

FORWARD IN CHRIST

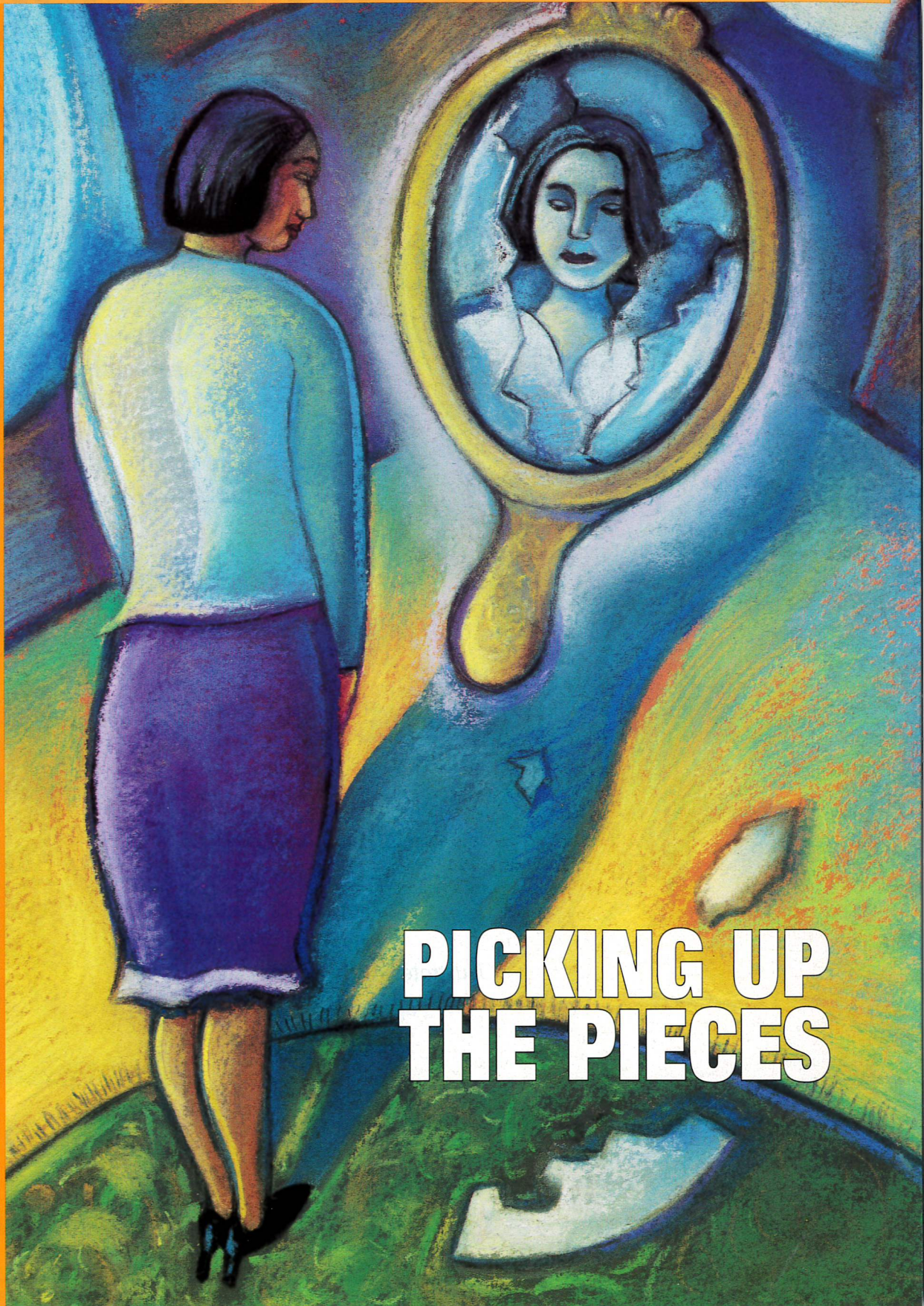
June 2004

The Word from the WELS

Dealing with
Alzheimer's

Gorging
ourselves
on fake
food

How much
do you know
about King
David?



**PICKING UP
THE PIECES**

A humorous guide to fatherhood

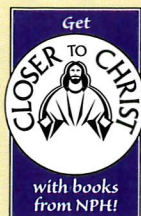
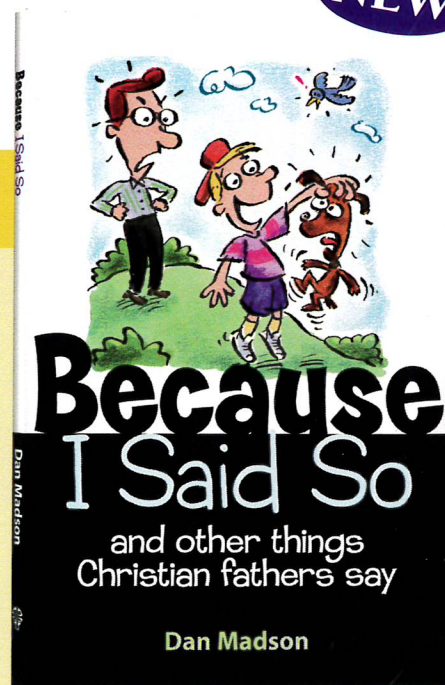



Author Dan Madson writes with a humorous perspective on an often frustrating and vulnerable phase of life—fatherhood. Readers will empathize with the all-too-familiar situations he describes. His Christian insights and accurate depictions of family life touch the heart with laughter. *Because I Said So* is great reading for parents, grandparents, and even children. But fathers especially will relate to the 36 real-life vignettes about being a dad in an often amusing Christian home.

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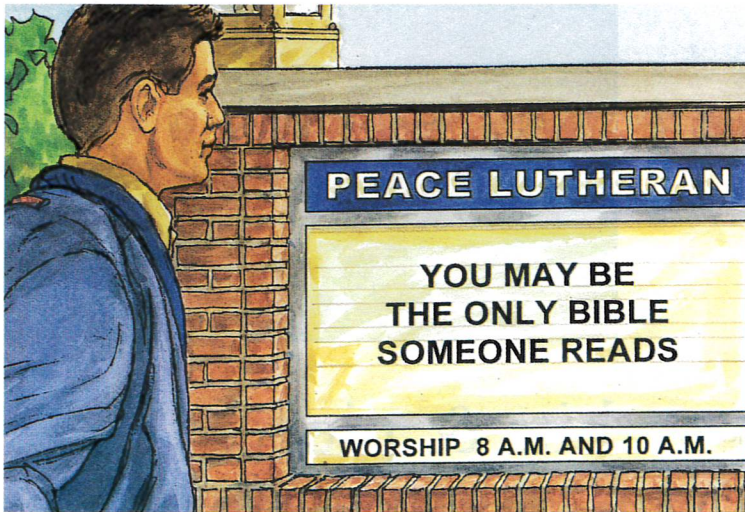
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Be a witness for Christ

“For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” Ephesians 2:10

Thomas A. Westra

My friend had grown up in a Christian home, with parents who took him to church every Sunday. He is one of the most generous, caring, humble, genuine people I know. If you ever need help, he will be there for you. He’s the kind of friend you don’t find very often—and when you do, you treasure him.



He doesn’t go to church anymore—hasn’t for a long time. Concerned for his eternal life, I asked him why. His normally smiling face turned dead serious, almost angry, and he launched into a litany of dirty laundry of people he knew who went to church—lies, deceit, dishonesty, adultery, immorality, abuse. “Hypocrites,” he called these people. They were his reasons for not going to church.

I pointed him to Jesus’ cross, to the desperate need for forgiveness that we all have, to the hopelessness of any of us, if we are without Christ. But I’m not sure how much he heard or believed.

Your life is a witness

I left our conversation feeling sad for him and also wondering what kind of witness my life had been to him and to others.

Paul’s words to Timothy came to mind: “Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because

if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers” (1 Timothy 4:16). I thought of our Savior’s words: “Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16). I also thought of the sayings:

- “More is caught than taught,”
- “I would rather see a sermon than hear one,” and
- “You may be the only Bible someone reads.”

Clichés, yes, but they are true.

Witness through your words and actions

How can my example—my life—be a better witness for Christ? If I look inward, I will only despair, for “I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature” (Romans 7:18). I will be led to cry out in hopelessness, “What a wretched man I am!” (Romans 7:24).

But the Holy Spirit will help me. He works in me to will and to act

according to God’s good purpose (Philippians 2:13). How? Through the message of what Jesus has done for me. Knowing that he has fulfilled every demand of God’s law in my place, as my substitute; knowing that he has taken my sins—all of them—into himself on the cross and made full payment for them; knowing that in love he chose me to be his own and sent his Spirit into my heart to

make me his child; knowing all of this produces in me the desire to do what is pleasing to him.

I will never be without sin, but maybe it’s here that I can let the light of Christ shine. As I confess my sin, my friend sees that I recognize my sinfulness, regret the wrong that I have done, and seek to do the right thing. He sees someone who has found peace in Christ sharing that peace.

How much we owe to the Holy Spirit! First, when I was dead in my trespasses and sins, he brought me to faith. Now, through that message of forgiveness in Christ, he equips me for serving Christ and witnessing to my friend, not only by my words, but also by my actions.



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

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Editorial office
Forward in Christ magazine,
WELS, 2929 N Mayfair Rd,
Milwaukee WI 53222-4398
FAX, 414/256-3862
<fic@sab.wels.net>

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

Senior Communications Assistants
Nicole R. Balza, 414/256-3232
<nicoleb@sab.wels.net>

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

Seminary Consultant
D. P. Leyrer

Contributing Editors
J. D. Buchholz, K. A. Cherney, D. J. Engelbrecht,
S. H. Geiger, R. L. Gurgel, T. J. Jeske, P. L.
Kieselhorst, M. J. Lenz, P. A. Panitzke, T. A.
Westra, P. E. Zell

Art Director
Paul Burmeister

Designer
Carianne Ciriacks

Photographs and Illustrations
Glenn Myers, p. 3; Susan Tolonen, p. 8;
Tom Nachreiner, p. 12; Corbis Images, p.18;
Rubberball Productions, p. 20; Amanda Haley,
p. 36

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Cover illustration by Susan Tolonen

Emotions of every kind can be expected when dealing with the aftermath of divorce—anger, depression, loneliness, grief, to name a few.

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bits & pieces



Did you know that more than 40 percent of first marriages end in divorce? Divorce touches us all, whether personally or through friends, relatives, and neighbors. A new series on "Life after divorce" starts this month with a look at dealing with the aftermath of divorce (p. 8). We'll also be covering the topics of single parenting, remarriage, and blended families.



Often illness and medical problems cause us to look more closely at our relationship with our Savior. They force us to give up control and to put our trust in God and his plan for our lives.

- Alzheimer's disease not only affects the one who is sick, but also the caregiver. Carol Gehrt shares how she was affected when she began taking care of her mother after her mother was diagnosed with Alzheimer's (p. 10). She also relates the importance of knowing that God had a plan for her and her mother.

- Read "The wonders of God's love" (p. 16) and discover how God directs a woman's life from childhood through marriage and then through a heart-lung transplant.



Our question and answer column this month focuses on what happen to those who die without hearing the gospel. Make sure to catch Prof. Richard Gurgel's answer and his plea to us to rededicate ourselves to spreading the Word (p. 32).



Something new and different is coming to our pages next month. We hope you enjoy it as much as we enjoyed putting it together for you, our readers.

—JKW

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Change laws? Change hearts!



Re: "Discover Taizé" [March].

About a year ago my grandmother informed me that her ELCA congregation began holding Taizé services. As my curiosity took hold, I did a little research. I found that the Taizé community was founded in the 1940s by a monk in the French hill town of Taize. The Web site <www.taize.fr> claims that it is an ecumenical community dedicated to worship using forms of prayer, meditation, and song. While they do use Scripture, including the Psalms, they rely heavily on the Roman Catholic church and the Mass. Taizé "services" promote heavy usage of icons (such as the virgin Mary) and candles and encourage prayer to the saints, quite contrary to Reformed and Lutheran traditions.

I feel that it is quite sad how we have accepted those ideas that Martin Luther rejected nearly 500 years ago and have begun incorporating them in our churches again. I also find it disturbing that while we do not allow fellow Christians who adhere to Reformed teachings to worship from our pulpits we have slowly begun to accept doctrine contrary to that which we hold so dear.

 *Jonathan D. Beckler
Muskego, Wisconsin*


Mary Prange, who helps plan Taizé services at Atonement, Milwaukee, responds: Taizé-style worship as I have experienced it in WELS means making use of a certain style of music, Scripture readings, and prayers. Candles, signifying the light of Christ, might also be included. Any form of worship can contain doctrinal errors. Worship planners who seek to add variety to worship must use what is doctrinally sound and reject that which conflicts with Scripture.

Thank you for the article on "Recipes for women's ministry" [April].


I am impressed with women with "common side interests," such as moms of toddlers and women who exercise, coming together for Bible

study. However, we should not miss the most obvious commonality of women—that we are women.

Our congregation started a women's Bible class in June 2003. Most small congregations such as ours cannot afford to divide up their women into special interests. We find that our Bible class is special because it is for women, by women, and the content is the everlasting Word of God. The content is unchanged, but the ambience is unique.


 *Lois Kluender
Trumbull, Connecticut*

Mark Braun begins his article ["I know that my Redeemer lives," April] with a brief story about a church organist thinking that an Easter hymn three weeks after Easter must be a mistake. An Easter hymn can never be a mistake. For many years my pastor has had in his files a request from me regarding my funeral service. The first hymn I have asked for is "Awake, My Heart, with Gladness."

 *Richard Engelmann
Cincinnati, Ohio*

Re: "I know that my Redeemer lives" [April] and its illustration. I found the artwork as well as the article on a favorite hymn most moving. Looking at the face of each of us, as it were, and reading this well-done article compels me to give a special "Bravo!" My heart is so touched—God's love is awesome!

In addition, the editorial in the same issue, "Jesus hasn't moved," really struck home. Jesus hasn't moved. We find him waiting for each one of us to return.

 *Barbara Beckmann
Sun Lakes, Arizona*

As a church librarian, I really appreciate your occasional feature, "Book nook," with reviews of new publications by Northwestern Pub-

lishing House (NPH). Our library routinely adds most of NPH's new releases. These reviews are called to our readers' attention via our newsletter and bulletin board to assist them in choosing reading materials from our library.

I also want to thank you for the articles on *The Da Vinci Code* and *The Purpose Driven Life* [April]. As WELS members, we need to be informed about what is being published and read by the rest of America. I had, unfortunately, out of curiosity, already read *The Da Vinci Code*. I consider it a blatant attack on Christianity, and it is disturbing to know that this is what so many people are reading—and believing. I wondered if *The Purpose Driven Life*, which I haven't yet read, was worthy of inclusion in our library. Richard Gurgel answered my question! Thank you. Please continue to offer this kind of service to your readers.

*Bernita Krumbach
Lake Montezuma, Arizona*

I saw Gary Baumler's article, "Anti-Semitism and the death of Christ" [April]. I totally agree and thought it was interesting that you stated that people are not accused of being anti-German when movies are made about the Holocaust. The truth of what happened is simply portrayed. I went to see *The Passion* and was moved to see the love of God on open display. I believe the world is hungering to see God's love, to really know the reality of the One who has created them to fellowship in that very love. . . .

 *Juanita Thomas*

Send your letters to Readers forum, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398; FAX, 414/256-3862; <fic@sab.wels.net>. Letters between 100 and 250 words are preferred. Include full name and address. Letters are edited for clarity, conciseness, and relevance. Not all letters can be acknowledged or used. Writers' views are not necessarily those of WELS or *Forward in Christ*.

Discovering our God

Thomas J. Jeske

Wintertime. The north Atlantic raged. Dark water rose up and hurled itself against the Donegal cliffs. If there's a god who controls the sea, he must be *strong*.

A newborn, just seconds out of the womb, is being held upside down by the ankles. The doctor clamps off the bright blue umbilical cord. A swat on the behind, and the frail one gasps. A short time before, little lungs had been filled with fluid; she received her oxygen from her mother's bloodstream. Now the infant breathes on her own. If there's a god who designed that, he must be *intelligent*.

Suddenly a popup was there on the computer screen: "Hi, my name is Jenny. I heard about you from a friend. I have a Webcam if you'd like to watch me. Just click here." The young man's heart pounded; he glanced around. If there's a god with commandments, who knows my thoughts and who disapproves, he must be *judgmental*.

Friends will admit that there is a God, somebody behind the scenes—of life, of fear, of love, of death. Most come around to the conclusion that he (she? they?) is strong and intelligent. It's a hideous strength, however, and a threatening intelligence. Our consciences assure us that we have offended this God whom we know from our five senses. As for his strength and his wisdom, he will only use those against us when we meet.

What options does a guilty human being have? Avoid God. Curse him. Say that her conscience is her mother's fault.

Worship with you? No thanks. Why get any closer to the fire?

Pulling the curtain back

Ten minutes to show time. Children attending the play at the school auditorium notice the curtain move. A little bit of light comes from the gap just above the stage boards. Every so often the kids can see feet

under the curtain. They can hear sounds of stage props shifting. "Someone is back there!" they whisper knowingly to each other. It's not until the heavy curtain is pulled aside, however, that they begin to understand the story.

What we know about God through our senses is true (that he exists—strong, smart, and critical of me), but it is as incomplete as what a boy knows about a play before the curtain opens and reveals the mind of the author.

Part of God's character is curtained from my five senses. If a strong and intelligent God desired to remain hidden from me, he could surely do that. But if the weak and the guilty are to know God, he would have to pull the curtain back. In the house of death, God would have to reveal himself. God would have to tell me about himself.

"The life appeared; we have seen it" (1 John 1:2).

Jesus appeared 2,000 years ago. His Passion took place halfway around the world from here. I've missed him with my five senses. For me to know him, then, he would have had to leave me words, his words. If the Bible is God's words, it could tell me—rather, he could tell me—what's in his heart. Does he know me? Does this strong, wise, holy God want to hurt me or help me? Listen!

"We proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us" (1 John 1:2,3).

Eternal life, hmmm.

Can I come worship with you?

Tom Jeske is pastor at Living Hope, Omaha, Nebraska.

Does this
strong, wise,
holy God
want to
hurt me or
help me?

PICKING

The aftermath of divorce can be hard to recover from. Here is advice from one Christian counselor.

Joan Dickerson

“Julie” walked into my counseling office and sat down. I asked: “How can I help you?”

Julie’s eyes filled with tears as she said: “I never thought my marriage would end in divorce. ‘Bob’ and I were high school sweethearts. Then came 15 years of marriage, two kids, not really talking to each other for the last three years, and Bob’s affair. The divorce was finalized six months ago. I don’t know where to go from here. I’m tired all the time, and it’s an effort to do anything. I hope you can help me.”

“How do you see yourself?” I asked Julie.

“Like a failure. I couldn’t keep my marriage together. I’m not much fun to be around anymore,” answered Julie with tears streaming down her face.

I looked into her eyes and said: “The death of God’s only Son is what you are worth. God, our Creator, is the only one who can determine your value, and he says you’re priceless to him.”

A familiar story

In divorce situations, many times people start to determine their value based on how others treat them, the gifts or abilities they have, the things they’ve accomplished, or the stuff

they own. It’s as if everyone has a mirror on them. But actually how others treat you is always a reflection of who they are, and how you treat others is always a reflection of who you are. Gifts, abilities, accomplishments, and things are God’s blessings to us. We can’t take credit for a gift, nor does it determine our value.

Unfortunately, Julie’s story is a familiar one. Marriage destruction typically happens slowly. Problems and issues not dealt with mount up until there’s an explosion. Sometimes those explosions are angry outbursts, resentful silences, abusive episodes, desertion, addictions, affairs, or divorce.

Emotions of every kind can be expected when dealing with the aftermath of divorce—anger, depression, loneliness, grief, anxiety, confusion, and relief, just to name a few. Julie was beginning to show classic symptoms of depression: exhaustion, lack of interest, isolation, and a sense of hopelessness.

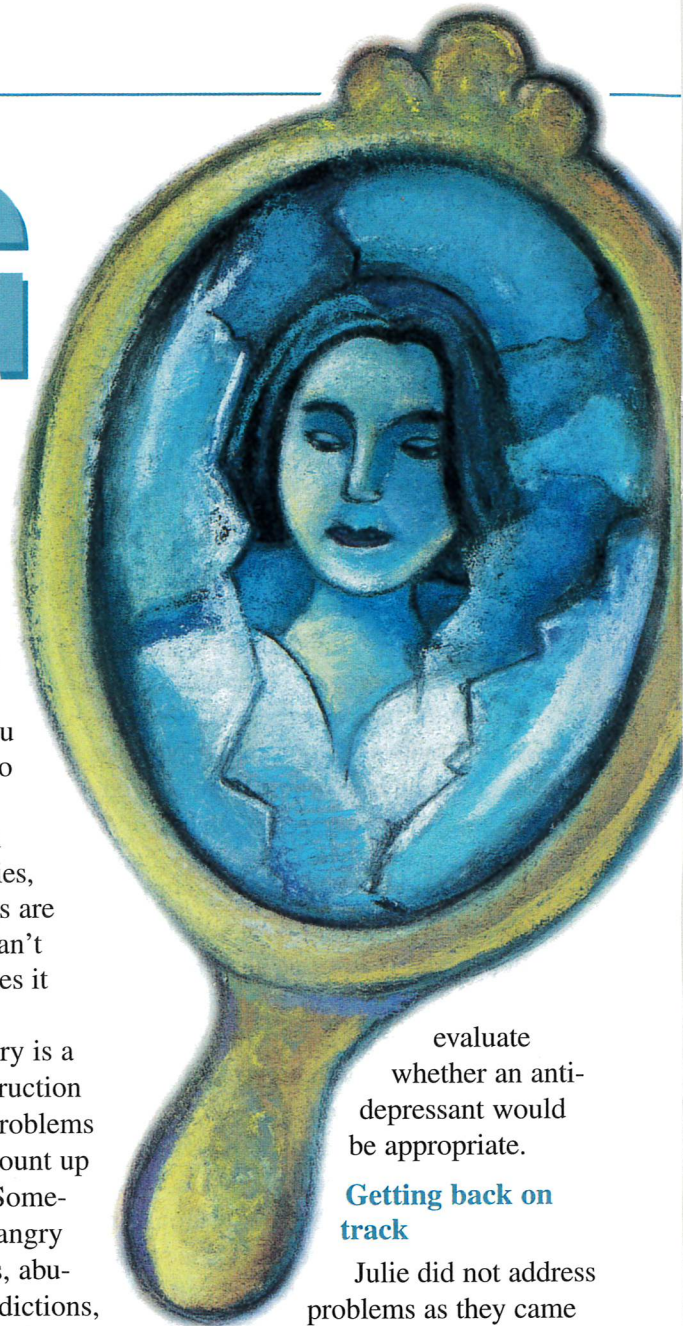
When dealing with depression, it’s important not only to receive counseling but to consult a medical doctor (family physician, psychiatrist). Stress and upheaval from divorce can change brain chemistry, which can lead to depression. A doctor can

evaluate whether an anti-depressant would be appropriate.

Getting back on track

Julie did not address problems as they came up. She let them build inside of her and then experienced chronic bouts of depression. Talking about what you think and feel, formulating a plan, and taking action are ways to successfully deal with problems related to the challenges after divorce.

Julie also isolated herself after the divorce. Her children and job consumed all of her time. To get her back on track, I gave her some daily homework assignments: reading God’s Word, praying, doing something enjoyable, being socially involved



UP THE PIECES

with others, eating well, exercising, and getting proper amounts of sleep.

Prayer is your way of talking to God, and the Bible is his way of talking to you. Communication is at the foundation of all relationships. It's no different with God, except that communication is perfect on his end. You are his precious child, and he loves to hear from you. He wants to fill you up with his good gifts (internal peace, love, joy, forgiveness, ability to forgive), which come to you from reading his Word. In over 25 years as a Christian counselor, I have found that restoring a person's emotional health is dependent upon the Word of God. The Holy Spirit is the Counselor.

Do something enjoyable every day. If all you have is 15 minutes, listen to music, watch a sunset, or do something else that doesn't require a lot of time. On the days you have more time, take advantage of the opportunity to enjoy yourself. Grow, stretch yourself, and don't be afraid to try something new.

God built us to need the friendship of others. When you go through divorce, there can be a tendency to stop attending social gatherings or for others to stop extending the invitations because they are uncomfortable with the change in your situation. Look to the body of Christ for

that companionship. Ask people who possess the character and attributes you're looking

for to do things with you. Going out for lunch, planning an outing together, or even sharing events of the day are all ways to reconnect with others.

Taking good care of yourself physically is important. Poor diet, lack of exercise, and not enough rest can drain a person physically, intellectually, and emotionally. Energize yourself by fueling the body God has given you.

I have found that restoring a person's emotional health is dependent upon the Word of God.

Moving forward

Julie and I met for four months. Her doctor prescribed a mild antidepressant. It helped with her waves of depression and allowed her to sleep better. With her doctor's supervision, Julie plans on going off her medication in about two months.

Julie feels more self-assured. She finds enjoyment in her life. As we started winding down our counseling sessions, I asked Julie what helped turn things around for her.

"Every evening I read God's Word and pray. When you told me this would be the most important thing I could do, I must admit I was skeptical. It has made all the difference. Knowing how God loves me and how he's always here for me helps give me peace."

Julie continued: "How others treat me is always a reflection of who they are. I'm not so self-conscious or worried about what others think of me. I also realize that I'm responsible for how I react to others. I used to get mad and think I didn't have a choice.

"Exercising is a little slow, but I do make a point to go for walks. I do feel better because of it. I eat pretty well. I try to get to bed earlier, but I don't always have that luxury. I always wanted to sing in the choir at church, and I finally got up the nerve to go.

"Probably, just being able to talk about what I was thinking and feeling inside has helped tremendously. I spent a lot of my life keeping things inside. Now, I take care of problems as they come up."

Paul reassures us in Romans 8:28: "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." Healing takes time. Focus on moving forward. Regardless of your circumstances, be confident of this: your Lord loves you beyond measure. You are not alone. You are a part of the royal family. You are a child of the King.



Joan Dickerson is a counselor in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, at Christian Family Counseling, a division of Wisconsin Lutheran Child & Family Service, Inc.

For more information about Wisconsin Lutheran Child & Family Service, visit <www.wlcf.org> or call 877/855-0936.

How Alzheimer's has affected me

As my mother's caregiver, I struggled with how to deal with this irreversible, terminal disease.

Carol Gehrt

Carol Gehrt and her mother, Viola Lueck, on Viola's 86th birthday in 2001.



Mom has Alzheimer's disease. She is now 87 years old, but she didn't retire from work until she was 78. Looking back, I think she knew something was happening to her, but she never discussed it with my siblings or me. We were all surprised by her sudden retirement because we knew what her job meant to her.

There seems to be a belief that Alzheimer's can be hidden or covered up, but eventually it was evident to me that something was going on. Some changes going on within her were noticeable and some were not. But how and why would Alzheimer's change me—the caregiver, the healthy one?

I was angry

Many years before Mom's diagnosis she was saying and doing things that confused and angered me. She said hurtful things that were unlike her. Her actions were confusing and out of place. It wasn't possible to discuss this because she would deny it. Increasingly, it seemed that conversa-

tions with my mother elicited feelings of anger. I knew it was wrong to harbor such feelings, and I prayed often that God would remove that anger and make me more understanding. God answered my prayers; he took away my anger. The answer to my mother's behavior was Alzheimer's.

I mourned the loss of my mother

Until Mom's diagnosis over three years ago, until talking with and listening to professionals, until reading books on the subject, I thought that Alzheimer's meant that you forgot things. How bad could that be?

What shocked me was learning that this was really a slow death. As invisible and undetectable as this disease can appear, as Mom loses brain cells, she is losing more than thoughts and words. She is losing comprehension. She is losing time. She is losing the ability to mother her children. She is losing the ability to be the independent person she prides herself in being. She is losing . . . she is losing . . . she is losing . . . , and I deeply mourned the loss of my mother.

I will grieve again

Perhaps one would think that would make it easier as time goes on. I have already grieved for the loss of my mother. Wouldn't dealing with that sadness make it easier to go on? No, because out of necessity a new relationship has formed between us. Now besides being a mother to my two children and a grandmother to my two grandchildren, I am a mother to Mom. This is not normal and does not feel comfortable. But it is necessary, and I do my best out of love for her. When God decides to take my new mom to heaven, I will grieve again.

My attitude changed

One of my misconceptions was that it was my duty to help my relatives come to terms with Mom's condition. One night at support group I was lamenting the fact that I couldn't seem to do it all by myself. One person snapped me into reality by saying, "Carol, you can't fix it for everybody!" How true that was! It was difficult trying to hold myself

together, let alone shouldering the concerns others had.

I long for understanding from people around me

Alzheimer's is often a disease that is invisible to people who have not experienced it firsthand. This causes a lack of understanding and support. I don't think people see this as the irreversible and terminal disease that it is. Seldom will someone ask how Mom is doing or even how I am doing. Would it be this way if Mom was dying from cancer?

My visits with Mom

Time with my mother has had to change. We now share only moments because as quickly as she knows something it can be forgotten. When I leave, she may not remember that I was even there. I, on the other hand, take the visit home with me, so I try to have my memory be as pleasant as possible.

Each time I arrive I wonder what kind of mood she will be in, what differences I might experience this time.

Often my heart is breaking as I enter her room, but I put on a cheerful face and greet her with, "Hi, Mom, it's your daughter, Carol. How are you doing today?" Sometimes she complains, but soon she will be happier if I listen and validate her feelings.

Validation is important in her life. It is important for her to feel and to know that she is in a good home, she gets good meals, her family loves her, she was a good employee, she is doing well, etc.

Mom and I can still laugh together, which is great medicine. We can make some situations silly because Mom's ways are more childlike as time goes by. By giving her a silly answer to a serious question, I can often change her mood or perception.

Things that I remind myself

There is the truth as I know it and Mom's truth, because how her mind sees things is real and true to her. So I try to put myself in her shoes and see things from her vantage point. Only

then can I feel her anger, frustration, fear, joy, or satisfaction. Unfortunately, the truth and Mom's truth can't always come to terms peaceably.

Mom is a Christian. She believes in her Savior and knows she will go to heaven. In the earlier years, she expressed these thoughts and wrote about her talks with God and how she got through hard times with his help. Now I don't read or hear about those things as often, so I have to remind myself that the Holy Spirit is still at work within her.

God is with us at all times. Trusting in him is the greatest comfort I could have. Many prayers are answered in amazing and surprising ways. Mom's disease and the part I'm playing in her care are all part of his plan.



Carol Gehrt is a member at Trinity, Neenah, Wisconsin.

Editor's note: Carol wrote this article in January 2003 while she was caring for her mother. Carol's mother passed away on June 29, 2003.



Carol Gehrt supported her mother, Viola Lueck (shown), as Viola struggled with Alzheimer's Disease. This picture was taken two months before Viola's death in 2003.

Lessons I have learned

As Mom's caregiver, I:

- have greater empathy toward others.
- am less hesitant to ask questions related to Mom's condition and situation.
- have learned to open my heart more to the elderly and to see them in a new light.
- feel that knowledge is power. Even though I don't always understand the technical side of this disease, I have been guided by reading about other caregivers and individuals afflicted with Alzheimer's.
- openly and readily acknowledge those who have helped with this journey.
- have learned to see the broad picture of Mom's care and not look at little details. Some things not accomplished in her daily care are due to Mom's independent spirit and her inability to see staff as supportive and needed instead of people to fear.
- am not embarrassed by Mom's appearance.
- am not embarrassed by Mom's comments or actions. The disease causes it.
- have felt a greater desire to help others, especially as related to Alzheimer's.



SOUL FOOD

Jesus is the Bread of Life. Only he can satisfy our spiritual hunger.

John L. Eich

Indigestion is a growing business. Over half a billion dollars are spent on antacids every year. Spiritually we can also suffer indigestion, so we need to be careful what we eat. Yet our world is a vast buffet table of spiritual ideas that can cause everything from heartburn to serious, eternal, life-threatening illnesses.

Spiritual indigestion

Pop culture today is full of empty calories: filth, violence, and gratuitous sex that excite the senses but leave us feeling famished—if not downright sick to our stomachs. It's easy to pig out at the cultural table on worldly fare. It tastes good and our sinful natures gravitate toward it. Fast food is easy, but the

calories are empty, and the heartburn is severe.

I remember once as a hungry little boy taking a piece of fruit off the table and chomping a big bite. Instead of sweetness and nutrition, I got a mouth full of fuzz and whatever else. It was fake fruit! Why do we as a nation have a growing number of sexually immoral, vio-

The comfort many are looking for in their Big Macs and Haagen-Dazs sundaes is simply found and easily digested in the Bread of Life.

lent young people on drugs? Because we've gorged ourselves on fake food. We fill our garages with more expensive cars, our mantels with tokens of our success, and our houses with "things." But none of those can ever satisfy for long. All they are is "fake fruit."

All this leads to spiritual indigestion and a bad case of heartburn.

Spiritual nutrition

Christ, on the other hand, is packed with nutrition: purity, peace, and sacrificial love that fill our hearts and nourish our bodies, minds, and spirits.

Perhaps that's why of all the images and metaphors Jesus uses to speak of himself, his mission, and his sacrifice, two of the most meaningful are bread and water. Today, just as they did 2,000 years ago, the images of Jesus as the Bread of Life and as Living Water suggest to our hungry, thirsty bodies and souls that he provides the real food we need.

Far from being prison fare, bread and water are the universal "soul food" of the Christian. The comfort many are looking for in their Big Macs and Haagen-Dazs sundaes is simply found and easily digested in the Bread of Life and Living Water of Jesus Christ.

But all too often we don't know what we want. My teenagers walk

into the kitchen, open the fridge door, and stare blankly inside. They want something to eat, but they don't know what. Many of us stare just as blankly into the Word. What is it that we want? Do we want filet mignon or meatloaf? Are we looking for rules to make our decisions easier, or are we looking for grace to guide us in our decisions? Are we looking for proof for our ideas, or are we looking for beliefs from God's proof? Are we looking for something that tastes sweet but lacks any lasting value or something that takes work to chew and digest but nourishes us for eternity?

Jesus told us, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled" (Matthew 5:6). You are what you eat. Hungering and thirsting for righteousness will be seen in our regularly serving ourselves from the banquet table of God's grace. The only diet that can feed our starving spirits and fill our empty insides is the "food that endures to eternal life" (John 6:27).

Jesus sums it all up: "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty" (John 6:35). The sweetness of God's love and forgiveness through Jesus satisfies our cravings. The marvels of his grace give us food for life.

Spiritual rest

In his book *God's Psychiatry*, Charles Allen tells this story: As World War II was drawing to a close, the Allied armies gathered up many hungry orphans. They were placed in camps where they were well fed. Despite excellent care, they slept poorly. They seemed nervous and afraid. Finally, a psychologist came up with the solution. Each child was given a piece of bread to hold after he was put to bed. This particular piece of bread was just to be held—not eaten. The piece of bread produced wonderful results. The children went to bed knowing instinctively they would have food to eat the next day. That guarantee gave the children a restful and contented sleep.

The real food of the gospel is in our grasp. Jesus is the Bread of Life, the true Bread of Heaven. Only he can satisfy, giving us a restful and contented sleep.

"Taste and see that the LORD is good," the psalmist declares in Psalm 34:8, "Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him." Jesus alone satisfies our spiritual hunger and thirst. His food always sits well.

Bon appetit!



John Eich is pastor at Good Shepherd, Alma, Michigan.

FAITH RADCLIFF, KENTUCKY

Storefront church with lots of room

Charlene H. Lauersdorf

My goodness, what is there about this little church near Fort Knox military base that makes it so appealing? Members will tell you about the firm scriptural foundation and the enthusiastic, dedicated, and hardworking members. They'll also mention that it's friendly, small, and personal, and that it is family-oriented. Members are faithful in their attendance, along with being loving, helpful, and supportive.

It's the kind of place I'd like to visit. Wouldn't you?

Storefront church with the purple awning

Back in 1992 a determined group of WELS members began meeting in their homes for Bible study. The little group eventually rented its present storefront property. They used telephone wires and speakers to enjoy the message from a pastor in Louisville, Ky., some 50 miles away. There was no visible presence of the pastor, but the Lord was there in all his glory, in the Word.

Members converted the storefront into a chapel, two classrooms, and pastor's office. After their first pastor arrived, they rented a back space also, for two extra classrooms, a kitchen, and a fellowship hall. Michael Zarling, pastor at Faith, tells us that the chapel holds 90 people comfortably, and "the padded chairs are strategically placed toward the front to entice the 'good Lutherans' to move forward in their seating."

The other rooms are busy also. Most of the members become involved. In fact, Zarling "warns" them when they join that they are expected to become active in the Lord's work. And the people love it. Some of the men teach Bible classes in those classrooms. Other folks are Sunday school and vacation Bible school teachers. Faith actually has three vacation Bible school sessions each year—Christmas, Easter, and summer!

Everyone works with outreach to the community. They've used door-to-door canvassing, phone canvassing, Travel/Canvass/Witness teams, ads in newspapers and on the radio, invitations in newspaper boxes and doors. They've marched in parades handing out invitations and pens. And when Zarling visits new prospects,



This storefront church with a purple awning always has something going on—from worship to vacation Bible school to fellowship activities.

he gives them a gift from the congregation, a box of bread mix to remind them of the Bread of Life.

Faith has an active Girl Pioneer group, which has been a wonderful outreach tool. SOS (Save our Sanity) is a group for all women to give them an outing of Christian calm and comfort, away from their busy worlds.

Fellowship activities have been a leavening agent in helping this congregation grow into the close-knit, friendly, family group that it is. Activities include potlucks, chili cook-offs, bake sales, pool parties, game nights, paintball, basketball, and golf outings.

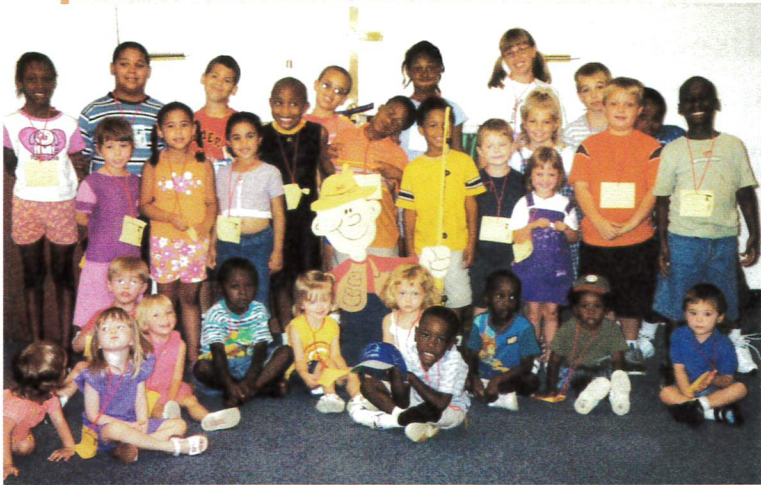
But the church also has its challenges. With a small group, finances are always a challenge. The membership at Faith is always fluctuating because so many members serve in the military. And it would be nice for Faith to have its own building. In the meantime, members purchased a set of church bells on wheels so that each Sunday morning they can wheel the bells out to call the world to worship.

Probably the most recent challenge for Faith is that the Lord led its pastor of seven years to accept a call to a different congregation. Zarling will be missed. But Faith is a strong group, it has much going for it, and the Lord will provide. Remember Faith in your prayers.

Lots of room for the military

Radcliff is a community of 22,000 people. Zarling calls it a “service community” to the army base. Most congregation members are in the military, retired from it, or connected with it in some way. The normal stay on the base is three years, so the congregation is in a constant state of change. But Zarling says that God’s people of Radcliff regularly “commission members as missionaries to other WELS churches.”

Faith’s membership is currently 65 communicants with 95 souls. The congregation gained 20 new members this spring. Losses to military moving, over a short seven years, number 50. Add that up and see what its membership numbers would be under other circumstances.



Faith has an active outreach program, including three vacation Bible school sessions per year.

For the military folks, Faith is a godsend. Thomas Murray calls Faith his “home away from home.”

“My family and I fell in love with the atmosphere and the wonderful people,” says Cady Sunsdahl, and Faith’s members became their “family.”

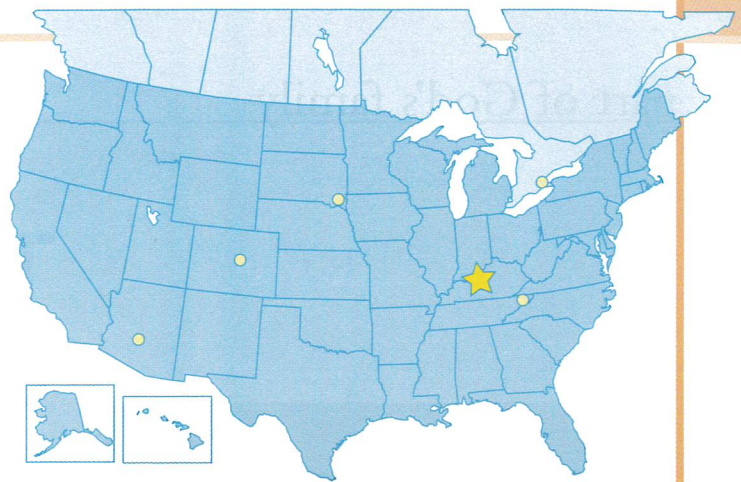
Donna Fox enjoys the “sincerity of commitment” that she finds there.

Room for the many

“Radcliff is kind of a ‘melting pot’ of cultures because of the military base. There are Germans, Hispanics, Koreans, African-Americans, and Caucasians from all over the United States and the world,” Zarling explains.

They come to Faith for different reasons:

- “It’s the nearest WELS church.”
- “I have much in common with the majority of members who are one way or another related to the military.”
- “I needed a higher power to turn to because I wasn’t getting answers.”



★ Featured congregation ○ Congregation already featured

QUICK FACTS

Faith, <www.faithinradcliff.org>:

- June 1992: Started gathering people together.
- October 1992: Began meeting for Bible study in homes.
- April 1994: Rented facility and began worshipping using phone lines.
- April 1996: Renovated a storefront for a new worship facility.
- June 1996: Held first worship service in new building.
- July 1996: First pastor was installed.
- May 1997: Held official grand opening service.
- September 1999: Received mission status from the Board for Home Missions.
- March 2004: Celebrated seventh anniversary.

- “I was brought up Lutheran in Germany, and it is very close to what I was taught.”

That brings up an interesting point. Many women from Germany have married U.S. military personnel and now live in the area. Faith has even started having regular German services once a month to bring the Word to them. Zarling preaches the sermon while a layman who has spoken German since childhood takes the liturgy. Faith also produces a German newsletter that members distribute—another one of the many tools in its outreach program.

And there’s room for me

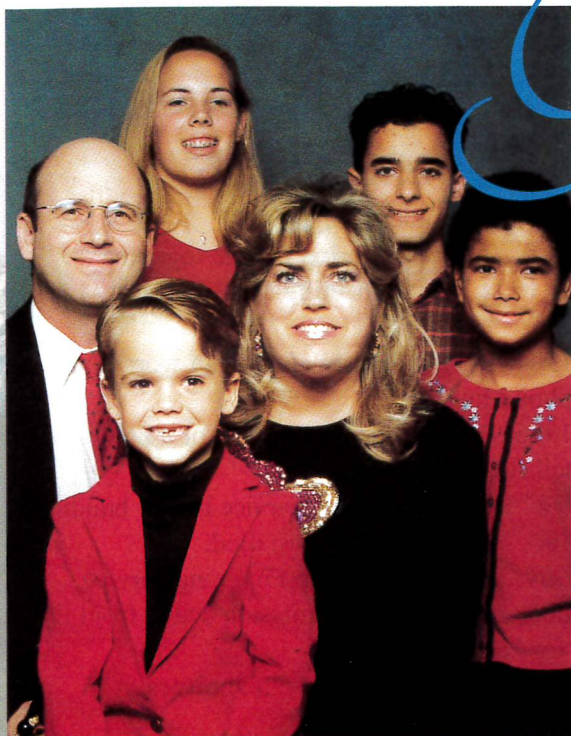
Are you going to be traveling in the Kentucky area in the future? Make sure when you’re in Radcliff that it’s Sunday, ‘cause you’ll want to go to church at Faith. Look for the deep purple awning on this unique storefront church. Come and meet the members who make up Faith’s family and your family in faith.

Charlene Lauersdorf is a member at Good Shepherd, West Bend, Wisconsin.

The wonders of God's love

A woman's life and her battle with a rare disease show the power of God's love and the strength of his mighty hand.

Lorie Gunn



Michelle and her family (clockwise from left): husband Glenn, Heather, David, Angela, Michelle, and Jonathan.

When I think of all the wonders of Christ's love and faithfulness and how he works faith in his people, I think of my sister, Michelle. As a baby she became a child of God by the power of baptism. Just a few years ago she came

to see, taste, and feel his mighty hand supporting her as she walked down a difficult path.

My parents raised us as Roman Catholics. Michelle and I, the middle two of four sisters, were close as we were growing up. We were given the same athletic abilities, competed in some of the same team sports, and had some of the same friends.

In high school Michelle began dating Glenn, a strong WELS member. Christ used Glenn to show her the way to heaven, and in time they got married. A few years later Christ used Michelle to show me the truths of Scripture. After a few more years, I became a member of her WELS congregation and married their (and my) pastor.

Glenn lost his job as an air traffic controller during the FAA strike in the early 1980s. He worked for a couple of private airports in Arizona and Kansas, but with no health benefits. During those years the Lord blessed them with four adopted children.

I was concerned, though. If something serious would happen to their children, Glenn and Michelle would not be able to afford health care. My husband and I prayed about this daily, and with the help of a Wisconsin state representative who was a member of our congregation, in 1998 Glenn began working again for the FAA with full government benefits.

In July 1998 we visited Glenn and Michelle and their family.

We went to a water park and were having a blast when I noticed that Michelle was sitting dry on her blanket. It wasn't like her to miss out on all the fun. In high school we had both been on the swim team. We loved being in the water!

I asked her what was wrong, and she told me that she hadn't been feeling well the past few months. She was short of breath and dizzy at times. I could tell she was feel-



Lorie (left) and Michelle in 1980. Lorie and Michelle had a close relationship as they were growing up that continued through Michelle's health problems.

ing blue. This wasn't like her at all. She was always a happy, fun-loving woman, who did her best to make sure that everyone around her was happy. Seeing her miss out on fun activities with her kids alarmed me. I scolded her—after all, Glenn's job provided full health benefits now—and suggested that she see a doctor. I immediately began praying for her. She was ill, and I was scared.

In October 1998, my husband accepted a call to serve as pastor of a mission church in Kasson, Minn., and as a chaplain at the Mayo hospitals and the Federal Prison in Rochester. Shortly after he accepted his new call, Michelle called to let us know that she had gone to the doctor because of more frequent shortness of breath and dizzy spells. They had run some tests and found that her blood oxygen levels were very low and that her heart was enlarged. They scheduled her for a heart catheterization in December.

Michelle was diagnosed with a rare disease called "primary pulmonary hypertension." Her heart and lungs were growing new muscle on the inside, shutting off her oxygen supply. Since her heart had to work so hard to force blood through the constricted arteries of the lungs, it became enlarged. She would be coming to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester for her final diagnosis and treatment plan.

Again our prayers went up as a sweet aroma to our Lord. On the second day in our new home, Jan. 2, 1999, Glenn called with the final diagnosis. Michelle's disease was terminal. She would need a complete heart and lung

transplant to survive. I was overcome with grief, yet knew that God had a plan for everything. We invited them to stay with us while she underwent more tests at Mayo Clinic. In our prayers we kept giving all glory to our Savior and prayed that his will be done.

During that first year after Michelle's diagnosis we shared many highs and lows whenever she came to Minnesota for tests. As Michelle's body wasted away, Christ sustained us as we shared our faith and our memories. We reminisced about how Christ plucked us from the unbelieving world through baptism and how we ended up sharing the same church family. The wonders of his love never escape me.

My husband now had a new challenge. He had become Michelle's temporary pastor as well as brother-in-law and friend. At times he comforted our entire family as we leaned on him for reminders of God's love for us amid the bitter consequences of sin. We were absolutely helpless to stop the progression of Michelle's illness, pain, and suffering. We often discussed how this was a bold picture of our spiritual condition. We are powerless to change our status as sinner before God. But Jesus carried our sin to the cross and nailed it there. We knew that God had everything under control. Our times were in his capable hands. We needed to keep this assurance before us as we continued to find ways to comfort Michelle and one another. God's Word gave us crystal-clear gospel passages to remind us of the hope that we have in him.

Michelle's calm witness was evidence of her confidence that,

if Jesus were to call her home, she would be in the best place ever. Her faith stirred the hearts of our Catholic parents and two sisters. Our oldest sister began attending worship services again after living for decades apart from Christ.

Faith moves mountains, and God gave Michelle's faith the strength to move the largest mountain of her life. In September 2000, Michelle returned to the hospital in Rochester for the last time. They said she would either die there or receive a transplant. She was put on the top of the national donor waiting list for seven critical days at the end of September. In the last hours of the seventh day, God gave Michelle a new heart and new lungs—almost a perfect match. It had been two years since we first received her call telling us about her rare disease.

Looking back, we can clearly see the long trail of pieces God fit together. All the while my greatest concern had been health insurance for the children, but in God's grand plan he was reserving those benefits for my sister.

Michelle is a blessing and inspiration to me. She didn't give up sharing the hope she had in Christ those many years ago. God used her persistent witness so we could share saving faith with each other and with the many who need Jesus. Thank you, Lord Jesus! Thank you, dear sister! What a wonderful, loving God we share!

Lorie Gunn is a member at Our Savior, Kasson, Minnesota.

Tell all people about Jesus

We need to reach out with the gospel to two types of people in North America: those who are culturally like us and those who are not.

Wayne A. Laitinen

Our synod's emphasis for the next three-and-a-half years is North American outreach. It may seem to be a rather parochial mission field. But if we consider the makeup of the United States and Canada alone, it becomes obvious that our mission field is composed of more than people who are just like us. The eyes of Lady Liberty that met forebears in the United States at Ellis Island still scan the ocean for the tired and the poor. Her torch still offers safe harbor. The only thing that has changed is the nationality of those huddled masses.

Proclaiming the splendor of God's kingdom to different cultures

No doubt you've noticed it in the doctor's office or hospital, or the college campus, which is a microcosm of our national melting pot. Is your workplace the same as it was 20 years ago? Your neighborhood? In some ways, it may be easier for us to speak of God's grace to these new arrivals than those who have been long assimilated into North American culture. The greater the cultural differences, the greater the curiosity between cultures. Questions about family, country of origin, customs, and religion can be a natural stepping stone in our wit-



ness about the salvation that our Savior purchased for all people.

A Chicago cabbie who had just moved from Eastern Europe was happy that I asked about his fatherland. The conversation naturally turned to the religions of his homeland. "There are three," he told me, "Orthodox, Jewish, and Islam."

"And which one are you?"

"Islam."

"Does your religion have a place of happiness and a place of punishment after this life?"

"Oh, yes, just like Christianity."

"And how do you stay out of one and get into the other?"

"By observing our prayer-times each day and going to the Mosque on Friday."

"Do you do all that?"

"Well, no. I'm busy every weekday. But I am good to my children and don't beat my wife."

"So, can you be absolutely sure you will go to heaven?"

"I guess that I can only hope for the best."

“But what if your best isn’t good enough?”

(Pause)

“Listen, I know a way you can be sure . . .”

From there I took him to the mighty act of the God who sent his Son into our flesh. I told him that this God is faithful to all his promises because he, unlike any other god, innocently died under the punishment we deserved because of our sins. Then he did something unheard of: he rose from the dead so that we can be sure that we will live with him in heaven forever.

Every religion except Christianity is natural religion: to some degree, man must please God in order to save his immortal soul. Taken to its logical conclusion, all natural religion must collapse under its own uncertainty. Our task is merely to proclaim Christ in its place: “So that all men may know of [his] mighty acts and the glorious splendor of [his] kingdom” (Psalm 145:12).

The cultural differences in North America can be a great advantage for the saints to extol the glorious splendor of Christ’s kingdom.

Proclaiming God’s mighty acts to those like us

But as the maxim goes, “A prophet is not accepted in his own hometown.” It is much harder to speak of our Savior to people who are culturally the same as we.

For instance, never did a saint seem more ill-suited than I felt one sultry, Saturday afternoon. Had I known what awaited me, I might have discovered an activity much more agreeable to a 19-year-old. But going door to door with church invitations was the least I could do to help find some lost soul in my little corner of East Brunswick, N.J.

I was met with the usual responses. Some politely took my literature. Others declined with varying degrees of politeness. Of course, some were not home. Overall, the afternoon’s responses were rather unremarkable.

But all that changed as I approached a house nestled in a cul-de-sac. I rang. The door opened. Then I launched into my well-rehearsed: “Hi, I’m Wayne Laitinen, and I’m a member of Our Savior’s Lutheran Church up on Milltown Road. We’re taking a religious survey of the neighborhood, and I wonder if I could ask you a few questions?”

The man in the doorway did better than I expected. He invited me in. I sat on the couch as he seated himself directly across from me. Then he leaned forward and, blinking back his emotions, said, “My wife . . . has just filed papers for divorce . . . and she took my two beautiful children with her. Can you help me?”

To say that this was a departure from my script would be an understatement. I was overcome with pathos for the man’s situation and in despair because of my own inability to help. How could I convince him of the glorious splendor of God’s kingdom if I couldn’t even put his family back together? After a few seconds of excruciating silence, I finally suggested, “We have a pastor who might be able to help. May I give you his number?”

He said, “No,” thanked me for coming, and showed me to the door.

For the longest time I struggled with the apparent disconnect between the mighty saving acts of God and his apparent powerlessness in solving life’s most heart-wrenching disasters. One would think that God would have to be wiser than that and might-

ier than that if he hoped to have any credibility.

The saints must proclaim the mighty acts of God by telling the world that it sees things only as they appear to be. God sees things as they really are. Man says, “There is nothing worse than a divorce.” God says, “There is nothing worse than ‘The Great Divorce.’” In his economy, God allows the evil of the former to bring a man to his senses, that he might avoid the horror of the latter.

Most of my Savior’s lessons have been learned after I’ve tried and fallen flat on my face. This one was no different. The more I read Scripture, the more it dawned on me that God was not weak at all.

God had shown his wisdom and might in the excellent way he prepared that man for my visit. He was a broken man. He even half-expected that I was sent there with an answer. And I was. I could have recalled for him how the heavenly Bridegroom stretched out his arms and gave up his life on behalf of the woman who never wanted him in the first place (sinners who one day would be his Bride, the Church). That self-denying, husbandly love wooed her to himself and adorned her in robes of everlasting righteousness. And, coincidentally, if there was any hope of that man winning his bride’s heart back again, it would be found at the cross of his own Bridegroom.

The more we search Scripture, the more we see the mighty acts of God in the most desperate situations and the more we have to tell those who are waiting to hear.



Wayne Laitinen is a pastor at St. John, New Ulm, Minnesota.

WHATEVER

Self-destruction

So many teenagers are hurting themselves physically. What can you do to help a hurting friend?

What do you do when you see someone close to you hurting herself? Whom do you tell? What do you say?

Self-destruction to your body is common in high schools today. I was very scared when I actually saw one of my own friends cutting herself. I never had realized how bad this really was! The part I struggled to understand was that she was hurting herself, she knew it, and she didn't know how to stop it.

I knew that I had to tell an adult immediately. I told the principal, even though I was very scared. When I was scared I thought of four simple letters—WWJD (What Would Jesus Do?). It helped me to do the right thing, and it always let me know that God was there with me.

After that day my friend found out that I had told on her. I was scared when she told me, but it turned out that she actually wanted to thank me. Now that I knew what my friend was doing, I realized that she was trying to live a normal life—just like me—but on the inside she was screaming for help, and she was too scared and angry to tell someone about it. Many people like my friend are just waiting for someone to talk to and rely on.

Here is my advice if you ever see someone hurting herself (or himself):

1. Don't panic. It won't help you or your friend at all.
2. Ask her questions. See if she will repent for what she is doing. Remind her of Proverbs 3:5, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding."
3. Go talk to an adult. This may be the scariest part, but after you tell someone about it, you will feel a lot better.

4. Don't leave all your sadness and anger inside. Talk to your parents about it. But don't go and blabber about it to other friends.

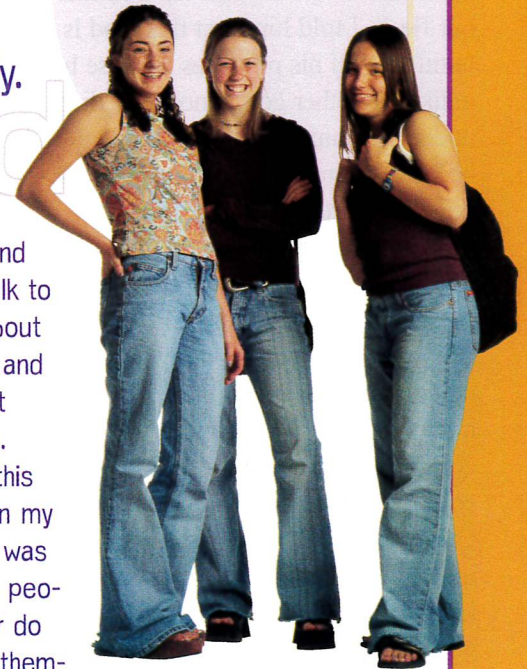
I didn't think that this would ever pop up in my life. I thought that I was hanging around with people who would never do anything like this to themselves. That's why we have to be aware at all times.

When you do notice someone hurting herself, don't yell at her. The reason she is hurting herself is because she gets so angry with herself for everything, and yelling will make it worse. Tell her how much you care about her. Tell her what she could be doing with her life and what the outcome might be if she doesn't stop hurting herself. Encourage her to put all her worries on Christ because he cares for her.

She might be unhappy a lot of the time. But if you talk about the things she likes to do, like her favorite sport, movie, book, or class, it helps a lot. When you finally see her smile, it will make you feel better about her.

So, talk to those who need a friend. Sit next to that lonely person in the corner of the cafeteria. Say "Hi" to a person without a smile. Because one day that person might need you!

Because of the personal nature of this article, the author remains anonymous.



Jesus do?

Fulfiller of promises

Mighty Savior

Merciful Savior

Son of God

Savior of all

Liberator

Righteousness of God

Bringer of joy

Mediator with the Father

Sacrifice for sin

Word of life

Faithful witness

It's all about Jesus

Mark J. Lenz

The U.S. Constitution's Bill of Rights guarantees its citizens many freedoms. As Christians we are citizens of a heavenly country, in which we enjoy infinitely more

wonderful freedoms. This is guaranteed by our great Liberator, Jesus Christ. The New Testament books in this lesson invite us to think about the freedoms we have in Christ.

Galatians: Here Paul emphasizes that we are saved only by God's grace in Christ.

- Why did Paul oppose Peter to his face (2:11-16)?
- Why has Galatians been called the "Magna Charta of spiritual emancipation" (3:13,14)?
- Because Christ has redeemed us, what have we received (4:4,5)?
- What does it mean to be sons of the free woman (4:30,31)?
- For what has Christ set us free? Why are we to "stand firm" (5:1)?
- Read 5:13. For what purpose were the Galatians called? What is an abuse of freedom? What should the Galatians do instead?
- Read 6:12. Why did some men want to compel the Galatians to be circumcised? What was their only reason for doing so? What is the object of Paul's boasting (6:14)?

James: This book emphasizes that the freedom we have in Christ is not a license to sin but rather is the very reason we want to bring forth fruits of faith.

- Because Christ has kept the law perfectly for us, what kind of freedom does the law now give us (1:25)?
- Why is showing favoritism a denial of the law that gives freedom (2:1,8-13)?
- How is Abraham an example that faith without works is dead (2:20-24)?
- What does it mean to submit ourselves to God (4:1-11)?
- Why will a person who is free in Christ be patient (5:7-10)? Why will such a person be steadfast in prayer (5:13-16)?

1 Thessalonians: Paul thanks the Lord that the Thessalonians continued to live for Christ in spite of severe suffering.

- The Thessalonians had been worshipers of idols. What freedom had they come to experience in Christ (1:9,10)?
- What is Paul's prayer for those who have freely experienced the love of God in Christ (3:12)?
- God has freely given us his Holy Spirit so that we might live lives pleasing to him. List examples found in 4:3-8.
- How can believers "encourage one another and build each other up" as they wait for the Lord's return (5:4-11)?

2 Thessalonians: Paul reassures the Thessalonians that because God has made them his people in Christ they need not fear judgment day.

- What does Paul say will happen before the day of the Lord comes (2:3)?
- What does Paul say is the source of our encouragement and strength (2:13-17)?

Conclusion: Jesus once said, "If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed" (John 8:36). Based on what you have learned in this lesson, what will this mean in your life?

Mark Lenz is a professor at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota.

Find this article and possible answers on-line. Go to <www.wels.net>, jumpword "fic," and click on "It's all about Jesus." Answers will be available after June 5.

Looking back

In this, the magazine's 90th anniversary, we bring you articles and news from previous issues.

From the Sept. 20, 1964, issue—
The *Northwestern Lutheran* celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1964. This

congratulatory letter came from Synod President Oscar J. Naumann:

"For 50 years the Lord of grace and mercy has blessed our Synod with an English language churchpaper. Such blessings should not go unnoticed.

"The purpose for an official churchpaper must be the edification of its readers, that they may grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

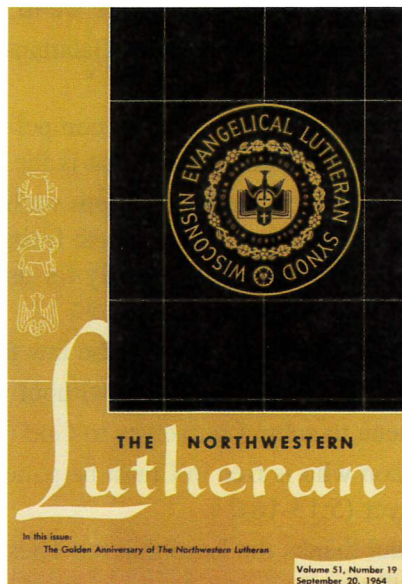
"A faithful ministry of the printed Word will also sound a sober warning against all error, for it endangers men's souls.

"Because the child of God rejoices to walk the way of God's commandments, a proper churchpaper will lead him on his way by bringing reports from all the fields of labor of his synod. These will include reports from mission fields, telling of the millions still sitting in darkness and the shadow of death, and rejoicing with the angels in heaven over every soul that repents and confesses Christ as Savior and Lord. A proper churchpaper will exhort its readers to support with their witness, their gifts, and their prayers every effort to prepare more candidates for the ministry of the Gospel and to call them and support them in their proclamation of the Word of Life. It will point to the fields white unto harvest and will exhort all readers to work in them while it is day.

"But above all it will speak the authoritative 'Thus it is written' and 'Thus saith the Lord' for the assurance of its readers, that they may walk in the certainty of His light and not in the doubt of darkness.

"Such service our *Northwestern Lutheran* has by God's grace rendered for half a century. For this we praise our God and thank our brethren who have labored so faithfully in this phase of our ministry.

"Knowing also what temptations confront us and all of God's children in these evil days, we join in praying the motto of *The Northwestern Lutheran*: 'The Lord our God be with us, as he was with our fathers: let him not leave us, nor forsake us' (1 Kings 8:57)."



The cover of the Sept. 20, 1964, issue featured the official synod seal. An explanation followed inside:

"The official seal of the synod is a fitting adornment for this anniversary issue of *The Northwestern Lutheran*, for this churchpaper is the official voice of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. It has never been thought of as a mere open forum for all shades of religious thought and opinion. Our pages have reflected divided opinions and convictions, yes—but only in regard to the means and methods by which we could more effectively do the Gospel work in our congregations and in the mission fields which either were already opened or were beckoning to us. We did not on one page hear a voice which was a true echo of Scriptural truth, while from another page sounded a voice which recommended to us a subtraction from Scripture or an addition to it."

Continuing education at the seminary opened to all teachers

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis., is opening part of its continuing education program to all synodically certified teachers, male and female.

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary offers three degree programs through its continuing education program: Master of Sacred Theology (STM), Master of Arts in Religion (MAR), and Master of Practical Theology (MPT). Pastors can take graduate courses in the summer toward either the STM or the MPT degree. Currently, a small number of male teachers and staff ministers are enrolled in the MAR program, which does not have biblical language requirements.

With the approval of the seminary's governing board and the Board for Ministerial Education, the seminary now will be offering classes toward the MAR degree to all synodically certified teachers and staff ministers. Since Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., plans to begin a master's program in the areas of curriculum and instruction, special education, and leadership, these graduate-level seminary classes will provide our synod's teachers an opportunity to broaden their knowledge of doctrine and the Scriptures.

The seminary hopes to offer these courses to all synodically certified teachers on a first come, first served basis by the summer of 2005. Informational mailings will be sent out in the fall of 2004. For information contact Prof. Mark Zarling, chairman of the seminary continuing education committee, 262/242-8152; <zarlingm@wls.wels.net>.

A pioneer in WELS' ministry to the deaf

"Sign to the Lord a new song!" That's right, sign, not sing. It's the title of a new religious sign language dictionary produced by WELS Mission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. And signing to the Lord is one of the things that Irene Riege, dictionary co-author, likes to do best.

Deaf since 1943 due to spinal meningitis, Riege, a member at Good Shepherd, West Allis, Wis., became involved with WELS' deaf ministry when the Committee for the Hearing Impaired held a seminar in early 1979.

"Soon after, I started attending signed church services at Redemption in Milwaukee," recalls Riege. "I [also] worked with the interpreters and the pastor on a survey to locate other deaf people in the area."

In 1983, Riege—along with four other women—worked with her pastor to start monthly signed services at Good Shepherd. A year later, she helped organize WELS HANDS (Helping and Nourishing Deaf Souls).

"The HANDS committee brought together many volunteers, located deaf and hard of hearing people, and held vacation Bible school for deaf children," says Riege.

When WELS HANDS members were invited to join the Mission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in 1989, Riege took on the task of editing *Ephphatha*, a quarterly publication targeting the deaf and hard of hearing. After 15 years and 59 issues, she recently put down her pen and retired from the mission. In February 2004, the committee held a dinner in her honor, celebrating her many years of service.

Whereas some people might have been discouraged by the loss of hearing at such a young age, Riege is not. As she writes, "Almost 18 years in the hearing world gave me the opportunity to get an education, develop language and other skills, and get started in the working world. I never dreamed that the Lord was preparing me with valuable training for the mission I've been privileged to be a part of these past 25 years."

Although she is now retired, Riege continues to sign-sing with the Singing Hands choir, of which she was a charter member in 1985.

Elizabeth Hudock



Gene Seidel, director of the Mission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, presents Irene Riege with a plaque that reads: "In appreciation of your many years of faithful, dedicated, unselfish service to the WELS Mission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. 'Well done, good and faithful servant!' Matt. 25:21."

Obituaries

Clayton E. Krug 1915-2004

Clayton Krug was born Oct. 16, 1915, in Town of Forest in Fond du Lac County, Wis. He died March 10, 2004, in Waupun, Wis.

A 1941 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Thiensville, Wis., he served at Mount Zion, Ripon, Wis.; Mt. Calvary, Kimberly, Wis.; Our Savior, Lena, Wis.; Peace, Green Lake, Wis.; Trinity, Waukesha, Wis.; Faith, West Newton, Penn.; and as chaplain in Germany.

He was preceded in death by one daughter, four sisters, and two brothers. He is survived by his wife, Lucille; one daughter; five sons; 23 grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren; and one sister.

Friedrich Gustav Reuter 1906-2004

Friedrich "Fritz" Reuter was born July 21, 1906, in Winnipeg, Canada. He died Feb. 22, 2004, in Stoughton, Wis.

A 1931 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Thiensville, Wis., he served congregations in Gary, Argo, and White, S.D.

He was preceded in death by one son and is survived by his wife, Evelyn; one son; three daughters; 10 grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren.

Susan M. Kappel 1949-2004

Susan Kappel (nee Brandt) was born July 6, 1949. She died March 13, 2004, in Milwaukee, Wis.

A 1971 graduate of Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., she served at Jordan/Lamb of God, West Allis, Wis.

She is survived by her husband, Kenneth; one son; and her mother and father.

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 World Missions

414/256-3233

A new program, the World Missions Promotions Center, will package world missionary deputation tours (the segment of a missionary's furlough reserved for presentations about overseas work) to given areas to maximize the number of presentations and minimize costs. The tour concept enables the missionary to give the same presentation in a given area numerous times by having the scheduling done in advance by a full-time coordinator. Saturation of an area allows presentations to be given to grade schools, area high schools, Lutheran Women's Missionary Society circuit gatherings, smaller church organizations as well as the Sunday morning worship service—all at a reduced cost because area congregations can share costs.

If you're interested in being part of a missionary tour, contact the World Missions Promotions Center at 800/466-9357 or e-mail <worldmissionspromotionscenter@wels.net>.

On March 22, armed thieves assaulted and robbed Missionary John Holtz and his wife in their home in Zambia, Africa. As a result, security is being increased for the

two mission families stationed in Chipata, Zambia. Their security walls are being raised with razor wire added on top. Watchmen have been hired to guard the premises at night.

"No matter how high we build our walls or how many watchmen we hire," Holtz comments, "our ultimate security is in the Lord. We take great comfort in the words of Psalm 46:1, 'God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.'"

Commission on Evangelism

414/256-3287

The Commission on Evangelism has developed a one-day seminar that will address the issue of helping members, especially new ones in our congregations, become more firmly connected in Christ with each other. This seminar will help congregations

- assess the need for an ongoing assimilation program,
- create a meaningful entrance for new members into congregational life,
- lead new members to a greater sense of belonging,
- establish an organized structure for member-care, and
- develop a written plan for effective assimilation.

Information about the seminar in your area is available from your district evangelism coordinator or from the Evangelism office, 414/256-3288; <coe@sab.wels.net>.

This seminar on "assimilation" is the first of three annual workshops to be offered in all districts as part of our synod's emphasis on North American outreach. A seminar on "Locating and Nurturing Prospects" will be held in 2005. "Friendship Witnessing" will be the focus of a seminar in 2006.

Human Resources

414/256-3269

The newest WELS compensation guidelines are now available online at <www.wels.net>, jumpword "compensation." The salary schedules for the synod's fiscal year beginning July 2004 have been adjusted to reflect a 2.15 percent inflation rate.

Board for Ministerial Education

414/256-3236

In April, the Board for Ministerial Education voted to reinstate the undergraduate staff ministry program at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn. The program was suspended during the 2003-04 school year because of budget pressures and perceived difficulties in placing graduates.

The 2003 synod convention authorized a committee to study the program and report about its viability. After research on the program, the Staff Ministry Study Committee recommended to the Conference of Presidents and the Board for Ministerial Education that the undergraduate staff ministry program be resumed.

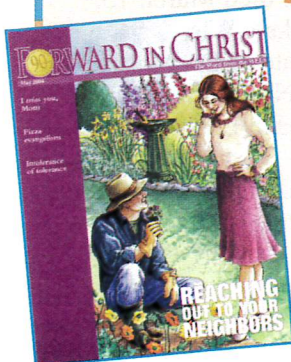
Work will begin immediately to reinstate the program at the college.

CORRECTIONS:

The introduction to the April "Looking back" incorrectly stated that synod president John F. Brenner wrote the Oct. 19, 1952, article "Get out the vote." John F. Brenner did write the article, but he was not synod president. His father, John W. O. Brenner, was synod president from 1933-1953.

In the May "Picture this," Martin Luther College student Jessica Mantey's name was spelled incorrectly.

Don't keep this magazine! Share it.



Leave your copy of *Forward in Christ*:

- On the airplane
- At a hotel
- At a coffee shop
- At the doctor's office
- At the nursing home
- At the laundromat

Tell us how—and why—you shared your copy, and we'll send you another one—free. *Forward in Christ*, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222; 414/256-3210; <fic@sab.wels.net>.

LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE

In the spirit of Matthew 5:16, we're sharing examples of people who live their faith. May they inspire you to let your light shine even brighter. If you have an example to share, send it to us at 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398.

A letter from Iraq

Last Mother's Day weekend [2003], I came home from school feeling really down. My husband was in Indonesia on one of his many trips to the mission field, and our oldest son, Jonathan, was serving in Iraq. When I went to check the mail, there was a letter from Jonathan. It read something like this:

Dear Mom,

I am writing this letter to wish you a Happy Mother's Day. I know you are not thrilled for me to be here, but I want you to know that God has a special plan for me.

The day we took Baghdad and Saddam's statue came down, I was one of the Marines combing a neighborhood looking for specific individuals. While in this neighborhood, an

Iraqi woman came running out of her home and grabbed me and just hugged me tight. In broken English she said, "I [am] a Christian and I [am] so happy you are here to help us. Now I do not need to be afraid anymore. Now I am free to say, 'I am a Christian!'" Mom, of all the Marines she picked me. That was no accident. We stood in the street just hugging each other. I shared with her that I too am a Christian and how wonderful it is to have the certainty of our salvation.

I want you to know that I am sharing all the devotions with my unit that Dad has been sending me. Other guys have their magazines from home stolen, but my devotions are disappearing like mad. Isn't that great? Mom, I know God is using me to reach guys who in normal situations would not be open to God's Word.

I love you and want you to know that I take Jesus with me wherever I go.

After reading Jonathan's letter I



Lieutenant Corporal Jonathan Reid with his wife, Jenny, and children, Katelyn and Dylan.

couldn't feel anything but happiness. It was the best Mother's Day gift I ever could have received.

Now Jonathan is in his second tour of duty in Iraq. My husband continues to send him devotions to share with those around him. I am so thankful that Jon is not ashamed to share his faith. My prayer is that as Iraq receives its freedom, we might use this new freedom to proclaim the saving gospel to the people of Iraq.

Marlys Reid

College class seizes opportunity to share the gospel—

Last fall I became friends with Dan, a man who ended up becoming a source of examples and class discussion in the Personality Theories class that I teach at Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee. Dan was fascinated by the idea of personality and what contributes to it, so he often shared items that he read or heard. Because they were applicable, I shared them with my students.

Dan was also an atheist, and some of his views fell in line with the secular views of the psychologists we were studying. Many of the students had never known an atheist, so they were interested in my take on his beliefs and asked questions that led to in-depth class discussions.

As the semester progressed, so did my relationship with Dan. One

day he came to sit in on my class—in part to see what I do and in part because he was fascinated with the subject matter. That day we happened to be evaluating humanistic theory from a Christian perspective. Something amazing happened when I started asking questions. Where normally a one- or two-word answer would have sufficed, students were expounding on theological truths. Instead of just giving the appropriate answer “sin,” a student said, “It is because of sin, which we all have, and of which we have been forgiven because Jesus came and died for us.”

I couldn't help but smile. Students who never participated were raising their hands and quoting Bible passages, not-so-subtly witnessing to a man who needed to hear the gospel.

I was touched and inspired to see their evangelistic zeal, to see students living out in front of my eyes the main purpose for which they are in this world.

Not only was I impressed, but Dan was as well. He appreciated the students' knowledge and insights. The concepts shared spurred on some deep spiritual discussions between the two of us and opened doors to future discussions. Dan has since started taking Bible information classes with me at Christ the Lord, Brookfield, and plans to become a member. We are engaged to be married at the end of July.

Sarah Bauer

District news

Nebraska

On Feb. 29, **Lord of Life, Thornton, Colo.**, voted to open a preschool and an elementary school.

Abiding Word, Highlands Ranch, Colo., responded to Mel Gibson's movie, *The Passion of the Christ*, with a three-part Lenten presentation, "Questions Penetrating the Passion." The congregation distributed 4,000 flyers and advertised in the newspaper and with a banner to attract guests to these presentations.

South Atlantic

Since September 2003, members of **Rock of Ages, Madison, Tenn.**, have been reaching out in Gallatin, Tenn. Rock of Ages began holding a weekly worship service in Gallatin on April 4. This effort has been fully funded by Rock of Ages in response to Jesus' Great Commission and WELS' focus on North American outreach.

Risen Savior, Orlando, Fla., had 550 visitors in the first six months since moving into its new facility. Retired pastor Joel Gerlach and his wife, Lillian, are working with the congregation and its pastor to follow up on all these visitors.

Amazing Grace, Myrtle Beach, S.C., is currently offering "Power Hours" as part of its youth ministry. "Power Hours" are catechism classes that combine lessons with games to a mix of members and prospects.

On April 4, **Grace, Grenada, West Indies**, celebrated "New Beginnings

Sunday," marking the occasion of going self-supporting after only two-and-a-half years. The day was marked with eight adult confirmations, four adult baptisms, and the reception of nearly a dozen children into the fold. Pastor Jim Radloff and his wife, Joyce, are serving the congregation in retirement.

On Feb. 14, **Lamb of God, Madison, Ala.**, hosted a marriage enrichment seminar for more than 30 people.

Southeastern Wisconsin

Members of St. John (Slades Corner), Burlington, Wis., honored **Marion Getka** with a reception for the more than 60 years she has played organ for the congregation. Getka continues to play organ for St. John (Slades Corner) and a neighboring WELS congregation.

Dakota-Montana

"Lift high the cross" took on a literal meaning when several men of **Christ, Bison, S.D.**, raised a new cross into position on Christ's church building on Dec. 6, 2003. The 16-foot stainless steel cross was raised nearly 30 feet to its new home. The congregation dedicated the cross on April 25.

Minnesota

On Feb. 29, members of **Mount Olive, Shakopee, Minn.**, celebrated the dedication of their new church building with two special services.

South Central

On March 19 and 20, 63 women gathered at the Camp Shiloh Lutheran Retreat Center in Pittsburg, Texas, to hear about various mission activities and how they could let their Christian lights "shine like stars." The **Red River Circuit of the Lutheran Women's Missionary Society** sponsored this "Women of the WELS" event.

Happy Anniversary!

MN—On April 25, Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., praised God for the ministry anniversaries of the following professors: **Lawrence Czer**, 25 years; **Philip Leyrer**, 25 years; **Gary Dallmann**, 40 years; **Charles Luedtke**, 40 years; **David Pelzl**, 40 years; **Beverlee Haar**, 50 years.

On April 17, **John Oldfield** celebrated his 40th anniversary in the teaching ministry. He served all 40 of those years at St. Croix Lutheran High School, West St. Paul, Minn.

NA—Members of **Prince of Peace, Fairport, N.Y.**, celebrated the congregation's 25th anniversary on May 2 and are planning another celebration for Oct. 24.

These pastors are the reporters for the districts featured this month: D-M—Wayne Rouse; MN—Jeffrey Bovee; NA—Harland Goetzinger; NE—Donald Wichmann; SA—Christopher Kruschel; SC—William Gabb; SEW—Scott Oelhafen.

Untangling the Web



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

- Inspiration and encouragement for teens are available at <www.livingbold.net>, a site produced by WELS' Commission on Youth Discipleship. The "teen gallery" features artwork, poetry, music, and articles by teens. Have a question? Submit it on the site and receive a biblical answer. E-devotions and a discussion board are also included.
- Looking for a way to receive timely news announcements from WELS? Sign up for the e-news service produced by WELS Communication Services. Go to <www.wels.net>, jumpword "welsnews," and click on "sign up for notification."

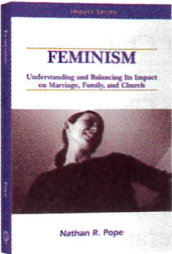
DEFINING RELIGION

Pericope—a set of Scripture lessons from the Old Testament, Epistles, and Gospels assigned to be read on each respective Sunday and holiday of the church year. A number of pericopes have been developed over the centuries. The pericope known as the Standard or Historic dates from about 600 AD.



A look at new books published by Northwestern Publishing House. For more information, visit <www.nph.net> or call 1-800-662-6022.

Feminism



\$15.99

The first section of Nathan Pope's *Feminism: Understanding and Balancing Its Impact on Marriage, Family, and Church* includes a thorough, scholarly, and insightful look at

the Christian origins of feminism in the United States. The early chapters include the most comprehensive definitions and delineation of the various forms of feminism that I have ever seen. It is also in this 174-page section that Pope frequently quotes his "Group of Four," which includes Christian women he knows well. I relate easily to this group's anecdotal

summaries to support a point Pope is making.

Perhaps because I was looking forward to application of "feminism," both good and bad, to the church, it was disappointing to find such an overwhelming emphasis on women and church governance in the second section of this book. Pope follows the pattern of most of the previous writings on this issue and fails to answer the questions many women in WELS are asking. Sadly, he no longer quotes his "Group of Four."

His main point in this section is that women are not to exercise authority over men in their marriages or in the church. Although he defines "authority" well, he unfortunately often uses

"leadership" as a synonym, which is confusing when trying to apply principles to my life as a Christian woman.

The questions most Christian women have relative to feminism deal not with governance or authority over men, but with how we can use talents from the Lord in our homes, lives, and church for the furthering of his kingdom. Only four or five pages of the 92 pages in this section deal with these questions, and only superficially at that. Although I have questions and would like clarification of some statements in this second section, the problem here isn't so much what's written as what's missing.

*Kathy Wendland
St. Peter, Mishicot, Wisconsin*

WELS president visits Nigeria

WELS President Karl Gurgel and Pastor Douglas Weiser, the Board for World Missions' appointed contact for Nigeria, visited WELS' sister churches—Christ the King Lutheran Church of Nigeria and All Saints Lutheran Church of Nigeria—in April.

They went to celebrate the seminary graduation of eight men—seven from Christ the King and one from All Saints. Two of these men were assigned and ordained as pastors,

while the other six will serve as vicars until the end of the

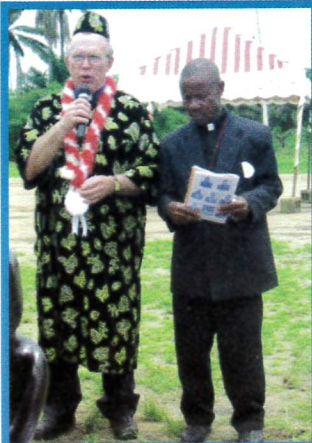
year. Christ the King has nine pastors, six vicars, and four evangelists and serves about 2,700 souls. All Saints has three pastors and 11 evangelists and serves 5,125 souls.

Gurgel and Weiser also went to demonstrate the fellowship that our church bodies share. WELS has been in fellowship with Christ the King since 1981 and just declared fellowship with All Saints at the 2001 synod convention. Gurgel was the first WELS president to visit Nigeria since President Oscar Naumann went in 1964.

While there, Gurgel dedicated a well in the village of Ikot Ufen. Money from the WELS Humanitarian

Aid Committee paid for the well. "The village elder was grateful for the well but was more grateful for the eternal things that we give them," says Gurgel.

WELS doesn't have missionaries in Nigeria, but offers counsel and assistance to both church bodies and some subsidy to Christ the King. WELS supports Christ the King Lutheran Seminary through non-budgetary gifts and by sending pastors four times a year for the past three years to supplement the Nigerian faculty.



WELS President Karl Gurgel (left) was made an honorary chief of the village of Uruk Uso when he visited Nigeria in April. He is pictured with Edet Akpanpan, director of Christ the King Lutheran Seminary.

Simon Orem, the seminary graduate from All Saints Lutheran Church of Nigeria, receives gifts from church members after his ordination.



World news

Internet users surf for religion—

Nearly two-thirds (64%) of adult Internet users in the United States have used the Internet for faith-related reasons, according to a study by the Pew Internet & American Life Project.

The study measured the following popular faith-related activities:

- Thirty-eight percent of the nation's Internet users have sent and received e-mail with spiritual content.
- Thirty-five percent have sent or received on-line greeting cards related to religious holidays.
- Thirty-two percent have gone on-line to read religion news.
- Twenty-one percent have looked for information about how to celebrate religious holidays.
- Seventeen percent have looked for information about where they could attend religious services.

Half of the 82 million “on-line faithful” said they attend church at least once a week. Most (69 percent) said they use the Internet for personal spiritual growth, not for work related to their places of worship. Twenty-six percent said they had used the Internet to seek or exchange information about the religious faiths of others, mostly out of curiosity.

The study surveyed 1,358 U.S. Internet users in November and December 2003. Its margin of error is plus or minus 3 percentage points.

(Pew Internet & American Life Project report, 04/07/04)

Moviegoers looking for morality in the theaters—

Movies with explicit sex and nudity don't sell, according to an annual study by the Christian Film & Television Commission.

Five of the top 10 movies at U.S. box offices in 2001, 2002, and 2003 had what the commission considered very graphic or excessive sex, while 19 (63 percent) of those movies had either a Christian or a moral worldview.

The study also showed that the more sex and nudity in a movie, the worse it did in the box office. In 2003, for example, 78 movies with no sex averaged \$37.6 million while 35 movies with graphic or excessive sex averaged only \$17.1 million. In the same year, movies with no nudity averaged \$26.6 million, but movies with nudity averaged \$14.5 million.

Another study by the same commission shows that moviegoers want movies with strong moral content. Movies in 2003 that the commission consider strong in moral content (such as *Finding Nemo*, *Return of the King*, and *Cheaper by the Dozen*), earned \$92.5 million on average, while movies with very strong immoral, negative content averaged only \$14.6 million per movie.

Internet-church created—The Church of England has set up an Internet-church (i-church) that will be led by an ordained or lay “Web pastor.”

The i-church is intended to be a Christian community of the Church of England based in the Diocese of Oxford. Its Web site, <www.i-church.org>, states that the church's purpose is to “provide a focus of Christian community for those who wish to explore Christian discipleship but who are not able, or do not wish, to be participant members of a local congregation.” People may also join because they need additional support that they may not find at their own churches or because travel makes joining a specific church difficult.

Membership is open to anyone, regardless of doctrinal allegiance.

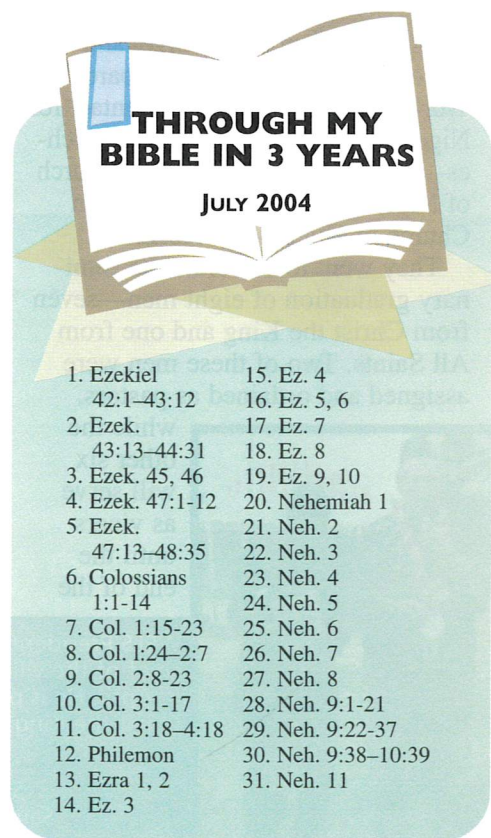
Nation's largest churches named—

The nation's 10 largest churches remain unchanged from last year, according to the 2004 *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches*, the annual report of church membership figures, compiled by the National Council of Churches.

The 10 largest churches in the United States are:

- The Roman Catholic Church: 66.4 million,
- The Southern Baptist Convention: 16.24 million,
- The United Methodist Church: 8.25 million,
- The Church of God in Christ: 5.49 million,
- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: 5.41 million,
- The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America: 5.03 million,
- The National Baptist Convention USA, Inc.: 5 million,
- The National Baptist Convention of America, Inc.: 3.5 million,
- Presbyterian Church (USA): 3.4 million, and
- Assemblies of God: 2.68 million

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.



THROUGH MY BIBLE IN 3 YEARS
JULY 2004

1. Ezekiel 42:1-43:12	15. Ez. 4
2. Ezek. 43:13-44:31	16. Ez. 5, 6
3. Ezek. 45, 46	17. Ez. 7
4. Ezek. 47:1-12	18. Ez. 8
5. Ezek. 47:13-48:35	19. Ez. 9, 10
6. Colossians 1:1-14	20. Nehemiah 1
7. Col. 1:15-23	21. Neh. 2
8. Col. 1:24-2:7	22. Neh. 3
9. Col. 2:8-23	23. Neh. 4
10. Col. 3:1-17	24. Neh. 5
11. Col. 3:18-4:18	25. Neh. 6
12. Philemon	26. Neh. 7
13. Ezra 1, 2	27. Neh. 8
14. Ez. 3	28. Neh. 9:1-21
	29. Neh. 9:22-37
	30. Neh. 9:38-10:39
	31. Neh. 11



CHANGES IN MINISTRY

Pastors

Bartsch, Michael P., to Salem (107th), Milwaukee
Bartz, James S., to Malawi, Africa
Boggs, John H., to Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Mich.
Bren, Donald J., to retirement
Frey, Edward A. Jr., to St. Paul, Cudahy, Wis.
Fricke, Joseph J., to St. Paul, Mauston, Wis.
Krueger, Robert J., to Immanuel, Findlay, Ohio
Lemke, Arnold E., to Christian Life Ministries, Little Canada, Minn.
Luchterhand, Martin P., to St. Luke, New Lisbon, Wis.
Schultz, Karl M., to Trinity, Kaukauna, Wis.
Schwartz, Timothy M., to Redeemer, Yakima, Wash.
Seelow, James P., to Holy Redeemer, Port Huron, Mich.
Werner, James M., to Ocean Drive, Pompano Beach, Fla.
Wilde, Mark H., to Christ, Cochrane/Dr. Martin Luther, Buffalo City, Wis.
Zank, Marvin W., to retirement
Zarling, Michael D., to Epiphany, Racine, Wis.

Teachers

Anason, Connie J., to St. Mark, Eau Claire, Wis.
Ankerberg, Erik, to Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee
Birkholz, Jerome P., to St. Matthew, Oconomowoc, Wis.
Bizal, Luanne M., to Zion, Denver, Colo.
Ebert, Ruth W., to St. Mark, Watertown, Wis.
Glowicki, Joshua T., to Lord of Life, Thornton, Colo.
Granberg, Stephen A., to Kettle Moraine LHS, Jackson, Wis.
Habeck, Gretchen R., to Faith, Tacoma, Wash.
Hartwig, Amy M., to St. John, Baraboo, Wis.
Hoewisch, Tina, to Hope, Milwaukee
Holman, James R., to St. Marcus, Milwaukee
Hosbach, Daniel J., to Emanuel First, Lansing, Mich.
Inniger, Jeffrey A., to Commission on Parish Schools, Milwaukee
Kaesermann, Lesley J., to St. Paul, Arlington, Minn.
Kiecker, Gretel E., to St. Stephen, Fallbrook, Calif.
Klug, Theodore A., to Lakeside LHS, Lake Mills, Wis.
Langebartels, Julie, to Hope, Milwaukee
Lecker, Penny J., to Bethany/St. John, Saginaw, Mich.
Madetzke, Trudy J., to retirement
Merten, Jane M., to Mountain Valley, Eagle, Colo.
Mittelstadt, Michael J., to Bethlehem, Menomonee Falls, Wis.
Neumann, Andrew M., to Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee
Plocher, Jonathan M., to Bay Pines, Seminole, Fla.
Pufahl, Laura M., to Good Shepherd, Burnsville, Minn.
Raymond, Scott, to Hope, Milwaukee
Reiter, Lynn L., to Christ, North Saint Paul, Minn.
Retberg, Amanda D., to Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee
Riesop, Crystal M., to St. Paul, Riverside, Calif.
Steinberg, Kimberle A., to Good Shepherd, Beaver Dam, Wis.
Stoltz, David M., to St. Lucas, Kewaskum, Wis.
Theimer, Cheryl R., to Riverview, Appleton, Wis.
Tjernagel, Julie L., to Trinity, Neenah, Wis.
Ungemach, Joel P., to Manitowoc LHS, Manitowoc, Wis.
Visaggio, Janis R., to Bethany, North Fort Myers, Fla.
Warren, Lisa, to Trinity, Bay City, Mich.

Wittig, Marvin S., to Peace, Hartford, Wis.
Yeo, Lucia, to Mountain Valley, Eagle, Colo.

ANNIVERSARIES

Danube, Minn.—St. Matthew (100). June 12. Service, 6:30 PM. June 13. Service, 9:30 AM and 2:30 PM. Dinner and fellowship between services.
Fairfax, Minn.—Emanuel (125). June 13. Service, 10 AM. Catered meal to follow. 507/426-7819.
Trumbull, Conn.—Christ Redeemer (25). June 13. Service, 9:30 AM. Picnic to follow. Katy Bomann, 203/268-2218.
Freeland, Mich.—St. Matthew (125). June 13, Aug. 1, & Sept. 12. Service, 9 AM. 989/695-9758.
Fox Lake, Wis.—St. John (100). June 19. Pig roast and campfire, 4 PM. Tickets required. June 20. Outdoor service, 9 AM. 920/928-3250.
Saginaw, Mich.—Bethany (50). June 20. Service, 10:30 AM. Lynn Schroeder, 989/793-7747.
Tyler, Minn.—Immanuel (125). July 11. Service, 10 AM. Catered dinner to follow at Legion Hall. RSVP, Jane Johnson, 507/247-5414 (evenings).
Newburg, Wis.—St. John school (100). July 11. Service, 9 AM. Dinner to follow. 262/675-6852.
Sparta, Wis.—St. John school (100). July 11 and Aug. 22. Services, 8 & 10:30 AM. Lunch and tours to follow. 608/269-4966.
Aberdeen, S.D.—Trinity church (50) and school (25). July 17. Service, 5 PM. Fellowship to follow. July 18. School service, 9 AM. Meal and program to follow. Church service, 3:30 PM. Supper to follow. 605/225-1750.
Perry, Mich.—Our Savior (25). July 18. Outdoor service, 4 PM. Dinner and activities to follow. Larry Place, 517/625-7202.

COMING EVENTS

Family-friendly festival—sponsored by St. Peter, Fond du Lac, Wis. June 12. 12-8 PM. Buttermilk Creek Park & Performance Center, Fond du Lac, Wis. Cheryl Retzlaff, 920/924-0462.
Conferences, conventions, retreats, or workshops
 • **Confessional Christian Worldview Seminar (ELS)**—June 6-12, Schwan Retreat Center, Trego, Wis. Understand popular cultural and religious trends from a scriptural and conservative Lutheran perspective. 800/577-4848 or <www.schwancenter.org>.
 • **WELS piano teachers workshop**—June 18, 9 AM-3 PM. St. Andrew, Middleton, Wis. \$20, includes lunch. Karen Hunter, 608/836-7497.
 • **Lutheran Women's Missionary Society National Convention**—June 24-27. Sioux Falls, S.D. Hosted by Minnesota Circuit, 414/321-6212.
 • **Special Ministries in Lutheran Education Conference (SMILE III)**—Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee. July 16-18. Bruce Cuppan, 920/922-8672.
 • **Single Parenting Retreat (ELS)**—July 30-Aug. 1. Schwan Retreat Center, Trego, Wis. 800/577-4848.
 • **Christian Educators for Special Education**—20th anniversary summer conference. Aug. 20, 8 AM-3:30 PM. Klemmers, Milwaukee. Members, \$20; non-members, \$30. Register to CESE, c/o Diane Kratz, 891 W Creekway Ct, Oak Creek WI 53154.
 • **WELS North Atlantic District Labor Day retreat**—Sept. 4-6. Camp Taconic, Hinsdale, Mass. Worship, recreation, and programs for all ages. Meals included. Judy Becker, 518/210-5590.
Northwestern Publishing House New Music Reading Workshop—will look at the newest worship resource, *Christian Worship: Occasional Services*. Workshop fee, \$35/person, includes lunch. Register, 800/662-6093 ext. 5763.
 • June 19, Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw.

- July 10, St. Paul, New Ulm, Minn.
- July 11, St. Paul, Onalaska, Wis.
- July 17, Trinity, Waukesha, Wis.
- July 31, Mount Olive, Appleton, Wis.

Camps

- **Single parent family camp**—Camp Phillip, Wautoma, Wis., July 9-11. Enjoy a weekend with your family that features cooked meals, activities, Bible study, and friendships with other single parents. 920/787-3202.
- **Camp**—Lutheran camp for kids sponsored by the Chicago Pastors Conference. July 18-23, YMCA Camp Duncan, Ingleside, Ill. 847/438-5018.
- **Tree of Life Bible Camp**—for all Northern California WELS churches. Aug. 1-7. Tim Mann, 650/367-8019.

Reunions

- **40th class reunion**—of Dr. Martin Luther College class of 1964 and three-year grads of 1963. July 17. Milwaukee. Dennis Schultz, 414/438-0353.
- **30th class reunion**—of Michigan Lutheran Seminary class of 1974. July 24. Saginaw, Mich. Keith Rogien, 269/461-6589.

AVAILABLE

One silver-plated communion flagon—free to a mission congregation. Timothy Spaude, 414/425-3030.

NEEDED

Set or individual copies of the Stori-strip filmstrips of Bible stories—for WELS mission in Dourados, Brazil. Charles Flunker, <flunkers@terra.com.br>.

NAMES WANTED

Military bases in Colorado Springs, Colo.—James Seiltz, 719/599-0200.
Chula Vista/southeast San Diego/Coronado, Calif.—Dan Schroeder, 619/482-7748.
Hickory, N.C.—John Qualmann, 828/684-7035.
Caddo Mills, Texas—starting up a preaching station. John Hering, 972/494-4911.

SERVICE TIMES

Mercer, Wis.—Zion, Hwy. 51 S. Starting May 2, Sunday worship, 9 AM. Mark Wenzel, 715/776-6742.
The Villages, Fla.—The Open Bible, Spruce Creek Professional Center, Hwy. 27/441 (across from Wal-Mart), Suite 502. Sunday service, 8:45 AM. Don Meier, 352/728-8492.

POSITION AVAILABLE

Live-in caregiver—St. Thomas Lutheran Ministries, Phoenix/Goodyear, Ariz. William Meier, 602/278-5373.
Full-time senior designer or art director—for Northwestern Publishing House's in-house design department. Experience in publication design and staff supervision required. Experience in art direction and administrative responsibilities desired. Must be proficient in Mac OSX and design software, including QuarkXPress, Adobe Illustrator, and Adobe Photoshop. Submit resume and salary requirements to Todd Rebillot, director of human resources, 2949 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222; <Rebillot@nph.wels.net>.

To place an announcement, call 414/256-3210; FAX, 414/256-3862; <BulletinBoard@sab.wels.net>. Deadline is eight weeks before publication date.

Competence that comes from God

What makes a minister competent? The life-giving gospel of Christ Jesus.

Paul E. Zell

One morning in late May a young man sits in a classroom, listening to his professor. The next morning he receives a divine call. The following morning he graduates from the seminary. By mid-July he is ordained and installed as a congregation's pastor. What makes this young man competent for the ministry?

Not of the letter

Some might speculate that the pastor-in-training learns a "how-to" manual for effective ministry. By the time he finishes at the seminary he can show his congregation how to worship God and how to study God's Word. He can counsel men on how to be better fathers and teach children to be more respectful. In keeping with God's glorious commandments, he can set his own course for honest talk, holy thoughts, and honorable living; and he can demand that others do the same.

Yet long before his ordination, the competent minister stops putting his confidence in the rules alone. He has learned what Paul gained from the ascended Christ and passed on to the church at Corinth. "Our competence comes from God," Paul disclosed. "He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life."

Have you ever tried to obey God's law to the letter? Impossible, isn't it? Now imagine a pastor expending all his efforts trying to make church

members perfectly obedient before God and perfectly devoted to prayer and love for one another. His could be an energetic ministry of "do this" and "don't do that," but the letter of the law is a killer. It shows us our sins. It places us squarely under the just anger of the God who announced that "the soul who sins is the one who will die" (Ezekiel 18:20).

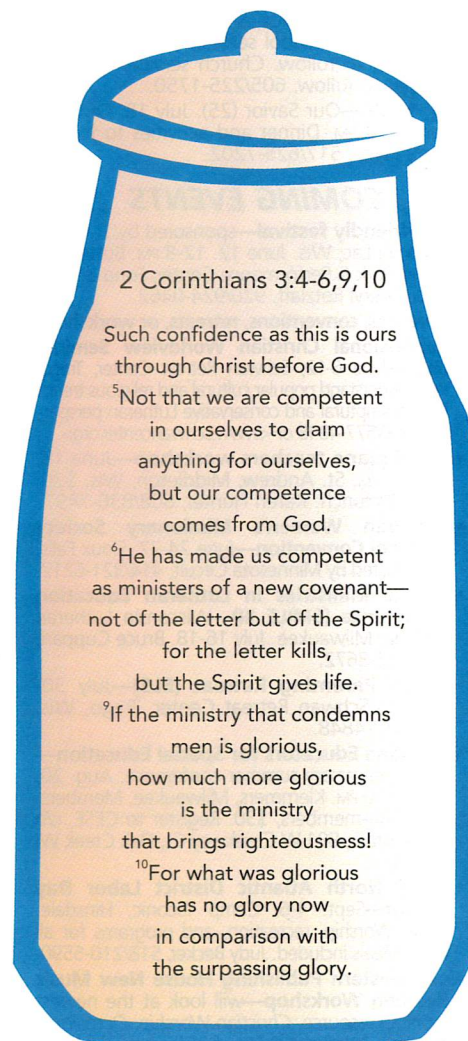
Of the Spirit

A ministry committed only to God's commandments condemns both pastor and people to eternal death. "How much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness?" Paul asks. Indeed, what is more magnificent than a pastor telling sinners that Christ has fulfilled all righteousness on their behalf? What announcement is more amazing than a minister absolving the condemned in the name of the triune God? This glorious gospel in Word and sacrament is the Holy Spirit's powerful tool. By it he calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth.

The young men coming out of the seminary this spring know what God demands. They will direct others to Mount Sinai, trembling in holy fear at those commandments carved in stone. The faithful minister knows the first use of God's law.

Yet what makes him competent for the ministry is that by the Spirit he has visited Mount Calvary; he has seen the blood that washes sin and guilt away. By the Spirit he has lifted his eyes to the Mount of Olives; he has seen the hands raised in blessing. The minister's competence comes from God, from the life-giving gospel of Christ Jesus.

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



Congratulations or not?

“Congratulations!” We use the word often in June with graduations, weddings, and Father’s Day. With it we pray in our hearts: “May God bless you with success, bringing you joy and happiness. May his blessings rest upon you on your special day and always.”

Congratulations and a prayer for God’s continued blessing are in order at God-pleasing events. But God-pleasing events depend on a godly goal and direction.

“Congratulations, graduate!” Much learning and a lot of hard work goes into an educational degree. Graduates usually come out a lot smarter and better off than when they entered school. But it doesn’t always work that way. Who doesn’t know someone who has graduated with the highest honors but can’t earn a living?

An even greater tragedy afflicts some learned people. It has to do with not approaching education with the right attitude. Solomon’s inspired words are, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge” (Proverbs 1:7).

The fear of the Lord, respect for God, is the only appropriate starting point for all learning. It acknowledges God’s existence and seeks his will and way in everything. The fear of the Lord leads a person to live with God here and look forward to spending eternity with God in heaven.

That starting and ending point for all knowledge is truly a blessing worthy of congratulations. But, unfortunately, that is not always the goal of those seeking wisdom. Whenever it isn’t, as Paul said, “Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools” (Romans 1:22). No congratulations for that!

In Romans 1, Paul gives a glaring example of such educated foolishness in connection with the precious gift of human sexuality, God’s blessing for the married life. Although we properly

congratulate and offer a prayer for a man and woman just married, we cannot do the same for same-sex marriages. There can be no wedding blessing for those who are defying God’s ordinance of marriage. They show disdain for God’s own Son, who, quoting from God’s creation of marriage, said, “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh” (Matthew 19:5).

So we congratulate and offer a wedding blessing for a Christian man and woman that unite in marriage, respecting God’s gift of it. And for such marriages blessed with children, we congratulate the father and mother. In June we especially remember the fathers. God’s blessings, parents, upon your example of Christian living! May God graciously bless your children and grandchildren as they follow in your godly ways.

But here again the unbelieving world shows its foolishness. If the unbeliever does not see God as the starting point for true wisdom, if he or she continues to display this brazen foolishness by living in a same-sex union, such a marriage will not be blessed in the natural way with children. No room for congratulations, even if a child is brought into such an arrangement.

Because we want everyone to be deserving of congratulations, we must spread God’s wisdom and proclaim peace through Jesus. Then others may enjoy the blessings that God brings to our lives now and for eternity.



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

Congratulations and a prayer for God’s continued blessing are in order at God-pleasing events.

IN THE CROSS HAIRS

Richard L. Gurgel

TOPIC: THOSE WITH NO KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS

Question: What happened to those born before Christ who didn't have any knowledge of the Old Testament? Also, what about those since Jesus' time who die without hearing the gospel?

Answer: The natural knowledge of God gives everyone powerful witness about his existence. All creation shouts to all with eyes and ears that one great Creator exists (Psalm 19:1-4; Romans 1:20). Man's accusing conscience also testifies powerfully to his responsibility to his Creator (Romans 2:14,15). Although such natural knowledge cannot tell anyone this Creator's exact identity, it should lead people to "seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us" (Acts 17:27).

Sadly, "there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God" (Romans 3:11). Therefore, "the wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them" (Romans 1:18,19). Stubborn rejection of that natural knowledge leaves all without excuse. God is just in judging those in Old or New Testament times who never heard his gospel.

Yet God has also shown himself zealous to spread that only message that saves man from his well-deserved plight. At least twice in Old Testament history everyone knew the gospel. After Adam and Eve's fall, God revealed the promise of the woman's offspring who would crush the serpent's head (Genesis 3:15). However as generations passed the vast majority rejected that promise.

Consider also God's patient mercy at Noah's time. God spoke to all who would listen through that "preacher of righteousness" (2 Peter 2:5). Then, when judgment reduced the world's population to eight, again all knew the true God's promised salvation. Yet once again the vast majority threw away that knowledge.

Other than Jesus there is
"no other name under
heaven given to men by
which we must be saved."

God has continued his persistence in New Testament times. For all the book of Acts tells us, it tells us little about any apostles other than Peter and Paul. From Paul's letters, it's clear that Acts doesn't record even all of Paul's travels. The missionary zeal of many early Christians and the pages of church history testify to a rapid spread of the gospel. Yet over the centuries, in many places where the gospel was richly abundant, man's callousness led to a loss of the gospel.

Human nature blames God—as if he's somehow unjust in condemning an unbelieving world. Yet consider history's tragic tale. God zealously hunts down sinful mankind with his gospel. Sinful people zealously refuse to be found, or once found, often run back into darkness.

There is no other way of salvation. We cannot quiet this concern by suggesting that perhaps there's some other way God will save those not won by the gospel. Other than Jesus there is "no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). There is no other way to come to faith in that gospel. "Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ" (Romans 10:17).

Let's not waste our energy wondering if God will judge those who die without the gospel. He will, with no apologies! Rather, let's take the challenge God lays before every generation of his children—to spread the powerful gospel message with every ounce of our energy and with every resource at our disposal.

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

Have a question you want answered? Send it to Forward in Christ, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222; <fic@sab.wels.net>. Look on-line at <www.wels.net/sab/qa.html> for more questions and answers.

Bits o' the Bible Do you know these facts about David?

1. Who was David's father?
2. How many brothers did David have?
3. Why was David brought to King Saul in the beginning?
4. How many stones did David take for his sling when he faced Goliath?
5. Who was David's closest friend?
6. Who was David's first wife?
7. What did David's wife use to deceive Saul's men into believing that David was in bed ill?
8. What song did the people sing about David after he killed Goliath?
9. Who was the priest that gave David consecrated bread when David was fleeing from Saul?
10. What weapon did this priest also give to David?
11. How did David escape danger at the hands of Achish, King of Gath?
12. Who was David's second recorded wife?
13. Whose widow was she?
14. What often-repeated line came from David's lament at the death of Saul and Jonathan?
15. What commander of Saul's army first opposed David after Saul's death but then went over to David's side?
16. Who killed that commander?
17. What son of Saul became king of Israel for two years after Saul's death until David became King of Israel?
18. Where did David already rule during that time?
19. Who was the last son of Saul's house to whom David paid honor?
20. What physical defect did that son of Saul suffer from?
21. Who was Bathsheba's husband when David committed adultery with her?
22. Who was the prophet that confronted David about his sin with Bathsheba?
23. Which son of David led a full-scale rebellion against David?
24. How many years did David rule as king?
25. Who is "great David's greater son"?

RESULTS: Score one point for each question answered correctly.

1-7: Read 1 Samuel 16-2 Samuel 5.

8-12: Average.

13-17: Very good.

18-21: Excellent.

21-25: Outstanding.

Picture this



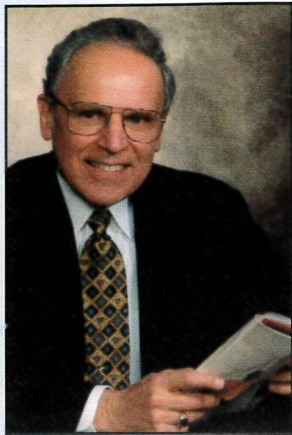
The children of Abiding Love Preschool, Cape Coral, Fla., gather for chapel time with the pastor.

Submitted by Bonnie Putnam

ANSWERS

- ANSWERS** 1. Jesse 2. Seven 3. To play his harp when Saul was troubled by an evil spirit 4. Five 5. Saul's son, Jonathan 6. Saul's daughter, Michal 7. An idol and goat's hair 8. "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands" 9. Ahimelech 10. Goliath's sword 11. He feigned insanity 12. Abigail 13. Nabal's 14. "How the mighty have fallen!" 15. Abner 16. Joab 17. Ish-bosheth 18. Judah 19. Mephibosheth 20. He was crippled in both feet 21. Uriah 22. Nathan 23. Absalom 24. 40 years 25. Jesus

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.



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

We look for our moral direction from God through his Word, regardless of what society is teaching and practicing and ruling.

Change laws? Change hearts!

“**S**ow the wind and reap the whirlwind.”

For years now and increasingly we have trivialized and otherwise assaulted marriage in our society. We dodge commitment, preferring to live together without marriage. We marry on condition, ready to divorce again in the face of conflict, prematurely ending nearly one million marriages in the United States every year. We heap abuse upon our spouses and children and pass that off as normal. We embrace infidelity at an alarming rate.

So why do we cry out now against same-sex marriages, claiming among other things that such unions trivialize marriage? That's the question that 158 religious leaders, both Christian and non-Christian, in the Greater Puget Sound region of Washington are asking. They point out, as they rally for same-sex unions, that they see more love and commitment and stability between many homosexuals than between husbands and wives.

Are we really surprised at the turn of events?

Furthermore, argue the clerics, we need to permit same-sex marriages in the name of religious freedom.

Meanwhile, others want to pass a constitutional amendment to protect marriage. How much chance do you think there is of that?

Yes, the majority of Americans seem to want it, but if we engage the debate in the terms the opposition is dictating, we will lose. We'll lose because those terms beg the real question at stake, a basic moral, religious question. Marriage is not the issue. The status of homosexuality is. If there is no stigma attached to the sin of same-sex sexual activity, why should we not allow same-sex marriage—even though it means redefining the term “marriage”?

The Bible is clear in condemning homosexuality and in defining marriage. Anyone who accepts the Bible as all God's Word should be able to see that. However, virtually all of the clerics making their stand in Washington do not accept the Bible as verbally inspired by God and the sole source for doctrine and practice. They dismiss what the Bible says about homosexuality and marriage as not applicable today.

Where, then, does that leave us? What about the argument for religious freedom?

For starters, the argument for religious freedom can hardly be compelling. Many of our nation's laws reflect religious principles: laws against murder, stealing, and pedophilia, to name a few. We aren't about to change those laws in the interest of freedom of religion. The truth is that we legislate morality all the time. It's only a question of whose morality.

Where does that leave us? Right where we've always been as society's moral values break down around us. Right where we are on issues of abortion and euthanasia, on pornography. We take our stand on God's Word. We speak out in favor of what is proper and true.

We are Christians. We are the church. We look for our moral direction from God through his Word, regardless of what society is teaching and practicing and ruling. We work harder than ever to keep our people, especially our children, from being misled by society—an increasingly difficult task.

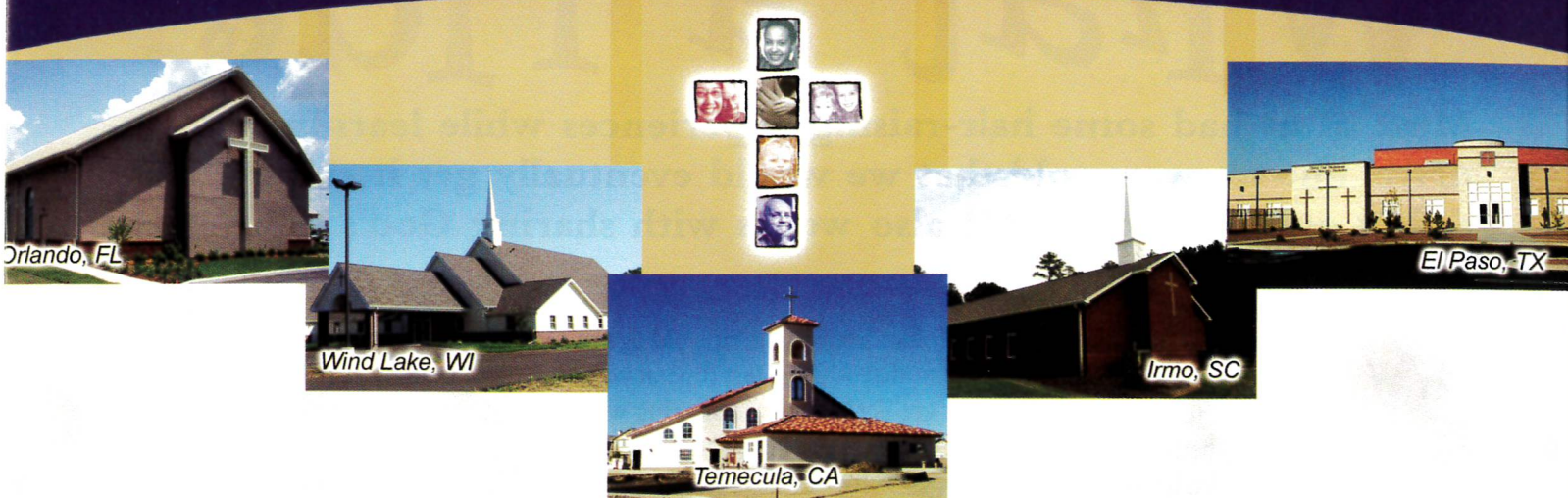
As Christians and as God's people we should do what we can to see true morality reflected in the laws of our land, and we should continue to let our voices be heard. However, as we invariably fall short in our efforts to change laws, we must redouble our efforts to change hearts by the gospel.

That's our first calling and needs to be our first passion.

Gary P. Baumler

WELS Church Extension Fund

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Philippians 1:4-6

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What a ride!

Most of us had some hair-raising experiences while learning to drive, but we were told that we would eventually get it right if we didn't quit. This principle also works with sharing God's good news.

Bob Gove

When my mother was about 19, she and several of her friends went for a drive one weekend. They found themselves at the top of Pike's Peak, on a steep road with several hairpin turns. Mother had never driven a car, but the boys in the car picked this unlikely place to give her a driving lesson.

Now cars were pretty basic in those days. The younger readers will have trouble believing what happened as they descended down and around the curves. Mother's heart was pounding, and her hands were sweating. Her foot was on the brake pedal, but the speed was increasing. The boys were cheering her on. Then the steering wheel came off in her hands!

Mother lived to the ripe old age of 87, but that was the last time anyone ever got her behind the steering wheel of a car, even though they got the car stopped without crashing.

You may feel uncertain when you "get behind the wheel" now. But hang in there.

Most of us had some pretty hair-raising experiences while learning to drive, but we were told that we would eventually get it right if we didn't quit. Sure enough, with more practice came more confidence, and with more confidence came more proficiency. Can you recall the feeling of exhilaration that came with receiving your first driver's license?

This principle also works with telling the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ.

The first time you try it your heart will pound. Your hands will sweat. The "steering wheel" might even come off. But if you slam it back in place, you can regain control. If you keep at it, you will learn what to do when you see a "sharp curve" or a "one-way street" ahead or when listeners throw up a stop sign or try to send you on a detour.

But one day, there will be a "75-mile-per-hour freeway" welcoming you. You will realize that you can trust the Holy Spirit to bring the right Scripture to mind and to open the heart and mind of your listener. There will be ears that are eager to hear what you are saying. Words will flow off your tongue in such a coherent manner that you will feel as though it is someone else speaking—and, of course, it will be. It will be Jesus expressing himself through you. You will experience the real joy of the Lord—and it will be your strength.

You may feel uncertain when you "get behind the wheel" now. But hang in there. God will bring glory to himself through you if you stick to it.

Bob Gove is a member at Messiah, Nampa, Idaho.

