

THE MERGER OF MIMI AND WLIM

Senior Church History Paper
Professor Korthals
Joshua Kesting
May 1, 2001

A baby tragically drowned in northern Wisconsin. The mother had stepped into the kitchen for just a minute and somehow the baby slipped out of its restraints and the mother found her baby drowned in the bathtub. The mother and father were inactive WELS members and the baby had not been baptized. The baby was Med-flighted into Madison on Monday night and on Tuesday night the baby was baptized. Friday morning the baby was declared brain dead, which medically speaking is dead, but the body was being kept alive by machines.

The parents decided to donate the baby's organs for transplant. The parents wanted to know what God said about all these things. Chaplain Kenneth Wenzel was called in to answer their questions. Chaplain Wenzel spent about four hours with them and finally the couple decided to donate their baby's organs to any child who would be coming into the hospital. They took the baby out of the incubator and placed it in the mother's arms with all the lines and tubes coming out of the baby. Doctors and nurses stood near keeping the baby alive. The mother held her baby as the father and chaplain put their heads together and talked about the blessings of baptism. Everyone was crying as they said their final good-byes to the baby.

This was a draining experience for the chaplain. As soon as Ken got back to his desk at the hospital he found a note that he was to see a different family concerning their baby. This was a WELS family from Tennessee that had been flown in on an emergency basis. Their baby was to receive an organ transplant from another baby. In all likelihood, the organs this baby received were the organs of the drowned baby. Of course the chaplain could not tell the family this information.

The chaplain watched as the parents and grandparents jumped up and down with joy, praising God for the gift of this organ transplant that allowed their baby to live. The baby received the needed transplant and is doing well.

That day was completely draining but yet wonderfully exciting. The chaplain could hardly sleep that night. How wonderful it was to see how God brought comfort, strength and direction to a family facing the death of their child and how God brought joy and peace to a family receiving the gift of life for their child.¹

This is institutional ministry. The name may not sound that important or all that exciting but one of the goals of this paper is to explain the duties and ministry of a WELS/WLIM chaplain. My other goal is to explain the history behind how WELS Madison Institutional Ministries, Inc. (MIMI) became a part of what is now called Wisconsin Lutheran Institutional Ministries (WLIM) in July of 1998. It makes the most sense to first give a brief history of both MIMI and WLIM. After that I will cover the merger and the organization that is now WLIM. After the history of the merger is covered, I will explain briefly a product of the merger, WLIM chaplains.

Madison Institutional Ministries, Inc. history begins in the early 1940's. In 1942 and 1944 the Western Wisconsin District convention addressed the issue of many WELS members who were being sent to Madison for medical care. It was not very feasible for the member's home pastor to travel to Madison since the distance was often great and during war times travel was

limited. In 1945, the District Mission Board of Western Wisconsin called and salaried a pastor to serve as the first chaplain in the Madison institutions.

As the years passed the demand to call on WELS members became greater and greater as more and more WELS members were sent to Madison for medical attention. The chaplains faithfully called on the WELS members that were in the area's hospitals, nursing homes and other institutions in the Madison area. In the year 1980 the chaplain made over 5,000 calls. About 35% of the patients visited were from the Northern Wisconsin District and from the Southeastern Wisconsin District. ⁱⁱ

In 1981, a significant change occurred in the way MIMI was run. The WELS Convention that year decided to withdraw the Synod's funding of the program. It was proposed that MIMI should be funded by local or regional sources. In 1982 MIMI became its own self-supporting non-profit organization. This change was not agreeable to many in the Western Wisconsin District but happened nonetheless. At first it was a financial struggle for the new MIMI, but the Lord opened the hearts of his people and most of the budget was covered by support from individuals and congregations. The finances were still a struggle in the 1990's when Ken Wenzel accepted the call to be a chaplain for MIMI.

WLIM's history began in 1902. The ministry was begun as a local pastor began to make calls out to the County Grounds in Milwaukee, where several hospitals and institutions for troubled boys and girls were (and still are) located. In its early years WLIM was heavily involved in the nursing homes in the Milwaukee area. Already in 1903 WLIM had a chaplain serving the only prison in the state at Waupun. It has really only been in the last 20 years or so that WLIM began to focus on other prisons and jails in the state. Currently, WLIM chaplains rarely make visits to nursing homes since local pastors cover this area of ministry. Their focus is mainly hospitals, detention centers, prisons and other institutions where the Gospel message can be spread.

WLIM was different from MIMI since it has always been self-supporting and did not receive aid from the Synod at large. Why isn't this important work supported by the Synod? This important work is supported by the Synod in many different ways. Much of the material used by institutional chaplains, such as Bible classes, is produced by the Synod. The Synod helps in many other ways but is not able to provide direct financial assistance to WLIM. This goes back to the 70's and 80's when the Synod's budget was very tight. The Synod felt that since this

work was not mission work *per se* but rather supporting existing members they would not be able to support the work. So, WILM is still financially supported by offerings from congregations, ladies groups, and individuals.

MIMI and WLIM were not the only institutional ministries that were involved in the 1998 merger. The Northern Wisconsin District Institutional Ministries, Inc. (NWDIM) also merged together with MIMI and WLIM into what is now WLIM. NWDIM was primarily involved in prison ministry in the northern part of the state. It is not my goal to trace NWDIM's history, but it is important to note that they were also involved in the merger.

So after looking into the history of Institutional Ministry in Wisconsin, we have seen that there were three separate WELS institutional ministry programs doing work among the different districts in Wisconsin and surrounding states. In 1993 WLIM had grown large enough to call an executive director, Donald Borgwardt, to handle much of the administration. Shortly after this a few meetings were held between WLIM and MIMI. These meetings were mainly used to keep updated on what each other ministry was doing. On September 29, 1996 Donald Borgwardt arranged a meeting with NWDIM at Petri's Restaurant in Fond Du Lac, WI. In a memo dated September 24, 1996 Mr. Borgwardt wrote to the members of the WLIM staff concerning the upcoming meeting with NWDIM,

"I'll have a very loose agenda prepared, but basically we want to explore ways that we can work together more effectively, communicate the ministries' mission better to the constituency and explore whether it makes sense to consider a consolidation or merger at some time." ⁱⁱⁱ

In this way the ball had begun rolling. In November of 1996 Mr. Borgwardt wrote concerning a similar meeting with MIMI in a memo to the WLIM's board of directors,

"Since we met with NWDIM on September 29th, I have been in contact with the Western Wisconsin District President Herb Prah and Pastor Charles Isles, chairman of the Madison Institutional Ministry (MIMI). Pastor Isles is enthusiastic about meeting with both WLIM and NWDIM to discuss how we might do a better job of institutional ministry in Wisconsin. Pastor Purdue and I agreed that we should invite MIMI to attend the December 1st dinner meeting, which we have done. If you are able to attend this dinner meeting on Sunday evening, December 1st, please call me by Wednesday, November 27th or return the enclosed postcard. Thanks in advance for taking the time to attend this meeting." ^{iv}

After this groundwork was laid, all three ministries met together at a Sizzler Restaurant in Milwaukee, WI on December 1, 1996. This meeting was organized for the purpose of improving

communication between the three agencies. However, this meeting and subsequent ones led them down the path toward a merger. It was at this meeting that someone was reported to have first said, "Why don't we merge!"

After the introductions each ministry gave a brief overview of their work. That evening they had a open discussion of opportunities to work together. They discussed, areas of overlap, areas not covered, opportunities for ministry growth/expansion, communication, and the possibility of establishing an 800 telephone number. They also asked the questions "where do we go from here?" and "should a joint committee should be established?" They also established a future meeting to continue the discussion. ^v

After this meeting Mr. Borgwardt sent out a memo to the chairmen of NWDIM, MIMI, and WLIM and wrote,

Our meeting on December 1st in Milwaukee was certainly a productive one, considering the agreement to begin planning a more effective and broad-based ministry through a joint ministry.

Certainly the Lord will guide all of us to find the way to work out all of the details, identify and solve any concerns or potential stumbling blocks, etc. which we must address to develop a ministry which will serve the Lord in the entire State of Wisconsin.

A number of items have been identified for discussion at the meeting on January 19th. They are by no means the only items which may be discussed, but should give everyone a start at some of the items which should be addressed early in our discussions.

I'm sure that we will come up with many ideas and issues which will need to be looked at over a number of months as we get together toward a common goal.

It would be helpful if the members of this committee would come prepared to address the issues and questions on the attached agenda. Future meetings will address additional issues and any questions, etc. that are raised during the January 19th meeting.

Looking forward to seeing all of you on Sunday evening. ^{vi}

So on January 19, 1997 the Chairmen and staff of NWDIM, MIMI and WLIM all met together at the Ponderosa Steak House, in Beaver Dam, WI. Included in the agenda for the night was:

- Development of "mission of combined ministry."
- Establishment of "vision for combined ministry."

-What is the greatest need for outreach that we should be starting on for the combined ministry.

-What do we want to do? How do we intend to accomplish it?

- Benefits of a combined ministry
 - Develop list
- What kind/structure of governing body should be established?
 - Federation, association, or individual membership?
 - Board of directors? How many members? How many from each existing ministry?
 - Term of office?
 - Timetable/ assignment to combine three constitutions/bylaws or develop new/revised constitution
- Annual meeting, quarterly meeting? Location?
- Establishment of issues which need to be addressed in future meetings ^{vii}

They also addressed the question of when the next meeting should be and where it should be held. The results of this meeting were substantial. The group came up with the following,

Proposed Mission-Vision Statements for Joint Institutional Ministries

In joyful response to the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Wisconsin Lutheran Institutional Ministries, Inc. exists to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to people with special needs throughout the State of Wisconsin.

Vision:

We exist to seek out and serve individuals:

- in prisons and jails
- in hospitals
- critically ill and dying
- those who have damaged their lives physically and spiritually with substance abuse
- families of present or recovering substance abusers
- those in nursing homes
- unwed mothers
- those who have experienced an abortion
- juveniles who are incarcerated or in shelter care
- families of juveniles who have become involved with the criminal justice system
- to help those who are released from prisons and jails to make a productive reentry into society

The scope of this ministry is the entire State of Wisconsin. The primary focus of this ministry will be to serve those who are unchurched. We also will gladly serve WELS members, in cooperation with the local pastor. ^{viii}

All of these meetings resulted in the decision to begin a new combined ministry. The Highlights of this new ministry were outlined on a sheet entitled, Highlights of Proposed New Ministry

- Ministry in three Wisconsin WELS Districts combined into one
- Effective August 1, 1998
- Nine man board of directors-three from each district One pastor, Two teachers/laymen
- Quarterly board meetings- board elects own officers
- Association of congregations throughout state operates ministry
- Annual meeting rotated throughout state
- Principal office of ministry in Milwaukee at 2949 N. Mayfair Rd. #105
- New name of combined ministry-Wisconsin Lutheran Institutional Ministries, Inc.
- Combined ministry would consist of:
 - 5 full time chaplains
 - 1 full time deaconess
 - 1 full time executive director
 - 1 part time lay ministry coordinator
 - 1 part time secretary
 - plus, a number of part time chaplains
- One year funding for a full time program/development director ^{ix}

The new WLIM had been planned. On July 26, 1998 the WLIM Board of Directors met at the new WLIM office in Milwaukee for the official signing of the Plan of Merger documents by the chairmen and secretaries of the three ministries. At that time they also held a call meeting for the Marketing/Development Director. On Sunday, August 30, 1998 a special service was held at Redeemer Ev. Lutheran Church in Fond du Lac, WI. At that service the new board of directors was installed and the Divine calls for the staff were affirmed. Copies of some of the merger documents have been included in the appendix, pages 11-17.

In the following portion of this paper I will include some questions that I asked of both Chaplain Ken Wenzel and Charles Isles during personal interviews in March of 2001. Perhaps a brief biography of each chaplain would be helpful.

Chaplain Ken Wenzel has been an MIMI/WLIM chaplain for five years. Before this he served congregations in rural Montana and Wisconsin. When he was called to MIMI his duties were to call on the hospitals and prisons in the area of Madison. Now that he works under the merged WLIM his work mainly consists of calling on the sick and ill in the hospitals of Madison.

Chaplain Charles Isles has served as a WLIM chaplain for less than a year, although he served on the board for MIMI for many years and so is familiar with the work. He served congregations in rural South Dakota, Missouri (exploratory), Oklahoma, and Wisconsin. His work mainly consists of calling on several prisons and jails, including Waupun, in the southern half of the state of Wisconsin.

Question: *So how is the new WLIM different than MIMI and the old WLIM?* Both chaplains stressed that WLIM is now much more focused on outreach and mission work in both the prisons and hospitals than it had been previously. Chaplain Isles mentioned that 60% of his work in the prisons was among the unchurched that attend his Bible classes or worship services. 40% of Chaplain Ken Wenzel's visits are made on non-WELS members. Under the guidance of the new WLIM much evangelism takes place. Both chaplains expressed that they were happy with the direction WLIM was heading.

Chaplain Wenzel also mentioned that he had been a pastor in the Western Wisconsin District for ten years before being called as a MIMI chaplain and really did not know about MIMI or the services that it offered. There was some publicity of MIMI but still not enough. Under WLIM more publicity is done and more and more pastors in the field know that they can contact a chaplain to visit their members when they are sent to Madison for medical attention. Chaplain Wenzel noted that the merger into WLIM brought organization, a newsletter, and a better financial base than the old MIMI.

Question: *How do you do mission work in a hospital?* Chaplain Wenzel mentioned that there were some days when not many WELS members were in the hospital. On those days Chaplain Wenzel would take a whole list of names that had no church affiliation and were from some distance away and begin making calls. On days like that Chaplain Wenzel has been given many opportunities to reach out with the Gospel message.

Those who are in the hospital are no more able to accept the Gospel message than anyone else, but God does use these opportunities to share his comforting message of forgiveness and salvation in Jesus Christ. Many in the hospital are hurting physically (of course) and spiritually. The devil often uses their physical problems as a club, "see God is punishing you for your sins." Simple Law/Gospel presentations are the most common method that Chaplain Wenzel uses in these "cold" calls. Some of these people may never set foot inside a WELS

church but the Gospel was shared with them. We never underestimate the power of the Holy Spirit to work through his Word. Much of a chaplain's work is Kingdom work.

This type of ministry is so important especially when many of the other non-denominational chaplains have what Chaplain Wenzel describes as a "ministry of presence, hold their hand, and support them in whatever direction they are going." This is a shallow ministry that never gets to the root of all earthly problems and more importantly the only solution to those problems.

Question: *What are some of the main differences in an institutional ministry vs. a parish ministry?* Chaplain Isles stated that, "it (institutional ministry) is different in almost every way, except I am still proclaiming God's Word, still proclaiming Law and Gospel." x Chaplain Isles also noted that the audience is different. As a chaplain you no longer have that weekly connection to your sheep. In some institutions, Chaplain Isles noted that almost every six months there was a turnover in the people he visited. In Chaplain Wenzel's case, this is even more of an issue. He might only visit a person once or twice before he or she is released.

Chaplain Isles also mentioned that he missed the daily working together with other Christians, such as the Board of Elders, or teachers, or the organist. A chaplain ministry is often a solo ministry and at times can be lonely. An institutional ministry is not necessarily worse than a parish ministry, just different. Although the sheep may be different, they are still God's sheep and still need to be feed and nourished with the Word of Life just as God's other sheep.

Question: *Is there a difference in stress level as an institutional chaplain or is it the same level as that of a parish pastor?* Chaplain Isles noted that as a parish pastor he was experiencing dull headaches more and more. He never really noticed that he was under anymore stress than usual but these headaches caused him to daily take aspirin or Advil. Sometimes he would even have to cancel a class or a shut-in meeting because these headaches were draining him so much. After about three weeks into his new duties at WLIM he noticed that the headaches were gone. Even though he had not noticed the stress of the parish this change in ministries relieved the stress that was silently wearing him down. Chaplain Isles mentioned that he prayed that this change in stress was not because he cared less for his new sheep, but that it is just a different type of ministry.

Question: *How is your family life different as a chaplain compared to a parish pastor?* Chaplain Isles mentioned that his schedule no longer matches that of his families. He does not

have the flexibility to make his schedule fit into his families as he used to. He mentioned that three nights out of the week he eats his evening meals by himself because he is on the road or gets home fairly late at night. His family has struggled with the change, but is doing fine.

Chaplain Wenzel noted that he is a pastor but does not live in a glass house. He does not have a congregation that is looking to him at all times for leadership. In some ways this relates to stress levels. The weight of congregational politics and bureaucracy are lifted from your shoulders. As the opening story noted there are draining days in the institutional ministry, but there are also great rewards. Both chaplains that I interviewed seem very happy in their positions. Both expressed their joy at being able to share God's Word with his people in a different but important way.

Another way to get a glimpse into what a WILM chaplain's ministry is to listen or read their stories. Chaplain Wenzel gave me several such stories. I will include them in the appendix of this paper. Some of these stories were written for the WLIM newsletter, but some have never been put into print.

As I stated at the beginning of this paper, institutional work in prisons and hospitals does not sound as if it would be all that exciting of a ministry. I have learned differently as I have researched this paper. Institutional work does not have to be a "maintenance" ministry. It can be and is a wonderful tool for outreach. These institutionalized souls are no less important than any other. Jesus' blood paid for their sins just as it paid for yours and mine. As members of the WELS we are truly blessed to have an institution such as WLIM. Keep WLIM and its chaplains in your prayers.

ⁱ This account was summarized from an interview of WLIM Chaplain, Ken Wenzel, on March 18, 2001.

ⁱⁱ This information was taken from Derrick Bauer's church history paper on the MIMI written in 1992.

ⁱⁱⁱ WLIM Memo dated September 24, 1996. This memo can be found in the appendix page 1.

^{iv} WLIM Memo dated November 8, 1996. This memo can be found in the appendix page 2.

^v Information gathered from the agenda of the NWDIM, MIMI, WLIM meeting on December 1, 1996. This agenda can be found in the appendix page 5.

^{vi} Memo dated January 13, 1997. This memo can be found in the appendix page 6.

^{vii} Information gathered from the agenda of the NWDIM, MIMI, and WLIM meeting on January 19, 1997. This agenda can be found in the appendix page 7.

^{viii} Proposed Mission-Vision Statement for Joint Institutional Ministries. This Mission-Vision statement can be found in the appendix page 8.

^{ix} Highlights of Proposed New Ministry This Highlights statement can be found in the appendix page 9.

^x Statement taken from an interview of WLIM chaplain Charles Isles, on March 16, 2001.



WLIM MEMO

DATE: TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 1996

TO: JOHN IBISCH, DEAN LOUCKS, GERRY MEYER, WALLY VOIGT, RV. KEN LENZ

FROM: DON BORGWARDT

SUBJECT: TRIP TO FOND DU LAC TO MEET WITH NORTHERN WISCONSIN
DISTRICT - INSTITUTIONAL MINISTRY

We'll be meeting at Wally Voigt's house (see attached map) at 4:30 p.m. on Sunday, September 29th. Wally has offered to transport all of us in his Suburban van.

We should arrive at Petri's Restaurant in Fond Du Lac by 5:45 p.m. for dinner with the Northern Wisconsin District Institutional Ministry. I'm not sure who will be there in addition to Pastor Guy Purdue (chairman) and Chaplain Dave Tetzlaff. Pastor Purdue said he thought two more from their board would be there.

I expect that we would be able to leave no later than 8:00 p.m. and be back at Wally's house at approximately 9:00 p.m.

I'll have a very loose agenda prepared, but basically we want to explore ways that we can work together more effectively, communicate the ministries' mission better to the constituency and explore whether it makes sense to consider a consolidation or merger at some time.

If you are unable to be at Wally's at 4:30 p.m. or will not be able to attend, please call me by noon on Sunday at home (377-5978) or if you don't talk to me, then call Wally at (414) 675-2155 so we don't wait for you.

Thanks in advance for taking the time to attend this meeting.

ap1



WLIM MEMO

DATE: NOVEMBER 8, 1996

TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

FROM: DON BORGWARDT

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH NORTHERN WISCONSIN DISTRICT - INSTITUTIONAL
MINISTRY (NWDIM) AND MADISON INSTITUTIONAL MINISTRY (MIMI)

Pastor Guy Purdue, chairman of NWDIM, and I have scheduled Sunday, December 1st for the followup meeting between WLIM AND NWDIM. WLIM will be hosting the dinner meeting at 5:30 p.m. here in Milwaukee. As we experienced the last time, all will be able to leave no later than 8:00 - 8:15 p.m. for their return home.

I'll again have a very loose agenda prepared, but basically we want to explore ways that we can work together more effectively, communicate the ministries' mission better to the constituency and explore whether it makes sense to consider a consolidation or merger at some time.

Since we met with NWDIM on September 29th, I have been in contact with Western Wisconsin District President Herb Prah and Pastor Charles Isles, chairman of the Madison Institutional Ministry (MIMI). Pastor Isles is enthusiastic about meeting with both WLIM and NWDIM to discuss how we all might do a better job of institutional ministry in Wisconsin. Pastor Purdue and I agreed that we should invite MIMI to attend the December 1st dinner meeting which we have done.

If you are able to attend this dinner meeting on Sunday evening, December 1st, please call me by Wednesday, November 27th or return the enclosed postcard. Thanks in advance for taking the time to attend this meeting.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1, 1996 5:30 P.M.

Sizzler Restaurant

1900 N Mayfair Rd. Milwaukee

(just south of North Ave)

771-1340

9P. 2



WLIM MEMO

DATE: NOVEMBER 8, 1996

TO: Pastor Guy Purdue, Chairman NWDIM

FROM: DON BORGWARDT, Executive Director

SUBJECT: JOINT MEETING
NORTHERN WISC. DISTRICT - INSTITUTIONAL MINISTRY (NWDIM)
MADISON INSTITUTIONAL MINISTRY (MIMI)
WISCONSIN LUTHERAN INSTITUTIONAL MINISTRY

Per our recent phone conversation, I have scheduled Sunday, December 1st for the followup meeting between WLIM and NWDIM. WLIM will be hosting the dinner meeting at 5:30 p.m. here in Milwaukee. As we experienced the last time, all will be able to leave no later than 8:00 - 8:15 p.m. for their return home.

I'll again have a very loose agenda prepared, but basically we want to continue exploring ways that we can work together more effectively, communicate the ministries' mission better to the constituency, etc.

Since we met with NWDIM on September 29th, I have been in contact with Pastor Charles Isles, chairman of the Madison Institutional Ministry (MIMI). Pastor Isles is enthusiastic about meeting with both WLIM and NWDIM to discuss how we all might do a better job of institutional ministry in Wisconsin. As we discussed, I have invited MIMI to attend the December 1st dinner meeting.

If you, members of your board and Chaplains Tetzlaff and Habermann are able to attend this dinner meeting on Sunday evening, December 1st, please call me by Wednesday, November 27th or return the enclosed postcard so I can give the restaurant a count. Thanks in advance for taking the time to attend this meeting.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1, 1996 5:30 P.M.

Sizzler Restaurant

1900 N Mayfair Rd. Milwaukee

(just south of North Ave - map enclosed)

ap3



WLIM MEMO

DATE: NOVEMBER 8, 1996

TO: Pastor Charles Isles, Chairman MIMI

FROM: DON BORGWARDT, Executive Director

SUBJECT: JOINT MEETING

NORTHERN WISC. DISTRICT - INSTITUTIONAL MINISTRY (NWDIM)
MADISON INSTITUTIONAL MINISTRY (MIMI)
WISCONSIN LUTHERAN INSTITUTIONAL MINISTRY

Per our phone conversation of November 7th, I have scheduled Sunday, December 1st for the followup meeting between WLIM and NWDIM (our first meeting was held on September 29th.) **We would like to extend an invitation to MIMI to join us for this Christian fellowship and discussion.** WLIM will be hosting the dinner meeting at 5:30 p.m. here in Milwaukee. As we experienced the last time we met with NWDIM, all will be able to leave no later than 8:00 - 8:15 p.m. for their return home.

I'll have a very loose agenda prepared, but basically we want to continue exploring ways that we can work together more effectively, communicate the ministries' mission better to the constituency, etc. If you have any specific items you want included, please let me know.

Pastor Guy Purdue, chairman of NWDIM is also enthusiastic about meeting with both MIMI and WLIM to discuss how we all might do a better job of institutional ministry in Wisconsin.

If you, members of your board and Chaplain Clement are able to attend this dinner meeting on Sunday evening, December 1st, please call me by Wednesday, November 27th or return the enclosed postcard so I can give the restaurant a count. Thanks in advance for taking the time to attend this meeting.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1, 1996 5:30 P.M.
Sizzler Restaurant
1900 N Mayfair Rd. Milwaukee
(just south of North Ave - map enclosed)

ap4

AGENDA - NWDIM, MIMI & WLIM MEETING

December 1, 1996

5:30 P.M. - 8:00 P.M.

Sizzler Restaurant, Milwaukee, WI

OPENING PRAYER: Wisconsin Lutheran Institutional Ministry

INTRODUCTIONS:

BRIEF MINISTRY OVERVIEW:

MIMI

NWDIM

WLIM

DINNER

DISCUSSION OF OPPORTUNITIES TO WORK TOGETHER

- Areas of overlap
- Areas not covered
- Opportunities for ministry growth/expansion
- Communication
 - Report on establishment of #800 telephone number

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

ESTABLISHMENT OF A JOINT COMMITTEE?

FUTURE MEETING SCHEDULE/DATE

CLOSING PRAYER: Northern Wisconsin District Institutional Ministry

APJ

MIMI NWDIM WLIM

MEMO

DATE: January 13, 1997

TO: Pastor Guy Purdue, Chairman NWDIM, Chaplain Dave Tetzlaff, NWDIM
Pastor Charles Isles, Sr., Chairman WELS MIMI
Rev. John Ibisch, Chairman WLIM, Chaplain Steve Stern, WLIM

FROM: DON BORGWARDT, Executive Director WLIM

SUBJECT: JOINT MEETING
NORTHERN WISC. DISTRICT - INSTITUTIONAL MINISTRY (NWDIM)
WELS MADISON INSTITUTIONAL MINISTRY (MIMI)
WISCONSIN LUTHERAN INSTITUTIONAL MINISTRY (WLIM)

SUNDAY, January 19, 1997 6:00 P.M.
Ponderosa Steak House
1520 N. Spring (Business 151) Beaver Dam, WI

Our meeting on December 1st in Milwaukee was certainly a productive one, considering the agreement to begin planning a more effective and broad-based ministry through a joint ministry.

Certainly the Lord will guide all of us to find the ways to work out all of the details, identify and solve any concerns or potential stumbling blocks, etc. which we must address to develop a ministry which will serve the Lord in the entire State of Wisconsin.

A number of items have been identified for discussion at the meeting on January 19th. They are by no means the only items which may be discussed, but should give everyone a start at some of the items which should be addressed early in our discussions.

I'm sure that we will come up with many ideas and issues which will need to be looked at over a number of months as we get together toward a common goal.

It would be helpful if the members of this committee would come prepared to address the issues and questions on the attached agenda. Future meetings will address additional issues and any questions, etc. that are raised during the January 19th meeting.

Looking forward to seeing all of you on Sunday evening.

apb

AGENDA - NWDIM, MIMI & WLIM MEETING
January 19, 1997
6:00 P.M. - 8:00 P.M.

Ponderosa Steak House, Beaver Dam, WI

OPENING PRAYER: WELS Madison Institutional Ministries

DINNER

AGENDA

- Development of "mission of combined ministry."
- Establishment of "vision for combined ministry."
 - What is the greatest need of outreach we should be starting on for the combined ministry?
 - What do we want to do? How do we intend to accomplish it?
- Benefits of combined ministry
 - Develop list
- What kind/structure of governing body should be established?
 - Federation, association or individual membership?
 - Board of directors? How many members? How many from each existing ministry? Term of office?
 - Timetable/assignments to combine three constitutions / bylaws or develop new / revised constitution
- Annual meeting, quarterly meeting? Location?
- Establishment of issues which need to be addressed in future meetings

FUTURE MEETING DATE & LOCATION

- Hosted by NWDIM

CLOSING PRAYER: Northern Wisconsin District Institutional Ministry

ap⁷

Proposed Mission-Vision Statements for Joint Institutional Ministries

In joyful response to the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Wisconsin Lutheran Institutional Ministries, Inc., exists to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to people with special needs throughout the State of Wisconsin.

Vision:

We exist:

to seek out and serve individuals:

- * in prisons and jails
- * in hospitals
- * critically ill and dying
- * those who have damaged their lives physically and spiritually with substance abuse
- * families of present or recovering substance abusers
- * those in nursing homes
- * unwed mothers
- * those who have experienced an abortion
- * juveniles who are incarcerated or in shelter care
- * families of juveniles who have become involved with the criminal justice system
- * to help those who are released from prisons and jails to make a productive reentry into society

The scope of this ministry is the entire State of Wisconsin. The primary focus of this ministry will be to serve those who are unchurched. We also will gladly serve WELS members, in cooperation with the local pastor.

upg

HIGHLIGHTS OF PROPOSED NEW MINISTRY

- Ministry in three Wisconsin WELS Districts combined into one
 - Effective August 1, 1998
- Nine man board of directors - three from each district
 - One (1) pastor
 - Two (2) teachers/laymen
- Quarterly board meetings - board elects own officers
- Association of congregations throughout state operates ministry
 - Annual meeting rotated throughout state
 - Principal office of ministry in Milwaukee at 2949 N. Mayfair Rd. #105
- New name of combined ministry - Wisconsin Lutheran Institutional Ministries, Inc.
 - Combined ministry would consist of:
 - 5 full time chaplains
 - 1 full time deaconess
 - 1 full time executive director
 - 1 part time lay ministry coordinator
 - 1 part time secretary
 - plus, a number of part time chaplains
 - One (1) year funding for a full time program/development director

ap9

Combined Ministry
NWDIM – MIMI – WLIM

2/24/97

Goals:

- merge the three Wisconsin District ministries into one
- expand prison ministry, especially in northern and western portions of Wisc.
- better publicize and promote joint/merged ministry
 - to get more awareness, participation and financial support for the ministry
- train and provide opportunities for lay workers to participate in the various ministries
- develop & expand programs and ministry to people:
 - in hospitals
 - in nursing & rehabilitation centers
 - in drug & alcohol treatment centers
 - in juvenile detention centers
 - in child & adolescent treatment ctrs
 - with developmental disabilities
- governing body (board of directors) of combined ministry would have equal representation from each district's present ministry

AP 10

**Wisconsin Lutheran Institutional Ministry, Inc.
Directors' Resolution Approving Merger
and Calling for Regular Meeting of Members**

The following resolutions were adopted at a regular meeting of the Board of Directors of Wisconsin Lutheran Institutional Ministry, Inc. held on May 3, 1998.

WHEREAS, the board of directors deems it to be in the best interests of this corporation to merge with Northern Wisconsin District Institutional Ministries, Inc. and WELS Madison Institutional Ministries Inc., Wisconsin nonstock corporations, upon the terms and conditions set forth in the plan of merger attached as Exhibit A (the "plan of merger").

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that a regular meeting of the member delegates of this corporation is called to be held on May 17, 1998, at the corporation's office located at 2949 North Mayfair Road, #105, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, or at a location to be determined by the board of directors and duly communicated to the member delegates, to commence at 4:00 P.M., Central Standard Time, for the purpose of approving the plan of merger;

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the officers of this corporation are authorized and directed to take such actions as are necessary to provide each of the members of this corporation with notice of such regular meeting under the provisions of chapter 181 of the Wisconsin Statutes and the bylaws of this corporation;

FURTHER RESOLVED, that, upon the adoption of the plan of merger by at least two-thirds of the corporation's members who are present, either in person or by proxy, at a meeting at which a vote on the plan of merger is taken, the officers are authorized and directed to do the following:

1. Prepare articles of merger in accordance with chapter 181 of the Wisconsin Statutes (the "articles of merger")
2. Enter into the articles of merger with the duly authorized officers of Northern Wisconsin District Institutional Ministries, Inc. and WELS Madison Institutional Ministries, Inc.
3. Cause the executed articles of merger to be filed with the office of the secretary of the state of Wisconsin and recorded with the register of deeds for Milwaukee County, Wisconsin, along with a copy of the plan of merger;

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the officers of this corporation

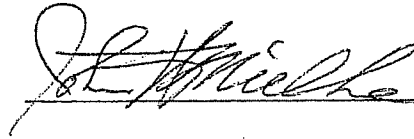
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are authorized to take any other actions reasonably necessary to fulfill the intent of these resolutions;

FURTHER RESOLVED, that this board of directors reserves the right to abandon the merger prior to the filing of the articles of merger with the secretary of the state of Wisconsin.

7 members of the board of directors were present in person or by proxy at the meeting, constituting a quorum and 7 directors voted for the resolutions and 0 directors voted against the resolutions.

Dated May 3, 1998.



Secretary

9p 12

Northern Wisconsin District Institutional Ministries, Inc.
Directors' Resolution Approving Merger
and Calling for Special Meeting of Members

The following resolutions were adopted at a special meeting of the Board of Directors of Northern Wisconsin District Institutional Ministries, Inc. held on May 15, 1998.

WHEREAS, the board of directors deems it to be in the best interests of this corporation to merge with and into Wisconsin Lutheran Institutional Ministry, Inc., and with WELS Madison Institutional Ministries, Inc., Wisconsin nonstock corporations, upon the terms and conditions set forth in the plan of merger attached as Exhibit A (the "plan of merger").

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that a special meeting of the member delegates of this corporation is called to be held on _____, 1998, at the corporation's office located at 1526 Algoma Boulevard, Oshkosh, Wisconsin, or at a location to be determined by the board of directors and duly communicated to the member delegates, to commence at __:__.M., Central Daylight Savings Time, for the purpose of approving the plan of merger;

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the officers of this corporation are authorized and directed to take such actions as are necessary to provide each of the members of this corporation with notice of such special meeting under the provisions of chapter 181 of the Wisconsin Statutes and the bylaws of this corporation;

FURTHER RESOLVED, that, upon the adoption of the plan of merger by at least two-thirds of the corporation's members who are present, either in person or by proxy, at a meeting at which a vote on the plan of merger is taken, the officers are authorized and directed to do the following:

1. Prepare articles of merger in accordance with chapter 181 of the Wisconsin Statutes (the "articles of merger")
2. Enter into the articles of merger with the duly authorized officers of Wisconsin Lutheran Institutional Ministry, Inc. and WELS Madison Institutional Ministries, Inc.
3. Cause the executed articles of merger to be filed with the office of the secretary of the state of Wisconsin and recorded with the register of deeds for Winnebago County, Wisconsin, along with a copy of the plan of merger;

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the officers of this corporation

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are authorized to take any other actions reasonably necessary to fulfill the intent of these resolutions;

FURTHER RESOLVED, that this board of directors reserves the right to abandon the merger prior to the filing of the articles of merger with the secretary of the state of Wisconsin.

_____ members of the board of directors were present in person or by proxy at the meeting, constituting a quorum and _____ directors voted for the resolutions and _____ directors voted against the resolutions.

Dated May 15, 1998.

Secretary

ap 14

**WELS Madison
Institutional Ministries, Inc.
Directors' Resolution Approving Merger**

This corporation having no members, the following resolutions were adopted at a regular meeting of the Board of Directors of WELS Madison Institutional Ministries, Inc. held on June 15, 1998.

WHEREAS, the board of directors deems it to be in the best interests of this corporation to merge with and into Wisconsin Lutheran Institutional Ministry, Inc. and with Northern Wisconsin District Institutional Ministries, Inc., Wisconsin nonstock corporations, upon the terms and conditions set forth in the plan of merger attached as Exhibit A (the "plan of merger");

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that this corporation shall merge with and into Wisconsin Lutheran Institutional Ministry, Inc. a Wisconsin nonstock corporation, upon the terms and conditions set forth in the plan of merger;

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the articles of merger as required by chapter 181 of the Wisconsin Statutes shall be executed by the appropriate officers of this corporation and shall be filed in the office of the secretary of the state of Wisconsin, and a certificate of merger shall be filed in the office of the register of deeds for Dane County, Wisconsin, along with a copy of the articles of merger;

FURTHER RESOLVED, that this board of directors reserves the right to abandon the merger prior to the filing of the articles of merger with the secretary of the state of Wisconsin.

_____ members of the board of directors, constituting a quorum, were present in person or by proxy at the meeting, and _____ directors voted for the resolutions and _____ directors voted against the resolutions.

Dated June 15, 1998.

Secretary

AP 15

Proposition for Merger of
Northern Wisconsin District Institutional Ministries, Inc.,
WELS Madison Institutional Ministries, Inc.
and
Wisconsin Lutheran Institutional Ministry, Inc.

- WHEREAS 1) our Lord Jesus has commissioned his Church to "go and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19); and
- WHEREAS 2) Jesus encourages us by his words and his example to bring the Good News of his love to all people, including the institutionalized (Matthew 25:36); and
- WHEREAS 3) for many years the Northern Wisconsin, Southeastern Wisconsin and Western Wisconsin Districts have taken this Great Commission to heart by conducting their own institutional ministries to the unchurched and to WELS members in prisons, jails, hospitals, nursing homes, drug and alcohol rehabilitation facilities, juvenile detention facilities and mental health facilities; and
- WHEREAS 4) the present cooperation between the three ministries has already produced greater effectiveness and efficiency in serving institutionalized people, especially in the prison system; and
- WHEREAS 5) the number of people in various institutions continues to grow, providing abundant opportunities for outreach and nurture to the institutionalized throughout the State of Wisconsin; and
- WHEREAS 6) under God's blessing a merger of the three individual ministries would provide an opportunity for all of God's people in the three districts of Wisconsin to support this ministry with their prayers, time, talents and treasures; and
- WHEREAS 7) the Lord in his grace has moved the governing bodies of these three ministries to work together and express support of this merger; therefore be it
- Resolved, a) That we give thanks to our gracious God for the blessings bestowed on the work of the Western Wisconsin District's WELS Madison Institutional Ministries, Inc.; and be it further

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- Resolved, b) That the WELS Madison Institutional Ministries, Inc., Northern Wisconsin District Institutional Ministries, Inc. and the Wisconsin Lutheran Institutional Ministry, Inc. be amalgamated into one ministry intended to serve the institutionalized throughout the State of Wisconsin; and be it further
- Resolved, c) That the name of this new ministry shall be the Wisconsin Lutheran Institutional Ministries, Inc.; and be it further
- Resolved, d) That all assets and liabilities of the Western Wisconsin District's WELS Madison Institutional Ministries, Inc. be transferred to the Wisconsin Lutheran Institutional Ministries, Inc., and be it further
- Resolved, e) That the Articles of Incorporation and Code of By-laws of the Western Wisconsin District's WELS Madison Institutional Ministries, Inc. be suspended; and be it further
- Resolved, f) That the Western Wisconsin District's WELS Madison Institutional Ministries, Inc. be dissolved, at the effective date of the merger; and be it further
- Resolved, g) That we encourage all congregations of our district to join the new WLIM association, send delegates to the annual delegate meeting, promote the ministry to their members, and include a commitment for financial support of this ministry in their annual budgets; and be it further
- Resolved, h) That the delegates to this district convention elect three representatives to serve on the new board of directors; and be it further
- Resolved, i) That all called workers presently serving the Western Wisconsin District's WELS Madison Institutional Ministries, Inc. be retained; and be it further
- Resolved, j) That the new board of directors shall begin to serve at the effective time of the merger; and be it finally
- Resolved, k) That we confidently seek God's richest blessings on this new venture of faith.

NOT ON MY LIST

A chaplain's list of names for visitations is daily prepared as I serve in several hospital institutions in Madison. One day in four hospitals there were 187 Lutherans of which 27 were WELS, 50+ were other synod Lutherans, and about 100 were non-churched Lutherans. While not all could be visited that day, there are always mission opportunities when the WELS-member list is lower.

However, there are people NOT ON MY LIST who also learn about the comfort of Jesus. A nurse asked for help when an African woman went into an African type of wailing at the bedside of her dying husband who was a medical student from the Sudan. In tears she tells me that she and her husband are baptized Christians and that God is punishing her for her sins by allowing her husband to die. In addition, she sobs that she now will be all alone in America. At that moment the door of her heart was wide open for the comfort and guidance of Christ. We first talked about the saving love of Jesus which had come to her and her husband by baptism. We also talked about how God had punished Jesus on the cross for our sins so that we sinners would have peace with God and the promise of heaven. We reviewed how Jesus promised to be with believers always wherever they lived.

The good news of Jesus took the woman out of her hopeless African wailing and brought her new comfort and strength. Later a nurse reported to the head chaplain that she did not know what I said but things changed in that room. When the head chaplain gave the report to me, I just smiled and gave thanks to Jesus for using me to spread his comfort to souls who were not on my list.

Another soul NOT ON MY LIST was a WELS mother with a sick child. She had come to the children's hospital where I was also visiting. She recognized me from having once preached in her congregation. The girl had a tumor behind her eye and may be going blind. Suddenly right in the middle of the hallway she cries aloud that God is punishing her for her sins. In private she then goes on to tell me that God is punishing her for two terrible sins which she had committed just out of high school. She had always wanted to tell her pastor about them but she was too ashamed to do it. In a state of panic she now was convinced that God was punishing her through her child's illness.

The door of her heart was wide open for the comfort and direction of the gospel. She knew about the love of Jesus and had prayed for forgiveness many times but now she had doubts and was confused. I told her to pick a number between 1 and 10; tell it to me; and then try to forget it. We both could not forget it. But God can do it. In fact He does do that because of Jesus' suffering and death upon the cross for our sins. When God forgives, He also forgets or sends sin as far as the east is from the west (Psalm 103:12). We also talked about how St. Paul again and again writes about his sins of persecuting Christians and the amazing grace of God. Paul could not get over that the Lord had not only forgave and forgot his sins, but Jesus

even called Paul to be one of his missionaries. There is real personal peace between us sinners and God in Jesus although we still remember our sins. God now also calls us to serve as His believing mothers, fathers, children, and workers.

In addition, the mother needed to remember that the health problems which come into the lives of believers are not punishments for sins. Jesus was punished for our sins. But because we live in a sin-stained world, even Christians may have all kinds of health problems and trials. The good news is that Jesus knows how to make even bad things work out for our good(Romans 8:28).

On that day we prayed for comfort, guidance, strength, and healing. The sick child was blessed with physical healing, and the mother went home with spiritual healing. I may never meet those souls again but at just the right moment the Lord put them on my list for spiritual healing.

Now let me tell you about some souls who were on my list to visit. Jenny was a young mother who was pregnant and in drug trouble. She was unchurched and afraid to tell anyone about her sins. She learned that she could go directly to Jesus for his forgiveness and help. Billy went to one of our WELS Christian day schools for only one day last fall and then spent the next several months in the hospital where he finally died. For weeks Sally has been patiently waiting in the hospital for an organ transplant so she can return home. A young Mexican man who had just started an adult confirmation class became very ill and finally was sent home to Mexico. A college girl from Africa was in the hospital with a bone infection for 5 weeks. She was frightened but the Savior gave her new strength. She eventually wanted to learn more about Jesus and become baptized. She was referred to our campus ministry in Whitewater. A WELS member from far up north who had been severely burned was cared for. The med-flight system in Madison is expanding and so more accident type of emergencies are demanding the chaplains attention.

A young boy at the Prairie Du Chien Correctional Institution asked me and the guard if he could talk in private to me after our Bible study. He tells me what had happened in his life, and starts crying the he had just been given a 12 year sentence and wanted to kill himself. He learned that he was still a precious soul to Jesus and that Jesus wanted to renew his faith and give new meaning and strength for his life. He agreed to start reading through the Gospel of Luke and then talk to me again at the next Bible study. He felt better and we prayed for Jesus' help and guidance.

SOULS NOT ON MY LIST AND SOULS ON MY LIST are a regular part of chaplain hospital ministry. Chaplain: Pastor Kenneth Wenzel of the WELS Madison Institutional Ministries, Inc. 608-825-7266.

Statewide WELS institutional help: 1-888-214-6490

WLIM Newsletter article - written in January 2001

Title: "ERIN'S BIBLE"

Matthew 19: 14 Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

The story of Erin and her Bible is about comfort and strength to the heart of a dying child. It also is a story about the hearts of those around Erin and about children in a far away mission field. Here is just a part of Erin's story and her Bible.

Erin was a happy and active girl. She enjoyed swimming, camping, and swinging her bat at a ball. However, at the age of seven she developed eating and balance problems. She was soon diagnosed with an in-operable tumor on her brain. She would spend weeks in treatments. Part of the time she would be at the hospital and part of the time she would stay at the Ronald McDonald House in Madison.

Erin became know as the little girl who loved to read from her children's Bible. It was a lengthy children's Bible with pictures and many of the favorite stories. She liked to read it aloud for herself and for others to hear. Erin received many wonderful gifts and activity books during her illness, however, she most often just wanted to sit and read her Bible.

Erin read the story of when the Children of Israel were afraid to enter the Promised Land. She learned how Joshua told them to not be afraid because God was with them. Erin believed that God was also with her through her scary procedures and treatments. Erin read the story of Noah's Ark and joined me in building a diorama of Noah's ark. She also colored a picture of the ark and some other pictures with me. As we colored the pictures, we talked about God's promises to the believers and her. She liked hearing about God's promises and about Jesus' saving love. Erin read many other Bible stories to me and her faith grew as she prepared to die and be with her Savior in heaven.

At home Erin continued to read her Bible. A few hours before she died, Erin read in her Bible about the woman who touched Jesus' coat and was healed. As did the woman in the story Erin began wanting to just touch Jesus clothes and be healed. But the Lord had plans for her to do that only in heaven. Erin read her Bible from front to back 17 times. This was no small accomplishment for a sick little girl. She asked questions about why would she die so young, what would death be like, and about living in heaven. While many of her questions could not be directly answered, her continuous Bible reading gave her heart the comfort and direction she needed.

Today Erin is touching the clothes and hands of Jesus Himself in the blessings of heaven. However, her story of Bible reading and faith is still moving the hearts of many other people. Through the Word of God, the Lord Himself not only comforted Erin' heart and faith, but He also brought strength to her family and witness to others. The people around Erin talked about the Bible stories which she had read. Erin's Bible reading at

home inspired some local families to buy children's Bibles for their own children. The hospital staff listened to the Bible stories. Only the Lord knows how their hearts were inspired. In addition, her family was moved to use some of Erin's memorial moneys to purchase a number of children's Bibles for needy children in a WELS foreign mission field.

Erin fits wonderfully into the Bible verses where Matthew writes (21:16-17): *"Do you hear what these children are saying?" they asked him. "Yes," replied Jesus, "have you never read, 'From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise'?"* The story of Erin and her Bible is a short but a wonderful song of praise to the saving Lord God. It is also a song which continues to praise God in the hearts of others. We praise God for this wonderful melody through Erin as the Lord continues to gather more souls into his eternal kingdom.

"Harold's Vision"

"I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know - God knows. And I know that this man ... was caught up to paradise. He heard inexpressible things, things that man is not permitted to tell." (2 Cor. 12:2-3). The Apostle Paul writes these words when the Lord gave him an amazing vision of heaven. He was not permitted to tell us what he heard and saw. Paul was not sure if he saw the vision with his own physical eyes or the eyes of his soul. It really did not matter, for the eyes of faith kept Paul close to his Savior.

These words of Paul came to my mind as a troubled and former hospital patient came to me for counsel. A year had almost passed since Harold had been in the hospital. Things were now better for his physical heart, but something was bothering his faith. Harold hesitated to tell me, but finally he related his story.

Harold was taken by ambulance to a hospital at the time of his heart attack. He "died" on the operating table three times, but each time he was brought back to life. During the longest episode of reviving him, Harold told me that suddenly he could see his body on the table and how the doctors were working on him. He could also see his family in the waiting room. Even more amazingly, he could see downtown the motel and his relatives gathering for his care. He seemed to be out of his body, and yet he could clearly see all kinds of things going on around him. Was this a dream, a hallucination, or did it really happen? For sure such an experience was bothering Harold's faith, and he wanted to talk to me about it.

Harold was a retired WELS bachelor. He attended worship almost every Sunday. He also participated in several of church related activities. He wanted to know if what had happened to him was possible or was it dangerous for his faith to believe his vision. He appeared to be speaking from his heart and from a real concern about his faith.

We first talked about the possibility of never knowing for sure what had happened. Then we looked at the possibilities. Was his vision a dream or a hallucination? We agreed that this was possible since he had been under a

lot of trauma and drug treatments in the hospital. He could have pick up the information from those working and visiting around him. On the other hand, we talked about the ability of our soul to see apart from out body. On earth our soul is generally limited to seeing only with our physical eyes. This limitation will be removed in eternal life. But God also has the power to make exceptions on earth. Was this one of them? We would never know for sure. On earth now is the time for our eyes to read God's Word which gives sight to our faith.

Harold liked the idea of his soul being able to see apart from his body. It helped him to eagerly watch for the blessings in heaven even though his body might still have to wait for the final resurrection. The saving love and death of Jesus on the cross became even more precious and exciting for Harold. He looked forward to seeing with the eyes of his soul all the glory of God and the blessings of paradise. *"Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known." I Cor. 13:12.*

Compassion news article May 2000 Suggested theme:
Ken Wenzel "Tell Grandma!"

"DON'T tell Grandma!" cried the family as the doctor announced to the family that their 80 year-old grandmother, Alice, was dying. She might die that very night. The family, doctor, and I were standing outside of grandma's room in the hospital when the family insisted that we do not talk about death to their grandmother. The doctor and I looked at each other in amazement and then agreed at the present time not to tell grandma how serious her condition had become. We were not comfortable with this plan, but since the family had insisted on it and had gone into such an emotional denial, this seemed like the best temporary thing to do.

With only half the facts, I now also had a difficult devotion to present. The family followed me into the room to listen to what I would say to grandma. They were going to make sure that I did not tell Alice that she was dying. A devotion about Jesus' love for sinners was held. I also prayed silently for another time to connect with grandma.

The Lord quickly answered my prayer. The next day grandma was alone in her room when I visited. She was sitting in her bed and fully alert. She welcomed my visit. During that talk she held out her hand and grabbed my hand with the strength she had left. She then looked into my eyes and asked: "Pastor, am I dying?"

"Yes, you are dying and going to meet Jesus," I replied. "Very soon you will be in the blessings of heaven."

"I knew it," she sighed. "I was going to ask the doctor the same question today. I suppose I will ask the same question again, but I am glad to hear what is really going on also from you." She then went on to tell me how she had already figured it out. She knew that her own health was failing and sensed that she was dying. She also watched her family whispering in her room. She heard how they talked about things going on outside of the hospital and things in general but not about her. She was disappointed that her family could not tell her that she was dying.

From that point on we talked about how she could prepare for her death and how she could help her family face her death. -The Lord gave us about four days to do this.- First we began with her own personal faith in Jesus. We

reviewed how sin had stained her life and about some of the problems it had brought into her life and family. We also reviewed how the saving love and death of Jesus upon the cross gave her God's forgiveness of sins, peace in her soul, and the Lord's gift of heaven. We finally reviewed how Jesus and St. Paul prepared for the day of their deaths.

We remembered how in the Garden of Gethsemane on the night before Jesus died our Lord went into a deep prayer to God the Father. Like Jesus, Alice would also pray as she had never prayed before. In addition, just as Jesus also carefully listened to His Father's Word, so Alice now personally listened to God's Word for her life, her death, and her heaven. As Jesus became prepared and strengthened in the garden on the night before His death, so Alice became strengthened and prepared to pass through the valley of shadow of her death unto eternal life.

To help her family and friends, Alice also planned to follow St. Paul's example of talking to Timothy about his approaching death. Paul wrote: *I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge will award to me on that day - and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.* 2 Tim 4:6-8.

In other words, Alice was also going to talk about her life and death to her family and friends. She would talk about the days of her life on earth. She would also share her trust in Jesus' saving work and heaven. It was not going to be easy talk. There would be crying. But Alice would find the words to talk about her approaching death, funeral, and eternal life. She wanted her family to deal directly with her death before she died. She was more comfortable with her death than they were. No she did not want to die, but death is a part of life and God's great plan for us. She wanted them to have the same comfort and direction which St. Paul gave his friend, Timothy, in the face of death.

Yes, death is scary; it hurts; and it is hard talk. But the love of Jesus led Grandma Alice and myself to talk about her life, death, and comfort in Jesus. Telling Grandma about her death and having her talk about it opened doors of preparation, comfort and witness. When death comes after a loved one, tell them about it! Then watch how the Lord opens doors to share faith and comfort in Jesus. When death comes, TELL GRANDMA!

Title: "Kristen's Ark"

Genesis 8:1 But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and the livestock that were with him in the ark, and he sent a wind over the earth, and the waters receded.

For forty days and forty nights the storm of the great flood rocked and threatened the ark in which the family of Noah had gathered. In awe and fright the eight family members huddled together as the world around them was destroyed. The loss of their home, their friends, and the control of their daily life, stunned their hearts. They quickly learned how fragile humans beings really are.

Living with never before seen animals, smells, and new chores turned their daily life upside down. They wondered if life on the earth would ever be worth living again. Confined to the ark for over a year, every ounce of patience was tested. They learned the strengths and weaknesses of each family member and of themselves. New knowledge, new friendships with each other and with the animals, and new ways to pass the time were forced upon them in their survival.

Many people would have crashed under such a trial, but Noah and family survived. You see, they had the saving Lord as their God. He had promised: *"Everything on earth will perish. But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark - you and your sons and your wife and your son's wives with you."* (Gen. 6:18) God promised to not only rescue their lives from the earthly disaster but to also continue his plan of sending the Messiah of sinners through their family. *"By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith."* (Heb. 11:7) The Lord of saving love gave Noah and family faith, courage, strength, patience, rescue, and meaning to their lives. The Lord of faithfulness carried them through those storm tossed days in the ark. He helped them endure through the many days of waiting to leave the ark. He blessed them with a new and richer life on dry ground.

2

In a similar way the saving Lord also worked in the life of a young sixth grade girl along with her family. With very little warning Kristen entered the UW Hospital in Madison, WI. The vacancy pastor asked the WELS chaplain to visit. I met the family as they were huddled in tears. They were facing difficult maybe impossible surgery. We turned to God's Word for strength and prayed for direction and blessings upon Kristen, her doctors and the decisions to be made. I went along with them into the doctor's conference after which we again prayed for wisdom to make the best decisions. It was finally decided that Kristen would have the kind of brain surgery where the doctors could only take one step at a time to see how far they could help. The Lord answered our prayers by giving the surgeons the needed wisdom and skills to make the operation a success.

But this was only the beginning of the storm in Kristen's life. For many days and nights Kristen's recovery went up and down with emergencies, fright, tears, and huddled prayers. Finally, the health storm calmed so that Kristen and I could visit. I had to talk for she could only write down her questions and thoughts.

In a mini-vacation Bible school we took up the study of Noah and the ark. We built a diorama of the ark, animals, rainbow, dove, and altar of thanksgiving. We studied the story from many angles including how Kristen could picture her long stay in the hospital like Noah's stay in the ark. The hospital therefore became Kristen's Ark. We projected the stormy part of the flood like the days of her operation and the scary days of her recovery. We talked about the patience of God towards sinners. God's faithful patience gave Noah and family their patience as they had to wait for the Lord to release them from the ark even when things seemed to be going better. We then talked about the patience the Lord was asking of Kristen.

Like Noah Kristen had to deal with new caretakers every day just as Noah had to deal with all the different kinds of animals every day. We even laughed at how we could give some staff members the names of some of the animals who might have been on the ark. We wondered how Noah and family found new ways of spending their time on the ark, and then we tried to find new ways for Kristen to use her time. Just as Noah and family probably grew in their prayer time, Kristen grew in her personal prayer life and understanding of God's Word.

Kristen eventually began to like the part of Noah's releasing the dove from the ark. She projected herself as being like that dove who left the ark. The day was coming when she would be able to go home even if she had to come back to her hospital-ark for more treatments. But like the dove of Noah's day Kristen waited for God to bring about the time when she could fly home and not have to return. In this sense Kristen became "my little dove" - my nickname for her.

Like Noah and family the most important matters in Kristen's Ark and life were the promises of our saving Lord. We had His promises of deliverance from our sins and His promises of eternal blessings in heaven by Jesus' death upon the cross. It was the same faith which Noah and family had, but we now have more details than did Noah. Prayers to Jesus for mercy and help were many from Kristen's Ark.

At first, we did not know if Kristen would be delivered from her storm, but when it became clear that she would eventually leave her ark, we meditated upon Noah's exit from the ark. We studied how he gave thanks to the Lord for his faithfulness. We then raised the question of what kind of offerings could Kristen make to praise her Lord. Kristen would thank her saving Lord in worship and prayer just like Noah and family. She would also offer to do things in her church and home to praise her Lord. She would try to help with teaching Sunday School when she could. She would make some Christian get well cards which I could hand out to other sick children. She would look at the rainbow in the sky with a reflective faith. From now on God would not only use rainbows to talk about his faithfulness to Noah but also about his faithfulness to Kristen and her family.

How does God keep His promise to make all things work out for our good? The Lord who allowed this girl to be confined for awhile in Kristen's Ark will now use Kristen and her family to touch the hearts and lives of other people with the faithful love of Jesus. This will be especially true for others who are also facing storms in their lives. Kristen is now at home and praising her Savior.

The Lord God never forgot Noah or Kristen while they were in their respective arks. The Lord never forget us when we are confined to our own personal ark in the storms in life. The word "remember" is a biblical expression which talks about God's concern for his believers and his

willingness to act with love and favor in our lives. God puts his faithful love to work even in our earthly storms. Like Noah and Kristen let us draw closer to the saving words of our faithful God. Let us project ourselves into the stories of the Bible and see how God would guide and bless us. Then like Noah and Kristen let us depart from the arks of our life and build altars of thanksgiving with words and deeds to the "remembering" God.

Title: *"Idols That Did Them No Good"*

Jeremiah 16: 19-21 *O Lord, my strength and my fortress, my refuge in time of distress, to you the nations will come from the ends of the earth and say, "Our fathers possessed nothing but false gods, worthless idols that did them no good. Do men make their own gods? Yes, but they are not gods!"*

The Prophet Jeremiah had the sad ministry of telling the people from Judah and Jerusalem that the Lord had withdrawn His hand of blessing from them. It was because of their turning to false gods. Diseases, war, and famine would strike their land and lives. They would die with no comfort. They would see that their homemade gods were no gods at all. They would not find in them any comfort and hope. In great distress they would finally listen to Jeremiah's message about the true saving Lord. God's grace would restore them with the blessings of peace, hope, and life.

The above circle of sin and grace was repeated again at the death bed of a patient in the hospital where a Lutheran man opted for an organ transplant. Since he had been very delinquent in his faith and he was frightened, he went to his pastor for a review and a renewal of faith several months before his surgery. Things went badly in the surgery, and he never recovered. The family called for a Lutheran chaplain for help and I was the chaplain on call that day.

I walked into the room and found three ladies weeping at the side of the man. One was the wife, another was the mother, and the other was a friend. In her grief the mother collapses and was put into a wheelchair. I took her out of the room and to a place where we could talk. Sobbing she told me that she depended on her son's care for her and that she is a Jehovah's Witness. She also reminded me that her religion does not believe in life after death. "Once you die - that is it - there is nothing more."

Then to my surprise she suddenly cries out that she could no longer follow her faith as she watched her son dying on the bed. There had to be something more than just life on earth. She had once been a Christian but had abandoned that faith many years ago. Her present faith and god offered no hope and no comfort. Her religion was worthless. What should she do?

I asked her if she remembered anything about the Christian faith she once had. She sobbed something about life after death. The door was now wide open for me to share with her the good news of Jesus' saving love which her son had reviewed and embraced before his surgery. Her son had the peace and comfort of Jesus which had won on the cross for all people. It was also a gift she could have through faith in Jesus, the saving Lord God. There was hope and life after death in Jesus the

Savior. Jesus is also the true Lord who would live and rule in our daily lives to help us in our times of trouble.

She listened quietly to the saving message of Christ. This Lord offered her hope and life. The Lord calmed her down and gave her strength to say her final "good bye" to her son. Her Christian friend now entered the room where we were talking to check up on us. I told her what the mother said. She affirmed the same message of Jesus and offered to take her to her church so that they could restudy that message. I prayed that the Lord would restore her faith and soul and bless her with the precious truths and comfort of Jesus.

Back in the room with the dying man, the wife also began sobbing. She belonged to the Wiccan faith and practiced witchcraft. She had placed a little black bag with crystals, pictures, and other items above the head of her dying husband. It had not protected her husband, nor did it offer any healing or comfort. In tears she set aside her faith for she had no hope and comfort. She then told me that her husband liked the 23rd Psalm. There seemed to be some hope and comfort there. Would I recite it and explain what it meant?

Again the door opened for the good news of Jesus. After reciting the 23rd Psalm, I explained how Jesus was the Shepherd of the 23rd Psalm. I shared how his death upon the cross gives sinners peace with God and opens the door to eternal life. This is the comfort of the 23rd Psalm. Her husband was soon going to be with Jesus in the blessings of eternal paradise. All who trust in Jesus as their personal Savior from sin have Jesus as the Shepherd who gives forgiveness and heaven. Only in Jesus is there certain hope, comfort, and life.

She also quietly listened. But tragically I felt that while she approved of such a faith for her husband, such a faith was not for herself. In the darkness of unbelief she still hung on to her hopeless crystals and amulets. It made no sense. She would stay with her idols even if they did not do her any good and offered no comfort. Afterwards I prayed that the Lord would somehow sprout the seeds of a saving faith from the gospel I had shared with her.

Like Jeremiah, in the day of distress I saw "worthless idols that did them no good." I was also given another mission opportunity to share the precious meaning and comfort we have in Jesus, the Savior even in the distress of death. May the one true Lord open many more doors for us to see and to say: *"O Lord, my strength and my fortress, my refuge in time of distress, to you the nations will come from the ends of the earth."*

One day St. Paul took a walk in the city of Athens. He became distressed to see that the city was full of idols. He eventually walked into the Areopagus and shared his faith with a crowd of pagans. He ended his sermon by saying: "Since we are God's offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone - an image made by man's design and skill. In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead." (Acts 17:29-31) Most of the people laughed at Paul's message and kept their own homemade ideas about God and man.

The above incident came to my mind as I stood in a small emergency room filled with 37 pagans. A Hmong woman in her 40's was brought into the emergency room and was pronounced dead on arrival. She had been the healthy one as her husband was sick and already in the hospital. I was the chaplain whom the staff called for help. Within the next hour 37 relatives crowded into a small room. Only two of them could speak English. An autopsy was desired and the hospital was worried that because of their religion, the relatives might refuse. In their faith making a cut in the skin might let out good spirits and let in bad spirits. The coroner and I made the autopsy case for the safety of their family members and the demands of the local laws. Permission was finally given. After the paper work was finished, I led four of the relatives upstairs to announce to the husband that his wife had suddenly died. Finally the husband and I first viewed the body and then all the other relatives lined up to do the same. The whole episode took several hours.

Since they talked in a language which I did not understand, I silently stood by most of the time and occasionally asked the one who could speak English to tell me what was happening. He told me that they were a spiritist kind of people and that they worshipped ancestors. One could hardly hear in the room as the women made a strange wailing cry. They had no hope. They just had to tough it out. I wanted so badly to stand up like St. Paul did in the Areopagus. I wanted to tell them about the saving love of Jesus, but no one would have understood my language. Was there any chance for Christian ministry here? I mostly had to watch, yet I silently prayed to the Lord for some kind of mission opportunity. When it was time to go home, they thanked me for getting some of their hospital questions resolved. I then passed out some law and gospel presentations in their Hmong language which I had brought along with me. I also wrote down the name of our international chapel in Madison as a local place for more information. I prayed that they would read the pamphlets and come to learn about the saving love of Jesus for sinners and his great promise of the resurrection to eternal life in heaven. I don't know if I will ever meet those people again. Only God knows what's going to happen to those 37 pagans. Lord have mercy!

Oh, Oh, THE PAIN!

Oh, oh, the pain! That's all the burn patient could say for a couple of weeks until more healing came. It wasn't until then that I was able to finally learn about his other pain.

Greg was for many years a drifter and an alcoholic. He wandered throughout the U.S. without family and friends.

One night he was hit by a car while hitchhiking. The results were that he lost one leg. He then came to the realization that he had to settle down.

After he was released from the hospital, Greg went back to his hometown where by the grace of God, he met a WELS pastor who showed him the healing compassion of Jesus Christ and other fellow Christians. They helped him overcome his drinking problem and find a job.

Greg enrolled in an adult Bible class and then joined the Lutheran church. Trying to keep his independence, he walked to worship and Bible study on his crutches, but he liked to get a ride home with members. In his new faith-life he cherished the forgiveness and peace of Jesus and his fellow believers.

Even though he had almost no earthly possessions, Greg was now enjoying the new meaning and direction of his life.

One day, however, when he lit up a cigarette in his apartment there was a flash of fire due a gas leak. His whole apartment complex blew up. Greg not only lost all of his possessions, but he was severely burned on his hands, arms, face, feet, and legs. In a flash, his life turned upside down.

"Oh, oh, the pain!" were the only words Greg could cry out to me as I first visited him in the hospital. So intense was his pain, that Greg's breath was taken away just saying those words. The unanswerable question of why God would allow such a trial to burn this new convert were asked by Greg and myself.

However, as Greg improved, he told me that his great pain was still not greater than the pain which Jesus had to suffer upon the cross for him. What a confession of faith!

In his own personal suffering and pain and through our devotions, Greg's converted heart wonderfully reflected on the great pain and compassion of Jesus for sinners. Here was new and deeper insight into Jesus' amazing grace for Greg's faith. What a wonderful lesson!

Greg was also concerned about getting back to his job where he had been serving handicapped patients who had become like a family to him. He constantly exercised his burned fingers because he liked to play the guitar and wanted to be able to play for his patients again.

In pain, Greg's heart focused on the care his friends needed. Greg reminded me of how Christ did not think of himself during his painful crucifixion, but rather you and me, His sin-stained friends. Greg was now teaching my faith!

The compassionate Lord, who knows how to work out good for those who love Him, also gave Greg an incredible new insight. You see, some of the handicapped patients he had previously worked with were also experiencing pain, but were unable to verbalize it. Through our visits in the hospital, Greg came up with a plan to use the experience of his pain to better understand and care for his patients.

Like Christ in His pain, Greg remained concerned about the care and life of his friends. He even planned to go home and tell others of how Jesus saved him from sin and the explosion. Oh, what growth by pain had now taken place in his faith!

"Oh, oh, the pain of our Lord!" That is our sorrowful cry as we meditate upon how our guilt pained Jesus to die upon the cross for our sins.

Someday, "Oh, oh, the pain!" might also cry out from our lips because of some physical or social trial. But the Lord can even use our pain to stretch our faith and life in new directions for the praise of His name and the blessing of others.

Chaplain Ken Wenzel

THE MAN WITH AN ANGEL FACE

Remember Stephen from the first Christian congregation in Jerusalem? He was elected by his congregation to help the twelve disciples with the administration of meals to Grecian widows. This would give the disciples more time for preaching the Word. Stephen himself boldly shared his faith also in and outside of the congregation. In fact, Stephen so actively talked about the Savior that the enemies of Christ arrested and finally executed him. During that time the Holy Spirit so filled Stephen's heart with faith in Jesus as the promised Messiah for sinners that his face shined like an angel's face as he talked about God's faithfulness. Read about it in Acts chapters 6 and 7. Note particularly how Stephen looked while he shared his faith under tremendous stress, hatred, suffering, and the threat of death. Luke records: **ALL WHO WERE SITTING IN THE SANHEDRIN LOOKED INTENTLY AT STEPHEN, AND THEY SAW THAT HIS FACE WAS LIKE THE FACE OF AN ANGEL (6:15).**

Have you ever seen an angel's face? The old masters have tried to paint many angel faces on their canvases. Some of those faces are truly inspiring. As the Christmas decorations go up again this year, take a close look at the faces of the angels? Do they look like innocent babes? Are they faces of joy or concern or serenity? There are many ideas of how an angel face might look. But try now to picture what kind of angel-face Stephen had. His face radiated as he shared his confidence in God's faithfulness to the Hebrew believers. His face beamed with joy in the Savior's completed work of salvation even though his life was being threatened. Even his enemies who put their hands over their ears to stop listening to the good news of Christ, saw in Stephen an angel-face filled the love and peace and strength of the Lord God. How tragic for them to have rejected the message given for the saving also of their souls. May we never miss an angel-face wanting to share with us the love of Jesus for sinners!

Such was the face also of Tim, a young man who had an uncontrollable type of diabetes. While it may have only helped him briefly, he chose not to have his legs amputated. Gangrene worked its way up his body towards his vital organs. He watched its progress. His feet and legs became black as burnt toast. The smell of death from his rotting feet and legs was incredible. He had pain but medications helped dull its mortal attack. So traumatic was the smell and sight of his rotting death that the staff and family could only stay with Tim in his room for short periods time. Tim was going to die. Everyone knew it. Tim knew it. All could see death coming right at him.

But Tim did not see something which I and perhaps some others saw. When I looked intently at Tim, behold his face was like the face of an angel. For sure, I do not know what angels look like. Yet Tim's face is forever etched in my mind. You see in those last hours Tim talked to me about the great things God had done for him. He praised God for the gift of life he had lived. He gave thanks to the Lord for

his family, friends, and for my chaplain visits. However, his angel-like face gleamed most brightly when he could talk about Jesus being his Savior. His words were songs of praise to the loving God. His smile beamed a divine comfort as he talked about Jesus' death upon the cross for all of his personal sins. His eyes glistened with angelic confidence and joy. Truly he had the face of an angel.

While the some hospital staff and his family may not have understood how dying Tim could die with an angel like face, the Christian knows how the Lord God of saving grace can so comfort a sinner's heart that his very face can reflect the joy of the angels who have peace and joy in Jesus. As a chaplain who enjoys sharing God's Word of saving comfort, it was truly a privilege to see Tim's angel- face speak words of comfort towards our hurting hearts. Tim died. Since there was a vacancy at his church, the family asked me to speak at his funeral. On a cold winter morning our hearts were warmed by recounting how Tim's angel like face had share with us his joys and confidence in the saving work of Jesus.

During the coming holiday season we will see many interpretations of angel faces. Yet how can we know what an angel face really looks like? There are painted ones, etched ones, and sewn ones. Here is one clue. Angels are living beings who are God's messengers. Look therefore in the faces of living people like Stephen or Tim who while suffering can still smile with words about Jesus their Savior. Look in the faces of living children as they sing how Jesus dearly loves them. Behold the joys of the faces which talk about Jesus' saving life and death for their gift of forgiveness and eternal life. Now then, may the Holy Spirit bless our faith so that others can see angel-like smiles, gleams and comfort also in our face as we share the good news of Jesus' birth, life, and death for sinners!

Chaplain Kenneth Wenzel