

FORWARD IN CHRIST

July 2001

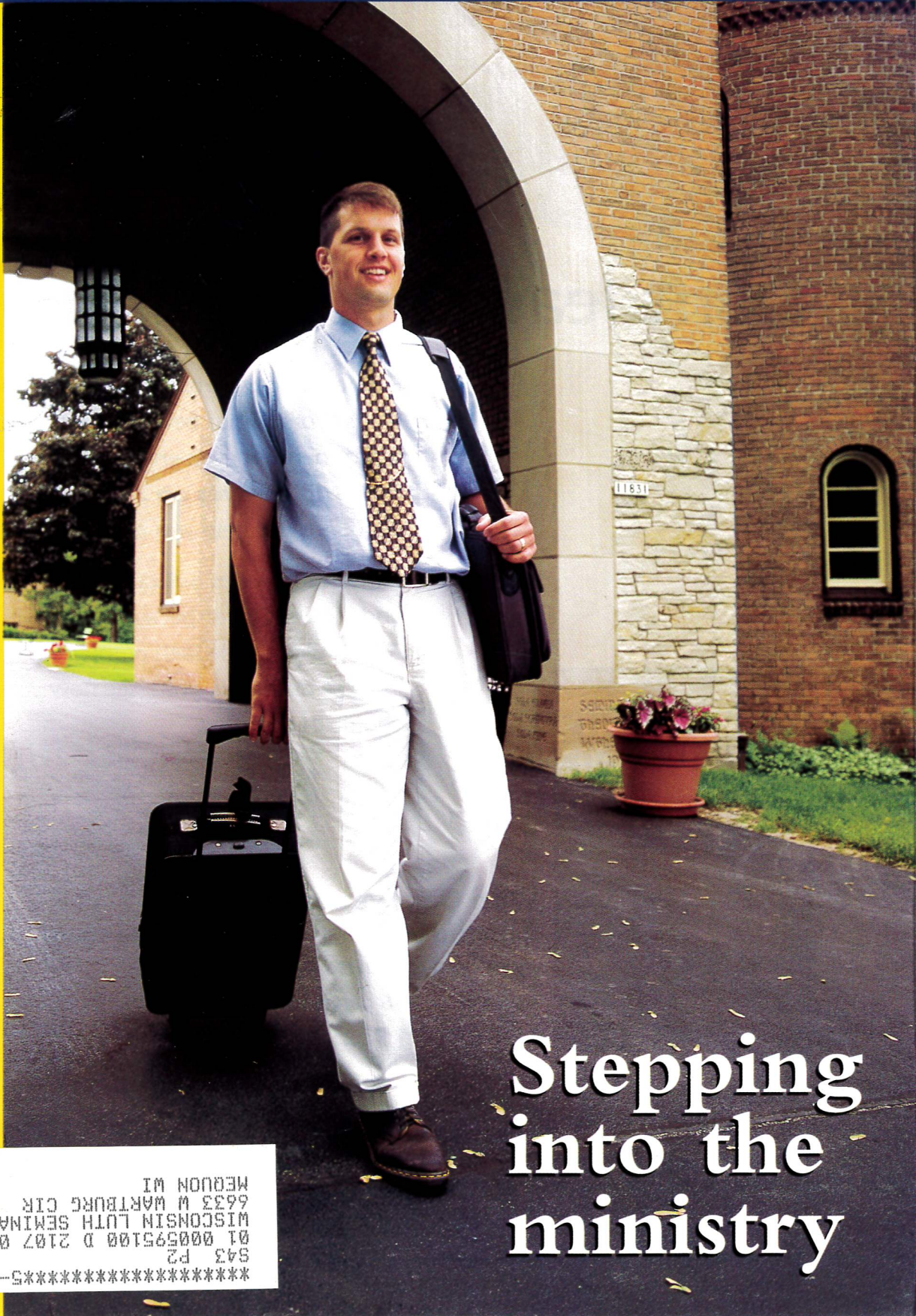
The Word from the WELS

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Who is going forward in Christ?

A prickly situation

What is the synod convention?



Stepping into the ministry

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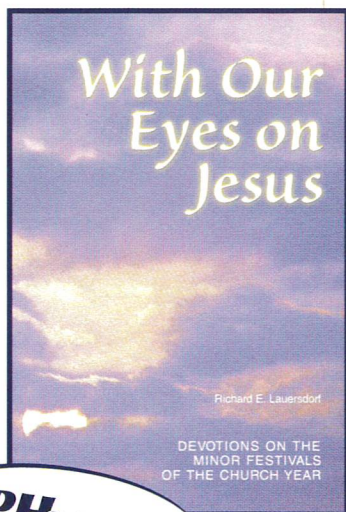
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Set us free, Lord

*Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God—
[I am rescued] through Jesus Christ our Lord! Romans 7:24,25*

Thomas A. Westra

Mom decided that a “time out” was in order for her naughty daughter. Since the little girl’s room had toys in it, Mom sent her to Mom’s room. “You sit in here and think about what you did.”

After a while Mom went in to check on her. “Well, have you been thinking?”

“No,” said the girl, “I’ve been spitting. I’ve been spitting in your purse. I’ve been spitting in the pockets of your clothes. I’ve been spitting in your shoes. Right now I’m waiting for more spit.” Her little heart was in a state of rebellion.

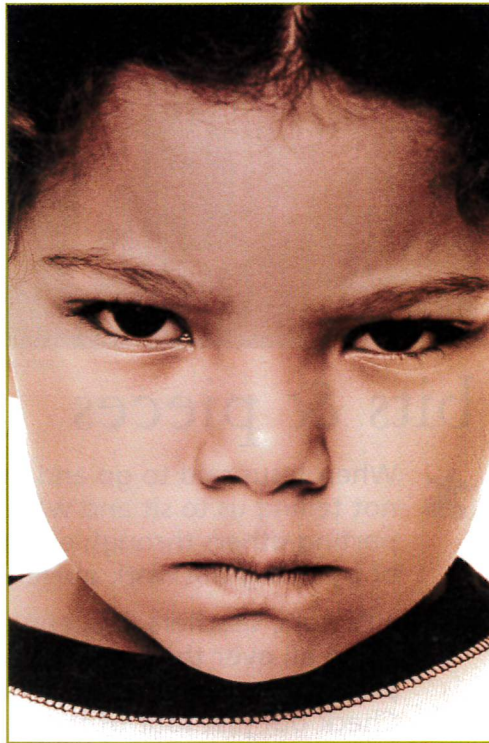
The rebellion

That story is a vivid picture of my sinful condition. By nature, my heart, too, is in a state of rebellion.

If I have sinned only by what I have said and done, then maybe I would have a chance to stop. “Hey, I know those things are wrong. So I won’t do them anymore.”

My problem, however, runs deeper. I am sinful by nature. My sin problem is not just a benign tumor that can be cut away, but an insidious cancer that has spread throughout my system. Every inclination of my sinful heart is evil. I not only break God’s rules. I am waiting for more spit.

The prophet has this in mind when he writes: “All of us have become like one who is unclean” (Isaiah 64:6). Paul agonizes over it in Romans 7: “For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. . . .



When I want to do good, evil is right there with me” (15,21).

The rescue

But Paul has an answer. He goes on to say, “Thanks be to God—[I am rescued] through Jesus Christ our Lord!”

Like a sponge Jesus absorbs out of us all the filth, sexual improprieties, arrogance, mean-spiritedness—every dirty, ugly thing—in our hearts. The Bible doesn’t only say that he took the punishment of our sin. It says that on the cross he became our sin (2 Corinthians 5:21). No wonder he screamed in horror—not because of the physical agony, but because he hates what he has to absorb out of us.

But he did it because he loves us. This is a truth that I could not believe were it not that God convinced me of it in my conversion. He loves me. He loves me even with my rebellious heart. What his love caused him to do at Calvary has set me free from the guilt of my sin and the punishment that I earned. The day of his crucifixion was our Independence Day. What a glorious freedom!

A continuing struggle

Yet, the struggle continues. I still see the hurt in the eyes of those I love as they are impacted by my selfishness. I still recognize the ugliness in many of my words and thoughts. I so much want not to sin, yet I sin so much.

The world doesn’t help. It is saturated with evil. The violence and illicit sex that spills into our homes on TV, the flood of Internet pornography, the materialism that seeps out of our culture—it all appeals to my sinful nature and finds an ally.

Therefore, even as we guard our steps with the light of his Word, even as we daily repent, we look forward to another Independence Day—a day when we shall be free from sin, the day that our Lord will deliver us from all evil as he brings us into his heavenly kingdom.



Thomas Westra is pastor at Beautiful Savior, Cincinnati, Ohio.

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Reflections of
a seminary
student as
he enters
the full-time
ministry.

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bits & pieces



When Jesus said to go and make disciples of all nations he was not telling us to sit and watch, but to get involved—by supporting others through encouragement, prayers, and funding or by doing the work ourselves. How can you get involved?

- Pastors, teachers, laypeople, and students are volunteering to go all over the world to spread the gospel through mission projects funded by the Forward in Christ thank offering. Check out just four of these projects on p. 8.

- Thirty-one men graduated from our seminary in May and will dedicate themselves full-time to God's work. See who they are and where they will go (pp. 20-22) and read reflections of one of them (p. 19).

- Nearly 500 people are taking a week out of their lives to attend the WELS 2001 biennial convention this summer. Learn about the ins and outs of the convention on p. 14.

- How can you help older members stay connected to the church? Nicole Moline shares tips and examples in her article, "Visiting for Jesus" (p. 16).



A new series begins and an old series ends this month.

- We thank Professor Theodore Hartwig for helping us cherish our heritage of hymns by giving us a more in-depth look at texts, tunes, and composers. His final article is on p. 18.

- Pastor Jon Buchholz will lead us through the life of Jesus in our new Bible study series. Make sure to check out his first article, "Just wait" (p. 30).

—JKT

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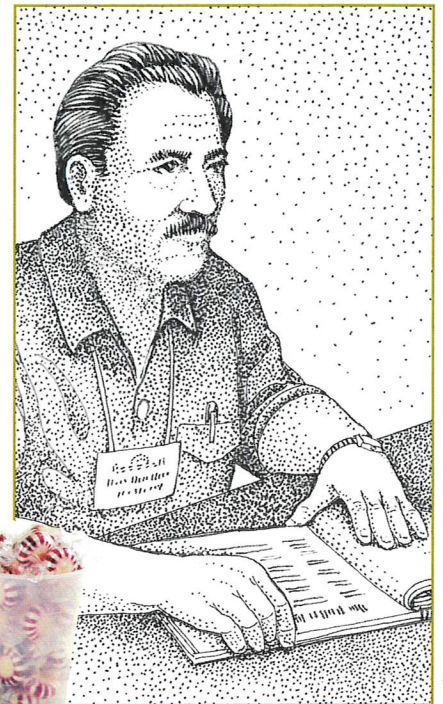
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**He loves me not.
He loves me.**




I was happy to read about Pastor Haar's reception of Canadian citizenship [Mar., p. 26] and pray that it serves him and his ministry well.

Working as a non-citizen can be difficult and costly in many countries, including the United States.

The concept of "dual citizenship" may sound strange to some of us, and the laws of the countries involved are complicated. Called workers should consult a lawyer specializing in naturalization before applying for citizenship in any country, including the United States. It is theoretically possible to become "stateless" if one is not careful.


Scott C. Mund

 Racine, Wisconsin

Just wanted to let author Pastor Carl Henkel know that I benefited greatly from his article, "Damaged Goods" [May].

God has used it to speak to my heart and to help me understand so much more clearly how I am to live as a Christian. Thanks so much for the insight and inspiration.

Patricia Clark


 Navarre, Florida

After seeing the illustration on p. 13 of the Apr. 2001 *Forward in Christ*, I feel there is an important matter that needs to be addressed in case someone has the wrong idea about Esperanto.

Although what some people consider religious cults have latched on to Esperanto, the language itself and the organization in charge of the language, The World-Wide Esperanto Association, claim complete religious neutrality. No one should blame a language for what anyone might do with that language.

I myself have been publishing a Lutheran newsletter in Esperanto for several years and, with the help of a friend from Belgium, have distributed over a thousand copies of *God's Great Exchange* in Esperanto to people from all over the world.

Ignorance can produce intolerance. Esperanto, like any other language, can be an evangelism tool. Please do not give anyone who reads your magazine the impression that we cannot be tolerant of Esperanto.

 Gary R Miller

In response to Walter Beckmann's question, "Do our vacancies concern you?" [May] my answer is yes! What I've been wondering is with all of the pastoral vacancies out there why are graduates being assigned as tutors to preparatory schools and Martin Luther College when we so desperately need them as pastors of our congregations?

Heather Duquaine
Duluth, Minnesota

Normally, pastor-trained tutors are assigned to positions where the pastoral training is considered essential. After one or two years they receive an assignment into the parish ministry.—ed.

I appreciated Walt Beckmann's comments regarding the vacancies in our synod [May]. Too often we lament the fact that there aren't enough pastors graduating instead of doing the hard work of recruiting, encouraging, and supporting.

I also believe that we need to think outside of the traditional WELS model for pastor/congregation relationships. Beckmann pointed out that large congregations could add a staff minister instead of a second pastor. Couldn't a small congregation also make use of a lay minister who might enable that congregation to share its pastor with other churches or preaching stations?

What things can congregations do to allow their pastors more time to proclaim the Word and less time writing newsletters, agendas, bulletins, and all the other stuff that really could be done by someone else?

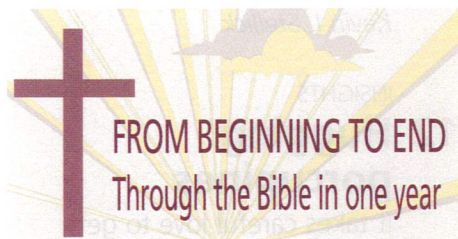
We need to address recruitment and financial assistance for those being

recruited, but we also need to plan for the shortage, which is going to be with us for a while. The synod needs to produce guidelines that would help congregations share pastors. Pastors need to train their congregations that the pastor's job is not all the paper pushing that he winds up doing, but the proclamation of the Word.

We must move beyond a mindset that seeks to keep things the way they have been simply because that is the way things always have been. We must ask ourselves—pastors, congregations, and individual members—"What can I do to get the Word out?" Then do it, even if it is different from what we have done before.

Paul Huebner

 Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin



July 2001

1. Nehemiah 11:10-13	16. Lk. 22:24-23:31
2. Zechariah 1-6	17. Lk. 23:32-24
3. Zech. 7-11	18. Acts 1 & 2
4. Zech. 12-14	19. Ac. 3-5:16
• Luke 1:1-38	20. Ac. 5:17-7
5. Lk. 1:39-2	21. Ac. 8 & 9
6. Lk. 3 & 4	22. Ac. 10 & 11
7. Lk. 5 & 6	23. Ac. 12-14:17
8. Lk. 7-8:39	24. Ac. 14:18-16:15
9. Lk. 8:40-10:16	25. Ac. 16:16-18
10. Lk. 10:17-11	26. Ac. 19 & 20
11. Lk. 12 & 13	27. Ac. 21-23:11
12. Lk. 14-16:18	28. Ac. 23:12-25
13. Lk. 16:19-18:34	29. Ac. 26-28:15
14. Lk. 18:35-20:26	30. Psalm 74 • Ac.
15. Lk. 20:27-22:23	28:16-31 • Titus
	31. 1 Thessalonians

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People skills

Kenneth A. Cherney

Suppose you were about to undergo major surgery. You had a choice of two doctors. One was friendly, personable, and grossly incompetent. The other's bedside manner left a little to be desired, but there was no one better in an operating room. Which would you choose?

For me, this would be a no-brainer. A surgeon's knowledge and skill would be much more important to me than his personality.

I always thought most people would agree, but it turns out I was wrong. A surgeon in my family tells me that today the emphasis is on choosing a doctor with whom you personally "connect." People want a doctor who comes across as friendly and caring—and whether or not he knows what he's doing is a secondary consideration.

I suppose it should come as no surprise that that's how some people pick their doctors. For a long time now, it's been the way they've picked their pastors.

It wasn't always so. Once upon a time, people believed that a pastor's primary job was to interpret sacred texts for his flock. Certainly, he had to possess a good character and a love for God's people. If he also had a pleasant personality, that was a big plus. But the main reason church members went to a pastor was to learn what the Scriptures meant and how they applied to one's life. On the pastor's part, that required him to master a certain body of knowledge—namely, about the Scriptures and how to work with them—and to prepare himself for a career of rigorous intellectual work.

In her book *The Feminization of America*, Ann Douglas recounts how all that changed over the course of the 19th century. Of course, that happens to be the time when liberal theology began telling

people that the Scriptures were fundamentally unreliable. Understandably, the pastor's ability to work in the Scriptures became less important. Soon, the pastor's "people skills" became more than just an asset to his work. Getting people to like him was the pastor's work, all by itself.

Today, it's clear that many Americans no longer care about what their clergy actually know or teach. When researchers ask new members why they chose the church they did, "the pastor and his personality" is nearly always one of the first things they mention. You don't often hear about the pastor's "thorough Bible knowledge" or "sound doctrine."

How about us in WELS? Have knowledge and competence been replaced by charm in what we look for in a pastor? That would be tragic. Why? Because we don't go to church to spend time with the pastor, but to spend time with God. God comes to meet us, not in the pastor's warm smile or firm handshake, but in the Word the pastor speaks. Through the Word, God rebukes our sin, assures us of our forgiveness, consoles us in our troubles, and guides us on the path to heaven.

No mere man—not the nicest, most lovable man on earth—can do all that. But a pastor equipped with God's Word is more than up to the job. That's because it's the Word—not the pastor—that really does the work.

But if that's true, then our pastors had better know the Word as well as they possibly can. That demands thorough training. And that takes time, hard work, and money. Our synod has always believed, however, that well-trained pastors are worth the price.

I pray we always will.

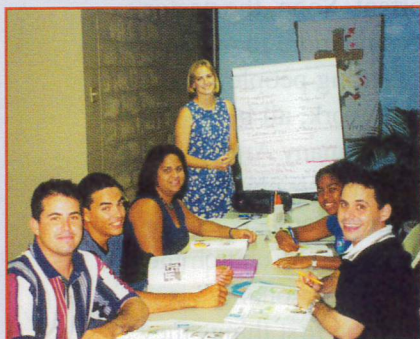
Ken Cherney is a professor at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota.

We don't go
to church to
spend time
with the
pastor, but to
spend time
with God.

Moving forward

From Puerto Rico to Wisconsin, Ecuador to Alaska, Forward in Christ

Julie K. Tessmer



Mollie Schweppe and one of her ESL classes in Puerto Rico.

Location: Guayama and Barrancas, Puerto Rico

Volunteers: Team ministry of Mollie Schweppe and Elizabeth Hake

Duration: Two years for each team member

Summary: Two Puerto Rican congregations began an English as a Second Language (ESL) program as an outreach tool in January. Already in October 2000, Mollie Schweppe went to help canvass and prepare for the ESL program. Elizabeth Hake is following in September 2001.

In an e-mail, Schweppe relates her ESL teaching experiences so far:

"We have now completed one nine-and-a-half-week class cycle. I taught a total of 47 students in five separate classes. . . . After the cycle ended I visited the students, often accompanied by one of the pastors. I am now in the middle of teaching another five classes for the second cycle.

"My students range from rowdy high school kids who spend much of class socializing, to retired people who love to spend whole class periods reminiscing about 'the good old days.' . . .

"I am continually surprised by their willingness to share their deepest concerns. One woman told us about the tragic death of her son and the lack of concern shown for her and comfort given her at the Catholic church she was attending. All her heartache of the past year came pouring out in response to a simple expression of interest in her spiritual well-being. . . . We will continue visiting her and comforting her with the gospel. . . .

"The ESL classes have been a good tool for developing friendships with people who need to hear the true gospel message of God's free forgiveness."



Location: Green Bay, Wisconsin

Volunteers: One pastor and 12 laypeople from six different congregations

Duration: Fall 2001-Fall 2002

Summary: "If Jesus really did die for all of my sins, and if he's forgiving everything I have ever done, and if he's the one who conquered death, then how come Lutherans look so bummed out when they come to church?"

A 24-year-old now-member of Saint Mark, Green Bay, Wis., asked this question, a question, according to Saint Mark's pastor, John Parlow, that many in her age group wonder about.

"She has no problem with the message," says Parlow. "She's just wondering how come people don't apply it."

Parlow hopes to discover what else young adults ages 19-35 think of the church's ministry. Through a Forward in Christ project, he wants to determine what we can do to minister more effectively to this difficult-to-reach age group and to create "experts" to help congregations with this important ministry.

To do this, Parlow will set up a task force of 12 young adults from six different WELS congregations—both congregations that have strong involvement of young adults and those that want to develop that ministry.

This task force will interview other young adults, create profiles of the youth ministries of the six involved churches and possibilities of what can be done, read and analyze books on the subject, visit non-WELS churches that have effective young adult programs, and publish their findings to help other interested WELS churches.

"Have you seen the WELS statistical report?" says Parlow. "We're losing that age group, and we're not alone."

But a large percentage of the U.S. population will be if we don't reach them.

Do you know how to reach out to young adults like these? A new study can give you ideas.

in Christ

volunteers are working to spread the Word.



Members of the Kodiak canvassing team at the Anchorage airport. Shepherd of the Hills, Anchorage, a neighboring congregation to Holy Trinity, Kodiak, provided fleece vests for the team so they were easily recognizable.

Location: Kodiak Island, Alaska
Volunteers: 12 Wisconsin Lutheran College (WLC) and University of Wisconsin–Madison students
Duration: May 23–30, 2001

Summary: Fishing is the theme of this trip—for fish and for men.

With one of the largest fleets of fishing boats in the world, Kodiak Island, Alaska, is a great place to finally “catch the one that got away.”

But besides using free time to catch those fish, 12 students, a WLC professor, and a WLC admissions counselor helped the small preaching station of Holy Trinity canvass and survey the entire city of Kodiak and staff a WELS booth at the annual crab festival.

Kodiak is a melting pot of cultures including Native Americans, Filipinos, and Koreans. “The students got a taste of cross-cultural outreach. It was an eye-opener to come into contact with people of different cultures,” says Fred Voss, pastor at Holy Trinity and at Shepherd of the Hills, Anchorage, Alaska.

Teamwork helped bring together this Alaskan outreach effort, according to Jeff Weber, admissions counselor at WLC. From the WLC advertising class (that developed the materials being used) to the campus pastors at the schools to members at Holy Trinity and the neighboring pastors that serve and have served there—all helped make it possible for these college students to become true fishers of men.



Location: Ecuador
Volunteers/students: 19 Martin Luther College Spanish students

Duration: May 20, 2001–June 20, 2001

Summary: No English allowed.

This statement isn’t meant to be exclusionary. It’s just one more way to completely immerse 19 Martin Luther College students in a study-abroad program.

These students spent seven hours a day for a month studying Spanish one on one with teachers from a language institute in Quito, Ecuador. They lived with host families and spent weekends traveling together throughout Ecuador, rehashing what they’ve learned and discovering more about the country’s culture and geography.

But why should the Forward in Christ thank offering help pay for that?

“This study abroad experience is providing the necessary language skills to reach the level where students can now be useful out in the mission field,” says Paul Bases, Spanish professor at Martin Luther College and coordinator of the program.

FIC funds will also help pay for these students and former students in the program to help congregations and missions with Spanish outreach during the spring break and summer of 2002.

Sam Degner, who has been on two of these study abroad programs, will be spending part of this summer in Mexico City, helping Missionary Larry M. Schlomer by following up on mission contacts, teaching vacation Bible school, and doing law/gospel presentations.

“I was hoping I could do something this summer to stay with the language and to use it in the kingdom,” says Degner, who will attend Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in the fall. “It’s a perfect opportunity.”

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Amy Pautz on a weekend outing in a previous Ecuador trip. Pautz will leave in January 2002 for Mexico City where she can use her Spanish gifts to further God’s kingdom. Pautz is being sponsored by WELS Kingdom Workers.

A SUCCESS STORY

When a Buddhist in Taiwan dies, a WELS missionary wonders, "What if . . . ?"

Kevin I. Stellick

About a year ago I met David Liau at my doctor's office. He knew who I was because his wife teaches at my daughter's elementary school. David talked about the Christmas nativity display that we had on the front of our home and how he liked to stop and stare at the scene. He was full of life, and his warm smile could bring a smile to anyone's face. We talked until the doctor called David into the exam room.

Subsequently, David found out that he had brain cancer. He was 41, married, with two small children. The doctors operated and removed one of seven cranial growths and then began to treat the others with chemotherapy. The doctors told David's wife, Tiffany, that the situation was grave. They gave David from six months to two years to live.

I visited David numerous times in the hospital and shared with him the hope and strength that Jesus gives us no matter what we face in life or in death. He seemed touched and receptive to the gospel. We prayed at each visit, asking for strength to face the future and for the Lord's leading as I shared more about God's grace.

Once he was released from the hospital, he still needed weekly chemotherapy. I tried to keep in touch and would often stop by his home. More often than not, I just left my calling card, as he was seldom reachable.

Just before Christmas, as I was walking by David's home, a car pulled up. David's parents got out, and I saw David in the back seat. They had just returned from a trip to the doctor as David had suddenly lost all use of his legs. We dragged him into his house, and he shared his present physical situation. He had spent most of the day at the hospital and was tired. We decided we should find another time to catch up on things, and I went home.

A few days later, I made a special trip to see David and to invite him and his family to our Christmas activities. Tiffany came to the door and said that David was resting. He had been violently throwing up most of the night. She and I talked about David's deteriorating condition. She could hardly get the words out between sobs. I prayed for Tiffany and let her know that we wanted to support her. She burst into uncontrol-

lable crying. I hugged her and prayed again, asking for strength and wisdom as she faced the unknown future.

Tiffany grew up as a nominal Catholic but after marrying David, followed his faith, Taiwanese Buddhism, which is a mixture of Buddhism and Taoism (spiritism). Commonly, in this culture the wife will follow her husband's faith. Although David was not a strong Buddhist, at various high festival times during the year, even the nominal Buddhist will do the worship rituals. At these times, Tiffany had to help with preparations for sacrifices to the gods of the underworld and David's ancestors.

Tiffany has never shown me any real knowledge of her previous faith and what Jesus had done for her. I do know, however, that every Christmas Eve, David, Tiffany, and their children would go to the Catholic church for Mass. I prayed that the Lord would still give me opportunity to minister to these hurting friends.

When I heard the news that David had died, my heart sank. David was close to my age. He shared many interests with me. His daughter and mine were friends.

But my heart didn't sink so much because he died. We knew that his time was short. My heart sank because I felt that perhaps I didn't do enough to bring David to his Savior. What could I, should I, have done differently? I felt I had failed David and his family. I felt I failed with the opportunity that God had given me. I felt I failed as a missionary.



Serina Wu and Kevin Stellick. Wu attends Stellick's Bible information class and is to be baptized June 22.

That night I kept wondering "what if?" What if I had been bolder in my sharing, more organized to see him on a regular basis? I prayed that I would be able to find David's family and that God would give me his words to comfort them.

Morning came, and I grabbed my Bible and prayed as I walked to their home. Once there I saw the doors and shutters all closed tightly and a white sign with black letters on the front gate. The sign read in Chinese characters "funeral in progress." David was really dead.

I rang the bell, but no one answered. Then I saw a company name and phone number on the bottom of the death notice. Following a phone call, I drove 25 minutes downtown to the city mortuary, the only place where wakes and funerals are held

other than in the person's own home.

At the mortuary, the wake was set up under a long, covered sidewalk. On a table covered with the golden saffron sheet used by the Buddhists was a framed photo of David. No smile! Behind the table a garage-size cooling room held his body, which was not visible. In front of the table, three Buddhist nuns chanted the Buddhist scriptures in a monotone, keeping cadence on special wooden blocks and small, tambourine-like instruments. Tiffany was seated closest to the table, following the chanting.



David Liao with his daughter and son.

It took my breath away to see the wake site, David's photo, and Tiffany. I had prayed for the chance to minister to her, and now, in the midst of darkest Buddhist paganism, the Lord answered my prayer. As the nuns chanted, Tiffany, her mother, and I moved further away and sat down. Words were few and slow. I expressed my sympathy and sorrow. She, weeping, tried to share the events of the last week.

With the drone of the Buddhist chanting in the background, I read Psalm 23 to them. I shared again the hope that Jesus gives us.

David knew of Jesus. Did he believe? Who can say? He did not evidence faith in Jesus in his life, but that does not rule out the possi-

bility that it was there. In human terms it seems unlikely that David believed, but we do not know.

We talked of the peace and the strength that Jesus gives us. He supplies all we need now and forever. He wipes away our tears and fears. I directed them to Revelation 7:13-17. I prayed for strength for Tiffany, now widowed with two small children. I prayed that the Lord would



A Buddhist nun in a line of wakes at a Taiwanese city mortuary.

lead her to know him more and would help her realize the peace and comfort his grace brings. She was thankful for the support and prayers. She asked me to come to the funeral on Sunday. I told her I would attend.

Was, is, this a success? Knowing Christ Jesus as our Savior makes us a success. Sharing the Savior is success, and God uses the witness to his ends.

Pray that the Lord would give us the strength to share his grace today, while there is still time. Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders. Make the most of every opportunity.



Kevin Stellick is a WELS missionary in Taichung, Taiwan.



HUGGING

It takes careful love to get around each other's

John L. Eich

A man went to his doctor covered in porcupine quills. "What happened?" asked the doctor. "I gave a porcupine a hug," responded the man. "What? Why on earth would you do that?" exclaimed the doctor. "Why not?" replied the man, "Porcupines need to be loved, too!"

"Porcupinish" people

We all know people who are a lot like porcupines. Each of us can be "porcupinish," too, with our attitudes and words jabbing those who try to get close. Christians can be like porcupines trying to keep warm on a winter's night. They draw close for warmth but then are forced apart by the pain they inflict on each other. Our selfishness, stubbornness, and lovelessness stick out like quills, jabbing everyone around us.

How do we deal with these prickly people? We need to follow Jesus' example. Remember how he reached out time and again to those who hurt him? When the Pharisees, Sadducees, and lawyers opposed him, Jesus would call them to repentance with the law and to faith with his love. Remember how the disciples often disappointed him, and yet he lovingly would call them back to him.

When I reflect on my own sinfulness, I'm sure I must feel like a spiny porcupine to Jesus. Every time he tries to draw me close, I jab him with

my sinful rebellions, my mixed-up priorities, and my apathy. Yet, lovingly, he calls me back to repentance with the law. Then, while I'm crushed, he hugs me close to his heart with the gospel.

It is always much more difficult to admit and correct the hurtful spines in our own lives than it is to see them in someone else.

When we develop some pain in our body, if we don't admit it, the problem may worsen and cause serious illness or even death. The first step towards stopping the hurts we porcupines cause is to be honest and admit that they exist. We cannot bury our heads in the sand, hoping that they will go away. They don't. They just get worse. We can't just ignore our own spiny points by saying, "That's just the way I am. They'll have to get used to it."

When we confront a brother or sister who has hurt us, we are to always confront one another in prayer, humility, honesty, and love. Both the offender and the confronter are sinners, equally in need of forgiveness. When we recollect those times we needed the forgiving and healing grace of God, we undergo the great

"equalizer," removing any sense of spiritual superiority. Our goal is to hug that person close to our heart through repentance and absolution.

There are several words in Scripture for this action. Two of the more common are "reconcile" and "restore." The word "reconcile" means, literally, to make enemies into friends. That's what Jesus has done and continues to do for us. He makes us friends with God by forgiving us our sin. That's why we too want to be reconciled with one another as brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus. How wonderful that is!

The other word, "restore," is a medical term for resetting a broken bone. When we reset a broken bone we don't yank on it. We exert just enough pressure to push it into place. When we attempt to reset a broken Christian, a gentle, firm pressure with law and gospel is much more beneficial than a yanking and twisting with violence or vehemence.

Conflicts can be resolved when people are willing to embrace the solutions found in Romans 12. Essentially, Paul advocates laying our minds, hearts, and wills on the altar of God as a living sacrifice so that we are able to completely fulfill God's will instead of our own personal agendas. Give your frustrations, disappointments, and hurt feelings over to the Lord instead of harboring feelings of anger. When we harbor

PORCUPINES

spines, and it takes humility to admit and correct our own spininess.

these feelings we open ourselves up to self-destructive attitudes, behaviors, and thoughts. As we lay them at the foot of the cross, Jesus' precious blood removes them, and his Holy Spirit helps us control them.

Spiny self

It is always much more difficult to admit and correct the hurtful spines in our own lives than it is to see them in someone else. Isn't it interesting that we have one list of terms to describe sin in us, but an entirely different list to describe the same sin in someone else? Others have prejudices; we have convictions. Others have foul tempers; we are seized with righteous indignation. Others shirk their responsibility, but it's not our job. We try to cover over our sin and in the process inflict more hurt on those around us—especially those who want to be close to us.

Here it takes work—a lot of work. In view of God's mercies toward us we should settle for nothing less than being Christ-like in our attitudes and actions. In Christ we have been crucified, dead, and buried to all of the old ways. We have been raised to new life and new ways. What do unrighteousness and hurt have to do with righteousness and love? Christ's forgiveness empowers us. Christ's love motivates us. Christ's example guides us to being less like porcupines in our own lives.



No, it's not easy hugging porcupines. They usually inflict more pain than they seem to be worth. It's never pleasurable to be around a grumpy, antagonistic person. It's never easy to respond in love when we are poked and stabbed by sharp tongues, pointed comments, and bristling attitudes. Still, the people who do that are worth the effort. They are blood-bought souls that God wants for eternity. They are

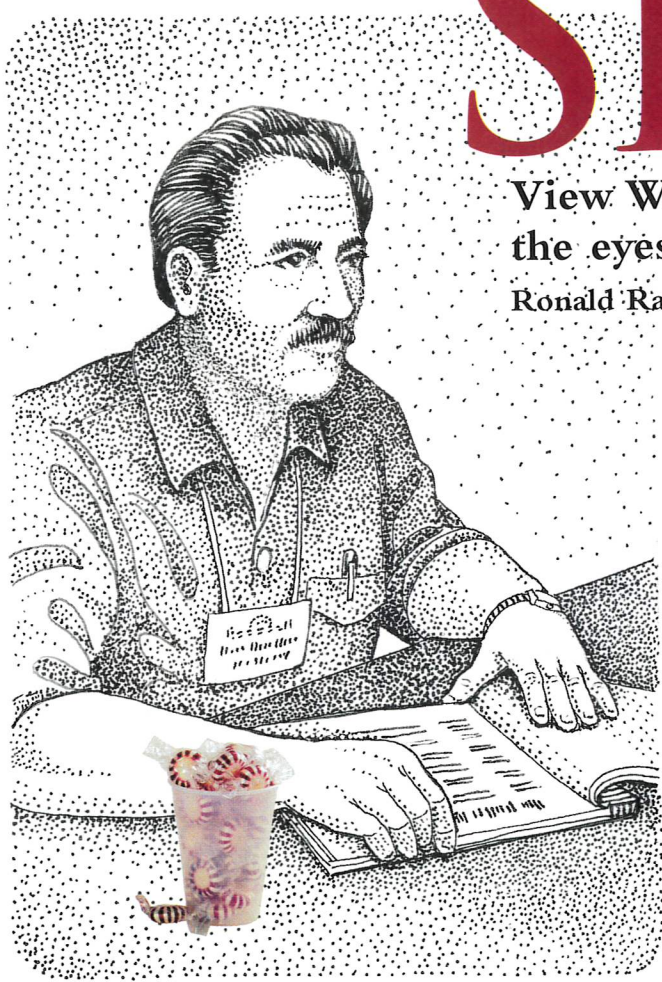
our brothers and sisters in the faith. They are our family and friends.

It takes gentle, firm love to get around their spininess. And it takes humility to admit and correct our own spininess.

No, hugging porcupines is never easy. But they need to be loved too.

John Eich is pastor at Grace, Alma/Zion, St. Louis, Michigan.

A JOY TO SERVE



View WELS' legislative process through the eyes of a lay delegate.

Ronald Rathke

of your congregation. There Lyle will be part of 399 voting delegates and 57 advisors, who will shape the vision and direction for the future and approve a specific program of WELS ministry for the next two years. To quote Paul Wirth, a delegate from Texas: "It's the visible church participating in the work of the invisible church."

Officially, the convention is the legislative body of WELS. It establishes, reviews, and amends the policies and the direction of WELS as we pursue our mission. (Article VII, *WELS Constitution and Bylaws*).

Lyle was chosen to attend the convention because it is his congregation's turn. He's one of 200 lay delegates, 115 pastoral delegates (five from world missions), and 84 teacher/staff minister delegates who will gather at Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, for five days beginning the last Monday in July. These men represent congregations, schools, and missions from around the world. All are selected using a defined rotation.

When asked why he was willing to take a week out of his life for this, Tim Suttle from Tennessee said: "It's not a week out of my life, but a week of my life to serve our gracious God who gave us eternal life."

Before the convention, Lyle will receive the primary source of convention business—the *Book of Reports and Memorials* (BORAM). All pastors, teachers, staff ministers, congregations, and lay delegates receive a copy. He will discuss the work and issues facing the convention at circuit, conference, or district meetings with other delegates and non-delegates, usually in May

You're going where? To the synod convention? Why? What's that? What do they do there?

Setting the scene

Lyle Layman*, from St. Hope Lutheran Church, is well prepared to answer these questions. "I'm going because I can be an integral part of our church body's ministry," he says. "I'm excited! It's an honor and a privilege to be able to serve in this way."

Lyle is talking about the upcoming biennial convention of WELS. You can compare it to the "voters' assembly"

or June. He, along with every voting delegate, will be appointed to a floor committee to evaluate, react to, and make recommendations to the convention about an assigned section of BORAM.

Arriving on the scene

Lyle is looking forward to having a memorable, uplifting experience at the opening communion service. Subsequently, he will devote the next five days to formal Bible study, floor committee meetings, elections, and open hearings on key issues. Floor committee reports and recommendations and debate will typically consume the balance of his week. In each working session he'll participate in an opening devotion. Advisory delegates (designated by the Conference of Presidents) will be available for consultation by his floor committee and all the others whenever needed.

You can compare [the synod convention] to the "voters' assembly" of your congregation.

The format of the convention not only addresses the needs of the delegates to be informed decisions makers, but also their need to grow spiritually and thus be totally prepared to vote for what is best to extend the Lord's mission through our synod. It's not all about approving a synod program. It's also a celebration of God's blessings on our ministry of the past and the nurturing of the delegates' faith.

"It is a unique opportunity and privilege to meet, encourage, and be encouraged by a cross section of the fabric of WELS—other



WHO IS ATTENDING THE SYNOD CONVENTION?

- One lay delegate per six congregations.
- One pastor for every 12 pastors.
- One teacher/staff minister for every 12 teachers/staff ministers.

Each delegate represents about 800 WELS communicants.



REMEMBERING A PAST SYNOD CONVENTION

"Memories of the last time linger in my mind. I was inspired by the awesome music and singing, choirs, my most interesting roommate, the issues, the sincere struggles of all delegates to serve their Lord, my own feeling of the Spirit during the convention."—Eugene Stemmann, a delegate from the Pacific Northwest District



dedicated Christian men," says Jude Peck from South Carolina.

And William Ekwere from Antigua: "One week out of my life to serve in this capacity can only enhance my spiritual growth and others by extension. It is always a joy to serve."

Leaving the scene

After the convention, as Lyle travels home, he will most likely think about the experiences he had. Perhaps he will remember the delegate he met from the Southwest, Paul Wirth, who commented: "The results of our work will affect lives around the world for years to come. What could be more important than the work of the church? My career pales in comparison."

Lyle may wonder about the fact that "as a synod we've established a plan to respond to our Savior's task to nurture the saved and seek the lost. But how will we carry it out?" His prayer: "Lord, only with your blessing will our plans succeed. May our zeal for the work and our passion for the lost be governed by the urgency of the convention theme—'Work while it is day.'"



Ron Rathke is the Northern Wisconsin District lay representative to the Synodical Council.

***Lyle Layman is typical of most of the lay delegates who will attend our synod's convention in Saginaw on July 30-Aug. 3, 2001. The other laymen quoted are all men who are delegates to this year's convention.**

Jesus provided the ultimate example of love. Consider showing your love for him and your fellow Christians by visiting senior members who need God's Word, a listening ear, or a helping hand.

VISITING FOR JESUS

Nicole R. Moline

What do you do to help senior members in your congregation? No, not what does your church do. What do you do?

According to Census 2000, there was a 38% increase in the number of people 85 or older in the last decade. That means that a growing portion of our population is reaching an age when they may need some form of help.

Almost every church does something to help older members. There are large-print hymnals, Bibles, and bulletins for those whose eyes are failing. There are hearing devices for those whose hearing is fading. Wheelchair ramps and lifts help those who have mobility problems.

But physical challenges are not the only challenges facing seniors. Many times spiritual and emotional challenges are just as difficult, if not even more difficult, to handle. And that's where you come in.



Each August, Wisconsin Lutheran Care Center, a senior living facility in Milwaukee, hosts Family Fest. Over 100 volunteers help with the event. Here Jenni Ehrke assists Clara Minor.

Visit with God's Word

"A layperson can visit an aging member and lead a devotion in a friendly way that doesn't need to go into deep theology," says Carl Ziemer, chairman of the Committee on WELS Ministry to the Aging and pastor at Christ, Zumbrota, Minn. "Pastor Randy Ott and I call it 'visiting for Jesus' in the workshops we present to train members to introduce a spiritual dimension to their visits to the aging."

Oftentimes older members can suffer from loneliness, depression, and boredom. The simple act of visiting can help alleviate these feelings.

"Many people do not even realize they can visit aging members," says Randy Ott, member of the Committee on WELS Ministry to the Aging and pastor at Trinity, Lake City, Minn. "They feel like that's the pastor's job. When I discuss it with them they usually react with, 'You mean I

can do that?' I believe that if we use the broader church family circle, there can be a lot that people can do that is really valuable and simple."

For example, members can share simple devotions, tapes of church services, and church bulletins during their visits to members who are not able to attend church services anymore. This can keep shut-ins spiritually active and connected with the church.

Joyce Schulz, a senior member

at St. Paul, New Ulm, Minn., visits residents at Oak Hills Living Center in New Ulm about three times per month. St. Paul and St. John in New Ulm have teamed up to conduct one worship service per week at Oak Hills. Schulz takes residents from their rooms to the chapel and plays the service's hymns on the piano. She says, "I like working with the elderly. This is one way of bringing Christ to them since they can't get to church. There are also residents who attend our service who aren't WELS, so we can bring Christ to them, too."

Visit with a listening ear

In addition to sharing God's Word on visits to seniors, try lending your ears to listen to their problems and concerns.

Pastor Bill Staab, founder of Uplifters, a program that trains lay counselors, recommends following a three-step process when a senior (or an adult of any age) wants to talk. First, be a listener.

"Most people do not want advice," says Staab. "They want someone to listen."

So, listen and identify in your mind the issues with which the senior is dealing.

Then, be a hearer. Process the information that is being spoken.

Finally, be a speaker. Use appropriate Scripture and prayer to help.

Visit with a helping hand

Many seniors can also use help carrying out everyday activities that are difficult or even impossible for them. Offer to provide transportation to doctor's appointments, grocery stores, and church services. Bring food that is easy to prepare and eat. Assist with household tasks like vacuuming and dusting.



RESOURCES TO HELP YOU VISIT FOR JESUS



- *God Our Refuge*, a pocket-sized devotion book available from WELS Commission on Special Ministries (CSM).
- Committee on WELS Ministry to the Aging Web site, <www.wels.net/sab/csm/aged.html>.
- Workshops presented by Pastors Carl Ziemer and Randy Ott.
- *Scripture Passages & Prayers: A Devotion Book* by Pastor Scott Carmichael, available from WELS CSM.
- *For Such a Time as This*, a three-volume compilation of 300 devotions previously printed in *Meditations*, available from Northwestern Publishing House (NPH).
- Hospital Devotions Series (four-part), produced by WELS CSM, available from NPH. These brief devotions are designed to be left with the hospitalized or shut-ins. Additional thoughts for meditation, a Scripture verse, devotion, and prayer are included.
- Uplifters training manual or 12-step training program, which teaches members of a congregation to be lay counselors. For more information, contact Bill Staab, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 952/432-5527; <w.staab@techemail.com>.

Contact WELS Commission on Special Ministries at 414/256-3241; <usr10@sab.wels.net> and Northwestern Publishing House at 800/662-6022.



CONDUCT A SURVEY OF NEEDS AND INTERESTS



Determine the needs and resources of senior members in your congregation. Design a survey to discover who the physically impaired in the congregation are, what their specific needs are, and what would help them participate more fully in the church. Also find out which able-bodied seniors would be interested in helping serve their less fortunate peers. This will give you a resource on which to base the ministries to seniors that are offered in your congregation and the volunteers who will help develop those ministries.

To see an example of such a survey, request the *Ministry with and for Seniors* handbook distributed by WELS Commission on Special Ministries, 414/256-3241; <usr10@sab.wels.net>.

These tasks may not be difficult for you, but they can ease the minds of those unable to perform these tasks for themselves. Just knowing that someone cares can also be comforting.

"The Lord has placed an amazing opportunity before us with the number of the aging population. Our own members need to be nurtured, and

the unchurched need to be found," says Ziemer.

Consider whether you are the right person to take advantage of this opportunity. Consider visiting a senior for Jesus today.



Nicole Moline is communications assistant for Forward in Christ magazine and WELS Communication Services.

Not unto us

Time's judgment will surely rate Eggert's "Not Unto Us" as his finest contribution to Christian hymnody.

Theodore J. Hartwig



Seldom has a poet complemented his hymn texts with his own musical compositions. This wedding of poet and musician was found in Kurt Eggert. His life, personally and professionally, may be described as a dedication to the joy of worship. This joy culminated in the leadership he gave to preparing the Wisconsin Synod's hymnal, *Christian Worship* (CW). In June 1993, however, shortly before the completed hymnal came off the press, Eggert, in his 70th year, was called to his Lord. It reminds one of Moses on Mt. Nebo.

Eggert's contributions to the hymnal were of three kinds: liturgical songs, melodies for the hymns of others, and his own texts and tunes.

For the liturgies, he composed musical settings for the hymn of praise in Service of Word and Sacrament, for the "Song of Mary" and the "Song of Simeon" in Evening Prayer.

For texts by other poets, he composed the robust melody to Franzmann's "In Adam We Have All Been One" (CW 396) and the stately melody to the final stanza of Gerhardt's "A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth" (CW 209). The hymn's unusual length meant that its last stanza was seldom reached because of time constraints—if not of modern impatience. By treating the stanza separately and joining it to a

melody truly majestic, Eggert rescued the comforting text for the more frequent use it deserves.

Time's judgment will surely rate Eggert's "Not Unto Us" (CW 392) as his finest contribution to Christian hymnody.

In four stanzas it interprets the opening verse of Psalm 115: "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us but to your name be the glory because of your love and faithfulness."

The hymn's first stanza refracts into a threefold divine gift about this love and faithfulness:

Not unto us, not unto us be
glory, Lord;
Not unto us but to your name
be praise;
Not unto us but to your name
all honor be giv'n
For matchless mercy, forgiveness,
and grace.

Stanza two rehearses the many dimensions of God's grace: election, redemption, justification, sanctification:

Amazing grace—that chose us
e'er the worlds were made;
Amazing grace—that sent your
Son to save;
Amazing grace—that robed us
in your righteousness
And taught our lips to sing glory
and praise.

The third stanza focuses on the Lord's inexhaustible patience in

shepherding us through our chronic strays and failings:

O faithful love—that shepherded
through faithless years;
Forgiving love—that led us to
your truth;
Unyielding love—that would
not let us turn from you
But sent us forth to speak
pardon and peace.

The final stanza closes fittingly with an expression of the quiet confidence of Christians waiting for their eternal home.

Not unto us but to your name
be glory, Lord,
For grace so rich, so wide, so
high, so free.
Abide with us till trav'ling days
are over and done,
And pilgrim feet lead us home,
Lord, to you.

Although the entire hymn is a prayer, it makes but one request, and that at the close: "Abide with us." In all other respects it glorifies God's gifts to us. It moves, like Luther's hymns, chiefly from God to us. This is worship at its highest. The text, quietly confident, is matched by a tune quiet, confident, almost yearning in quality. Through the years this hymn should win recognition as a classic of 20th-century hymnody.



Theodore Hartwig is a professor at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota.

Fulfilling a childhood dream

A senior seminary student reflects on his education and his upcoming assignment.

Jonathan Scharf is one of 31 men who graduated from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in May. We caught up with him before he received his first assignment and asked about his experiences so far. Here's what he said:

Q: What made you decide to become a pastor?

A: I first wanted to be a pastor as a little kid, because that is what my dad did. I remember playing church with my sisters on the basement steps. I'd be at the bottom "preaching," and they would all be off in the kitchen in the "mother's room" with their dolls.

During high school, I thought about other options, but none of them really struck me as vital. The more experience I got in working with the Word, with spreading the Word—the more interested I became in fulfilling that childhood dream.

Q: Did you ever feel overwhelmed by the eight years of school after high school?

A: There were and are times when the schooling drags, but I don't think I was ever overwhelmed. I think what helped out the most was that I was going to school with a great bunch of guys who all had the same goals. And as we got more and more tastes of the ministry, we found it tasted pretty good.

Q: What was the most difficult/challenging part of your education? The most rewarding?

A: Second grade—O.K., just kidding.

I don't know if I can pick one part. Aside from our salvation, nothing worthwhile or rewarding is easy (and that's only easy because God has done the hard part). There are challenges along the way, and that's a good thing.

The greatest rewards have come in these last years of schooling, as things came together and became clearer as my knowledge of Scripture grew. But even more spectacular (it seems) than personal growth is when I see growth in people God has used me to touch.

Q: What lessons did you learn from your vicar year?

A: The biggest thing I got from my vicar year [at Christ Our Savior, Columbia, Tenn.] was experience. . . .



Jon Scharf; his wife, Janette; and one of his children, Andrew. In May Jon received his first assignment as an elementary Hebrew instructor at Martin Luther College for one year.

I was privileged to see how much a group of God's people can accomplish when love for Christ is kept central and a love for the lost is acted on.

Vicar year was definitely great motivation for ministry, and my favorite part had to be the people. . . . As I served them with God's Word, they grew to love me and I them.

Recently I was back in Tennessee on choir tour, and a former prospect (now a member) told me how much it meant to her and her family that I had gone to their house and talked about Jesus. God had used me to share that life-changing message. God had used me to change their lives.

Q: How do you feel about receiving your first call?

A: Not really nervous, but excited. I have no reason to be nervous, because I have no say. I'm leaving where I'll be going in God's hands. . . . I'm just excited to find out where that is going to be. And I'm excited to meet the people I'm about to fall in love with.

Q: What words of encouragement would you give to those preparing to be pastors or to those uncertain of a future career?

A: Why not? God will provide for you no matter what occupation you choose. God has given you gifts. Why not use them in an occupation where you'll be in God's Word, where you'll have constant reality and priority checks, where you'll have the opportunity to help many people, and your own faith will grow as you continue your study of God's Word?



WISCONSIN LUTHERAN SEMINARY

Mequon, Wis.

At the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary graduation service on May 23, 31 graduates received their Master of Divinity degrees.



Jamie S. Brei
Belvidere, Ill.



Brian C. Doebler
Lindenhurst, Ill.



Timothy D. Dolan
Fond du Lac, Wis.



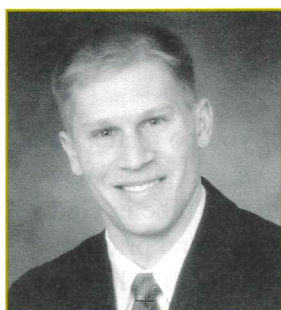
Arthur L. Faught
Siren, Wis.



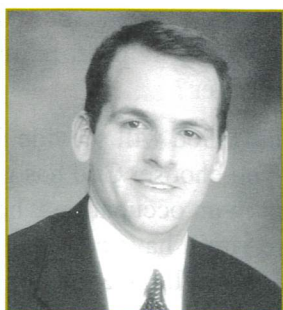
David C. Fleischmann
Hartford, Wis.



Harland H. Goetzinger
Muskego, Wis.



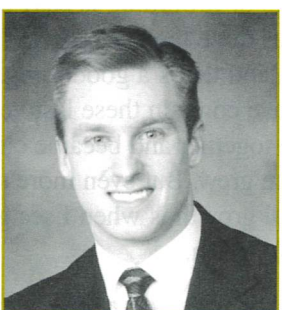
Jonathan P. Hackbarth
Lake City, Minn.



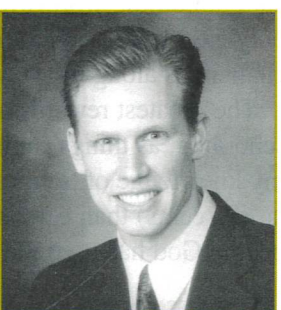
Joel S. Heckendorf
Jackson, Wis.



Stephen G. Helwig
Milwaukee, Wis.



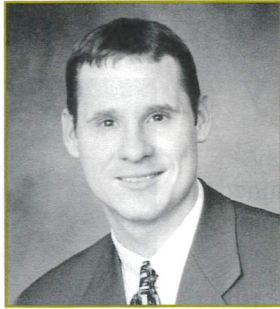
Matthew A. Holtz
Saginaw, Mich.



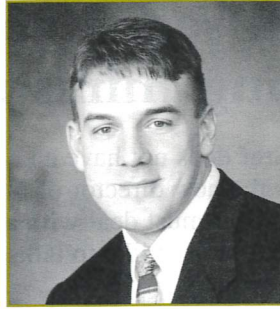
Christopher D. Johnson
Saginaw, Mich.



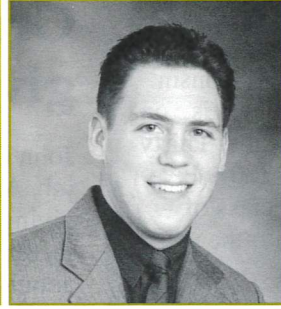
Joshua W. Kesting
Kewaskum, Wis.



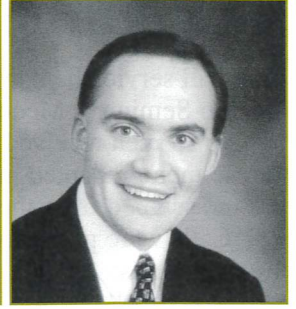
Matthew D. Krenke
Leesburg, Fla.



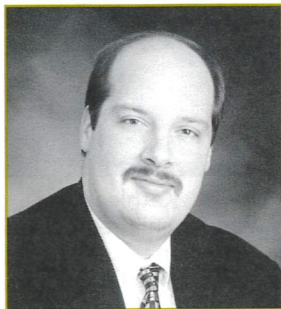
Joshua C. Martin
Muskego, Wis.



Richard M. Miller
Bay City, Mich.



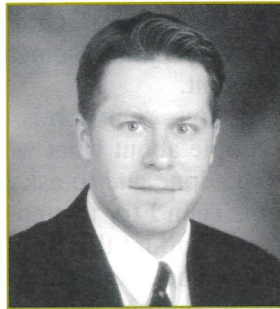
Scott J. Miller
Watertown, S.D.



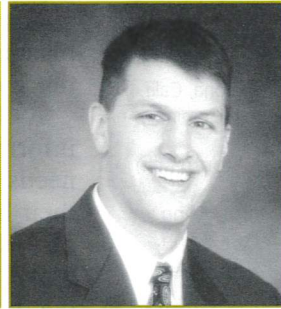
Luke J. Myslik
Abrams, Wis.



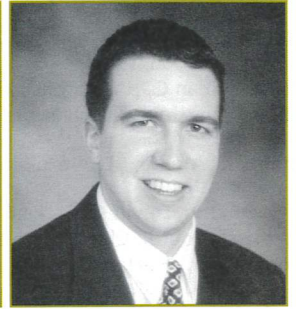
William R. Ritchie
Slinger, Wis.



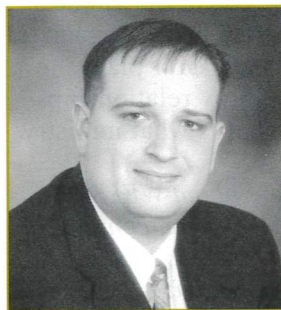
Mark J. Rohrback
Cudahy, Wis.



Jonathan E. Scharf
West Allis, Wis.



Kurt R. Schaser
Darien, Ill.



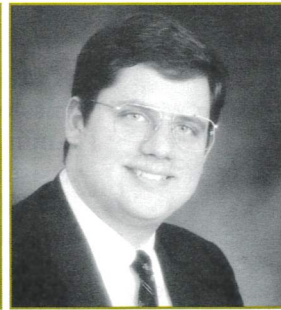
Christopher L. Schroeder
Oconomowoc, Wis.



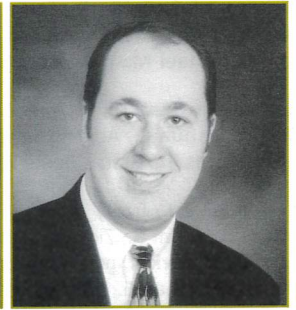
Paul T. Schulz
Greenfield, Wis.



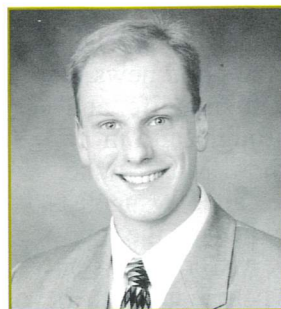
Andrew D. Schwartz
Saginaw, Mich.



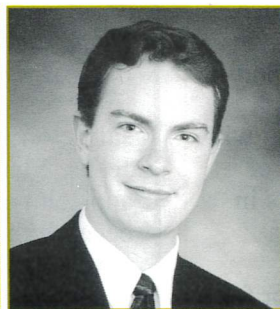
Michael G. Sheppard
Saginaw, Mich.



Johnold J. Strey
Cedarburg, Wis.



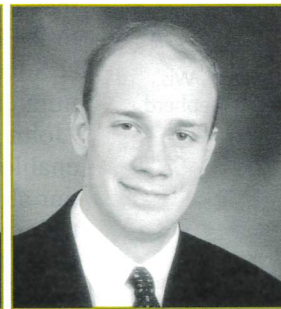
Michael P. Sullivan
Novosibirsk, Russia



Michael J. Weigand
West Bend, Wis.



James M. Werner
Belle Plaine, Minn.



Russell A. Wilke III
Redwood Falls, Minn.



Gary A. Wong
San Francisco, Calif.

Assignments

At the call service held at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis., on May 22, 35 men received calls. Thirty of those men graduated in 2001. Five were re-assigned from the class of 1999. Calls were placed into the following fields:

- Parishes: 20
- Home missions: 9
- World missions: 1
- Ministerial education schools: 5

Brauer, Bart A., exploratory outreach, Caledonia, Mich.
Brei, Jamie S., Our Redeemer, Wabasha, Minn./Grace, Nelson, Wis.
Doebler, Brian C., Hispanic outreach, Pomona, Calif.
Dolan, Timothy D., Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Mich.
Faught, Arthur L., exploratory outreach, Winchester, Va.
Fleischmann, David C., St. Paul, Morris, Minn.
Gawrisch, Joel J., Christ, North St. Paul, Minn.
Goetzinger, Harland H., St. Paul, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
Hackbarth, Jonathan P., King of Kings, Garden Grove, Calif.
Heckendorf, Joel S., St. Peter, Schofield, Wis.
Helwig, Stephen G., Gethsemane, Lee's Summit, Mo.
Holtz, Matthew A., Grace, Prairie du Chien, Wis.
Johnson, Christopher D., St. Paul, Algoma, Wis.
Kesting, Joshua W., Trinity, Englewood, Fla.
Kober, Michael M., missionary to Grenada, West Indies
Krenke, Matthew D., St. Peter, Milwaukee, Wis.
Martin, Joshua C., Abiding Savior, Killeen, Tex.
Miller, Scott J., Grace, Burke/Peace, Carlock/St. John, Herrick, S.D.
Myslik, Luke J., Trinity, Nicollet, Minn.
Ritchie, William R., Zion, Sanborn, Minn.
Rohrback, Mark J., missionary to Russia
Scharf, Jonathan E., Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn.
Schaser, Kurt R., Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis.
Schroeder, Christopher L., Hispanic outreach, Pomona, Calif.
Schulz, Jason A., Peace, Milbank/St. John, Summit, S.D.
Schulz, Paul T., Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis.
Schwartz, Andrew D., St. John, Florence, Wis.
Schwartz, Matthew E., Good Shepherd, Downers Grove, Ill.
Sheppard, Michael G., Trinity, Lincoln/St. John, Mio, Mich.
Strey, Johnold J., Gloria Dei, Belmont, Calif.
Sullivan, Michael P., Zebaoth, Milwaukee, Wis.
Weigand, Michael J., Peace, Holiday, Fla.
Werner, James M., Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn.
Wilke, Russell A. III, Amazing Grace, Florence, Ky.
Wong, Gary A., St. Paul, North Mankato, Minn.

Graf sets a course for planned giving ministry

John Graf does not have an easy job. As the new director of planned giving, Graf must deal with a subject many do not like to talk about—money.

How much money one has and what a person should do with that money are subjects that are very private, and that is what many people expect to discuss when they hear the words “planned giving.” Graf sees planned giving’s job as something much different.

As Graf says, “Our job is to inform people about what work needs to be done and to ask for their help. Then I try to step out of their way and let the Holy Spirit move them. The Lord will provide the direction and the blessing at all times.”

He adds, “I want to help WELS members learn that they can have a direct impact on the mission and ministry of WELS through their gifts for specific designated areas of mission and ministry such as a missionary or professor position, a ministry program, or student assistance.”

Graf, a 1967 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, began working as a WELS gift planning counselor in 1990. In March 2001, he accepted the call to be the director of WELS Ministry of Planned Giving. As director, Graf will train, guide, and support the 18 gift planning counselors so they can provide maximum service to WELS members.

South Atlantic District gift planning counselor Joel Raasch says, “John Graf can set a course that will enable us to make the best use of our abilities, and he can lead us in training that will help us better serve our members.”

Ronald Roth, the administrator for the Commission for Communication on Financial Support and former



John Graf and his wife, Kathleen (pictured above), have four children—Heidi, Matthew, Ethan, and Anna. Graf credits Kathleen with balancing his life and lending him perspective on his ministry.

director of planned giving, agrees. He anticipates that “John Graf will better equip gift planning counselors to serve God’s people. He will be a trainer, a supporter, and an organizer.”

Most important, Graf plans “to serve God in all my relationships with people. That is what ministry is all about.”

To learn more about WELS Ministry of Planned Giving, contact John Graf at 414/256-3206; <jmgraf@sab.wels.net>.

DEFINING RELIGION

Evangelist: one who proclaims the gospel, the good news of forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation through faith in Jesus. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are called evangelists because they penned the four Gospels. Every Christian is an evangelist when he tells others about the Savior.

East Fork Lutheran High School's ministry important to Apache mission

East Fork Lutheran High School has been educating Apache Lutheran teenagers in the Lutheran faith for 53 years.

Abel Classay has been attending WELS schools on the mission since his infancy, beginning as a child at East Fork Nursery. He graduated from East Fork Lutheran High School (EFLHS) in 2000. Now he, along with three other former EFLHS students, is attending Martin Luther College (MLC), New Ulm, Minn. Two more former EFLHS students will join them at MLC next year.

Classay credits the teachers at East Fork Lutheran High School for encouraging him to go on in the teaching ministry. He wants one day to return to his Apache people and teach at the high school. He says, "My experience at East Fork greatly affected me both spiritually and educationally. Where I come from it is known that the best education you can get on the reservation is at East Fork. But more important to me was the daily contact with God's Word, and for this I thank

my pastors and teachers."

Located on the White Mountain Apache Reservation of Eastern Arizona, the school currently educates 74 students in grades 9-12.

Some exciting programs have developed there in the past several years. Our mission outreach to the Navajo people of northern New Mexico uses East Fork students to teach vacation Bible school (VBS), conduct teen outreach, and teach Bible study to the Navajo people.

The teens have also been active in summer VBS programs in local Apache congregations. In the past two years, more than 200 WELS laypeople worked with EFLHS students on service projects, VBS, and retreats.

This coming summer, youth groups from Texas, Idaho, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin will join EFLHS students at a retreat at the East Fork Mission. It will be an opportunity for young people from across the nation, and across cultures, to share common teenage struggles, experiences, and most important, their common Christian faith.

For 53 years, WELS supported the mission and ministry of East Fork Lutheran High School spiritually and financially. The school is now in the midst of a transition in which WELS is helping the Apaches take ownership of the school. Just over 18 months ago an all Apache Board of Control for the school was formed. The board has assumed a leadership role over the school. They have developed



In 1999, six students from East Fork Lutheran High School went to Farmington, N.M., to help with outreach to the Navajos. They were (from left to right) Jamie Hughey, Abel Classay, Natrissa Quintero, Joelinda Dude, Francine Quintero, and Jarred Truax.

new programs for the financial support of the school. The board has also renewed its effort to promote its ministry among the eight Apache Lutheran congregations. A thrift store using many Apache volunteers has begun operation, and an alumni association has been formed.

In the past, the eight Apache congregations that support this ministry to Apache teens have received subsidy from WELS to help them run the high school. However, for this ministry to continue, additional support must now come from individual WELS members.

For more information on how you can help, contact the WELS Planned Giving Office, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398; 800-827-5482; <pgm@sab.wels.net>.

Jeffrey Gunn



Carlita Lewis, a graduate of East Fork Lutheran High School, studying for an exam at Martin Luther College. Lewis has already emergency taught for a semester for grades 5-6 at East Fork Lutheran Grade School in Whiteriver, Ariz. She will graduate from the five-year program at MLC in 2003.



Meet the editorial staff—uncut

Ever ask yourself, “Who are these people who write for Forward in Christ magazine?” Through this series you can find out. Read on:

A planter of seeds

Throughout the Bible, God uses farming metaphors to explain how his Word is spread. He talks about sowing and reaping, about plants and crops. As an avid gardener, this is the type of metaphor that Thomas Andrew Westra can understand and embrace.

As a *Forward in Christ* magazine “thought for today” writer, Westra plants seeds of insight through his devotions.

As a father of three, Westra plants God’s Word and will in his children’s hearts. He says, “My greatest blessing has been to watch my own children grow in their faith.” His sons, Matthew and Mark, are 16 and 14 years old. His daughter, Emily, is seven. He struggles to balance the responsibilities of the public ministry with his responsibilities as a husband and father.

“It seems like the time flies by so

quickly,” explains Westra. “One day you’re bringing newborns to the font, knowing that God is making them his children in Holy Baptism, and the next they’re standing in front of church singing of Jesus’ love. Then one day they’re accompanying the school choir on the piano, and you’re witnessing them make their confirmation promises. In no time at all, it seems they’ve moved off to school, considering full-time work in the church. You find yourself a little sad that it all went by so quickly, and you find yourself a lot thankful that God has been working in their hearts all this time.”

As a pastor at Beautiful Savior, Cincinnati, Ohio, Westra plants and waters seeds of faith, rejoicing when the Word takes root and produces a crop. He says, “One of the blessings of having served in one location for a while is seeing a young person who was just a little girl when I got here, now teaching Sunday School, helping little people learn about the Savior’s love. Or seeing young people I



Tom Westra and his wife, Carol, stand with their children (from left), Mark, Emily, and Matthew.

baptized as infants now participating in the choir. Or watching a young man I had the privilege of teaching in confirmation class standing in the pulpit as a seminary student, preaching the Sunday sermon.”

Throughout his life, Westra has worked hard to produce a harvest for the Lord. He looks forward to the “best day” when “I see my Savior’s face, and I will be with my family and friends, together, in his presence.”

WELS news briefs

These updates are from the offices at the synod administration building. You can contact these offices and administrators at 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398.

Board for Home Missions

414/256-3286

At the Board for Home Missions meetings in February and April:

Mission status was granted to Risen Savior, Orlando, Fla.; Resurrection, Verona, Wis.; Lamb of God, Madison, Ala.; Cross of Glory, Peoria, Ariz.; Faith, Tallahassee, Fla.; and Living Water, Oshkosh, Wis.

New manpower was authorized for East Flagstaff, Ariz.; Winchester,

Va.; and Caledonia, Mich., as new outreach efforts; for Montrose, Colo., and Englewood, Fla., as restarts; for a staff minister in support of the Boise, Idaho, Vietnamese outreach; for a full-time missionary-pastor in Grenada; for a two-pastor Hispanic Outreach Team for Pomona, Calif.; and for a staff minister for existing outreach efforts in the Inland Empire area east of Los Angeles.

Facility planning authority was granted to Mountain Valley, Eagle, Colo.; Lamb of God, Madison, Ala.; Living Hope, Savage, Minn.; Living Hope, Midlothian, Va.; and Living Water, Wind Lake, Wis.

Land search authority was granted to Manhattan, Kan., and

Jacksonville, Fla.

Chino Hills, Calif., was **discontinued** by action of the District Mission Board.

Commission on Adult Discipleship

414/256-3277

About 150 people attended “**Connecting in Christ**,” a **networking workshop for large congregations** held in Milwaukee in February. There they had the opportunity to share ideas, learn from each other, and encourage one another.

WELS Historical Institute
Extra copies of an eight-minute video showing the work of the

Historical Institute have been made. The tapes are free except for \$2.50 for postage. To order, contact Mrs. Naomi Plocher, 216 Deerfield Rd, P.O. Box 237, Marshall WI 53559.

Commission on Worship
414/256-3265

The third National Conference on Worship, Music, and the Arts will be held July 21-24, 2002, at Carthage College, Kenosha, Wis. Small parishes will be a significant focus of the conference.

Commission on Evangelism
414/256-3287

Seventy-one congregations were served in **10 Schools of Outreach in 2000**. In 2001, 10 schools are scheduled in nine districts. Congregations interested in attending or hosting a School of Outreach should contact their district evangelism coordinator

or the evangelism office.

Commission on Youth Discipleship
414/256-3274

A new kind of Christ-Light® material is available. C lessons are short Bible studies for grades 3-4 and 5-6. There is no teacher's guide, just a full-color 8 1/2 x 11 four-page leaflet. The leaflet consists of a contemporary picture and related story to introduce the lesson, a portion of Scripture with study questions (answers on the back), a memory treasure, and suggested discussion/application questions and projects. Old Testament lessons are available. To order, contact Northwestern Publishing House at 1-800-662-6022.

Over 400 people attended **two annual Sunday school teachers' workshops** under the theme "Shepherding the Sunday school" held this

past January and February. Two more workshops will be presented in 2002—one in Wisconsin Dells on Jan. 19, the other in Minnesota, date and time to be determined.

Forward in Christ celebration

Because of funding from Aid Association for Lutherans and Lutheran Brotherhood, **WELS was able to have some special additions to our 150th anniversary** celebration including banners, road signs, and district committee funding.

Volunteers are welcome to participate in Forward in Christ mission projects. Lay volunteers should call WELS Kingdom Workers at 1-800-466-9357; <kingwork@wkw.wels.net>. Pastors, professors, and teachers (active or retired) should contact Gene Ludwick, <eludwick@sab.wels.net> or their district president, principal, etc.

LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE

In the spirit of Matthew 5:16, we're sharing examples of people who live their faith. If you have an example to share, send it to us at 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398; <fic@sab.wels.net>.

Mom had collected teddy bears for several years. After Dad was gone, the bears became a more routine part of her apartment's decor.

During our Christmas visit, Mom asked me to come with her to visit Meme in the infirmary section of the facility where Mom lives. She picked up three bears to take along. One played Christmas carols, one was kneeling in prayer, and the newest one was pure white.

We walked through the hallways from independent living to assisted living and then took the elevator upstairs to the infirmary. I said a silent prayer that Mom would never

have to be moved here. The residents were in various stages of awareness. We smiled and greeted many as we made our way to Meme's room. I remembered Meme from my youth, an active lady at church, always serving in some way.

Meme was on her bed, eyes open, but not alert to our presence. Mom went to her side. Ignoring Meme's blank stare, Mom spoke loudly as she placed the first bear in her hands and told her that this bear was praying. She told her it was Christmas and that we were celebrating Jesus' birthday. Then she pressed the button on the caroling bear that played "Silent Night." Mom reminded Meme of the words, "Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born. . . ."

Then, she placed the pure white bear in Meme's arms and moved her hands so that she was soothed by its softness and beauty. I was reminded that because of Jesus, our heavenly Father sees us as white as snow. Mom told Meme that she would



Lorene Leberecht and one of her many teddy bears.

probably be in heaven soon with her husband and that she herself was ready to join Dad there too.

When it was time to go, she reluctantly removed the bear from Meme's arms. Along the hallway, Mom played carols and talked to more residents, telling them that it was Jesus' birthday. Her visit brought smiles to many faces. I was in awe of her simple confession.

*Lois Meier
Adrian, Michigan*



District news

Arizona

Members of **Shepherd of the Valley, Surprise, Ariz.**, dedicated their sanctuary on Feb. 11. In 1997, Shepherd of the Valley was given exploratory status. Since then, its membership has tripled and now totals 143 baptized members.

Minnesota

On Apr. 1, 450 people attended the Forward in Christ hymn festival held at **Martin Luther College (MLC), New Ulm, Minn.** Musical selections traced the song of God's grace through the ages. A highlight was the premiere of "Six Motets from Isaiah," written by Dr. Carl Schalk for MLC's choirs. There were over 400 choir members, making for an assembly of over 800 worshippers.

Western Wisconsin



The high peak of Hope, Belvidere, Ill., was destroyed by wind on Apr. 11. The 85-ft. peak and a 25-ft. by 30-ft. section of the roof were carried by the wind into a neighbor's yard. The rest of the structure stands, but extensive reconstruction is necessary and will probably not include another high peaked roof. No one was in the building or on the church grounds at the time of the damage.

South Central

The district opened a campground, **Camp Shiloh**, in Pittsburg, Tex. Builders For Christ worked on the buildings of the 15-acre facility positioned by Lake Bob Sandlin. All WELS members are invited. For more information, visit the Camp Shiloh Web site, <www.dfw-wels.org/shilohlutheranretreat/index.html>.

Northern Wisconsin



The year 2000 marked the 50th anniversary of Rowena Gorz's service as organist at St. Paul, Algoma, Wis. Gorz has many interesting anecdotes from her years as St. Paul's organist, including having to "wing it" when a hesitant groom showed up 15 minutes late for his own wedding.

Southeastern Wisconsin

Shoreland Lutheran High School, Somers, Wis., had its Youth Mission Festival 2001 on Apr. 11. The service consisted of student speakers, chancel dramas, Shoreland Choir and Festival singers, and the Shoreland band. The festival focused on WELS' mission in Japan. Violinist **Heather Braun**, a junior at Wisconsin Lutheran High School, Milwaukee, won the 2001 Milwaukee Youth Symphony Orchestra Senior Symphony Concerto Competition. She also won a full scholarship to be part of the 2001 Young Artist Orchestra at the Boston University Tanglewood Institute, a summer music program where aspiring musicians undergo intense training.

Western Wisconsin

Beautiful Savior, Spooner, Wis., dedicated a new organ and an educational wing in September 2000. Members are also currently conducting a satellite ministry in Siren, 30 miles west of Spooner, and are opening a preschool in September 2001.

On Apr. 27-29, **St. Matthew, Winona, Minn.**, hosted the School of Outreach for 85 attendees, representing 11 congregations in the district. Pastors Bob Hartman, Jim Radloff, Chuck Westra, and Wayne Schulz led the sessions. The overall goals of the seminar were to assist congregations in outreach to the unchurched and to help them find ways to more effectively activate their members in the ministry of the church.

On Mar. 10, the girls basketball team of **Lakeside Lutheran High School, Lake Mills, Wis.**, won the division three state championship at the Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association Tournament.

South Atlantic

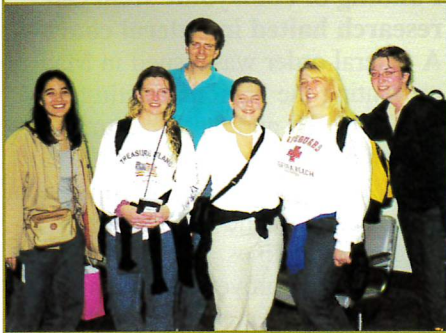
Bob and Rhoda Grebe, members at Ascension, Sarasota, Fla., are assisting our WELS missionary in Thailand through WELS Kingdom Workers.

Southeastern Wisconsin



Kyle Bubolz, a member at Christ the Lord, Brookfield, Wis., broke three national swimming records for 13-/14-year olds between Mar. 9-11. The records set were in the 50-yard freestyle, the 100-yard freestyle, and the 100-yard butterfly. He also set a national high school record for the 100-meter butterfly on Jan. 19.

South Atlantic



College students (from left) René Fink, Karen Lindwurm, Celia Guild, Melissa Kuxhaus, and Mary Potratz canvassed about 1,100 homes for Faith, St. Petersburg, Fla. They were joined by Pastor Henry Koch (above) and two teens from Faith's youth group. About 180 families were identified for future contact.

On April 8, kickoff services took place at **Living Savior, Asheville, N.C.**; **Beautiful Savior, Clarksville, Tenn.**; and **Saving Grace, Mobile, Ala.** All spent the last year doing extensive outreach and have prospect lists ranging from 250 to 700-plus.

The week of Mar. 18-25, **Living Word, Johnson City, Tenn.**, hosted an eight-person travel-canvass-witness team from St. Mark, Watertown, Wis. The team included four eighth-graders and two high school students. Living Word's youth are planning to do ministry at St. Mark this summer.

Happy Anniversary!

MN—A special service was held on Apr. 29 at Christ, Marshall, Minn., to celebrate **John Festerling's** 25th anniversary in the teaching ministry.

These pastors are the reporters for the districts featured this month: AZ—Kenneth Pasch; MI—Geoffrey Kieta; MN—Jeffrey Bovee; NW—Joel Lillo; SA—Mark Haefner; SC—Peter Snyder; SEW—Scott Oelhafen; WW—Elton Stroh.

Michigan



On Feb. 11, members of St. Matthew, Benton Harbor, Mich., gave thanks for the 58 years Aneita Mummaw has sung in the congregation's choir. Here Pastor Paul Naumann presents Mummaw with a token of appreciation as the choir looks on.

Obituaries

Leola Scheppe
1910-2000

Leola Scheppe (nee Roesler) was born June 14, 1910, in Dale, Wis. She died Dec. 19, 2000, in New London, Wis.

In 1937, Scheppe accompanied her husband, William, to Nigeria, where he served as the first WELS missionary overseas. Scheppe also taught at Bethlehem, Hortonville, Wis., and Emanuel, New London, Wis.

Scheppe was preceded in death by her husband, William, and one sister. She is survived by one daughter, two sons, 10 grandchildren, six great-grandchildren, a brother, and a sister.

Edgar J. Greve
1924-2001

Edgar Greve was born Aug. 25, 1924, in LeSeur County, Minn. He died Mar. 19, 2001, in Somers, Wis.

A 1950 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis., Greve served WELS missions in

Nigeria and Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia); Fox Valley Lutheran High School, Appleton, Wis.; Mount Olive, Appleton; and Shoreland Lutheran High School, Somers, Wis.

Greve was preceded in death by his wife, Helen (nee Jaeger). He is survived by two sisters, two daughters, and 10 grandchildren.

Delmer James Harders
1930-2001

Delmer Harders was born Apr. 25, 1930. He died Mar. 15, 2001, in Benton, Kan.

In 1984, Harders joined WELS through colloquy from the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. He served Faith, Pittsburg, Kan., and Zion/St. Paul, Colome, S.D.

Harders was preceded in death by his daughter, Sheila; and two brothers. He is survived by his wife, Leila (nee Barger); two sons, two daughters, 11 grandchildren, three brothers, two sisters, and many nieces and nephews.

Marcus F. Liesener
1911-2001

Marcus Liesener was born July 29, 1911. He died Apr. 8, 2001, in Milwaukee, Wis.

A 1936 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis., Liesener served Trinity, Brillion; Grace, Wausau; St. Peter, Juneau; and North Trinity, Milwaukee, all in Wisconsin.

He is survived by his wife, Gerda (nee Rathke); four children, 10 grandchildren, and eight great-grandchildren.

Jane A. Price
1953-2001

Jane Price was born Jan. 21, 1953, in Appleton, Wis. She died Apr. 24, 2001, in Kaukauna, Wis.

A 1976 graduate of Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., Price served Immanuel, Hadar, Neb.; St. John, Redwood Falls, Minn.; and Trinity, Kaukauna, Wis.

Price is survived by her mother, six brothers, three sisters, and nieces and nephews.

CONGREGATION MISSION SUBSCRIPTION PERFORMANCE

	Total Subscription		Offerings Received				
	Communicants 12/31/99	2001	Year to Date Projected	March Offerings	Three Months' Offerings	Percent of Sbscrptn	Annld Ave Per Commun
Three Months Ended March 31, 2001							
Arizona-California	17,808	\$1,097,663	\$222,646	\$90,103	\$250,702	112.6%	\$56.31
Dakota-Montana	9,121	458,255	67,008	23,343	72,704	108.5	31.88
Michigan	36,334	2,224,331	447,229	178,781	399,700	89.4	44.00
Minnesota	43,184	2,502,475	407,211	140,626	410,097	100.7	37.99
Nebraska	10,414	642,715	99,927	45,936	113,237	113.3	43.49
North Atlantic	4,116	370,944	79,173	22,320	83,164	105.0	80.82
Northern Wisconsin	60,948	2,709,300	512,626	169,541	426,650	83.2	28.00
Pacific Northwest	5,133	310,331	57,574	24,943	72,305	125.6	56.35
South Atlantic	7,060	589,766	128,347	49,376	122,933	95.8	69.65
South Central	4,710	518,829	105,207	44,769	117,885	112.1	100.11
Southeastern Wisconsin	57,211	3,516,785	568,129	239,150	570,264	100.4	39.87
Western Wisconsin	59,598	3,241,371	583,765	195,638	596,918	102.3	40.06
Total — This Year	315,637	18,182,765	3,278,842	1,224,526	3,236,559	98.7	41.02
Total — Last Year	315,637	17,810,601	3,155,037	1,309,163	3,240,683	102.7	41.07

CURRENT BUDGETARY FUND

Statement of activities

	9 months ended March 31		
	2001 Actual	2000 Actual	2001 Budget
Changes in Unrestricted Net Assets			
Revenues:			
Congregational Mission Offerings	\$13,119,627	\$13,215,713	\$13,613,200
Gifts and memorials	4,888,928	2,777,115	3,876,000
Bequest/planned giving	1,136,493	907,445	862,300
Tuition and fees	9,482,237	8,289,078	9,233,700
Other	124,821	111,325	129,000
Transfers-endwmt earnings	169,201	257,618	216,700
Transfers-gift funds	9,400,006	8,433,417	9,317,500
Transfers-continuing programs	2,452,415	2,765,754	3,141,400
Transfers-other	3,362	-	-
Total revenues	40,777,090	36,757,465	40,389,800
Expenditures:			
Home Missions	8,118,266	7,394,383	7,854,200
World Missions	6,739,676	6,357,757	7,321,000
Ministerial Education	19,112,969	17,105,895	19,456,500
Parish Services	1,503,825	1,376,279	1,727,300
Administrative Services	4,213,344	3,964,881	5,057,200
System Wide	243,144	189,380	525,800
Total expenditures	39,931,224	36,388,575	41,942,000
Changes in unrestricted net assets	845,866	368,890	
Changes in Temp Restricted Net Assets			
Gifts and memorials	-	-	-
Bequest/planned giving	-	-	-
Change in value of trust agreements	-	-	-
Change in temp restricted net assets	-	-	-
Net assets - beginning of year	4,350,503	4,170,081	
Net assets - end of period	5,196,369	4,538,971	

Statement of Financial Position

	Mar. 31, 2001	Mar. 31, 2000
Assets:		
Due from other funds	2,587,083	2,130,404
Accounts receivable-cash adv.	124,250	125,250
Other accounts receivable	232,925	207,564
Contributions receivable	3,648,200	3,454,400
Mortgage note receivable	9,499	11,764
Allowance for doubtful accts	(45,100)	(47,300)
Prepaid expenses	60,487	87,100
Total assets	6,617,344	5,969,182
Liabilities and Net Assets:		
Due to schools	1,299,867	1,391,329
Accounts payable	121,108	38,882
Total liabilities	1,420,975	1,430,211
Unrestricted	1,548,169	1,084,571
Temp restricted	3,648,200	3,454,400
Total net assets	5,196,369	4,538,971
Total liab. and net assets	6,617,344	5,969,182

Mark Meissner, director of finance

World news

Funding of embryonic stem cell research halted in federal court—

A federal order was issued in May preventing the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) from funding human embryonic stem cell research while HHS reviews funding guidelines.

It has been proven that stem cells can be taken from sources such as bone marrow, placental tissue, umbilical cord blood, and adult stem cells.

Pastor Robert Fleischmann, national director of Christian Life Resources, stated, "We are pleased that funding for this research has stopped. We hope the NIH will aggressively pursue funding of stem cell research that does not risk unborn life or lend credibility to a process of intentionally terminating unborn life after conception."

Christian Life Resources is not opposed to stem cell research, only research in which the life of an unborn child is ended.

LifeWire, May 11, 2001

Handwritten Bible in the works—

Saint John's Abbey and University, Collegeville, Minn., has commissioned a handwritten illuminated Bible, created by scribes in Wales.

"It draws attention to the core inspiration of Benedictine monasticism, its relationship to the Word of God," says Dietrich Reinhart, president of Saint John's University, which was founded by Benedictine monks in the 1850s.

The seven-volume Saint John's Bible, which will take six years to create, will be about 1,000 pages long and over 15 inches wide and 23 inches tall. It will be created on vellum using goose quills and handmade inks, but will incorporate contemporary fonts, scripts, and artwork reflecting modern biblical themes.

One of the last enormous manuscript Bibles like this was commissioned by the Benedictines in 1168.

**CHANGES IN MINISTRY****Pastors**

Barlow, Michael T., to Cross, Rockford, Minn.
Castillo, James A., to St. Paul, Slinger, Wis.
Green, Darren L., to St. John, Montrose, Colo.
Kock, Mark A., to Trinity, Osceola, Wis.
Krenke, David A., to retirement
Liggett, James D. Jr., to gift planning counselor, Milwaukee
Mau, Kevin R., to Atonement, Baltimore, Md.
Meyer, Timm O., to Redeemer, Norton, Kan./Water of Life, Alma, Neb.
Otto, Joel D., to Reformation, San Diego, Calif.
Piepenbrink, Fredric, to West Cobb County exploratory, Ga.
Radloff, James J., to Grenada exploratory
Seafert, Larry F., to Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw
Tesch, Jon E., to Trinity, Marinette, Wis.
Unke, Timothy A., to Trinity, Manitowoc, Wis.
Waldschmidt, Richard, to St. Jacobi, Greenfield, Wis.
Wilde, Philip P., to Zion, Bristol, Wis.

Teachers

Abts, Kay L., to St. Matthew, Winona, Minn.
Adams, Dolores J., to retirement
Babinec, James M., to Bethany, Kenosha, Wis.
Bauer, Megan L., to Beautiful Saviour, Carlsbad, Calif.
Bilitz, Daniel E., to Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee
Britton, Jodeen R., to Good Shepherd, Burnsville, Minn.
Carlovsky, Jill A., to St. Peter, Schofield, Wis.
Cole, Michelle M., to St. Paul, Saginaw, Mich.
Conrad, Charlotte J., to Peace, Hartford, Wis.
Ehlers, Tama A., to Zion, Chesaning, Mich.
Engelbrecht, Jon E., to St. Matthew, Stoddard, Wis.
Fitzsimmons, Sadie Jo, to St. Croix LHS, West St. Paul, Minn.
Goodger, Janice L., to Word of Life, Milwaukee
Grambsch, Chad R., to Word of Life, Milwaukee
Gray, Lisa A., to St. Matthew, Iron Ridge, Wis.
Hartwig, Ryan, to St. Croix LHS, West Saint Paul, Minn.
Heup, Howard F., to retirement
Hinz, Nathan W., to Crete, Crete, Ill.
Kahrs, Mark A., to Divine Savior, Indianapolis, Ind.
Kohlstedt, Jennifer, to Eastside, Madison, Wis.
Krueger, Faye E., to Divine Grace, Lake Orion, Mich.
Kuehl, Tammy R., to Trinity-St. Luke, Watertown, Wis.
Lange, Tina A., to St. John, Waterloo, Wis.
Leckwee, Dennis D., to Grace, Kenai, Alaska
Lepke, Josh, to Star of Bethlehem, New Berlin, Wis.
Luehring, Shaun C., to Bethel, Menasha, Wis.
Mateske, Adam R., to Gloria Dei, Belmont, Calif.
McNeill, Timothy A., to Hope, Milwaukee
Mielke, Nicole J., to Shoreland LHS, Somers, Wis.
Miller, Kristen M., to Word of Life, Milwaukee
Miller, Terri L., to St. Paul First, North Hollywood, Calif.
Plocher, Andrew K., to Ascension, Escondido, Calif.
Retberg, Daniel J., to Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw
Roberts, Jody D., to Brooklyn, Brooklyn Park, Minn.
Rogers, Regina, to St. Paul, Cudahy, Wis.

Schauer, Tamatha, to St. Marcus, Milwaukee
Schleef, Vicki L., to Morning Star, Jackson, Wis.
Schmidt, Lynn R., to St. John, Wauwatosa, Wis.
Schmudlach, Julie B., to Good Shepherd, Downers Grove, Ill.
Schomberg, Kristine K., to Christ-St. John, West Salem, Wis.
Schultz, Jill K., to Immanuel, Hadar, Neb.
Stahmann, Kristy, to Christ-St. Peter, Milwaukee
Stoltz, Robert J., to retirement
Strutz, Paul W., to Shoreland LHS, Somers, Wis.
Vettleson, Laura, to Scarville, Scarville, Iowa
Wangerin, Nancy L., to St. Philip, Milwaukee, Wis.
Wilson, Jennifer M., to Shepherd of the Hills, Greeley, Colo.
Wittig, Debbie A., to Immanuel, La Crosse, Wis.
Wolfgramm, Peter F., to Riverview, Appleton, Wis.
Zastrow, Donovan M., to St. Matthew, Appleton, Wis.
Zellmer, Nona A., to Trinity, Waukesha, Wis.
Zuberbier, Thomas M., to St. John, Dakota, Minn.

Staff ministers

Koepsell, Thomas G., to Our Redeemer, Madison, Wis.
Rehberger, Phillip F., to Mt. Zion, Kenosha, Wis.

ANNIVERSARIES

Saginaw, Mich.—St. Paul (150). July 15. Services, 8 & 10:30 AM.
North Fond du Lac, Wis.—St. Paul (100). July 22. Outdoor service, LeMieux Park, 10 AM. Picnic to follow.
Almena, Wis.—Zion (100). July 29. Services, 10:30 AM & 2 PM. Dinner between services. Walter Koenig, 715/357-3153 or Richard Burdick, 715/357-3426.
Hartford, Wis.—Emmanuel (150). Aug. 5. Services, 10 AM & 2 PM. Dinner between services. RSVP, Melanie Feucht, 920/387-4496.
Sun Prairie, Wis.—Peace (100). Aug. 12. Services, 8 & 10:30 AM. Brunch between services.
Platteville, Wis.—St. Paul (125). Sept. 30. Service, 10 AM. Dinner to follow. RSVP, 608/349-6776.

COMING EVENTS

Pastors Institute—July 8-10, Schwan Retreat and Conference Center, Trego, Wis. Prof. Alan Siggelkow on "Counseling and substance abuse." Pastor David Russow, 1-800-577-4848.
WELS Weekend LIVE 2001—hosted by students from Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel and Student Center, University of Wisconsin—Madison. July 27-29. Rib Mountain State Park, Wausau, Wis. Kati Hatfield, 608/285-8612.
Christian Educators for Special Education conference—Aug. 14, 8:30 AM to 12:30 PM, Wisconsin Lutheran College. Kimberly Warning, 414/423-5769.
DMLC retired alumni get-together—Aug. 14. Luther Haven, 8949 N 97 St, Milwaukee. Assembly, 11 AM followed by noon potluck. Meat and beverage provided. RSVP, Donald Zimmerman, 414/355-9595 or Richard Grunze, 414/423-0118.
WELS Labor Day retreat—Sept. 1-3. Berkshire Mountains, Mass. Philip Becker, 603/472-5551.
WELS Home Education retreat—sponsored by Zion, Cambria, Wis. Sept. 14-16. Camp Philip, Wautoma, Wis. Debbie Thompson, 920/348-6482.
LWMS Women of WELS (WOW) retreats—Sept. 21 & 22, Escanaba, Mich. Betty Warning,

715/484-4405.
 Sept. 21 & 22, Perrysburg, Ohio. Ruth Kemerley, 419/365-5503.
 Sept. TBA, Larkspur, Colo. Tiphonie Figurski, 719/534-9697.
 Oct. 5 & 6, Trego, Wis. Betty Ruffedt, 715/568-1248.
 Oct. 12 & 13, Davenport, Iowa. Deonne Titus, 815/273-2780.
Fourth annual Run for the Prize: 5K Run & Walk—sponsored by Immanuel, Findlay, Ohio. Oct. 20, 10 AM. Dave Braun, 419/365-5770.
Exodus tour—to Egypt, Sinai, & Jordan. High school students and family members welcome. Dec. 26, 2001-Jan. 5, 2002. Cost, \$2,495-\$2,970. Led by Pastors David Putz (Winnebago Lutheran Academy) and Leon Ehler (Fox Valley LHS). Register by Sept. 16 to avoid late fees. 920/921-4105 or 920/735-6034.

AVAILABLE

Pews—with hymnal racks. Free for the cost of shipping. Calvary, Sheboygan, Wis. 920/458-4822.
Sturgis Rally housing—provided by members of St. Paul, Rapid City, S.D. Randy, 605/399-9692.
Furniture—altar, lectern, table, baptismal font. Free for the cost of shipping. Kent Holz, 684/288-4867.
School desks, various textbooks, and science equipment—free for the cost of shipping. Tim Wempner, 732/254-1207.

NEEDED

Volunteers—for a Forward in Christ project. Need mentors/trainers in either Arizona-California District or Michigan District to help congregations start Jesus Cares Bible classes for individuals who are developmentally disabled. Knowledge of developmental disabilities desirable. Travel and administrative expenses covered. Training to be provided. Bruce Cuppan, 920/922-8672.
Preacher—needed for Aug. 5, 12, & 19 in exchange for use of parsonage at Abiding Word, Highlands Ranch, Colo. Kurt Ebert, 303/795-9198.
Preacher—needed for Aug. 12 in exchange for use of parsonage from Aug. 8-15 at Merritt Island, Fla. David Rosenbaum, 321/453-1000.
Shipping leads—any reader knowing of secure methods of shipping goods to Calabar or Port Harcourt, Nigeria, contact <papencharl7@naspa.net> or <calwels@foxinternet.com>.

NAMES WANTED

Lusby, Md.—Bruce Wietzke, 301/373-3299.
Sheridan, Wyo.—Pete Zietlow, 307/672-7599.

SERVICES TIMES

Cottonwood, Ariz.—Peace. Service, 9 AM. Sunday school and Bible class, 10:30 AM. 928/634-8727.

YEARBOOK CORRECTIONS

Rev. James Schumann, 415 Blackberry Ln, Myrtle Beach SC 29579-0003, 843/236-5946; <jschumann@sc.rr.com>.
 Rev. Russel Kobs, 1 Glenbarr Circle, Bella Vista AR 72715, 501/876-2155; <rkobs@juno.com>.

To place an announcement, call 414/256-3210; FAX, 414/256-3899; <BulletinBoard@sab.wels.net>. Deadline is eight weeks before publication date.

Just wait

God's people had to wait a long time for the fulfillment of the promise of a Savior.

Jon D. Buchholz

When my son turned five, he started calling the song, "Happy Birthday," "the waiting song." When we asked him why, he said resignedly, "It's the song that has to be sung while you're waiting to eat cake and ice cream and open presents."

A few moments can seem like an eternity when we're waiting for something special. Can you imagine what it's like to wait for thousands of years?

God's people waited

"He will crush your head" (Genesis 3:15), Adam and Eve heard God say to the serpent in the Garden of Eden. That promise was all that Adam and Eve had to cling to. They died spiritually when they tasted the forbidden fruit. They felt God's fury upon their disobedience. God's promise that the deceiver would be crushed offered the only glimmer of hope.

Thus began the wait for a promise to be fulfilled.

Adam lived out his life, watching and waiting—for 930 years. As he felt his once-perfect body age and deteriorate, he ached to see the promise fulfilled. But the serpent-crusher didn't come.

The violence and wickedness of the generations after Adam increased, but a tiny remnant remembered God and clung to the promise. The wait continued.

Centuries of waiting turned into

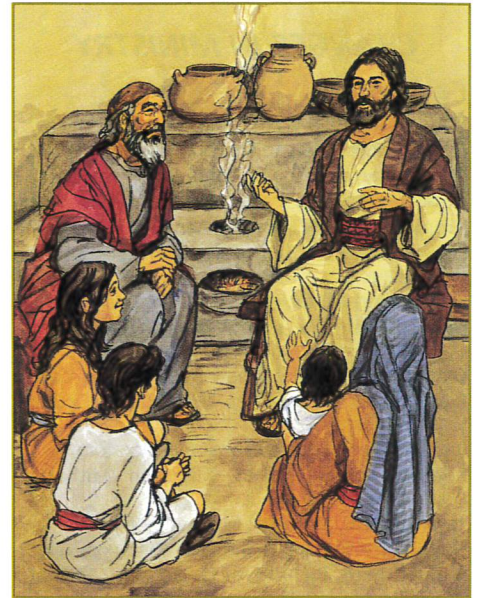
millennia. Great empires arose and crumbled. Peace and prosperity gave way again and again to the horrors of war, famine, and plague. Kings and conquerors ruled and returned to dust.

God's people shared the prophecy

Through it all, God's faithful few passed down the promise of a Savior. Around campfires and at evening meals, during Sabbath rests and while working in the fields, fathers told their sons, mothers taught their daughters that there was hope for all who were waiting for God's deliverance.

As centuries passed, God shared details about how and where the Deliverer would come:

- His conception and birth were to be miraculous: "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14).
- Judah, son of Israel, would be his ancestor: "The scepter will not depart from Judah . . . until he comes to whom it belongs" (Genesis 49:10).
- The City of David was chosen as his birthplace: "Bethlehem Ephrathah . . . out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel" (Micah 5:2).
- The seat of his ministry was to be the shores of the Sea of Galilee: "He will honor Galilee of the Gentiles, by the way of the sea, along the Jordan" (Isaiah 9:1).



God's prophets also pointed to what the Deliverer would do:

- The Messiah, or Chosen One, was to take upon himself the punishment that we sinners deserve: "He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities" (Isaiah 53:5).
- His perfect obedience would be credited to sinners as righteousness: "This is the name by which it will be called: The Lord Our Righteousness" (Jeremiah 33:16).
- He would die a horrible death: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Psalm 22:1).
- Death would not be able to hold him: "You will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay" (Psalm 16:10).

Who knows how many generations were born, lived, watched, prayed, and died waiting for a fulfillment that they saw only with eyes of faith?

Only when the stage was perfectly set, when the time had fully come, did the waiting end—when God revealed his present to the world.



Jon Buchholz is pastor at Holy Trinity, Des Moines, Washington.



"The Word of God is living and active."—Hebrews 4:12

The speaker took the stage and announced, "I can move that 50-gallon drum of water from one end of this stage to the other." She didn't appear to be built for such a feat, so the crowd grew suspicious. When she produced a one-gallon bucket the audience thought they understood. "I could move that drum of water one gallon at a time," she explained, "but it would take a long time. It would tire me out, and it wouldn't be much fun." Then she distributed 50 one-gallon buckets to willing participants. "Let's get this done," she invited, "and have some fun doing it!" A few minutes later the job was done.

The speaker hit on one reason God doesn't make "lone ranger" Christians. He puts us together to build one another up, but he also puts us together to work together for him. Another measure of our spiritual health is how well we work together to bring glory to God and good to his people.

Health factor—Working together

God's Word

From [Christ] the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow (Colossians 2:19).

1. Name some parts of your body that work together. Compare that to the body of Christ (believers) working together.
2. "From Christ" indicates the source of growth. Name five blessings that come from Christ.
3. "The whole body" grows. Christ intends that every believer grow in faith. Think of other passages in the Bible that express the same desire.
4. Ligaments hold parts of the body together. Sinews supply strength. In what ways are believers like either ligaments or sinews?
5. It's easy to think our hard work is building God's church. According to this verse, though, God causes it to grow. List three reasons why it is important to remember that.

My soul for personal check-up

1. When was the last time I worked with another believer in some service?
2. What made that experience positive? What made it challenging?
3. What benefits am I receiving today because other believers worked together?
4. The gifts and abilities God gives me vary throughout my life. Whether young or old, I can support and uphold others who do what I cannot do. Think of someone who is serving in a way you can't. How can you support him or her?

My church for group check-up

1. Does our church's mission statement articulate how we intend to work together? If not, how would you change it?
2. Churches organize to help people work together. List five ways our church's structure helps us work together.
3. Sometimes the way we organize ourselves prevents us from working together. Give an example, if you can, and explain how you might correct it.
4. Jesus is the head; he gives the direction. We want him to guide our work. How does our church demonstrate that conviction?

Web-med

Intriguing Web sites to help you continue your check-up.

Check out service activities for youth and adults at <http://www.luthbro.com/communities/hchy/HCHYcong.html>. For dozens of ideas for working together, go to <http://www.wels.net>, click on ministry, and choose the area you're interested in.

Randy Hunter is pastor at St. Andrew, Middleton, Wisconsin.



Can a nice atheist be saved?

Anyone who repents of one's sins and believes in the Lord Jesus is saved.

Thomas H. Trapp

The disciples thought that rich people were wealthy because God favored them. Jesus turned that belief on its head: "I tell you the truth . . . it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God" (Matthew 19:23,24). This stunned the disciples. If good, successful community people cannot be saved, "Who then can be saved?" they inquired (v. 25).

Paul and Silas have the answer: "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31).

Wealth does not matter. Even good deeds do not matter. All that matters is a repentant heart that believes Jesus Christ alone can save us from "eternal punishment" (Matthew 25:46).

Hypocritical Christians and nice atheists

What about a church-going person who lives godlessly during the week and claims to be a Christian? Will he or she be saved? Or what about a nice atheist? The Bible says neither will be saved. If the Christian lives unrepentantly, Hebrews 10 warns, "If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment . . ." (26,27). Just because people call themselves "Christians," go to church,

and give money does not mean they have faith in Jesus. "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven," Jesus warns (Matthew 7:21).

All that matters is a repentant heart that believes Jesus Christ alone can save us.

The nice atheist will not be saved either. Only faith in Jesus saves. Unbelief damns. Jesus proclaimed, "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him" (John 3:36).

This does not mean that God delights in the death of unbelievers (Ezekiel 33:11). God wants everyone to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:3,4). The rich who are in love with their money, the phony church-going "Christian" who cares less about God's commands, and the nice atheist—God wants them all saved.

Mass murderers

But what about mass-killer Jeffrey Dahmer? He brutally murdered 17 men and boys. Can Dahmer be saved? Jesus said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things

are possible" (Matthew 19:26). Even a mass murderer can be saved. At his trial Dahmer said he felt a tremendous amount of guilt because of his actions. In court he confessed, "This has never been a case of trying to get me free. I didn't want freedom. Frankly, I wanted death for myself. . . . I know how much harm I have caused. . . . Thank God there will be no more harm that I can do. I believe that only the Lord Jesus Christ can save me from my sins. . . ."

If Dahmer believed what he said, he was saved. By grace he was saved (Ephesians 2).

Dahmer confessed like the thief on the cross. The thief made his 11th-hour confession, " 'We are . . . getting what our deeds deserve. But this man [Jesus] has done nothing wrong.' Then he said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.' Jesus answered him, 'I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise' " (Luke 23:41,43).

Sound unfair? It is unfair. It's grace.

Who then can be saved? Anyone who repents of one's sins and believes in the Lord Jesus—even you and I!

Amazing? Of course. It's grace.



Thomas Trapp is full-time campus pastor at Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel & Student Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.



Jesus, Shepherd of the Sheep



“Jesus, shepherd of the sheep,
Who your Father’s flock does keep,
Safe we wake and safe we sleep,
Guarded still by you.”

(*Christian Worship* 436:1)

Children were drawn by lambs on the lawn to vacation Bible school in 2000 at St. John, Wetaskiwin, Alberta, Canada. Member Eleanor Goold writes: “On the third day one of the lambs was missing but was found lying face down at the side of the church. That was used in the introduction that day to illustrate that we, like sheep, have gone astray, but Jesus finds us and brings us back to the fold.”

“On the fourth day, the children, wearing shepherd head coverings, sent a message in helium balloons to share the good news with others.”



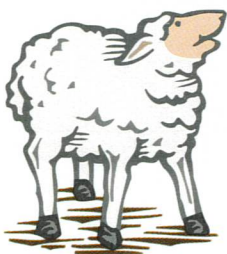
Send pictures to *Picture this*, Forward in Christ magazine, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398. On a separate sheet, give us information about the photo. Those whose photos are chosen will receive a small gift.

Focusing on lambs

Dr. W.B. Riley was once spending a vacation with a Scottish shepherd. Noticing one day that the herder was uncommonly quiet, Dr. Riley asked him why. The herder replied, “I lost 65 of my best lambs last night. Wolves got in.”

Dr. Riley then asked how many of the older sheep were killed. The herder looked at him in surprise and said: “Don’t you know that a wolf will never take an old sheep as long as he can get a lamb?”

This so clearly illustrates the devil’s clever effort to get our young people into his clutches. (quoted from *Daybreak* in the newsletter of Mt. Olive, St. Paul, Minn.)

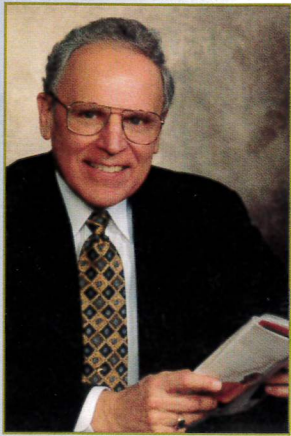


I Am Jesus’ Little Lamb

“I am Jesus’ little lamb;
Ever glad at heart I am,
For my shepherd gently guides me,
Knows my needs and well provides me,
Loves me every day the same,
Even calls me by my name.”

(*Christian Worship* 432:1)

Jesus said, “I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep.” John 10:14,15



Gary P. Baumler is editor of *Forward in Christ* magazine and WELS Director of Communications.

In the very act
in which I can
see God's hate
for me in my
sins, I see God's
love for me by
sacrificing his
Son in my
place.

He loves me not. He loves me.

Usually I ignore letters that are unsigned and have no return address. Not letters with requests to remain anonymous for cause, but those reflecting cowardice.

But now and then the subject begs for attention anyway. So I refer to a letter in which the unknown writer complains about troubles over the claim that "God hates sin, and he hates sinners too!"

The writer alludes to a sermon that taught "that every time we look at Jesus on the cross, we need to remember how much God hates our guts."

"How can that be so?" the writer wonders. "Was it not love that gave his Son to die for our sins? Was it nails that held Jesus to the cross or his love for sinners like us?"

Which of the above applies, since we are all sinners?

Yes, and yes! That is to say that the writer is correct, but so was the sermon message; and the cross is the place to see it. Call it the great Christian paradox (and marvel at God's grace)—the meeting of law and gospel in the same moment.

I look at the cross where the Lord Jesus hangs in misery, and I must know that my sins put him there. God's law presents all the ugliness of my sin to me in the death I deserved to die.

I caused it! You caused it! Look how the Savior had to suffer and die. It wouldn't have had to be—if you and I had never sinned. In that moment, God pours out his burning wrath, his hatred, against all sin and all sinners.

We can't escape it. That's why in Lent, for example, we stress penitence. That's why we think of ashes on Ash Wednesday and go to Tenebrae (darkness) services on Good Friday. Hell has its day there, with God's blessings—so to say.

Still, I don't despair, because God's love made it happen to Jesus instead of to us, and the love prevails. So, in the very act in which I can see God's hate for me in my sins, I see God's love for me by sacrificing his Son in my place. At the very moment I admit God must "hate my guts," I experience his love in forgiveness. Even as I realize that I with my sins put Jesus on that cross, I know he chose to go and willingly went to save me.

Jesus' own words on the cross make the point. "My God, my God," he cried, "Why have you forsaken me?" Forsaken by God because God hates sin and the sinner!

A short time later, he cried out again, "It is finished." In his great and wondrous love, Jesus had finished his work for our salvation. He died so we might live. Jesus gave up his life because God loved the whole world.

He loves me not. He loves me. He loves me not. He loves me. That's not pulling petals off a daisy because we have doubts. It's nailing Jesus' arms to the cross so there can be no doubt. The final word is "he loves me."

Gary P. Baumler

Going to College or Tech School? WELS Campus Ministry is for You!



"Campus Ministry
has been a
tremendous blessing
in my college years.
It has kept me close to
God and surrounded
by Christian friends.
What more could I
ask for?"

- Margy Weinstein,
University of Arizona

WELS Campus Ministry offers you a chance to meet new Christian friends and to grow in faith and Christian service during the vital college years.

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- Get *Lightsource*, a periodical filled with ideas for spiritual growth.
- Learn about the regional and national campus gatherings.
- Get in touch with the church/campus ministry that serves your school.

To learn more, check out our Web site at: <http://www.wels.net/sab/cm/frm-cm.html>

Complete the form below and return to:

WELS Campus Ministry—2929 N. Mayfair Road - Milwaukee, WI 53222-4398

Or complete the form on-line by selecting "Get Mail" from the Registration Building on our Web site!

NAME

Last _____

First _____ Middle Initial _____

Birth Date ____/____/____

Gender: Male Female

HOME ADDRESS _____

City, State, Zip _____

E-Mail Address _____

Home Phone _____

Church Name (at home) _____

Street Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Pastor _____

COLLEGE INFORMATION

College Name _____

City, State, Zip _____

Living with parents when college is in session?

Yes No

Year in school _____

College Graduation Date _____

Program Major _____

ADDRESS WHILE AT SCHOOL

Street Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone No. while at school _____

FREE SUBSCRIPTIONS

Yes, please send me my FREE subscription to *Forward in Christ* and *Meditations*.

WHATSOEVER

A scary story

A day at the mall shatters stereotypes about “scary” people.

Joanna Balza

Some people are scary looking: some just a little intimidating, others downright spine-tingling, hair-raising, cold-sweating scary. The most frightening kind of person in my opinion is the all-black-clothes, black-hair, metal-spikes, nose-ring, white-face-makeup, black-lipstick, and army-boots kind of person.

I know it's wrong to stereotype, but I have always thought of these people as mean, snotty, sometimes violent drug addicts, and, of course, scary.

Sad to say, I have always thought of myself, a clean-cut Christian family girl who went to Christian school, as a better person than they. Yes, I had been taught that God loves everyone and died for everyone, and that I am a sinner too. In Sunday school I colored pictures of all different races of people holding hands, joined together in faith through Christ. But guess what? I never colored any people with spiked hair, black lipstick, or an eyebrow ring.

I probably would have gone on thinking of myself more highly than they for the rest of my life, but one day something changed my attitude.

I was at the mall looking through a rack of shirts for a present. A couple of racks down, a young lady with Down syndrome, alone in her wheelchair, was struggling to reach a pink sweater on a high shelf. When she grabbed onto a lower shelf to pull herself closer, the shelf gave way and fell to the floor, along with several large stacks of sweaters.

I stood there, not sure what to do. Other shoppers pretended not to see what happened. A store clerk remarked, “Stupid retard! Why is she in the store anyway?”

The young lady, tears streaming down her face, tried unsuccessfully to put the shelf and sweaters back in place. Still no one stepped up to help, including me.

One person finally walked up to her. What little hair he had was bright green. His baggy jeans were ripped and frayed. He had too many earrings to count, and when he spoke, you could see a small silver stud at the tip of his tongue. His lips were a dark burgundy color, and everything he wore was black. He was one scary person.

I was shocked when he knelt down and reassured her that everything was okay. Then he took the shelf and put it back in place. He gave the girl a tissue and asked her name and what had happened. She told him her name and what had happened. She began to cry harder as she admitted that she felt dumb and that everyone must hate her.

To my surprise, he told her that she was not dumb, that no one hated her, and that she was loved by a lot of people. When she denied this, he told her that no matter what she did, Jesus would always love her.

At this point, my jaw was practically on the floor. The girl's mother rushed up and pushed the girl out of the store. My stereotypical “scary” person left, and a sales clerk finished cleaning up the sweaters. Soon everything was back to normal.

It took me longer to recover. I don't think I will ever forget that “scary” person telling the young, crying girl in the wheelchair about Jesus. It certainly taught me a lesson about scary people and about stereotyping people.

It also taught me a lesson about Jesus' love. God's love has no limits. It does not end at scary people or at other people that we stereotype.

Joanna Balza graduated from Fox Valley Lutheran High School, Appleton, Wisconsin, in May and is a member at Eternal Love, Appleton.

