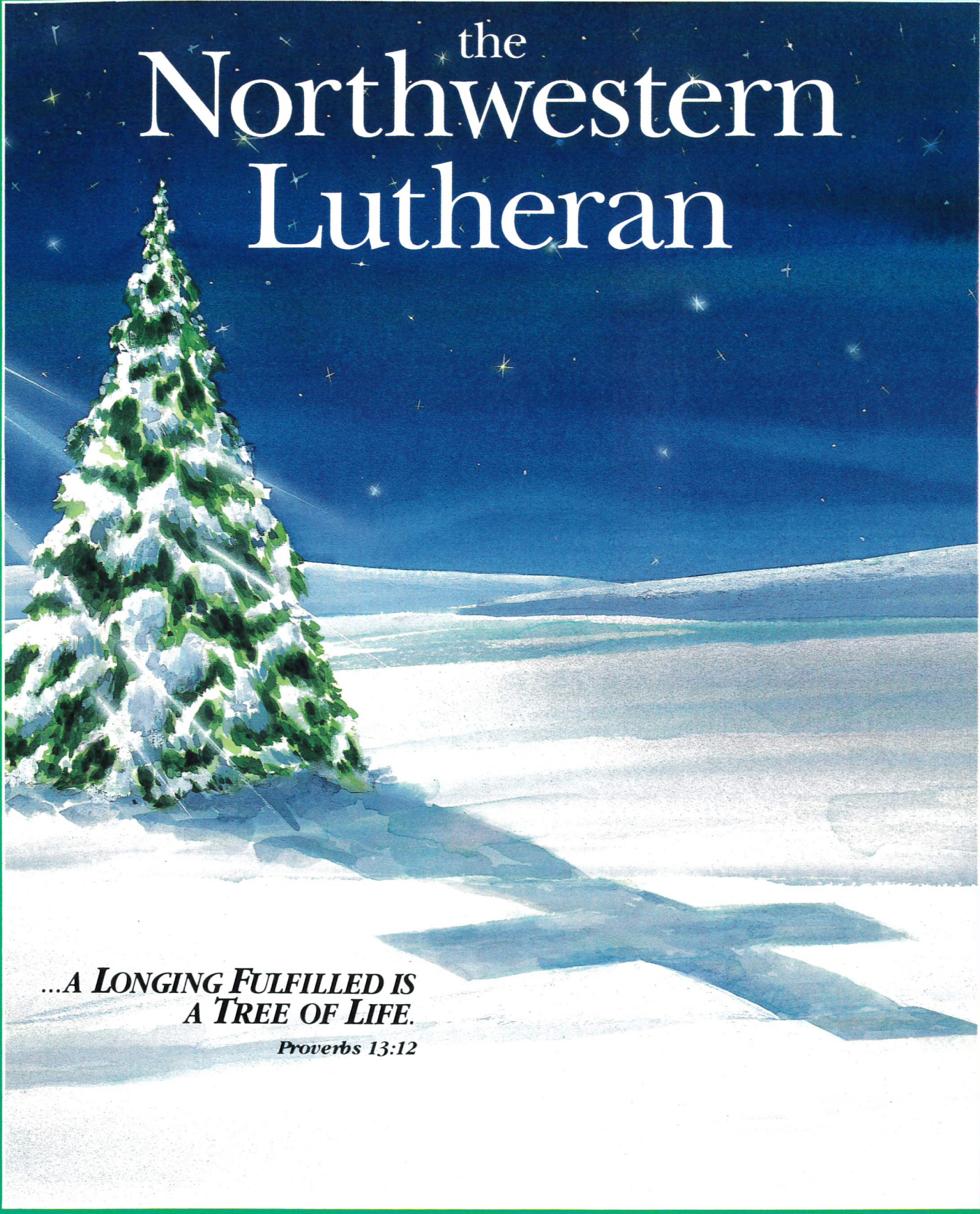


December 1990

A photograph of a snow-covered evergreen tree in a snowy landscape under a starry night sky. The tree is on the left side, and its shadow is cast on the snow. The background shows rolling hills under a dark blue sky with many small, bright stars.

# the Northwestern Lutheran

***...A LONGING FULFILLED IS  
A TREE OF LIFE.***

*Proverbs 13:12*

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## PREFACE

■ The cover on this issue is from the Christmas invitation card, part of a seasonal outreach to the unchurched produced by the WELS evangelism and mass media ministry teams.

■ This issue offers a variety of Christmas themes. Besides Arlyn Boll's "The week after" (p. 414), you'll enjoy Vernon Gerlach's "Christmas gifts" (p. 413), and Jim Woodfin's "They haven't got Christmas out yet" (p. 420).

■ A growing number of parents are choosing to educate their children at home. Read about two WELS families who are (p. 408).

■ "It isn't popular to attack a popular idol, especially when he's gone," says Joel Gerlach on page 411, but the UN's ele-

vation of former Beatle John Lennon "to the status of a world peace folk hero is inexcusable."

- And don't miss Cap Ehlke's article on the Unification Church (p. 406). The article is the sixth in a series on world religions.
- We welcome Pastor Tedd Wendt of Norton, Kan., who replaces Pastor Tim Bauer as reporter for the Nebraska District.
- On page 417 you'll find the first of a series of Bible readings which will take you through the entire Bible in 365 days. Look for the next month's readings in the second issue each month.

DJS

*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

# the Northwestern Lutheran

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# The wonders of Christmas

by Kurt F. Koeplin

*... to us a child is born, to us a son is given . . . and he will be called Wonderful (Isaiah 9:6).*

**H**ere is a safe prediction. You can depend on it. During this Christmas season not one single thing will be said, by believer and unbeliever alike, that hasn't been said before. Not one thing will be done, in the name of Christmas, that hasn't been done before.

The "wise" of the world have long rejected it. The "relatives" of Herod's wise men, who like their ancient counterparts know all the answers, but do nothing about it. The reason Christmas happened, they say, is too preposterous to consider. So forget it and move on to real life.

The agnostic scoffs at it. All sentiment, lumps in throats, tears of joy, gleeful shouts of laughter and feelings of warmth, love, and general well-being are all mush and nonsense. "Get real," they say, "and look at the heartache, the homeless, the lonely, the suicidal. Christmas is far more trouble than it's worth."

The blasphemer mocks it. One giggles at parodies. One sniggers at virgin jokes. Hoots of derision are directed at Joseph, "the gullible simpleton," while knowing winks of admiration are given to a young woman of questionable morality who came up with the most inventive tale ever spun in order to explain an unwanted pregnancy and trick a man into marrying her. But, enough about the spiritually blind, stone-hearted nay-sayers.

How about us, the Christians for whom Christmas is an amazing, awe inspiring wonderment? Is there anything that can be said of Jesus, the Christ-child, the holy family, the birth, the circumstances, anything and everything known and unknown concerning the world-changing event that hasn't already been said hundreds, yea, thousands of times? It is to be seriously doubted. Down through the centuries Christians have been moved to praise God, have been constrained to testify of the love of Christ in

their lives, and frequently have used the same expressions, used the same thought patterns, perhaps even have used the exact phrases.

Does this mean that during this Advent and Christmas season there is nothing left to be said by us? When we speak of the Wonderful One, Jesus Christ, the Father's only begotten Son who entered the main stream of humanity so that we alienated rebels might live Life with a capital L, since someone else has most likely said it first and better, we are to be as mute stones? Dare we not speak of the one who came to us as a child, our brother in the flesh? Is it wrong to praise him by repeating age-old truths which have been said before?

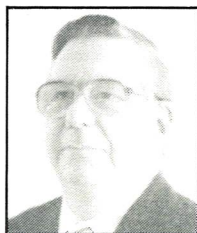
Not at all. Absolute truth does not change. Jesus Christ is absolute truth. What was an absolute verity at the time of the prophet is still rock solid and unchanging truth for us today.

Isaiah said it first, centuries before Christ's birth. Isaiah said it best since he wrote by the Spirit's inspiration. His name is Wonderful, he wrote. It's eminently fitting because of who he is and what he did. He is God's Son, our Savior, born to redeem us by living for us, dying for us, rising again for us. That's wonderful!

Although we aren't inspired in the same sense as Isaiah, it still is a marvelous wonderment to say that the Wonderful One is our Savior.

Indeed. It may be repetitious. It also, thankfully, is not original to say it or think it. But is there something wrong with that?

Every believer through the Spirit makes this wonderful old truth a fresh new truth. The Wonderful One is mine. He is yours.



Yes, Isaiah, for us too his name is wonderful.

*Kurt Koeplin is pastor of Atonement, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.*

# The virtue of waiting

There are quite a few of us who have trouble just waiting. If you don't believe this, get yourself stuck in the middle of a traffic jam on a Chicago expressway when cars move very slowly if at all. Or go for a doctor's appointment and sit for an hour in the waiting room before your turn finally comes. One finds out how difficult it is to wait.

That was Adam and Eve's problem. They were not content to wait for God. They looked for the "quick fix" offered by the old evil foe. They wanted to be wise, to be like God, and they wanted it now.

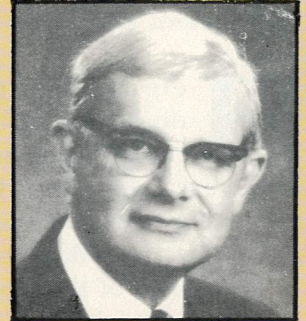
Evidence that people find it hard to wait is all around us. An example is the abuse of credit buying. The American people have piled up an enormous personal indebtedness through the use of plastic cards. The slogan is: buy now and pay later. The rationale: why wait to enjoy what you would like to have right now?

The very thing which we human beings find so hard to do—to wait—is counted a virtue by God. It is a virtue often commended in the Bible. "Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord" (Psalm 27:14). "My soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning" (Psalm 130:6). The patriarch Joseph refused to commit adultery and waited in prison for the Lord's vindication. In Luke 14 Jesus tells a parable about guests invited to a banquet. His point: wait for the host to give you a higher seat and don't push yourself forward.

Waiting is a virtue not easily acquired. We are impatient to see results. We live in an era which looks for instant gratification. Yet impatience is hardly a modern malady. Even the Hebrew word for "wait" suggests the difficulty. Literally it means "taut, tense." The word describes a measuring line which is drawn up tight. That's the way people feel who are forced to wait. When things are not going well, it is hard to wait for God's solution.

We need to recognize how much God is a God who waits, One who does not act hastily. Think of God's patience prior to the flood. And God waited a long time before finally sending his Son, the Messiah. Luther once remarked that if he were God, he would use the hammer more often on the wicked. But God shows great patience with sinners and waits for repentance.

Advent is the season of waiting. It recalls the years of waiting which the Old Testament believers experienced before the promise was fulfilled. Advent calls on us to be those who continue to wait for that Promised One to come again. Advent celebrates the virtue of waiting.



Victor Prange  
is pastor of Peace,  
Janesville, Wisconsin.

Victor H. Prange

A little girl is at the age where she always wants to help. Whatever her daddy is doing she says, "Let me help you, Daddy." She means well, but the results are sometimes disastrous. Her motives are good—we might even say "pure." She really wants to help. So her father tenderly encourages her.

### Pure in heart

At first glance Jesus' sixth beatitude pronouncing blessing on the "pure in heart" sounds so forbidding, so impossible. We remember that the heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure (Jeremiah 17:9). We think of Jesus' words, "For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts" (Mark 7:21). We take one look at our own sinful hearts and immediately disqualify ourselves saying, "I'll have to count myself out of this particular beatitude." Or, we reserve the beatitude to the realm of heaven where we will be sinless. While this beatitude finds its ultimate fulfillment in heaven, Jesus pronounced it to his hearers for the here and now.

Jesus did not say, "Blessed are the *perfect*." He said, "Blessed are the *pure in heart*." "Pure in heart" does not mean sinless. The Greek word for "pure" means "cleansed" or purged of all foreign matter. Since the heart in biblical terms is the center of our being from which come all our motives, the "pure in heart" would be those whose motives are unmixed, whose intentions are sincere.

Is it possible to reach this state of purity in the heart? The apostle James, in defining what it means to be religious, said, "keep oneself from being polluted by the world." Paul's instruction to Timothy was "keep yourself pure." As it applies to the heart Luther tells us: "That is called a clean heart which sees and considers what God says, and instead of its own thoughts, accepts the word of God, for this heart alone is pure before God, nay, it is purity itself, by means of which everything therein becomes

# Blessed are the pure in heart

by Fredric E. Piepenbrink

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

**Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.**

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

pure."

When we consistently and carefully check and pattern our thoughts and actions against the standards of purity outlined by the word of God, Jesus would say that we are "pure in heart."

Since our heart is by its very nature corrupt, it is obvious that a pure heart is not produced by our own mental suggestions or environment or education. Rather, it is a miracle worked by God himself, "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your

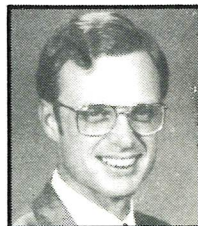
heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws" (Ezekiel 36:26-27).

### They will see God

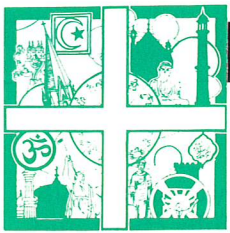
This simple, habitual, child-like intention to please our Father has inherent blessings. Just as the little girl's desire to help her father resulted in a close association with him, so the Christian's "pure heart" results in "seeing" God.

Philip requested, "Show us the Father, " to which Jesus replied, "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father." To see God then is to apprehend the truth about Jesus. It is to make the teachings of Jesus real and applicable. It is to enjoy a closer association with God. That comes with hearing his word and receiving the sacraments, but it also comes with a heart whose desire is to live in conformity with that word.

Jesus' sixth beatitude echoes the words of the psalmist, "In my integrity you uphold me and set me in your presence forever" (Psalm 41:12).



Fredric Piepenbrink is pastor of Atonement, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.



# The Unification Church

by Roland Cap Ehlke

**T**here are thousands of religious groups in the United States. Some of them are established worldwide religions, such as Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism. Each of these has its various divisions, as does Christianity with its denominations: Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Lutheran, etc. In addition, newer breakaway groups, often referred to as sects, are constantly forming and dying off.

And then there are the cults, the new religions which don't fit in the other categories.

The term cult often has negative overtones. It brings to mind pictures of young people turning their backs on parents, isolating themselves in communes, and adopting strange anti-Christian beliefs. We also tend to think of mysterious leaders, spellbinding their devotees — some call it brainwashing. Perhaps images of Jim Jones and the tragic mass suicides of Jonestown in November 1978 flash before us.

Although the Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons are cults, they've been around long enough for people to think of them as established religions. For many, the group that epitomizes the word cult is the Unification Church, whose followers are commonly called Moonies. Church leaders consider that term derogatory. They point to their official name, the Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity.

Whatever labels people might use, what's important is faithfulness to the word of God. Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples" (John 8:31). An examination of the Unification Church shows it is not guided by the Holy Spirit, who works through the word of God. Nor is it a unifying factor or even Christian.

## Characteristics

The Cult Awareness Network (CAN) is a non-religious organization dedicated to educating the public about what it calls "destructive cults." It defines a destructive cult as "a group with a hidden agenda of power through deceptive recruitment and complete control of the minds and lives of its members." CAN states that there are "well over 1000" such groups nationwide, with membership in the millions.

Although not all cults have exactly the same characteristics, there are many common threads running through them. A few are:

*Deceit.* A cult uses vagueness and secrecy about its goals and beliefs. Members rationalize this on the principle that the end justifies the means. The Unification Church (also known as CARP and CAUSA) uses this "heavenly deception."

*Love bombing.* New recruits are touched, hugged and flattered, so that they feel loved and important.

*Renunciation.* Former relationships with families and friends are renounced, and former values often referred to as "satanic."

*Preoccupation with fund raising and recruiting.* The Unification Church is known for its members selling flowers, candles, or candy on street corners and parking lots. In *Lord of the Second Advent*, former Unification member Steve Kemperman recounts how he raised over \$100,000 in three years in the mid 1970s.

*Sleep deprivation.* Long hours of recruiting and fundraising, as many as 20 hours per day, stifle critical thinking.

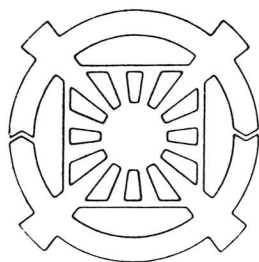
*Charismatic, dogmatic leader.* According to CAN, the "leader demands total devotion, and may claim supernatural power and unique, simple solutions to world problems."

## Sun Myung Moon

In the case of the unification church, the absolute ruler is Sun Myung Moon. Born in Korea in 1920, Moon claims that when he was 16 Jesus appeared to him in a vision and informed him that the world would be transformed through Moon.

In 1945 Moon supposedly received another vision, which led to the founding of the Unification Church in 1954 in Seoul, Korea. An ardent anti-communist, Moon was twice imprisoned by the communists in that nine year span.

During the 1970s Moon came to the United States where he carried out missionary activities and increased his already large business holdings. The year 1982 saw the famous mass wedding of 2,075 uniformly dressed followers of Moon in Madison Square Garden. In 1984 he began serving an 18 month prison term for tax fraud. Nevertheless, Moon's financial empire has grown from \$15 million in 1980 to \$2 billion in 1990, and includes everything from weapon parts plants in



The Unification Church explains its emblem: "The circle in the center represents God, the twelve rays emanating from the center represent the twelve gates to the new Jerusalem. . . and the arrows encircling the symbol represent the universal give and take among God, man, and creation that is the basis for harmony and union."

There was no redemption; there was no salvation; and there was no beginning of Christianity. So there on the cross, salvation was not given." The Unification Church also denies the bodily resurrection of Jesus.

The church considers Moon the Messiah. He has come to accomplish what Jesus failed to do. Through marriage, Moon will bring about a pure human race.

At heart Unification theology — like that of all unbiblical religions — teaches work righteousness. People must earn their own salvation. Kemperman notes, "According to this Unification principle, salvation equals spiritual perfection (total oneness with God) which can only be achieved by man's constant 100 percent effort in both faith and action. Christianity on the other hand teaches that God's salvation is a *gift*."

Kemperman, who had been in the church for three and a half years, also alludes to the vast difference between Moon and Jesus: "I had wanted to give him (Moon) a small, gift-wrapped box of chocolates . . . . When he'd finished his delivery and started heading out of the room, I pressed the gift against his right hand and said, 'Here, Father, for you.'

"Without flinching, or even looking aside, the glum-faced Father ignored my gift and bulldozed right past me into the dining room across the hall. So Sun Myung Moon remained for me an untouchable and distant man, a Messiah whom only the highest Church officials dared approach."

How different from Jesus who invites one and all, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

South Korea to fishing cops in Louisiana to the *Washington Times* newspaper.

As of 1987 church membership estimates ranged from 5,000 to 15,000 in the United States and hundreds of thousands in Asia, especially Korea.

Although Moon's church claims to be Christian, his theology is anti-Christian to the core. According to the Unification "Bible," *Divine Principles*, Jesus failed in his mission on earth: "We must realize that through the crucifixion on the cross God and Jesus lost everything. . . .

One Unification training manual refers to Moon as "visible God." But the fact is that Sun Myung Moon is a false Messiah or Christ, of whom the true Christ warned, "At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'There he is!' do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will appear . . . ." (Matthew 24:23,24). We write this even though the Unification Church is known to sue those who speak against it.

### Getting in and out

CAN literature indicates most people who join the cults are 16 - 35 years old, with the most vulnerable ages being 18 - 25. They generally come from middle to upper socio-economic families, and are of average or higher than average intelligence. They are intellectually curious and idealistic, having philosophical questions about life. Many are also in a state of transition, off to school, away from home, in a new job, etc.

Another former member, Chris Elkins, points out that 70 percent of the Unification Church members are former members in mainline, established churches (from *What Do You Say to a Moonie?*).

Elkins contends that these churches often lack a deep commitment to Scripture: ". . . in recent years some Christian churches have watered down their faith and simplified their theology. In an effort to make Christianity easier to accept, they have reduced it to mush." Some also lack an atmosphere of love and acceptance: "Many Moonies left the Christian church because they needed to be loved."

On the other hand, many do eventually leave the Unification Church; the turnover rate is very high. So if you know someone in this or another cult, don't stop praying, loving, and testifying.

Some are forcibly removed by the controversial "deprogrammers," whom Unification officials refer to as "thugs." Such tactics may border on the illegal and often don't bring a true change of heart.

A far better defense against the cults is that Christians and Christian churches be the loving, Christ-centered people God intends them to be. In these troubled times of false Christs, may we who know God's love in Jesus stand firm in his word, grow in that truth, and gladly share it with others!

Further reading: *Sun Myung Moon and the Unification Church* by James Bjornstad; *Larson's Book of Cults* by Bob Larson.

Next: The Moslems.

Roland Cap Ehlke is an editor at Northwestern Publishing House.

# Home schooling:

by Dorothy J. Sonntag

**O**n Sue Swearingen's pantry shelves a collection of textbooks and teacher's manuals shares space with the canned goods and peanut butter. She keeps the books there because her kitchen doubles as a classroom. Sue and Rick, of Antioch, Illinois, have joined the growing number of parents who are choosing home schooling for their children.

No one knows for certain how many children are being taught at home today; estimates are somewhere between 300,000 to one million. And the number is growing.

The majority of parents who choose home schooling do so for religious reasons. Others believe their children will do better academically. Some feel home schooling will keep their families closer together. Families who move frequently—those in military service, for instance—may choose home schooling to avoid frequent changes of schools for the children.

Home schooling is legal in all 50 states, with varying restrictions. Each state sets its own laws governing home education. Meeting the requirements of the laws may be as simple as offering a specific number of hours of instruction per year or as complex as providing a certified teacher and a state-approved curriculum.

Parents who teach their own children can choose the curriculum from a variety of sources. Some work with a local school which supplies the materials. Some parents rely on correspondence courses. Others order their textbooks directly from the publishers.

Home computer programs can provide resource materials. In addition, most home schoolers supplement the curriculum with the use of public libraries, museums, schools, community athletics, and home school support groups.

Methods and schedules for teaching vary with each family. Mary and Tom Purnell, of Lake Villa, Ill., who also have chosen home schooling for their children, have a specially designated school room, but they use it primarily as a place to keep books and other teaching aids. Their children work at the dining room table or sit in a comfortable chair to read.

Books aren't used for every lesson, however. "Learning isn't just sitting and reading from a book," says Mary. She prefers hands-on experience.

Both the Swearingen and Purnell families use the morning hours for concentrated study and the afternoons for music lessons and practice and for other enrichment activities. Household chores get done before school and during breaks. "Instead of washing the chalkboard during recess," quips Tom Purnell, "the kids vacuum the living room."

The parents keep careful records of each child's progress, recording attendance, subjects, grades, and topics covered. "They know it or they don't," says Mary Purnell. "But we keep grades to prove they've had a valid education." The Purnells and Swearingens also measure their children's progress by the same standardized achievement tests used in schools.

Home-schooled children test, on the average, in the 75th to 95th percentile range on those tests, according to Dr. Brian Ray, president of the National Home Education Research Institute. He reports that a 1986 survey of 300 home-schooled families found 72.6 percent of the children to be scoring one year or more above grade level.

The Purnells wouldn't be surprised at those results. Their oldest son, Shawn, 16, finished high school in three years. He is now in the honors program at the College of Lake County on a scholarship offered because of his high scores on the American College Test (ACT). His parents were elated at his scores "because we don't stress academics."

The Swearingens aren't especially concerned with academics either. "The academics are important, sure," says Sue Swearingen. "I care that my children get a good education, but that's not my prime concern. We want to raise children who are believers in Jesus and lights in the world.

Home-schooled students may achieve more because parents require higher standards than a classroom teacher might. "I work hard for my mom, probably harder than I would for a teacher," says 12-year-old Molly Swearingen. "You can fool a teacher but you can't fool Mom."



# another way to teach

"And in school you can goof off," adds her mother, "and you won't get grounded by the teacher."

Probably the most serious concern raised concerning home schooling is that children won't learn necessary social skills. They may spend too much time with their parents and not enough time with their peers.

Dr. Ray Dusseau, principal of Shoreland Lutheran High School in Somers, Wis., believes home-schooled students may encounter social problems. A few students who attend Shoreland received their elementary education at home. "Different kids have different social needs," Dusseau says, "and giving up the social interaction of high school is not the best for everyone."

Richard Baumgart, principal of Faith Lutheran School in Antioch, has similar concerns. Some previously home-schooled children have enrolled at Faith, and occasionally they've had trouble adjusting to being in a classroom.

"Children need to learn to get along with others beside their own families," says Baumgart. "They need to learn to deal with social problems. If you don't have the problems at home, you don't learn how to handle them."

There are many ways of socializing children, contend home school advocates. They note that home-schooled children spend time with people of all ages, while those in formal classroom settings spend most of their time with their own immediate age group.

"School is not normal socialization," notes Sue Swearingen. "Never again in your life are you going to be spending most of each day almost entirely with people your own age."

According to Brian Ray, a home schooling advocate, research on social activities and emotional characteristics of home-school children shows "these children are actively involved in activities outside the home with different-

aged children, peers, and adults. . . . Home schoolers are not being socially isolated nor are they emotionally maladjusted."

Anne Purnell, who's 12, doesn't think home schooling has hurt her social life. Most of her friends are members of her church (the Swearingens and the Purnells are members of Heritage Lutheran in Lindenhurst) or the home school association to which the Purnells belong. "I see my home-schooled friends a lot," she says. "We go on field trips or study together. I see them more than if I were in school."

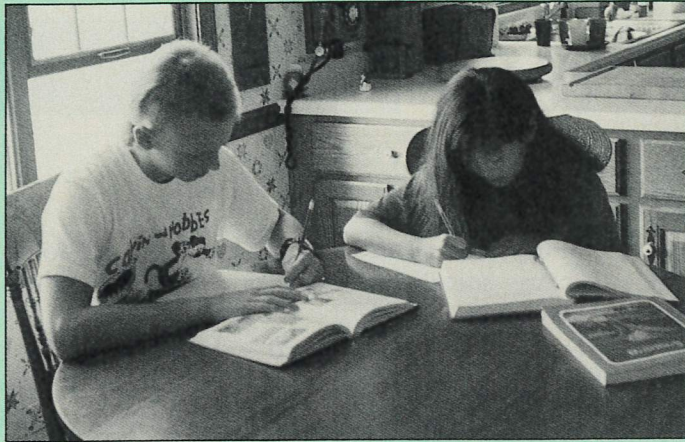
Mary Purnell agrees. "Anne's social calendar drives us crazy," she says. "The phone rings constantly."

Another concern raised is whether parents can adequately teach their children. Richard Baumgart, Faith's principal, believes primary grades are easily taught by "a parent who has good rapport with the child." But he questions whether upper graders fare as well. "Parents have trouble helping with even fifth



Mary Purnell is Mark's mother and his teacher.

DOROTHY SONNITAG PHOTOS



Joe and Molly Swearingen use their kitchen as their classroom.

and sixth grade math. What about upper level math?"

Ray Dusseau of Shoreland LHS agrees. "I have some concern that parents can teach every subject. What happens when students study trigonometry, for instance? I wonder if students will be equipped to fully use their gifts if they haven't had adequate instruction."

Sue Swearingen believes, however, that most parents are capable of home schooling. "The average parent can definitely do this," she says. "Parents don't have to know everything to teach their children. Motivating them and encouraging them is more important."

Both Molly and Joe Swearingen are studying algebra under their mother's supervision. "So far we haven't had any problems," says Sue. "If we did have trouble I wouldn't hesitate to find someone who could help us, or Joe could take the class at the high school."

Mary and Tom Purnell believe that most parents are capable of teaching their own children. "The best qualification I have," says Mary, "is that I know them better and love them more than anyone else does."

The Purnells and Swearingens are college educated, however, and have the necessary resources. Dr. LeDell Plath, assistant administrator for the synod's Board for Parish Education, questions whether the average parent could do a good job. Parents need time, skills, ample resources, and a strong commitment, he notes. "I'm not sure," he says, "that my wife and I could have done it."

Home schooling requires the commitment and involvement of both parents. In the Purnell home, Tom helps with instruction. Sue Swearingen does the

teaching in their family with help from her mother, Hannah Toben, but, says Sue, "Without Rick our home school would not be possible. He gives me unconditional support. Our home school is definitely a team effort."

Home schoolers also need to make a considerable financial investment in textbooks, teacher manuals, other teaching aids, and enrichment activities. Estimates for expenses range from several hundred to a few thousand dollars a year.

Families will probably need to get by on one income, too. In the majority of home schools, the mother (almost always the teacher) is not employed outside the home. Financial resources could be a problem for couples relying on two incomes or for single-parent families.

Another factor is time. Several hours a day are needed for instruction, study, and enrichment activities; and additional time is needed for planning and record-keeping.

Mary Purnell acknowledges that home schooling isn't for everyone. "We wanted the responsibility of teaching our children," she says. "We really believe that God wants us to do this. But we don't stand on a soapbox advocating home schooling."

The synod's Board for Parish Education office has received some inquiries regarding home schooling, but it does not offer specific recommendations for curriculum or textbooks. "We have no statistics on the number of WELS families who are home schooling," says LeDell Plath. "We haven't heard from many. If there's an appreciable number, we would rethink the type of service we provide."

The BPE does offer some general considerations for parents and congregations. It urges parents to think about whether home schooling is the best way for them to prepare their children to be disciples of Christ. And it encourages congregations to consider how they can support and help families who are home schooling.

"In congregations where some parents home school their children," recommends the BPE, "it is incumbent upon all concerned—parents, pastors, teachers, and boards of education—to work together so that the children receive the very best Christian training possible."



Dorothy Sonntag is assistant editor of the *Northwestern Lutheran*.

# Imagine that!

by Joel C. Gerlach

Normal activities at the United Nations in New York came to a halt on October 9 for an extraordinary event purportedly in the interest of world peace. UN ambassadors and their functionaries took time out to pay tribute to the memory of a man whom many regard as a modern folk hero. October 9 was the 50th anniversary of the birthday of Beatle John Lennon.

Delegates observed a moment of silence in Lennon's memory and then listened to the music and the lyrics of "Imagine," one of the rock songs popularized by Lennon and the Beatles in their heyday. Radio stations across the country and around the world joined in the event by airing "Imagine" at the same time that it was piped through the sound system at the UN.

What happened on October 9 struck me not just as a popular advertisement for a major UN agenda item, but as a frightening triumph of evil. If that strikes you as a harsh and unwarranted judgment, then reflect for a moment on the words of the song the UN chose to honor the prophet of its illusive dream of world peace.

*Imagine there's no heaven. It's easy if you try.  
No hell below, above us only sky.  
Imagine all the people, living for today.*

*Imagine there's no country. It's not hard to do.  
Nothing to kill or die for, and no religion too.  
Imagine all the people, living life in peace.*

*You may say I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one.  
I hope some day you'll join us, and the whole world will be one.*

*Imagine no possessions—I wonder if you can,  
No need for greed or hunger; the brotherhood of man.  
Imagine all the people sharing all the wealth.*

*You may say I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one.  
I hope someday you'll join us, and the world will live as one.*

"No heaven . . . no hell . . . no religion." If there is any lingering doubt that Christian truth and worldly philosophy are irreconcilably opposed to each other, that ought to settle the issue. Lennon's popular

dream that "the whole world will be one" is patent evidence that the primitive philosophy of the Babel builders is still alive and flourishing just as God's prophetic pronouncement at Babel indicated it would be (Genesis 11:6). It wouldn't come as much of a surprise if "Imagine" were adopted as "The International Anthem" of the UN.

That UN politicians should be devoted to the cause of world peace is understandable. That's their job. That they should honor the memory of John Lennon and elevate him to the status of a world peace folk hero is inexcusable. In his best-selling biography, "The Lives of John Lennon," author Albert Goldman describes Lennon as "a soul locked in battle with personal demons, a man with whom little real peace could be found."

Goldman's book was serialized in People magazine in August, 1988. Goldman documents Lennon's "battle with personal demons" and portrays Lennon as a man who devoted his life to a conscious effort to mock the moral and cultural values of a civilized Western world. And he's the man the UN lionizes!

It isn't popular to attack a popular idol, especially when he's gone. But when that idol mocks God and the fundamental values of a civilized society, we lose the struggle by default if we remain silent.

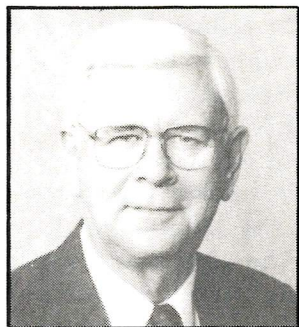
In the book of Revelation, the apostle John portrays in graphic symbolism a titanic, ongoing conflict between the Beast and the Lamb. The conflict is presented as a series of campaigns which increase in intensity as the New Testament age moves on toward Armageddon, the climax of the struggle. As the end nears, the whole world joins forces with the Beast in a united effort to annihilate the Lamb and his faithful few followers. From our vantage point it doesn't seem as though the Lamb stands a chance at Armageddon.

But looks can be deceiving, and in this case they are. When the final battle in the final conflict ends, it's the world that ends up in oblivion. And the Lamb? Luther says, "He holds the field forever." Imagine that!

*Joel Gerlach is pastor of St. John, Wauwatosa, Wisconsin.*

## *Not one word has failed*

“**M**ay the Lord our God be with us as he was with our fathers; may he never leave us or forsake us” (1 Kings 8:57). These words, spoken by King Solomon as he led God’s people in prayer at the dedication of the new and magnificent temple, have appeared on the masthead of the *Northwestern Lutheran* for as long as I can remember. Their presence there is not mere window dressing. We take them seriously. They are a continuing reminder that all we are and have is the gift of a gracious God and all that we ever hope to be still “depends on our possessing God’s abundant grace and blessing” (LH 425:1).



Pastor Mischke  
is president of the  
Wisconsin Evangelical  
Lutheran Synod.

But how had God demonstrated that he had been with their fathers? Solomon answers: “Not one word has failed of all the good promises he gave through his servant Moses” (1 Kings 8:56). The dramatic release from the slavery of Egypt, the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea, the manna in the desert, the rock that yielded water, the entrance into the promised land—all underscore that not one word has failed of all that God has promised.

But there’s another promise that God gave through Moses, one that we recall especially during this season. “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him” (Deuteronomy 18:15). Why listen to him? Because this prophet would be one of a kind, truly unique, belonging in a class by himself. But he would not come from the world of angels. He would not be a mysterious creature from outer space. He would be their brother, of their flesh and blood yet without sin, filled with the Spirit of God, the final Mediator between God and his people.

It’s true, Moses didn’t live to see the day, nor did Solomon. But you and I have. We’ve lived to see the fulfillment of the greatest promise of all when an angel told a group of startled shepherds, “Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:11).

What the fathers most desired  
What the prophets’ hearts inspired  
What they longed for many a year  
Stands fulfilled in glory here. (LH 91:2)

Not one word has failed of all that God has promised.

Bethlehem is no longer a promise. It’s a fact. And because God is faithful, Calvary and the empty grave in Joseph’s garden have followed according to the timetable of God’s eternal plan. Not one word has failed.

Can there be any doubt then that he will also keep his final promise to me and all believers, “Enter into the joy of your Lord,” the joy that is Christmas forever?

That’s the foundation on which our synod and all of its congregations rest. That’s the sum and substance, the heart and core of what we preach from our pulpits and teach in our schools. And because not one word has failed, that’s what we’ll keep on doing.

Carl H. Mischke



# Christmas gifts

by Vernon Gerlach

*On the first day of Christmas  
My true love gave to me  
A partridge in a pear tree.*

**S**imeon Stylites (of *Christian Century* fame), reflecting on the song, stops short of recommending that we plant a pear tree and install a partridge in it on Christmas Eve. But he does suggest that unusual gifts might be quite appropriate for those who have the real Christmas spirit.

It's the unusual that prompts one to sing. There are no songs about Christmas toasters for Mom or Christmas neckties for Dad. No—it takes a partridge in a pear tree to turn on the song writer.

Which brings to mind the Christmas of the two sheep herders and their boys, out in the foothills near Bethlehem. They were good people, graduates of the local parochial school. They respected their parents. They prayed regularly. They went to the synagogue on schedule. They worked hard.

And they knew Scripture. Especially the parts that told of the Messiah-to-come. They chafed under the Roman rule. They were looking for a king to slay their foes and lift them high. Time and again they and their fathers and their grandfathers had thought that a leader had finally come, one who would free them from that hateful Roman bondage. But always their hopes were dashed.

And so it was that they were on the night shift, herding their sheep in that crisp December air. What were they talking about? Hopes for the future: freedom, life, joy, peace. Oh, that the Romans would be driven out!

We know the story: the angel's "Unto you is born a Savior" and the heavenly host's "*Gloria in excelsis*" and, after their visit in the stable, the shepherds' "*In dulci jubilo*."

Imagine what December 25 would be if the shepherds had received a sensible gift instead of that impractical gift in the stable—a gift as impractical as flowers that fade (instead of the practical new

blender), as impractical as another portrait that requires wall space (instead of the practical cordless screwdriver). That gift was as impractical as a partridge in a pear tree.

A couple of shepherds and their lads given a baby in a sheep stall as a present? How inappropriate! Whose gift list was that on? Can you imagine anyone saying, "Just what I always wanted"?

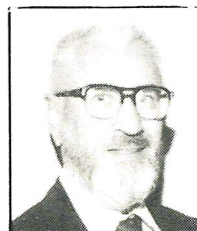
But isn't that just what happened? Those herders didn't go back to the hills wishing someone had given them a new blanket or a new shepherd's staff. No—they went back praising God for the most unusual gift of all time.

A baby in a barn? Wouldn't a new synagogue have been better? Or how about new scrolls to replace those worn so badly the preacher has trouble reading from them? A baby in a barn? That's not the gift for those who have everything. But for those with *nothing*—nothing in their hands to bring, who only to the cross can cling—the ridiculous is the sublime, the impractical is the practical.

Two turtle doves! How unseemly. Who would want such a gift? Ask Simeon. Or Anna. A baby in a barn! Who wants it? Ask the shepherds. Or the Nazareth carpenter and his wife.

How about us? Are we the kind that likes partridges and turtle doves? Does a baby in a barn make us want to sing, and sing until tears of joy flow?

*They were all looking for a king  
To slay their foes and lift them high.  
Thou cam'st a little baby thing  
To make a woman cry.*



Vernon Gerlach is professor emeritus of psychology in education, Arizona State University. He is a member of Emmanuel, Tempe.

# The week after

by Arlyn W. Boll

**T**he vacation had come at last. The week after Christmas finally arrived. As any teacher knows, this is one of the finest pauses in the entire school year.

Weeks of preparation and uncounted hours of practice for the children's Christmas Eve service are over. All that remains of this annual effort is a warm glow and a comfortable feeling of joy and satisfaction.

The children had done so well; the Christmas gospel was presented so clearly; the message had been shared. And yet, what was it that nagged, that left me with a small feeling of dissatisfaction?

Although the next Christmas was some 360 days into the future, my mind kept jumping ahead, thinking about the next time. Then I realized what the problem was.

As fine as our service had been, it was not really our service. We had chosen one of those children's services prepared by someone, somewhere, sometime. It was good, but had a familiar sameness to it. Why couldn't we have a service of our very own, written with our children and our church in mind?

There was no rush to do anything about this. After all, we never thought seriously about Christmas until October. But something in that Christmas afterglow led me to take out pencil and paper immediately.

Our church has two large transepts and a fair-sized balcony. Could we make use of them in some special way? Antiphonal speaking would be one possibility. Prophecies could come from the left, fulfillments from the right. Christmas angels could speak from the balcony.

Little by little a service began to take form. One of the songs would certainly be "Watchman, Tell Us of the Night," with its dialog between traveler and watchman. "Silent Night" would begin with a group of children from the balcony. Children in the nave would sing the second verse. On verse three, the balcony children would provide the descant.

So it went, and so the ideas came, some slowly,

some faster than they could be written. Here I was, absorbed in the spirit of Christmas-yet-to-come. I was thoroughly enjoying myself.

It took nearly two days to put all the ideas on paper. When I finished, my excitement turned to doubt. What if the other teachers don't like this? What if the service won't work? What if someone doesn't like the new approach? What if. . . .

One of the enemies of creativity is doubt. Conquer it, and half the battle is won. This was no time for "bah, humbug" thoughts, I told myself. It would be my challenge to share the present enthusiasm with the other teachers, and make them as excited as I was.

The service was typed into a readable copy before that Christmas vacation ended. Now I'd just have to wait until the next October, when a teacher would surely ask, "What are we going to do for Christmas this year?" Then I would share my creation, and all prayers would be answered.

As you might guess, I couldn't wait until October. Cautiously I sketched the general outline at a meeting in March, and the faculty liked the service concept. Pre-school meetings in August offered another opportunity, when we discussed the printed copy. Some changes were suggested, and each teacher provided ideas which led to a service that had everyone's approval.

That autumn at school was unique. The pressure was off; Christmas Eve was settled before anyone even thought of worrying about it. And we had a service of our very own.

Grown men don't often weep. Principals seldom shed tears. But that next Christmas Eve was as satisfying and rewarding as the creative urge had been a year earlier. I cried with joy on Christmas Eve.



*Arlyn Boll is principal  
at St. John, Watertown, Wisconsin.*

## Nigerian missionary reunion

On June 8-10 at Wisconsin Lutheran College a reunion of missionaries and families who had served on the Nigerian mission field from 1936 to 1963 was held. One hundred people from thirteen states and four Lutheran synods attended.

Among these people is a special bond. No matter what synod they now belong to, these people know they were instrumental in planting the word of God in the country of Nigeria. During this period of growth a normal school, high school, and seminary were started. Numerous churches, schools, and a hospital were built.

The group met as one happy family, sharing stories, watching films, looking at photographs, eating together, and honoring some of the pioneers such as Mrs. Leola Schwappe, widow of our first WELS overseas missionary, and Miss Helen Kluck, the first nurse to practice her healing arts in a land barely touched by civilization. Many had not seen each other for years.

The reunion closed on Saturday evening with a special African ground nut stew served buffet style. Center pieces on the tables were African curios. The evening ended on a special note. Missionary Harold Ottemoeller, affectionately known as "Mr. Nigeria," spoke on his work in Nigeria spanning the years of 1947 to the present.

Serving on the arrangements committee were Pastor and Mrs. Edgar Greve, Mr. and Mrs. Ray Spangenberg, Mrs. Leola Schwappe, and Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Holzhauser.

—Jenney Baringer Roemke

## Twin Cities host national WELS Lutherans for Life convention

"If we save babies from abortion, but fail to lead them and their parents to repentance, then we've merely stayed their execution." That was the message delivered by Pastor Richard Stadler in the opening service of the national WELS Lutherans for Life convention held in Minneapolis-St. Paul Sept. 29.

Echoing Stadler's thoughts, synod President Carl H. Mischke reminded LFL members and supporters in his keynote address that "in our fights against the grievous sin of abortion, we may never lose sight of the church's broader assignment to call sinners to repentance and faith. And in this fight we must use the only weapon God has given the church to change people's lives, namely the word of life."

Another perspective on abortion and euthanasia was presented by Dr. John Dolan, co-chairman of the Program in Human Rights and Medicine at the University of Minnesota's Law School. Dolan spoke of chilling parallels between our country's current attitudes and practices toward unprotected "unworthy" citizens (the old, the disabled, the unborn) and those of the Nazi regime

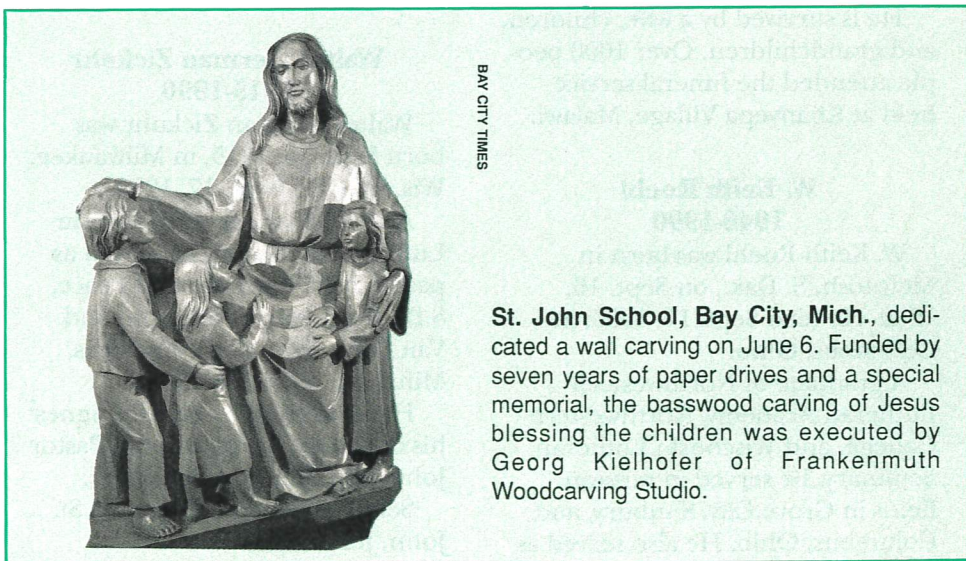
during World War II.

Dolan's address was appropriately followed by the message of the day's final speaker, Allen Quist, ELS member and author of *The Abortion Revolution*. Paraphrasing Ezekiel, Quist urged the audience to become "watchmen over the lives of little children, giving warning to our country and its government that the Lord will not tolerate the evil of abortion."

Conventioners also had the opportunity to attend workshops covering a spectrum of life issues on topics such as creationism, living wills, and the legislative process. Others gave attendees practical advice in applying that knowledge when counseling, teaching children about life, or witnessing through life issues.

Other convention highlights included an update by Brad Mattes of the National Right to Life Committee on legislative action around the country, and the installation of national LFL board officers Del Warner of Livonia, Mich.; Charles Skeels of Muskego, Wis.; Tom Frey of Longmont, Col.; and Jerry Gronholz of Appleton, Wis.

—Paula M. Bilitz



BAY CITY TIMES

**St. John School, Bay City, Mich.,** dedicated a wall carving on June 6. Funded by seven years of paper drives and a special memorial, the basswood carving of Jesus blessing the children was executed by Georg Kielhofer of Frankenmuth Woodcarving Studio.

## Minnesota District news

**Lutheran Institutional Ministry Association** (LIMA) delegates voted to support the calling of a full-time campus pastor for the Twin Cities on a shared-cost basis with the Board for Home Missions. The position will begin with the 1991-92 school year. . . . **The Lutheran Home: River Falls** hosted a grand opening celebration on Sept. 9. This newest acquisition to the Lutheran Home system offers residential apartments for the retired, care for the aged, a day care center, and other services. . . . **St. John, Fairfax**, observed the cen-

tenial of the congregation and 90th anniversary of the school with special services. . . . **Immanuel of Buffalo** celebrated its centennial on Sept. 16. . . . **Farmington** (rural Osceola), Wis., observed its 125th anniversary Sept. 23. . . . **Trinity, Belle Plaine**, celebrated its 100th anniversary with three special Sundays in October. . . . **Emmanuel, Hudson**, Wis., celebrated the 15th anniversary of the congregation and the tenth anniversary of the church building Oct. 7.

—Robert M. Edwards

## Obituaries

### Cylice Bowman 1922-1990

Cylice Bowman died Sept. 16, 1990, at the age of 68. An evangelist in the Lutheran Church of Central Africa, Bowman was one of the charter members of the LCCA in Malawi and was instrumental in expanding the LCCA into Malawi.

He graduated from the Lutheran Bible Institute in Lusaka, Zambia, in 1969 and served as a full-time evangelist until he retired.

He is survived by a wife, children, and grandchildren. Over 1000 people attended the funeral service held at Khanyepa Village, Malawi.

### W. Keith Roehl 1940-1990

W. Keith Roehl was born in McIntosh, S. Dak., on Sept. 16, 1940. He died Sept. 11, 1990, in Columbus, Ohio.

A graduate of Northwestern Lutheran Academy, Northwestern College, and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, he served in mission fields in Grove City, Sunbury, and Columbus, Ohio. He also served as

a circuit pastor, as chairman of the board of Lutheran Parish Resources, and on the Michigan District evangelism committee.

He is survived by his wife, Connie; daughters Kris (Jimmy) Jones, Cindy, Carie, and Cheri; his mother, Thelma Zubrod; a brother, Roger; and sisters, Rosemary Bilitz and Judy Calhoon. His father and a brother preceded him in death.

Services were held at St. Paul, Columbus.

### Walter Herman Zickuhr 1915-1990

Walter Herman Zickuhr was born Sept. 15, 1915, in Milwaukee, Wis. He died Sept. 17, 1990.

A 1940 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, he served as pastor at Willow Lake and Peace, S.D., Boyd, Minn., Fremont and Van Dyne, Wis., and Hendricks, Minn. He retired in 1984.

He is survived by his wife Agnes; his daughter, Edith; his son, Pastor John; and four grandchildren.

Services were conducted at St. John, Jefferson, Wis.

## Nebraska District news

**Mt. Olive, Lincoln**, recently completed phase one of its relocation plans. The congregation went all the way to the US Cabinet, purchasing land from Secretary of Agriculture Clayton Yeuter. Mt. Olive is now beginning phase two: beginning to build. . . . **St. Paul, Plymouth**, broke ground for an addition which will include Sunday school rooms, an overflow area, offices, meeting room, handicapped entrance, and restrooms. . . . **Living Hope in West Omaha** has received authority and funding to build a church. An architect is drawing plans and bids will be taken shortly. Construction will begin early in 1991. The new building should be completed by September. . . . The Colorado Mission Board has begun calling for **Ogden, Utah**. This exploratory outreach was granted at the September Board for Home Missions meeting.

. . . **Nebraska LHS** has an enrollment of 93 students: 54 are returning, 39 are new, and 37 are freshmen. There are also 21 new families sending their sons and daughters to NLHS for the first time. . . . **Three generations serve the WELS:** It began with Arthur Hirsch, a rancher who lived north of Merna. In the late '50s and '60s Art, a member of St. Paul in Broken Bow, served on the synod's Board of Trustees. Art's son, Eldon, is the music instructor and choir director at Martin Luther Prep School. Eldon is the father of three sons and a daughter. Only Paul (a tutor at Northwestern Prep) is serving outside the Nebraska District. Phil is pastor of Peace in Boulder, Colo.; Mark teaches at St. John in Stanton; and Kathy (Mrs. Norval Koch) assists with the track team at NLHS.

—Theodore L. Wendt



**THE BIBLE IN 365 READINGS**

One of the marks of God's people is their love for his word. As the word weaves its way into their lives in many different settings, it nourishes and sustains them. It brings peace to troubled and angry hearts. It dries tears and blesses celebrations. It is the bread and water of life.

Many have said: I must read my Bible; I will start at Genesis and read it through to the end. But the project is soon abandoned. There must be a way—some have thought—which will lead me through the Bible systematically and with variety.

As a service to our readers we are proposing a reading program which will take you through the Bible—the entire Bible—in 365 readings. The program of reading will begin Jan. 1 and close Dec. 31. The next four weeks' readings will normally appear in the second issue of the month. The readings—10 to 15 minutes each day—are alternately taken from the Old and New Testaments to provide variety.

<b>January 1</b>	Matthew 1—4
<b>2</b>	Mt 5—7
<b>3</b>	Mt 8—10
<b>4</b>	Mt 11—13:30
<b>5</b>	Mt 13:31—15:28
<b>6</b>	Mt 15:29—18:14
<b>7</b>	Mt 18:15—20
<b>8</b>	Mt 21—22:40
<b>9</b>	Mt 22: 41—24: 31
<b>10</b>	Mt 24: 32—26:16
<b>11</b>	Mt 26:17—27:32
<b>12</b>	Mt 27:33—28; Psalm 6
<b>13</b>	Genesis 1—3
<b>14</b>	Gn 4—7:5
<b>15</b>	Gn 7:6—7:24; 2 Peter
<b>16</b>	Gn 8—10
<b>17</b>	Gn 11—13
<b>18</b>	Gn 14—17
<b>19</b>	Gn 18,19
<b>20</b>	Gn 20—22
<b>21</b>	Gn 23, 24
<b>22</b>	Gn 25, 26
<b>23</b>	Gn 27, 28
<b>24</b>	Gn 29—31:16
<b>25</b>	Gn 31:17—33
<b>26</b>	Gn 34—36
<b>27</b>	Gn 37—39
<b>28</b>	Gn 40—41:45; Ps 54; Ps 1
<b>29</b>	Gn 41:46—43
<b>30</b>	Gn 44—46
<b>31</b>	Gn 47; Ps 105

Letters between 100 and 200 words are preferred. In the interest of conciseness, letters are subject to editing. Full name, address and daytime phone number should accompany each letter. Names will be withheld only under unusual circumstances. Letters cannot be acknowledged, nor can all letters be used. Address your letters to LETTERS, The Northwestern Lutheran, 2929 N. Mayfair Road, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53222-4398.

**Correction**

The report on the Arizona-California District Convention (Sept. 1) stated: "The convention also recommended that the synod close Martin Luther Preparatory School at the end of the 1991-92 school year and move its operation to Phoenix, merging it with Arizona Lutheran Academy."

This could easily give readers the impression that the convention voted to move MLPS lock, stock, and barrel to the campus of ALA, remaining one of three existing prep schools, this time in the sunny Southwest. However, this reflects neither the spirit nor the letter of the resolution.

The resolution adopted states:

**RESOLVED:** a) That we recommend to the synod MLPS be closed at the end of the 1991-92 school year and the property put up for sale; and be it further **RESOLVED:** b) Funding for ALA as a common purpose school be included in the decision package process.

Thus the majority of delegates concurred with the report on synodical school structure prepared by our synod's Board for Worker Training which suggested a change in focus for our entire secondary school system, both area Lutheran high schools and synod preparatory schools. This proposed change envisions all of our secondary schools having students preparing for general Christian ministry and for full-time public ministry as pastors and teachers. The convention chose option 7 in the BWT's report, which suggested combining the operations of MLPS and ALA in Phoenix into a new "common-purpose" school.

Changing demographics indicate such a move would be beneficial not only for training future church members for the southwest but also for training future church workers for the entire synod.

*Frederick Casmer*

*Resolutions Committee chairman*

**What is medical treatment?**

I appreciated Dr. Lindemann's article on euthanasia (August). While prolonged, terminal illnesses are traumatic for everyone involved, we need to remember we have the strong arms of our almighty Savior on which to lean as we face difficult problems.

One recent development I am concerned about is the apparent recategorizing of food and water as medical treatment. I never realized that every time I eat I am taking medicine. Although that would explain my young son's repeated requests to put sugar on his green beans. After all, "a spoonful of sugar helps the 'medicine' go down."

*Ronald F. Zindler  
Columbia, Missouri*

**No opinions, please**

The articles concerning Northwestern College (Sept. 1 and 15) were to deal with the history of the institution. If this was the case, the last paragraph of the second article is out of place. An article on history should not include the writer's opinion. In view of the fact the NL is the official publication of the WELS, these comments imply this is the official position of WELS, which is not true.

Should the author feel strongly concerning his statement, his comments would more appropriately be placed on an editorial page or in the "Letters" section.

*Timothy J. Kassulke  
Norfolk, Nebraska*

**Change is inevitable**

In the past it was taught in WELS congregations that men only have the right to vote outside the church; men only teach in the schools; and men only sit on one side of the church's center aisle and attend communion before any of the female members. The thing we have learned from history is that change is inevitable.

*Dave Luetke  
Onalaska, Wisconsin*

## NOTICES

The deadline for submitting items is five weeks before the date of issue.

### NOTICE FOR CONGREGATION TREASURERS

The cutoff date for synod mission offering receipts in the synod's post office lock box is the last business day of each month. December 1990 lock box offerings will be credited as 1990 receipts through Jan. 9, 1991, as long as they are received in the lock box on or before that date and are clearly labeled as December offerings on Form 220. Please note that offerings must be mailed to the lock box rather than delivered to the synod offices.

Norbert M. Manthe, Controller

### WELS KINGDOM WORKERS SEEK DIRECTOR

The WELS Kingdom Workers national board of directors is developing the position of a full-time national director who will oversee and coordinate all Kingdom Workers activities and programs. The director, who will work closely with district Kingdom Worker organizations to promote and extend WELS mission awareness, will work out of the national office in West Allis, Wis.

Members of the WELS interested in this position may obtain a job description from the national pastoral adviser, Pastor Charles D. Found, 3431 S. 12 St., Milwaukee, WI 53215. Resumes should be sent to him before Jan. 15.

### MISSION SEMINAR 1991

#### Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary

Theme: "By all possible means"

Dates: Feb. 6, 7:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.:

Session 1: **Today's technology**

Session 2: **Parish programs**

Feb. 6, 7:30 p.m.:

Session 3: **Child evangelism**

Feb. 7, 7:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.:

Session 4: **Cross-culture**

Session 5: **Creative concepts**

The student body invites everyone to attend any or all sessions. To reserve a seat, please contact the undersigned. Lutheran elementary school teachers, Sunday school teachers, and anyone who works with children are especially invited to attend Session 3.

Seminar booklets may be ordered for \$3.00 each (if picked up at the seminar) or \$3.75 (if mailed). Send payment before Jan. 14 to Robert Wassermann, Mission Seminar secretary, 6717 W. Wartburg Circle, Mequon, WI 53092.

### SYNODICAL TEACHER CERTIFICATION COURSE

Dr. Martin Luther College will offer the following synodical certification course: Edu 1410-Principles of Christian Education. Instructors: Dr. LeDell Plath, Dr. Daniel Schmelung. Jan. 7-May 6, at Fox Valley LHS, Appleton, Wis., Monday evenings 6:00-9:00 p.m. 3 credits \$200.00.

This course will apply toward elementary or secondary (but not kindergarten) synodical teacher certification. Persons wishing to take the course for certification credit must have been accepted into the program before registration.

For further information and application forms contact Dr. John Isch, Director of Special Services, DMLC, New Ulm, MN 56073; 507/354-8221.

### CHRISTMAS CONCERT

#### WISCONSIN LUTHERAN SEMINARY

The Seminary chorus will present identical concerts at 3:00 and 7:00 p.m. on Dec. 16 in the campus auditorium. The concert program entitled "Gloria" will feature the chorus, congregational participation, and brass and string ensembles. Cassette tapes of the concert will be available for \$8.00. Contact Prof. James Tiefel, 11822 N. Seminary Dr., Mequon, WI 53092.

### JUNIOR CHOIR FESTIVAL SERVICE

Identical services based on the Psalms will be held Jan. 20 at 3:00 p.m. at six Milwaukee area churches with a mass choir of about 150 children at each church. You are invited to attend one of these services of praise.

Locations: Christ, 2235 W. Greenfield; Mt. Lebanon, 6100 W. Hampton; Zebaoth, 3885 N. 6th St.; St. Paul, S66 W14200 Janesville Rd., Muskego; Trinity, 1052 White Rock Ave., Waukesha; St. John, 7809 Harwood, Wauwatosa.

### WELS HANDBELL FESTIVAL

The eastern regional WELS handbell festival will be held at Lakeside LHS, Lake Mills, Wis., April 20-21. For more information contact Randy Bode, St. John Lutheran School, 317 N. 6th St., Watertown, WI 53094; 414/261-3756.

### ITEMS AVAILABLE

The following are available for the cost of shipping.

**ELECTRIC CANDELABRA:** brass pair, 6½" base, 19" slanted arm with 5 lights. Middle candle is 22" from base, fifth candle 23" from base. Contact Emogene Brandau, Box 266, Wilton, WI 54670; 608/435-6600.

**COMMUNION WARE:** includes flagon (in need of some repair), pyx, paten, ciborium, and chalice. Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 907 Mattes Dr., Midland, MI 48640; 517/835-4181.

**ADDRESSOGRAPH SYSTEM:** addressing machine, stamping machine, plates, frames, file cabinet, rolodex file. Contact Helen Hacht, First Lutheran Church, 1101 Logan St., Lake Geneva, WI 53147; 414/248-3374.

**PULPIT, ALTAR, BAPTISMAL FONT, PEWS:** Altar furnishings are painted white with gold trim. Contact Pastor J. Hartmann, PO Box 137, Batesland, SD 57716; 605/288-1999.

### CHANGE OF TIME OR PLACE OF WORSHIP

in the following exploratory areas or mission congregations.

**POMPANO BEACH, FLORIDA**—Ocean Drive, 109 SE Tenth Ave. Worship 9 a.m.; Sunday school and Bible classes, 10:15 a.m. Pastor Jonathan Voss, 305/942-1216.

**SUMMERVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA**—Beautiful Savior, 720 Old Trolley Rd. Worship 9:30 a.m., Bible class/Sunday school, 10:50 a.m. Pastor Martin Spriggs, 803/873-5522.

**YORKTOWN (TABB), VIRGINIA**—Our Redeemer, 2017 Victory Blvd. Sunday School 9 a.m.; Worship 10:15 a.m. Pastor Donald Stuppy, 804/867-9625.

### NAMES WANTED

Survey work preliminary to conducting exploratory services. People interested in WELS services, contact pastor noted.

**SEBRING/AVON PARK/LAKE PLACID, FLORIDA**—Pastor Joel Willitz(ELS), 1503 Corvette, Sebring, FL 33872; 813/385-2293.

**SPRING HILL, TENNESSEE**—Pastor Charles Westra, 215 Porter Circle, Columbia, TN 38401; 615/380-1656.

### CHANGES IN MINISTRY

#### PASTORS:

**Biebert, Dean C.**, from St. Paul, Livingston, Mont., to Grace, Hot Springs; Shepherd of the Hills, Custer, S. D.

**Drews, Daniel S.**, from Shepherd of the Plains, Lubbock, Tex., to Winnebago Lutheran Academy, Fond du Lac, Wis.

**Goldschmidt, Todd W.**, from St. Paul, Columbus, Neb., to exploratory, Bear Creek, Wash.

**Hansen, Neil C.**, from Redeemer, Schofield, Wis., to Prince of Peace, Houston, Tex.

**Pautz, Larry L.**, from Good Shepherd, West Bend, Wis., to Bethany, Antioch, Calif.

**Radunzel, Steven J.**, to St. James, Evanston, and Jerusalem, Morton Grove, Ill.

**Rosenow, Carl R.**, from Gloria Dei, Sierra Madre, Calif., to Holy Trinity, Kent, Wash.

**Welch, Roland W.**, to Christ Our Savior, Angleton, Tex.

**Wendt, Theodore L.**, to Trinity, McCook, Neb. (dual parish with Redeemer, Norton, Kan.)

### OUR FAVORITE HYMNS

These audio-cassettes are again available. The three sets contain 58 hymns sung by mixed and male choirs. Cost for each cassette is \$5.00 postpaid. Send orders to Martin Albrecht, 315 Highland Dr., Grafton, WI 53024.

### ITEMS NEEDED

**BIBLE:** My grandmother's Bible was donated to Northwestern College years ago. The names Edward and Wilhemina Boje are written in it. If it's still around and no one wants it, I'd like it back. Please contact Mrs. Henry Rabbach, N7219 Clyt Y, Watertown, WI 53094; or call collect 414/699-2902.

**COMMUNION WARE:** For Christ Our Savior mission. Contact Pastor Charles Westra, 215 Porter Circle, Columbia, TN 38401; 615/380-1656.

### ADDRESSES

#### PASTORS:

**Albrecht, Joel D.**, 25445 Knollwood Dr., Murrieta, CA 92362; 714/698-5301

**Albrecht, Michael J.**, 453 Annapolis Ave., St. Paul, MN 55118; 612/290-9588

**Andrus, Eugene R.**, 145 High St., Elkton, MI 48731, 517/375-2783

**Cooper, David R.**, 2033 Hercules Ave. N., Clearwater, FL 34623; 813/461-9620

**Free, Keith R.**, 1702 Magnolia St. PO Box 668, Plover, WI 54467; 715/344-8185

**Gumm, Charles F.**, Rua Victor Hugo 236, 90610 Porto Alegre-RS, Brazil, South America

**Hoff, James L.**, 19170 Osmus, Livonia, MI 48152

**Johnston, Timothy L.**, Box 363, Bison, SD 57620

**Kassebaum, Jerry A.**, 560 S. Tropical Trail, Merritt Island, FL 32952; 407/453-1000

**Langebartels, James L.**, 2906 24th St., Hopkins, MI 49328; 616/793-7222

**Luplow, Jeffery L.**, 1479 N. Macomb St., Monroe, MI 48161; 313/242-7552

**Schleis, Paul**, 712 Second St., Marathon, WI 54448; 715/443-2023

**Schulz, Edmund O.**, 5007 147th St. W., Apple Valley, MN 55124

**Sebald, William M.**, 2777 Hardin St., Saginaw, MI 48602; 517/797-0418

**VonDeylen, Marc A.**, 13292 Yockey St. #10, Garden Grove, CA 92643; 714/539-6380

**Welch, Roland W.**, 100 Bayou Woods Dr., Angleton, TX 77515

**Westphal, Walter W.**, Rt. 1 Box 130, La Crosse, WI 54601; 608/786-1742

#### TEACHERS:

**Beagle, Jon M.**, 524 W. Maple, Byron, MI 48418; 313/266-2144

**Bruckner, Thomas**, 15902 S. Hemlock Rd., Oakley, MI 48649; 517/845-6711

**Koester, Jason A.**, 5332 Hippias Hollow Rd., Eau Claire, MI 49111; 615/461-4379

**Kurth, Travis A.**, 2941 N. 19th Ave. #93, Phoenix, AZ 85015; 602/253-7169

**McCargar, Amy L.** and **Troy L.**, 9906 232nd St. SW, Edmonds, WA 98020; 206/542-3003

**Neumann, Neil V.**, 317½ S. Jefferson, Sturgis, MI 49091; 616/651-6523

**Rehberger, Phillip F.**, 394 Turner Lane #C4, Hemlock, MI 48626; 517/642-8935

**Remmele, Steven**, 809½ Hollister Ave., Tomah, WI 54660; 608/872-0607

**Renner, Mark A.**, 5812 Olive Tree Dr. #N8, Saginaw, MI 48603; 517/793-9361

**Roecker, Darrell F.**, 225½ Hazelton Rd., Owosso, MI 48867; 517/725-8780

**Rosenbaum, Steven J.**, 711 N. 4th St., Fort Atkinson, WI 53538; 414/663-0297

**Stellick, Norman A.**, 4221 Dearing Rd., Parma, MI 49269; 517/789-8893

**Stewart, Darin D.**, PO Box 325 303A N. East St., Wonewoc, WI 53968; 608/464-7100

**Stroschine, Lee R.**, 1497 N. Macomb St., Monroe, MI 48161; 313/242-9369



*Merry Christmas  
and a blessed new year*

*from the Northwestern Lutheran staff*

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# They haven't got Christmas out yet

by James Woodfin

A great deal has been said about the commercialization of Christmas. Maybe to say more would amount to beating an already well-beaten dead horse. But every now and then something comes up that re-emphasizes the whole matter. Maybe on such occasions it's not a bad idea to give the old horse a few more whacks.

A few years ago I happened to be in the seasonal display section of a discount department store. It was mid-September, so Halloween items were on display.

A wild-eyed man of harried demeanor abruptly appeared. He stood for a moment surveying the array of orange and black. He was obviously a man with a mission. He strode swiftly from aisle to aisle, apparently seeking and not finding.

After some minutes he stopped, assumed a theatrical pose of frustration, and announced in a loud voice, "IT'S ALREADY SEPTEMBER AND THEY HAVEN'T GOT CHRISTMAS OUT YET!" Then he departed as suddenly as he had arrived.

Now there was something I hadn't thought about. So I thought I'd better give it a think. Let me share some of my thoughts with you.

Those holding a higher view of holidays such as Christmas and Easter could easily find themselves opposing the boldly stated complaint of the wild-eyed man.

"Christmas stuff on display in September? The very idea! Why, I remember when no one even thought about Christmas until the last of the Thanksgiving turkey had run its gastronomical course and the 'jolly old elf' had waved to the viewers from his plywood sleigh at the end of Macy's parade.

"But now, not only do we have Christmas glitz, glitter, and 'gimme gifts' before the grass has turned brown, we've got chocolate bunnies and colored eggs fighting with shamrocks and green jelly beans

for shelf space recently vacated by Valentine candy. It's not right."

The "grabbin' of the green" and the artificially generated Christmas spirit for the sake of commerce may have little appeal to those of us who, as Paul Harvey would say, "know the rest of the story," but maybe there is a lesson in it for us.

That Christmas isn't "out in September" isn't our problem; our problem is that it's confined to a few days in December. Is there anything wrong with having our Christmas—the real Christmas—out in September? Or in June, or March, or all year around?

What if we were to sing Christmas hymns in July and set up manger scenes in April or leave the Christmas tree up for a year? What if we were to declare, "He is risen. Alleluia!" every time the magnificent fact came to mind?

What if the birth of the Savior and the joy of the resurrection and the fire of Pentecost and the significance of the Reformation got all mixed up with Thanksgiving gratitude and it became one gigantic all-year celebration—one that made us walk around smiling and rejoicing and sharing the good news of Jesus with everyone we met? Wouldn't that totally outdo anything the commercial world could come up with?

We see a lot of slogans that say things like "Keep Christ in Christmas" and "It isn't the candy that makes Easter sweet." How about an all-season slogan that says, "Easter every Sunday, Christmas every day"?

It's something to think about.



James Woodfin is a member of Redeemer, Huntsville, Alabama.