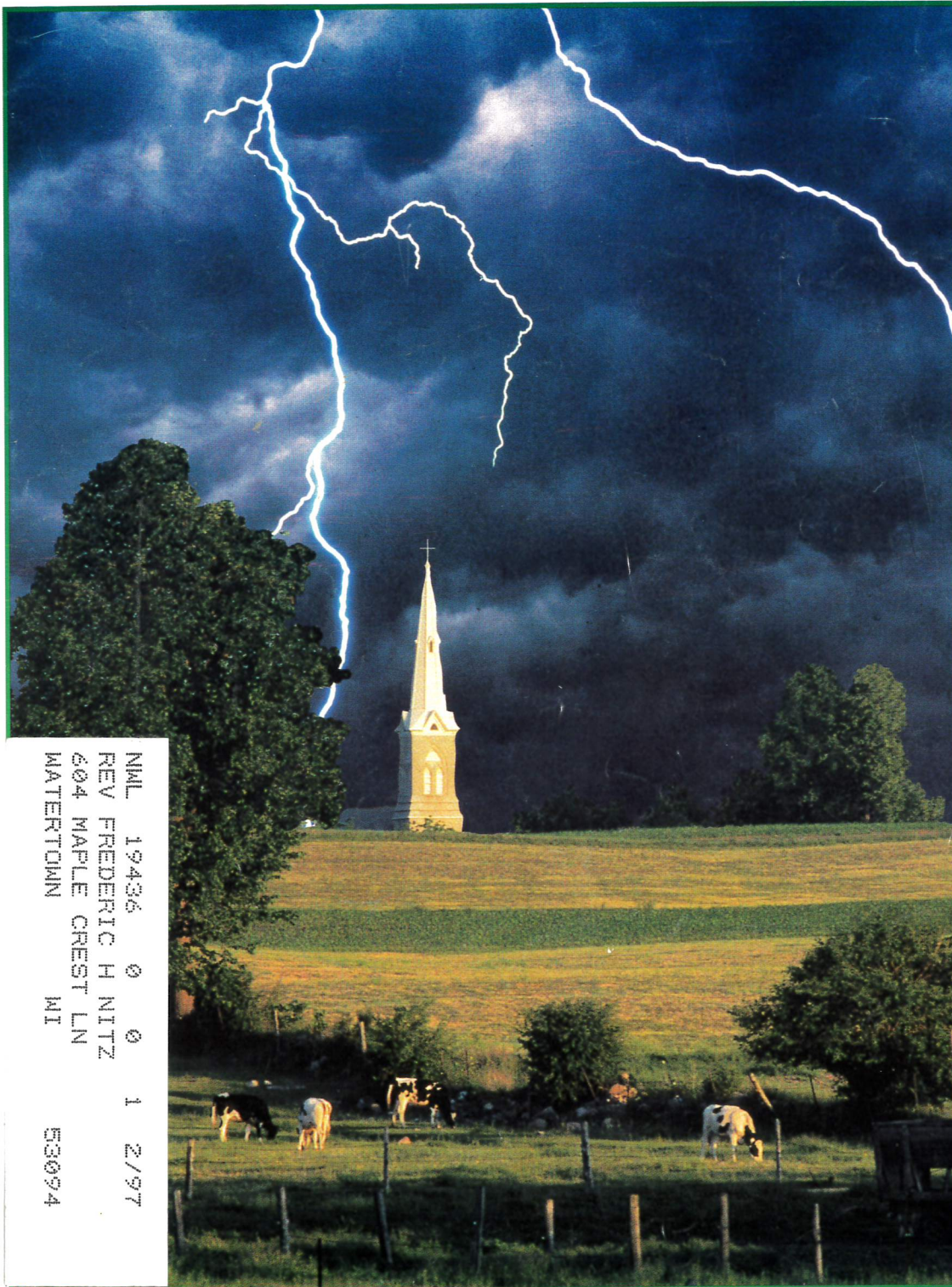


NORTHWESTERN

July 1996

LUTHERAN



Want to do something for your country?

page 3

Let's not call our Christian faith, "religion"

page 14

Your will be done

page 8



NML 19436 0 0 1 2/97
REV FREDERIC H NITZ
604 MAPLE CREST LN
WATERTOWN MI 48094

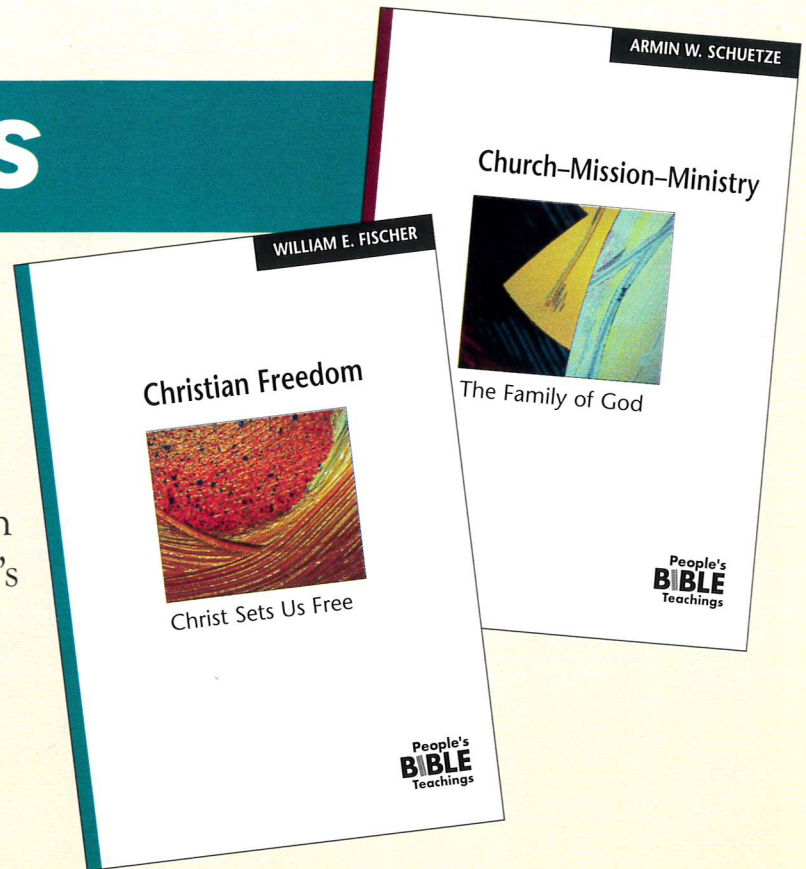
Taste of Ministry page 25

NPH INTRODUCES . . .

A NEW SERIES

Available NOW!

The first two titles of **People's Bible Teachings**. This new 25-volume soft-cover series complements Northwestern Publishing House's popular **The People's Bible commentary series**. Each volume addresses a major doctrinal teaching from Scripture and applies it with practical insight to our faith and lives.



Christian Freedom

by William E. Fischer

Sanctification and justification are not obscure theological terms. *Christian Freedom* discusses these scriptural teachings and the many freedoms we have as servants of Christ.

Church-Mission-Ministry

by Armin W. Schuetze

A study of God's assignment for the church, *Church-Mission-Ministry* examines the nature of the church, its people, and its practices, as outlined in the Scriptures.

You can look forward to an invaluable series, four new titles each year, covering an additional 23 doctrinal topics. **Become a subscriber to People's Bible Teachings** and ensure that your library will include this one-of-a-kind collection for your study of the Word.

Call TOLL-FREE

1-800-662-6022

**for additional information
and subscription options**

Milwaukee Area (414) 475-6600
(8:00 A.M. - 4:30 P.M. weekdays)



**Northwestern
Publishing House**

1250 North 113th Street
Milwaukee, WI 53226-3284

Want to do something for your country?

Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people. Proverbs 14:34

Richard E. Lauersdorf

Name someone who helped make our country what it is. Who of us would think of our Christian parents or ourselves? God blesses a nation because of the believers in it. Let our number shrink or our Christianity fade, and history shows what can happen.

Sense the challenge behind Solomon's brief verse? It asks us believers, "Do you want to do something for your country?"

Recognize the problem

Something's wrong in America the beautiful. Thinking citizens can't help feeling all is not right and wondering where it will all end. Since 1963, violent crimes have increased 500 percent, illegitimate births 400 percent, children living in single parent homes 300 percent, teenage suicide 200 percent. Other studies show 84 percent either had or would disregard tenets of their religion with which they disagreed, and the percentage given to their churches and charities has declined 66 percent the past 30 years.

What can we glean from such statistics? It's a chilling fact—America is more and more turning its back on what made it great. There's growing disregard for authority of any kind, including the highest authority of God and his Word. There's increasing disrespect for marriage, human life in and out of the womb, our own and our neighbors' welfare—those very



items that keep life's fabric intact. There's the all-pervading "I" syndrome, measuring everything by what it does for me or gives to me or how much it pleases me.

Or to use Solomon's word—what do we see but "sin"? God was not bluffing or exaggerating when he used Solomon to give the sage advice that nations receive God's blessings when they follow his ways. When the opposite is true, watch out. Sin can only bring "disgrace." When a nation forsakes God and forgets his ways, finally it can expect only disgrace, decrease, and destruction.

Want to do something for your country? Let's begin by recognizing the real problem, sin. And then instead of contributing to the problem, let's be part of the solution.

Remember the solution

As believers we hold in our hands the only solution. Only God's Word with its central, compelling message of God's righteousness can exalt a nation. Through his Son's payment for sin, God has pardoned us completely and powered us for lives of service to him and our land. Redeemed by Jesus' blood, covered with his robe of righteousness, heirs of the Father's home, we want to walk in his ways. We want to share what we have. The more we have the blessings of God's righteousness in Christ, the more we will walk in outward righteousness in our land. And the more we walk his ways together, the more we can expect God's blessings on our land.

See what America needs? Not superstars who flare brightly and fade away, but those nameless ones in the crowd, those unsung heroes in the shadows who know what it takes. Our country needs believers who share the gospel of God's righteousness in Christ.

Want to do something for your country? Then pray daily that we be less and less part of the problem and seek daily to offer more and more the only solution.

Richard E. Lauersdorf, the synod's first vice president, is pastor at St. John, Jefferson, Wisconsin.



- On the cover you see that “Something’s wrong with America the beautiful,” as Richard Lauersdorf points out. Although he highlights the problem, he also leads to the solution. If you passed it by, please turn back to “Want to do something for your country?” on page 3.
- We all pray for things we want. Two articles this month focus on believing and trusting that what God wants is what we should want. See “A letter to Mom” on page 6 and “Your will be done” on page 8.
- On page 18, you see your new Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary graduates, filled with zeal for sharing the gospel. Next month we’ll bring you the graduates of Martin Luther College.
- We also highlight truth this issue. Turn to “The unmuffled truth,” (page 29) and read about sharing your faith in a public forum. Then, but not until you’ve read everything inside the magazine, flip to the back page to read, “Plain, unvarnished truth.”
- We end a series this month. Our thanks to author Frederic Piepenbrink for bringing us “Good old godly guidelines.” The final article is on page 30.

—LRB

Cover photography by Zefa-U.K./
H. Armstrong Roberts & Jerry Kiesow

NORTHWESTERN LUTHERAN

Official magazine of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod
July 1996 / Vol. 83, No. 7

Editor

Rev. Gary P. Baumler, 414/256-3230

Communications Assistants

Linda R. Baacke, 414/256-3232

Julie K. Tessmer, 414/256-3231

Northwestern Lutheran WELS

2929 N Mayfair Road

Milwaukee WI 53222-4398

Phone 414/256-3888

FAX 414/256-3899

Communication Services Commission

R. J. Zink (chairman), R. D. Balge,
J. M. Barber, W. F. Bernhardt, M. D.
Duncan, T. L. Schultz.

Contributing Editors

J. A. Aderman, R. D. Balge, W. F.
Beckmann, M. E. Braun, J. F. Brug,
T. B. Franzmann, J. C. Gerlach,
R. H. Hochmuth, R. E. Lauersdorf,
F. E. Piepenbrink, V. H. Prange.

Art Director

Paul Burmeister

Graphic Designer

Melissa Homan

Photographs and Illustrations

Zefa-U.K./H. Armstrong Roberts &
Jerry Kiesow, p. 3

Melissa Homan, p. 6, 8, 14, 30, & 36

Courtesy of New Beginnings, p. 12

Erin Elder, p. 16

Subscription services

1-800-662-6093 ext. 8

Milwaukee area 414/475-6600 ext. 5

Northwestern Publishing House
1250 N 113 St

Milwaukee WI 53226-3284

USA and Canada—one year \$9. All
other countries—one year, air mail \$40;
one year, surface mail \$24. Write for
multi-year, blanket, and bundle rates.

Available on audio cassette from
Mission for the Visually Impaired,
559 Humboldt Avenue, St. Paul, MN
55107.

NORTHWESTERN LUTHERAN (ISSN
0029-3512) is published monthly by
Northwestern Publishing House, 1250
N 113th Street, Milwaukee WI 53226-
3284. Second class postage paid at
Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to
Northwestern Lutheran, c/o Northwestern
Publishing House, 1250 N 113th Street,
Milwaukee WI 53226-3284. ©1996 by
Northwestern Lutheran. Printed in the
USA.

TO ORDER

Northwestern Lutheran

Send this coupon with check or money order to:

Northwestern Publishing House
1250 N 113th Street
Milwaukee WI 53226-3284

A subscription
in U.S.A. or Canada

for 1 year at \$9.00

for 2 years at \$17.00

for 3 years at \$24.00

Name (print) _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

(Note: You can also subscribe to *Northwestern Lutheran* by calling subscrip-
tion services toll-free 1-800-662-6093, ext. 8. In the Milwaukee area
call 414/475-6600, ext. 5. Phone weekdays between 8 AM and 4 PM)



A letter to Mom
page 6



The urgency: pleading
for our attention
page 10



Twentieth century
tongues
page 16

- 3 THOUGHT FOR THE DAY**
Want to do something for your country?
Richard E. Lauersdorf
 Only God's Word with its central, compelling message of God's righteousness can exalt a nation.
- 6 INSIGHTS**
A letter to Mom
Amy L. Mowry-Hepfner
 A woman shares her faith during her mother-in-law's struggles.
- 8 PRAYER**
Your will be done
Paul O. Wendland
 The sad truth is: my sinful self does not want to pray.
- 10 SEVEN KEYS THAT OPEN THE REVELATION**
The urgency: pleading for our attention
Wayne D. Mueller
 The Revelation's urgent call to sinners is a matter of life and death—eternal life or eternal death.
- 12 PART OF GOD'S FAMILY**
New beginnings
Julie K. Tessmer
 A home for mothers gives women new chances in life and in Christ
- 14 SPEAKING MY MIND**
Let's not call our Christian faith, "religion"
Walter F. Elgin
 By drawing a distinction between religion and the Christian faith we emphasize the uniqueness of Christianity.
- 16 THEY SPOKE IN OTHER TONGUES**
Twentieth century tongues
Mark E. Braun
 At century's end, Pentecostalism and the charismatic movement are at home throughout the United States.
- 18 GRADUATES**
Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary
- 20 WELS NEWS**
- WELS survey report
 - Twister leaves mark on church
 - "The Promise" shared in Bulgaria
 - By kids, for kids
 - Grace Oasis—bridging the gap
 - Students receive a "taste of the ministry"
 - NL wins award
- 26 WORLD NEWS**
- Religion television coverage on the blink
 - Communist influence on German churches
 - Austria's youth shun God
 - Traditional marriage reaffirmed
 - Hell's description divides Americans
- 28 BULLETIN BOARD**
- 29 SPEAKING MY MIND**
The unmuffled truth
Marianne Jensen
 It's rare to hear a clear declaration of Christian hope and faith in a public forum.
- 30 GOOD OLD GODLY GUIDELINES**
Remembering your leaders
Fredric E. Piepenbrink
 A leader who speaks the Word of God faithfully, applies it to human hearts, and lives accordingly deserves respect, obedience, and honor.
- 31 EDITORIAL COMMENT**
America at a crossroad
Joel C. Gerlach
 As Christians, we recognize that God instituted marriage. Because he designed it, he alone has the right to define it.
- 32 YOUR QUESTION, PLEASE**
Offices of the ministry
John F. Brug
- 33 READERS FORUM**
- 34 EDITOR'S PEN**
Old debate, new setting
Gary P. Baumler
 What the authors brought us was nothing more than the ongoing battle between believers and unbelievers.
- 36 INSIGHTS**
Plain, unvarnished truth
Kenneth A. Cherney
 We human beings have an almost limitless capacity for deceit.

A letter to Mom

A woman shares her faith during her mother-in-law's struggles.

Amy L. Mowry-Hepfner

Dear Mom,

Ever since you called this morning, you've been on my mind. What has me concerned is you feel every time you pray, things get worse. I guess you need to take a look at how you pray and what you ask for.

To start, keep in mind everything happens for a reason. God has a plan, and even when we sin, he uses it to achieve his purpose. Now, what do you ask God for? Jesus showed us how to pray in the Garden of Gethsemane. He prayed: "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will," and "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done" (Matthew 26:39, 42). The cup, of course, referred to his suffering and death on the cross.

Jesus knew there was no other way to achieve salvation. Why did he ask God to change the plan of salvation, when he knew it wasn't possible? I think he did this to teach us how to pray when we face trouble, pain, or suffering. He always ended the prayer with "Your will be done." Now Jesus knew God's will is always done, so why would he say "Your will be done"? It means he accepted the Father's will and looked for strength in his human nature to fulfill it. In our prayers,

we ask that our will be the same as God's, and that he give us faith to accept his will.

Case in point: When my first husband, Jim, had Hodgkin's disease, I kept praying for a year and a half that God would make him better. This prayer was answered with God's loving silence.

One morning, Jim woke me up at 4 AM saying he couldn't breathe and wanted to go to the hospital. The doctors took one look at him and ordered x rays and tests immediately. Later his doctor explained that Jim had a deadly strain of pneumonia and wasn't expected to survive the weekend. If he did survive the pneumonia, the cancer had progressed to the point that it would kill him in a month. If he died that weekend, he would fall asleep and die without pain, but if he had the extra month he would die a lingering and painful death.

What a quandary! Which do I pray for? All I could do was throw up my hands and pray, "Your will be done. Lord, give me the strength to deal with your decision."

I should have prayed "Your will be done" all along because at that very moment, I felt less helpless, stronger (physically and mentally), and peaceful. When I prayed only for what I wanted, I felt helpless and alone. There is nothing wrong

with asking God for things to go our way, but we need to remember to ask that our will be his. And ask for the strength of faith to understand when our wish is not his will, and he (like any loving parent) has to say, "No."

We have to remember he knows everything—past, present, and future—and we do not have the wisdom of God.

God called Jim home the next day. From then on, I have said if Jim had lived, something may have happened to cause him to lose his newfound faith in God. God knew this and took Jim home at just the right time. I believe God was protecting me too. If there would have been any doubt that Jim was in heaven, I would have had a hard time coping. I worry about that with you too.

We pray every day that your faith will be stronger. Maybe our prayers are the reason for your physical troubles. You see, we ask God to keep you close to him in faith, no matter what it takes. God uses suffering in this world for Christians—not to punish—but to preserve, strengthen, and teach so we will get to heaven. Those who have an easy life on earth have a harder (but not impossible) time entering heaven, because suffering makes the promise of heaven much sweeter. Who would want to leave earth and look forward to heaven if things on earth were perfect?

Earth is not our home, and this life is only a journey. God wants us all to make it home, not to get lost in the trappings of Satan and end up in hell.

Every night as a family we pray: "Let my near and dear ones be, always near and dear to thee. Oh, bring me and all I love, to your happy home above."

We want him to do this no matter what it takes because heaven and eternal life is all that matters. Like that part of our evening prayer says ". . . me and all I love . . ."—that means you.

Take heart, Mom, things will get

better and will stay that way for all eternity. Jesus willingly went through with his crucifixion to make it so.

God promises to give us only what we can handle. But remember two things: One, he will always give us strength to get through troubles. Two, he knows us better than we know ourselves. God knows better than we do what our limits are. He will use our troubles, trials, or tribulations to make us spiritually stronger in the end.

I pray the Holy Spirit helps you understand what I've written with God's guidance. Keep in mind

(like I tell the children everyday), God and I love you, and that love is forever, without change. There's nothing you could do in all the world to stop it.

*God bless you,
Amy*

NL

Amy L. Mowry-Hepfner is a member of Ascension, Plymouth, Minnesota.



Your will be done

The sad truth is: my sinful self does not want to pray.

Paul O. Wendland

When I was young, I thought the only way something could be real was for it to be free. It had to flow like a river, blow like the wind. It had to be as easy and as natural as breathing.

Free to pray free prayers

You can imagine what that meant in my prayer life. "Don't hedge me 'round with times and seasons, don't trouble me with set hours or fixed forms." Oh no, to be real, prayers had to be unrehearsed and uncoerced.

I could conceive of nothing more lethal to the true spirit of prayer than thin-lipped piety cracking the whip over my soul. I had to be me. I had to be free. I don't know that I prayed much, but that was beside the point. I had true prayer figured out, and I could do it if I wanted, whenever I wanted.

To give the devil his due, there's often an element of truth in his lies. I was right in thinking wherever the gospel is, there is freedom. What could be more clear than Paul's words, "It is for freedom Christ has set us free"?

Love needs no command to coerce it, but before the command is given, it's already up and doing. The Spirit that Christ gave us in baptism unceasingly cries out to the Father from within us. He groans out my needs to God in thoughts more deep and free than I could ever say.

But the Liar was glad to let me forget that I was still a sinner. Though Christ has given me his Spirit, I still contend with my sinful nature. The sad truth is: my sinful self does not want to pray. I may not have to coax my spirit into doing anything, but I still must coerce my sinful nature, or I won't get anything done.

Free to set time aside for prayer

A seminary professor put it this way, "Men, sometimes you only get up and preach because it's Sunday and the bells are ringing." True! Not only for preaching, but also for prayer. Sometimes the only thing that makes my sinful nature yield for prayer is force of habit.

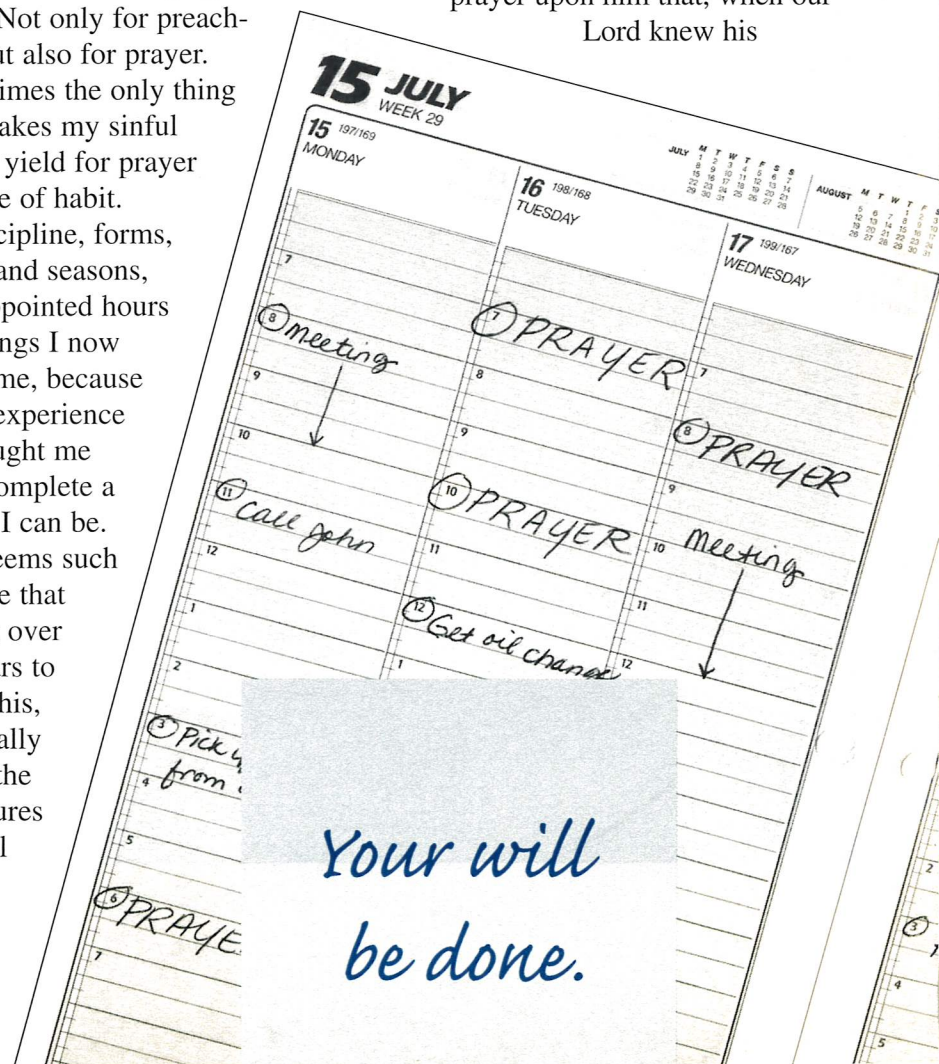
Discipline, forms, times and seasons, and appointed hours are things I now welcome, because bitter experience has taught me how complete a pagan I can be.

It seems such a waste that it took over 30 years to learn this, especially when the Scriptures are full

of examples of God's people welcoming godly self-discipline. Paul speaks of beating his body and making it his slave. Daniel, Peter, and John all observed set hours for prayer.

Though perhaps I can understand why I was oblivious to other sinners' examples, I wonder why the Son of God's regular practice never made me stop and think. The appointed day found Jesus worshipping his Father in the synagogue "as was his custom" (Luke 4:16). So urgently did the Spirit press his demand for prayer upon him that, when our

Lord knew his



workday would be long and the demands great, he made time for prayer by getting up early and going to a quiet place.

Free to let God's will be done

Now I know self-discipline is good, good for habituating my soul to prayer. "Keep watch and pray that you do not fall into temptation." But infinitely better is God's discipline. Jesus taught us to pray, "Your will be done." In the Garden, before he died, he showed us what he meant. "Not as I will, but as you will." Not what I want, Father, even though your will for me leads from here to a skull-shaped hill outside the city, and two wooden beams in the shape of a cross. Not what I want, Father, even though I must now face the horror and walk into the darkness of your anger upon sin, and drink the cup of suffering to the dregs. Not what I want, but what you want. For your will is higher, better, and sees more clearly than mine.

I pray more regularly now, but, because of my weakness, I still come to God far too often with a shopping list of my own desires instead of a heartfelt longing to seek God's will in all things. I struggle with it because I know my will is harmful, and self-assertion must lead to self-destruction. Yet I still want what I want, and I want God to do what I want.

If I am to pray "Your will be done" and mean it, then those words must come from the lips and heart of a son who trusts his Father, and wants what his Father wants as something far better, and far more loving, than anything he could want.

Who can deliver me from this body of death, this agony of conflicting wills? It's not good enough simply to give in, to put my head up on the chopping block of God's inscrutable decree and to let him

have his way with me.

If I am to pray "Your will be done" and mean it, then those words must come from the lips and heart of a son who trusts his Father, and wants what his Father wants as something far better, and far more loving, than anything he could

want. True freedom, finally, is to want what God wants.

Free in Christ's Spirit

Then from that place of deep weakness and absolute need, I can only say, "Father, set my heart free from evil desire. Break my will, send it to the cross with Jesus, and let it die there. Send the Spirit of your Son into my heart again to cry out, 'Abba, Father.' Such a prayer is quite beyond my soul's power to produce of itself. Yet through the power of baptism, by the power of your promises, by the power of the love I see revealed in the suffering face of Christ, I know you give me the victory in him. In him you set my heart free."

Prayer done, I rise to do what God wants me to.

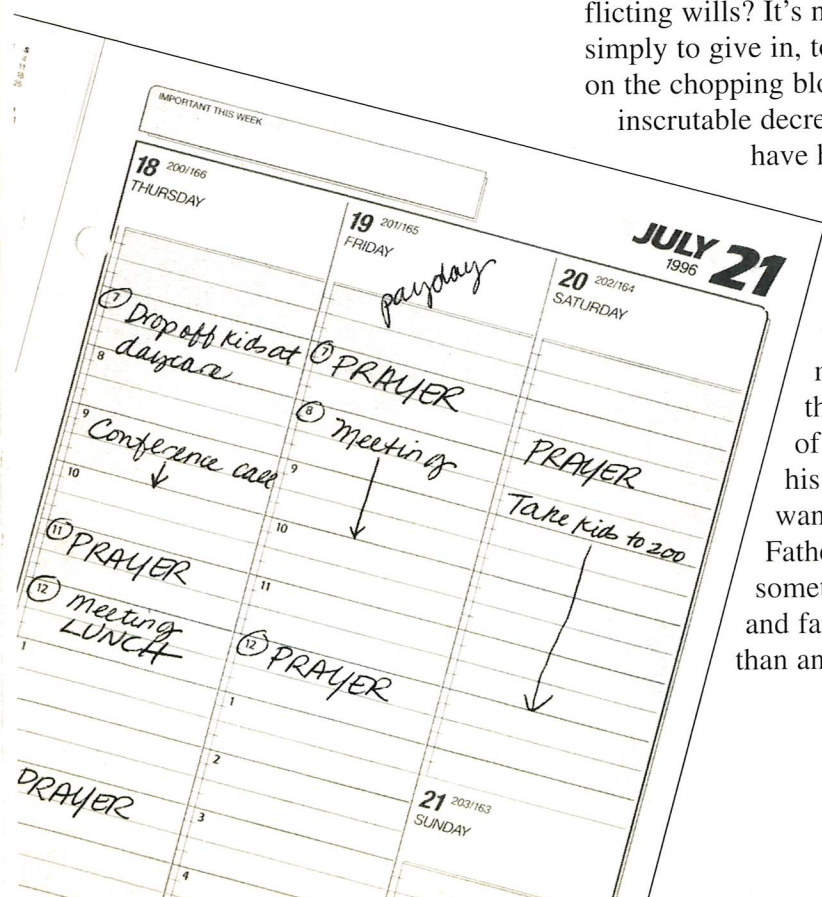
But if my "things-to-do" list has become my prison, when it seems the press of duty is driving me on to tasks that are never done, when life has turned into a desert of shoulds and musts, then "Your will be done" also serves as my sigh of surrender, God's way of reminding me it was never my job to carry the world on my back.

These things I hand over to the one who shouldered all our griefs, carried all our sorrows, and did all things well. I give it to him and rest content he will make good what I have left undone. He has both the love and the will to take my failure and make it serve his good pleasure.

That's true freedom.

Paul Wendland is a professor at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota.

NL



The urgency: pleading for our attention

The Revelation's urgent call to sinners is a matter of life and death—eternal life or eternal death.

Wayne D. Mueller

A sense of urgency works like a cup of coffee. It makes us more alert. Our task becomes a mission. Whatever we're doing seems more important. We set aside more mundane chores and set off with a purposeful gaze.

For many, pressure is a daily tonic. Life is a mad chase from one urgent task to another. An important letter or a fax, and we're off. We rush to the phone or jump in our car with a renewed sense of purpose. We run from home to work to school to market to home again. And then we collapse into the armchair of satisfaction, feeling we've really accomplished something.

Jesus is going to return

But our worldly chasing can keep us from giving attention to a most urgent matter. Jesus is going to return. The sense of urgency this reality creates for the believer leads him to reorder his daily schedule. It's not that we don't have other important things to do, but the Revelation constantly tells us to set

priorities among urgencies. Preparing for our Savior's return will be highest on our list.

From its opening words to the closing prayer, the Bible's last book pleads for the attention of its readers. At the outset, John wrote that those who hear and take to heart what is written in the Revelation will be blessed. Why? "Because the time is near" (1:3). At the end of the book, Jesus promises, "Yes, I am coming soon." And John prays, "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus" (22:20).

*We long to be taken
away from this chase-paced
world and to be at rest
with our Savior.*

The Revelation's urgent call to sinners is a matter of life and death—eternal life or eternal death. If we become comfortable with our sins, we lose our sense of urgency. Some members at Pergamum needed to set different priorities in their

busy lives. Jesus urged them: "Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth" (2:16). In 22 chapters, Jesus issues 11 calls to repentance.

We need to watch for him

Our Lord's pointed reminder of his coming is the antidote to spiritual lethargy. Sleeping churches, like the one in Sardis, need this wake up call. Sardis was a congregation just going through the motions. Jesus called them to repentance and attention to his Word. Then he stated the alternative: "But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you" (3:3).

Chapter 16 paints a dreadful picture. As angels pour out seven bowls of God's wrath, terrible things afflict the earth in the last days. Natural disasters, world powers in league with Satan, personal calamities, and false teachers plague the world. In the middle of John's vision of worldwide horror, Jesus interrupts

Seven keys that
open the Revelation



Jesus



the Word



the visions

to warn and comfort believers: "Behold, I come like a thief! Blessed is he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed" (16:15).

If the urgent tone of the Revelation makes no impression on us, the devil is wiser than we are. He is working as hard as he can because he knows it's not long until his final defeat. Our preparation for Christ's return must include constant vigilance. The Revelation warns, "Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short" (12:12). Forewarned is forearmed.

We will be eager for his return

It's only natural to react to the Revelation's warnings with some fear. The sinful nature that persists in believers is threatened by the imminence of Jesus' return. Yet the predominant feeling Jesus seeks to evoke from us is eagerness. Through faith, we know we won't be standing "naked" (16:15) in front of the judgment throne. We have washed our robes in the blood of the Lamb. Jesus has dressed us in the white robes of his own perfection (7:13,14).

So Christian life is not fearful watchfulness. It is vigilance linked with anticipation. We long to be taken away from this chase-paced world and to be at rest with our

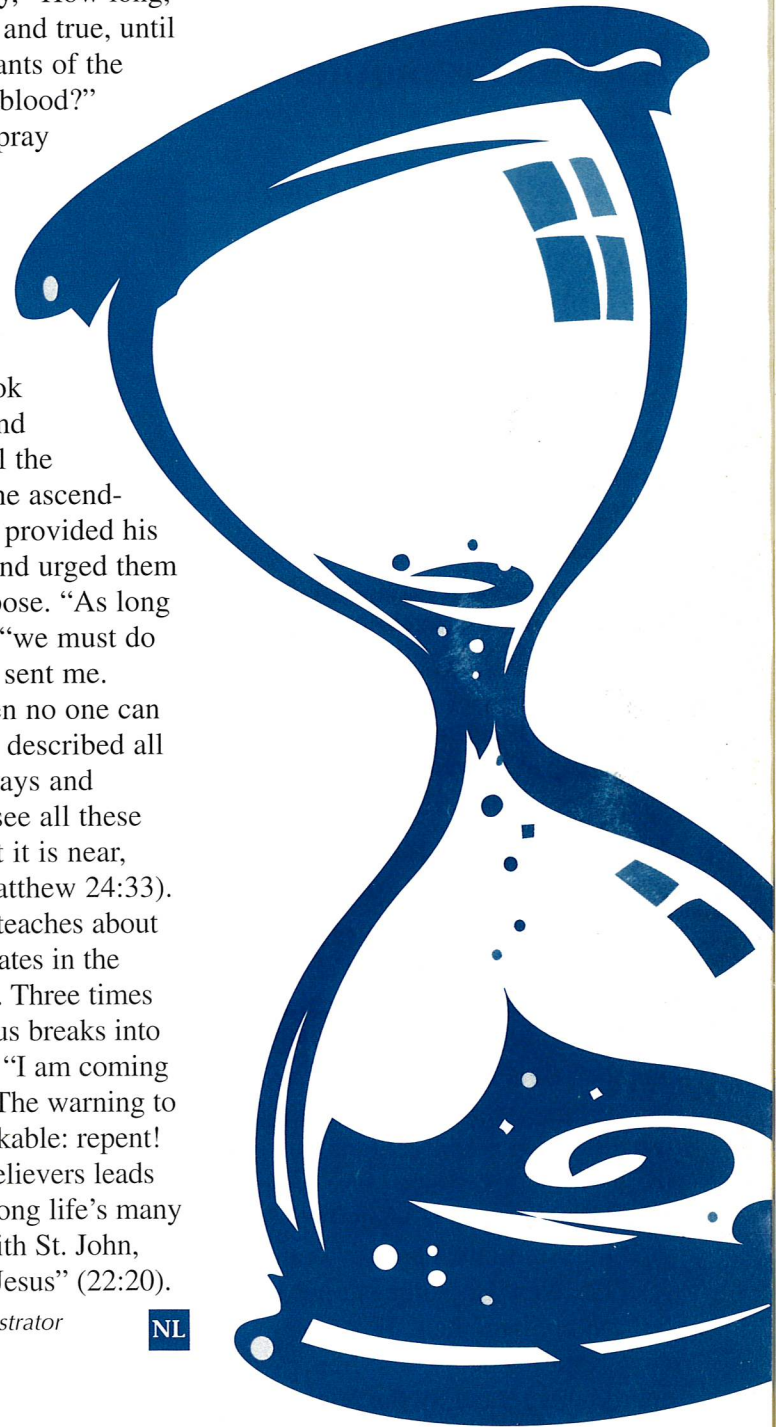
Savior. Like the souls under the altar in heaven, we cry, "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?" (6:10). God's people pray to escape this hectic life. And until he returns, Jesus answers, "Wait a little longer" (6:11).

The urgent theme of the Bible's last book echoes the warning and comfort offered by all the holy writers. Before he ascended into heaven, Jesus provided his followers a mission and urged them to pursue it with purpose. "As long as it is day," he said, "we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work" (John 9:4). He described all the signs of the last days and warned, "When you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door" (Matthew 24:33).

What all Scripture teaches about urgency, Jesus punctuates in the Bible's closing words. Three times in the last chapter Jesus breaks into John's narrative with, "I am coming soon" (22:7, 12, 20). The warning to lax sinners is unmistakable: repent! But the comfort for believers leads us to set priorities among life's many urgencies. We pray with St. John, "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus" (22:20).

Wayne Mueller is administrator of WELS Parish Services.

NL



the millennium



the faithful



the urgency

Next: the victory

New beginnings

A home for mothers gives women new chances in life and in Christ

Julie K. Tessmer

Craig and Judy Schwartz didn't expect to be parents again. All their children were already grown.

But that's just about what they became when they accepted the call to New Beginnings—A Home for Mothers, a WELS maternity home in the metro Denver, Colo., area for unwed mothers and their babies.

"They don't want to be recognized as our children," Craig Schwartz, spiritual director at New Beginnings, said chuckling. "But we are a family here."

And in that role the Schwartzes have the opportunity to offer a new beginning to unwed mothers and mothers-to-be, in life and in Christ.

New Beginnings—the program

"Many say that people at pro-life centers talk a woman out of having an abortion but do nothing else to help her," said Robert Fleischmann, national director of WELS Lutherans for Life and chairman of the New Beginnings board. "Although we follow up at our centers, this got me thinking about what else we could do for these women."

Primarily funded by Lutherans for Life, New Beginnings opened in fall 1993. Since then, 31 women have been residents, rent free, in six apartments rented by the home.

"Our original intent was to help a woman who decides to keep her child but can't get her life together," said Fleischmann. "This grew into also helping women who are placing their children for adoption."



Residents, staff, and guests listened to a speaker on post abortion syndrome at their 1995 Christmas party.

Pregnancy counseling centers, as well as social services, refer many women to New Beginnings. The women are interviewed before they are accepted.

Residents must contribute their source of support—welfare checks, family monetary support, or job wages. Half of the money goes into their savings, while the other half is given back to them to live on.

New Beginnings differs from many maternity homes because each resident receives her own fully furnished apartment. She may stay there a year after the birth of her child. The most important difference is the gospel message these women receive.

Time is critical though. The average stay at New Beginnings is only three months.

"They're restless," said Craig. "They think there's always something better somewhere else. That's mainly why they come to us—we're better than where they were before."

New beginnings in life

One of the Schwartzes' major goals, therefore, is to get residents to think more about the future.

"They think about now," said Craig. "We try to make them aware there's a tomorrow, because that's one of the hard things for them to deal with."

To do this, the Schwartzes and counselor Lisa Buch—using articles, videos, and guest speakers—give tips on parenting and family relations, social skills, general home upkeep, budgeting, and finances.

Buch meets with each resident once a week for counseling sessions. Every day the residents and the Schwartzes also gather together for a "commons" meal, cooked by residents on a rotating schedule.

Residents are urged to attend classes, either to finish high school or to further their education in an area that interests them.

New beginnings in Christ

But beside the residents' immediate needs, New Beginnings also considers their spiritual future.

"Sharing Jesus with them is the most blessed part of the whole thing—and they're the least resistant to that," said Craig.

The Schwartzes hold a Bible class every day. Because the women come from different religious backgrounds, discussions about Bible truths sometimes last for hours.

"We feel the longer and the more they hear about God's Word, the better. It's the planting of the seed," said Judy Schwartz, home manager.

The women also are encouraged to attend weekly worship. Many however do not attend because they feel uncomfortable in a church setting or do not want to attend a "Lutheran" church.

To allow residents to attend "church" without the pressure of being "in church," New Beginnings is looking into opening a cross-cultural ministry in a thrift store owned by area church members. Training of ministers and lay people will begin this summer.

Area church members get involved by donating furniture and baby supplies for the apartments, and serving as resource people and mentors for the residents.

But challenges still exist. One of the biggest is getting the residents' trust.

"They can't understand how anyone can love them without knowing them," said Judy. "This also makes it hard for them to accept that their Savior loves them."

Yet the Holy Spirit continues to work faith in their hearts.

"In our devotions we were discussing Christianity and the work of the Holy Spirit. We asked the girls to pray for the Holy Spirit to work in the hearts of someone they knew. God planted a little seed of faith in

the heart of one Muslim girl who asked the Holy Spirit to help her grow in faith," said Craig.

Events like this show the Holy Spirit is working to include these women in another family—God's family.

NL

For more information, contact New Beginnings—A Home for Mothers, PO Box 423, Aurora CO 80040; 1-800-720-6667.

Julie Tessmer is a communications assistant for WELS Communication Services and Northwestern Lutheran.

Zena is one of four women now living at New Beginnings. She came in February 1996.

"I came to New Beginnings because I wanted to have my baby somewhere," said Zena.

Zena had her fourth baby, Sharmella, on Mar. 2, 1996. Her three other children are living in foster homes.

"I had a problem with drugs while I was growing up," said Zena. "I knew about the Lord, but I rebelled. Since then I have gone to drug rehab and gotten help."

She also started hearing about the Lord again.

"I really didn't understand the Lord and what he could do for me. New Beginnings gave me that as well as a clean and healthy environment," she said. "Craig and Judy were there for me when my



Zena and Sharmella

own family wasn't. I feel like they're my spiritual parents."

Recognizing these benefits, Zena, 27, encourages the younger residents.

"I've been here the longest. I try to help them understand that this is a good program," said Zena.

Zena hopes to get into a three bedroom apartment in August so her other children can live with her. She also plans to go to school for computer processing.

Let's not call our Christian faith, "religion"

By drawing a distinction between religion and the Christian faith we emphasize the uniqueness of Christianity.

Walter F. Elgin

When someone asks, "What is your religion?" we have a wonderful opportunity to witness to the uniqueness of our Christian faith. A provocative reply might be, "I have no religion. However, I trust in Jesus Christ and know he has reconciled me and all mankind to our Creator."

A distinction worth making

If our answer had been "I am a Lutheran," or "I am a Christian," we would have been accepting the world's common understanding of religion. But we are under no obligation to use the vocabulary of those who do not know or trust Jesus Christ. We can take that catchall phrase, "religion," and use it to draw a distinction between the ignorance of unbelief and the truth about Jesus Christ, the only Savior of the world.

By not using the word, "religion," in reference to the Christian faith, we avoid leaving an impression that Christ is only one of many valid choices.

The Christian faith is unique and absolute in its essentials of spiritual truth. At the center of what we believe and teach is the Christ. The universal Christian creeds carefully detail his person and work. Unlike the religions of the world that provide a required regimen of religious works by which the devotees may access their god, the Christian faith centers in what God has done for us

in Christ: "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast" (Ephesians 2:8,9).

The gospel tells the good news about what God has done for us in



Religion

Christ. The Christian participates in a living faith, rejoicing in the certainty of his faith because it is centered in Christ and his victory over sin, death, and hell.

The Christian knows he can do nothing to earn his way into God's favor. God has worked the reconciliation between himself and the sinner. "God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them" (2 Corinthians 5:19). We receive this truth in faith. We believe in Christ's work of redemption. Our faith takes hold of all the benefits of his victory and delivers us from death to life, from being God's enemies to being God's friends.

In contrast, "religion" offers no victory for mankind. Rather, it imposes a lifelong necessity of struggling blindly in an attempt to satisfy the demands of an unknown deity. Religion offers death; Christ offers life. Religion leaves a

person in uncertainty; Christ provides the certainty of a living Savior. Religion requires us to believe that we are sincere enough to merit a god's favor; Christ tells us that no one merits God's favor, but receives it out of God's love through Christ.

A distinction that gives a witness

By drawing this distinction between religion and the Christian faith we emphasize the uniqueness of Christianity.

If we agree to include the Christian faith as merely one among the religions of the world, we can inadvertently increase the ignorance of unbelief. By not using the word, "religion," in reference to the Christian faith, we avoid leaving an impression that Christ is only one of many valid choices. And by highlighting the uniqueness of the Christian gospel, we show, by contrast, the common works-righteous theme running through all religions.

Unlike the religions of the world that provide a required regimen of religious works by which the devotees may access their god, the Christian faith centers in what God has done for us in Christ.

We might do well to make this distinction in our elementary and secondary schools and colleges, as well as in our homes. Courses carrying the title, "religion," would be courses that deal with non-Christian world religions. When we teach our children to distinguish between dead religion and living faith in Christ, they will learn to witness to the exclusiveness of Christ.

In the process, we adults will also benefit by developing more effective replies in our witness to Christ. If in our teaching, preaching, and writing we reserve the term "religion" for non-Christian bodies, we may also develop a synodical vocabulary that centers, sig-

nificantly, in Christ. It will sharpen our witness and make it easier for us to stay on track in our witness to the Savior.

Being religious is no big deal; it is common as mud. The Masonic Lodge, primitive religions, Eastern religions, the New Agers, those who use the Bible but distort its teachings about Christ, and everything else that is displayed on the smorgasbord of religion, thrive because man is religious by nature. At the very least, most non-Christians acknowledge there will be a day of reckoning. They then establish some form of religious code by which they hope to endear themselves to a god they vaguely sense but cannot know or trust, unless they come face to face with Jesus Christ.

Believing that "God so loved the world" is an unnatural act: "No one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit." Saving faith in Jesus Christ is unique. We will increase the effectiveness of our witness by maintaining the distinction between religion, which leads to death, and Christian faith, which provides fullness of life now and in eternity.

NL

Walter Elgin is pastor at St. Paul, Honolulu, Hawaii.

Twentieth century tongues

At century's end, Pentecostalism and the charismatic movement are at home throughout the United States.

Mark E. Braun

Pentecostals and the charismatic movement trace their roots to John Wesley, founder of Methodism. Wesley desired a second experience of grace in a Christian's life, to give added, inner assurance of being saved. While he never envisioned one could be free of all sin in this life, Wesley expected a Christian could receive a perfect will and undivided zeal to please God.

This longing for a second, personal, instant experience of God's grace led to holiness and perfectionist churches in the 1800s. In dramatic revival style, holiness preachers stormed the frontier, imploring sinners to put away iniquity and get right with God then and there. Churches that grew out of the holiness movement include the Church of the Nazarene, the Wesleyan Church, and the Salvation Army.

Pentecostalism: a third experience

It was easy to take it the next logical step: a desire for a third instantaneous experience—an outpouring equal to what the Spirit granted the disciples on Pentecost. Why, asked Reuben A. Torrey in his 1895 book, *The Baptism with the Holy Spirit*, did Spirit-filled people in biblical times speak in tongues, but no one did now? Cyrus Schofield announced in 1899 that more books, booklets, and tracts on the Spirit were issued during the

previous 80 years than in all the centuries since the invention of printing.

Charles Fox Parham, traveling ex-Methodist preacher, founded the College of Bethel Bible school in Topeka, Kan., in fall 1900. One of Parham's earnest, hypochondriac students, Agnes Ozman, after anguished longings and prayers, spoke in what she claimed was a Chinese tongue on Jan. 1, 1901. Although 30 or 40 of Parham's students manifested the gift a month earlier, it was appealing to mark the first day of the century as the beginning of a new, Spirit-filled age.

The [charismatic] movement's emphasis on experience, not doctrine, has made it thoroughly ecumenical, in sharp contrast to early Pentecostals who separated over doctrine or lifestyle disputes.

William J. Seymour, Holiness minister, former slave, once Parham's student, claimed the gift in 1906. After being locked out of a Los Angeles Nazarene church as a heretic, Seymour moved to a livery stable awaiting demolition at 812 Azusa Street. On April 18, he predicted the city's destruction; only a

few tremors were felt, but the next day the San Francisco earthquake struck. For three years the Azusa Street Mission was the epicenter of a tongues-speaking eruption. One eyewitness summarized: "Pentecost has come to Los Angeles, the American Jerusalem."

In the early half of this century, Pentecostal numbers grew rapidly. Seeking to emulate the first century church, insisting they got their truth straight from the Spirit, and obeying the directive to "come out" from among unbelievers and "be separate," Pentecostals formed their own churches. Many still thrive: the Church of God (Cleveland, Tenn.), the Church of God in Christ, the Pentecostal Holiness Church, the United Pentecostal Church, and the Assemblies of God, which grew by 400 percent from 1965 to 1985.

Pentecostalism also advanced—but more slowly—in respectability. Its original appeal was greatest among blacks and poor whites in the lower Midwest and the South. Early suspicions about it can be traced to practices perceived by outsiders as strange at best—rejection of even basic medical care, rigid rules concerning dress and makeup, seized by "jerks," "fits," and "holy dances." Nor was the movement without scandal. Aimee Semple McPherson, flamboyant, beautiful founder of the International Four Square Gospel Church, caused a

sensation when she disappeared in 1926, only to resurface a month later amid rumors of kidnapping, a hidden tryst with her lover, and charges of perjury.

Charismatic movement: experience, not doctrine

Beginning in the 1950s, the movement changed course when Pentecostalism gave way to the charismatic movement. Although speaking in tongues remains its most distinguishable mark, the term “charismatic” itself is more broadly defined.

Killian McDonnell says the term may more loosely be applied “to all who experience a spiritual renewal, attend prayer meetings, or engage in other regular activities under the general supervision of those in the renewal movement.” The movement’s emphasis on experience, not doctrine, has made it thoroughly ecumenical, in sharp contrast to

early Pentecostals who separated over doctrine or lifestyle disputes.

In 1953 California dairyman Demos Shakarian founded the Full Gospel Businessman’s Fellowship International. Episcopal rector Dennis Bennett announced in a sermon to his congregation in Van Nuys, Calif., in 1960 that he’d spoken in tongues. Larry Christenson, Lutheran pastor in San Pedro, Calif., embraced the movement the following year. Fathers Edward

O’Connor, Francis MacNutt, and others launched the movement within Roman Catholicism. Oral Roberts, Jim Bakker, and Pat Robertson popularized it on TV. Reports of holy laughter and divine healings from the “Toronto Blessing,” along with less savory accounts of people shaking uncontrollably, falling backward, barking like dogs, and ripping off their clothing, remind us that Azusalike outbursts may still occur.



At century’s end, Pentecostalism and the charismatic movement are at home throughout the United States. One observer has likened the bewildering variety of Pentecostals to the beasts in Noah’s ark—Protestant, Catholic, Reformed, Trinitarian, Unitarian, mainline, sectarian, white, black, Hispanic, nouveau riche, working class.

The majority of new churches established in the 1980s, that have grown within two years to at least a

thousand at worship, are almost exclusively Pentecostal or charismatic. It has been called “the fastest growing non-Catholic force around the Christian world.” David Barrett’s *World Christian Encyclopedia* lists more than 100 million adherents worldwide.

Richard Quebedeaux, in his study *The New Charismatics, II*, explains why the movement is so important for many today. Many churches teach new life in Christ and the presence of the Holy Spirit, Quebedeaux wrote, but they often fail to make their message believable. People want to experience God’s presence in their lives. Rejecting those who no longer trust the Word to be true, as well as those who overintellectualize the faith, charismatics embrace “a God you

can feel, respond to, and love. It is the knowledge of this God, given through the experience of his Holy Spirit,” he explained, “that has bound charismatics together.”

They want certainty, and in the religious experience of the charismatic renewal, they believe they find it.

NL

Mark Braun is a professor at Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee.

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary

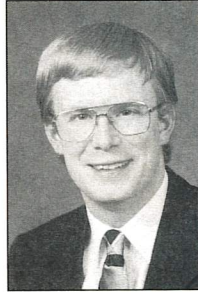
Mequon, Wis.

1996 GRADUATES

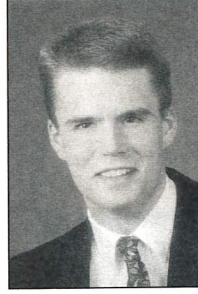
At the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary graduation service on May 31,
33 graduates received their Masters of Divinity degrees.



Jonathan P. Bilitz
Oakfield, Wis.



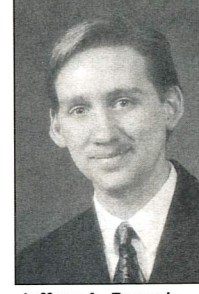
Gregg H. Bitter
Oakfield, Wis.



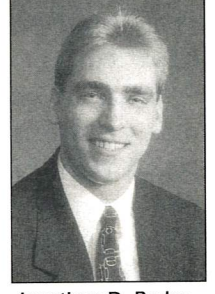
Thad D. Bitter
Oakfield, Wis.



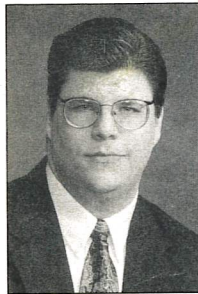
Gary D. Bode
Delano, Minn.



Jeffrey A. Bonack
Mayville, Wis.



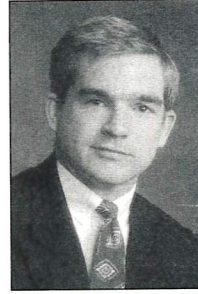
Jonathan D. Brohn
South Haven, Mich.



Paul A. Cerny
Milwaukee, Wis.



Todd A. Engel
South Haven, Minn.



Robert M. Frick
Sun Prairie, Wis.



Christopher A. Goelzer
Eau Claire, Wis.



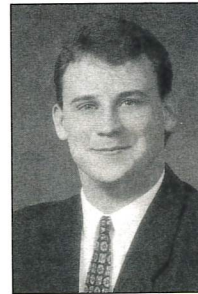
Benjamin R. Golisch
Brooklyn Center, Minn.



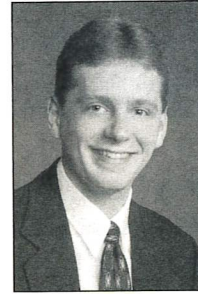
M. Robert Green
Rocklin, Calif.



Paul C. Gunderson
Wood Lake, Minn.



Jon P. Hartmann
Milwaukee, Wis.



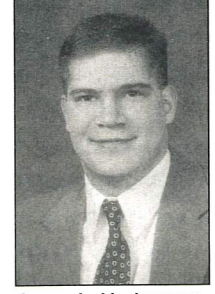
Brian K. Hennig
La Mesa, Calif.



Mark C. Kom
Big Bend, Wis.



Richard I. Krahn II
Oconomowoc, Wis.



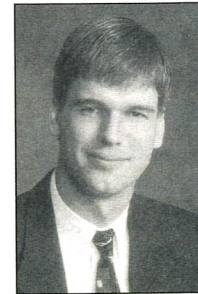
Loren L. Lindemann
Brandon, Wis.



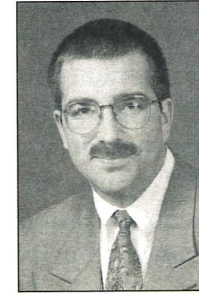
Peter F. Lindemann
Pardeeville, Wis.



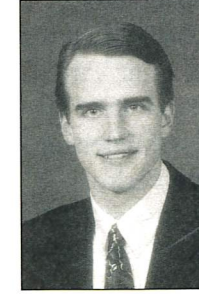
Peter L. Martin
Port Charlotte, Fla.



Eric O. Miller
Brandon, S.D.



Steven L. Neumann
Beaver Dam, Wis.



David C. Pagel
Livonia, Mich.



Robert D. Romberg
Larsen, Wis.



Michael A. Roth
Hales Corners, Wis.



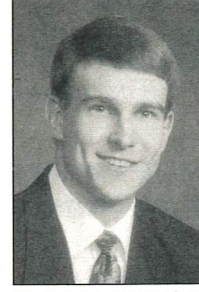
Stephen J. Schmidt
Coon Rapids, Minn.



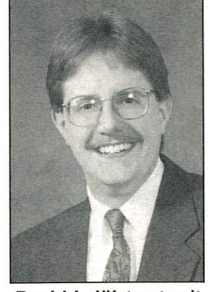
Larry F. Seafert
Bay City, Mich.



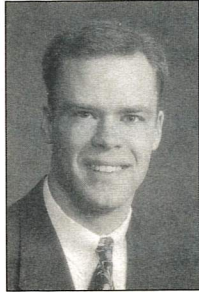
Jeffrey A. Verbeke
Allenton, Mich.



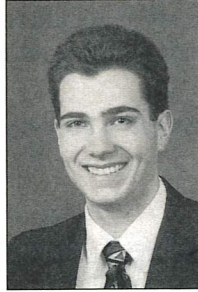
Steven W. Wagenknecht
Fort Worth, Tex.



David L. Waterstradt
Citrus Heights, Calif.



Kevin L. Wattles
Lincoln, Neb.



Paul R. White
Fox Lake, Wis.



Michael D. Zarling
West Bend, Wis.

a s s i g n m e n t s

The Conference of Presidents met May 20-21 to issue calls into the pastoral ministry to these Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary graduates. Assignments include graduates from previous years.

Arnold, Matthew R., St. Paul, Oconto Falls, Wis.

Bilitz, Jonathan P., assistant to Pacific Northwest District president, Portland, Ore.

Bitter, David P., Valley View, Helena, Mont.

Bitter, Gregg H., St. Paul, Litchfield, Minn.

Bitter, Thad D., Grace, LeSueur, Minn.

Bode, Bradley E., Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Mich.

Bode, Gary D., Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn.

Bode, Steven D., Zion, Allenton/St. Peter, West Bend, Wis.

Bonack, Jeffrey A., assistant to second vice president of WELS, Muskego, Wis.

Borgwardt, Michael J., Hope, Andover, Minn.

Brohn, Jonathan D., assistant to South Central District president, Houston, Texas.

Cerny, Paul A., Immanuel, Campbellsport, Wis.

Cole, Paul L., Christ, Menomonee, Mich.

Engel, Todd A., St. Stephen, Beaver Dam, Wis.

Frick, Robert M., St. Mark, Sterling Heights, Mich.

Geiger, Stephen H., Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn.

Goelzer, Christopher A., King of Kings, Alexandria, La.

Golisch, Benjamin R., Prince of Peace, Martinez, Ga.

Green, M. Robert., Good Shepherd, Livermore, Calif.

Gunderson, Paul C., Grace, Casa Grande, Ariz.

Hartmann, Jon P., Garden Homes, Milwaukee, Wis.

Hennig, Brian K., assistant to Arizona-California District president, Garden Grove, Calif.

Huebner, Paul P., St. Jacob, Grass Lake, Mich.

Kom, Mark C., assistant to Michigan District president, Midland, Mich.

Krahn II, Richard L., First Lutheran, Lake Geneva, Wis.

Lindeman, Loren L., St. John, Stanton, Neb.

Lindemann, Peter F., Zion, Egg Harbor/Christ, Bailey's Harbor, Wis.

Martin, Peter L., missionary, Mwembeszi, Zambia, Africa.

McKenzie, Tony L., Trinity, Neenah, Wis.

Melso, Stephen C., Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Mich.

Mielke, Thomas A., St. John, Maribel, Wis.

Miller, Eric O., Redemption exp., West Palm Beach, Fla.

Neumann, Steven L., Our Savior, Springville, N.Y.

Olsen, Theodore J., Zion, Kiel, Wis.

Otto, Joel D., First German, Manitowoc, Wis.

Pagel, David C., exploratory outreach, NW Portland, Ore.

Romberg, Robert D., Christ, Denmark, Wis.

Rosenbaum, Glenn T., Resurrection, Rochester, Minn.

Roth, Michael A., Christ, Milwaukee, Wis.

Schewe, Mark H., St. Paul, Green Bay, Wis.

Schmidt, Stephen J., Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn.

Schroeder, Thomas E., Good Shepherd, Novi, Mich.

Seafert, Larry F., Amazing Grace, Florence, Ky.

Seiltz, Nathan C., Lord of Lords, Casper, Wyo.

Sievert, Phillip D., Zion, Moberge, S.D.

Turriff, James E., Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis.

Verbeke, Jeffrey A., Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis.

Wagenknecht, Steven W., missionary, Torreon, Mexico

Waterstradt, David L., Shepherd of the Lakes, Fairmont, Minn.

Wattles, Kevin L., assistant to North Atlantic District president, Falls Church, Va.

White, Paul R., St. John, Florence, Wis.

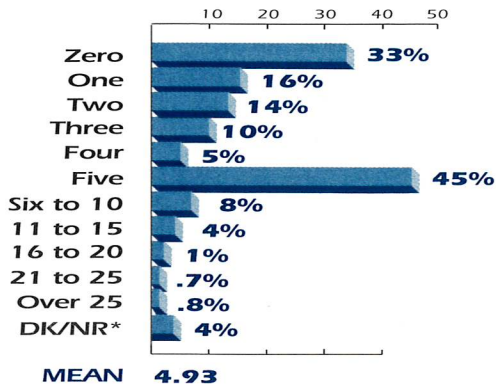
Zarling, Michael D., Faith exp., Radcliff, Ky.



WELS survey

The following are some key findings from the WELS pastor only study.

In the past five years, how many people has your congregation sent to ministerial schools?

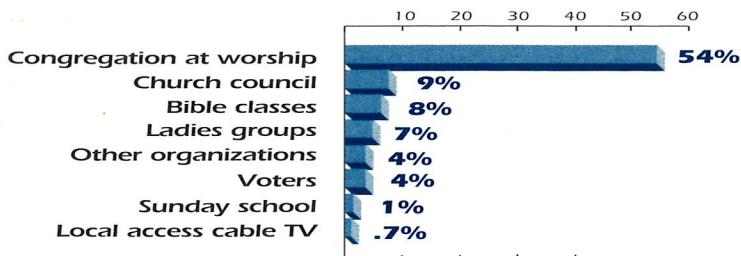


We depend on our congregations for our future public ministers.

Would your congregation welcome and use copy masters of bulletin inserts to promote the mission of the church?

Yes	90%
No	7%
DK/NR*	3%

To whom does the congregation show the WELS Connection video each month?



11.6% of pastors surveyed don't subscribe to the WELS Connection video.

A worthwhile goal is to see that all the congregation gets to see WELS Connection regularly.

Does your congregation have a lay contact man as an active link to WELS?

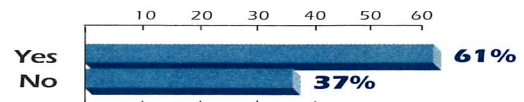
Yes	78%
No	21%

Do you communicate regularly with your contact man?

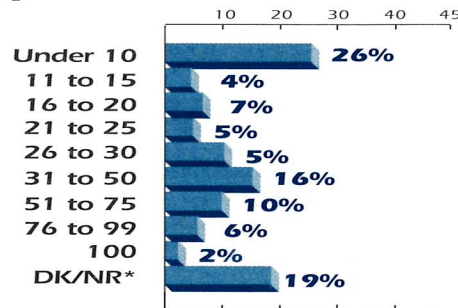
Yes	67%
No	28%
DK/NR*	6%

Let us use every means available to keep everyone informed about our work together as a synod.

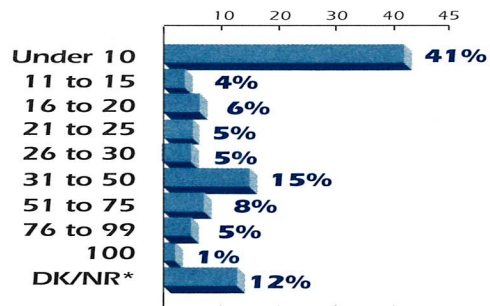
Does the congregation have an organized program for youth?



What percentage of youth participate in teen youth groups?



What percentage of youth attend Bible classes?



A continuing challenge is to keep our youth involved with God's Word and in fellowship with their fellow Christians.

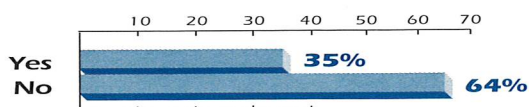
How often does your church offer the Lord's Supper



Does your congregation intend to have a capital fund drive in the next three years?

Yes	39%
No	57%
DK/NR*	4%

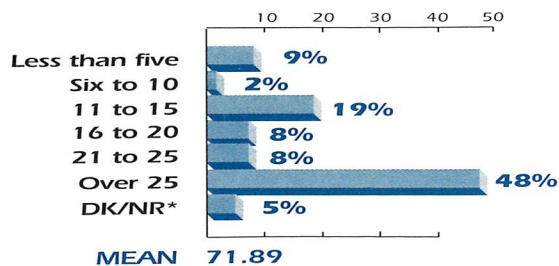
Has your congregation added called staff in the last five years?



Do you foresee the called staff at your congregation . . .

Increasing	30%
Staying the same	64%
Decreasing	5%

Approximately what is the size of the congregation's prospect list?



How does your congregation address new people who move into the community?

Wait for any interest in their church	51%
Welcome them with a letter	39%
Welcome them with a visit	27%
Follow up an initial welcome with a visit	20%
Welcome them with a phone call	18%
Follow up an initial welcome with a call	14%
Follow up an initial welcome with a letter	12%

Do you use any of the following to get new member prospects?

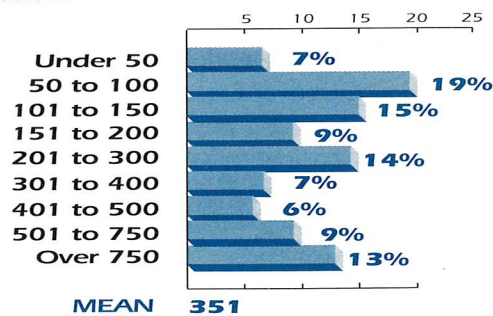
References by a friend or relative	93%
The church visitors' register	88%
Marriage	65%
Calls for information or services	46%
Welcome to new people in the community	39%
Door-to-door canvassing	39%
Telephone canvassing	21%

What is the most productive source?

References by a friend or relative	54%
The church visitors' register	16%
Marriage	5%
School	4%
Telephone canvassing	2%
VBS	2%
Door-to-door canvassing	2%
Welcome to new people in the community	1%

Personal witness among friends and relatives remains the most effective means to reach the unchurched.

How many communicant members are in your congregation?



*DK/NR means don't know or no response.

The costs for the survey were covered primarily by a generous grant from AAL. The Leede Research Group of Manitowoc, Wis., collected and reported the data.

rē · li · giōn

Defining religion

covenant: agreement, contract, testament. Scripture speaks of God's covenant with Noah (Genesis 6:18-21), Abraham (Genesis 15:18-21), Israel at Sinai (Exodus 24:7-8), and David (2 Samuel 7). God established a new covenant through the work of the Messiah (Jeremiah 31:31-34, 1 Corinthians 11:25) in which he promises the forgiveness of sins.



By kids, for kids

"Kids are the best witnesses when it comes to inviting their peers to church," says Jerry Kastens, youth discipleship administrator.



Next Easter, kids will get a formal opportunity to share the promise with their friends.

A kids-to-kids invitation card has been designed and will be available for congregations' young members.

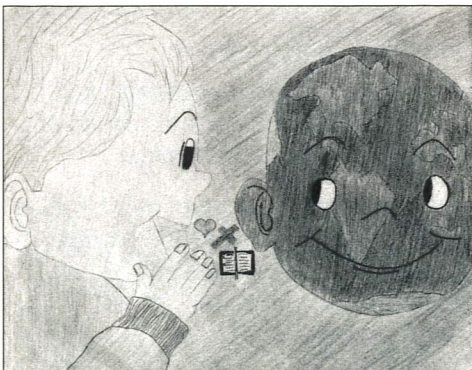
But the card wasn't only designed for youth, it was designed by youth.

This past spring, every student in WELS Sunday schools and Lutheran elementary schools was invited to submit a drawing that emphasized the WELS two-year theme—"Share the Promise."

Nearly 300 entries from the U.S., Canada, and Germany were submitted. The winning entry was designed by Tricia Troge, a seventh grader at St. Paul, New Ulm, Minn. Her drawing will be used as the cover for the invitation card.

"Kids want to serve; they're looking for opportunities to serve. We need to provide them with the materials to do that," says Kastens.

"This card is just the beginning."



Troge's drawing won a contest open to all WELS Sunday school and Lutheran elementary school students.

Twister leaves mark on church

Most people weren't aware a tornado had come through—until they saw the damage. The tornado hit Zion, Ill., on April 19, at 11:30 PM, and lasted only a few minutes.

Several houses were totaled, apartment buildings' roofs were entirely blown off. Some homes in the city were damaged so severely that they were condemned.

Members of Our Savior's, Zion, Ill., had trees uprooted and some damage to fences and roofs, but no one was injured.

The church sustained more damage

than any of the homes. The outer layer of the roof blew off; only the decking remained. Trees were uprooted, and there was water damage inside to carpets and ceiling tiles. School was called off for two days after the tornado. Members pitched in to clean up the grounds and got the property back in shape in just a few days.

"Our worship the week after the tornado was a service of thanks and praise for God's protection," says Jon Bitter, pastor at Our Savior's. "The general feeling was the damage could have been so much worse."



Members helped clean up the yard after Our Savior's, Zion, Ill., was hit by a tornado on April 19. By working together, members got the church up and running in only a few days.



Of seven confirmands at Peace, Holiday, Fla., two are of Italian heritage and name, one was born in Mexico, one in Puerto Rico. The father of one is from Indonesia, the father of another is from Portuguese. One girl is of English lineage. Still, Peace is known as "the German church" because whenever anyone asks for "the old Lord's Prayer," the pastor launches into the "Vater Unser."

*Philip Wilde
Englewood, Florida*

Obituaries

Victor M. Albrecht 1901-1995

Victor M. Albrecht was born on Oct. 31, 1901 in Renville, Minn. He died Oct. 10, 1995 in Wauwatosa, Wis.

A 1922 graduate of Dr. Martin Luther College, he served Immanuel, Manitowoc, Wis., for 40 years.

He is survived by many nieces and nephews.

Herbert John Lemke 1905-1996

Herbert John Lemke was born Sept. 23, 1905 in Morrison, Wis. He died Apr. 18, 1996 in Mequon, Wis.

A 1931 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, he served at Manistique, Lincoln, Mio, and Williamston, all in Mich., and Crandon, Argonne, Hiles, Enterprise, Monico, Lomira, Hartford, and Theresa, all in Wis.

He is survived by children David (Catherine), Kenneth (Carol), Myra Hollander, Ruth (Kieth) Krueger; eight grandchildren; two great-grandchildren; and brother Ted.

Walter Edward Bock 1937-1996

Walter Edward Bock was born Jan. 28, 1937 in Owosso, Mich. He died Apr. 20, 1996 in Appleton, Wis.

A 1959 graduate of Dr. Martin Luther College, he served at Zion, Valentine, Neb., Salem, Owosso, Mich., and Fox Valley LHS, Appleton, Wis.

He is survived by wife Ruth; sons David (Dawn), Jeffrey, and Jonathan; and sister Carol (John) Martin.

Gerald Warning 1953-1996

Gerald Warning was born on Dec. 23, 1953 in Green Bay, Wis. He died on Apr. 24, 1996 in Milwaukee, Wis.

A 1976 graduate of Dr. Martin Luther College he served at Zion, Sanborn, Minn.; Mt. Olive, Bay City, Mich.; and St. Jacobi, Milwaukee, Wis.

He is survived by wife Kimberly and daughter Katherine.

District news

Minnesota

David Ross celebrated his 25th anniversary in the teaching ministry on Apr. 14. . . . **Christ, Zumbrota**, celebrated its 100th anniversary on June 30. Only six pastors have served the congregation since it started.

Western Wisconsin

St. James, Cambridge, celebrated its 100th anniversary on Apr. 21. . . . **St. John, Waterloo**, celebrated its 140th anniversary on Apr. 14.

Elton Stroh



Six Martin Luther College professors celebrated anniversaries of service on April 28.

(From left) Dennis Gorsline, 25th; John Schibbelhut, 40th; Arnold Koelpin, 40th; John Paulsen, 25th; Alan Spurgin, 25th; and J. Lance Hartzell, 25th.

Southeastern Wisconsin

Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee, will dedicate its new center for the fine arts on Sept. 7. . . . **St. Matthew, Niles, Ill.**, celebrated its 100th anniversary on May 26. . . . **First, Elkhorn, Wis.**, celebrated its 125th anniversary on June 2. . . . **St. John (68th and Forest Home), Milwaukee**, marked its 150th anniversary. . . . **Zion, South Milwaukee, Wis.**, dedicated its new school building. . . . **St. James, Milwaukee**, celebrated its 75th anniversary this year.

George Ferch

Michigan

Carolyn Smart celebrated her 40th anniversary in the teaching ministry on June 2. . . . **Meyer Winsjansen** has served as choir director for 26 years at St. Mark, Flat Rock. . . . **Darlington, Ann Arbor**, celebrated its 50th anniversary on June 9. . . . On May 19, **Elsie Spitzer** finished her 60th year as a member of the senior choir at St. Paul, Stevensville.

David M. Zahn

rē · li · giōn

Defining religion

representation: The false teaching that the bread and wine in Communion merely symbolize Christ's body and blood. Most Protestant denominations teach representation. The Bible teaches that Jesus' true body and blood are actually present with the bread and the wine in the Lord's Supper. (Mark 14:22-24, 1 Corinthians 10:16)



“The Promise” shared in Bulgaria

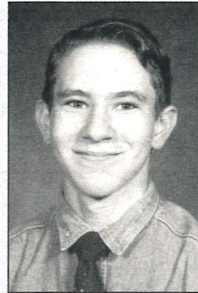
On Easter Sunday, the CNN network in Bulgaria aired “The Promise.” “There were telephone calls with people expressing their joy at having seen the video,” says Audrey Spevacek, wife of missionary Kirby Spevacek. The 23-minute WELS mass media video recounts the events of the Bible—from creation and the fall into sin to Jesus’ life and his second coming. At the conclusion, the video challenges the viewer to seize the opportunity to make disciples of all nations. “The Promise” is available in English, Japanese, Russian, Bulgarian, and German.

NL wins award

Northwestern Lutheran won an award at the Associated Church Press convention in April. The honorable mention went to the series “Hard sayings of Jesus” by author Thomas Trapp. The articles ran from April to December 1995. The Associated Church Press is an international association of nearly 200 church-related publications.

youth news

Jason McCollough, a junior at Oologah-Talala High School, has been named a 1996 Sir Alexander Fleming Scholar. He will spend eight weeks of his summer vacation conducting cardiovascular biology research at the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation, Oklahoma City, Okla. Jason is a member and teaches Sunday school at Mt. Olive, Tulsa, Okla.



Danielle Heinitz has been chosen as a representative for the People to People Student Ambassador Program. She will visit London, Paris, Berlin, and Copenhagen this July. She is a member at Christ, Big Bend, Wis.

Malissa Ross was selected for the John Patterson chapter Daughters of the American Revolution 1996 Good Citizen Award and is listed in *Who’s Who Among American High School Students*. She is a member

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

and secretary/treasurer for the church youth group at Good Shepherd, St. Peters, Mo.

On May 4, **Amanda Fischer**, 12, and **Erin Kanter**, 11, of Appleton, Wis., took part in the North Central Regional Junior Original Concert. The girls created their own musical compositions and submitted the scores and a videotape of their performance to the Yamaha Music Education System for evaluation.



Their pieces were chosen from 103 submitted as two of 11 to be performed. They and their teacher, Donna Dahm (middle), are members of St. Matthew, Appleton, Wis.

Celebrating freedom this month?

Help someone celebrate freedom in Christ every month.

To order *Northwestern Lutheran* use the order form on page 4 or call toll free **1-800-662-6093 ext. 8**; (Milwaukee 475-6600 ext. 5) weekdays 8 AM to 4 PM. Charge it—Discover Card, MasterCard, or Visa—or bill it.



rē · li · giōn

Defining religion

Arianism: an ancient heresy named after Arius, the fourth century priest who promoted it. Arianism denies the full divinity and eternity of God the Son, claiming the Son had a beginning and is subordinate to the Father. The Jehovah’s Witnesses teach a similar error today. The Nicene Creed was formulated in response to this heresy.

Students receive a “taste of the ministry”

This year 72 seniors at Michigan Lutheran Seminary (MLS), Saginaw, Mich., and 42 seniors at Luther Prep School (LPS), Watertown, Wis., took a closer look at what life is like as a called worker through the schools' Taste of Ministry programs.

The programs place students in participating congregations and elementary school classrooms where they meet, observe, and work closely with pastors and teachers.

“Taste of Ministry gives students a chance to experience the public ministry ‘behind the scenes,’ and see the wide variety of things that pastors and teachers do,” said Marcus Manthey, recruitment director and professor of English at MLS.

“The added blessing is that the program also benefits host schools and churches,” said Manthey. “It gives pastors and teachers a chance to refocus on their ministries and congregation members an opportunity to see the important role they play in preparing future workers for the church.”

MLS seniors who want to learn more about the teaching ministry go to the host school for two hours twice a week for three weeks. Most observe the first week but soon have opportunities to tutor individual students or small groups, and eventually work with the entire class.

In the LPS program, seniors spend a day and a half at the host school, and stay overnight with the teacher. “At night, teachers can have them help correct papers and prepare for the next day. It also gives them more time to talk about what life is like as a teacher,” said Peter Kiecker, LPS professor of religion and social studies.

At MLS, senior boys interested in the pastoral ministry spend a four-day weekend with their host. They attend meetings and classes with the pastor, go along on evangelism and shut-in

calls, and help plan and participate in Sunday worship.

LPS senior boys spend a day and a half with the pastor. “Students say they can see how important it is to share the gospel one-on-one. They discover it isn't just preaching on Sunday,” said Kiecker.

The idea for the program came in 1982 when a teacher from St. Paul, Saginaw, Mich., invited several MLS students to observe her classroom. MLS began offering it to all interested seniors the following year. A parallel program for future pastors started in 1987. LPS began similar programs in 1989.



MLS senior Joshua Bannermann (kneeling), and MLS junior Candace Hines (standing in back), help Ruth Ann Izzat, a teacher at Bethany, Saginaw, Mich. The Taste of Ministry program allows students at MLS and LPS to observe and work closely with called workers.

Grace Oasis—bridging the gap

Wisconsin Lutheran Institutional Ministries (WLIM) is always looking for ways to follow up with people after they go through treatment programs.



“For a lot of recovering drug and alcohol addicts going from being ‘on the street’ to sitting in the pew is a big jump,” said Phil Merten, WLIM chaplain. “We need to bridge that gap.”

Salem (Cramer St.), Milwaukee, Wis., wants to get more involved in the community.

“We constantly look for ways to serve people in the community—the mentally ill, the depressed, the addicts. It’s the focus of the congregation’s outreach,” said James Sonnemann, pastor at Salem.

Together they found a way—a program called Grace Oasis.

Developed in 1995, Grace Oasis brings together recovering addicts, pastors, and volunteers for fellowship, games, songs, and Bible study every Friday night at Salem. About 10 to 15 people attend every week.

“Treatment facilities liked our idea,” said Merten. “They told us a Christian perspective would fill a void in the recovery community.”

Salem also helps “bridge the gap” for addicts with church services held in the lounge on Wednesday nights. Salem members as well as the unchurched attend.

“The services are very informal,” said Sonnemann. “They’re more of an interactive discussion of the Bible.”

But why the name Grace Oasis?

“The addicts are always under the law, but grace is where the liberty is,” said Merten. “It’s a desert out there. This is a place where they can be refreshed.”



Religion television coverage on the blink

Of the more than 18,000 stories on the nation's four major television networks' evening news programs in 1995, only 249 were about religion. Morning news programs, with 26,000 news segments, had even fewer stories about religion—just 224. This was according to an April study by the Media Research Center, an Alexandria, Va.-based group that monitors television programming.

The figures for prime time viewing also bode badly for religion.

"In prime time, given that there were almost 1,800 hours of original

shows, there was only one depiction for every seven hours of programming," the report said.

Yet for the exposure religion did receive, more than half of the portrayals on the networks of devout laity or clergy were negative.



Communist influence casts shadow over German churches

Five years after German unification, 86 percent of the population in west Germany belongs to the main Protestant and Roman Catholic churches. However, in east Germany—ruled by a communist government from 1949 to 1989—the proportion is only 30 percent.

The statistics, cited in *Lutherische*

Monatshefte, show 25 percent of west Germans, but only seven percent of east Germans, attend church at least once a month.

Over half of east Germans say they are "completely nonreligious." Only 13 percent of west Germans said the same. [Ecumenical News International, Apr. 15]

Seventh-day Adventists reaffirm traditional marriage

The Seventh-day Adventist Church, responding to what it called the "controversy in different parts of the world" over the drive to give same-sex partnerships the same social, religious, and legal recognition as heterosexual marriages, reaffirmed its "strong and continued belief" in traditional Christian marriage.

"Marriage was divinely established in Eden and affirmed by Jesus Christ

to be both monogamous and heterosexual, a lifelong union of loving companionship between a man and a woman," the statement said.

The statement was issued by the Administrative Committee of the General Conference, the top day-to-day policy-making body of the church. The denomination has 8.6 million members around the world.

In brief

- **The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), the largest Protestant denomination in the U.S., continues to grow.**
According to Baptist Press, the official news service of the SBC, church membership reached 15,668,077 in 1995, an increase of 48,165 or 0.3 percent. Baptisms totaled 393,811, an increase of 4.1 percent or 15,348 over 1994. The denomination has 40,120 churches.
- **The Roman Catholic Church remains the nation's largest religious body, with 60,190,605 members.** It is followed by the Southern Baptist Convention, with 15,668,077 members; the United Methodist Church, with 8,584,125 members; the National Baptist Convention USA, Inc., with 8,200,000 members; and the Church of God in Christ, with 5,499,875 members.

Austria's youth shun God

Although 83 percent of Austria's 7.8 million people are members of the Roman Catholic Church or a Protestant denomination, 22 percent of the population calls itself atheist, according to the Information Service of the German Evangelical Church. It also said that 35 percent of those under the age of 30 do not believe in God or a higher being. Of that same age group, only three percent attend church every Sunday.

**DON'T
KEEP THIS
MAGAZINE!**

Give it away!

WISCONSIN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD **Financial report****CONGREGATION MISSION SUBSCRIPTION PERFORMANCE**

Three Months Ended March 31, 1996

District	Total Subscription			Offerings Received			Annizd Ave. per comm.
	Communicants	1995	Year to date projected	March offerings	Three months offerings	Percent of sub.	
Arizona-California	16,630	\$997,698	\$210,038	\$82,508	\$197,491	94.0%	\$47.50
Dakota-Montana	9,375	426,387	65,039	27,098	66,237	101.8	28.26
Michigan	36,926	2,132,175	409,718	128,934	361,945	88.3	39.21
Minnesota	43,642	2,371,952	415,216	159,420	359,295	86.5	32.93
Nebraska	10,110	550,636	82,682	37,945	109,238	132.1	43.22
North Atlantic	3,646	302,506	62,593	15,651	68,973	110.2	75.67
Northern Wisconsin	61,574	2,498,651	404,835	206,961	424,231	104.8	27.56
Pacific Northwest	4,770	268,056	53,493	18,131	52,369	97.9	43.92
South Atlantic	6,303	394,707	97,030	35,723	97,839	100.8	62.09
South Central	4,126	344,765	71,793	29,731	89,230	124.3	86.51
Southeastern Wisconsin	58,087	3,261,224	543,658	175,903	499,124	91.8	34.37
Western Wisconsin	<u>59,910</u>	<u>2,972,138</u>	<u>490,049</u>	<u>218,270</u>	<u>516,144</u>	<u>105.3</u>	<u>34.46</u>
Total - This Year	315,099	16,520,895	2,906,144	1,136,275	2,842,116	97.8	36.08
Total - Last Year	316,221	16,434,979	2,778,059	1,119,126	2,757,535	99.3	34.88

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

Nine months ended March 31, 1996

	1996 actual	1995 actual	1996 budget
Revenues:			
Congregation Mission Offerings	\$ 11,996,519	\$ 11,905,467	\$ 11,939,000
Gifts and memorials	1,710,935	313,319	928,000
Bequest/planned giving income	506,317	540,438	466,000
Tuition and fees	6,075,753	5,818,786	6,049,000
Other	87,460	53,140	72,000
Transfers-endwmt/trust earnings	198,242	154,099	165,000
Transfers-gift trust	5,958,823	5,642,578	6,048,000
Transfers-continuing programs	2,437,946	1,661,788	2,363,000
Transfers-other	100	50	-
Total revenues	28,972,095	26,089,665	28,030,000
Expenditures:			
Administration Division	2,035,041	1,997,701	2,171,000
Home Missions Division	4,693,726	4,383,050	4,943,000
World Missions Division	5,315,362	5,032,832	5,465,000
Ministerial Education Division	14,538,722	12,359,827	13,473,000
Parish Services Division	993,483	816,533	1,005,000
Fiscal Services Division	971,299	1,075,377	1,112,000
Total expenditures	28,547,633	25,665,320	28,169,000
Net change for the period	424,462	424,345	
Net assets - beginning of year	627,702	155,746	
Net assets - end of period	1,052,164	580,091	

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

	March 31, 1996	March 31, 1995
Assets:		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 1,781,213	\$ 1,332,785
Due from other funds	18,162	37,916
Accounts receivable-cash adv.	99,250	87,250
Other accounts receivable	102,732	185,494
Mortgage note receivable	19,567	21,239
Allowance for doubtful accts	(92,000)	(92,000)
Prepaid expenses	11,171	4,709
Total assets	1,940,095	1,577,393
Liabilities and fund balance:		
Due to schools	725,188	809,678
Accounts payable	162,743	187,624
Total liabilities	887,931	997,302
Net assets	1,052,164	580,091
Total liab. and net assets	1,940,095	1,577,393

Randy E. Matter, controller

Hell's description divides Americans

A survey by the Barna Research Groups found much disparity among Americans' views of hell:

- 31%** see hell as an actual location: "a place of physical torment where people may be sent."
- 37%** say "hell is not a place, but it represents a state of permanent separation from the presence of God."
- 19%** described hell as merely a symbolic term, not referring to a physical place.
- 10%** of adults were undecided on their views of hell.

Scripture describes hell as a place of eternal fire (Matthew 5:22; 18:8,9; 25:41) and says that those condemned to hell will be "shut out from the presence of the Lord" (2 Thessalonians 1:8,9).

Although Americans differ on the concept of hell, they express one-sided certainty in the existence of sin. More than seven in 10 Americans disagree strongly with the statement "people may make mistakes, but there is no such thing as sin." This figure represents a 14-point jump from 1992 when only 57 percent of Americans expressed disagreement to the same assertion. [Barna Research Group, Mar. 18]

Bulletin BOARD & NOTICES

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

NOMINATIONS FOR WLS PRESIDENT

The following men have been nominated as president of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis.:

Prof. Forest L. Bivens, Mequon, Wis.
Rev. John A. Braun, Watertown, Wis.
Prof. John M. Brenner, Mequon, Wis.
Prof. John F. Brug, Mequon, Wis.
Prof. Leroy A. Dobberstein, Mequon, Wis.
Prof. John C. Lawrenz, New Ulm, Minn.
Rev. Wayne D. Mueller, Waukesha, Wis.
Prof. David J. Valleskey, Mequon, Wis.
Prof. James J. Westendorf, Mequon, Wis.
Rev. James G. Witt III, St. Louis, Mo.

Correspondence regarding the nominees should be mailed by July 20 to Pastor Paul Manthey, secretary, 8419 W Melvina St, Milwaukee WI 53222.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

The Board for Ministerial Education invites voting members of the synod to nominate candidates for the office of administrator for ministerial education. The position became vacant when Pastor Wayne Borgwardt accepted the call as director for telecommunications and technology.

The position is responsible for assisting the BME in long-range planning, supervision, and policy-making for the synod's system in ministerial education.

Send nominations with pertinent information by July 20 to secretary Lynn Schroeder, 5105 McCarty Rd, Saginaw MI 48603.

CHANGE IN MINISTRY

Pastors:

Albrecht, Joel D., from Christ the Vine, Temecula, Calif., to Richmond/Short Pump, Va., exp.
Boeder, John C., from Abiding Savior, Elk River, Minn., to St. Paul, Wisconsin Rapids, Wis.
Bolda, James L., from Bethel, Sioux Falls, S.D., to Abiding Savior, Weslaco, Texas.
Dunham, James A., from Good Hope, Ellensburg, Wash., to Our Savior, Gaylord/Hope, Indian River, Mich.
Gaertner, Joel P., from Amazing Grace, Florence, Ky., to St. Paul, Algoma, Wis.
Hartzell, Eric S., from East Fork, Whiteriver, Ariz., to Georgetown, Texas, exp.
Laabs, David W., from Faith, Tacoma, Wash., to Evergreen LHS, Kent, Wash.
Rakos, Joel K., from St. Paul, Amherst, N.H., to Thoughts of Faith, Stoughton, Wis.
Roekle, John D., from St. John, Florence, Wis., to First, Racine, Wis.
Schwanke, Larry R., from Emmanuel, Zephyrhills, Fla., to Faith, Kokomo, Ind.

Staff ministers:

Holm, James A., to WELS gift planning counselor, Milwaukee, Wis.

Teachers:

Bartels, Denise E., to St. Peter, St. Peter, Minn.
Bases, Paul A., from Wisconsin LHS, Milwaukee, Wis., to MLC, New Ulm, Minn.
Becker, Karen K., from East Fork, Whiteriver, Ariz., to Mt. Olive, Delano, Minn.
Bieber, Bertha R., to St. Paul, Tomah, Wis.

Bloomquist, Denise S., to Sola Fide, Lawrenceville, Ga.

Boehlke, Paul R., from MLC, New Ulm, Minn., to WLC, Milwaukee, Wis.

Boileau, Philip N., from Our Savior, Grafton, Wis., to Shoreland LHS, Somers, Wis.

Buege, Ruth J., from Wisconsin LHS, Milwaukee, Wis., to St. John, Wauwatosa, Wis.

Festerling, John E., from St. Stephen, Adrian, Mich., to Samuel, Marshall, Minn.

Gieschen, Lori J., to Christ, Eagle River, Wis.

Grebe, Karl E., from St. Paul, Muskego, Wis., to St. Paul, North Mankato, Minn.

Haag, Lisa M., to St. Paul, Mt. Calvary, Wis.

Harvey, Maxine J., from David's Star, Jackson, Wis., to Morning Star, Jackson, Wis.

Henzi, Carolyn A., to Trinity, Brillion, Wis.

Hong, Karen S., from Our Redeemer, Madison, Wis., to St. Mark, Eau Claire, Wis.

Johnson, Gregory A., from Our Savior, Bylas, Ariz., to St. John, Dowagiac, Mich.

Kasten, Linda J., to St. Paul, Muskego, Wis.

Landry, Laurie J., from Grace, St. Joseph, Mich., to St. Matthew, Benton Harbor, Mich.

Lemke, Shirley A., to St. Paul, Sheboygan Falls, Wis.

Lindeman, Karen K., from David's Star, Jackson, Wis., to Our Redeemer, Madison, Wis.

Lindholm, Lisa M., from St. Paul, Columbus, Ohio, to St. John, Jefferson, Wis.

Malchow, Timothy P., to MLS, Saginaw, Mich.

Marquardt, Paul C., from Trinity, Caledonia, Wis., to St. John, Sleepy Eye, Minn.

Miller, Rebecca R., to St. Paul, N. Fond du Lac, Wis.

Ogg, Peggy J., to St. John, Westland, Mich.

Pekrul, Peggy L., to St. Paul, Mt. Calvary, Wis.

Radichel, Jerald E., from St. Paul, East Troy, Wis., to Zion, Columbus, Wis.

Ross, Mark A., from St. John, Minneapolis, Ohio, to King of Grace, Golden Valley, Minn.

Schmal, Daniel E., from Michigan LHS, St. Joseph, Mich., to WLC, Milwaukee, Wis.

Schwartz, Nancy, to Lola Park, Redford, Mich.

Sellnow, Larry M., from St. Paul, Brownsville, Wis., to Holy Trinity, Wyoming, Mich.

Steinbrenner, Leah J., from St. Martin, Watertown, S.D., to Apostles, San Jose, Calif.

Strehler, Lyle A., from Trinity, Belle Plaine, Minn., to Bloomington, Bloomington, Minn.

Thiesfeldt, Jeremy J., from Emanuel, W. St. Paul, Minn., to St. John, Lannon, Wis.

Voigt, Timothy A., from Shepherd, Albuquerque, N.M., to Trinity, West Bend, Wis.

Wagner, Scott A., from St. Paul, Wisconsin Rapids, Wis., to Resurrection, Aurora, Ill.

Weber, Bridget K., to St. John, Saginaw, Mich.

Weibel, Charlene, to St. Matthew, Stoddard, Wis.

Welch, Thomas R., from St. Paul, Livonia, Mich., to Fox Valley LHS, Appleton, Wis.

Wichmann, Paul D., from Huron Valley LHS, Westland, Mich., to Luther HS, Onalaska, Wis.

Zahn, Philip M., from St. Paul, Columbus, Ohio, to Resurrection, Rochester, Minn.

The synod administration building will be closed the following dates:

July 4 & 5—Independence Day
Callers may leave voice mail messages, 256-3888; FAX 256-3899.

Extended Northwestern Publishing House summer store hours:

For summer shopping convenience, NPH retail store will be open Friday evenings until 8 PM.

ADDRESS CHANGE

South Milwaukee, Wis.—Zion Lutheran School, 3600 S Chicago Ave, South Milwaukee WI 53172.

AVAILABLE

Paraments—Altar and lectern. Green, purple, white, and red. Free for cost of shipping. Immanuel, Medford, Wis., 715/748-2921.

ANNIVERSARIES

West Bend, Wis.—St. Peter (140). July 21. Service, 11 AM; lunch follows. 4930 Beaver Dam Rd, West Bend WI 53095. Gerald Rosenthal, 414/629-5308.

Mauston, Wis.—St. Paul (100). July 28—Mission festival. Services, 7:45 AM and 10:30 AM; picnic, noon; mission service, 2 PM. Aug. 25—centennial Sunday. Services 7:45 AM and 10:30 AM; lunch, noon; thanksgiving service, 2 PM. 517 Grayside Ave, Mauston WI 53948; 608/847-4108.

Eitzen, Minn.—Zion (125). July 28. Confirmation reunion. Services, 10 AM and 2 PM; dinner, noon. 311 Iowa Ave, Eitzen MN 55931.

Zumbrota, Minn.—Christ (100). June 30. Services, 8:30 and 11 AM; dinner, 12:30 PM; centennial service, 2:30 PM. Christ, 223 E 5 St, Zumbrota MN 55992; 507/732-7107.

Fall River, Wis.—St. Stephen (75). July 14. Service, 10:30 AM; potluck picnic, noon. At Fall River Village Park (weather permitting). 221 N Main, Fall River WI 53925; 414/484-3991.

MLC EXTENSION COURSE

The Theology and Practice of Ministry, SM 9020—Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee. Sept. 13-14, Oct. 4-5, 25-26, Nov. 15-16, Dec. 6-7. Fri.: 6-9 PM; Sat.: 9 AM-4 PM. This course is part of the certification requirements for MLC's staff ministry program, but cannot be applied to any other synodical certification program. Contact Special Services, Martin Luther College, 1995 Luther Ct, New Ulm MN 56073; 1-800-686-4142.

NAMES WANTED

Eagle/Gypsum/Edwards/Vail/Aspen/Glenwood Springs, Colo.—Pastor Brent Merten, Mountain Valley, PO Box 3547, Eagle CO 81631.

NEEDED

Books—Luther's Works. Used. Pastor Brian Keller, 7654 Ragall Parkway, Middleburg Heights OH 44130; 216/826-0464.

REQUEST FOR RESUMES

WELS Human Resources maintains an active file of candidates for positions that may open at the synod administration building and other synodical units. Individuals interested in working for WELS who have backgrounds in finance, accounting, office support, education, or general business may submit their resumes for consideration as openings occur. All positions require a working knowledge of computers, and interaction with co-workers, called workers, or the general public. Address inquiries to WELS, Human Resources, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398; 414/256-3269.

SERVICE TIMES

Loveland, Colo.—Visiting Rocky Mountain National Park? Join us for worship. Service time, 9:30 AM. Abiding Love, 206 E 29 St, Loveland, CO 80538; 970/669-9678.

The unmuffled truth

Marianne Jensen

“It’s in God’s hands,” said one man. “People say I was saved for some reason. I was saved for pain, I tell you,” said another.

Both men lost their wives as a result of the February flooding in the Pacific Northwest. There were 120 mudslides in one week in Portland alone. Rivers changed course during the flood. The Oregon Department of Transportation spokeswoman described the topsoil, when saturated, as “chocolate pudding that hasn’t set up.”

A clump of alder trees slid onto a street, remained upright, and pushed a pick-up truck down the street like a lurching, wobbling shopping cart. A river of rocks washed down the south wall of the Columbia River Gorge, picked up a bungalow like a shoe box, and set down the kitchen chairs 300 yards away on the interstate.

It took three weeks to get all four lanes of the highway open, and trains still crept along, in order not to start any more slides.

Many people were inconvenienced by the flood. Some lost their sense of security. Some lost power for hours or days. Some had their property damaged. Some lost everything they owned. A few people lost their lives.

What happened to the man who sounded so bitter? A mudslide pushed his house into the Sandy River, and he floated, in what was left of his house, past three bridges, all the way to the Columbia. His wife’s body has not been found.

My friends and I watched the Willamette River boil over its falls at Oregon City. It’s usually a scenic sight, but watching all that brown water hurtling

into the churning, seething chaos that snaked below us, we agreed, “What can this be, but the power of God?”

I watched the news and read newspaper articles about the flood damage and realized nobody was saying anything about God. Nobody used the term “act of God;” nobody talked about praying to God.

Our newspaper reflected the idea, “Nature showed it still is boss.” The rest of the media echoed this sentiment. However, one small article quoted a man from Albany, Ore., whose wife had left for the grocery store and never came back. He’s the one who said, “It’s in God’s hands.”

That man is Don Schuerman, a member at Beautiful Savior, Corvallis. After his wife’s body was found, he gave an even greater testimony to the glory of God. “As Christians, death is a triumph, not a tragedy,” Schuerman said. “She loved her Lord. I know she’s with her Lord now. I’m looking forward to being there too.”

In this part of the country, it’s rare to hear a clear declaration of Christian hope and faith in a public forum. I was struck when I read God’s truth, unmuffled for once, in a newspaper. I thank God for carrying through with his promise that his name will be exalted “among the nations” (Psalm 46:10). I thank Mr. Schuerman for giving his clear testimony of faith during a most difficult time. And I thank the editor of *The Albany Democrat Herald* for not editing it out.

It’s rare to hear a clear declaration of Christian hope and faith in a public forum.

Marianne Jensen is a member at Bethesda, Portland, Oregon.

Remembering your leaders

A leader who speaks the Word of God faithfully, applies it to human hearts, and lives accordingly, deserves respect, obedience, and honor.

Fredric E. Piepenbrink

Pastors used to be the most respected individuals in town. Often they were the most educated. Today they are still called Reverend in some denominations, and they still ride ahead of the hearse in a funeral procession; but a lot of real respect is gone.

The occupation of clergyman used to be ranked number one in prestige and honor. Today it's ranked eighth, according to the Institute of Social Science Research. University professors are given the highest rank, followed by physicians, lawyers, business presidents, accountants, business executives, high school teachers, veterinarians, and finally clergymen.

What the pastor said in the church was the law. He ran the show. He made the decisions. That has changed too, for some good. Today we appreciate more the gifts, talents, and direct participation of members.

Remember your leaders

Still, the office of the clergy has taken a beating. Maybe it has to do with the highly publicized cases of clergy hypocrisy—the Bakkers and the Swaggarts, and a few misfits among priests. Maybe it has to do with a general decline in religious

values. Whatever the reason, the writer to the Hebrews presents one more old-fashioned idea when he says, **“Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you”** (Hebrews 13:7). A leader who speaks the Word of God faithfully, applies it to human hearts, and lives accordingly, deserves your respect, obedience, and honor.

Pastors are in a demanding position. They must maintain sound doctrine, so they study and review God's Word. They instruct the young and old, comfort the sick and shut-in, reach out to the lost and unchurched, admonish the obstinate and backslider, maintain discipline and order, and all the while try to keep their own lives free from offensive sin. Their goal is to lead precious souls to heaven. But they never see those fruits of labor until their ministry is over and they reach heaven, when they must give God an account of their faithfulness.

That's why clergy appreciate members' concern and cooperation. There are two things you can do to help your pastor. First, take to heart what he says, especially when speaking God's Word.

And second, come to church regularly to be fed with the Word and sacrament. In Sunday worship, the pastor can reach the most members in the least amount of time. If you don't come to church, the pastor will need to come to you. That takes time. And you will miss the fellowship of believers.

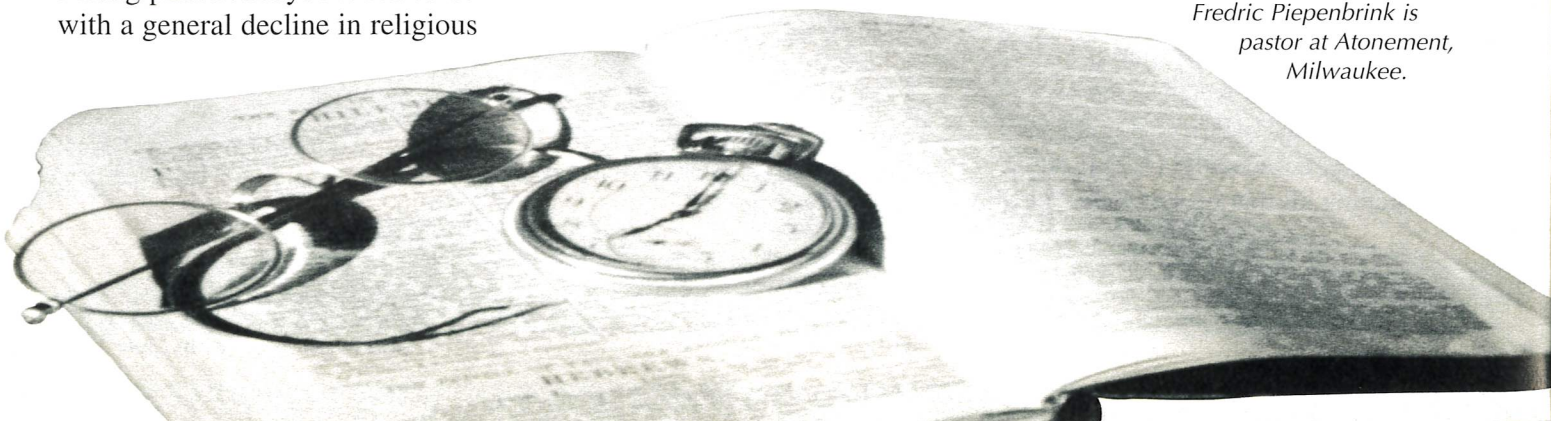
Imitate their faith

“Remember your leaders. . . . Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith”

(Hebrews 13:7). Who are your pastors? Who served before them? How did they conduct themselves? What was their way of life? Did any weaken or waver in the faith? Did they fail to put the Lord first? If you have had faithful pastors who exemplified strong Christian character, then God has given them to you as a legacy to remember and imitate.

Pastors have their faults too. You may not always share their opinions. You may question their actions from time to time. But they are still God's chosen instruments to lead God's flock. For that reason they deserve your support, patience, honor, and imitation. That may sound old-fashioned, but it is still God's Word.

*Fredric Piepenbrink is
pastor at Atonement,
Milwaukee.*



America at a crossroad

Joel C. Gerlach

Are we ready for same-sex marriages? In February, two men exchanged rings during a "commitment ceremony" in Honolulu. This month a Hawaii civil court will start to decide whether to sanction their commitment by legalizing gay weddings.

Six plaintiffs are challenging Hawaii's marriage regulations. The plaintiffs claim the state practices discrimination because these same-sex partners are being denied marriage licenses.

Three years ago Hawaii's Supreme Court ruled that unless the state can show a compelling interest in prohibiting same-sex marriages, the plaintiffs' charge of discrimination will be declared valid, and the state will be ordered to sanction homosexual marriages.

If that happens, the consequences reach far beyond Hawaii. The Full Faith and Credit Clause of the U.S. Constitution will require all states to recognize the legality of Hawaii's same-sex marriages. If these couples move to another state, they will be entitled to the benefits enjoyed by regularly married couples in that state.

Now 22 states are wrestling with this question. If Hawaii legalizes same-sex marriages, other states are almost certain to follow.

At least two things are at issue: the state's interest in regulating marriages and the definition of marriage and family. Governments provide benefits for married couples because the state has a vested interest in continuing a healthy society and in protecting children when parents don't do so. Since homosexual couples cannot procreate, there is no compelling reason to grant them the same rights as legally married couples.

Same-sex marriage proponents make their case by redefining marriage and family. As Christians, we recognize that

God instituted marriage. Because he designed it, he alone has the right to define it. And he has—"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24).

Representative Tammy Baldwin, a lesbian serving in Wisconsin's legislature, defines civil marriage as "nothing more than a series of rights, responsibilities, privileges, obligations, benefits, and burdens bestowed by government upon persons who enter the marriage contract."

Her opponents argue that same-sex marriages "will forever change the American family as we know it." She contends, "If it changes the American family at all, it will be a change for the better."

As her basis, Baldwin suggests, "We need to enact public policy not based on fear or hate, but on the principles of fairness and justice." Historically, civil laws, including marriage laws, have been based on natural law. Proponents of same-sex marriage want to shift from a universal standard to an elusive, subjective determination of what's fair. What's fair is what agrees with Baldwin's thinking, while our view is presumably based on "fear and hate."

America is staggering from an abandonment of values. We are at a crossroad. To turn one way is to move toward self-destruction. To go to the other is to move toward a social contract based on something substantive rather than on a nebulous notion about what's fair.

Bills were introduced in May to define marriage in federal law as "a legal union between one man and one woman." If we aren't ready for same-sex marriages, we need to let our voices be heard where they will count. In the meantime, let us pray.

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

As Christians, we

recognize that

God instituted

marriage.

Because he

designed it, he

alone has the

right to define it.

Offices of the ministry

John F. Brug

Paul seems to distinguish two offices of the ministry: One—elder/overseer, and two—deacon, deaconess. What responsibilities or characteristics distinguish the one from the other? How does this apply to the life and ministry of the church today?

In the only place where Paul discusses the two offices side by side (1 Timothy 3), he lists the qualifications for holding these offices, not the duties of the office holders. Since the same Christian character is required for both offices, this description does little to help us distinguish the offices. The main characteristic that distinguished the elder/overseer from the deacon was ability to teach.

A comparison of such passages as Acts 20:17 and 28 indicates that elder and overseer were interchangeable terms. A consideration of all the passages in which the terms elder or overseer occur suggests this office was similar to our office of pastor, but the responsibilities of the office were often divided among several men, so that a given elder might have been more of a specialist and less of a generalist than our pastors normally are.

Among the duties of elders/overseers were shepherding the flock (Acts 20:28), teaching and preaching the Word and directing the affairs of the church (1 Timothy 5:17), encouraging sound doctrine and refuting error (Titus 1:9), pray-

ing for the sick (James 5:14), and laying hands on candidates for the ministry (1 Timothy 4:14).

1 Timothy 5:17 implies that not all elders were directly involved in preaching and teaching the Word.

It is generally believed the duties of deacons and deaconesses were similar to those of the men appointed to be in charge of the charitable work in Acts 6. Those men, however, are not called deacons, nor are the duties of a deacon or deaconess described anywhere else in the New Testament. At times the church has applied the term deacon or deaconess to people who assist the pastor in the ministry of the Word.

The terminology and the arrangement of the ministry in our congregations has undergone numerous changes since the time of the apostles.

A survey of the relevant passages indicates New Testament congregations established by the apostles were not bound to rigid terminology or forms of ministry, but were free to make the arrangements that would best serve the changing needs of the congregations. We may do the same if we observe the qualifications Scripture sets for those serving in the public ministry and remember

the one mission the Lord has given to the church—preach the gospel.

The terminology and the arrangement of the ministry in our congregations has undergone numerous changes since the time of the apostles. We use the title “pastor” for our office that is closest in scope to the elder of the New Testament, although the title “pastor” occurs only rarely in the New Testament. We use the term “elder” for church councilmen who have a much narrower assignment than the elders of the New Testament. Our Lutheran elementary school teachers have an assignment different in scope than that of any of the ministers who appear in the pages of the New Testament.

Though some of the externals have changed, the substance of the ministry established by Christ remains the same.

John Brug is a professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon.

*Send questions to
Your question, please,
Northwestern Lutheran,
2929 N Mayfair Rd,
Milwaukee WI 53222-4398.*



Having read the April issue from cover to cover, and having failed to find one single reference to the Lord's Supper in any of the articles, or otherwise, is alarming. We Lutherans know the importance of the Word—no argument there—but never at the expense of the sacraments. That's what makes us different from all other Christian denominations.

If we were told more often about the real encounter we can have with our Savior Jesus Christ, how he truly gives himself to us in his Supper—to forgive our sins and to strengthen our weak faith—perhaps it would create a real hunger in us.

*Monika Weihmann
Kelowna, British Columbia*

For anyone who may consider Bruce Becker's criticism of Promise Keepers [May] an all-too-typical response from WELS, be aware there are plenty of non-WELS people equally concerned about the movement. Michael Horton, a Christian Reformed pastor and founder of Christians United for Reformation, sees in PK the law lacking in its severity (failing to identify man's total depravity) and a gospel buried in therapeutic moralism and confused with pop psychology.

With pastors of various denominations on his radio talk show, Horton assesses PK as another example of the "movement mentality" or revivalist spirit common in American Christianity. The movement and the enthusiasm it engenders become its real source of power, rather than the gospel in Word and sacrament. These non-

WELS pastors listed other concerns about PK including doctrinal shallowness and failure to recognize denominational differences. Wise Christians—WELS or otherwise—do not jump on every bandwagon that passes by.

*Steven Radunzel
Evanston, Illinois*

Memories, memories, and Mildred Meyer in the May issue with "School days." We couldn't have gone to the same Lutheran school, but then all Lutheran schools were alike. The captions tell "Corporal punishment was allowed." There were no school buses and we had no library, but we did have a big dictionary and a large globe.

Revisiting, you do hear voices. I know because I've been there. I hope there are more like us reflecting on these memories that can't be taken away from us. Last, but not least, the hymns and passage we learned. When our eyes have dimmed we still know them from memory.

*Edna C. Hiller
Flint, Michigan*

Regarding the article "Wedding service participants" [June]. WELS fellowship practice is probably the most difficult issue to explain to new members in mission congregations. It's probably the biggest reason for direct as well as backdoor losses in membership. It needs more articles written in *Northwestern Lutheran* to help our laity and pastors.

I agreed with the logic presented in the article on wedding service participants. I was disappointed that no Scriptural passages were presented. The last sentence references that the subject was based on Scripture and the first sentence in

the second paragraphs says "Scripture teaches," yet no passages were introduced at this logical area of the article.

*Daniel Carow
Festus, Missouri*

Send your letters to Readers forum, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398; FAX 414/256-3899. Writers' views are not necessarily those of WELS or *Northwestern Lutheran*.

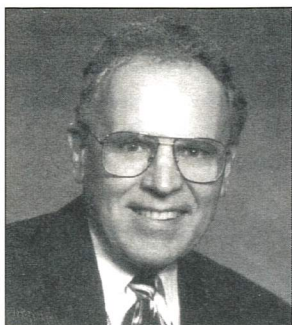
Through my Bible in 3 years

August 1996

1. Job 11, 12
2. Job 13, 14
3. Job 15-17
4. Job 18, 19
5. Job 20, 21
6. Job 22-24
7. Job 25-27
8. Job 28-29
9. Job 30, 31
10. Job 32, 33
11. Job 34, 35
12. Job 36, 37
13. Job 38:1—40:5
14. Job 40:6—42:6
15. Job 42:7-17
16. Psalm 42, 43
17. Ps. 44
18. Ps. 45
19. Ps. 46-48
20. Ps. 49
21. Ps. 50
22. Ps. 51
23. 2 Samuel 1
24. 2 Sam. 2, 3
25. 2 Sam. 4:1—5:16
26. 2 Sam. 5:17—6:23
27. 2 Sam. 7
28. 2 Sam. 8, 9
29. 2 Sam. 10, 11
30. 2 Sam. 12:1—13:37
31. 2 Sam. 13:38—14:33

The readings in the June issue were incorrectly titled as June 1996. They should have been titled July 1996. The readings, however, are accurate.

Old debate, new setting



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

What the authors brought us was nothing more than the ongoing battle between believers and unbelievers.

They speak of evidence, of truth, of history. They want to show you the real Jesus.

Don't you believe them.

I refer to the critical scholars whose views led *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *U.S. News* all to feature Jesus on the covers of their April 8 issues. We could be glad for the coverage except for the confusion. We would applaud the effort except for the illusion. We might welcome the scholarship except for the skepticism.

The articles in those magazines provided a coming-out party for almost every heresy known about Jesus. And although they also quoted champions of the orthodox view of Jesus, we should not be deceived.

What the authors brought us was nothing more than the ongoing battle between believers and unbelievers, between God's objective truth and skeptics' subjective search for truth.

In the name of scholarship, the critics abandon all objectivity. They leave the impression that clear new evidence exists that will show us a different Jesus from the biblical account. But they never produce the evidence. They don't because no new specific evidence about Jesus exists. Virtually no meaningful account of Jesus exists outside the Scriptures.

Knowing that, the unbelieving scholars examine the Bible evidence. But their search is marred by preconceived notions and agendas for change. They don't go to Scripture to listen to its message, but to dispute it, to discount it. Some don't hide their bias at all: they want to "reinvent Christianity." They begin with an idea of what Jesus must be and accept only evidence that supports their idea. Only certain concepts of Jesus are allowed:

- He must be a "secular sage and a social critic."
- He must have more concern about this life than the afterlife.
- He must be subject to all natural laws and exhibit no supernatural powers.
- The biblical witness about him must not be taken literally.
- Anything the critic cannot believe about Jesus must not be true, no matter what the account says.

Given those conditions, it doesn't take a scholar to predict the outcome. If you cannot believe the biblical account of Jesus, you must create another Jesus or ignore him. Paul's words to the Corinthians still hold true: "The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him . . ." (1 Corinthians 2:14).

Am I saying that we are more objective than the scholars—we who believe the Bible presents the real, historical Jesus who bodily rose from the dead? By secular standards, no. We bring the bias of faith—faith worked in us by the Spirit of God through the Word the critics wish to debunk.

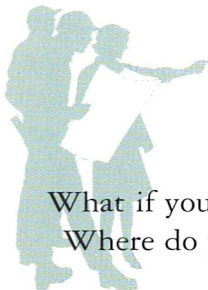
The Word, we believe, is objective and true, not because the writers were without bias. Hardly! They, too, expressed their own doubts at least until Pentecost. The objectivity and the reality come to us from God by the Spirit of truth. We believe he inspired the Word, and we don't have to guess which parts are true and which are not. All are true.

When in faith we trust in the Jesus presented to us in the Bible, we have the real Jesus and really have Jesus and eternal life through him. That reality is not up for debate.

Gary P. Baumler

WE'RE WORKING ON BETTER TOOLS TO SERVE YOU.

Your congregation's ministry needs:



- People growing in God's Word
- Sharing Different Gifts
- Giving Their Time

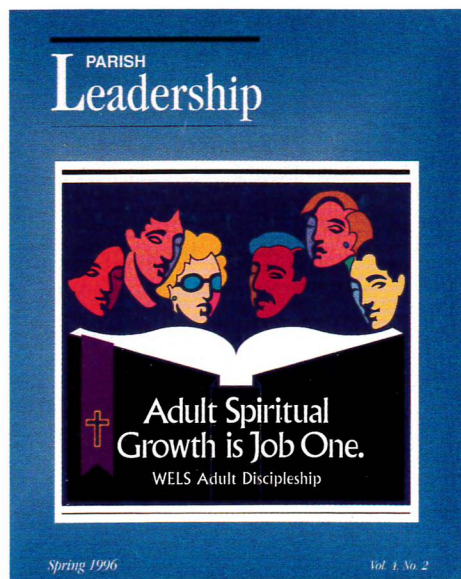


What if you're just learning how to help your congregation grow?
Where do you go for ideas and encouragement on how to serve?

Your WELS Board for Parish Services has developed tools and services to help people serve their local congregations in the areas of youth nurture and education, adult spiritual growth, stewardship education, outreach, school administration, ministry to special needs and leadership training. One of the most affordable tools is *Parish Leadership*, the journal for members who serve.

For several years, *PL* journal has included

articles from member leaders for member leaders in every area of parish ministry. And that's not going to change! What will change is the look, the title, it's practicality and how easy it will be for you to get and use—now 4 times per year. Starting with the November, 1996 issue, the journal will be called *Lutheran Leader*. These changes reflect our on-going commitment to helping member leaders who serve the Body of Christ.



For more information about content or the work of Parish Services, please call 414-256-3888. For subscription orders or information, please call Northwestern Publishing House at 1-800-662-6022. Or send in the coupon on this ad for a complimentary sample copy.

YES! I am interested in *Parish Leadership*, the journal for members who serve. Please send my complimentary sample copy to:

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

One sample copy per person.
Please mail request to:
WELS Adult Discipleship
2929 N Mayfair Rd.
Milwaukee, WI 53222-4398

Plain, unvarnished truth

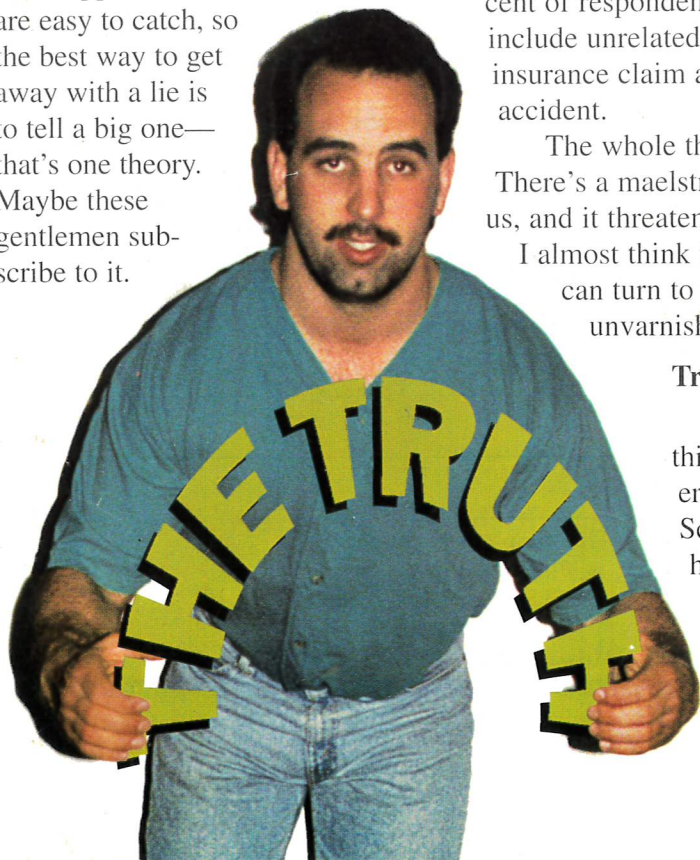
We human beings have an almost limitless capacity for deceit.

Kenneth A. Cherney

What do the following events have in common?

- An art dealer receives a painting to sell on consignment. He sells it quickly, pockets the money, and puts it up for sale again—this time for the new owner. Then he tells the original owner that no one's bought the painting yet—that's why it's still in his shop.
- A professor at a mainline seminary writes there is no biblical support for the view that Jesus' death atoned for the sins of the world.
- A tobacco industry representative looks members of Congress in the eye and tells them there is no evidence that nicotine is addictive.

Obvious, isn't it? All three men told what might be politely termed "a whopper." Small lies are easy to catch, so the best way to get away with a lie is to tell a big one—that's one theory. Maybe these gentlemen subscribe to it.



Lies of the world

Personally, I think that theory is in trouble. Big lies are occasionally found out. Sometimes they make headlines. And what about the rising tide of lesser lies around us—lies that often go unnoticed?

Look at the world of advertising. Here "truth" has been redefined to mean nothing more than "a statement nobody can prove is false." That's why a restaurant can advertise "the best gumbo in the whole world" and get away with it. It's just advertising after all.

Look at politics, where "truth" has been redefined to include statements that are obviously false, but don't do any harm because only an idiot would really believe them. It's just politics after all.

Look at a poll in which 47 percent of respondents said they would include unrelated repairs in an insurance claim after an automobile accident.

The whole thing is frightening. There's a maelstrom of lies around us, and it threatens to pull us down.

I almost think the only person I can turn to for the plain, unvarnished truth is myself.

Truths of the Bible

But if that's what I think, I've got another guess coming. Scripture says, "The heart is deceitful above all things

and beyond cure. Who can understand it?" (Jeremiah 17:9). We human beings have an almost limitless capacity for deceit. That means self-deceit above all. Rationalizing, self-justification, selective memory—if we search our own hearts, we'll find all of these lurking there. If I'm looking for nothing but plain, unvarnished truth, my own heart isn't the place to find it.

God's Word is. Its author not only doesn't lie—he can't. Dishonesty is completely foreign to God's nature. Therefore, I can put complete confidence in every single word God's book says. That's refreshing, even when the news is bad—like the news about human deceit and sin.

But what about when the news is good? What about the Bible's main message: the news about God's love, his forgiveness, a Savior, eternal life? It's good to hear those things. But to know they are absolutely true, and I can trust them completely—that's exhilarating.

What a relief—to meet, in the Bible, a man who says, "For this I came into the world, to testify to the truth" (John 18:37).

It's a nice break from: "That's my story, and I'm sticking to it."

Ken Cherney is pastor at Living Hope, Mandeville, Louisiana.