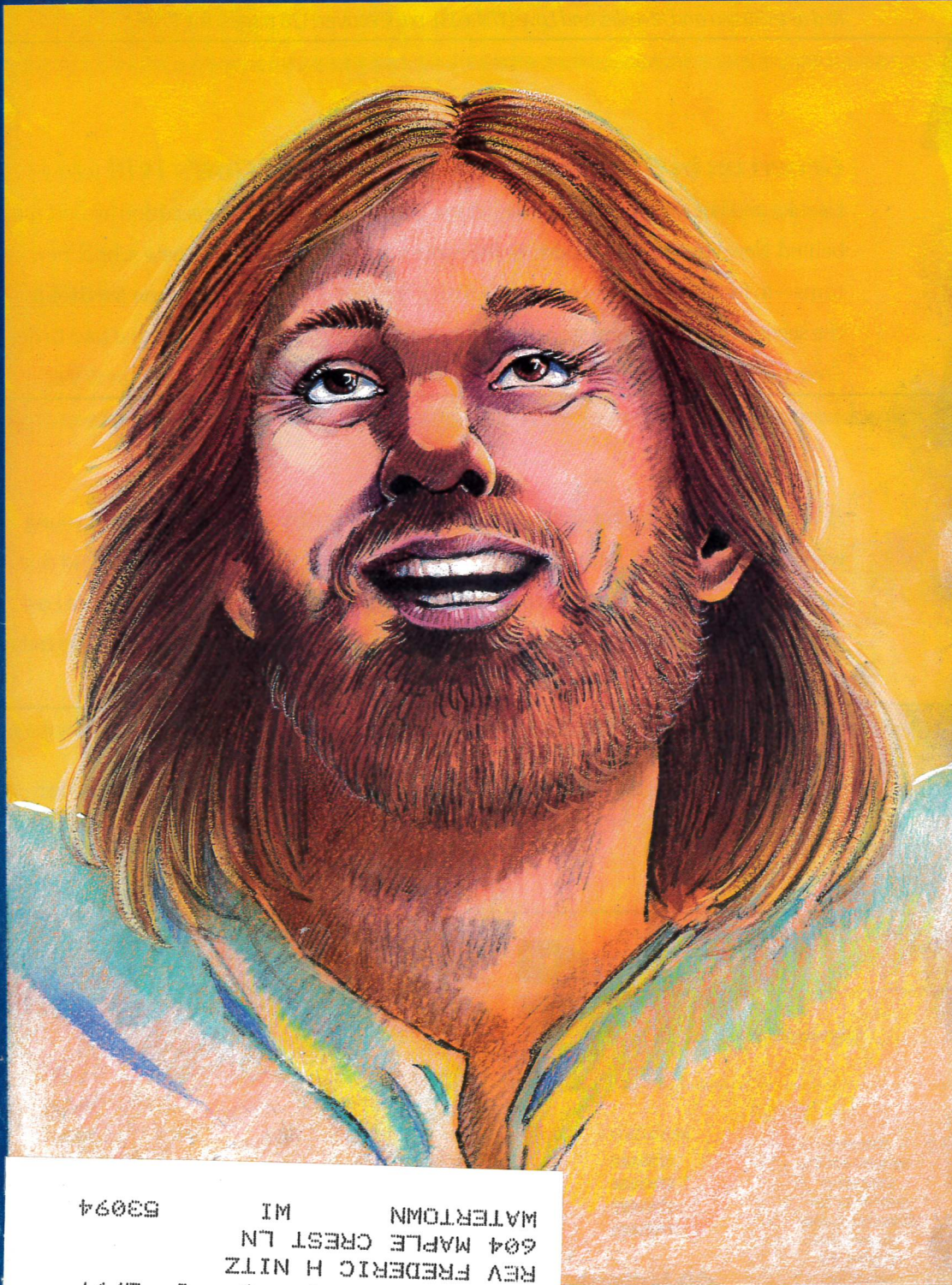


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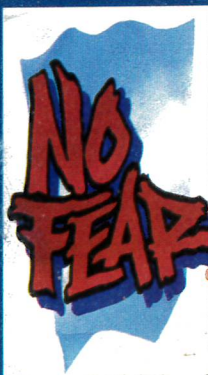
**Brothers still**

page 6

**Johannes  
Muehlhaeuser:  
The synod's  
founder**

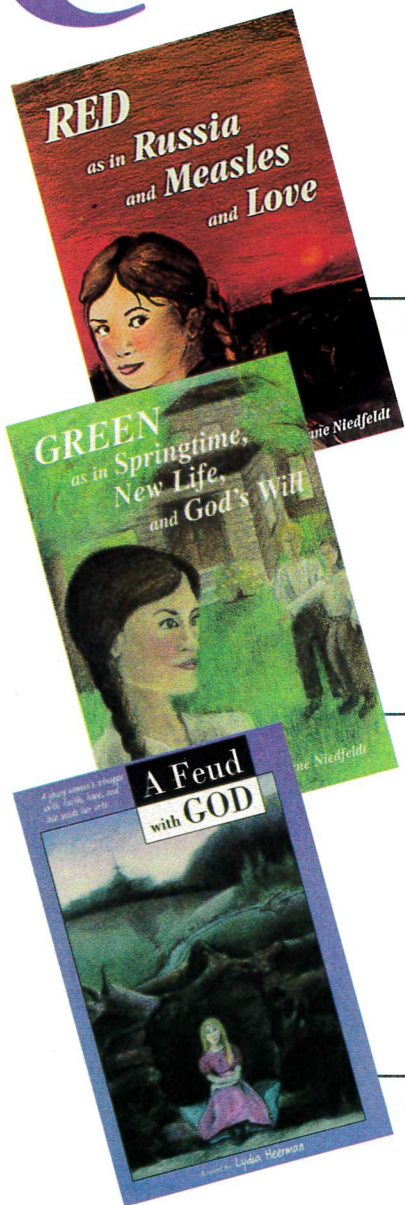
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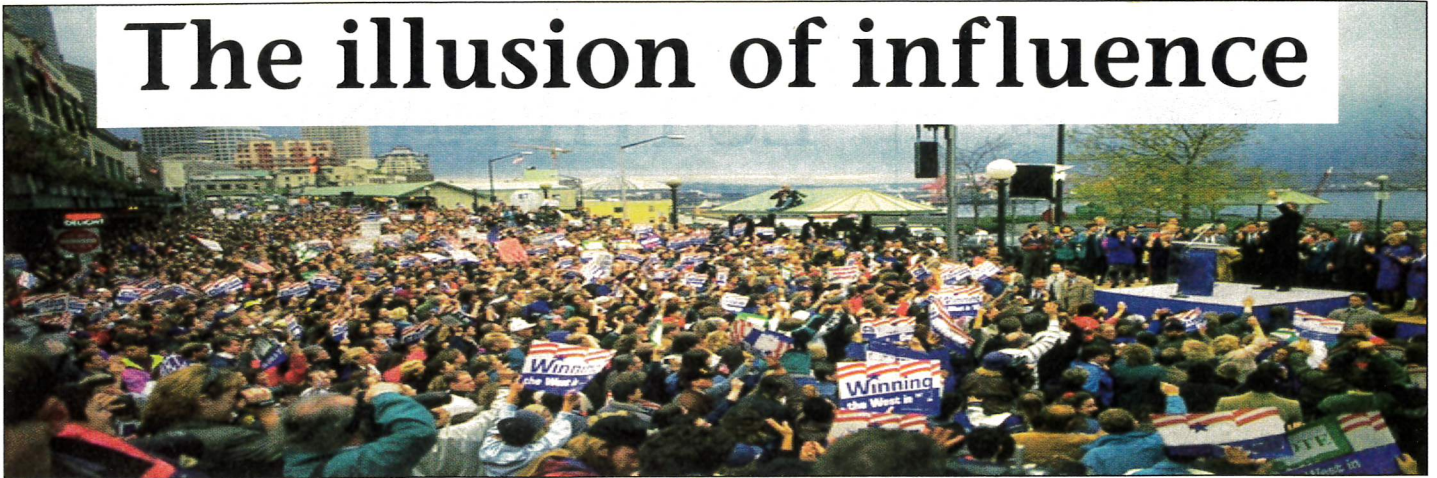
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# The illusion of influence



*"I will give you all their authority. . . if you worship me, it will all be yours." Luke 4:6,7*

Robert C. Hochmuth

**H**ow could Satan's blatant proposal to give Jesus authority possibly be a temptation to our Lord? God the Son had laid aside his divine majesty to carry out his mission. He endured temptation as our brother, fully human.

For him who was walking in our sandals, the deceiver offered a way to hold sway over human events, eradicate corruption and injustice, and usher in a new age in which the whole world could be one happy family. What a grand perspective!

## **Idealistic**

What an effective crusade Jesus would be able to carry on in the interest of decency and peace if he were to rule as this world's supreme potentate.

He and his disciples would never have opposition. They could make the world sit up and take notice. Mockers would be forced into silence, and missionaries would see nations swarming to be on the side of might and right.

What's more, Satan's illusion bypassed the humiliation of rejection as well as the agony of the cross.

But Jesus had not come to change world conditions; he had

come to ransom offenders from slavery in sin and to restore them to a high calling as servants of God for time and eternity. To this he recommitted himself, repelling the tempter with God's Word.

## **Insistent**

Satan still operates with the power scheme when he concentrates on deluding the Lord's rank and file.

With crime so rampant and evil so flagrant, it becomes apparent that a campaign against ungodliness is called for.

The temptation is to conclude that we Christians will be more effective in ushering in the kingdom of God when we wield more clout—especially political clout. We need to pull together; then we can pass laws that will force people to be more godly. We will be battling for the souls of our nation. It sounds positive and constructive. But Satan can employ it to divert us from what God wants Christians to accomplish above all.

## **Inadequate**

The one who overcame such temptation by the Word stands

beside us to fortify us, too, through his Word: "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight."

Coercion cannot bring anyone into the kingdom of God; only conversion can. Hearts can be changed only by the Holy Spirit's persuasion, not by legislation. Force cannot make anyone godly. The best it can do is restrain evil. That is needed, but in the long run political power can only make this world a better place from which to go to hell. Satan is satisfied if we are so earthly minded that we are of no heavenly good.

Certainly many evils need to be resolved through law and order, but the greatest human need could not be resolved by force, but only by surrender—our Lord's willingness to go to the cross for the guilty.

The Christian's prime concern cannot be how to force convictions on someone else, but how to echo the crucified Lord's invitation to live with him and for him.

*Robert Hochmuth is interim pastor at Good Shepherd, Pleasanton, California.*





- No one felt neutral; readers either liked or disliked last month's cover of the suffering Jesus. Let us know if you feel as strongly about artist Ed Koehler's follow-up picture on this cover. Speaking of artists, a new one has joined NL. Melissa Homan is now doing the layout and design.
- For Christians, Easter is the most glorious holiday of the year. That's why we chose the Easter issue to bring you the entire magazine in color. (Cost prevents us from doing so every month.) You'll find the Easter theme in several articles. Two will take you to some out-of-the-ordinary settings—on page 6 to Africa and, on the back cover, to hell itself.
- A new series, "The hard sayings of Jesus" by Thomas Trapp begins in this issue. Leading off the series is "Turn the other cheek," on page 8.
- You've seen the slogan; you can hardly miss it. It appears in a variety of forms: pins, bumper stickers, posters, t-shirts. Don't miss what Eric Hartzell has to say about NO FEAR on page 12.
- WELS members treasure their schools, and for good reason. Lutheran schools turn out knowledgeable, committed Christians and serve as an important evangelism tool, too. No wonder, when Curtis Peterson sent us a piece defending public schools, he called it "an improper opinion." See if you think what he says about public schools on page 32 is improper.

—Dorothy Sonntag

Cover by Ed Koehler

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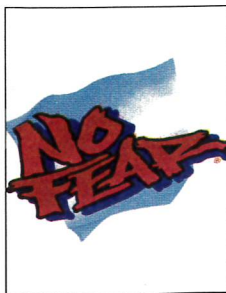
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NO FEAR  
page 6



Brothers still  
page 16



Easter morning  
in hell  
page 36

- 3** THOUGHT FOR TODAY  
**The illusion of influence**  
*Robert C. Hochmuth*  
Coercion cannot bring anyone into the kingdom of God; only conversion can.
- 6** EASTER  
**Brothers still**  
*Paul O. Wendland*  
I had failed my brother in his need. Now his little girl is dead.
- 8** HARD SAYINGS OF JESUS  
**Turn the other cheek**  
*Thomas H. Trapp*  
You've read the bumper sticker: "Don't get mad, get even." Jesus says, "Don't get even."
- 10** WELS AT WORK  
**WELS at work in Washington**  
*Dorothy J. Sonntag*  
Christians in Kent share their faith.
- 12** REFLECTIONS  
**NO FEAR**  
*Eric S. Hartzell*  
There is no quicker way to die than to have no fear.
- 14** TEN COMMANDMENTS  
**The hidden majesty**  
*Wayne A. Laitinen*  
God's majesty is hidden beneath the flesh and bone of earthly authorities.
- 16** BY FAITH THEY LED  
**Johannes Muehlhaeuser:  
The synod's founder**  
*Morton A. Schroeder*  
A founder and the first president of the Wisconsin Synod, Johannes Muehlhaeuser so strongly influenced the organization that it was sometimes called "Muehlhaeuser's Synod."
- 18** OPEN DOORS  
**Planning your gifts to the church**  
Ronald Roth answers questions about the synod's gift planning counselors.
- 19** WELS news
- A Bible in every home
  - Exemplary high schools recognized
  - 1994 offerings to synod topped \$15 million
  - New curriculum is on its way
  - Bruce Becker fills adult discipleship post
  - Veteran missionaries head for Cameroon
  - Cyberspace comes to WELS
  - District news
  - On the bright side
- 25** World news
- It's the law
  - Ancient churches, modern costs
  - Catholics debate use of inclusive language
  - Creationism controversy hits New Hampshire school board
  - Lutheran worldwide population up slightly
  - News briefs
- 27** BULLETIN BOARD • NOTICES
- 28** PERSON TO PERSON  
**Before and after**  
*Karl R. Gurgel*  
On that first Easter morning, between Saturday night and Sunday morning was all the difference in the world.
- 29** FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT  
**Love—God's way**  
*James A. Aderman*  
God's love is an unconditional, unbreakable commitment to do whatever is for our benefit, regardless of cost.
- 30** EDITORIAL COMMENT  
**Holy Laughter is no laughing matter**  
*Joel C. Gerlach*
- 31** YOUR QUESTION, PLEASE  
**Jesus in hell  
Different races**  
*John A. Brug*
- 32** SPEAKING MY MIND  
**Public school—a chance to be salt and light**  
*Curtis Peterson*
- 33** READER'S FORUM
- 34** THE EDITOR'S PEN  
**A proven pick-me-up**  
*Gary P. Baumler*  
Ever since the friends of Jesus discovered his empty tomb, the source of all joy has been "He lives."
- 36** EASTER  
**Easter morning in hell**  
*Wayne A. Laitinen*  
Jesus marched into hell to assure us that we will spend Easter morning with him forever.



# Brothers still

I failed my brother in his need,  
and now his little girl is dead

Paul O. Wendland

The morgue at the University Teaching Hospital in Lusaka is not a pleasant place. We are there to fetch a body for burial—a little girl, the daughter of Vicar Peter Chikatala. “Pastor,” he had said to me only last Friday, “she’s sick and the Nursing Sisters tell me I must take her to town. To hospital.”

He wanted a ride, of course. It seemed sometimes as if everybody at Mwembezi wanted a ride. Not surprising, I suppose, considering we were one of the few families in the area with a car, or “transport,” as they say.

But I had been busy at the time. A thousand things to do. Why couldn’t he have seen that? Why did he have to come to me? Why did he have to look at me that way? With ill-grace, I agreed to take them the fourteen kilometers of bad dirt road to the main highway leading to Lusaka. There they could catch a lift from a passing car. They would get to town soon enough.

**Who knows how much the extra minutes would have helped,** had I taken them all the way in?

Who knows how much the wait in the hot sun had hurt a little girl already burning up with fever? Maybe she would have died anyway. But I’ll never know now.



Thoughts like these fill my mind as we wait in the preparation area. It is a plain room of cement plaster walls and floor with one high window as the only source of light.

And two slabs. One occupied by the body of a young man, unknown to us, grey in death. The other about to be occupied by the body of the Chikatala’s daughter (her name? why can’t I remember her name?). At the foot of it lies the *bokosi*, the small wooden coffin for the young child. The attendants roll her in.

**I stand mutely by as the mother tenderly washes the body,** crooning a song to ears now beyond hearing, caressing soft skin now beyond feeling. In that cold and ghastly place, love remains. Now she covers her limp limbs with a little pink dress.

I know that dress. We had given it as a gift to Peter and his wife when our daughter Miriam had outgrown it. All at once there washes over me a sense of the magnitude of my sin and the depth of their grief as I watch her dress her lifeless child in my living daughter’s clothes.

**I had failed my brother in his need. Now his little girl is dead.** Maybe that death was beyond prevention, maybe it couldn’t be set directly on my doorstep. It didn’t



matter. As I stand in a room full of death, there is no place to hide from this one stark fact: I had failed to love my brother fully, freely, and without reservation at a time when he needed my help.

I don't remember much of the ride to the cemetery. I scarcely heard the choirs singing or the people wailing as we walked to the graveside. I remember how rocky the soil was. So full of little stones. So hard to dig into. Anonymous mounds of dirt on all sides. So empty and useless it all seemed. So empty and

---

*All at once there washes  
over me a sense of the  
magnitude of my sin.*

---

hard my heart. What can you do with guilt? Reason it away? Work it off somehow? "Could my tears forever flow, could my grief no respite know . . . ?" And the parents—who will help them carry this? What light can pierce the darkness of these shadowlands where little girls die and we end it all in stony ground?

**We are at the grave now** and Pastor Hachibamba's voice soars high and clean over the keening wails of the crowd, singing them into silence. He tells the story, the only story we can bear to hear right now. He speaks in Tonga, but all of us—black and white—hear him in our mother-tongue. As he speaks, we see it happen.

The women step carefully through the fading shadows of early morning. They go to a tomb carved from solid rock. They go to see a man three days dead. To anoint his body, to show

respect. There's not much one can do in the face of death. Ritual, it seems, is all we have. It's nothing, really, but love must try to do something, even if it helps not at all.

Then the gaping mouth of the grave where a stone should be, and the angel's triumphant question, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is risen, just as he said. Come, see the place where he lay!"

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, their world has shifted. It's the same world, but one in which nothing can ever be the same again. Something new has happened that makes everything new: life, death, sin, pain, grief—everything! In dread and awe combined they look inside and see . . . grave clothes lying in a heap, with the burial cloth they had so lovingly wrapped around his face only last Friday. There it is, folded neatly, off to one side. Who needs the spices of the dead, the garb of the dead, the home of the dead, when he lives again? Who needs any of our sad and helpless dancing, our rituals for keeping busy, when life and immortality have been brought to light?

They run off to tell the disciples, hearts jumping, minds whirling. And stop. Suddenly. There he stands. The Lord himself. He greets them warmly and then he

says, "Go tell my brothers I go before them into Galilee."

Yes, go tell them, huddled in fear behind locked doors. Go tell what you've seen. Go tell what you've heard.

**"My brothers,"** he says. There's no mistaking the word. Brothers still, though they had not served him as brothers. Brothers still, though one had denied him and all had deserted him. Weak, doubting, fearful, sinful, grieving human beings—failures all—but brothers, brothers of one family still.

What a world of love is contained in that one word! There can be no greater consolation for a fallen, faithless disciple than to hear the living Christ name him brother.

NL

*Paul Wendland teaches at Northwestern College, Watertown, Wisconsin.*





# Turn the other cheek

You've read the bumper sticker:  
"Don't get mad, get even."  
Jesus says, "Don't get even."

Thomas H. Trapp



*"You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also."*

*Matthew 5:38,39*

**I**t's a hard saying because it's easy to understand.

Jesus told his followers, "You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Matthew 5:38,39).

### **The eye-for-eye law**

When he referred to "eye for eye," Jesus was quoting the Old Testament. The Lord said to Moses on Mount Sinai, "If anyone injures his neighbor, whatever he has done must be done to him: fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth. As he has injured the other, so he is to be injured" (Leviticus 24:19).

"Bloodthirsty! Savage! Awful!" That's the response of some to the eye-for-eye and tooth-for-tooth law. Actually, that law is designed to be merciful and control retaliation. Revenge often far exceeds the original injury.

God establishes governments to prevent revenge and carry out justice. Through the centuries, governments (including Hammurabi's of 2,250 BC) have followed the *Lex talionis* ("law of retaliation")—the eye-for-eye law. Today money, instead of an eye, is often used to bring justice.

Jesus is not eliminating the eye-for-eye law. He's simply telling

Christians to go a step further. "If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also."

### **The right cheek**

Turning the other cheek is hard, because an unprovoked insult prompts automatic retaliation.

You've read the bumper sticker: "Don't get mad, get even."

That Jesus mentions the right cheek is significant. If a right-handed person hits the right cheek of someone he's facing, the back of his hand would strike the person.

According to Jewish law, a backhand slap was twice as insulting as a flat-of-the-hand slap.

Jesus is saying: If anyone attacks you with a calculated insult, don't retaliate. Turn the other cheek—not in a provocative way, but in a way that shows no bitterness and no intent to strike back. The apostle Paul put it this way: "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

### **Models of forgiveness**

Jesus did just that. He was called a glutton and a drunkard and a friend of thieves and prostitutes—with the implication that he affirmed their lifestyle. He did not strike back. "When they hurled insults at him, he did not retaliate. . . . Instead he entrusted himself to him who judges justly" (1 Peter 2: 23).

The early Christians were called cannibals because of their practice of the Lord's Supper. They were called divisive for their refusal to worship the emperor. Yet their goal was not to get even. Someone has said, "It belongs to God's church to receive blows, rather than inflict them."

In Madison, Wisconsin, at the WELS Lutherans for Life Pregnancy

Counseling Center, committed Christian women help women in crisis pregnancies. Yet over the past decade, these God-fearing volunteers have been called liars, fakes, manipulators, deceitful, gruesome, intimidating, dishonest, and even dangerous. Sound familiar?

Jesus said, "Turn the other cheek." He continued, "Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you." Those are ways of turning the other cheek.

---

*According to Jewish law,  
a backhand slap was  
twice as insulting as a  
flat-of-the-hand slap.*

---

### **No doormat**

Jesus wasn't saying, "Be a doormat." During his trial before the high priest, when Jesus was unjustly struck in the face, he asked, "If I said something wrong, testify as to what is wrong. But if I spoke the truth, why did you strike me?"

Jesus was not a doormat—nor did he slam the door. Instead he returns evil with good. He does that with us every day. His goodness is seen on his cross—it's called forgiveness, mercy, and grace.

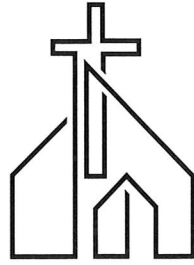
"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." Impossible? Not if we go to Jesus. With him we can do all things—even turn the other cheek.

**NL**

*Tom Trapp is pastor at Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel and Student Center, Madison, Wisconsin.*



# WELS at work in Washington



Pastor Jon Buchholz works with Caleb Schoeneck, a Holy Trinity member, on Evergreen's student publication.

## Christians in Kent share their faith

Dorothy J. Sonntag

Because coffee matters more than Christ to most of Seattle's citizens, sharing the gospel there is a challenge—one that members of Holy Trinity, in suburban Kent, Wash., gladly face.

"Seattle is a typical west coast, 'trendy' setting," says Pastor Jon Buchholz. "The espresso craze was born here. You'll find an espresso stand in every McDonald's."

### People to reach

McDonald's, not church, is where Seattle residents are likely to be on Sunday morning. The area is "heavily unchurched," Buchholz said, with "a highly mobile populace—transplants from other parts of the country. They don't have family traditions, including religious affiliation."

That lack of religious affiliation doesn't discourage Buchholz. He calls it an opportunity. "The possibilities for gospel outreach are without limit."

Laurie Barnes, a parish member, is equally optimistic. "There are a

great many unchurched people," she said. "We have so many opportunities for sharing our faith."

### Families to serve

Because its members are sharing their faith, Holy Trinity is growing. "The core of our congregation is families, including many with small children," Buchholz said. "We serve only two shut-ins."

Jobs brought many of those families to Seattle. "Prime employers for our members are Boeing, Weyerhaeuser, and Microsoft," said Buchholz. "We have members who tweak satellites and engineer 757s. We have folks who are responsible for managing thousands of acres of prime timberland; and we have a member who works right down the hall from [Microsoft president] Bill Gates."

Not all members are recent transplants, congregation president Don Schmeichel says. "We have a good mix, from people brand new to the church to older folks who have grown up with the church."



### HOLY TRINITY

Kent, Washington

organized 1966

380 members

#### Pastors:

Jon Buchholz  
John Henning

#### Teachers:

Stephan Rodmyre  
Carol Cole  
Brenda Henning  
Jane Rodmyre  
Helen Strege



One of those who grew up with the church is Doris Ewald. "It used to be we were all young, but we're becoming a three-generation church," she said. "We raised our family at Holy Trinity. I can't think of going anywhere else."

---

*The core of our congregation is families, including many with small children. We serve only two shut-ins.*

---

#### Youth to teach

One reason she wouldn't go elsewhere is that she values her church's "strong emphasis on Christian education. The further you get from the midwest, the more hungry you get for that." The parish elementary school has about 90 students.

The congregation so values Christian education that it also provides space for Evergreen Lutheran High School. "The school is a separate entity, but we have a close relationship," said Buchholz.

He says increasing enrollment at both schools is a blessing, but also a challenge. "Zoning allows 200 students on our campus. The enrollment will pass that next year. Either we get a zoning variance—good luck!—or turn students away."

#### Challenges to face

The parish faces another challenge. Its other pastor, John Henning, has had serious health problems.

"Pastor Henning has kept us focused on our mission and on God's promises," said Don

Schmeichel. "We want to keep him involved, but right now his job is to get better."

Holy Trinity's members are used to challenges, said Laurie Barnes. "We address problems; we don't just ignore them."

Jon Buchholz wants to add more challenges. He has a list of goals for Holy Trinity. First is an evangelism program. "At Christmas we hand-delivered invitations to over 360 homes. We hope to expand this kind of outreach."

Next, he said, is "enhancing communication in the congregation. We are trying to listen to our members and address specific needs."

Another goal is "to involve more members into the ministry of the church—initiate a greeter program, build a Christian counseling network, offer leadership training, develop lay Bible study facilitators, and be much more active in the community."

Laurie Barnes believes Holy Trinity will meet those goals. "There are so many committed Christians here. They really look for opportunities to share their faith."

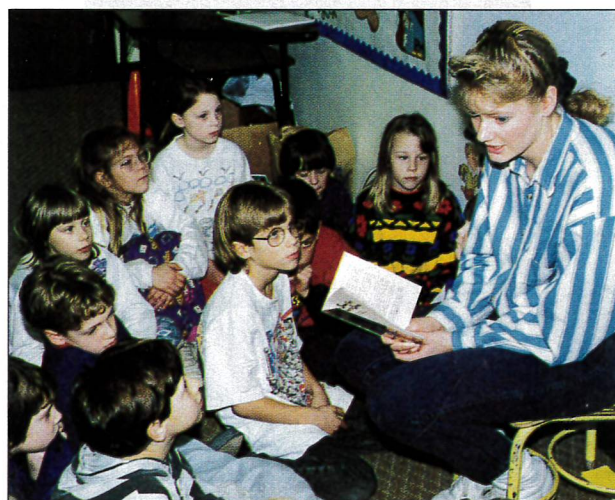
Don Schmeichel agrees. "I've seen a lot of positive things happen in the time I've been here, and the Lord will continue to bless us. We can count on that."

NL

Dorothy Sonntag is assistant editor of Northwestern Lutheran.



*Holy Trinity elementary school students play in the shadow of Evergreen Lutheran High School.*

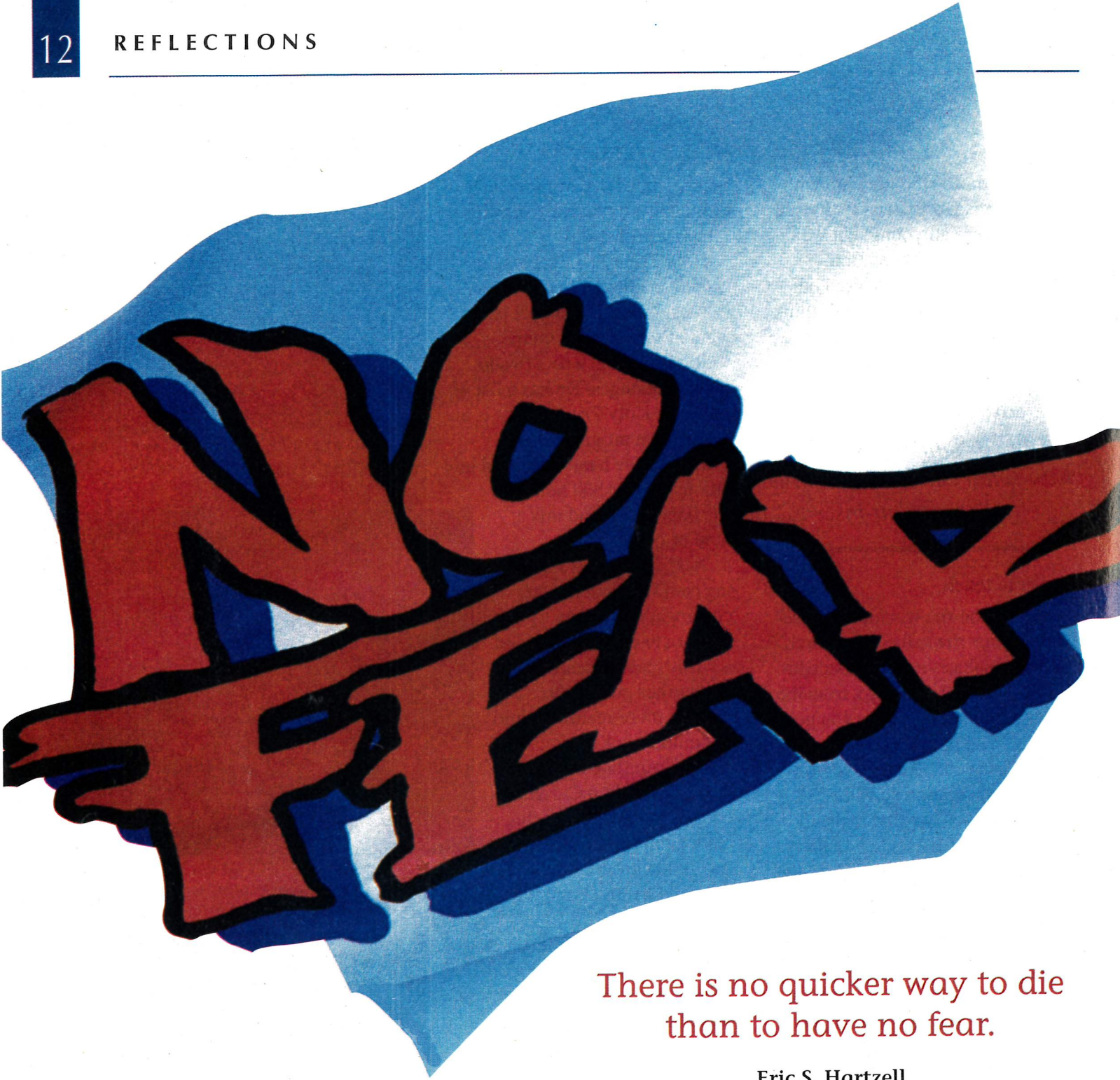


*Brenda Henning holds her first and second graders' attention at story hour.*



*The pie toss was popular at Winter Carnival, one of several fellowship events sponsored by the congregation.*





There is no quicker way to die  
than to have no fear.

Eric S. Hartzell

**N**O FEAR. You see it on the backs of t-shirts these days in capital letters after some cocky statement about winning. The scary thing about NO FEAR is that it might be the way it is.

**No fear is bad**

NO FEAR, if it is true, is bad. There is no quicker way to die than to have no fear of heights, of rattlesnakes, of fights, of danger. And it surely is true of our spiritual lives:

no fear of the devil, no fear of hurting God, no fear of transgressing and trespassing sacred boundaries leads always and quickly to death.

Joseph could not wear a NO FEAR t-shirt. When he faced the



“win/win” situation of having all Potiphar’s possessions and his wife as well, Joseph was afraid. “How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?” he asked his temptress.

The thief on the cross next to Jesus took off his NO FEAR t-shirt when he said to his fellow thief, “Don’t you fear God?”

Adam and Eve, on the other hand, did wear NO FEAR t-shirts. Their creator had told them that if they ate the fruit they would die, but somehow they got around their fear

of death and reached and picked and ate. They listened to the great promoter of NO FEAR who said to them, “Have no fear; you will not die!”

AIDS continues to find many willing and eager victims. NO FEAR! The one who delights in destroying bodies and souls has outdone himself in his educational campaign for “no fear sex.” Even where worldly authorities warn against promiscuous sex, he convinces people not to fear. If AIDS isn’t the outcome, then hideous scarring of the human body and soul is. “He who sins sexually sins against his own body” (1 Corinthians 6:18).

**Fear is good**

What a great ally God gave us when he gave us fear, when he taught us in our spiritual childhood, “We should fear and love God.”

Martin Luther surely knew this. In his catechism he said, “God threatens to punish all who transgress these commandments.

Therefore, we should fear his wrath, and not do contrary to them. But he promises grace and every blessing to all that keep these commandments. Therefore, we should also love and trust in him, and willingly do according to his commandments.”

Notice that there is fear. “Yes, yes, the childlike fear of God is not only a high regard and respect for God, but also a fear of his wrath and punishment.”

*All slogans aside, it remains a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

**Parents with no fear**

Parents who have no fear of missing church teach their children to have no fear of despising God’s Word too. Parents who have no fear of alcohol and its addiction teach their children to be heroes of drink too. Fathers who aren’t afraid to misuse God’s name raise up sons who parrot phrases they might not even understand but phrases that blaspheme nevertheless. Wives who whittle on their husbands with their tongues train daughters to be everything but gentle and quiet spirits.

In all these cases and many others, NO FEAR on the part of parents becomes that same thing in the lives of children. The sin of NO FEAR passes from the parents to the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate God and learn not to fear him.

On the other hand, parents who have God-pleasing fear pass this respect to their children. This is “training them up in the way they

should go.” This is the parent walking along life’s road with his little one in hand, pointing out things to fear. Fear to despise authority and bring down the curse of the fourth commandment on your head: life will go bad and you will not live long on the earth. Be afraid of that happening to you!

Thank God for the parent who read the notice on the pack of cigarettes and feared hurting her unborn child. Thank God for all mothers who were afraid to deform their unborn babies with the contents of a bottle or can.

**Christians with no fear**

Finally, no one can truthfully wear a NO FEAR t-shirt. Those who might convince themselves they have no fear do have fears. All slogans aside, it remains a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

But there would be some interesting t-shirts that Christians could wear in the NO FEAR department.

Jesus is going to stand with me on Judgment Day. NO FEAR!

God plans my life for me. NO FEAR!

I wrestle with God and prevail. NO FEAR!

Nothing separates me from the love of God. NO FEAR!

Even though I die, I will not die. NO FEAR!



*Eric Hartzell is pastor at East Fork, Whiteriver, Arizona.*





# The hidden majesty

God's majesty is hidden beneath the flesh and bone of earthly authorities.

Wayne A. Laitinen

It was the last evening of our family get-away. We had just finished our evening prayers in the motel room when my four-year-old son asked, "Daddy, what do policemen do for us?"

"They keep bad people from hurting us," I replied, "They help us when we're in trouble. And they stop us if we're driving too fast so we won't get hurt in an accident." Satisfied with my answer, the little guy drifted off to sleep.

## A lesson in the fourth commandment

The very next day, as I was driving down the home stretch, the flashing lights of an Ohio state trooper appeared in my rearview mirror. I glanced at my speedometer and pulled over. As the officer approached my window, I fumbled through my wallet to find my driver's license.

It occurred to me that I was about to teach my family a lesson in the fourth commandment. The next words I

spoke, for better or for worse, would answer questions like:

"How does Dad act when he does something the policeman says is wrong? And why does he act that way?"

"Who makes the rules? The policeman, my daddy, or someone else?"

"Does my dad have to follow the rules?"

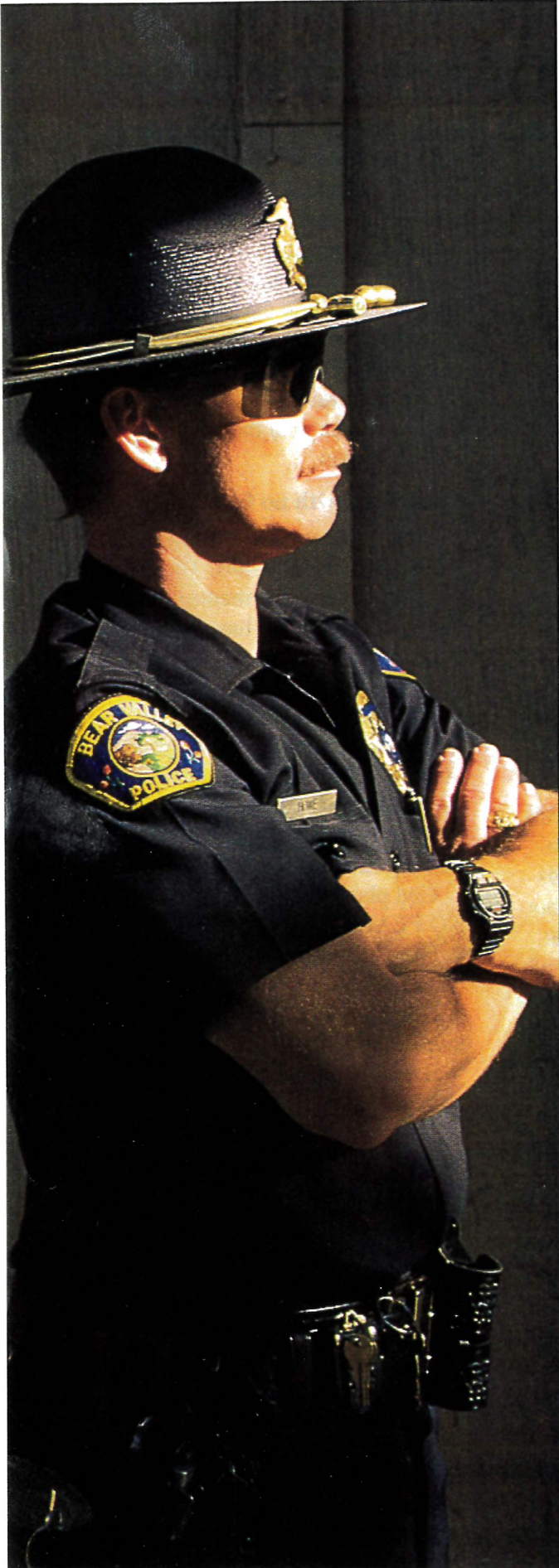
"Who gives the policeman the right to tell my dad what to do?"

---

*Our earthly authorities have been established by God. God tells us that when we honor and obey them, we honor and obey him.*

---

As I rolled down the window, my son was about to see me in the role of a child. The officer would play the parent. I could be manipulative. I could turn my children's respect for me against the officer. I could complain, transfer guilt, or make excuses in a play for my family's sympathy. Or I could honor the state trooper because of his "hidden majesty."





## Honoring authority

In his Large Catechism, Luther said that we ought to honor our parents because of their "hidden majesty." Parents, teachers, government officials, employers, and church leaders are flesh and blood people. What's more, they are sinful people. That's what's deceptive. If I had probed into the private life of that officer, I'm sure I could have found enough evidence to complain, "After what you've done, you've got a lot of nerve to stand here and tell me how to drive!"

But that's not the point. Earthly authorities have been established by God. God tells us that when we honor and obey them, we honor and obey him. God's majesty is hidden beneath human flesh and bone and sin.

It is not enough to demand that my children obey me. That only gives them the impression that all authority begins and ends with me. There is no hidden majesty. Just my own. When my children are old enough to leave home, they may feel that they can leave behind my beliefs and values as well.

My children must also see their father as one who is under authority. I, too, am conscience-bound by God's Word and will. My son will likely see no more of the hidden majesty in me than I do in that state trooper. One day, I can expect him to play that roadside script back to me in all of its defiance or humility.

Ultimately, it is not my authority at stake here. My example will teach my children either to bow before God or to twist his Word to serve their ego.

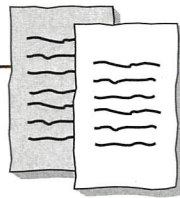
We must keep this in mind more often than when God's man is standing at our car door. God's

### FOURTH COMMANDMENT

Honor your father and mother, that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.

#### *What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God that we do not dishonor or anger our parents and others in authority, but honor, serve and obey them, and give them love and respect.



authority must be honored at all times and in all places: On the ball field, while watching a televised news conference, on the phone, and in family conversations about others.

Heavenly Father, help us parents! We who know the majesty we represent are keenly aware of our sins and failures.

#### **Free to be obedient**

But this is where parents teach their children to see the hidden majesty with new eyes. Through daily contrition and repentance, Christian parents teach their children to flee to our Savior, Jesus Christ, for forgiveness. He was born to redeem us so that we might have the full rights of sons. As sons, we are also heirs: forgiven, declared just, Christ's adopted

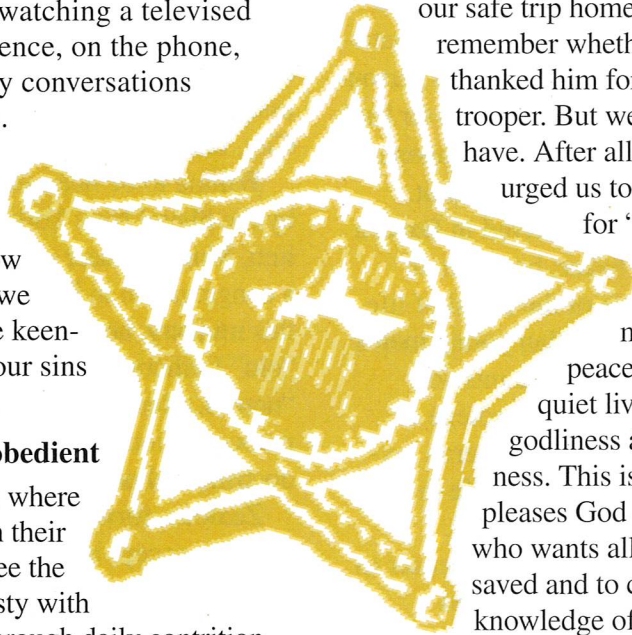
brothers, in communion with our Father, given his estate, freed from law, and slaves to no man.

Our Savior-God sets us free to be obedient citizens in God's world.

Did the 12-year-old Son of God respectfully listen to the teachers in the temple courts? So will we. Not because we must, but because it pleases our Father. From the cross he honored his mother and provided for her earthly needs. Our sinless brother even submitted when he was unjustly arrested by worldly authorities. While under oath, he answered the tyrant, Caiaphas, truthfully.

This is the gracious "hidden majesty" I want my son to see and imitate.

When we turned into the driveway that evening, we thanked God for our safe trip home. I don't remember whether we thanked him for the state trooper. But we should have. After all, the apostle urged us to give thanks for "... those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:1-4).



NL

Wayne A. Laitinen is pastor at Gethsemane, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.



# Johannes Muehlhaeuser: The synod's founder

**A founder and the first president of the Wisconsin Synod, Johannes Muehlhaeuser so strongly influenced the organization that it was sometimes called "Muehlhaeuser's Synod."**

Morton A. Schroeder



A plaque at Grace church commemorating Muehlhaeuser's service says, "Founder and pastor of Grace Ev. Lutheran Congregation in Milwaukee, 1849-1867. Hebrews 13:7."

Johannes Muehlhaeuser spent the first third of his life in his native land, Germany. Seeking a more satisfying vocation, he crossed his personal Rubicon: the Rhine. On its far bank lay Basel, Switzerland, an important stop in his journey to the pulpit.

Muehlhaeuser arrived in Basel a journeyman baker; he left it an ardent disciple of the bread of life. He joined a Christian young men's society, studied in the mission house, and became a protégé of Christian Spittler, a Lutheran layman who dedicated his life to missions and the printed Word.

Spittler tapped Muehlhaeuser to go to Austria, Hungary, and Bohemia to sell Bibles and religious tracts. Although he was jailed on false charges of proselytizing and organizing secret societies, the venture fanned his missionary zeal.

## Missionary to the New World

Muehlhaeuser's next stop was the Barmen Mission House. After two

years of study, he was sent to America. His arrival made him the Langenberg Society's first missionary to the New World. His first assignment, teaching in New York City, failed.

Willing to be licensed as a pastor by the liberal New York Ministerium, Muehlhaeuser accepted a call to a congregation in Rochester. During this ministry, he came in contact with "old" Lutherans. He, an advocate of "new" Lutheranism, disliked their preoccupation with sound Lutheran doctrine and practice.

Zealous, forward-looking, and ready to accept hardship as norm, in 1848 Muehlhaeuser resolved to move to Wisconsin to carry out mission work. To support himself and his family, he became a colporteur for the American Tract Society. He also preached in Presbyterian and Congregational churches. When poor health forced him to give up his book agency, some Germans in Milwaukee asked him to form a

Lutheran congregation.

Trinity congregation resulted. Renamed Grace because a Trinity existed in the city, it became known as *Muehlhaeuser Kirche*. Grace and its pastor were soon noted for their work among the poor, sick, and needy.

## Synod founder

Muehlhaeuser was a quick study, possessing innate administrative skills. Building on lessons learned from Spittler and eastern colleagues, he sought strength in union. He convinced two friends from Langenberg days, John Weinmann, pastor of St. John's, Oak Creek, and William Wrede, pastor of Salem, Town Granville, to discuss cooperative church work.

The men met December 8, 1849, in rooms rented by Grace Church, to organize what would be the Wisconsin Synod. Muehlhaeuser was elected president, Weinmann secretary, and Wrede treasurer.

The constituting convention of the new group, sometimes called unflat-



teringly "Muehlhaeuser's Synod," was held May 26-27, 1850, in Salem's log church. Muehlhaeuser presented the constitution he had been asked to write; it was adopted with minor changes. Financial matters, school plans, and Bible study were discussed. A synod was born.

**Synod president**

On three occasions the constitution was set aside so Muehlhaeuser could be re-elected. Deemed indispensable by his peers, he served for ten years. When he declined renomination because of age and poor health, he was elected "Senior," an honorary office created to show appreciation for his pioneer work.

Muehlhaeuser was more than presiding officer. Because the missionaries sent to America by German mission societies were sometimes unsatisfactory, the synod wanted its own training school. Muehlhaeuser pursued various options, but none proved viable during his tenure. However, he started a library to help educate ministerial candidates. The venture, helped by European friends, predated Milwaukee's public library by 25 years.

The synod's most vexing problem was its doctrinal position. Muehlhaeuser was a "new" Lutheran, and his liberal tendencies contrasted with the conservative tenets of "old" Lutherans, led by Johannes Bading. Because each respected the contributions the other made to the synod's welfare, their differences were resolved—sometimes raucously, but always fraternally.

**A multi-faceted man**

Muehlhaeuser was a multi-faceted man, and he stretched the ropes of his tent beyond congrega-

tional and synodical ministries. He was a "friend" of Passavant (Milwaukee) hospital. He was one of the chaplains who participated in Milwaukee's public observance of Abraham Lincoln's funeral. He was one of five men who chose and bought the original land for Union Cemetery.

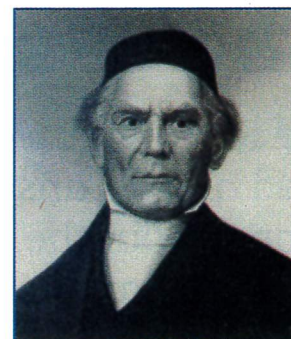
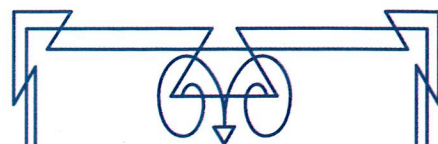
He assisted in establishing other Milwaukee churches. He and two others shared the pulpit to help St. Peter get started. The first to preach at St. Matthaueus when it began, he was land agent when it bought property. And he helped struggling congregations by wise use of an annual \$300 stipend from the Pennsylvania Synod.

Milwaukee, called by many the *Deutsch-Athen* of the Midwest, changed dramatically during Muehlhaeuser's time. A town of about 10,000 when he arrived in 1848, it grew to be a city of almost 70,000 by 1870. Muehlhaeuser died in that changed city five weeks after his 64th birthday.

Johannes Bading, the man who succeeded him to the presidency, said, "By his death the synod loses its father, founder, and advocate. . . . Its development was marked by his efforts, speeches, and struggles." This was a kind, generous, and true assessment of the lasting work of the "new" Lutheran advocate by the leader of the "old" Lutherans.

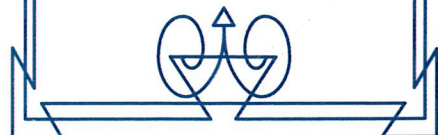
**NL**

*Morton Schroeder, a retired professor, lives in Appleton, Wisconsin*



**Johannes Muehlhaeuser**

- Born in Notzingen, Wuerttemberg, Aug. 9, 1803
- Langenberg Society's first missionary to America, 1837
- Pastor of Grace, Milwaukee, Wis., 1849-1867
- Led the organization of the Wisconsin Synod, 1850
- Synod president, 1850-1860
- Died in Milwaukee, Wis., Sept. 15, 1867





# Planning your gifts to the church

Ronald Roth, director of planned giving, answers questions about the synod's gift planning counselors.



*The planned giving staff. Standing: Paul Soukup, Lory Yorkey, Tom Franzmann, Ron Roth, Bob Weimer, Jan Fleming, Jim Klein, Lee Vaccarella. Seated: Cathy Grimm, John Graf, Jon Scharleman, Gerry Heckmann, Norm Stellick.*

## What do gift planning counselors do?

We help synod members by telling them about opportunities to support the Lord's work and offering advice on how to make use of assets through current or deferred gifts. When you talk to a gift planning counselor, you're talking to a fellow Christian, and in strictest confidence.

## What kind of advice do you give?

We don't provide legal advice, but we help with financial planning. First, we help you list your assets. Second, we ask, "Who are the people important to you? What work of the Lord is important?" Then we show what you can do with your assets to support what's important to you, and offer advice on how to get it done.

## Since gift planning counselors are paid by the synod, do they ask people to give to the synod?

No. We help people plan to give to whatever work of the Lord is of special importance to them. When we

help someone plan her estate, she may make her church the beneficiary.

## I already support my church. Why should I talk to a gift planning counselor?

Normally, on a Sunday morning, you and I give cash or checks. But our real net worth may be in non-liquid assets: stocks, bonds, real estate. For example, stock you bought for \$5,000 can be worth \$20,000 today. Its major value is in what it's worth; it doesn't give you much income. Instead of selling the stock and giving the money, you donate the stock. You pay no capital gains tax and use the full value as an itemized charitable contribution. It's a win-win situation.

There are many other such possibilities the average person doesn't know.

## Why is the synod putting more emphasis on planned giving?

It's wise stewardship. God wants us to make the most of his gifts, and that can mean knowing some things about tax laws and how things like charitable trusts and annuities work.

## What effect has planned giving had on synodical income?

Twenty years ago, the synod budget was funded almost exclusively by congregational offerings and tuition. Today only about half of the synod's income comes from congregations. Revenues from trusts and annuities now account for about a fourth of the synod's income.

## Why are congregations giving less to the synod?

Churches are struggling to meet their budgets. Congregational expenses are increasing dramatically for two reasons. One is increase in staffing. We don't teach 50 kids in one classroom today, and we don't want one pastor to shepherd 1,000 souls.

Another is that earning power has declined. Families can't live on one income today. But we still talk of giving from income. We don't talk much about giving from assets.

*For help with your financial planning, contact WELS Planned Giving, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222; 414/256-3888*





The Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference is an international federation of which WELS is a member.

## Mission work continues despite disappointments

Under communism, the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church (ELF) in eastern Germany could do little evangelism. Now this sister church of the WELS is actively doing mission work. Excerpts from a letter from ELF President Gerhard Wilde describe some efforts:

"Our five students [at the seminary in Leipzig] distributed 1,000 worship invitations to homes. Not a single new visitor came, but they are not

giving up on mission work."

The next project, he said, was to hold "a Bible week in Planitz. . . . We will again set mobile information center in the marketplace in nearby Neuplanitz."

Wilde also described another mission project in Zwickau: "The local trombone player plays from the town hall balcony, while the young people pass out invitations to Sunday services. He has also preached from the balcony."

The custom of preaching from that balcony, Wilde said, "is well-grounded in the tradition of Luther. Of course the town hall has been rebuilt several times since Luther's day."

WELS assists ELF through the Germany Support Fund. Gifts for that fund can be sent to WELS, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398.



## Professors go to jail

Professors at Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, are going to prison—every month. They conduct services and teach Bible classes at Saginaw Regional Correctional Facility, a newly opened state prison. As many as 125 men attend the monthly service, reports Ray Arnold, a member of the district commission on special ministries.

Lay people who accompany the pastors provide music and visit with the prisoners.

"We all have been prisoners, prisoners of sin, but now we have freedom through Christ," said Arnold. "This is the message that is being preached."

## A Bible in every home

Members of Siloah, Milwaukee, Wis., decided to try a different evangelism approach recently. "Instead of giving out tracts and calling people

on the phone, we decided to get a Bible into every home of the church's immediate neighborhood," said Pastor Keith Tullberg. "We distributed the Everyday American English translation, which gives readers information on how to get started in reading the Bible."

Just before Christmas, members went door to door, distributing

350 gift-wrapped New Testaments. Each Bible carried an invitation to Siloah's holiday services.



Volunteers from Siloah, Milwaukee, wrap Bibles to be given as Christmas gifts to people in the neighborhood.

**rē·li·giōn**  
Defining religion

**absolution:** The pronouncement of God's forgiveness. The absolution is spoken by the pastor after the confession of sins in our worship services. Every Christian, however, has the privilege and duty to announce God's forgiveness to penitent sinners.



## Congregation's scholarships aid future ministers

The members of St. John, Bay City, Mich., appreciate their pastor and teachers and want to ensure a steady supply of ministers for future generations. For years St. John's Men's Club had been giving scholarships to students attending Michigan Lutheran Seminary, our synod's prep school in Saginaw.

The congregation wanted to do more. They decided to use a portion of offerings gathered on major festivals of the church year for St. John students studying for the ministry. Several teachers and pastors have benefited from this gen-



St. John, Bay City, Mich., gives financial aid to these Michigan Lutheran Seminary students, who pay \$4,000 per year for room, board, and tuition there.

erosity.

Then the congregation established a scholarship fund. One member offered a generous gift to start an endowment for student assistance. That fund has grown considerably

through gifts and memorials.

St. John's efforts continue to pay off. The congregation has 16 students attending Michigan Lutheran Seminary, two at Northwestern College, one at Dr. Martin Luther College, and one at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary.

The Board for Ministerial Education can assist your congregation in setting up a student assistance fund. Ask for "Congregational

Scholarship Guidelines." Contact Ruth Rogahn, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398; 414/256-3237.

—John M. Brenner

## Exemplary high schools recognized

Three Lutheran high schools in Wisconsin—Kettle Moraine, Jackson; Shoreland, Somers; and Wisconsin Lutheran, Milwaukee—have been named exemplary schools.

A committee of WELS educators chose the schools from among 20 WELS-affiliated high schools. "The committee had a difficult challenge," said Dr. Daniel Schmeling, administrator of the Commission on Parish Schools. The committee based its choices on the schools'



High School senior plans to study business administration in college.

Jenny Gauerke, 17, a member of Mt. Olive, Appleton, Wis., was the only student from Wisconsin at the National Young Leaders Conference in Washington DC in February. Selected because of high academic achievement, the Fox Valley Lutheran

academic standards and commitment to students' spiritual nurture.

Each school received a \$2,500 grant to fund instructional programs and help purchase educational materials. The awards were part of a Lutheran high school enrichment program sponsored by Aid Association for Lutherans.

## Obituary

### Raymond L. Wiechmann 1918-1995

Raymond Louis Wiechmann was born March 3, 1918, in Elgin, Minn. He died Jan. 27, 1995, in Clearwater, Fla.

A 1943 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, he served at St. Peter, Monticello, Minn., and Salem and St. Lucas, both in Milwaukee, Wis., before becoming the synod's first full-time administrator for home missions. He then returned to parish ministry at Bay Pines, Seminole, Fla. When the synod organized the South Atlantic District in 1973, he served as its first president until his retirement in 1984.

He is survived by his wife, Miriam; children, Timothy, Joel, Philip, and Margaret; ten grandchildren; sisters, Renata Beschnett, Cordelia Roschke, and Anita Meyer; and brothers, Helmuth and Edgar.





## New curriculum is on its way

The first lessons for Christ Light, the synod's new religion curriculum, will be field tested this month.

Nearly 100 teachers, pastors, and lay people have been working part-time on the course for WELS schools, Sunday schools, and vacation Bible schools from preschool through grade 12.

"We're going to prepare at least two lessons at every grade level," said Donald Helwig, one of three Northwestern Publishing House editors working on the curriculum. "We're sending them to 40 teachers—day school and Sunday school—and parents across the synod. Their reactions will give us direction as we continue."

Besides Helwig, full-time curricu-

lum editors are Owen Dorn, Jane Mose and Lyle Albrecht.

"The curriculum is coordinated between home, church, and school," Helwig said. "The lessons will be sent home, so that parents take part in the learning experience. We say education is the parents' responsibility, but we don't always give parents opportunity."

The target date for completion is 1997, he said. "I know teachers want it as soon as possible. But we've got to get it right, even if it takes longer."

He agreed that the \$2.8 million project is an ambitious undertaking. "Monumental is how I'd describe it," he said. "I feel privileged to be a part of it."

## Singles share through SHARE

You're a single Christian whose career takes you to a city where you have no friends. If you don't want to visit bars or run an ad in the newspaper's personals column, how do you meet other singles—especially other Christians?

Donna Jonnejack and Sue Johnson, among others, found the answer in SHARE—Singles Helping one Another on the Road to Eternity. The Wisconsin-based organization offers social and spiritual support to Christian singles. Jonnejack and Johnson, both from West Allis, Wis., are members of SHARE's board of directors.

SHARE has an equal number of men and women, Jonnejack said, and includes people who are widowed or divorced as well as those who have never married. "We say 'still single or re-single,'" quipped Johnson.

The group's activities range from Caribbean cruises to Christmas caroling. An annual event is a seminar focusing on topics of interest to singles. This year's program on May 6 includes discussions on single parenting, Christians in the workplace, and sexuality and dating.

Although a few couples who became acquainted through SHARE have married, finding dates is not the group's purpose. "We form friendships," said Jonnejack, "not just with women, but with men too."

Both women said they are willing to advise singles in other areas establish similar groups. "People have told us they're so glad they found SHARE," said Sue Johnson. "We're the alternative to hanging out at bars."

For more information, write SHARE, PO Box 341004, Milwaukee WI 53219. To register for May's seminar, call Susan Johnson, 414/546-0275.

## Bruce Becker fills adult discipleship post

Developing programs to foster spiritual growth is his first priority, says Bruce Becker, the synod's new administrator for the Commission on Adult Discipleship.



"We grow spiritually in Lutheran school or Sunday school, and then too often we quit, even though adulthood is when we face the real need," he said.

A 1982 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Becker was a parish pastor in Springville, N.Y., and Brillion, Wis. He fills a position that has been vacant for almost two years.

He and his wife, Linda, a medical technologist, are the parents of four children: Benjamin, 12; Christopher, 10; Andrew, 6; and Deanna, 3. They are members of St. John, Lannon, Wis., where the boys attend school.

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Raymond and Lois Cox



Norbert and Margaret Meier

## Veteran missionaries head for Cameroon

At an age when many are beginning to think ahead toward retirement, Raymond Cox, 62, and Norbert Meier, 63, are embarking on a new adventure. They have accepted five-year calls to assist in establishing new congregations and setting up a pre-seminary and seminary program for the Lutheran Church of Cameroon (LCC) in West Africa. They will work together with the president of the Lutheran Church of Cameroon, the Rev. Bruno M. Njume. Their positions are funded by Lift High the Cross offerings.

Cox has been a world missionary for all but three years since his graduation from Wisconsin

Lutheran Seminary in 1961. Most of his service was in Zambia and Malawi, Africa. Recently he served in the Apache mission in Arizona.

Meier, a 1957 seminary graduate, was a missionary in Japan for 10 years. He also served home missions in Billings, Mont., and Fairbanks, Alaska.

The synod has had contact with LCC since the early '70s. WELS could not send missionaries into Cameroon, however, until LCC was officially recognized by the Cameroon government.

—David Valleskey

## 1994 offerings to synod topped \$15 million

Synod mission offerings from congregations in 1994 totaled \$15,655,826, according to a report issued

by the Commission for Communication on Financial Support.

The 1994 totals reflect an increase of \$183,936, or 1.2 percent, over 1993 offerings.

The report noted that increases still lag behind inflation, however. The Conference of Presidents has appointed a special committee to address the problem and initiate measures to improve offerings.



## Cyberspace comes to WELS

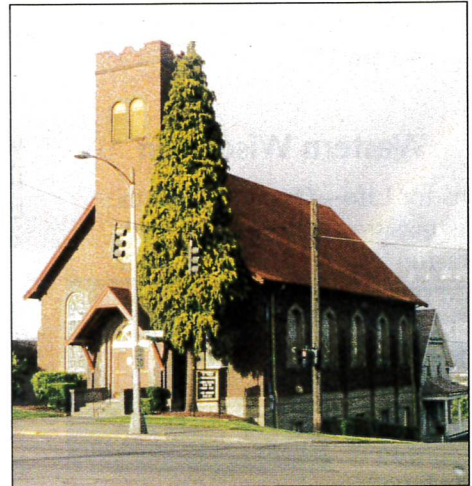
The Northwestern Publishing House Board of Directors in its February meeting enthusiastically endorsed linking the WELSNET computer bulletin board with Internet, the well-known international information highway. In doing so, NPH agreed to cover the hookup costs as a service to the synod. WELS members will receive several advantages from this action, according to WELSNET board member and NPH vice president, Mark Brunner.

- ✓ It will link world missionaries and synod officials through WELSNET.
- ✓ It will allow members around the country access to WELSNET through Internet for the cost of a local phone call.
- ✓ It will create a link into the Government Information Division, a service provided by WELS Lutheran for Life, which will daily report on pending legislation of Christian interest on local, state, and federal levels.
- ✓ It will allow WELSNET members to search through the vast resources available on Internet.



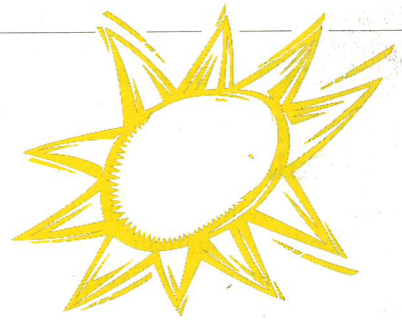


**Off to Colombia**—Chris and Rachel Cordes and children Madelaine, Jesse, Rose, and Tony will leave soon for Bogota, where he will join the Latin American mission team.



St. Paul, Tacoma, Wash., celebrated its centennial Nov. 13. The oldest WELS congregation in the district, the congregation fostered several other churches in the state.

## On the bright side



Chuck Gassert and children, Elsa, Heidi, and Philip made Easter baskets, complete with colored eggs, for shut-in members of Jordan, West Allis, Wisconsin. Putting the extra eggs away, they delivered the baskets.

A few days later, Chuck's wife Marlyn was making breakfast and discovered her family made a mistake. They had colored raw eggs and left the hardboiled ones at home.

—Linda Baacke  
West Allis, Wisconsin

Jim Holman, from Citrus Heights, Calif., reports that after the flooding in California, President Clinton made a visit to their city.

"Mark Blauert, our seventh grade teacher, went out to see if he could catch a glimpse of his motorcade," Holman wrote. "He did better than that. The President's vehicle stopped in front of Mark. Mark shook his hand. The President then strolled over to a fast-food joint and bought chili and diet Coke."

The post office delivered it. The bold letters announced through the clear window:

WELS WESTERN WISCONSIN DISTRICT, IT'S CONFIRMED—

YOU'RE OUR NEW \$10,000,000.00 WINNER!

Smiling back at us were the reassuring faces of Ed McMahon and Dick Clark. We won't see ten million in our account, but we are winners—eternally!

—President Herbert Prahl  
Western Wisconsin District  
newsletter

Send your contributions to Bright Side, Northwestern Lutheran, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398.



## Western Wisconsin

Teens for Life—Ornaments on the Christmas tree in the entrance of

**Lakeside Lutheran High School (Lake Mills, Wis.)** last

December symbolized God's love for

the unborn. Teens for Life, the only student group affiliated with WELS Lutherans for Life, decorated the tree. Lakeside students gave baby items and over \$300 to two needy families and a pregnancy counseling center.



## Pacific Northwest

### Quake interrupts basketball game

"The most 'moving' basketball game I ever attended," Jonathan Schoeneck, principal of **Evergreen Lutheran High School in Kent, Wash.**, said of the girls' varsity basketball game Jan. 28 that was briefly interrupted by an earthquake.

"I heard a loud rumble," Schoeneck reported. "My feet swayed, my knees buckled a bit, and I had the 'sinking elevator' feeling. The steel girders momentarily turned to Jello as the entire building did a silly wiggle."

The 5.0 seismic event was centered a few miles from the school. "Different people saw different effects," said Schoeneck. "Some saw a

# District News

wave or ripple flow across the gym floor. Spectators on the stage saw the backboard swing as if King Kong had slam-dunked in front of them."

Evergreen's Eagles had pulled ahead by one point when the quake struck. The girls went on to win the game.

The quake caused no injuries. "God demonstrated his protective love over our school," said Schoeneck. "His love is unshakable."

## Michigan

### Project Angel Tree helps prisoners' children

Everybody feels pain when a loved one goes to prison, but children suffer the most, says Mark Schultz. "They face humiliation at school because their dad or mom is in prison. They get passed around to different relatives. Many have no stable homelife."

Schultz, pastor at **Trinity, Bay City, Mich.**, knows about those children because he visits their parents. He and Pastor Paul Schweppe from St. John, also in Bay City, are chaplains at Bay City's correctional facility. Assisted by congregation members, they lead weekly worship and Bible study at the prison.

Schultz also visits prisoners who ask to see a chaplain. Those visits made him aware of the hardships prisoners' children face.

To help the children, members of Trinity and St. John set up "angel trees"—Christmas trees with angel ornaments, each bearing a child's name. Church members could take an angel from the tree and buy a gift for that child.

A week before Christmas, the children came to Trinity to "hear about Jesus, receive gifts, and enjoy donuts and milk," reported Schultz. "Together with St. John congregation, we bought gifts for 130 kids."

Gifts were delivered to children who didn't come to the party. A third church, St. Paul, in nearby Saginaw, delivered gifts and Bibles to the children who lived there.

"Our witness team here at Trinity is doing follow-up on the families of prisoners' children," Schultz said. "We started Sunday school transportation, with members picking up some of these children. The next week we saw six new faces at Sunday school."

## Northern Wisconsin

**Redeemer, Fond du Lac**, dedicated a fellowship area to its church and a gym for its school in November. This is the third addition to the church since it was built in 1957.

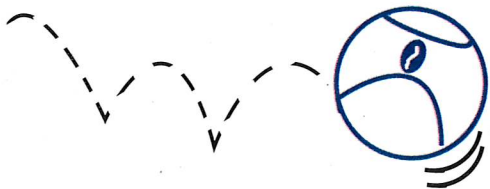
## Southeastern Wisconsin

### School lauded fostering multi-cultural ties

**Siloah Lutheran School, Milwaukee**, was honored by YWCA of Greater Milwaukee for leadership in eliminating racism and promoting cultural diversity through activities in and out of the classroom.

Siloah's gospel-based, African-centered curriculum reflects its students' cultural heritage. In addition, according to principal Timothy McNeill, Siloah's faculty works with suburban WELS schools to promote multi-cultural understanding. Students exchange visits and letters and participate in inter-scholastic events, and school choirs perform at each other's churches.

McNeill, with other inner-city teachers, has met with suburban teachers and parents who want to eliminate racism. "It's refreshing to see the support we get," he said. "There are a lot of caring brothers and sisters who want to support our central city schools and their ministry."





## It's the law

If things go as expected, Norwegians may not feel guilty about dancing before Easter this year, now that their government has proposed lifting an ancient ban.

A 1735 church decree, which was codified into law in 1965, forbids dancing, concerts, entertainment, sports events, or "excessive festivities" in the period between Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

But Thom Rafoss of the Norwegian Ministry of Churches and Education said the ban will be lifted "very soon," according to the Associated Press.

However, noisy activities such as lawn-mowing and log sawing will still be banned on religious holidays.

## Creationism controversy hits New Hampshire school board

People for the American Way, the liberal religious and civil rights advocacy group, has warned a New Hampshire school board it will likely be sued if it adopts a proposal to have creationism—the biblical account of creation—made a part of the school system's science curriculum.

Citing a 1987 Supreme Court ruling, the group argued that "creationism is religious doctrine, and the teaching of religious advocacy or doctrine in public schools violates the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment." It claimed that placing the teaching in the science curriculum did not change that fact.

The school board delayed action on the proposal until a later meeting.

## Lutheran worldwide population up slightly

The worldwide Lutheran population increased to just under 60 million during 1994, according to figures released by the Lutheran World Federation.

In 1993, there were 58.8 million Lutherans around the world. Germany, with 14.3 million Lutherans, has the largest number.

The 7.6 million member Church of Sweden is the world's largest Lutheran denomination, followed by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America with 5.2 million members. The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has about 2.6 million members in the United States and Canada, and the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod about 418,000.

The most significant increases in membership took place in Tanzania (700,000 in 1994) and Ethiopia (230,000) in Africa and in the Pacific island nation of Papua New Guinea (250,000).

## Catholics debate use of inclusive language

First, one branch of the Vatican, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments, accepted the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible as an approved worship text in the Roman Catholic Church. Then, the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith overruled the approval because the text uses inclusive language—"humankind" instead of "mankind," for example—in references to people.

Since that change, US and Canadian Catholic scholars and Vatican officials had a "cordial, frank, respectful, and useful" exchange on the sensitive issues involved. According to a brief Vatican press release, "While the issues involved are often complex, participants were satisfied that their principle concerns were presented."

## Ancient churches, modern costs

If you ever wished you could have one of the ancient landmark churches for your home congregation, you might want to reconsider.

Of the Church of England's 16,364 ecclesiastical buildings, some 13,000 are officially listed as having special architectural or historic significance. Most date from before the Reformation. The latest available figures, however, reveal that the Church of England spent an estimated \$175 million on maintaining those treasures in 1992.

The situation has frustrated the clergy, who often see themselves more as custodians of the buildings than as spiritual leaders of their flocks.

"We cannot be a church for the sake of its buildings," said Bishop Gavin Reid of Maidstone, and noted that the cost of maintaining the beautiful historic churches "is strangling the life of some of our village congregations." He added: "All too often the symbol of the cross is replaced by the symbol of the fund-raising thermometer."

### rē·li·giōn

Defining religion

**repentance:** A change of mind; true repentance involves both sincere sorrow for sin and trust in Jesus for forgiveness. A Christian's entire life is one of repentance. Impenitence is unbelief.





## Vast majority of Americans claims to be Christian

According to a 1990 National Survey of Religious Identification, 86.2 percent of United States adults claim to be some kind of Christian.\* Only 8.2 percent marked none (agnostic, humanist and no religion), while 3.3 percent claimed to be other than Christian and 2.3 percent refused to answer. Lutherans accounted for 5.2 percent. The survey, touted as "the most extensive survey of American religious identification in the 20th Century," sampled 113,000 people across the continental United States.

The top ten religions of all replying were:

Catholic	26.2%
Baptist	19.4%
"Protestant"	9.7%
Methodist	8.0%
Lutheran	5.2%
"Christian"	4.5%
Presbyterian	2.8%
"Pentecostal"	1.8%
Jewish	1.8%
Episcopalian	1.7%

Respondents merely answered the question, "What is your religion?" The survey did not measure membership, attendance, or commitment.

\*(The survey, conducted by the Graduate School of the City University of New York, included Mormons (1.0%), Jehovah's Witnesses (0.8%), and Christian Scientists (0.13%) under Christian, although none of them recognize the Triune God of Scripture. The survey was reported in Yearbook of American & Canadian Churches 1995.)

## In Brief

- About one in four Czechs say they believe in God and another **12 percent believe some type of supernatural power exists**, according to a poll by the state-supported Institute for the Public Opinion Research in Prague. That compares with 96 percent of Americans who believe in a supreme being.
- Fragments of the **Gospel of Matthew** have recently come to light that **may date as early as 20 years after Christ's death**. Three scraps of papyrus, hidden away unnoticed for years in an Oxford, England, college library have been dated as possibly from the mid first century.
- In 1993 there were 3.5 million unmarried-couple households, compared to 0.5 million in 1970. There were **six unmarried couples for every 100 married couples** in 1993, compared to one couple per 100 in 1970. In 1993 there were 16.7 million currently divorced persons, up from 4.3 million in 1970. (*Psychology Today*, Nov/Dec 1994, quoted in *Current Thoughts Trends*, January 1995)
- Lutheran Hour Ministries (LCMS) aired its animated **television special "Christmas Is"** on Russian national television on Jan. 7, the Russian Orthodox Christmas.
- There are **now 140,000 Christian missionaries serving around the globe**, according to Operation World. . . . Reports at a recent missions conference indicate that it is possible that every person on earth may hear the gospel by the year 2000. (*Wesleyan Advocate*, Oct 1994, quoted in *Current Thoughts & Trends*, January 1995)
- In 1984 there were only two **family movies**, but 1992 produced six. Last year, however, there were 75 family films. Media critic Ted Baehr applying biblically-based standards recommended 32 of them. (*National & International Religion Report*, Dec. 12, 1994, reported in *Current Thoughts & Trends*, January 1995)

**rē·li·gi·ōn**  
Defining religion

**repentance:** A change of mind; true repentance involves both sincere sorrow for sin and trust in Jesus for forgiveness. A Christian's entire life is one of repentance. Impenitence is unbelief.



# Bulletin BOARD & NOTICES

To place an announcement, call 414/256-3231; FAX 414/256-3899. Deadline is six weeks before publication date.

### AVAILABLE

**PEWS AND PULPIT**—Eleven wooden pews, good condition. One pulpit. Free for cost of shipping. Contact Pastor Dale Schaffer, Faith Lutheran Church, Rt 5 Box 81, Austin MN 55912; 507/433-4006.

**DOSSAL CURTAINS AND PARAMENTS**—set of four. Free for shipping. St. John Lutheran Church, 1108 E Lafayette, Sturgis MI 49091; 616/651-5308

**FURNISHINGS**—Matching oak finish altar, pulpit, lectern, hymn board, baptismal font, and brass single candle holders. Good condition. Free to mission congregation for cost of shipping. New Hope Lutheran Church, 870 Hollywood Blvd, West Melbourne FL 32904; 407/768-1500

### ANNIVERSARIES

**MONROE, WIS.**—Mt. Olive (50). April 30. Worship, 10:30 AM and 2 PM. Noon meal. 609/328-8130.

**APPLETON, WIS.**—Riverview (50). May 21, 8 & 10:30 AM. Dinner, 1 PM. Festival service, 4 PM.

Woodland, Wis.—St. John (125). May 7. 9:30 AM and 2 PM. Meal follows each service.

**GLENHAM, S. DAK.**—St. Jacobi (75). July 9. Worship, 10:30 AM and 3 PM. Dinner at noon. Contact St. Jacobi Church, 620 W 9th St, Mobridge SD 57601; 605/845-3704.

**SAN JOSE, CAL.**—Apostles School (25). May 7, 8, 9:30, 11 AM services. Noon barbecue. 4 PM program. 5828 Santa Teresa Blvd., San Jose CA 95123; 408/225-0107; FAX 408/225-0720.

**MILWAUKEE, WIS.**—Grace, Rededication, June 11. Worship 8 and 10:30 AM; brunch 9:15. Former members welcome. Grace Lutheran Church, 1209 N Broadway, Milwaukee WI 53202; 414/271-3006.

### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

#### EVANGELISM OPPORTUNITIES

Canvass a Hispanic neighborhood on Milwaukee's south side April 29 and May 6. No Spanish or canvassing experience necessary. Teach or help with bilingual VBS (Spanish/English) June 19-23 on Milwaukee's south side. You need not be fluent in Spanish. Contact Nathan Strutz, 6717 W Wartburg Cir, Mequon WI 53092; 414/242-7276.

**COUNSELORS FOR CAMP BASIC** for developmentally disabled. June 11-17; June 17-26. Call Jim Bell, 507/454-1997, or Lee Robbert, 414/885-6752.

### POSITION AVAILABLE

**FACULTY POSITIONS**—Bethany Lutheran College, owned and operated by the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, invites applications for faculty positions in chemistry, biology, and communication. Applicants should have at least a master's degree and should agree with the school's mission and philosophy. Send resume, transcripts, and three letters of recommendation to Ronald Younge, Dean of Academic Affairs, Bethany Lutheran College, 734 Marsh Street, Mankato, MN 56001; 507/386-5326.

### COMING EVENTS

**ALCOHOLISM AWARENESS RETREAT**—For recovering alcoholics or families. May 5-7 at the Cousins Center, Milwaukee, Wis. Discover God's blessings during stages of recovery. Write Alcoholism Awareness Retreat, Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Service, 6800 N 76th St, Box 23980, Milwaukee WI 53223, or call John Cook, 414/353-5000.

**CAMP BASIC**—For people of any age who are developmentally disabled. June 11-17 or June 17-26 at Wyalusing State Park, Prairie du Chien, Wis. Also need counselors, 15 or older, to help campers. Call Jim Bell, 507/454-1997, or Lee Robbert, 414/885-6752.

### WISCONSIN LUTHERAN SEMINARY CHORUS TOUR

- April 5—St. Marcus, Milwaukee Wis.
- April 8—Emmanuel, Tempe, Ariz.
- April 9—St. Thomas, Phoenix, Ariz.
- April 9—Grace, San Carlos, Ariz.
- April 9—Open Bible, Whiteriver, Ariz.
- April 10—Grace, Tucson, Ariz.
- April 11—Arizona LHS, Phoenix, Ariz.
- April 11—Reformation, San Diego, Cal.
- April 12—St. Stephen, Fallbrook, Cal.
- April 12—King of Kings, Garden Grove, Cal.
- April 13—Star of Bethlehem, Santa Maria, Cal.
- April 15—Gloria Dei, Belmont, Cal.
- April 16—Apostles, San Jose, Cal.
- April 16—Good Shepherd, Vallejo, Cal.
- April 16—Mt. Calvary, Redding, Cal.
- April 17—St. Mark, Citrus Heights, Cal.
- April 18—St. Peter, Modesto, Cal.
- April 19—St. Paul First, North Hollywood, Cal.
- April 20—Mt. Calvary, Flagstaff, Ariz.
- April 21—Green Valley, Henderson, Nev.

**HANDBELL FESTIVALS**—Two festivals, April 23 at 2 PM. Eastern regional. Fox Valley Lutheran High School, Appleton, Wis. Western regional, St. Martin Lutheran School, Watertown, S.D.

**LWMS CONVENTION**—June 23-25, at Crystal Gateway Marriott, Arlington, Va. For convention information call Cheryl Vergara, 703/266-3130. For hotel reservations, call 703/920-3230. For tourist information, call 1-800/677-6267.

**VESPER SINGERS CONCERT**—May 14, 4 PM at Trinity, Watertown.

**The synod administration building will close:**  
April 14—Good Friday

Callers may leave voice mail messages, 256-3888; FAX 256-3899.

### WELS CONVENTION

The fifty-third biennial convention of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod will be held July 24-28 at Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Mich.

Opening communion service will begin at 9 AM July 24 at St. Paul church. Opening session of the convention will begin at 10:45 AM. Delegates are asked to register on July 23 or before the opening service. Closing service will be held immediately after the final session July 28.

The convention theme is "Share the promise." Five mini-essays will carry out this theme. Housing will be provided for all delegates. Meals will be served in the school cafeteria. The synod secretary will send each delegate a letter by the middle of May, certifying his delegation and informing him of his floor committee assignment. The school will send detailed instructions regarding travel and housing to each delegate in May. Mail to delegates during the convention should be sent in care of Michigan Lutheran Seminary,

2777 Hardin, Saginaw MI 48602. Delegates may be reached at 517/793-1041; FAX 793-4213.

**MEMORIALS** to be considered by the convention should be sent as soon as possible to the Office of the President, WELS, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222.

### REQUEST FOR COLLOQUY

Mr. Ger Yang has requested a colloquy for the purpose of entering the ministry of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. Please address correspondence relative to this request to the president of the Minnesota District, Pastor Larry Cross, 4520 19th Ave NW, Rochester MN 55901.

### CHANGE IN MINISTRY

#### Pastors:

**Arndt, David P.**, from St. Peter, St. Peter, Minn., to St. John, Two Rivers, Wis.

**Biebert, Dean C.**, from Grace, Hot Springs, S.D., to Shepherd of the Hills, Inver Grove, Minn.

**Biebert, Timothy P.**, from St. Paul, Ridgeland, Wis., to St. John, Neillsville, Wis.

**Borchardt, Paul V.**, from Manitowoc LHS, Manitowoc, Wis., to retirement.

**Kruck, Keith C.**, from Rock of Ages, Madison, Tenn., to Ascension, Sarasota, Fla.

**Lindemann, Edward W.**, from Northwestern College, Watertown, Wis., to St. John, Pardeeville, Wis.

**Malchow, Daniel W.**, from WELS Commission on Communication for Financial Support, to WELS director of capital funding services, Milwaukee, Wis.

**Pommeranz, Norman E.**, to Our Savior, Perry, Mich.

**Ragner, Bradley E.**, from St. John, Tarzana, Cal., to St. Matthew, Appleton, Wis.

**Scheiderer, Steve**, to Shepherd of the Mountains, Reno, Nev.

**Seelow, Jeffrey M.**, from St. John, Cornell, Wis., to St. Paul, Lake Mills, Wis.

**Vogel, Vaughn M.**, from Our Savior, Zion, Ill., to King of Kings, Kennewick, Wash.

**Ziemer, Paul C.**, from St. John, Rock Springs, Wis., to Our Savior, Phillips, Wis.

#### Teachers:

**Bilitz, James M.**, from St. Luke, Oakfield, Wis., to Winnebago LA, Fond du Lac, Wis.

**Evers, Marilyn A.**, to Manitowoc LHS, Manitowoc, Wis.

**Grundman, Rick J.**, from St. John, Libertyville, Ill., to Northland LHS, Wausau, Wis.

**Leverence, Mark A.**, to Wisconsin LHS, Milwaukee, Wis.

**McCormick, Mark R.**, from Bethany, Hustisford, Wis., to Winnebago LA, Fond du Lac, Wis.

**Slates, Elaine M.**, from St. John, Bay City, Mich., to retirement.

**Thoma, Gary L.**, from St. Andrew, Chicago, Ill., to Riverview, Appleton, Wis.



# Before and after

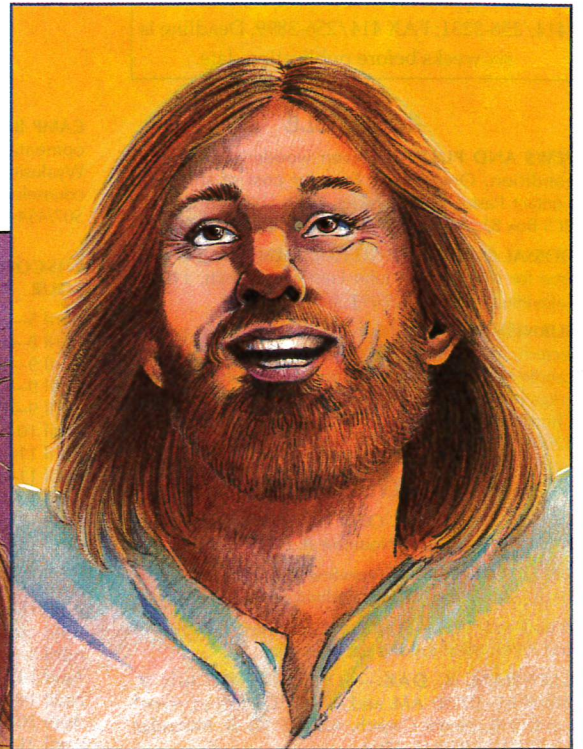
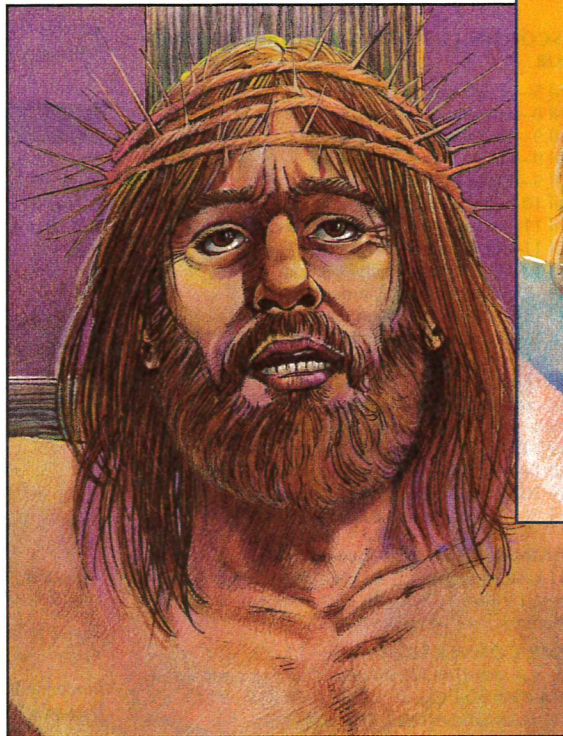
Karl R. Gurgel

**B**efore and after, haven't we all seen the picture? The before picture wasn't very flattering. The after is. What makes the after picture so attractive is how strongly it contrasts with what was before.

Usually, to produce such a strong contrast takes time, certainly more than a day. But on that first Easter morning, between Saturday night and Sunday morning was all the difference in the world.

Fright to faith, tears of sorrow giving way to strains of holy joy, were the contrasts that first Easter. From death to life eternal, the change couldn't have been more dramatic.

"After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week," is how Matthew sets the scene. The Sabbath, with its work restrictions, was a symbol of the before. It mirrored sin and death. Each commandment of God secured our grave more



surely. The law reveals our sin. It lays bare our penalty, the death we deserve because of sin.

That's the before. What comes after? As the rosy fingers of dawn pulled back the curtains of the night, more than just a new day had begun. Eternity had dawned.

Obedient to God's law, Jesus' body had rested in the grave on the Sabbath. But at dawn, that first day of the week, the Savior had risen. His obedience, the payment in full for our disobedience, had paved the way back from death to life for us.

Before and after, things would never be the same! Sorrow, true remorse over death-dealing sin, gives way to unreserved happiness and praise. Alleluia! He is risen!

Before and after, what a delightful contrast! And yet, even after another Easter, the distinctive line between them is often blurred in our daily lives. Hope gives way to hopelessness, again. Fright lives on where faith alone should be. That which is right before our eyes seems more real to us than the hereafter.

The before is real. It's with us now, our sinful nature, never completely crucified. But the after is real, too. Thank God it lives on in us. By faith it does, forever.

Before and after, haven't we all seen the picture? Before: the sin, the cross, the death. After: the pardon, the empty tomb, eternal life.

Before and after, what a difference a day, a day like Easter, makes!

*Karl R. Gurgel is president of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.*



# Love—God's way

James A. Aderman

Love, our culture says, is the raw passion that drives a man and woman into each other's arms. It's the giddy rush of soulmates intoxicated with each other. Love is emotional fireworks and a starry-eyed gaze, a mind overpowered with thoughts of its beloved.

True love does have an exhilarating side. But the exhilaration is not love; it is the result of love. Real love is not a feeling. It is an action, a commitment to appreciate and affirm others, to serve and sacrifice for them. This is the love the Holy Spirit empowers within every Christian. It is part of his fruit in our lives. It is an extension of God's love and works like God's love.

## God loves us

For example, God did not love Old Testament Israel because the people had won his heart. He remained faithful because of his covenant, his commitment to them. He remained faithful despite their ungrateful response to his love. Is there a more striking picture of that commitment than the marriage vows he commanded Hosea to live out? "Go, show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another and is an adulteress. Love her as the LORD loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods" (Hosea 3:1).

Commitment as the basis for love is essential to the New Testament word

agape. God did not feel an emotional high when he "so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son." He felt no fireworks, had no stars in his eyes, experienced no giddiness. But he loved.

God's love is an unconditional, unbreakable commitment to do whatever is for our benefit, regardless of cost. Even the sacrifice of his Son. His commitment doesn't flag because we fail to love in kind. His commitment goes beyond desire to action. His is an astounding love, an unimaginable love! Luther said of God's grace, "Such is its magnitude that if anyone were able to comprehend it . . . a joy so great would come to us from this recognition that we would promptly die because of it."

## God empowers us to love

When the Holy Spirit created faith in Jesus in our hearts, he moved into our lives with this love. Now the Spirit urges us to love as we've been loved, not only those who love us back, but those who annoy us or even wish to destroy us. He teaches us to love without condition or repayment. The Spirit reveals that real love is patient and kind; devoid of envy, boasting, and pride; refuses to be rude, self-seeking, and easily angered; keeps no

### FOR PERSONAL STUDY

1. Look for evidence in Abraham's life that God's love for his people was based on his covenant, not emotion (Genesis 12:25).
2. Read 1 John 4:7-21. What's the relationship between God's love and our love for others?
3. Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 in several translations. Write your own commentary. How might you better show love?
4. Family project: View a television program together. Evaluate its definition of love against God's.

record of wrongs; declines to delight in evil but rejoices with the truth; always protects, trusts, hopes, and perseveres; and never fails (1 Corinthians 13:4-8).

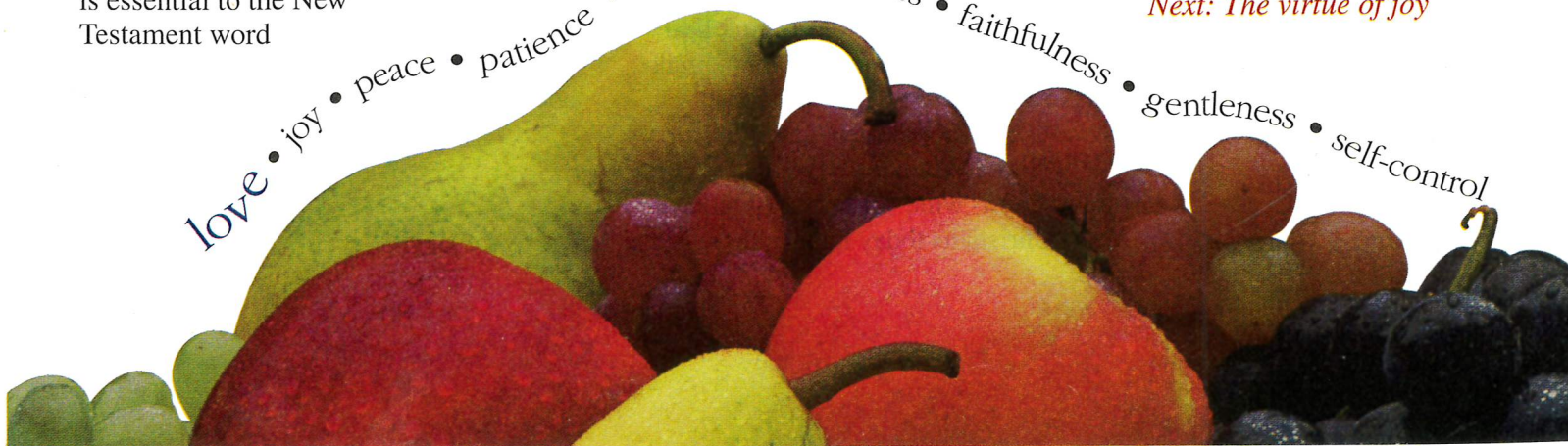
Much more than teaching about love, the Spirit empowers us to love. That's essential. If love is to be love, it must express itself. The Spirit provides the strength to love God's way, strength to overcome our selfish unwillingness to love. The same force that brought the Spirit into our hearts continues its powerful work.

That's why the Spirit can command, "Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" (Ephesians 5:1-2).

*Jim Aderman is pastor at Fairview, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.*

*Next: The virtue of joy*

love • joy • peace • patience • kindness • goodness • faithfulness • gentleness • self-control





# Holy Laughter is no laughing matter

Joel C. Gerlach

*Holy Laughter  
advocates equate  
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What in the name of Jesus will people do next in their quest for a spiritual high? It seems there's no end to which people will go to convince themselves that they have experienced a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

The latest fad is called Holy Laughter. Its chief guru is Rodney Howard-Browne, an evangelist who brought the phenomenon to the US from South Africa. Tens of thousands of curious visitors, 2300 at a session, have been drawn to Airport Vineyard Fellowship in Toronto, Ontario, during the past two years to witness "The Toronto Blessing" and receive it for themselves.

Holy Laughter takes its place alongside speaking in tongues and healing miracles as another evidence of a special working of the Holy Spirit. A promotional video, "Signs and Wonders—Campmeeting 1994" offers an entree to the Holy Laughter experience. A Spiritual Counterfeits Project newsletter reviews this video.

Pastors of huge charismatic churches were stumbling around the church stage "drunk" with "holy" laughter. Wanting to testify to the fact that "holy" laughter had transformed their ministries and their lives, many of them were unable to speak when called on to do so. But their "drunken" condition became their testimony. Their halting speech was seen as "proof" of the "power of the Spirit" that had come over them. The congregation roared in approval as pastor after pastor laughed uncontrollably and then fell to the floor. Standing alongside the "drunken" pastors was evangelist Rodney Howard-Browne, the self-described "Holy Ghost bartender" who was serving up this "new wine" of holy laughter. Many Christians today believe that

Howard Browne is God's appointed channel for imparting joy and revival to the end times church.

The laughing revival moved from the fringes into the mainstream last year. In October Pat Robertson endorsed the laughing revival on TV's 700 Club. Robertson said, "What this says to me is revival is taking place in the world in a mass wave . . . and we look to the coming of the Lord. I think this is a very encouraging sign in the middle of all this trouble and all these wars and confusion. God is saying, I'm on the throne and I'm going to touch multiplied millions. It's wonderful. I applaud it." Recently Oral Roberts canceled classes for two days on the campus of his university in Tulsa so the 4000 students could receive the gift of Holy Laughter.

Holy Laughter advocates equate the experience with the Bible's "joy of the Lord." The Bible does not have a single reference to "holy" laughter. To equate it with joy in the Lord is the height of absurdity.

The Bible does refer to laughter of a holy sort. But it's God who does the laughing. Psalm 2 says that "The One enthroned in heaven laughs." His laughter is directed at those who disdain his authority and set themselves against his Word. When God laughs in that fashion, it's no laughing matter. Neither is Holy Laughter.

The Toronto Blessing is another evidence that when people have been hooked on a false gospel, they will go to any length to authenticate their experience and satisfy their spiritual craving. And once again, that's no laughing matter.

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



# How long was Jesus in hell?

John F. Brug

*After the death of Jesus, how long was he in hell? The implication in the Apostles' Creed is that it was until his resurrection.*

Only one passage, 1 Peter 3:18,19, gives us specific information about Jesus' descent into hell: "made alive by the Spirit . . . he went and preached to the spirits in prison, who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah."

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*Jesus descended to hell after he had risen from the dead, but probably before he began his resurrection appearances.*

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This passage tells us that Jesus descended to hell after he had risen from the dead, but probably before he began his resurrection appearances. During the time between his death and resurrection his soul was in heaven, as his words on the cross revealed. Thus the wording of the Apostles' Creed does not give a clear indication of the time of his descent.

The purpose of Jesus' descent into hell was not to preach the gospel, but to declare his victory over Satan and his forces. Colossians 2:15 seems to refer to this aspect of Jesus' descent into hell: "And having disarmed the

powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross."  
(See also "Easter morning in hell" on page 36.)

*How could Shem, Ham, and Japheth produce all the different races we have today, which look so different from the sons of Noah?*

Although the Bible recognizes groups that are distinguished by homeland, language, and appearance, it does not deal with distinct races. It recognizes one race, descended from Adam (Acts 17:26). Two factors unite this race: all share the same sin and all have the same Savior.

The lines between races are blurry. For example, not all dark-skinned people are descended from Ham. Some dark-skinned people of India are classified as Caucasian. Europeans differ considerably in skin color. Many of today's ethnic groups are a result of mixing and blending from earlier groups.

We do not know what Noah's sons looked like, so we cannot say to what degree the beginnings of racial diversity were reflected in their appearance. We do know that the change from one language did not happen gradually. At the tower of Babel, God dramatically accelerated the breakup of mankind into different language groups.

It seems quite likely he did the same with racial differentiation, since there does not seem to have been sufficient time for this to happen as a slow, natural process. Since the scattering from Babel, racial and linguistic groups have continued to develop, diverge, and combine, resulting in the diversity we see within the human race today.

Today's racial diversity is a result of the development of the genetic potential God placed in Adam and Eve at creation, perhaps with special intervention or direction by God's providence after the flood. Since the Bible gives no specific information about this process, any explanations we offer are only speculation.

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

*What would you like to ask?  
Write QUESTIONS,  
Northwestern Lutheran,  
2929 N Mayfair Rd,  
Milwaukee WI 53222-4398.*



# Public school—a chance to be salt and light

Curtis A. Peterson

I went to a public school. I became a Christian through the witness of a friend during those years. I wonder whether I would have become a Christian if the friend who shared his faith with me had gone to a Christian high school.

We may encourage our children to choose Christian schools, where all the students share their faith. But why not choose schools where they can share their faith with all the students?

Christian education offers a grounding in sound doctrine and teaches and models Christian values. However, public school education can also be a blessing, because it provides opportunities for witness.

## Salt and light

Christ placed us here to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. But how can we be salt and light if we withdraw from the world? We hear complaints about public schools being centers of humanistic thinking and ungodly lifestyles, but if Christians pull their children out, who is left?

Conservative Christians often take the stance, "If you can't beat 'em, separate from 'em." This may be an improvement over "If you can't beat 'em, join 'em." But what's wrong with "Beat 'em!"?

Christians active in the public schools have been elected to school boards, using them as platforms to protest secular humanism and new

age approaches. In some places Christians have successfully insisted that creation be given a hearing along with evolution. Others have been able to modify or eliminate amoral sex education or stop distribution of birth control devices in school clinics.

Public school teachers who are Christians also provide a wonderful influence. Many of them are candles for Christ, shining in the darkness.

## Training and encouragement

Young people in public schools need not suffer a collapse of faith and morals. They can hone their witness and be strengthened in their faith through testing in the marketplace of ideas that characterize public high schools and secular universities and colleges.

To let their light shine on a public school campus, young people have to be trained in Christian doctrine, evangelism, and apologetics (the defense of the faith), and encouraged to bring their unchurched friends to a saving knowledge of the Lord. Perhaps we do not challenge our young people enough or give them credit for stemming the tide on the devil's ground.

Young people in public schools need encouragement and prayers as they provide salt and light to the world.

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*Curt Peterson is pastor at Resurrection, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.*

*Tara Kornely, a student at Rufus King High School in Milwaukee, understands what it means to be salt and light. She wrote this essay for biology class.*

## Evolution versus creation

How did the world begin? Some people believe in evolution. I believe in creation.

There are many differences between creation and evolution. Evolution is a man-made theory and creation is God's eyewitness account. Evolution involves millions of years and creation took six days. Evolution teaches we are masters of our own fate and creation teaches we are responsible to God. Evolution is an uninterrupted chance process and creation took place by God's Word.

In Hebrews 11:3 God tells us, "By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible." 2 Peter 3:5,6 says, "They deliberately forget that long ago by God's Word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed." Genesis 2:7 states, "The Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being." All these passages come from the Bible.

I was raised a Lutheran and studied the Bible. I learned that all things were created by God. I believe that. I also know that one day God will raise me and all believers to live with him forever. If this is not convincing enough, I don't know what is!



**As God's representatives, our ministers certainly deserve honor** ["Public ministers deserve respect," Feb.], and using their titles is one way to show we respect them. But a minister who's asked "Do we have to call you pastor?" should think about how he addresses his parishioners. Does he call them by their first names? Maybe that's why they ask whether they need to use his title.

*Kristin Sonntag  
West Allis, Wisconsin*

**"Not necessarily angels,"** [Feb.] **was right on target.** It put into words my uncomfortable feelings about all the recent rhetoric on angels. It reminded me how careful the Christian must be when purchasing spiritual books.

Shopping at Christmas found me in a bookstore at the display table filled with "angel" books. A young clerk approached me and said, "Not all these books on angels are very Christian." Our conversation, although brief, made me reflect on what a courageous young woman she was to come up to a total stranger with those words.

*Melody Brigowatz  
Carol Stream, Illinois*

**Please continue the series of articles on Parables of judgment.** I can hardly wait to get my Northwestern Lutheran to read the articles. I have saved most of them and placed them in the appropriate spot in my Bible. The parables would make a great regular feature. Thanks for a great magazine.

*Barbara Graf  
Antioch, Illinois*

**Do you remember the scene from the musical *Oklahoma*** when the villain, Judd, bid against the hero, Curly, for the picnic basket of the heroine, Laurie? Every time Curly bid, Judd would say "and two bits!"

I propose that all WELS members add "two bits" to their regular weekly offerings. Synod Mission Offerings (SMO) consistently lag behind the bud-

get. This is a problem, as important work needs to be done in "using the gospel to win the lost for Christ and to nurture believers for lives of Christian service, all to the glory of God."

I propose that all congregations make an [extra] SMO commitment of "two bits" per communicant. This will amount to \$13 per year per communicant. Multiply that by 300,000 members and we arrive at close to \$4 million per year for SMO. We know there will be some slack, so let a few of us put in an extra "two bits" now and then.

Judd tried for a picnic dinner for "two bits." You and I can help SMO with our weekly "two bits" to share the gospel with people who are in desperate need of its saving message.

*Norman Larson  
Arroyo Grande, California*

**Many Christian parents experience anxiety when their child leaves home** for college, the military, or a job. Their child's faith was nurtured at home, at church, and through Christian education. What will happen now that their son or daughter is on his or her own, far away from home and church?

Our synod shares these concerns and is ready to help. WELS Commission on Special Ministries sends a worship service to everyone on its list and provides Northwestern Lutheran and Meditations.

If you know someone who should be cared for in this way, send a note to WELS Membership Conservation, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222.

*Gary Leopold  
Warrenton, Va*

**An article in Teen magazine stated that 8,441 teens become sexually active** every day. Another study revealed that we see 65,000 references to sex each year while watching the three major networks. Fewer than 650 of these references will mention abstinence as a viable choice. The conclusion: TV is high on sex and low on morals.

So what can parents do about pre-

marital sex? Teach children when they are young, before they are pressured by their peers. Parents, talk to your children before the world does.

*Erin Smith  
Brookfield, Wisconsin*

**Send your letters to Readers Forum, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222; FAX 414/256-3899. Include full name, address, and daytime phone number. Letters are edited for clarity and conciseness. Writers' views are not necessarily those of WELS or Northwestern Lutheran.**

THROUGH MY  
**BIBLE** in 3 YEARS

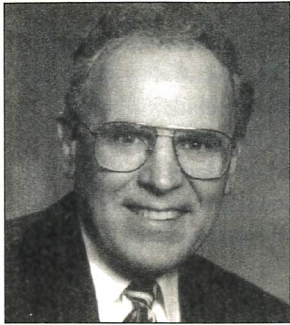
May 1995

- 1. Luke 21:5-24
- 2. Lk. 21:25-38
- 3. Lk. 22:1-13
- 4. Lk. 22:14-30
- 5. Lk. 22:31-46
- 6. Lk. 22:47-62
- 7. Lk. 22:63-23:12
- 8. Lk. 23:13-25
- 9. Lk. 23:26-43
- 10. Lk. 23:44-56
- 11. Lk. 24:1-12
- 12. Lk. 24:13-35
- 13. Lk. 24:36-53
- 14. Psalms 1, 2
- 15. Ps. 3, 4
- 16. Ps. 5
- 17. Ps. 6
- 18. Ps. 7, 8
- 19. Ps. 9, 10
- 20. Ps. 11, 12
- 21. Acts 1:1-11
- 22. Ac. 1:12-26
- 23. Ac. 2:1-13
- 24. Ac. 2:14-36
- 25. Ac. 2:37-47
- 26. Ac. 3
- 27. Ac. 4:1-31
- 28. Ac. 4:32-5:16
- 29. Ac. 5:17-42
- 30. Ac. 6
- 31. Ac. 7:1-43

Next month's readings will appear in the next issue.



# A proven pick-me-up



Gary P. Baumler is editor of Northwestern Lutheran and the synod's Director of Communications.

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*When nothing else  
makes sense any  
more, they know  
"He lives!"*

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It's an often told story. Martin Luther was going through some depressing days, and he showed it. He was hanging around the house like an old dirty rag. He was glum.

At last, his beloved wife Katie had seen enough of his moping. She dressed herself all in black and went about her day as if in mourning. When Martin saw what she was doing, he asked what was wrong. "Who died?"

"God is dead," replied Katie.

"What do you mean, 'God is dead'?"

"The way you go around sad all the time, I'm sure God must have died."

If that's indeed what happened, it must have had its effect on Luther. We're told that he wrote the single Latin word *Vivit*, "He lives," on his study wall to serve as a pick-me-up whenever he felt down.

One word, two for us, does the trick. Two words bring light into the darkest gloom, punctuate the eternal good news, provide a permanent pick-me-up. Ever since the friends of Jesus discovered his empty tomb, the source of all joy has been, "He lives."

I'm not suggesting that you scrawl "He lives!" on your walls to help you gain peace of mind. But I am suggesting that you wear the phrase on your heart.

The world is too much with us and before our very eyes is flaunting all that is evil and brings gloom. Home remedies

for happiness are popping up all over, yet despair increases. Listen to the people around you. How many sound truly happy? Look at the events around you. How many bring calm to your troubled heart? Investigate the New Age fixes. How many last for eternity?

As I prepared to write this, I was feeling melancholy. I had been talking with some people with deep wounds, who hurt in ways most of us don't experience. You and I might consider their

burdens unbearable. But they believe in Jesus. When nothing else makes sense any more, they know "He lives!"

If that doesn't help, what will? What will help me at the bedside of a terminally ill friend or loved one? What will help me when the expectations on my time far exceed the number of hours I have to give? What will help me when I don't feel good about

myself? What will help when I can't even put into words the things that are troubling me?

He lives!

Try it on for size in your life. Make every day Easter Day. More properly I should say, "Remember, every day is Easter Day because Jesus lives." Then, as surely as the rising sun of Easter filled the darkness of the previous night with light, so the risen Son will fill your life.





Coming  
April 1995



## 1995 Discipleship Program

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A study of faith through generations

Call the WELS Commission on Adult Discipleship  
to order materials 414-256-3278. Brochures will  
be mailed by april 1; sample booklets will ship shortly after.

*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.*  
Hebrews 13:8



# Easter morning in hell

Wayne A. Laitinen

Misery loves company. If hell's residents experience anything that approaches our definition of joy, I suppose it could be summed up in that adage.

Satan thought the death of his enemy would insure the misery of mankind. So when Jesus breathed his last, it seemed like VE Day in hell.

Above the cacophony of weeping and gnashing of teeth one might think he heard the popping of champagne corks, the whirl of noisemakers, and the faint groan of success. The Enemy is dead!

That might explain why his satanic majesty's ushers were setting up more folding chairs in the narthex of the furnace room—with our names scrawled on them.

But there was to be a guest preacher in hell that weekend. As our creed says, "... he [Jesus] descended into hell. ..."

Peter explains, "He went and preached to the spirits in prison" (1 Peter 3:19).

It would have been interesting to listen in on our Lord's sermon. However, those words were not recorded for us. But one thing we know: that unhallowed congregation was as dumbfounded to see our Lord

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---



mount the pulpit alive as they were horrified to hear his victory address.

Why did Jesus do it? To make their perfectly miserable Easter even more miserable? No, it was not for the spirits in prison he descended into hell. It was for you and me.

Think of it! Jesus placed himself

under his Father's justice for our sins. When our salvation was complete, Jesus cried, "It is finished!" And it was finished: death, hell, and Satan were no longer our masters. Just for the record, Jesus marched straight into enemy territory, delivered his victory address, and marched out again. And there wasn't a thing our enemies could do about it. As long as we are with Jesus, Satan can no longer accuse

us. Death must yield our bodies at Jesus' command. Nothing in all creation can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord!

In short, Jesus marched into hell to assure us that we will spend Easter morning with him forever.

Now there are scores of folding chairs in the back of Satan's sanctuary which will never be used. And there

are scores of pews in God's church where you can always hear of Christ's Easter victory.

Wayne A. Laitinen is pastor at Gethsemane, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.