

September 15, 1992

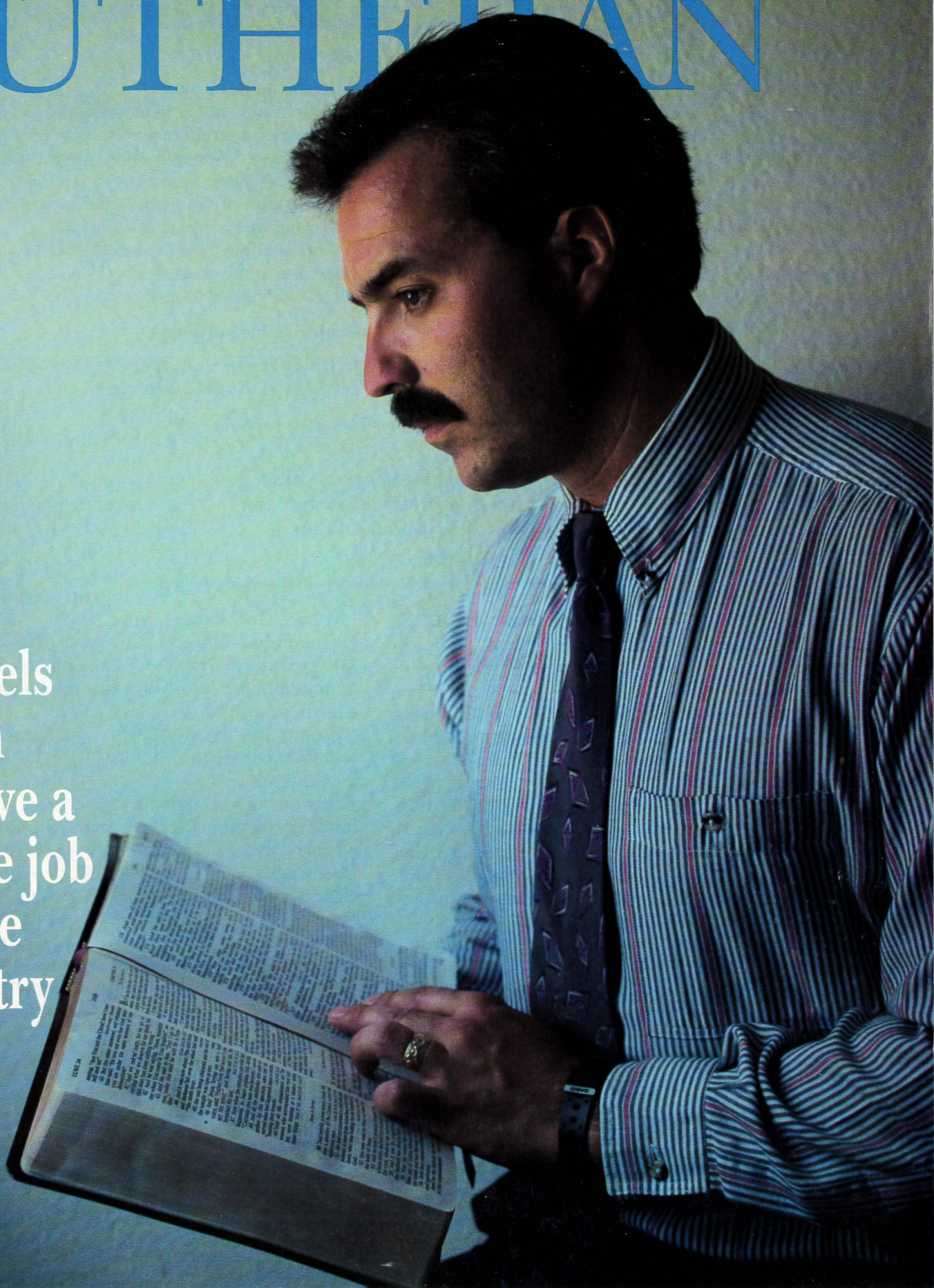
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NORTHWESTERN LUTHERAN

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Our God in adversity

by Robert H. Hochmuth

“**W**here is your loving God now?” is the challenge hurled at believers when disasters occur.

Pagans seem to feel that only if things are going well can they be assured of the favor of the gods. In fact, this is what their idea of serving gods is all about: Gain their favor to guarantee the goodies. Sometimes Christianity is distorted to match this inclination. Acknowledging the Lord is supposed to guarantee a pay-off in here-and-now benefits.

Devotees of this mind-set tend to find their assurance of God's love only in success, good health, and prosperity. But the living God who reveals himself in the Scriptures cultivates in us a higher esteem and deeper devotion.

Claiming our allegiance

We have a God who can claim our allegiance even in adversity. He is the one who has provided the way for restoring us undeserving sinners to his family. We find ourselves magnifying his name because of what he has accomplished for us offenders facing eternity, not just for what he supplies for us consumers soliciting his bounty.

A much beleaguered apostle Paul can testify realistically about rejoicing in sufferings, recognizing how God has poured out his saving love on us when we were at odds with him. Since we have been declared totally acceptable in his sight on the basis of the atoning sacrifice Jesus our brother laid down in our stead, and since that divine decree is validated by his resurrection, nothing need unsettle us about whether God is for us or against us. Even when things go bad we can have assurance of his favor.

It's not only heroic apostles who exhibit that confident devotion. On Sunday listen to the worshipful alleluias rising from voices imprisoned in bodies incessantly tortured with arthritis. Or eavesdrop on the trusting bedtime prayers of a struggling mother and children in the apartment next door.

A God who allows trouble? Yes. And the only God who came to share our trouble with us that he might deliver us from it. So even facing uncertainty in surgery the patient can revere her reliable God: “My Savior leads me through no darker place than he

went through for me.”

How much more heartwarming than sterile platitudes which merely cast us on our own resources, philosophizing: “The Almighty gives burdens, but also shoulders.” How much more precious than the arid pontification of the gurus: “Since you can't be spared suffering, make it part of your joy.”

For us there is yet another tier to our worshipful response to adversity. It emerges as we recognize that when God allows us to be tested, it is for our benefit.

Achieving his purpose

It's no secret that sometimes out of love God allows troubles in our lives to chastise us and purge us of some of our fascination with folly. Joni Earickson comes to mind, smiling through her paralysis and testifying how it takes the anxiety of the storm to appreciate the value of the anchor.

But there is a factor more exciting than correction involved. God employs adversity in refashioning us to become what he in his mercy and majesty has in mind for our future. Salvation is not just escape from condemnation; it is also God restoring us for a future and a purpose with him.

Psalm 138 expresses the confidence: “Though I walk in the midst of trouble . . . the Lord will fulfill his purpose for me.”

It's not of much significance to be content in the midst of happiness and plenty. Such was Satan's evaluation of Job's piety. As in his case, so God has the intent to develop us into tested, persevering veterans, each with our own distinct experiences of faith and trust.

There are no pre-fab Christians. God works uniquely in each life, even using adversity, to fashion us for his purpose. “All the pillars in God's temple are hand-hewn columns,” is the way one writer put it.

What a God! We can revere him even for the troubles he allows in our lives.

*“Though the olive crop fails . . .
I will be joyful in God my Savior”
(Habakkuk 3:17,18).*



Robert Hochmuth is pastor of St. Andrew, Sacramento, California.

May the Lord our God be with us
as he was with our fathers;
may he never leave us
nor forsake us. 1 Kings 8:57

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FORWARD

■ A generation or two ago, the vocation a person embarked on was likely to last a lifetime, often with the same firm. Today's graduates, however, are prepared for career changes. They can't count on—or don't want—a job with the same company until retirement. The church can benefit: the new career can be ministry. For a look at what made one man leave a secure position to study for the pastoral ministry, turn the page; and for other forms of ministry becoming possible for Christians ready for a second career, see "From this corner" on page 319.

■ If you're a back-to-front magazine reader, as some of us are, you've already seen the back cover. If not, before you turn to it, visualize a church librarian. See if your mental picture matches Wayne Mueller's description of what church librarians look like. Take note, too, of the information on the organization for church librarians. If you don't have a church library, they'll help you start one. If you have one, the group offers practical advice on how to make it better.

DJS

What compels a man to leave a secure job

... sell his home, leave behind college-age children, and move across the country to study for the ministry?

by Delores Kupke

My husband Paul was secure in management with a large corporation. From the world's point of view, Paul was a success. Then the company began moving us from one location to another. Although we thought these moves were to further his career, it is apparent now that God was preparing Paul to follow him.

We moved from Dallas to Houston and, after only 18 months, back to Dallas. Here we joined our church's evangelism training program. We both matured spiritually in the program and it was apparent that Paul's love for sharing God's word with others was continually increasing.

Again the company asked us to move, this time to Lubbock. We moved, reluctantly, not knowing God's hand was involved.

We joined a newly established mission in Lubbock, Shepherd of the Plains. The congregation had just initiated an evangelism program and welcomed our support.

Paul's enthusiasm grew as he and the pastor brainstormed means by which we could better reach the unchurched. Paul worked up a "Welcome Package," spending entire Saturdays getting it ready.

Then the company wanted to move us again. Neither of us wanted to move. I suggested Paul transfer into another department in the company so we could stay in Lubbock.

Paul's plans

But Paul had other plans. He wanted to serve his Lord in full-time ministry. Weeks went by while the company insisted we move and his desire to serve in the church became more intense.

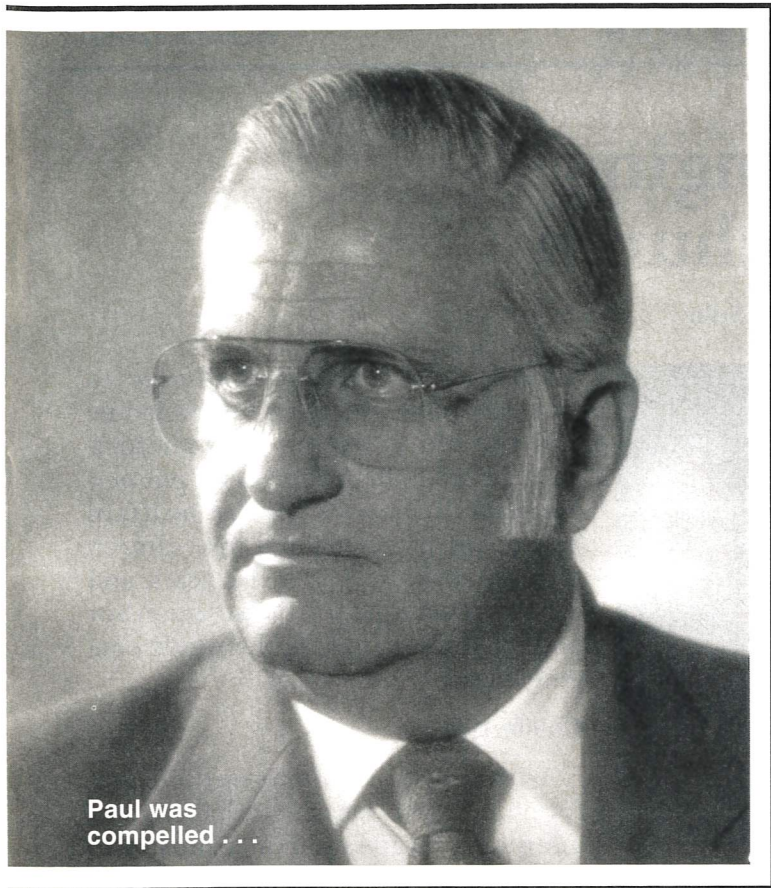
On Reformation Sunday, 1976, Paul suggested we take the pastor and his wife to lunch. I knew what he wanted to talk about. Was he going through a mid-life crisis or was the Lord calling him?

His enthusiasm in sharing God's word and his soul-searching left no doubt that it was the Lord moving Paul. Paul had no choice. The Holy Spirit truly captured his heart.

A year later we found ourselves at Bethany Lutheran College in Mankato, Minnesota, where Paul studied Hebrew, Greek, and related courses for the next two years, preparing to enter Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. Although the times were difficult, the Lord never failed to provide what we needed.

God's plans

Volunteering for the summer vicar program for two summers prior to his full year of vicaring strengthened Paul's zeal to do the Lord's work. He even asked me whether I would support him if he received a foreign call. He was willing to follow the Lord anywhere. But God had other plans.



Paul was compelled . . .

When he graduated from the seminary in 1983, Paul was assigned to Tyler, Texas, serving as missionary to east Texas. He pursued his calling with an unusual urgency. He held midweek Bible classes monthly in three outlying areas and three adult information classes weekly. He wanted everyone confirmed before Christmas.

Paul was content and happy with his calling. He had found a work that we together, as husband and wife, could share. We looked forward to many years of joy in comforting God's people, preparing them for works of service, and reaching for the lost.

Less than six months after Paul's ordination, one week before Christmas, God called Paul to his eternal rest.

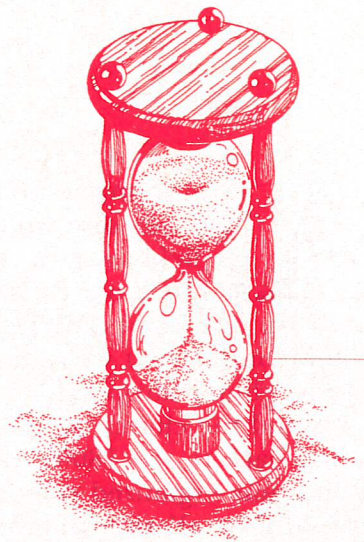
Why did God call Paul home after so little time in the ministry? The answer will have to wait until I see my Lord face to face. Although I don't always understand why God does what he does, I know he loves us and his hand is in everything that happens to us.



What led Paul to leave a secure job to pursue a second career? The truth is, he could do nothing less. The love of God compelled him.

Delores Kupke is a member of Immanuel, Fort Worth, Texas.

Is this the time for you?



You, a pastor? It can still happen. But, of course, there are so many questions to answer. Sometimes you don't even know what the questions are or whom to ask.

Important decisions take time. Such a change in your life requires careful thought about your family, your finances, and your aptitude and ability to do the work of a pastor. An important first step is to pray for the Lord's guidance. Then talk to your pastor. He can help you begin to ask the right questions.

Northwestern College wants to help too. Next summer Northwestern, our pastor training college, will offer a weekend retreat for sec-

ond-career men interested in pursuing the pastoral ministry. The retreat will be held on the campus in Watertown, Wisconsin, June 11-13, 1993. Participants and their spouses will stay in the dormitory and explore the possibilities of training for the pastoral ministry with Northwestern's faculty and current second career students. Those interested may request additional information and registration forms by writing or phoning Prof. John Braun, Northwestern College, 1300 Western Ave., Watertown WI 53094; 414/261-4352.

The changing country church

by Jeffrey W. Suhr

As I sit in my church office, I look out one window and see fields, a barn, and cows. As I look out the other window I see new homes. We're a church in the country, but we're not such a country church anymore.

Around the church are gravestones dating back to the 1800s. When this church was organized over 125 years ago, almost all the members were farmers. Some older members can still remember the horse stalls in the back of church. Today only about ten percent of the members are farmers. One wonders what the founders of this church would think if they were to see the church as it is today. Things have changed.

Changes

One of the most noticeable changes is growth. When the church was made up mostly of farmers, the numbers stayed pretty much the same. In fact, today where a church is made up of mostly farmers, the numbers have gone down. Farm families aren't as big as they once were, and with farms becoming bigger there are fewer farm families.

Being only about four miles from a city makes a big difference. Today a lot of people are moving out of the city and building homes around the church. The farmers are finding it more profitable to sell land for housing lots than to farm the land.

With growth come the challenges of assimilating new people. When most of the families were farmers, changes came slowly. People knew each other. A lot of them were related. When a new family came, they were known as the new family immediately and for a long time.

Now it is not uncommon to hear the expression from an older member, "We don't know everyone in church anymore."

Most of them say this with a smile. New people add excitement. They add new life. They force us to change. Because they come from a wide variety of occupations—doctors, lawyers, paper mill workers,



MRS. KEVIN SCHEBEL

nurses—it becomes a challenge to make the new members feel welcome and the old members feel comfortable. To solve that problem we put new members' pictures on the bulletin board; we try to make a new church pictorial directory every five years, and we regularly have a new-member potluck dinner, inviting the whole congregation.

Challenges

With growth in numbers the country church also faces the challenge of adequate facilities. For almost 125 years our church had only one worship service. Now it must have two for seating purposes. Two years ago we expanded the area for Sunday School and fellowship, thinking we would have adequate space for 25 years down the road. It's almost too small already. We also need to look at the amount of land we have for the future. Who knows what the next years will bring.

When new people who aren't farmers become part of the church, one of the first questions asked is "do we have a worship service during the week?" Some traditional members may wince at this. This was never a challenge before because farmers were around almost every weekend. Non-farmers are more mobile and may be gone on weekends, or they are shift workers and have to work on Sunday mornings. Along with a midweek service come the challenges of times for worship and meetings. Out of love and consideration for all, everyone has to give a little.

If the founders of this church could see it now, they would see a lot of outward changes. But the real message hasn't changed. They would still hear the law and the gospel. They would still see baptisms and the Lord's Supper as they knew it. They would still see Christians who, out of love for Jesus, desire to serve him. These things are what really make the church whether in the city, suburbs, or the country.



Jeffrey Suhr is pastor at St. John, rural Appleton, Wis.

Thank you—six times

by LeRoy A. Martin

Iknew it was what God wanted. I knew it was what I wanted. But it still was a little unnerving. After 22 years in established congregations, my family and I were about to step into the unknown.

The call I had accepted simply said to explore the possibility of establishing a congregation in the greater Port Charlotte area.

Yes, we had moved before, three times since seminary graduation. But always from one large and caring group of Christians to another group of the same. Now it was from one large family of believers to nothing. Or so it seemed.

We weren't completely in the dark about the future. Thanks to the Lutheran Women's Missionary Society, an orientation for exploratory pastors and their wives had been held at the synod administration building in Milwaukee. Men whom God had led a year ago to the same kind of calling offered practical tips about how to approach the work. Home mission administrators Hagedorn and Kruschel gave us spiritual encouragement from God's word. Mary Butler and others from the staff of the home mission board walked us through some administrative matters. (That's one.)

God gave us a safe move to our new town. A month before we arrived, district mission board members had spent a lot of time searching the area for a home. They wanted your offering money to rent the best home they could find. God guided their choice. Enough bedrooms for our family, with one bedroom, the "mother-in-law" room, to become my study. And an owner who would tolerate our cat Gidget. (That's two.)

Missing from my study were some items critical to any working office.

No mimeograph. No copier. No computer. No working typewriter. But not missing for long. Within the week the staff in the home mission office had sent in an order for a copier. And in ten days the technician was in our home setting up the new machine. Our mission counselor gave us a typewriter which had been used in another exploratory mission.

Pastor Zahn of our mission board said to look into getting a computer. Computer-savvy brothers in the ministry helped. And one month after arriving at our new home, a computer with a printer and needed software was blinking at me.

The total package was funded by our Home Mission Equipment Fund. When our group is able, it will pay back one half the amount. But for now we're in business for keeping track of the people God sends to our exploratory. (That's three.)

Where do you begin in an area with 80,000 people and no Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod church? What would be your strategy? For years WELS has been developing a most thorough evangelism strategy. Mission counselor Jim Radloff spent several days providing options and advice. Being able to run my plans past him was extremely helpful. With his counsel we planned outreach strategy and a first worship service. We prayed together. He conducted an outreach workshop to help equip the ten WELS members of our nucleus for reaching out with the gospel in our community. You as a synod also provide other full-time counselors for advising missions throughout our synod. (That's four.)

With the door-to-door canvassing and the phone canvassing complete, we wanted to make the community aware of our presence. Enter John Barber and the mass media ministry which your offerings support. He provided professional advice regarding newspaper ads and radio coverage. His staff's professionalism coupled with their scriptural emphasis makes WELS exploratories the envy of many other church bodies with no such resource. (That's five.)

But we were never really alone. So many of you kept your promises to keep us in your prayers: prayers that we remain faithful to our God, prayers that God would open doors for us. (That's six. Six special gifts God had given us to use as we acted on your behalf to bring the precious gospel to this community.)

I'm writing this because you, dear member of the WELS, ought to know just how much your God accomplishes through your offerings and prayers. I know of no other church body that provides such support and resources for a new mission just getting started. So, for the present and future members of Christ the King exploratory of Port Charlotte, and all other past, present, and future exploratories, I say thank you.

LeRoy Martin is pastor of Christ the King, an exploratory mission in Port Charlotte, Florida.

The Apology of the Augsburg Confession

by Wayne A. Laitinen

On August 3, 1530, a little over a month after the Lutherans presented the Augsburg Confession, the Roman Catholic theologians responded with a confutation.

The confutation agreed with the Augsburg Confession in who God is, who Jesus Christ is, baptism, and the return of Jesus to judge the world.

In some areas, the Catholic confutation gave the Lutherans mixed reviews. One example is the confession of sins. Both felt that confession was important. Lutherans, however, insisted that the act of confession did not earn the confessor favor in God's eyes. Lutherans also insisted that repentance is more than simply being sorry about one's sins. It also includes faith that, for Jesus' sake, those sins are forgiven.

The Catholic confutation listed seven sacraments: baptism, confirmation, communion, marriage, penance, holy orders, and extreme unction. Melancthon, the author of the Apology, explained that the number of sacraments is not important. To avoid confusion, he stressed that we should define a sacrament as something instituted by God that gives spiritual benefits.

Sometimes people grow impatient over what may seem to be denominational quibbling about definitions. The Apology shows these areas are directly related to the basic truth that we are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, as revealed in Scripture alone.

The heart of the issue

The heart of the issue is justification by the undeserved love of God, declared to each of us because of Jesus' merits alone, received by the individual only through Spirit-given faith.

To this the Catholic theologians replied, "The blasphemy of ascribing Christ's honor to our works cannot be endured." Melancthon asked, "If works save, what place does Christ have?" They replied, "For Christ's sake we are given an inclination to goodness which is meritorious." Melancthon shot back, "They bury Christ."

That is the nub of the issue. Either Jesus is our

complete Redeemer or he is no redeemer at all. For if people have an inherent goodness, they don't need the goodness of anyone else.

With a masterful use of scripture, the Apology placed faith and good works into proper perspective. Good works are a necessary result of hearts fixed on Jesus' redeeming love.

Burying Christ

The Roman Catholic Church has changed over the past four centuries. But its official teachings have changed very little. Christ's merits are buried under the alleged merits of sinners. The one-time sacrifice of Jesus is buried under the priest's work of sacrificing Jesus repeatedly in the mass. The proclamation of free forgiveness to a penitent sinner is buried under the directive to say a number of "Hail Marys" or "Our Fathers." Jesus' promise, "Today you shall be with me in paradise," is buried under candles and masses for the dead. Holy days of obligation, the mandatory celibacy of the priesthood, and dietary restrictions overshadow the freedom Christ has given us in the gospel.

By nature, these ideas are appealing to us. We can recognize them in ourselves when we are tempted to ask, "How many times must I go to church to please God?" or "How long can I stay away from Holy Communion before I have despised the sacrament?" or "Just tell me how much money God expects me to give the church and I'll be done with it." If our dedication and charity are not done out of faith in our forgiving Savior, we bury Christ, too.

Our healing is found in the gospel. "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Ephesians 2:8-10).



Wayne Laitinen is pastor of Palos, Palos Heights, Illinois.

Literacy convention draws 1200 teachers

Teachers from 23 different states, representing over 300 Lutheran schools, participated in the WELS National Literacy Convention on the Dr. Martin Luther College campus in New Ulm, Minn., June 30-July 3. Approximately 1200 teachers met to learn about new approaches to teaching reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

The convention, sponsored by the WELS Commission on Parish Schools (CPS) in cooperation with Dr. Martin Luther College and supported by an AAL grant, offered general sessions, workshops, small group sessions, and evening activities.

Dr. Thomas Kuster of Bethany Lutheran College delivered the keynote address, stressing the importance of God's gift of language as "the foundation of knowledge, the vehicle of truth, and the means by which God's plan is fulfilled."

General session speakers on succeeding days included David W. Booth, author and professor at the University of Toronto; Margaret



Participants at the WELS National Literacy Convention included (left to right) Joanne Edson of Valley Preparatory School, Redlands, California; Lyn Reggett of College of Education, Dumedin, New Zealand; Margaret Hayes of Auckland College of Education, Auckland, New Zealand; and David Wendler of Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota.

Hayes, reading and language arts advisor at Auckland College of Education, Auckland, New Zealand; and J. David Cooper, author and professor at Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana,

Small group sessions addressed reading, writing, speaking, and listening at all levels—preschool, elementary, high school, and college. Presenters for the small group sessions—over 100 of them—came from WELS and ELS schools, public and private schools, the CPS, and Northwestern Publishing House.

Evening activities included renewing old acquaintances and enjoying fellowship. The New Ulm Chamber of Commerce hosted a "Mini New Ulm Fest" one evening, and a number of publishers and exhibitors dis-

played educational materials.

The most popular evening event was a dinner at which Barbara Robinson, author of the award-winning book *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*, autographed books and addressed the group. Appropriately, the banquet room was decorated with a Christmas-in-July theme, complete with lights and a Christmas tree.

Kathleen Fuhrmann, teacher at Mount Calvary in Kimberly, Wis., summed up the feelings of many of the participants. "I've learned so much here and I'm so excited about this," she said. "I can't wait to get to work."

The convention has ended; the work is just beginning.

—Thomas N. Hunter

Celebration of WELS 1892 federation

In 1892 the three midwestern synods of Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Michigan formed a federation called "The General (*algemeinen*) Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, and Other States." The federation worked together at some common tasks until 1917 when the three synods merged.

The synod has chosen to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the 1892 federation on Sunday, November 1, and to thankfully acknowledge the gifts God gave us through this federation.

A committee has planned an appropriate centenni-

al celebration. As a result, an article on the 1892 federation has appeared in the *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, and articles will appear in the two October issues of *Northwestern Lutheran*.

A responsive prayer has been prepared for use in congregations on the anniversary Sunday. Copies of the prayer will be included in the September mailing of President Mischke's newsletter to the pastors.

—Prof. John Jeske, Chairman
Centennial Anniversary Committee

Lutheran Women's Missionary Society gathers in Florida

Representatives of Germany, Japan, Brazil, Arizona, Wisconsin, and Florida were among nearly 500 guests gathered in Kissimmee, Florida, June 26-28 for the 29th annual convention of the Lutheran Women's Missionary Society.

Karla Jaeger, wife of civilian chaplain Joel Jaeger, likened the European civilian chaplaincy to a modern day circuit-rider ministry. The two chaplains conduct services in Germany, England, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, Austria, Italy, Wales, and Scotland. Her husband has given communion "in a student's dormitory, a barracks lounge, a car, an army tank, and a runway fire station." Since travel is by VW Jetta, she said, they joke about suffering from "Jetta-lag."

Two world missionaries addressed the convention. Pastor Arthur Guenther described his work with the Apache Indians, the oldest WELS world mission field (almost 100 years). He told how a chief declared in the then-newly built church, "This is the only church I put my thumb print on." Turning to the pastor (Guenther's father), the chief said, "Baptize me." One hundred of his followers were also baptized.

Missionary Bruce Marggraf spoke of Brazil, the newest WELS world mission. Spiritism from Africa is a popular religion, mixing in with

New Age and Catholicism. The five WELS missionaries in Brazil use Christian Centers for Information, hold informal services, and use the video "Communicating Christ."

Two others spoke about home missions. The convention heard of work in Miami, site of a Hispanic storefront mission led by Pastor Ralph Martens. God used the heat and poverty of her native South Dakota and her experience teaching in a multicultural setting in Chicago, said his wife Roxanne, to prepare her to be a missionary's wife in Puerto Rico. A strong prayer warrior, she stressed the importance and impact of prayer at their new Miami mission.

Lynn Wempner, currently of Ohio, recounted lay mission opportunities created by her husband's business moves. Their children were baptized, reared, and confirmed in the makeshift settings in which new missions find themselves. The Holy Spirit was at work, she said, whether the church met in a daycare center, dance school, funeral home, school, or around the Wempner dining room table where leaders met to plan for the future.

National LWMS President Karen Bauer presided over the business meeting. Surpassing \$50,000 for the first time, the mission box offering of \$50,793.90 was divided between



National LWMS President Karen Bauer

the Latin American vicar program and church planters workshop. Convention worship offerings went to Australian mission exploration and the multicultural mission fund.

New officers are spiritual growth laywoman, Sandra Krohn, Essexville, Michigan; vice-president, Sharon Baumann, Sutton, Nebraska; spiritual growth pastor Alan Gumm, Gillette, Wyoming; pastoral advisor, Wayne Meier, Genesee Depot, Wisconsin. Shirley Larson was reelected secretary.

Convention '93 will be in Sioux City, Iowa, June 25-27.

—Betty Kloha

Johne commissioned to serve in Nigeria

On June 28 Prof. Harold Johne of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary was commissioned to serve for 1 1/2 years in Nigeria. Johne will work with Missionary Larry Schlomer in establishing a pre-seminary and seminary program for Christ the King Lutheran Church.

This will be the third seminary with which Johne has been affiliated, the second in a world mission field. Prior to coming to Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in 1986, he spent 18 years in Japan. His major assignment there was to spearhead the training of workers for the

church.

He and his wife, Barbara, left for Nigeria at the beginning of July. The mission of the Schlomers and Johnes is being financed through Lift High the Cross gifts.

—David J. Valleskey

Northwestern Lutheran Academy graduates hold reunion

Over 550 graduates, former professors, and friends of Northwestern Lutheran Academy gathered in Mobridge, S. Dak., on June 27-28 for an all-school reunion. They used the occasion to thank God for his many blessings during the school's 51 years. The school, opened in 1928, was closed in 1979 by the synod convention, which cited high operational costs as the reason for its closing.

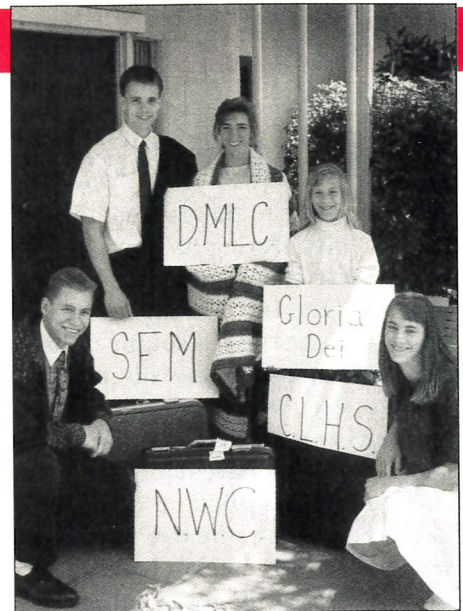
At a special worship service held at Zion Lutheran Church, an overflow crowd was in attendance. The sermon was delivered by Pastor Philip Wilde ('77) of Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, while Pastor Ronald Roth ('56) of Hales Corners, Wis., served as the liturgist. Former professor William Birsching was the organist.

An early afternoon banquet fea-

tured class introductions, cheers and songs led by former cheerleaders, skits, and sharing of memories. Pastor Christian Sulzle ('68) served as the master of ceremonies, and NLA graduate ('35) and former professor Wayne TenBrock delivered the keynote address. The day concluded with tours of the former NLA campus.

Addresses are on file for 636 of the school's 691 graduates, who currently reside in 36 states and five foreign countries.

The school, which was eventually sold by the synod, is currently operated by the Assemblies of God under the name Central Bible College. Its function is to train native Americans for Christian ministry on the Indian reservations of North and South Dakota.



The five children of Pastor and Mrs. Gerald Geiger of Belmont, California, have headed to five different schools representing all five levels of WELS Christian education. Stephen (top and clockwise) returned to Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in Mequon, Wis., and Sarah is at Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn. Joanna doesn't go far—just down the walk to Gloria Dei Lutheran School in Belmont. Mary is attending California Lutheran High School in Huntington Beach, and Michael returned to Northwestern College, Watertown, Wis.

Touch of laughter

Our 3-year-old daughter came home from Sunday school and recited the Bible verse she had learned: "If you fall over me, I will make you fishers. Amen." It took some questioning to find out that the passage was "If you follow me, I will make you fishers of men."

*Mrs. Dale Roenneburg
Brodhead, Wisconsin*

Six-year-old Katie attended a cheerleading clinic at the public school and came home to report they had cheered for God. Puzzled, I questioned her. She explained, "We say 'S-P-I-R-I-T! Spirit! Let's hear it!'" She thought it was great cheering for God.

*Rebecca Wiershem
Cedarburg, Wisconsin*

Notice in the church newsletter: "Bethlehem OWLS will tour Northwestern Publishing House and book store and the Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran Synod Deadquarters."

*The OWLS newsletter
Bethlehem, Menomonee Falls, Wis.*

Our 5-year-old sings, "Noel, Noel." Our 2-year-old responds, "Yes well, Yes well."

*Joan Hoerning
Greenwood, Nova Scotia*

My father is the pastor of our church. One weekday afternoon, a child from our church spotted me at the swimming pool and uttered with surprise, "I know you. On Sundays you're the pastor's daughter."

*Chris Koeplin Sturm
Germantown, Wisconsin*

Reporting in the Minnesota District newsletter, evangelism coordinator Pastor Verne Voss closed his report with "May the Lord bless our efforts as we go out there and give 'em heaven!"

The Newsletter - Minnesota District

While reviewing the Christmas stories during a Bible lesson, I asked my kindergarten class what Joseph's job was in Nazareth. They answered correctly that he was a carpenter. When I asked what a carpenter does, one little boy answered, "He lays carpet."

*Sue Pagel
Moline, Illinois*

Contributions are welcome. Please send them to LAUGHTER, Northwestern Lutheran, 2929 N Mayfair Road, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398.

Joy in Mito City as IRS letter arrives

Three years to the day that Missionary John Hering received the call to serve WELS in the Japan mission field, the IRS sent him a letter telling him he owed a couple of hundred dollars. John wrote his parents:

"Actually, if they had sent a letter that said I owed them a million dollars, it wouldn't have dampened the excitement that filled our hearts today. It is Friday, the day that Naoe-san studies with me. We had finished a short Bible series called 'Let's Meet the Savior,' and today

we began a study of Genesis.

"The best way to start this study is to ask some questions—you know, the ones that man has been trying to answer for the last 6000 years: Where did I come from? What am I doing here? Where am I going when I die?"

"Well, Naoe-san didn't know where she came from (that was good, because she will learn something new from the study of Genesis). She didn't know why she was here on earth (that was good, because as she learns this, her fire to do mission

work should increase), but she said, 'I know that when I die I will go to heaven because I believe in Jesus and have his forgiveness for all my sins.'

"Only God knows why I didn't splash the room with tears of joy and dance around the room! Thank you Lord! Thank you WELS! The money spent to send John Hering and 'company' to Japan was worth at least one soul for Jesus! Now, by the grace of God, let's see if we can make it a bargain for the WELS."

—Bob and Lois Hering

Book notes

To Every Nation, Tribe, Language, and People, edited by Theodore Sauer. Northwestern Publishing House. 321 pages, paperback, \$9.99 plus \$3.00 for postage and handling, stock no. 15N0542.

The first comprehensive history of the WELS world mission program is now available for our readers. The history spans the time between 1893, the opening of the Apache mission field, and the synod's entry into Brazil, its latest field. The book is the introduction to the WELS centennial year of the world mission enterprise to be celebrated in 1993.

Although the history is written by eight different authors, the thread of the narrative is not broken. Between 1893 and 1937 our "world" mission effort concentrated on the Apache mission field. With 1937 came the Lutheran Synodical Conference entry into Nigeria. The WELS, a member of the Synodical Conference, participated in this mission and its pioneer overseas missionary, William Scheppe, got his start there. It was not until 1953 that we opened our first overseas mission support-

ed solely by WELS with the sending of Missionary A. B. Habben to Northern Rhodesia (Zambia). The rest, as they say, is history.

The writing is catching and arresting enough to keep the average reader going. For the foreseeable future this book will be the standard history of the WELS world mission enterprise.

Listen, God Is Speaking to You! by Henry E. Paustian. Northwestern Publishing House, 205 pages, paperback, \$9.99 plus \$3.00 for postage and handling, stock no. 06N0694.

Pastor Paustian addresses the seniors among us. His words, warmed by 40 years of parish ministry, are directed at the hearts of those who have seen most of what life has to offer. He speaks to our fears, our doubts, our victories under God, our temptations and struggles. The focus is always on the healing power and loving care of our God.

In 65 messages—each two and one-half pages—he covers the problems of life (senior and junior) with wise words keyed on a verse or so of Scripture. Here are messages when sleep fails, when the day is dreary, when the sun is shining brightly. And all of it in print we can read!

Two series originally appearing in Northwestern Lutheran have been published as paperbacks by Northwestern Publishing House. The paperback ***Modern Moral Dilemmas*** (65 pages, \$5.95 plus \$3.00 for postage and handling, stock no. 15N0536) covers a wide range of social problems from a Christian perspective, and is a convenient compendium of what ails contemporary society. Its author, Wayne Mueller, was formerly professor of theology and New Testament at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and is presently administrator of the synod's Division of Parish Services.

The second paperback, ***I Would Like to Know*** (170 pages, \$9.99 plus \$3.00 for postage and handling, stock no. 15N0533), is a frank discussion of questions which daily confront Christians and their faith, from animal rights to vasectomies. The series by Paul Kelm, administrator for adult discipleship, ran for many years in Northwestern Lutheran and was one of its most popular features.

If you enjoyed the individual articles, you will be pleased with them between two covers.

—James P. Schaefer

These books may be ordered from NPH by calling 1-800-662-6022.

What's "Brother Bill" up to these days?

Several years ago Northwestern Lutheran reported the story of Lawrence "Bill" Shadd, a deaf man who found his Savior through Siloah, Milwaukee, at the age of 69.

Bill persuaded his brother Calvin and his wife Bertha to visit Siloah on Friendship Sunday. Calvin and Bertha liked what they saw and were confirmed in the Lutheran faith.

In the meantime Siloah needed a school custodian. Bill took over, and the school had never looked so good. But Bill's health gave out and surgery was necessary. That ended his custodial duties.

The most recent chapter in this story was written when Bill and

Calvin asked their pastors to visit their sister Gertrude who had been a second mother to them. Her health was failing, but the gospel triumphed when Gertrude joyfully received the sacrament of baptism in her hospital bed.

All this followed from one brief canvass visit by a Siloah member. What if the deaf man had not noticed the canvasser on his doorstep? What if the reluctant canvasser had decided to do something more pressing that Saturday morning? But the what ifs didn't happen, and angels in heaven rejoice because of it.

—*Rolfe Westendorf*

Obituaries

Vera Siegler 1903-1992

Vera Siegler, nee Zimmermann, died in Milwaukee, Wis., on July 21, 1992, at the age of 89. She was born in Chorio, Minn., on February 21, 1903. From 1962 to 1987 she served as housemother at Dr. Martin Luther College.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Pastor Victor; survived by son Paul (Beverly) Siegler and daughters Clarice (Charles) Frederick, Janice (Karl) Seiltz, and

Judith (Don) Krueger; 13 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.

Services were held at Risen Savior, Milwaukee.

Theophil Georg Haar 1906-1992

Theophil Georg Haar was born July 13, 1906, and died May 28, 1992. A graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, he was pastor at St. John, Mazepa and St. John, Bear Valley, Minn. for 52 years.

He is survived by his wife, Lenora (nee Busse), his sister, Erna, and his daughter, Virginia.

A word of caution to WELS drivers

Dr. William J. Thorn is chair of the journalism department at Marquette University, Milwaukee. He also wrote a chapter in a book, *Reporting Religion*, in which he refers to the Wisconsin Synod.

"To invite people to its churches," he wrote, "the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod built a major event around the theme 'Come to the WELS.' A well-executed campaign, this involved every media aspect from bumper stickers to ads and billboards. The media blitz supported an extended effort by each congregation to invite and welcome fallen-away members and everyone else."

In a seminar which he conducts, he referred to this paragraph from the chapter and related to the class an experience he had as he motored to class. A car cut in front of him, almost precipitating an accident. Fastened to the bumper of the car was a WELS sticker: "Come to the WELS."

Thorn's advice to the WELS member of his class was simple: If WELS members have the sticker on their car, drive more carefully.

Bargain centers observe 25th anniversary

Two hundred seventy people gathered June 1 to mark the 25th anniversary of the Milwaukee Federation Bargain Centers.

The two centers offer the opportunity to purchase clothing and household items at low cost and in turn distribute the proceeds to deserving organizations.

Most of the funds are divided equally among Wisconsin Lutheran High School, Wisconsin Lutheran


College, Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Service, Wisconsin Lutheran Institutional Ministry, and the WELS Milwaukee Federation. WELS Lutherans for Life, Camp Philip, and others have also received funds.

Marge Agather, treasurer, reported that the stores have grossed \$2,052,000 in their 25 years. Making this possible was the contributed time and talents of hundreds of

workers, accumulating 656,250 hours of service. This does not include the many hours contributed by menders, quilt makers, knitters, sewers, and repair people.

A recent addition is the antique department, supervised by Hilde Buerger. Her expertise in this area has occasionally resulted in sales of substantial amounts.

—*Clarence W. Saatkamp*



The counseling cold war— it's healthy

Rather than
condemn psychology,
we ought to grow in faith
so that theology informs,
interprets, and applies
what psychology uncovers

by Paul E. Kelm

There is something of a counseling cold war between psychology and theology. Horror stories from the realm of secular therapy have left pastors somewhere on a continuum between wary and antagonistic. Caricatures of spiritual counseling have made psychologists cynical (and some lawyers drool). Meanwhile theoreticians and theologians write books attempting to reconcile the two approaches to the human psyche, while practitioners crank out paperbacks attempting to reconcile people's self-perceptions with reality.

How seriously we take this cold war can be recognized by several recent events in our own church body. The seminary has installed a professor whose primary field is counseling and whose preparation includes study in the secular university. Northwestern Publishing House has produced at least two major works on counseling of late and plans an entire counseling series addressed to people in the pew. And a 1992 workshop on counseling for called workers walked more than a hundred leaders from across the synod through a model of counseling intended to merge clinical psychology's experience with biblical truth.

You'll be disappointed if you thought I was about to negotiate an end to this cold war in several breakthrough paragraphs. In fact, I'm a sort of "counseling cold warrior" who believes the tension between theology and psychology is healthy.

Psychology—harmful or helpful?

Psychology can put a wrong spin on theology. One example is Robert Schuller's redefinition of sin as the loss of self-esteem. In a society preoccupied with self it is hardly surprising that popular religion would fixate on man's relationship with self rather than with God. Sermons on shame replace answers to guilt precisely because the nature of sin has been redirected from a damning alienation from God to a dysfunctional alienation from self. When psychology addresses guilt, the counseling focus is on guilt feelings because psychology cannot offer the resolution of guilt in Jesus Christ. That deflection may confuse symptoms with the disease, ameliorate sin's consequences without removing sin's death sentence. Psychology can identify blame for shame in childhood experience; but without an understanding of sin and forgiveness, blame can become another insulator from one's God.

It is not psychology's fault, however, when human-centered thought replaces God-centered conviction in our spiritual life. Psychology, after all, is human-centered. It works with human experience, not divine revelation. It can observe, categorize, and interpret, but not cure fallen human nature.

A different realm

Since psychology recognizes neither objective justification in Christ nor objective truth in Scripture, its realm is perceptions and theories. Because it knows no new nature in Christ, it can only ameliorate the condition of human nature. Rather than condemn psychology, we ought to grow in faith so that theology informs,

interprets, and applies what psychology uncovers.

Psychology may prevent us from simplistic pronouncements on the human condition. While separation from God is sin's primary curse, Genesis and Jesus teach us about shame and conflict—the number sin did on the other two relationships in life. While the resolution of guilt in the blood of Jesus is the church's central mission, the elimination of false guilt—the product of legalism or perfectionism—is legitimate ministry. Psychology has a way of keeping a theologian's feet on the ground.

And psychology can assist spiritual people in understanding human nature's thought patterns and emotional responses. It can provide tools to dig through layers of denial. It can identify problem indicators. It can share processes for working with people. Knowing the enemy within is important for the individual's war with human nature, the counselor's application of Scripture to a troubled Christian, and the evangelist's tailoring of law and gospel to each non-Christian.

Guides for meandering Christians

Several principles should guide a Christian meandering through psychology. Here are a few. See your pastor for some more.

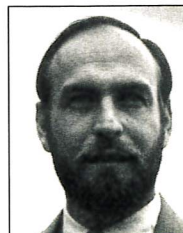
- "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?" (Jeremiah 17:9). Reflect for a moment on all the implications of original sin.

- "Against you, you only (O Lord), have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge" (Psalm 51:4). Doesn't that cut through all the protestations and rationalizations of a less than penitent heart?

- "Jesus Christ, the Righteous One, is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:2). That's firm fact for fuzzy feelings about self!

- "Since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God" (Romans 5:1-2). Know how you stand, where you stand, and who stands with you.

Life is looking up!



Paul E. Kelm is administrator for the Commission on Adult Discipleship.

Even a bad person can teach a good lesson

The shrewd manager

Luke 16:1-9

by Mark E. Braun

Of all the stories Jesus told during his three-year ministry, none has proved more troublesome than the parable of the dishonest manager.

It's bad enough that the chief character is a businessman accused of wasting his master's property. The blame seems deserved: the manager never protested he was innocent. He couldn't do physical labor, and he wouldn't beg; unspoken is the further admission that he would never again be hired for such a responsible position by anyone who heard what he'd done.

What's worse is the devious, even illegal, course of action he hit upon. In those frantic final hours in which he still had the account books, he hustled his master's debtors into his office one by one and drastically altered their indebtedness in their favor.

Most distressing is the punch line: "The master commended the dishonest manager." How on earth could a wealthy man who'd just been swindled out of major shekels praise the crook who swindled him?

Learning from an unsavory character

Some commentators find this story so disturbing that they insist Jesus could never have told it; others argue that the only way such an unsavory story could ever have been included in Luke's gospel is because Jesus must have told it.

Readers familiar with the Middle East remind us, however, that we need to read the story in its proper setting. What this manager did was lawful, even laudable, according to Eastern business practice, they say. As long as a manager collected the price his owner demanded, he was free to take for himself as big a percentage as he could. This manager was merely foregoing his considerable commission. Some even say the manager was more honorable than his master, since Old Testament law said a man should not charge interest on a loan to a fellow Jew.

Yet the opening accusation stands: he had wasted his owner's possessions. What does Jesus want us to learn from him?

Listen again: "The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly." Not honest-

ly, not ethically, but shrewdly. He knew he wouldn't have his master's books for long; he had to act quickly and decisively. He had to make some powerful friends, each with an IOU to repay. Soon, when he would have no job to do and no place to go, he would pay a visit to each of the debtors whose invoices he had discounted. "Remember me?" he would ask. "Remember the favor I did for you? I'm here to collect!"

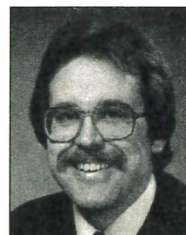
Shrewdness can make an eternal difference

That's how it is out there, Jesus said. The people of this world may be dishonest and cruel, but they can also be shrewd about getting what they want. If only the people of the light would be so shrewd. While the world pursues its goals with ruthless efficiency, too often we go about our Father's business half-headedly and half-heartedly. Leftover hours and leftover dollars are good enough. Martin Marty has commented, "More junk, more tawdriness, more slipshodhood, more mediocrity is peddled in church circles than in many others. Yet are we not supposed to give God our best gifts?"

We have a greater good to accomplish—the eternal good of our neighbors. We have the opportunity to make friends, not just for us but for the Savior, not just for now but forever. Some day this life will be gone, but if we seize the moment as shrewdly as the sons of the world do to secure their fleeting treasures, we can make an eternal difference. Some day the souls won for their Lord through our shrewd action of sharing the gospel will welcome us into eternal dwellings. "Thank you," they will say to us. "Thank you for using all that dirty money to tell us about Jesus."

Here's the bottom line on the parable of the shrewd manager: sometimes even a bad person can teach us a good lesson.

Next: The rich man and Lazarus



Mark Braun is director of spiritual programming and instructor of theology at Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee.

Eco-religion—earth with a capital E

Earth Day has propelled little Mt. Horeb, Wisconsin, into the national limelight. On a hilltop outside the village, four women and two men observed Earth Day in a religious ceremony which included prayers to Mother Earth. Selena Fox served as the priestess for the occasion. In solemn tones she prayed, "Sacred Earth Power, bring healing to Planet Earth." *Time* magazine reported the event, noting that "the ceremonies were part of a growing US spiritual movement: Goddess worship, the effort to create a female-centered focus for spiritual expression."

An editorial in the *New York Times* gave its qualified endorsement to the new movement. Acknowledging that "it appears flaky on the surface," the *Times* went on to say, "it still warrants sympathy and respect. For it proceeds from values of nurturing, peace, and harmony with nature."

To the chagrin of legitimate environmentalists, even the famed Sierra Club has endorsed the new eco-religion. The club's environmental health sourcebook, *Well Body, Well Earth*, says, "The more you contact the voice of living Earth (note the capital E) and evaluate what it says, the easier it will become for you to contact it and trust what it provides." The sourcebook provides specifics by offering pagan rituals as the way "to reaffirm and bond with the spirit of the living Earth."

Not surprisingly, the World Council of Churches is also sympathetic toward the new eco-religion. At its last convention in Canberra, Australia, it adopted a statement which says, "Those who are closest to the land, and whose spiritualities consider the Earth to be sacred, are those best able to guide this new process" of environmental renewal.

This new religion is for kids too. Ted Turner's cable TV cartoon series, *Captain Planet*, introduces them to it. The program combines environmental teaching with a spiritual message and introduces viewers to the wisdom of Goddess Gaia, the mother of all life.

Features of this religion for a new age include worshipping a goddess mother who is the source of all life, elevating Mother Earth from legend to an object of faith, deifying the earth and its creatures, and condemning Christianity for allegedly condoning the rape of Mother Earth. Part of its popularity derives from the fact that it intertwines legitimate and serious environmental concerns with ancient myths and practices, and then blends them both with certain emphases of the feminist movement.

As Christians we need to recognize the diabolic nature of this revival of Babylonian nature worship. We also need to remember that while God requires of us that we respect nature, he doesn't ask us to revere it. Biblical principles of Christian stewardship obligate us to use the earth and its resources wisely, and not to enrich ourselves at the expense of future generations.

We endorse the practical suggestions of environmentalists to recycle, reuse, reduce consumption, and return to simpler living, but not the mythology of neo-pagan fanatics who want to identify their religious interests with environmental concerns.

When you see earth spelled with a capital E, beware!

Joel C. Gerlach



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

Pastors' wives

As a seminary student, I enjoyed "Pastors' wives" (5/15) very much. It seems as if the pastor's wife who wrote this article is comfortable with who she is and how she is living her life, in spite of all the preconceived ideas of what a pastor's wife should be.

I think we all need to be comfortable with who we are and what talents God has given us. God makes each one of us individually by hand, not by pouring us into a prefabricated mold on an assembly line. It is unfortunate when congregations try to put called workers and their families into that mold, or when workers do it to themselves.

I thank God every day that I am going to marry someone who is a Christian individual with a personality all her own.

*John D. Roebke
Milwaukee, Wisconsin*

The Nicene Creed

"The Nicene Creed" (5/15) stirred my memory to a course long ago in church history. The article said, "At Nicaea, the third article simply read, 'And in the Holy Spirit.' Fifty-six years later it was expanded to say, 'I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son.'" The "and the Son" part was added much later than 56 years after the Council of Nicea.

A little more in-depth history of our documents of faith would not be wasted space.

*Thomas A. Jahrmann
Milwaukee, Wisconsin*

Author Wayne Laitinen responds:

The second ecumenical council, held 56 years after Nicea, did flesh out much of the third article as we now have it. Regrettably, I included the phrase "and the Son," which was not introduced till the third council in 589 at Toledo, Spain. Thanks for the brotherly correction.

The KGB

Issue after issue I thoroughly enjoy all of the articles published in the NL. Pastor Gerlach's article, "What's going on at the KGB?" (5/15) was especially

exciting.

The collapse of the communist Soviet Union came as a surprise to most people. However, the invitation received by the 19 American Christian churchmen to meet with the vice-chairman of the KGB and also his statement concerning the need for repentance and faith in Russia was an even greater surprise to me.

Sinful being that I am, I have this propensity for underestimating the power of the Holy Spirit. This turn of events certainly proves what Christians have always known: God is and always will be in charge.

*Peter Oesterreicher
Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin*

Self-denial

(We recently received the following letter for the Readers Forum from Prof. Theodore J. Hartwig of Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., who received it from a teacher enrolled in a correspondence course. Because it was not originally intended for publication, the teacher wishes to remain anonymous. We agreed with Prof. Hartwig that the comment is timely.)

The term self-denial is quickly becoming an archaic term. We have become easy prey to the constant bombardment of enticements which promote the exact opposite of self-denial. We have jobs which pay wages far in excess of what we need to meet our basic needs of life, food, and shelter. Our land, both in the crops it raises and the work it provides, makes the milk and honey of the promised land appear meager.

At no other time in history has a nation had so many things it could afford, coupled with so many things it can buy. Only a minority of the people need to worry about having food to eat or clothes to wear or shelter to live in.

This abundance distorts our concept of self-denial. Denial to us means that, instead of steak for the evening meal, we may have to have a pizza or hot dog. Instead of having Nike shoes, we may have to buy a store brand.

Self-denial is having a black-and-white TV set. Self-denial is not being able to take a Carnival cruise. Since basic necessities no longer are our main concern, self-denial has taken on the meaning of giving up luxuries.

In addition to having our sense of self-denial distorted by the incredible blessings which this land provides us, people who try to practice self-denial are labeled as weird or as religious fanatics. Practicing safe sex is considered self-denial, while one who abstains is considered out of touch, probably a religious zealot. A person who gives generously to church instead of having all the latest adult toys is considered weird. Giving time to church or school instead of being on the bowling team or taking time for oneself is considered being a sucker.

This conceptual distortion of self-denial can be particularly difficult for the Christian teacher in a Lutheran elementary or high school or a Lutheran college. Lutheran teachers are well aware of the differences in wages, benefits, and expectations between themselves and their public school counterparts. They may prefer to have the more narrowly focused responsibilities of the public school teacher. They can easily mistake this attitude as self-denial.

Yet we have plenty to eat; we have good homes, loving families. Most important, we have the privilege of serving our Lord in a special manner.

Graduation assignments

I don't have a son, grandson, brother, or even a friend among the graduates of 1992, but I rejoice every year with the group of workers the Lord has put among us. I look forward to seeing those pages and finding out where they will be working in his kingdom.

*Pearl Wegwerth
Sun City, Arizona*

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 READERS FORUM, Northwestern Lutheran, 2929 N Mayfair Road, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398.

Several months ago we printed a call for candidates by Dr. Martin Luther College, the synod's ministerial college for teachers, for a new position at the college. When the position is filled, the person will be responsible for a "staff ministry program," a special four-year college program authorized by the synod's 1991 convention. The program will graduate four different types of ministers: minister of family and youth, of evangelism, of administration, and deaconess.

As ever greater demands are made on the pastoral ministry, many congregations are seeking ways to assist their pastor without calling a second pastor from a shrinking pool of available pastors. The convention action recognized that there are forms of ministry which do not require four years of theological education beyond an undergraduate degree.

A few pioneering congregations had anticipated the staff ministry program. There are about ten large congregations which already are being served by one or the other of the proposed staff ministries. There are at least two ministers of administration to take care of the "business end" of the congregation. Also on the list are ministers of family, of youth, of evangelism, and of discipleship. About half of these ministries are making use of DMLC graduates of the teaching ministry. The new program, according to President Lloyd Huebner, will be fully operational by next fall.

With all these new ministries—tripling the old familiar ones—no one is to blame if there is some confusion. For 857 congregations without a parish school the only full-time ministry they know is the "pastoral ministry." The 365 congregations with schools expand their understanding of the public ministry to include "teaching ministry." But what about these four additional "ministries"? We could use a short course—say, 150 words—on the biblical meaning of ministry.

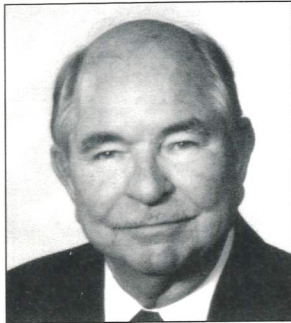
The church of history has not always been clear on what ministry means. During the Middle Ages until Luther's time, the ordained clergy—priests and bishops—were the ministers of the church. To them belonged the "keys of the kingdom." By virtue of their ordination, authority over the church was conferred on them.

Luther, under God, restored to the church the priesthood of all believers. Its classic form was given to us in 1 Peter 2: "You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." Every Christian, according to Peter, has a personal ministry to proclaim the name of his God wherever the Christian is, with whatever talent the Christian has.

But there is also a public ministry in the church to which some Christians are called. Instead of a babel of voices at worship, the gathering of the royal priesthood appoints ("calls") someone to share with them the means of grace. The qualifications for this public ministry are noted in the New Testament epistles. Scripture does not distinguish the public offices of ministry in terms of importance, but by scope of responsibility. The congregation acting as the priesthood of believers calls to the public ministry and determines the scope and nature of the ministry.

One last word of caution. "While the church has the Christian freedom to establish forms of public ministry in response to specific needs," a report to the 1991 convention said, "it will do so within the biblical principles of decency and order and expediency and constructiveness" (citing 1 Corinthians 14:40 and 10:23).

James P. Schaffer



We could use a short course on the biblical meaning of ministry.



What church librarians look like

by Wayne D. Mueller

Mention church librarian and people immediately call to mind a certain image. Probably somebody with a background in library science, a very quiet person with eye glasses, scanning a pile of religious book catalogs, right?

Wrong. Church libraries do not serve the same purpose as public libraries. Our churches exist to proclaim Jesus Christ. So the church library is there to help people know their Savior better, to grow in faith and good works. A church librarian, above all, must be someone who understands that unique purpose of the library.

The most important qualification for Lutheran church librarians, then, is the burning desire to share the message of Jesus with as many people as possible. They are practical evangelists. They are not only concerned with getting books in; they want to get the word out.

And that will require some doing. Lutheran church librarians know from Scripture and from experience that no one has a natural desire to learn more about God's word. Even though that little library has the greatest literary treasures of the world, people will not be rushing in to get them.

That means church librarians, like all good evangelists, will have to take the word to the people. They will talk to parents about the resources available for their daily family devotions. They will catch teens in the narthex after the worship service to tell them about the new book that addressed the concerns of youth. They will telephone the grieving widow or widower to tell about

the great book of comfort that was just published. Good librarians not only order Bible books for the shelves; they are instruments of God to create a demand for those books.

Good evangelists know their message. Thus, the church librarians are there every Sunday in worship and Bible class alongside the potential book borrowers. They know which Bible commentaries to recommend, because the ones in the library have enriched their personal study of Scripture. They can point others to specific places in the word, because they've been there before. Not satisfied with displaying the books in the back of the church, they bring to life the message of those books inside and outside the church.

So, what do church librarians look like? To the casual observer, they may look just like anybody else. But to those who get to know who they are on the inside, they are very special people.

(A WELS church librarians' organization was started September, 1991. The group holds two meetings a year.

To receive the quarterly newsletter, please remit \$2.50 to Joanne Weber, S90 W13322 Boxhorn Drive, Muskego WI 53150.

For further information contact Lorraine Ashmore, president pro tem, at 414/265-8654.

The next meeting will be held October 3 at Zion, South Milwaukee, Wisconsin.)



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