



WISCONSIN  
LUTHERAN  
INSTITUTIONAL  
MINISTRIES

# COMPASSION

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## HOPE LIES IN OUR LORD

by Pastor Robert Dick

**“Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope.”**

*(1 Thessalonians 4:13)*

Over the last few years, I've come to a greater appreciation of Paul's inspired words as one of the chaplains for a local fire department. I respond to PNB calls. PNB stands for Pulseless, Non-Breather. When a chaplain responds to a PNB call, it means someone's loved one has died. These are always tragic calls. A few of the calls would have been less tragic if the families had known the Lord Jesus as their Savior.

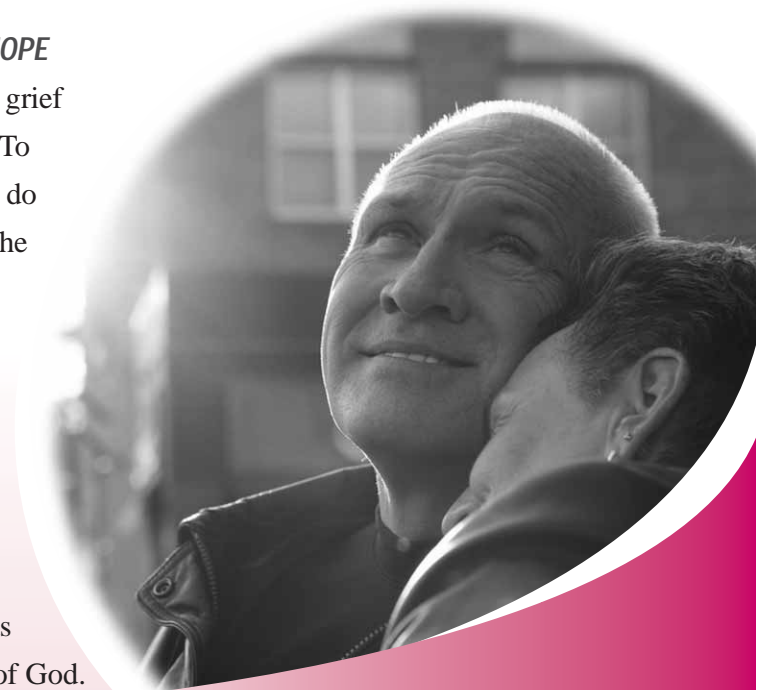
### SOME GRIEF KNOWS NO HOPE

In these homes the cries of grief have a different character. To hear the cries of those who do not know Jesus mourning the loss of a husband, wife, mother, father, brother, sister or other family member who does not know Jesus is to hear grief that knows no hope. It's almost as if their cries acknowledge that a soul has been lost for the kingdom of God.

### DESPAIR OVERTAKES THE FAMILY

As the emergency personnel leave the home, "I'm sorry for your loss," is the phrase repeated over and over again. The family and friends are now alone with the dearly departed. They wait for the medical examiner or the funeral director to come and take their loved one. As the police officer watches over the body and I watch over the family, wave after wave of despair overtakes those left behind. The family is absorbed in grief and sorrow.

*continued on pg 5*



## A SPECIAL RETIREMENT GIFT



Recently, the WLIM Board and Staff invited Chaplain Steve Stern and his family to celebrate his retirement from WLIM at the end of 2006. WLIM executive director Don Borgwardt (left) presented Chaplain Stern (right) the lighthouse artwork pictured above as a special retirement gift. The artwork is meaningful; it reminds all of us of Chaplain Stern's book, "Safe Harbor," which will be printed in the near future. We all wish Steve and his family the Lord's richest blessings in his retirement!

Your memorial or special gifts to the WLIM operating fund or any WLIM special fund (youth ministry, Grace Oasis, nursing home ministry, etc.) are most appreciated.

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## FREEDOM IN JAIL

Jim (not his real name) hung around with the wrong crowd. He was in the wrong place at the wrong time. Now he sits in prison awaiting trial for murder. This was where I first met him, a few weeks after my vicar year started, a few weeks after he was locked up.



### THE COMFORT OF THE GOSPEL

My supervising pastor and I have been taking turns seeing Jim every week since then. We visit with him, but more importantly share God's Word with him. We didn't need to emphasize the law; the judicial system and his conscience have done that well. However, Jim did need the comfort of the Gospel, of knowing that Jesus still loves him and that he is forgiven for Jesus' sake. Though he is suffering the earthly consequences of his actions, he can stand confidently before his heavenly Judge and know that he is declared, "Free from hell, not guilty!" Even though he is locked up in a prison cell, he is free because Christ has washed away his sin.

### MAKING GOD A PRIORITY

Every week Jim eagerly looks forward to seeing us. He says that we are the highlight of his otherwise regimented and dull days. He loves to hear the Word and has started studying Scripture on his own. He spends a lot of time in prayer, not only for himself, but for his family as he encourages them to make God a priority in their lives.

### ANSWERED PRAYERS

God has answered his prayers. Not only has God used his difficult situation to bring Jim into his fold, but God has also touched his family. His older sister is regularly attending Sunday morning worship, and his mother and two brothers have started coming too! They are so thankful for what we do for their son and brother but also what the Savior has done for them all. It is exciting to see God's Word at work. Jim is in a very difficult situation and is facing the possibility of life imprisonment, but I thank God that Jim and his family have eternal freedom found only through faith in Jesus Christ.

Vicar Aaron Strong is serving  
Beautiful Savior Ev. Lutheran Church,  
Las Vegas, Nevada.

Vicar Aaron Strong



# THE TRUTH LIES IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

I call him “Frustrating Fred.” He’s a Christian and he’s in prison, but that’s not why I think of him as frustrating.

I first met Fred about a year ago. He came to one of my worship services and asked if I visited with inmates one-on-one. When I told him that I did, he asked if I could make room for him in my schedule.

## **FRUSTRATION IN STUDY BEGINS**

I began to meet weekly with Fred a short while later and, at first, our study of God’s Word went well. Then Fred started to be just a little bit frustrating.

He doesn’t believe that children are sinful from the beginning of their lives, so he believes they don’t need to be baptized. Not only that, but he is convinced that before the Holy Spirit can bring someone to faith in Jesus, that individual must first decide that he wants and needs a Savior from sin. I took Fred to Psalm 51 and Ephesians 2, but he remained unconvinced.

It didn’t end there. Fred is sure that a Christian can eliminate sin from his life - it just takes determination and hard work. After all, why would Paul urge the Christians in Corinth to aim for perfection, (2 Corinthians 13:11) if they wouldn’t ever be able to get rid of sin? I took Fred to Romans 8:18-25. I was sure that Fred would see his error. He had to, but he didn’t! It was frustrating!!

## **DISCONTINUING THE STUDY OF GOD’S WORD**

In fact, it became so frustrating that I started to wonder how I could discontinue my study of God’s Word with Fred!

But, I knew I couldn’t do that. Instead, I had to figure out how I could prove to Fred that a Christian’s salvation and sanctified life are entirely dependent



on God’s grace. After all, if I didn’t show him the error of his beliefs, who would?

## **SALVATION LIES IN THE HOLY SPIRIT**

I was thinking about that yesterday, when it occurred to me that I was just like Fred. I was trying to figure out what I could say or do to convince Fred to believe the truth. And, I was forgetting that it is only the Holy Spirit who can do that!

Only the Holy Spirit can convince any sinner that the Bible is the truth. Only the Holy Spirit can bring any sinner to faith in Jesus and only the Holy Spirit can strengthen any Christian in that one saving faith.

## **THE PRIVILEGE OF PROCLAIMING GOD’S WORD**

My job, my privilege, is to simply proclaim the truth of God’s Word. All the rest is the Holy Spirit’s work!

*Chaplain Charles Iles, Sr.*

*Chaplain Charles Iles, Sr. is a 1975 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and joined WLIM in 2000 after 25 years of parish ministry in Missouri, Oklahoma and Wisconsin. He serves at several state prisons and the Mental Health Institute.*



## SPECIAL GIFTS AND MEMORIALS

<i>IN MEMORY OF</i>	<i>GIVEN BY</i>
Pastor Steve Hintz	Rev. Mark Bartsch
Nicole Boldon & son Christian	Mr. & Mrs. Albert Becker
Rev. Roy W. Brassow	Mr. Earl Brassow
Robert J. Dettlaff	Mrs. Grace Dettlaff
Arno Pleuss	Mr. & Mrs. Robert A Doneff
Elizabeth Henne	Mr. Robert Henne
Pastor Gerhardt Kionka	June M Kelm
Martin Koch	Dr. & Mrs. Marvin Koch
George H. Woelflein	Kay Martin
Edwin Millard	Mrs. Ruth Millard
Phil Schmidt	Mr. & Mrs. Earl Pappenfuss
Walter "Wally" Mundstock	Mr. & Mrs. Brian Rindfleisch
Adolph Fehlauer	Mrs. Carol Ryan
Elaine Arnison	Ms. Ruth Stern
Arthur Klemp	Mr. & Mrs. Alan Uher
Richard & Helen Oemig	Nancy Weinkauff
David Wenzel	Mrs. Marcella Wenzel
Del Wynkoop	Dorothy Wynkoop
Ken Ballard	Mr. & Mrs. Orville Zuberbier

<i>IN HONOR OF</i>	<i>GIVEN BY</i>
Arnold Knuth's 85th birthday	Mr. & Mrs. Robert Bauer
Jerry's birthday	Mr. & Mrs. Jerald Glaze
Chaplain Steve Stern's retirement	Mr. Herman Harstad
Del & Imogene Hoeffner's 54th anniversary	Mr. Lloyd Hoeffner
Chaplain Ken Lenz "Staying the Course"	Mrs. Jane Krueger
Chaplain Steve Stern's retirement	Mrs. Jane Krueger
Chaplain Phil Merten 25 years in the ministry	Mrs. Jane Krueger
Chaplain Steve Stern's retirement	Mrs. Louise Peterson
Victor & Barbara Steinle	Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Raddant
Chaplain Steve Stern's 20 years at WLIM	Ms. Ruth Rehbaum
Chaplain Steve Stern's service in the ministry	Mr. Ellsworth Shields
Thanksgiving for great-grandchildren	Joyce Strohm
Rev. John Schroeder	Mr. & Mrs. Otto Uher
Beth Wagie	PK4 class at Our Savior Lutheran School - Grafton

## DOG - MAN'S BEST FRIEND??

Some say, "a dog is man's best friend." While I have enjoyed my own dogs, people who live too seriously by that standard have "best friend" backwards.

### *A FAMILY TORN AND IN CRISIS*

A young daughter was dying in the hospital. The mother asked me to baptize her baby after I went through a lesson on baptism. Her husband, who had been absent during the lesson, suddenly appeared for the rite. The father had no faith. He was even defiant about any God. The mother wept while the father showed little feeling for his dying daughter.



### *MISGUIDED AND CONFUSED*

Next, the father told me that his dog, who had been his hunting buddy and "best friend," had died a month earlier. His dog's death had affected him greatly and he was still mourning. He even cried as he told me about his dog. Finally, he asked me if his dog was in heaven. I told him that I did not know. He became very angry with God and me. Later I learned that the father had been abusive towards his family.

### *A BACKWARDS SOURCE OF FRIENDSHIP*

Why was the dog his best friend? By instinct, his dog approved of whatever he did, even if he abused his wife and child. If you rob a bank, hurt someone, steal, or lie, a dog will still support you because it has no moral judgment. A dog has no soul. A dog does not feel guilty if it kills a rabbit or steals another dog's food. A dog by instinct can be a "friend" but never be a "best friend" in the fullest sense.

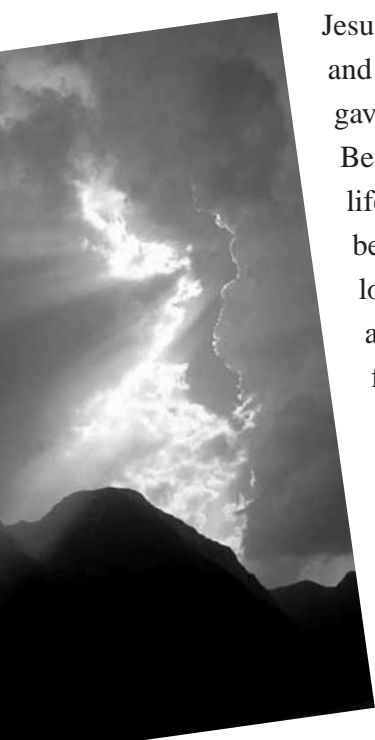
The little girl's father's best friend was dead and gone. His dog could no longer give friendship and approval. His best friend left him with no comfort or hope for himself and for his dying daughter. His source of

friendship was backwards. I baptized the little girl but the father refused to believe that baptism had any power.

In another case, the family's "best-friend" dog suddenly turned upon their three year old son and critically bit him. His chin and cheek bones were crushed and one of his eyes was almost gouged out. The child was at the point of death and an emergency baptism was requested. The dog, which had also viciously bit the mother who rescued her son, was hardly a "best friend."

### **UNDERSTANDING OF A REAL BEST FRIEND**

In the Bible lesson I shared with this family, they amazingly still thought of their dog as their best family friend. However they now heard about their real Best Friend. By baptism, Jesus would come to their critically injured son and adopt him into His saved family. Christ gave up His life on the cross to become their Best Friend with forgiveness, comfort and life. He rose again from the dead to always befriend us with His powerful and helping love. His friendship could bless the doctors and nurses in the care of their child. His friendship could bless the healing process. His friendship would never die and always give them strength. They had their "best friend" spelled backwards. But thank you Jesus! Now turned around, they had a full, divine friendship with peace and hope. They could go home in life with their best friend, spelled rightly - not "d-o-g," but G-O-D!



PS: The child recovered remarkably and the family was referred to one of our WELS congregations.

*Chaplain Kenneth Wenzel*



*Chaplain Wenzel's primary ministry is conducted at the University Hospital and the Children's Hospital, as well as two other Madison, WI area hospitals. A 1973 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Chaplain Wenzel joined WLIM in 1997.*

### **HOPE – CONTINUED FROM PG 1**

The denial of life after death as well as heaven and hell, is their only comfort, and what a false comfort that is.

### **THERE ARE MANY LEVELS OF HOPE**

As a pastor my heart goes out to these people "who sit in darkness." For them, their loved one is lost and gone forever. They have no hope. And their intense emotional cries seem to be an indication that in some way they knew this. As I prepare to leave the scene, it gets harder and harder to say, "I'm sorry for your loss," because of the great loss that has really been suffered. Their loss and their loved one's loss is the comfort of knowing the forgiveness of sins in Christ Jesus our Lord and all the blessings that Jesus brings to the believer.

Please don't let this scene play out in lives of those you know. They need Jesus. At death, it's too late. And for those who remain here on earth – how long before this tragic scene is played out again? Don't wait to share the Good News of Jesus Christ!

*Pastor Robert Dick*



*Pastor Dick serves Divinity - Divine Charity Ev. Lutheran Church, Whitefish Bay, WI.*

## WLIM SPECIAL DELEGATE MEETING

Due to the retirements of Chaplains Stern, Lenz and Tetzlaff, the WLIM Board of Directors has called a special WLIM Delegate meeting for Saturday, Feb. 24, 2007 at Good Shepherd's Ev. Lutheran Church, West Allis, WI. The meeting will convene at 11 AM. With the approval of the delegates, a divine call will be extended for a full-time WLIM chaplain. The Board of Directors will recommend that the new chaplain be located in the Milwaukee area and that he serve the regional medical center, Froedtert Lutheran Memorial Hospital, area county jails and other area institutions.

All delegates (known delegates have received a mailed invitation) are urged to attend. Good Shepherd's is located just off the Greenfield Avenue exit of I-894 on the west side of Milwaukee. Please call the office at 414-259-8122 for directions if needed.

## FEEL USELESS?

The apostle Peter encourages, "But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander." Sometimes we aren't eager or ready to do this. We try to come with excuses or feel that we don't have opportunities to share our faith with others. Advancing years can limit the contacts we have with others. It's not the same as when we were employed or when we were more socially active. We may feel useless in God's kingdom.

### *PRISONS ARE NOT CONDUCIVE TO GOOD HEALTH*

Useless - that described the mindset of an inmate named Sheila. She was sixty-five years old when I first met her eleven years ago. She has experienced some severe health problems and has been in the hospital unit at Dodge Correctional Institution. Even now she has difficulty walking any distance and is carted by wheelchair. Prisons are not conducive to good health. Over-crowded cellblocks make it almost impossible to avoid coming into contact with sick inmates and being exposed to various germs and viruses. Each prison is like a different five-germ casserole.

In spite of all her physical problems, I have never heard Sheila complain. She told me something that I regard as her life motto. "Whatever happens to me is God's will and that's ok. I know that Jesus will take care of me every day, so every day is a good day." Sheila has a good sense of humor and that's important in her. She laughs so hard whenever I remind her of an old undertaker's proverb, "Every day above ground is a good day!"

### *ONCE CONSIDERED USELESS - NOW THE LORD'S MISSIONARY*

Whether Sheila realized it or not, the Lord is using her as His missionary. She is not afraid or ashamed to confess her Savior before others. Even though some may ridicule her for living her Christian faith, her example has been beneficial to many other women. I've been told that many of the young women call her, "Grandma," and older women call her, "Mom." She is an excellent Christian counselor as well as a Christian role model. Here is a woman, who once considered herself to be useless, still in prison at seventy-six years old, and who will probably die in prison; yet, the Lord is using her as His missionary.

I hope that the next time you are have a self-pity party, you will remember Sheila. Think of how the Lord is blessing her and enabling her to serve as His missionary in prison. May the Lord also use each of us to spread His kingdom of grace regardless of our situation or location in life.



Chaplain David "Digger" Tetzlaff

# BRINGING JOE TO JESUS

Have you heard the saying “Whatever doesn’t kill me, will make me stronger?” People in institutions who are hurting seem to identify with this phrase. Many feel the looming shadow of death. Some are in pain and fearful of the future. Most are facing the loss of their freedom and independence, a major change in life, as they know it. A hope is that good could come from the pain.

One of the blessings of serving the Lord by teaching others is that the teacher gets to learn. Often, God gives the teacher new insight even from the Biblical accounts you’ve heard and read many times. Indeed, as our lives change, God’s Word applies to our lives in new and different ways.

I observed this as I was talking to a teen boy, Joe. From the report of the psychiatric nurse, the charges against this boy were very serious. He was accused of doing things to other children that would shock even the most seasoned professional counselor. But Joe professed his innocence. He claimed faith in Jesus as his Savior. Joe said that he wasn’t worried about the accusations because, “God knew the truth and would work it out.”

## JESUS KNOWS THE TRUTH

I didn’t know what to think or believe. Perhaps the accusing children were making up some terrible, potentially life-altering lies about Joe and he truly was an innocent victim. If this were the case, it would take God’s help to avoid doing time because of the lies. Or, Joe truly had brutally hurt innocent victims. If this was the case, he should have had a terribly aching conscience. I was glad that I was not the judge who had to determine the truth. I took comfort in the fact that Jesus knows the truth.

Joe and I regularly read God’s Word together. One week, I read the story of the sinful woman who was brought to Jesus. We didn’t go into detail about the crime, that wasn’t important. Instead, the important verse was, “The teachers of the law and the Pharisees

brought in a woman caught in adultery.” (Jn. 8:3) The teachers and Pharisees brought the woman to Jesus to trick the Savior. Their accusations could have resulted in the stoning of the woman to death. But what really happened? They brought the woman to Jesus and He was able to offer her forgiveness and peace. She was urged to sin no more. Jesus answered the accusing mob’s conniving intentions with wisdom and grace. The woman was brought to Jesus. She now had a new relationship with God. Evil did not win and Jesus used the difficult situation to bring the woman eternal blessings.

Many things can lead us to Jesus, including negative things like fear, pain and confusion. But praise God even in the time of trouble. Evil cannot separate us from God; that is His promise.

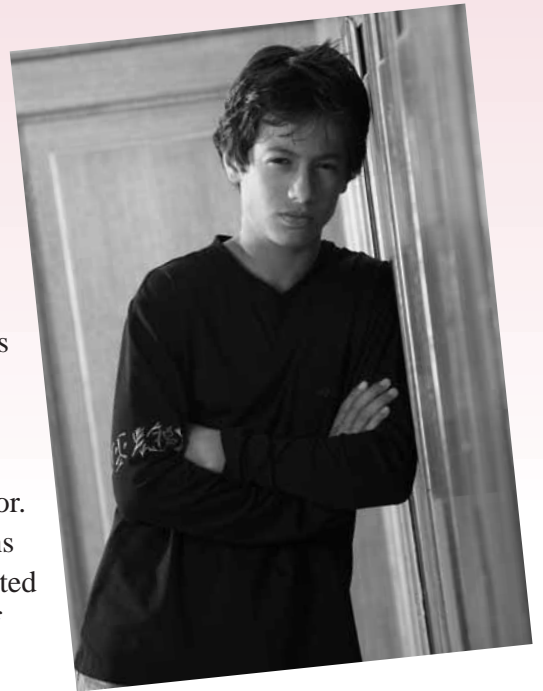
## JOE TEACHES THE TEACHER

After we talked about the story, Joe told me that there are times the devil tries to lie to him to get him to think that God is far away. What a blessing for Joe – and each of us - to know that God is always near. The Holy Spirit is there for us even in the time of great trouble.

Whatever comes of Joe’s case, I pray that it will be fair and just. I pray that his difficult situation will turn into eternal good for Joe and others according to God’s plan. May Joe and his accusers, like the sinful woman, be brought closer to Jesus.

*Deaconess Sarah Owens*

*Deaconess Owens works with children and teens in the Milwaukee County Children’s Court Center, in the Behavioral Health Treatment Center and various other institutions throughout the state.*





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## OUR MISSION

*// To share God's law and the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ with all individuals who are or have been institutionalized, and their families. //*

### **CONGRATULATIONS TO CHAPLAIN KEN WENZEL**

He was recently awarded the "UWCH Gold Star," given by the University of Wisconsin Children's Hospital for outstanding care of patients and their families. Chaplain Wenzel was very positively mentioned in the Press Ganey survey of patients and their parents at the hospital.

### **ANOTHER RETIREMENT AT WLIM**

Pastor David (Digger) Tetzlaff has announced to the Board of Directors that he intends to retire on June 30, 2007, the same date that veteran Chaplain Ken Lenz is retiring. How WLIM has been blessed with faithful, dedicated and knowledgeable chaplains in Pastors Tetzlaff, Lenz and Stern (who retired on Dec. 31, 2006). May the Lord bless all three of these men in their retirements!

### **WLIM BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Officers for 2007 were elected at a recent board meeting. The new chairman is Rev. Richard Waldschmidt, associate pastor of St. Jacobi Ev. Lutheran Church in Greenfield,

WI. Vice chairman is Mr. Steven Schultz who serves at Faith Lutheran School, Antioch, IL. Secretary is Mr. Donald Zastrow of Hartford, WI and treasurer is Mr. George Schaser of Greendale, WI. Two new board members were welcomed to the board: Pastor Mark Albrecht, associate pastor of St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church, Winneconne, WI and Pastor Paul Steinberg, associate pastor of Immanuel Ev. Lutheran Church, Medford, WI.

### **THRIVENT GIVINGPLUS GIFTS**

Thank you to the many WLIM supporters who completed the GivingPlus form and had their gifts to WLIM matched, \$.50 on the \$1 up to \$600 per donor. A total of \$18,577.50 was received in matching GivingPlus funds last year. With your help, that amount could grow in 2007. Need a GivingPlus form? Call the WLIM office at 414-259-8122.