

# LUTHERAN



**Were you there?**

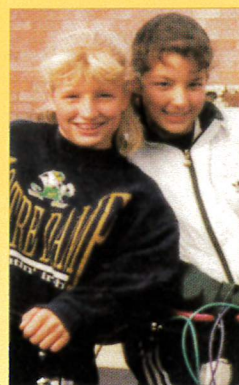
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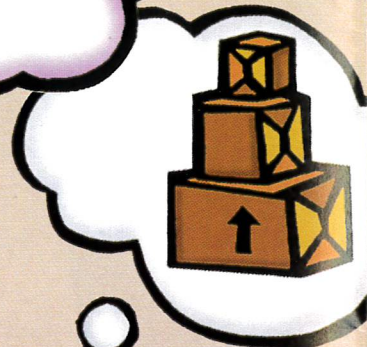
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# Were you there?

*He was delivered over to death for our sins. Romans 4:25*

Richard E. Lauersdorf

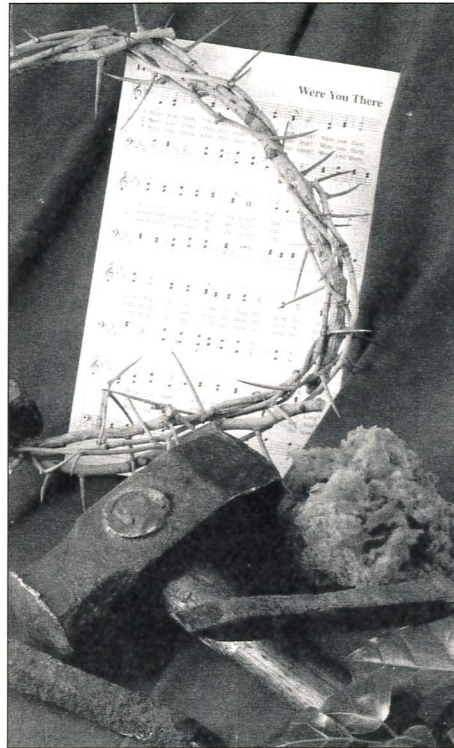
**W**ere you there? “Yes,” we answer gladly when some special occasion or festive party is meant. “No,” we are happy to answer when it comes to some tragic accident or unpleasant situation.

What’s our answer to the Lenten question posed by that old African-American spiritual, “Were you there when they crucified my Lord?”

## We were there

Notice the little pronoun in our verse? “*Our* sins,” Paul said. It doesn’t take much effort to see the sin involved in Christ’s being delivered over to death. We are quick to pick up on the hatred and hypocrisy of the Jewish leaders. We can easily identify Pilate’s lack of intestinal fortitude and his inability to insist on what was right. We can focus on Judas’ greed, which led to the Savior’s betrayal, and Peter’s pride, which led to his denial. We can readily hang a label on the fear that put wings of flight on the disciples’ feet that night in the garden.

But “our sins.” That can be another matter. What we so easily spot in others can remain unseen in ourselves. Paul sets the record straight with that pronoun “our.” So must we if our Lenten observance is to benefit us. My shortcomings, which no paint can gild regardless how thick I apply it; my unloving attitude, which has its way of picking at those around me; my lack of concern for God’s Word, which



shows in the minimum time I spend in it; my sinful pride, which can criticize and complain about almost anyone and anything—all this and more were part of that Calvary equation. Soldiers swung the hammer, but my sins pierced him. Hell claimed him and chained him in its torments that Good Friday, but my sins forged some of the links.

Were you there when they crucified my Lord? “Yes,” each of us must answer sadly. The hymn writer has it right, “Sin was there on Calvary, all the sins of ev’ryone, laid upon God’s sinless lamb, there on Calvary” (*Christian Worship* 140:3).

## God was there

Notice something else in Paul’s words? God was there on Calvary. He “delivered” Jesus “over to death for our sins.” No, God did not cause the cross; human sin did that. But God used the cross to cancel the debt for all those sins. There on Calvary God’s justice and God’s love came together to deal with mankind’s sin.

Divine justice demanded that every sin committed, from the first Adam in the Garden of Eden to the last Adam on the last day, be punished. There was no way man could cancel, chisel away at, or cover up the awful debt. Only one remedy would work, the one God’s love alone could provide. He delivered his own Son over to death at Calvary to bear the punishment for our sins. And when Good Friday was over, both God’s justice and God’s love could walk away satisfied. For “the blood of Jesus, his son, purifies us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).

Again the hymn writer has it right: “Love was there on Calvary, streaming from the heart of God, reaching out for ev’ryone, there on Calvary” (CW 140:4).

There when they crucified my Lord? Thank God our happy answer can be, “Yes,” there, seeing and believing what God’s love has done with all our sin.

*Richard Lauersdorf, first vice president of WELS, is pastor at St. John, Jefferson, Wisconsin.*



- “Were you there?” asks the well-known Lenten song. On page 3, Richard Lauersdorf reminds us: although we may not have been there, our sins were. Then on page 18, one man sees himself in those who were there—at the foot of our Savior’s cross.
- No two people are alike. In this issue, a number of articles discuss our differences.
  - ✓ It’s easy to witness our faith to those completely different from ourselves. What’s not so easy, is witnessing to those exactly like us. (p. 6)
  - ✓ Carl Henkel compares those living in Cameroon to those in the U.S. (p. 16)
  - ✓ She is deaf. That makes Pat Pasbrig “different” in our society. It also makes her feel alone in church. (p. 12)
  - ✓ In the U.S., different religions abound. Read Dan Koelpin’s view of the tolerance regarding religion in our society today. (p. 29)
  - ✓ On the back cover, read how Christians should not hide from the world—from those who are different.
- One year ago we ran a series “By faith they led,” focusing on Christians God used to shape WELS. Many of you suggested we continue that series, and even gave us names for additional articles. So back by popular demand . . . Morton Schroeder will focus on 12 more leaders who have led our synod. Turn to page 8.

—LRB

Cover photo by Gerry Koser

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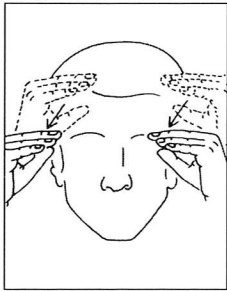
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# It's easy to be a missionary

Being a foreign missionary isn't hard. What's harder is maintaining a mission mindset in your everyday American life.

John P. Hartwig

**D**o you think it's hard to be a missionary? I suppose it's hard to move to a place far from everything and everyone you have ever known. It's hard to learn a new language. It's hard to learn to like food that looks, smells, and tastes like nothing Mom ever made. It's hard to adapt to a way of life in which many of the "necessities" are absent—things like television, Fruit Loops, McDonalds, and Charmin.

But these things aren't really what being a missionary is all about. In fact, these so-called hard things—the big differences in culture and lifestyle—make it easy to be a missionary. Those big differences make it easier to actively live your faith and share the love of Christ with others. Being a foreign missionary isn't hard. What's harder is maintaining a mission mindset in your everyday American life.

## Big differences, little barriers?

Somphat Choonapong is a successful Thai businessman. He puts gold jewelry on his baby to bring her luck. He drives a new Volvo that has been properly blessed by the Buddhist priest. He lights incense and prays in his shop every day so that he, his family, and his business will have good fortune and prosper. He regularly performs acts of charity and makes offerings at the local temple. He hopes the merit he chalks up now will be greater than his demerits, so that he will receive a reward in this life and rebirth closer to Nirvana in the next.

Maluwa Mtengo is a young Malawian. She lives in a village. Her house lacks running water and electricity. The walls are mud, the roof grass. Barely a teenager, she is her husband's younger wife. Her firstborn wears an amulet around

his neck to protect him from harm. Pregnant with her second child, Maluwa also wears a charm tied around her swelling waist to protect that unborn child. Maluwa's days are filled with backbreaking chores to keep her family fed, sheltered, and clean. She lives in constant fear of an unseen spirit world to which she attributes much of the unpleasantness of daily life in her country: disease, malnutrition, death.

When you meet such people in far-off, exotic locales, it's easy to be a missionary. It is so evident they lack the knowledge of God, of a Savior who loves the whole world, of a Lord who sustains, forgives, protects, and blesses. It's not hard to know what to do, even though gaining the skills, knowledge, and tools that let you do it might be tough. You seek to love and respect your new friends. You try to under-



stand them in their cultural context, even though, because of what God has taught, you can't love and respect many things in their culture and lifestyle. And you make use of every opportunity to share your life with them, to share the reason for the hope that you have.

### Smaller differences, bigger barriers?

Why is it so hard to do the same in our everyday American life? The situations are not so clear cut. We don't so quickly recognize the spiritual needs of people who are supposed to be like us. And yes, we do expect the people in our own spheres of activity to be like us, don't we? Despite today's lip service to diversity, we worship sameness and fear anyone who is different.

I can steel myself to go out of my context and do canvass/witnessing in an urban neighborhood, or to assist in a prison ministry, or to share God's love in a nursing home. But I don't often talk about my faith with my co-workers, my school friends, my golf partners, the people I socialize with—even members of my own family who are not living in God's light.

Sometimes it's the smallest differences that are the hardest to overcome. I pride myself at hurdling the big obstacles of race or nationality, only to trip up on the little prejudices and predispositions. Maybe it's a matter of dress. Like the young woman with jet-black hair and hardware hanging from her ears, eye-brows, nose, lip, and tongue, or the portly fellow in a bell-bottom shirt who matches his Bermudas with black socks and dress shoes.

I pop people into mental pigeonholes from which there is no escape. Maybe it's a matter of speech. I tend to find something lacking in people who don't treat the English language with the same amount of care as I. In my mind they don't measure up. Maybe it's some other foible. Even when I hear about someone who has managed to muddle up his or her life, in place of the love and sympathy that might be there, I often think, "You made the bed. Now sleep in it."

My petty perceptions build barriers. My judgments spoil opportunities. My fears keep me from trying

to understand others and from being understood by them.

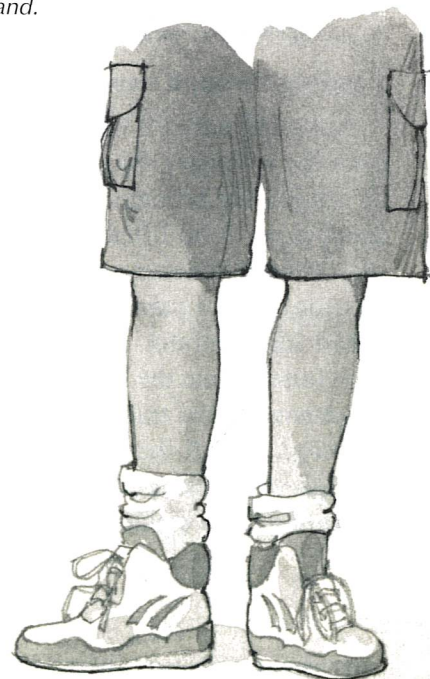
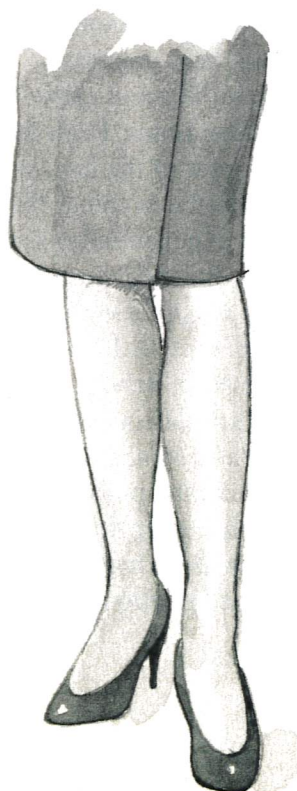
### Jesus removes barriers

Lenten season is a special time. A time of introspection and repentance. Also a time to look out, a time to look at our Savior and the extremes to which he went to remove all of our essential differences. In his life he used every opportunity, ignoring the differences in those around him. From the wise and honored teachers in the synagogues to the lowly foreign woman at the well, Jesus shared the same message with them all: "You are a sinner. But forgiveness is in me."

This message encourages us to abandon our fear of differences in others and of being different ourselves. This message equalizes us all. We are all subject to the same temptations. We all fail to measure up. We all need a Savior. We all have a Savior.

That's the message we believe. It's what makes it easy to be a missionary no matter where we are.

*John P. Hartwig, librarian at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, was a missionary to Malawi, Africa, and Thailand.*



# Oscar J. Naumann: a president for his time

The Lord was with Naumann, giving him extraordinary patience and granting him strength to guide the synod.

Morton A. Schroeder

The date: Aug. 5, 1953. The place: Northwestern College, Watertown, Wis. The occasion: the opening session of the 32nd convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States. The agenda item: the president's report. The speaker: Rev. John Brenner. His words: "I desire to end my service as the president of the synod. I am sure the synod will be better served . . . if the duties of my office would rest on younger and stronger shoulders.

The convention granted the 79-year-old his wish and elected 44-year-old Oscar John Naumann as his successor. Naumann, who picked up the gavel at the close of the convention, wielded it longer than any other synodical president. He would be elected to the office for 12 more consecutive two-year terms.

## Leading through troubles

Although only 19 years removed from the seminary, Naumann was no novice. He brought to the presidency a portfolio filled with credentials as tutor, teacher, pastor, home missionary, and parish, district, and synod administrator.

All the talents the Lord had given Naumann, all the training he had gathered, and all the lessons he had learned would be needed to keep the synod from disintegrating, the



Oscar and Dorothy Naumann

victim of forces intent on moving it from long-held positions.

The late '50s and early '60s were troublesome times. High dudgeon was the order of the day, and polarization was the in thing. Problems escalated exponentially: scouting, unionism, the meaning of the *Common Confession*, joint stateside endeavors such as Milwaukee's Lutheran High School and joint elementary schools in Madison, Wis., and St. Paul, Minn., and overseas projects like the mission in Nigeria, Africa. This magazine reminded its readers the doctrinal situation was "grave" and relations with a sister

synod [Missouri] were "strained."

The president was an easy target, and frequently Naumann found himself victimized by careless but well-aimed verbal darts. The Lord was with Naumann, giving him extraordinary patience and granting him strength to guide the synod through a long and painful confessional struggle and to lead it through an unprecedented mission expansion program.

## Following his father's footsteps

Naumann's story begins in the land of the Reformation. There, a 13-year-old boy named Justus Naumann set out for his New World. Determined to become a pastor, he studied at Concordia College, Fort Wayne, Ind., and Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo. After graduating from the seminary in 1886, he visited his homeland. The next year he was called to be missionary to scattered German immigrants in Dakota Territory. In 1895 he accepted the call to Gibbon, Minn. Membership in the Minnesota Synod was inherent; 17 years later he was elected its 10th president.

Naumann Justus and Maria Scherf, whom he married in 1894 while pastor in Wolsey, Dakota Territory, were the parents of eight children. One of them, Oscar,



would be, like his father, a president in the church. And also like his father, he would have a son who would be president in the church [Peter, president of the Dakota-Montana District].

Son Oscar spent most of his childhood in Wood Lake, Goodhue, and St. Paul, Minn. When he was not yet eight years old, his father suffered a paralytic stroke and died Feb. 5, 1917. He was 51. Oscar's mother lived to be twice that age. She died in 1975. She was 102.

### Serving faithfully

Naumann's entry into the ministry was not with fanfare. Of the 25 ministerial candidates graduated from the seminary on June 7, 1934, only six were assigned. Three were called to parishes in the synod, one to the Norwegian Synod in Iowa, one as tutor at Michigan Lutheran Seminary in Saginaw, and Naumann as tutor at Northwestern College and prep school in Watertown.

Although Naumann's desire to follow his father into a parish was put on hold by the Watertown years, the assignment was enriching. Three factors made it so: a change in the dormitory supervision routine that had been in effect since 1915, an unexpected 11 percent increase in enrollment, and the protracted illness of the newly-called inspector.

The 17 years Naumann spent in the parish ministry were separated by a teaching stint in New Ulm. But even during those six years, he was attracted to congregational work. Grace Lutheran Church, in Le Sueur, Minn., a small town some 35 miles northeast of New Ulm, was organized in 1944 with his leadership.

Although turbulence marked the early years of Naumann's presiden-

cy, his messages to the faithful encouraged patience. All points, he held, must be heard, discussed, evaluated. Conveyed in formal reports, sermons, and articles in this magazine, they were upbeat and optimistic. Three themes, not unlike litanies, were repeated again and again: faithfulness to the apostles' doctrine, interest in mission work, and increased consecration in the stewardship of money.

One of Naumann's greatest joys, amid the frenetics of preparing for the synod's 42nd biennial convention, was ordaining and installing son Peter in Petra, St. Cloud, Minn., on July 1, 1973 and son James in St. Mark, Sterling Heights, Mich., on July 15, 1973. Naumann's death, only a month before a third son, Paul, entered the ministry, kept Paul from sharing his brothers' joys.

Although Naumann had announced a short time before he died that for health reasons he would not seek reelection, his death was unexpected. He had considered surgery a year before but had opted for medication. He suffered a stroke Saturday afternoon, June 16 and died early Tuesday morning, June 19, 1979. The family had lost a devoted father, the synod a soft-spoken, self-effacing soldier of the cross who had taken 1 Timothy 1:12 as his confession of faith as he prepared to leave his office.

NL

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



Born June 24, 1909, Wood Lake, Minn., to Marie (Scherf) and Justus Henry Naumann.

Confirmed March 1923, by Pastor John Plocher, St. John, St. Paul, Minn.

Graduated from high school department of Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn. 1927; Northwestern College, Watertown, Wis., 1931; Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Thiensville, Wis., 1934.

1934-1936, tutor, Northwestern College

Sept. 5, 1936, married Dorothy Schwarz (1910-1975)

Sept. 13, 1936, installed as pastor, Arlington Avenue, Toledo, Ohio

1940-1946, professor, Dr. Martin Luther College

1946-1959, pastor, St. John, St. Paul; co-worker with Plocher

1948-1953, president, Minnesota District of WELS

1951-1953, second vice president, WELS

1953-1959, part-time president, WELS, while still serving at St. John, St. Paul

Dec. 1959, moved to Milwaukee, Wis., upon assumption of full-time synodical presidency

Died in office June 19, 1979

# Seeing eye-to-eye

## Christians can counter conflict through Christ.

Paul E. Kelm and Linda R. Baacke

**Y**ou've been dreading this moment all day. You tried to focus, but a nagging voice wouldn't let you. You knew you needed to resolve the matter, but part of you secretly hoped today was Judgment Day, that Jesus would return and you wouldn't have to act.

Nice try, but it didn't work that way.

So you muster your courage and pick up the phone. (Oh no, it's ringing!) Your friend answers. You hem and haw, and finally squeak out, "I think we need to talk."

### Conflict is inevitable

The conflict with your friend wasn't the first time two people

haven't seen eye-to-eye, but it felt like it.

Actually, conflict is as old as sin. After the fall into sin, God created conflict between Satan and human beings—because the worst thing is not that we have conflict, it's that we are at peace with sin.

We get frustrated when we look for peace in our relationships in a fallen world, instead of looking for peace in our relationship with God. Yet because of what Jesus has done, we can bring peace to our earthly relationships with the same love and forgiveness God used to bring peace in our relationship with him.

### Conflict can be healthy

We can't avoid conflict, but we can learn to use it positively. That begins with understanding conflict's levels—disagreement, opposition, and fighting.

Disagreement occurs when people see things differently based on their experiences, education, or personality. This is healthy. If everyone shared your opinion, you'd never grow.

But when disagreements harden into positions, it becomes opposition. You draw lines and choose your side. When opposition is not resolved, fighting

*You can resolve conflict in a God-pleasing way. Keep these principles of Christian conflict resolution in mind as you work to reduce conflict in your life.*

### 1. Remember: you are God's child so you aren't defensive.

Build each other up in love. Build each other up in Christ. Admit your own sin. Ask each other, "What do each of us really need and really want?"

### 2. Don't argue, blame, demand, or condemn.

Don't harden your own position. Don't make the issue seem worse than it really is. Ask each other, "Why is this important to you?" Find out each other's values and feelings—hopes, hurts, fears, frustrations.

### 3. Acknowledge common ground.

Admit your own sin. Be ready to forgive sins against you. Build on common Christian values and goals. Focus on blessings.

### 4. Work at collaboration first, compromise second, accommodation third, arbitration last.

*Collaboration*—Talk it through. Can you work together so you can have it both ways?

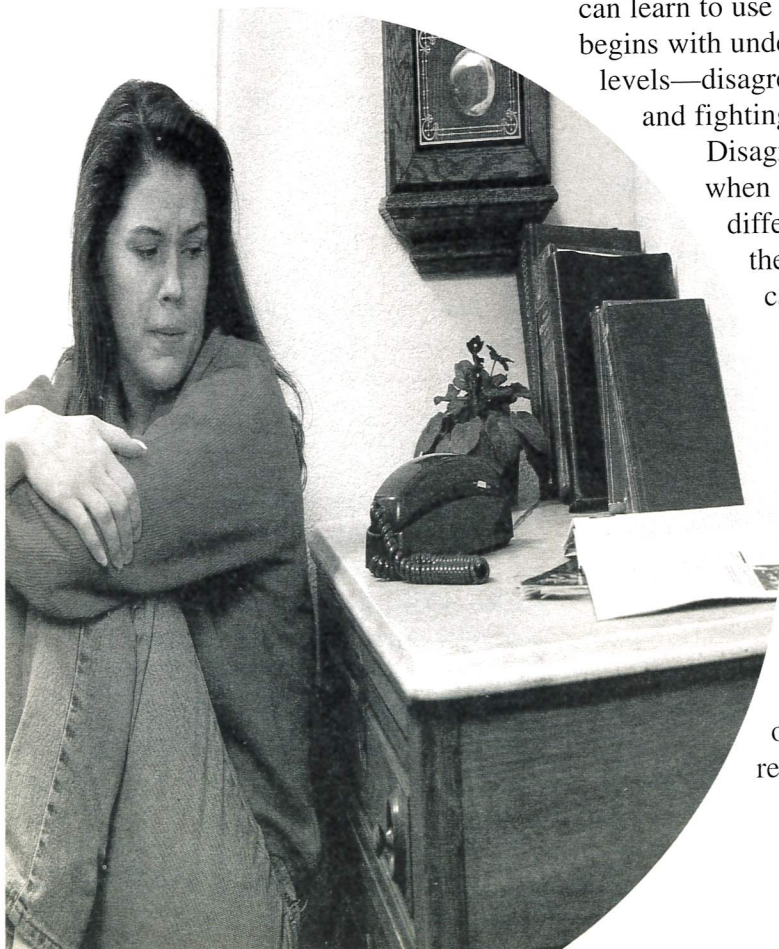
*Compromise*—You both give up a bit, yet both get something.

*Accommodation*—One of you gives in and says, "Okay, we'll do it your way."

*Arbitration*—Talks have stalled. You bring in a third party—friend, counselor, family member, pastor.

### 5. Apply the power and promises of God's Word.

Rebuke what is sin. Speak the truth in love. Remind each other of mutual respect and love. Restate the agreement you reached.



occurs. The fight gets personalized—bad guys and good guys, winners and losers.

You can avoid the fighting stage by understanding conflict and the resolution of conflict in our Savior.

### **Ultimate conflict is against Satan**

In any conflict, remember that your enemy is Satan, not others.

Read Ephesians 6:11-13: "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world, and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."

When you realize your struggle is against Satan, it reshapes the way you look at others. You no longer want to fight against them, you want to work with them.

### **Human nature is source of conflict**

This is not to say, however, that humans have no responsibility for the conflict in their lives. In fact, our sinful human nature is the primary source of conflict.

No two people are alike—and we appreciate that. But we are often scared by what is different. Our differing personalities, experiences, and ideas create a perfect environment for conflict to arise.

The Bible contains examples of how human nature causes conflict.

Turn to Luke 22:24. The disciples were arguing over who was considered the greatest. Pride caused them to compete for the "Best Disciple Award."

That sounds familiar. We live in a competitive, comparative world. We're older or younger. Smarter or dumber. Prettier or uglier. More talented or less talented. Asking, "Who's greatest?" is natural.

Or look in Acts 6. A church

originally numbering 120 added 3,000 members, 3,000 new human natures. With those blessings came conflict—too much work, too small a staff.

That sounds familiar. God blesses our lives, families, churches with many good things. Then we complain about our lack of time or energy to do everything we've been blessed with the ability to do.

Another example is in Acts 15:36-41. Paul and Barnabas were going to visit places where they had already preached. Barnabas wanted to take John (Mark) with them. But Paul didn't want to because Mark had deserted them during a mission journey. As the passage says, "They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company."

That sounds familiar. We think our church (school, employer, family) should be doing one thing. Someone else has another idea. Pretty soon voices are raised, and people leave in a huff.

### **Conflict resolved through Christ**

After those examples, and adding our own to the list, it's easy to get discouraged. But although conflict is inevitable, resolution is possible.

The essence of Christian conflict resolution is love. It sounds like an easy answer, but it is not easy to do. Our sinful nature does not want to resolve, it wants to win. So how can we break our human nature and do God's will?



The answer: God's Word. Read it, believe it, live it.

Build up your new man through Bible study and the Lord's Supper. Clothe yourself with humility; forgive as the Lord forgives you. Trust that you are perfectly loved—equally a child of God with your brothers and sisters in Christ. Believe that you have all your security needs met. Praise God that you are the heir of everything.

Through God's Word, you will find identity in Jesus Christ, and you will resolve any conflict.

Don't you feel better already?

NL

*This series is based on a Bible study held in summer 1996 at St. James, Milwaukee. Information was developed and presented by Paul Kelm, campus pastor at Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee, and reported by Linda Baacke, senior communications assistant for Communication Services and Northwestern Lutheran.*

# Where I feel alone

Pat Pasbrig

The place I feel alone is at my church. I sit facing my interpreter, and I am the only one being signed to. I would like more people like me sitting with me, "hearing" the Word of God.

**Why am I the only one? I found that many people born deaf are unchurched.** Even if they go to church, they need to learn religious signs, and the congregation needs to know how to communicate with them. Most born-deaf people go to deaf churches where the lay people are deaf or know about the deaf culture. There are only a few deaf churches, and the congregations are very small.

Hard of hearing people slowly lose interest in going to church.

They can't hear the scriptures, understand the sermon, or participate in church-sponsored activities. Many hard of hearing refuse to admit their needs and retreat into their own familiar world.

**Late-deafened people, like me, grew up with a church background.** How can the church serve me now? I need signed services to understand what's being said during the service. I can't keep a tune or follow the music. Do I sit there and read the music while everyone is singing, or do I sing with my hands? Do I go to church once a month when they sign the service or sit in church on other Sundays and "pretend" to hear the service? I ask these questions many times.

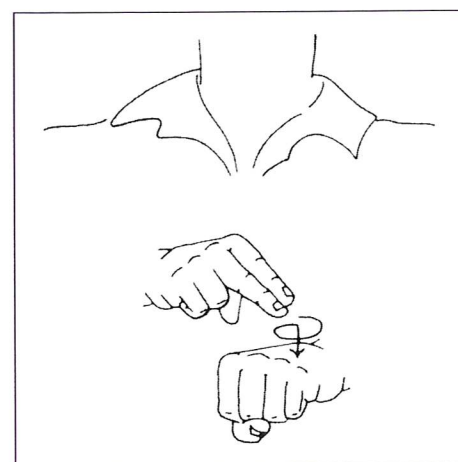
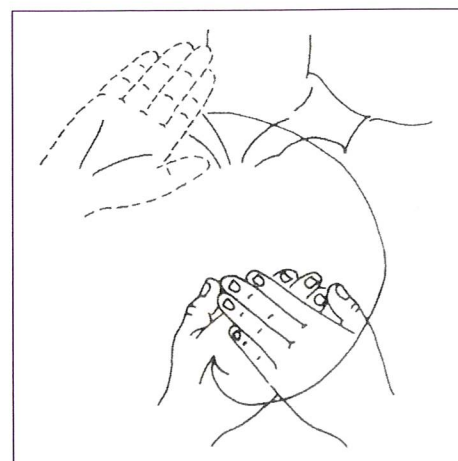
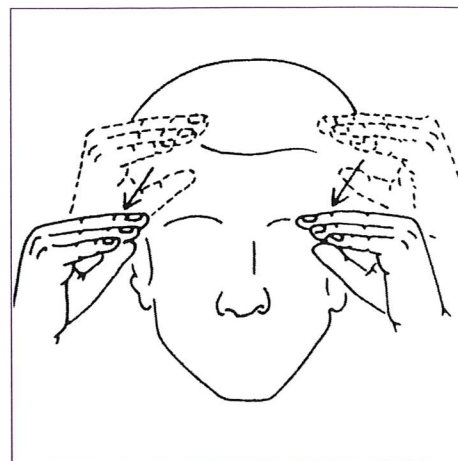
The WELS Mission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing provides services to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, and to churches and individuals who want to better serve these people. They offer:

- Funds for churches to start signed services in their congregation. Currently 19 WELS congregations use interpreters.
- Funds for people to receive interpreter training. The biggest hindrance to this ministry is the lack of interpreters.
- Access to a resource library of materials and tapes.
- A Sunday school curriculum for hearing impaired children. The 36-lesson curriculum includes

three video tapes, a teacher's manual, and pictures.

- Assistive listening devices that work with or without a church sound system. These devices are loaned to churches for trial periods of four weeks.
- A quarterly newsletter, *Ephphatha*, that offers inspirational as well as helpful articles.
- Their service as a clearinghouse for people who need interpreters for special services.

To learn more, attend the WELS convention for the deaf and hard of hearing on July 25-27, 1997, La Crosse, Wis. To register or for information about the Mission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, contact Gene Seidel, 8955 W Palmetto Ct, Milwaukee WI 53225; 414/536-1651 (voice/TTY).



Can you guess what phrase these signs spell out?

Turn to page 26 to find out.

Several years ago I hid my hearing loss. I would sit and pretend to hear the Word of God. I felt alone and avoided doing the things I used to love. Eventually, I confided to my church friend, who took me by the hand and said, "Let's learn sign language."

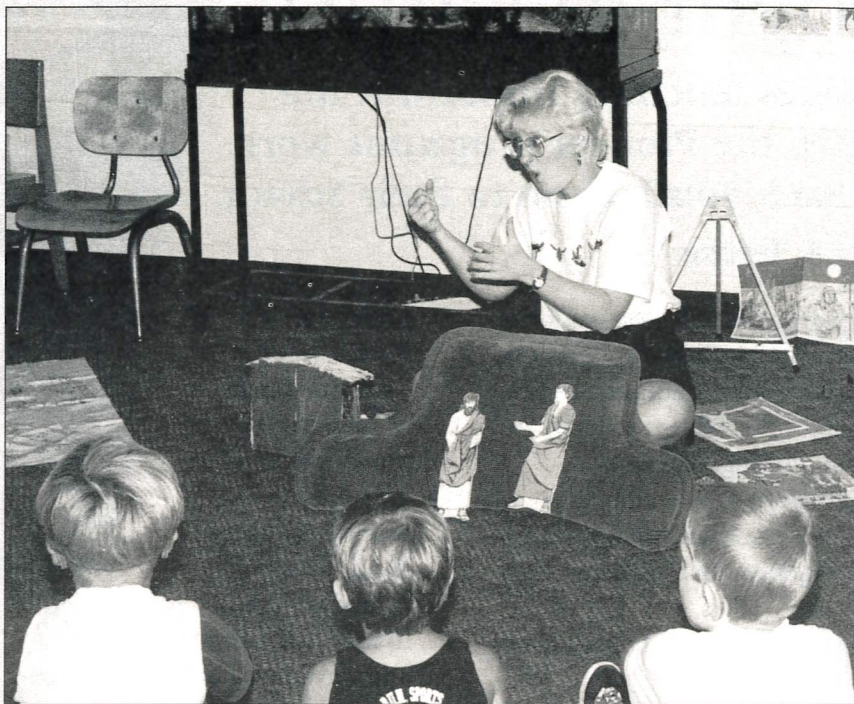
I started to accept my hearing loss and began telling people I was hard of hearing. If it wasn't for my friend, I still might be sitting in church not "hearing" the Word of God. She made me realize I needed to do something to help myself. It took two years of practice, and now my friend interprets the church service at least once a month. But I am still the only one.

I did teach sign language for members at church. Up to 20 people attended in one class. I have since stopped pushing myself at church because I grew tired of trying to educate others about me.

**I have learned to accept my late-life deafness.** I need to forge ahead—pick up where I stopped. I want to sit with others like me and not feel alone. But how am I going to do that? I need to publicize that my church has signed services. I need to learn who in the congregation has a hearing loss and take them by the hand as my friend did for me. I also need to be an advocate for people with hearing loss.

I can't do this all by myself. My church should

- install an assistive listening sound system;
- have sermons printed;
- have captioned videos and films;
- have more than one interpreter (interpreters are paid \$25 to \$50 per service);
- have more than one interpreted service a month. (The hearing



*Dawn Schultz tells deaf and hard of hearing children about Jesus at a vacation Bible school at Mt. Calvary, Waukesha, Wis.*

**Teach all nations**—"We often think of people in foreign lands, but seldom think of children," says Verna Weigand, an elementary school interpreter for deaf and hard of hearing children.

Deaf and hard of hearing children don't have the same opportunity to hear the gospel as hearing children do. They, too, may feel alone in church.

To reach these children, Weigand participated in a vacation Bible school at Mt. Calvary, Waukesha, Wis. The children

have the privilege of being able to go to church every Sunday.)

To show it cares, the church should educate the hearing congregation about the deaf and hard of hearing so that everyone can participate fully in all church functions.

learned about creation, sin, Jesus' birth, crucifixion, and resurrection. Because of the positive response, Mt. Calvary has since started Sunday school classes for deaf and hard of hearing children.

"They need to know God understands sign language, something they are always surprised to learn," says Weigand. "There will be times in their life, just as for hearing children, when they will need to remember the Lord is always there for them."

Where do you feel alone, and how are you going to change it?

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*Pat Pasbrig, editor of A.L.D.A. Madison Newsletter (Association of Late Deafened Adults), is a member at Our Redeemer, Madison, Wisconsin.*

# Loyal to Christ

Besides teaching important life skills, the Pioneer programs work to keep youth close to their Savior.

Julie K. Tessmer

Singing songs by the campfire. Racing model cars. Learning how to tie knots, administer first aid, and fold a flag correctly. Hiking, biking, canoeing . . .

These are only a smattering of activities children can do in Lutheran Pioneers and Lutheran Girl Pioneers.

But one program benefit overshadows them.

"If you never teach them how to tie a knot or build a fire, but you let them know Christ died for their sins, and they're going to heaven, then you've accomplished what the program is after," said Dale Lorfeld, national commander of the Lutheran Pioneers.

## Activities

Lutheran Pioneers and Lutheran Girl Pioneers possess the components of a youth ministry program—service, worship, education, recreation, and fellowship.

"A Word-centered Pioneer program is an excellent way to complement Sunday school, confirmation class, or a youth ministry program," said Jerry Kastens, administrator for youth discipleship. "It's part of a whole package for youth ministry."

This part of the youth ministry package reaches a large number of WELS youth. There are over 300 active caravans with over 5,500 girls in Lutheran Girl Pioneers and 300 active trains with 4,500 boys in

Lutheran Pioneers.

As members of the Pioneer programs, congregations receive publicity ideas, access to an audiovisual library and merchandise, a library of materials, a curriculum, leader training, and name recognition.

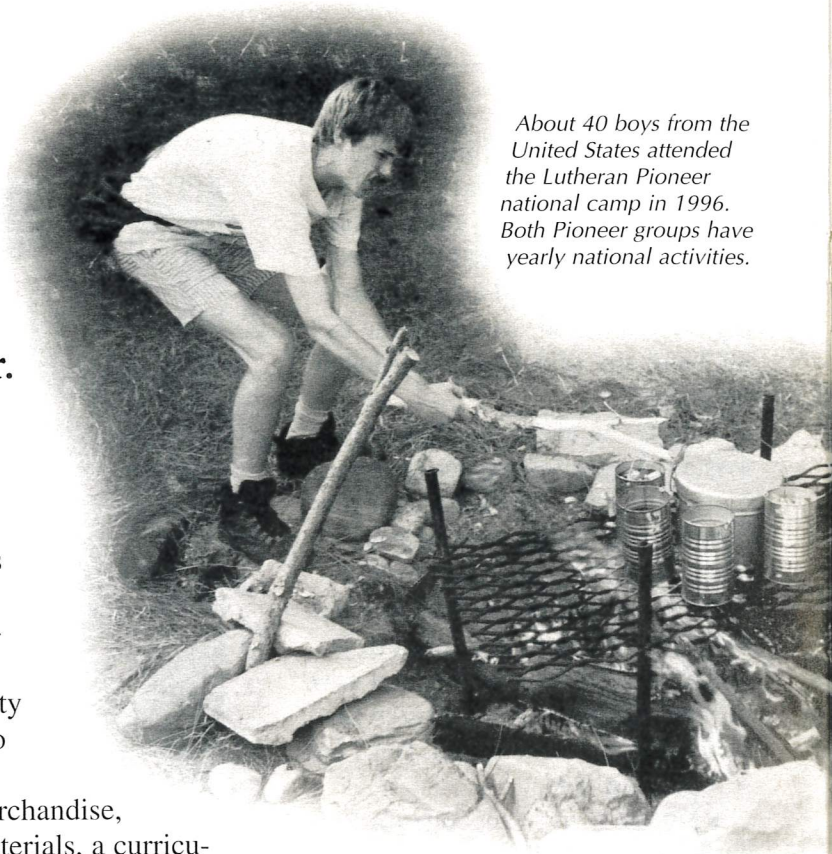
National activities—pine car derbies; camp; biking, canoeing, and hiking trips—bring groups of Pioneers together for fellowship and skill-building activities. The canoeing and hiking trips are geared for older youth, keeping them involved in a program largely dominated by third- through eighth-graders.

Children in first and second grade can be involved in the Buckaroos or the Sunbeams, Pioneer programs that begin teaching younger children life skills.

Program units for the Lutheran Pioneers include nature study, Christian leadership and citizenship, camping, first aid, and safety. The girls learn about evangelism, cooking, the environment, camping, first aid, art, and babysitting.

But all these programs focus on one thing—Christ.

"Our motto 'Loyal to Christ' is at the center of all our activities and learning experiences," said Judy



*About 40 boys from the United States attended the Lutheran Pioneer national camp in 1996. Both Pioneer groups have yearly national activities.*

Hansen, national counselor of the Lutheran Girl Pioneers.

## Benefits

Benefits abound for groups who participate in the Pioneer programs.

The children's knowledge goes deeper than just practical life skills.

Since the boys and girls have input into programs and even help teach, leadership skills become apparent.

"They begin to understand what Christ-centered authority means—how can you best serve those under you," said Peter Prellwitz, a Pioneer leader at Peace, King of Prussia, Pa.

Camping, besides helping develop a knowledge of God's creation, also builds character. "Outdoor camping skills really lend themselves to teaching individualism and self-reliance, while at the same time teaching cooperation and working together," says Lorfeld.

The children mature socially through dealing with each other, their leaders, and congregation

members. Close friendships often develop. "The friends you make here are friends not just for life, but for eternity," said Lorfeld.

But, most important, Pioneer members continue to grow in the Word and in understanding their position in the congregation.

"The children see the congregation is concerned about the next generation because we're providing something for them away from the rat race of the world," said

Norris Baumann, pastor at St. Paul, Onalaska, Wis., and pastoral advisor of Lutheran Girl Pioneers. "They begin to see church as their home."

Leaders see their rewards as their "students" grow and develop in their understanding of God's Word and other important life skills. They also develop close friendships with other leaders and the youth involved in Pioneers.

Benefits aren't just for those directly involved in the program.

"The congregation benefits the most," said Prellwitz. "Pioneers is a Christ-centered program we can use to appeal to prospects. They can learn about Christ there in a non-threatening atmosphere."

Pioneer programs help the congregation through service projects like collecting food for food drives, shoveling sidewalks, and caroling to shut-ins. This gives the children a sense of belonging and helps them learn how to be members and leaders in a church.

## Changes

The Lutheran Pioneer program has changed considerably since its beginnings in 1951.

"One reason Lutheran Pioneers started was to give the boys something to do," said Bruce Thompson, founder of the Lutheran Pioneers.

Now competition from dozens of after-school activities has forced the Lutheran Pioneers to become flexible with curriculum requirements.

They added a new unit called independent living skills in which they teach skills such as washing and ironing clothes, etiquette, cooking, budgeting, and cleanliness.

"Society's changed from the time Mom was there to wash your clothes until you got married," said Lorfeld. "Kids are going away to college and putting off marriage. Boys need to know how to do these things."

And Lutheran Girl Pioneers, formed in 1954, isn't just about cooking and sewing anymore.

"We focus on what role women can play in a WELS congregation," said Hansen.

One way they do this is by offering a unit on evangelism. Girls hear, read, and study God's Word, demonstrate the love of Jesus by their actions, and finally learn how to tell people about Jesus.

"We're not just camping and playing games," said Hansen. "We show our girls how to keep Christ in every part of their life—not only by going to church on Sunday."

And that's the secret of a successful Pioneer program—keeping it Christ centered. As Prellwitz said: "Think of the Pioneer programs as a wheel, with Christ at the center and all the programs branching out from him. If Christ isn't the center, the wheel becomes a wobbling disaster. But if he remains as the center, the program will run smoothly."

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For information about Lutheran Pioneers, Inc., call 414/763-6238. For Lutheran Girl Pioneers, call 608/781-5232.

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



Members of the girl pioneer caravan at St. John, Lannon, Wis., participated in a WELS Lutherans for Life bike-a-thon. Fellowship, educational, and service activities play an important role in the Pioneer program.

# Impressions of the people

Although the differences between people in Cameroon and those in the U.S. are extreme, “in heaven, believers from both America and Cameroon will experience the same unending joy.”

Carl R. Henkel

*Built on the Rock the Church shall stand  
Even when steeples are falling,  
Crumbled have spires in ev'ry land;  
Bells still are chiming and calling. . . .*  
(*Christian Worship* 529:1)

In America when the clear, resonant church bell rings from high atop the steeple, God's people have already gathered in their impressive, elaborately decorated sanctuary, and the one-hour worship service begins.

It's not quite the same in Cameroon. Striking a rusty truck wheel with a twisted piece of steel produces a piercing and most unpleasant sound. And when the “church bell” of one of the Lutheran Church of Cameroon churches is rung, the humble chapel is still empty. The bell announces to the village people that it's time to begin walking to church. Twenty minutes, maybe a half hour later, as God's people start to gather, the singing of simple choruses, accompanied by drums, begins. Two, maybe three hours later, the worship service ends.

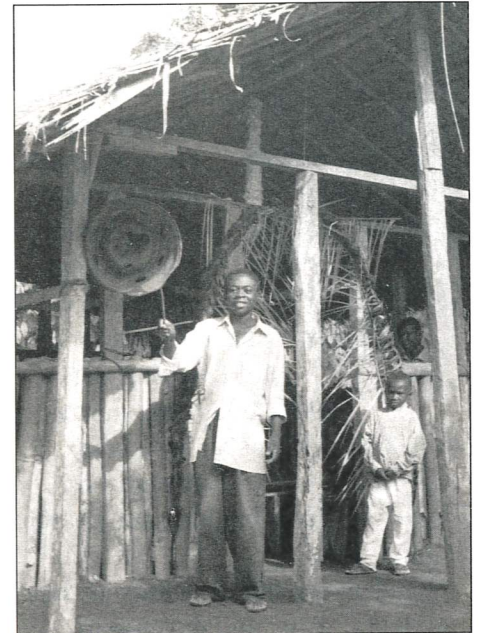
We can safely say the people of Cameroon are not slaves to the clock. This, like most other things in life, has both a good side and a bad. It's refreshing to never feel rushed and to know that even if you are 15 minutes late, you'll still be the first one there. But when meet-

ings start an hour late, drag on for three hours, and appear to go nowhere, it seems like a terrible waste of valuable time.

**The people of Cameroon have dreams, foremost of which is the dream to visit America.** When I talk about America, their eyes light up and get as big as saucers. They've heard much about America; have seen pictures of American cities, schools, and houses; and want more than anything else to go there someday.

Sensing this great affinity for America, when preaching one Sunday on Jesus' words “in my Father's house are many rooms [mansions]” (John 14:2), I assured the congregation heaven is even better and more wonderful than America with its large, multi-roomed houses. I pointed out that people in America have problems, too. Many problems. I emphasized that sin's curse is universal, but, God be thanked, so is the cure.

A couple days after the service, a man stopped me on the road to thank me for reminding him that even though his dream of going to America will probably never become reality, his hope of going to heaven is already a certainty through faith in Jesus Christ. “In heaven,” he said, “believers from both America and Cameroon will experience the same unending joy.”



*A young man ringing the church bell, made from a rusty truck wheel. In Cameroon, ringing the church bell doesn't signify the beginning of worship. It signals the village people to begin their walk to church.*

**The level of poverty we've witnessed is indescribable,** yet after being here only a short time, we no longer find the sights and smells of Cameroon offensive. The people have so precious little. Our hearts go out to them. Children's toys consist of old tin cans with which they play trucks. Mom's kitchen is a kettle over some coals in the backyard. Dad's job, if he's able to find one, may bring \$6 a week. School children spend much of their time in manual labor like carrying sand, gravel, and cement blocks on their head up a long, steep hill where a



water holding tank is being built. People in America have no idea.

While all the earthly belongings of an average Cameroonian family could be loaded easily onto a little two-wheel push cart (they call it a truck), they shake their heads in disbelief when I tell them that, where I come from, it often takes a truck with 18 wheels to move a family's possessions from their old house to a new one. "Why would people want so many things?" they ask.

I've noticed, however, that greed isn't reserved only for the affluent. Everyone wants to be friends with the "white man." Unfortunately, it's often not for the sake of friendship or even because of the gospel he brings, but for the possibility of sharing in his "wealth."

I've noticed, ironically, that the lack of earthly possessions can also lead to a dangerous sense of pride. Some hinted to me that they will surely be going to heaven because of their humble status in this life. They quote from Jesus' story of the rich man and poor Lazarus: "But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember

that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here, and you are in agony'" (Luke 16:25).

**When either attending or preaching for a Sunday service in one of the villages, it is common to see as many people standing outside the dirt-floored chapel as seated inside on rough, backless benches.** The sight of the fair-skinned missionary from America, and the sound of his "funny tongue" draws big crowds. When I mentioned to a man of Cameroon that this rarely happens in America—that there are as many people gathered outside the church as those crowded inside—he humbled me with this observation: "We have nothing to give up," he said, "so why not believe in a God who promises to give us a better life that costs us nothing?"

His point, of course, is that in his eyes, Americans are like the rich ruler to whom Jesus said, "Sell everything you have and give to the

poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." Luke then adds, "When he heard this, he became very sad, because he was a man of great wealth" (Luke 18:22,23).

What I have witnessed has been an eye-opening and soul-searching experience. The social and economic contrasts between the America I know and the Africa where I now live could not be more extreme. This has caused me to take a painful and more prayerful look at Jesus' words: "From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked" (Luke 12:48).

As an American, I have so very much, yet frequently find myself complaining. This cannot continue. Nor can I continue to use the old "out of sight, out of mind" excuse for not responding to the spiritual and physical needs of my less fortunate sisters and brothers. I have been richly blessed. I must see to it that church bells, even the truck-wheel variety, continue to ring with the message of peace and hope through Jesus Christ.

*Grant then, O God, Your will be done,  
That, when the church bells are  
ringing,  
Many in saving faith may come  
Where Christ His message is  
bringing. . . .*  
(CW 529:5)

NL



People gather for church at Eboko Bajoh, Cameroon, a village about two hours north of Kumba.

*Carl Henkel is teaching for one year at the seminary for the Lutheran Church of Cameroon.*

# At the foot of the cross

One man places himself at the foot of the cross and sees himself in those who betrayed and killed the Savior.

Reinhard Wohlgemuth

Sometimes I imagine myself at the foot of the cross of Christ. The cursed, blessed cross of Christ. I stand there weeping. Not weeping as those who stand around me, who knew him through the years of his earthly ministry, but as one who knows the end of the story. I long for the strength to relieve him, to be remembered as the man who comforted Christ in his hour of suffering. The man who comforted Christ, who has comforted many.

But I know the end of the story. The man must suffer a death devised for him alone. As I watch him suffer, I realize that I love him because I know how he has gone to his death, hated by his enemies and betrayed by his friends, yet forgiving enemy and friend alike.

**As I look to the left and right I see myself.** I see myself in the Roman soldiers who play out the parts that culminate in the hammering home of three spike nails. As I become one of those soldiers, I realize I am angry with this Jew, whom I blame for the arduousness of this labor—driving spikes through a man's body is hard work.

I see myself in those, now with heads bent because the power of the crowd has dissipated, who had cried, "Crucify Him!" Now one of that crowd, I croak, "Crucify him." Those around me look at me with contempt. I scream, "Crucify him!" Now belonging, yet pitying. No! It is not pity, it is fear lest it be me they crucify. So, louder, I scream, "Crucify him!"

"Crucify him!" Then, remembering you, my faithful brothers, I fall silent.

I see myself, perhaps most of all, in the skulking disciples, knowing him and afraid to have others know that I know him.

Lastly, I see the women. Weeping openly with a pure proud grief that knows him and is cut deep by knowing him. I hope to see myself in them, but I do not.

Disappointed, I turn my back on Christ and walk down the hill. I know I will see him again on Judgment Day. I will kneel before him confessing that he is Lord.

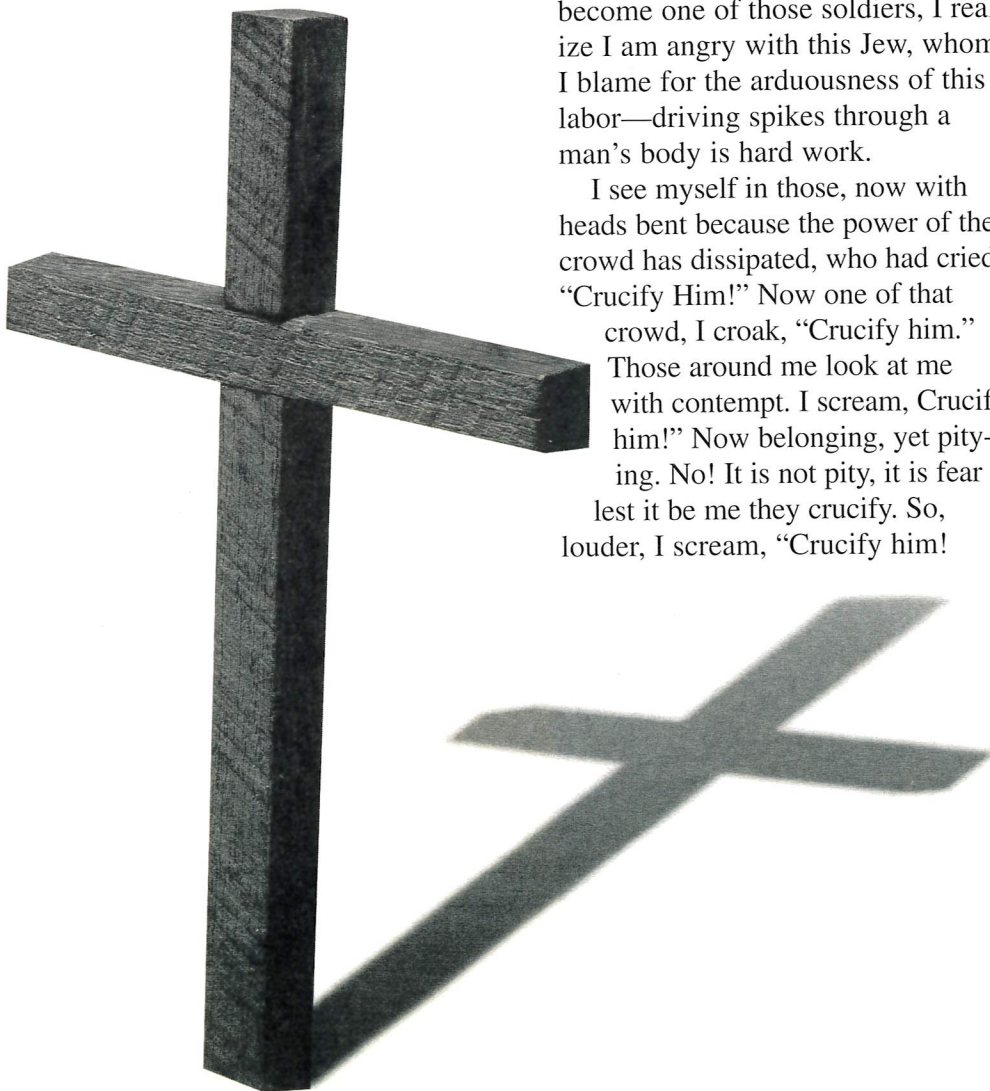
**If I could, I would forever live my life aware of his suffering and love, but my immediate needs cause me to withdraw.** Perhaps my daughter wants me to look at something (probably her), perhaps the phone rings, or a favorite song sings seductively from a speaker pair—whatever, it is gone.

Nevertheless, I am content, if trembling, to have stood beneath the Christ's cross. My soul is renewed. I am acutely aware that the material world is seductive, contemptible—made so by me—and temporary. My spirit will endure.

One day I will stand resurrected, exalted and smiling, forgiven in the presence of our Lord.

*Reinhard Wohlgemuth is a member at Good Shepherd, South Attleboro, Massachusetts.*

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# Color us Christians

Unless you can see faith, telling the real Christians from the fakers is tricky business.

Kenneth A. Cherney

What would happen if, one day, every Christian in your city suddenly turned bright purple?

The entire population would go into shock, that's what—and not just because suddenly all kinds of purple people were walking around. A much bigger surprise would occur when people noticed who had changed color, and who hadn't.

## Looking at the people

Lots of ordinary people who never seemed very "religious" would suddenly not look ordinary at all. On the other hand, many professing "Christians," even regular churchgoers, would be completely unchanged.

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**Holding membership in a church somewhere doesn't make you a Christian.**

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That's because calling yourself a Christian doesn't make you one. Holding membership in a church somewhere doesn't make you a Christian, either—any more than registering for the draft entitles you to veteran's benefits.

There'd be another surprise. If all real Christians turned purple, many people who never struck you as "saintly" would instantly appear a rich, deep violet. On the other hand, many kind, generous people would

be completely unchanged.

Why is that? Because "Christian" and "good person" are not synonyms. "Good people" are "good" for all kinds of reasons. Of course, Christians are taught to be good, too—but the essence of their Christianity lies elsewhere.

The essence of their Christianity is their faith in Jesus as Savior. And within a community or a family (or a church), there'll be some who have that faith, and some who don't. How can you be sure who's who? Right now, you can't. Unless you can see faith (and only God can), telling the real Christians from the fakers is tricky business.

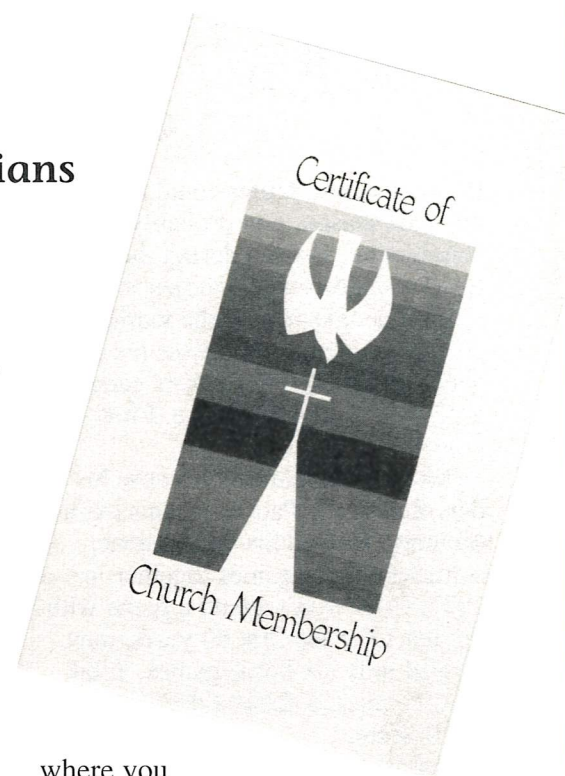
## Looking at the gospel

So if you want to meet some real Christians, what do you look for? Don't look for who's the busiest at church or who makes the most noise about how "Christian" they are. Don't necessarily look for who seems the kindest or happiest, either.

Actually, your best bet is not to look at the "Christians" at all. Look for what makes people Christian.

Look for the gospel message.

In other words, look for the good news of God's forgiveness in Jesus Christ. That message is "the power of God for the salvation of all who believe" (Romans 1:17). It's what conquers people's hearts and turns them into Christians. Of course, that doesn't happen to every heart. But



where you find that message, you'll find real Christians—even if you can't be sure who they are.

Best of all: find that message, and you'll find what you yourself desperately need. You'll find what your own faith needs to grow strong. And finally, that's what's important.

Because all Christians are not going to turn purple one day. But one day, suddenly, they will all stand out just as clearly as if they had. There will be surprises—both pleasant and unpleasant. And I wouldn't be caught without my faith on that day for anything.

You see, ultimately, figuring out whether you're faking your Christianity isn't my business.

Being sure that I'm not faking mine, is.

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



## Famous football fan also committed Christian

If you watched professional football this past season, you probably saw the commercial. It aired during the Super Bowl to an estimated audience of 800 million people around the world. An elderly gentleman discusses his attendance at Green Bay Packers games and says, "I'm Mel Knoke. I feel the power."

Knoke was featured because his devotion to the Packers seems extraordinary. He and his wife, Leone, started going to games together in 1927. (Mel won't attend a game without her.) For the first 60 years, they missed only six home games. Total, they've missed about a dozen games in 70 years.

But they have another "attendance record" that means more to them. Mel, 89, and Leone, 94, are members of Mt. Olive, Appleton, Wis., where they are more faithful about sitting in the church pews than they are about sitting in the bleachers.

"Mel deserves more recognition with his faithfulness to the church than his devotion to the Packers," says Rob Raasch, pastor at Mt. Olive. "In our church, they are more recog-



Mel Knoke, and his wife, Leone, are members at Mt. Olive, Appleton, Wis. The Knokes were featured in a National Football League commercial that aired throughout the season and during the Super Bowl.

nized for what pillars they have been to Mt. Olive."

Mel met Leone when he joined the church choir in 1924. As he loves to say, "I've been walking her to choir practice ever since." That's over 72 years worth of choir rehearsals. (The Knokes celebrated their 64th anniversary on Dec. 26, 1996.)

Mel also taught Sunday school for 10 years and served as superintendent for 20 years. Leone worked as the secretary.

"We have no children, so we've been active helping kids in parochial schools, Fox Valley Lutheran High School, and Wisconsin Lutheran College," says Mel, who served on the general board at Fox Valley for 25 years. "We've worked together all our lives in church work."

Mel doesn't understand the nationwide attention focusing on his attendance at Packers games. But even more, he doesn't want attention for his service to the Lord.

"These activities are nothing for me to brag about. I'm just grateful the Lord permitted us to help along as we have," says Mel. "Now because I'm 89, we're just regular members."

Regular members who gained worldwide attention.

After all the recognition, Mel has one bit of advice for sports fans everywhere: "Packers—or any sports team—should not cut into religious life. With ours it hasn't."

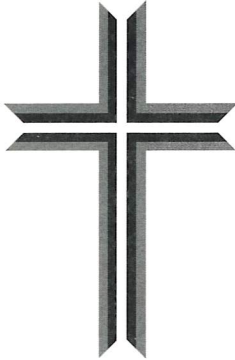


Mel and Leone at a Packers game.

## Mission work spreading

WELS world missions continue to spread:

- **Two WELS missionary families arrived in Albania, the newest country of WELS outreach,** in late 1996. Twenty-two people have been baptized there, and 50 are enrolled in a Bible course. Until their arrival, WELS missionaries in Bulgaria carried on the work in Albania through visits every four weeks.
- The Board for World Missions accepted the work of the **Lutheran Mission of Salvation in Rajahmundry, Hyderabad, and Jabulpur, India** as a WELS exploratory mission for two years. The Lutheran Mission of Salvation in India has 118 pastors with congregations; 6,600 members; 3,500 Sunday school children; and 25 schools with a total 3,900 students.



## Synod mission offerings on the rise

WELS congregations and individuals gave \$18,111,910 in synod mission offerings in 1996. Synod mission offerings increased by \$855,627 in 1996, for a 5 percent increase over 1995 offerings. Synod mission offerings are made up from combining congregation mission offerings (\$16,161,500) and individual mission offerings (\$1,950,410).

## District news

### Arizona/California



*Grace, Casa Grande, Ariz., dedicated its new church on Oct. 27, 1996. Groundbreaking for this new worship facility/fellowship hall was in April.*

### Minnesota

**West Lutheran High School, Plymouth, Minn.,** moved into its new facility on Dec. 9, 1996. Formerly located in Hopkins, Minn., West LHS began constructing its first

permanent facility in April 1996 after operating for 17 years in three different rented facilities. Formal dedication of the school will be Apr. 27.



*Students await the first chapel service at West LHS's new facility. The 25,000 square foot structure includes a gymnasium, classrooms, computer lab/media center, science lab, music room, and offices.*



## YOUTH NEWS

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

**The Viking cheerleading squad from Wisconsin Lutheran High School, Milwaukee,** competed in the National High School Cheerleading championship in Orlando, Fla., from Feb. 6-11. In November 1996 they placed first in their division and first in the overall competition at the Badger Regional competition in Wisconsin. They also won first place at a dual conference competition and the Midwest Classic Championship. Christine Gosch coaches the squad.

**Kevin Keiser,** a junior at Winner High School, Winner, S.D., was named to the South Dakota class IIA all-state football team. Besides being active in school activities, Keiser attends church and youth league regularly at Trinity, Winner, S.D.



*The WLHS Viking cheerleading squad*

## WELS church celebrates 150th anniversary

The year: 1847. Alexander Graham Bell and Thomas Edison were born. Charlotte Bronte wrote *Jane Eyre*, and Emily Bronte wrote *Wuthering Heights*. Gold was discovered in

California.

And, close to the newly established area called Milwaukee, one of the three founding churches of the Wisconsin Synod began in Granville Township.

That church, Salem (107th St.), Milwaukee, will celebrate its 150th anniversary this year with special services and events.

Twenty German families organized the church on Dec. 25, 1847. On May 26, 1850, the first meeting of what is now the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod took place at Salem in which five pastors representing 18 congregations signed the new

synod's constitution.

The "Landmark Church," one of Salem's first worship facilities, still stands and is one of the oldest buildings in Milwaukee. Built in 1863, the Landmark Church now serves as the WELS historical museum. The WELS Historical Institute is working on restoring the building.

Even though Salem has existed for 150 years, Pastor Winfred Nommensen, who retired in 1992 after serving Salem for 33 years, still sees challenges in Salem's future: "In the next 50 years we have to keep the congregation going and the people coming into our changing neighborhood. We don't have the old Germans moving in anymore."

*To make a contribution to, or for more information about the WELS Historical Institute, contact WELS Historical Institute, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222.*



*Salem's "Landmark Church," built in 1863. This church now serves as the WELS historical museum.*

# Martin Luther College

New Ulm, Minn.

## 1996 GRADUATES

On Dec. 19, 1996, 11 graduates of Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., received Bachelor of Science in Education degrees. Names followed by an asterisk are elementary/secondary education graduates. The rest received elementary education degrees.



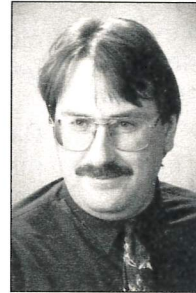
**Jason C. Arras\***  
Grand Rapids, Mich.



**Noah B. Bain**  
New Ulm, Minn.



**Joanna L. Behrens**  
Bay City, Mich.



**Jeffrey H. Bischoff**  
St. James, Minn.



**Sara L. Fulton**  
New Ulm, Minn.



**Connie S. Kurtzweg**  
Arlington, Minn.



**Staci J. Meier**  
Phoenix, Ariz.



**Jennifer L. Richmond**  
Green Bay, Wis.



**William J. Tomlin**  
New Ulm, Minn.



**Jennifer I. Wolgramm**  
Wilbur, Neb.

*Not pictured: Charles G. Sonnenburg Jr., Crete, Ill.*



Pastor Daniel Simons recalls when Pastor Snowden Sims (an African-American) accepted the call to Salem, Milwaukee. Prior to Sim's arrival, a Salem member was concerned about how to avoid mixing up the two of them due to their similar last names. Simons assured her that telling them apart would not be a problem. "Remember," he said, "I'm the tall one."

*Melinda Sims  
Watertown, Wisconsin*

While waiting for the pre-schoolers and the kindergarten children to arrive for Christmas Eve service practice, several children were discussing what they had for supper the night before. Most of them had the usual foods, but Preston said, "We had God-our-Father's pizza." A few months later, our family was considering going to Godfather's pizza again. Preston suggested, "If God the Father's isn't open, let's go to God the Son's."

*Esther Spaeth and Ruth Schmitzer  
Jenera, Ohio*



## Youth rally coming

The 1997 WELS International Youth Rally will be held from June 18-21 in Murfreesboro, Tenn. The rally is for high school teens and adult counselors.

An off-site trip to Opryland USA is planned. Deadline for registration is Mar. 1, if possible. For more information, contact your pastor.



### Matthew

These four videos use live actors to visualize Matthew's gospel. The narrative consists of a verse by verse reading of Matthew's inspired writing. The actor who represents Jesus does a good job of showing that Jesus was "fully human," something usually lacking in other Bible videos. (Rental: \$7.50)

**Matthew 1:1—9:1** (Code 8320)

1996 58 min. color IJSCA

**Matthew 9:2—14:36** (Code 8321)

1996 58 min. color IJSCA

**Matthew 15:1—23:39** (Code 8322)

1996 70 min. color IJSCA

**Matthew 24:1—28:20** (Code 8323)

1996 64 min. color IJSCA

Videos are available for rental by congregations, schools, and church groups. Order from Audiovisual Library Services, Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 N 113 St, Milwaukee WI 53226-3284; 414/475-6600; 1-800-662-6093.

## Men's retreat a success

Across the country, men's retreats are becoming increasingly popular. So it was no surprise when a retreat for WELS men was held Nov. 16, 1996 at Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee.

What was a surprise—in a way—was the overwhelmingly positive reaction of the over-300 participants.

As one man said, "I'm 74 years old, and this was one of the most informative days of my life."

Mike Zarling, 26, pastor at Faith, Radcliffe, Ky., said, "Since ours is a mission congregation, we have so many other things to work on that we don't have men's and women's groups. A retreat like this was good for those of us in outlying areas of the synod to get together with other Christians."

Four workshops covered men's responsibility to their families, what men should know about women, male sexuality, and pressures on Christian businessmen.

When asked which was their favorite topic covered, most of the

men said, "All!"

Randy Davies, 33, a member at Trinity, Bay City, Mich., drove for seven hours to attend the retreat because, "it's important for men to do things together to serve their Lord. In today's society, men don't do enough mentoring from senior to junior. This was a great opportunity because we took time to enjoy fellowship."

"Also, hearing 300-plus voices singing in a key you're comfortable with is an awesome experience. It had a strong short-term impact."

It might be easy to enjoy the short-term impact and let the effect fade.

"But there was a long-term impact," says Davies. "Often we spend our lives thinking about jobs and home. When you meet those who have the same motivation you do, you think on a grand scale, beyond the parameters of your everyday life."

The retreat was sponsored by WELSMEN, a layman's organization dedicated to Christian fellowship and charity.



Participants at a men's retreat at Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee. Over 300 men attended the one-day convocation last November.



## Obituaries

### Theodore Edward Kretzmann 1912-1996

Theodore Kretzmann was born April 28, 1912 in Denver, Colo. He died Nov. 25, 1996 in Cuba, Mo.

A 1963 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, he served at Salem, Circle, Mont., and St. Paul, Las Animas, Colo. He served as a world missionary in Zambia, Africa, and as a medical director for a mobile clinic, Malawi, Africa.

He is survived by his wife, Hilda, and two sisters.

### Gerhart Paul Eckert 1914-1996

Gerhart Eckert was born on Sept. 24, 1914 in Sturgis, Mich. He died Dec. 12, 1996 in Hastings, Neb.

A 1941 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, he served at Trinity, Duncan, Ariz.; Grace, Casa Grande, Ariz.; St. Paul, Gresham, Neb.; First, Gary, S.D.; and Redeemer, Hastings, Neb.

He is survived by his wife, Ragna; a son; a foster daughter; six grandchildren; and two great grandchildren.

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## YOUTH NEWS

**Wisconsin Lutheran High School's volleyball team** had a successful season in 1996.

With a record of 44-2-1, the Lady Vikings won the conference and state championships and were ranked number one in Wisconsin for public and private schools. They finished eighth in the nation.

Individual members also received recognition. Lisa Kargus was named player of the year in the conference, and Sara Urbanek received an all-American honorable mention from *Volleyball* magazine and was named Southeastern Wisconsin player of the year by the

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

*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*.

Kargus, Urbanek, and Becky Sowinski were named first team all conference, state, and area.

But the team wasn't focused only on sports. In 1995 and 1996, they also received the American Volleyball Coaches Association Team Academic Award that honors teams who match their dedication to volleyball with dedication to excellence in the classroom.

"They have been blessed," said coach Karen Sitz. Sitz retired from coaching after leading the volleyball team for 16 years. "I tell them their cup certainly has run over."



Wisconsin Lutheran High School volleyball team

## WELS high schools noted

Three WELS high schools were named schools of excellence by WELS Commission on Parish Schools.

The schools are St. Croix Lutheran High School, West St. Paul, Minn.; Illinois Lutheran High School, Crete, Ill.; and Luther High School, Onalaska, Wis.

WELS Commission on Parish Schools selected these schools from the 21 WELS area Lutheran high schools based on factors including quality education; dedication to making disciples of young people; and

effective working relationships among the school, parents, supporting congregations, and the community.

Dan Schmeling, parish schools administrator, said the recognition program "helps the staffs at our high schools to identify and to celebrate outstanding blessings that God has bestowed upon the Christian ministries carried out in WELS Lutheran high schools."

Each school received a grant from Aid Association for Lutherans for instructional programs and teaching materials.



## Lutherans serving in 105th Congress

There are 23 Lutherans in the 105th Congress of the United States—one more than the number of Lutherans in the 104th Congress, according to the Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs, Washington, D.C. Twelve are Democrats; 11 are Republicans.

The five Lutherans in the U.S. Senate are: Conrad Burns (R-Mont.), Rod Grams (R-Minn.), Byron Dorgan (D-N.D.), Ernest Hollings (D-S.C.), and Tim Johnson (D-S.D.).

The 18 Lutherans in the U.S. House of Representatives are: Douglas Bereuter (R-Neb.), Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio), Walter Capps (D-Calif.), Norman Dicks (D-Wash.), Paul Gillmor (R-Ohio), Darlene Hooley (D-Ore.), Ron Kind (D-Wis.), Tom Latham (R-Iowa), David Minge (D-Minn.), Mark Neumann (R-Wis.), Jim Nussle (R-Iowa), Michael Oxley (R-Ohio), Collin Peterson (D-Minn.), Thomas Petri (R-Wis.), Martin Olav Sabo (D-Minn.), John Shimkus (R-Ill.), Floyd Spence (R-S.C.), and Charles Stenholm (D-Texas).

Representative Neumann is a member of WELS. Senators Burns and Grams, and Representatives Bereuter and Shimkus are members of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The rest are members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. [Evangelical Lutheran Church in America News Service, Nov. 27, 1996]

The signs for the article on page 12 say, "Teach all nations."

## More teens volunteer more time

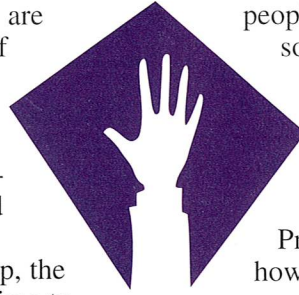
A rising number of teens are giving a larger amount of time to volunteer activities, says Independent Sector, the Washington-based umbrella organization of U.S. charities and major donors.

According to the group, the number of teens giving time to volunteer activities has risen from 12.4 million youths in 1992 to 13.3 million.

Additionally, the number of hours given to volunteer activities by teens between the ages of 12 and 17 rose from 2.1 billion hours to 2.4 billion.

Of those volunteered hours, 1.8 billion were in formal commitments to organizations, and 600 million were in the less formal pattern of helping neighbors or informal assistance to organizations.

The teens' major reasons for volunteering were: they felt compassion for



people in need, they could do something for a cause that was important to them, and they believed if they helped others, others would help them.

Independent Sector President Sara Melendez, however, said behind the good news, some areas needed attention. For example, teens should be asked to volunteer. They were four times as likely to volunteer if they were asked than if they were not asked. Among the 51 percent who were asked to volunteer, 93 percent responded. Among the 49 percent who were not asked, 24 percent volunteered.

*The report, "Volunteering and Giving Among American Teenagers 12 to 17 Years of Age," was based on surveys of 1,007 teens by the Gallup Organization. It had a margin of error of plus or minus four percent.*

## Restored dome sheds new light on revered site

The newly restored 115-foot dome of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the traditional site of Jesus' tomb, was unveiled in January.

The dome had been blocked for decades by scaffolding. Restoration was held up by arguments among those who claim control over portions of the church in Jerusalem's Old City.

With the curtains and scaffolding removed, sunlight poured through a skylight, illuminating the dark, dank interior of the 900-year-old church. The dome's new motif shows golden rays against a backdrop of pearly white dotted with sparkling gold stars.

Ara Normart, an artist from Fresno, Calif., designed the interior motif. He called it an "explosion of light" meant to represent "the glory of God enveloping the risen Christ."

Finishing the project required the Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, and Armenian Orthodox churches to work together after centuries of animosity and jealousy. All three denominations control parts of the Holy Sepulchre.

In the 1850s, the ruling Ottoman Turks gave those three denominations—as well as the Ethiopian, Egyptian Coptic, and Syrian churches—the right to oversee specific parts of the vast Holy Sepulchre. Each group fiercely guarded its part of the church.

The first church of the Holy Sepulchre was constructed in AD 336 by the Emperor Constantine. In 1009, the church was razed, and a new one was constructed by the Crusaders over the next 100 years.

## Why teens go to church

When surveyed about the reasons they attended church on the last occasion, teens gave the following responses:

	Total	Male	Female
I attended because I decided I wanted to go	68%	63%	72%
I went mainly because my parents wanted me to go	19%	21%	16%
I went only because my parents told me to go	9%	11%	8%
Does not apply, never attend	4%	5%	4%

Those reasons were then compared with responses from 1988.

	1996	1988
I attended because I decided I wanted to go	68%	61%
I went mainly because my parents wanted me to go	19%	24%
I went only because my parents told me to go	9%	12%
Does not apply, never attend	4%	3%

[The Gallup Youth Survey, Emerging Trends, November 1996]

## Missionaries serve anonymously

The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship anonymously appointed two couples to serve as missionaries in regions considered hostile to Christian evangelism.

In what is being compared to the federal witness protection program, the couples are the first missionaries to be so appointed in the five-year history of the moderate Baptist group. It is feared their work and their lives could be in danger if they were to be identified.

At a commissioning service, the

two couples sat unnoticed in the congregation as surrogates stood in for them and gave their testimonies by proxy, reported Associated Baptist Press, an independent Baptist news service.

One admitted to some sadness about losing a public identity in ministry: "It will be hard not to tell people what we do. But as long as we can rally individual and family prayer support, the loss of public identity won't be so hard."

## Utah's anti-abortion law ruled unconstitutional

Utah's law banning abortions after the 20th week of gestation has been struck down as unconstitutional by a federal appeals court.

The 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, based in Denver, said the provision infringed on a woman's right to choose.

The provision was part of a 1991 Utah law banning all abortions after 20 weeks, with narrow exceptions. The law's provision banning abortions during the first 20 weeks of pregnancy had already been struck

down as unconstitutional.

A spokesman for the State Attorney General said lawyers were reviewing the decision, and it was unclear if the state now had any restrictions on abortion.

In its ruling on the post-20-weeks provision of the law, the appellate court noted the U.S. Supreme Court has said that a doctor, not legislation, should determine the viability of a fetus and "until viability is actually present the state may not prevent a woman from choosing to abort."

## rē·li'giōn

### Defining religion

**Satan:** Adversary, one of the names the Bible gives to the devil or the chief of the evil spirits. Satan and the other evil spirits were angels who rebelled against God sometime after the week of creation (2 Peter 2:4, Jude 6). Satan is a murderer and the father of lies (John 8:44).

## Through my Bible in 3 years

April 1997

- Matthew 22:1-14
- Matt. 22:15-46
- Matt. 23:1-22
- Matt. 23:23-39
- Matt. 24:1-31
- Matt. 24:32—25:13
- Matt. 25:14-46
- Matt. 26:1-16
- Matt. 26:17-29
- Matt. 26:30-56
- Matt. 26:57-75
- Matt. 27:1-14
- Matt. 27:15-31
- Matt. 27:32-50
- Matt. 27:51-66
- Matt. 28:1-20
- Jeremiah 26
- Jer. 27, 28
- Jer. 29
- Jer. 30:1—31:26
- Jer. 31:27-40
- Jer. 32, 33
- Jer. 34
- Jer. 35
- Jer. 36
- Jer. 37, 38
- Jer. 39—41
- Jer. 42, 43
- Jer. 44, 45
- Jer. 46, 47

# Bulletin BOARD & NOTICES

To place an announcement, call 414/256-3231;  
FAX, 414/256-3899; e-mail, nl@sab.wels.net  
Deadline is six weeks before publication date.

## CHANGE IN MINISTRY

### Pastors

**Bender, Keith F.**, from Zion, Morgan, Minn., to retirement

**Enderle, Phillip M.**, from Redeemer, Huntsville, Ala., to Resurrection, Milwaukee, Wis.

**Hansen, Tony J.**, from Zion, Akaska, S.D., to Goodview Trinity, Goodview, Minn.

**Roecker, Eugene A.**, from Lilongwe, Malawi, Africa to Zion, Zealand/St. Paul, Hazelton, N.D.

**Schwerin, Philip J.**, from Zion, Clatonia, S.D., to Faith, Russellville, Ark.

**Ungemach, Edward III**, from Bethlehem, Carmel, Ind., to Mt. Calvary, La Crosse, Wis.

**Winterstein, James H.**, from St. Luke, Grand Rapids, Minn., to St. John, Victorville, Calif.

**Ziecker, Eric J.**, from Mt. Sinai, Montrose, Mich., to Peace, Rio Rancho, N.M.

### Teachers

**Bain, Noah B.**, to St. John, Montello, Wis.

**Gruetzman, Karen M.**, from Lakeside LHS, Lake Mills, Wis., to retirement

**Jenswold, Arthur J.**, from St. Mark, Watertown, Wis., to retirement

**Kurtzweg, Connie S.**, to Trinity, Hoskins, Neb.

**May, Sarah L.**, to Risen Savior, Milwaukee, Wis.

**Meier, Staci J.**, to St. John, Burlington, Wis.

**Pfeifer, Michael J.**, from Bloomington, Bloomington, Minn., to St. Mark, Green Bay, Wis.

**Sonnenburg, Charles G. Jr.**, to Zion, Monroe, Mich.

**Zickuhr, Karen L.**, from St. John/St. James, Reedsville, Wis., to St. Paul, Muskego, Wis.

## WELS CONVENTION

The 54th biennial convention of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod will be held July 28 to Aug. 1 at Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis.

Opening communion service will begin at 9 AM, opening session at 11 AM. Delegates—register July 27 or before the opening service. Closing service will be held after the final session on Aug. 1.

Three mini-essays/Bible studies and an essay will carry out the theme: "We Are Family Under God." Housing will be provided for all delegates. Meals will be served in the cafeteria. The synod secretary will send each delegate a letter, certifying his delegation and informing him of his floor committee assignment. The school will send each delegate instructions regarding travel and housing. All air travel arrangements are to be made through an 800-number provided to the delegates. Mail for delegates during the convention should be sent c/o Luther Preparatory School, 1300 Western Ave, Watertown, WI 53094. Delegates may be reached at 414/261-4352; FAX, 414/262-8118.

## NOMINATIONS

The following have been nominated for administrator of the Board for World Missions:

Rev. David B. Dolan, Fond du Lac, Wis.  
Rev. Delmer F. Kannenberg, Denver, Colo.

Rev. Dennis A. Kleist, Morton Grove, Ill.  
Rev. Daniel H. Koelpin, Waukesha, Wis.  
Rev. Philip A. Koelpin, Tucson, Ariz.  
Rev. Gregory P. Lenz, Eden Prairie, Minn.  
Prof. Carl W. Leyrer, Fond du Lac, Wis.  
Prof. Marcus P. Manthey, Saginaw, Mich.  
Rev. Jonathan E. Schultz, Calgary, AB, Canada  
Rev. Timothy R. Soukup, San Antonio, Tex.  
Rev. John J. Sullivan, Novosibirsk, Russia  
Rev. Daniel D. Westendorf, Hartford, Wis.  
Correspondence regarding nominees should be mailed by Apr. 1 to Pastor David Dolan, 52 E First St, Fond du Lac WI 54935.

## COMING EVENTS

**Women's workshop**—Ladies' time out. 8 AM to 4 PM, March 15. Salem, Milwaukee. Salem, 414/353-8141 or Debbi Witte, 414/354-0051.

**Luther Preparatory School 1997 choir tour**—Contact Prof. Randy Bode, 414/261-4352. March 18—Lord and Savior, Crystal Lake, Ill., 7:15 PM

Mar. 19—Emanuel, St. Paul, Minn., 6:30 PM

Mar. 20—St. John, Red Wing, Minn., 7:30 PM

Mar. 21—St. Paul, St. James, Minn., 7 PM

Mar. 22—Immanuel, Willmar, Minn., 2 PM; St. Martin, Watertown, S.D., 7:30 PM

Mar. 23—Good Shepherd, Sioux Falls, S.D., 10:30 AM

**Regional handbell festival concerts**—April 6, Manitowoc LHS, Manitowoc, Wis.; April 20, Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis., and Onalaska LHS, Onalaska, Wis. All concert times at 2 PM. Cheryl Diener, 715/258-7203.

**Women's day**—April 12. St. Paul, New Ulm, Minn. Beth Hauf, 507/354-3256.

**Dedication**—of West LHS, Plymouth, Minn. 3:30 PM, April 27. West LHS, 3350 Harbor Lane North, Plymouth MN 55447-5255; 612/509-9378.

**Leadership conference**—for WELS outdoor ministries. May 9-11. Camp Phillip, Wautoma, Wis. \$40. Travel subsidy available. Commission on Youth Discipleship, 414/256-3224.

**Lutherland trip**—May 31-June 10. Hosted by Wisconsin Lutheran College and Pastor Richard Krause, Christ, Pewaukee, Wis. Sites include Berlin, Wittenberg, Erfurt, Nuremberg, Rothenburg, Augsburg, and Munich. Pastor Krause, 414/691-0720 or 414/695-0627.

**Canoe trip**—July 13-18 into the BWCA/Quetico, Provincial Park. Led by men from Faith, Antioch, Ill. Cost: approx. \$300. Terry Beguhn, 847/746-1766.

**Tour**—hosted by OWLS. Seven day motor coach tour to Mackinaw Island and Niagara Falls. Aug. 4-10. Cost: \$659. Pastor H. Kaesmeyer, 3317 Kipling Dr, Saginaw MI 48602; 517/793-1020.

**WELS-CLO spring meeting**—WELS Church Librarians' Organization. St. Paul, Muskego, Wis. Apr. 26. Registration: 8:30 AM. Fee: \$7. 414/256-3222.

**Israel dig**—Lutherans Interested in the Bible and Related Antiquities (LIBRA), a WELS/ELS association, is organizing experiences in field archaeology and biblical geography. All welcome to apply; no experience needed. Mini-season at Tel Yafo (Joppa) in late September or early October 1997; major season in summer 1999. Mail LIBRA, c/o John Lawrenz, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222; or check the LIBRA website, www.mls.pvt.k12.mi.us/libra

## ANNIVERSARIES

**North Mankato, Minn.**—St. Paul (75). March 1,2, May 17,18—confirmation reunion. June 26, 28,29—wedding reunion; June 26 service at 7 PM. Sept. 27,28—mission fest. Nov. 22,23—anniversary thanksgiving. Saturday services, 5:30 PM; Sunday services at 8 AM and 10:30 AM. Lunch follows 10:30 AM services. 304 Monroe Ave, N Mankato MN 56003; 507/345-4939 for reservations.

**Muskego, Wis.**—St. Paul (140). Special emphasis each month. March 2—youth Sunday. May 4—sanctity of life Sunday. June 1—special presentation and organ recital in the old church, 7 PM. Aug. 17—outreach Sunday. Sept. 21—mission Sunday; potluck, noon. Dec. 7—thanks and praise Sunday. Sunday services, 7:45 AM and 10:30 AM; Monday, 7 PM. S66 W14325 Janesville Rd, Muskego WI 53150; 414/422-0320.

**Flagstaff, Ariz.**—Mt. Calvary (50). Mar. 30, those buried in the faith, 9 AM. Easter breakfast, 8 AM; Apr. 20, those baptized into the faith, 9 AM; May 18, those confirmed in the faith, 9 AM. Celebration Sunday, Oct. 5. worship, 10:30 AM; dinner/historical presentation, 12:30 PM; worship 2:30 PM. Mt. Calvary, 2605 N Fort Valley Rd, Flagstaff AZ 86001; 520/774-8811.

**Milwaukee, Wis.**—Salem (150). March 9—mission Sunday; potluck following services. April 13—Lutheran Chorale. April 27—youth Sunday. Thurs. services, 7 PM; Sunday services 8 & 10:30 AM. 6814 N 107 St, Milwaukee WI 53224-4306; 414/353-8141.

## NAMES WANTED

**Roanoke/Blackburg/Lynchburg, Va.**—Mark Buske, Our Savior, 4756 Lakeview Dr, Roanoke VA 24012; 540/977-4036; e-mail, revmark@bellatlantic.net.

**Lutheran Vanguard alumni**—Past members for alumni band for 20th anniversary celebration. Send name/maiden name, address, school attended, and years involved to LWV-20, c/o Don and Barb Stellmacher, 1520 Julie Ct, N Fond du Lac WI 54937.

**Peoria, Ill.**—Norman Paul, Living Hope, 7213 N Allen Rd, Peoria IL 61614; 309/693-7494.

## NEEDED

**Church furnishings**—Altar paraments, communion ware, and offering plates. For Living Hope exploratory, Peoria, Ill. Norman Paul, 309/693-7494.

## AVAILABLE

**Organ**—12-year-old Hammond. Double keyboard. 13 pedals. Excellent condition—only been used a few times. Gail Anderson, 414/242-9414.

## PHONE NUMBER CORRECTION

The phone number for Christ the King, Palatine, Ill., is incorrect in the 1997 Yearbook. The correct number is 847/358-0230.

## CHANGE OF ADDRESS

**Plymouth, Minn.**—West LHS, 3350 Harbor Lane North, Plymouth MN 55447-5255; 612/509-9378; FAX, 612/509-0861.

**Petoskey, Mich.**—Beautiful Savior. New phone/FAX number: 616/347-2368.

## SERVICE TIMES

**White Rock/Los Alamos N.M.**—Skiing in southern Colorado, or northern New Mexico (Wolk Creek, Taos, Red River, Angel Fire, Santa Fe)? Worship, midweek meditations, or visit. Pastor Martin Hahn, Messiah, 172 Meadow Ln, Los Alamos NM 87544-3757; 505/672-0169; 505/672-1323; e-mail, xlmin@juno.com

# Tolerance: even a noble idea can be misunderstood

Daniel Koelpin

**T**olerance is an American tradition. Because we love freedom, we allow many points of view to have their “day in the court of public opinion.” Also, as believers, we tolerate the expression of many thoughts and ideas with which we may personally disagree so that we might enjoy a similar freedom to proclaim the truth as we know it in Jesus Christ.

Yet, noble concepts often have a way of being misunderstood or infused with “new meaning.” Some people, for example, talk about “love,” but really mean “lust.” Some insist on being free, but they do not mean freedom from dictators and tyrants. Instead they mean freedom from their conscience and the laws that make for civilized society—even if a freedom is harmful to others.

Tolerance is also a noble idea that has come to be exaggerated and misunderstood. In America, tolerance has progressed from the idea of “not persecuting other religions” (freedom of religion as guaranteed by the Bill of Rights) to the idea of actually embracing all religions as having equal value. In the minds of many in our day to be tolerant means to accept any type of behavior no matter how degrading and self-destructive it might be. To multitudes, tolerating every point of view requires believing that no one point of view actually has a corner on the truth.

The noble concept of tolerance is starting to mean trouble for Christians. Christians are often categorized as intolerant and even unAmerican because they dare to hold that there is a standard (the Ten Commandments) by which matters of right and wrong are to be judged.

Yet, paradoxically, while Christians are branded as intolerant, they are in reality becoming the victims of intolerance. A public school teacher isn’t free to keep a Bible on her desk because the nonreligious might be offended.

But what about offense to Christians? Freedom of religion was never intended to mean freedom from religion. Those who insist on freedom of expression while denying it to others (because their view is biblical) are guilty of hypocrisy and a double standard—and they should be called on it.

For Christians, the line separating what we should and shouldn’t tolerate can be difficult to draw—but not impossible if certain guidelines are kept in mind.

For us American Christians, tolerance means we embrace the intent of our constitution, which is never to persecute people who have different beliefs. It doesn’t mean that we have to see every religious belief as equally valid and worthy. Jesus said “I am the way and the truth and the life. No man comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6).

Tolerance means we allow others to express their point of view. It doesn’t mean we are out of place in expressing our own. “I believe; therefore I have spoken” (2 Corinthians 4:13).

Tolerance means that we are loving toward sinners. It never means embracing or approving of their sins. “Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God” (James 4:4).

Tolerance can be a virtue and vice.

*Dan Koelpin is pastor at Trinity, Waukesha, Wisconsin.*

*Tolerance*

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*others to*

*express their*

*point of view.*

*It doesn't*

*mean we are*

*out of place*

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*our own.*

# Samuel: king rebuker

God does not let his people wander without calling them back—even when they have wandered far.

James A. Aderman

In the early morning light he showed the effects of a sleepless night and a burdened heart. Samuel resolutely shuffled the 15 miles from the hilltops of Bethel down through the cliffs overlooking the Jordan River. His destination was Gilgal on Jericho's plain and the camp of Israel's errant king.

## The call to repentance

The Lord's words from the night before rumbled in his heart: "I am grieved that I have made Saul king, because he has turned away from me and has not carried out my

instructions" (1 Samuel 15:10).

God's instructions to Saul were simple: "Attack the Amalekites and totally destroy everything that belongs to them" (15:3). The king had a better idea. Instead of annihilating the Amalekites, he seized an opportunity to endear himself to his army. He allowed his soldiers to save all of the healthy farm animals for themselves and the king for him.

Samuel remembered another time Saul thought he knew better than God. During a war of liberation from the Philistines (13:1-15), Saul usurped the role of priest. The kings in nations neighboring Israel dictated their people's spiritual life. Saul assumed he had the same right.

Now an exultant Saul greeted Samuel, "I have carried out the Lord's instructions" (15:13).

"What then is this bleating of sheep in my ears?" Samuel demanded.

Saul explained, "The soldiers took sheep and cattle from the plunder . . . in order to sacrifice them" (15:21).

## The rejection after impenitence

Our faithful God sent his prophet to call Saul to repentance. Unfortunately, the king's pride left room only for hedging, none for penitence.

"To obey is better than sacrifice," Samuel replied. "For . . . arrogance [is] like the evil of idolatry. [Consequently, the LORD] . . . has rejected you as king" (15:22,23).

Saul's response? Repentance voided by excuse. "I have sinned [but you need to understand] I was afraid of the people. . . . Forgive my sin and come back with me, so that I may worship the LORD" (15:24,25).

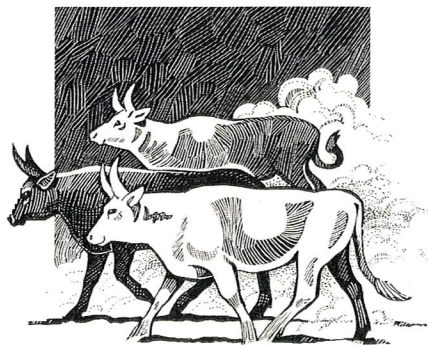
Samuel refused. With no clear acknowledgment of disobedience, the prophet could not worship with him and give the impression the king was guiltless. Only after Saul fully repented did Samuel agree—and then, not before the Amalekite king was executed.

God, who is "compassionate and gracious," does not let his people wander without calling them back—even when they have often wandered far. But he also refuses to "leave the guilty unpunished" (Exodus 34:6,7). For those who reject our upside God's grace, only the consequences of a downside world remain.

For Saul that meant rejection. This was the final time Saul saw Samuel alive. They lived only a handful of miles apart, but the barrier of spiritual distance came between them as it did between Saul and God.

Still the Lord is committed to transforming bad into blessing. Already he was preparing his next ruler, "a man after his own heart" (13:14).

*James A. Aderman is pastor at Fairview, Milwaukee.*



## FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. List God's characteristics in Exodus 34:5-7. How do those attributes show in his dealing with Saul (chapters 13-15)?
2. If the Lord sent Samuel to rebuke you, what might he say? How would you respond? How does 1 John 1:8,9 urge full repentance?

# Preach the Word

Victor H. Prange

Once upon a time a monk named Anthony of Padua went to his church to preach a sermon only to find no one in the pews to listen. So he decided to go down to the sea and deliver his sermon to the fish, but all in vain.

As the story goes:

The sermon once over, away they go swimming.

The pike to their thieving, the eels to their loving;

the sermon was splendid, but they're still like the others!

The crabs still move backwards, the cod are still bloated,

the carp are still gorging, the sermon's forgotten!

The sermon was splendid, but they're still like the others!

Why keep on preaching when often the results seem so meager? Why should a preacher try to improve his skills when even a well crafted and delivered sermon appears to make little difference in the listeners' lives?

Why preach? Because that is the charge given to ministers of the church: "Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke, and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction" (2 Timothy 4:2).

This is a charge ministers take seriously. I receive a religious news magazine that regularly advertises books and workshops on preaching. A Presbyterian Seminary answers the question, "Is preaching a dying art?" by declaring that "preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ is

still a pivotal vocation." A Baptist Seminary announces a five day "National Conference on Biblical Preaching." A quarterly journal entitled *The Living Pulpit* is advertised. In Canada an Institute for Biblical Preaching announces an intensive workshop titled "Biblical Preaching for Our Time."

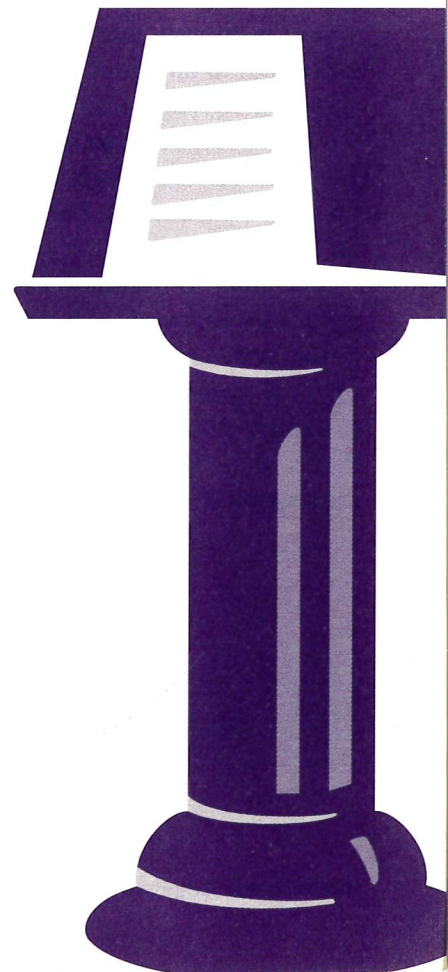
WELS pastors certainly do not take second place to any other church body in our commitment to preach the Word. They are thoroughly trained at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in the art of preparing and delivering a sermon. The weekly task of preaching the Word is of the highest priority in a pastor's list of things to do.

Members of our congregations can help those who preach God's Word Sunday after Sunday. They can make sure their pastors have adequate time to prepare. They can encourage (and perhaps finance) opportunities for pastors to attend workshops or classes to enhance preaching skills. They can speak words of appreciation to their preachers; there is also room for constructive criticism.

But above all, members of our congregations must rejoice if they hear again and again from their preachers the message the apostle Paul was determined to proclaim to the churches he served: Jesus Christ and him crucified. To preach the Word is to preach Christ and the salvation that is in Christ alone. That's all the reason a preacher needs to preach the Word in the best way he knows how.

*Victor H. Prange is pastor at Peace, Janesville, Wisconsin.*

*To preach  
the Word is  
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which is in  
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# Of light-years, tattoos, and hard hearts

John F. Brug

*We know "God wants all men to be saved," but Matthew 22:14 says, "Many are called, but few are chosen." Does this mean somehow some are created so they will reject the Holy Ghost, and others are created so they will choose not to reject him. How does this tie together?*

As you indicated, the Bible clearly teaches that God wants everyone to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4) and that he does not want any to be lost (2 Peter 3:9). God has elected some to salvation through faith in Christ (Ephesians 1:3-7), but he has not predestined any to be damned. The lost are damned because of their own malicious rejection. The Bible says it is entirely due to God's grace, not to any good in them, that some are saved. It also says it is their own fault that some are lost. It is hard for our reason to reconcile these two statements, but we must let Scripture stand.

The story in Matthew 22:1-13 reinforces this view. All the people in the story are "called" (that is, invited) by the king. Some are excluded, not because the king didn't invite them, but because they scorned his invitation.

*Some of my relatives, model citizens in the church and community, are getting tattoos and body piercings. How should I respond to this?*

The Old Testament law commanded the Israelites not to disfigure or tattoo their bodies (Leviticus 19:28). This command was a warning to the Israelites not to adopt mourning practices like those of the heathen. God's people were to be different.

Christians should not adopt styles of dress or adornment that will identify them with a false religion or with immoral attitudes. Tattoos, certain types of jewelry and clothing, and certain hair styles have had such meaning in some cultural settings. Christians obviously should not adopt such styles.

But what if tattoos have no such meaning? Many commentators believe that the biblical prohibition against tattoos and cutting was also aimed at preserving the body intact, as God created it. The biblical text, however, does not state this. We, therefore, cannot recognize this claim as any more than a personal opinion.

We have to leave the decision to the judgment of the individual. Christians, however, should be careful not to adopt styles that will

cause offense to others, especially when a style that was once offensive has progressed part way to "respectability."

Christians who regard certain styles with distaste should be careful about judging fellow Christians by their outward appearance.

*There appears to be a problem in Meditations for Oct. 25, 1996. It talks about seeing a star that is 9,000 light-years away. If the earth is only 6,000 years old, how could we see such a star, which should not be visible from earth yet?*

The idea that the earth is about 6,000 years old is based on the assumption that the genealogies in Genesis list every generation from creation to Abraham. If not all the generations are listed, the earth could be older than the age suggested by simply adding up the numbers in Genesis. Regardless of the earth's age, it seems likely all the stars God made were visible from the earth from the time they were created. God made them to serve the earth, so they were created to be visible from the beginning.

*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; FAX, 414/256-3899; e-mail, nl@sab.wels.net.**





**I was surprised to read letters critical of the October *Northwestern Lutheran* cover depicting a victim of domestic violence.** The image did not expose our children to something they have never seen.

Prior to high school graduation, the typical child will have witnessed more than 200,000 acts of violence depicted in the media. Even if we prohibit children from watching television, listening to the radio, or reading the newspaper, violent images will find them. Has anyone not seen the bruised face of Nicole Brown Simpson on magazines?

Although we must protect children, it is not true that each violent image is bad for them. If so, we would not allow children to see paintings of our crucified Savior. We allow our children to be exposed to the violent image of Jesus nailed to a cross because the image teaches us the terrible price God paid for our sins.

The October cover serves to remind us of the ugly sin of domestic violence. As Christians, and as parents, we need to teach our children about the sin of violence and the reality that not all homes are safe. Most important, we need to teach our children that through prayer and Christian love, violence need not overwhelm us. If Christians do not discuss violence with our children, secular society will be teaching the lessons.

*Victor I. Vieth*  
Windom, Minnesota  
author "When Dad hits Mom"

**In November, Gary Baumler wrote the Bible "has survived the crazes of nearly two millennia."** Since information was handed down by God's direction using oral methods from the time of Adam and Eve, doesn't that mean the contents of the Bible have

been around for at least six millennia?

When people confront me with the "fact" that Christianity is one of the youngest religions around and not worth much compared to the older and wiser religions, I inform them Christianity has been around since the beginning of the world. It started with God creating the world. Adam and Eve were the first believers in God and in what we now call Christianity. Christianity is, therefore, the oldest religion on earth.



*Charlene L. Newby*  
Manitowoc, Wisconsin

*The reference was to the completed canon, both Old and New Testaments.*  
—ed.

**Re: Tick . . . tick . . . tick . . .** [Jan.] "Although it's possible for anger to lead to sin, the pure emotion isn't wrong." Of course it is, when it flows from the sinful nature. This bad tree produces only bad fruit, including sinful emotions of anger, hatred, and even love. "Everything that does not come from faith is sin" (Romans 14:23).

On the other hand the good tree of the new spiritual nature produces only good fruit, including the righteous emotions of anger, hatred, and love. The emotions are but the reflection of the human heart in rebellion against or in agreement with the living God. Thus the Christian who possesses both the sinful nature and the new spiritual nature daily prays, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."

*Kurt Grunewald*  
Mt. Calvary, Wisconsin

**Thank you! "Children belong in church" [Jan.] rings a bell.** Six of our children are now parents. They are bringing 20 grandchildren to churches throughout the U.S.

As a grandmother, the noise of a crying child in church is music to my ears. When the music gets a little too

noisy, a silent prayer has a powerful effect. "Thank you Lord for letting me know that our congregation is alive and growing. Please help me keep my listening in balance. Amen."

I am always amazed at how quickly my prayer is answered, and balance is restored.

*Doris Schumann*  
Jefferson, Wisconsin

**While I understand the point that a pastor should be able to relate to his members on a more personal level,** I'm afraid "Confessions of 'a man of the cloth,'" [Jan.] may have left the impression the pastor who wears a clerical collar is aloof and unable to relate to real people.

People see the clerical collar as a uniform. Unless people have a negative preconceived notion about a certain denomination, most say it helps them focus on Christ and his worship, not on the pastor and his idiosyncrasies.

Although Pastor Lidtke would not like to be known as "a man of the cloth," there are others who would and for the right reasons.

*James R. Schulz*  
Jackson, Wisconsin

*Pastor Lidtke replies:*

*If my article made it sound as though men who wear clerical shirts and collars are "aloof and unable to relate to real people," I apologize. That was never my intent.*

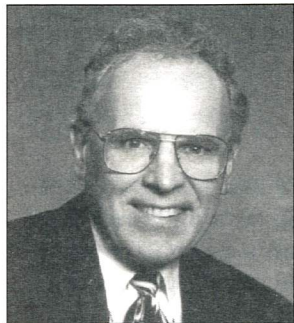
*Vestments are neither good nor bad. We are privileged to be called servants of God. As such we are "over them" in the Lord, as "men who must give an account." I am disturbed by the phrase "man of the cloth," however, because it is often used by people to describe a pastor as "one who is above us morally." When people use the phrase "man of the cloth," to refer to any called servant as a "near perfect man," I believe it detracts from our message and gives a false impression of what any pastor wants people to see him as.*

*Bible readings can be found on page 27.*



GOD

Search



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

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**The Web offers a broad, generic god to whom everyone can relate because this god changes to suit our fancies, even if we fancy he doesn't exist.**

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Just the term “cyberspace” used to scare me. It conjured up images of space come alive, an out-of-control, ever-expanding monster. With it came the World Wide Web (www) and the Internet and information superhighways. It threatened to snare me in its tangled tentacles and reduce me to cyberfood.

Now I have been out in cyberspace and back, many times, intact (I think). I wouldn't speak of highways—libraries maybe. Think of it as a big personal journal in which anyone can write her most personal experiences, and everyone else can come in and read them at any time from anywhere. Yet, it's bigger than all that. And I'm still scared.

No, the technology doesn't scare me anymore. It's merely a new way to talk across the back fence. Only now the “fence” connects continents as well as adjoining city lots. What scares me is how it will be used.

To illustrate, I went searching this cyberlibrary to find what it has to say about “God.” I found poetry, names of rock bands, and names of Christian church bodies. I found pantheism, “pothead” philosophy, blasphemy, errant Christian witness, and true witness to God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

“God is you,” cries one. “I am god,” says another. “God is everything,” insists the next.

“You can't know God,” reasons a philosopher. “I have personal messages from God,” reports a self-appointed prophetess. “God killed your puppy,” charges the cynic. You're told to find God within you or to create your own god or to quit trying.

Overall, the Web offers a broad, generic god to whom everyone can relate because this god changes to suit our fancies, even

if we fancy he doesn't exist.

These thoughts aren't new. The world since the fall has never lacked blasphemers, false prophets, false gods.

- What has changed is the ease and speed with which anyone with another garbage thought can spread it worldwide.
- What has changed is that any 12-year-old with a computer, a modem, and a search engine can access the junk and fill his mind with it from a desk in his home or school—with no certainty he'll ever see the site that witnesses to the true God.
- What has changed is that an increasing number of people will rely entirely on the Web to shape their ideas of God and his way of salvation.

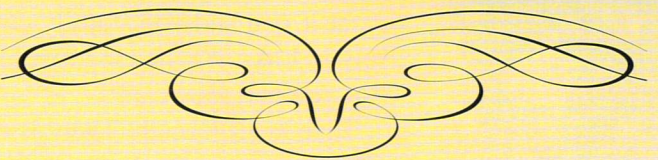
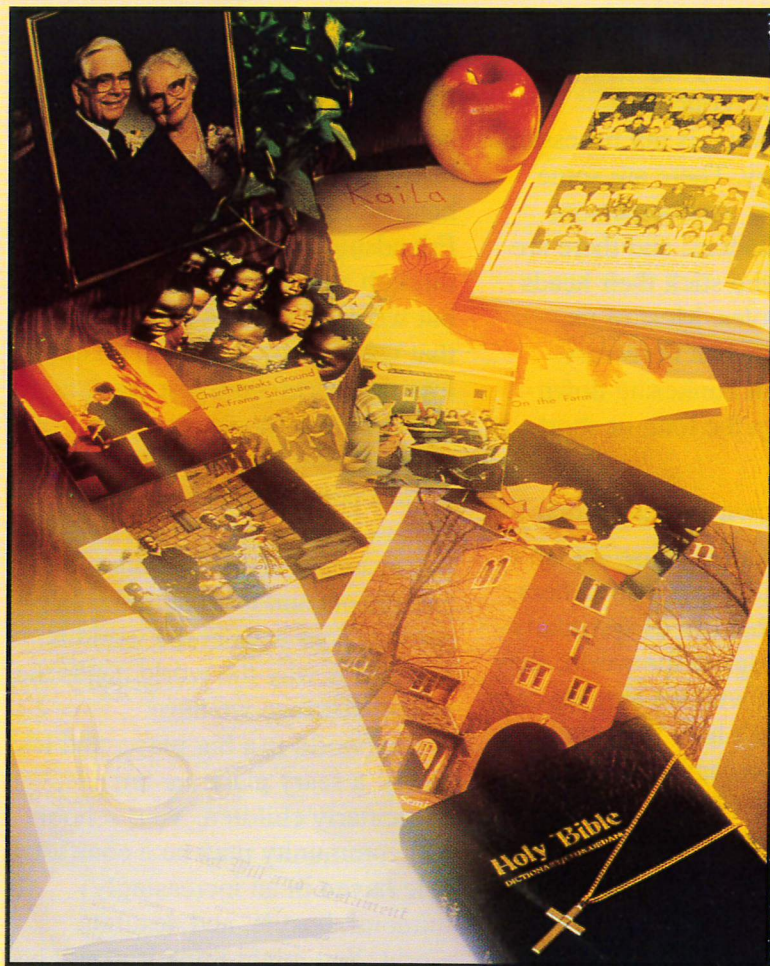
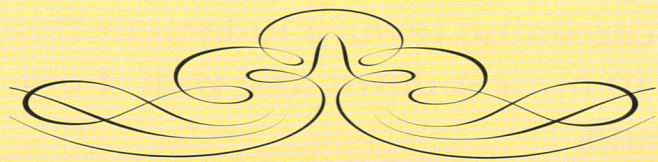
When I close out of my Web browser and turn off my computer, all the godless homepages (and there are many more on many subjects) disappear from the screen. It's easy to go into denial, to conclude that no one actually goes to those sites. But the numbers tell another story, and that's scary.

The garbage is out there, and people are going out to collect it. We cannot change the reality. But we can put up more God-pleasing and God-witnessing sites to counter the godless. We can educate our young people (make that, all our people) in how to use the Web. We can show them where to look for the good things, the godly things. We can just as easily and quickly as others send the saving message of Jesus Christ worldwide on the Web.

Your church can do it. You can do it. Our national church is doing it and will have a new site ready early this spring. Watch for information on how to access it.

*Gary P. Baumler*

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# Hunkered-down Christians

**As this world continues its mad careening toward Judgment Day, a Christian's response might be to hunker down and wait it out.**

John Isch

**B**ombs in parks and bombs in airplanes. Drive-by shootings and downloaded pornography. Ethnic cleansing and polluted environment. Abortion on demand and divorce by whim. As this century comes to a close and the world continues its mad careening toward Judgment Day, a Christian's response might be to hunker down and wait it out.

## **Hunkering down is understandable**

We hunker down in our safe (?) nation, our safe communities, our safe neighborhoods, our safe homes, and our safe schools, and we ignore those "other places." We hunker down with people we know—people who are like us—and we avoid the different ones. We focus even more on our own family and build those lot fences higher. Even Christian schools become a

place to hide our children so they won't be infected by the sinful viruses of public education.

Hunkering down is not necessarily a bad strategy. There are some overenthusiastic weatherpersons who chase tornadoes, and there are other people who stick their heads up out of foxholes. Most of us, however, duck when necessary.

But Christian hunkering down doesn't work in the long or short run.

## **Hunkering down doesn't work**

It doesn't work because sin isn't just "out there." Sin is also in here, in us. Things that kill us spiritually are not just things in the world; they are also part of who we are. We can run, but we can't hide from them. We will never escape sin on this side of eternity. Christ has destroyed the power of sin, but temptation will always be with us.

Hunkering down also doesn't work because it hides our testimony. Who can hear us or see us when we hide from the world? Who can hear our testimony of the hope we have when we are in the closet? Friendship evangelism and outreach through marriage are fine starters, but we don't reach a lot of people that way. Christ told us to go out into the world—not just the safe and comfortable places or the places where there are Christians, or nice people, or people like us. We are supposed to go out into places where there are sinners and bad people and terrible things happening. That is what the world is, and that is why the world needs the gospel message we have.

The world is a big place, and it can be a scary place for anyone, particularly children. Your school and community may be a comfortable haven in an increasingly immoral, hostile, and destitute world. You might think it would be great if you and your family could stay in Lake Wobegone forever. But you and they can't.

Take heart though. There is one who has overcome the world not by avoiding it but by conquering it. He is with you always, and he will be with your children as they go out into the world. Teach them to face the world with confidence and resolution with the message the world needs.

*John Isch is a professor of education at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota.*

