

FORWARD IN CHRIST

June 2002

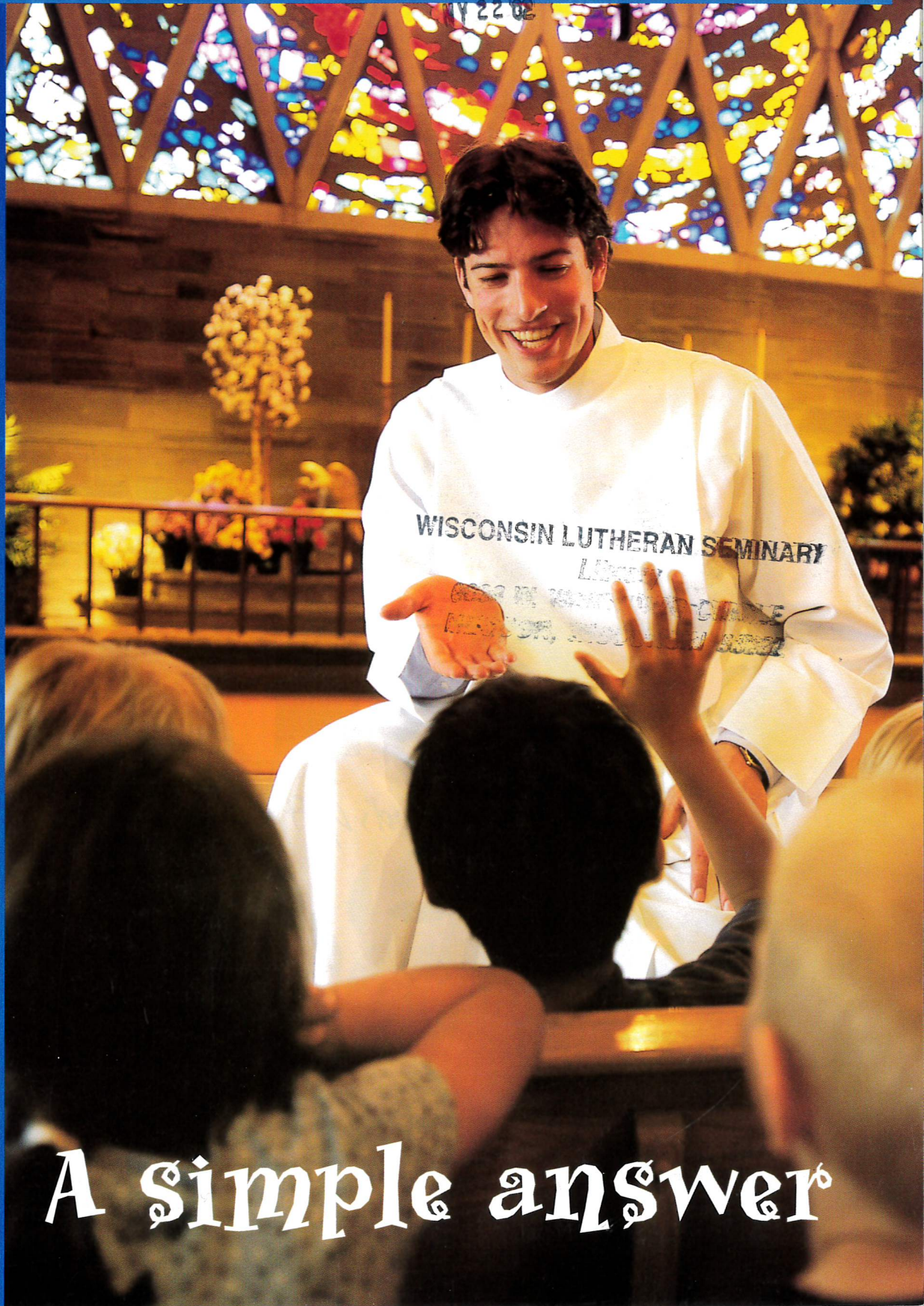
The Word from the WELS

www.wels.net

Two new
WELS high
schools

What makes
a good Bible
translation?

Staff ministers
take ministry
to new levels



01 000395100 D 2206 08 03
WISCONSIN LUTH SEMINARY LIBR
6633 N WARTBURG CIR
MEDIUN WI 53092-1530

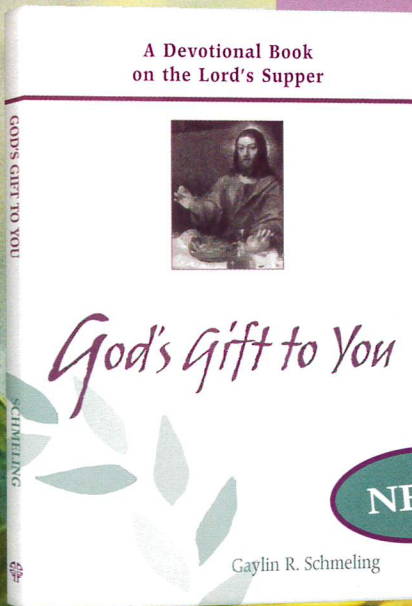
89/16

A simple answer

GOD'S GIFT TO YOU

Reflect on God's great gift in the Lord's Supper through the 40 devotions and 17 Communion prayers in *God's Gift to You*. This new devotional book will enrich your personal Communion preparation and deepen your appreciation for the Sacrament's many blessings.

The book includes devotions for each season of the church year, as well as devotions focusing on the stressors of everyday life. The selection of prayers can be used before, during, and after Communion.



God's Gift to You A Devotional Book on the Lord's Supper

by Gaylin R. Schmeling
Papercover. 139 pages.

LU06N0720 \$11.99

NEW!

Call 1-800-662-6022 to order
(Milwaukee area 414-475-6600)
8:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. weekdays.

Discover, MasterCard, and Visa are accepted. All orders are subject to shipping and handling costs and sales tax where applicable.

NPH Online Catalog
www.nph.net



Northwestern
Publishing House
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Extreme generosity

Jesus . . . watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny. Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on. Mark 12:41-44

Paul M. Janke

In one sense, the widow’s offering was small. The two copper coins that she put into the temple treasury amounted to only about one percent of a day’s pay for the average worker.

In another sense, however, the widow’s offering was huge. It was all she had to live on. It was the equivalent of writing a check for the last few dollars in her account and dropping it into the offering plate.

Given from a trusting heart

I’ve tried to imagine the widow’s circumstances. Was she a mother with children at home? If so, how did she tell her children that she had given her last two coins as an offering? What was she going to prepare for dinner that night—or the next night?

I may be more interested in the answers to those questions than she was. That she’d given the last two coins of her financial “cushion” as a temple offering didn’t seem to worry her. Just the opposite: she trusted that God would provide for her.

The widow’s offering can strike us as foolishly unrealistic. If we imitated her ways, we’d all be in line at the welfare office,


wouldn’t we? Is that what Jesus wants? Clearly not! Jesus isn’t making a law here. He isn’t instructing that we all give every last penny we have as an offering to God next Sunday. He’s simply observing that a very small offering can be a very large expression of trust in God. It all depends on the heart. Paul said something similar: “For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have” (2 Corinthians 8:12).

Given to a merciful God

At the height of the Great Depression, Bing Crosby recorded the song “Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?” “Spare” in that sense means something that can be given away because it’s not strictly needed. It’s possible that what many Christians give as their offering is what they can spare, that is, what they don’t strictly need. Statistics reveal that

the average WELS member gives about three percent of income as an offering. In a society as affluent as ours, it may be possible for me to give three percent of my income without having to think carefully about my priorities or about how I’m managing what God has entrusted to me. That wasn’t the case with the poor widow, however. She trusted not what she’d kept aside for herself, but the promises of her merciful God.

God-pleasing offerings come from a trusting heart. The trusting heart recognizes that all we have comes from God—not because we deserve it, but simply because of his grace. The same love that caused God to send us Jesus as our Savior also causes him to meet our physical needs daily. God’s generosity inspires our trust and enables us to be generous in response. Worries about how we’ll provide for ourselves evaporate in the warmth of the confidence that God knows our needs and provides for us.

God’s unfailing mercy enables us, like the widow at the temple, to perform acts of extreme generosity. 

Paul Janke is pastor at St. Peter, Modesto, California.



FORWARD IN CHRIST

formerly Northwestern Lutheran
Official magazine of the
Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

June 2002 / Vol. 89, No. 6
www.wels.net

Editorial office
Forward in Christ magazine,
WELS, 2929 N Mayfair Rd,
Milwaukee WI 53222-4398
FAX, 414/256-3899
<fic@sab.wels.net>

Editor
Rev. Gary P. Baumler, 414/256-3230
<garyb@sab.wels.net>

Senior Communications Assistant
Julie K. Wietzke, 414/256-3231
<juliew@sab.wels.net>

Communications Assistant
Nicole R. Moline, 414/256-3232
<nicolem@sab.wels.net>

Seminary Consultant
D. P. Leyrer

Contributing Editors
J. D. Buchholz, K. A. Cherney, D. J. Engelbrecht,
R. L. Gurgel, E. S. Hartzell, R. K. Hunter,
P. M. Janke, P. L. Kieselhorst, M. J. Lenz,
A. J. Panning, T. A. Westra, P. E. Zell

Art Director
Paul Burmeister

Graphic Designer
Carianne Ciriacks

Photographs and Illustrations
Gerry Koser, p. 3; Brice Photography, pp. 8 & 18;
courtesy of Steve Bruns, p. 12; Eyewire & Comstock
Images, p. 14; courtesy of Neil Scriver & John
Barenz, p. 16; Rubberball Productions, p. 20;
Dan Grossman, p. 36

Forward in Christ
Forward in Christ (ISSN 1528-6371) is published
monthly by Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 N
113 St, Milwaukee WI 53226-3284. Periodical postage
paid at Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Rates: USA—\$10; single copy—\$1.50. Canada—\$10.70;
single copy—\$1.61. All other countries—air mail \$34;
surface mail \$26. Postage included, payable in advance
to NPH. Write for multi-year, blanket, and bundle rates.
For single issues, Wisconsin add 5% sales tax; Milwaukee
County add 5.6% tax. Also available on audiocassette
from Mission for the Visually Impaired, 559 Humboldt Ave,
St. Paul MN 55107.

Rates change as of July 1. USA—\$12. Canada—\$12.84.
All other countries—air mail \$43.20.

Subscription Services
1-800-662-6093, ext 8. Milwaukee area
414/615-5785. Or write NPH, 1250 N 113 St,
Milwaukee WI 53226-3284.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to
Forward in Christ, c/o NPH, 1250 N 113 St,
Milwaukee WI 53226-3284.

©2002 by *Forward in Christ*.
Printed in the USA.





Cover photo by Brice Photography

José raised his hand and quietly said, "I know, Mister. I know why I'm going to heaven."

8


bits & pieces

 We're trying something new this month in *Forward in Christ* magazine. Our feature article is fictional. The lessons that it teaches about God's grace, however, aren't made up. Be sure to read "Because God loves me" (p. 8).

 With the release of the New Testament of the Today's New International Version Bible (TNIV) in April, questions have been pouring in to the WELS Web site, <www.wels.net>, about Bible translations. What makes a good translation? Why does WELS use the NIV translation? What about all these new translations that are coming out? In a new series, Prof. David Kuske from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary will answer these questions and more as we try to sort out whose words are the best translation of God's Word (p.18).

 Individual faith is seen in two articles this month.

- In our Bible study on Jonah, Jonah's faith is apparent as he cries out to God while in the belly of a giant fish. Examine his prayer in "Blessed by the Word" (p. 30).
- Our teen writer this month talks about this life and the next as he struggles with life-threatening cancer (p. 20).

 Baseball season is now in full swing. Victor Vieth takes us out to the ballpark as he reminisces about past players and games gone by. He also shares some spiritual lessons that he has learned from the United States' national pastime. Don't miss "Jesus on a baseball card" on our back page.

—JKW

features

FICTION

8 Because God loves me

A little boy's answer would always remind a vicar that it all starts and ends in God's grace.

Jeffrey L. Samelson

INSIGHTS

11 The church's three dimensions

Only when there is faith, truth, and love is the church complete.

Rolfe F. Westendorf

STAFF MINISTRY

12 Taking ministry to new levels

The introduction of staff ministers provides congregations with new levels of ministry.

Adam Goede

A CLOSER LOOK AT LUTHERANISM

14 Lutherans are reasonable people

Lutherans embrace common sense in non-spiritual things but recognize its limits in matters of God.

Wayne D. Mueller



WELS HIGH SCHOOLS

16 Living the dream

The dream of opening WELS high schools in Colorado and Florida is becoming a reality.

Julie K. Wietzke

BIBLE TRANSLATIONS

18 Choosing a good Bible translation

A good translation must be faithful to the original languages, accurate especially in doctrinal passages, and easy to read and understand.

David P. Kuske

WHATEVER

20 It's a faith thing

How do I stay so positive when I have an illness that could eventually lead to my death? It's a faith thing.

Joshua Prickett

PERSON TO PERSON

31 Serving the Lord in the workplace

Serve God, serve human beings, willingly, from the heart.

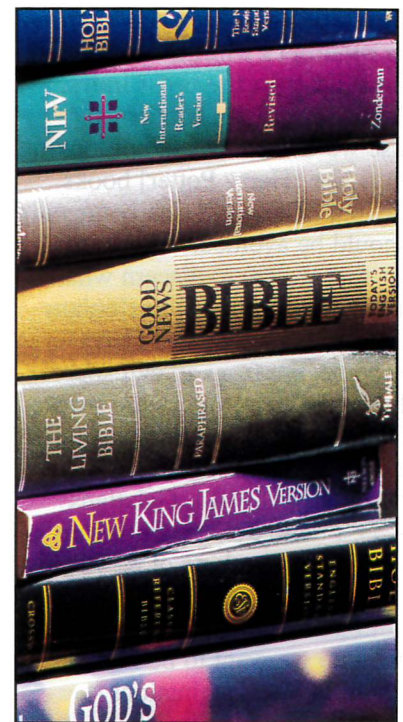
Karl R. Gurgel

INSIGHTS

36 Jesus on a baseball card

Baseball's heroes fail often and always grow old, but one hero will never let you down.

Victor I. Vieth



18

departments

3 THOUGHT FOR TODAY

Extreme generosity

6 READERS FORUM

7 EDITORIAL COMMENT

Under two flags

21 INTERACTIVE BIBLE STUDY

22 WELS NEWS

28 WORLD NEWS

29 BULLETIN BOARD

30 BIBLE STUDY

Blessed by the Word

32 IN THE CROSS HAIRS

Degrees of judgment in hell

33 POTLUCK

34 EDITOR'S PEN

To be positive . . .



I understand that our synod cannot tell its members what they can and cannot read [“In the cross hairs,” Feb.]. However, I am concerned because we Christians are not looking at things like [Harry Potter] books and saying, “These are clearly ungodly and should be avoided.” The Lord tells us that we are to discern what is evil and avoid it (1 Thessalonians 5:21,22). It is obvious that Harry Potter books are from an evil source. The heroes of these books are sorcerers. God condemns sorcerers as followers of the devil. He detests them (Deuteronomy 18:9-14, Galatians 5:19-21). I don’t believe Christians would dream of making close friends with sorcerers in real life. If we wouldn’t associate with them in real life, why do we want to be friends with them in our imaginations?

*Elizabeth Ubert
Belton, Missouri*

Allow me to express my appreciation for Pastor Zell’s article, “Wrong-way messenger” [Mar.].

After reading it I could not help but think of our pastors and teachers who are called to areas that pose unique challenges to the ministry—world missions, central cities, New York City, etc. Perhaps they, like Jonah, were at first reluctant to preach and teach God’s law and gospel. Yet, with the help of the Spirit, the Word flourished. . . . How sweet it is to know that nothing will hinder the powerful Word, in which is found the love of God made manifest in Christ.

*Brandon A. Wigley
Milwaukee, Wisconsin*

I would like to thank Pastor Mueller for his fine series on Lutheranism [“a closer look at Lutheranism”].

I am especially appreciative of his boldness as he puts in simple terms our “richly” rooted scriptural truths giving Jesus all honor and praise for what he did to bring us to him. We are, as Mueller stated in almost every one of his monthly writings, unique

(set apart) and blessed with the truth of God’s Word.

I would like to also thank those pastors who are making every effort to open the hearts of God’s people to be more receptive to the converted Christian whom Christ has died for too. . . . The effort that these pastors make are opening doors for us to walk in peace with you who have been fortunate to have Christ from infancy.

*Lorie L. Gunn
Kasson, Minnesota*

Re: “Worship welcome” [Mar.]. This recipe really works!

Redeemer, Maple Grove, Minn., has grown dramatically with these important welcoming techniques.

*Elaine Stindt
Minneapolis, Minnesota*

A friend shares your magazine with me. It is one of the best and brings joy to my heart.

I would like to mention an item on page 16 of the March issue that needs clarification. **Present-day Baptists are not related to the European Anabaptists born of the 16th-century Reformation.** That the two groups are connected is a misconception shared by many. Actually, Anabaptists never made it to America. Present-day Baptists split off from colonial Congregationalism.

*Bermeleen A. Albright
Navarre, Florida*

Re: “A second chance at life” [Mar.]. This article really touched home, because I have a daughter who is/was anorexic. I am glad that this issue has reached your magazine.

However, I do have concerns with the article. Eating disorders are a result of mental illness. They are insidious, unfathomable, and multifaceted. They almost always require the care of a professional team consisting of a therapist, psychologist, counselor, dietician, and doctor. . . .

The revelation that occurred in this girl’s life is rare. I am concerned that parents will read this and expect this to happen in the lives of their eating-disordered daughters.

Joan Mueller

Recently I was a guest in a WELS church and picked up your magazine. It was helpful reading, especially the report of the relief ministry around Ground Zero in New York City and the encouragement for believers to build evangelistic bridges to nonbelievers.

In Wayne Mueller’s article, “Lutherans admit they’re bad to the bone” [Feb.], I was surprised to find the assertion that only Lutherans believe in original sin. On the contrary, millions of evangelical non-Lutherans recognize the biblical doctrine of depravity—and we confess it regularly (though not generally liturgically). The author has missed the mark by stating that “outside Lutheranism, people confess only sins they have actually committed.”

The unfortunate result is that misunderstanding begets more misunderstanding, evident in the list of domino effects cited by Mueller. For example, most evangelical non-Lutherans would not say that “the remnant of good in us enables us to make our own decision for Christ.” Not at all! The truth, on which we agree, is that there is no remnant of good in any of us. Let’s praise God that we stand together in proclaiming this message to the lost pluralistic society that not only denies original sin, but personal sin as well.

*Doug Clevenger
Sleepy Eye, Minnesota*

Send your letters to Readers forum, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398; FAX, 414/256-3899; <fic@sab.wels.net>. Include full name, address, and daytime phone number. Letters are edited for clarity, conciseness, and relevance. Writers’ views are not necessarily those of WELS or Forward in Christ magazine.

Under two flags

Armin J. Panning

Since Sept. 11 we live in an era of heightened patriotism. This demonstrates itself in many ways, including increased display of the U.S. flag. We see flags prominently displayed on public buildings and private residences, fluttering from car windows, pinned to lapels, and patched to caps and jackets.

June 14, Flag Day, gives U.S. citizens another opportunity to honor the flag, and with it, the United States. Although there was sporadic observance earlier, Flag Day as a formal holiday observed annually on a nationwide basis is of fairly recent origin. It dates back to a congressional bill signed into law by President Harry Truman on Aug. 3, 1949.

Although the formal observance of Flag Day is rather recent, the idea of commemorating the birthday of the flag goes back considerably further. Credit for originating and popularizing the concept goes to a first-generation Luxembourger from Wisconsin, Bernard J. Cigrand. In 1885 he was a 19-year-old grade school teacher at the Stoney Hill School in the little hamlet of Waubeka, in the town of Fredonia, 30-some miles north of Milwaukee. As a closing exercise, Cigrand put a small flag into a bottle on his desk and asked his class to write an essay on its significance.

He chose June 14 as the birthday of the flag because that was the day on which the Continental Congress in 1777 adopted the red, white, and blue banner with its 13 stars and stripes as the country's new flag. George Washington reportedly said that the white represents "the purity and serenity of the nation, while the red stripes represent the blood spilled by Americans who made the ultimate sacrifice for freedom. The royal blue field stands for freedom and justice."

Particularly now as the world situation again puts American servicemen and

servicewomen in harm's way, we need to appreciate their courage and thank God for their willingness to fight to protect the United States, so that we can live quiet and peaceful lives in the "freedom" and "serenity" our founding fathers envisioned.

The colors red, white, and blue, however, form yet another flag—one coexistent with and supportive of the U.S. flag. That flag is the Christian flag, thought to have been designed in 1897 by Charles Overton, Dean of the Brighthelm Chapel in Coney Island, N.Y. It features a red cross on a blue field imposed on the upper corner of a white background.

The general significance of the colors is retained, but the message conveyed by the Christian flag is quite different. The national flag is secular; the Christian flag has spiritual significance. The red cross reminds us of "the blood spilled by [Christ] who made the ultimate sacrifice for [our] freedom," to paraphrase Washington's words. Christ's red blood has made us "white as snow," to use Isaiah's picture (1:18). Cleansed of our sins in Christ's blood and clothed in his righteousness, we are relieved of the obligation to earn our own salvation. It's ours as a gift, received by faith. Hence we are now free, in grateful appreciation, to live lives of loving service to God and our neighbor. That is true freedom, of which the blue is a constant reminder.

Flags are important, and June 14 will again give us the opportunity to reflect on that. As we do so, let's remember both flags. Church and state are not at odds. They fit together like the front and back of the coin of which Jesus said, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's" (Matthew 22:21).

Armin Panning, a member at St. Matthew, Port Washington, Wisconsin, is a professor emeritus at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin.

The colors red, white, and blue form another flag—one coexistent with and supportive of the U.S. flag. That flag is the Christian flag.



BECAUSE GOD LOVES ME

A little boy's answer would always remind a vicar
that it all starts and ends in God's grace.

Jeffrey L. Samelson

It was only the vicar's third Sunday at the church, and he was nervous.

It wasn't his week to preach—he'd gotten that out of the way the first Sunday—and leading the liturgy wasn't all that nerve-racking, with two years of seminary under his belt already. What was putting butterflies in his stomach was the children's message. He'd never done one

before, and his professors hadn't exactly trained him for this the way they'd taught him to preach sermons.

"Relax! I'm sure you'll do fine," said Pastor Unbehagen in the sacristy before the service. Vicar Neuling found this much less reassuring than he might have, given that it had been just three days ago that his supervising pastor had said, "You know, I've thought for a long time that we should have a children's message as part of the service. I've never tried one before, but it can't be too hard—why don't you put one together for Sunday?"

"Relax!" his fiancée had told him the night before as he agonized over it long distance. "You have it memorized—you know what you're going to say. Don't worry about it. They're just a bunch of cute little kids!"

Relax? The vicar didn't think he could, but he tried. Most of all he kept praying that things would go smoothly. Most important, he said, was that he not accidentally trip over his tongue and teach the kids false doctrine—but what he really feared most was the mortal embarrassment if he slipped up.

The service started. He and Pastor Unbehagen went to their respective corner chairs (he wondered if anyone else ever thought of boxing when they did that) and sat down.

They sang the first hymn, but Vicar Neuling, if anyone had been close enough to listen, was basically just mouthing the words—his mind was somewhere else. He was already facing the altar to begin the liturgy when he realized he hadn't yet told the people to stand. Not quite a mistake, but it made him more uneasy.

Then the liturgy did for him what it was designed to do for all the worshipers there that morning. It brought him peace. As he confessed his sins to God along with everyone else, he became aware that he had a much bigger problem than nerves; and as he pronounced the words of absolution, he knew that all his problems were solved with the forgiveness of his sins.

"What was I so worried about?" he asked himself as he sat down for the Psalm. "I've got to trust God more and me less!"

He was almost surprised a few minutes later when he realized it was time for the children's message. Since this was a new thing for the congregation, it took a minute or two for all the children to find their way to the front, and while he was waiting, smiling, some of the nerves started to return. But there was no time to worry about that—one thing he knew about these kids was that they didn't sit still without something to grab their attention. So he took his visual aid out from behind his chair. "Anyone know what this is a picture of?"

"Disneyland!" "Mickey!"
"Disney World!" "Mickey!"

"-Land" or "-World" didn't much matter—he knew they had the idea. "Is that a place you'd like to go?" he asked.

"Yes!"

"I've been there!"

"My cousins went there a few years ago, but it rained."

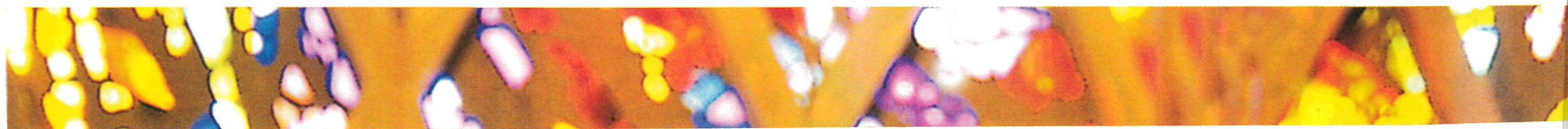
"Daddy said we can't even think about going until my brother is potty-trained!"

Vicar Neuling suddenly realized that even "yes" or "no" questions can be dangerous in the hands of small children. So as soon as they quieted down, mostly, he started his lesson. He helped them see that Disney World is a place they want to go, but that if their parents—or grandparents—take them there it isn't because they especially deserve to go, or because parents are required to take their children, or anything like that. Rather, he explained, it's because their parents love them, and only because they love their children that parents would take them to such a wonderful world like Disney.

Then he asked them about heaven. He didn't have a picture of that place, of course, but he asked them if they all wanted to go there, and they all said "yes." He talked about Jesus, and how God so loved the world that he sent his Son so that we could all have eternal life in heaven.

He had their attention, and his nervousness was long gone. It was going really well, he thought, until he asked what was supposed to be his concluding question: "So then, how do you know that you're going to heaven?"

continued on p. 10



A pause. Silence.

The vicar tried again. He held up the picture and asked, “Well, if you get to go to Disney World because your Mommy and Daddy love you, how do you know that you’re going to heaven when you die?”

Someone’s two-year-old shouted “Mickey!” again, but that didn’t count. The vicar realized that he’d have to be direct.

“OK, Tommy,” he said to the pastor’s first-grade son, knowing he wasn’t shy. “Why are you going to go to heaven?”

“Umm! Is it because we go to church every week, or because we’re Lutherans?”

Before the vicar had a chance to respond, Tommy’s third-grade sister, Missy, corrected him. “No, Tommy, that’s not it. We’re going to heaven because we’re good. That’s why we obey the 10 Commandments, don’t you remember?”

Out of the corner of his eye Vicar Neuling could see his supervising pastor turning red. Mrs. Unbehagen, who sat up front, suddenly began looking for something in her purse. He could imagine what both of them were thinking—“Don’t look at me! I didn’t teach them that!” All the adults were paying attention now, and more than a few were stifling a chuckle.

“Well, no, Missy, that’s not right either. Remember what we just talked about—how no one is saved by what they do? Remember what we said about Jesus? Now, who else wants to try answering the question?”

Of course, since the pastor’s kids got it wrong, no one else wanted to say anything. Vicar Neuling tried asking some of the other children directly, but none had an answer. “Come on,” he thought, “I know they know this!”

This was definitely not going the way he’d planned. Then finally he looked at José, a little boy he knew was in church for only the third time. He’d come to the congregation’s outreach vacation Bible school at the end of the summer, and his mother had agreed to bring him to church for Sunday school.

As Vicar Neuling sat down a few minutes later to sing the hymn, he marveled at how much better God teaches lessons than he ever could.

José raised his hand and quietly said, “I know, Mister. I know why I’m going to heaven. They told me.”

Vicar Neuling could see a surprising clarity in the five-year-old’s eyes—it matched the confidence in the boy’s voice. He smiled. “Why, then, José? Why are you going to go to that wonderful place called heaven?”

“It’s simple. Because God loves me.”

As Vicar Neuling sat down a few minutes later to sing the hymn, he marveled at how much better God teaches lessons than he ever could. The answers the vicar had expected from the children—“Because Jesus died on the cross,” “because God sent his Son,” “because we believe,” etc.—weren’t exactly wrong, but even if he had heard those answers they wouldn’t have been as right as José’s. They didn’t get to the root cause of our salvation, the way his answer did. They didn’t talk about

grace—God’s undeserved love for undeserving sinners.

José’s quiet, confident faith had latched onto God’s grace: “I’m going to heaven because God loves me.” That was the key thought that Vicar Neuling had wanted the children to take away from his message, but he hadn’t expected it that way, or from that boy. The Holy Spirit had had different plans, and it took his breath away to see what the Spirit had done. “No wonder,” he thought. “No wonder Jesus told us to have faith like a little child’s. A child knows to put his trust in the One who loves him.”

After church, Vicar Neuling noticed Pastor and Mrs. Unbehagen hustling their children back to the parsonage. He imagined that there would be more than a little remedial Sunday school over lunch that day.

The next year, as he sat with his fellow students learning the finer points of theology from his professors, and years later, as he prepared his sermons, Bible classes, and catechism lessons, the former Vicar Neuling would often smile and remember what he had learned from little José. He knew, and he taught, all the details of our salvation in Christ that the little boy hadn’t yet learned, but that boy’s answer would always remind him that it all starts and ends in God’s grace. It’s why we are saved. It’s the basis of our faith. It’s why we are going to heaven. It’s simple.

“Because God loves me.”

Jeff Samelson is pastor at Christ, Columbia, Maryland.



The church's three dimensions

Only when there is faith, truth, and love is the church complete, like a three-dimensional sculpture.

It stands solid against the winds of time.

Rolfe F. Westendorf

Everyone knows about “the church’s one foundation,” who is Jesus Christ, our Lord. But do you know about the church’s three dimensions? You do, I think, but not by that name. Let me introduce you to the concept.

The first dimension is faith.

Without faith the church does not exist, because only those who believe in Jesus as their Savior belong to it. If no one would believe anymore, there would be no church on earth. That can’t happen, of course. Jesus said that he would shorten the world’s history to preserve those who still believe at the end of time.

The second dimension is truth.

Without the truth the church doesn’t exist either, for truth is the object of faith. Those who believe in lies do not belong to the church. If no one believed the truth any more, there would be no church.

There is a difference between “the whole truth” and “the saving truth.” All of God’s Word is important, because God has revealed it to us. Therefore we must never be content with anything other than “the whole truth.” But many in the Church do not have the whole truth. They believe things different from the truths that God has taught. Yet they believe in the church’s one foundation. Therefore they belong to the church, for “whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16).



Since it is faith that qualifies a person for membership in the church, and since only God knows who really has faith, the church is invisible to human eyes. On the other hand, the truth is “visible,” that is, it can be recognized by human minds. The teachings of a church determine whether or not it has the truth. We look for visible churches who have not just part of the truth, but all of it.

With all three dimensions, the church truly rests on its one foundation.

The third dimension is love.

In theory the church can exist without love, but that is neither desirable nor permissible. Jesus demanded that his disciples should be recognized by the love that they have for each other. However, love can also exist apart from the church. Therefore every group that demonstrates love is not

necessarily a part of the church. The love that identifies the church is the love that reflects Jesus’ love. Those who do not know Jesus’ love have no such love to reflect. A loveless church, then, is flat and flexible, like a two-dimensional painting. Only when there is faith, truth, and love is the church complete, like a three-dimensional sculpture. It stands solid against the winds of time.

Those three dimensions are as important to the church as the Father, Son, and Spirit are to the Trinity. Without all three persons, God is not God. Without all three dimensions, the church is not the church.

Although the “three-dimensional church” is not common terminology, the idea is neither novel nor unfamiliar. All three dimensions are clearly and frequently taught in Scripture. However, in our discussions about the church, we often look only at one part at a time. That habit distorts and weakens the church. We must not have faith without truth and love. We must not have truth without love and faith. We must not have love without truth and faith. With all three dimensions, the church truly rests on its one foundation, and is, therefore, The Church, the Holy Christian Church, the Communion of Saints. ✨

Rolfe Westendorf is pastor at Siloah, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Taking ministry to new levels

The introduction of staff ministers provides congregations with new levels of ministry.

Adam Goede

Karl Walther, pastor at St. Mark, Watertown, Wis., worked on a Hispanic outreach program for some time with the help of volunteers from St. Mark. Together, he and congregation members taught English as a second language, translated mail, and provided other services to the Hispanic community—all while inviting them to St. Mark for the greatest gift, God's Word.

Soon Walther realized there was so much potential work in this area that neither he nor volunteers could handle everything. St. Mark's solution was to call Rebecca Palacios as the Deaconess of Hispanic Outreach in the spring of 2000. Palacios had been attending Spanish services at St. Mark and knew Walther and the Hispanic members well. She majored in Spanish and cross-cultural studies at Wisconsin Lutheran College and would be graduating soon—a perfect candidate for the job.

While pastors are called to cover a wide range of general jobs, their main purpose is to provide theological leadership and to preach the Word. Staff ministers like Palacios are perfect candidates for the other work—and even provide congregations with new levels of ministry.

The history

Lawrence Olson, director of the staff ministry program at Martin Luther College (MLC) in New Ulm, Minn., explains that staff ministers are “those who are called into the public ministry of the church, as part of the

professional staff, to work along with pastors, teachers, and members in a focused area of ministry.”

While the idea of staff ministers seems new and MLC's program to train staff ministers began first in 1993, the idea to have paid workers filling focused areas in the church is not new. Forty years ago some congregations already had called workers filling specific areas of work within the congregation. As more congregations began to develop positions like that, the 1991 synod convention delegates decided it would be best to provide a method to train and certify workers for those positions.

Several different paths lead to becoming a staff minister. The typical MLC on-campus program takes five years and trains students with a mix of religion, liberal arts, and professional classes, as well as credits in fieldwork. Some students major in education along with staff ministry. Shorter programs are designed for people who already have a college degree or are older than 35. MLC also provides options for students to take courses via correspondence and video or via the Internet, in summer sessions, at extension locations, and through independent and directed study. These courses are ideal for those who already serve as staff ministers but haven't been certified yet.

Men and women alike may be staff ministers, but they are carefully assigned to positions that will not disrupt God's biblical roles for men and

women. Palacios explains, “My role as deaconess is to teach English or translate for the people. I work under Pastor Walther who does all the teaching of God's Word and evangelism work.”

The job

Although congregational volunteers may do some of the jobs done by staff ministers, staff ministers are often favored because they can bring more focus, expertise, and continuity to a congregation's ministry. Because most staff ministers work on a paid full- or part-time basis, they can get more done. The hope is, too, that staff ministers will foster and coordinate even more lay involvement in ministry.

Joel Nelson, one of our synod's first staff ministers, adds that “certification helps to guarantee that the person doing the job has the training and spiritual background he or she needs to do the job. Credentials give the congregation's members more confidence.”

Credentials are especially important when staff ministers work closely with pastors, assisting with tasks that pastors would usually do on their own. “It depends on the needs of the congregation. As a staff minister I oversaw the executive committee of the congregation, worked with the stewardship board, did long-range planning . . . a lot of the things that pastors normally do,” says Nelson.

Other popular areas of parish staff ministry include youth and family ministry, parish education, evangelism, parish care, administration, and parish



(From left) Staff ministers Todd Wendorf, Dan Hanke, and Steve Bruns pal around at the 2001 WELS International Youth Rally. The youth rally is a great time for staff ministers to get together and talk about what works and what doesn't.

music (see sidebar). In addition, staff ministers serve synodwide with jobs like gift planning counseling, school development, or directing and working at institutions such as New Beginnings or Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Service, Inc.

The opportunities

But, you may ask, why not just call another pastor to do these ministries?

Olson explains, "The reality is that there's a pastoral shortage right now, so in some congregations, especially those with two or three pastors, it may make more sense to add a staff minister to the congregation rather than to leave a pulpit vacant in another congregation."

Because of specialized training, a staff minister may also provide unique talents to a specific position. Members should take full advantage of the opportunities provided by a diverse ministry staff. Says Nelson, "The church where I served had six men on staff: two staff ministers, the school principal, and three pastors. We all respected each other as equal members of the ministry team and got much more done for the church."

Looking at the numbers, congregations have already begun taking advantage, and students have stepped up to fill the need. In 1997, one staff

minister graduated from MLC. This year, seven graduates completed the program, and 11 more are expected to graduate in 2003. Currently about 75 staff ministers serve nearly 60 congregations. Sixty more candidates are enrolled in the staff ministry program at MLC, not including those who are studying part-time. Olson says interest is so great, the need seems to be outstripping supply.

Church leaders like Walther agree that this interest is a good thing. Besides Palacios, St. Mark has two other staff ministers working in the area of parish music. "Staff ministers are a great benefit to the synod, absolutely. Work for the Savior is always good. I would hope to see more people joining the program to become staff ministers and congregations showing support by their actions and mission offerings." ✨

Adam Goede, a member at Trinity, Waukesha, Wisconsin, will be a senior at Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in the fall.

For more information on the staff ministry program at Martin Luther College, contact Lawrence Olson at 507/354-8221; e-mail, <olsonlo@mlc-wels.edu>.

What does a staff minister do?

Staff ministers serve a variety of ministry functions. Here are some current examples:

Steve Bruns—Outreach/Youth and Family Ministry, Messiah, Alpharetta, Ga. Assists with canvassing, Bible studies, devotions, counseling, visitations, and recruiting for vacation Bible school. Started a teen and a women's group and is looking into starting a preschool or dayschool.

Bob Erdmann—Minister of Administration, St. John, Milwaukee, Wis. Maintains church membership records and statistical information regarding confirmations, baptisms, weddings, funerals, and membership changes. Teaches Bible classes and serves as an advisor to the Board for Children's Ministry.

Bob Garbe—Minister of Discipleship, St. Paul, Muskego, Wis. Serves as advisor to the Board of Outreach, Member Assimilation, and other committees and groups. Helps members use their time and talents. Establishes and maintains support groups.

The 12 attributes presented in this series reflect what makes Lutherans unique.

Although each attribute on its own may be shared by other religious groups, when all the attributes are studied together, a uniquely Lutheran image emerges.

Lutherans are **REASONABLE PEOPLE**

Lutherans embrace common sense in non-spiritual things but recognize its limits in matters of God.

Wayne D. Mueller

Maybe you noticed. Lutherans don't swallow snakes to prove their faith. Few ride horse-drawn buggies to church. We seldom report seeing the face of Jesus in the clouds.

For the most part, Lutherans hold common sense and human reason in high esteem. Dr. Siegbert Becker explains: "With Luther, the Lutheran Church, at its best, holds that faith is also in the intellect. . . . Lutheranism knows that man is a rational creature before his conversion, and knows also that he remains a rational creature after his conversion" (*The Foolishness of God*, p. 188).

Reasonable within limits

Although we recognize reason as a gift of God, we admit that our sinful nature skews its use in spiritual things. "The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so" (Romans 8:7). Our approach to common sense is to embrace it in non-spiritual things but to recognize its limits in matters of God. God's message trumps man's reason: "We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge

of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5).

Luther followed the rule of Scripture: "God has given men reason so that they can milk cows, bridle horses, and know that a hundred gulden are more than ten. Show your wisdom here; be a master and a good helper; use your knowledge. But here, when we come to the question of how we are saved, in heavenly relations and matters of faith, stop your reason, keep still, listen, and say: Here I can no longer operate" (*What Luther Says* [WLS] 3713).

Impact on teaching

Our approach to using human reason within proper limits characterizes Lutheran teachings. Luther abandoned an old approach to Bible interpretation that looked for three or four different meanings in every verse. His common sense, paired with trust in the clarity of God's Word, led him to declare that every verse of Scripture had one simple, God-intended meaning.

So Lutherans use their common sense to understand Scripture but

not to stand in the way of it. God led Luther to steer a careful middle course. Off to one side was Rome with the subjectivism of tradition and superstition. Off to the other was the Reformed, whose rationalism led them to deny that babies could be brought to faith in baptism.

Knowing when to praise reason and when to depreciate it led Luther himself to make conflicting statements. Once he wrote that human reason is a beautiful light. Yet when human logic was used to discount the Bible's teaching on the Lord's Supper, he said, "Reason is the devil's prostitute and can do nothing but blaspheme and defile everything God speaks and does" (WLS 3717).

Unreasonable truths

So we use human reason to understand what God says, but we do not doubt what he says when it seems unreasonable.

This leads us by faith to accept many logical contradictions, such as the Lord's Supper. Rome reasons that if the body and blood of Christ are present in the Holy Supper, God must somehow transform the bread and wine so that they are no longer

in the sacrament. Reformed churches argue that Jesus is in heaven, so his body and blood cannot be present in the Lord's Supper on earth. Against all common sense, Lutherans humbly accept the Bible's paradox: the bread and wine and the body and blood of our Savior are all present.

Lutherans are perhaps best known for their clear distinction between law and gospel. But human reason fails miserably in grasping the Bible's two main messages. Our sinful mind is hostile to God and is not able to submit to God's law (Romans 8:7). Common sense says God has no right to make laws that demand what he knows we cannot do.

The good news of Jesus equally perplexes human thinking. The gospel's promise of free grace is nonsense to the secular mantra: "Nothing's for nothing." The preaching of the cross is "foolishness" (1 Corinthians 1:23) to rational unbelievers. The natural knowledge of the unconverted mind cannot even conceptualize the gospel: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him" (1 Corinthians 2:9).

Luther acknowledged that without the Holy Spirit, we cannot properly differentiate between law and gospel.

Distinctive reasoning

The general public usually identifies Lutherans as Protestants. The military chaplaincy or your Roman Catholic friend will agree, because we put the authority of the Bible over the pope and tradition.

But your Baptist friend will likely think of you as more Roman than Reformed because the liturgies most of our churches use follow early Christian and Roman patterns. And, like the Roman church, we acknowledge God's power in the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Lutherans, however, fit conveniently into neither camp. Our approach to God's truth uses human reason as a servant, not a master. The role of reason, in fact, distinguishes us from non-Lutherans and also marks the line between liberal and confessional Lutherans.

Our approach to God's truth uses human reason as a servant, not a master.

This difference surfaces in the teaching about God's eternal election. The Bible teaches that before the creation of the world, God chose some to come to faith. He predestined us "in love . . . through Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 1:4,5). He tells us about our eternal election to comfort us when our faith is threatened. He does not invite or desire our speculation.

But human reason has demanded answers. "Why did God choose some and not others? Why do some believe and not others?" Some say that God is the answer to both questions. The Reformed leader, John Calvin, taught double predestination—God predestined some to be saved and others

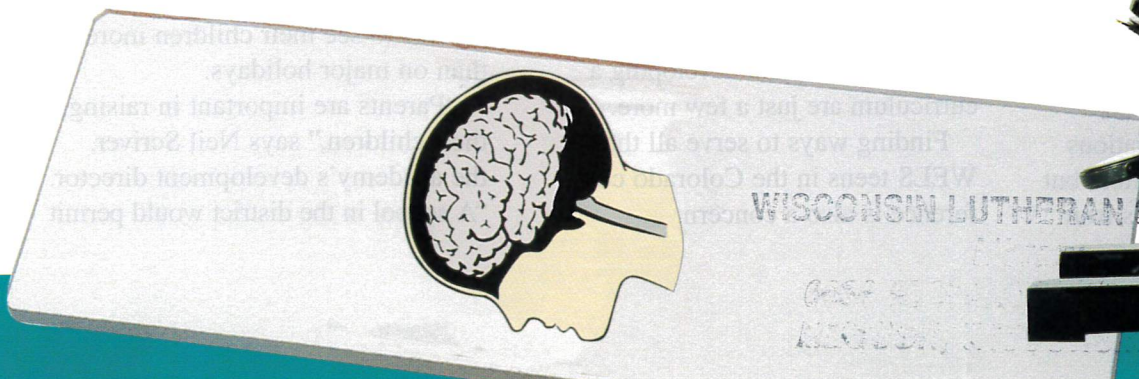
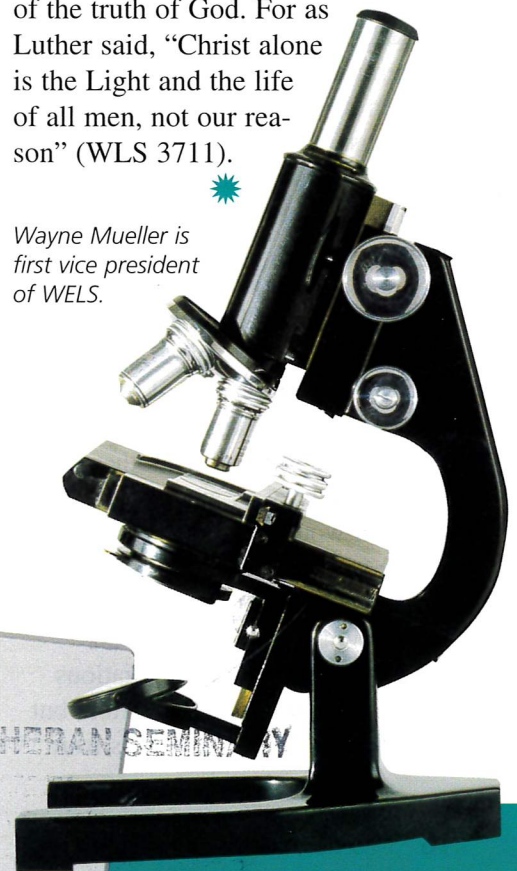
to be damned. The second half of Calvin's statement answers the curiosity of human reason, but contradicts the Bible's clear message that God wants no one to be lost (1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9; Ezekiel 18:32).

Others say that man's free will is the answer to both questions. It is true that if we are lost we have only ourselves to blame. But God also says that neither man's free will nor reason can make a decision for salvation (Ephesians 2:8,9; 1 Corinthians 12:3).

In 1917 the majority of Lutherans in this country adopted a variation of the free-will teaching. They said that God elected us because of the faith he saw we would have. Since then these Lutherans have rejected other "unreasonable" teachings such as the six-day creation and biblical inspiration.

Faithful Lutherans, however, view reason as God's gift to help us understand what he tells us about Jesus. In this role, reason is our servant. We must ever pray that reason does not become master of the truth of God. For as Luther said, "Christ alone is the Light and the life of all men, not our reason" (WLS 3711).

Wayne Mueller is first vice president of WELS.



Living the dream

The dream of opening WELS high schools in Colorado and Florida is becoming a reality.

Julie K. Wietzke

Lutheran high schools don't just appear magically. It takes a lot of work to plan, build, and run a school. And, unlike the movie *Field of Dreams*, "if you build it," students won't necessarily come.

But dreams can become realities after a lot of prayer and hard work. Our two newest area Lutheran high schools—Rocky Mountain Lutheran High School, Thornton, Colo., and Southern Lutheran Academy, Lakeland, Fla.—are living examples.

Christian education in Colorado

The dream of starting a Lutheran high school in Colorado goes all the way back to 1979. Committees were formed, a Board of Directors was elected, and now Rocky Mountain Lutheran High School is preparing to open its doors to ninth-graders in August.

"We have seen firsthand the Lord's work in the development of this ministry," says John Barenz, mission and ministry developer for the high school. "During those days when the possibility of developing an area Lutheran high school seemed so remote, the Lord would move someone to come forth with another idea for this ministry, or another gift or donation would be received, or more people would sign up as supporters. In each instance our spirits were lifted, and our hope was strengthened."

Twelve Colorado congregations make up the school's federation, but the school is getting inquiries from

people as far away as Texas. About 10 to 15 freshmen will attend Rocky Mountain in its first year. New grades will be added each year.

But students won't be walking into a typical high school setting. Rocky Mountain is leasing the fellowship hall and the previous worship space of Lord of Life, Thornton, Colo., a WELS church on the northeast side of Denver, for two years.

"It is our intention to operate with a balanced budget," says Barenz. "Buying land and building a school would put us into debt."

This concept of operating with a balanced budget stretches into other areas for the school.

"We decided early on in the development process that we wouldn't open our doors until the first year's operating costs were 'in the bank' or committed. We then can put all gifts and tuition toward the second year of operation and so forth," says Barenz.

Securing finances isn't the only challenge that Rocky Mountain will face. Convincing people of the need for Christian education, selecting a central location for the school, deciding whether to build or lease after the first two years, organizing car pools, arranging lodging for students who can't commute, and developing a curriculum are just a few more.

Finding ways to serve all the WELS teens in the Colorado conference is also a concern.

"Tuition can keep some students from attending an area Lutheran high school," says Barenz. "If we are to be a part of the ministry of 12 churches, we can't limit our service to just those who could afford it."

Plans for this expanded ministry include putting together a correspondence Bible course for teens, inviting other Colorado teens to take part in activities at the school, running a band program in the WELS elementary schools in the area, and providing training for lay leaders in teen ministry.

"We need to figure out where the needs are and how we, as an arm of the church, can help fill those needs," says Barenz.

Finding a new way in Florida

With the closest WELS high school over 1,100 miles away in Michigan, parents in the South Atlantic District have been dreaming and praying for many years about finding a better way to provide a Christian high school education to their teenagers.

Soon those dreams will become realities with the development of Southern Lutheran Academy, a new Lutheran high school that will provide a close connection to Jesus, a quality education, and a way for parents to see their children more than on major holidays.

"Parents are important in raising their children," says Neil Scriver, the academy's development director. "A school in the district would permit

Each year the schools in the South Atlantic District get together for a field day (right). Neil Scriver attended and talked about Southern Lutheran Academy at this field day in March. Could these be the future students of Southern Lutheran Academy?



Lord of Life, Thornton, Colo., is the site of Rocky Mountain Lutheran High School (left). The members of Lord of Life dedicated a new worship facility in 2001 and leased their old church and fellowship hall to Rocky Mountain. The hall will be remodeled to include two classrooms and two offices.



parents to be with their children on weekends and attend games and concerts.”

Thirty congregations have already agreed to support the school, which will be between Orlando and Tampa in Lakeland, Fla. Right now, Southern Lutheran Academy is planning on building its own school, starting with a gymnasium and classroom building and a 48-student dormitory.

Why build? “Location and identity and ownership and pride,” says Scriver.

The academy is also determined not to borrow money for its expenses because it doesn’t want to shoulder the burden of paying interest. That leaves a \$4.4 million construction cost to be raised.

That’s a long road to pave before the school opens for ninth- and tenth-graders in 2005. But parents, students, and called workers alike are excited about the possibility of opening a school.

“Blessings abound,” says Scriver. “Students, parents, and congregations are talking about what is needed most in life—God’s Word.”

This is something Southern Lutheran Academy can provide to its students daily. And that’s a blessing.

Julie Wietzke is senior communications assistant for Forward in Christ magazine and WELS Communication Services.

What advice would you give a Lutheran high school that is just starting out?

- “Decide on a purpose (assuming it would be to share Jesus) and let that be your guide in all things.”
—Jeffrey Davis, principal at Lakeside Lutheran High School, Lake Mills, Wis.
- “Remember what you are doing. It is very easy to turn your eyes away from the cross of Christ and focus on all kinds of other ‘important’ challenges. Just as the children of Israel were reminded again and again, keep God as your first love. Then all the other challenges will line up in the proper order.”—Randall Westphal, principal at Winnebago Lutheran Academy, Fond du Lac, Wis.
- “Be fair with everyone. Be very accepting and welcoming. Don’t react to problems by making new and many rules to cover every eventuality. Let the students know that you are there to serve them and that you love them just as Jesus loved them. Challenge the students and you get what you expect. Be patient and remember that you are in this for the long haul.”
—Dan Myers, principal at Great Plains Lutheran High School, Watertown, S.D.



CHOOSING A GOOD BIBLE TRANSLATION

A good translation must be faithful to the original languages, accurate especially in doctrinal passages, and easy to read and understand.

David P. Kuske

“Which Bible translation do you use?” In the 1970s people often asked this question. A number of new translations had appeared (e.g., NASB, NIV, NEB, LB), and Christians were naturally interested in them. These translations were easier to read and understand than the King James Version, so more and more people began to use them.

Recently another group of Bible translations has appeared (NIRV, TNIV, NRSV, REB, GW). Not surprisingly, we are asking questions about Bible translations again. What about these new translations? Why did our synod choose to use the New International Version (NIV) in our publications? And the question we will begin with: What makes a good translation?

Faithful to the original languages

A translation must be faithful to the original languages of the Bible: Hebrew and Aramaic in the Old Testament and Greek in the New Testament. But word for word translation from one language to another is not always good translation. Our English language doesn't always express things in the same way or with the same word order as the Hebrew or Greek languages do. For example, a word-for-word translation of Ephesians 2:8 would be: “By the for grace are you saved by faith, and this is not from yourselves. From God it is a gift.”

Even if paraphrasing is necessary sometimes, it is not good when a translation paraphrases too much. The literal translation of the words of

Ephesians 1:18 would be “the riches of the glory of the inheritance from him.” It would be better to paraphrase like this to make the meaning clear: “the glorious riches of the inheritance he gives us.” But the paraphrase in the Living Bible is too far removed from what the Greek actually says: “the magnificence and splendour of the inheritance promised to Christians.”

Accurate especially in doctrinal passages

A second way to test a translation is how it handles passages that deal with doctrine. If doctrinal passages are not translated accurately, the translation might throw a cloud over doctrines such as Jesus being true God and true man in one person, Jesus dying as our substitute, justification, creation, and inspiration. For example, 2 Timothy 3:16 says, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching” (NIV). But when a translation changes this and says, “Every inspired scripture has its use for teaching” (New English Bible), it gives the impression that not every passage of the Bible is inspired, but every one that is inspired is useful.

Another example comes from Paul’s letter to the Corinthians. In 1 Corinthians 10:16, the Greek word *koinonia* is used twice. This word says that two things come together in a union. In this verse, this means that the cup of blessing (wine) is united with the blood of Christ, and the bread with the body of Christ. This passage teaches us that we receive both the wine and the blood, the bread and the body, when we participate in the Lord’s Supper. Note that this truth is missing in the New Living Translation: “When we bless the cup at the Lord’s Table, aren’t we sharing in the benefits of the blood of Christ? And when we break the loaf

of bread, aren’t we sharing in the benefits of the body of Christ?”

It is hard to teach doctrine in children’s catechism classes, in adult Bible information classes, and in sermons and Bible classes if the doctrinal passages in a translation change the meaning or leave the meaning unclear.

Easy to read and understand

The third quality a good translation has, in addition to being faithful to the original languages of the Bible, is that it puts the meaning of the original languages into simple, understandable English. A translation doesn’t do us any good if we read it but can’t figure out what it is saying.

Some things in the Bible are “hard to understand” (2 Peter 3:16). But these passages usually deal with miracles of God, which by their very nature are beyond our understanding. No translation should make things hard to understand by the words or the sentence structure it uses. Some of the words used in the King James Version, together with its many long sentences, gradually made this translation harder for younger people to read with understanding.

Some of the rules today for writing good, understandable English are to use

- simple declarative sentences,
- the active voice,
- short paragraphs, and
- plain conversational language.

If translations do not follow these rules, they will make the Bible difficult for us to read and understand.

The sentences in the original Greek, especially in the New Testament epistles, are long and involved. For example, Ephesians 1:3-14 is one sentence the way Paul wrote it. It is not easy to translate sentences like this into simple English. But a good translation has

to find a way to do this and still remain faithful to the original languages of the Bible.

But simplicity in a translation is not enough. A translation must also have a dignity and style that make it both easy and fitting to read out loud in our church services. Slang doesn’t retain the dignity we are accustomed to when worshiping in God’s house. If a translation has a style that results in a rather choppy delivery when it is read out loud, it would make it difficult for us to listen to the Scripture readings and sermon text as they are read in our church services.

Importance of a good translation

Perhaps you might look for some other qualities in a good translation, but these three are basic: faithful to the original languages, accurate especially in doctrinal passages, and easy to read and understand.

2 Timothy 3:16 has this to say about the Bible: “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.” Since God gave every word of Scripture by inspiration, we want a translation that will tell us as carefully as possible in our language what was said in the original languages. How can we use the Bible for the four things Paul mentions in this passage if a translation changes or clouds what the Bible says in doctrinal passages? And how can each of us read the Bible daily and meditate on all God says to us in his Word if it isn’t easy to read and understand?

How the Bible is translated is important. The translation of the Bible we choose to use must be a good one.



David Kuske is a professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin.

WHATEVER

It's a faith thing

A majority of people look at me and wonder how I stay so **positive** when I have an illness that could eventually lead to my death. My answer is that it is a **faith** thing.

Joshua Prickett

I imagine you first find a bump under your arm that then leads you to get a chest x-ray that then reveals a mass in your lung on which they perform a biopsy. You are in complete suspense, hating to have to wait, maybe not so much because you are afraid of the results but because you don't like not knowing. The results finally come in, and the doctor says that they can tell you for certain that you have cancer.

He says that the tests say you have small cell lung cancer, a type that is almost exclusively found in middle-age smokers, and that they have never seen it in anyone younger than 40. So just to make sure they have the diagnosis right, they send the tests to three different specialists in different parts of the country, who all confirm the results but are just as dumfounded.

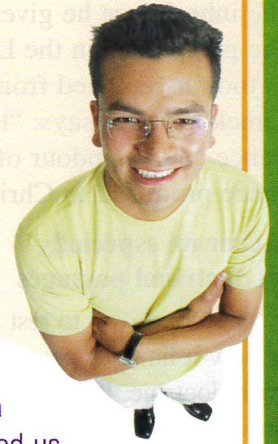
This was me at the end of November 2001. I'm 19. I don't smoke. I don't live around smokers. Yet I have a disease that in all likelihood makes me the youngest person to have it on record. In three months, the cancer has spread to eight different parts of my body.

Now the majority of people, whether they are Christian or not, look at me and continually wonder how I stay so positive when I have an illness that could eventually lead to my death. My answer is that it is a faith thing. That's right, a faith thing. It's understandable that an unbelieving person would not understand, but the fact is that many Christians don't understand either because they are all too afraid of that which is unnatural (death) to think of what the Bible tells us about death and life.

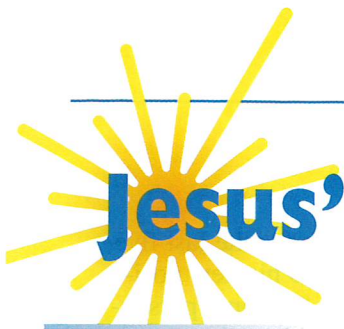
We must all realize that we fear illness and death because it is not a natural occurrence. When God created us, we were not created to suffer and die. We know this by looking at Genesis 2:16,17: "And the Lord God commanded the man, 'You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.'" In this we clearly see that we were created to live forever in bliss. Now, however, we do die, and we must take comfort in God's promises that he will take care of us through his Son. A good reminder of God's care comes from Jesus' own lips on the Sermon on the Mount, when he tell us that just as the Father provides for the needs of the birds so shall he do the same for us in this life.

We must also recognize that God will not only take care of us in this life but in the next life as well. Psalm 121:8 reads, "The Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore." God will be there for us no matter when. Christ made it sure by his life and death. So we should not look at illness and fear death, but look at death and realize how utterly meaningless all our worries and concerns are. Even if we suffer for a short time here, it will all pass away, leaving us with everlasting joy and happiness.

Joshua Prickett is a member at Word of Life, Appleton, Wisconsin.



death



Jesus' miracles: PORTRAITS OF REDEMPTION

Mark J. Lenz

INTRODUCTION

- In 1986 a television special featured the activities of Satan. The program resulted in many phone calls to the network, and thousands responded by letter. Most were experiencing problems with the occult. Some told of incidents having to do with devil worship and demon possession. If such a program were aired today, what kind of response would it have?
- In Jesus' day people believed that demons lived in tombs and deserts, which made it dangerous to travel near such areas. People blamed demons for mental illness, epilepsy, and other physical diseases. Do you think that they were just being superstitious, or is there some truth to what they believed?

TEXT—MATTHEW 8:28-34

²⁸When he arrived at the other side in the region of the Gadarenes, two demon-possessed men coming from the tombs met him. They were so violent that no one could pass that way. ²⁹“What do you want with us, Son of God?” they shouted. “Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?”

³⁰Some distance from them a large herd of pigs was feeding.

³¹The demons begged Jesus, “If you drive us out, send us into the herd of pigs.”

³²He said to them, “Go!” So they came out and went into the pigs, and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and died in the water. ³³Those tending the pigs ran off, went into the town and reported all this, including what had happened to the demon-possessed men. ³⁴Then the whole town went out to meet Jesus. And when they saw him, they pleaded with him to leave their region.

QUESTIONS

1. Where in the Gadarenes had these demon-possessed men made their home?
2. How violent were these men? (See also Mark 5:3-5.)
3. The demon-possessed men knew who Jesus was, and what he had the power to do. Comment and explain.
4. To what does “the appointed time” refer?
5. Jewish people did not raise pigs because they were considered unclean. What does this suggest about the nationality of the people living in this area?

QUESTIONS, CONTINUED

6. The pigs carried the demons into the depths of the sea. What did this perhaps symbolize (Luke 8:31)?
7. How did those tending the pigs react to what Jesus did? How did the people of the town react? Why?

APPLICATIONS

1. What evidence is there that demons are at work in today's world?
2. The demon-possessed men “were so violent that no one could pass that way.” How could Jesus show such remarkable courage in their presence? How can we have the same kind of courage in the face of evil?
3. The townspeople seemed more concerned about their loss of income than about the deliverance of the demon-possessed men. Cite examples of how we also sometimes have our priorities mixed up.
4. Seven recorded miracles of Jesus show his authority over the forces of evil. We hear of other demon possessions in the Gospels (Matthew 4:24, 8:16; Mark 1:39, 3:11; and Luke 10:17-20). In Luke 9:1, the Twelve are given authority over the demons as a separate category from curing illnesses. What do these suggest as ways to differentiate between demon possession and mental illness?
5. Explain how Jesus' authority over the demons is a portrait of redemption.
6. As Jesus drove the devils out of the men in our text, so he wants to drive the evil out of our lives. How does he do that?

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, I often let the devil control my life, giving in to his temptations to sin. How grateful I am that you conquered sin, death, and the devil for me. Help me live the victory you won for me. Give me strength to resist the devil's temptations. By your Word and sacrament, drive evil thoughts, words, and deeds out of my life. In your powerful, saving name I bring these requests. Amen.

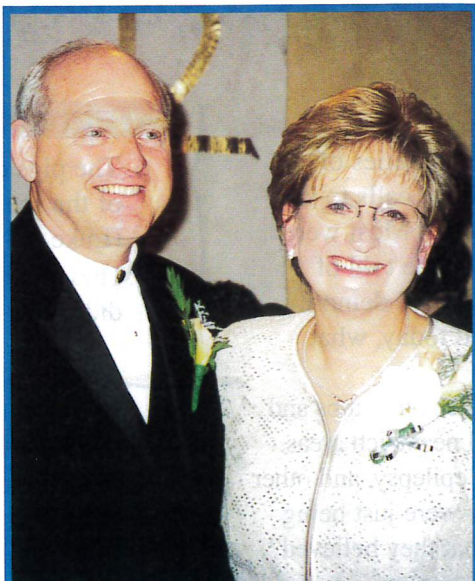


Prepared for service

Of his new position as Special Ministries administrator, Carl Ziemer says, “God seems to have been preparing me for this role for years.” Throughout the last 29 years, Ziemer has ministered in the parish—preaching, teaching, counseling, and visiting God’s people. He worked with college students as campus pastor at the University of Wisconsin—River Falls, and also served youth as camp director and chairman of the Camp Croix Board of Control.

Now, however, he observes that “More of my efforts will be directed to encouraging, helping, and motivating other pastors and lay leaders to carry out their ministries with God’s special people.”

Ziemer is not a stranger to Special Ministries. He was the Minnesota District Special Ministries coordinator for 20 years and has been a member of WELS Commission on



Although Carl Ziemer and his wife, Cheryl, will be leaving behind dear friends and family in Minnesota, they are confident that the Lord will meet all their needs in their new ministry.

Special Ministries for the last five years. Coming into his new position, he wants to “become personally acquainted with each area of the ministry.” Those areas include the deaf and hard of hearing, the sight impaired, the mentally challenged, the institutionalized, and those living overseas.

“I want to meet with the leaders and volunteers who are actually carrying on ministry at the synodical and local levels,” Ziemer says. “I want to listen to them so I can better understand both the challenges and the opportunities our Lord is placing before us. I want to help develop action plans for ministries already underway and for ministries yet to be uncovered. I want to support all who are serving the spiritual and physical needs of God’s special people.”

Laura Warmuth

REAL TIME WITH A MISSIONARY

In this section, you’ll hear news that came via e-mail from missionaries. We hope you enjoy these tidbits from our missions.

From Dick Warnke, a missionary to Malawi:

Today is the third Monday of the month. That means that this morning was Maula Prison time.

With the generous gifts that have come in, we are continuing to increase the amount of food and other “goodies” we take for the prisoners. They receive only one meal a day from the prison—and it consists of the nutritionless mush called *nsima* and brown beans.

Today we took pears, *kapenta* (a tiny, dried fish), salami (so no cooking would be required), and I splurged and bought chocolate-covered raisins as a treat. We also took 40 bars from

the box of hotel-size soap that the Zuberbiere, our medical mission nurse and administrative coordinator, brought back from the States.

I was curious to find out what the men had thought of the pears and nectarines we took last time, knowing that most had never eaten either. My convict friend, Mr. Singano, told me that the men enjoyed them, although some were certain they had to be cooked first.

While the number of men for devotions and Bible study had been holding steady at around 40, today the number swelled to more than 60. We’re not sure if interest in the Bible study has attracted the added crowd, or if it is more interest in possibly getting some soap, which the prison doesn’t give them. For the future, we’ve taken steps to ensure that men are not coming just for soap. With the food that isn’t a problem, because it’s shared by the men who regularly come to our convict-led Sunday church services after we leave.

Today I distributed the soap as prizes for correct answers to questions about the Bible and Bible content. They answered some fairly difficult questions but couldn’t answer some of the simple ones.

As always, it’s a special joy to hear the men singing a hymn vigorously as many look on to a dozen hymn sheets and a couple of hymnals.

The population at Maula has inched up, now nearing 1,500 men, plus many women in a separate section. Since we have not had any contact with the women’s section through Lutheran Church of Central Africa members being incarcerated there, we are not having Bible studies with them. Maybe the Lord will open an opportunity for us some day.

As always, we came away knowing that we may or may not build the visible church on earth through this work. But, by God’s grace, we are confident that the church triumphant will welcome new members in due time.

Readers give thumbs up to FIC

If you are a regular reader of *Forward in Christ*, you like both the layout and the content of the magazine's features—at least according to the readers' survey from the October 2001 issue. Over 90 percent of those returning surveys said they either "like" or "strongly like" all of the features but one. That one, our interactive Bible study, received an 88 percent approval rating. More than 50 percent "strongly like" just over half of the features (6 of 11).

Of the 1,209 persons responding, 77 percent were 50 years old or older, and 66 percent were women. Although that seems to reflect an older, mostly female readership, uncontrolled factors of the survey should be taken into account. It is fair to assume, for example, that older, retired readers were more

likely than others to take the time to complete the survey. Also, in households where both husband and wife read FIC, it is likely that more wives than husbands completed the survey. Ninety-three percent of respondents read the magazine every month.

Nearly 60 percent (58 percent) of those responding indicated that one or more others in the family read the magazine. Just over half (52 percent) also shared their copy outside of the church. They shared it at work, with friends, with neighbors, and with inmates. They placed it at libraries, laundromats, hotels, doctors' offices, truck stops, nursing homes, and airports.

Some volunteered some critical comments, all of which are receiving attention. One that has a high priority



for us is to find room to provide answers for the interactive Bible study. Meanwhile, we are thankful for the support and are more than ever committed to increasing the

readership, particularly among younger members, and offering them inspiring, Christ-centered reading.

The editorial staff

* This survey plus the synodwide distribution of the October issue of *Forward in Christ* was made possible in part by a grant from Aid Association for Lutherans/Lutheran Brotherhood.

God's promise: From page to screen

You roam through the temple. You are surrounded by the darkness of Gethsemane and invited into the thoughts of Bible characters whom you've been excited to meet since childhood. Along the way you begin to understand the structure of the Bible and to see how everything in it revolves around Christ.

This journey begins with *God's Promise*, a new CD-ROM produced by the Commission on Adult Discipleship and Northwestern Publishing House (NPH). It uses the computer to present God's Word in a way in which no book, video, or other medium is capable.

Unlike Bible commentaries, which have an encyclopedia-like feel, this program is an interactive journey. Each of the 12 chapters provides three types of activities. Videos overview each section, scrolls open into Bible scenes, and puzzle pieces challenge you to dig deeper into the Word.

God's Promise is a versatile tool for furthering God's kingdom. Even though it was originally designed for young adults, ages 20-35, a fifth-grader would be comfortable walking through the scenes, learning from hundreds of people who make "man on the street" comments. It explains the teachings simply enough for those unfamiliar with the Bible, yet still holds new insights for more mature Christians.

Pastors can give *God's Promise* to prospective members to familiarize them with the Bible's teachings before Bible information class. Going through the program can build the confidence of people who stay away from Bible study because they aren't able to answer any questions. It can also be used for 7th- and 8th-grade confirmation classes or installed on computers in area Lutheran high schools.

"I showed the 3-D temple walk-about to my 18-year-old daughter, and she spent 45 minutes at it even though she needed to leave for an appointment," says Mark Bergemann, a member at Good Shepherd, West Allis, Wis., who has extensively tested the program. "*God's Promise* has much to offer to everyone from grade school children to theologically trained adults and pastors."

God's Promise will be available early this summer. To order, call 1-800-662-6022; e-mail <orders@nph.wels.net>; or visit <www.nph.net>.

Laura Warmuth

God's Promise



Obituaries

Charles Schlei

1925-2002

Charles Schlei was born Oct. 1, 1925, in Manitowoc, Wis. He died Mar. 4, 2002.

A 1950 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis., he served at Nathanael, Milwaukee, Wis.; St. Paul, Hurley, Wis.; Bethlehem, Hortonville, Wis.; German missions; and Manitowoc Lutheran High School, Manitowoc, Wis.

He was preceded in death by one sister. He is survived by his wife, Evelyn; one daughter; and three grandchildren.

Donald Lindloff

1929-2002

Donald Lindloff was born June 13, 1929, in Elkton, S.D. He died Feb. 23, 2002, in North Mankato, Minn.

A 1954 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis., he served at St. Paul, Mound City, S.D.; Trinity, Winona, Minn.; and St. John, St. Clair, Minn.

He was preceded in death by one son and two brothers. He is survived by his wife, Mildred; two daughters; nine grandchildren; and one sister.

Henry Gieschen

1924-2002

Henry Gieschen was born Dec. 21, 1924, in Milwaukee, Wis. He died Mar. 10, 2002.

A 1947 graduate of Concordia Theological Seminary, Springfield, Mo., he served at St. Peter, Darwin, Minn.; St. Paul, Gresham, Neb.; St. Luke, Winamac, Ind.; St. Mark, Medaryville, Ind.; St. John, Rib Lake, Wis.; Zion, Spirit, Wis.; Trinity, Prentice, Wis.; Trinity, Chelsea, Wis.; St. Paul, Naugart, Wis.; and St. Paul, Hamburg, Wis.

He was preceded in death by one brother and one granddaughter. He is survived by his wife, Lily; one sister; two brothers; four sons; two daughters; and nine grandchildren.

Marjorie Rau

1920-2001

Marjorie Rau was born May 7, 1920. She died Dec. 27, 2001, in Wausau, Wis.

She served at Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn.

She was preceded in death by one sister. She is survived by two sisters.

Melinda Jahnke

1909-2002

Melinda Jahnke (nee Bartsch) was born Oct. 6, 1909, in Leigh, Neb. She died Mar. 19, 2002, in Graceville, Minn.

A 1928 graduate of Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., she served St. Paul, Appleton, Wis.; First German, Manitowoc, Wis.; Trinity, Johnson, Minn.; and Our Savior, Bylas, Ariz.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Adolf, and one daughter. She is survived by one son, one daughter, nine grandchildren, and 15 great-grandchildren.

Wilbert R. Gawrisch

1924-2002

Wilbert Gawrisch was born Mar. 7, 1924. He died Apr. 3, 2002.

A 1947 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis., he served St. Peter, Fond du Lac; Good Shepherd, West Bend; Zion, Rhinelander; and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, all in Wisconsin. He also served as the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference president from 1993-1999.

He is survived by his wife, Marilyn; three daughters; two sons; one brother; 15 grandchildren; and one great-grandson.

Correction: In Esther Wiedenmeyer's obituary [Apr. 2002], we incorrectly stated that she taught at St. John, St. Johns, Antigua. She actually taught at St. John, Jefferson, and Friedens, Kenosha, both in Wisconsin.



**So, God,
what about ...?**

Want God's advice, but you're not sure where to look? We'll get you started with the basics. Remember these verses—and share them!

As Christians we should do works, shouldn't we? Or is that even the right question to ask? Read about the place of works in our lives of faith.

- Titus 2:11-14: "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good."
- Hebrews 10:23,24: "Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds."
- 1 Timothy 6:18: "Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share."
- Ephesians 2:8-10: "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."
- John 9:4: "As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work."

On your own

Learn more about the works we do as Christians and why we do them.

Read and study the following:

Romans 4

Romans 12

Galatians 3:26-4:7

Galatians 6:1-10

Where are they now?

In *Forward in Christ* magazine, we report the news but aren't always able to follow up. "Where are they now?" is our way of giving you the rest of the story.

"The changeless gospel in a changing congregation," an article about Grace, Seattle, ran in December 1997.

Here's a recap

Located where 25 different languages are spoken in a one-mile radius, Grace, Seattle, has a prime location for spreading the Word among immigrants. In July 1997, the congregation rededicated itself to reaching out to its multi-cultural neighbors. One way it did this was by offering English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. Among its students was an Albanian couple who had settled in Seattle—Vladimir and Flutura Kuka.

So, where are they now?

On Nov. 11, 2001, the Kukas were baptized and confirmed. They and their two children are members at Grace and regularly bring friends to church.

Thomas Gumm, pastor at Grace, spent three years taking the Kukas through adult instruction class. "I would teach them in English," says Gumm. "They had the adult instruction manual in both English and Albanian. Most of the time they took turns reading the lesson in Albanian, and I would follow in the English. It was amazing that I could follow them, but it got easier each time we met."

Although the Kukas are a success story, Grace struggled to change to meet the needs of its multi-cultural neighborhood.

Because the 71-member congregation could no longer support a full-time pastor, Grace became a shared-time ministry in 1999. This means that the pastor, besides serving the congregation, works another job to support himself and his family.

"I don't have a day off except when it is a national holiday," says Gumm. "I work 40 hours a week for Aspen Technology, Inc. Commute two hours per day. Work two or three hours per night for church, eight to 10 hours on Saturday, and eight to 10 hours on Sunday."

Though difficult, a shared-time ministry does provide some positive opportunities.

"The greatest gift is that the members lose all excuses," says Gumm. "The laypeople are realizing that I am in the same boat as they are. It is now 'our church' instead of 'Pastor Gumm's church.' I can't do it alone—they must help."

He continues, "And help they have! I am the most proud of the way this church has come forward and worked with me. I feel that this is a team effort and that I am not alone."

Members are now responsible for gathering volunteers for church work; setting up cleaning, ushering, and fellowship schedules; helping with home visits; and being more involved in neighborhood outreach.

And although the church no longer offers ESL classes, many immigrants are still attending Grace. "In our area, we are known as having a mixed-culture church," says Gumm.

So even as the congregation keeps changing, it works hard to share the one thing that doesn't change—God's Word.



The Internet has become a vast maze of information. Knowing where to look for strong Christian content can make the journey easier.

- Looking for a strong law/gospel presentation on-line? Want to explain why Christianity is relevant today? Check out <www.truenorthwels.org>, the official Web site of the WELS campus ministry at the University of Minnesota. Click on "The Journey" link. You can also read about a variety of topics written from a biblical perspective by clicking on "Resources."

- Want to read about the work WELS members have accomplished this year? Check out the 2002 *Report to the Twelve Districts*, the official summary of synodical work. Visit <www.wels.net> and click on the "News" button.



Pastor Thomas Gumm with Flutura and Vladimir Kuka on their baptism and confirmation day.

DEFINING RELIGION

Saint: a holy one. Every Christian is a saint because the Holy Spirit has brought him to faith. Through faith every believer in Christ has received the forgiveness of sins and has been covered with Jesus' perfect righteousness.

District news

North Atlantic

Abiding Word, Orleans, Ontario, Canada, presented a musical concert for area WELS churches during Holy Week. The cantata, "What a Morning!", traced Jesus' journey from his triumphal entry into Jerusalem to his suffering, death, and victorious resurrection.

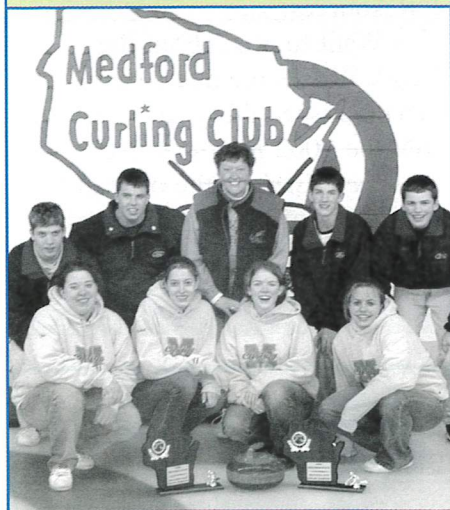
On May 17, members at **Grace, Falls Church, Va.**, dedicated their expanded and renovated worship, fellowship, and education facilities. A community-wide open house was held on May 4.

On May 5, **Abiding Word, Orleans, Ontario, Canada**, held an "Organist Appreciation Sunday" for organist Judy Bellefeuille, who has been playing organ for the congregation since the congregation began in 1974.

South Atlantic

Christopher Potter, an eighth-grader at Ascension, Sarasota, Fla., qualified for the state geography bee hosted by National Geographic.

Western Wisconsin



Beverly Schroeder (back row, middle) and Ryan Lemke (back row, far right), members at Immanuel, Medford, Wis., played key roles in leading their team to the State High School Curling Championship in February. Schroeder coached the team, and Lemke, a senior at Medford High School, was the skip.

Beautiful Savior, Clarksville, Tenn., held a German Christmas service. There was standing room only in this exploratory congregation's small facility. The local newspaper even featured the event.

Faith, St. Petersburg, Fla., was blessed with the help of four Martin Luther College students over the students' spring break. Darik Mischke, Aaron Strong, Abbie Henke, and Dominique Kiesling canvassed 80 blocks of homes, distributing flyers about Faith's before and after school program, its Easter service, and its Health and Safety Fair.

Rebecca Segert, a member at Redeemer, Merritt Island, Fla., is a sophomore at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy on Long Island, N.Y. During the 2001-02 basketball season, she scored her 1,000th point, finishing second in the nation in NCAA Division III with a 24.0 scoring average. Segert was also named Player of the Year in the Skyline Conference.

Southeastern Wisconsin

Wisconsin Lutheran Institutional Ministries' Web site, <www.wlim.net>, is up and running, providing up-to-date information about the ministries being carried out, Bible classes being conducted, locations being served, and much more.

Michigan

On Feb. 24, **Salem, Owosso, Mich.**, dedicated its new elevator, which Salem hopes will allow more people to hear God's Word.

South Atlantic



On Mar. 24, over 120 people attended the opening service of Mighty Fortress, which is serving West Cobb/East Paulding counties, near Atlanta, Ga. The service was held at Boots Ward Recreation Center in Powder Springs, where Mighty Fortress continues to have services each Sunday.

Pacific Northwest



After almost 30 years of moving pews to make space for tables at potluck dinners, Beautiful Savior, Corvallis, Ore., built an addition to its building, which was dedicated on Dec. 2, 2001.

These pastors are the reporters for the districts featured this month: MI—John Eich; NA—Kevin Schultz; PNW—David Birsching; SA—Mark Haefner; SEW—Scott Oelhafen; WW—Martin Baur.

ON THE BRIGHT SIDE

One Sunday morning, I happened to be surfing through radio stations until I came upon a familiar voice. It was a brother pastor preaching, so I thought I would listen. After an excellent sermon, the pastor said, "The peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, who returned home from the hospital this week."

I, of course, confronted the brother pastor with what I considered a rather interesting doctrinal statement. Turns out that, for the sake of getting as much of the service on the air as possible, the person recording the sermon cut out before the "Amen" and then cut into the middle of the pastor's announcement, before the prayer of the church, about a member who returned home from the hospital.

*Earle Treptow
New Ulm, Minnesota*

WELS news briefs

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

Board for Parish Services

414/256-3288

In 2002, Parish Assistance will celebrate 10 years of service to WELS leaders and congregations.

Right now, 62 congregations are in the first stages of exploring the possibility of engaging Parish Assistance to help them advance their ministry. Seventy-six congregations are actively engaged.

Board for Ministerial Education

414/256-3236

The Board for Ministerial Education will increase tuition and fees up to nine percent for each of the next three years. The increase was made not only in view of impending synodical budget constraints, but because increases in previous years have been far below actual education costs.

Several capital projects will be undertaken at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn. A new boiler building had to be constructed to be able to meet the needs of the current student body and new state regulations. The college will also be using local designated funds to expand and improve the cafeteria, and local undesignated funds to reconstruct tennis courts, refurbish athletic fields and parking lots, and do other site work in connection with the boiler building project. Additional capital projects, such as the proposed chapel, will be undertaken as funding becomes available.

Board for Home Missions

414/256-3284

The Board for Home Missions allocated \$100,000 in outreach grants to 52 outreach efforts.

These monies are used to provide

name identity in communities and to conduct outreach. Half of these monies come from special gifts.

Commission on Parish Schools

414/256-3220

Graduates of area Lutheran high schools have regularly been the largest segment of students entering the educational ministries program at Martin Luther College (MLC). **This year, over 50 percent of the MLC freshmen entering the pastoral ministries program also came from area Lutheran high schools.**

Commission on Adult Discipleship

414/256-3278

Concentrated work at authoring a new Bible Information Course is a main thrust for this commission. It is scheduled for release in 2003.

Commission on Youth Discipleship

414/256-3274

A Confirmation Ministry Task Force has been appointed to study confirmation practices in WELS and present recommendations to the commission for discussion and action. In initial meetings the task force identified five key areas to study:

1. The definition of confirmation.
2. The involvement of parents in the process.
3. The methods used to teach confirmation/catechism class.
4. The part confirmation plays in a person's overall spiritual life and growth.
5. The age of confirmation and first communion.

The CYD and the Commission on Evangelism sponsor an annual Christmas card design contest for Sunday school and Lutheran elementary school students in WELS.

WELS produces the winning card for congregations to advertise their Christmas celebrations. This year's theme is "Happy Birthday, Jesus!" Entry forms are available from your Sunday school superintendent and/or

school principal. Artwork is due to the CYD office by June 26. Call Bob Mateske, 414/256-3274, for details.

Communication Services Commission

414/256-3230

WELS Tech 2003 will be held June 22-25, 2003, at Fox Valley Lutheran High School, Appleton, Wis. Updates will be provided on the WELS Web site, <www.wels.net/welstech>.

Tel/Tech Task Force II

262/650-1592

Responding to a need for comprehensive technology planning at the local level, **two new conferences are available this summer:** a "boot camp" for network leaders in WELS congregations and an institute for teachers implementing technology in instruction.

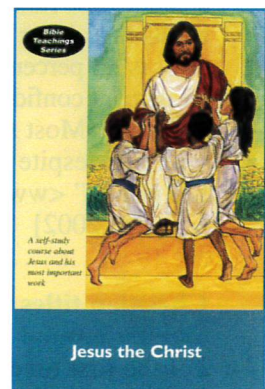
Board for World Missions

414/256-3233

The Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (WLS) campus/furlough houses should be completed by June. Missionaries on furlough will use these homes during the summer. The units will be sublet to WLS married students at a reduced cost during the school year.

Multi-Language

Publications has initiated a new series of publications entitled the Bible Teachings Series. The series of self-guided studies, based on 12 books published by WELS Prison Ministries, is written in simple English. Translation of the English version is being undertaken in Spanish. Translations in Bulgarian and Indonesian are being considered.





Poll: Adults satisfied with life even though challenges abound—

Nearly four out of five adults (78 percent) are completely or mostly satisfied with their lives, according to a nationwide survey by the Barna Research Group, Ventura, Calif.

Although most were satisfied with their lives, four out of five adults could identify pressing personal challenges and difficulties relating to

- finances (28%),
- health (19%),
- career concerns (16%),
- parenting struggles (11%),
- family relationships (7%), and
- accomplishing personal goals (7%).

Ninety-nine percent of adults were troubled by one or more national issues including

- war and related fears about terrorism (52%);
- economic issues such as the strength of the economy, taxes, and the cost of living (30%);
- the moral decline of the nation (19%);
- unemployment and job issues (15%); and
- national security (14%).

Adults were also dissatisfied with government performance (9%), education (8%), poverty (6%), racism (5%), and health care (4%).

This data was taken from telephone interviews during Jan.-Feb., 2002, with a nationwide random sample of 1,006 adults (age 18 or older). Sampling error is ± 3 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level.

[From “Most Americans satisfied with life despite having quality of life issues,” <www.barna.org>; Mar. 26, 2002]

Christian titles top Publishers’ Weekly annual bestseller lists—

For the first time in the history of Publishers’ Weekly annual hardcover bestseller charts, Christian titles are #1 in the fiction and nonfiction charts.

Desecration, book number nine of the “Left Behind” series, topped the fiction chart, beating out John Grisham’s *Skipping Christmas*.

It sold 2.9 million copies in 2001.

The Prayer of Jabez sold more than 8 million copies last year, putting it at the top of the 2001 nonfiction chart. *Secrets of the Vine*, the sequel to *The Prayer of Jabez*, was second.

The list was published in March. Publishers’ Weekly has been compiling fiction end-of-the-year-lists since 1895 and nonfiction lists since 1912.

New hymnal for the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod—

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) is in the middle of field-testing its new hymnal.

In 1998, the LCMS synod convention encouraged the LCMS Commission on Worship to start work on a new hymnal. The 2001 convention approved the field-testing, and the 2004 convention is expected to consider final approval for the hymnal. The hymnal will then be available in fall 2006.

The LCMS’s current hymnals include *Lutheran Worship* (1982) and *The Lutheran Hymnal* (1941). Liturgies for the new hymnal will include services from these hymnals as well as new ones.

Every LCMS congregation received a packet of materials to field-test. A second field-test is planned for 2003.

[LCMSNews, Mar. 26, 2002; LCMS Web site, <www.lcms.org>]

ELCA to study sexuality—

A three-year sexuality study to help the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America answer questions about same-sex relationships and the possibility of ordaining homosexual clergy in same-sex relationships began in February.

James M. Childs Jr., an ELCA pastor who is a professor at Trinity Lutheran Seminary, Columbus, Ohio, is heading the study.

The 2001 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA mandated this study. A final report and an action plan for implementation is expected for the 2005 Churchwide Assembly.

On-line petition tries to halt politically correct Bible—

Christian Petitions has posted a petition asking the International Bible Society and Zondervan to stop the publication of “Today’s New International Version” (TNIV) of the Bible. Critics of the new Bible believe that needless changes are being made to yield to political correctness.

For more information about Bible translations, check out our new series (p. 18). The August issue will talk a little more about the TNIV.

A religious dot.com files for bankruptcy—

Beliefnet, a multi-faith Web site focused on religion and spirituality, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in April.

Beliefnet plans to reorganize and hopefully continue its services.

The company has about 5 million e-mail newsletter subscribers, most of whom receive daily inspirational messages, including Bible passages, horoscopes, and daily “wisdom” from Muslim, Hindu, and other perspectives.

Most news reported in this section is derived from Religion News Service. Items do not necessarily reflect the views of WELS or *Forward in Christ* magazine.

GREAT GIFT IDEA

Looking for the perfect graduation or wedding gift? Help your loved ones grow in faith. For only \$12 per year, you can give them answers to life’s questions, stories of faith, interactive Bible studies, and WELS news with *Forward in Christ* magazine.

Subscribe before July 1 and save over 15 percent. That’s a one-year subscription for the low price of \$10.

Call Northwestern Publishing House or order on-line today. 1-800-662-6093, ext 8. Milwaukee, 414/615-5785. <www.nph.net/html/periodicals.html>. Charge it—Discover, MasterCard, or Visa—or bill it.

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

Hartwig, Theodore J., to retirement
Kant, William R., to Bethany, Concord/Good Shepherd, Vallejo, Calif.
Lindholm, Oliver H., to Risen Savior, McFarland, Wis.
Malchow, David B., to Our Savior, Bylas, Ariz.
Metzger, Paul W., to Bulgaria
Pudell, Rodney D., to Bloomington, Bloomington, Minn.
Schroeder, Daniel M., to Risen Savior, Chula Vista, Calif.
Stern, Jonathan D., to Mt. Calvary, Flagstaff, Ariz.
Thompson, Glen L., to Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee
Ulrich, Ross W., to Zion, Monroe, Mich.
Wendt, David R., to First, La Crosse, Wis.
Widmann, Warren L., to WELS Spiritual Growth Project Director, Milwaukee
Zell, Paul E., to Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis.

Teachers

Averbeck, Robert L., to retirement
Bastian, Anita M., to Peace, Sun Prairie, Wis.
Bauder, Cynthia L., to Bloomington, Bloomington, Minn.
Belsaas, Doris M., to retirement
Biedenbender, Steven W., to St. Paul, New Ulm, Minn.
Bredendick, Kristi L., to St. Paul First, North Hollywood, Calif.
Brucker, Eric A., to Rocky Mountain LHS, Denver, Colo.
Doering, Matthew K., to Lakeside LHS, Lake Mills, Wis.
Fenske, Joel R., to Friedens, Kenosha, Wis.
Franz, Robert A., to Native American Missions Administration
Glaeser, Caroline A., to retirement
Gregorius, Maxine, to retirement
Heiderich, Barbara L., to retirement
Hoffmann, Linda V., to St. John, Peshtigo, Wis.
Kasten, Brian K., to St. Stephen, Fallbrook, Calif.
Kasten, Kirsten J., to St. Stephen, Fallbrook, Calif.
Kempky, Jessie L., to Trinity, Marinette, Wis.
Koester, Michael J., to Zion, Columbus, Wis.
LaGrow, Martin P., to Trinity, Kaukauna, Wis.
Layton, Betty M., to retirement
Leitzke, Mark E., to Grace, Portland, Ore.
Lohmiller, Frederick M., to Rocky Mountain LHS, Denver, Colo.
Marquardt, Lois E., to St. Mark, Green Bay, Wis.
Meyer, Edward H., to retirement
Micheel, Peter J., to Trinity, Minocqua, Wis.
Mickelson, Ruthann K., to retirement
Monroe, Tamara K., to St. James, Prairie du Sac, Wis.
Neumann, Andrew M., to Rocky Mountain LHS, Denver, Colo.
Prahl, Lanny L., to Rocky Mountain LHS, Denver, Colo.
Presser, Kelly, to Rocky Mountain LHS, Denver, Colo.
Reich, Leanne K., to Immanuel, Hutchinson, Minn.
Renner, Mark A., to St. Martin, Watertown, S.D.
Rick, Helen M., to St. Paul, Wonewoc, Wis.
Rupprecht, Anita B., to retirement
Rusert, Amy L., to St. Paul, Cannon Falls, Minn.
Schibbelhut, John H., to retirement

Schneider, Nancy L., to retirement
Schuelke, Lois E., to retirement
Schulz, Arthur J., to retirement
Schulz, Candace, to Bethlehem, Hortonville, Wis.
Sievert, Jean A., to retirement
Sievert, Mary M., to retirement
Tillman, Judith A., to retirement
Tobeck, Gary W., to retirement
Tobeck, Norma J., to retirement
Westendorf, Jean K., to Calvary, Thiensville, Wis.
Wohlens, Clarice R., to retirement
Yagodinski, Rebecca L., to St. John, Manitowoc, Wis.
Zeitler, Susan K., to Zion, Hartland, Wis.

Staff ministers

Wade, James A. Jr., to Divine Savior exploratory, Miami, Fla.
Ruddat, Jonathan A., to Lord of Life, Thornton, Colo.
Reese, Peter M., to Risen Savior, Milwaukee

ANNIVERSARIES

Manitowoc, Wis.—Immanuel (75). Services, 8 & 10:30 AM.
 • June 2. Picnic to follow at Lincoln Park, Manitowoc, Wis.
 • July 14. Luncheon & entertainment to follow.
 • Sept. 8. Reception between services.
 • Oct. 13. Catered dinner & entertainment to follow.
Brookings, S.D.—Our Savior (30). June 9. Service, 10:30 AM. Meal to follow.
St. Louis Park, Minn.—Timothy (50). June 23. Service, 9:30 AM. Luncheon to follow.
Milwaukee, Wis.—Mt. Lebanon (75). June 23. Service, 9:30 AM. Picnic to follow.
Morton Grove, Ill.—Jerusalem (100). June 30. Service, 10 AM. Banquet, 12:30 PM, at Lone Tree Manor, Niles, Ill. RSVP to Janice, 847/967-6863.
West Mankato, Minn.—St. Mark church (60) & school (25). June 30. Service, 10 AM. Meal to follow. Keith Siverly, 507/388-2013.
Hartford, Wis.—Trinity (150). Anniversary services, 10 AM & 2 PM. Fellowship dinner, 11:30 AM-12:30 PM at Lisko's Hall, Huilsburg. Cost of meal: \$8.50 for adults. Reply for meal by June 9. Joyce Moldenhauer, 262/670-1022.
Lawrenceville, Ga.—Sola Fide (25). Oct. 6. Service, 3 PM. Program & dinner to follow. Jon Woldt, 707/972-1771.
Lake Zurich, Ill.—New Life (15). Nov. 3. Service, 9:30 AM. Brunch & program to follow.

COMING EVENTS

LWMS National Convention—June 27-30. Las Vegas, Nev. LWMS central office, 414/321-6212.
National OWLS Convention—July 9-11. Ramada Convention Center, Wausau, Wis. Lester Ring, 507/354-4403.
Camp—Good Shepherd Bible Camp, Angelus Oaks, Calif. July 7-13 & July 14-20. Campers fourth through tenth grade. Families welcome. Charles Found, 805/492-8943.
DMLC 25th class reunion—class of 1977. July 20. Appleton, Wis. Ed and Laura Becker, 708/672-0713. <eb-ssp@rocketmail.com>.
Training camp—an opportunity for kids entering grades 3-8 to grow in God's Word in an outdoor setting. July 21-26. Sponsored by WELS' Chicago Pastor's Conference. YMCA Camp Duncan, Ingleside, Ill. Andy Bauer, 847/438-5018.
WELS Weekend LIVE 2002—hosted by students

from Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel and Student Center, University of Wisconsin—Madison. Aug. 2-4. Four Points Sheraton Hotel, Milwaukee. Kati Hatfield, 608/257-1969.

Regional youth rally—Minnesota District. Aug. 4-7. St. Louis, Mo. 507/232-3938.

DMLC retired alumni get-together—Aug. 13. Luther Haven, 8949 N 97 St, Milwaukee. Opening devotion, 11:45 AM followed by lunch. All food & table service provided. Free will offering. RSVP, Donald Zimmerman, 414/355-9595 or Richard Grunze, 414/423-0118.

WELS Home Educators Retreat—Sept. 6-8. Camp Phillip, Wautoma, Wis. Debbie Thompson, 920/348-6482.

AVAILABLE

Baptismal font—free for pick up. Good Shepherd, Wisconsin Rapids, Wis. 715/325-3355.
Typewriter—free for the cost of shipping. Jim Larkee, 262/673-6418.
Organ—Hammond Grande Console. Free for pick-up in Hartford, Wis. 262/673-3796.

NEEDED

Architect—to help draw up plans for expansion project at St. John, Florence, Wis. Pastor Andrew Schwartz, 715/528-3337.
Preacher(s)—to conduct services at Beautiful Savior, Portland, Maine. June 30 & July 7. Housing available. Jeremy Glowicki, 202/797-4686.

SERVICE TIMES

Mountain, Wis.—Mountain Ambulance Service Building, 14336 State Hwy 32. May-Sept. Saturday worship, 6:30 PM. Craig Korth, 715/473-5633.
Bella Vista, Ark.—Beautiful Savior, 648 Lancashire Blvd. Sunday worship, 9:30 AM. Sunday school and Bible class, 10:45 AM. Russel Kobs, 479/876-2155.
Arcadia, Wis.—Bethel, 401 W Main St (driver's licensing building). Saturday worship, 6 PM. Bible class and Sunday school, 7 PM. Nathan Strutz, 608/582-9998.

POSITION AVAILABLE

Child care providers—Grace, Charlotte, N.C., is seeking WELS/ELS individuals to work at Lambs of Grace Child Development Center (ages six weeks to five years). Experience a plus but not necessary. Patti Fellers, 704/366-9309.

NAMES WANTED

Mountain/Suring/Breed/Lakewood, Wis.—Craig Korth, 715/473-5633.
Bass player—for St. Philip, Milwaukee, gospel choir. John Paul Simons, 414/774-2190.
Sheridan, Wyo.—Pete Zietlow, 307/672-7599.
Arcadia/Independence/Whitehall, Wis.—Nathan Strutz, 608/582-9998.

YEARBOOK ADDITION

Pastors-Retired—Ronald N. Kaiser (71), 1928 W Orangewood Ave #17, Phoenix AZ 85021-7843; 602/544-2944; <the_kaisers@hotmail.com>.

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

Blessed by the Word

Like Jonah, you have God's Word to take along wherever you go.

Paul E. Zell

No one wishes to be tossed into the sea during a storm or longs to spend three days trapped in a great fish. No one envies Jonah for these traumatic experiences. But wouldn't you love to have Jonah's powerful faith?

Jonah's faith

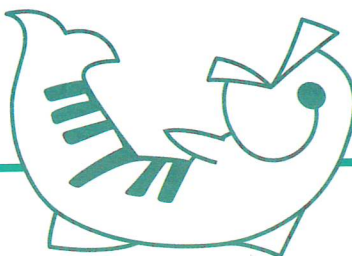
Just imagine! Jonah did not complain at all about the discomforts inside the fish's belly—he expressed thanks to God that he was still alive. Jonah did not look inward and wallow in self-pity—he looked heavenward and entrusted all things to his Savior. Jonah did not worry about the risks ahead of him—he expressed confidence in the Lord's mercy and might.

Wouldn't you love to be given such faith?

"Faith comes from hearing the message," we are told, "and the message is heard through the word of Christ" (Romans 10:17). Jonah serves as a head-of-the-class illustration of that promise.

We cannot calculate the number of times Jonah sang the psalms. We cannot quantify the number of hours Jonah spent hearing and studying Holy Scripture. It is apparent, though, that the faith he displays in his prayer flowed from the Word of God. His prayer reflects some inspired psalms that he knew.

- "In my distress I called to the Lord, and he answered me" (v. 2). That sounds like Psalm 120:1.



BIBLE READING

Jonah 2:1-4,6,8,9

¹From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the LORD his God. ²He said: "In my distress I called to the LORD, and he answered me. From the depths of the grave I called for help, and you listened to my cry. ³You hurled me into the deep, into the very heart of the seas, and the currents swirled about me; all your waves and breakers swept over me. ⁴I said, 'I have been banished from your sight; yet I will look again toward your holy temple.' . . . "To the roots of the mountains I sank down; the earth beneath barred me in forever. But you brought my life up from the pit, O LORD my God. . . .

⁸"Those who cling to worthless idols forfeit the grace that could be theirs. ⁹But I, with a song of thanksgiving, will sacrifice to you. What I have vowed I will make good. Salvation comes from the LORD."

- "From the depths of the grave I called for help, and you listened to my cry" (v. 2). That is similar to Psalm 30:2,3 and Psalm 130:1.
- "You hurled me into the deep, . . . all your waves and breakers swept over me" (v. 3). That's Psalm 42:7.

- "Yet I will look again toward your holy temple" (v. 4). Perhaps the prophet was recalling Psalm 5:7.
- "But you brought my life up from the pit, O Lord my God" (v. 6). Sounds like Psalm 103:4.
- "Salvation comes from the Lord" (v. 9). Doesn't that remind you of Psalm 62:1?

The gift of God's Word

Powerful faith is a precious gift from God. But the gift is not gained through wishful thinking, envious longing, or fervent praying. For all of Jonah's foolishness, stubbornness, and narrow-mindedness, the Holy Spirit graciously blessed the prophet just as he blesses you and me—through repeated contact with God's Word.

Does your congregation sing a psalm every Sunday? Terrific! Do you know some by heart? Wonderful! If you witnessed a baptism this year, thank God for his outpouring of grace. If the instructor assigns "memory work" to your adult Bible class, commend him for his insight. If you have sung that hymn or read that Bible story or heard that passage so often that you know it word for word, praise God for his goodness. Like Jonah, you have "songs of thanksgiving" to take along wherever you go!

Paul Zell is a professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin.

Serving the Lord in the workplace

The business news has been depressing lately, especially for graduates about to seek employment. Enron's collapse and the indictment of Arthur Andersen creates uncertainty in the marketplace. Enron was among the top five U.S. corporations, and Arthur Andersen was among the largest accounting firms in the nation. How far the mighty have fallen!

In times past, many employees worked for only one company for a lifetime. After 40 to 50 years, gold watch in hand, they retired. Today it's much more uncertain. Some dot.com companies aren't even five years old. Some won't be around 10 years from now.

The rules have changed, supposedly, for the employed as well as their employers. What important qualities, then, should you be seeking in your employer, your employees? Is there any practical, godly advice here?

Practical? The Ten Commandments are not always viewed as being practical, are they? But would you say a doctor's diagnosis is practical? I think so! Appropriate treatment cannot begin before there has been an accurate diagnosis. God's law is that for you and me. Before the x-ray vision of God's law, our inbred sin comes to light. Our condition is terminal. "The wages of sin is death," the law declares (Romans 6:23).

But while that is an accurate diagnosis of our sinful, death-dealing condition, the prognosis is optimistic. "The blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

With that gospel promise ringing in our ears, the law serves in a new, practical way. It reveals countless ways to show our thanks and appreciation to the Great Physician for his eternal cure. Luther listed some of these ways in his Table of Duties, including practical advice for employees as well as their employers.

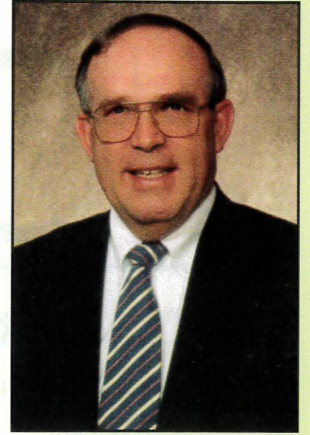
Employees, stop trying to please only your earthly boss. Strange advice, isn't it? But pleasing your boss outwardly, working hard only when his eyes are on you, can be superficial. It can also be hard internally if nothing you ever do seems to please him.

Paul encourages us in Ephesians 6:5-8 to act like slaves. Serve God, serve human beings, willingly, from the heart. This may not always win you favor with your earthly boss, but it always pleases your heavenly Master. And, your hardworking efforts may provide an opportunity to share why you willingly serve the Lord in slaving away for an earthly boss.

Employers, stop observing only the unique characteristics and special skills of your individual employees. Think of how we are all alike. Every one of us, above all, is God's creation and the object of God's grace in Christ.

"Don't show favoritism" is Paul's inspired advice in Ephesians 6:9. He is not saying we cannot recognize the unique gifts of individuals, promoting them to more responsible positions, rewarding them with appropriate compensation. He is saying, however, that we shouldn't forget that every one of us is the same before God. Treating all of those who work for us with dignity and respect may be an opportunity God gives us to speak of his universal, pardoning love for every human being.

That's it, for now, for Luther's Table of Duties. If you're like me, I don't leave much on the table untasted. May it be the same with the delicacies on Luther's Table of Duties. May we see them, in the various times and roles of our lives, as delicious opportunities to express the thankfulness of our hearts for God's unending, pardoning favor.



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

Serve God,
serve human
beings,
willingly,
from the
heart.

The Table of Duties is a portion of Luther's Small Catechism that contains "certain passages of Scripture for various classes and stations of men, whereby these are to be admonished of their respective offices and duties" (p. 18, Gausewitz edition). As Luther said, "Let each his lesson learn with care, And all the household well shall fare" (Luther's Small Catechism, p. 21, Gausewitz edition).

IN THE CROSS HAIRS

Richard L. Gurgel

TOPIC: DEGREES OF JUDGMENT IN HELL

Question: A recent edition of *Meditations* says, “An unbeliever who never heard of Jesus suffers less [in hell] than one who rejected him. And generally speaking, an unbeliever who rejected the gospel suffers less than one who believed it and later fell away. That person would have been better off to have never even heard about Jesus.” Where in Scripture do I find a reference to these statements?

Answer: Although hell’s punishment with its separation from God’s mercy won’t be pleasant for anyone, Scripture teaches that greater judgment awaits those who had greater opportunity to hear the gospel.

In Matthew 10:15 Jesus speaks to his disciples about what would happen to those in Jewish towns and villages who rejected their preaching. “I tell you the truth, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.” Although unbelievers in Sodom and Gomorrah and in these towns and villages would both be condemned to hell, the latter group’s judgment would be more severe. They would have squandered the opportunity of Jesus’ disciples proclaiming the good news in their midst.

In Luke 12:48 Jesus tells the principle behind such judgment: “From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.” Although Jesus speaks this in a parable that warns believers about careless gospel stewardship, the principle has broader application. Whenever someone hears the gospel, the greatest gift in the world is shared with him. The Spirit works through that message to create faith in Jesus. Those who reject such a great salvation, either never believing or falling from faith, are marked as those “entrusted with much” from whom “much more will be asked.”

The only thing that can rescue any soul from the judgments of hell is that gospel message.

Scripture doesn’t detail for us exactly what it means to be under greater judgment. The purpose for revealing this truth isn’t to satisfy our curiosity. Rather, this warning leads us to recognize the danger of our stubborn sinful nature so that we run to the cross of Jesus for strength.

However, consider this: we all know the feeling of frustration when we miss an opportunity. All souls in hell will exist with the eternal frustration and anger of knowing that the same God who condemned them to hell had earnestly desired their salvation. They will know that their Judge himself earned salvation for them and provided it free. But God’s gift of a time of grace will have been squandered. Who can measure the depth of bitter anger and frustration that will come over those who had the gospel all around them—and even believed for a time—only to have thrown it away, forever! Such indescribable frustration helps us understand why Jesus defines existence in hell as “weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matthew 25:30).

Now, don’t draw the conclusion that we should keep the gospel to ourselves rather than risk greater judgment for others. It’s true that there will be some whose stubborn rejection when we share the gospel will actually harden unbelief. Yet remember that the only thing that can rescue any soul from the judgments of hell is that gospel message. Proclaim it with the prayer that the Holy Spirit will overcome natural stubbornness and give another sinner “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:6).

Richard Gurgel is a professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin.

Have a question you want answered? Send it to 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222; <fic@sab.wels.net>.



Pastor Edgar Hoenecke and his wife, Meta, pose during the centennial celebration of St. Peter, Plymouth, Mich., in 1956. Hoenecke served as pastor at St. Peter for 30 years. Known synodwide for his pioneering work in world missions, he died in February, missing his own centennial by less than two years. His wife lives in San Diego, Calif.

Submitted by Viola Pederson

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.

Junk food preferred?

Once upon a time, so runs a tale, the lion invited the animal world to dine with him. The pig also appeared. When tasty dishes were placed before the guests, the pig grunted: "Is any bran to be had?"

The worldly-minded are like that. In our churches we preachers place the best food before them, such as the grace of God, forgiveness of sins, and eternal salvation. But they turn up their snouts for dollars and worldly pleasures. What is dainty food to the cow? She feeds on coarse straw. (Martin Luther)

When works work or vice versa

A bad motive makes a good action bad.

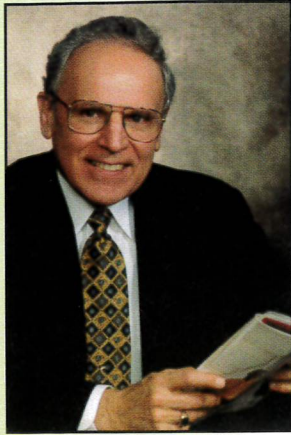
He who receives a benefit should never forget it; he who bestows one should never remember it. (Charron)

As you do not have to tell the sun to shine, just so useless would it be to tell Christians, "You must do this or that." (C. F. W. Walther)

To oppose God's wrath with our good works is like attempting to extinguish a fire by throwing straw on it. (Martin Luther)

From a poll taken in March, the *Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life* reports the following:

- 37 percent of Americans think religion's influence on American life is increasing, compared to 78 percent in a poll taken in mid-November.
- 75 percent of Americans think many religions can lead to eternal life, compared to 18 percent who said their own religion is the "one true faith."
- 61 percent say children raised with a religious emphasis are more likely to become moral adults. 35 percent said children raised without religion are just as likely to live a moral adult life.
- 65 percent of Americans believe religion plays a significant role in most wars and other conflicts in the world.
- 91 percent of the public reject the idea that Sept. 11 indicated God no longer protects the United States.
- 84 percent believe a person can be a good American without religious faith.
- 79 percent oppose government development of programs to encourage people to get and stay married.
- 76 percent support the death penalty for people convicted of terrorism.
- 70 percent think churches should not make political endorsements.
- 62 percent think Catholic church leaders have mostly tried to cover up cases of alleged sexual abuse by priests, compared to 26 percent who think church officials have attempted to address the problem.



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

To be positive . . .

It has a new slogan, but it's an old scam. Many of you first learned of it as "the power of positive thinking." Or you have heard people insist, "All you have to do is have faith." Today's slogan is "name-it-and-claim-it." It's also called positive confession or word-faith. If you haven't heard of it yet, you may soon. It is becoming the popular spiritual rage.

Now, before you write your letters, understand why I call this latest fad a scam. I know that positive thinking has a huge upside. You see it in business, in sports, even in health. If you think positively, you will tend to act and react positively. If you set goals ("name-it"), you will be more likely to reach the goals you set ("claim-it").

On the flip side, negative thinkers tend to be lower achievers. If you can't get yourself to say you want something, you're probably not going to get it.

That all seems plain enough, so why call the name-it-and-claim-it movement a scam? It's a scam because it is promoted by some as a Christian teaching—even the very essence of what is Christian, although it is more akin to Buddhism. It isn't biblical. It leaves out Christ altogether or, at least, as Savior. It, in effect, elevates man to god status. As Kenneth Copeland, one of the movement's leaders, says, "Man was created in the God class."

You can have anything you want, just name it. Name it with the conviction of strong faith, and you can claim it. By speaking, you release the power of the faith. This power is inherent in you.

This is a "human potential movement." Some have called it a "faith in faith" movement. It sounds so good, so responsible. (It is so true to our sinful natures.) We can pull ourselves up by our own

bootstraps. Name it and claim it. Fail, and it's only a sign that your faith isn't strong enough.

Yes, this thinking gets passed off as Christian medicine, but it is really anti-Christian quackery. It can work for a time, but it's also bound by time. Consider—

- It builds on human potential, ignoring that human potential was forever flawed in the fall of Adam and Eve. Nothing truly good comes from our sinful natures (Romans 7:18).
- It places prime importance on this-world blessings, giving short shrift to eternal blessings. Jesus told us to seek the kingdom of God first (Matthew 6:33) and insisted that his kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36).
- It predicates success on the power of faith. What does that say of our Savior's faith when he prayed in Gethsemane?
- It teaches that words have creative power, but it doesn't properly identify the Word by whom all things were created (John 1:1-3). "Creative power was in God's mouth. It is in your mouth also," according to Charles Capps, another of the movement's leaders.
- It turns attention to you and your efforts instead of to Christ and his efforts for you.

This movement is popular because it is positive. It stresses the positive and with it prosperity. How can we be negative about that? We can because it is missing the one important positive of God's Word, the gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ. Name that, and claim its promise of eternal prosperity.

Gary P. Baumler

The name-it-and-claim-it movement leaves out Christ altogether or, at least, as Savior.

inspiration

www.wels.net

FREE

Web Services

for *you*



wels.net

identification

www.shopwels.net

information

Jesus on a baseball card

Baseball's heroes fail often and always grow old. But through the errors, blown saves, and heartbreaking seasons, remember the one hero who never lets you down.

Victor I. Vieth



I was born the year the Minnesota Twins came to town. My boyhood batting stance mimicked All-Star outfielder Tony Oliva's. Once every June or July, Dad drove to Metropolitan Stadium where he, my brother, and I watched baseball beneath the stars. I saw Perry pitch, Killebrew clout, and Rod (Carew) run. I was particularly intrigued by the way a young shortstop named Danny Thompson glided his glove along the ground.

When not in the stands poised to catch a stray ball, I was glued to my radio, from which Herb Carneal painted me a word picture of every play. Win or lose, Herb's gentle voice was a calm influence on me. When Herb's voice was no longer heard, I knew summer was over.

When boyhood was over, baseball remained. I was a newly christened

lawyer when the Twins brought Minnesota her first world championship. I was married with a baby girl when the Twins brought a second. Ten years later, I sat next to my daughter as she caught her first foul ball.

Lessons learned

The bond that baseball forged in my family then and now will never be broken. The lessons learned from the game will never leave. A. Bartlett Giamatti said that baseball is designed to break the heart and, to some extent, I suspect that's true. Baseball's heroes fail often and always grow old. Harmon Killebrew struck out more often than he hit home runs. Tony Oliva's knees gave out. Danny Thompson died from leukemia at the age of 29.

Jesus hit a home run that gave all his fans, including me, a heavenly championship.

But in the many shortcomings of the players and owners, I remember how it is that I should play the game.

When I read that racism once prevented the New York Yankees from signing a promising outfielder named Willie Mays, I remember that God looks at the heart and cherishes all.

When I hear that, while managing the Reds, Pete Rose tossed aside a cereal box a boy asked him to autograph, I remember that God scolds those who keep the children away from him.

When I learn that a bunch of billionaire baseball owners agreed to contract their league and perhaps eliminate my beloved Twins, I remember that God is forever, and no power on earth can take him from me.

The best baseball card

In giving me baseball, God warms my winters with memories of daring diamond feats. It is in the painful parts of the game, though, that God reminds me of my need for him. In the errors, blown saves, and heartbreaking seasons, I remember the one hero—Jesus—who never lets me down.

When Satan threw a wicked curveball called sin, it was Jesus who pinch-hit for me. With two outs in the bottom of the ninth, with my fate sealed inside a tomb, Jesus hit a home run that gave all his fans, including me, a heavenly championship. A shot that, unlike Bobby Thomson's pennant clincher, really was "heard 'round the world."

If Jesus played the game, his baseball card would be my most prized possession. Although I continue to collect and even trade my baseball cards, I'm going to hang on to the card that bears the name of Christ. I'm going to keep it, that is, until the day in glory when I trade it for a crown.

I will never play in a World Series, but thanks to a teammate from Galilee, I know what it's like to win one. ✨

Victor Vieth is a member at Trinity, Woodbridge, Virginia.