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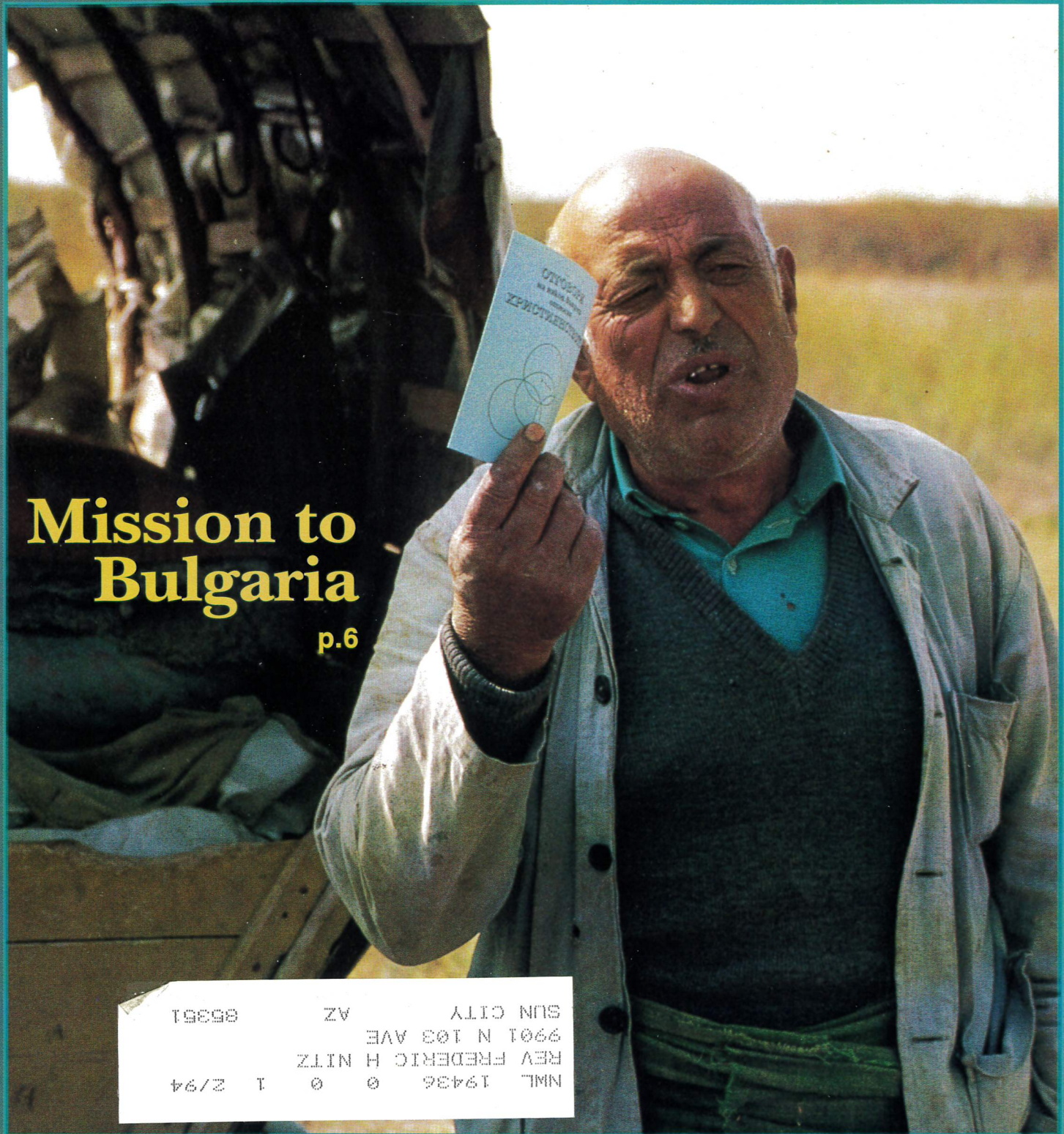
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# NORTHWESTERN LUTHERAN

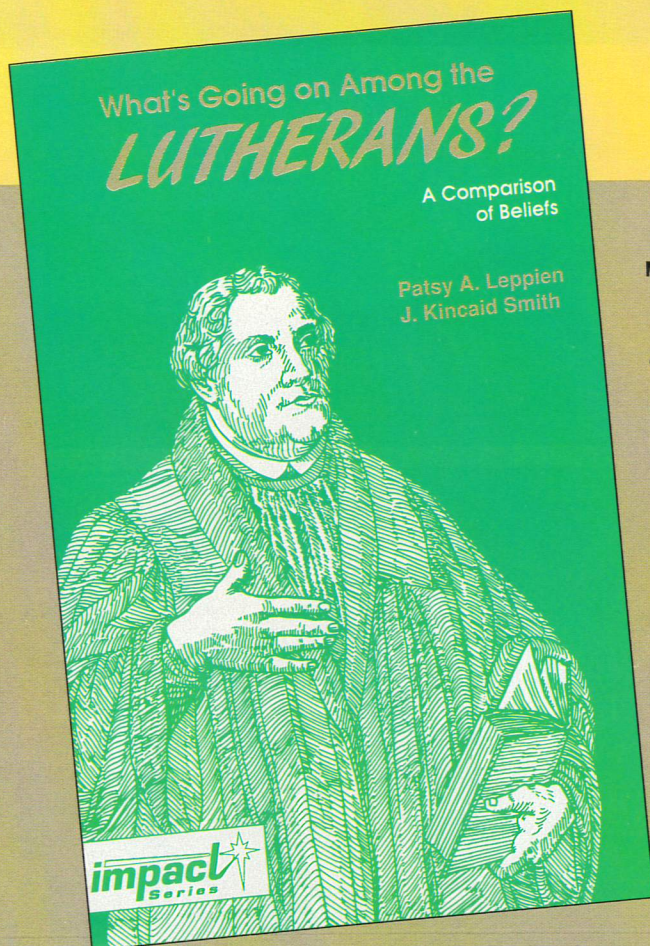
January 1993



**Mission to Bulgaria**  
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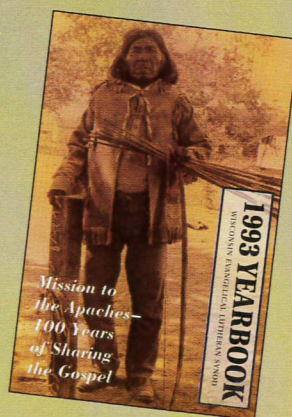
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If the Lord gives us  
another year of grace,  
it will be because  
Jesus is still cultivating us

## Another year of grace

by Richard D. Balge

**T**he turn of the year is a time for looking back and for looking ahead. It is a time to remember the past with thanksgiving and with some regret, too. It is a time to consider the future with some hope and with some uncertainty. It is a time for taking an honest look at what we are doing with the gift of life. It is a time to appreciate that God has promised to forget our sins and has assured us that nothing will be able to separate us from his love in Christ Jesus.

### A time of expectation

Jesus' parable of the fig tree reminds us that God is expecting to see the fruit of faith in our lives. The tree's owner had every right to expect fruit from the tree. He had planted it in good ground. It had reached maturity. But he had not found any fruit on it.

Our God looks for the fruits of faith in us. He has given us eternal life in Christ so that we can live, not for ourselves, but for him who loved us and gave himself for us. What does he find? Are we really eager to do his will as he has revealed it in his word? Are we really alert to opportunities to serve him? Are we truly sensitive to the spiritual and physical needs of people less blessed than we? If God does not find what he looks for in us, why should we be permitted to clutter up the landscape?

### A time of cultivation

If the Lord gives us another year of grace, it will be

for the sake of our intercessor Jesus Christ. It will be because he is still "cultivating" us. The owner of the vineyard said, "Cut it down." But the tree had a friend: "Master, I will give it a little extra care, aerate the soil, put on a little fertilizer. If that doesn't work, then cut it down."

In much that way Jesus our Savior intercedes for us. And, he wants to continue to cultivate us, not with a spade and fertilizer but with the gospel in word and sacrament. He wants to continue to give us that plant food which every Christian needs: the continuing assurance that God is our loving Father because Christ has redeemed us.

*Leave it alone for one more year,  
and I'll dig around it and fertilize it.  
If it bears fruit next year, fine!  
If not, then cut it down*  
(Luke 13:8,9).

The parable does not answer the question whether the tree bore fruit the next year. If it did not, it was not because it had no care, or because the master had been impatient.

We do not even know whether it will be a full year. Even God's patience has a limit. So the critical moment is always now. Lord, "teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom."



*Richard Balge is dean of students and teaches church history and homiletics at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin.*

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

# NORTHWESTERN LUTHERAN

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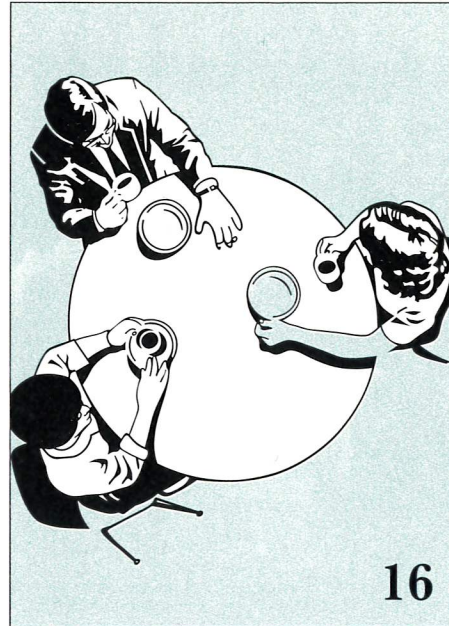
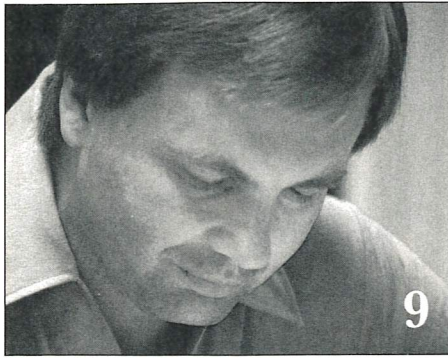
Evangelism is an act of caring.

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■ The new year brings a new look to *Northwestern Lutheran*. You'll notice it's thicker by 16 pages. With this issue we begin publishing a larger magazine once a month. While the change was made to save money on postage and production, we hope it will also bring other improvements. Increased space per issue can bring you more news and features and also more of what the publishing business calls "white space," making articles easier on the eye.

■ Speaking of news and features, we'd like to hear from you. You can send news about WELS members and congregations to your district correspondent (his name is listed in the masthead, and your pastor can give you his address) and longer features directly to NL. While we can't print everything we receive, we welcome contributions—and we read them all.

■ On the cover is a Gypsy holding the tract handed him by a member of the team that visited Bulgaria to explore the possibility of doing mission work there. Their report is encouraging; read about it in "Mission to Bulgaria" on the next page.

Dorothy Sonntag

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Harold Essmann, part of the mission exploration team, hands out a Bulgarian language Christian tract.

# Mission to Bulgaria

by Harold A. Essmann

“Where in the world is Bulgaria?” That’s the question several people asked when I told them I’d be going there.

Situated north of Greece and south of Romania, Bulgaria is one of the most prosperous eastern European nations. Pastor Kirby Spevacek, mission coordinator for eastern Europe, and Pastor Don Fastenau and I from the Board for World Missions conducted a three-week mission investigation there during September.

Traveling more than 2,500 miles within the country, crisscrossing the nation, we visited more than 30 cities, large and small. We interviewed pastors of various denominations to ascertain the attitude of the people concerning religion. We spoke with educators to determine the needs of the educational system of the country and how they could be met, especially through the use of volunteers. We conferred with embassy officials to find out how missionaries might

be able to enter Bulgaria. We met with Bulgarians, Turks, and Gypsies to find whether people might be open to the message of the gospel.

Before the fall of communism, the Christian church in Bulgaria was severely persecuted. Bibles and other Christian literature, smuggled into the country, were buried in the ground so government authorities would not find them. Because an Orthodox priest was put to death for baptizing a child, few people under 40 have been baptized. Pastors were imprisoned on an island in the Danube River. One ate grass for two weeks to stay alive. Our driver revealed that his grandfather, a Bulgarian Orthodox priest, had stones tied to his feet and was thrown into a river to drown.

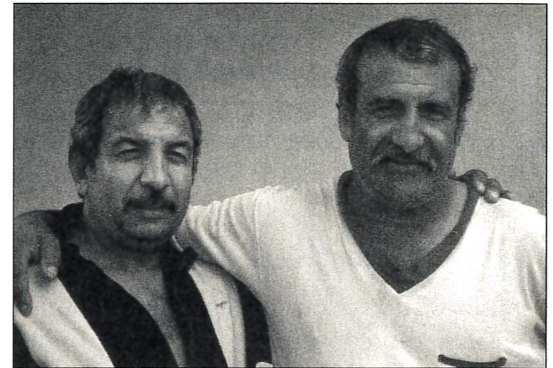
After the fall of communism there was a “boom” in the number of Christian denominations. Yet today only about one percent of the nine million people who live in Bulgaria are members of Protestant denominations. There is no Lutheran church in the



PHOTOS BY HAROLD ESSMANN

*Clockwise, beginning above:*

- The exploration team (left to right) Kirby Spevacek, Don Fastenau, Harold Essmann
- A gypsy wedding celebration
- Turkish believers in Bulgaria
- Malko Tarnovo, a Bulgarian village
- The pedestrian mall in Plovdev, Bulgaria
- A Bulgarian shepherd



country.

During our stay in the country we distributed more than 7,500 Bulgarian language Christian tracts. People sought to receive them. Many Bulgarians are open to the the gospel.

A large number of Turks and Gypsies live in Bulgaria. Most are not Christians. We had opportunity to speak to some Turks who are Christians. Especially in northern Bulgaria, where the Turks are farther removed from the Muslim influence of Turkey, many wanted to hear the gospel. They pleaded for help, for Bibles, for Christian literature.

We were able to speak with some Gypsies, a happy and a friendly people, when we came upon a Gypsy wedding celebration in a village. We celebrated with



them and passed out over 250 Christian tracts.

To reach out to the Bulgarians, the Turks, and the Gypsies, we need Christian literature in their language. We need to translate books and tracts for these people, unknown or forgotten by so many.

The Board for World Missions plans to expand the exploration of eastern Europe and Russia to include work in Bulgaria. The board hopes to send an exploratory team and volunteers to teach in universities and to staff Christian information centers. It also hopes to provide Christian literature.

Plans are under way to seek entry into Bulgaria, where the gospel is little heard and there are no Lutheran churches.

*Harold Essmann, a retired pastor, is secretary of the Board for World Mission's Committee for Mission Expansion.*

New converts, still glowing from their newly-found salvation, are often the most effective evangelists

## Get them while they're hot

by Robert Raasch

**H**ave you ever noticed that some of the most effective evangelists are converts, especially new converts? Have you ever wondered why they are often more enthusiastic about sharing their faith than many lifelong Christians?

### "Watch out," not "reach out"

Well, without condoning it, I believe we came to it naturally. My contemporaries (give or take 15 years) grew up in the time of attack on some of our strong doctrinal beliefs, the time of the Ministerial Minutemen—rifles in one hand, plows in the other. Our cry was "watch out," not "reach out."

Our attention to protection drew us away from the plow, and its purpose: planting. Pastor Joel Gerlach once said he didn't remember a single adult confirmation or baptism during his youth years in his church. I don't either. I'm not saying planting did not get done, it just didn't get done in many large, established congregations. And even many of the missions were started as rescue missions to scattered, marooned WELS-ers. "Avoiding" was the operative word, not "inviting."

### Staleness

Another hindrance could be the "staleness" of some WELS members' salvation in contrast to that of most converts. To illustrate: How many of you remember when you took the Salk polio vaccine? How excited are you now about it? Probably not much. You had to see a polio epidemic, have a friend with polio, see a crippled president, hear your mother's prayers that her children be spared, to really know the fear of the disease and the wonder of this medicine. We were all new converts when we got the vaccine. But my contemporaries and I have to admit we haven't spent too much time thinking about it lately.

Natural, isn't it? Natural as the Old Man. Unfortunately, the same thing can happen to our view of our eternal salvation. I know that is not right. Nor

is it universal. But it is part of the struggle we face as sinner/saints.

### FRAN networks

Now let's go back to "getting them while they're hot." If you are like me, your first exposure to our synod's effort to reach out led you to believe that evangelism meant cold calls and canvassing.

Fortunately, we came to realize that evangelism is much broader, more multifaceted than that. One of the most important facets, even the first step, after the desire and motivation to reach out is felt, is the identification of people to reach out to.

In our new missions, we call such people prospects (and we pay quite a bit of attention to the size of each mission's prospect list). New converts are one of the more fruitful sources of prospects. You've probably all heard about FRAN networks—friends, relatives, associates, and neighbors. Partly because of the "watch out" days of our long-time members, their FRANS are heavy with WELS people.

New converts usually have many unchurched relatives and friends. Converts may not have all the jargon down yet (in most cases, that's good), but they will probably still be glowing from their newly-found salvation in Christ. They are probably the closest parallel to the New Testament believers through whom the early church spread so fast.

But let's get them into the friendship evangelism and body-building before they follow the unfortunate model of some of our yet unrenowned oldsters. And let's make sure they never start thinking, as so many of us did, that the idea is just to make believers of them. The idea is to make disciples of them.



*Robert Raasch, a retired business executive, is a member of Christ, Brainerd, Minnesota, and the WELS Board for Home Missions. This series is adapted from an essay he delivered at the 1992 Minnesota District convention.*



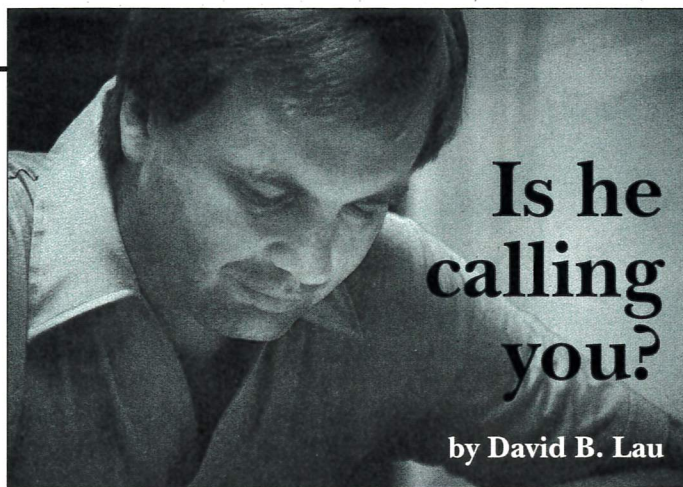
**Y**ou are probably reading and hearing about a greater emphasis in the synod in recruiting young people to be pastors and teachers. This is a good, God-pleasing effort and I am sure we are continually praying that young people will answer God's call and enter the ministry.

But God is calling others, too, to full-time ministry. He may be calling you. You with the three children, two in high school. You with a nice home and three cars in the driveway. You with the college degree and a secure job which you enjoy. You who are serving your church right now as a Sunday school teacher or congregational president or elder. You who are only 15 years from retirement.

God doesn't insist on using only those who have gone "through the system" as youths. Many now serving in the full-time ministry gave up a secure job, a house, and maybe even their life's savings to study for the ministry.

I'm sure there is an interesting and inspiring story about each person who made such a dramatic change. But the reasons will always boil down to just one: God's love in sending the world a Savior from sin.

Just as you, they recognize the tremendous love and mercy of God. Just as you, they accept in faith the Savior's sacrifice for sin. Just as you, they realize there is more to life than accomplishing personal career goals. They also heard the call of their God to leave their secular vocations and serve him full time.



## You, a pastor?

**Y**ou can be a pastor for your second career. But, of course, there are so many questions to answer. Sometimes you don't even know what the questions are or whom to ask.

**Northwestern College wants to help. This summer Northwestern, our pastor training college, offers a weekend retreat for second-career men interested in pursuing the pastoral ministry. The retreat, "Is This The Time?," will be held on the campus in Watertown, Wisconsin, June 11-13. Participants and their wives 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 information and registration forms by writing or phoning Prof. John Braun, Northwestern College, 1300 Western Avenue, Watertown WI 53094; 414/261-4352. The deadline for the retreat registration is May 19.**

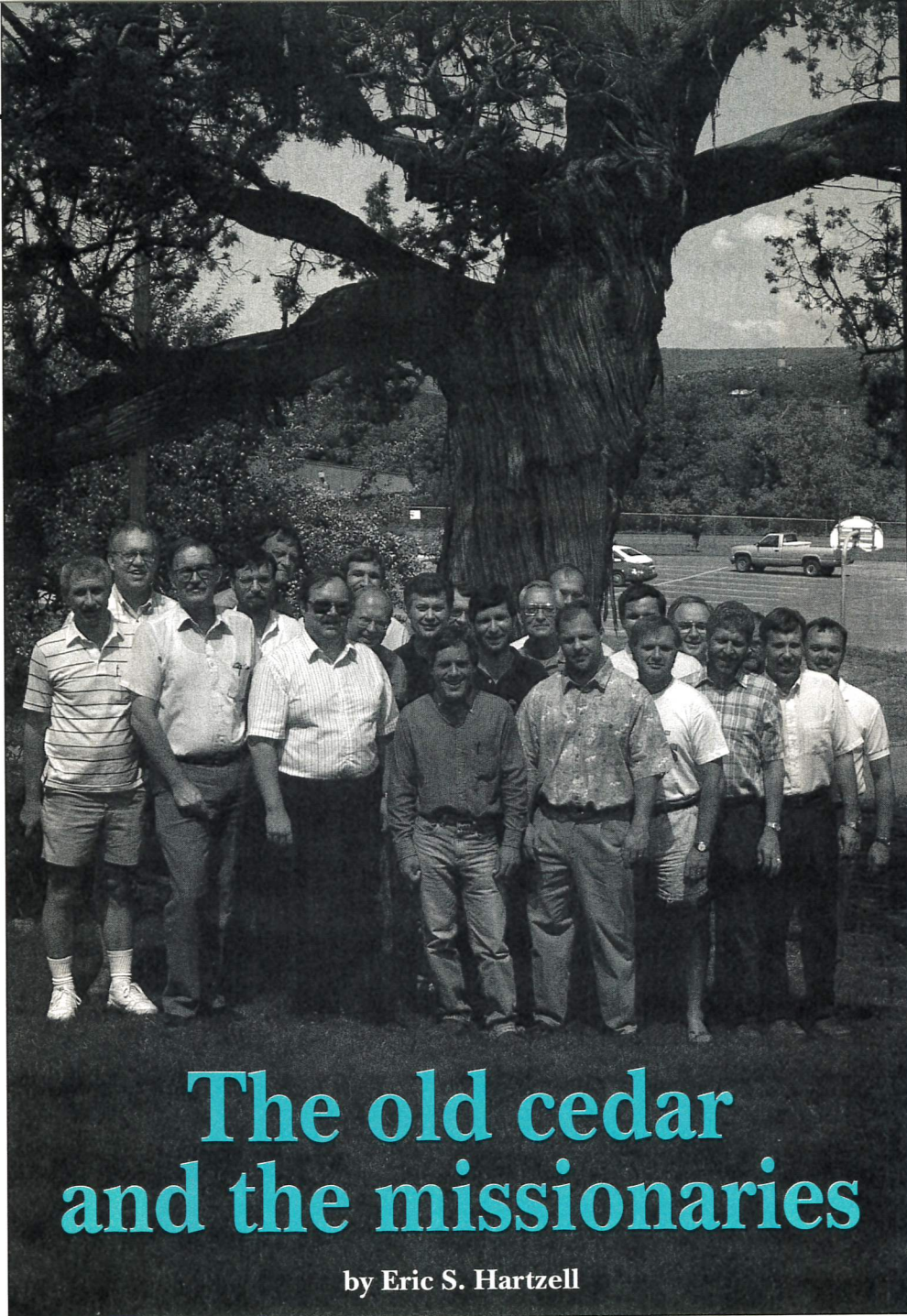
and eventually sent them out to take the gospel to the world.

Our church needs active laypeople. But maybe you are one of those whom God now wants in the pulpit or classroom. Is he calling you?

If he is, and you respond, you will have some tough and challenging times ahead of you. But you can be sure that our loving God will give you the strength and the means to faithfully serve him wherever he chooses to use you.



*David Lau is pastor of Lone Star, Tyler, Texas.*



## The old cedar and the missionaries

by Eric S. Hartzell

**T**he old cedar—Gad N’chah—still stands. It was old in 1984, the last time the missionaries came to East Fork Mission for their world missionaries’ conference. It is older now. Eight years of time and work in God’s kingdom have gone by since Gad N’chah saw the last missionaries. It is almost a hundred years since it saw the first.

The missionaries came to the mission from the far reaches of the globe, arriving in the wee hours of the morning. One missionary was inadvertently left at the airport in Phoenix and had to find his own way to the mission in the darkness. Some

got only a brief rest before the opening service.

But they were all here: missionaries, executive committee members, professors. With the words of the simple song we all learned as children, Pastor Bernhardt reminded us of our weakness and our Savior's strength—"We are weak but he is strong." (He had the courage to sing it to us!)

**D**uring the week we were reminded many times of this truth. To think of two or three missionaries struggling alone in countries the size of Brazil and Columbia and Malawi, trying to bring Jesus to the doors and hearts of the masses! Surely our work can be characterized as weak. But no one came to brag of strength, unless it was in the one who is our strength. We are weak but he is strong. It was a good way to begin the conference.

And then came the reports and discussions and prayer about the work that was unique according to each mission field but which in so many ways echoed the same strains and refrains. In his inimitable way, Pastor Habben from Japan told us the story of a woman who became Christian and was ecstatic about the change it brought in her life. Her daughter saw the change in her mother too. The husband, however, was reluctant to admit that he saw any change (the rascal!).

Another brother reminded us that it took over 400 years for Buddhism to take hold and flourish in Japan. We should not give up hope for Christianity if the results seem small after our short time there.

We heard the frustration in the voices of some: "We aren't doing much of anything; we can't seem to get enough manpower." In a devotion we heard a brother bare his soul with the admission that he had prayed, "Lord, will it never happen that men will come here who love this work and this people? Must they all leave?" Another admitted, "Our church is fewer now in numbers than when we began."

We are weak, but he is strong!

And the evidence of his strength was there. God blessing the work of the weak. Churches in a number of countries bursting at the seams, instruction classes taught at an average of three per day, foreigners to the gospel lovingly embracing the message and the missionary.

We heard the prayer of one. "Lord, thank you for letting me see your church growing in a way that very

few Christians ever get the chance to see."

The lights stayed on in the dormitory until 2:30 in the morning on several nights. Can you imagine the joy of being able to talk to one who believes and knows and experiences the same? After all the months and years of working alone, to have a kindred spirit to talk to? If you can imagine it, then you know why the lights burned into the night.

It wasn't all business. There were two trips on an evening and a morning up the East Fork River to the high mountains to watch the big bull elk. This time of year their majestic antlers are decked out in velvet, and they steer carefully between the spruce and aspen branches.

The food was good. Even a box of Cheerios looks good to someone who has not seen them for a long time.

**O**n Wednesday night all met at Whiteriver Lutheran Church to witness the installation of Pastor Raymond Cox, who comes to Apacheland from Malawi. He is the newly called mission coordinator. Pastor William Meier, who preached the sermon, asked the question that

perhaps many have asked, "Ray, what is your job supposed to be anyway?"

The answer in short: "To prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up." To this work of encouraging the Apache church toward indigenization, Pastor Cox brings his considerable experience in world missions. The Apache missionaries present at the service laid their hands on Pastor Cox's head in blessing, in most cases the lesser in experience and years blessing the greater.

But the week came to a close. The van and cars left at noon on Friday. The mission settled back into its routine of getting ready for another school year. The big cedar tree continued its vigil over the work here, a testimony to the fact that the Lord makes both trees and his kingdom to grow.

Will there be another time of missionaries coming to meet here? Will *Gad N'chah* witness it?

We hope so.



The Apaches welcome mission coordinator Raymond Cox and his wife Lois.



Eric Hartzell is pastor of East Fork, an Apache mission in Whiteriver, Arizona.



Left to right: Leah Fein, Rachel Fein, Kurt Cereske

## Shining stars

by Forrest L. Bivens

Proclaiming the gospel through

## God's tool

by Kristine Wobrock

**B**rent Bauske has been performing for audiences for over two decades, but recently his focus has been entirely on using his gift of music to spread the gospel. He has been performing concerts of his original Christian contemporary music.

"My wife Kris is my manager, booking agent, and sound technician," said Bauske, who has also used the stage name Brent Camlin. "We write some of the songs together. We take our day off and just sit with the Bible open, researching a certain phrase or parable. We get a lot of new insights from listening to each other and reading the Bible."

Brent and Kris are members of St. Andrew in

Elgin, Illinois. "Pastor Pete [Prange] and the whole congregation have been so supportive. Pete actually was the first to suggest I use my musical abilities in a Christian environment. It has been a very happy and healthy change for me. I had been playing in secular rock bands since I was a teenager, but you just get uncomfortable after a while, being around all the smoking and drinking—the general lack of hope that you sense in most clubs or bars. Playing Christian concerts is the most satisfying performing I've ever done."

Brent uses computerized music for back-up when playing solo concerts around the country. "I write, play, and record the music in a small studio

**I**t began on the campus of Dr. Martin Luther College. Students Leah Fein and Kurt Cereske had written some music. Would they be willing to sing at the freshman welcome banquet?

The warm reception given that evening in 1988 led to an invitation to give a contemporary Christian music concert later in the school year. Rachel Fein joined Leah and Kurt for the concert, which attracted an audience of 500 and led to several other invitations to present God's word in song. Since then the musical trio has sung at youth rallies, campus ministry rallies, on college and high school campuses, and at several WELS congregations.

The musical group, which writes most of its own music, chose the name "Shining Star" by drawing on the words of Daniel 12:3, "Those who lead many to righteousness [will shine] like the stars for ever and ever."

"Our music appeals to a general audience," said Leah Fein. "Teens like it, but so do senior

citizens and little kids, partly because we do a lot with familiar hymns."

Leah, Kurt, and Rachel grew up in Saginaw, Michigan, and attended St. Paul elementary school and Michigan Lutheran Seminary before going on to DMLC. Leah and Kurt are now teaching in Lutheran elementary schools.

Shining Star is an official organization of St. Paul, their home congregation, and the group works closely with the congregation's leaders. The cooperative approach helps alleviate friction or fears that sometimes surface concerning contemporary music. Students of St. Paul school accompanied the trio on its new tape, "The Rock."

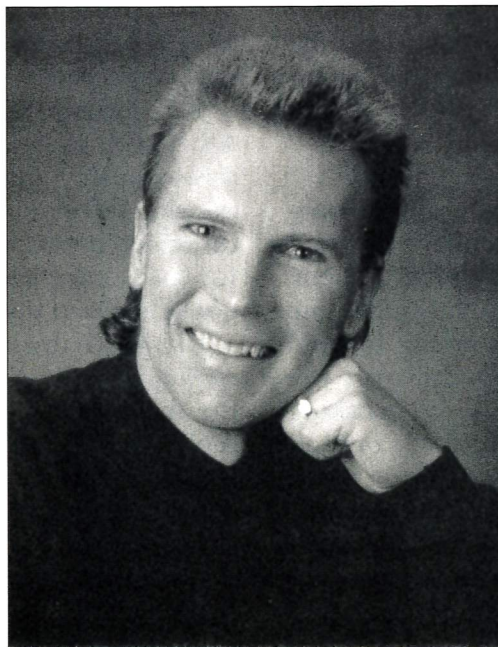
Shining Star's cassette tape may be ordered from Northwestern Publishing House, "The Rock" (twelve songs for \$10.98 plus \$4.00 for shipping and handling, Order #34-2092). Contact Shining Star, 2745 W Genesee Street, Saginaw MI 48602 for other information.

*Forrest Bivens is pastor of St. Paul, Saginaw, Michigan.*

## contemporary Christian music

in my home. Using the computer, I'm able to simulate full orchestras or a trumpet trio or whatever instrument the song calls for. I just trust in the Lord to send the best ideas to bring him the greatest glory."

Brent's "day job" as the service manager at a marina in the Chain of Lakes area of northern Illinois lets him devote the winter months to his musical career. He performs year round, but during the summer he plays only as many concerts as his work schedule will allow.

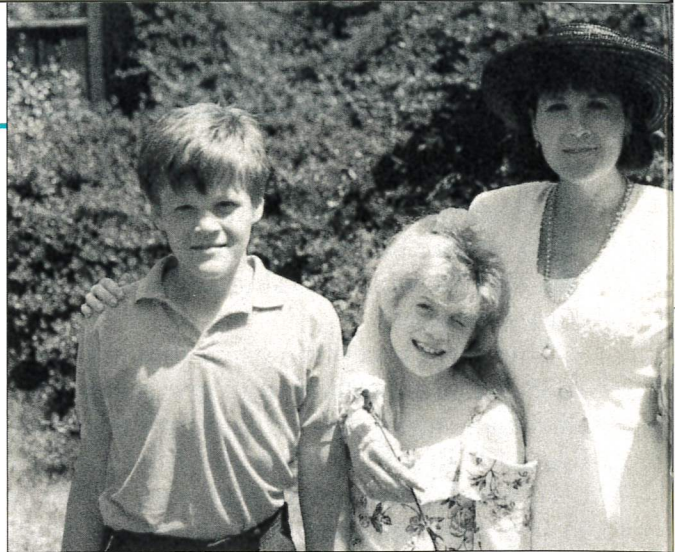


Bauske recently signed a contract with Incubator Records, a company that works exclusively with Christian contemporary music. "We are hoping they'll decide to produce an album. Until then, we just put our trust in the Lord. After all, I'm his tool. God is using me for his work."

To order Brent Camlin's tape, "Just You and I," or for booking information, please call 708/253-7908.

*Kristine Wobrock is a member of St. Andrew, Elgin, Illinois.*

Left to right:  
Brian, Jordan,  
Janet, and Vaughn



# Earthquake

by Janet Lonquist Klebig

October 17, 1989, started out as a typical Tuesday. My husband Michael was in Salt Lake City, the second day of a week-long business trip. My three-year-old son Vaughn and I ran errands and then picked up his nine-year-old brother, Brian, and six-year-old sister, Jordan. We spent an hour at the library and then went to Wienerschnitzel for hot dogs. It was a beautiful day—

the sky was that vivid autumn shade of blue and the sun was shining gloriously. We sat in a booth by the window.

## “It’s only an earthquake”

At 5:04 the earthquake struck. A loud, terrible rumbling filled the air and the restaurant began shaking violently from side to side. Brian and Jordan remembered their training and immediately slid under the table. I knelt awkwardly by the table trying to hold Vaughn underneath. He was crying and over the earth’s groaning and the shrill sound of breaking glass, I remember crooning, “It’s all right, it’s only an earthquake.”

For fifteen indescribable seconds, the earth shook. Finally it was over. We got up from the floor, our hearts pounding and legs trembling, and went outside. Street lights were swaying from side to side and cars were strewn at strange angles along the street. Two cars had collided in front of the restaurant.

We drove home slowly—the traffic lights had all been knocked out—and listened to the car radio. I was shocked to hear the first rumors that “an overpass is down” and “something has happened to the Bay

Bridge.” I murmured a thankful prayer that Michael was in Utah instead of San Francisco.

The children clung to me as we entered our home. All of the kitchen cupboards and drawers were thrown open, their contents spilled across the room. Stereo, television, and computer equipment had shimmied across desks and shelves. The “Annabelles,” Jordan’s porcelain dolls, were scattered amongst the books and toys that had fallen from the shelves.

In the living room, the etagere had cracked, spilling glass shelves, potpourri, and family pictures to the floor. The only shelf remaining held our family Bible and a framed piece of embroidery saying, “Trust in the Lord.”

I gathered the kids close to me on the sofa and we prayed, fervently thanking God for protecting us and praying for those whom we suspected had been hit harder.

Around 5:30, a second earthquake struck. I grabbed Vaughn and we stumbled outside. With underground wiring and no tall trees, it was the safest place to go. The entire neighborhood gathered around a car radio and we began to hear the sad confirmations of earlier rumors: the Nimitz Freeway had



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## As earthquakes again threaten California Janet Klebig re-visits the San Francisco quake of 1989, and the Sunday following at Apostles, San Jose

collapsed, killing an unknown number of commuters and trapping the injured. A portion of the Bay Bridge was down. Fires raged in the Marina district. At 7.1 on the Richter scale, it was a major earthquake.

Then there were the warnings. More aftershocks were expected. Another, even stronger earthquake was possible. I found a map and located the epicenter. It was about twenty-eight miles from our house.

### **The longest night of my life**

As darkness fell, I pulled a sofa to the middle of the family room away from the shelves and windows. The children listened wide-eyed to the emergency broadcasting system as I gathered our jackets, flashlights, batteries, dried fruit, water bottles, and a wrench to turn off the gas main just in case. There were nearly continuous aftershocks and tremors.

Despite the earth's vibrations, the children fell asleep, worn out from the intensity of their experience. I thanked God for their safety and prayed to have the ability to take care of them if the worst happened. It was the longest and loneliest night of my life. Between 5:04 p.m. and 6:30 a.m. there were 1,400 aftershocks. As I sat on the sofa, surrounded by our emergency gear, I learned the meaning of "pray without ceasing."

The next day we were told to stay at home and avoid using the phone. There were several hundred more aftershocks—two were over five on the Richter scale—but at least we had power. The kids spent the day on the "safe" couch, watching videos while I watched the heartbreaking TV coverage in another

room.

The children were able to return to school Thursday and I contacted the police to find out if I could check on Michael's office in Los Gatos, where the damage was heavy. I learned the building had been "red-tagged." Later, Michael and his partners would be allowed fifteen minutes in pouring rain to remove what possessions they could.

I also learned the library the kids and I had left minutes before the quake suffered considerable damage.

Michael finally got home Friday night, armed with a huge bouquet of flowers. It was a relief to share the burden with another adult.

Apostles Lutheran Church was packed that Sunday. People greeted each other with hugs and amazing stories that revealed God's protection and mercy. Pastor Janke's message "Deliver us from evil" was uplifting and Pastor Mahnke spoke of his feelings as he stood in the doorway watching the entire church rock during the quake.

Every prayer and hymn had an added poignancy. I know I wasn't the only one who had trouble getting through the hymn verse that read, "Fear not, I am with thee, oh, be not dismayed/ For I am thy God and will still give thee aid/ I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand/ Upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand."

*Janis Klebig, a member of Apostles, San Jose, is a writer and television talk show host.*

# Listening in love

by Dorothy J. Sonntag

**L**istening is what the people gathered around the table usually do. But on this day they had come to talk. They wanted to share information about CCAP.

CCAP—Christ Centered Assistance Program—offers education and referrals through peer listeners who have received training in offering assistance, especially for addiction, to members of their congregations. CCAP members offer help by being available to listen, by providing information, and by encouraging professional assessment and care.

“Peer listeners are caring fellow Christians, not trained counselors,” explained Peggy White, from Mt. Calvary, Waukesha, Wisconsin. “They identify problems and refer people to an appropriate agency for help.”

“Ordinary Christians,” says the organization’s statement of its philosophy, “can have a major impact in their own families, the congregation, and the community to improve mental, spiritual, emotional, and physical functioning.”

## Helping fellow Christians

The program provides only those services desired by the congregation and not readily available from other sources. “There’s a place for hot lines and things like that,” said White, “but people ought to be able to get help in their own church.”

Much of the CCAP program centers on alcoholism because “60 percent of all problems have alcohol or other drug addiction at the root,” according to Mimi Festerling, from St. John, Lannon, Wis. “Alcoholism is a factor in a number of problems,” she said. “When you find out what alcohol has its fingers on—sexual abuse, physical abuse, dysfunction of every sort—you can’t ignore it.

“Abuse of alcohol, many times, comes from pain we’re trying to avoid,” continued Festerling. “It’s a factor in many family problems—and people with problems are among regular church-goers.”

The CCAP members stressed that they aren’t trying to compete with the pastor. CCAP supplements the pastor’s ministry, they said, and keeps him fully

informed of their activities. “Our pastor tells people about us and encourages them to talk to us,” said White. “They have learned to trust us.”

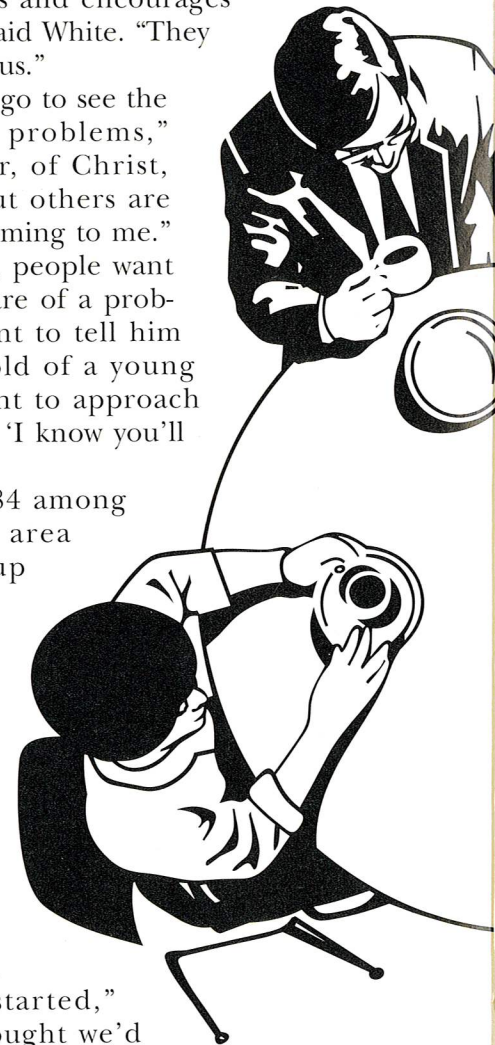
“Some people will go to see the pastor with their problems,” added Lois Mitzner, of Christ, Pewaukee, Wis., “but others are more comfortable coming to me.” Sometimes, she said, people want the pastor to be aware of a problem but are reluctant to tell him directly. Mitzner told of a young man who didn’t want to approach the pastor. “He said, ‘I know you’ll tell him for me.’”

Organized in 1984 among seven Milwaukee area churches, the group has worked with the synod’s parish services division to establish a national board to provide local CCAP ministries with counsel and direction. The board plans training programs and is preparing a manual for peer listeners.

“When we first started,” said White, “we thought we’d help by telling people what to do. We’ve learned judging and ready-made answers have no place. We’ve learned to offer acceptance and encouragement through God’s promises.”

## Training peer listeners

Peer listeners are expected to attend church and Bible class regularly. “To be in CCAP,” White said, “you need to go to communion, to be in Bible class. That’s a prerequisite. CCAP members need to be





## “Ordinary Christians can have a major impact in their own families, the congregation, and the community”

models of Christian living.”

Initial applicants for peer listeners are required to attend a weekend training session. “We do it in a weekend, rather than an hour here and there,” explained Peggy White, “so we can really get to know the people, know they can be trusted.” Additional training sessions are held on six Saturdays throughout the year.

Peer listeners learn about broad clusters of symptoms—addiction, abuse, eating disorders, grieving, sexual abuse, suicide, depression, terminal illness, abortion—and how to use

Scripture to offer help and comfort. They also learn about resources for professional help available in the community.

Peer listeners usually go beyond the mandatory training, however. “When

I started with CCAP,” said Mimi Festerling, “I spent two to three hours a week for three solid years.” She spent much of that time attending programs at area hospitals or social service agencies.

Going to those programs has made Festerling even more convinced of the need for CCAP. “Unfortunately, those programs have become so ‘New Age’ in their presentation that we don’t go anymore,” she said. “We need a program within the synod that will not deny the truth, but will present it in a Scriptural way.”

### CCAP programs

Christ Centered Assistance Program members offer

a variety of educational services to congregation members. Alice Ruppel of Mt. Calvary described CCAP activities at their church. “We put a monthly newsletter, also cards with our names and addresses, just to remind people we’re here and what we’re here for.” The newsletters provide information on subjects such as dysfunctional families, alcohol and drug abuse, depression, or eating disorders. “We also made holiday cards and inserted them in the call boxes at church to let the hurting know we care. We’ve addressed several organizations in the congregation, and we sponsor a drug education program in our school.”

“We printed five different real-life stories,” said Linda Campana of Gloria Dei-Bethesda, on Milwaukee’s north side, “and put one in each Sunday bulletin between Thanksgiving and Christmas. It was a good time to do it because that’s a season when alcohol is often abused.”

Linda read aloud one of the stories, a child’s sad account of Christmas with an alcoholic father. “I hate Christmas!” the little girl wrote. “It just makes my family fight.”

Not everyone in the congregation was pleased to have the stories included, said Campana. “One woman asked me why we printed them. She complained that it ruined her Christmas.”

The woman’s reaction is not unusual, said the CCAP members. One difficulty they face is that church members sometimes deny that addiction or other problems exist among Christians. “Often the feeling is we don’t need to talk about those things in the church,” said Peggy White.

The group all agreed they’d like to see more congregations offering the assistance provided by CCAP.

“The program works,” Mimi Festerling emphasized, “and it touches those who need it.”

*For more information about CCAP, contact Pastor Michael Turriff of CCAP’s board of directors at 414/547-6720.*



*Dorothy Sonntag is assistant editor of Northwestern Lutheran.*

## Evangelical Lutheran Free Church in Germany takes confessional stand



Delegates and guests at the ELF convention in Hartenstein, Germany.

In a historic convention the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church in Germany (ELF) took a giant step confessionally. First it cut fellowship ties with five church bodies with which it had had a long association. Then it voted to participate in establishing the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC), a federation of church bodies to be based on the confessional standard of the former Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America.

The ELF convention, held in Hartenstein, Saxony, October 2 to 16, 1992, terminated fellowship with the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of England, the Evangelical Lutheran Church—Synod of France and Belgium, the Confessional Lutheran Church of Finland, and the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of Denmark. The reason in each case was basically the same, the teaching or tolerating of false doctrine and/or unscriptural practice.

The ELF had previously suspended fellowship with the Evangelical Lutheran (Old Lutheran) Church (the Breslau Synod) and the Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church, known by its German acronym as SELK. These two churches, which have now merged, are pluralistic, that is, their members are not agreed in doctrine and practice.

The five churches with which the ELF broke off fellowship continue

to maintain fellowship ties with SELK. Neither the Wisconsin Synod nor its sister church, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS), is in fellowship with SELK or any of its partner churches. Because of fellowship with ELF the Wisconsin Synod was in a kind of triangular relationship: WELS and ELS/ ELF/ SELK's partners. That problem is now resolved.

Representing the WELS Commission on Inter-Church Relations (CICR) at the ELF convention were Prof. Richard Strobel, Commission secretary; Prof. Armin Schuetze, former chairman of the Commission, and the undersigned. Other representatives of WELS were Missionaries John Sullivan and Harris Kaesmeyer, who are serving the ELF; Chaplains Daniel Balge and Dennis Smith, serving WELS members in Europe; and Missionary Kirby Spevacek, who is exploring mission opportunities in former communist countries of Eastern Europe.

Also attending were President George Orvick and Pastor Paul Schneider of the ELS and four representatives of the ELS mission in Czechoslovakia, and Chairman Christer Hugo and Pastor Egil Edvardsen of the Lutheran Confessional Church (Scandinavia).

After the convention the CICR representatives spent two days in discussions with the ELF Theological Commission in the interest of furthering doctrinal consensus.

In response to urgent and long-

standing requests, the WELS and the ELS have taken steps to organize a replacement for the Synodical Conference, which after nearly ninety years of cooperation, passed out of existence in the early 1960s.

The constituting convention of the proposed CELC is planned for April 27-29 in Oberwesel, Germany. While the confessional basis of the CELC will be the same as that of the old Synodical Conference, namely, acceptance of the Holy Scriptures as the guiding rule for doctrine and practice and unqualified agreement with the Lutheran Confessions as a correct exposition of the Scriptures, unlike the Synodical Conference the CELC will be international in scope. Twelve church bodies from around the world have accepted invitations to send representatives to Oberwesel.

In addition to voting and advisory delegates and official guests, any visitors who might like to attend are welcome. Such visitors will, of course, need to pay their own expenses for travel, lodging, and meals. Since the number of visitors who can be accommodated is limited, reservations will be accepted on a first come first served basis. Requests for further information should be addressed to Prof. Wilbert R. Gawrisch, CELC Planning Committee Chairman, 11754 N Seminary Dr, Mequon WI 53092.

—Wilbert R. Gawrisch

# African church forms two synods

The Lutheran Church of Central Africa (LCCA) will now have self-governing boards and committees in Malawi and Zambia, according to *The Lutheran Christian*, official publication of the LCCA. The LCCA is an independent church body started by and affiliated with the WELS.

Official titles of the two new synods are Lutheran Church of Central Africa—Zambia and Lutheran Church of Central Africa—Malawi. Elected president of LCCA—Zambia was Rev. Peter Chikatala and of

LCCA—Malawi was Rev. Joseph Kandaya. Elections were also held for board of trustees, finance and stewardship, missions, board of control, Bible Institutes and Seminary, education, and publication. The two synods have a combined baptized membership of almost 24,000 with over 15,000 located in Malawi.

President Chikatala compared the Lutheran Church of Central Africa to a tree, with one solid trunk, but having a Malawi branch and a Zambia branch growing out it.

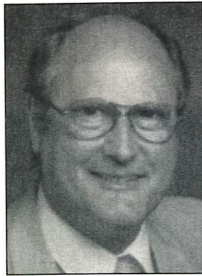
Presently, the LCCA has two Bible Institutes, one in Zambia and another in Malawi. All seminary training, however, is still done in Zambia. Currently, the seminary has 14 second and third year students and eight student vicars in Zambia and Malawi congregations.

A proposal was before the 1992 LCCA convention to begin a second seminary in Malawi in 1995. The delegates decided to have a special committee study the question and report to the next convention.

## Over a century of tradition ends

A 140-year synod tradition ended in early September when Clair V. Ochs accepted the call as administrator of the synod's board of trustees. Previous to his acceptance of the position, it had always been held by a pastor.

The change came as the result of a resolution adopted by the 1987 convention which provided that "a theologically trained man or a consecrated and competent layman may serve as administrator for the board of trustees." Five years



Clair Ochs

later at the retirement of Pastor Robert Van Norstrand as administrator, the trustees chose to exercise the option and called Ochs, a member of the board since 1983.

The board of trustees is the body corporate of the synod and responsible for all its fiscal affairs.

Ochs, 63, was president of Ochs Enterprises, a firm engaged in management consulting, industrial sales, and product development. The firm is located in White Marsh, Maryland.

Ochs (pronounced "Oaks"), born and reared in rural western Pennsylvania, graduated from the high school at Parker, Pa., and for the next four years worked for the

FBI in Washington, DC, in the fingerprinting department. He was drafted into the army in 1952 and spent the next two years in guided missile research and development. After military service Ochs attended American University in Washington, DC, and graduated with a degree in business administration and industrial management. The rest of his career was spent in various management positions in the eastern railroad systems, ending with the CSX Corporation. He retired in 1986.

In 1974 Ochs married Caroline Bess, a native of Fort Atkinson, Wis., who was working for the FBI in Washington, D.C. They have no children.

At the time of his marriage he joined the Wisconsin Synod and became a member of Divine Peace, Largo, Maryland. He is presently a member of Atonement, Baltimore, where he held various positions, including president and chairman of the elders. Ochs and his wife are moving to the Milwaukee area.

On December 14, at the synod administration building, Ochs was installed as administrator of the board of trustees by Pastor William R. Gabb of Watertown, Wis., chairman of the board.

### Book notes

*Face the Facts—The Facts of Life for Young People*, by James A. Aderman. Northwestern Publishing House. 172 pages, soft-cover, \$9.99 plus \$4.00 for postage and handling, stock no. 12N1757.

In 35 years as a book reviewer, I have not come across a book for teenagers about sex which speaks to them so clearly and frankly about their sexuality and sur-

rounds the whole discussion with a thoroughly Christian dimension. In 17 chapters Aderman covers almost all there is to know about Christians and sex. This book deserves a wide circulation among teens in the WELS and elsewhere.

Aderman is a frequent writer for Northwestern Lutheran and recently completed a series on "Christian Families Today."

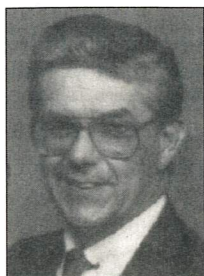
—James Schaefer

*This book may be ordered from NPH by calling 1-800-662-6022.*

## Timm heads Kingdom Workers

David C. Timm, 51, has been named the national executive director of WELS Kingdom Workers.

One of his first projects, said Timm, will be to help organize new local chapters of Kingdom Workers. "We're trying to get interested and dedicated WELS members involved."



David Timm

Kingdom Workers supports the mission endeavors of the Wisconsin Synod by providing information about the needs and opportunities in mission fields, encouraging lay people to take part in mission work, and providing financial support for special mission efforts.

"We work closely with the home and world mission boards," said Timm, "and we fund the projects that we believe otherwise would not take place."

Timm, who was a food broker for 28 years, is a member of Atonement, Milwaukee. His wife Elaine teaches in Atonement's elementary school. They are the parents of three grown children.

Timm will be commissioned on Jan. 24 at Atonement.



**Mission  
of the  
WELS**

**A**s men, women, and children united in faith and worship by the word of God, the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod exists to make disciples throughout the world for time and for eternity, using the gospel to win the lost for Christ and to nurture believers for lives of Christian service, all to the glory of God.

## Concordia to publish Northwestern's Bible commentary

A news item in Missouri Synod's *Reporter* announced recently that Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, has made arrangements with Northwestern Publishing House, Milwaukee, to publish Northwestern's *The People's Bible* commentary series under the title *People's Bible Commentary*. The financial arrangements for the publication have been completed. *The People's Bible* (which Northwestern will continue to publish) is a lay commentary on the entire Bible on the basis of the New International Version. Twelve volumes of the series, six each from the New and Old Testaments, are now available from Concordia.

It was also announced that a new commentary will be undertaken by Concordia, the *Concordia Bible*

*Commentary*. It will be "written by top Lutheran scholars and exegetes and will feature theological commentary on the original Bible text."

The first two volumes are tentatively scheduled for 1995 release, with the entire series taking at least 10 years to complete. Concordia Publishing House says the commentary intends to fill the need currently being met by Lenski's commentary on the New Testament (50 years old), and Keil-Delitzsch's commentary on the Old Testament (100-plus years old).

The series is being underwritten by a grant from an anonymous donor. General editor is Dr. Jonathan Grothe, president of Concordia Lutheran Seminary, St. Catharines, Ontario.

### Also in the news

A national workshop will be held August 13-15 for persons leading and teaching in **religious training for the mentally handicapped**. Details will be provided in the spring. For more information, write the WELS Commission on Special Ministries, 2929 Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398. . . . Pastor Edgar Herman reports the completion of the first of a series of **correspondence courses for prisoners**. You may reach him at 25385 E Huron River Dr, Flat Rock MI 48134. . . . January 17 is **Evangelism Sunday**. Friendship evangelism (personal witnessing) will be the focus of 1993 evangelism efforts. . . . The WELS' initial request for registration in **Russia** has been denied. An alternative is to send in missionaries who would teach English as a second language in Russian schools. Teachers of English are allowed to use religious materials, including the Bible. . . . Charles Skeels, member investment counselor, reminds us that February 7 is **Church Extension Fund Sunday**. CEF funds land, chapels, and parsonages for missions at low interest rates "CEF Sunday has generally been a time we encourage an offering for the CEF," notes Skeels. Skeels also reported a record year in member loans to CEF of \$11.2 million. Total member investments now amount to \$45.9 million. . . . At its October meeting the Board for Worker Training authorized **six new professors for synodical schools**. Increased enrollment at the prep schools and Dr. Martin Luther College was cited. Calling the professors is subject to funding.

## David's Star observes 150 years

The second oldest Lutheran church and school in Wisconsin, David's Star, Jackson, Wisconsin, will observe its 150th anniversary in 1993. A year-long observance is planned, beginning Jan. 17 when the congregation welcomes President Mischke as its guest speaker.

The founders of the congregation emigrated from Germany and settled in the wilderness 25 miles north of Milwaukee in October 1843. They immediately set to work building a two-story log building that was to serve as church, school, and parsonage. By December they had issued calls to Pastor Gustav Kindermann and Teacher Carl Stiemke.

In 1856 the congregation built its present church building, made from limestone quarried from land owned by church members. Although the interior has been redecorated and a narthex added, the massive stone walls of the original building still stand.

Originally a member of the Buffalo Synod, the congregation ended its affiliation with that group in 1862 and remained independent until it joined the Wisconsin Synod in 1892.

Pastors Richard Gurgel and Martin Janke serve the congrega-



tion, which has a baptized membership of over 1000. The school, headed by principal Frederick Mahnke, has a faculty of 10 teachers and over 240 students in preschool through eighth grade.

During David's Star's 150 years, 66 sons and daughters of the congregation entered the ministry, 23 as pastors and 43 as teachers. Many of them will take part in the monthly anniversary services.

## Church moves to another state

Churches sometimes relocate, but a move across state lines is a rare occurrence. On October 11, members and friends of Apostles Lutheran Church met for a rededication service at its new worship home in Bedford Township, Michigan. What made the celebration unique was that the founding fathers originally established the church in Toledo, Ohio.

Over half the members were retired. The Toledo church was in a changing neighborhood, and only a few members still lived in the vicinity. Most members lived in a metropolitan region that included Bedford Township, ten miles away and the fastest growing suburb of Toledo.

In 1991 another denomination offered to purchase the property, and so the members of Apostles reluctantly decided to leave their beautiful stone church of Gothic architecture. At first it seemed they would have to follow the procedure

most new missions use—rent a temporary place for worship, buy land, develop plans, and build—quite a feat for a group of mostly elderly people.

Then some church property became available in Bedford Township. It included a fifteen-year-old church building and a one-year-old parsonage on seven acres of land. The church property is in the middle of Bedford Township and between the villages of Temperance and Lambertville.

Through Lutheran Association for Church Extension, Apostles obtained a loan. In February the purchase of the new property took place and remodeling began. Volunteers also began painting inside the building—a large fellowship hall, the worship area, four classrooms, two offices, restrooms, nursery, library, kitchen, and hallways.

Members of Apostles wore their work clothes to evening Lenten ser-

vices at the new church and used the time before and afterward to paint. Every Saturday was a work day. And there were potlucks and lunches for the workers. The fellowship helped strengthen the congregation.

Help also came from Arlington Avenue and Zion churches in Toledo, and St. Timothy and Resurrection of Maumee.

Members owe a debt of gratitude also to Rick Swanson, a member of Emanuel, Lansing. Rick moved the pipe organ and installed it in the new church. He completed the job the day before the rededication service.

Easter Day saw the first Sunday worship service for Apostles in Bedford Township, and it was an especially joyous time. It is encouraging to see visitors in church almost every Sunday now and to receive new members.

—Elton Bickel

## Thirty years of favorite hymns

We all enjoy singing and hearing the beautiful hymns of our Lutheran heritage. Mrs. Alma Schwan, Marshall, Minnesota, asked Professor Martin Albrecht to record favorite hymns sung by Dr. Martin Luther College choir and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary choir for the shut-ins and residents of nursing homes who can't hear these hymns sung in their churches. Her initial gift to start such a program has brought joy and inspiration to thousands of Christians over the past 30 years.

Professor Albrecht left the music

### Michigan District news

**St. James, Portage**, observed its 25th anniversary Sept. 13. . . . **Trinity, Elkton**, celebrated its 100th anniversary Sept. 27. . . . **David Krueger** was appointed circuit pastor for the southern circuit of the Northern Conference. . . . Nearly 50 congregations joined in a festival service Nov. 1 marking the 475th anniversary of the Reformation and the 100th anniversary of the federation of the joint synod. . . . **Tisha Moore**, a 1992 graduate of Michigan Lutheran Seminary, is the recipient of a scholarship from the St. Luke Hospital Foundation. The foundation offers one scholarship each year to an MLS graduate who chooses to prepare for a medical profession. . . . **Huron Valley LHS**, Westland, is taking 15 students to "Focus on the ministry" at Northwestern College. For the second year, Huron Valley hosted three exchange students from Germany for two weeks. . . . **Jeffrey Mitchell**, a Huron Valley LHS senior, is part of the USA Select Seventeen, a group that prepares students to train for the Olympics.

—James Langebartels

department at DMLC in 1962 for Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. During the same year he began to put favorite hymns sung by choirs at both schools on long play records and to make them available for purchase. In 1975 he started to put the hymns on cassette tapes, resulting in a 3-tape set recording 58 hymns.

Cassettes 1 and 2 feature the mixed choir of Dr. Martin Luther College and the male chorus of the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. On cassette 3 all hymns, most of which were arranged by Professor Albrecht, are sung by the seminary male choir. Among the favorites are "God's Word is Our Great Heritage," "Beautiful Savior," "Abide, O Dearest Jesus," "The

### Southeastern Wisconsin District news

On November 15, **St. John, Mequon**, rededicated its church following an extensive interior restoration of the traditional Gothic architecture. Pastor Wayne Mueller preached, and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary brass choir and the congregation's choirs provided special music. . . . "Alive in Christ" was the focus of over 400 high school students who participated in the 26th annual **national WELS Choral Fest** at Kettle Moraine LHS, Jackson, on November 6-8. Twenty Lutheran high schools, from Washington to Michigan and from Arizona to Minneapolis, participated in the Friday evening show choir concert. Miss Mary Prange, Dr. William Braun, and Professor James Tiefel served as clinicians. Mrs. Lila Snyder was the organist on the new Rogers organ. On Sunday afternoon a sacred concert with over 400 voices climaxed the weekend activities.

—Robert Sievert

Church's One Foundation," "Rock of Ages," "A Mighty Fortress," "Jesus Lead Thou On," and "The Lord's My Shepherd."

Orders have come from all over the United States and Canada. A woman from Arizona writes, "Please send 2 complete sets of your tapes. We are planning to use these for Christmas gifts." An ELS pastor in North Dakota writes, "The recordings are beautiful. My wife and I are listening to them as we're spending a quiet evening at home." A Huntsville, Alabama, woman comments, "Thank you for the beautiful tapes. If you have them, please send me two more sets. That's the best bargain I've gotten this year."

The cost is \$5.00 per cassette or \$15.00 for the set, including postage. "Robin Yount was looking forward to number 3,000 and I'm looking forward to number 2,000," quipped Albrecht. He will be sending out the 2000th tape during 1993.

Tony Lusthoff, a member at Mt. Lebanon, Milwaukee, makes all the cassettes for the program. Anyone interested in ordering one or all three cassettes entitled Our Favorite Hymns may address orders to Professor Martin Albrecht, 315 Highland Drive, Grafton WI 53024-2312, or call 414/375-3975.

—Robert Sievert

### WELS Connection videotapes

#### February topics

- Feasibility Study Committee

#### March topics

- Bill Shadd from Siloah, Milwaukee
- Northwestern Lutheran magazine

#### April topics

- "Training Christians for Ministry"
- President Mischke's Easter message

For more information, contact *CCFS, WELS Administration Building, 2929 N Mayfair Road, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398*. Cost of a year's subscription is \$48.

## She's been singing for 70 years

For 70 years Clara Olm, a member of St. Matthew of Appleton, Wis., has been singing in her church choir. On October 11 she was recognized by the choir and congregation for her long service as choir member, Sunday school teacher, and as a member of its altar guild. A reception followed the service.

Over the years she has had a number of songs and hymns she especially likes. Right now her favorite choir selection is "On Eagles' Wings" by Michael Joncas.

She has had no formal voice training and said, "I don't know a note. I know when you go down or up. I've always been a good follower.

"I went through a lot of choir directors," said Olm. John Kander is the current director.

After singing with the choir for 70 years, it's Clara Olm's legs, not her voice, that have given out. Olm can still sing the hymns in a strong, clear voice. But to climb several flights of stairs from the basement rehearsal hall to the choir loft has become stressful.

Not too stressful to surmount at Christmas or Easter time though, said Olm. She's not ready to give up singing with the choir on these special occasions that are so dear to her heart and memories.

## Parents are glad they chose a Christian school

"In some small way, if this letter can help encourage other parents to make the right choice in giving their children a Christian education, please share it with them," wrote the parents who sent this letter to Richard Huebner, principal of Immanuel, Appleton, Wisconsin.

Dear Mr. Huebner,

John and I want to take this opportunity to say "thank you" for the nine years you and your staff have encouraged, nurtured, and cared for our daughter.

We both were "doubting Thomases" when deciding whether or not to enroll Michelle at Immanuel Lutheran School. We thought Immanuel might not be able to provide a well-rounded education for our daughter and prepare her for her future years. The pastor helped us see the importance of a Christian education and guided us in making the right choice. Boy, how wrong we were for doubting our school!

Words cannot express our gratitude for the blessings Michelle received. It has been the greatest thrill of all to watch our daughter grow in faith. No public school could have given this gift to Michelle.

We sincerely commend the teachers at Immanuel. Michelle has thoroughly enjoyed school because she has continued to receive encouragement to develop the talents God has given her.

May God continue to bless your work.

John and Lou Ann

### Obituaries

#### Kurt F. Koeplin 1929-1992

Kurt Frederick Koeplin was born August 10, 1929, in Bay City, Michigan. He died Nov. 14, 1992, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

A graduate of Concordia theological seminary, Springfield, Ill., he served in Williamston and Tecumseh, Michigan, and at Atonement in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

During his ministry he was a member of the WELS Board for World Missions, chairman of the executive committee for Southeast Asian missions, past chairman of the synod's public relations committee, and a regular contributor to Northwestern Lutheran. He was also co-director of the Lutheran Radio Committee and served on the Southeast Wisconsin District Mission Board and Wisconsin Lutheran High School board.

He is survived by his wife,

Nancy, and five children: Karla (Pastor Manfred) Schmidt, Crystal (Michael) Sturm, Cynthia (Pastor William) Natsis, Karin (Herb) Schrank, and Kurt; nine grandchildren; and one brother, Erich.

Services were held at Atonement, Milwaukee.

#### Alma M. Nitz 1895-1992

Alma Maria Nitz, nee Pingel, died Oct. 14, 1992, in Watertown, Wisconsin. She was born Oct. 9, 1895, in Hustisford, Wisconsin.

She attended Northwestern College and taught in Lutheran schools in Colby and Manitowoc, Wis. After her marriage to Henry C. Nitz, she and her husband started the East Fork, Arizona, boarding school and orphanage for the Apaches in their home.

She is survived by two daughters, Ramona (Wallace) Heikinen and Naomi (Ray) Schultz; four sons, Frederich (Grace), Joel (Irene), Paul (Carol), and Marcus (Marguerita); 31 grandchildren, and 48 great-grandchildren.

## Christian Peace Corps for Russia

Recently at the Anaheim Convention Center, Calif., representatives of a joint venture of 60 Christian educational groups announced a plan to send a "Christian Peace Corps" into as many as 120,000 public schools in Russia to help in teaching the children of the former Soviet Union about Jesus Christ and the Bible.

"It is a miracle," said Aleksandr Asmolov, Russian deputy of education, "that the Christianity of the United States is going to help its brothers in Russian. But isn't that the real essence of Christianity?"

The joint venture, called the CoMission, plans to send 120,000

people—laden with books, films, and videos—to the former Soviet Union over the next five years to train public school teachers in Bible education and teach adults and children directly as well.

While expressing thanks, Asmolov also stressed that state-run schools will remain secular. His country, he said, and the other republics are religiously diverse. In addition to Christians there are many Muslims, Jews, and atheists.

Asmolov said that his country won't run the risk of simply replacing one state-mandated religion—atheism—with another. "We don't want mono-ideology, because mono-

ideology often means absence of any individual thought."

Asmolov said that some education about Christianity and the Bible could take place in social studies classes, some in optional classes at the schools, and some at independent centers.

"There is some questioning of why Christianity is being brought from the outside," said Paul Eshleman, a vice chairman of the new coalition. But the goal, he said, is to reintroduce a region to Christianity—not convert it to a particular denomination.

## Magazines cease publication

According to the Associated Press, two of the nation's oldest religious magazines, American Baptist and Christian Herald, have ceased publication.

Both the 115-year-old Christian Herald, started in 1878 and based in Chappaqua, N. Y., and the 189-year-old American Baptist, whose antecedent magazine started in 1803, cited declining circulation.

Philip Jenks, executive editor of American Baptist, a denominational monthly based in Valley Forge, Pa., says it will be replaced by a newsletter.

Christian Herald, an interdenominational evangelical monthly that was influential in progressive labor and immigration legislation in the early part of the century, will continue some ministries of compassion, such as a Bowery mission.

## Pro-life Lutherans meet

Lutherans for Life, a Missouri Synod pro-life organization which welcomes other Lutherans, met at Cleveland in November and discussed the need to refocus its activities toward personal contacts and education within the church and society as changes in government policies regarding abortion and other life issues are anticipated.

Meeting under the theme, "Choosing Life in a Changing World," Lutherans from 27 states attended the 10th annual conven-

tion. The organization has nearly 300 local chapters and 13 state affiliates.

"The changes under President-elect Bill Clinton will be far-reaching for us," said Dr. Jean Garton of Little Rock, Ark., president of LFL. Garton also expressed concern that Christians are not following the Bible's directives on abortion, "mercy killing," and other aspects of human life. "As a society," she said, "we have become a juvenile culture because of our self-focus."

## Board votes for Bible

The Bible will remain in school libraries of the Brooklyn Center, Minn., school district by unanimous decision of the district's school board.

Gene Kasmar, an atheist living in the suburban Minneapolis district, had petitioned the board to remove the Bible on the grounds that it contained obscene and violent language.

The decision was cheered by some 600 onlookers who crowded a school cafeteria where the board was meeting. Many waved Bibles they had brought with them to the meeting when the vote was announced.

A lawyer supporting the school board's decision said that the Brooklyn Center case may have set an important precedent.



**Nation under God . . .** Where did the pledge of allegiance to the flag come from? Was it written by a minister? Is that why it contains the words "under God"? According to Religious News Service, the pledge first appeared in the Sept. 8, 1892, issue of *The Youth's Companion*, a weekly magazine published in Boston. The first version read: "I pledge allegiance to my Flag and to the Republic for which it stands; one Nation, indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for all." In 1917, the magazine stated that the author was James B. Upham, an executive of the magazine who had died in 1910. But in 1923, Rev. Francis Bellamy, a former member of the *Youth's Companion* editorial staff, publicly claimed authorship. The claim was upheld by a ruling of the United States Flag Association in 1939, following an investigation. Although Bellamy was a one-time minister, the phrase "under God" that appears after "one nation" was added by an act of Congress in 1954.

**From swimming center to Lutheran cathedral . . .** The old St. Peter's Cathedral in St. Petersburg, Russia, is once again a Lutheran place of worship more than 50 years after it was closed and converted into a swimming center. The first worship service was held in the renovated church building on October 31. The cathedral was converted in 1963 into the "most beautiful swimming center in St. Petersburg" (then known as Leningrad).

**The states of religion . . .** According to a report in *Christianity Today*, west of the Rocky Mountains is the place to reach unchurched people, based on a recent study on religious activity. The research found that fewer than one-fourth of residents in some sections of Colorado, Oregon, and Montana belong to any religious group. The unaffiliated outnumber the affiliated at least three to one in most Western states. The study also found there were substantial areas in Michigan, Ohio, West Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Florida where less than half the population claims church membership. Meanwhile, areas having the highest religious affiliation are the southeastern states and middle America, reaching from Texas and Louisiana upwards to North Dakota, Minnesota, and Wisconsin.

**Bibles to China . . .** East Gate Ministries International, led by Ned Graham, a son of evangelist Billy Graham, says it has reached agreement with Chinese church officials and the United Bible Society to supply 1.1 million Bibles to China over the next five years. Graham said the Bibles would be printed in China at the Amity Press in Nanjing. Graham's mother, Ruth, is a founding member of East Gate Ministries' board and the daughter of L. Nelson Bell, a medical missionary in China from 1916 to 1941.

**Friends, not rallies, make converts . . .** A national survey by the English Council of Churches has found that personal relationships, not Billy Graham-style rallies or television evangelists, are what count most in drawing people to church. Only four percent of those surveyed said they had been brought to Christ through big rallies. Canon John Finney, heading the survey, said at a press conference that he hoped the research proves that big-event evangelism is a poor way to approach people about faith. He said the report showed that evangelization "depended primarily on personal relationships."

**Protestant religion joyless says ex-dean . . .** Mainline Protestantism has become a "joyless religion" where praise of God takes a back seat to improving people, said Leander E. Keck, former dean of Yale Divinity School, who was speaker for the school's annual prestigious Beecher Lectures recently. "I do not know why so much mainline Protestantism has become a joyless religion," Keck said. "Perhaps we are more impressed by the problems of the world than by the power of God." According to Keck, worship that sets an agenda beyond praise forgets and perhaps denies that worship of God is an end in itself. "If praise is the heart of worship, then making it useful destroys it because it introduces an ulterior motive for praise, and ulterior motives mean manipulation."

**Tax notices to churches . . .** Churches in Berkeley, Calif., are being ordered to pay taxes like other nonprofit organizations in the city. Last month, the city informed churches that they will be taxed 60 cents for every \$1,000 in contributions they receive. A mailing to that effect also told the congregations they must register like other nonprofit organizations. City finance director Sonali Bose said about 300 of an estimated 600 nonprofit groups operating in Berkeley are registered with the city. The municipality, she said, must either exclude all nonprofit groups from taxation or tax them all equally. A 1990 ruling by the US Supreme Court calls for such equalization of taxation.

**Catholic Church not wealthy, says cardinal . . .** A cardinal has called the public perception of the Roman Catholic Church as wealthy a "mistake." In a recent interview Cardinal Rosalio Lara attributed this impression to the priceless art treasures the Vatican owns. He said the art treasures do not represent real wealth because they cannot be sold. The cost of their upkeep is higher than the income derived from them. For 1991 he said the deficit amounted to \$87.5 million.

News items appearing in *News around the world* represent current events of general interest to the readers of *Northwestern Lutheran* and should not be interpreted as representing the views of the editors.

**The deadline for submitting notices is five weeks before the first of each month.**

**CALL FOR NOMINATIONS  
Dr. Martin Luther College**

With the concurrence of the Board for Worker Training, the Board of Control of Dr. Martin Luther College requests the voting constituency of the synod to nominate candidates for the position of music professor on the Dr. Martin Luther College faculty. The person called to fill this position will replace Professor Larry Zimmerman, who has resigned effective December 31, 1992.

Nominees for this position should be qualified to teach general education courses in music: fundamentals of music theory, vocal skills, and history. Nominees should also be able to teach keyboard and direct choir.

Nominations with pertinent information for this position should be in the hands of the secretary by January 25, 1993. A complete list of nominees will be available upon request from the secretary, Pastor Robert A. Bitter, 173 Waupun St, Box 277, Oakfield WI 53065.

**CALL FOR NOMINATIONS  
Michigan Lutheran Seminary**

Michigan Lutheran Seminary has been authorized by the Board for Worker Training to call for nominations to fill two professorships, both of which are subject to funding in February 1993. MLS seeks one nominee who is qualified to teach English and assist with recruitment, and another who is qualified to teach science (particularly biology) and mathematics, and to assist with athletics. Teachers at MLS must have or acquire synodical and state certification.

Please send nominations prior to February 15, 1993, to Mr. Jerold Meier, secretary, MLS Board of Control, 397 Auburn, Plymouth MI 48170. A complete list of nominees will be available upon request from the secretary.

**MEDICAL SERVICE AND MINISTRY OPPORTUNITY**

We need medical professionals (doctors of all specialties, dentists, nurses, etc.) to staff two mobile medical clinics in Ukraine operated by Thoughts of Faith, a church-related organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. These clinics minister spiritually and medically to children and pregnant women, especially those affected by the nuclear disaster of Chernobyl. Health care in Ukraine is at least 40 years behind the US. There are many opportunities to witness your faith, serve people medically, and improve the quality of health care through seminars and lectures. Our program is multi-faceted and very flexible. Please contact Administrator Ed Meier, Medical Clinic on Wheels, PO Box 37, Stoughton WI 53589.

**OWLS TOUR**

Join us in April for a tour to New Orleans with visits to Civil War sites and plantations. For more information contact Reuben Feld, W4262 Emerald Dr, Watertown WI 53094; 414/699-3780.

**HANDBELL FESTIVAL**

The western region handbell festival will be held April 24-25 at Luther High School, Onalaska, Wis., and hosted by St. Matthew, Winona, Minn. For additional information contact Sandy Graves, 507/452-8515 or Julie Haessig, 507/454-6283.

**ITEMS AVAILABLE**

**Altar items**—Wooden cross and candle stick holders, hymn board and numbers, book stand, paraments. Available for cost of shipping. Pastor Dan Schoeffel, 226 Essex Knoll Dr, Coraopolis PA 15108; 412/269-0111.

**Communion set**—In good condition, will serve 150 communicants. Five trays of individual silver plated chalices including base and cover. Pastor Tim Grams; 715/536-3404.

**ITEMS NEEDED**

**Hymnals**—Need about 20. Our Savior, 560 11th St NE, East Wenatchee WA 98802; Dan Jordan, 509/664-5498.

**HOME SCHOOLERS CONVENTION**

WELL at HOME, an organization of families who educate their children at home, will convene Sept. 9-12 at Snow Mountain Ranch near Winter Park, Colorado. For more information, or to receive the WELL at HOME newsletter, contact Kurt and Luane Austad, 3751 N Iriquois Circle, Sedala CO 80135; 303/688-8579.

**SYNOD CONVENTION**

The fifty-second biennial convention of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod will be held August 2-6, 1993 at Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Michigan. Details will be announced later.

Any memorials that are to be included in the Book of Reports and Memorials (BoRaM) must be submitted to the office of the president by April 7, 1993.

*David Worgull  
WELS Secretary*

**WELCOM 93**

**Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Camping and Outdoor Ministry Leadership Seminar**

A seminar for congregations which operate or are interested in beginning Christ-centered camping programs for children and families will be held April 30-May 2 at Camp Phillip, near Wautoma, Wis. The \$30 registration fee will cover meals and housing. Workshop materials will be provided through a grant from AAL. Participants will receive planning materials, training resources, strategies, and models for planning and implementing a Christ-centered camp/retreat programs for youth and families. Contact Gerald Kastens, administrator for youth discipleship, 414/771-9357; or Pastor Thomas Klusmeyer, Camp Phillip director, 414/787-3202. April 15 is the deadline for receiving registrations.

**WINTER VISITORS**

**Sebring, Florida**—Worship with us at New Life (ELS). Sunday service, 10 a.m. Bible class and Sunday school, 9 a.m. 2345 US Hwy 27 South, in the Banyan Plaza. Pastor Joel Willitz, 813/385-2293.

**Bullhead City, Arizona/Laughlin, Nevada**—Family of God (ELS) worships at 1863 Panadero Rd, just south of Bullhead City. Sunday worship, 8:30 a.m.; Sunday school and Bible class, 9:45 a.m. Pastor Michael Smith; 602/763-5303

**MISSION SEMINAR 1993**

**Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary**

*"Raise a Banner for the Nations"*

- February 3  
7:30 am—Opening devotion  
7:45 am—America: A Banner among us  
9:20 am—Apacheland: 100 years of rallying around the Banner  
10:55 am—Australia: Bringing the Banner through the gates
- February 4  
7:30 am—Opening devotion  
7:45 am—Japan: A Banner that stands alone  
9:20 am—Africa: Preparing future standard-bearers  
10:55 am—Raise a Banner for the nations

The student body invites everyone to attend any or all sessions. Seminar booklets may be ordered for \$3.00 each, if picked up at the Seminar or for \$3.75, if mailed. Send payment before January 20.

To reserve a seat contact: Stephen Geiger, 6717 W Wartburg Circle, Mequon WI 53092.

**CHANGE IN MINISTRY**

- PASTORS:**  
**Backhaus, Curt S.**, King of Kings, from Portsmouth, Va., to MLS, Saginaw, Mich.  
**Ewald, Gregory E.**, from Hope, Lexington, So. Car., to Good Shepherd, Burton, Mich.  
**Jahnke, Gene E.**, from Good Shepherd, Novi, Mich., to Palos, Palos Heights, Ill.  
**Pope, Stephen D.**, from St. Paul, Hurley, Wis., to Mt. Olive, Appleton, Wis.  
**Raasch, Charles A.**, from Trinity, Smiths Mill, Minn., to Shoreland LHS, Somers, Wis.  
**Rakos, Joel K.**, from Holy Cross, Oklahoma City, Okla., to Commonwealth of Independent States

**WELS SINGLES TOUR**

WELS singles: Join us for a spring breakaway Caribbean tour April 11-16. Travel from Tampa to Playa Del Carmen, Cozumel, and Key West. Per person, \$735, including air fare. Contact Ann Thurber, Regency Travel, 414/327-7000.

**NAMES WANTED**

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

**AIRPORT AREA, PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA**—Abiding Word. Pastor Dan Schoeffel, 226 Essex Knoll Dr, Coraopolis PA 15108; 412/269-0111.

**EVANSVILLE, INDIANA / HENDERSON AND OWENS-BORO, KENTUCKY**—Worship/Bible study each Sunday. Contact Pastor Steven Mischke, 10415 Scarlet Oaks Ct, Louisville KY 40241; 502/425-1101.

**RADCLIFF/FORT KNOX/ELIZABETHTOWN, KENTUCKY**—Worship/Bible study on second Sunday. Contact Pastor Steven Mischke, 10415 Scarlet Oaks Ct, Louisville KY 40241; 502/425-1101.

**AUDIOVISUAL LENDING LIBRARY**

**MY PERSONAL VIEW OF NORTHWESTERN  
(VHS - 124 - NWC)**

1992 16 min. 1/2" VHS color JSCA  
Northwestern students describe their experiences with classes, instructors, dorm life, and extracurricular activities. This video is another important tool for encouraging young men to prepare for the preaching ministry.

**WELS IN BRAZIL: THE FIRST FOUR YEARS  
(VHS - 125 - LAM)**

1992 17 min. 1/2" VHS color JSCA  
Our WELS mission in Brazil has adjusted and matured during its first four years. The missionaries describe the progress being made there. A Kingdom Workers production.

**GO FORTH IN MEXICO—ADELANTE EN MEXICO  
(VHS - 126 - MEX)**

1992 24 min. 1/2" VHS color JSCA  
Recent changes in government policy have improved the climate for mission work among the people of Mexico. This video describes the work being done there. A Kingdom Workers production.

With annual subscription or rental, order from AUDIO-VISUAL LENDING LIBRARY, Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 N 113th St, Milwaukee WI 53226-3284. Phone 414/475-6600, ext.127.

**WELS VIDEO/FILM RENTAL**

**LIVE OPTION  
1992 30 min. 1/2" VHS color JSCA**

In this somewhat simplistic story a caring pastor helps a troubled mother and her pregnant daughter decide against having an abortion. **Rental: \$5.00**

**THE BIBLE STORY CARTOONS**  
The Family Entertainment Network has produced this series of Bible stories in enjoyable cartoon style. Although the stories are generously embellished by the author's imagination, the events depicted remain for the most part true to the biblical narrative. While intended primarily for children, adults can also benefit from viewing and discussing these videos. The series includes:

- The King Is Born**  
1992 30 min. 1/2" VHS color PJA
- John The Baptist**  
1992 30 min. 1/2" VHS color PJA
- The Miracles Of Jesus**  
1992 30 min. 1/2" VHS color PJA
- The Prodigal Son**  
1992 30 min. 1/2" VHS color PJA
- The Good Samaritan**  
1992 30 min. 1/2" VHS color PJA
- He Is Risen**  
1992 30 min. 1/2" VHS color PJA
- Saul Of Tarsus**  
1992 30 min. 1/2" VHS color PJA

**Rental: \$5.00 each**

Send your order for renting the videos to WELS VIDEO/FILM RENTAL SERVICE, Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 N 113th St, Milwaukee WI 53226-3284. Phone 414/475-6600, ext.127.

# Seated in the heavenly realms

As a gift of grace,  
we share in Christ's  
wealth and power now

by James A. Aderman

**Y**ears ago at Northwestern Prep students sat at assigned places in the cafeteria. Seniors sat at the ends of the table where there was more elbow room. Freshmen, sandwiched between the upperclassmen, were ideally positioned to pass the platters of food from one end of the table to the other and to flag down the waiters when a platter needed a refill. No one liked sitting in the freshmen's lowly place.

Satan would like Christians to believe that we have been assigned the lowest of seats in the Lord's kingdom, that we are without rank and worth. The only thing he would like more is for us to believe we have no place in the kingdom. But God's word promises our place in the Son has astounding significance.

## Jesus in a seat of honor

Ephesians 2:6 pledges God has "seated us with him (self) in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus." Let's examine that position of distinction.

The concept of a seat of honor figures prominently in our understanding of who Jesus is. Remember how our Lord told the Sanhedrin early Good Friday morning, "From now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God" (Luke 22:69). There is no position in the universe more powerful than that of the risen and ruling Jesus Christ. That's why the Bible maintains, "God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church" (Ephesians 1:22) and "[Jesus] ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe" (Ephesians 4:10). Philippians 2:9-11, Colossians 1:15-20, Revelation 1:12-18 say even more about that.

## We have a seat of honor

Now for the incredible status Jesus' position guarantees us: "Because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ

and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:4-7). Read those verses again.

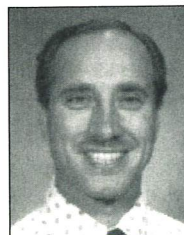
Through faith in Jesus we are the beneficiaries of his victories. Jesus died and rose again. Consequently, we have died to sin and are now alive to God. Jesus' victories are our victories. We have become co-heirs with the Savior of all that belongs to him.

But there are additional blessings. Jesus' ascension into heaven and his coronation as king of kings means we share in his lofty place; we are seated in the heavenly realms. That's how the saints in heaven are described in Revelation 4:4, 20:4.

However, we don't have to wait to get to heaven to be seated there. Based on the complete forgiveness we have in Jesus, we are already seated in the heavenly realms. Look again at this verb: "God . . . seated us. . ." It is past tense; it describes an accomplished event. As surely as he "made us alive with Christ" and "raised us up with Christ," he has already "seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus."

Our eternal destination is so secure that God speaks of it as accomplished even while we wait to enjoy it fully. Jesus said, "He who believes has everlasting life" (John 6:47). Luther remarked about this promise, "On these words one should preach a thousand years. . . . Here Christ directly promises eternal life to him who believes on him. He does not say: Whoever believes on me will have eternal life, but: As soon as you believe on me, you already have it. He does not speak of future grants but of present gifts."

Our place is at the head table, an eternal seat of honor. As a gift of grace, we share in Christ's wealth and power now. That's our place in the Son.



James Aderman is pastor of Fairview, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.



**The Lutheran Vanguard Band of Wisconsin**, made up of 163 students from seven Lutheran high schools in the state, walked off with first place in the Calgary Stampede Parade last summer and of 23 bands was named the outstanding parade band of 1992. Band members also canvassed for St. Paul, a mission in Calgary. They visited 1200 homes, of which about 240 were tagged as prospects for further contact by the congregation.

## Autumn evening

There was a slight breeze  
 In an autumn evening  
 But the earth was still,  
 As still as a humid summer day.  
 The air was warm,  
 The sunset was a roaring fire.  
 It filled the evening with a pink touch.  
 Looking around, I saw so many wonderful things.  
 As the sun faded, my heart wanted to melt.  
 The harvest looked like a golden mine  
 of shiny coins.  
 As the breeze flared in my hair,  
 It made me feel so alone in the world.  
 I said to myself,  
 What a wonderful Indian autumn evening.  
 And I never forgot  
 God made it all.

*Alexandra Larson  
 Zion Lutheran School  
 Trinity Lutheran Church  
 Osceola, Wisconsin*

## To my friend

We don't own each other;  
 We are just friends.

We make each other laugh,  
 Because we are friends.

We can cry to each other.  
 That's what friends do.

We trust each other.  
 That trust is whole and complete,  
 And we are friends.

The sound of silence comforts.  
 My friend—you are here.

The reason I know  
 Is not that you tell me and  
 Not that you show me.

But I see it in your eyes,  
 and I feel it between us.  
 Don't you?

You are my friend.

*Kim Perez  
 Michigan Lutheran Seminary  
 Saginaw, Michigan*

## Rebirth

In the beautiful early morning  
 With the dew covered grass  
 Birds sing the glory of a new day.

The sun starts to rise  
 And the wind gently blows  
 As the whole world washes up.

The sweet smell of lilac fills the air  
 And a butterfly gracefully flutters about  
 As this new day begins.

A robin chirps, with the renewal of nature's cycle  
 As God paints the world from his palate of green.  
 We see spring is here and life is truly wonderful.

*Lisa Clark  
 Nebraska Lutheran High School, Waco  
 Gethsemane Lutheran Church, Omaha, Nebraska*

TeenTalk is edited by Karen Spencer. Young people ages 12-18 are invited to send brief articles, artwork, photos, or news on teen activities to *TeenTalk*, Karen Spencer, 2297 E 25th Place, Yuma AZ 85365. Include your name, address, school, church, and a self addressed stamped envelope for return.

# Do you know God?

When you know God,  
you know how he feels about you  
and what he is trying to tell you

by Paul E. Kelm

Once pagan priests read omens and entrails to determine for people how the gods felt about them. Horoscopes are a do-it-yourself version of that superstition. When you don't know God in his word, you look for signs in his creation.

Not our problem. Or is it? Maybe, like me, you've been tempted to ask, "What are you trying to tell me, God?" as you try to read his will in events. Maybe you want to measure how God feels about you by what's been happening to you. You want to interpret success or happiness as God's endorsement of you and what you're doing. Reversals and heartaches leave you wondering what's wrong with you, why God is punishing you.

A cause-and-effect explanation for life suggests something you did is responsible for what happens to you. Pride or guilt can drive a suspicious wedge between you and your God. And then it really gets serious. Read Job to see how serious.

## In his word

Unless we know our God in his word, we will take one of three self-destructive paths. We may protest our innocence, question God's justice, and put God on probation. Until he does right by us, we'll keep our distance from him. We may despair and conclude we could never be right with God. Or we may try to deal with God, do right in exchange for some evidence that he's on our side.

Once priests offered sacrifices to appease God, a bloody business. It seems somehow cleaner to buy God off with a few bucks, a good deed or two, and an occasional visit to church. When you don't know God in his Son, you'll look for him in a transaction.

Of course, you know you aren't going to keep your end of the bargain—giving up all those vices—so you're not surprised when your life takes a few more hits. But you and God have a sort of understanding. As long as you're not too bad, he won't treat you too badly.

## In his son

Unless you know God in his Son, religion becomes a stand-off. You do what's necessary to keep God off your back. Every so often you have a nagging fear that maybe God isn't playing this game. But hey, things aren't all that bad, so "the man upstairs" must still like you, right?

Once pagan priests offered a mystical encounter with God. Magic and miracles—the supernatural. A few gurus, some psychological jargon to satisfy the skeptical, some testimonials from the stars, and all this is New Age. When you don't know God in his Son and in his word, you'll look for him in yourself.

You'll tell yourself you can. You can be that good person God wants. But when you aren't, you'll tell yourself you should. You should keep commandments and act like a Christian. But when you don't, you'll tell yourself you can't. When you don't know Christ was righteous for you, you're stuck with pretending you're something you're not while denying the something he died to make you.

Because you know your God in his Son, you know how God feels about you. He loves you. He's forgiven you. He's adopted you. He lives in you. See Jesus, know God.

Because you know your God in his word, you know what God is trying to tell you. His will is unchanging, his will to give you eternity with him and his will to direct your life until then. What he hasn't told you in his word, you don't need to know. What he has told you in his word convinces you to trust him for everything else. When you're tempted to look around and wonder about God, to look inside and try to find God,

then be reminded to look up and know God—in his Son and in his word.

Life is looking up!



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

## Ship ahoy

From a Christian's point of view, the new year finds the United States setting sail on a stormy political sea. The moral climate includes some threatening clouds that make the future look ominous to many of its citizens.

The president-elect announced shortly after his election that one of the first things he intends to do after he takes office is to issue an executive order revoking the ban on gays serving in the armed forces, in spite of the fact that Pentagon officials have been almost unanimous in their opposition to that idea.

Even more disconcerting was the announcement that the new president intends to rescind the ban against federal funding for abortion counseling at agencies such as Planned Parenthood. Consistent with that thinking, he also plans to rescind the ban on foreign aid to agencies that provide abortion services in foreign countries. He also wants to legalize the importation of the controversial French abortion pill, RU 486.

Understandably citizens who have been laboring hard and long to preserve fundamental moral values in America are frustrated, apprehensive, and pessimistic about the future. Some may even be wondering if God is really still at the controls in his world. If all governments are ordained by God as Scripture says they are, then why would God allow a government he ordained to trample on his moral absolutes?

When Christians ask questions like that, they are forgetting their Bible history. More than a few of the kings who ruled Israel and Judah in Old Testament times similarly scorned God's moral absolutes and led both nations into moral bankruptcy. But that didn't happen because God lost control of things.

It seems standard operating procedure with God to let people go their own way until they stray so far off course that there is only one option left for them. And that is to appeal to him for help. Psalm 107 offers a classic example of how that works.

Meanwhile God's faithful people have to coexist in a world that scoffs at their morals and trashes God's standards. All the while God expects us to keep a positive outlook and to exhibit a cheerful spirit. And why not? When "the kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against his Anointed One . . . the One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them," and ultimately he "will dash them to pieces like pottery" (Psalm 2:2).

For a word of encouragement in a time of discouragement, there's only one place to look, and that's into God's word. Come to think about it, that may be God's reason for letting the ship of state lose its moral compass and founder. Then perhaps people will listen again for the voice of God. And those who are still listening all the while will learn to appreciate anew what it means to say, "You are my God. My times are in your hands."

No need to know what the future holds when you know who holds the future.

Joel C. Gerlach



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

# Pity the poor priest

by Rolfe F. Westendorf

**T**he public sins of Roman Catholic priests make up one of the outstanding tragedies of our times. Not only has their sin destroyed their careers and reputations and scarred their victims for life, but the unfaithfulness to their trust has cast a dark shadow over clergy of all churches. Now people who need help have one more excuse for neglecting the therapies that could lead them back to wholeness with themselves and their families. Finally, the sexual misbehavior of a few priests has contributed to the declining influence of the church at the very time when the church's influence is desperately needed.

These sad individuals deserve at least a small amount of sympathy. In the first place, their church has laid on them a burden that many men are not able to bear. The vow of celibacy denies the sexual urges that are a normal part of being human. When the natural is denied, the unnatural offers many temptations. If a man can control his desires—as many have done—it is well and good that he should be free from family responsibilities so he can devote his time to his people and his Lord. But some who desire the priesthood do not have that ability, and the consequences have brought shame and distrust upon themselves and their ministry.

Celibacy in other generations was easier to bear. Sexual desires can remain dormant when there is nothing to stimulate them. Celibate priests in another time perhaps could go for days and months without thinking much about sex. Today the priest would have to isolate himself in a monastery to avoid such stimu-

lation.

Roman Catholic clergy are not the only ones who have lost control of their sexual desires. Today sexual activity outside marriage is commonplace. We have AIDS and abortions and unwanted children to show

for it. The tragic failure of a few clergymen is only one small part of the big picture that displays in vivid detail the consequences of sex for entertainment.

An obvious solution would be to eliminate sexual stimulation from the public scene. But that's not going to happen. Too many people refuse to deny themselves that pleasure. Too many people are making a lot of money selling people what they want. Besides, the forcible removal of sexual stimulation would

be censorship, and that's illegal in this land.

But there are some things that can be done:

- Require warning labels on every form of erotic material: "WARNING: This material causes unwanted pregnancies and transmits sexual diseases."
- Place a 200 percent tax on all sexually stimulating materials. Let the people who use these destructive materials help pay to relieve the misery they cause.
- Boycott the entertainers and advertisers who use sex to sell their wares.



Rolfe Westendorf is pastor of Siloah, Milwaukee.

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*The tragic failure of a few  
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in vivid detail the consequences  
of sex for entertainment.*

---

by John F. Brug

**I have noticed that some other Christians number the ten commandments differently than we Lutherans do. What we call the fifth commandment they call the sixth commandment and so on. Recently a Baptist friend told me that Lutherans use the Catholic numbers and that this numbering is wrong because it omits the commandment against worshipping images, which should be the second commandment. What is the correct way of numbering the ten commandments?**

The Bible does say there are ten commandments (Ex 34:28) but it does not say how they should be numbered.

Lutherans have retained the Catholic tradition of treating Exodus 20:3-4 as one commandment against idolatry. Most other Protestants divide these verses into two commandments, the first commandment, which prohibits any other gods, and the second commandment, which forbids idols or images. As a result the number they assign to each of the following commandments is one number higher than the number we Lutherans use. Our second commandment is their third, etc.

Catholics and Lutherans, on the other hand divide Exodus 20:17 into two commandments against coveting (the 9th and 10th). An argument in favor of this decision is that the command "You shall not covet" occurs twice in this verse.

Which of these ways of numbering is correct? Actually, both divisions seem unnatural. Why have two commandments against idolatry or two against coveting in such a brief summary of the law? A further argument against our tradition of dividing the prohibition against coveting into two commandments is that the second version of the ten commandments, which is given in Deuteronomy 5, lists the commands against coveting in a different order than Exodus 20 does. If the prohibition against coveting is divided into two parts, the ninth commandment in Exodus would be "Don't covet your neighbor's house," but the ninth in Deuteronomy would be "Don't covet your neighbor's wife." This seems strange.

There is a third way of numbering which deserves consideration. Actually the Bible does not say there are ten *commandments*. Literally translated from the Hebrew it says there are ten "words" or "sayings." It may be that the first "word" is not a commandment at all. The first "word" may be Exodus 20:2, "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt." This would start "The Ten Words" with a positive gospel

motivation for keeping the nine commandments which follow.

This seems to provide a more natural solution to the numbering problem than dividing either the first or last into two commandments. Nevertheless, the two different systems of numbering the commandments are so firmly established by tradition that there is little likelihood that the numbering could ever be changed. Nor is it necessary to do so since we do not know to any degree of certainty which way of numbering is original. What is important is not the numbering, but that we fear and love God so that we gladly hear and obey his commandments.

**Some time ago I was discussing Epiphany with some friends. We became curious about the origin of this holiday. In spite of a lot of effort we have not been able to find any information about the beginnings of this holiday. Can you tell us how this became a holiday in the church?**

The short answer to your question is "no." The origins of Epiphany and Christmas are hidden in the shadows of early church history. In the earliest days of the church there was little emphasis on the celebration of Jesus' birth. The main festival was Jesus' resurrection.

"Epiphany" comes from a Greek word meaning "revelation" or "revealing of glory." It therefore is likely that this holiday originated in the eastern Mediterranean where Greek was the dominant language. By the second century the church in Alexandria, Egypt, was celebrating January 6 as Epiphany, a festival honoring the miracle of the incarnation (God becoming man). By the fourth century Epiphany was an important festival throughout the Eastern church. It gradually spread westward to the Latin church.

Christmas began in the West. In the early 200s the church father Hippolytus maintained that December 25 was the birthday of Jesus, but the first evidence we have for the celebration of Christmas comes from 336 AD. By the late 300s Christmas was also being celebrated in the East. A natural result of this development was that the emphasis on Jesus' incarnation was detached from Epiphany and associated with Christmas in both East and West.

We cannot say with certainty whether either December 25 or January 6 is the true birthday of Jesus or whether these dates were chosen to provide substi-



tutes for the heathen midwinter festivals which celebrated the return of the sun as the days lengthened. As the "Western Christmas" of December 25 became established as the day to celebrate Jesus' birth, the "Eastern Christmas" on January 6 became the end of the twelve days of Christmas. Its celebration now focused on the coming of the wise men, Jesus' bap-

tism, and the beginning of his ministry. These are the emphases of this festival to the present day.

Send your questions to *QUESTIONS*, Northwestern Lutheran, 2929 N Mayfair Road, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398. Questions of general interest are preferred. Questions will be answered, however, only through this column.

*John Brug teaches theology and Old Testament at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin.*

## READERS FORUM

### Luther and the Jews

What a breath of truth: "Luther and the Jews" by James Kiecker (Nov. 1). I have so often heard "all the Jews turned against Jesus." Some of the Jews, yes; most of the Jews, maybe; but not all the Jews. The growing number of Messianic Jews should fill all of us with joy that these souls love Jesus, too. And let's remember that all the disciples were Jews, the first Christians were Jews, our Scriptures are a Jewish book, and our Savior is a Jew.

*Eleanore Haefler Koscinski  
Brown Deer, Wisconsin*

James Kiecker's fine article on Luther and the Jews (Nov. 1) might have been improved by two observations: First, Luther called for burning Jewish synagogues at a time when other religious leaders were all for burning the Jews themselves. Luther was a voice of relative moderation in his time.

Second, Luther lived in a state-church situation wherein blasphemy was not just a sin, it was a crime against the state. Luther did not advocate hunting down rabbis, but rather enforcing the laws prohibiting them from committing serious crimes. (Calvin had a Unitarian burned over a slow fire.) Luther can be forgiven for not thinking of a situation like ours where many religions coexist peacefully. The accepted wisdom then was that the prince's religion must be everyone's religion, and if you didn't agree, you left the country.

*Roger Kovaciny  
Ternopil, Ukraine*

### Turning TV off isn't enough

"Vice is a monster of so frightful mien / As to be hated needs but to be seen; / Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face, / We first endure, then pity, then embrace" (Alexander Pope).

Using the remote control [to censor objectionable television programs] may not be enough (From this corner, Nov. 15). My family and I got rid of our TV five years ago. We have been so much happier without it.

*Carol Vaughan  
Kerrville, Texas*

### Women's ministry

In the Bible study "Man and Woman in God's World" Prof. Brug points out the scriptural soundness of women ministering to other women. I would like to find women who might be interested in such a fellowship. I think there is much mission work to be done among the women of our synod. God has blessed us with so many talents to use to improve the spiritual life of our mothers, sisters, daughters.

I would like to hear from all the women concerned with women's service to the Lord. Please write or call.

*Wanda Cantrell  
323 N Sears, Minden NE 68959  
308/832-1124*

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.

## February '93

- 1. Leviticus 8
- 2. Lev. 9, 10
- 3. Lev. 11
- 4. Lev. 12:1—13:46
- 5. Lev. 13:47—14:32
- 6. Lev. 14:33—15:33
- 7. Lev. 16
- 8. Lev. 17
- 9. Lev. 18
- 10. Lev. 19, 20
- 11. Lev. 21, 22
- 12. Lev. 23
- 13. Lev. 24
- 14. Lev. 25
- 15. Lev. 26
- 16. Lev. 27
- 17. Hebrews 1
- 18. Heb. 2
- 19. Heb. 3:1-6
- 20. Heb. 3:7—4:13
- 21. Heb. 4:14—5:10
- 22. Heb. 5:11—6:8
- 23. Heb. 6:9-20
- 24. Heb. 7:1-14
- 25. Heb. 7:15-28
- 26. Heb. 8
- 27. Heb. 9:1-15
- 28. Heb. 9:16-28

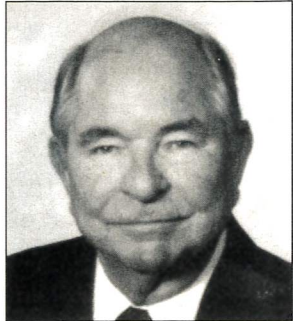
One of the marks of God's people is their love for his word. Many have said, "I will start at Genesis and read the Bible through to the end." But the project is soon abandoned. These proposed readings—5 to 10 minutes each day—will take you through the entire Bible systematically and with variety. The next month's readings will appear in the next issue.

THROUGH MY BIBLE IN THREE YEARS THROUGH MY BIBLE IN THREE YEARS

*Oh, God!*

*Thou who never canst err, for Thyself art the Way;  
Thou whose infinite kingdom is flooded with day;  
Thou whose eyes behold all, for Thyself art the Light,  
Look down on us gently who journey by night.*

**O**ur devout poet, Alfred Noyes, reminds us this time of year that all of us pilgrims “journey by night.” Each new year is an invitation to “wait upon the Lord” who promised, “Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”



*Look down  
on us gently  
who journey  
by night.*

I cannot begin my first column of the new year without reflecting on the untimely death (humanly speaking) of one of our faithful writers, my colleague, my friend, and my pastor, Kurt F. Koeplin. Though he was only 63, I know that God’s time is always the right time. But in this mortal world our calendars are often out of sync with God’s time. Kurt was my successor at Atonement, Milwaukee, and my pastor—fresh as the day he came—for 25 years. He had a big presence and once met, unforgettable.

His life was consumed by the pastoral ministry. Even as he paced the fairways, it was never far from his thoughts. His passion was missions, especially world missions. When I got to know him in the ’60s, he was introducing the “mission weekend,” a 60 hour immersion in world missions for his beloved Tecumseh, Michigan, congregation. One of the great moments in his life was when President Naumann appointed him to the Board for World Missions in 1974 as a member of the Executive Committee for Southeast Asia Missions, which he passionately served until his death.

It was a commentary on his ministry that his last sermon preached at Atonement on August 2 was based on Matthew 28:19-20, the Lord’s commission to his church. Typically, he gave it a fetching and pointy theme: “Can we still get the job done?” He left that week with his wife, Nancy, on a vacation trip which took them to Texas, and then to the East coast. At Winston-Salem, N.C., he underwent emergency surgery for an aneurysm in the area of the brain. Weeks of hope and despair followed. It ended November 14 when the Lord invited him home. I will miss him. I will not be alone.

This is our first 36-page issue. Like every “first,” there were a number of glitches, but a determined staff persevered. A special word of appreciation for our production manager, Clif Koeller, who was glitched more often than the editors. We hope that all our problems will be solved in time for you to receive our January issue before the first of the year, the postal service cooperating.

You will find all the old features in the magazine, and we are renewing the reader’s question corner under a new title, “Your question, please.” Fielding the questions will be Dr. John F. Brug of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. Dr. Brug is a 1971 seminary graduate. After 7 years serving missions in eastern US, he accepted a call in 1978 to Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn. Since 1983 he has been teaching systematic theology and Old Testament at the seminary. So let us have your questions, please.

*James P. Schufte*

# You can



Fill this pulpit



Teach these children



Spread the gospel at home and abroad

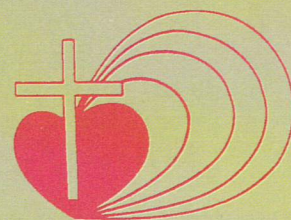
## out of love for Jesus.

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can help to carry on God's work for generations to come.**

- You are encouraged to remember your synod as well as your congregation in your plans for giving.
- Your giving beyond the congregation can include annual gifts or designated gifts to help support current mission and ministry programs.
- Your review and planning of your estate can include a bequest in your will or your trust. Such planned gifts are important to the financial strength and stability of the WELS in the future.
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- You may have a life insurance policy which is no longer essential to your estate that can be given. Or you may want to assign a portion of a policy.
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- You may desire the confidential and competent counsel of a WELS gift planning counselor whose only desire is to help you accomplish your goals of providing for your family and the work of the Lord.
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GERALD M. KOSER STUDIO

## Evangelism is an act of caring You are the telephone

by Jill McKinley and Wendy Reichel

**E**vangelism can scare anyone. Few people jump at the chance to put their views on the line and tell others they are wrong. The fact is, evangelism is an act of caring, not aggression. We should share God with everyone. We are a kind of telephone.

You don't need to speak "King James" to communicate Christ to others. Communicate the same way you do in everyday situations. How do you talk about sports? How do you make your arguments in political conversations? Use that same style. If you're good at analogies, statistics, or historical concepts, use them. Christ did. He used many different styles including parables, history, and hard facts.

It is very important, however, to know what you're talking about. If the people around you have questions you can't answer, search the Scriptures or ask your pastor. Whatever you do, don't bluff.

Don't be afraid to show others you are human, that life can get you down like anyone else. Some Christians feel they must lead an artificially happy life with a plastic smile or others won't take them seriously. You can't promise people wealth and happiness if they become Christians. Christ does not promise life will be easier for us. Christ does promise that he is always with us, that he cares for us, and that he will never give us anything that is too hard for us to handle.

**B**e tough. Evangelism becomes a lot less intimidating when you consider that many of the people you come into contact with daily are going to hell. We don't know when anyone will die, so there's a sense of urgency about sharing the gospel. Tell people the results if they decide not to follow

God. Show compassion and concern.

Use action. Behavior says more about the way we feel than anything else. If you say you believe in Christ and then sleep with your girlfriend or boyfriend, what message are you sending? What will people think when they see him or her leave the next morning? Evangelism is not only speaking Christ, it's living him. Witness is sexual purity, honesty, hard work, integrity. Stealing pencils from work, copying exams, and lying set bad examples. We have to strive to live what we believe. Pray for the ability to live in a way that says to those around you, "Christ comes first in my life."

**T**he most important thing to keep in mind is that evangelism begins and ends with God. You are only in the middle. Pray for those who do not believe in Christ or who have weak faith. Let God pave the way in their hearts. Pray that you will know what to say and how to handle questions. Don't feel as if the pressure is on you. You are the telephone, but the Holy Spirit actually delivers the message. Even hard-core atheists can't compete with the creator of the world.

Finally, don't forget that your unbelieving friends may never become Christians. Your friendship can't be contingent on their conversations. They may become Christians later in life because of the seed you planted in their hearts. Be patient. Look beyond the masks of people and reach out to them with the same warmth and caring that made you friends in the first place.

*Jill McKinley and Wendy Reichel are students at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Their article appeared in Doxology, a publication of Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel and Student Center.*