

The
Northwestern
Lutheran

APRIL 1, 1983

FROM THE PRESIDENT

It is reasonable to assume that there are more people in most of our churches on Easter Sunday than any other time. I'd like to believe that even those who do not take their religion too seriously between Easters still sense how much depends on that empty grave.

Paul leaves no doubt about it. If Christ is not risen, our preaching is vain. It's empty of content and meaning. It's a waste of time for preacher and hearer. Our faith is also vain, for a dead Christ can save no one. We'd still be in our sins, for without the empty grave there would be no hope of forgiveness. And our fathers and mothers, our brothers and sisters, our sons and daughters, our



wives and husbands who have fallen asleep in Jesus have perished. A terrifying thought, yet true, if Christ is not risen.

But the Apostle would not have us dwell on this too long. He quickly adds, "Now is Christ risen from the dead." Our preaching and teaching are not in vain. The gospel we proclaim is filled with power. When it offers us forgiveness, life, and salvation it also conveys what it promises. Nor is our faith vain. Our trust is based on a living Christ, one who will deliver on every promise he has ever made. And those who have fallen asleep in Jesus have not perished, but have become the

firstfruits of a rich harvest unto eternal life.

Because Christ is risen, Luther could say and we can say with him, "Know then sin, death, and devil that you are missing the mark. I'm not afraid of you. For Christ, my Lord, has presented to me the triumph and victory by which you were laid low. My sin and death hung about his neck on Good Friday, but on Easter they had completely disappeared. This victory he has bestowed on me. That is why I do not worry about you."

Everything in our life is inseparably linked to a risen Christ. All our worship, all our prayers, all our living, all our giving receives direction from a risen Christ. The work we do in his name we do joyfully and enthusiastically and with blessing because we serve a risen Christ. The strength to endure trials is drawn from a risen Christ.

So how can we be lukewarm and complacent between Easters? Every day is Easter, because everything in life that is worthwhile (and the best is yet to come) rests on this unshakable foundation: Now is Christ risen from the dead.

Carl H. Muschke

COVER — Floral cross at St. Paul's, Livonia, Michigan on Easter 1982. It was designed and arranged by Ed Slesak, a member of St. Paul's, who has taken prizes in floral arrangements at the Michigan State Fair and elsewhere.

May the Lord our God be with us
as he was with our fathers;
may he never leave
or forsake us. 1 Kings 8:57

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The best life insurance

"Because I live, you also will live"
(John 14:19).

"Over 65? Need life insurance? Only \$39.95 a year! No physical needed!" said the commercial. "Married? Have children? Carrying enough life insurance?" asked the ad. Perhaps "death insurance" might be a better term for what they offer. It's there to provide for those we leave behind when we die. It has nothing to do with our life.

But Easter does! Easter with its eternally exciting message of the risen Savior and the empty tomb offers *the best life insurance you can ever have.*

The premium is fully paid

Ever meet an agent who offers you free life insurance or a company that will issue a policy without sending a bill? Always there's a premium to pay for the protection you receive.

So with eternal life insurance. Somebody had to pay the bill before there would be eternal life in heaven. You and I couldn't do it; we couldn't even begin. Only God could do it; but why should he? Yet in love he did as the Calvary cross and the garden tomb remind us. The blood, staining that cross, was holy, precious blood; and the body, laid lifeless into the tomb, was there because of innocent suffering and death. There at Calvary the immense bill was paid in full as God himself issued the check and signed it with the crimson ink of his own Son's blood.

Can you find a better bargain than this? Here's life insurance that's really life insurance and the premium is fully paid.

The guarantee is foolproof

In life insurance we want some guarantee of coverage. We want proof, when something happens, that the company will honor its prom-

ises. So we look for a written policy which we store in some safe place.

Is there any guarantee for our eternal life insurance? Any proof that Christ actually has paid for our sins and that eternal life is waiting? Well, let's ask Mary Magdalene. You remember her, don't you? She was one of those women that first Easter who came with embalming spices in her hands and tears in her eyes. What dried her tears and turned sorrow into greater joy?

Or maybe we should ask Simon Peter. You remember him, too, don't you? He was not just one of the disciples. He was the one who denied his Lord and punctuated his denials with oaths and curses. Yes, he had seen the Lord's look that night and had gone out to weep bitterly. But he must have wondered and grieved — till Easter Sunday. What changed him? What assured him?

Perhaps we should also speak with those two Emmaus disciples. Remember how they flew back to Jerusalem that night as fast as legs would carry them? "How come?" we might ask, "why the dramatic change?"

Their answers would agree. Mary, Peter, the Emmaus disciples would declare, "He lives. We've seen him. Our sins are gone. Heaven is open. It's true just as he promised." And Paul would quickly back them up. "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men," the great apostle once theorized, only to rush on with the glorious fact, "but Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Corinthians 15:17-20). The resurrected Christ is proof positive, a living Guarantee, that God honors his promises.

The benefits are forever

Nobody wants insurance without benefits. In fact, you want those benefits spelled out fully and clearly, so much so that many times paragraph after paragraph of words have to be used.

How clearly and fully Scripture states the benefits of our eternal life insurance! "I am the Resurrection and the Life," the Savior clearly stated, "he who believes in me will live, even though he dies, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die" (John 11:25,26). Perhaps shortest and sweetest of all is the Savior's summary, "Because I live, you also will live."

Are there any benefits? Ask the believer who lays a loved one to rest. Thank God it's not just "ashes to ashes and dust to dust," but "the hope of the resurrection to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ." Thank God it's not "Good-by," but "We'll see you again in heaven."

Are there any benefits? Ask the believer who notes his own death marching relentlessly nearer. Thank God it doesn't have to be the inescapable swing of the "grim reaper's" scythe, but the gentle escalator which lifts up to heaven. Thank God it's not ending with a whimper, but beginning with that glorious promise, "Because I live, you also will live."

Can you find a better bargain than this? Here's life insurance that's really life insurance and its benefits are forever. □



Pastor Lauersdorf
is at St. John's
Lutheran Church,
Jefferson, Wisconsin.

“Raise your hand if you’re sure”

The TV evangelist asked his audience, a congregation in Florida, “How many of you are sure you would go to heaven if you died today? Raise your hand if you’re sure.” Most did not raise their hands. The TV camera quickly shifted its focus. The viewer had only a brief glimpse of what appeared to be a disappointing response, even though the evangelist urged them several times to raise their hands.

Certainly the question was a very serious one; no one should have raised his hand unless he was *sure* he would go to heaven. But in the state of Florida, where so many people have been confronted by the question, “Are you saved?” one should have expected a more convincing response. After all, most of Florida is also Southern Baptist country.

One reason for the limited response lies in the evangelist’s message that a Christian must be able to point to a given day, even a given hour, when he was reborn and gave himself to Christ. Though the evangelist was reared as a Christian and went to church, he did not consider himself truly saved until he was 13, when he experienced a moment of decision, when he felt the Spirit enter his heart. How did he know he was saved? Because he felt in his heart that he was reborn. His feelings, his spiritual high, convinced him that he was saved.

No wonder that many in that evangelist’s audience did not raise their hands. In their church they were taught to rest their assurance of salvation largely on their feelings, on their inner conviction that they were God’s saved children. The feelings of many in that audience, however, were not strong enough, or sure enough, to generate that sure hope of final salvation.

What would happen if your WELS pastor were to ask your congregation, “How many of you are sure you would go to heaven if you died today? Raise your hand if you’re sure.” If you wouldn’t raise your hand, the fault could hardly have been your pastor’s. In sermon after sermon he laid the true, unshakable foundation for your hope of heaven. He did not tell you to rest your hope of heaven on your feelings or your “experience.” He told you to rest it on God’s sure, unchangeable Word. You can have a sure hope of heaven because God has promised it to you in his Word, even if you don’t always *feel* saved.

Luther’s declaration that faith must cling to the Word despite sight and senses is true. “This only is a really strong faith: if a heart can believe what it does not see and comprehend, believe against all senses and reason, and cling solely to the Word. In this faith we must put out of sight everything except the Word of God. Faith clings to the Word alone, purely and simply, never loses sight of it, looks at nothing else, neither at its work or its merit.” “For God’s Word is not based or built on faith, but faith is built on God’s Word. Besides, faith may waver or change, but God’s Word remains eternally.”

If God says the believing sinner is saved, he is saved, whether the sinner feels it or not. Luther would have raised his hand. So can we.

Carleton Toppe



Professor Toppe is president of Northwestern College, Watertown, Wisconsin.

letters

Thanks for meditations

First I want to say that I find the changes made in The Northwestern Lutheran during the past year all positive.

But my main reason for writing is to thank Pastor Stadler for the series of prayers based on the petitions of the Lord's Prayer. I looked forward to each one. It made me feel more at one with the great variety of people who pray this prayer.

Most of us react in a personal way to things we read, but never think to let the writer know how it touched us. In this case I don't want to be remiss in this regard.

Virginia H. Mittag
Hart, Michigan

Information on pro-life groups

We, too, were happy to see the pro-life article in The Northwestern Lutheran (December 15, p. 338) and would like to share this bit of information.

Recently we heard that some of the funds collected by the March of Dimes were channeled into the Planned Parenthood treasury. Since we would not want to support an organization which counsels some to have abortions, we inquired about the allegation. While some of its funds are spent for tests of the amniotic fluid, it does not counsel abortion if the test reveals abnormalities. We are thankful to know the truth. Every child, handicapped or not, is a gift of God.

Each state has a pro-life group which will give you valuable information. The name and address of your state's society may be obtained from Dr. Wilke's National Right to Life, 419 Second Street, N.W., Suite 402, Washington, D.C. 20004.

Membership in your state group entitles you to the newsletters which alert you to the times when pro-life legislation is being discussed in the state legislatures and Congress. These are the most important times to write your representatives to let them know how you feel about this issue of the century. You will also be informed of your congressman's voting record on this life and death issue.

Luther and Ruth Spaude
Wauwatosa, Wisconsin

Liked issue

This afternoon I received my issue of The Northwestern Lutheran (February 15), and by the time I reached the last page my reaction was, "Everyone in my congregation should read this." I've had that reaction to at least two other issues in the past four months, but this time I had to sit down and write.

We have a publication which I can proudly recommend to my members confident that it will be a blessing for their spiritual lives in their daily living.

Not to downplay the other features of the issue, I believe that every member should read the articles by Toppe, Lindloff, Braun, and Mischke, and study the "I would like to know" page. And every member should be urged to memorize the back-page article by Wendland.

If our congregation does not have a greatly increased subscription in the near future, it won't be because I haven't publicized it.

Mark Porinsky
Dexter, Michigan

Overly generous review of ET

Pastor Gerlach has given his readers an overly generous review of ET by his feelings that ET can serve as a means of setting the stage for Christian evangelism (December 15, p. 346). He finds ET hard to criticize despite its vulgarities. A more discerning and cautious approach is needed.

Jesus admonishes believers for their naivete using unbelievers and their worldly wisdom as the analogy. God also says, "My glory will I not give to another." ET performs miracles, influences the thoughts of people, is raised from the dead, and is taken away to his "home" in the skies. Some Christians find this repulsive. ET's psychic and supernatural powers could also be interpreted in the context of our contemporary society. Could this be a subtle conditioning to spiritistic powers?

Sweden has censored ET for children under eleven claiming it portrays parents as enemies of children. Another observer sees ET as America's newest deity. The vulgar language is inexcusable. Jesus says, "Ye shall know them by their fruits."

Alfred W. Schoennauer
Mankato, Minnesota

Lutheran Worship fills needs

Our worship needs can be fulfilled with *Lutheran Worship*.

Most of the hymns in LW are from TLH, yet many beautiful new contemporary, older traditional, and Christmas hymns of the Christian church are added. The liturgy section of LW will satisfy those who enjoy stability in worship and yet give variety and freshness to those who want to grow in their worship life.

Our Synod has been using new Bible translations and a contemporary catechism for a number of years. Our book of worship deserves similar revision.

Organists of average ability or better will have no problem playing the new harmonies. Others may find the challenge well worth the effort.

The emotional feelings of music connected with God's Word has always had a powerful impact on Christians. Changing a hymnal after 40 years of use will be difficult for some. Yet our faith is based firmly on God's Word, not on a particular hymnal or translation.

Throughout the year, as church organist, I have used numerous hymn harmonizations in LW either for congregational singing or as voluntaries in the worship service. Some hymns have been sung for services.

If change is going to increase our understanding of the Word and in the future give some new "old favorite" hymns to praise our God and strengthen our faith, then we need to change now.

Good stewardship suggests the Synod use this well-researched, liturgical, quality book of worship.

Synod members would be wise to give LW their unbiased study and consideration.

Gary L. Steffenhagen
Schofield, Wisconsin

Letters between 100 and 250 words are preferred. Letters are subject to editing. Open letters, letters written to persons and letters written to another publication will not be printed. Letters should be in response to an article in The Northwestern Lutheran. Full name, address and phone number should accompany each letter. Names will be withheld only under unusual circumstances. Address your letters to LETTERS, The Northwestern Lutheran, 3512 W. North Ave., Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53208.

The vision of heaven

chapters four and five

Now we'll look at our second vision, which brings us a truly spectacular picture.

Slide 1 (4:1) A door standing open in heaven, telling us that we're going to see a vision of heaven! And Jesus' voice (see 1:10-13), inviting John (and us) to come up and go in, telling us that he will now show us what is going to happen during the time between his first and second comings, the theme of this book (1:1 and 1:19).

A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION

by Julian G. Anderson

Slide 2 (vv. 2-3) God's throne in heaven. The description of God the Father seems strange — like a jasper (diamond) and a carnelian (sardius), a beautiful red stone; but John is simply trying to describe a scene of surpassing beauty. And circled over the throne an emerald rainbow, the symbol of peace between God and men (Genesis 9:8-17). Thus we are not to be afraid of the one who sits on the throne.

The 24 thrones

Slide 3 (v. 4) Surrounding the throne are 24 thrones of 24 elders. Twelve is the code-word for the Church, originally the 12 tribes of Israel. Here the elders are the 12 sons of Jacob (the Old Testament Church), and the 12 apostles (the New Testament Church). And this whole Church is clothed in white, the symbol of sinlessness, and wearing gold crowns, mindful of the promises to be found later in 5:10 and 22:5.

Slide 4 (v. 5a) Lightning and thunder coming from the throne, symbolizing the awful majesty of God!

Slide 5 (v. 5b) Seven lamps in front of the throne, which are identified as the seven spirits of God. Since 7 is the whole number, this pictures the whole, complete Spirit of God — the Holy Spirit (see 1:4).

Slide 6 (v. 6a) The sea of glass in front of the throne pictures the world God created (see Genesis 1:2), appearing as clear crystal, so that God can see every creature and everything going on there.

Slide 7 (vv. 6b-11) In the center and around God on the throne are four living creatures. This is the same picture recorded in Ezekiel 1:5-10, which pictures God's providence and governance of the world, including the wild animals (lion), tame animals (ox), men and birds (eagle). These figures also picture God's providence and governance as powerful (lion), patient (ox), intelligent and all-knowing (man), and swift to avenge (eagle). And their many eyes picture the fact that God sees and knows all about every creature. Verse 8 is a quotation from Isaiah 6:3, and verses 9 and 10 indicate the fact that God's providence brings him glory and honor in which the Church joins.

Sealed with seven seals

Slide 8 (5:1) God the Father sitting on his throne, holding a book in his hand, which is completely sealed shut with 7 seals. This book, as we shall see, is really the central feature of this whole vision for us, since it contains God's description of all the things that are going to happen (4:1), and the seals picture the fact that at this time (96 A.D.) all this information was unknown to the world of men.

Slide 9 (vv. 2-4) No one in heaven or earth is found who can open this book, since no one can discover God's secrets.

Slide 10 (v. 5) One of the elders tells John that there is someone who can open the book — namely the Lord Jesus, described in the Old Testament picture language as the Lion of Judah (Genesis 49:9, Matthew 2:6), and the Root of David (Isaiah 11:1 and 10, 2 Samuel 7:12-16).

Slide 11 (v. 6) The beautiful vision of Jesus, the Lamb of God (John 1:29), emphasizing his atoning death, which was the promised fulfillment of all the Old Testament sacrificial lambs. Note that he is standing in the center of the throne, picturing his close relationship with the Father (John 10:30), and showing that he joins fully with his Father in the overall providence and governance of the world, and in sending the Holy Spirit into the world (see John 14:26, 15:26 and 16:7).

Opening the book

Slide 12 (v. 7) Jesus takes the book from his Father, since it was he who was sent into the world to reveal and carry out God's plan of salvation (Hebrews 1:1-3).

Slide 13 (vv. 8-10) Now the agents of God's providence and the Church in heaven fall down to worship the Lamb, the harp being used to lead the singing in the Temple, and the golden bowls of incense being identified as the prayers of the saints, symbolized by the smoke of the incense rising heavenward. Their song identifies Jesus as worthy and able to open the book because of his atoning death by which he purchased us to be his own as royal priests in his Kingdom (see I Peter 2:9).

Slide 14 (vv. 11-14) Now all the myriads of angels in heaven join the worship, singing praises to the Lamb, who is now the supreme Ruler of the universe! A thrilling scene which leaves us all in suspense, anxiously waiting for the Lamb to open the book! □



Julian G. Anderson
is a retired pastor
and seminary professor
living in
Naples, Florida



Members at Gravataí, Brazil.

by Ernst H. Wendland

After I have preached at a mission festival, I am frequently asked by people how to become more personally involved in world mission work. Such people, I suspect, generously support our world mission program, but the offering plate seems so impersonal.

St. Paul sensed some of this same feeling during his missionary travels in the Roman world. He wanted a close, personal relationship with his congregations, some of them hundreds of miles away. His letters to them was one way of maintaining contact. There is another way, just as personal and direct.

Jesus strongly recommended it when he pointed out the need for workers in the mission fields of the world. "Ask the Lord of the harvest," he urged his disciples, "to send out workers into his harvest fields." The Lord was indicating that this is the first way to become more closely involved in mission work — through prayer.

Paul must have known these words of Jesus and how important they were. That's why we find him urging prayer upon his churches, especially at the close of his letters as a last word to them.

"I urge you to join in my struggle by *praying* for me. . . . *Pray* also for me that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel. . . . *Pray* for us that God may open a door for our message. . . . *Pray* that I may



Colombia missionaries (left to right): Lawrence A. Retberg, Mark A. Goeglein, Larry W. Schlomer, James R. Connell and Philip B. Strackbein.

proclaim it clearly. . . . Brothers, *pray* for us! . . . *Pray* for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly. . . . *Pray* that we may be delivered from wicked men" And one thing more [he wrote from prison:] "Prepare a guest room for me, because I hope to be restored to you *in answer to your prayers.*"

In his struggle to proclaim the message of the gospel Paul is confident that the prayers of his brothers and sisters will help sustain him. He even hopes that their prayers will open the doors of his Roman prison and send him on his gospel mission again.

It is within this great Biblical tradition that a recent newsletter from the staff of our missionaries in Colombia, South America, issues an appeal to us to "adopt a missionary" by remembering the missionary and his family in our daily prayers.

"We need your prayers, your specific prayers," the newsletter reads, "so that God may continue to bless our efforts to preach the gospel in our world missionary fields." Adopt a missionary, the letter urges. "Make it a prayer adoption. You personally, your women's and men's groups, your entire congregation can participate. Write to a missionary. Your pastor can give you names and addresses. Ask the missionary what his joys and problems are. Ask him to be specific so that you can approach God's throne of grace, giving thanks for special blessings and asking for a further outpouring of blessings."

The newsletter mentions specific needs: that Gabriel Alvarez may complete his training in the seminary; that Dorio Olaya who is just starting the Bible Institute may complete the course; that Missioner James Connell and his wife who have just arrived in Medellin may be

blessed in the ministry. As each of these needs comes before us, we hear the words, "Ask the Lord of harvest, therefore. . . ."

And I want to add another urgent request to our South American prayer list: a missionary venture in Brazil. For some years the world mission board has eyed this country with its vast mission potential. The board has even received a direct appeal from the country. In 1979 the convention authorized a team to explore the field. But because of budget stringencies for the last three years the resolution has not been carried out.

"We consider this to be unfortunate," reports the board's executive secretary, Pastor Theodore A. Sauer. "Our contact in Brazil has a small congregation in Gravataí, just outside Porto Alegre. The congregation first came into contact with the Synod in 1975." Temporary assistance was unsatisfactory and budget problems prevented alternative solutions. "The result is that our intentions to test this field as well as to stand at the side of this small confessional group have not materialized. The result could well be that we may lose our initiative and perhaps our opportunity to test and possibly enter this field."

"The prayer of a righteous man," says James, "is powerful and effective." Fervent prayer cannot be offered without corresponding action. South America has extended us a plea for our prayers. Our positive answer to that plea will be for us to become personally involved in world mission work, first of all through prayer, and then also in the actions which — with God's blessing — will inevitably follow. □

Professor Wendland teaches homiletics and Old Testament at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin.



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A cool morning breeze carried aloft the mingled scents of springtime flowers. Sparrows and finches fluttered among pine trees and cypresses, while the crowing of peasants' roosters could be heard in the distance. Across the valley the sun was just beginning its ascent from behind the Mount of Olives, bringing to light rocks covered with the blue of hyacinths and dusty roads leading from the slumbering city.

All was quiet, peaceful and still as the women walked

toward the garden. Burdened with the weight of sorrow, their walk was heavy, slow. There was little to say, except to wonder aloud, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?"

So began the first Easter. For many it began as just another day. For the Master's followers it began in sorrow.

Of course, it was not just any day. It was to be the turning point in all of history. Nor did it end in sadness,

The First Easter

by Roland Cap Ehlke

but with unspeakable joy. It was the day God's Son swallowed up death in victory and brought "life and immortality to light."

It is here in the garden that the first Easter day begins to loom so large we don't know quite what to do with it. We feel drawn to the garden at the break of day. We can feel the disciples' grief over Jesus' tragic death. But Christ's

*Of course, it was not just
any day. It was to be
the turning point
in all of history.*

resurrection, his glorious conquest of death, his opening the gates of paradise — thought fails us and emotion overwhelms us.

If we return to the simple setting — the beginning of another day and the women's sadness — it becomes much easier for us to relive Jesus' resurrection.

A day like every other

A day like every other. God could have ushered in the day with angel choruses, as he did our Savior's birth. He might have made it a longer day, as he did when Joshua battled the Amorites. Or he might have darkened the sun, as on the day Jesus died. God might at least have chosen a special festival day or the Sabbath on which to perform this miracle of miracles. Isn't it reasonable to assume that the day God vanquished death calls for some kind of spectacular setting?

Instead, it began with the frightening of a small garrison of soldiers and the journey of a few women to the tomb of their beloved Teacher. To most of Jerusalem and the rest of the world it seemed to be an ordinary day like every other.

With this the Lord teaches us something. There are no ordinary days. Every day is special.

Whether Saturday, Sunday or Monday, Easter or another workday, we Christians are to devote each day to Jesus, who was "delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification." Jesus arose not just for that one day, but forever. So we face each new day with boldness, knowing he walks beside us. Although we see him only with the eyes of faith, Jesus keeps his promise, "I will be with you always."

Because of the first Easter there are no more ordinary days. Every day belongs to our mighty, living Lord.

A day that began in sorrow

A day that began in sorrow. Before we can even start to appreciate the joy of Easter, we must taste the sorrow of Good Friday. Just so! We cannot appreciate Christ crucified until we have felt the crushing weight of our sin. We experience the joy of Easter only after having drunk from the bitter cup of grieving. Yes, it's so: the darker the backdrop the more brilliantly the resurrection shines.

God permits heartaches and crosses of every sort to fill our lives. We are surrounded by tragedy and death — that we might cling more steadfastly to our risen Savior and not to this dying world.

Rather than escaping the trials of life, we can now view them in a different light — the light of Easter. We realize troubles are passing. The eternal joys of heaven are ahead. Someday soon our resurrected Lord will bring you and me to that better country and wipe away every tear. "I am going there to prepare a place for you," says Jesus, "I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am."

Because of that first Easter the Christian's sorrows have forever lost their sting.

In the evening the birds returned to their nests as they had always done before. The springtime flowers lost their

*Because of the first Easter
the Christian's sorrows
have forever lost their sting.*

color beneath lengthening shadows. Once more the air turned cool and chill as the sun began to sink behind the western hills, silhouetting only the trees that crowned them. Except for the occasional howling of a lonely wild dog in the narrow city streets, everything was quiet again.

But nothing would ever be the same. □



Pastor Ehlke is an associate editor at the Northwestern Publishing House. During his student days he lived in Israel for a year and has visited the Middle East on three other occasions.

Luther and Zwingli at Marburg

Third of a series

“**W**hy are there so many churches? If only they would all get together. Think how much good they could do in the world all working together.” Such sentiments as these are oftentimes expressed.

Nearly 500 years ago Ulrich Zwingli, a Swiss pastor born seven weeks after Luther, had the same feelings. His goal at that time was to unite the Protestants politically against the threat of Roman Catholic suppression. When war came, Zwingli wanted a united Protestantism.

Why so many churches? by VICTOR H. PRANGE

One is not surprised that this Swiss pastor should think in military terms. Swiss soldiers were hired as mercenaries by various European powers including also the Roman papacy (the pope still has his Swiss guards). Zwingli himself served as chaplain for Swiss soldiers who fought on the side of the pope in several battles. That was prior to his becoming pastor in Zurich, and his change of heart about the Roman Catholic Church. Working with the Zurich town council Zwingli introduced a reformation of church worship and practices.

But in 1529 ominous storm clouds were gathering on the horizon suggesting a more vigorous policy on the part of Catholic leaders to put down the reformation gains in Germany and Switzerland. Zwingli was alarmed and began seeking political allies among the Protestants. “Think what a strong force we would be if German and Swiss fought together against Emperor Charles.” This was Zwingli’s argument for unity.



Philip of Hesse



Ulrich Zwingli

Zwingli found a comrade-in-arms in the person of Count Philip of Hesse, Germany, a territory which in later years supplied the British with mercenary soldiers in the American Revolution. Count Philip was not a theologian but a military man. He supported Martin Luther and had introduced the reformation into his territories; he signed the Augsburg Confession in 1530. But

Philip was not averse to making a few compromises in matters of confession if it furthered the political strength of the Protestants. Philip and Zwingli shared a common view in this respect.

One person who did not was Martin Luther. Luther’s point of view is well expressed in words from the Battle Hymn of the Reformation:

*With might of ours can naught be done,
Soon were our loss effected;
But for us fights the Valiant One,
Whom God Himself elected.*

Luther saw some real spiritual problems in seeking to unite the German and Swiss forces into any kind of political front. For Luther was convinced that there was no unity of teaching and confession. He based this view on some of Zwingli’s writings which had been published. In 1528 Luther authored an extensive rebuttal of Zwingli’s teaching on the Lord’s Supper. He titled it: “Confession Concerning Christ’s Supper.” Luther had little hope that further writing or even a face-to-face meeting would accomplish much in settling the doctrinal differences between himself and Zwingli.

But Philip was a persuasive person. He finally prevailed upon Luther to journey to Marburg in Hesse for a colloquy (formal discussion) with Zwingli on the Lord’s Supper. The meeting took place in October 1529 at Philip’s castle. Various close friends and supporters came along with Luther and Zwingli to the colloquy.

After three days of discussion it became obvious that there was no agreement between Luther and Zwingli on the Lord’s Supper. This is recognized in a statement which was formulated at the conclusion of the debate and signed by Luther, Zwingli, and others. Article 15 first stated the agreement on the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ. But then comes this sentence: “And although at this time we have not reached an agreement as to whether the true body and blood of Christ are bodily present in the bread and wine, nevertheless, each side should show Christian love to the other side insofar as conscience will permit.”

It was Zwingli’s contention that Christ could not be “bodily present in the bread and wine” because his body was up in heaven seated at the right hand of God. In concluding his treatise on the Lord’s Supper Zwingli writes: “We are just as certain that Christ cannot be present bodily as we are that he is bodily seated at the right hand of God.” Luther maintained that such a limitation on Christ’s bodily presence finally undermined the basic teaching on the person of Christ. “O dear man! If someone does not want to believe the article of faith concerning the Lord’s Supper, how will he ever believe the article of faith concerning the humanity and divinity of Christ in one person?”



Marburg, on the Lahn River.
View toward the former castle of Philip of Hesse.

One might compare the difference between the teaching of Luther and Zwingli with the difference between having an actual person present or only having one's picture present. In the Lord's Supper the body and blood of Christ are really present. Luther kept going back to the words of Christ: "This is my body." Zwingli maintained that though Christ said, "This is. . .", he really meant: "This signifies or represents my body." Since Christ is ascended into heaven, he can't possibly give his body in this sacrament.

And besides, for Zwingli it didn't really make much difference because the whole thing was a matter of the mind, of thinking, of remembering. Whereas Luther stressed that the Lord's Supper is a means of grace or vehicle by which the Holy Spirit comes to the believer bestowing forgiveness and spiritual life, Zwingli declared: "The Holy Spirit needs no wagon."

The Lutherans taught that in the sacrament also the unbelieving communicant received the true body and blood of Christ but to the communicant's hurt; Zwingli and his supporters rejected such an idea. For the Lutheran the word of God made the sacrament; for the Zwinglian the mind of man made the sacrament. Zwingli was satisfied with a picture; Luther proclaimed the comforting gospel of the real presence of Christ's body and blood.

Zwingli's point of view is revealed in the worship forms which he prepared for the church in Zurich. The buildings were stripped of all paintings, statues, and ornaments. The organs were closed and no music was permitted. Everything was done to emphasize the bare Word of God and to give the people an opportunity to concentrate upon this bare Word without distraction.

Zwingli abhorred fleshly things. He stressed simplicity and interiority in worship. Nothing should interfere with the meditation of the worshiper as the Christian contemplated Christ's work of salvation on the cross and his sitting at the right hand of God. As part of the communion liturgy John 6 was read with emphasis on the words: "The flesh profiteth nothing." During the Lord's Supper silence prevailed after the reading of 1 Corinthians 11.

During the Marburg Colloquy Luther is reported to have said to one of the followers of Zwingli: "Our spirit is different from yours; it is clear that we do not possess the same spirit, for it cannot be the same spirit when in one place the words of Christ are simply believed and in another place the same faith is censured, resisted, regarded as false and attacked with all kinds of malicious and blasphemous words."

The Lutherans were surprised that the Zwinglians were ready to receive the Lutherans into church fellowship despite the basic difference in the teaching about the person of Christ and the Lord's Supper. The Lutherans could not with a good conscience agree to this show of unity. But for Zwingli there was the goal of a united military front, and he was ready to overlook differences in teaching to achieve this goal.

Zwingli lost his life in 1531 fighting with a Swiss army against the forces of Emperor Charles. The Swiss found a new spiritual leader in the Frenchman John Calvin, whose story we shall take up in the next installment. The Zwingli-Calvin followers are generally known as the Reformed Church and, as we shall see in future articles, had great influence on various denominations which were subsequently formed.

*... Luther stressed that
the Lord's Supper
is a means of grace
by which the Holy Spirit
comes to the believer ...*

Was Luther wrong for not declaring church fellowship with Zwingli at Marburg? Should he have overlooked the "different spirit" which he perceived in the Swiss? Did he contribute to the many churches of the present day because he would not compromise? Those who believe that doctrinal unity is not necessary for organizational unity would say yes. But those who believe that there can be no church fellowship without unity of confession will pray with Luther:

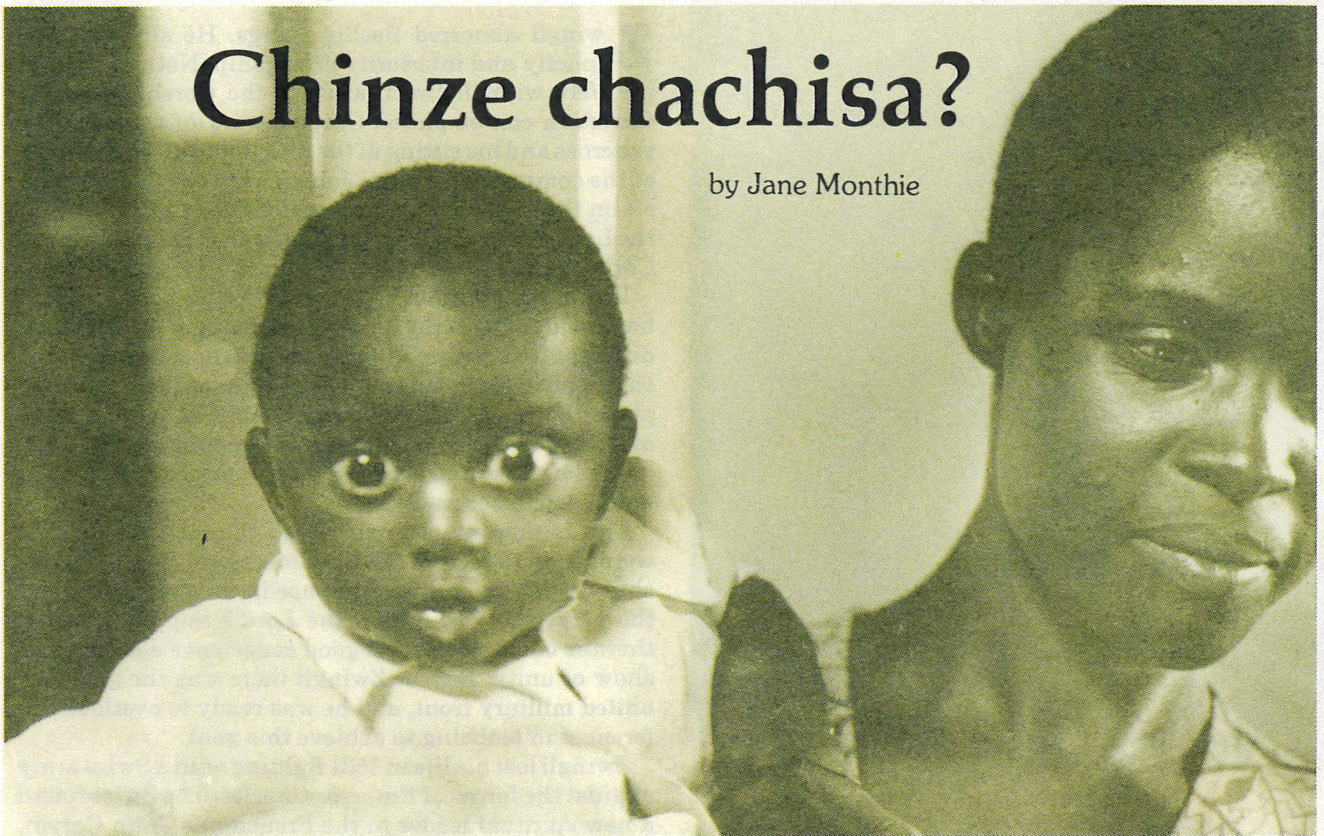
*Lord, keep us steadfast in Thy Word;
Curb those who fain by craft and sword
Would wrest the Kingdom from Thy Son
And set at naught all He hath done. □*



Pastor Prange is at Peace,
Janesville, Wisconsin.
He is also chairman of the
Stewardship Board of the
Western Wisconsin District.

Chinze chachisa?

by Jane Monthie



Mother at registration desk.

Chinze chachisa — what is paining you? — was repeated 180 times today as people filed past the admission desk at the Mwembezi Lutheran Dispensary, an hour and a half drive west of Lusaka, capital city of Zambia. The various responses of mutwi, mumala kunyona, mubili conze, and mubili rapia mangi will tell us that it is malaria season in Zambia.

“Why do you want to go there?”

With an African staff consisting of Ba Mkandawire (medical assistant), Bamuka Himululi (a nationally licensed nurse), Ba Musumpuka (dresser), and an American staff of Debbie Teuteberg and myself (RNs), approximately 2500 people can be seen at this dispensary in a month and 30,000 in one year.

“Why do you want to go *there*?” was a question I was frequently asked as I prepared my sea shipment. At that time I only knew it was because the Lord wanted me in Zambia. When

I arrived at the dispensary I found other reasons — 30,000 of them. Here are just a few.

Morris Hibabola, an 8-year-old boy, was bitten by a snake at 5:00 p.m. while bathing in the river. The river is flooded and it is difficult to find transport across it at that hour. The time passes. The arm swells. Potassium permanganate has been applied to the wound to stop the bleeding. A tourniquet of bark has been applied to the arm to prevent the poison from spreading. Finally a boat is hired. The father carries his son, and the mother comes with the year-and-a-half-old baby on her back.

After crossing the river there is a six-mile walk to the dispensary. Everyone is exhausted as they arrive at the clinic at 1:30 a.m. The anti-snake venom serum is administered and the arm is elevated. Will the serum work? Has it been too long? Because the patient is returned to his home, we will not find out. Often that is the frustrating ending to a treatment.

Medicine Gadzika, a two-year-old, is brought to the dispensary limp, with sunken eyes and high fever. The

mother says the child has had diarrhea for two weeks and started vomiting three days ago. He has also fainted and had fits, she adds. “Why didn’t you bring him in earlier?” I ask. “We thought he had ingala,” the mother replies. (Ingala is a disease that the African believes he can contract when the corn tassels.)

On examination the child is found to have an ear infection and most likely malaria. Has it been too long? Will the child do all right with the chloroquin, antibiotics, and oral rehydration that can be provided at our dispensary or should the child be sent to town? Regardless of the benefits derived from our five-month international health sciences course at Seneca College in Toronto, the answers to these and other questions are not always clear and simple.

Many pregnant women have passed through the doors on Tuesdays, Prenatal Clinic day. They are registered, have their weight and blood pressure checked, and are seen by the sisters (as we RNs are called). A quick examination is done, problems spotted and attended to.



LEFT (and clockwise) • Ba Mkandawire teaching basic physiology • Outside of dispensary on Under Fives Clinic (UFC) day. • Debbie Teuteberg at UFC giving injections. • Ba Musumpuka cleaning a child's ears. • Jane Monthie taking blood pressure at Prenatal Clinic.



Depending on the season nearly 110 women can be seen in one day.

The women try to deliver at the clinic, but some live too far away. The care is good at Mwembezhi the people say, and an average of 30 babies are born a month. Last week a woman came to the dispensary with the baby in a transverse lie (an impossible delivery). I sighed as I thought about the exhausting, bumpy, one-and-a-half-hour drive to Lusaka. Will I get stuck? Will I arrive at the University Teaching Hospital before harm is done to mother and baby?

Saturday is Under Fives Clinic. The typical immunizations are given on this day. Ba Mkandawire teaches

the women in their own language how to care for their children. He then weighs the children and instructs in the Tonga language those mothers whose children are malnourished or losing weight. Saturday echoes with bawling children as the injections are given. Better that than a deadly, crippling disease.

At Mwembezhi we are serving at least a 300-square-mile area. People would be dying if we weren't there. There are government clinics in the neighborhood but they are short-handed and short on medicine.

And sometimes I pause and speak a prayer of thanks for all the people who support this ministry of mercy: the women's organizations and indi-

viduals, Mrs. Herbert Speckin, executive secretary of the medical mission, and the many other people who pray for us.

On those days when we've been up all night on some medical emergency and a life is saved, we know your prayers were heard. On days like that — and always — it is good to have your prayers and the Lord at our side.

If anyone should happen to ask you, that's why I am in Zambia □

Jane Monthie, a native of Hudson, New York, is a member of Faith, Pittsfield, Massachusetts. She is a graduate of Dr. Martin Luther College and received her nursing degree from the University of Wisconsin — Milwaukee. After graduation she was accepted for service at the Mwembezhi Lutheran Dispensary. She will return to the states late this year.

from the WELS

Budget subscriptions rise by 3.6%

Congregational subscriptions to the Synodical budget for 1983 rose by 3.6%. A total of \$13,465,000 has been committed by congregations for Synodical work during the calendar year 1983.

The report was submitted to the February 25 meeting of the Coordinating Council, the budgeting agency of the Synod, by Arthur W. Schaefer, acting stewardship counselor.

At the 1981 Synod convention which adopted the biennial budget it was estimated that subscriptions

would increase by 8%. "This complicates our budgeting for the next biennium," Schaefer pointed out. "The budget requests for fiscal 1983-84 show an increase of 13.6%."

The following are the Synod's districts with their 1983 increases: Arizona-California, 5.3%; Dakota-Montana, 5%; Michigan, 3.2%; Minnesota, 3.9%; Nebraska, 6.1%; Northern Wisconsin, 3.1%; Pacific Northwest, 3.4%; South Atlantic, 12.7%; Southeastern Wisconsin, 4.4%; and Western Wisconsin, 1%.



PASTOR PAUL HARTMAN, former missionary in Puerto Rico, was installed in December as pastor of San Juan Congregation in El Paso, Texas and as director of the theological education at the Mexican seminary there. Hartman was installed by Pastor Rupert A. Eggert, his predecessor as director of theological education. The sermon was preached by Pastor Vincente Guillen of Cristo Redentor Congregation of Ciudad Juarez, Chih. Mexico. Shown at the installation are (back row, left to right): Robert Grebe, member of the Latin America executive committee; Pastors Steven P. Blumer, Eggert, Beck H. Goldbeck, and Guillen. Blumer and Goldbeck are from El Paso congregations.

DR. MARTIN LUTHER COLLEGE NOMINATIONS Education

The following have been nominated for the vacancy in the field of education caused by the death of Dr. Elaine Bartel:

Kathleen Barfknecht	Appleton WI
Linda Berg	Lake Mills WI
Linda Bruskewitz	Janesville WI
Ronald Gioc	Lake Mills WI
Arnold Goodger	Jenera OH
Sandra Griepentrog	Crete IL
Susan Haar	Baltimore MD
Gerald Kastens	Lake Mills WI
Elsa Manthey	Manitowoc WI
Robert Mateske	Adrian MI
Ruth Muehlenbeck	Wausau WI
Marilyn Orth	Hutchinson MN
Marilyn Otterstatter	Milwaukee WI
Kerilyn Stuedemann	Onalaska WI
Ruth Unke	New Ulm MN
Marlene Wendler	Lake City MN
Robert Wolff	New Ulm MN
Annette Wulff	

Physical Education

The following have been nominated for the vacancy created by the resignation of Miss Judith Wade:

Judy Albert	Mankato MN
Carol Dietz	Kewaunee WI
Karilynn Hahnke	Valentine NE
Rachel Kaesmeyer	Kenosha WI
Carla Melendy	Baltimore MD
Ellen Pieper	South St Paul MN
Mary Scharf	Milwaukee WI
Kay Shambeau	Winona MN
Candy Siewert	Sleepy Eye MN
Ann Steffen	Fond du Lac WI
Karen Wells	Flint MI
Karen Wilsman	Manitowoc WI

Any correspondence regarding these nominations must be in the hands of the secretary by April 11, 1983.

Darrell Knippel, Secretary
DMLC Board of Control
4818 Garfield Avenue South
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55409

With the Lord

Frederic H. Zarling 1910-1983

Pastor Frederic H. Zarling was born June 11, 1910 at Cudahy, Wisconsin. He died on February 22, 1983 at Milwaukee, Wisconsin.



Zarling

A graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, he served congregations at Fairfax, Minnesota; Sault St. Marie, Michigan; Two Rivers, Hartland, Appleton and Hortonville, Wisconsin; and Pembroke, Ontario.

In 1942 he married Luella Neumann, who preceded him in death. He is survived by two sons, Craig and Tim; three sisters, Lillian Zarling, Irene (Prof. Erwin) Scharf, and Anita (Rev. George) Barthels; and one brother Pastor Waldemar J. (Ruth) Zarling.

The funeral services were held February 24 at St. James, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. □

FAMILY CAMPING TOUR

The Lutheran Science Institute's Chiwaukee family camping tour will be held July 18-29 at two campsites between Milwaukee and Chicago. Included will be hiking, swimming, canoeing, boating, fossil hunting, museum visits, active archaeological "dig" and wildlife areas. Group rates will be arranged where possible. A \$10.00 non-returnable deposit applicable to registration fee will hold a reservation. Fees for a person or family are: LSI member, \$20 (\$2 per day); WELS member, \$30 (\$3 per day); non-WELS, \$60 (\$6 per day). Deposit or fees are payable to: Gerald Mallmann, 10317 — 195 Avenue, Bristol, WI 53104.

LUTHERAN SCIENCE INSTITUTE

The fourth annual science seminar sponsored by the Lutheran Science Institute will be held at Wisconsin Lutheran College on Saturday, April 23, 1:30-7:15 p.m. with social hour to follow. Agenda topics include: Theology of Ecology, Leeuwenhoek and His Microscope, Biblical Indicators of the Age of the Earth, and The World Before and After the Biblical Flood. Fees are \$10.00 per individual, \$15.00 per couple (husband and wife) and \$5.00 per student, to be sent to LSI, c/o Wisconsin Lutheran College, 8830 West Bluemound Road, Milwaukee, WI 53226 by April 18. Indicate if evening meal at \$4.25 is desired.

CALENDAR OF CONFERENCES

Michigan District, Northern, April 11, Agenda: An Analysis of Reaching Out in Light of the Scripture's Principles of Stewardship of Treasures; Discussion of Memorial to 1983 Synod Convention.

Michigan District, Southeastern, April 11-12, Agenda: 2 Corinthians 5:14-6:3; Practical Aspects of Objective Justification in our Ministries; Principles in Regard to the Support of Organizations and Charities; Reformation Rally Planning in View of Special 500th Anniversary.

Northern Wisconsin District, Winnebago Conference, April 11, Agenda: Reach Them-Teach Them; Heaven and Hell.

South Atlantic District, Florida, April 11-12, Agenda: 1 John 2:28-3:10; Isagogical Study of Amos; Receiving Members by Profession of Faith; Study of Assemblies of God; Christ's Descent into Hell.

Western Wisconsin District, Southwestern, May 3, Agenda: Luther and the Family; Does The Lutheran Worship Fill our Need for a New Hymnal?

EXPLORATORY SERVICES

are being held in the following places to determine the potential for establishing a WELS mission in the area. Services are held on Sundays unless otherwise noted.

CINCINNATI (NORTHEAST), OHIO — Kinder-Care Learning Center, 10695 Loveland-Madeira Road, Loveland, Ohio. 9:30 a.m.; Bible class/SS 10:45 a.m. Pastor David A. Grundmeier, 10940 Barrington Court, Cincinnati, Ohio 45242; phone 513/489-5466.

ARLINGTON, TEXAS — Our Savior, 1506 Pioneer Parkway, Arlington. 8:30 a.m.; SS 9:45 a.m. Pastor Stanford R. Espedal, 1500 Cherry Lane #215, Arlington, Texas, 76013; phone 817/274-8919.

AUSTIN (SOUTH), TEXAS — Travelodge Motel, San Antonio room, E. St. Elmo and I. H. 35, 8:30 a.m.; SS 9:40 a.m. Serving areas of Austin, San Marcos, Oak Hill, Buchanan Dam, Burnet and Llano. Pastor James L. Radloff, 10601 Bluff Bend Drive, Austin, Texas 78753; phone 512/836-4264.

CHANGE OF TIME OR PLACE OF WORSHIP

has occurred in the following exploratory areas or mission congregations.

FORT WORTH (SOUTHWEST), TEXAS — Abiding Faith, Seventh Day Adventist facilities (north wing), 7051 S. McCart. 10:00 a.m.; Bible class/SS 9:00 a.m. Pastor Ed Lehmann, 5008 Lincoln Oaks Drive N. #501, Fort Worth, Texas 76132; phone 817/294-9303.

PLANO/ALLEN, TEXAS — Atonement, National Child Center, 913 Lexington, Plano. 11:00 a.m.; SS 9:30 a.m. Pastor Thomas Valleskey, 1826 Santa Fe, Lewisville, Texas, 75067; phone 214/436-3835.

NAMES WANTED

Survey work preliminary to conducting exploratory services is being done in the following places. If you know of people in these areas interested in WELS services, contact pastors noted.

ROANOKE, VIRGINIA — Pastor Joel T. Luetke, 3229 Sandra Lane, Virginia Beach, Virginia 23464; phone 804/424-3547 or 804/420-9652.

INTERNATIONAL YOUTH RALLY

The 1983 WELS International Youth Rally will be held at Carroll College, Waukesha, Wisconsin on Tuesday through Thursday, August 16-18. The fee for the rally is \$75.00. Congregations will receive additional information by mail.

INSTALLATION

(Authorized by District President)

Pastor:

Meler, Edward P., as pastor of Immanuel, Oshkosh, Wisconsin on January 30, 1983, by D. Meier (NW).

ADDRESSES

(Authorized through the District President)

Pastors:

Albrecht, G. Jerome, Rt. 2, Box 74A, Delavan, WI 53115, 608/883-6338.

Meler, Edward P., 330 N. Eagle, Oshkosh, WI 54901, 414/231-3579, Office 414/233-1378.

125th ANNIVERSARY

St. Peter's of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin will celebrate its 125th anniversary from Sunday, September 11 to Sunday, October 2. On the first two Sundays will be six confirmation reunion services and the last Sunday in September three anniversary communion services followed by a banquet at 1:00 p.m. at Winnebago Lutheran Academy. On October 2 a thanksgiving service will be held for St. Peter's School. For further information contact Arthur Hungerford, 459 Marshall Avenue, Fond du Lac, WI 54935. Dinner tickets are \$4.00 for adults and \$2.50 for children. Reservations must be received by August 31, 1983.

CENTENNIAL

Bethlehem Lutheran School of Hortonville, Wisconsin will celebrate its 100th anniversary in special services on April 24, 1983, at 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. with a dinner to follow. All former pastors, teachers, members and students are invited to attend. Please contact the school office 414/779-6761 if you plan to attend.

100TH ANNIVERSARY AT MARINETTE

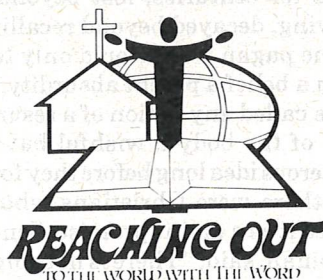
Trinity Lutheran Church of Marinette, Wisconsin will celebrate its 100th anniversary in special services throughout 1983. On April 17 President Mischke will preach on the theme "Our Outreach Through the Synod." Christian Education Sunday will be held June 5 with Prof. Don Sellnow of Northwestern College as the guest preacher. The Confirmation Reunion will be held July 17 with the theme "Faithfulness to the Lord" being presented by Rev. Larry Nast, a son of the congregation. Another son of the congregation, Bruce McKenny, will preach for the special service of thanksgiving on November 27 using the theme: Thanksgiving for 100 Years of God's Grace. All former members, past church workers and friends of Trinity are invited to any or all of these services. For more information contact Rev. Frederick Mueller, 1509 Thomas St., Marinette, Wisconsin 54143.

SPIRIT DUPLICATOR NEEDED

WELS mission congregation would like to purchase a used spirit duplicator. Call M. Grubbs, 218/751-6334 or write St. Mark's Lutheran Church, C7, Box 130A, Bemidji, MN 56601.

GERMAN CHOIR MUSIC

Interested in singing in German? German choir music is available from St. John's Lutheran Church, c/o Nancy Stelling, Stanton, NE 68779. The church will also pay postage.



COUNCILMEN'S WORKSHOPS

Workshops sponsored by the Minnesota District Stewardship Board will be held April 9, 10-00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Grace, Oskaloosa, Iowa and April 10, 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at Grace, Columbia, Missouri.

REQUEST OF ADMINISTRATION SURVEY COMMISSION

The Administration Survey Commission, charged with studying the synodical and district administrative structure of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, and suggesting changes for improvement, if such improvement is necessary, requests your views of possible problem areas and suggested solutions.

Please send all correspondence relative to the work of this committee to District President George W. Boldt, chairman, Administration Survey Commission, 8637 Fernald Ave., Morton Grove, IL 60053.

COLLOQUY

In a colloquy conducted on February 14, 1983, Fred Archer of Landis, South Carolina, formerly a pastor of the Church of the Lutheran Confession, was found to be in confessional agreement with the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. The Reverend Archer is at present pastor of Good Shepherd Ev. Lutheran Church, a congregation in confessional fellowship with the Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran Synod.

First Vice President George W. Boldt
Professor Richard Balge
District President Waldemar J. Zarleng

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ATTACH LABEL HERE

I believe...

the "first fruits." Wherever there are "firstfruits," there's more to follow.

The Christian church has summed up this article of her faith in the next to the last phrase in her most ancient of creeds: "I believe . . . in the resurrection of the body."

If we dare to say it, it may strike us that it seems easier to talk about

ter death." Pliny, also a Roman, said that the idea of a life after death is no more than a child's fairy tale to satisfy man's insatiable desire not to come to an end.

The early church responded. Irenaeus (died about 200): "The body is capable of sharing salvation." Centuries later, Peason, in a writing called, "On the Creed," said that God knows all the scattered bones of men wherever they are; he knows how "this ruined fabric should be restored; he knows how every bone should be brought to its neighbor-bone, how every sinew may be re-embroidered. . . ."

The words, "I believe . . . in the resurrection of the body" arouse a similar skepticism when they fall on many 20th-century ears. Such a teaching can lead even Christians to do a fair amount of unhealthy speculating. Our limited and sin-bedeveled brain trips and falls on the how and the how come.

But the words and promises of God were never meant to be grist for speculating. They were written so that we, for whom he has died and whom he has called, would have comfort and hope. Perhaps the resurrection word begins to matter only after one has grasped the cold and rigid hand of the spouse no longer alive. Perhaps the resurrection word offers greatest consolation only when we take a last agonized look at the wasted shell of a parent. Perhaps it is when we remember how much we loved and cherished and held on to *bodies* that "I believe . . . in the resurrection of the *body*" counts.

At such times, these words are not the last of a litany of dry and dusty dogmas, words to be memorized and recited for the sake of a tradition gone stale. Nor are they the improbable claims of an ancient creed. They are God's words, and only God's words will do. We recite them, and they revive us. "I believe . . . in the resurrection of the body." □



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by Mark E. Braun

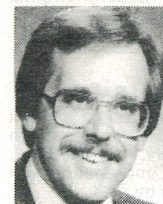
What we celebrate in this season of lilies and bonnets and bunnies is that the body of a man who had died was made alive again. What we celebrate is the literal, physical resurrection of a corpse, which had been "crucified, dead and buried." The miracle of the resurrection is what constitutes Easter. Anything less than that miracle leaves us no Easter to celebrate.

Along with a first miracle of such magnitude, there is closely connected a second — a second miracle every bit as grand and unreasonable. *We too will be made alive again.* If God lets the world last long enough for us to be dead and buried, we too will be resurrected. One of the Easter epistles calls the resurrected Christ

Christ's rising than it is to talk about our own. After all, Jesus was God. People knew Jesus, and they knew where his body was and he wasn't dead all that long. It would be easier for Jesus to rise, we may think, because he had to endure none of the indignities of decay.

What can be far harder to imagine is how God can revive uncountable millions of bodies which have been dead for centuries, lost beyond retrieving, decayed beyond recalling.

The pagan world could only label such a belief a patent absurdity. Pagans called any notion of a resurrection of the body a wishful but preposterous idea long before they found out there were Christians who believed it as a divine promise. Seneca, a Roman, said, "There is nothing af-



Pastor Braun is at St. John's, Sparta, Wisconsin.