried taking a vacation from God

The Bible tells us a vivid story of one man who tried to take a vacation from God. Jonah felt that what the Lord was asking of him—taking God's message of repentance and salvation to lost people who made Jonah particularly uncomfortable—was just too much. So he decided it was time for a holiday on the coast of Spain.

It didn't go well for him. He forgot two things: One, that since God is everywhere, you can't really get away

from him; and two, that cutting off your relationship with the Lord—even if you think it's only for a little while—is never a good idea. After all, the Lord loves us and happens to be master of the universe.

So when God sent a storm that nearly capsized the ship, Jonah began to realize how foolish his idea of escape had been. And when the sailors threw him overboard to stop the storm, his vacation ended. He started getting close to God again. In the dark and discomfort of a fish's belly, he returned to God's Word. He repented of his sins and his abandoned responsibilities, and he relied once again on the grace of his loving Lord.

### We need to vacation with God

We might characterize Jonah's attempt at a vacation from God as more of a vacation from sanity. It was a foolish thing to do, and we can only thank the Lord, as Jonah did, for giving him a second chance. God is, after all, the God of second chances.

But far too many of us seem to be waiting for our seventh, or eighth, or 19th chance. Just take a look at your congregation's list of non-attending members—or maybe take a look in the mirror. The Lord may not have trapped you in a fish's belly, but there

have certainly been storms in your life. Did they wake you up and turn you around? Have you repented of your sins and your vacation from God? Or did you once again turn your back on the gospel and continue with your vacation from God's grace?

Because that's what a vacation from God is: separation from the One who loves you, saved you, and wants to bless you. All too often such vacationing Christians complain about the troubles that come to their lives and the blessings that they do not receive. They—*you?*—fail to recognize their problems for what they are: God's loving call to come home—now!—and end that costly vacation that never should have begun.

Maybe you need a break. We all do. But Jesus invited us to take our vacation *with* him, not from him. He said, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).

Next time life tires you out or your troubles seem more than you can bear, remember that the best and happiest place you can be is close to your Lord and resting in his grace. There is no better way to “get away.”

Jeff Samelson is pastor at Christ, Columbia, Maryland.