

# NORTHWESTERN LUTHERAN

September 1994



## Miles from school, molding the classroom

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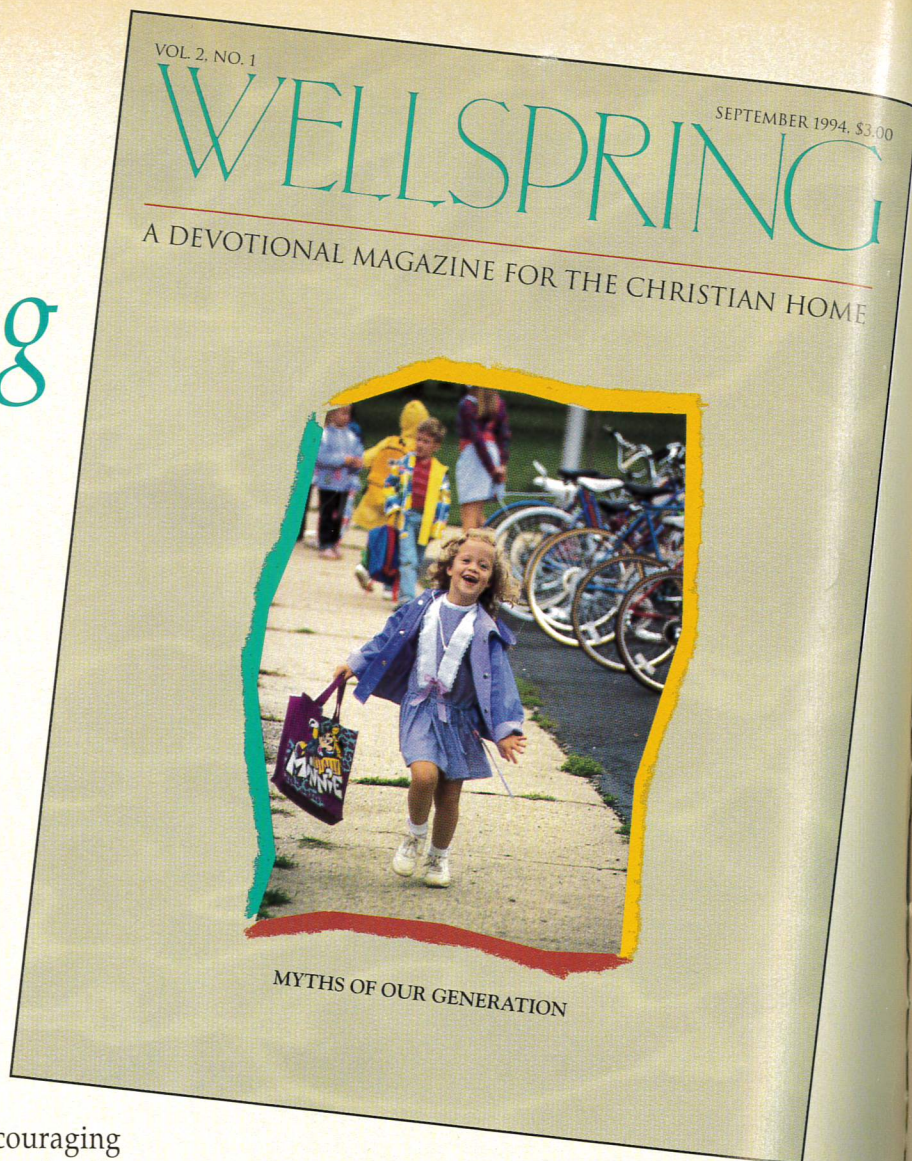
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# Mercy, not judgment—for Jesus' sake

by Richard D. Balge

The accused stood before the judge and trembled. The judge said, "Don't be afraid. In this court you'll get justice."

The man replied, "I know. That's why I'm trembling."

What if that same man in the same court heard these words from the judge: "Don't be afraid. In this court you'll get mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment?"

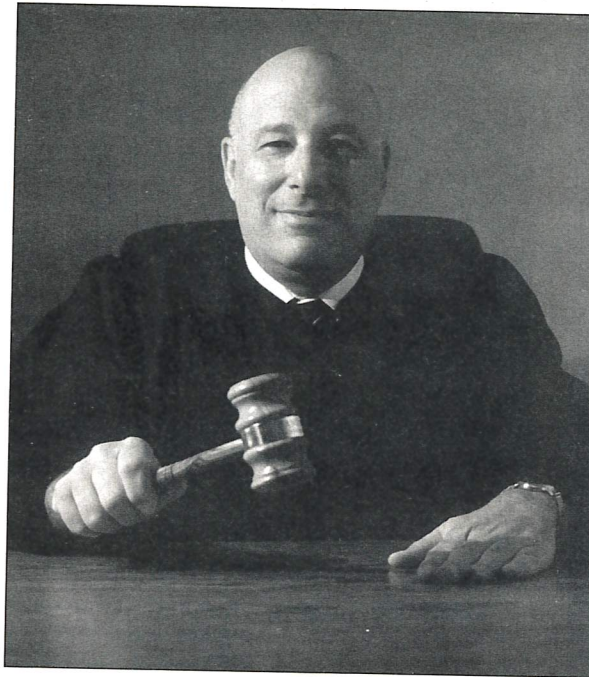
## God shows us mercy— for Jesus' sake

Imagine being able to keep every commandment of God except one. Imagine someone who never hated, never lust-ed, never coveted, never lied. Imagine someone who cheer-fully, at every opportunity, helped where help was need-ed. Moreover, that person always loved God and God's Word with all his being.

Remember, however, that person was guilty of breaking one of God's laws—just once. God's Word says that person is guilty of breaking all of God's law.

God's judgment on all who break his law is that they must spend eternity separated from him. God's judgment is that they must spend eternity with the devil, where there is hatred, misery, despair, and pain. That person who broke only one commandment falls under God's judgment.

There has never been a person who kept all but one of God's commandments. But there is someone who kept all of them. His name is Jesus, and he did it for every human being. Then, on the cross, he suffered the judgment of God against sin and sinners. For his sake, God has been merciful. He has credited Jesus' obedience under the law to us. He has forgiven



MRS. KEVIN SCHEIBEL PHOTOGRAPHY

*For whoever keeps the whole law  
and yet stumbles at just one point  
is guilty of breaking all of it. . . .  
Speak and act as those who are going  
to be judged by the law that gives freedom,  
because judgment without mercy will be  
shown to anyone who has not been merciful.  
Mercy triumphs over judgment!*

James 2:10,12,13

us for Jesus' sake. He raised Jesus from the dead to prove it. In Christ, mercy has triumphed over judgment.

God is going to judge us on the last day by "the law that gives freedom." That is not the law that damns, that binds us over to eternal slavery. Rather, it is the law that gives freedom from sin's consequences and sin's power. It is the gospel. Mercy triumphs over justice.

## We show others mercy— for Jesus' sake

"Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom." What kind of people are "those"? They are forgiven people, so they forgive. God has been gracious to them, so they are patient with one another. God's heart has gone out to them, so they have a heart for the lowliest of the Savior's brothers and sisters.

But what if we don't? What if we are indifferent to, or can't be bothered with, those in need? What if we will not forgive those who

hurt us with their fists or with their mouths? James warns: "Judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful." How do we want to be judged on the last day? Surely, according to

God's mercy in Christ. We have his mercy; we are going to be judged that way "by the law that gives freedom." Let us speak and act accordingly, says James.



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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## BITS & PIECES

■ On the cover are three of the more than 1000 teachers who attended the National Literacy Convention in July. When they weren't wearing signs around their necks, the teachers were gathering and sharing ideas to take back to their classrooms—and, unintentionally, impressing those who observed them. One observer was NL editor Gary Baumler, who came away from the conference with increased respect for the professionalism, enthusiasm, and faith of Lutheran teachers. The story about the convention and the teachers who attended it begins on page 6.

■ In this issue, two writers talk about "church." Curt Peterson, in "Games church people play" (p. 8), warns us against playing by our rules instead of God's.

■ How we define "church," says the second writer, Wayne Mueller, can limit our understanding of Christian ministry. "Why is it so important to think of the church in Bible terms?" he asks. "Because doing so helps us think of ministry in Bible terms." Don't miss "Ministry serves the church" on p. 14.

Dorothy Sonntag

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Participants look forward to an enjoyable week.

PHOTOS BY GARY BAUMLER & DENNIS NEEDHAM



Presenter Regie Routman talks about teaching language with a WELS educator.

# Miles from school, molding

**N**early 15 months in advance, by April 1993, 700 teachers had sent \$95.00 each for a program that didn't yet exist. Many paid their own money. "They didn't know what they were going to get for \$95.00," exclaimed committee member David Wendler. "That is phenomenal! That is unheard of!"

A foolish venture? Blind faith? Talk to any of the 1,000 teachers who attended the WELS National Literacy Convention June 28-July 1, and you will hear no such second-guessing. Rather, you will sense that they had already bought into the eventual theme of the convention, namely, Literacy: Every Teacher's Business.

## They came to grow professionally

Committee member Rolland Menk insisted, "They all know why they're coming and why they're here."

They came to grow professionally.

"It is exciting to see this many teachers so willing to give their time, to give their effort, to be part of a learning situation," added Menk. "That sends a message to our parents . . . to the children. We have teachers who are going out of their way to become much better masters of their craft."

Teacher Paula Robinson of Westland, Mich., concurred: "Our teachers want further schooling. I got many ideas for the classroom. It helps us keep from becoming stale."

Mary Boettcher of Tomah, Wis., said simply, "We get ideas, ideas, ideas."

"We are getting fresh ideas," echoed Alice Thiesfeldt of Glendale, Ariz. "We can't always use them in the form presented, but we can mold them for our classrooms."

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*No matter how far they traveled,  
teachers at the National Literacy  
Convention were never far from their  
classrooms. They could hardly wait to get  
back and use what they had learned.*

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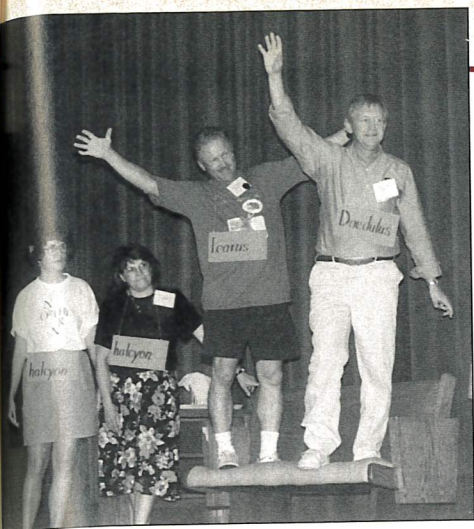
The singular focus of the convention helped. "The narrow focus is reading, writing, listening, and speaking, and how to use those things in social studies," explained Wendler. "It's literacy, not everything under the sun. Those are basic skills for expressing your faith."

Said Dennis Needham of Antigua, West Indies: "This helps me in communicating. What we say is not necessarily what someone else understands. I can apply this to teaching Scripture." Dennis intends to make sure he's teaching Scripture clearly by getting more feedback from his students.

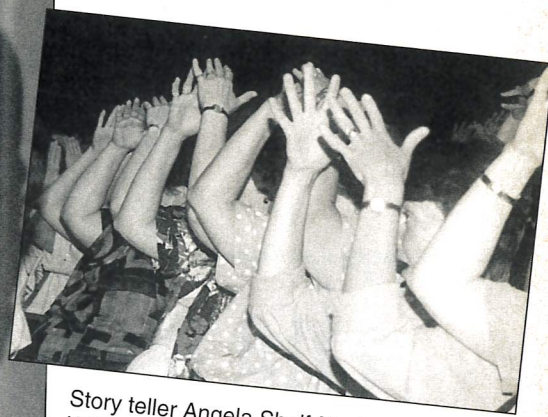
## They came to benefit the children

Most of the teachers, no matter how far they traveled, were never very far from their classrooms and students. Many expressed the desire to get back, even though it was summer vacation time, and use what they had learned.

Teacher Nancy Beyersdorf of Saginaw, Mich., sounded the keynote: "I'm impressed how we can put the pieces together. If we can get our children to be better readers, they will better use God's Word."



Participants act out a story to illustrate drama in teaching literature and social studies.



Story teller Angela Shelf-Medearis has WELS teachers up in arms.

# the classroom

by Gary P. Baumler

"The main reason to read," emphasized Boettcher, "is to read the Bible and to tell others."

That's how the committee saw it, too. "If we can turn kids on to reading," said Wendler, "we have a much better chance that they will become lifelong readers of Scripture."

"Our goal," he added, "is lifelong Christians writing on their faith, speaking their faith, so that they can share their faith."

"If we can do a better job with instructing children in the language arts," opined Menk, "it seems we are also helping them find ways to express their faith more easily."

## They came to share with one another

Speaking faith was part of the convention too, particularly in unscheduled moments. Katherine Cross of Rochester, Minn., felt that was the best part. "We share our faith," she volunteered. "We encourage each other in our faith-life. We have the opportunity here to shore up and support one another, often the more experienced teachers helping younger teachers." Cross noted that most teachers seldom get this kind of an opportunity to exchange experiences and ideas.

Tania Jacobs of Norfolk, Neb., agreed with Cross: "I gain by seeing my classmates and the older and more experienced teachers and sharing experiences. I realize my problems are not just my problems. Everybody has *that* child. Everybody has *that* one thing."

As Needham put it, "It's just a good feeling to be back here [New Ulm] and keep in touch with what's going on at school and visit with others."

## They came to tend to business

Most participants enjoyed the fellowship and shar-

ing and had a good time, but they tended to business all the same. Their attitude impressed the workshop leaders who weren't WELS members.

On the third day of the convention, half a dozen of them spoke to David Wendler, and each volunteered, "This is the best audience I have ever presented to."

"I know these people," Wendler explained. "They have presented to literally thousands of people in Minnesota and other states. And they say this is the best group they have ever presented to. When I asked why, their answer was: 'Because of their professionalism.'"

"I asked them, 'What do you mean?'" Wendler continued. "They told me, 'Your teachers are so eager to learn.'"

"That's a message we need to get out," offered Wendler. "And presenters also talk about how the teachers are so helpful, how they are so kind. They say, 'Your people just—without ever saying it—they just live their faith.' And those are the kind of people teaching our children. Those are the kind of people I want to teach my children."

"Those nonWELS people envy us for what we have. They say of our teachers: 'I know they want to use this to help their children learn more about your religion.'"

Kyle Bender of Two Rivers, Wis., experienced the same thing: "One public school presenter said, 'You guys should be able to get more out of your kids, because you have that religion.' That's the way she phrased it: 'that religion.'"

"That religion" made this convention special.

*Gary Baumler is editor of Northwestern Lutheran and WELS Director of Communications.*

# The games church people play

by Curtis A. Peterson

**C**hurch, I think you will agree, is serious business, hardly a game. Yet, when we look at what is happening in churches today, we might begin to wonder about the games church people play. And we may want to examine our own church conduct. Three examples illustrate. Call them cafeteria religion, tradition supreme, and entertainment today.

## Cafeteria religion

This game treats Christian doctrine like food in a cafeteria line. We choose lettuce and radishes but skip the pickles and onions. We order roast beef, but pass up fried chicken, ham, and seafood delight.

Similarly, some of us pick and choose what we will believe and obey from God's Word.

Some, for example, don't like the taste of God's teachings about roles in the church. So we learn that 76 percent of all Americans and 67 percent of "born again" Christians believe women should be able to be pastors.

Some don't want God's teachings to define their sexual mores and marriage. Consequently, the number of POSSLQs (persons of the opposite sex sharing living quarters) has more than tripled since 1970, and one in three children is born out of wedlock. They call it "trial marriage" to soften the sin, but their condition has become as Jeremiah described: "Were they ashamed when they committed abomination? No, they were not at all ashamed: they did not know how to blush" (KJV 6:15).

Many would rather bypass the teachings about a six-day creation and a universal flood. Only a rare college or seminary treats the opening chapters of the Bible as real history with creation by divine decree and a universal flood.

Has not Jesus told us to teach everything he has

commanded us? Has he not declared, "If you love me you will do what I command"? His doctrines are not options to accept or reject as if we were debating planks in a political party platform. Love will serve and obey him who loved us and gave his Son for us.

## Tradition supreme

In the second game church people play, tradition gets confused with doctrine. The object is to preserve customs and comfort at all cost. The player insists that we must do things the way we always did them. Cafeteria religion subtracts from the Bible; in this game we add to it.

This game does not tolerate changes in the order of church service. It disallows organized outreach programs. It dictates how offerings must be given for the Lord's work. It creates homemade rules and risks the rebuke Jesus gave to the Pharisees: "They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men."

In matters of doctrine, we stand with our fathers and do things the old way. But where Scripture does not speak, old things are not necessarily better than new. God calls us to be free. The Spirit did not call us from the slavery to sin to be slaves to human rules and ways of doing things. As Paul wrote to the Galatians: "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery."

Paul also offered a better spirit than that of traditionalism when he said, "I have become all things to all men that I might by all means save some."

## Entertainment today

Having identified traditionalism as a game church people play, we need to be careful not to go to the other extreme. Not all change is good.

In an effort to make church worship more com-



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*Church is hardly a game. Yet, when we see what is happening in churches today, we wonder about the games church people play.*

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...pelling to outsiders, some play the entertainment game. They measure the service by the following criteria: Does it meet my needs? Is it fresh, exciting, and creative? Does it hold my attention? Does it entertain? As one theologian put it, they make "have a nice day" a religious imperative.

Not that those elements are wrong of themselves. We want worship that is creative, exciting, and meets the needs of God's people. But those things are incidental next to the primary criteria of true worship: Is our worship in spirit and truth? Does it glorify God? Is the gospel of Christ crucified and risen proclaimed? Are the sacraments administered rightly?

If the only point of a worship service is to have an exciting experience, other activities or drugs will do as well. But the divine service does not center on us or even the preacher. It centers on the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

We gather each week to hear the Word of the Almighty. We come to receive his peace, his blessing,

his pardon. We come to celebrate his presence, especially in the Word and Sacrament, and to receive the forgiveness of our sins. We gather to honor his name and to bow down before him. We come to meet God.

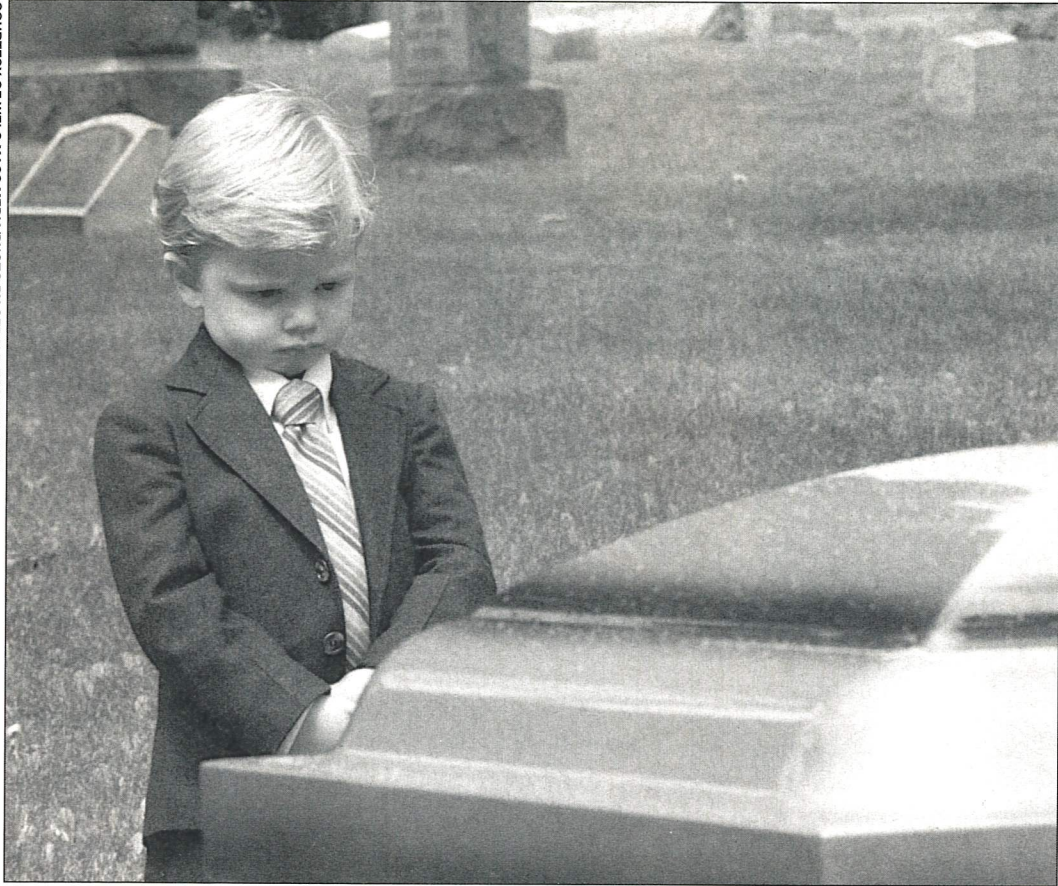
Worship sometimes is fun and certainly may be joyful, although fun and joy are not the same thing. Worship may even entertain—as we experience when we listen to a fine choir. But worship is not entertainment. It is serious business. God is the object of our hymns, our praise, our worship.

God did not put us in his church to play games, but to live our lives in him. We are to learn from Christ, receive the rebuke of God's law for our sins, and enjoy forgiveness through his gospel. We are to honor our Lord and be about his business. What is at stake is not our comfort, but God's message.



*Curtis Peterson is pastor at Resurrection, Milwaukee.*

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# At death the gospel means the most

by Thomas B. Franzmann

**J**ust before dinner, Rebecca hurried to answer the telephone. When she returned, it was clear something was wrong.

"Honey, what is it?" Jim asked.

"That was my brother Glenn," Rebecca answered. "Dad is in the cardiac unit at the hospital. A heart attack."

The children were speechless. That something could happen to Grandpa didn't seem possible. He always seemed so strong.

"Glenn said it doesn't look good," Rebecca said as they sat down to dinner. "He thinks I ought to come." Rebecca didn't taste her food, and had trouble concentrating on the family devotion. She did join in the prayers for her father. After the meal she

started packing.

**Late that evening the phone rang again. The news was worse.** Rebecca's father had died.

Rebecca could hardly concentrate as she heard her brother say, "Can you come, Sis? We can be with Mom, and we can make the arrangements for the service."

In the morning, before the children rose, Rebecca finished packing. She and Jim convened the family at breakfast and shared their plans. Rebecca and Jamie, the youngest, would leave in an hour. Jim, Kevin, and Jennifer would follow two days later.

Upon Rebecca's arrival, Glenn suggested they take care of pressing matters immediately, while their

mother rested. Fortunately, their father had left well-organized files. He and his wife had already made most decisions years before, including buying plots for burial and selecting a funeral director. The director was kind and helpful. He did his best to make an unhappy time as pleasant as possible.

By late afternoon Rebecca and Glenn were ready to send notices to the newspaper and reserve the church for a memorial service.

Volunteers from the church brought a meal to the house. Jamie fought sleep, but it was a losing battle. Soon he was fast asleep on the sofa, Grandma's old afghan tucked around him.

**As darkness deepened, mother, son, and daughter talked quietly.** "When I was a teenager, I thought Dad's attention to detail was unnecessary," Glenn mused. "He was always telling me to get better organized. Boy, I tell you, I never appreciated that quality of his as much as I did today. A difficult task would have been much, much harder, Mom, if he and you had not taken care of so much. Even the funeral director was impressed by the orderliness of your affairs."

Between phone calls from relatives and friends, they reminisced, one memory triggering another. They were comforted, their conversation bringing warmth and love.

Late the next morning the pastor stopped by. Rebecca did not know him well. But she knew him as a man who brought the Word of God, especially the joy and comfort of the gospel.

The gospel! Never was it more precious to her than now. As the pastor read the Scripture with a steady voice, led them in prayer, and assured them that their loved one's soul had reached eternal rest with Jesus, Rebecca knew the gospel was her richest treasure.

**The day of the funeral came.** The large church was not full. Rebecca was not surprised. "After all, this is

the '90s," she mused. She knew some people couldn't get away from work. Others might prefer to avoid the emotions that funerals generate. Perhaps some were just indifferent.

Rebecca remembered reading that church funerals are becoming less common. Some survivors are uncomfortable about holding a funeral in the church where they recently worshiped with their loved one. But everyone in Rebecca's family agreed that Dad's funeral should be held where he and Mom had heard God's Word for so many years.

A sudden death brings feelings of helplessness. Rebecca and her family hoped the funeral would fill their emptiness and comfort them in their loss. They were not disappointed.

The service reminded them of God's grace and reassured them of the resurrection. The Scripture readings, the sermon, and the hymns brought them hope and peace.

Of course, there were tears. But their faith provided the strength they needed. It dried their tears and reminded them they would meet again.

**At home, they gathered around their family table.** "We'll miss Grandpa," said Jennifer, thinking about the way he teased her.

"He taught me how to fish," Kevin added.

"It's going to be so hard for Grandma," said Rebecca. "Let's remember to call and write her often."

They talked about heaven and the love of God that sacrificed his Son so we can go there. Each one had a slightly different image of what heaven is like, but no one doubted that Grandpa was there.



Tom Franzmann is pastor at Our Redeemer, Santa Barbara, California.

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*The gospel! Never was it more precious to her than now. As the pastor read the Scripture with a steady voice, led them in prayer, and assured them that their loved one's soul had reached eternal rest with Jesus, Rebecca knew the gospel was her richest treasure.*

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# Homosexuals can be in heaven, too

**With God's help, he learned to live without the sin of homosexuality**

**I** am addicted to the sin of homosexuality, but I will be in heaven someday. This sounds like a contradiction: a homosexual—in heaven, especially in the light of the Scriptures.

“Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral . . . nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders . . . will inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Corinthians 6:9,10). However, the Bible also says that all sins have been washed away, even my sin of homosexuality.

## **The Christian falls to temptation**

I grew up in a WELS family, went to Lutheran elementary and high schools, and attended Dr. Martin Luther College for a semester. I sang in choir, participated in youth programs, and rarely missed church. The hand of God was in this, keeping me close to him, my only hope of salvation.

But at the same time I began to follow a second, contrary lifestyle. It started with adolescent experimentation with sex and grew to an addiction to homosexuality. I also accepted the commonly accepted view that I was born that way and could never be different.

## **The sinner becomes conditioned to his sin**

I now know that circumstances in my youth and decisions I made conditioned me into the gay lifestyle. Knowing this, it follows that with God's help, I can be conditioned out of it. I believe this is true of almost all gays, no matter how much they say, “I was born this way”; “I can't change”; “this is the way I am.”

I remember struggling with sexual sin during high

school and begging God to help me stop, promising him almost anything to be able to control it. I was terrified of talking to my pastor or a teacher or even my parents about my problem. I also feared my peers would find out and I would be humiliated.

After high school I enrolled in a university where I met my future wife. However, my double life continued with pornography and contact with other gay men.

I had decided to become a teacher and attended Dr. Martin Luther College for synodical certification. After one semester there, I received a call to teach in an area Lutheran high school. I accepted the call, got married, and began teaching.

For a while I was able to suppress my sinful temptations, but as time wore on, it became increasingly difficult to control my lust. I began to sneak to adult bookstores and gay bars whenever I could. My double life continued for several years with the public perception of the loving husband and father and high school teacher, and the secret reality of a homosexual active in the gay lifestyle.

## **The sinner pays earthly consequences for his sin**

Then God stepped in and got my attention. I was arrested in an adult bookstore by an undercover vice officer.

I spent one night in jail, crying into my pillow in despair and praying for God to send the judgment that night so I wouldn't have to face anyone ever again. But I did have to face everyone: my wife, children, parents, pastor, principal, coworkers, students, everyone I knew.



MRS. KEVIN SCHEIBEL PHOTOGRAPHY

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*Condemn the sin  
of homosexuality,  
but don't condemn  
the repentant sinner.*

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broken marriage.

**The Christian seeks  
help for others**

Now I have many regrets. I particularly regret not seeking help at an early age, before the patterns were firmly established. It would have been easier to work on the problem then instead of after twenty years of sinful habit building.

Now I hope others reading this article will not be afraid to approach people who can help them. Those of you who might help, be approachable. One off-color joke or body language that says you are uncomfortable could put you out of the running to help a homosexual.

Finally, condemn the sin of homosexuality, but don't condemn the repentant sinner. Some people have never said a word to me since my arrest. I know I can't judge their hearts, but I can sense they are uncomfortable around me.

On the other hand, others have come forward and shown support to me and to my family as we work to put our lives back together. For them I am truly thankful. With God's help I can say today, with all confidence, I know I will be in heaven.

*Although the author wishes to remain anonymous, he can be contacted through Pastor Phil Merten, 6320 N 103rd St, Milwaukee WI 53225; 414/353-7337.*

I immediately resigned my call and tried to do everything I could to keep my occupation and place of employment out of the news. I didn't want my sinfulness to blacken the name of my Savior or any part of his kingdom.

My pastor began working closely with me and my family, a relationship that continues to this day. He also started my wife and me in counseling with Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Service.

**The redeemed sinner grows in God's forgiveness**

I knew Jesus had forgiven all my sins, but I hadn't known there was hope that I could be permanently rid of my addiction. My counselor showed me how the sin had taken control of my life and that with God's help I could learn how to live without the sin of homosexuality.

I had missed the key word, "were," following the Bible verse from 1 Corinthians: "And that is what some of you *were*. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God" (6:11).

My wife also played an important role in my recovery, with her patience and forgiveness. She decided to stay with me; and with the help of our counselor, pastors, and friends, we have been able to salvage a

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# Ministry serves the

**C**hristian ministry is humble service that flows from hearts filled with faith in Jesus. The very nature of ministry is service.

To know its nature, however, is only the first step to understanding Christian ministry. Ministry is also defined by its object: the believer's ministry aims to serve Christ's church. Church history demonstrates that how people see their church influences how they practice ministry. It stands to reason, then, if we are united in our view of the church, we will also share the way we think of ministry.

## How do you think of church?

Say the word "church," and generally one of three ideas comes to mind. I often use church to describe what I do on Sunday morning when I go to worship. To many people, church means that building down the street with the cross atop the steeple, that place where they hold membership. Others may think of church as a denomination.

It's not wrong to speak of church in these terms during casual conversation. But we have to be careful that thinking about church like this does not limit our understanding of Christian ministry.

If we think of church as the worshipers gathered on Sunday morning, we may also think that ministry can only be carried out in that context. If church calls to mind that brick building at First and Center Streets, we may think that our membership there is all we have to do to support ministry. If the church body we belong to comes to mind when we say church, we might confuse denominational loyalty with service to the church of God.

## The church is the body of Christ

Christ's church, of course, is not made of brick and stone. It is "a spiritual house" built of "living stones" (1 Peter 2:5). The holy Christian Church is not an institution or a denomination. Jesus' church is not just one "sheep pen"; it is the whole "flock" (John 10:16).

Note how our new hymnal indents "the communion of saints" under "the holy Christian Church" in the Apostles' Creed (*Christian Worship*, p. 19). This indentation emphasizes that both phrases are names for the same body, the body of Christ.

The church includes all the saints, living and dead, made holy by the blood of Christ. The church is peo-



*The Bible's description of the church leads us to see ourselves as saints fighting the good fight of faith, not a minority struggling to maintain an institution. It helps us view ministry as ongoing, everyday service to our Lord.*

ple, God's holy people—all saints everywhere, called by the Holy Spirit into their common union by faith in Jesus. The holy Christian church is the communion of saints.

Within this church each member serves the good

# ve the church

by Wayne D. Mueller



COURTESY OF WELLS MASS MEDIA/PHOTO BY GERALD KOSEH STUDIO

Bible terms? Because doing so helps us think of ministry in Bible terms. It keeps the great spiritual mission of Christ's church from getting lost amid the functions of churches as we popularly think of them.

Teaching little children about Jesus is not just the ministry of Sunday school teachers at church. It is the spiritual service every father in Christ's church offers to his own children.

Sharing the message of Jesus is not just the work of the evangelism committee at church, it is the service every member of the body of Christ offers to lost souls.

An exemplary lifestyle is not merely an expectation the local congregation has for its called minister; it is the service every saint offers to God to attract the world to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

To correct a sinning brother is not only the work of the board of elders. To announce forgiveness to sinners is not only the ministry of the pastor in formal worship. These are the services every member of the body of Christ offers to every other member.

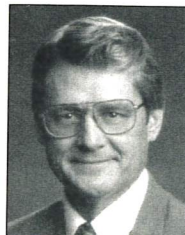
## The sheep pen is the church

The Bible's broader perspective of the church does not draw away from the ministry of the local congregation. It enhances it. It takes our attention away from personality differences, budget problems, daily chores, and endless meetings. It leads us to see ourselves as saints fighting the good fight of faith, not a minority struggling to maintain an institution.

The Bible's description of the body of Christ helps us view ministry as ongoing, everyday service to our Lord, not just a role assigned to an office, a building, or a day of the week. The local congregation benefits when members serve each other every day.

The Bible reminds Christians everywhere that we are members of the same family, sons and daughters with the same Brother and the same Father. In the middle of the trials of maintaining our temporary home, we are working to bring the whole family together for the final reunion.

To know that Christ's church is the object of ministry—that gives meaning to our service.



Wayne Mueller is administrator for Division of Parish Services.

of all the others. "There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord" (1 Corinthians 12:5). "In Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others" (Romans 12:5). "From [Christ] the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work" (Ephesians 4:16).

## The church extends beyond the sheep pen

Since Christian ministry serves the church, it also shares the goals for which Christ established his church. Church and ministry have the same mission.

The goals of Christ's church are uniquely spiritual. They are long term, eternal. The body of Christ shares the goal its head, Jesus, set for his own ministry: "To seek and to save what was lost" (Luke 19:10).

Thus the goals of ministry are to bring in those who are not of our sheep pen and to take care of those sheep.

Why is it so important to think of the church in

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# Every soul is important

Serving Christians with vision or hearing disabilities

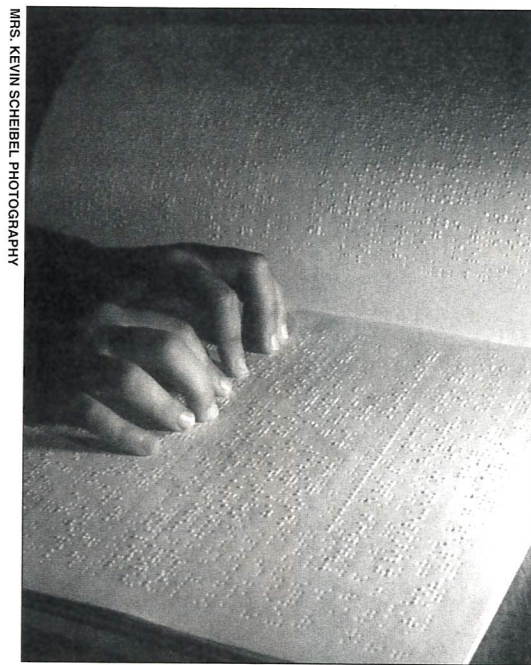
by Linda R. Baacke

Imagine being unable to hear the pastor's sermon or to pray along with a prayer printed in the hymnal. For those who can see and hear, worship is easy. For those who can't, it can be a frustrating challenge. But the faith of the visually handicapped or hearing impaired is just as important, their worship just as vital.

To help them worship and grow in faith, the synod's Commission on Special Ministries serves those with vision or hearing disabilities through the Mission for the Visually Handicapped and the Mission for the Hearing Impaired.

## Mission for the Visually Handicapped

The Mission for the Visually Handicapped (MVH) produces Christian literature in large print, braille, and audio cassette. They send material to about 300 people, but "in proportion to a national survey conducted a few years ago, there could be as many as 2000 WELS members who are visually impaired," said



MRS. KEVIN SCHIEBEL PHOTOGRAPHY

Ruth Wedl, general manager of the Mission's workshop.

The workshop, headquartered in St. Paul, Minn., distributes *Meditations*, *Northwestern Lutheran*, and *From the Pulpit* (three sermonettes and choral music) on audio cassette. *Meditations*, *Lutheran Book of Prayers*, confirmation booklets, *LWMS Outreach* and *Topics*, as well as *The Lutheran Hymnal* in Japanese are available in braille. Twenty of 50 brailled Lutheran hymnals in Japanese have been completed and sent to Missionary Roger Falk in Japan. Much of the financial support comes from the Lutheran Women's Missionary Society.

The big project facing MVH is translating *Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal* into braille. Brailleists throughout the US are doing the translating. Through the purchase of a new computer and braille printer, volunteers in St. Paul transfer the translated hymn from disk to the computer. The printer then prints the hymn on both sides of the paper in braille.

## WELS churches with signed services

### ILLINOIS:

Buffalo Grove—New Life  
708/520-9176

Palatine—Christ the King  
708/358-0230

### INDIANA:

Indianapolis—Divine Savior  
317/849-9692

### KANSAS:

Russell—Faith, 913/483-3654

### MICHIGAN:

Hartford—Hope, 616/621-3407

Owosso—Salem, 517/723-3293

### MINNESOTA:

Bloomington—Bloomington  
612/888-2475

West St. Paul—St. James  
612/457-9232

Winona—St. Matthew  
507/452-2085

### TEXAS:

Austin—Risen Savior  
512/280-8282

### WISCONSIN:

Arlington—Zion  
608/635-4000 voice  
414/623-5487 TDD

Fond du Lac—Redeemer  
414/921-4020

Madison—Our Redeemer  
608/274-6608

Milwaukee—Redemption  
414/466-5100

Muskego—St. Paul  
414/422-0320

New London—Emanuel  
414/982-5444, Fax 982-6706

Oshkosh—Bethlehem  
414/235-5390

Plover—Divine Word  
715/341-2915

Watertown—St. Luke  
414/261-2120

Waukesha—Trinity  
414/547-5350, Fax 547-8110

West Allis—Good Shepherd  
414/774-1184





Singing Hands  
Hands  
practice

"It boggles my mind," says Wedl, "how the computer can do this." One copy has been completed and sent to a blind organist in Green Bay, Wis. Other people are "waiting and calling, asking when it will be completed," commented Wedl. "We hope to have it done this fall."

### Mission for the Hearing Impaired

As challenging as visual impairment can make worshipping or learning the Word, people with hearing problems also face difficulty, partly because theirs is an invisible handicap.

A survey conducted a year ago showed that 36 percent of WELS congregations have members who are hard of hearing and 13 percent have members who are deaf. Pastor Raymond Ziebell of the Mission for Hearing Impaired committee noted the statistics may not be entirely accurate because "people may have difficulty hearing, but they don't talk about it. They don't want to admit it."

Since the percentage of WELS members who are hearing impaired seems to be small, many congrega-

tions don't adequately meet the special needs of the deaf or hard of hearing. Enter Mission for the Hearing Impaired (MHI).

Operating from private gifts, MHI helps those who work with or who are deaf or hard of hearing. MHI offers resource materials for pastors, teachers, and congregations. A 36-lesson Sunday school curriculum is available, complete with teacher's manual, picture story packet, and video. The MHI lending library offers books and videotapes, including a video series that teaches American Sign Language. It also publishes *Ephphatha*, a newsletter for the deaf and hard of hearing and the people who serve them.

The ministry, however, is more than distributing materials. Committee members are available for presentations and seminars to raise awareness of special needs. They provide names of interpreters, and encourage congregations to offer interpreted services. To help congregations explore available technology, MHI demonstrates assisted listening devices that hook into a church's sound system and eliminate background noise associated with some hearing aids. MHI has a wireless transmitter available on loan to any congregation wanting to try one out.

A unique group called Singing Hands signs songs. They've performed in Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, and Indiana. "Ask us—we'll go anywhere," said Irene Riege, member of Singing Hands.

"They sing a little flat sometimes," joked MHI chairman Gene Seidel.

Seidel admitted that "ministry to the hearing impaired will always be ministry in miniature. There never will be large numbers of people who are deaf."

Neither will there be large numbers of visually handicapped members. But that doesn't mean ministering to these special people isn't vital. "It's still important," Seidel adds. "Every soul is important."



Linda Baacke is editorial assistant for Northwestern Lutheran.

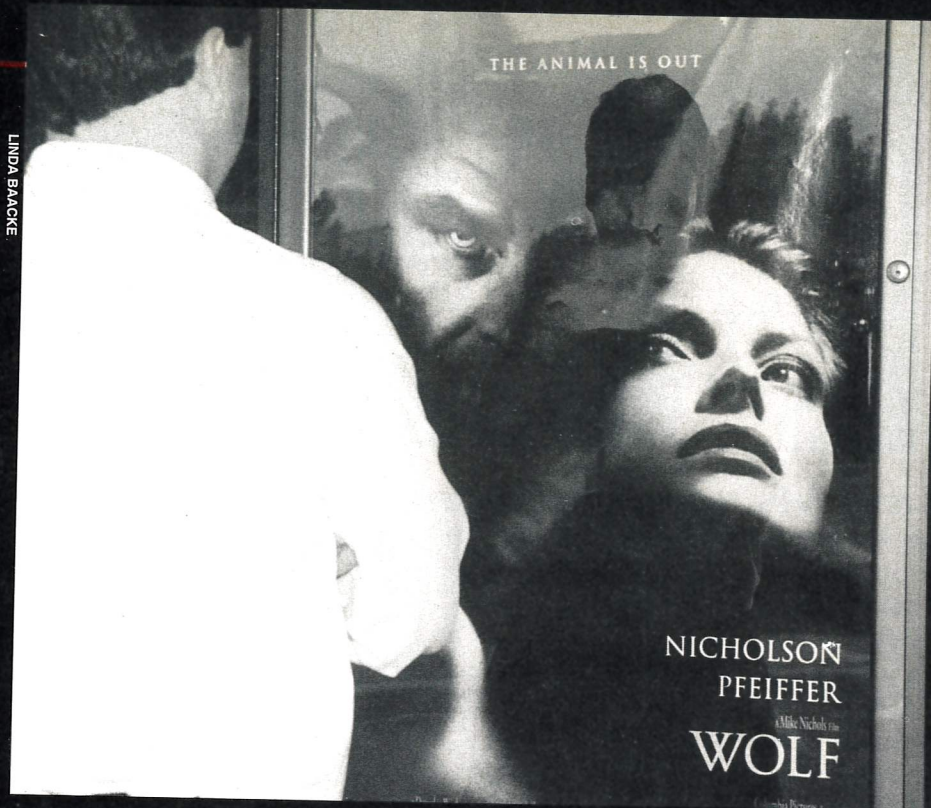
### Services for those with special needs

Featured in this issue:

- Hearing Impaired
- Visually Handicapped
- Special Education
- Institutional Ministries Committee
- Care Committee for Called Workers
- Military Services
- Senior Ministry
- WELS Membership Conservation

### For more information contact

- ✓ Mission for the Hearing Impaired  
2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398  
414/256-3241; FAX 414/256-3899
- ✓ Workshop for the Visually Handicapped  
559 Humboldt Ave, St. Paul MN 55107  
216/291-1536



# Werewolves, O.J., and me

by John A. Braun

**C**olumbia Pictures released the movie *Wolf* last summer. It stars Jack Nicholson as a man who becomes a monster—a werewolf. A werewolf is a man temporarily transformed into a wolf, usually at the time of the full moon. His face and body grow long hair, and some mysterious force changes his teeth into fangs. The change is more than physical; the werewolf becomes a creature capable of terrible brutality.

## Werewolves

I remember the werewolf movies of my childhood. Rather than portraying all the gory details, horror movies, including werewolf movies, depended on the viewer's imagination. As I grew up, werewolf movies reappeared occasionally with a slight twist, like *I Was a Teenage Werewolf*. I don't remember a recent werewolf movie. I wondered why a werewolf reappeared in 1994.

Maybe the movie is intended just to scare its audience. After all, Stephen King and others make a good living scaring people. Those who read King's books and go to the movies his books generate enjoy them in part because they want to be frightened. For whatever reason we like being scared.

Maybe it's more than the thrill of imaginary fright. Perhaps something in the movie speaks to us. The advertisement for *Wolf* suggests that when the animal rises, the man disappears. A look at the newspapers every day reminds me that people do act like animals. Some force within us all makes us do shameful, terrible things at times.

## O.J. Simpson

I didn't think too much about werewolves until, like almost every other American, I watched the LA police follow O.J. Simpson's white Bronco. He was arrested and charged with the murders of his former

wife and another man. The news media will cover his trial as they have covered his arrest and indictment, and we will hear every detail even if we don't want to know.

Of course, O.J. is only charged with the crime; he is still considered innocent. A jury will decide whether he is guilty. But the murder of these two victims raises a question: how could anyone be so brutal? Because O.J.—a handsome, articulate, wealthy, and famous man—is charged with the crimes, the question takes on an ironic twist.

Maybe werewolves aren't mythical. People do terrible things. Ask any police officer after a shift in the city streets on a hot summer night. About 24 calls come into the Milwaukee Police Department every day, most of them after dark, asking police to intervene in domestic violence. Then there are calls for murders, thefts, and everything else. Nonchristians cannot understand what is happening. What activates the monster within? What is it within people that makes them act so violently?

Me

As a Christian I must be careful not to become pharisaical. The problem is not just in others. The problem is in me too, as it is in all those who watched the arrest of O.J. or bought tickets to see *Wolf*.

The apostle Paul had the same problem. He wrote, "For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. . . . So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members" (Romans 7:19,21-22).

Thoughtful people in the world outside my little Christian circle know evil persists in everyone. Ideas

like the werewolf touch that truth of our life here. No one really believes in werewolves. They're myths, like the ancient myths of almost every culture.

Without God's Word, people don't know exactly what makes us evil. Because they don't know, they offer explanations that begin with myths and stretch to alcoholism, environmental conditioning, and poverty. Those explanations evaporate in the face of crimes by non-alcoholics and the rich.

I know I'm not different from O.J. or any other human being. I know that in me exists a sinister evil, capable of terrible things. It is too powerful for me to control by myself. Not only does God's Word help me understand the evil within, it offers the answer to it. Paul found the answer.

"Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Romans 7:24,25).

Yes, Jesus! I too am thankful that God sent Jesus to die for me and remove the punishment I deserve. Even if the evil force in me does not break out into violence and crime, I'm guilty.

The power to contain evil and overcome its influence also comes from Jesus. I struggle each day to live as he desires, assured that I am forgiven in him and able to stand against the evil within by his power. So I listen to Jesus, read his Word, receive his body and blood, and pray for his strength in the evil around me and in me.

In him I'm a new creature. Each day that I live as he wants is a victory for him, for me, and for his church. Each day I fail, I turn to him for forgiveness and renewed strength. Then, forgiven, I start again to live as he wants.



John Braun is vice president of editorial services at Northwestern Publishing House.

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People do terrible things. . . .  
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all those who watched the arrest of  
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## Benefit plans

*Richard Sonntag, benefits administration manager, and Peggy Weinzatl, claims manager, answer questions about the synod's health plan.*

### **H**ow will the government's health care reform affect the synod's health care plan?

We're not likely to be out of business, even if the government offers universal coverage. We'll probably



DOROTHY SONNTAG

Peggy Weinzatl and Dick Sonntag consult with Kim Gabb as she processes a claim. Kim is one of four claims approvers.

still offer a supplemental plan for those areas that the government plan doesn't cover.

A government plan that permits each state to determine insurance coverage would be a problem. Right now, federal regulations pre-empt state laws. Our plan would become impossibly complex if we would have to follow insurance laws in 50 different states.

Overall, based on everything we've seen, a government health plan will result in fewer benefits at a higher cost and in a reduction in Medicare benefits.

We're concerned, too, that the government will decide what benefits are covered. If a government plan covers abortions, we would have to follow those guidelines.

### **W**hy does the synod have its own plan?

There are advantages to having our own plan. We can adapt the benefits to our members' needs and can reflect our Christian philosophy. For instance, we

don't cover abortions.

One big advantage is that we can include our missionaries. Most insurance plans don't cover someone living in another country.

Our plan is self-insured and self-administered; we collect the premiums and pay the claims ourselves. We can pay claims more quickly, and we save money because administrative costs are lower and we're tax exempt.

### **W**ho is included in the synod's health plan?

Ministers—pastors, teachers, staff ministers—and lay workers employed at least half time by the synod or one of its churches. We also cover ELS members and some WELS affiliated agencies, such as WELS Lutherans for Life and Northwestern Publishing House.

### **W**ho pays the premiums?

Almost always, the congregation. In a few cases, congregations do not provide insurance, and the minister must pay part or all of the cost.

### **W**hy are premiums so high?

Health care is expensive, and technology and defensive medicine—tests and treatments to prevent malpractice suits—raise the cost. Unlike some plans, we don't drop anyone whose poor health raises our costs; and we cover anyone eligible for the plan who enrolls within 60 days, even for pre-existing conditions.

Compared to other church bodies, we're in the low end of the premium range. The steps we take to hold down costs saved well over \$1 million last year.

### What WELS benefits provide:

- Health care
  - √ Health coverage
  - √ Vision
  - √ Dental (optional)
  - √ Prescription drugs
- Long term disability
- Accidental death or disability
- Group term life (optional)
- Pension
- Survivor benefits

Do you have questions about the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod—how it functions, how decisions are made and carried out? Please send your questions to *OPEN DOORS*, Northwestern Lutheran, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398.

## Graduates assigned to ministry

On July 18 the Conference of Presidents assigned two pastor candidates and 23 teacher candidates.

May graduates of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary assigned to parish ministry were **John G. Bonow II**, to St. John, Woodland, Wis.; and **David P. Silfies**, to Grace, Columbia, Mo.

These graduates of Dr. Martin Luther College received calls to the teaching ministry:

- Durfey, Caley, J.**, to Salem, Stillwater, Minn.
- Fenske, Joel R.**, to Immanuel, Fort Worth, Tex.
- Frey, Christiana M.**, to Zion, Hartland, Wis.
- Gnewuch, Kim L.**, to Zion, Columbus, Wis.
- Goede, Sara A.**, to Faith, Antioch, Ill.
- Haldorson, Stephanie D.**, to Mt. Lebanon, Milwaukee, Wis.
- Hinds, Michael J.**, to First, LaCrosse, Wis.

- Jackson, Timothy E.**, to Martin Luther, Neenah, Wis.
- Klug, Kristine D.**, to St. Mark, Bemidji, Minn.
- Kutz, Mark P.**, to St. Matthew, Niles, Ill.
- Manthey, Susan A.**, to St. John, Stanton, Neb.
- McElroy, Willette M.**, to Pilgrim, Minneapolis, Minn.
- Nolte, Laura C.**, to Peace, Hartford, Wis.
- Peper, Pamela K.**, to St. John, Wrightstown, Wis.
- Richards, Robin A.**, to St. Paul, Green Bay, Wis.
- Rusert, Amy L.**, to Eastside, Madison, Wis.
- Sell, Jennifer L.**, to Peace, Holiday, Fla.
- Stanford, Wendy L.**, to Faith, Anchorage, Alaska
- Steffen, Andrea M.**, to Trinity, Minocqua, Wis.
- Struck, Deborah A.**, to Good Shepherd, Midland, Mich.
- Uhlenbrauck, Jeffrey R.**, to Trinity, Crete, Ill.
- Weber, Shawna D.**, to Grace, Glendale, Ariz.
- Zamenski, Christopher B.**, to Zion, Winthrop, Minn.



**Kerry and Nicholas Laper** are the first husband-and-wife team to work at the Lutheran Mobile Clinic in Lilongwe, Malawi, Africa. Kerry will head the nursing program and her husband will oversee the clinic's business affairs. The Lapers arrived in Lilongwe June 11 and will work there for three years. "The need for single nurses and married nurse couples continues," says Medical Mission Committee chairwoman Irene Brug. Those interested in learning more can contact Kathie Wendland at 414/682-5694.

## President Gurgel to conduct Clergy TALKS

The goal is to reach every parish pastor in the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod for TALKS—Talk About the Lord's Kingdom Spreading. To accomplish the goal, President Karl Gurgel will attempt to visit the 140 pastoral circuits of WELS by the end of this year.

Gurgel's visits result from the 1993 synodical resolution that encouraged "the COP to pursue vigorously a solution to the problem of the disheartening decline in congregational mission offerings." They are the beginning of a

long-range effort to expand work for the Lord as a synod.

Each visit will begin with Bible study, review present performance, and involve the pastors in discussion of the challenges before them. President Gurgel said he hopes the meetings will communicate a sense of urgency and result in understanding, commitment, and cooperation in addressing the task at hand under the gospel. He will stress the importance of the pastor's role in synodical efforts and, he said, expects to do more listening than speaking.

## Martin Luther College will be the Knights

*Northwestern Lutheran* reported in August that the athletic symbol for the new Martin Luther College in New Ulm, Minn., would be the

Spartans. Correction: Spartans was one of two final choices. The college's board of control ultimately chose Knights.

## Home mission administrator: new missions were opened

The report that no new exploratory missions opened in the '93-'94 fiscal year (NL, June) did not accurately convey the situation, according to home mission administrator Harry Hagedorn.

He said that 12 exploratories opened during that time, eight financed by Lift High the Cross. The four financed from synod mission offerings were possible because they had little impact on the budget or because other mission efforts were discontinued.

One new exploratory mission is in the budget for the coming fiscal year. "However, with a little creative money management we also hope to obtain more than one new exploratory through synodical mission offerings," Hagedorn added.

## District conventions discuss synod business

Delegates to the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod's twelve districts met in convention during June. Items for discussion included whether to call for a special convention to reconsider the amalgamation of the synod's schools. The decision made by the 1993 synod convention to combine the synod's colleges and two of its

preparatory schools has been the subject of sometimes heated debate. Eleven of the twelve districts voted to continue with the '93 plan.

Another item of discussion was a proposal that regional centers using area Lutheran high schools prepare students to enter the synod's ministerial colleges. Reaction was mixed; most districts

called for further study and more information.

A third topic was a proposed constitutional change that would provide 50/50 balance for voting delegates between ministers—pastors and male teachers—and laymen at synod conventions. Presently, the balance is one-third each pastors, teachers, and laymen.

## Highlights as reported from the WELS districts

### ARIZONA-CALIFORNIA

**Amalgamation:** The district resolved to support the amalgamation action and pray for the Lord's blessing.

**Regional centers:** Delegates supported the recommendation for regional centers for ministerial education and requested that Arizona Lutheran Academy be one of the regional centers.

**Synod delegates:** The district voted to retain the present delegate balance.

**Division into two districts:** Delegates voted to retain the present district rather than divide into two districts.

—Hermann K. John

### MICHIGAN

**Amalgamation:** By written ballot, delegates decided to "walk together in support of our synod's resolution regarding synodical school structure."

**Regional centers:** Delegates called for further study on regional centers, stating that preparatory schools should be the primary source for ministerial students and should receive primary financial support.

**Synod delegates:** Delegates called for defeat of the proposed changes that would provide 50/50 balance for voting delegates

between ministers and laymen at synod conventions.

—James L. Langebartels

### MINNESOTA

**Groundbreaking:** Highlight of the convention was the groundbreaking service for the first new building of Martin Luther College.

**Missions:** Delegates were greeted by missionary Glen Hieb of Japan; viewed a video of WELS mission work in Russia and Siberia; and heard about the Asian-to-Asian mission in St. Paul, Minn., with contacts in China, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam.

—Bradley J. Pearson

### PACIFIC NORTHWEST

**Amalgamation:** The convention reaffirmed the decision to amalgamate the synod schools, and recommended that opposition to the decision cease.

**Northwestern Publishing House:** The convention decided to submit a memorial to the 1995 synod convention to direct NPH to study and implement ways to reach a wider Christian market.

**Change in schedule:** The 1995 district conference and 1996 convention will be scheduled over weekends. Those Sundays will be designated as laity Sundays.

—David H. Birsching

### SOUTH ATLANTIC

**New circuit:** Delegates approved a new circuit, deemed necessary because of the distances separating many congregations. The new conference includes Abita Springs, Baton Rouge, and New Orleans, La.; Mobile, Ala.; Fort Walton Beach and Panama City, Fla.

**Anniversary:** The convention noted the 40th anniversary of WELS work in Florida.

—Martin A. Springs

### SOUTH CENTRAL

**Amalgamation:** Considerable discussion was held on the amalgamation of the synodical schools. A number of delegates expressed their disagreement. The district resolved to support the amalgamation.

**Regional centers:** A resolution to establish regional centers for ministerial education was defeated. Among the points raised was a consideration for greater financial support for students enrolled in ministerial schools. Delegates supported a recommendation that additional and alternative ways to make education affordable be explored.

—Charles L. Learman

### SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN

**Amalgamation:** In a voice vote, delegates accepted by a wide margin the Board for Ministerial

Education committee's report affirming the synod's decision to amalgamate its ministerial education schools.

**Constitutional change:** Delegates narrowly defeated the proposal to change the section of the synod constitution that outlines the synod's purpose. The vote rejected

the substitution of the synod mission statement for the present wording.

—George A. Ferch

### WESTERN WISCONSIN

**Amalgamation:** After considerable evangelical discussion, delegates voted 163 to 154 to request a

special synod convention to reconsider the resolutions affecting Northwestern College and Martin Luther Preparatory School.

**Regional centers and restructuring the synod:** Delegates asked for further study and more specific information.

—Elton C. Strohm

## New district presidents elected

At their biennial conventions in June, delegates to three of the 12 synod districts elected new presidents.

Peter J. Naumann, pastor of Zion, Mobridge, S. Dak., is president of the Dakota-Montana District. Elected to the Michigan District was John C. Seifert, pastor of Good Shepherd, Midland. President of the Northern Wisconsin District is Douglas J. Engelbrecht, pastor at Trinity, Neenah.

Two of the new presidents replace men who have retired—Reginald Pope, Dakota-Montana,

and Carl Voss, Northern Wisconsin. Robert Mueller, Michigan District, chose not to run for re-election.

In addition, the Western Wisconsin District elected Herbert H. Prah, pastor of St. Mark, Eau Claire. Prah was the district's vice-president and stepped in as president last year when Karl Gurgel became the synod's president.



**President Naumann**  
Dakota-Montana District



**President Engelbrecht**  
Northern Wisconsin District



**President Prah**  
Western Wisconsin District

Naumann, Seifert, and Prah are 1973 graduates of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. Engelbrecht is a 1972 graduate.

## Officers of the districts

These men were elected at the synod's 12 district conventions held in June. All are parish pastors.

### Arizona-California

Marcus C. Nitz, *president*  
Steven C. Degner, *first vice-president*  
Philip A. Koelpin, *second vice-president*  
Allen K. Schroeder, *secretary*

### Dakota-Montana

Peter J. Naumann, *president*  
Douglas L. Free, *first vice-president*  
Wayne L. Rouse, *second vice-president*  
Paul H. Marggraf, *secretary*

### Michigan

John C. Seifert, *president*  
Gerald C. Schroer, *first vice-president*  
Paul S. Naumann, *second vice-president*  
David A. Grundmeier, *secretary*

### Minnesota

Larry E. Cross, *president*  
Ronald W. Uhlhorn, *first vice-president*  
Charles F. Degner, *second vice-president*  
James D. Liggett, *secretary*

### Nebraska

Joel G. Frank, *president*  
Philip E. Zarling, *first vice-president*  
Kenneth E. Bode, *second vice-president*  
Theodore L. Wendt, *secretary*

### North Atlantic

Walter F. Beckmann, *president*  
Thomas F. Zarling, *first vice-president*  
Donald L. Tollefson, *second vice-president*  
Brett E. Voigt, *secretary*

### Northern Wisconsin

Douglas J. Engelbrecht, *president*  
Paul H. Kolander, *first vice-president*  
Gerald E. Free, *second vice-president*  
Arno J. Wolfgramm, *secretary*

### Pacific Northwest

Warren L. Widmann, *president*  
Theodore D. Lambert, *first vice-president*  
Douglas P. Weiser, *second vice-president*  
Gordon J. Peters, *secretary*

### South Atlantic

John R. Guse, *president*  
Keith C. Kruck, *first vice-president*  
James F. Pope, *second vice-president*  
Robert M. Krueger, *secretary*

### South Central

Vilas R. Glaeske, *president*  
Wayne A. Laitinen, *first vice-president*  
Mark R. Bitter, *second vice-president*  
John A. Liebenow, *secretary*

### Southeastern Wisconsin

David N. Rutschow, *president*  
James R. Huebner, *first vice-president*  
Mark A. Jeske, *second vice-president*  
Robert W. Pasbrig, *secretary*

### Western Wisconsin

Herbert H. Prah, *president*  
Mark G. Zarling, *first vice-president*  
David A. Fischer, *second vice-president*  
Victor L. Headrick, *secretary*

## YOUTH NEWS

Please send photos or news on teen activities to **YOUTH NEWS**, Northwestern Lutheran, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398.

### Lakeside LHS band takes a first

Lakeside Lutheran High School's marching band, Lake Mills, Wis., capped a successful summer by taking top honors on July 8 in the Calgary Stampede and Exhibition parade in Alberta, Canada.

The band was one of 25 from around the world and performed for more than 400,000 spectators. It was named best high school band and best overall marching band, and its flag and rifle unit was named best auxiliary unit.

Lakeside's band director is David Fenske.

### Teen spends year in Congress

Rachel Dolan, 16, will return to Winnebago Lutheran Academy in Fond du Lac, Wis., for her senior year of high school after spending her junior year in Washington, D.C., as a congressional page.



Rachel Dolan

One of 66 House pages, she attended morning classes and spent afternoons and evenings answering phones, delivering messages, and running errands for members of the House of Representatives.

Rachel's parents are Mary and David Dolan. He is pastor at St. Peter, Fond du Lac.

### Northwestern College student guides blind runner

During track season, Chris Johnson spends time holding on to one end of a towel while Missy Lehman holds on to the other end. Together they run.

Missy participates in track for Watertown High School and has been blind from birth. Chris Johnson is beginning his second year at Northwestern College. The towel connects them as they run around the track or through the streets of Watertown, Wisconsin.

Chris guides Missy. He says, "She has to have a tremendous amount of trust in me because we go out and run around in the streets and everything." Sometimes she trips, because it's impossible to warn her about

everything, but she gets up and gets going again.

With Chris's help, Missy runs in competition. She is grateful for the opportunity. "I think when I'm running a lot of people don't see me as a blind person. They see me as a runner, and that's sort of my goal." With the towel and Chris, she runs not only on a level track but even cross country.

Missy's coach, Tim Gifford, found Chris to help Missy run. Missy says, "I just want to be the best runner I can be, and I know probably at the beginning they say, 'Oh, she's a blind runner. I can beat her. No problem.' But then after the race, they're going, 'Oh, my gosh.'"

—John A. Braun

### Northwestern students earn All-American honors

Bart Gurgel, freshman at Northwestern College, was named to the NCAA academic all-American cross country team last spring. Those honored placed in the NCAA regional meet and had a grade point of 3.5 or higher.



Bart Gurgel



Todd Gorsline



Heath Butler

Earlier, football players Todd Gorsline and Heath Butler were named to the Champion USA all-

American team. The two had led Northwestern's rushing offense, which was ranked second in its division.

### Don't keep this magazine! Give it away.

Encouraged by someone's story of faith? Uplifted by a Bible study? Inspired by a devotional thought? Share *Northwestern Lutheran* with a family member, friend, co-worker—or a stranger.

Write or call to let us know how (and if you want, why) you shared your copy. We'll replace it free. Contact *Northwestern Lutheran*, WELS, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222; 414/256-3232.



## Northwestern College plans final homecoming

"We are trying to make a grand finale," says Northwestern College athletic director Jerry Kruse of the school's homecoming on Oct. 8. The college is moving from its Watertown, Wis., location after this year.

To make the final homecoming "a very special day," says Kruse, a number of events are planned, beginning Oct. 7 with a chapel service, pep rally, and talent show.

The next day's events include a run/walk, open to all, and entertainment for children. In the morning the college soccer team will play Marian College, and in the afternoon the football team will play against Northwestern of Minnesota. After the games NWC's music and drama departments will provide entertainment. A chapel service at 5 p.m. will be followed by

a tailgate party.

Its alumni "have fond memories of Northwestern College," said Kruse. "This last homecoming could also be part of them."

Northwestern will move to New Ulm, Minn., next summer and become part of Martin Luther College, to be formed by combining the synod's ministerial schools on one campus.

## Lutherans for Life to meet in Orlando

Dr. D. Alan Shewman, associate clinical professor in the department of pediatrics division of neurology at UCLA and an expert on anencephaly, will be the keynote speaker at the WELS Lutherans for Life (LFL) national convention Nov. 5 in Orlando, Fla.

Preaching at the opening service will be Pastor Fredric Piepenbrink, Milwaukee, Wis. Eight workshops

will be held during the day, along with a children's convention for grades K-7 and child care for those under 5. An evening banquet will close the convention.

Registration fees cover access to the exhibits area, morning coffee, lunch, and convention materials. For registration information, call the WELS LFL national office at 1-800-729-9535.

## Michigan District

**St. Paul, Livonia**, recently honored Luella Perry for her 20 years as director of the church's cradle roll. The occasion also celebrated her 80th birthday. Mrs. Perry plans to continue her service as long as the Lord allows.

**Bethel, Bay City**, celebrated the 25th anniversary of its church building on the same day that Wayne Oblender, a son of the congregation, was commissioned as missionary to Novosibirsk, Russia.

**Of the 61 May graduates of Michigan Lutheran Seminary**, 12 will attend Dr. Martin Luther College, 11 will go to Northwestern College, five have enrolled at Wisconsin Lutheran College, and two at Bethany Lutheran College. MLS also said farewell to retiring professor Loren Dietrich. His career spanned 40 years, the last 25 at MLS.

—James L. Langebartels

## Obituary

### Victor E. Lehmann 1912-1994

Victor E. Lehmann was born July 15, 1912, in Hustisford, Wis. He died May 28, 1994, in Plymouth, Wis.

A 1932 graduate of Dr. Martin Luther College, he served as teacher and principal of Lutheran elementary schools in Madison, Ixonia, and Neillville, Wis. He retired in 1976.

He is survived by his wife, Wilma; daughters Vickie (James) Vetting and Cynthia (Richard) Malon; and five grandchildren.

## WELS Connection videotapes

### September topics

- WELS mission work in Russia

For more information, contact CCFS, WELS Administration Building, 2929 N Mayfair Road, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398. Cost of a year's subscription is \$54.

## Wellspring wins award

*Wellspring*, a family magazine published by Northwestern Publishing House, received the Associated Church Press 1993 Award of Merit for design of its table of contents.

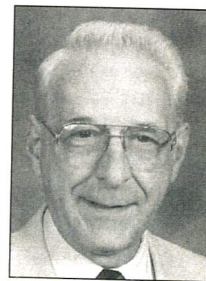
Marie Farley, art and electronic publishing manager at Northwestern Publishing, designed the winning layout. Kenn Kremer is editor of *Wellspring*.

"This simple, airy design is a pleasure to look at," said the contest judges. "There's a clever use of color rules, imaginatively cropped photos . . . and beautiful typography." Judges were members of the faculty of Duke University.

The Associated Church Press, an organization of religious journalists, includes some 200 publications.

**Darrel Knippel**, Pilgrim, Minneapolis, was one of ten Minnesota teachers to receive the 1994 Teacher Achievement Award for excellence in teaching. Winners were selected from over 6000 nominees.

Knippel, a graduate of Dr. Martin Luther College, has taught at Pilgrim for 38 years and was principal for 34 years. Ashland Oil sponsors the awards program.



## Religion seen as losing impact, but not relevance

According to a March 1994 Gallup poll, only about one person in four (27 percent) now says religion is increasing its influence on American life. Sixty-nine percent say religion is losing its influence, while 2 percent say its influence remains steady and 2 percent have no opinion.

Religion's sway in America was most evident in 1957, when seven persons in 10 (69 percent) felt its influence was increasing.

The perception of religion's influence on America reached its

lowest ebb during the turbulent era of the 1960s and 1970s, when only 14 percent said it was increasing, compared to 75 percent who thought it was decreasing.

Although many people may feel religion is losing its impact, this should not be interpreted as meaning they also think it has lost its relevance.

In the March survey, 64 percent expressed confidence in the ability of religion to deal with contemporary problems. Just 20 percent felt it is out of date, while 16 percent had

no opinion.

The relevance of religion to the contemporary world is underscored by the statement of six persons in 10 (59 percent) that religion is very important to them on a personal level. An additional 29 percent of the population say religion is fairly important in their own lives.

The importance level was lower throughout the 1970s and 80s but much higher in the 1950s and 60s when 70 to 75 percent of the population said religion was very important to them.

## Majority of Americans still have confidence in religion

In spite of public scandals in religion in recent years, a majority of Americans still have confidence in organized religion. Even so, organized religion takes a back seat in confidence ratings to the military, which ranks number one.

According to a March 1994 survey, 29 percent of American adults say they have a "great deal" of confidence in organized religion, while 25 percent report having "quite a bit" of confidence. An additional 29 percent report still having "some"

confidence, but 14 percent have "little," and 2 percent "no" confidence at all in organized religion.

The military, ranked at the top as an institution, now enjoys the confidence of 64 percent of the U.S. public. The police are in a tie with religion, for which 54 percent of the public said they had either a "great deal" or "quite a bit" of confidence.

Other rankings in order were the U.S. Supreme Court (48 percent), the presidency (38 percent), the

medical system (35 percent), television news (35 percent), banks (35 percent), and the public schools (34 percent).

Lagging far behind religion were newspapers (29 percent), organized labor and big business (26 percent each), Congress (18 percent), and the criminal justice system (15 percent).

Organized religion was not always in second place. Up until 1986 it was always in first place.

## Teen attitudes toward faith in flux

Gallup polls past and present give a mixed picture of teens' religious status today compared to the 1950s and 1960s. In the past, Gallup observes, America's teens have had a stronger sense of religious identity and were more likely to attend worship services. But there seems to be little basic change in their level of belief in God and the hereafter. Comparative polls reveal the following:

- In 1959, 97 percent of teens said they believed in God. In 1988, 95 percent said they believed in

God or a universal spirit.

- In 1961, a survey found that 83 percent of teens thought of God as a judge who observes their actions and will reward or punish them. By 1988, belief in a personal God had dropped slightly to 76 percent.

- The 1959 study found that 79 percent of teens believed there is life after death. In 1988, belief in the hereafter had declined to 67 percent. However, a 1991 survey showed that 91 percent of teens believe there is a heaven and 76 percent that there is a hell.

- Survey findings in 1961 showed that 62 percent of teens considered the Bible to be "completely true," while a 1992 poll concluded that only 39 percent said they believed the Bible is the actual Word of God to be interpreted literally word for word. In 1992, 46 percent believed it is the inspired Word of God, but not to be interpreted literally word for word.

- While seven teens in 10 said they had attended worship services the previous week in 1961, only five in 10 made similar claims in 1993.

## Regular worship important to teens

A Gallup Youth Survey completed in February 1994 sheds more light on the faith-life of American teens.

Half of America's teens (49 percent) consider regular attendance at worship service to be very important, and an additional one in three (34 percent) say it is somewhat important. Only 17 percent feel attending church regularly is of little or no importance.

Teens living in the South (66 percent) and West (50 percent) are far more likely than those in the East (37 percent) and Midwest (38 percent) to consider regular atten-

dance very important.

Non-white teens are more likely than whites to consider church attendance very important, by a margin of 64 percent to 47 percent. However, recent attendance by whites was slightly greater than by non-whites.

Protestants (63 percent) more often than Roman Catholics (36 percent) consider regular attendance very important. Here, too, however, recent attendance by Protestants was only slightly greater than by Catholics.

## Change or disappear, German theologian warns mainline churches

"Mainline protestant churches are in acute danger of disappearing if they continue neither to resist the spirit of the progressively secularist culture nor to try to transform it," warned conservative ecumenical theologian, Wolfhart

Pannenberg of Munich during a lecture tour of Ottawa, Boston, and New York. He accused the mainline churches—both in

Europe and North America—of "wavering" in their faith and Christian identity and of "surrendering the substance of the Christian faith."

Pannenberg claimed that unless the churches changed course, they would be unable to present a suitable alternative to "the spiritual emptiness of modern life."

## Can celibate priesthood survive the '90s?

Two recent studies of priests, one conducted by the Los Angeles Times and the other by the National Federation of Priests Councils may surprise some.

• Fifty-four percent say that their lives as priests are "better" than what they expected; 36 percent say it is about what they expected, and 10 percent say it is worse than expected. Seventy percent say they would definitely choose to be a priest again. Eighty-seven percent are satisfied with their lives as priests, 56

percent very satisfied.

• Eighty-seven percent say they are very unlikely to ever leave the priesthood. Four percent are somewhat likely to leave, and two percent very likely to.

• Although the majority of priests believe that celibacy should be optional, only 14 percent say celibacy is a serious problem for them personally. Eighty-four percent say they would either definitely or probably not marry if the church would allow them to do so.

## Ecumenical theologians debate reclaiming the Bible for the church

More than 400 participants, mostly pastors of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, met in Northfield, Minn., in June to examine "the crisis of biblical authority and interpretation." An ecumenical group of speakers addressed the "gap between the historical-critical method of biblical studies and the theology of the church."

Although the conference did not signal a return to the traditional historical-grammatical approach to Scripture, several participants were critical of the way the historical-critical method has been applied. Planners spoke of "an increasing alienation of the church from its own book."

The Rev. Roy A. Harrisville, emeritus professor of New Testament at Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary (ELCA) compared the historical-critical method to the Trojan Horse, but stressed that it was "the good guys" who brought the horse into the city. The Rev. Robert W. Jenson, professor of religion at St. Olaf College where the conference was held, admitted the historical-critical reading of the Bible "was in part devised as a weapon against the faith," though he felt the church could still use it.

News reported in this section is derived from Religious News Service, Ecumenical Press Service, Evangelical Press Service, and Lutheran World Information. World news items do not necessarily reflect the views of WELS or Northwestern Lutheran.

**The deadline for submitting notices is six weeks before publication date.**

**CALL FOR NOMINATIONS  
Martin Luther College**

Martin Luther College's Board of Control requests voting members of the WELS to nominate professors in these fields: Greek; Greek and Hebrew; English; Religion (may be appointed director of male housing). These men should be seminary trained and have an interest in the areas into which they may be called.

Send nominations by Sept. 20 to Philip Leyrer, 3209 Nightingale Lane, Middleton WI 53562.

**NOMINATIONS  
Commission on Adult Discipleship**

The following have been nominated for administrator for the Commission on Adult Discipleship:

- |                   |                        |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| Bruce Becker      | Brillion, Wis.         |
| David Drska       | Madison, Wis.          |
| Thomas Franzmann  | Santa Barbara, Cal.    |
| Randy Hunter      | Middleton, Wis.        |
| Ronald Kaiser     | Colorado Springs, Col. |
| Paul E. Kelm      | Milwaukee, Wis.        |
| Philip Koelpin    | Tucson, Ariz.          |
| James Krause      | Corpus Christi, Tex.   |
| Silas Krueger     | Carlsbad, Cal.         |
| Marcus Manthey    | Saginaw, Mich.         |
| Ronald Muetzel    | Bay City, Mich.        |
| Jason Nelson      | Lake Mills, Wis.       |
| Joel Nelson       | Muskego, Wis.          |
| Joel Prange       | Redding, Cal.          |
| Ronald Roth       | Milwaukee, Wis.        |
| Jeffrey Schallert | Milwaukee, Wis.        |
| James Witt III    | St. Louis, Mo.         |
| Mark Zaring       | Fort Atkinson, Wis.    |

Send correspondence regarding nominees by Sept. 15 to Allen Zahn, 6310 Cromwell Rd, Indianapolis IN 46250-2716.

**WISCONSIN LUTHERAN SEMINARY AUXILIARY**

You are invited to the WLSA meeting Oct. 1 in the chapel of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Registration fee of \$7.50 includes lunch. Please make checks payable to WLSA and include your name, address, phone, and conference. Send registration to Jan Lampe, 1645 S 79 St, West Allis WI 53214.

**COMMEMORATIVE NWC PLAQUE**

Orders are being taken for a colored aerial view of the Northwestern College campus, mounted on a 10x13 wooden plaque. \$16 includes postage and handling. Call Northwestern College Recruitment Office; 414/261-4352.

**NORTHWESTERN COLLEGE HOMECOMING**

Northwestern College's, Watertown, Wis., final homecoming celebration will be Oct. 8. Soccer vs. Marian College, 10:30 a.m.; football vs. Northwestern of Minnesota, 1 p.m. Other special events are planned (see WELS news, page 25).

**DMLC PRESENTS MUSICAL**

The drama club of Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., presents *Brigadoon*, a musical play, on Nov. 11, 7:30 p.m.; Nov. 12, 7:30 p.m.; Nov. 13, 2 p.m. Reserved ticket sales begin Oct. 3. Call 507/359-1671, Mon.-Thurs., 4:30-9 p.m.

**DR. MARTIN LUTHER COLLEGE AUXILIARY**

All WELS women are invited to the annual meeting of the DMLC Ladies Auxiliary, Oct. 12, New Ulm, Minn. Registration and coffee hour 9 a.m. Opening service, 10 a.m. Baby-sitting provided. Contact Becky Schroeder, 507 S 11th St, Olivia MN 56277; 612/523-1041.

**NAMES WANTED**

**BOISE/MERIDIAN, IDAHO**—Cross of Christ. Contact Pastor John Steinbrenner, 5171 N Buckboard Pl, Boise ID 83704; 208/375-3992.

**NL SUBSCRIPTION INCREASE**

Effective January 1, subscription rates for *Northwestern Lutheran* will increase from \$8.50 to \$9.00 for an individual subscription; from \$5.50 to \$5.75 for bundle subscriptions; from \$6.00 to \$6.25 for blanket subscriptions.

**PASTORS INSTITUTE**

The 1994 Pastors Institute at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary will be held on five Mondays, 1:30-4:30 p.m., beginning Sept. 26. Two lectures will be presented:

**Contemporary issues in parish education**—Prof. James Tiefel. The following topics will be presented: The crises of parish education; Staffing a program of parish education; Funding parish education; Methodology and the means of grace in parish education; Problems in parish education: staff harmony and dealing with cases of abuse

**The Spirit speaks on missions**—Prof. Harold Johnhe. The essayist will "walk through" Scriptures, pointing out, interpreting, and applying sections with special significance for missions. The essays will also point out the mission motifs that run through Scripture.

Please send registration to Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, President Armin Panning, 11831 N Seminary Dr, Mequon WI 53092. The fee is \$25, payable to Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary.

**CHANGES IN MINISTRY**

From Dr. Martin Luther College to Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn.:

**Hartwig, Theodore J.**  
**Koelpin, Arnold J.**  
**Lange, Lyle W.**  
**Raddatz, Darvin H.**  
**Woldt, Michael A.**

From Northwestern College to Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn.:

**Dose, Brian L.**  
**Gosdeck, David M.**  
**Piltzuweit, Jerald J.**  
**Sprain, Roger, J.**  
**Strobel, Richard W.**

**PASTORS:**

- Cox, Raymond G.**, from Apache mission coordinator, White River, Ariz., to mission coordinator, Cameroon, Africa.
- Hochmuth, Robert H.**, to Good Shepherd, Pleasanton, Cal. (part time).
- Janke, Paul M.**, from Apostles, San Jose, Calif., to St. Peter, Modesto, Calif.
- Lindloff, Donald W.**, from St. John, St. Clair, Minn., to retirement.
- Recksin, Dale M.**, from Atonement, Baltimore, Md., to Peace, Sun Prairie, Wis.
- Siemers, Ron E.**, from Faith, Austin, Minn., to Immanuel/Zion, Hutchinson, Minn.
- Worgull, David P.**, from Calvary, Chandler, Ariz., to retirement.

**TEACHERS**

- Arndt, Dallas E.**, to Fox Valley LHS, Appleton, Wis.
- Babler, Bruce A.**, from Christ, Big Bend, Wis., to Christ the King, Bremerton, Wash.
- Becker, Edward J.**, from St. Matthew, Niles, Ill., to Bethany, Manitowoc, Wis.
- Belter, Rhoda R.**, to Martin Luther, Neenah, Wis.
- Buege, James L.**, from Zion, Columbus, Wis., to Lakeside LHS, Lake Mills, Wis.
- Ehlert, Bethany E.**, to St. Andrew, Chicago, Ill.
- Gray, Gary D.**, from Abiding Word, Houston, Tex., to Arizona Lutheran Academy, Phoenix, Ariz.
- Hahm, Ronald E.**, from Northwestern Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis., to Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis.
- Helwig, Donald W.**, from Trinity, Minocqua, Wis., to Northwestern Publishing House, Milwaukee, Wis.
- Karstens, Michelle M.**, from St. Paul, Mt. Calvary, Wis., to Peace, Hartford, Wis.
- Lueck, Eric**, to Wisconsin LHS, Milwaukee, Wis.
- Needham, Douglas W.**, from Mt. Olive, Appleton, Wis., to St. Mark, Watertown, Wis.
- Polack, Brigitte**, to Christ, Eagle River, Wis.
- Raasch, Joel E.**, from Shepherd of the Hills, Inver Grove Heights, Minn., to Manitowoc LHS, Manitowoc, Wis.
- Rahn, Kenneth D.**, to St. John, Redwood Falls, Minn.
- Rodewald, Karen**, to St. Paul, Tomah, Wis.
- Scharf, Rebekah A.**, from Peace, Hartford, Wis., to Winnebago Lutheran Academy, Fond du Lac, Wis.
- Schibbelhut, Wendy S.**, from St. Matthew, Niles, Ill., to Nebraska LHS, Waco, Neb.
- Schultz, Kathleen**, to Shoreland LHS, Somers, Wis.
- Smith, Cheryl L.**, to Trinity, Brillion, Wis.
- Southwell, JoAnn R.**, from Faith, Dexter, Mich., to retirement.
- Stelter, Ronald L.**, from Lakeside LHS, Lake Mills, Wis., to retirement.
- Thiel, Daniel F.**, from Zion, Osceola, Wis., to Wisconsin LHS, Milwaukee, Wis.

**ANNIVERSARIES**

- YUMA, ARIZONA**—Prince of Peace (25). Sept. 11, 9 a.m. For more information, call 602/726-8716.
- PITTSFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS**—Faith (25). Oct. 2, 4:30 p.m. Steve Brown; 413/494-6193.
- OMAHA, NEBRASKA**—Good Shepherd (50). Oct. 16, 10:30 a.m., 3 p.m. with meal following. Call 402/553-6512.
- MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN**—St. Andrew (100). Aug. 8, 1995, 9 a.m. Sept 10 and October 8, 8 and 10:30 a.m. Nov. 12 10:30 a.m. dinner; and program following. For more information call Carl Cornells 414/764-4357.
- WABENO, WISCONSIN**—Trinity (95). Oct. 16. Dinner, 11:30 a.m.; worship, 2 p.m. Call 715/473-5633.
- WEST ALLIS, WISCONSIN**—Jordan (100). Sept. 11 Service, 10 a.m. at church. Dinner and entertainment, 12:30 p.m. at school. For reservations call 414/541-5130 or 414/327-2030.

**AVAILABLE**

- ORGAN**—Free to church or school for shipping. Conn electronic. Two manuals, 13 pedals. Tom DeWitz, Caledonia, Minn. 507/724-2994.
- TEXTBOOKS**—elementary, 1978-86 editions. Free. Call 313/426-8442.
- VACATION LODGING**—in western Pennsylvania. Free bed and breakfast for pastor and wife for 1-3 nights. Arnie James, 814/674-5993.

**NEEDED**

- THE LUTHERAN HYMNAL**—two dozen or less. Our Savior, 2066 East Ave., Monte Vista CA 81144.
- VOLUNTEERS TO TEACH ENGLISH** to adults on Milwaukee's south side. Teaching experience and some knowledge of Spanish are a plus, but not necessary. Contact Lutheran Southside Ministries, 414/282-7354 and ask for Steve.

**AUDIOVISUAL LIBRARY SERVICES**

- TIME TRAVEL THROUGH THE BIBLE** (Code 8250)  
1994 107 min. 1/2" VHS color JS  
This video is designed to introduce teens and pre-teens to biblical archeology. The first part explores some sites of Old Testament history. The second part takes us to places where Jesus lived and worked. **Rental: \$10.00**
- ANCHORED IN CHRIST** (Code 5139)  
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This video tours the campus of Kettle Moraine Lutheran High School, Jackson, Wisconsin, and stresses its Christian foundation. **Rental: \$7.50**
- TALK ABOUT THE SAVIOR** (Code 5142)  
1975 26 min. 1/2" VHS color JSCA  
This excellent film on evangelism is now available on video tape. Cf. Audio Visual Lending Library Catalog, '92-'94, page 19. **Rental: \$7.50**
- CURRENT ISSUES IN CHRISTOLOGY** (Code 3127)  
1993 C Prof. Gawriscs CA  
(Audio cassettes from the 1993 Pastors Institute)  
1. Contemporary Christology Scene  
2. Issues Involving Christ's Deity  
3. Issues Involving Christ's Humanity  
4. Issues Involving Christ's Work  
5. The Stakes in the Issues  
**Rental: \$7.50**
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(Audio cassettes from the 1993 Pastors Institute)  
1. Nurturing Goals: A Matter of Growth  
2. Content in Adult Bible Study  
3. Methods in Adult Education  
4. Types of Groups in Adult Education  
5. Growth in Adult Education  
**Rental: \$7.50**
- Please note that the lending and rental libraries have been combined. An annual fee of \$75 allows a congregation to use 30 titles at no additional cost except for return postage. For \$100 congregations may use 50 titles during the calendar year. Individual titles may be rented for \$7.50 or \$10 depending on the format. Order from **AUDIO/VISUAL LIBRARY SERVICES**, Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 N 113th St, Milwaukee WI 53226-3284. Phone 1-800-662-6093, ext. 7 (Milwaukee area phone 414/475-6600, ext. 1297). Call between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. on weekdays.

# The wedding banquet

Matthew 22:1-14

by Mark E. Braun

**S**eventeenth century philosopher and mathematician Blaise Pascal said, "There are only two kinds of men: those righteous who believe themselves sinners; the others, sinners who believe themselves righteous."

As the time of his suffering drew closer, Jesus' parables became more intense, and the contrast between those who embraced him and those who resisted him more defined.

Months earlier, Jesus pictured God's salvation as a great banquet. The invitation was lavish and undeserved, but the guests who'd already agreed to attend wouldn't come. Angry, but eager to fill his house, the master sent his servant out to the roads and country lanes to bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame. In an astounding reversal of fortune, all those who'd promised to be there put themselves outside, but all the people who had no right to be there were belying up to the buffet table.

## An incredibly generous invitation

There are obvious similarities between that story and this one, but the differences are greater. That one was an after-dinner story in the house of a prominent Pharisee, this one another round in the last showdown between Jesus and Israel's leaders. That story featured a great banquet, but this was the king's wedding banquet for his son. In that one, ungrateful guests offered lame and trite excuses—"I've just bought a field, I've just purchased some oxen, I just got married"—but here they simply refused to show up.

Then, when a second wave of servants repeated the king's invitation, the ingrates turned vicious and murdered the servants. They weren't merely distracted or disinterested, they were actively wicked. And the king paid them back in kind: he sent his army to kill them

and burn their city.

Everything in this retold version is magnified. God's invitation is incredibly generous: his salvation, as Luther put it, a time of holiday and joy, in which we sing, play, dance, eat, drink, and are glad. But the price for saying no is staggeringly high. There are no other choices and no other chances.

But the king wanted his table filled for his son's wedding, so he, like the master in Jesus' first story, sent his servants out to invite anyone they could find, both good and bad.

## An unwelcome guest

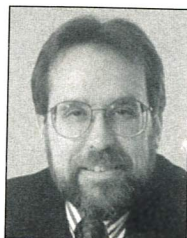
Here too is the heavenly King's grace, we say, and we're right, but here's also where this story takes its unlikeliest twist. One of these guests

off the streets wasn't wearing wedding clothes. "Hey, pal, how did you get in here?" the king thundered. "Throw him out!"

What made this guy any worse than the rest? Weren't they all plucked from the gutter? Where did these other losers get their wedding clothes? From the king! He gave them what to wear. They were no better, and this lone guest no worse. But the others entered solely on the king's terms, while he tried to get in on his own.

To revise Pascal, there are only two kinds of people: those who think they can stand before God with their own righteousness, but are sinners; and those who know they are sinners, but stand before God with the righteousness of someone else. I get to sit at the king's banquet only by a life I couldn't live and a death I didn't die.

*Next: The fig tree.*



Mark Braun teaches at Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee.

*One of the guests wasn't wearing wedding clothes. "Throw him out!" the king thundered. What made this guy any worse than the rest? Where did the other losers get their wedding clothes?*

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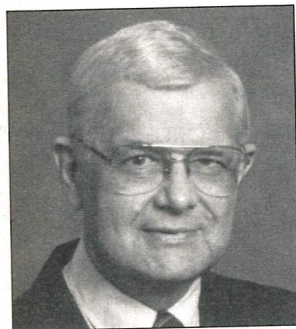
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## Cherish your church musicians

Only a few times in my 36 years as a minister has our congregation had to worship without an accompanist. At one service an ice storm interrupted the electrical power shutting down our organ. (We worshiped by candlelight.) Once our organist was unable to get to church due to heavy snow.



Victor Prange is pastor at Peace, Janesville, Wisconsin.

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*A congregation's janitor and secretary are usually paid. But neither position demands the study, practice, outlay of cash for lessons and music, and preparation necessary to become a proficient church musician.*

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It is possible to worship without organ or piano. Doing so occasionally has benefits. But in the long run, for Lutherans especially, to worship without a musical instrument is far from ideal. We value the role that music plays in our worship.

Recently I read an interview with the director of music at a large Lutheran congregation renowned for its music program. He asserted that while for many music is a "time-out, a relaxation," for him music "is a gift; it is a miracle." Music has the power to unify. "Music gives the congregation a voice," he said. "Instead of thinking of themselves as a bunch of people, they see themselves as a unit. The common rhythm and tempo and text bring people together in unison or harmony. Music has that role, to bring us together."

Do congregations appreciate the importance of music in their worship and cherish their accompanists? Or do they take church musicians for granted? Too often, it seems, they are hidden away in the balcony or off to the side, unnoticed, unless some Sunday the organ bench is empty.

One measure of appreciation is payment. A congregation's janitor and secretary, whether part-time or full-time, are usually paid. Serving as janitor or secretary does require certain skills. But neither position demands the study, hours of practice, outlay of cash for lessons and music, and the music preparation for worship necessary to become a proficient church musician.

Paul Manz, a prominent Lutheran organist, reflected on the shortage of competent church accompanists: "There aren't too many musicians available for the churches [in the Chicago area]. Some of my students are playing in two churches: you know, they have one service at nine and then rush over to another place at eleven. There aren't enough organists around. Why is that? Simply because the church does not pay; the church does not recognize the work of the parish musician."

Inadequate pay is not the whole answer as to why the shortage of church musicians is growing more acute. But it is a factor. One way we can show our church musicians that we cherish them is by offering adequate remuneration for their services.

As we were preparing to introduce our new hymnal, a Lutheran pastor who had experience in such a venture said to me: "Not the pastors but the musicians are the most important people in successfully introducing a new hymnal." Cherish your church musicians.

Victor H. Prange

by John F. Brug

*Jesus said, "Do not resist an evil person" (Matthew 5:39). Are Christians allowed to use self-defense?*

Jesus makes this statement in the Sermon on the Mount to warn us against using the valid legal principle of "an eye for an eye" as the measuring stick for our personal conduct.

The government, as God's servant, is to exact proportionate punishment for every offense, but in our personal dealings with people we are to be forgiving, not vengeful. We are not to jealously insist on our rights nor to retaliate for injustice.

But Christians may use legal remedies to protect themselves against injustice, as Paul did in Acts 16, 24 and 25. Our Lutheran confession, the Apology to the Augsburg Confession, says, "The Gospel forbids private redress. . . . Public redress, which is made through the magistrate, is not advised against, but is commanded and is a work of God (Romans 13:1)" (Triglotta 341).

In cases where the police are not available, may Christians use force to protect their lives or the lives of others? We do not have specific examples in the New Testament, but Jesus, who told Peter not to use his sword to defend him from arrest in Gethsemane, told the apostles to buy swords before they went on their dangerous missionary journeys (Luke 22:36). When asked if Christians were permitted to use violence to defend against criminals, Luther replied, "Yes, indeed. In that event [if I was attacked by robbers], I should be the authority and wield the sword,

*We are to be forgiving, not vengeful.  
But Christians may use legal remedies  
to protect themselves against injustice.*

because no one else would be near to protect me. I should strike as many dead as I could and thereupon receive the Sacrament and should consider myself to have done a good work. But if I were attacked as a preacher for the sake of the Gospel, I should fold my hands and say, 'Well, my Christ, here I am. I have preached you. If my time has come, I commit myself into your hands. And thus I should die'" (Plass, *What Luther Says*, 243).

In using the legal tools God has given them to resist evil, Christians should be careful that they are seeking the glory of God, the defense of the gospel, and the good of their neighbors, not personal revenge.

*Many Christians use credit cards to pay bills, but they never pay any interest since they pay their balance each month. They think this is a sharp way to do business, but the poor who can't pay their balance each month have to pay higher interest to make up for the freeloaders. Isn't this taking advantage of the poor? I believe we are our brother's keeper.*

You raise an interesting question about credit card use, but your line of thinking could be applied to anyone who bought on sale or double-coupons.

*The most effective way to help  
the needy is to get the best deal  
you can when you do business  
and then use the money  
you saved to help those in need.*

Anytime we seek the best deal we can get on a transaction, we are forcing the merchant to seek elsewhere for higher profits. But willingly paying interest or a higher price in the hope that the merchant will pass along your generosity is not likely to provide much relief to the needy.

If your conscience troubles you, the most effective way to help the needy is to get the best deal you can when you do business and then use some of the money you saved to help those in need. If your neighbor is so desperate that she charges food on a credit card, the best thing you could do would be to get food for her. Paying interest on your credit card won't help her.



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.

# Who says there isn't a state religion?

by Wayne A. Laitinen

I have good memories of my public elementary school education. I had conscientious teachers. I remember standing with my classmates as we pledged allegiance to the flag. The values of the classroom reflected the values at home. If I was punished at school, I could be sure my parents would take out a yardstick, not a lawsuit.

At that time, the religious community had a profound influence on public education. It was fairly well agreed that God made us and gave us the rules of life. We respected God-given authority, life, body, possessions, and reputation. We also believed that religious differences could be openly debated. In all of this, no one religion was promoted in the classroom to the exclusion of the others.

## State-established religion

The last several decades have seen mainstream Christian denominations in retreat. Many have become embarrassed because of the "foolishness" of the Bible. To make the gospel more palatable, they have tried to find common ground between creation and evolution, faith and reason, miracles and nature. Churches that lost the transforming power of the Word became conformed to this world. They lost their wholesome, salty influence on society.

The evil beliefs of this world filled the vacuum. I asked some public school students, "How many of you are being taught evolution in school?" All of their hands went up. Then I asked, "How many of you think your school does not teach religion?" They all raised their hands again.

Evolution presupposes atheism. In the beginning there was no God. There was only chance. Since we are all products of chance, no one owns us. Since

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*State religion is disguised  
under the pretense of science.  
And no one dares challenge it  
under penalty of public ridicule.*

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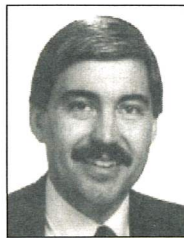
there is no God to tell us what is right and wrong, each of us can do what suits us at the moment. "Survival of the fittest" is the law of Darwin's jungle. The moral fruits of evolution have manifested themselves in high school violence and anarchy. When teens believe that they are merely higher forms of animal life, how can they be blamed for doing what comes naturally? Here is the logical extension: If there are no moral laws, there are no sins. If there are no sins, we don't need a Savior from sin. We don't need Jesus Christ.

Who said there isn't a state religion? It is disguised under the pretense of science. And no one dares challenge it under penalty of public ridicule.

## Christ-established religion

But we know One who knows all things. His Word doesn't change like the theories of men; his knowledge of the universe is complete. He formed us, owns us, set the rules for us. When we broke the rules, he entered the world to suffer for us under his own justice. He bought us back from Satan, death, and hell. And he rose again to give us life with him in heaven. It was news too marvelous to comprehend. So he sent his Holy Spirit through Word and sacrament to convince us of its truth. And he will come again to take his believers to heaven.

We must proclaim the gospel of Christ to today's society, because a lot of people know nothing but a lonely, loveless, dead-end world.



Wayne Laitinen is pastor of Gethsemane, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.



**Booing won't help**

Keith Tullberg [Readers forum, June] stated that it's fine to boo because it is the only way to immediately express disapproval when a bad call is made. Just because a person makes a mistake does not give a Christian permission to compound the problem. Booing won't help the person; it is just a way for fans to show their personal disapproval. Negative feedback is not a successful teaching tool.

We are trying to teach our children to live as Christians in a nonchristian world. Booing is getting worse all the time. The Milwaukee Bucks encourage booing and making noise when an opponent is taking a free throw. That's just one example of poor sportsmanship in our world today. Let us, at least, be positive, Christian sports enthusiasts.

*Karl Grebe  
Muskego, Wisconsin*

**Public school teachers**

I am concerned by remarks made by Terry Hahm re public education and educators [Readers Forum, June]. I quote: "Their purpose is nothing less than the destruction of children's souls, through means that are not so easy to identify and resist—subtle new age thought, unrelenting antichristian peer pressure, and amoral teachers as role models."

I doubt that all public schools are out to destroy the souls of children—in fact, I doubt that is the aim of any public school. For the Christian student, an excellent chance to witness to others takes place in and out of the classroom.

The statement that the teachers in public schools are amoral role models concerns me. I am a public school teacher—and I am a WELS member. I suspect that I am not alone. In fact I can think of WELS members who are not only teachers in public schools, but administrators as well. Are we all amoral?

Perhaps such sweeping generalities are to be avoided.

*Lea Ann Schramm  
Yankton, South Dakota*

**What's "close"?**

Pastor Franzmann's article "Planning a move" [July] brought back memories of our move from Nebraska to California. Our prayer was that the Lord would place us close to a WELS church. The location of my job was 100 miles one way from the nearest WELS church. Since we believed that 100 miles was the Lord's definition of "close," we didn't argue, we went to church. Was it easy? No. Was it a blessing? Very much so.

*John C. Ecklund  
Soledad, California*

**Check out small churches, too**

In response to "Planning a move" [July], I can appreciate the difficulties in making life-changing decisions. I also am happy to see encouragement for Christians to consider how these decisions affect their spiritual life. My chief concern is the mentality that one checks out a church for what it seems to offer.

As someone who has lived in congregations of fewer than 50 members, I have cried when WELS people moved to town and chose a larger church because of what it has to offer. Numerous times I've answered questions from a parent about whether we have this or that program. My reply, "We would love to start one. Please let's talk about it," is met with excuses.

Please, dear friends, consider not only what a congregation has to offer, but also how you may serve your Lord and others. No school? How about a home schooling cooperative? No organized youth ministry? How about spending time with your children, inviting their friends for activities and starting a less formal youth ministry? You may be surprised what exercise your faith may receive if the attitude becomes one of service to the Lord instead of what services are offered to you.

What do our small WELS congregations have to offer? First and most important, God's Word: the foundation of any congregation. On that foundation, you may find innumer-

able unexpected blessings. Please consider adding your God-given talents and gifts to a small congregation.

*Ann A. Styx  
Snoqualmie, Washington*

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; FAX 414/256-3899.*

**Oct. '94**

- 1. Psalm 119:1-24
- 2. Ps. 119:25-48
- 3. Ps. 119:49-80
- 4. Ps. 119:81-104
- 5. Ps. 119:105-128
- 6. Ps. 119:129-152
- 7. Ps. 119:153-176
- 8. Ps. 120, 121
- 9. Ps. 122, 123
- 10. Ps. 124-126
- 11. Ps. 127-129
- 12. Ps. 130, 131
- 13. Ps. 132
- 14. Ps. 133, 134
- 15. Ps. 135
- 16. Ps. 136
- 17. Ps. 137, 138
- 18. 2 Chronicles 1, 2
- 19. 2 Chron. 3:1—5:1
- 20. 2 Chron. 5:2—6:11
- 21. 2 Chron. 6:12-42
- 22. 2 Chron. 7, 8
- 23. 2 Chron. 9, 10
- 24. 2 Chron. 11, 12
- 25. 2 Chron. 13, 14
- 26. 2 Chron. 15, 16
- 27. 2 Chron. 17, 18
- 28. 2 Chron. 19, 20
- 29. 2 Chron. 21:1—22:9
- 30. 2 Chron. 22:10—23:21
- 31. 2 Chron. 24

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

## What is this thing called love?

**L**ove makes the world go 'round and heads spin and hearts go thumpety thump. Love inspires romantic poems. It makes adolescent girls titter and boys hopelessly tangle their tongues.

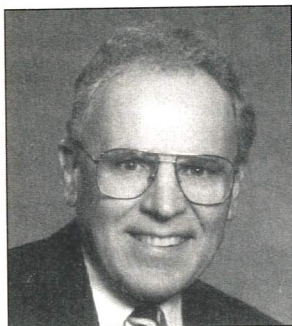
Love has many objects: My car, my freedom, my antique brooch. My dog, my friend, my significant other.

When you have love, you can just burst. It's euphoric. It numbs hurts. Then again, it hurts. Like the praying mantis, it seeks to devour its object.

What? Is this thing called love?

It's called that, all right. You can make a game out of naming the most songs that have love in their titles.

Love is a feeling. Love (of this kind) is fickle.




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*We need to  
experience love  
to be able to love.  
We don't come  
by it naturally.*

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### Scriptural insight

*1 Corinthians 13:4-8.* Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.

*1 John 4:10,11.* This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

There is another love. It feels, but it doesn't depend on feelings. It acts. As someone has said, "Love is a verb."

This love is there when the diapers need changing, the fever needs tending, the hurt needs soothing. This love cradles its object and protects it. It teaches how to field a grounder. It takes time to tell how and why things are. Sometimes it takes "time out," and it even spansks, if necessary.

This love visits the sick, welcomes the stranger, lends a hand to the neighbor. It never suffers from "I trouble." Filled with it, you come to love the unlikeable and to like the unlovable.

Love uplifts and sets free its object. Though often made to suffer, never dies. You cannot explain love, but you know when it is present.

Everyone wants to be loved, but we're not always quick to love. It takes doing. We need to experience love to be able to love. We don't come by it naturally.

Those love best who know God best. "God is love." Those know God best who know the love that went into Calvary's sacrifice—who know Jesus.

"We love because he first loved."

*Gary S. Baumbler*

# Charitable Gift Annuity

*A gift to the Lord you didn't think possible*

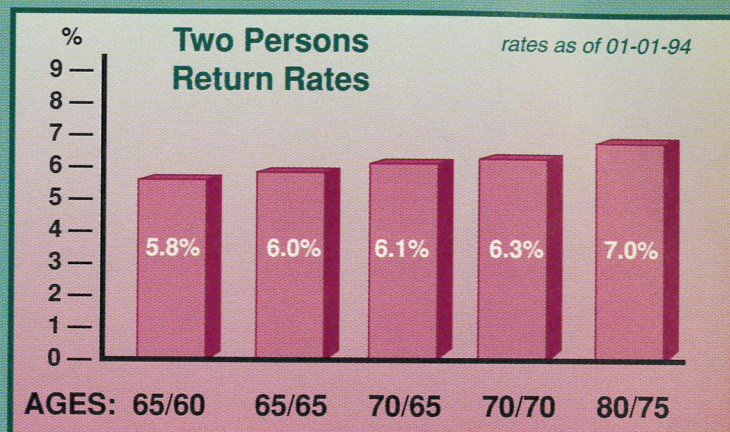
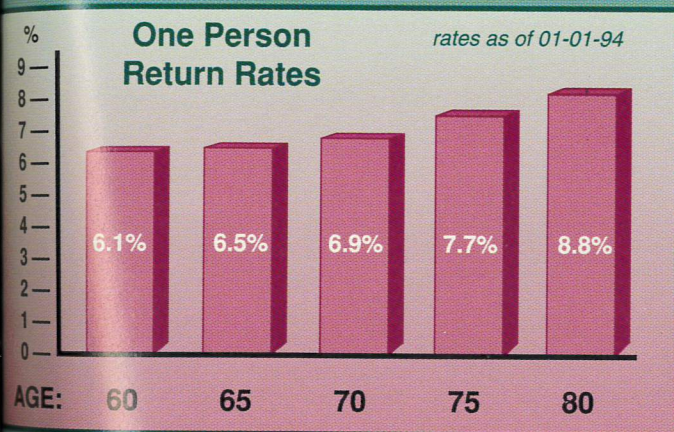


## What is a charitable gift annuity?

It's an agreement by which your gift of cash, stocks, bonds, or mutual funds is exchanged for an income guaranteed for life.

After death the remainder of the gift will be used by your congregation and synod as you specified.

## What are examples of gift annuity rates?



## Features

- A meaningful gift for the Lord after your death.
- Minimum of \$1,000. No maximum limit.
- Irrevocable. Once established it cannot be changed or canceled.
- Secured by the assets of the Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran Synod Foundation, Inc.
- Income you cannot outlive — regular, dependable, unchangeable.
- Immediate payment annuities available to WELS members aged 60 and over; deferred payment, aged 45 and older.

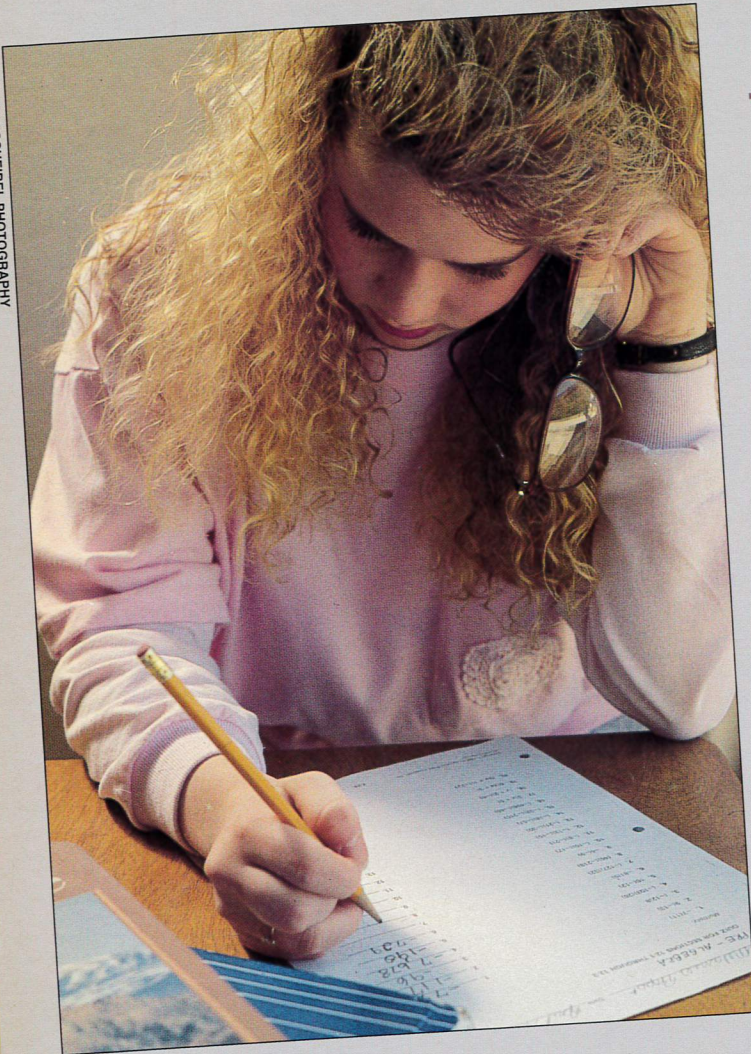
## Benefits

- The opportunity of designating your gift.
- The joy of making a gift for the Lord's work in your congregation and/or synod.
- The assurance of a steady income, possibly greater than you are now receiving.
- A deduction on your income tax return if you itemize.
- A portion of your annual payments free from income tax.
- If funded with appreciated assets, the avoidance of some tax on the capital gains.

## I'm interested. How can I receive more information?

Please write or call:  
 Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran Synod  
 The Ministry of Planned Giving  
 2929 N. Mayfair Road, Milwaukee, WI 53222

Milwaukee area:  
 771-0697  
 1-800-827-5482



I'm something of an expert on taking tests. It started years ago with those weekly spelling tests in grade school. I soon learned that if I wanted a gold star on my paper, I had to study the list of words.

That's the way it is with most school tests. How well you do depends on how well you prepare yourself. When teachers play "Gotcha" by offering no help and making tests as difficult as possible, students who want good grades really have to hit the books. And to get ready for important exams—the ACT or the SAT or the GRE—there are books and computer programs and even classes to help you.

I've lost a lot of sleep studying for exams—and worrying about tests I thought I might not pass.

Maybe that's why I'd always get nervous when I'd hear about tests of faith. Abraham got an "A" when God tested him, but I knew I'd never do half as well. I'm no Abraham. I might pass a short quiz,

# Passing the test

by Dorothy J. Sonntag

but if God would really test me, I was sure, no matter how well I'd try to prepare myself, I'd flunk.

Studying the Bible might help. But it takes more than Bible knowledge to pass a test of faith. It takes patience and courage and wisdom, and I'm not abundantly blessed with those characteristics. I'm better at complaining and worrying and making mistakes.

Then I became familiar with another kind of test—medical tests. The ones with long names or confusing initials: leukocyte scans, echocardiograms, ECGs, CTs, ERs, PgRs, and the like. And I learned something else about test-taking: unlike studying for school exams, preparing for medical tests doesn't always help. People who exercise and eat their vegetables and don't smoke still might not pass.

But medical tests aren't done to see how well we've prepared for them. They're done to diagnose what's wrong, and what we need to get well.

That's the way God tests. He already knows what's wrong and what I need, of course—he just wants me to know, too. And he doesn't play "Gotcha." He'll give me all the help I need to pass his tests. I don't have to do anything. Academic exams and medical tests still make me anxious. But I no longer worry about tests of faith. I can't fail—Jesus won't let me fail. "Don't worry, you'll pass," he says, "because I'll give you all the answers."



Dorothy Sonntag is assistant editor for Northwestern Lutheran.